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## Social Justice Questionnaire: Responses

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While developing this Special Issue on Social Justice (SJ), we became increasingly aware that even though SJ claims a global discourse, the term is largely embedded with academic erudition. Underneath the theoretical and policy aspect of SJ lies the very real, painfully visceral human experiences of injustices, leading to varying articulations of what SJ means to people in different socio-economic, politico-cultural contexts. The Issue's attempt to present global perspectives and personal narratives on the problem of SJ would remain incomplete if its explorations do not go beyond the confines of the academic community and conventional templates of academic research practices. While *LLIDS* attempts to break away from the latter and create an alternative space through its Forum section, the very nature of the topic of SJ and its real-time implications demand a more personal and diversified approach. The idea of the questionnaire then was an attempt to innovate a writing format by way of including perspectives of people from all walks of life on their lived experiences of discriminations and injustices as well as their expectations from Justice.

The responses to this questionnaire present a set of raw confessions and ruminations on a range of injustices that people live through every day. The responders differ widely in their contexts as it relates to their geographies, professions, communities, social classes, age, gender, sexuality, race, caste, religion, etc., and this difference can be seen in their outlooks as well. What follows is a compilation of contradicting ideas about what SJ means, ranging from descriptive understanding of the concept to frustrated grievances of its failures, to hopeful expectations from one's society. Varied and conflicting as the responses may appear, they still present only a sliver of the social injustices perpetrated in the world. Despite our attempts to open up the questionnaire to other languages, this exercise remains limited to the English-speaking groups given the digital form of the survey.

By acknowledging the multifarious observations on social (in)justice from people across the globe—experiential and visceral, stripped of theory and analysis—these responses act as a preface to the Research Papers and Forum sections of this Special Issue. An interesting question that came up from one of the responders of the questionnaire upon reading the compiled responses was: “It seems to me there is an agreement on social justice as a goal, but divergence in how to achieve it. What means

are necessary to achieve the end goal?” We are afraid that this Issue will not be able to answer this. The only thing then we can do, as Prof. James Baumlin put in an email to us, “is not to debate or to give or withhold assent, but to bear witness. If each [response] had been offered in living conversation, ‘I hear you (and I see you)’ would be a humane reply.” We hope that a reflection on the spectrum and complexity of issues voiced within and beyond the Questionnaire evoke an understanding towards tolerance and inclusivity in us, its readers. As we read through these responses, let us take a moment to reflect: what is at stake when we raise questions on the problem of Social Justice?

## What is Social Justice?

- “ For me, social justice is when an individual feels secure about her/his rights. The person must have the protection of the right to flourish, develop, and fulfil dreams and aspirations.
- Parveen Kumari, Assistant Professor, India
- “ I see social justice as the natural order of things, as balance. When we check our ego and find within ourselves capacity for love and compassion, we practice social justice. When we value each member of the ecosystem and encourage diversity to happen, we practice social justice. Social justice means never losing hope, that we can do better, that we can create abundance and ensure everyone has access to it.
- Maddy Grzybowski, Social Worker, Czech Republic
- “ A way to right many of the historically lopsided relations of power currently in the world, which place certain groups of people at a serious disadvantage.
- Agostinho Pinnock, GeoHumanities Lecturer, United Kingdom
- “ Social justice is the state of equity in social relations and material welfare including along axes of race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, and nation of origin (distributive justice). It also is the invocation and capacity to repair past injustices (reparative justice). It also is the capacity of people equally to participate in decision making at local and broader levels of society (procedural justice). It also is the equal representation of subaltern knowledges in public culture (epistemic justice).
- Dana Cloud, Professor of Communication, United States
- “ Social justice means that those who can stand up for, support, and uplift others should do so for those who need it. They should do so not for legal reasons, but because it's the right thing to do, though the law can be a powerful encouragement if utilized properly. Both words are key: the social makes clear that this is not just individual but action on behalf of society while the justice is ethical and can be used both positively and negatively in ways that transcend existing legal systems.
- Jeff Horn, Dean, USA
- “ When everyone is treated humanely, and all voices are equally heard and respected.
- Aida Hass-Wisecup, University Professor (Criminology), United States
- “ Anyone regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, class, religion, or nationality should have access to education, health care, housing, and the freedom to choose occupations. They have the right to protest, to be safe from gun or other violence, racism, or sexism. They also have the right to a political system truly about integrity and not driven by financial interest.

