Equity, Public Administration and Social Justice: A Moral Guideline for Public officials in Bangladesh[*]

Professor Abdun Noor

Abstract

Human society is a relationship of mutual cooperation and exchange where everybody expects that 'justice' should be done to ensure one's due. Therefore, justice is the supreme value of the society. To ensure justice in society, the necessary political institutions that have been evolved in course of time, are the government and administration. Bangladesh, the eastern wing of the former Pakistan, has become an independent nation with the declaration to establish 'social justice' in the new Republic. "Economic and social justice" has been enshrined in its Constitution as one of the four fundamental principles of state policy. Almighty Allah, who has created mankind as His vicegerent on earth, has also ordained mankind to establish Adle (justice) and sent His Apostles from time to time with Books and Balance that men may stand forth in justice. Public officials are obliged to make and implement decisions congruent with public interest. This necessitated a simple but operational articulation of public interest that needs laying the foundation of organizing a just and welfare society. Experts and scholars proposed that the concept of social justice offers much of the operational guidelines to the administrators in formulating decisions for promoting public interest. This article makes a critical survey of the major theories of justice formulated by the Western scholars such as:1) the positivistic approach to justice; 2) the idealistic approach to justice; 3) the utilitarian approach to justice; and 4) the

contractual approach to justice; and collated them with Islamic perspective. Then an attempt has been made to outline a comprehensive operational framework of social action as moral guidelines for policy makers and administrators.

Despite some similarities in defining the concept of social justice, significant difference lies between Western approach and the Islamic approach. Western theories are the product of social reactions and secular in nature. Effectiveness in Western theories is driven by egoistic motive or economic considerations, while justice in Islam is a universal value and Islamic society is required to look beyond economic considerations, and actively works for altruistic pleasure as a measure of spiritual advancement. The normative approach of the dominant Western theories is based on intuitive approach only. On the other hand, the normative approach of Islam is based on Tawhid—spiritual belief and motivation—the belief that Allah (STA), the Creator and Lord of the universe, has commanded the mankind (as His vicegerent) to observe justice (Adle and Ihsan) in society, for failure of which, individuals shall have to account to Him in the 'Day of Judgment'.

Introduction

Ever since men began living in society, thinkers and philosophers aimed at defining the goal of human beings to attain in order to lead a good life. Human society is basically a relationship of mutual co-operation and exchange (Aristotle, Al-Farabi). In this relationship, everybody expects that 'justice' should be done to ensure one's due. Therefore, justice is the supreme value of the society. To ensure justice in society, the necessary political institutions that have been evolved in course of time, are the government and administration. Therefore, "justice is the end of government," wrote the American Founding Fathers while framing the Constitution of independent America[1]. In the contemporary world, justice seems to has again become a universal slogan. The "New World Order" demand of the Non-Aligned Movement, the "New Economic Order," the "New Political Science", and the "New Public Administration" movements of the recent times, are all directed towards establishing justice in society. Although everybody hold identical view regarding the desirability of establishing justice in the society, there is great divergent of views in determining the exact meaning and operational framework of the concept. The million dollar question is,

why should the public officials in Bangladesh need to be concerned about equity and social justice? Public officials are to organize their behaviour within the legal framework and constitutional principles in order to realize the objectives of the government. From this perspective,

what constitutional and moral obligations would propel the civil servants in Bangladesh to be concerned with social justice? The following are the reasons:

1. One of the three goals of Bangladesh that has been fixed in our *Declaration of Independence*, is the establishment of social justice (*The Declaration of Independence*, April, 10,1970)[2]. Every year, the Finance Minister concludes his budget speech with a hope of establishing justice in the country.

2. Economic and Social Justice is one of the four fundamental principles of state policy as enshrined in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh [*Article-8(1)*].

3. Social equity has been proposed as a basic operational guideline for public administrators by the New Public Administration (NPA) movement[3] ·Equity is the synonym of justice. According to *Black's Law Dictionary*, equity denotes the spirit and the habit of fairness, justness, and right dealing which would regulate the intercourse of men with men to render to every man his due. And the most promising ethical paradigm of social equity is the concept of social justice.

