

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind



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Justice is Impossible without Equality

Human beings have evolved in various aspects of their lives. Particularly, in their social and political lives they have made great strides and they have reached to today's modern democratic system. This system has been able to satisfy their social and political needs to certain extent; however, certain important considerations are still overlooked. One of the main issues that still remain unattended pertains to justice and equal rights for all the people of the society alike. There are many people in the world who are deprived of even their basic human rights; while, the justice system seems incapable of providing them those rights.

One of the basic reasons that human beings are not able to develop justice and provide equal rights to every human being is the lack of equality. Since, the golden rule of equality has been forgotten, and it has been attributed to a particular system, the foundations for justice have not been laid appropriately and, therefore, human beings saunter in search of justice and equal rights uselessly.

Equality is undoubtedly an important prerequisite to justice and it is basically equality that guarantees equal rights to all the citizens living in a state. Equality implies the following things. First, all persons should be provided with adequate opportunities for the development of the personality.

Second, no class or caste or group enjoys special privileges which are not available to other members of the society. Third, there should not be any discrimination among members of society and if there is any discrimination it should be on reasonable grounds. Thus, it does not prevent special treatment of handicapped and backward persons so that they can be brought at par with others. Fourth, rights are equally distributed among all and all have equal access to opportunities leading to authority.

The concept of equality is not basically very old, though we get some tracers of the concept in the writing of the Stoics as well as the Romans. It was only in the latter half of the eighteenth century that the concept gained popularity. The French Revolution of 1789 was largely a protest against the prevailing inequalities and the Revolutionaries adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man (1789) asserting, "Men are born and always continue to be free and equal in respect of their rights." But, it was only in the present century that effort was made to eliminate inequalities in the economic and social sphere and necessary laws were enacted to protect the interests of the workers. It was emphasized that equality in the economic sphere was more important than equality in the civil and political spheres.

It was asserted that political liberty without economic equality was a myth. The decline of imperialism and colonialism and the emergence of a large number of independent states in Asia, Africa and Latin America gave a further impetus to the principle of equality. All the states began to be treated as equals at the international levels irrespective of their size, resources and importance.

The war against racial discrimination and the introduction of universal franchise further strengthened the doctrine of equality. Most of the modern states devoted great attention to the improvement of economic lot of the deprived ones to bring about economic equality. Yet, there are serious matters to be resolved in this regard.

According to modern political principles, a state should make sure that the citizens have (1) Civil Equality - Equality of all before law, (2) Political Equality - Equal rights to participate in the affairs of the state, (3) Social Equality - No discrimination among citizens on the basis of social status, caste, color, creed, rank, etc., (4) Economic Equality - Equality in the opportunities to have sound economy. Unfortunately, these equalities are not guaranteed in many countries of the world and we have discontentment among the people.

As a matter of fact, political equality can never be achieved unless it is accompanied with economic equality. Without economic equality, political power and authority is limited to the elite. It is difficult to imagine how without economic equality political authority can reach to the common people and they are able to play any role in it. It is important to remember that economic equality does not imply that there should be equal distribution of wealth, because this sort of equality is incapable of realization.

On the other hand, it means that there should not be concentration of wealth in few hands only and certain minimum standards of income should be assured to all before anyone can be allowed to have more. In other words, the basic needs of all should be met before some people are permitted to lead a luxurious life. Unfortunately, these concepts are being neglected in today's world and we see thousands who suffer because of inequality and discrimination.



Human Dignity - The Cornerstone of Human Rights

By Hujjatullah Zia

Recognition of the "inherent dignity" of mankind "is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" and all members of human family are equal in dignity and rights regardless of their religious, racial, or sexual backgrounds. The equal and inalienable rights of human beings originate from their inherent dignity. That is to say, human dignity is known as the basis of human rights in "The Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment".

Human dignity is inviolable and no individual or state is allowed to humiliate one through torturing or discriminating them. The principles of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) seek to protect human rights, dignity, and values.

According to Immanuel Kant, one has to treat people as "Principle of the End" rather than an object or instrument. Therefore, humiliating acts such as slavery, torture, human trafficking, racial discrimination, etc. are allowed at no circumstances. Similarly, inflicting unnecessary sufferings upon people during the conflicts, using chemical weapons, resorting to mutilation or genocide are strictly banned for violating human rights which are based on dignity.

On the other hand, pornography, prostitution, rape, and reproductive cloning of human being will reduce mankind from Supreme Creature to object.

In addition to threatening families and society, reproductive cloning is contrary to human dignity since it changes people into objects. It further results in mental and physical harms and disintegrates families.

There are a number of intra-cultural and universal principles. For example, violating one's rights to life and liberty, killing non-combatants during the conflict, torturing one mentally or physically, humiliating, etc. are forbidden in all cultures. No culture will back slavery, human trafficking, racism, unfair prosecution or treatment.

Despite this fact, humanitarian law has been widely transgressed around the world. The harsh practices of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina were likened to the atrocities and killings carried out by Nazis in Second World War. The acts of Serbs contained genocide, sexual violence, systematic killings and bombings, inflicting hunger and thirst on civilians, etc.