- Cari Carpenter, Professor Emerita, USA
- ““ Equity (meaning the erasure of all forms of discrimination) and multispecies kinship, or in other words, unprivileged multiplicity, that is social justice for me.
  - Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi, PhD candidate in English Studies, Greece
- ““ Principles for organizing society in a fair and equitable manner.
  - Hon Fai Chen, Professor, Hong Kong
- ““ Social Justice for me is the equitable distribution of resources and equal access to those resources for each member of the society with diverse ethnic, race and geographic identity.
  - Tirupati Pariyar, Program Manager at Samata Foundation, Nepal
- ““ Social Justice, for me, is a goal—a process and action—in which we celebrate differences and not belittle or discriminate against identities that have historically been marginalized.
  - Amy Aldridge, University Administrator, USA
- ““ Social justice, in my view, entails ensuring justice for every individual, regardless of gender, class, or other social distinctions. This principle seeks to promote fairness in the distribution of opportunities and privileges, as well as recognize and protect individual rights.
  - Biswarup Das, PhD, India
- ““ Ensuring equity and dignity for all individuals in society is social justice.
  - Sayan Lodh, PhD candidate in History, India
- ““ Equal opportunities for all, regardless of class, gender, or differences. The right to be heard and seen as equal—no less than a man or a woman from a more privileged background.
  - Ayesha Latif, Teacher/Student/Mother, Pakistan
- ““ Social justice means structuring societal systems to provide fair and equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background. It is grounded in the belief that all people have inherent, God-given value and dignity. This perspective emphasizes justice as a reflection of equality under God, not just societal norms, and calls for systems to operate in ways that honor this truth.
  - Toby Sommer, LMCS Pastor, USA
- ““ Social justice to me has been made into something it was never intended to be. It was supposed to be a voice for all people: one that was equally heard no matter their

formal place in the socioeconomic structure. Now, I feel it has been weaponized against anyone with a traditional, conservative voice. I recognize that social justice is important to society, but being hateful towards someone because their opinion is different does not contribute to the very principles social justice stands for.

– Jeremy Roe, Director of Enterprise Fraud at Dickinson Financial, United States

“ Social Justice was a great concept until exploited by the left to disparage hard working people. Growing up in the Midwest, everyone had the opportunities to excel and succeed if you’re willing to put in the work. Now it seems that the cries of Social Injustice come mainly from those who want everything without putting in the work. To me, it is a crutch by those who want the government to provide at the expense of others.

– Scott Burrelsman, United States

“ Social justice in India is to give unlimited powers, quotas, freebies, scholarship, employment, opportunities, reservation, etc., to some numerical strong castes who are useful in elections as radical and polarized vote banks.

– Yogesh Kumar Sharma, Professor (Retired), India

“ Equality for all whether it’s work or housing or income; I don’t agree with any of that, there’s laws in place in our country that make it unlawful but easy to discriminate against someone.

– Riley Gilmore, Entrepreneur Taxidermist, North America

“ A person should be given what they are qualified for. They should not be just given it because of their race or sex. It should be given to you for your qualifications.

– William Ghirardi, Apartment Maintenance, United States

## According to you, what are the biggest problems in your society today?

“ People have reduced agency to live in the world we envision, both because of structural limitations to our power, but also because we give up our agency voluntarily and neglect to create personal, community and societal visions. Shopping, scrolling, gaming, grooming, consuming—all divert our attention and drain our agency. Anxiety and fear drive responsiveness rather than love. We increasingly lack the skills to collaborate with others, to negotiate difficult conversations, to govern ourselves. We need to reclaim these skills and commit our time to envisioning our world if we want to be free and exercise our personal power to change the structure of the society we live within.

– Michelle Miller, Researcher on food systems, USA

“ In our society we don't think as a citizen, rather we (most of the people) put our class, religion, caste, etc., above our rights and duties of a citizen.

It happens very often that whenever there is a problem around nobody tries to solve it positively or nobody ever takes any initiative. For example, in my colony if the drainage is overflowing, nobody wants to solve this problem positively, rather we choose to ignore it by thinking that anybody else will do it.

Even I don't take initiative because in our education system it was never taught to us. I mean how to solve practical problems is never part of our education system.

– Surya Pratap, Learner, India

“ Expectations to conduct oneself in a manner which is driven by age old traditional and conventional mindset. Society doesn't give the freedom to experience and try new things because of fear of failure.

1. No counselling for a kid when attaining maturity, to decide the next course of action in education, physical activities or lets say career. It's not a regular practice where one can feel heard. It's much like following the pack at the moment, just because “kuch krke dikhana hai.”<sup>1</sup>
2. Life Orientation: No education or discussion about how one should conduct him/herself at an adolescence age. Discussions about issues in society, crime, drugs, touch, sex, family. It has to be voiced out at a certain age so that it does not become a taboo or an uncomfortable conversation in future life.
3. Under age kids working at households, because of schools not providing service that they should at ground level.
4. Lack of NGO's and support to NGO's.

