

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q4(a)

Ambedkar's idea of social justice leads to 'egalitarian justice' as compared to Rawls' 'justice as fairness' which aims at the notion of 'pure procedural justice'. Comment

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 1 · 20 marks · Justice

Justice: Conceptions of justice with special reference to Rawl's theory of justice and its communitarian critiques.

Core demand of the question

- **Ambedkar's** idea of social justice leads to 'egalitarian justice' as compared to **Rawls'** 'justice as fairness' which aims at the notion of '**pure procedural justice**'. Comment. (20 marks)

Revision summary

- **Rawls's justice as fairness models pure procedural justice:** a fair original position defines just shares.

Ambedkar's social justice starts from graded inequality and aims at equal status, not only a fair bet among equals.

Article 17, reservations, and **annihilation of caste** are substantive egalitarian tools.

The original position assumes moral equality that caste society denies.

Indian basic structure and reservation law sit closer to **Ambedkar's** end-state than to a caste-blind procedure.

Introduction

B. R. Ambedkar and **John Rawls** both reject a caste or class lottery as destiny. They still aim at different objects. **Ambedkar's** social justice is a substantive egalitarian reconstruction of a graded society. **Rawls's** justice as fairness is a hypothetical procedure whose outcome is to be accepted as just if the procedure is fair.

Body

Rawls: justice as fairness and procedure

- In A Theory of Justice (1971), parties behind a veil of ignorance choose equal basic liberties, fair equality of opportunity, and the difference principle.
- **Rawls** distinguishes perfect, imperfect, and **pure procedural justice**. Gambling is his school example of pure procedure: whatever results from a fair bet is fair.
- Justice as fairness is presented as the closest political analogue of **pure procedural justice**: a fair original position defines the just distribution, without a prior independent pattern of desert.
- The self is prior to its social titles. Caste, race, and class are morally arbitrary and must not dictate life chances.
- The theory is ideal theory for a well-ordered society of free and equal citizens, not a handbook for annihilating untouchability.

Ambedkar: social justice as egalitarian substance

- **Ambedkar** treated caste as a system of graded inequality, not as one more social primary good to be redistributed after a veil.
- **Annihilation of Caste**, the Poona Pact struggle, **Article 17**, and constitutional reservations aim at a real equality of status, not only a fair procedure among already equal persons.
- Representation, education, and entry into office are instruments of egalitarian justice because the Hindu social order denied personality itself to the Depressed Classes.
- **Granville Austin** placed this in the Constitution's social-revolution strand, beside political democracy.
- For **Ambedkar**, a procedure among caste Hindus would reproduce hierarchy. The end-state of equal dignity is known in advance and must be forced by law.

The comparison the question asks

- **Rawls**'s persons in the original position are already moral equals. **Ambedkar**'s society does not contain that fact; it must be made.
- **Pure procedural justice** suspends a prior criterion of just shares. **Ambedkar** has a prior criterion: end of untouchability, end of graded inequality, effective equal citizenship.
- Reservations look 'patterned' in **Nozick**'s hostile sense. For **Ambedkar** they are corrective of a structural wrong, closer to rectification than to a lottery.
- **Rawls** can support fair equality of opportunity and even some affirmative action in non-ideal theory. He does not start from caste as the central injustice.
- Egalitarian justice in **Ambedkar** is status equality plus material access. Justice as fairness is lexical liberties first, then distribution regulated by the difference principle.

Comment, not a false choice

- Both oppose natural hierarchy and both use the state. The comment is about starting point and metric.
- Indian courts after **Indra Sawhney (1992)** and the 103rd Amendment's EWS debate show the tension: group remedy versus a Rawlsian-looking income criterion.
- **Kesavananda** keeps both dignity and equality inside basic structure, which is more **Ambedkar**'s substance than a pure gamble.
- A fair procedure is not enough where the players are not recognised as players. That is **Ambedkar**'s decisive addition.

Flow diagram

Rawls -> Pure procedural justice
 Rawls -> Veil and two principles
 Ambedkar -> Egalitarian social justice
 Ambedkar -> Annihilation of caste
 Egalitarian social justice -> Status equality in law

Conclusion

Rawls aims at fair terms of social cooperation through a procedure that defines justice. **Ambedkar** aims at an egalitarian social order that must be known and built because caste already defines persons as unequal. Social justice here is substantive equality of status. Justice as fairness is hypothetical pure procedure among equals. India needs both, but it cannot treat the veil as a substitute for **annihilation of caste**.

Facts & figures

Pure procedural justice

Rawls's term for a procedure whose fairness makes the outcome just, without a prior independent criterion of shares.

Annihilation of Caste

Ambedkar's 1936 text treating caste as a religious and social system that reform of a few rules cannot end.

Article 17

Abolishes untouchability; a substantive constitutional end, not a procedure among already equal citizens.

Indra Sawhney (1992)

Upheld OBC reservations with a creamy-layer limit, an Indian debate on group egalitarian justice.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-1/2022/ambedkar-s-idea-of-social-justice-leads-to-egalitarian-justice-as-compared-to-rawls-justice-as-fairness-which-aims-at-the-notion-of-pure-procedural-justice-comment/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com