

# Illustrate the Hobbesian concept of "limited right Revolution"

## Introduction:

James Hobbes is renowned as one of the famous philosophers of modern political science. He saw the civil war of Britain from 1642 to 1651. Due to this, he was of the view of limited rights of revolution to the public. He elaborated in his book "**The Levathion**" that people should surrender their protection to the state, while in return for this people should show obedience to the state. They could not start a revolution for the small things, they are unhappy with the state. But they should show ultimate obedience to state and ultimate powers resided with state which is sovereign and possessed absolute power.

## What is Limited Right Revolution

James Hobbes explained in his philosophies that public should have no choice of ~~limited~~ right revolution. If they start revolution for small things against the state, their security would be at stake. So, people cannot claim for revolution just for increased taxes or economic poverty of state. The only condition they can call for revolution, when king is at the verge of killing people when their life is in danger at the hand of king, people can call for a revolution.

**"A subject could only rightfully resist government if there is any issue of self-defence and only when lethal harm against them is imminent"**

(James Hobbes, The Leviathan)

## James's views on the concept of Revolution during his Era:

James had seen the English civil wars and the French revolution.

At that time people were of the view that public would conform to the sovereignty of God, as long as their rights are fulfilled by the state. They followed the **"Theory of divine Rights"** in which

when the rights of people are not being fulfilled by the state, people started revolutions against the king and got taken over by them.

As, they thought state is ultimately belonged to the ordinary people.

Due to the condition at that time, Hobbes explained that it is in the **"state of**

**nature"** that human is wicked, and selfish. So, he should be

given the limited right to revolution.

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## Why the limited right to revolution should be given?

Thomas ~~James~~ Hobbes had given limited right revolution for the sake of sovereignty of state and the protection of people. Following are the reasons for his limited right Revolution.

### 1. Revolution leads to Anarchy:

According to Thomas Hobbes, revolution is ultimately resulted in anarchy. ~~but~~ If people are given the chance of revolution, they would go for it, even if there are minor issues. By nature, man is bad and self-interested, so he would not revolt otherwise it would result in lack of security and ultimately anarchy.

### 2. Rightful Authority cannot be achieved:

Thomas Hobbes, in his book

Levathion, had elaborated that it is not possible to achieve absolute authority. So, it would be mandatory for people to follow the sovereign state. As, there is not any procedure through which good and bad of a society can be weighed. So, there is no difference between just and unjust. So, public should obey the state.

### 3. Revolution should be for self-defence only:

According to Thomas Hobbes, revolution becomes necessary only when there is importance of self-defence becomes significant. So, people should obey the state in all the circumstances, except only when there is danger to the life of people when king gives open threats

to people

"If men could rule on their own, there could be no reason for a coercive power"

(Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan)

9- Better to compromise some rights than security.

During civil war in the Great Britain, almost 200,000 English soldiers and common people had died. Due to this,

Thomas Hobbes was of the view that there must be a government who should devise the rule of law for people and provide security to the people.

He said that even if people compromise some of their social, economic and political rights for their security, would be beneficial for people. So, people should obey the state and the king.

## Application of Thomas Hobbes philosophy in Contemporary

### Era:

In some perspective, the "theory of social contract and limited right revolution" can be applied nowadays. Like, a civil war in Yemen, Syria is going on, there is a wastage of resources and human lives just for revolution. As, Hobbes said, there should be sovereign body, who provide security to the people while they obey the state in return.

### Critical Analysis:

Some philosophers think that Hobbes theory of social contract is against the spirit of modern democracy. As, people are not given the chance of freedom of speech. And, it promotes

authoritarianism, as ~~the~~ maximum powers are vested in one personality i.e. king. Government ~~is~~ may use violence for holding the power on people. It seems to be impracticable, as people do not select their rulers and governments in this way.

Conclusion:

Thomas Hobbes had given the idea of limited right revolution, as people should not be given excessive rights of revolution. He was of the view that public should show obedience to state while state should provide protection to the society. In some way, Hobbes's philosophy is applicable to today's world but there ~~is~~ some criticism to it also.