

Social Justice and Significance of Interfaith Studies

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ABSTRACT

Social justice refers to a diplomatic, legislative, and esoteric theory that emphasizes the concept of equity in the relationship between individuals in society and equal avenues to wealth, opulence, opportunities, elbow room, and social privileges. This article aims to highlight the above-mentioned objectives. Moreover, it will be elaborated in this article that the role of religion is influential in casting notions of social impartiality, despotism, subjugation, and emancipation. Furthermore, it will be explained in this article that according to Islamic traditions, injustice is explained as one of the abysmal forms of evil in the light of the Quran and Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), that justice and neutrality should not be predicated to a specific group of people, religious belief, race, caste, creed, or faith it should be done with each creation of God. Examples will also be given from prominent non-revelational religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism. For example in Zoroastrianism, Humans are the unique creation of God specially designed for the purpose of fighting against heinous acts, in Buddhism, the concept of social justice includes that the Buddhist is interdict to harm any specie, as succinctly captured in the five precepts of morality including not to perpetrate murder, not to abduct, not to commit a sexual transgression, not to lie, and not to partake of intoxicating drinks or drugs and finally its comparison will be done with the Islamic Traditions that how Islam stands as an ambassador religion to safeguard the rights of the entire community and a staunch icon of religion in this interfaith religion's dialogue. Concluding to the topic it will be justified that the concept of social justice prevails in each religion, though it is implemented practically or not is another topic of debate. But social justice is the need of the hour to safeguard this planet from disaster. All human beings are born with free will and have equal social rights.

Keywords: Social Justice, esoteric theory, Practically Implemented.

Introduction

Since the dawn of humanity, the different revolutionary movements for social justice continue till today. These movements pass through different phases of rising and decline and in different eras, some eminent personalities symbolize a stalwart icon of social justice. ¹ During the immediate post-war period, when the field of social justice emerges justice findings played an

important role in the cognitive revolution within social psychology.¹ Social justice is justice in terms of the equal administration of facilities regarding health, education, etc, and equal opportunities in every domain of life to flourish in society. Social equity seeks solutions to disparity, and advocates for the egalitarian distribution of assets within a community and state so that every single entity has the same opportunities and liberation. The ideology of social justice is often referred to as the process of ensuring that the individual will fulfill their societal duties and will get their rights in return. This pedagogy also upholds the philosophy that social fairness within the society both comprehends honor and values human rights and as well as recognizes the decorum of every mankind. In contemporary campaigns for social justice, awareness has been created about the dissolution of obstacles in the way of social mobility, the creation of a safety web, and a roadway toward economic justice.²

Islam is the complete code of life, viability, subsistence, and the approach with greater emphasis on the future course of action. It doesn't just comprehend the need how to run the state but also emphasizes the need for the execution of justice in the right sense and at right time. It asserts greater importance on achieving peace through the means of social justice for the inhabitants of the globe.³ Islam is the ambassador religion of justice and promotes peace in society. The teachings of the Quran and Sunnah not only make the person a God-fearing man but also teaches him the lesson to be kind, fulfill the basic needs of the inferior and mediocre of society, to cooperate with the people to remove their hitches and obstacles. This is the only way a Muslim can be pious, righteous, and a benefactor in its real essence.⁴ It is stated in Holy Quran

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ :

“Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded.”

Religions have a vivacious role in molding ideas of social justice and legitimacy, and in responding to the perceptions of injustice and illegitimacy via passively recognizing human suffering, pain, and injustice.⁶ Religions have also significantly come up with the development

of more just, humane, and ecologically responsible societies.¹ The concept of social justice prevails in all religions. In Hinduism, the peculiarity which distinguishes one individual from another is their character shaped by everyday behavior. In Hinduism all beings like animals, birds, and humans are created equally so, should be treated equally.² In Sikhism, a closer religion to Hinduism, their holy books Guru Granth is the torch bearer of universal justice. The holy scripture promotes the concept of equity of all beings and Sikh believers must deal with all the individuals on the globe with feelings of brotherhood and fraternity.³

In Buddhism, the concept of social justice also prevails, and social justice includes that the Buddhist is interdicted to harm any other entity. Buddhists believe in equanimity and tranquility. This means an equal attitude toward every individual in society.⁴ Zoroastrianism also speaks of social justice and the belief in human rights and social justice flows continuously. Humans should care for other human beings and the entire entities of the whole universe because every single species is the masterpiece of God's creation.⁵

Types of Social Justice

There are three types of Social Justice which include:

- 1. Distributive:** This type of social justice explains that a distributive system on the foundations of justice and harmony should be formulated in the society and according to this system benefits, advantages and burdens should be equally and fairly distributed to attain impartiality.
- 2. Compensatory:** This type of social justice includes temporary justice to the individuals of the society and does not form the system of supreme social justice. According to this ideology, people must fairly restore to an individual who has lost something or been victimized by someone. In other words, compensation must be provided by the society members to the victimized one for fair justice in society.
- 3. Retributive Justice:** This system speaks of punishing and condemning people for their heinous acts, in other words, the implementation of punishments for those who commit wrong deeds, consequently, to have fairness to the rest of society members is the prime purpose of this system.⁶



