



Evolutionary Dynamics: Unravelling the Shifting Landscape of Social Justice in India

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has profoundly impacted all aspects of human life, significantly shaping social structures. It operates in an unequal and biased manner, creating a divide between the affluent and the impoverished, driven by a neo-liberal economy that emphasizes liberalization, privatization, and globalization. This economic model has concentrated resources in the hands of a few, while many remain trapped in poverty. In this system, humans are viewed as commodities in the production process, and the principle of "survival of the fittest" dominates. Globalization has significantly limited the state's ability to provide social welfare and justice for underprivileged groups, even though historically the state has been a significant force in providing social justice. The foundation of socialist society has been altered by the advent of free trade. Social justice, as a philosophy, remains crucial in shaping the social experiences of many marginalized communities worldwide.

Keywords: Social welfare, globalization, neo-liberal economy, socialist society, liberty, state, justice

1. INTRODUCTION

The term 'Social-Justice' combines 'social,' which pertains to all individuals within society, and 'justice,' which relates to freedom, fairness, and entitlements. Social justice aims to ensure freedom, fairness, and rights for all members of society, facilitating their fullest potential. However, implementing 'social justice' in practice remains challenging. Ambedkar's concept of justice highlights human equality, fair resource allocation, and eliminating societal discrimination. Social justice ensures equal opportunities for all to develop their personalities, free from discrimination based on caste, gender, or race. It is connected to rights and social equality, both of which are dependent on rights and economic equality.

Social justice requires a society that does not exploit individuals for others' benefit and where a few do not gain at the expense of many. It involves ensuring every member of society has access to all benefits and privileges, focusing on eliminating structural inequalities that negatively impact certain groups. The government must address injustices caused by one group's dominance over another.

2. OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

1. Examine the historical evolution of social justice movements and policies in India since independence.

2. Analyze the changing dynamics and priorities of social justice initiatives over time, including shifts in focus on different marginalized communities (e.g. caste, gender, religion, and region).
3. Identify persistent challenges, emerging issues, and potential strategies for achieving substantive and sustainable social justice outcomes in India's diverse and complex societal landscape.
4. Assess the impact of globalization, technological advancements, and changing cultural norms on the conceptualization and pursuit of social justice ideals in India.

3. THE VISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Indian Constitution's core principles are outlined in its Preamble, stating that India is a socialist secular democratic republic, emphasizing political, social, and economic justice, along with liberty, equality, and fraternity. Social and economic justice is prioritized over political justice, suggesting that the Constitution views them as fundamental. The Constitution's framers likely envisioned a society of social equity, free from discrimination based on caste, religion, race, gender, or nationality. During the Constituent Assembly debates, opinions varied on achieving social change through political democracy and individual liberty versus needing economic democracy. The Fundamental Rights safeguard individuals' political and civil rights, while the Directive Principles of State Policy aim to achieve socio-economic rights over time.

Granville Austin emphasized the Directive Principles' role in social transformation, laying the groundwork for a socialist society enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its 42nd amendment. The Constitution includes specific provisions to promote equality for marginalized groups, ensuring equal opportunities for all.

4. INDIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL VISION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE INCLUDES:

1. The promotion of the equal liberty principle through the provision of political and socioeconomic rights through the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy.

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2. Adopting a model of socioeconomic development that creates equal opportunities and lessens the gap between the rich and the poor, so promoting the idea of just equality of opportunity.
3. Applying the Difference Principle to specific protections and affirmative action for underprivileged groups in society.

A Crisis of Social Transformation

Post-independence, India made notable progress, breaking from its past and achieving significant milestones. Economic expansion is essential for social transformation, but India has struggled to convert this growth into prosperity for all. Persistent issues like poverty, deprivation, exclusion, corruption, and extremism indicate incomplete development and social change.

The current middle-class focus on personal financial gain and consumption conflicts with supporting those in needs. Development relies not only on capital but also on human resources. Emphasizing high growth rates in income and sectors like industry, agriculture, and trade without addressing social aspects such as health, education, and the environment will not lead to sustainable development. Socio-economic changes and modern communication systems have transformed societal values and principles.

Technology, including information and communications, has driven consumerism and materialism, leading to increased self-assertion and higher expectations, weakening community influence. India is facing a national governance crisis, as indicated by low ratings in productivity, transparency, and governance. Necessary administrative and bureaucratic reforms, in addition to economic reforms, are crucial. Making the removal of corruption in public offices and government departments a priority is essential. Aspects like quality of life, human values, moral values, discipline, integrity, and honesty play a role in determining one's commitment to the nation and public service. Ineffective corporate governance is underscored by prevalent corporate misconduct.

Improving public audit accountability, enhancing local self-government, promoting e-governance, and fostering public-private partnerships with NGOs are crucial for good governance and civil society. Achieving social change in India requires effective legislative skills, implementation efforts, a fair judiciary, prioritizing national interests, collaboration with industries, administrative social responsibilities, and comprehensive reforms across governance levels. Addressing job prospects, resource access, farming development, wages, geographic isolation, and land reforms is essential to counter extremism. Reducing inequalities is key to citizens' overall development, as equality is fundamental to democratic governance.

India's development, particularly in social areas, has been

average. Economic growth has improved, but high illiteracy rates, healthcare backwardness, severe social inequalities, and other limitations hinder participation in the growth process. Government negligence and public inaction contribute to these challenges.

The current situation of economic justice and social injustice

Growing income and wealth inequalities, the close link between socio-economic status and access to healthcare and education, and decreased citizen involvement in public matters indicate a decline in social justice prioritization by governments. Despite appearing more democratic, societies remain plutocratic and elitist. Global culture focused on consumption, competition, and greed has eroded traditional social inequalities and citizen rights. However, there is an increasing belief that society should reward individuals based on abilities and hard work. Justice, fairness, and freedom are interconnected, supporting economic activity and fair compensation.

Debates on globalization's societal effects are contentious, with most analyses falling between two extremes.

5. CONCLUSION

In the era of globalization, liberalization, and privatization, social justice has become more crucial. Multinational companies prioritize merit over social justice, often rejecting the latter. To ensure social justice for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women in India, MNCs must operate within constitutional guidelines. The state should establish rules, regulations, and procedures to uphold social justice; otherwise, it remains theoretical.

Economic changes since the NEP implementation necessitate a shift in focus to uphold individual rights and constitutional objectives like socialism, equality, and justice. The government struggles to uphold economic rights and advance development due to limitations from major international organizations and internal challenges. A market-based economy linked to the global market, driven by private businesses, involves inviting multinational investments, privatizing state-owned companies, removing regulations, promoting competition, and relaxing fiscal and monetary policies. While fostering innovation and creativity, these policies can lead to monopoly and uneven development, as private investments prioritize profit over public benefit. The establishment of the World Trade Organization and intellectual property rights advancements will impact domestic industries previously protected from external competition.

The state's economic role must be defined through constitutional regulation, outlining its responsibilities. While reducing the state's paternalistic involvement, it must still ensure citizens' welfare by guaranteeing fundamental rights. Principles from directive policies should be incorporated into fundamental rights, including healthcare, jobs, education, and

legal assistance. In a social market economy, the state sets rules and ensures business autonomy, influencing the economy through social and economic planning, monetary and fiscal measures, and public power. The state also fosters global economic relationships.

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