

Social Justice: The Route Between Liberty And Equality From The Perspective of John Rawls

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Abstract

Justice is a social virtue. Providing liberty and equality to the common people in a society is one of the very significant and sensitive issues for the social justice in the recent world. Generally, we know liberty means freedom which ensures peoples freedom of speech, freedom of action, freedom of equality and justice before law, freedom to join all socio-political activities etc. in a society. Again, equality means where every people of a society get equal opportunity and chances irrespective of caste, creed, gender, region and religion to live their life happily. Justice is a concept of ethics and law that means people behave in a way that is fair, equal and balanced for everyone. Justice is when someone gets what they fairly deserve. But we have seen in society that people are facing several social injustices like someone are not free to speak, act, someone are very rich and someone are too poor and they cannot afford food or medication etc. on

the basis of caste, creed, gender, religion, region etc. It is a perennial problem of society; it must happen when we try to make some universal principles for well-being of a society. Because there are different kinds of people belong in a society, like, strong, weak, poor, rich etc. In this situation strong people want to make such types of principles which will be benefited for strong people and similarly weak people want to make such types of principles which are benefited for weak people and so on, instead of making those principles which are equally benefited for all and accepted for all. Rawls said that, when we try to make principles for society, in this situation, we have to be in original position and veil of ignorance. Therefore, in this paper I would like to discuss how John Rawls try to give justice on the basis of liberty and equality.

Keywords: Justice, liberty, equality, society, principles, people etc.

Methodology

To Carry out the proposed research work in a systematic manner based on the analytic, conceptual and qualitative method, is taken into account. Again, in this study in some places the descriptive and evaluative methods are used. The whole work too involves library work and different primary and secondary sources including books, periodical journals, articles, internet etc.

Introduction

Generally speaking, liberty means freedom. It suggests to be free from some illegal restriction or domination of society which is forced by the authority on one's own way of life, such as freedom of speech, freedom of conscience,

equality and justice before law, behavior, political and social views etc.

Equality means where every individual gets equal opportunity without caste, creed, region, religion to make their happy life.

In the book, "Two Treatise on Civil Government", written by John Locke, we can know the idea of Social Contract Theory, the Era of the State of Nature and the character or the behavior, nature and the character of the people in the State of Nature. According to Locke, there was no violence and quarrel among the people in the State of Nature. There was a state of peace, harmony, goodwill, mutual assistance, preservation etc. in the State of Nature. People in such state, according to Locke, was kindhearted and they were free from the interference of one another. It was pre-political, but not pre-moral. Every person was treated equally in such state, so that everyone has the equal capability of discovering their life and they equally bound by the law of nature. For Locke, the Law of Nature based on morality and that morality was given by God's command. So that we do not harm one another and interferes one another's life, health, wealth, liberty etc. because we all are belong to God equally.

In simple words justice is a concept on ethics and law that means that people behave in a way that is fair, equal and balanced for everyone. Justice is when someone gets what they fairly deserve, with the interpretation of what then constitutes 'deserving' being impacted upon by numerous fields, with many differing viewpoints and perspectives including the concepts of moral correctness based on ethics,

rationality, law, religion, equity and fairness.

But there are some injustices facing in our society like, human right, climate justice, healthcare, refugee crisis, racial injustice, income gap, gun violence, hunger and food insecurity, poverty, anti-social behaviors, drug abuse, prostitution, economic deprivation, political corruption, gender inequality, education for development and other social discrimination based on caste, creed, gender, region and religion etc. In our society, some peoples are multi-billionaires; others die because they are too poor to afford food or medications. In many society peoples are denied right to free speech to participate in political life, or pursue a career, because of their gender, religion, race or other factors, while their fellow citizens enjoy these rights. These facts seem unjust and this social injustice creates conditions that adversely affects the health of individuals and communities. It denied individuals and groups equal opportunity to have their basic human needs met. Its violets fundamental human right and represents a lake of fairness or equity.

