

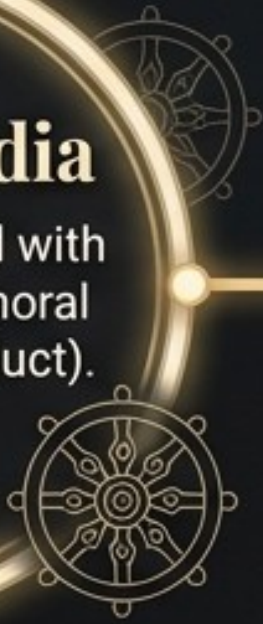


# Social Justice

Class 11 Political Science • Chapter 4

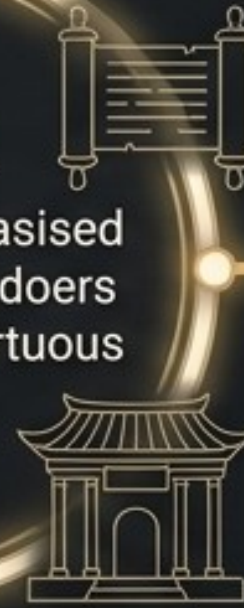
## Ancient India

Justice associated with Dharma (duties, moral order, proper conduct).



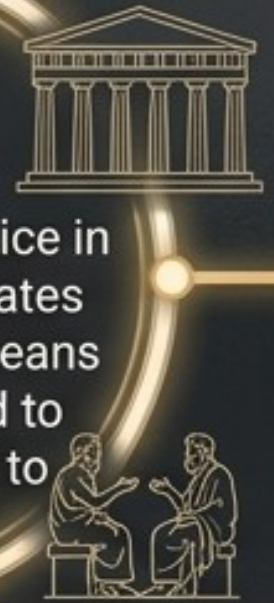
## China

Confucius emphasised punishing wrongdoers and rewarding virtuous people.



## Greece

Plato discussed justice in The Republic. Socrates debated if justice means simply doing good to friends and harm to enemies.



# What is Social Justice?

Creating a society where people receive fair treatment, equal rights, and opportunities, while unjust inequalities are reduced.

Key Distinction: It does not mean absolute equality or treating everyone identically. It requires providing basic conditions for a dignified life.

# Pillar 1: Equal Treatment for Equals

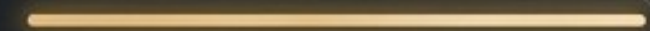
**The Principle:** Equals should be treated equally. People who are similarly placed should receive the same kind of treatment.

**Moral Foundation:** All human beings have equal moral worth.

**No Discrimination:** Enjoy equal rights without discrimination based on caste, class, gender, religion, race, etc.

**Example:** Workers doing the same work must receive equal treatment without gender-based discrimination.

**NCERT Key Idea:**  
Equality of treatment → Equal treatment for equals.



~~Caste~~  
~~Class~~  
~~Gender~~

# Pillar 2: Proportionate Justice

## **The Limitation of Absolute Equality:**

Treating everyone exactly alike can sometimes be unjust.

**The Principle:** Rewarding or treating people in proportion to their effort, contribution, ability, or the quality of their work.

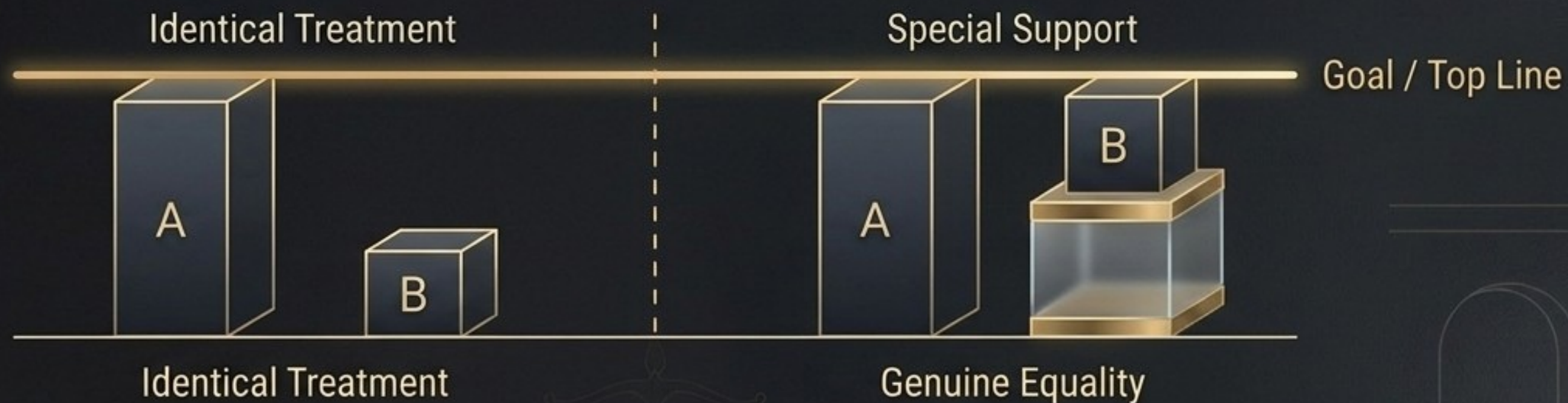
**Example:** Giving every student full marks in an exam = equal treatment, but NOT proportionate justice. Rewards must correspond to performance.



**Justice = Equal treatment + Proportionality**

# Pillar 3: Recognition of Special Needs

## Equity vs. Equality



### The Context

Identical treatment does not always produce genuine equality. Some require special treatment due to different circumstances.

### Who Requires Support?

Persons with disabilities, elderly, people lacking access to education/healthcare, and other disadvantaged sections.

