EMPLOYABILITY AND ADVANCEMENT IN THE MODERN ERA

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In today's society, we never get anywhere in our careers unless we carry credentials that make us competitive. Our professional advancement relies on the merits that we actually have. Most companies hire employees based on candidates' credentials, specific evaluation processes, and examinations among other things.

It is the same in government. The desire to advance to a higher job grade or ranking would entail taking some sort of test, some form of interview, evaluation of your service records, etc. Everything is scrutinized, down to the minutest details. You might say one would practically be 'dissected' when being considered for a higher post. This is well and good, since it all evens out the playing field for everyone. Everybody has a shot at getting to a more advanced role.

Meritocracy, when taken in its purest form, is both a quantitative and qualitative ideology. It has long been used as the concept for advancement, as it places all candidates on a platform of evaluation. There is ideally no place for corruption and favoritism, since only black-and-white proofs of qualifications are considered.

Meritocracy encourages a competitive spirit. One has to work hard to be able to earn the expertise required for a job. Talent equals promotion, theoretically.

However, the system presents some forms of disadvantages. One such negative impact is the tendency for the whole framework to become elitist. The concept of belonging to a certain class based on such factors as social status, intellect or financial resources would surely set apart the haves from the have nots. This further becomes a breeding ground for arrogance and complacency, since the gifted ones always get the better positions, while their less gifted counterparts make do with their lot. Someone who is always preferred over others might become too self-satisfied---they get by with their credentials, anyway.

The system also derives its flaws from those who set the very standards for advancement. What guarantee is there that they are objective enough to set the bar for advancement? Does graduating from a particular learning institution justify immediate acceptance to a job post? There could be other, more talented individuals still out there whose only deficiency is having graduated from a less-recognized academic institution.

Equal opportunity for all is the key, and then whoever gets hired can prove his worth further on the job. But if an applicant is turned away outright because he doesn't meet a specific qualification despite having the abilities, then the system becomes unjust. That system of meritocracy in hiring would contribute to the growing number of individuals in an ignored talent pool. So much talent can only go to waste.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Define meritocracy. Be able to talk in class about its origins.
2. Would you have chosen the same career you are in now if you had the chance? Why or why not?
3. Which institutions of learning are popular in your country? What are the factors that make them popular?
4. How should the hiring process in a company be done, in your opinion?
5. Should talent always be equated to one's academic institution? Justify your answer.