



Mains Practice Question

Q. What do you understand by 'welfare state'? Do you think that India is a welfare state in true sense? (250 words)

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Approach

- Explain the Welfare State model. Points need to be precise.
- Highlight Welfare State nature of India with examples and case studies
- Highlight challenges, shortcomings in Indian Welfare State. This would be to state that India is not an ideal example.
- In conclusion, be suggestive and exemplify India striving to achieve those ideals.

Introduction

Welfare State is a politico-economic setup with the following characteristics:

- It provides for basic minimum services to its citizens like law and order.
- It is interventionist in nature. It does so as to further common social good.
- It has a multi-party democratic system.
- It has a mixed economy. Both the private and public sectors co-exist at the same time.

Body

India exhibits features of such a state:

- Through Directive Principles, State strives to achieve various common social goals like conservation of the environment, gender equality, representation to depressed communities etc.
- India has achieved food security for its citizens by the Green Revolution, White Revolution and currently working on Nutritional Security by implementing the National Nutrition Mission.
- Redistribution of wealth so as to reduce inequalities have been affected in the form of Land Reforms, Progressive Taxation Policy, Subsidies etc.
- Cronyism, Profiteering is made subservient to common good by strict laws like Companies Act, Prevention of Corruption Act etc.
- Means of livelihood is provided through various programmes like MGNREGA.

Challenges to Indian Welfare State:

- Income inequality in India has been rising especially after LPG reforms, as per Oxfam report.
- Failure of policy implementation like the Land Ceiling Act.
- Prevalence of discrimination - gender (Nirbhaya Case), caste (Dalit atrocities), minorities (communal violence) etc.
- Unemployment levels have steadily risen in the last five years.

Conclusion

Thus, India does not present a Welfare State model in true sense. However, it continually strives to move in that direction in future too, evident in programmes like Ayushman Bharat, Bharatmala and Sagarmala project, strengthening of armed forces etc.

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