### The Measures

Reservation and special protection are used to overcome existing inequalities.

**NCERT Key Idea:** Treating people differently can sometimes be necessary to achieve equality and justice.

# The Material Requirement: Just Distribution

Meaningful & Dignified Life

Education

Healthcare

Food

Housing

Fair Distribution

**Justice** goes beyond laws and equal rights. Society must ensure a just distribution of resources and opportunities.

**Basic Conditions:** Access to necessities is mandatory for social justice.

**The Threat:** Extreme inequalities in wealth and access limit genuine opportunities.

**NCERT Key Idea:** Social justice requires fair distribution of basic resources and opportunities.

# John Rawls' Theory of Justice



Unknown Future Status  
(Rich/Poor, Weak/Strong)



Veil of Ignorance



Original Position



Protection for  
the Worst-off

Original Position

Imagine deciding the rules of society without knowing your future position.

Veil of Ignorance

Unaware of social status or talents, individuals must think rationally and fairly.

The Rational Choice

Because you don't know your future, you won't design a society only for the privileged.

Main Idea

Justice is fairness. Society must give particular consideration to the worst-off / disadvantaged.

# Pursuing Social Justice

## The Core Reality:

Social justice does not mean complete sameness. People naturally have different abilities, choices, and circumstances.

## The True Aim:

Removing unjust and avoidable inequalities while ensuring basic conditions for all.



**NCERT Core Idea:** Justice is not absolute equality or sameness; it is fairness in rights, opportunities, treatment, and distribution.

# The Core Debate: Free Market vs State Intervention



## Free Market

- Individual freedom & choice
- Private ownership
- Competition rewards talent & skill
- Market determines prices, wages, profits



## State Intervention

- Social welfare & justice
- Government regulation
- Protection of disadvantaged sections
- State provides basic conditions & equal platforms

The Central Question: How to balance individual economic freedom with the protection of the disadvantaged?

# Exam Focus: Multiple Choice Questions (1-3)

Q1. Which of the following best explains the principle of “Equal Treatment for Equals”?

- A. Everyone must receive exactly the same treatment in every situation
- B. People who are similarly placed should receive similar treatment**
- C. Everyone must receive the same income
- D. All differences between people must be removed

Q2. What does proportionate justice mean?

- A. Treating everyone identically
- B. Giving everyone the same reward
- C. Treating or rewarding people according to relevant differences such as effort or contribution**
- D. Giving special treatment to only the rich

Q3. Why can recognition of special needs be justified in a just society?

- A. It creates permanent inequality
- B. Some people require additional support to overcome disadvantages**
- C. It removes all differences between people
- D. It benefits only the majority

## Exam Focus: Multiple Choice Questions (4-6)

Q4. Which concept is directly associated with John Rawls' theory of justice?

- A. Free market
- B. Veil of Ignorance**
- C. Absolute equality
- D. Private property

Q5. Under the “Veil of Ignorance”, individuals are unaware of:

- A. The laws of society
- B. The existence of other people
- C. Their future social position and advantages or disadvantages**
- D. The need for justice

Q6. Which of the following is associated with state intervention for social justice?

- A. Complete absence of government regulation
- B. Protection of disadvantaged sections and provision of basic conditions**
- C. Removal of all government welfare measures
- D. Complete dependence on market forces

# Exam Focus: Long-Answer Questions [6 Marks]

**Q1. What is social justice? Explain the principles of equal treatment for equals and proportionate justice.**

Social justice means ensuring fair treatment, equal rights, and reducing unjust inequalities.



Equal Treatment: People similarly placed should receive similar treatment without discrimination (caste, gender, religion).



Proportionate justice: People may be treated differently according to relevant differences (effort, ability, quality of work). Justice requires both.



**Q2. Why is recognition of special needs important for achieving social justice? Explain with suitable examples.**

Equal treatment does not always produce genuine equality.



Disadvantaged groups (persons with disabilities, elderly) require additional support to overcome circumstances.



Special measures like reservation and special protection create equal opportunities. This differential treatment is therefore justified.



## **Q3. What is meant by just distribution? Why are basic conditions necessary for social justice?**

- 1** Just distribution means a fair distribution of resources, opportunities, and basic conditions necessary for a dignified life.
- 2** Equal legal rights alone are not sufficient. People need access to education, healthcare, food, and housing.
- 3** Extreme inequalities prevent disadvantaged people from making meaningful choices and competing on fair terms.
- 4** The state must take measures to improve access to these basic conditions. Social justice requires both equal rights and fair access to resources.

## Exam Focus: Long-Answer Questions [6 Marks]

### Q4. Explain John Rawls' theory of justice with reference to the Original Position and Veil of Ignorance.

John Rawls explains justice as fairness.



He asks us to imagine choosing societal rules from an Original Position.



In this position, people are placed behind a Veil of Ignorance—unaware of their future social position, status, talents, or advantages.



Because they cannot design rules only for their own benefit, they would make a rational choice.



They would favour principles that ensure fairness and protect the interests of the worst-off/disadvantaged sections.

#### Examiner Keywords

- ✓ Original Position
- ✓ Veil of Ignorance
- ✓ Fairness
- ✓ Rational Choice
- ✓ Worst-off

# Q5. Explain the debate between Free Markets and State Intervention in the context of social justice.

## Free Market Approach:

- Emphasizes individual freedom, private ownership, and contracts.
- Prices, wages, and profits are determined by market forces and competition.
- Prioritizes individual choice, talent, and skill.

## State Intervention Approach:

- Emphasizes social welfare and protection of disadvantaged sections.
- The state provides basic conditions, regulates economic activity, and reduces extreme inequalities.

The Conclusion: The debate centers on how to appropriately balance individual economic freedom with necessary social justice and welfare.