

Quadrant II - Notes

Paper Code: POC 102

Module Name: Meaning of Equality

Module No: 03

Meaning of Equality.

Equality, which means state of being equal, is derived from old French or Latin words *aequs/ aequalis*, meaning fair, even, equal. It signifies 'having the same rights, privileges, treatments, status, and opportunities.

1. Natural inequality Is a fact of Life-Equality does not mean that all men and women are born equal in mental as well as physical powers. In fact no two persons are born equal and identical in all respects. Newly born babies differ amongst themselves both in weight as well as in strength. As they grow older their inequality in the qualities of head and heart becomes all the more prominent.

Physically some men are three or four times as strong as others.

Even twins brought up exactly in the same manner by the same parents do not attain the same level of physical and intellectual powers.

- Nature seems to take delight in diversity.
- Natural inequality in strength, in capacity, in aptitude, in temperament, in spirit, in grace and in thought is perhaps the law of nature.

Multi dimensional concept-aspects of Equality

1. To some equality means absolute identity of treatment
2. To others equality is a leveling process
3. To still others it is accommodation of social justice
4. To some it stands for an equal access to the avenues of authority.
5. Many feel that it stands for equal opportunities to all for flowering of human personality.

6. Others view equality as an absence of special privileges for any.

A) Absolute Equality is neither desirable nor possible-Absolute equality, that is, complete identity of treatment and reward in all respects is neither desirable nor possible. As long as men fundamentally differ in their capacities and needs, such identity itself is bound to give rise to differences. For eg. to treat a mathematician or a doctor on the same footing as a mason is an act of sheer absurdity. Equality does not mean uniformity, and difference does not imply inequality.

B) Equality is a leveling process-There is something which is fundamentally common between all mankind. Accordingly it demands that social forces should be so arranged and directed that each individual gets his due.

Equality thus implies impartiality or proportionality-ie **equality among equals and inequality among unequal's.**

. According to Harold laski Equality as a levelling process implies the following four things:

1. Absence of Special privileges in society-It implies that every citizen should have an equal access to the avenues of authority. All citizens are equally eligible to enjoy political rights, irrespective of caste, creed, color, sex, race and place of birth. It makes no distinction between the vote of an ordinary citizen and that of a philosopher statesman.

2. Adequate opportunities to all-This should not be interpreted as “equal opportunities”. It means that all persons must get such opportunities or training which is most likely to develop their faculties to the full. Talent whenever and wherever is discovered, should not be allowed to perish for want of adequate and suitable opportunities.

3. Equality is a matter of proportion-All the essential things without which life is not worth living must be provided to all before luxuries and other comforts are accessible to any to quote Laski “the urgent claims of all must be met before we can meet the particular claims of some”.

4. Equal distribution of Rights- So far as the state is concerned with equal conditions, guaranteed to each for making the best of himself, however, much we may eventually differ in what we actually make of ourselves. Equality thus is the starting point and not the end of the matter.

Conclusion

Equality is the most powerful moral and political ideal that has inspired and guided human society for several centuries.

Every faith and religion invariably Proclaim that all human beings are creation of God. The concept of equality as a political ideal invokes the idea that all human beings have an equal worth regardless of their color, gender, race, or nationality. It urges among human beings equal consideration and respect because of the common humanity. The belief in this notion of humanity led us to the declaration of universal human rights.