Inhuman acts in Yugoslavia and Rwanda were highly offensive. In the same way, a large number of prisoners were degraded and tortured in the worst possible way in Abu

Ghoriab prison, where naked prisoners were piled in triangular form. Human dignity is inviolable and inalienable and more significant than one's right to life. For example, one will be sentenced to death on the basis of law or allowed to be killed in war, but will never be allowed to be degraded. Even degrading human body is considered crime. Based on the principle of dignity, all members of human family must be respected for being human regardless of their distinction. One's dignity must be protected even if s/he is criminal, political foe, merciless killer, and so on.

Natural rights are the second basis of human rights. Thomas Aquinas, a natural law theorist believes that natural rights are universal, unchangeable, and in accordance with human nature for being ethical and reasonable. He divided law into three categories: "Divine Law", the "Natural Law" and "Human Law". Natural law, according to him, is perpetual, universal and belongs to all in any time and place and everyone is able to realize it based on the level of their ability. So, the universal human rights root in natural rights.

However, Grotius asserted that human nature is the mother of natural law, and that it would operate even if God did not exist. This idea reflects the modern and secular approach to natural rights. Natural rights are traced to more than 20 centuries back and existed in both religious and secular traditions. The followers of this school of thought say that human laws stem from natural law and in case of being contradictory, human laws will attach no importance.

According to moral principles, all human beings are born equal and one's rights and dignity should be valued simply for being human. Based on this fact, human dignity is universal and perpetual.

To sum up, there are three bases for human rights: First, human dignity which means that the rights of human beings should be respected since, unlike other living things, they have dignity. Second, natural rights suggest that human beings are "endowed with reason and conscience" and there is a set of rights in accordance with human nature to be protected.

Ethical code is the third basis which says that people need to be respected for being human and have to practice upon "Golden Rule". Indeed, human dignity, which is inalienable and inviolable, is the cornerstone of human rights. Human societies will have to support human dignity more than ever before so as to promote peace and prosperity.

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A Truly Global Response to Climate Change

By Akinwumi Adesina, Suma Chakrabarti, Bandar M. H. Hajjar, Werner Hoyer, Kundapur Vaman Kamath, Jim Yong Kim, Jin Liqun, Luis Alberto Moreno, and Nakao Takehiko

Climate action is not just about controlling global temperatures. It can also be a driver of development and poverty reduction all over the world. At the COP 23 Climate Conference in Bonn, Germany, in November, multilateral development institutions showed themselves to be more committed than ever to the urgent and central issue of supporting and financing these critical goals.

Today's political climate is uncertain. But climate change is not. Partnership around the world must be maintained in the global effort to achieve a smooth transition to low carbon and climate-smart development. Multilateral development institutions have never been more relevant.

Climate-smart development also makes good economic and business sense, particularly when it comes to sustainable infrastructure. We have already witnessed tremendous growth in renewable energy, creating with it new business opportunities and jobs. Many climate-smart investments can also reduce air pollution and congestion. Building resilience now saves money later. We are committed to supporting a climate-smart future.

As multilateral development institutions, we reconfirm our commitment to the Paris climate agreement. Our role is to facilitate the public and private finance that is a vital part of the climate solution.

That is why, two years after the Paris accord was successfully negotiated, we are increasingly aligning actions and resources in support of developing countries' goals. In July, the G20 Sustainability Action Plan embedded the Paris agreement in G20 policies and noted that more effective use of financing from multilateral development institutions is key to innovation and private investment in climate action.

In 2016 alone, multilateral development institutions committed over \$27 billion in climate finance, and we continue to step up our work, determined to broaden the private and public finance mobilized for climate action at COP 23. We commit to:

- Deliver on the promises that we made in 2015 to increase our support for climate investments in developing countries by 2020, both from our direct financing and from our mobilization efforts;
- Increase mobilization of private-sector investment by

supporting policy and regulatory reforms. This includes aligning price signals, making innovative use of policy and finance instruments and, as applicable, leveraging concessional (below-market-rate) finance to help scale up public and private investment in climate projects.

- Strengthen international efforts by working together and with other development finance institutions, to increase transparency and consistency in tracking climate finance tracking and reporting greenhouse-gas emissions;
- Put climate change at the heart of what we do, bringing climate policy into the mainstream of our activities, and aligning financial flows to the Paris agreement;
- Support countries, cities, and territories with their own climate action plans and build the conditions for an ambitious next generation of such contributions; and
- Work with our clients to support initiatives that protect the most climate-vulnerable areas, including small island developing states, while mobilizing more finance for developing countries to build resilience and to adapt their infrastructure, communities, ecosystems, and businesses to the consequences of climate change.

Each of these measures supports our strong commitment to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. By pursuing them, climate action will become a key part of the international community's work to place infrastructure and the rollout of new technologies and policies for energy, water, and mobility at the core of sustainable development.

This is a serious response to a serious challenge. Climate change poses a grave threat to the natural environment, to economic growth, and to the lives of all people around the world, especially the poorest and most vulnerable.

It is fitting that this threat to national economies and to every person on earth, and the opportunity to counter it, should be tackled with the backing of multilateral development institutions. We call on others to join us in placing climate action at the center of their business, stepping up climate finance, and tracking its impact around the world. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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