



Mains Practice Question

Q. Why did human development fail to keep pace with economic development in India? (Answer in 250 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach

- Briefly introduce the concept of economic development and human development.
- Discuss why human development has failed to keep pace with economic development in India.
- Conclude by highlighting that India has made significant progress in human development despite facing numerous challenges.

Introduction

Human Development refers to boosting well-being through education, healthcare, gender equality, and overall quality of life while economic development refers to persistent efforts for prosperity through growth, employment, and sustainable resource efficiency.

Body

The divergence between economic development and human development in India can be attributed to several complex and interconnected factors:

- **Income Inequality:** Persistent income inequality in India disproportionately benefits the wealthy, hampering equitable access to healthcare, education, and basic services for a significant portion of the population.
- **Education Disparities:** Despite economic growth, India faces education related challenges like high dropout rates, inadequate infrastructure, and poor quality, limiting human capital development and workforce participation.
- **Healthcare Inequities:** Unequal healthcare access, especially in rural areas, contributes to high disease burdens and child mortality rates, impacting human development indicators, compounded by limited access to clean water and sanitation.
- **Gender Disparities:** Gender inequality in India restricts women's access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, while gender-based violence and discrimination further hinder their development.
- **Social Exclusion:** India's caste system and social hierarchies historically marginalize communities, limiting their opportunities and affecting human development outcomes.
- **Inadequate Social Safety Nets:** India's welfare programs often fall short in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, offering limited protection against poverty and malnutrition.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Unsustainable development and environmental degradation for economic growth have long-term consequences, with climate change, pollution, and resource depletion threatening well-being.
- **Governance Challenges:** Weak governance, corruption, and inefficient bureaucracy can hinder the effective implementation of policies and programs.

Conclusion

However, India has **achieved significant growth** over the years in social, economic, and political life and human development has also been catching up with the pace of economic development eg. in 1990, India's HDI score was 0.429, which increased to 0.633 by 2021.

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