– Shreeyansh, Managing Director at Smart Creation, India

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<sup>1</sup>Editor's Note: “kuch krke dikhana hai” is a colloquial phrase in Hindi language. It translates to “I have to prove myself.”

- “ Intolerance has replaced tolerance.
- Nawazish Ali, PhD Student, China
- “ The biggest problem, according to me, is how intolerant people are to anything that doesn't align with what they believe in, how they're not even open to having a dialogue where there might be a possibility that the conclusion won't be in their favor, or that the conclusion might prove them wrong.
- Sonali, PhD Scholar, India
- “ Issues of caste discrimination, oppression of religious minorities as well as the issues of women's safety comprise some of the major social problems in Indian society today.
- The pandemic has exacerbated certain social problems. For Instance, the widening of the class divide, and the effects of the pandemic are being felt unequally by those in marginalised groups.
- Swarnika Ahuja, Assistant Professor, India
- “ I would like for more people to become conversant and comfortable discussing identities and Intersectionality.
- Amy Aldridge, University Administrator, USA
- “ Exclusion of certain groups because of race, class, gender (gender inequality and pay gap), inaccessibility to public health and education, environmental pollution and disrespect towards others specially.
- Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi, PhD candidate in English Studies, Greece
- “ For me, the biggest problem in our society is the staggering inequity in opportunities. A person's entire life trajectory is decided the moment they are born—defined by who their parents are, their caste, religion, skin colour, or even just the country they happen to be born in. This lottery of birth seals one's fate long before any merit can be shown. For many, especially those born without privilege, upward mobility is nearly impossible. Even access to justice—supposedly a universal right—is unequally distributed along these same lines of identity.
- The pattern of inequality is no longer confined to specific geographies or histories. It is global. From systemic racism in the West to caste hierarchies in South Asia, from economic exclusion in the Global South to the tokenism of diversity elsewhere—structural inequality is everywhere, morphing to fit local contexts but always serving the same function: to keep power concentrated and inaccessible to most.
- Deb Datta, Retired, India
- “ In this global democratic age, most of the situation still seems unresolved as worldwide conflicts surge in different parts of the world. From the Ukraine-Russia

war to the Hamas and Israel war. Moreover, the religious hegemony seen in the South Asian continent produced by certain political parties' fanatic religion-based politics has created problems for minorities, Dalits, and Adivasis, or tribal groups.

For me, at present, global social justice for tribal groups and Adivasis in the Indian subcontinent has become crucial. The way we have experienced the violence and atrocities being carried out upon the Adivasi and Dalit groups in the Indian subcontinent remains beyond our expectations of the practice of democratic values. Such treatments have led to the exclusion of members of Dalits and Adivasis from the job sectors, be it private or government. Today the Hindutva has increased the violence against those Dalits who are marginalized and sociopolitically oppressed in the political arena.

If you are an educated person from a tribal group, you realize the institutional oppression carried out systematically against such groups. However, if you are an illiterate Adivasi or Dalit, you aren't even going to realize how you have been suppressed by racial injustice and casteism. Even if you are capable, you are not respected, listened to, or consulted just because you belong to a certain caste and community. Being born as an Adivasi and Dalit is the biggest sin you face if you are born in a Hindu society in the Indian subcontinent. Even today the social institutions do not include people from our groups unless we need to be surveyed by some international agencies.

– Mohan Dangaura, Teacher, Nepal

“A lot of women nowadays are seen as less than or not “strong” enough to run for president, make their own decisions, and what we know about our own bodies.

– Megan Skaggs, USA

“Justice is often mistaken as “equality,” and running behind equal rights creates the sense of “binary oppositions” at vivid social levels—gender, religion, class or caste.

– Antra Mani, PhD Scholar, India

“In contemporary India, social justice appears to be skewed toward certain groups, as evident in cases like Atul Subhas's. To genuinely achieve social justice, a society must authentically commit to the principles of equality and fairness, rather than merely paying lip service to them. In India, the disparity between the ideal of social justice and its implementation reveals a lack of authenticity in societal structures. This disparity reflects, to use Jean-Paul Sartre's term, a form of collective “bad faith,” where Indian society avoids confronting the contradictions between its stated values and actual practices.