4. Article-21(2) of the Constitution of Bangladesh states that "every person in the service of the Republic has a duty to strive all times to serve the people", or in other words, the main goal of the civil service is to serve "public interest". Experience has further proved that public officials not only implement government policies and progammes, but are also deeply involved in the formulation of policies which necessitate value judgment. How should they make (discretionary) decisions congruent with "public interest"? There is, therefore, a need for a simple and operational articulation of `public interest that meets the needs in organizing a just and welfare society. Scholars consider that the concept of 'social justice' offers much of the operational guidelines to public administrators in formulating a policy for promoting "public interest" (David K. Hart) [4].

5. "Absolute trust on Almighty Allah" has been enshrined in the Constitution of Bangladesh as the basis of all (governmental) actions [*Article-8(1a)*]. And Almighty Allah, the Creator and Lord of the

universe, has also ordained mankind as His *Khalifa* or vicegerents on earth to establish justice in society (*Al-Qur'an*, 38:26). In the Holy *Qur'an* and in the life and behaviour of His Messengers, an

overriding importance has been given to *Adle* or justice after *Tawhid*. Allah says:

> "*We sent aforetime Our Apostles with signs and sent down with them The Book and Balance* (of right and wrong), *that men may stand forth in justice...*" (*Sura Hadid*, 57:25).

Major Western Theories of Social Justice

The following discussion makes a critical survey of the major theories of social justice formulated by Western scholars and collated them with Islamic perspective of *Adle* (justice). Then an attempt has been made to outline a comprehensive operational framework of social justice as moral guidelines for administrative decisions.

1. The Positivistic Approach to Justice

The Positivist School of jurisprudence accepts "law" as the standard of justice. One of the most ancient governmental functions is the settling of disputes between the members of a society. And the most permanent method developed to fulfill this task is juridical. Hence the lawyers and judges associated with the judiciary prefer to define justice as the "rule of law", which, according to Carl J. Friedrick purports "to ensure that all persons are put in a position to get what they are entitled to under the law" [5].

Criticism: In this approach, due consideration has not been given to the basis or justification of the law. The South African black majority were discriminated by the white minority according to the policy of *Apartheid* sanctioned by law, which itself was unjust from the moral point of view. In other words, morality also provides an important justification to all deliberate human actions and social institutions.

2. The Idealistic Approach to Justice

The Idealistic conception of justice provides a standard of distribution. It determines the share of different individuals in the distribution aspect of society.

Plato

Plato (427-347 BC), one of the forerunners of this approach, considered justice as "giving to every man his due"[6]. The essence of the Platonic

conception of justice is that man's due is naturally ordained. Three basic forces, as Plato contends, motivate men in the society. These are the forces of desire or appetite, forces of spirit or courage, and forces of reason or wisdom. According to these innate potentialities of men, Plato divided the entire society into three distinct classes viz., 1) the ruling class of philosopher-kings having the quality of reasons ; 2) the soldier-guardians having the quality of courage ; and 3) the class of producers having appetite as the dominating impulse. Plato's conception of justice is achieved when each class of the society performs its specific duties for which it is best fitted by nature and capacity without interfering with the duties of others. Social justice is achieved when all classes perform their duties in union. In this way, harmony and peace prevail in the society.

Criticism: This approach is too simplistic and scorned democratic values.

Aristotle

Aristotle (384-322 BC), a great disciple of Plato on the other hand, introduced 'contribution' as the basis of distribution. According to Aristotle, justice means ensuring everybody his reward (i.e., money, honour, job and distinction etc.) in proportion to his contribution to society[7]. Aristotle further says that 'corrective justice' comes into operation when the standard created by 'distributive justice' is undermined. It restores proportional equality by a remedial method.

Criticism: Aristotle's concept of justice did not take into consideration the condition of non-citizen slaves who contributed enormously to production and services. Furthermore, what would be the condition of those unfortunates in society (i.e., old, sick and disabled etc.) who cannot or are not in a position to contribute? The distribution theory of Aristotle is silent on this issue. "In a good (or just) society", says Rashdall, "...a lame man, however unworthy he is or however little he is, able to do good for common men, should he be provided with an artificial leg"[8]. So, there are other considerations in justice than the mere contribution to increasing social goods.

3) The Utilitarian Approach to Justice

The utilitarian view of justice emphasizes maximization of satisfaction for the society as a whole. It is an aggregative theory. It tells us to perform such actions as will produce the greatest sum of happiness for all. Jeremy Bentham, Adam Smith, David Hume and John Stuart Mill are the pioneers of this theory known as utilitarianism [9].

