



Mains Practice Question

Q. "Social justice cannot be achieved without economic empowerment." Discuss this statement in the context of poverty alleviation programs in India. **(150 words)**

11 Jun, 2024 GS Paper 2 Social Justice

Approach

- Introduce by mentioning the link between social justice and economic empowerment
- Delve into economic empowerment as a prerequisite for social justice
- Mention key arguments featuring social justice as a catalyst for economic empowerment
- Conclude in a balanced manner.

Introduction

Social justice and economic empowerment are inextricably linked concepts that lie at the heart of efforts to **alleviate poverty** and promote **inclusive development**.

- The statement "Social justice cannot be achieved without economic empowerment" encapsulates the notion that addressing economic disparities and providing opportunities for **economic self-sufficiency** are crucial steps towards realizing **social equality and justice**.

Economic Empowerment as a Prerequisite for Social Justice:

- **Poverty as a Barrier to Social Inclusion:** Poverty often leads to exclusion from **education, healthcare, and other essential services**.
 - Economic empowerment through poverty alleviation programs can provide access to these services, **fostering social inclusion and equality**.
 - Example: The **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** has provided employment opportunities and income security to rural households, enabling them to access basic necessities.
- **Enabling Participation and Agency:** Poverty can limit an individual's ability to participate in **decision-making processes** that affect their lives.
 - Economic empowerment through **skill development, entrepreneurship, and financial inclusion** can enhance agency and participation in societal processes.
 - **Example:** The **Self-Help Group (SHG) movement** has empowered women economically, enabling them to have a voice in household and community decisions.
- **Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Poverty:** Poverty can perpetuate itself across generations, hindering social mobility and exacerbating inequalities.
 - Economic empowerment programs that focus on **education, vocational training, and asset creation** can break this cycle and promote social justice for future generations.
 - **Example:** **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana** provides a secure and attractive investment option for parents to invest in their daughters' future, breaking the cycle of financial insecurity and dependence.

Social Justice as a Catalyst for Economic Empowerment:

- **Addressing Systemic Inequalities:** Policies and programs that promote inclusivity and address discrimination can open pathways for economic empowerment.
 - **Example:** The **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act** aims to protect the rights of marginalized communities and create an enabling environment for their economic progress.
- **Promoting Inclusive Development:** Social justice principles emphasize the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups in development processes.
 - Inclusive development approaches can create economic opportunities and ensure **equitable access to resources and services.**
 - **Example:** The **Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)** has facilitated the identification of economically disadvantaged households for targeted poverty alleviation programs.
- **Building Human Capabilities:** Social justice initiatives focus on improved human capabilities can lead to better economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods.
 - **Example:** The **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) program** aims to improve the health, nutrition, and early childhood education of children from disadvantaged communities, **laying the foundation for their future economic empowerment.**

Conclusion

In this way, there is a synergistic relationship between social justice and economic empowerment. By addressing intersectional inequalities and promoting sustainable livelihoods, India can create a virtuous cycle of inclusive growth and social transformation and accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs, particularly **Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities).**

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