

Key Terms: Human Rights & Justice



Human Rights

Human Rights: Basic freedoms and protections that belong to every individual, such as freedom of speech and equality.

Responsibilities: With rights come duties, such as respecting the rights of others.

Social Justice: Promoting fairness in society, ensuring equal opportunities, and addressing inequalities.

Prejudice: Prejudging someone based on characteristics like race, gender, or religion.

Discrimination: Acting on prejudice to treat someone unfairly.

Racial Prejudice: Prejudice based on race, leading to inequality and discrimination.

Positive Discrimination: Preferential treatment to address historical inequalities (e.g., hiring quotas).

Status of Women in Religion: Views vary; some traditions promote equality, while others limit roles for women in leadership or worship.

Treatment of Homosexuals: Debated across religions, with some promoting acceptance and others viewing homosexuality as sinful.

Freedom of Religious Expression: The right to practise and express one's religion, balanced against the need to respect others.



Equality and Ethical Perspectives



Equality: Belief that all people are of equal value, often rooted in religious teachings (e.g., Genesis 1:27: "Made in the image of God").

Justice: Fair treatment, often linked to addressing inequality and upholding human rights.

Christian Teachings on Equality:

- "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:31).
- "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Islam on Equality: Emphasis on ummah (the global Muslim community) and fairness for all.

Buddhist Teachings on Prejudice: Non-violence (ahimsa) and treating all beings with compassion.



Wealth and Poverty

Wealth: Seen as a blessing, but religious teachings often emphasise it must be used responsibly.

Right Attitude to Wealth: Avoiding greed and using wealth for good, rather than selfish purposes.

Responsibilities of Wealth: A duty to help others, especially the poor, through charity and fair practices.

Tackling Poverty: Addressing systemic causes like lack of education, corruption, and inequality.

Fair Pay: Ensuring workers receive wages that reflect their work and meet their basic needs.

Excessive Interest on Loans: Exploiting the poor through high-interest rates, condemned by most religions.

People-Trafficking: Exploitation of vulnerable people for profit, considered a major injustice.

Charity: Acts of kindness or monetary giving to support those in need; central to many faiths (e.g., zakat in Islam, tzedakah in Judaism).



Religious Teachings on Wealth

Christianity on Wealth:

- "For the love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Timothy 6:10).
- Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus warns against ignoring the needs of the poor.

Islam on Wealth: Zakat (charitable giving) is one of the Five Pillars, requiring Muslims to share a portion of their wealth with the needy.

Buddhism on Wealth: Encourages detachment from material possessions and generosity to reduce suffering.

Judaism on Wealth: Tzedakah (charitable giving) as a moral obligation, not optional.

