Ontological And Axiological Foundations Of An Inclusive Society

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Abstract: This article explores the ontological and axiological foundations of an inclusive society through the lens of contemporary philosophy and humanistic thought. The author analyzes inclusion not only as a social policy mechanism but as a form of being that embodies the essence of human coexistence, value recognition, and moral responsibility. The research argues that inclusivity is both an ontological condition of human being-in-the-world and an axiological imperative of modern civilization aimed at ensuring equality, dignity, and sustainable development.

Keywords: Inclusion, ontology, axiology, equality, human dignity, social justice, philosophy of values.

Introduction

In modern philosophical and social discourse, the concept of inclusion occupies a central place as a symbol of justice and humanity. The idea of an inclusive society reflects the transition from a world built on separation and exclusion to one based on participation, recognition, and solidarity. In this sense, inclusion becomes not only a political or pedagogical agenda but also an ontological and axiological phenomenon that expresses the essence of human existence in community.

As Chorieva (2024) emphasizes, "the importance of an inclusive society lies not only in ensuring social access but in creating moral and cultural conditions for the realization of human potential."1^11 Similarly, in her later study, Chorieva (2025) argues that inclusion is a necessary philosophical and educational condition for developing a society based on empathy and justice.2^22

This article explores the philosophical underpinnings of inclusion from two perspectives: (1) its ontological

foundations — the mode of being of the human as a co-existent being; and (2) its axiological foundations — the values that define inclusion as a moral imperative of modern civilization.

The ontological dimension of inclusion concerns the nature of human existence as coexistence. From the standpoint of existential philosophy, to be human means to exist not in isolation but in relation — to share a world with others. Heidegger (1962) conceptualized this as Mitsein — "being-with," suggesting that existence is always already social. Similarly, Levinas (1969) viewed the encounter with the Other as the very basis of ethics and responsibility.

An inclusive society, therefore, is rooted in the recognition of being as coexistence. Exclusion, on the contrary, represents an ontological rupture — a distortion of human being that denies the interconnectedness of existence. To include is to affirm the unity of being; to exclude is to negate it. This idea resonates with Eastern philosophical traditions as well. The teachings of Al-Farabi and Confucius emphasized social harmony and moral self-cultivation as essential to human flourishing.

From this perspective, inclusion has a metaphysical status: it is not merely a political arrangement but a necessary structure of human being. Every person, by virtue of their existence, possesses ontological worth. Recognition of this fact forms the foundation of moral and social justice.

Inclusion, then, reflects the transition from the ontology of separation — where difference is perceived as threat — to the ontology of unity, where difference becomes an element of diversity within a shared world. This transition marks a philosophical revolution: it redefines what it means to exist as a human being in relation to others.

If ontology explains what inclusion is, axiology explains why it matters. Axiology — the study of values — reveals that inclusion rests upon a hierarchy of moral and cultural principles: dignity, equality, freedom, empathy, and solidarity.

The inclusive society is, first and foremost, a value-based community. Its essence lies not in uniformity but in the recognition of difference as value. According to Nussbaum (2011), social justice requires recognizing the "capabilities" of each individual to live a life of dignity. Similarly, Rawls (1971) defines justice as fairness — the

moral principle that ensures equality of opportunity.

Inclusion, therefore, is a manifestation of axiological justice: the realization of values that affirm human dignity in social structures. When society fails to recognize these values, it produces moral exclusion — a state in which individuals are dehumanized or rendered invisible.

As Chorieva (2025) rightly observes, inclusive education is not only an institutional reform but a moral transformation — "a path toward forming empathy, tolerance, and respect for the uniqueness of every person." These values cannot be legislated; they must be cultivated through culture, education, and philosophy.

Axiologically, inclusion implies the prioritization of human worth over economic or instrumental rationality. It challenges societies to measure progress not by profit or productivity but by participation and equality. Thus, inclusion is a moral compass directing humanity toward sustainable and humane development.

The ontological and axiological dimensions of inclusion are inseparable. Being without value is empty; value without being is abstract. Their synthesis produces the lived reality of an inclusive society, where existence itself becomes a moral act.

This dialectic can be illustrated through the concept of "recognition" (Honneth, 1995), which bridges ontology and axiology. Recognition affirms both the existence of the Other and their value. It is through mutual recognition that human dignity is realized, and society attains moral coherence.

Inclusion, thus, represents a moral ontology — a unity of being and value. It is the philosophical embodiment of the idea that existence attains meaning only in communion with others, within a framework of justice and empathy. In this way, inclusion is not an abstract ideal but a lived practice of ethical coexistence.

Moreover, this synthesis is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015), particularly in the principle of "Leave No One Behind." Inclusion serves as a criterion for assessing global civilization's maturity — its ability to harmonize material progress with moral responsibility.

An inclusive society is both a philosophical ideal and a practical framework for human development. It bridges the gap between abstract ethics and concrete social policy. The philosophy of inclusion aligns with Jonas's

(1984) concept of responsibility: humanity must act in ways that ensure the flourishing of all beings, present and future.

In the context of Uzbekistan's social and educational reforms, inclusion has become a cornerstone of modernization and human development. The integration of inclusive principles into education, culture, and social governance reflects a shift toward the humanistic paradigm of development. It embodies the belief that progress must be evaluated not by economic indicators alone but by the degree of human participation and empowerment.

The ontological principle of coexistence and the axiological principle of dignity converge in this paradigm, making inclusion the foundation of a sustainable and ethical society.

The analysis of the ontological and axiological foundations of inclusion allows us to perceive an inclusive society as a philosophical and moral system rather than a mere political program. Ontologically, inclusion expresses the essence of being-with-others — the realization that existence is inherently communal. Axiologically, it affirms that the supreme value of any society is human dignity, expressed through equality, justice, and solidarity.

Inclusion, therefore, represents a new philosophical synthesis of being and value, reflecting humanity's ethical evolution. It calls for a civilization that recognizes every person as a co-creator of the shared world, where diversity is not a challenge but a source of enrichment.

As we face global crises of inequality, conflict, and alienation, inclusion emerges as the key to humanity's survival and moral renewal — the pathway to a truly human future.

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