To solve this type of problem Rawls suggest us to do a thought experiment, to do imagine something. Rawls said that this a problem and this problem is realistic problem, it is simple and it will happen when we try to do some collective effort universally. In this universal collective effort, specially, some people want to take minimum benefit to grow or develop themselves, who are powerful and influential people. Rawls said that there is a solution of this problem, He said that the representatives of the society, those, who will select the just and fair principle which are necessary to build a well-ordered society, they will have to forget their status in society, where

they have belonged. It means all the representatives who unite together, they at least don't know their position in society, that means they have forgot their position in society whether they are belong to rich or poor, strong or weak, intelligent or dull section. In this situation they do also don't know that what position they will occupy after governing the society. When this type of condition came in the society is called by Rawls is the original position. And the people who are in this condition, belongs under the veil of ignorance.

Veil of ignorance means that peoples or representatives of the society does not have any knowledge of their social status. In veil of ignorance, the people, who are belong to rich category in society, they themselves have no knowledge regarding their position that they are belong to rich category. So that they will never try to make such types of principles which are only benefited for rich people. The poor people, in this situation they also don't know their position that they are belong to poor family. So that they also will not try to make that type of principle through which only poor people get benefit. Similarly, strong and weak, intelligence and dull people do the same. It is the position where some people together try to make some principles and try to establish justice in society through these principles, but the people or representative who will make the principles they don't know what the position they will occupy in society. The principles which will emerge in this situation will must be just principle, according to John Rawls.

For him original position is a hypothetical situation prior to the beginning of society. Here Rawls emphasis regarding the hypothetical world. Rawls said that original

position has no historical event. It was never happened in historical world that people were in the original position. He just told us to imagine that if we have to decide a just principle, or we have to decide such types of principles which will be just, through which we can govern our society. If we have to decide such type of principle then we have to take ourselves in the original position. Behind the original position our position will have to be the position of the veil of ignorance. Veil means covering and ignorance means lack of information or knowledge. That means the people who are under the original position would have to be lack of some information. Then what are this information, this information is that, people will not know which position they will occupy in society, whether they will be rich or poor, strong or weak, talented or dull etc. When people will not know their position in the veil of ignorance and in this situation if people will decide any principle, will must be just principle, neutral principle, because on that time people will not think of themselves and of their benefit. Because they will not know which position, they will occupy after making the principles. So, that they will always try to make such types of principles which will be fair and equally benefited for all.

It is very important that some thinkers think that veil of ignorance means people will totally unknown and unknown able about everything or they know nothing. But it is false. It means that in this situation people will not just their position is society or which position they will occupy after governing the society. Without these they will know all the basic uncontroversial facts about science and science related things, society, politics, economics, struggle of social life etc.

Under the veil of ignorance, how people will choose the just principle. Because people will not know the position they will occupy in society. In this situation people always will be in a fear that they may born poorest of the poor in society of weakest of the weak. That is why, they would not want to take any risk so, and they would imagine a vast condition for themselves. Through this imagination they will decide the principles of justice. In this way which principle will emerge that must equally fair and beneficial for all. If we follow these systems and rules and make principles for society then all the social injustices like, human rights, healthcare, income gap, hunger and food insecurity, poverty, anti-social behavior, discrimination based on caste, creed, gender, region and religion will be reduced.

Example, suppose there are two friends Ram and Rahim and they have piece of cake and this cake has to be divided into two parts. They both is in a agreement that Ram will cut the cake and Rahim will choose any one part of this cake. Now you have to understand the position of Ram? In this situation, Ram is in a original position and behind the status of veil of ignorance. Because Ram will not know that which piece of cake he will get after cutting the cake. He just has to cut the cake. So, what will Ram thinks in this situation? Here Ram will always try dividing the cake equally into two parts. Because Rahim don't know which part of cake he will get. So, after taking this cake by both there will no difference between them.

Similarly, the people are in original position knows that they don't have any knowledge about their status. So, after governing the society they their position might be in any

categories, either they may be to the poorest of poor, or the weakest of weak. That's why people will make that type of principle which will be fair, benefited and helpful for weakest of weak, poorest of poor people. They don't want to take any risk, because they think that they also may be come into the poorest of poor section. So that, they will make such types of principles which will fair for all and benefit for all.

