

As instruction



Various philosophers like Plato, Hume, Mills etc. have espoused philosophies regarding different aspects of our life's ideologies and concept of living a moral and ethical life. The philosophy is part and parcel of every human being and he or she exhibits it through the wisdom and individual perspectives towards the various aspects of their daily life. The philosophers through the ages have attempted to explain the sequence of events or happenings around us that directly or indirectly influence our actions and reactions in our daily life. It tries to interpret everything and anything in the wider empirical consideration of our experiences of conscious and unconscious manifestations of our being. It therefore, can be said that each of us, follows a definite philosophy which guides our actions and our efforts to gain knowledge and accordingly base our judgments of the people or event. J. S. Mills, an eminent philosopher, in his book 'On liberty' has extensively discoursed on liberty of thought and discussion and has tried to explain its wider meaning with respect to the control exerted by society on an individual.

Through the ages, liberty and freedom of choice has been the most important issue for the rulers and the community at large. The rulers and people in authority have been using their power to exert control over the community and individuals. Mills has argued that no government or individual has the right to suppress the independent thought of other individuals largely because the new thoughts are catalysts to the changes, which are part and parcel of human existence. The extent of the influence of their control on the liberty of individuals is the most vital aspect of interplay of human relationship within the society. The governmental and constitutional paradigms of liberty are important factors in the larger

interests of the society. But there are some intrinsic and unarticulated social control over the individuals within the society, which may be defined by the doctrines of the time and religion.

According to Mills ' for a long time past, the chief mischief of the legal penalties is that they strengthen the social stigma' (Mills, chapter 1). While to some extent, one can agree that excess control does corrodes of moral and ethical values, but some control is necessary to maintain law and order within the social fabric. But Mills theory on liberty of thought and discussion is highly relevant with the issue of teaching the theory of evolution and the theory of intelligent design in public school. Mills has been very vocal on the issue of liberty of thought because he believed that it promotes the conception and inception of new ideas which are intrinsic part of development, which every society undergoes through the time. ' No one can be a great thinker who does not recognise, that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead... we can expect no fresh start, until we again assert our mental freedom' (Mills, Chapter 2) .

In the recent times, the issue of teaching evolution and intelligent design has become controversial primarily because of the conservative nature of the often unarticulated socio-religious controls which are not rationalized within the wider perspective of the advancing time. The revolutionary views of Mills on the vital issue of liberty of thought and discussion are essential part of changing paradigms of social control and hence relevant to the issue of teaching the theory of evolution and intelligent design.

Reference

Mills, J S. (1899). On Liberty. Available from: [Accessed 24 November 2008].