

**DISCRIMINATION AND JUSTICE:
BEYOND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

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Abstract

The theme of this essay is that affirmative action is necessary but cannot be sufficient to resolve problems of discrimination and injustice in society. It begins with the origins of discrimination in historical perspective, explains how discrimination leads to exclusion, to show that embedded injustice is an outcome of the process. The conception of justice evolved over a long period of time that spanned centuries if not millenniums. Yet, it is clear that the quest for social justice, driven by political democracy mostly through affirmative action, essentially surfaced during the second half of the twentieth century. This leads into a discussion on the logic, the necessity and the limitations of affirmative action to highlight what else is needed. And a dose of reality is imparted to the story with a tale of three countries, even if the focus is on India. In conclusion, the paper draws some lessons from experience to contemplate the future.