

Chapter 3: Equality

Question Answer



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Definition of Equality:

- Equality is the principle of treating all individuals or groups fairly and impartially, regardless of their differences in characteristics, status, or circumstances.

Types of Equality:

1. **Social Equality:** This refers to the equal treatment of all individuals in society, irrespective of their social or economic backgrounds. It aims to eliminate discrimination based on caste, class, or social status.
2. **Political Equality:** Political equality ensures that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities to participate in the political process. It includes the right to vote and stand for elections.
3. **Economic Equality:** Economic equality focuses on reducing disparities in wealth and income. It aims to provide equal economic opportunities and bridge the gap between the rich and the poor.
4. **Equality before the Law:** This principle ensures that all individuals are subject to the same laws and are treated equally in the eyes of the law. It prevents discrimination and ensures justice.

Significance of Equality:

- Equality is a fundamental principle in democratic societies as it ensures fairness, justice, and inclusivity.

- It promotes social harmony, reduces conflicts, and fosters a sense of belonging among citizens.

Challenges to Equality:

1. **Social Inequality:** Persistent social hierarchies based on caste, class, or gender can hinder social equality.
2. **Economic Disparities:** Economic inequality, such as the wealth gap, challenges economic equality.
3. **Discrimination:** Discriminatory practices and biases can impede equality before the law.
4. **Political Inequality:** Unequal access to political power can undermine political equality.

Government's Role in Promoting Equality:

- Governments play a crucial role in formulating and implementing policies to promote equality, including affirmative action programs, progressive taxation, and anti-discrimination laws.

Conclusion:

- Equality is a cornerstone of democratic societies, encompassing social, political, economic, and legal dimensions.
- Upholding equality is essential for building just and inclusive societies where all individuals have equal opportunities and rights.

1. Some people argue that inequality is natural while others maintain that it is equality which is natural and the inequalities which we notice around us are created by society. Which view do you support? Give reasons.

Answer: I support the view that inequalities are often created by society rather than being entirely natural. While some differences among individuals may have biological or natural origins, many inequalities, especially those related to social class, wealth, and opportunities, are primarily a result of societal structures, systems, and historical factors. Discrimination, unequal access to education, and economic disparities are often perpetuated by social and economic systems. Therefore, it is possible and essential for society to address these inequalities through policy interventions to achieve a more equitable and just society.

2. There is a view that absolute economic equality is neither possible nor desirable. It is argued that the most a society can do is to try and reduce the gaps between the richest and poorest members of society. Do you agree?

Answer: I agree with the view that achieving absolute economic equality may not be possible or even desirable in practice. Absolute economic equality would require significant redistribution of wealth and resources, which can have unintended consequences, such as disincentives for innovation and productivity. However, reducing the gaps between the richest and poorest members of society is both possible and desirable. Society can strive to create policies and systems that promote greater economic equality, ensuring that basic needs are met for all citizens and that extreme disparities are minimized. This approach strikes a balance between economic incentives and social justice.

3. Match the following concepts with appropriate instances:

(a) Affirmative action - (iii) Every child should get free education

(b) Equality of opportunity - (i) Every adult citizen has a right to vote

(c) Equal Rights - (ii) Banks offer a higher rate of interest to senior citizens

4. A government report on farmers' problems says that small and marginal farmers cannot get good prices from the market. It recommends that the government should intervene to ensure a better price but only for small and marginal farmers. Is this recommendation consistent with the principle of equality?

Answer: The recommendation to intervene and ensure a better price for small and marginal farmers, while excluding other farmers, may not be fully consistent with the principle of equality. This approach could be seen as a form of positive discrimination or affirmative action, aimed at addressing the specific challenges faced by a disadvantaged group. However, it may raise questions about fairness and fairness in market access for all farmers. To align with the principle of equality, the government should carefully consider the impact of such interventions and ensure they do not disproportionately favor one group at the expense of others.

5. Which of the following violate the principles of equality? And why?

(a) Every child in class will read the text of the play by turn.

- This does not violate the principle of equality because it ensures equal opportunity for each child to participate.

(b) The Government of Canada encouraged white Europeans to migrate to Canada from the end of the Second World War till 1960.

- This violates the principle of equality as it discriminates based on ethnicity, favoring one group over others.

(c) There is a separate railway reservation counter for senior citizens.

- This does not necessarily violate the principle of equality as it may be intended to provide convenience and prioritize the needs of senior citizens, who often require additional assistance.

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