

## IS CONTINUAL ECONOMIC GROWTH THE IDEAL TO AIM FOR?

It is often argued that conservation and sustainability of resources are impediments to economic development. But it is worth remembering that some of the pioneers of the theory of economic growth to which most current national governments subscribe, contemplated its ultimate stabilisation. Below is a quote from John Stuart Mill, a radical thinker and very influential in the development of modern economic and social theory, writing in his book *Principles of Political Economy* in 1848 (Book 4 Chapter 6).

*"I confess I am not charmed with the ideal of life held out by those who think that the normal state of human beings is that of struggling to get on; that the trampling, crushing, elbowing and treading on each other's heels, which form the existing type of social life, are the most desirable lot of human kind, or anything but the disagreeable symptoms of one of the phases of industrial progress .....*

*"If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger, but not a better or a happier population, I sincerely hope, for the sake of posterity, that they will be content to be stationary, long before necessity compels them to it .....*

*"It is scarcely necessary to remark that a stationary condition of capital and population implies no stationary state of human improvement. There would be as much scope as ever for all kinds of mental culture, and moral and social progress, as much room for improving the Art of Living and much more likelihood of its being improved, when minds cease to be engrossed by the Art of Getting On."*

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