Significance of Social Justice and Interfaith Studies

One of the critical elements of a culture of peace is social justice. Perception of injustice leads to turmoil, disaster, conflict, civil unrest, and war. Maximizing the potential of religions to contribute to peace and minimize those that procreate war requires a deep understanding of cultural information which will ultimately result in social justice in society.¹ In the conditions of the modern process of Globalization, we have become closer to each other, and due to this advancement, the dialogue between different religions is also necessary to create peace in society via social justice. A more peaceful world entails many dimensions, better inter-religious communication is not the only condition necessary for peace, it is an essential ingredient for effective communication and betterment of the society.² The need for justice and social coordination is universal among all people and societies. However widespread variations occur in how different societies coordinate and organize themselves to resolve these problems. As a result, these variations give rise to variations in moral codes and concepts, and perceptions of justice and injustice. But it is evident from the observations that all the religions that prevailed in the societies are ambassadors of social justice and peace. Because this is the only corridor through which this planet will be a better place to live on it.³

Concept of Social Justice in Hinduism

Hinduism teaches that every human being has the essence of Hinduism in him. According to Hinduism the trait which makes someone striking among others is the character building of a person. The social ethics of Hinduism emphasizes that every individual must perform his duties and obligation, according to his social position which is determined by his relationship with other citizens. Hindus adhere to the teachings of goodness (dharma), and the norms of social behavior are the foundation that produces the social emotions which create social awareness among human beings. This also fosters moral and spiritual bonds in social relationships which in return strengthen the social relationship and thereby create happiness in public life via social justice.⁴ To create social justice, it is necessary to develop noble actions that reflect the atmosphere of kinship and cooperation. In the Sigalavada Sutta, the Hindu Gautama has outlined the standards for Hindus to carry out associations with fellow human beings of different groups, positions, and roles in society for justice. The attitude of helping others in need so that they can stand on their own, an attitude to like work, and respect for the work of

others are fostered, be prepared to sacrifice anything and act in a perfect union which helps achieve prosperity and justice in the society is being manifested in Hinduism.¹

Sectarianism is an obstacle to social justice in Hinduism

The concept of reincarnation segregates Hindu society into various sects and classes. This includes Brahman, Kshatriya, Vesh, and Shudra. As a result of this segregation with Brahman at the top and Shudar at the bottom, the Hindu society is deteriorated, and the concept of social justice disseminate. This injustice leaves a detrimental effect on society:

- Individuals of one sect cannot marry a person of another sect.
- Higher Rank Hindus are prohibited to eat from the residences of lower-rank Hindus.
- If an individual from a higher rank is forced to talk to or eat from a lower rank Hindu, he then must purify himself from different religious spiritual acts.
- If a person does not follow the rules of sects he will be emitted from the sect, and he does not have any posting and dignity in the society.²
- In Hinduism the religious rights of the minorities are also violated for Shudars it is prohibited to listen to their religious book “Vaid”.
- The Brahmans have the right only to lead the society, they cannot be physically punished for the commitment of crime, taxes cannot be imposed on them, and if they find any treasure, they are not impelled to return it to the government and can consider it as their personal asset, taking the life of any Brahman is the major sin in the society, they are awarded special privileges among the rest of people in public places, they cannot be challenged in the court by any shudar. This form of social injustice in Hinduism results in turmoil and destruction in society. The concept of social justice is present in their religious books but not practiced in an actual manner in society.³

Due to this caste and creed system of Hinduism, the Hindu society is facing problems and turbulence and it is difficult to understand the religion and reaching to any conclusion that either system of social justice prevails in Hinduism or not.⁴

The notion of Social Justice in Buddhism

The concept of social justice is prevalent in the teachings of Siddharta Budha the founder of Buddhism. The notion of justice in Tripitaka, the Buddhist canon comprises two important elements:

- ❖ Every individual should have an equal approach to all the basic liberties which should be homogeneous to the set of liberties of others.
- ❖ Social and economic disbalances are to be managed in an orderly way so that everyone should take benefit from all of them in a homogeneous manner and should be easily accessible for all.¹

In Buddhism, all living entities should be treated as a friend. This is the concept most prevalent in their belief. The teachings of Buddha to Brahmans regarding their superiority are that no one is born superior by birth, it is the distinctive good virtues that made a man superior². In other words, there is no racial discrimination in society according to Buddha. The parents should perform their social duties in the upbringing of their children and in return, the children should feed their parents when they will be old. Students should respect their teachers and the teacher in return should love their students. All individuals should get equal opportunities for social rights and facilities like medical facilities, education, and residential and food facilities. This is a dynamic example of social justice in which all entities are performing their duties within their limitations.³

The above analysis shows that the concept of justice is prevailing in Buddhist texts. The Buddha does not deny the caste system totally, but he declares the nature of Dharma showing how Dharma also covers the concept of justice, especially the equal right to develop wisdom in a discriminatory society. Opting for these teachings, social justice can be established in society according to Buddhism.⁴