– Biswarup Das, PhD, India

“Less qualified and less meritorious candidates are selected from radical groups. We have to live under fear due to the misuse of the draconian laws to protect the so called oppressed groups and castes.

– Yogesh Kumar Sharma, Professor (Retired), India

- “ Many companies are fleeing DEI policies. This will adversely affect the workforce and perpetuate societal inequalities.
- Carlton Funderburke, Pastor, United States
- “ Ecological destruction and pollution, gun violence, racism, sexism, and other discrimination against the disadvantaged and oppression of the working class by the wealthy.
- Cari Carpenter, Professor Emerita, USA
- “ Among many other boiling issues, one major issue is how India is full of qualified individuals but no jobs. Many colleges and universities (at least in Mumbai) offer jobs like Assistant Professor only Clock Hour Basis.
- Smita Vivek Jakkani, Independent Researcher, Academic and Creative Writer, India
- “ It seems to me that one of the biggest social problems is lack of sanitation in public areas.
- Isha Rohatgi, Editorial Assistant, India
- “ The biggest problems in achieving social justice in India today are the flawed laws and the overburdened judiciary. Cases sometimes take years to reach a conclusion.
- Sayan Lodh, PhD candidate in History, India
- “ I believe there is a lot of work to do to ensure complete and equal social justice for the entire human race. Due to the fact that ideologies of white vs. Black, American vs. “Mexican,” rich vs. poor, are ingrained in our systems of government—whether it be trade, allyship, etc.—or just the fact that many people do not (or just refuse to) understand that country boundaries are made up and “race” is all just based on melanin levels resulting from sun exposure and perhaps diet. And if we continue the patriarchy mindset of “this is men’s work,” etc., we will never have true equity for females in the workforce. I mean, look who we recently elected to be our president in the U.S., for f\*cks sake! The exact opposite of progress towards complete and total social justice has all but reversed course—at least for the time being.
- Jed Long, Student and Library Assistant, United States

## How have you felt wronged by society in your personal life and/or your area of work?

- “ As a woman living in Delhi, one of the unsafest cities in the country for women, I have constantly struggled with safety issues.
- Swarnika Ahuja, Assistant Professor, India
- “ I feel like I’m not the right person to answer this because I’ve had a very fortunate life and living situation, but in society just being a woman I’ve been wronged in many ways because men are the ones wronging us and are usually the ones who find themselves in a situation of power.
- Maddison Sidwell, College Student, America
- “ Primarily, I have experienced discrimination based upon my large body size and sex as a (cis) female in a high-level leadership position.
- Amy Aldridge, University Administrator, USA
- “ I face women’s oppression and anti-queer repression in politics, economics, and culture. I also have been discriminated against for my disability.
- Dana Cloud, Professor of Communication, United States
- “ Oh, definitely! As a gay man, I have had to make myself “straight” when in certain areas/around certain people to produce the expected “societal norms” for how men are supposed to be, especially in my rural Missouri Ozarks hometown. There was a time when I was in college right out of high school in 2015 where I was working in retail, and I was promoted to a customer service advisor. That offer was rescinded, and I was terminated from employment shortly after my disclosure of being gay. While the reason for my rescinded promotion and termination wasn’t officially disclosed, it seems as though this may be more than just sheer coincidence—at least from my perspective.
- Jed Long, Student and Library Assistant, United States
- “ First I was too young then too old, always female and often poor. I ‘pass’ for several ethnic groups and frankly, am sick of ‘passing’ as a protective navigational mechanism in group situations.
- Michelle Miller, Researcher on food systems, USA
- “ Coming from a Dalit community in Nepal, I am perceived as a second class human in the society which has custom tailored my identity constraining my development. It has shaped in a particular way how I should live my life unlike others. I am not liberated.

– Tirupati Pariyar, Program Manager at Samata Foundation, Nepal

“ I as a woman and Dalit have felt wrong in personal as well as public life. My access to sources is limited. As a woman, I am told directly that I cannot achieve certain things. I feel that as a woman I have to resist and am at a loss even if I have competence and skills because of societal limitations and prejudices. Whereas a man has the upper hand on me and is privileged just because he is a man. I have to do certain things in a certain period to have societal validation. When the caste factor is included the situation becomes complex. Directly in words, I am not told to act in a certain way or know my place as it is against the constitution of India. However, indirectly in the public sphere, it is expected of me to do as stated or not to excel as compared to certain individuals as they do not like it. Sometimes certain people had easy access to jobs and certain perks from certain individuals because of their social and economic background. While I have to work hard for the same things even after the hard work I have to look to certain cosmic powers to help.

