



Development and Equity

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Scheme of Presentation

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“Equity signifies Equality.

Equality may be a fiction but nonetheless one must accept it as a governing principle”.

- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

- **Equity** is based on the idea of **moral equality**, the principle that people should be treated as equals.
- The idea of equity is the application of this principle of moral equality to the ways in which people are treated in society.
- The principle should cover every individual's actions in society **but** should also be of particular importance in setting goals for and constraints on actions by governments and states.

There are certain standards of moral justification which must in turn govern our actions with respect to serious and non-trivial decisions.

(A) **Relevance** – It is about a certain kind of connection between the way in which we treat a person and some feature of the person themselves.

(B) **Consistency** – It is about a certain kind of connection between the reasons lying behind how we treat different people (or the same people on different occasions), meaning that they are compatible, they hold together and they are not contradictory.

Principles of Equity

- There are broadly 3 principles of equity
 - 1. Equal life chances:** There should be no differences in outcome based on factors for which people cannot be held responsible. (E.g two children born on same day same nation with different opportunities leads to relative deprivation to one)
- The central principle here is that there should be no differences in life chances based on factors that are beyond a person's control, for which we can not hold them responsible. In other words, there can be no relevant reason for differences in outcomes between two people where they have done nothing different to each other.

- 2. Equal concern for peoples needs:** Some goods/services are matters of necessity and should be distributed proportional to peoples level of need and nothing else.
- This second principle of equity relates to the sorts of goods and services that people are said to need: shelter, physical security and environment, health care, water and sanitation, food and nutrition, a basic education and so on. These are things a person must have within a certain time period if they are to avoid suffering adverse effects on their wellbeing.
 - The criterion for distributing these goods and services is the level of need- simply lacking them is reason enough to be given them.

3. Meritocracy: Positions in society and rewards should be distributed to reflect differences in effort and ability, based on fair competition.

In order to ensure a true meritocracy, two additional factors must hold.

- First, clearly all people must have access to these positions, in the sense that all people must be eligible to apply for positions and there should not be any variation in the sorts of position different people have access to.
- Second, all people having sufficient opportunity to develop the skills and talents needed for success.

Social equality vs Economic equality

- **Social equality** is a state of affairs in which all people within a specific society have the same status in certain respects, often including civil rights, freedom of speech, property rights, and equal access to social goods and services. However, it also includes concepts of health equity, economic equality and other social securities. It also includes equal opportunities and obligations, and so involves the whole of society.
- **Economic equality** is the concept or idea of fairness in_economics particularly with regard to taxation.

Causes of Inequity

- Unequal Power relationships are central causes of inequity. The government instead of providing essential services to all citizens based on their level of need, unevenly distributes with more powerful groups capturing benefits.
- Socio-cultural drivers include values, belief systems and cultural norms lead to inequity. Social exclusion and adverse incorporation are the underlying processes that sustain inequity.
- Economic drivers such as informal and formal labour markets and credit sources.

Development and Equity

- **Development** is the sustained, concerted actions of policy makers and communities that promote the standard of living and economic health of a specific area. Such acts includes development of human capital, social infrastructure, regional competitiveness, social inclusion, health, safety, literacy and other initiatives.

- There are three main arguments why equity should be central to government policy in developing countries:
- First, equity is of intrinsic value: greater equity is a good thing in itself and is valued worldwide.
- Second, through its relationship with other goals (such as growth and rights), equity is a key ingredient in numerous conceptions of what 'development' or 'good' social change constitutes.

- Third, equity is instrumental to any development strategy through its causal links with other crucial outcomes, which make it an important factor in securing growth, poverty reduction, social cohesion and long-term change.

Suggestions to promote Equity

1. Providing universal access to public services and improving their delivery mechanism for fair treatment.
2. Targeted action for disadvantaged regions and groups in terms of Affirmative policies.
3. Social protection should be provided to ensure that nobody drops below a minimum level of wellbeing.
4. Redistribution of resources.
5. Challenging embedded power imbalances.

Example of a social protection scheme

- The Progresa programme (now called Oportunidades), implemented by the Mexican government, provides in-kind benefits to people in extreme poverty in rural areas. The transfers are structured so that they help alleviate poverty but also encourage investment in education, health and nutrition.
- The programme was found to significantly increase school enrolment, particularly of girls, leading to 8% higher earnings on entering the workforce. It was found to have a strong impact on health as well, lowering the incidence of illness by 12% and reducing the number of 'sick days' by 19%. In terms of nutrition, the programme fostered a higher calorie intake and lower incidence of stunting. Finally, it had significant effect empowering women, by placing them in control of the benefits.

Conclusion

- Equity is a very important matter for development.
- Promoting equity is valuable in itself, is likely to contribute significantly to positive processes of social change, has the potential to improve development programming and may add value by marshalling involvement, enthusiasm and political support for development efforts.
- The key question is whether there is the political will.

“No two leaves are alike, and yet there is no antagonism between them or between the branches on which they grow”

THANK YOU