The conception of Social Justice in Zoroastrianism

Among the great religions of the world, Zoroastrianism is among the prevalent religion with distinctive characteristics. The religious book of Zoroastrianism is Avesta. From the old sculptures of Zoroastrianism, it is evident that the societal system consists of segregation with a divide-and-rule policy among farmers, breeders, and the warriors' tribes. These warriors were the enemies of these farmers and their animals. According to Zoroastrians, these warriors belong to the satanic faith. The Zoroaster himself condemns these warriors and declared them the followers of Satan. Religion speaks of having good thoughts, speaking good words, and performing good acts to the other members of the society too in cooperate social justice²⁶. In Zoroastrianism, the cultivation of land and breeding animals is a profound profession and a

way for the betterment of the society, so that the supply of food and shelter should be provided in vast amounts to all the inhabitants of the society without any discrimination, a roadway to social justice. Looking down deep into the teachings of Avesta it is also evident that inter-family marriages were allowed in this religion which is the complete violence of human rights according to the Charter of Humanity culminating in social justice²⁷. Religion is the great ambassador of conducting social welfare in society without any discrimination and emphasizes the due payment of rights and duties in Marital life. It is evident that a society unit forms a family cell that came into being because of marriage. So, if the family unit is strong so as the society cell will be, ultimately resulting in social justice in the society²⁸.

Islamic Impression of Social Justice and its Importance in Interfaith Relationships

The purpose of the establishment of an Islamic state is to make all the individuals of the state abide by the rules and commandments of Allah Almighty and paved the way for the social and economic justice and development of the society. The Islamic state is established to proclaim the institute of social justice in society. According to the Islamic perception, the notion of social justice is regarded as a sacred Amanah. Social equilibrium is not only considered vital for the proper functioning of the state but an essential imperative for its development. The dynamic ideas of social fairness have taken centuries to trigger the consciousness of the world community and the process is still on its way. But it is the hallmark of Islam and Prophetic excellence that culminate these notions to the ignorant, unlettered, remorseless Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula.²⁹ as stated in the Quran.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ

“O! you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice”

In the teachings of Hadith, the concept of social justice also prevails. In the last sermon of Hijaa tul Wida the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H clearly mentioned that there is no racial discrimination between white and black people, and social justice should be prevailed in the society. This sermon is the greatest charter of humanity.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! إِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ أَبَاكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَالْإِلَاحُ فَضْلٌ لِعَرَبِيٍّ عَلَى عَجْمِيٍّ وَلَا عَجْمِيٍّ عَلَى عَرَبِيٍّ وَلَا أَحْمَرٌ عَلَى أَسْوَدٍ وَلَا أَسْوَدٌ عَلَى أَحْمَرٍ إِلَّا بِالْتَّقْوَى (إِنْ أَكْرَمَكُمْ

عند الله اتقواكم) سلسلة احاديث صحيح ترمذ الباني: 2700

“All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also, a White has no superiority over a Black nor a Black has any superiority over a White except by piety and good action.”

It is the prime duty of an Islamic state to promote social justice in society by protection of certain rights.

- Protection of Life and Wealth
- Protection of honor and dignity of the individuals.
- Protection of self-independence
- Protection of personal assets and property.
- Protection of faith and believe³¹

Discussion and Conclusion

From the above study, it is evident that the concept of social justice is present in one or another way in different religions of the world. In Hinduism, though the system of social justice is present in its religious sculpture, it is not implemented in its real system in society. The caste and creed systems are the main obstacle and hindrances to the establishment of social justice in society. In Buddhism also the caste system is dominant and Sidharat Buddha does not deny this system, but this religion focuses on the feelings of friendship among all the living entities. A culture of war is prohibited in this religion to promote social justice. The concept of social justice includes that the Buddhist is interdict to harm others or to harm the self, as succinctly captured in the five precepts of morality including not to perpetrate murder, not to abduct, not to commit a sexual transgression, not to lie, and not to partake of intoxicating drinks or drugs. In Zoroastrianism, Humans are individually created as fellow workers (hamkars) of God in the fight against evil. Concluding the topic, religion Islam is the ambassador of Human Rights. The Holy Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H. establishes a universal system of social justice in the society of Barbarin Arabs. He also made pledges with non-Muslim territories to strengthen the bond of interfaith relationships. These pledges play a significant role in the foreign policy of the Islamic state³². So,

- Islam emphasizes the process of inter-faith dialogue to promote peace and harmony in society.
- Social justice can prevail in society by creating awareness among the masses about their rights and duties.
- The teachings of the Quran and Sunnah serve as a catalyst to promote social justice in society.
- Social media can play a significant role in creating awareness among people about social justice via inter-faith dialogue.

- The culture of tolerance can be promulgated in society by discouraging sectarianism and the caste system.
- Respect for humanity is the key to social justice which can only be developed via Allah's fear and surveillance.

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