

BA Political Science
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Topic- Equality, It's Dimensions and
Relationship with Rights

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Introduction

- Thinking about equality the questions that come to our mind are:
 - Equality of what ?
 - Why do we need equality ?
 - Do we all really equal ?

These questions can only be answered when we experience inequality.

Equality of rights, resources, opportunity, treatment, respect and so on.

Thinking Inequality

- Aristotle says: Treating equals equally and unequals unequally, is justice and important to avoid the sense of 'Inequality'.
- Rousseau was among the first to talk about inequality:
 - people are not born equal with respect to colour, construction, capacity and so on. (Natural inequality)
 - But these natural inequalities should not be resulted into the differential treatment and control over resources, rank and respect. (Conventional or crafted inequality)

Making People Equal

- Equality never means literal equality.
- Foundational Equality: equality of human beings in the moral sense.
- Distributive Equality: equality of human beings in moral and material sense. (Social Justice)
- Principles to achieve Social Justice or Distributive Equality:
 - Equality of Opportunity
 - Equality of Outcome

Equality of opportunity can't secure equal outcomes,
Therefore reasonable grounds of discrimination require
to achieve social justice. (Affirmative actions)

Dimensions of Equality

Formal Equality

- Legal Equality
 - Equal legal status or equality before law in a society
- Political Equality
 - Equal political status i.e One person, one vote, one value
 - Equal Right be elected to political posts

Secured in a Liberal Capitalist society

Do you think that legal and political rights are equally accessible to all ?

Substantive Equality

- Social Equality
 - No discrimination because of natural and conventional inequality
- Economic Equality
 - No discrimination because of natural and conventional inequality
 - Basic economic needs must be secured
 - Economic disparities must be minimized

Secured in a Socialist Society

Social and economic inequality result in deprivation of equal access to other equalities.

Relationship Between Rights and Equality

- French Revolution of 1789 demanded “ Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” as fundamental rights.
- It means there should be equal right of liberties to all.
- There has been a direct relation between demands of rights and dimensions of equality.
- Demand of first generation of rights , i.e Civil and political rights led to the demolition of privilege of king and his court and spread of these rights to other classes. It is also called bourgeois rights.
- The demand of social and economic rights by the labour class led to the socio-economic equality. These are second generation of rights and also known as socialist rights.
- The expansion of the above rights to the colonised people of third world further secured similar equality to the rest of the world.

Conclusion

- Equality never means literal equality.
- Giving primacy to one equality over other depends upon the rightful justification in a particular society.
- A balanced approach is required to secure maximum equality of all desired respect in a society.
- Social justice is an important principle to secure equality
- For any query mail to: i_abhi@hotmail.com

Thanking You

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