Two Principles of Justice

Under the original position and veil of ignorance people will choose the two principles of justice. Now what are the two principles of justice and how it helps for governing a fair and just society.

Analysis of these two principles is given below---

1. Liberty principles
2. Rawls divided second principle into two parts---
 - a. Equal opportunity principle
 - b. Difference principle

So, here we can see three principles of justice. In some books, it has been said that Rawls has given three principles of justice. But technically it is false. He has given two principles of justice.

1. According to liberty principle,
 - a. Justice requires maximum equal political liberty to every individual.
 - b. Greatest liberty for myself is compatible with the same amount of liberty for others.

Basic liberty includes,

- 1.Liberty to participate in political activities
- 2.Freedom of thought and expression
3. Right to equal property etc.

Second principles of justice, socio-economic inequalities are just if they attach to position "open to all" is called by Rawls is equal opportunity principle.

Example, Suppose, there are two people in society, one is Meera who is a doctor and another is Rakesh, who is an autorickshaw driver. Meera's income is 20 lakh p.a and Rakesh's income is 80 thousand p.a. The gap between both Meera and Rakesh is 19.2 lakh. According to equal opportunity principle, we could justify this inequality if the opportunity to become a doctor was equally available to both Meera and Rakesh.

If it is right then what can stop Rakesh from becoming a doctor. According Rawls it may have three causes ----

Legal inequality

It is a law prohibiting rickshaw drivers from becoming a doctor.

Birth status

Meera's family background helps her in becoming a doctor. Her family was a very supporting and caring family. She studied in a very expensive school. She was belonging to very rich family. So that she able to completely focus on studies. But Rakesh could not able to completely focus on his studies because of his economic problem.

If these two sources are available in any society two stop Rakesh from becoming a doctor, then this society is an unjust society.

Talent and effort-

This is the only reason to justify for Rakesh to earn less than Meera is his on efforts. Legal inequality and birth status never can be the source of any inequality.

To solve this problem government must eliminate all legal or birth status related inequalities. Government must not form any rule which will stop poor people from becoming doctor. Government should build school where the quality education is given by teacher which is equal to Meera's expensive school. Again, government should provide free of cost coaching class, reservation for economically weaker section. Through this process inequality due to the birth status will be reduced.

Socio-economic inequalities are just if the inequalities are benefited all is called difference principles of justice. The example of Meera and Rakesh is also useful here. The income gap between Rakesh and Meera is justifiable if this gap helps Rakesh to promote himself and if Meera's extra income will benefit people like Rakesh and least advantaged people in society. Now what will be the role of government here. Here the government will tax Meera's income, collect tax and provide benefit to list poor people like Rakesh. In these processes we could make a fair and justifiable society where everyone should be treated, benefited equally and there should not be any kind of social discrimination.

Conclusion

After analysis all of the above problems, in conclusion I must acknowledge that I find his theory very initiative. I still feel that he gives a good explanation of how principles of justice can be arrived at in order to have a fair and just society by providing liberty and equality to the common people. By using the veil of ignorance, we can be erasing individual preference in order to get at what is really best for everyone. For me not only are his principles of justice justifiable by utility,

his very reasoning can be said to be utilitarian. The original position is designed to be a fair and impartial point of view that is to be adopted in our reasoning about fundamental principles of justice. In taking up this point of view we are to imagine ourselves in the position of free and equal persons who jointly agree upon and commit themselves to principles of social and political justice. At the time of making principles for society and if we follow all the rules of original position and veil of ignorance then that principle will be just principle and through that principle every people of the society will get benefit equally what they deserve. This theory of justice is directly linked with social equality. It gives safeguards from any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, gender, religion, region etc. and from all the social problems I have mentioned above., here the status of all groups in society should be the same. This social justice is based on such values or principles which aim is to minimize the inequity in the society and create an environment for fair equality of opportunity for all which enable all humans to live with dignity.

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