

# Social Justice in Catholic Social Teaching and Amartya Sen

## A Complementary Approach

### Research Overview

This research is an attempt to bring Catholic Social Teaching and Amartya Sen, the Indian born economist and moral philosopher, in dialogue with each other to explore the possibility of an alliance for promoting social justice in the contemporary Indian context. Although Catholic Social Teaching and Amartya emerge from two very different ideological backgrounds, they do have a lot of similarities in their understanding of justice, freedom, and authentic human development. Therefore, it seems to be promising to bring Catholic Social Teaching in dialogue with Amartya Sen to explore the converging points between them and attempt to find a complementary approach that would enable the mutual theoretical contribution especially to their understanding of social justice.

### Research Questions

- How could contributive justice and participative justice of Catholic Social Teaching make a theoretical contribution to Amartya Sen's concept of the Capability Approach (expansion of real-freedoms) and to his *The Idea of Justice*?
- Why is Amartya Sen's sharp division between transcendental institutionalism and realization-focused comparison approaches to justice not justifiable?
- What is the relevance of this complementary approach to Indian socio-economic context with rising inequality and religious nationalism?



### Research Objectives

- Amartya Sen as a dialogue partner to Catholic Social Teaching
- A complementary approach that makes a theoretical contribution to the concept of social justice

### Research Method

Imre Lakatos's scientific research programme method. The method contains a hardcore of theoretical assumptions, which are central to the given theory and these cannot be abandoned at random. It also contains the auxiliary hypotheses which are expendable and adoptable.

### Literature

- Economic Justice for all*: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy. 1986  
Amartya Sen. *Commodities and Capabilities*. 1999  
Amartya Sen. *The Idea of Justice*. 2009



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