The core principle of utilitarianism is that a public policy will be in the public interest provided the policy increases the net balance of social satisfaction summed over all the individuals belonging to a society. In other words, if a public policy makes everybody or the whole society slightly better off, even if some individuals are left slightly worse off in other ways as a result of that policy, then the policy is just.

Criticism: The distributive character of justice which encompasses that each individual should receive his due cannot be accommodated into this theory. It holds that the greatest happiness is to be achieved for the greatest number, not the same happiness for each and every member of the society.

4. The Contractual Theory of Justice

As an alternative to the traditional theories of justice, specially to remedy the deficiencies of utilitarianism, John Rawls developed a contractual theory of justice by using the notion of fairness as a basis for his analysis.

The aim of Rawls is to elucidate a natural situation in which all would agree to a set of principles of justice that would make the life of all in the society peaceful and advantageous. His theory depicts a hypothetical social structure where the basic rights and liberties of all are upheld in an equal manner, and at the same time the natural inequalities of men are regulated in such a manner that would benefit all, especially the least advantaged people in the society. The twin principles of justice as enunciated by John Rawls are as follows :

1. Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others.

2. Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged; and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity [10].

Criticism: Although the 'difference principle' of John Rawls has a strong intuitive appeal, what is the motivation by which the naturally gifted people will sacrifice for improving the conditions of the least advantaged ones in the society? The Rawlsian theory does not provide any answer to this question. Moreover, there is nothing in these two principles which directly prescribes how wealth and other goods should he distributed among persons. However, despite all these criticisms, it

must be admitted that Rawls has presented before us a variation on a well-established theme of social concern.

Characteristics of Social Justice Drawn from the Major Western Theories

It appears from the above discussion that none of the systematic theories of justice, examined here, is found satisfactory. They, however, provide a framework of social actions which has the following characteristics:

1. Justice means ensuring everybody his due ;

2. One's due would be determined by the amount of contribution he makes to the society;

3. Justice demands a situation where everybody is provided with equal liberty and social opportunity; and

4. In a just society, natural inequalities of men are to be regulated for the benefit of the least advantaged ones.

The above framework of justice, however, suffers from the following limitations:

1. If justice means giving everybody his due based on his contribution, then what would be the condition of those unfortunates in the society (i.e. sick, old, disabled) who cannot or are not in a position to contribute? The dominant theories do not provide any answer to this question.

2. In an unequal society where distribution is made on the basis of one's contribution, there remains a possibility of concentration of wealth into a few hands who control productive assets like land, capital, etc; and

3. Finally, what would motivate the better-off people in the society to sacrifice for the betterment of the least advantaged? Moreover, the psychological or spiritual aspect of individual social behaviour has not been taken into consideration in Western theories.

Taking into consideration these limitations of the dominant theories, and our constitutional principle of "Absolute trust on Almighty Allah", an attempt has been made in the latter part of this paper to provide a broader framework of social justice drawn from Islamic perspective.

Social Justice in Islam

Islam is the combination of a belief in Allah as the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and a code of human behavior based on total submission to His Will. The Will of Allah has been expressed in the Holy *Qur'an* which has ably been demonstrated through the life and works of the final Messenger Muhammad-bin-Abdullah *(pbuh)* Thus the *Qur'an*, the Message of Allah together with the *Sunnah* (words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad *pbuh*), formed the basic code or guidelines for the whole of mankind in their drive towards a just and welfare society. In the Holy *Qur'an*, Allah says that "He has created mankind to be His *Khalifa* (Vicegerent) on this earth" (35:39). What is the specific mission of man on this planet? The *Qur'an* categorically states that as the vicegerent of Allah, it is the responsibility of man to establish '*Adle*' or Justice in society. Allah says:

> *"0 David! We did indeed make thee a vicegerent on earth; so judge thou between men in truth (and justice) ; Nor follow thou the lusts (of thy heart), for they will mislead thee from the path of God ; for those who wander astray from the path of God is a penalty grievous, for that they forget the Day of Account (38:26);*
> *"O ye, Children of Adam! . . Say: My Lord hath commanded justice" (7:27-29) ;*
> *"Allah commands justice and welfare to mankind" (l6:90); and*
> *"Allah doth command you to render back your trust to those to whom they are due; and when ye judge between man and man that ye judge with justice" (4:58).*