– Parveen Kumari, Assistant Professor, India

“ I have been the victim of the casteist mentality of society. I still remember doing great in my studies during my MA and MPhil at the Tribhuvan University of Nepal; however, I was never given top grades. I remember how some politician students from the upper castes would manipulate our professors and score 4 GPAs out of 4 even without submitting original term papers and attending classes regularly. I was even denied a teaching job at the central university just for being a Tharu. People in Nepal and India do not even consider Dalits and Adivasis as humans. For the upper caste elites, the marginalized groups are just like dirt or a burden to their superior caste and race.

– Mohan Dangaura, Teacher, Nepal

“ There haven't been any major instances. However, due to my surname, I've been mistaken for a SC/ST/OBC person many times without actually availing of any of the benefits. There have been instances where I've missed out on some opportunities due to my unreserved category.

– Sayan Lodh, PhD candidate in History, India

“ Imagine having to spend 20 years studying and 5 more years to earn a PhD (which includes a heavy monetary investment) only to be offered no more than 10K per month. All the while being taught about how idealistic we must be to change the nation. “Be the change to see the change.” It all sounds good till you don't have enough money or jobs to feed your family.

– Smita Vivek Jakkani, Independent Researcher, Academic and Creative Writer, India

“ As someone of mixed-race heritage, I haven't felt that societal systems were intentionally designed to hold me back. However, I have experienced instances of

racism in the rural South, which were more individual than systemic. On the other hand, my father's experience with redlining in St. Louis in the 1980s revealed a clear example of systemic injustice. Policies like redlining created structural barriers for minority families to achieve homeownership and economic stability, impacting generations.

– Toby Sommer, LMCS Pastor, USA

““ Yes, I feel like they don't give the middle aged white guy in America the same thing that they give people of color, whites, women, we have become the segregated race.

– Riley Gilmore, Entrepreneur Taxidermist, North America

““ Recently, I was dismissed from the DEI committee at my office. I am a white, middle-aged man. I told someone within the committee that I believed we should choose the best candidate for the job, and not select candidates based on their skin tones. One of my colleagues, a black man, began to argue with this statement, stating: Our company needs to be more diverse. To which I replied: If a plane is experiencing extreme turbulence and your life is at risk, do you care about the skin color of the pilot who's trying to keep the plane in the air? No, you just want the most experienced, more assured pilot.” This did not go over well with the committee, but to me, it makes total sense. I want our company to be diverse and represent the American public, but I am not going to hire an unqualified individual just because they present differently than the white majority of this bank.

– Jeremy Roe, Director of Enterprise Fraud at Dickinson Financial, United States

““ For me it has always been question of 'fit,' an issue of belonging, and of a need to understand the way that the (social) game is being played...as these relate to questions of power, how it is being used, and who is using it, and for what ends.

– Cecily Jensen-Clayton, Researcher, Australia

““ I believe society has disproportionately limited the educational and entrepreneurial opportunities in our community.

– Carlton Funderburke, Pastor, United States

““ During my postgraduation, I felt extremely frustrated about the lack of sanitation in my college. Even though my college/university was “very well reputed” but the condition of sanitation was pathetic. During the entire day, washrooms were cleaned just once in the entire day. Sometimes, there used to be no water supply. No handwash/soap, toilet paper and bins. This was the peak of hypocrisy. On one hand, I was reading about feminism but on the other hand I did not have access to basic facility like clean washroom.

– Isha Rohatgi, Editorial Assistant, India

- “ On a personal level, as females, we are struggling to have the same basic human rights as males with the reversal of Roe v. Wade. Not to mention the disparities in pay and opportunities for jobs. We have never had a female president in America. Society has deemed females as less than, undeserving, and incapable to some degree, even when females are highly qualified and educated individuals.
- Tam Moody, Retired, United States
- “ I felt wronged when Trump was reelected. He plans to take away my rights and the rights of the people I love. And it made me look stupid to be a part of the nation that reelected him.
- Sidney Brown, Student, USA
- “ I have never felt wronged by society because I am always hyper aware when things aren't going right and I advocate for myself before feeling taken advantage of.
- Aida Hass-Wisecup, University Professor (Criminology), United States
- “ Whenever I feel that the results I enjoy are not proportional to the efforts I pay.
- Hon Fai Chen, Professor, Hong Kong
- “ In my line of work, I have had to hire less qualified personnel because a “quota” was mandated by upper management.
- Scott Burrelsman, United States
- “ Assumptions about my intellectual abilities in school, endangered constantly by gun and other violence, suffering from sexism as a female. I have witnessed the privilege of white men at work and in the larger community.
- Cari Carpenter, Professor Emerita, USA

