



SOCIAL JUSTICE: AN ELUSIVE DREAM FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED AND MINORITIES IN INDIA

* Mr. Rajesh Ingle

* Master of Social Work, LL.B(II), NET-UGC), 102, Newa Garden, Phase-2, Sector-20/A, Near Knowledge Park, Patni Road, Airoli, Navi Mumbai-400708

Abstract:

This paper comprises insights from the field and intellectual discussions with the stakeholders concerned in society. Poverty alleviation programmes and social justice laws are announced and they exist for decades now but the condition of the underprivileged communities still far away from the actual seeds of the development process. The challenges are distinct and deeply rooted in our social systems. The Social Justice values remains a dream for today, this paper elaborates this analysis with certain insights and suggestions from the field.

Keywords: Social Justice, Indian Economy, Underprivileged, Indian Constitution, Affirmative Action, Representation, Economic Development, Equality, Government

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“True generosity consists exactly in trying to eradicate the forces that feed fake charity,” says the author. Paulo Freire is a Brazilian philosopher.

Introduction:

Paulo Freire's sentence above clearly expresses the need of attending to the "main cause" rather than just the symptoms. Even in modern India, where we encounter numerous examples of prejudice and institutional neglect by the state, social justice remains a faraway goal. The Indian Constitution contains numerous Fundamental Rights provisions that are similar to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and other socio-cultural treaties that India has accepted.

For the last seven decades, the situation for socially disadvantaged people has remained unchanged. Rather, the digital and LPG (Liberalisation, Privatisation, and Globalisation) era has exacerbated the plight of

disadvantaged populations in India, including lower caste groups, tribals, and minorities.

To address concerns of prejudice and bring equality among these disadvantaged classes, the Indian government has formed social initiatives, departments, and budgetary measures. The results of these policies and programmes are insufficient and unsatisfactory.

International Perspectives on Social Justice:

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) stress equality of opportunity and lowering inequality of results, the elimination of discrimination in law, policy, and social practise, and socioeconomic inclusion of all people at the global level, all under the banner aim of "leaving no one behind." "Regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status," implies "regardless of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status" (SDG 10.2). However, there is no reference of caste.



Since 2009, the United Nations has observed 'World Day of Social Justice' (WDSJ) on February 20. The objective is to take stock of the situation of injustice around the world and to urge for long-term solutions. Several international human rights organisations claim that caste discrimination affects over 260 million people worldwide, that caste is "a fundamental determinant [of] social exclusion and development", and that caste affects roughly 20–25 percent of the world's population – including (but not limited to) the peasantry. They've fought for caste to be included in progress indicators and data disaggregation, and they've issued shadow reports on caste inequities that aren't reported in national SDG reports.

India's History of Social Injustice:

For millennia, India has survived as a nation with restricted communities divided by caste, faith, and language. Work was divided and each person was assigned a duty from birth, and occupational heredity was a major factor in the economics of both urban and rural life. Mobility of occupation or caste was restricted, and it was uncommon to see someone abandoning his ancestors' occupation in order to pursue his or her own path.

The government of independent India was hesitant to utilise caste as a predictor of poverty and inequality, and social classifications employed in colonial administration had no place in post-independence censuses; so, caste categories were dropped from post-independence national censuses. The Indian Constitution, which enshrined equality in its directive principles, also recognised historical disadvantage, providing special protection and benefits to a list (or schedule) of castes (first drawn up by the British in 1936) whose "extreme backwardness" arose "out of the traditional practise of untouchability" by presidential order.

The Indian State, which supplies the crucial inputs for inclusive policies, must look inward to address the

practises of structural violence inherent in institutions +of governance. Although caste-based discrimination was outlawed in India in 1955, centuries-old attitudes continue, and lower-caste groups such as Dalits are among the most disenfranchised. It is clear that caste continues to play a significant role in the dynamics of India's social and political interactions.

As a democratic country, India's legislature and elected political leadership are constantly enacting and updating progressive legislation and programmes. After independence, India has been on a long road that has resulted in the creation of a dual society that has lasted more than seven decades.

Today's Situation:

Although poverty reduction programmes have been successful, there are still gaps in programme implementation in some regions, such as prisons and institutions, as well as in distant places. The right to justice in all spheres of life is critical to the development of a just society.

In the guise of development, the majority of poor individuals are presently confronted with discrimination, intolerance, and the threat of eviction. In the face of a difficult political environment for these and other underprivileged people, the Indian government must present itself as a beacon.

John Rawls identifies two "principles of justice" in his essay "A Theory of Justice." First, "each person shall have an equal right to the most comprehensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all"; "Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings concept, and (b) connected to offices and posts open to all under fair equality of opportunity," says the second paragraph.

Existing practises have been perpetuated and deepened by the way the legal and criminal justice systems operate. This observation is supported by the fact that



Adivasis, Dalits, and Muslims are overrepresented in Indian prisons.

A sense of alienation pervades the design of public policies and accompanying institutional arrangements, resulting in structural inequities and violence, as well as poor implementation of existing programs/schemes and insufficient budgetary allocation.

Legal aid is defined as a court right under the Indian Constitution (article 32) and the Indian Penal Code (section 320), and there have been a number of legal judgments on the subject, but the problem has not been settled. Thousands of people are languishing in prisons and have lost the opportunity to live their lives as free citizens.

The people who are left behind have the following characteristics:

- A lack of awareness,
- A lack of resources and social support, and
- Belonging to distinct social - caste groupings.

