

# Democracy without justice is tyranny.

## Outline

### I. Introduction

Their Statement: Democracy without justice is nothing more than a facade for tyranny.

Because of the absence of inherent belief of justice, the rectification of socio-economic, socio-cultural, and politico-economic inequalities exacerbates resulting in the intensification of authoritarianism.

### II. Understanding the role of justice in democracy

\* Ensuring equality, protecting rights and freedom, promoting fair governance, equal access to opportunities

### III. How democracy without justice leads to tyranny

(A) In political realm

(a) Marginalization of large portion of population

by powerful elite

(b) Erosion of civil liberties undermining the rights of the people  
Case in point: autocratic tactics in 2024 elections in Bangladesh and Pakistan

(c) Waning the public trust results in civic disengagement and apathy

## (B) In institutional domain

(a) Unfair and selective justice while serving the interests of the elite

(b) Blur the concept of separation of power by practicing undemocratic principles  
Case in point: Hungary's Prime Minister has amended constitution to weaken checks on executive

(c) Discriminatory tactics in governance breeds social evils

Case in point: institutionalized racism and social inequality between African Americans and whites



### (C) In human right sphere

(a) Discrimination of minority groups lead to widespread human right abuses

Case in point: Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 of India

(b) Practice of extrajudicial killing and police brutality in countries with unjust democracies

### (D) In socio-economic domain

(a) Exacerbating income inequality and poverty by following democracy without justice

(b) Significant discrimination of population based on gender

Case in point: The World Economic Forum report

### IV- Tyrannical democracies of 21<sup>st</sup> century due to the absence of justice

(a) The rise of right-wing radicals in United States - a threat to democratic justice

(b) Secular democracy turning to tyrannical in India

(c) Democratic situation in Pakistan since 2018

V- Challenges occurring to the progress of democracy with justice

(a) Corruption and lack of transparency hindering the smooth process of democracy

(b) Weak judicial system under profound political influence

(c) Political polarization and extremism trigger gridlock in democratic institutions.

VI- Effective measures necessary for the promotion of democracy based on justice

(a) Encouraging separation of power in real spirit

Case in point: Montesquieu's separation of power

(b) Combating corruption while ensuring transparency

(c) Addressing socio-economic inequalities by practicing real democratic values  
Case in point: examples of Nordic countries

VII- Conclusion



Democracy, a universally recognized ideal government, aims essentially to preserve the fundamental rights of the public and to ensure national tranquillity crucial for peace through social justice. However, it is crucial to identify the tyrannical nature of democracy in the absence of justice. Without ensuring justice in democracy, the ramifications of social, political and economic woes emerge particularly due to the decisive tenet of authoritarianism. As per Aristotle's rationale in identifying the different forms of government, the tyranny is destined to occur when democratic credentials are corrupt with injustice. He said, "Democracy is when the indigent, and not the men of property, are rulers. If liberty and equality, as is thought by some are chiefly to be found in democracy, they will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost." Thus, when injustice prevails, the marginalization of population, erosion of civil liberties, and the rise of social evils take place. Considering the democracies of 21st century, the blatant violation of democratic principles has been observed even in the countries

of staunch supporters of democracy. <sup>The</sup> United States and India have topped in the list of tyrannical democracies with the escalation of right-wings in the former and atrocities on Muslim in the latter. Nonetheless, it is crucial to advocate for democracy under the dogma of justice. By tackling the challenges in the progress of democracy with justice, the probability of turning the democracy into tyranny can be reduced.

For understanding the role of justice in democracy, it is crucial to recognize the principles of democracy first. The rule of law, the advocacy for transparency and accountability, liberty and freedom, fair governance and equal access to opportunities are the utmost requirement for democracy. Ostensibly, these tenets can be ensured by including the feature of justice in it. Due to the certainty of fulfilling democracy on the basis of equality, the fundamental rule of democracy with justice can be obtained. As it is



rightly said by John Dewey "Democracy is the best form of government, but the real spirit of democracy could only be prevailed in a society, when all of its citizens are treated on the basis of justice."