**As an instrument of policy, social justice seeks to ensure access, equity, participation, and human rights. Please comment on these principles.**

“ Similar to the way that ideals function in human meaning making, these named principles can and do influence our thinking, behaviours, and social contributions for good ends. However, as personal and social values, the uptake and influence of these principles of access, equity, participation, and human rights very much depend on individual responses to existing conditions. In this post truth era, an era of overwhelming devolution, opportunities exist for reinvention and translation of traditional approaches as these offer opportunities to develop a culture of care for ourselves, others, and our environment. However, enacting social change requires different ways to imagine and think so that the principles of access, equity, participation, and human rights are no longer so tightly constrained by the highly gendered societal system that the English language inculcates.

– Cecily Jensen-Clayton, Researcher, Australia

“ Those are all key and crucial things for our society to strive for, so we can actually begin to say we live in a somewhat egalitarian society - which is something we like to say even today, keeping ourselves oblivious to reality. It is crucial to have access to basic and advanced needs, so we can nourish our bodies and minds, it's crucial we equate human rights to trans rights, queer rights, women's rights, BIPOC rights, all rights, because human rights belong to all humans and we need to start recognizing ourselves in each other again. Participation is crucial to build relationships - with ideas, with people, places, ourselves. We are transforming human beings into stuff and we humanize things that are for our consumption. Guns have more rights than women. We need to think of ourselves, regardless of identity, as a part of a circle, an ecosystem. And we need to start giving back instead of mindless consumption. We also need to take back our power, our autonomy.

– Maddy Grzybowski, Social Worker, Czech Republic

“ These principles are hard to achieve, as the system in which we live creates social inequalities, thus leaving some people unprotected. This allows for a constant cycle of more poor people and more people without opportunities.

– José Duarte, Teacher, Portugal

“ While everything may appear workable on paper, much more needs to be done to address and secure these critical issues. The state must ensure the presence of social justice for its citizens—a concept that is glaringly absent in Pakistan. Ethnic, class, and gender divisions have become increasingly pronounced, and the growing lack of trust in state institutions has turned the very notion of social justice into a mockery.

– Ayesha Latif, Teacher/Student/Mother, Pakistan

“ Awareness and grassroots level changes can only benefit the society as a whole. And it might even take a generation to accept policies and norms, thereafter one can find actual growth and harmony in the society. Social justice is not ingrained in people and we are not taught the same in practice when kids. It’s all literature and not an activity-based learning. Opportunities are plenty even now, but access to those opportunities seems a tremendous task of its own, and probably underlines where social justice is falling behind.

– Shreeyansh, Managing Director at Smart Creation, India

“ I remain skeptical. There is no shortage of policies that claim to promote access, equity, participation, and human rights. But most of these policies are crafted by elites - some of whom may carry the badge of marginalization but are still functioning within elite systems. These frameworks often serve to preserve the status quo, providing just enough relief to prevent unrest but never enough to enable real transformation. It is a carefully managed illusion of justice - hope doled out in small doses to keep the machinery of privilege running smoothly.

– Deb Datta, Retired, India

“ One should not forget that these principles may differ in understanding across different cultures. There is not one universal definition. If so, it often risks becoming Westernized, if I may say so.

– Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi, PhD candidate in English Studies, Greece

“ This is absolutely wrong. Only a few powerful castes and communities are benefited by the instrument of social justice. They grab all the benefits and quotas. All the laws, benefits and privileges on the basis of caste, religion and colours must be scrapped and repealed. Only on the basis of economic conditions benefits should be given.

– Yogesh Kumar Sharma, Professor (Retired), India

“ I think this is a poorly worded question. If the notion of society is built on democratic principles, then equity, human rights and especially access ought to be fundamental principles. History shows that has rarely been the case. Social justice’s intent and a major purpose of the movement is to create, inculcate and implement those principles.

– Jeff Horn, Dean, USA

“ These are the core of the concept of social justice. Policies and practices within government should have the primary goal of protecting the rights of individuals and ensuring that individuals feel well represented. Everyone in society deserves to be seen and heard in a manner that encourages dialogue and acceptance. When people feel protected and respected, they will thrive and refrain from creating factions of withdrawal and hatred.

– Aida Hass-Wisecup, University Professor (Criminology), United States

“ In this state of law, localization of these principles through state mechanisms is imperative while policies and programs are controlled by the hegemony manifested by the privileged groups.

