

Social justice of john rawls

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Abstract- In this research paper I am analysing to the social justice of John Rawls in the modern scenario, I am also searching in this research paper how can be established to social justice in modern condition in where there are so many problems like poverty ,corruption, women right and casteism, racism, In this research paper we are described to the concept of the social justice of John Rawls by which he eradicate to the all problem which is related to the social justice in our society .John Rawls said that he is criticize to the concept of the social justice of utilitarian or ideas of the bentham and his ideas of the “ greatest happiness to the greatest number” John Rawls criticize to this statement that ‘greatest happiness and greatest number’ and he said that unless we are not provide to the justice of marginalised person we are not make to society fairness therefore we should be provide to justice like liberty ,equality to every person of the society Then we are established to the social justice in our society.

Key word- social, justice, john, Rawls

Introduction-

John Rawls was a prominent political philosopher who is best known for his theory of justice, outlined in his influential work "A Theory of Justice" (1971). Rawls' theory focuses on social justice and aims to establish a fair and just society through the principles of justice he proposed. Here are the key elements of Rawls' theory of justice:

1-The Original Position and Veil of Ignorance¹: Rawls proposes that the principles of justice should be determined from an original position, a hypothetical situation

Rawls john, "ATheory of justice", p-15, the Belknap press of Harvard University

where rational individuals come together to create a just society. To ensure impartiality, these individuals are placed behind a "veil of ignorance," meaning they have no knowledge of their own characteristics, abilities, social status, wealth, or position in society.

2. Principles of Justice : - Rawls argues that in this original position, individuals would agree on two fundamental principles of justice:

a. The First Principle (Principle of Equal Basic Liberties): Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberties compatible with similar liberties for others.

b. The Second Principle (Difference Principle): Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:

i. To the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society (the difference principle ensures that any inequality benefits those who are worst off).

ii. Attached to positions and offices open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (ensuring that people have an equal chance to attain positions of privilege and authority).

3. Maximin Rule²: Rawls' theory employs a maximin rule, which means making decisions based on maximizing the well-being of the least advantaged individuals in society. In other words, when faced with different possible social arrangements, the focus should be on ensuring the highest level of welfare for the most disadvantaged members.

4. Liberal Egalitarianism: Rawls' theory is often associated with liberal egalitarianism, as it seeks to combine individual freedom and equality. It acknowledges that some degree of economic inequality may be necessary to incentivize productivity and innovation, but it insists that such inequalities should be to the advantage of the least well-off and subject to fair equality of opportunity.

² Rawls John, "A Theory of justice", p-53, the Belknap press of Harvard University

Description-

Rawls' theory of justice has had a significant impact on political philosophy and has been widely discussed and debated. It provides a framework for considering issues of distributive justice, fairness, and the role of government in creating a just society. Rawls' work has inspired numerous discussions on social justice and informed debates about policies and institutions aimed at reducing inequality and promoting fairness. John Rawls was a prominent political philosopher who is best known for his theory of justice, outlined in his influential work "A Theory of Justice" (1971). Rawls' theory focuses on social justice and aims to establish a fair and just society through the principles of justice he proposed. John Rawls before gave the idea of the social justice he criticized to the Bentham ideas.

Political philosophers John Rawls have made criticisms regarding Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism.

1. Focus on Hedonistic Calculus³: Bentham's utilitarianism is based on the principle of maximizing pleasure (utility) and minimizing pain (disutility). He proposed a hedonistic calculus to quantify and compare the pleasure and pain associated with different actions. Critics, including Rawls, argue that reducing complex moral considerations to a quantitative calculation oversimplifies the nature of morality and neglects the uniqueness of moral dilemmas.
2. Neglect of Individual Rights: Bentham's utilitarianism is primarily concerned with overall welfare and aggregate happiness, often at the expense of individual rights and liberties. Critics like Rawls contend that this disregard for individual rights could lead to situations where minority rights are sacrificed for the greater good of the majority.
3. Tyranny of the Majority: Utilitarianism, as advocated by Bentham, may lead to the tyranny of the majority, where the interests of a minority are perpetually overridden for the benefit of the majority. Critics argue that this approach lacks protections for vulnerable or marginalized groups.

³ Rawls John, "A Theory of justice", p-17, the Belknap press of Harvard University

4. Incommensurability of Values : Critics of utilitarianism, including Rawls, question the comparability of different goods and values in terms of pleasure and pain. They argue that some goods, such as individual rights, dignity, and justice, are not easily reducible to a common metric of pleasure or utility.