It has been recorded that "Allah has, from time to time, sent His Messengers with Scriptures (the criterion of right and wrong) so that mankind may observe justice in the society" (*Al-Qur'an*, 57:25). Therefore, justice in Islam is not merely a moral value. It is a religious virtue/obligation and an essential principle of social management. According to the Holy *Qur'an*, the Prophet Muhammad *(pbuh)* was especially commissioned by Allah to establish justice in society (besides inviting people towards the way of Allah) (42:15). In order to fulfil this mission, Muhammad *(pbuh)* was found to have organised the Jews, the Christians, the ldeolators and the Muslims of Madina into an *Ummah* (Nation) through a written charter, which is known in the history as the first constitutional government in the world [11]. Under that charter (*Charter of Madina*) all sorts of religious freedom and citizen rights were ensured for the different communities living in Madina on an equal

footing, and Prophet Muhammad *(pbuh)* was made the chief justice for arbitration.

The fundamental principle that guided the social formation of Madina was 'equality' of men. The Prophet Muhammad *(pbuh)* categorically denied any ascriptive criterion for classifying the society and admonished his citizen that "all people are the same as the teeth of a comb, they came from Adam, and Adam is created from dust; there is no privilege for an Arab over a non-Arab, nor a white over a black ...". The plural but integrated society of Madina under the Prophet *(pbuh)*, ultimately developed into a full-fledged state[12] in the modern sense, where the principles of liberty, equality and social justice found their fullest manifestation under an Islamic system of government and administration[13].

In a society where the rights and liberties of individuals are ensured on an equal footing, Islam declares that man's due or reward is determined by the amount of contribution he makes to the common good. In the Holy *Qur'an*, Allah has categorically stated:

"*And withhold not things justly due to man*" (26:183); and

"*Man can have nothing but what he strives for*" (53:39).

This principle is more or less akin to Aristotle's theory of 'distributive justice'. Side-by-side, Islam also advocates the creation of honorable living for those unfortunates in the society (i.e., disabled, sick, old, orphans, destitute, etc.) who are unable to participate in productive activities. That is why, the term *adle* has been combined in the Holy *Qur'an* with *ihsan* when Allah says:

"*Allah commands Adle and Ihsan to mankind*" (16:90); and

"*...and do good* [unto others] *as God has done good unto thee...*"(28:77).

Adle means justice and *Ihsan* is something beyond justice. It means giving or doing something beneficial for others in compassion. The Prophet *(pbuh)* further said that: "Every child of Adam has got a right over three things— a piece of bread to meet his hunger, a piece of cloth to cover his/her body and a house to live in" (*Tirmizi*).To meet such a huge expenditure on social security/welfare programmes, Islam has made institutional provisions (i.e., *Zakat*, *Sadaqa* etc.) to raise funds through

taxing the affluents in society. Allah says: "*And in their wealth and possessions* (was remembered) *the rights of the needy*" (51:19; 70:24-25). Besides *zakat*(a fixed and obligatory payment), the well-off people in society have been encouraged in Islam to sacrifice a little for their fellows, needy relatives and poor neighbors through *sadaqah* (unfixed alms to be offered occasionally) and various other types of transfer payments as religious virtue [14]. That is why, Islam urges the people to nurture the Godly qualities of mutual love and co-operation, sympathy and affection, etc. among themselves. Similar to John Rawls' 'difference principle', Islam considers the natural inequalities of men as natural advantages. To establish justice in society, Islam advocates the need for a rational plan to regulate these natural advantages for the benefit of the whole society, specially the less advantaged ones. In the Holy *Qur'an*, Allah (*STA*) says:

"*It is We Who portion out between them their livelihood in the life of this world. And We raise some of them above others in ranks (power, status or riches), so that some may command work from others*" (43:32) ; and

"*It is He Who hath made you (His) vicegerents, inheritors of the earth, He hath raised you in ranks, some above others ; that he may try you in the gifts He hath given you*" (6:165).

Another important characteristic of social justice in Islam, is that Islam prohibits concentration of wealth in a few hands (Law of inheritance for example,incentive for investment,prohibition against hoarding etc.) and advocates necessary measures to minimise the cleavage between the advantaged and the least advantaged in society. Islam also prescribes various taxes and transfer payments (*Zakat*, *Sadaqa* etc.) in order to redistribute resources from the rich to the poor. In lslam, state intervention is a must, whereas state intervention is minimum in the Western approach. Islam, therefore, provides an elaborate programme to safeguard the disadvantaged from the oppression and exploitation by those who hold worldly power and wealth.