The community must not forget its civil rights heritage and must continue to struggle for all members of our community's human rights.

Hypotheses and areas to investigate:

- I. Why aren't social justice programmes reaching out to the poor and disadvantaged? What are the various implementation roadblocks?
- II. Are these implementation hurdles due to a lack of financial allocation or infrastructure deficiencies?
- III. Are there any additional variables that contribute to this process and unhappiness, which is the point of this research and investigation beyond the societal assumptions listed above?
- IV. The law has been passed, but the supporting regulations, processes, and procedures are unclear, and the essential financial, manpower, and infrastructure support is lacking.
- V. The programme itself is riddled with flaws and ambiguities. Some people take advantage of the programme, while the really needy go unnoticed.

VI. There is no mechanism for transparency, accountability, or monitoring systems to follow the scheme's or program's real implementation at every stage.

VII. The auditing apparatus is ineffective or sluggish.

VIII. The right to information is a misnomer, as it only allows for superficial difficulties and does not provide assistance in fundamental areas.

IX. The implementing machineries are not given proper orientation, target, or supporting systems. The public is completely unaware of the programme or scheme. The assigned strategy, programme, has a small / insignificant budget.

Government involvement is a possibility:

- The Union Government should work with local grassroots organisations to assist anti-bullying initiatives that spread caste prejudice through the use of social media in colleges and communities.
- Work with local businesses to develop seasonal enrichment programmes and co-op possibilities for students and unemployed youngsters from underserved socioeconomic groups.
- Collaborate with the Department of Community Health to give medically accurate health education to kids and help them avoid becoming addicted, with an emphasis on the most disadvantaged groups.
- Develop a "Student Success Plan" in collaboration with the University Grant Commission and other academic and professional groups.

Research Context:

The research will be carried out in a few selected areas/districts as a comparison district between India's socio-ecologically advanced and impoverished regions. It could be the MMRDA (Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority) region or the Mumbai region, which includes the economic capital of India and its surrounding areas, such as Mumbai, Thane, and Palghar, and will be compared to less advantaged regions, such as Osmanabad, Jalna,

and Yavatmal districts, as defined by the HDI (Human Development Index).

Investigate the following research questions:

1. Is there a structure in place to gather public input, opinions, and ideas in order to create and implement the programs/schemes?
2. Is there any openness in how the programme informs the needy in a timely manner? (What is the budget for such government advertising equipment, and what is the staff's opinion/experience with the awareness budget and technical support? Are there any upgrades or adjustments in this process of transforming social systems, such as social media?)
3. Will there be any public programmes following LPG for better understanding among the most marginalised?
4. Does the programme or system have any flaws? What is the root of the problem? Are they as a result of human error or technical difficulties?
5. Are the government's programmes just for show or are they theoretical concepts? Is the government tracking the implementation of its policies and programmes in a systematic way, with a time-bound outcome approach and specified accountability for non-implementation?

Methods of investigation:

The research will take the form of analytical research with field and participant observation, document and secondary data analysis. Document analysis is especially useful in qualitative case studies—in-depth investigations that produce detailed descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organisation, or programme. Non-technical literature like as reports and internal correspondence can provide empirical data for case studies.

Social organisations, government departments, and other think tanks will be surveyed. Document analysis is especially useful in qualitative case studies, which are in-depth investigations that produce detailed

accounts of social events covered in the media. Document analysis from many sources, including government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in such work, would be a prominent source. Field visits to social service organisations, study of their service delivery reports, focus group conversations with stakeholders, and evaluation of programmes with focus group discussions to identify obstacles in implementation and seek solutions to improve service delivery and quality.

Units of Study: At the federal / central level and state level, many government departments such as Law & Judiciary, Social Justice, Women & Children are mostly active. These departments create money and implementing units, which operate at the local, district, state, and federal levels.

NGOs and community groups: There are advocacy organisations and service delivery organisations that aid the poor. It will be critical to investigate their experiences and responses.

Significance of Research:

The importance of this study is that caste discrimination is never openly debated or acknowledged by the Indian government in international forums. After seven decades of freedom, a huge number of outcasts still live on the outskirts of India. A country with a few billionaires also has a large number of people living in poverty, starving for a single meal. They have had no impact on technological advancement or government policies. Through field inputs and programme analysis, it is critical to investigate the gaps and constraints in the policy to service delivery process in order to identify the reasons and concerns.

Conclusion:

As previously stated, social justice is a state obligation that should not be referred to as a gift or charity. Although the concept of social justice is an age-old one, it is mentioned in the Magna Carta of 1215, the way we



understand it now is a late marvel. The goal should be to deliver hassle-free and convenient justice to society's weaker sectors and minorities, particularly women, children, and persons from underprivileged backgrounds. As a result, social justice works to ensure that the constitutional promise is kept in letter and spirit, and that equal justice is provided to the oppressed and weaker members of society.

Despite the fact that social justice has long been considered a necessary component of the rule of law. Much has been done in this area during the last seventy years, but unfortunately, the efforts have not yielded the expected results. In India, the social justice programme has a long way to go. The government, courts, and social justice ministries are all working to realise the constitutional makers' ambition of providing high-quality programmes and aid to India's most remote villages, but there is still more to be done. The concept of social justice and equality is not a myth, but its effective implementation may be, but if every talented person contributes to this purpose, the founding fathers' ambition will be realised sooner rather than later.

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