

BEST FOR AN INDIVIDUAL IS NOT NECESSARILY BEST FOR SOCIETY

In order to create a civilized society in this individualist age, we must recognize the essence of collectivism. Hobbs was criticized for viewing people like beasts without the demands of society for self-actualization. He believed that individualistic tendencies were animistic ways of all against all that would lead to anarchy. M.K.Gandhi said "Be the change you want to see in the world" though individualism is to some extent acceptable, general societal thinking is the only way for the mass to progress. According to a latest survey, less than 5% of the Indian population retains well over 60% of the national wealth. Even though this is desirable for those selected people, when society is taken into account as a whole, the disparity is stark. Redistributing finances could lower infrastructure deterioration, hunger-related fatalities, and hardship.

Reservations in India are another controversial subject that is now in the media. In order to right historical wrongs done to their community, reservations are beneficial to an individual. However, they are opposed since the rules prevent many qualified applicants from landing employment or getting into outstanding academic institutions. What is beneficial for an individual is often not perceived as being good for society. Similarly, what is best for one nation may not be best for all other nations combined? Rich countries have historically harnessed and exploited natural resources. The developing countries will be most affected by the issue because of the escalating catastrophe in the name of development. Let us see this by taking examples. Imagine being stranded in a desert with five of your friends. The amount of water that each of you can drink at one sitting is limited. At least three of you would die if each of you only considered what was best for oneself, but if you shared it evenly, none would die. This leads us to the essay's main idea: what is best for an individual is not always great for society.

Let's look at another perspective before drawing any conclusions. Due to opposition from the community, a Dalit woman was forced to withdraw her name from the panchayat election. It is against the societal expectations in her village to nominate a Dalit woman. This indicates that what is best for society may not always be best for an individual.

Therefore, a lot of questions are raised at this stage. Should one favour their own interests over those of society, or vice versa? How can this confusion be asserted?

Since moral ideals and a sense of fulfilment for any progressive society have been lacking, as a result of which India's educational system is plagued with dilemmas. We judge knowledge by test scores, which, when added up at the individual level, are the most accurate since they can lead to high-paying professions. Each culture has a unique history, which is also one of the best teachers. As we have seen in the past, fascism and authoritarianism were the only preferred political regimes prior to the Enlightenment. Although it appeared to be the ideal approach for monarchs or fascists to establish political power, it was detrimental for society as a whole. Our economic situation has not been spared, much like the politics. Our society's advancement has slowed down in the pursuit of rapid economic expansion and materialism. Globalization and industrialization have lifted per-capital income while also increasing societal inequality. Demand for space has increased as a result of growing population. This has led to land degradation and global warming, as evidenced by the current catastrophe of Amazonian deforestation. People are increasingly choosing nuclear families since living spaces are getting smaller. Despite being beneficial on an individual level, it is destroying our social values. Because of this, familial ties are now unstable. We've seen time and time again how the government distributes necessary medications through cumbersome licensing. Individual drug manufacturing is not in the best interest of society as a whole. Similar to this, because society allows such hierarchy, the cast system is very prominent in Indian society.

Returning to the two examples from the beginning, let's use the utilitarian and the categorical imperative theory. According to utilitarian theory, in the first case, it would appear that sharing a water bottle equally would be the optimal course of action because it would benefit the greatest number of individuals. The second example shows how the categorical imperative theory might be used to reject prevailing cultural norms since they infringe on the rights of Dalit women.

Society is the soul if the individual is the body. It implies that what is best for an individual may not be best for society, but we must also understand the opposite side of the coin. The delicate balance between the individual and society must be retained.

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