Unfortunately, when ~~the~~ injustice dominates in a society, the possibility of autocratic supremacy is increased in the democratic societies. Considering the political realm, the marginalization of large <sup>portion of</sup> population by powerful elite is one such example of the nation who have practiced democracy, but in reality, injustice <sup>has</sup> ingrained deep into the roots. The people have no access to the decision-making policies due to the concentration of power in certain groups. The example of Russia can be understood in this matter. Despite the conductance of elections and encouraging the support of people's will, the victory of Vladimir Putin has negated the presence of other political parties. This centre of power has created severe repercussions in the form of Russian invasion



of Ukraine. A large portion of population has shown anger towards the war, but their will have been ignored due to the prevalence of tyranny.

Moreover, the erosion of civil liberties also occurred in the societies where people are not treated equally. This has negated the rights of people in the form of suppression of freedom of speech, association and the freedom of free will. The undue curtailment of human rights has experienced during the election period of Bangladesh and Pakistan in 2024. The usage of surveillance and the right of people to profess their mandate have ignored undermining the spirit of justice in democracy. Draconian laws were formulated to suppress the dissenting voices directly the nation towards despotism. Such societies find difficulty in regaining the genuine essence of democracy.

Another point of consideration in this matter is the erosion of public trust due to the undue favor of upper

class while neglecting the will of lower class. The public then prefers to adopt violence and extremism. The profound profusion of civic disengagement and apathy cause a country to destabilise in its roots. According to Thomas Jefferson, "A democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of other forty-nine." This notorious fact has created a gap, which is occupied by the sense of crime, sin and vice. Due to sidelining the trust of the people, mob rule prefer to dominate in these countries of injustices.

Similarly, in identifying the rule of tyranny in countries of unjust practices, it is clear that the complexities and expenses associated with the rule of law has hindered the access to all citizens at equitable rate. Serving the interests of the elite is the most grave cause of ineffective justice. Unfortunately, the depressed section find it difficult to access



the justice. Pakistan is one such country where the slogan of democracy is propagated but with poor rule of law. According to rule of law index report 2023, Pakistan ranked 130 out of 142 countries. Because of the dominance of injustice, the manipulation of judges and weakening the judicial system on the part of biased judges are the common practice negating the true esteem of democracy.

Furthermore, the blue concept of separation of power is highlighted in the countries of democracy with the dominance of injustice. Interfering in the domain of other organs of governing body is common case in this regard. It spawns inequality in the society due to sidelining masses from the mainstream politics. Consider the example of Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who has been accused of undermining the separation of power by stacking constitutional courts with loyalists to weaken checks on executive power. This move is particularly linked with unlimited executive power to

fulfill their vested interest. It is thus no wrong to say that the absence of separation of power breeds injustice in democratic country to thus directing towards tyranny.

Discriminatory tactics employed in governance breed social evils in the society. This includes the lack of transparency in dealing with the rich. Social evils in the form of violence, crime, poverty, crony capitalism, skyrocketing inflation and brain drain often exemplify the concept. For example, institutionalized racism and social inequality are high in the United States due to the significant disparities between African Americans and whites under the legacy of Jim Crow Laws. These inequalities amplify the injustice while treating the poor and the marginalized people. Thus, the production of social evils in undemocratic societies spawns tyranny.

Human right abuses are the climax point while discussing the democracy without injustice. Minority groups are mostly



subjected to this inhumane tactics. These groups are majorly annihilated from the mainstream infrastructure of political entities. For example, The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) of 2019 in India has depicted the intentions of Indian government in marginalizing Muslims despite the staunch advocate of democracy. This act has provided a path to citizenship for non-Muslim refugees and excluding Muslims from this act. This has depicted the practice of despotism on the part of Indian government.