POLITICAL THEORY OF EQUITY
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EQUITY WEEK
Education Building 215
INTRODUCTION

• Concepts do not have a tied down meaning.
• Concepts should be context-bound.
• To understand equity it is necessary to make reference to history.
• Equity is a concept that has developed over time.
• It is associated with other concepts such as justice, equality, inequality and law, among others.
UNDERSTANDING EQUITY

• It is about fairness, justice and impartiality.
• Based on the realization that absolute equality is not possible.
• As noted by Aristotle treating those who are unequal equally can lead to injustice.
• Likewise treating those who are equal differently is injustice.
• Not limited to income distribution. Incorporates discrimination, oppression, exploitation etc.
CONT.

• For equity to prevail it should be anchored in Law. Why?
• Political will should also be evident.
ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT EQUITY

• Socrates/ Plato and Aristotle’s times discrimination was rampant. Certain groups not allowed “privileges”.

• Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau on state of nature and state

• Types of inequality: Natural/ Physical and Political/ Civil Society
• John Stuart Mill the utilitarian – on higher and lower pleasures.
• Mill “On Subjection of Women”.
• Significance of the French Revolution.
• Fredrick Engels on Patriarchy.
• On socialism and communism.
• On capitalism and consumerism.
ON THE ROLE OF THE STATE AND INDIVIDUAL

• Ideal state an impartial arbiter, image of sovereignty.

• Ensure equity as enshrined in the constitution “We hold these truths to be evident that all men are born equal ....”

• State pursues public good and not individual interests.

• State creates environment for all to enjoy political, economic and social equity.
• Responsibility of individuals/populace/masses to support state through tax.

• What happens when state/government fails or unwilling to promote equity:

• Option 1: Do nothing (Thomas Hobbes).

• Option 2: Pray for a revolution (John Locke).

• Option 3: Civil Society.

• Option 4: Vote it out through elections.
WHY EQUITY?

• Avoid centralized power (Lord Acton)
• Avoid conflict e.g. Ethiopia, Somalia, Rwanda, South Sudan etc.
• Justice for all. No hording.
• Rule of law and not Darwinian.
• Peace, stability and happiness e.g. Danes.
• Development
THE WAY FORWARD

• Is democracy the way forward?
• Is socialism the way forward?
• Is it about law?
CONCLUSION

• Equity is the way to co-exist.
• Rule of society – “Do unto others as thou would like to do unto thy self”.

END