One fundamental question often raised in society is, who from among the people should be entrusted to formulate and implement necessary social policies and programmes? Here comes the question of politics and government. According to Islam, there cannot be any distinction

between man and man because all are the children of Adam. Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) emphatically declared that anybody in the society (Who is obedient to Allah and having the necessary qualities of 'honesty', 'integrity' and 'commitment to justice'), even the black domestic servant, has got an equal right to participate in governing the society, and the people have been advised to remain obedient to the leader as long as he is guided by the agreed principles (*Bukhari, Muslim*).

In this way, Islam has synchronised individual rights with the collective welfare of the community in establishing a just and welfare society. Justice in Islam, is, therefore a comprehensive programme where the rights as well as obligations of the people in matters of formulation and implementation of social policies and in the production and distribution of social goods have been recognised on the basis of human equality. It is a 'package programme' consisting of the following interrelated and mutually supportive activities:

1. Provision of fundamental rights and liberties for all based on human equality;
2. Ensuring everybody his/her due or reward based on his/her contribution;
3. Economic and social security for the poor and disabled;
4. Fulfillment of basic needs (such as food, clothing, shelter, education, etc.) of the individuals;
5. Redistribution of resources in order to eliminate poverty and minimise the gap between the rich and the poor; and
6. Equal opportunity for all to participate in government.

Moreover, there would be an institution of *Hisba* for supervision of economy to ensure justice and stop unjust behavior of market manipulators.

Implementation of Social Justice

Talcott Parsons identified four necessary characteristics of any social action. These are: a goal, a system of motivation, a situation, and normative regulations. Parsons also described a cultural system comprising values and beliefs which affect the behaviour of the individuals in society [15]. Here the goal set by Islam is the establishment of a just and welfare society (16:90) ; the well-off people have been motivated to sacrifice a little from their possessions for the poor and

needy for which they have been assured reward in this world and the life hereafter (51:19); a *shura* based or participatory political system (42:38); an honest leadership devoted to Islam (36:21); the individuals valuing both spiritual and economic outcomes comprise the situation (2:201) ; and finally, the *Qur'an*, and the *Sunnah* constitute the normative regulations and cultural basis (4:105 ; 59:7). Islam provides motivation to mankind as reflected in the following verse of the Holy *Qur'an* where Allah says:

Ukhrizat linnaas, which means, 'I have raised you for the welfare of mankind' (3:110). In different places in the Holy *Qur'an*, He has encouraged mankind to do *amalus saleh* or virtuous deeds. Allah says:

> "*Those who have faith (in Allah) and do righteous deeds, they are the best of creatures, their reward is with Allah: Gardens of Eternity beneath which rivers flow, they will dwell therein for ever*" (98:7-8; also see 22:14, 23) ;

These verses of the Holy *Qur'an* and an endless list of Prophetic *Sunnah* (Traditions) inspire mankind to do virtuous deeds which go towards establishing a just and welfare society in this world as well as earning adequate rewards in the life hereafter.

Social justice in Islam is neither a hypothetical situation, nor it is confined to mere ideals. Rendering of justice is considered in Islam as *ibadah*— a form of prayer. The above-mentioned characteristics of justice found their fullest manifestation in the plural society of Madina founded by Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) during the 7th Century AD, and ruled by his first four successors (*Khulafa'-e-Rashedin*) under an Islamic system of social governance [16].

General Feature of Social Justice and Mechanism of Implementation

From the above survey of the major Western theories and Islam, certain general features of social justice and the mechanism of their implementation may be drawn, and these have been presented in the following Table.

Table 1
Social Justice: Major Features and Mechanism of Implementation

Theories	Major Features	Mechanism of Implementation
The Positivistic Approach	Rule of Law	Parliament, Acts, Organisations.
The Idealistic Approach	Giving every man his due	Ideal State: Education and the rule of the Philosopher kings.
The Utilitarian Approach	Maximising satisfaction	Public policies for improving the lot of the majority.
The Contractual Approach	Regulation of natural inequalities to benefit the least advantaged	Public policies tilted towards the betterment of the lot of the disadvantaged
Islamic Approach	Development with minimizing inequalities among all sections of population*.	Hisba of market, freedom of enterprise, *Zakat, sadaqa etc*.

