

EQUALITY, LIBERTY AND JUSTICE

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Democracy is based on equality, liberty and justice the structure and legitimacy of political institutions is determined by the social cooperation. Equal social cooperation is the base of strong democracy. Sometimes there is a conflict between equality and liberty. The Distribution of social benefits promotes greater equality even at the expense of certain liberties. Most extensive set of liberties may result in fundamental inequalities across society. Equality is included in provision of fundamental rights in most of the democracies. Naturally we all may be equal socially, but there are individual differences, biological and dependent on personal capabilities. The personal and social characteristics of different persons, which can differ greatly, can lead to substantial interpersonal variations in the conversion of resources and primary goods into achievements. *1 Equality may be related to resources or alternately it may relate to welfare. We may want everyone in our society to enjoy standard of living that ensures dignity and security including those who may be responsible for any inadequacies in their lives

John Locke held that the state of nature is one of "*peace, good will, mutual assistance and preservation.*" This is dependent on the ground that the law of nature provides a complete equipment of human rights and duties. The defect of the state of nature lies merely in the fact that it has no organization to give effect to the rules of right.*2.

In the state of nature Locke believed that property was common in the sense that everyone had a right to draw subsistence from whatever nature offers. Man has a natural right to that with which he had mixed the labour of his body. In general their utility depends upon the efforts and labour expended upon them and thus Locke's

theory led to the later labour theories of value in classical and Social Economics.*3.

The principles of the Revolutionary Era first clearly stated by Locke and embodied in great political manifestoes like the American Bills of Rights, summed up political ideal which in the nineteenth century contain progressive realization in this politics of all countries where the culture of Western Europe prevailed and might probably come to be realized throughout the world. These ideals included the civil liberties-freedom of thought, of expression, and of association, the security of property and the control of political institutions by an informed public opinion. Everywhere these ends were to be practically realized by the adoption of the forms of constitutional governments.

Political liberalism was a massive movement- which grew in all the Countries of Western Europe and America. The social philosophy was in essence a program of legal, economic and political reforms connected by the fact that they are all derivative from the principle of greatest happiness of the greatest number. The principle was included in private morals and public policy.

The liberalism was an intellectual force of enormous political importance in nineteenth century. Without themselves attaining the proportion of political party, they disseminated ideas in the light of which a vast amount of antiquated political lumber was swept away, and legislation, administration and judicial process were made both more efficient and more democratic.*4.

J. S. Mill accepted the greatest happiness principle as it had been stated by Bentham. The desire for one's own greatest pleasure is the individual only motive and the greatest happiness of everyone at once the standard of social good and

object of moral action. The recognition that, political institutions are part of a larger social context which largely determines the way in which they work was in itself an important discovery and it indicated an important addition to political concepts. Society or the community becomes a third factor in the relationship between the individual and government and securing the individuals liberty. Mill's ethics was utilitarian in the sense that he thought of the value of personality not as a metaphysical dogma but as something to be realized in the actual conditions of a free society. A good society must, therefore, be one which both permits freedom and opens up the opportunity for free and satisfying ways of life. For him liberty is not only an individual good but also a social good. Legislation may be a means of creating, increasing and equalizing opportunity, and liberalism can impose no arbitrary limits upon its use.

For John Rawls justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue, likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. Being first virtue of human activities, truth and justice are uncompromising.*6.

A set of principles is required for choosing among the various social arrangements which determine the division of advantages and for underwriting an agreement on the proper distributive shares. These principles are principles of social Justice, they provide a way of assigning rights and duties in the basic institutions of society and they define the appropriate distribution of benefits and burdens of social cooperation.

The justice of a social scheme depends essentially on how fundamental rights and duties are assigned and on the economic opportunities and social conditions in the various sectors of society. The primary subject of the principles of social justice is the basic structure of society, the arrangement of the major social institutions into one scheme of

cooperation .These principles are to govern the assignments of rights and duties in these institutions and they are to determine the appropriate distribution of the benefits and burdens of social life. In his Theory of Justice, Rawls describe two principle of justice:

- 1) First: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.
- 2) Second : social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both
 - (a) Reasonably expected to everyone's advantage, and
 - (b) Attached to all positions and offices open to all. *7

There is a difference between the aspects of social system that define and secure the equal basic liberties and the aspects that specify and establish social and economic inequalities. Important basic liberties are political liberty as right to vote and holding public office, and freedom of speech and assembly, freedom of thought, freedom from psychological oppression, Right to personal property and so on. These liberties are to be equal by the just principle .The second principle applies to the distribution of income and wealth and the design of organizations that make use of differences in authority and responsibilities.*8 Distribution of wealth and income must be to everyone's advantage and positions of authority and responsibilities must be accessible to all. Arrangement of social and economic inequalities must be for everyone's benefit.

All persons having similar abilities and skills should have same chances of development regardless of their place in social system. The prospect of those with same abilities and aspirations should not be affected by their social class.*9.

Rawls theory, because of the issues it tries to tackle, has invited diverse interpretations. It has generated considerable debate and discussions. The first major review by Hampshire rightly proclaims it

to be the "most substantive and most interesting contribution" in the post Second World war period. *10 during a long period, Rawls's theory has undergone subtle alteration and changes. Many of the modifications have been in response to the critical appraisals.*11 However it is commendable, that in course of its revision, none of the central doctrines has been given up. The pervasive influence has been due to its core tenets rather than subsequent amendments.

Rawls exhibits sufficient awareness of rich and diverse heritage that he has inherited from earlier thinkers. He is also conscious of his limitations. The decision to modernise the well established concepts and theories is of fundamental significance in this time of development. Rawls is an influential though a subtle exponent of the Constitutional democratic variant of liberalism. Rawls demonstrates that the liberal doctrine has the proclivity for reform and change thereby indicating its continued relevance and ideological importance. It has the power and capacity to sustain the claims of citizen for greater realisation and fulfilment of liberty, equality, social Justice and democracy. It is now generally recognized that liberal democratic societies contain a well defined tradition of fundamental human freedoms, civil liberties and democratic culture. Liberal democratic practice has become widely acceptable and attractive. It is reformist in nature, progressive in outlook, moderate in recommending unrestrained economic freedoms and social in consciousness.

Rawls attempts to synthesize the libertarian perspective of liberalism with economic egalitarianism. The new liberalism attempts to derive from the moral personality, a defense of a fundamental value of individual freedom and concede a basic right to material goods to further one's ends. The institutions of a well ordered society recognize and duly acknowledge the moral autonomy of each individual, considered to be fundamental to the conception of justice as fairness. Rawls's invocation is to incorporate the maxims of contemporary social welfare into the fundamental principle of political justice.

Rawls proceed on the assumption that basically people are similar. If they appear different, it is due to the circumstances and environment. He realizes that while citizens are free, they are equally capable of enjoying that freedoms .Due to the differences in wealth and power, the differences take place.

Under the difference principle, the compensation would be only once, just to prevent the same family from availing benefits repeatedly. The whole thrust of Rawls is on reciprocal benefits and advantages, where every individual contributes to society and derives benefits in the process without social hostility and public stigma. Rawls advocates constitutional democracy as the political foundation of a well ordered society. The realization of social and political justice requires governments to be elected democratically through fair and free elections. The realization of social and political justice is an essential requirement for a strong democratic environment.

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