– Tirupati Pariyar, Program Manager at Samata Foundation, Nepal

“ I think that everyone should have the same human rights. Even if the country has rules about everyone’s rights does not mean that everyone is treated the right way. The laws are fake and only protect white or rich, and this is coming from a white woman. People of color are fighting every day in America to live a better life but instead they’re fighting for it. The lgbtq+ community can’t even like who they want without being harassed, like love who you love. It all is just so crazy to me, like why can’t we all live in peace?

– Megan Skaggs, USA

“ By integrating these principles, social justice seeks to dismantle systemic inequalities and create a society where everyone can thrive. It emphasizes that progress is not just about economic growth but about ensuring that all individuals, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds, are included and empowered in every aspect of society.

– Neha Sharma, Research Scholar, India

“ I agree with these principles, even though these terms are highly general and open to interpretations and contestations.

– Hon Fai Chen, Professor, Hong Kong

“ I agree that policies are made to provide equal resources to the “Haves not” groups. Social justice is an instrument of policy but is not necessarily to be attained through policy introduction merely. Proper implementation and revisiting of policy can help to understand to what extent it reaches out to people.

– Akanksha, Visiting Scholar, Leipzig University, Germany

“ I feel like access and equity goes ignored and it’s so important to highlight these, especially how merely access to resources or even information can change one’s life so much.

– Sonali, PhD Scholar, India

“ We are social animals. Everyone wants to belong and to have a purpose in our lifetimes. Social injustices occur because of our tribal tendencies and a fixed distribution of power in laws and institutions and historical legacies of colonialism. These structural inequalities need to be renegotiated to reflect our understanding today. Belonging needs to be renegotiated, too, so that we are not morally

disengaging from one another but practicing curiosity, universal human dignity and appreciation for our differences.

– Michelle Miller, Researcher on food systems, USA

“ We just elected a [white male, convicted of felony election interference 34 times over, and accused] of rape into the White House. He ran against a highly educated, qualified, capable [Black, South Asian] female with an unblemished and remarkable work ethic, who is currently serving as Vice President of the [United States]. He won. I think this says all it needs to about the social justice system we currently face. Until we reach a different outcome of choice between an unqualified, white male and a highly qualified [Black, South Asian] female, we are falling short on all fronts.

– Tam Moody, Retired, United States

“ The question of social justice is irrevocably connected to that of our Fundamental Rights. However, we run into problems when we think of Human Rights as there is no body to grant us those rights. Human Rights awareness can only come through tools of sensitisation such as literature.

– Swarnika Ahuja, Assistant Professor, India

“ I have worked in areas related to EDI—Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. While these are good ideas and practices to take up institutionally, there is a greater challenge with embedding them as an overall culture. This is the part that UK institutions struggle with.

– Agostinho Pinnock, GeoHumanities Lecturer, United Kingdom

“ The basis of Social Justice being the idea that everyone has equal rights and opportunities is a very broad statement. But in fact the biggest issues encompassed by Social Justice has so many factors which can be influenced. The fight for gender equality. Yes, men and women should be treated equally and paid equally, but in the industrial work environment, women are a severe minority. Mostly because they do not want to do this type of work and/or are not physically capable. So should a company HAVE to hire women to do not or are not capable?

– Scott Burrelsman, United States

“ The purpose of social justice policy should be to ensure access, human rights, and equitable participation for all. However, equity must be balanced with meritocracy. While addressing systemic barriers and unconscious biases is critical, defining equity solely as equal outcomes without consideration of merit can undermine the values of excellence and fairness. Diversity should be a byproduct of just systems, not an enforced standard that sacrifices competence or performance in the marketplace or government.

– Toby Sommer, LMCS Pastor, USA

- “ Our laws already have instruments against segregation.
- Riley Gilmore, Entrepreneur Taxidermist, North America
- “ It does not. It takes away the rights of the white males. We are the most minorized group having to fight for everything we have now.
- William Ghirardi, Apartment Maintenance, United States
- “ Social justice should also be about “not delaying” and “not redirecting.”
- Antra Mani, PhD Scholar, India
- “ I think it is good for policy to ensure those things, but I am not the biggest fan of the government so I don’t have the most hope for it.
- Sidney Brown, Student, USA
- “ True, as an instrument of policy social justice seeks to do as said. And policy and Policies related to social justice are always there but the real problem is implementation of these policies in true sense and the more important thing is acceptance for these policies among all.
- Surya Pratap, Learner, India

## **Tell us your own story about Injustices/problems you have faced.**

“ As a single woman, particularly a divorced woman, I am often made to feel invisible in social gatherings and public spaces. I have experienced this firsthand while fighting a court case for the custody and remittance of my two children. The judge, along with others involved, clearly regarded me as less important than my ex-husband. Their empathy seemed to lie with him, especially since I was the one who initiated the divorce. The aftermath of this judgmental attitude has left me bearing the brunt of societal biases as well.