5. The Experience Machine Thought Experiment : - Rawls, among others, has employed the "experience machine" thought experiment to criticize utilitarianism. The thought experiment challenges the notion that maximizing pleasure is the sole measure of a good life. If given the choice, most people might reject a simulated life of constant pleasure in favor of living a real life with its inherent risks and uncertainties.

6. Long-Term Consequences⁴: Some critics argue that utilitarianism might not adequately consider the long-term consequences of actions. It might justify short-term sacrifices of individuals' well-being for potential future benefits, which could lead to issues of intergenerational justice and sustainability.

It's important to note that while John Rawls and other philosophers have offered criticisms of utilitarianism, there are different variations of utilitarian thought, and contemporary defenders of utilitarianism have addressed some of these criticisms by refining and adapting the theory. Philosophical debates regarding utilitarianism continue to shape discussions on ethics, moral decision-making, and social and political justice.

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Rawls' theory of justice has had a significant impact on political philosophy and has been widely discussed and debated. It provides a framework for considering issues of distributive justice⁶, fairness, and the role of government in creating a just society. Rawls' work has inspired numerous discussions on social justice and informed debates about policies and institutions aimed at reducing inequality and promoting fairness. The "Veil of Ignorance" is a concept introduced

⁵ Rawls John, "A Theory of justice",p-52, the Belknap press of Harvard University

⁶ Rawls John, "A Theory of justice",p-242, the Belknap press of Harvard University

by John Rawls in his theory of justice. It is a metaphorical device that represents a hypothetical condition in which individuals are unaware of their own personal attributes, such as their social status, wealth, talents, gender, ethnicity, or religious beliefs, when making decisions about principles of justice.

The purpose of the Veil of Ignorance is to ensure impartiality and fairness in the decision-making process. Rawls argues that if individuals are ignorant of their own particular circumstances, they will be more likely to develop principles that are unbiased and just, as they cannot tailor the principles to favor their own interests.

When individuals are behind the Veil of Ignorance, they are encouraged to think from a position of universal perspective. They have no knowledge of whether they will be born into a position of privilege or disadvantage, so they must consider the interests of all individuals in society.

Rawls suggests that if rational individuals, seeking to protect their own well-being, were to make decisions about the principles of justice from behind the Veil of Ignorance, they would choose principles that ensure equal basic liberties for all individuals and that promote social and economic inequalities only if they benefit the least advantaged members of society.

In summary, the Veil of Ignorance is a conceptual tool used by Rawls to encourage impartiality and fairness in the development of principles of justice. It helps individuals consider the interests of all members of society by temporarily setting aside their own personal attributes and biases.

Conclusion- John Rawls's theory of social justice, as outlined in his book "A Theory of Justice," has had a profound impact on political philosophy and discussions surrounding the concept of justice. The conclusion of his theory can be summarized as follows:

Rawls's central goal in "A Theory of Justice" is to establish principles of justice that would govern the basic structure of a just society. He proposes the two principles of justice,

the First Principle of Equal Basic Liberties and the Second Principle of Fair Equality of Opportunity and the Difference Principle, as a means to achieve this goal. The First Principle emphasizes the equal distribution of fundamental rights and liberties to all members of society. It ensures that everyone has access to political freedoms, freedom of speech, and other essential liberties without discrimination or preference for certain individuals or groups.

The Second Principle, consisting of the Principle of Fair Equality of Opportunity and the Difference Principle, addresses socio-economic inequalities within society. It demands that opportunities should be distributed fairly, giving each individual an equal chance to pursue their life goals and ambitions. Additionally, any social and economic disparities that emerge should work to the advantage of the least advantaged members of society, thereby reducing inequality and promoting the well-being of those in the most vulnerable positions.

Rawls argues that individuals in a just society would agree to these principles from behind the "veil of ignorance." By making decisions about societal structures without knowing their own personal characteristics, individuals would naturally choose principles that ensure fairness and benefit everyone.

Overall, Rawls's theory of social justice seeks to create a society that prioritizes equality, fairness, and the protection of individual rights. While his ideas have been the subject of various debates and critiques, his work has significantly shaped discussions on justice, ethics, and political philosophy, inspiring scholars and policymakers to consider how to achieve a more just and equitable society.