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## Freedom Overview

The autobiography of Nelson Mandela, titled *Long Walk to Freedom*, narrates his personal struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa. Similarly, Aung San Suu Kyi, in her book *Freedom from Fear*, emphasizes that living a dignified human life requires overcoming fear.

The term 'Swaraj' combines two words: *Swa* (self) and *Raj* (rule), meaning both self-rule and rule over oneself. Freedom can be simply defined as the space where individuals, groups, communities, or nations can chart their own destiny and be what they wish to be.

Freedom allows the full development of an individual's creativity, sensibilities, and capabilities. However, some political and legal restraints are necessary as measures to reduce social and economic inequalities. The state can justifiably constrain actions that cause harm to others, but such constraints must be balanced against the need for freedom.

Hate campaigns cause serious harm to others' freedom and can be legally constrained. However, society must avoid developing a habit of self-censorship where individuals do not say what they wish without interference. Positive liberty refers to the freedom to govern oneself, answering the question "Who governs me?" with "I govern myself." As famously stated, "I disapprove of what you say but I will defend to the death your right to say it." Banning speech may provide short-term relief but it undermines the principle of freedom of expression.

### Exam Questions

Q1. What does the term 'Swaraj' mean?

*Answer:* 'Swaraj' means self-rule and rule over oneself, combining the words 'Swa' (self) and 'Raj' (rule).

Q2. Why are some political and legal restraints necessary in a free society?

*Answer:* Restraints are necessary to ensure that differences can be discussed and debated without coercion, preventing one group from imposing its will on others.

Q3. Explain the difference between negative liberty and positive liberty.

*Answer:* Negative liberty is freedom from external interference, allowing individuals to act without constraints. Positive liberty is the freedom to participate in the governance of the community.

## Harm Principle and Constraints on Freedom

The Harm Principle, articulated by John Stuart Mill, states that individual actions should only be limited if they cause harm to others. Freedom of other measures fail to prevent serious harm to individuals.

Hate campaigns and actions causing serious harm to others justify legal constraints. However, constraints must not be so severe as to destroy freedom even if it causes some inconvenience. Banning speech is a short-term solution that harms long-term freedom by encouraging censorship.

## Exam Questions

**Q1. What is the Harm Principle?**

*Answer:* The Harm Principle states that individual actions should only be restricted if they cause harm to others.

**Q2. Why should society avoid habitual restrictions on freedom?**

*Answer:* Habitual restrictions are detrimental because they destroy freedom itself and encourage a culture of censorship.

**Q3. How does freedom of expression relate to the Harm Principle?**

*Answer:* Freedom of expression is fundamental, but it can be limited only when it causes serious harm to others, in line with the Harm Principle.

## Types of Liberty

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Negative liberty refers to the absence of external constraints, allowing individuals to act freely without interference. Positive liberty is the capacity of individuals to govern themselves, while positive liberty emphasizes self-governance and empowerment.

Freedom of expression is considered part of the minimum area of non-interference. Society must tolerate some inconvenience to protect the right to free speech even when disagreeing with it.

## Exam Questions

**Q1. Define negative liberty.**

*Answer:* Negative liberty is freedom from external control or restraint, allowing individuals to act without interference.

**Q2. What does positive liberty emphasize?**

*Answer:* Positive liberty emphasizes the ability to govern oneself and act according to one's own free will.

**Q3. Why is freedom of expression important in a free society?**

*Answer:* Freedom of expression allows individuals to share their views and is fundamental to democracy; protecting it ensures diverse opinions.

## Glossary

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- **Apartheid:** Racial discrimination between Whites and Blacks, mainly after World War II.
- **Economic liberty:** Ensuring earning opportunities and minimum wages for citizens.
- **Freedom:** A situation limiting constraints on individuals, allowing them to expand their abilities and potential.
- **Freedom of expression:** The right to express one's views through speech, writing, etc.
- **Legal liberty:** The freedom of a country to draft and enforce its own constitution and govern accordingly.
- **Natural liberty:** The right of a person to be born free.
- **Personal liberty:** Freedom in individual matters like marriage and food.
- **Political liberty:** Freedom to choose representatives, contest elections, and participate in government.
- **Religious liberty:** Freedom to follow and spread any religion without state interference except in special circumstances.

## Quick Reference

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- **Swaraj:** Self-rule and rule over oneself.
- **Harm Principle:** Actions should be limited only if they harm others.
- **Negative Liberty:** Freedom from external interference.
- **Positive Liberty:** Freedom to govern oneself.
- **Freedom of Expression:** Fundamental right to express views.
- **Constraints:** Necessary legal and political limits to protect freedom.

## Solved Examples

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**Example 1:** Explain why some constraints on freedom are necessary in a society.

*Solution:* Constraints are necessary to prevent harm to others and to ensure that different groups can coexist peacefully without coercion. The

**Example 2:** Differentiate between negative and positive liberty with examples.

*Solution:* Negative liberty is freedom from interference, such as the right to speak without censorship. Positive liberty is the ability to act on or

## Practice Set

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### Easy

- What is the meaning of Swaraj?
- Define freedom of expression.
- Who wrote *Long Walk to Freedom*?

### Moderate

- Explain the Harm Principle.
- What is the difference between negative and positive liberty?
- Why is it important to avoid habitual restrictions on freedom?

## Challenging

- Discuss the role of the state in balancing freedom and constraints.
- Analyze the significance of freedom of expression in a democratic society.
- Explain how freedom allows the development of individual creativity and potential.

## Answer Key

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- **Easy:**
  - Swaraj means self-rule and rule over oneself.
  - Freedom of expression is the right to express one's views through speech, writing, etc.
  - Nelson Mandela wrote *Long Walk to Freedom*.
- **Moderate:**
  - The Harm Principle states that actions should only be limited if they harm others.
  - Negative liberty is freedom from interference; positive liberty is freedom to govern oneself.
  - Habitual restrictions harm freedom by fostering censorship and limiting rights.
- **Challenging:**
  - The state balances freedom and constraints by protecting individuals from harm while ensuring liberty.
  - Freedom of expression is vital for democracy as it allows diverse opinions and accountability.
  - Freedom enables individuals to develop creativity, sensibilities, and capabilities fully.

Year	Event
1948	Nelson Mandela begins struggle against apartheid
1960s	John Stuart Mill articulates Harm Principle
1980s	Aung San Suu Kyi writes <i>Freedom from Fear</i>

- It was articulated by John Stuart Mill.
- The Harm Principle holds that the actions of individuals should only be limited to prevent harm to other individuals.

Harm Principle

Why do we need constraints?

- We need some constraints or else society would descend into chaos.
- Differences may exist between people regarding their ideas and opinions, they may have conflicting ambitions, they may compete to control of scarce resources.

Negative Liberty:  
In this the freedom is from the external restraint on one's action.