Note:* Analysis shows that this feature of social justice incorporates with its fold John Rawls' "difference principle", and Islamic principles of 'fulfillment of basic needs of the individuals'; 'economic and social security for the poor and disabled'; and 'redistribution of resources in order to eliminate poverty and minimize the gap between the rich and the poor'. For further details, see David Miller, *Social Justice* (Oxford: Clarendon Presss, 1976), pp. 40-57, 336-344 and Abdun Noor, *Social Justice in Bangladesh: An Islamic Perspective* (Chittagong: Liberty Forum, 1991, pp. 21-33) and *Social Justice And Human Development*(Dhaka:Adorn Publication,2007).

The above Table further shows that what Islam had prescribed almost fourteen hundred years ago, has almost been reiterated by the contemporary researchers in explaining the concept of social justice. However, one significant difference that lies between the two approaches is that the Western theories are secular in nature. Effectiveness in Western theories is driven by egoistic motives or economic considerations while an Islamic society is required to look beyond such considerations, and actively work for altruistic pleasure as a measure of spiritual advancement. Here economic considerations are guided by moral and ethical standards found in the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* that lead to an individual's spiritual growth.

The normative approach of the dominant theories is based on intuitive appeal only. On the other hand, the normative approach of Islam is based on *Tawhid*--spiritual belief and motivation—the belief that Allah, the Creator and Lord of the universe. Allah has commanded mankind (as His vicegerents) to observe justice (*Adle* and *Ihsan*) in society for which individuals shall have to account to Him in the 'Day of judgement'. Islam further emphasises that on the basis of the evaluation of one's intentions and actions, he/she will be rewarded or punished both in this life and the life hereafter.

Another important question which is often raised is, what would be the treatment of non-Muslims in the provision of social justice in Islam? As an answer to this, it would be sufficient to say that social justice as prescribed by Islam, is not confined to Muslims only. These are meant for all mankind. In the Holy *Qur'an*, Allah has always addressed His vicegerents as "O! Children of Adam', 'O! Mankind', 'O! Believers', etc., and the Prophet (*pbuh*) has been adjoined as the *RahmatulliI a'lamin*, which means: "We sent thee not, but as mercy for all creatures" (21:107). This has ably been demonstrated in the plural society of Madina founded by him. Montgomery Watt in his book entitled *The Majesty That Was ISLAM* (1974) has given eloquent illustration to the above truth [17].

Concluding Remarks

Studies on governance have long tried to determine the appropriate guidelines for public bureaucrats to make and implement their decisions congruent with public interest. This necessitated a simple but operational articulation of public interest that meets laying the foundation of organizing a just and welfare society. It has been proposed that the concept of 'social justice' offers much of the operational guidelines to the public administrators in making decisions for promoting public interest. Most of the moral philosophers hold identical view regarding the desirability of establishing justice in the society, though they differ greatly in determining the actual meaning and definition of the concept. In this paper, the dominant Western theories of justice have been collated with Islamic perspective and then attempt has been made to outline a common operational framework of social action.

Despite some similarities in defining the concept of social justice, significant differences lie between the Western approaches and Islamic

approach. The Western theories are secular in nature and are concerned only with the mundane life. Effectiveness in Western theories is driven by egoistic motives or economic considerations, while an Islamic society is required to look beyond such considerations, and actively works for altruistic pleasure as a measure of spiritual advancement. Good life in Islam is concerned not only with the worldly life, but also the life hereafter. Here economic considerations are guided by moral and ethical standards prescribed in the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah* that lead to an individuals's spiritual growth and God's satisfaction. The normative approach of the dominant theories, is based on intuitive appeal only. On the other hand, the normative approach of Islam, is based on spiritual belief and motivation-the belief that Allah, the Creator and Lord of the universe, has commanded mankind (as His vicegerents) to observe justice (*Adle* and *Ihsan*) in society. For this, individuals shall have to be accountable to the supreme Lord of the universe in the 'Day of Judgment.

Social justice in Islam is neither a hypothetical situation nor it is confined to mere ideals. The supra characteristics of justice found their fullest manifestation in the plural society of Madina founded by Prophet Muhammed (*pbuh*) during the 7th century AD, and ruled by his first four successors (*Khulafa'-e-Ra'shedin*) under an Islamic system of governance. However, in the contemporary societies certain pre-conditions need to be fulfilled in order to Islamic prescriptions of social justice to success. These are a) a conducive social environment where individuals value both spiritual and material goods; b) a participatory governance system; and c) an honest and God-fearing leadership. ❏

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