

was the guiding principle wherein people behaved as they wanted, without caring about the rights of others. Of course, there was complete chaos and human beings do desire peace at the end of the day.

- In order to avoid this chaos and come out of the 'state of nature', Hobbes then describes that members of the society got together and signed a 'social contract' to form a state.
- By signing this treaty, they surrendered their rights to an 'absolute sovereign authority', who was the monarch in this case.
- People surrender their rights in return for safety and protection of one's self and property. The word of the 'Sovereign' was absolute and had to be obeyed by all subjects.
- However, even the 'Sovereign' was limited by 'natural law' and had to follow it and could never deviate from the natural law.
- The concepts of individualism, materialism, utilitarianism are part and parcel of this theory that was given by Hobbes.

John Locke

- Though the theory given by John Locke also emphasizes the 'Social Contract Theory', it is quite different from the theory given by Thomas Hobbes.
- In Locke the 'State of Nature' was not as bad as the one described by Hobbes. According to Locke, people were equal and had all the individual freedom to exercise their options. However, a problem arose when issues pertaining to property came to the forefront.
- There existed no judges to adjudicate on issues related to property, no authority to enforce claims on property and finally no established laws on property. We see that 'Right to Property' is an inherent part of this theory.
- It was under these circumstances that the people came together and surrendered some of their rights to a common authority (called the state), who would then enforce these rights.
- The people ended up surrendering only those rights that were required to enforce the 'Right to Property'.
- The role of the state extended to protecting property and enforcing its claims and few other functions. Hence, we see the concept of a 'Minimalist state' or the concept of a state that plays the role of a 'Nightwatchman'.
- The people too owed their loyalties to the state, only when it functioned, according to the interests of the people and not otherwise.