



JAMES MIDGLEY'S
INEQUALITY, SOCIAL PROTECTION
and SOCIAL JUSTICE

A Book Review by

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James Midgley is a professor at the graduate school regarded as a pioneer in the fields of international social work, and social work and social policy in the developing world. James Midgley's "Inequality, Social Protection and Social Justice" aimed at a true depiction of the undiscussed pre-existent societal inequalities. Midgley has a unique writing style that is simple, clear, and engaging. He has an objective and balanced analysis that brings an air of curiosity in readers that enables them to raise questions. James is a societal inequity interlocutor. Midgley's story can be seen as an important turning point in the 21st century.

Social protection promotes social justice by redistributing resources from higher to lower-income earners while ensuring those who do not get attention are protected. Protection schemes need to be updated with time. One challenge is that social protection and redistribution are linked with the flow of monetary resources, but data is unavailable about their impact on focus groups. If social protection programmes are funded by progressive taxes, they will redistribute from higher to lower earners, but if regressive taxes are followed, the cost of social schemes will be met by those with lower incomes. The tripartite method of funding aims to fund social schemes with regressive taxation, rather than progressive taxation, creating inequality. There is no universal rule of how these costs should be met. It depends on market conditions, the availability of labor, and consumer demand. On the other hand, provident funds and retirement schemes, due to financial difficulties, do not redistribute among their members. In some cases, tax subsidies are required to meet the obligations of these schemes.

The complex and multidirectional flow of resources redistributed by social protection favors diverse groups of people. Although there remains inequality, millions of people's earnings and living standards have improved because of social protection. Schemes such as social insurance and social allowances can be structured to allocate resources to impoverished families in an equitable manner, ensuring that women, minorities, and other vulnerable groups are not disadvantaged. The impact of social protection should be examined, and elements, such as, coverage, appropriateness of benefits, and administrative competency, should be included. What counts is whether the government is dedicated to employ aggressive social protection to promote egalitarian ideas.

A society that lacks social stratification, except for inequality based on ability and age, provides equal access to resources and prestige. In many countries, social protection reduces inequality by increasing the incomes of individuals at the bottom of the income distribution. Cash transfers

promote gender equality, whereas some systems have a Mathew effect that redistributes wealth in favor of the middle and upper classes. The goal of social protection should not be to promote equal ideas but to enhance impoverished people's wages and living conditions. According to the Welfarist beliefs, families should be responsible for their own welfare, and non-profits should play a larger role in alleviating the burden of delivering benefits to a larger population. Also, if everyone takes part in social safety programmes, the money that flows through them is more likely to help even out the distribution of wealth.

To promote social justice, the government should be responsible for social protection and ensure that these schemes are available to all as a right of citizenship. A comprehensive network of schemes needs to be developed that covers the entire population and is appropriate to local needs and circumstances. Economic development policies must be designed to promote egalitarian ideals.

By ensuring that social protection is comprehensive, inclusive, adequate, and efficient, the potential of universalism to promote social justice can be achieved. In countries where social protection is provided by national law, its execution should be examined on a regular basis. When social protection has a negative impact on the budget, other sectors receive less attention. Midgley mentions that plans for social protection must be carefully planned, culturally appropriate and fit the needs of the area.

Redistribution through social protection does not always promote social justice. Deliberate support from all sectors is needed. Governments dedicated to a right-based, equitable approach have a tremendous problem in terms of coverage. Another issue is the adequacy of benefits; in most cases, large-scale social programmes fail to alleviate poverty. Social protection services are not adjusted to reflect rising living costs. Even though social programmes are operating, some people are ignorant of them, some believe they are ineligible, and in certain circumstances, some do not even apply because they are afraid of being shamed by their peers. Even those who live by the roadside lack adequate documentation; hence, they are deprived of it. Administrative issues, well-trained staff, and a lack of management can also affect how well these projects work.

High priority should be given to those who are excluded from social protection because of discrimination. In some countries, general revenues derived from regressive taxation are used to subsidize social insurance for high income earners. Though social assistance has become more

inclusive, many who are not eligible still receive benefits. Inequitable flows that produce Mathew effects should be identified and corrected.

By enrolling the informal sector in social insurance programmes, and subsidizing benefits with current payments or reserve money, coverage can be expanded. More disadvantaged farmers could be enrolled in crop insurance systems, allowing the government to increase coverage. Promoting retirement and other social savings accounts can broaden the reach of plans. Beedi rollers have benefited from the inclusion of beedi rollers in India's provident fund, which has allowed them to save for retirement in a safe and well-managed statutory institution. To close the gaps created by automation, irregular work, increased migration, youth unemployment, and other developments that obstruct coverage, non-traditional measures will be required. To promote social fairness, universal plans should be stressed. According to the paradox of redistribution, countries with comprehensive universal social security programmes have lower income disparities than those that rely on means testing.

Egalitarian social protection can be promoted by utilizing different approaches to achieve inclusivity. Social schemes must be balanced within a broader planning framework that is appropriate to needs and circumstances of different countries. In developing countries, the trend towards converting categorical pension schemes into social allowances should be accelerated. Categorical child allowance should be replaced with universal schemes. Other reforms that promote inclusivity and universality should be adopted. Compliance with mandates, especially minimum or living wages should be rigorous not only in western countries but in higher income developing countries where it had been witnessed that they benefit low-income workers and reduce inequality. Schemes that do little to promote egalitarian social protection should be abandoned. Provident funds should be replaced with social insurance and commercially managed retirement accounts should be abandoned. Minimum income schemes, tax benefits and living wages are helping to create a social protection floor below which no one will fall. However, basic income is controversial and raises numerous fiscal and practical challenges. Instead, a plural mix of social protection schemes in which universal programmes feature prominently is a credible way of achieving the “national minimum of civilized life”. In addition to that, if it is implemented, it can raise the income of those at lower end of distribution and resolve the challenges of discrimination

and inequality. Though social protection alone cannot solve the problem of inequality but can make a major contribution.