Experiencing liberty is not possible in an unequal society

Liberty, the concept of what it means to be exactly, is hard to define, but for most, the normal household people who are just not of a philosophical or political background, relate liberty mostly with freedom. V. Sriranjani, in the book “Political Theory: An Introduction” defines liberty as a multifaceted concept, one where the individual who is at liberty has the ‘choice’ to do something, has ‘no constraints’ taking that choice and has the required ‘conditions’ to get that thing done.

“ Can one truly experience liberty ?” , that's the question I have taken for this thought exercise. Referring to the book, learning how in history have thinkers viewed liberty as, with whom I could relate to the most was John Locke. His view of liberty incorporates both the absence of external constraints and the importance of choice within a moral framework. He bases his understanding of liberty on the Laws of Nature, which include the principle that no one should harm another's life, health, liberty, or possessions. As long as what we do falls within the moral values, it should be good, and the state need not interfere. There will always be a debate on how to know what is morally right or wrong as there isn’t a book of ‘Law of Nature’ but just being practical and rational should solve that problem. Cheating in an exam for a better career can be seen as preserving oneself and rightful according to Hobbes but such a career got by unfair means is morally wrong for him also and unjust for his competitors. For me, this does not fall under liberty.

Can there be an equal society as communism theorizes? I have not been able to relate on how on common gossip or in the media, we take Russia as a communist country. We all have heard about the oligarchs, the billionaires of Russia, how they came to exist, then. There is always going to be private ownership, the self interest of people which we criticize is on practical terms not so selfish. Without self interest, we would never be developing. Had there been a society where everyone gets equally, I would never have had work. Let people work hard all day long, and I would be waiting for them to serve it on my plate, why not, we should all get equal rights. Work should always be rewarded. If I am not getting as much as I put in, that would be discouraging. Society evolves on self interest, and equality by no means can be achieved. There will always be differences in people, priorities for people will always differ, and so will the resulting circumstances. For a society as diverse as ours, economic disparities are not the only cause for an unequal society. Freedom for one community of people can seriously hurt other people’s beliefs. The holy belief of treating cows as God can be taken as an example. There are many communities in our country for which hunting down cows for food is not an issue, even holy practice for devoting to their God. If they take killing cows for food as liberty which should not be a problem for them for sure, their beliefs need to be respected as well. But imagine such a situation out there, and we know what we will be seeing in the media in the days to come.

For me, experiencing liberty is not possible in such an unequal society as ours. There are no common grounds on all issues for us. If there are, its good, but that would not be complete freedom, will it? What about the notion of choice then, can the state provide conditions for exercising liberty to all of our diverse community? A NO for me.