



Mains Practice Question

Q. “Development and welfare schemes for the vulnerable, by its nature, are discriminatory in approach.” Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer. (Answer in 250 words, UPSC Mains 2023)

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Approach

- Begin by introducing the topic and briefly stating your position on whether development and welfare schemes are inherently discriminatory or not.
- Provide your opinion and arguments to support your position.
- Conclude by striking a balance between acknowledging the challenges in implementation and the positive intentions behind development and welfare schemes.

Introduction

Development and welfare schemes aim to uplift socially, economically, or physically disadvantaged groups. While some view them as discriminatory, they are designed to promote equity and justice by ensuring equal access to opportunities and resources for everyone, irrespective of their background or circumstances.

Body

The development and welfare schemes for the vulnerable seem discriminatory in approach because:

- Development and welfare schemes are non-universal, having specific eligibility criteria based on socio-economic factors, potentially excluding some citizens and leading to perceived discrimination.
- Targeted approaches in schemes like Standup India, limited to SC/ST/Women beneficiaries, can foster resentment or alienation among excluded groups.
- Affirmative action policies, like reservations, aim to address historical injustices but are inherently discriminatory by providing preferential treatment based on identity or background.
- Resource competition may arise when limited resources are allocated to vulnerable groups, creating a perception of unfairness among those not qualifying for reserved quotas.

But it is not a negative or undesirable aspect. Such schemes are necessary and beneficial for the following reasons:

- They address the historical and structural inequalities and injustices that have marginalized and oppressed certain communities for generations. For example, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and the reservation policy are meant to protect and empower the historically oppressed castes and tribes in India.
- They promote social inclusion and diversity, by ensuring that the voices and needs of the vulnerable groups are heard and met. For example, the Standup India scheme and the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme are aimed at empowering women and girls, who face discrimination and violence in many spheres of life.
- They foster human development and well-being, by improving the quality of life and livelihoods of

the vulnerable groups. For example, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and the Mid-Day Meal Scheme provide basic amenities and services, such as housing and nutrition, to the poor and the needy.

- They contribute to the overall development and progress of the nation, by harnessing the potential and talent of the vulnerable groups. For example, the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan provide skill development and education opportunities, which enable the vulnerable groups to become productive and employable.

Conclusion

Therefore, the development and welfare schemes for the vulnerable appear discriminatory in approach, but this is not a flaw or a drawback. Rather, this is a strength and a virtue, as it reflects the commitment and responsibility of the state and the society to ensure that no one is left behind or excluded from the fruits of development.

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