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The concept of social justice has many different facets. This is shown through the various kinds of definition this concept is given. However, although its definitions vary, these have a similar ideological background. Overall, many people perceive the concept of social justice as the justice and fairness that overrides individual justice. This paper aims at exploring the concept of justice, including analysis the different definitions for this concept and comparing the degree to which these share a similar ideological basis.

In order to establish that the concept of social justice is multi-faceted, it is important to look at the various definitions for this concept. Shookner (2002, p. 2) defined social justice as, " Distribution of the social and economic resources of society for the benefit of all people." In his definition, Shookner considered diversity and inclusion as core factors in the concept of social justice. He argued that diversity, which includes different races, cultures, genders, sexual orientation, age, religions, among others, should all be entitled to social and economic inclusion, for the achievement of social justice (Shookner, 2002).

On the other hand, Hunsaker & Hanzl (2003, p. 9) define social justice as " the process through which society attains a more equitable distribution of power in the political, economic and social realms." However, these have also argued that it is impossible for any society to exist without a considerable degree of social injustices. Therefore, a utopian society is nonexistent and unachievable. However, they noted that a society could make progress in terms of its state of social justice. This progress can be achieved when a society considers fairness in its social, economic, and

political realms. This way, each member in the society will have the privilege of enjoying a portion of power, therefore, meaning that there is an equal distribution of power in the society. Hunsaker & Hanzl (2003) also noted that people in society can struggle and fight for the ideal of social justice, when it is denied to them. This is why different countries have social justice movements, which are composed of those people believing to have been sidelined in the country, with regard to distribution of social, economic, and political power.

Additionally, Hawkins (n. d) considers social justice to be the process of " upholding dignity, equality, rights, and freedoms of all individuals and communities especially those

who are disadvantaged, oppressed and/or discriminated against" (2). Therefore, Hawkins considers social justice as a phenomenon that is of great importance to the disadvantaged and the marginalized groups in society. These groups have mainly been considered to include women, children, the physically disabled persons, as well as the poor in society. Today, most countries are addressing social justice by first ensuring that women, the disabled, and the other marginalized groups are granted their rights. According to the United Nations (2006), the world today is characterized by social inequalities in income distribution and distribution of other assets, which date to past decades. These inequalities mean there is no adequate social justice in different countries today. The United Nations blames poverty in the world today on social injustices. Social injustices are evidenced by increased poverty of refugees, discrimination, insecurity, poor health, abuse, among other atrocities in society (United Nations, 2006).

All different definitions of social justice base on a similar ideological

background. In the discussed definitions by various authors, there are a number of similar ideologies, which these authors share in their perception of social justice. The first ideology rests on the equality factor. In all the definitions, it is clear that the authors associate social justice with equitable distribution of wealth, power, and status in society. Shookner (2002) asserts that social justice must lead to equal benefits for all people in society, with regard to social and economic resources. On the other hand, Hunsaker & Hanzl (2003) share the same ideology when they link social justice with equitable distribution of power in the political, economic, and social realms of society, among all members of the society. Similarly, Hawkins (n. d) share same sentiments with the other authors. However, Hawkins is more inclined to the disadvantaged in society when she considers social justice to be more instrumental in ensuring that they are granted equal rights and privileges, like other members of society, who are well off.

From the arguments of some of the authors, it is clear that they consider the government and authorities to play the role of ensuring social justice in society. According to Hunsaker & Hanzl (2003), members of society have a right to demand social justice, when this is denied, by forming social justice movements. Therefore, since most movements in society are formed with the purpose of demanding change in governance policies, it is clear that social justice movements too demand the implementation of social justice from their respective governments. Therefore, this shows that governments and authorities are the determinants of social justice, since these have authority over most resources in society. The United Nations (2006) emphasizes that social injustice roots from past decades, and is manifested in various negative acts in society, which discriminately exploit some

members of society. Therefore, persistence of these negative acts in society shows that governments have failed to address social justice issues, since these hold the authority to punish and prosecute any persons perpetrating such acts.

Although all the authors agree that social justice is imperative in society, there are considerable differences in how these perceive the nature and solutions to social injustices. The United Nations (2006) asserts that it is possible to address the social injustices perpetrated in past decades, and victims be granted their justice. The UN also argues that different strategies could be adopted in the leadership of countries to promote social justice, in order to achieve countries which are just in their dealings. On the contrast, Hunsaker & Hanzl (2003) argue that it is impossible for a country to exist without any levels of social injustices. However, they agree that it is possible for countries to increase their level of social justice by adopting appropriate policies and laws.

In conclusion, social justice is important in society, as this promotes harmonious living. Although there exists social injustices in society today, which have their roots in the past, appropriate strategies by governments and individuals could be adopted to reduce any acts that aggravate social injustice. It is therefore, a collective responsibility of individuals and governments to ensure that social justice prevails in society.

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