– Ayesha Latif, Teacher/Student/Mother, Pakistan

“ I have done the same jobs as males throughout the years for less money and have been passed over for promotions because the positions were given to male counterparts who needed to ‘make more money to provide for their families.’ Being a single parent as a female also affects how society treats women. Companies prefer females without children or overlook them for promotions because they have children. I could go on and on, but why beat a dead horse?”

– Tam Moody, Retired, United States

“ I grew up in a very poor, divorced household. I was always a little different and I used to move a lot as a child, so every time I relocated I was the odd one out. I struggled with bullying a lot and I always felt wronged for beating me down for one simple reason—being different. Being queer, being neurodivergent, being poor, loving to read. As I grew up, I inevitably felt wronged by the housing market skyrocketing, the work market devalueing me as a person because I can’t work long hours or focus for a long time. I definitely felt wronged as a social worker for the funny little salary I used to get. But at least I was getting some.

– Maddy Grzybowski, Social Worker, Czech Republic

“ I have been relatively privileged in life and cannot claim to have been on the harshest edge of systemic injustice. That said, in the early stages of my career, I was grossly underpaid for over fifteen years—despite being productive, committed, and routinely taking on the work of multiple people. The low starting salary created a trap that was almost impossible to escape. My competence wasn’t in question—just my starting point. It was only due to a fortunate turn of events that I managed to break out of that cycle. But that experience gave me a glimpse into how difficult it is to change one’s circumstances when the system is stacked against you.

– Deb Datta, Retired, India

“ Almost all colleges in Mumbai have the potential to open up jobs in academia. But they refuse to give proper jobs and only CHB or contractual jobs to well qualified individuals. This is either in the name of lack of funds or government policy. While

some get the jobs by “donating” heavily. Which is absolutely unfair! What quality of education will such teachers and institutions provide to the coming generations? While we grew up believing we could participate in bringing about positive change one student at a time, we have no path ahead of us. Many struggle because they cannot leave the city for familial commitments and other reasons. With PhDs, we are overqualified for many jobs, underpaid, or jobless. None of which are healthy for the society and for sure unhelpful for the nation.

– Smita Vivek Jakkani, Independent Researcher, Academic and Creative Writer, India

““ What I have concluded is that people are inflexible and follow obsolete principles blindly because of tradition and lack of education. Academia may study all this but its conclusions and theories are often inaccessible to the general public. I would recommend a closer link between academia and the educational system. People in my society live with so many myths about who they are (Ancient Greece and Christianity), about what nature is (two sexes), and everyone seems to have their own opinion, which is good for them and democratic, but it is more often than not, completely uneducated, uninformed, and at the expense of others.

– Stavroula Anastasia Katsorchi, PhD candidate in English Studies, Greece

““ I grew up on First Nations reservations and witnessed every kind of injustice there is in a settler colonial racist system based on dispossession. At the same time, my very real white privilege was rendered invisible. In my life I have experienced inequities in pay and access to resources, along with threats of violence on the basis of gender. I worked for a long time in the movement against the death penalty and witnessed multiple instances of state murder facilitated by profound racism. I see injustice in the treatment of immigrants and once was in a demonstration and civil disobedience action against ICE enforcement in Syracuse. I have seen police hassle unhoused people routinely. I participated in the BLM movement in response to racist police murders. I could go on.

– Dana Cloud, Professor of Communication, United States

““ I felt wronged by society every time when I wanted something and I wasn’t allowed to do or pursue that just because of my gender, every time that I was interrupted and talked over, every time that I was not heard, every time that I had to take a longer route because that would be safer, every time that I walked into classrooms or other spaces that were dominated by men.

– Sonali, PhD Scholar, India

““ When my family asked for help they were told “they were the wrong color” and a promotion wasn’t given because of personal lifestyle played into an evaluation. My father lost his job and had five kids. He went to get food stamps. The person running the food stamps said, “If you give me \$30 worth of cash I will give you \$50 worth of food stamps.” My father replied we did not have the money. If we did we would

have bought groceries. He was told he was the wrong color to get food stamps. A female supervisor stopped me from getting a promotion because of my lifestyle. She knew I was dating a stripper and on an evaluation wrote a bad report, causing me to lose an important promotion because of my personal life.

– William Ghirardi, Apartment Maintenance, United States

