

# **Chapter 4: Social Justice**

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## Chapter 4: Social Justice

### Definition of Social Justice:

- Social Justice is the principle of fairness and equity in the distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
- It aims to address and rectify inequalities and injustices that may exist based on factors such as gender, race, class, and economic status.

### Key Concepts in Social Justice:

1. Equality: Ensuring that all individuals have equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights, regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.
2. Equity: Recognizing that individuals may have different needs and providing support accordingly to achieve fairness.
3. Inclusivity: Promoting the inclusion of marginalized groups and ensuring their participation in social, economic, and political processes.
4. Redistribution: Implementing policies and measures to redistribute resources and opportunities to reduce disparities.

### Principles of Social Justice:

1. **Recognition of Diversity:** Acknowledging and respecting the diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences of individuals and groups.
2. **Fairness:** Ensuring that individuals are treated fairly and justly, with equal opportunities and rights.
3. **Solidarity:** Encouraging cooperation and support among members of society to address inequalities and injustices.

### **Challenges to Social Justice:**

1. **Economic Inequality:** Disparities in income and wealth can hinder social justice.
2. **Discrimination:** Prejudice and discrimination based on factors like race, gender, and religion can perpetuate injustice.
3. **Lack of Access:** Limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities can exacerbate social inequality.

### **Government's Role in Social Justice:**

- Governments play a vital role in promoting social justice through policies and programs that address inequality, discrimination, and access to basic services.

### **Conclusion:**

- Social justice is a foundational principle in democratic societies, focusing on fairness, equity, and inclusivity.

- Achieving social justice requires recognizing diversity, ensuring fairness, and fostering solidarity to create a more just and equal society.

**1. What does it mean to give each person his/her due? How has the meaning of “giving each his due” changed over time?**

Answer: To give each person his/her due means to ensure that every individual receives fair treatment, rights, and opportunities in accordance with their merits and needs. The meaning of "giving each his due" has evolved over time. In ancient societies, it often meant following traditional roles and hierarchies. However, in modern democratic societies, it has shifted toward the recognition of equal rights and opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their background, gender, or social status. The concept has expanded to include principles of social justice, ensuring that marginalized groups receive equitable treatment.

**2. Briefly discuss the three principles of justice outlined in the chapter? Explain each with examples.**

Answer: The three principles of justice outlined in the chapter are:

- Equality: This principle emphasizes treating all individuals equally, ensuring that they have equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights. For example, equal pay for equal work promotes economic equality.
- Equity: Equity recognizes that individuals may have different needs or circumstances and requires adjusting policies to achieve fairness. For instance, providing extra educational support to students with disabilities ensures equity in access to education.

- **Inclusivity:** Inclusivity aims to include marginalized groups in social, economic, and political processes. Affirmative action policies, such as reservations for underrepresented communities, promote inclusivity.

### 3. Does the principle of considering the special needs of people conflict with the principle of equal treatment for all?

**Answer:** The principle of considering the special needs of people does not necessarily conflict with the principle of equal treatment for all. In fact, it complements it. Equal treatment does not mean treating everyone identically; it means treating everyone fairly. Recognizing and addressing special needs ensures that individuals have equal opportunities to succeed despite their different circumstances. For example, providing accommodations for people with disabilities ensures that they have an equal chance to participate in education or employment.

### 4. How does Rawls use the idea of a veil of ignorance to argue that a fair and just distribution can be defended on rational grounds?

**Answer:** John Rawls uses the idea of a "veil of ignorance" to argue for a fair and just distribution by proposing that individuals should make decisions about societal structures and policies without knowing their own position or characteristics in society. This thought experiment ensures that individuals, when making choices, would strive for fairness because they do not know if they will be born into advantaged or disadvantaged positions. It rationalizes the pursuit of fairness and equality as a means of creating a just society that benefits everyone, regardless of their circumstances.

**5. What are generally considered to be the basic minimum requirements of people for living a healthy and productive life? What is the responsibility of governments in trying to ensure this minimum to all?**

**Answer:** The basic minimum requirements for living a healthy and productive life typically include access to:

- Clean water and sanitation.
- Adequate food and nutrition.
- Basic healthcare.
- Education.
- Safe housing.
- Employment opportunities.
- Social security.

The responsibility of governments is to ensure that all citizens have access to these basic necessities. This may involve implementing policies and programs to provide these services or resources, particularly to those who are vulnerable or in need.

Governments play a crucial role in safeguarding the well-being of their citizens and promoting social justice.

**6. Which of the following arguments could be used to justify state action to provide basic minimum conditions of life to all citizens?**

(a) Providing free services to the poor and needy can be justified as an act of charity.

(b) Providing all citizens with a basic minimum standard of living is one way of ensuring equality of opportunity.

(c) Some people are naturally lazy and we should be kind to them.

(d) Ensuring basic facilities and a minimum standard of living to all is a recognition of our shared humanity and a human right.

Answer: The following argument justifies state action to provide basic minimum conditions of life to all citizens: (d) Ensuring basic facilities and a minimum standard of living to all is a recognition of our shared humanity and a human right.

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