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EQUALITY

Equality is a powerful moral and political ideal that has inspired and guided human society for many centuries. It is the principle that all humans are created equal and have the same rights and responsibilities, which are visible both globally and within societies.

When people are treated differently based on religion, race, caste, or gender, it is considered an unacceptable form of inequality. Equality involves ensuring equal access to basic goods such as education, healthcare, and safe housing, which are essential for a just society.

The three dimensions of equality are:

Political Equality

Political equality includes granting equal citizenship rights to all members of the state, such as freedom of expression, movement, association, and belief.

Exam Question

Q: What does political equality entail?

A: Political equality means all citizens have equal rights and freedoms, including freedom of expression, movement, association, and belief, and equal access to political participation.

Social Equality

Social equality guarantees minimum living conditions for all members of society, such as adequate healthcare, education, nourishment, and access to education and employment.

Exam Question

Q: How does social equality protect individuals?

A: Social equality ensures that everyone has access to basic necessities like healthcare, education, and fair wages, and protects against discrimination and exploitation.

Economic Equality

Economic equality exists when there are no significant differences in wealth, property, or income between individuals or classes. Marx argued to address this.

Exam Question

Q: What is the cause of economic inequality according to Marx?

A: Marx believed economic inequality is caused by private ownership of important economic resources and suggested public control to reduce

Promoting Equality

Promoting equality involves ending formal systems of inequality and privileges. The Constitution of India prohibits discrimination based on re

Sometimes, treating people differently is necessary to ensure equal rights, such as providing ramps for disabled individuals. Affirmative acti

Critics argue that reservations can be unfair and constitute reverse discrimination. However, a distinction exists between treating everyone i

For example, women require maternity leave and crèches to exercise their right to work effectively.

Exam Question

Q: What is affirmative action and why is it necessary?

A: Affirmative action involves positive measures such as reservations to reduce social inequalities, ensuring that formal equality by law trans

Know the Terms

- **Equality:** The right of all people to have the same opportunities to develop their skills and pursue their goals.
- **Feminism:** A political doctrine advocating equal rights for women and men.
- **Natural inequalities:** Differences arising from individual capabilities and talents.
- **Patriarchy:** A system valuing men over women, giving men power over women.
- **Socially-produced inequalities:** Inequalities resulting from unequal opportunities or exploitation within society.
- **Socialism:** Political ideas focused on minimizing inequality and distributing resources justly.

Solved Examples

Example 1: Explain why political equality is essential in a democracy.

Answer: Political equality ensures that all citizens have equal rights and freedoms, such as voting and freedom of expression, which are fund

Example 2: How does affirmative action help in achieving social equality?

Answer: Affirmative action provides special provisions like reservations to disadvantaged groups, helping to overcome historical discriminati

Practice Set

Easy

- Define equality in your own words.
- What are the three dimensions of equality?

Moderate

- Explain the difference between natural inequalities and socially-produced inequalities.
- Why is it sometimes necessary to treat people differently to achieve equality?

Challenging

- Discuss the arguments for and against affirmative action.
- How does the Constitution of India promote equality?

Answer Key

- **Equality:** The principle that all individuals have the same rights and opportunities.
- **Three dimensions:** Political, social, and economic equality.
- **Natural vs Social inequalities:** Natural inequalities arise from individual differences; socially-produced inequalities arise from social structures.
- **Treating differently:** To ensure equal rights, some groups may need special provisions to overcome disadvantages.
- **Affirmative action arguments:** For: helps reduce inequality; Against: may cause reverse discrimination.
- **Constitutional promotion:** Prohibits discrimination and abolishes untouchability.

Quick Reference

- Equality means equal worth and rights for all.
- Political equality: equal citizenship rights.
- Social equality: access to basic needs and protection from discrimination.
- Economic equality: reducing wealth and income disparities.
- Affirmative action: positive measures to achieve real equality.

Glossary

- **Equality:** Equal rights and opportunities for all individuals.
- **Affirmative Action:** Policies to improve opportunities for disadvantaged groups.
- **Patriarchy:** Social system privileging men over women.
- **Socialism:** Ideology advocating for equitable distribution of resources.
- **Discrimination:** Unfair treatment based on group membership.

Year	Event	
1950	Constitution of India enacted	Prohibited discrimination on grounds of religion, caste, and sex
1970s onwards	Implementation of affirmative action policies	Reserved seats in education and government jobs for SC, ST, and OBC

Equality invokes the ideas that all human being have an equal worth regardless of their colour, gender, race or nationality.

Why does equality matter

Equality

How can we Promote

Establishing Formal Equality

Equality Through Different Treatment

To end the formal system of inequality and previous loges.

Equality can also be established by treating people differently in order that they can enjoy equal rights.

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