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Q11

It is argued that the strategy of inclusive growth is intended to meet the objectives of inclusiveness and sustainability together. Comment on this statement.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · GS III · 15 marks · Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Core demand of the question

- Comment on whether inclusive growth is meant to deliver inclusiveness and sustainability together
- Explain the two aims, where they support each other, and where they clash
- Name Indian schemes and recommend a path that keeps both

Revision summary

Inclusive growth is meant to spread opportunity and to last without exhausting nature or the budget.

The Twelfth Plan and the SDGs already pair inclusiveness with sustainability.

Schemes such as **MGNREGA** assets, Ujjwala, Jan Dhan-DBT, NFSA, and Ayushman try to serve both.

Clash appears in unmetered power, paddy-wheat lock-in, and poorly sited mining.

Judge policy by green jobs, honest targeting, and carrying capacity, not by GDP alone.

Introduction

Inclusive growth is not only a higher Gross Domestic Product. It is growth whose fruits reach the poor, women, and lagging regions, and that can last without exhausting soil, water, air, and the budget. India's Twelfth Plan already named the trio: faster, more inclusive, and sustainable. The argument in the question is therefore the official intent. Practice still splits the three when a coal plant, a free power farm, or an untargeted subsidy buys inclusion today and a bill tomorrow.

Body**What the strategy intends**

- **Inclusiveness** means jobs, food, health, schooling, and a voice for those who would otherwise miss the market: Scheduled Castes and Tribes, women, small farmers, and backward districts.
- **Sustainability** means the same generation does not eat the next generation's groundwater, forests, fiscal space, or climate room.
- Together they are one strategy because a growth path that leaves people out is politically unstable, and a path that wrecks ecology is economically short. The **Sustainable Development Goals (2015)** and the **Paris Agreement** put that pairing into India's international script.

- Indian tools that try to do both at once include **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act** assets (water, trees), **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** (clean cooking), **Swachh Bharat**, **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana** plus Direct Benefit Transfer, **National Food Security Act**, **Ayushman Bharat**, **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana**, and renewable programmes such as **Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana** paired with solar missions.

Where the two aims support each other

- Health, sanitation, and clean fuel raise labour productivity and cut household pollution; that is inclusion and a lighter environment load.
- Skills, rural roads (**Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**), and digital payments let the poor join markets without a new forest cut if the project is sited honestly.
- Climate-smart agriculture (millets, pulses, efficient irrigation) can raise small-farm income and spare aquifers.
- A greener power mix, if it also electrifies poor households, is both an SDG energy goal and an inclusion goal.

Where they clash in Indian practice

- Cheap coal and unmetered farm power have been used as **inclusion** (jobs, irrigation) while they drain **sustainability** (emissions, bankrupt discoms, falling water tables).
- Minimum Support Price plus heavy paddy-wheat procurement feeds the poor through the public distribution system but locks water-stressed belts into a thirsty rotation.
- Rapid highway and mining projects can raise GDP and some wages while displacing Adivasi livelihood if **Forest Rights** and rehabilitation are weak.
- Large welfare outlays without targeting or without a tax base threaten **fiscal sustainability**, which later hits the same poor through inflation or a capex freeze.
- Urban inclusion (housing, metro) can still fail sustainability if it is sprawl without sewage and public transport.

Comment

- **The statement is** right as design: inclusiveness without sustainability is a short boom; sustainability without inclusiveness is a green enclave.
- **The statement is** incomplete as description: India still often sequences "grow first, clean later" in minerals and thermal power, and "spend first, target later" in subsidies.
- A working strategy treats **green jobs, metered irrigation, DBT for kerosene and fertiliser leakages, coastal and Himalayan carrying-capacity plans, and a just coal transition** as the joint programme, not as two ministries' separate pamphlets.

Flow diagram

Inclusive growth -> Inclusiveness jobs welfare
 Inclusive growth -> Sustainability ecology fiscal
 Inclusiveness jobs welfare -> Health Ujjwala skills
 Sustainability ecology fiscal -> Health Ujjwala skills
 Inclusiveness jobs welfare -> Cheap power paddy mining
 Cheap power paddy mining -> Water carbon fiscal bill

Conclusion

Inclusive growth is intended to carry inclusiveness and sustainability together, and India's plans and SDG language say so. They reinforce each other in clean energy, health, and climate-smart farming. They collide when cheap power, paddy lock-in, and extractive projects buy votes or GDP with ecological and fiscal debt. The comment is: keep the joint intent, and judge every scheme by whether the poor still have water, air, and a solvent State in twenty years.

Facts & figures

Twelfth Plan trio

Faster, more inclusive, and sustainable growth was the official Plan slogan before the **NITI Aayog** era.

SDGs 2015

Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals that bind poverty, inequality, and environment into one agenda India has adopted.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Rural employment guarantee whose useful works (water, afforestation) can serve both livelihood and ecology.

PM Ujjwala Yojana

LPG connections that cut indoor smoke and women's time cost - inclusion with a local environment gain.

NFSA 2013

Legal food entitlement for a large share of the population; inclusion that must still face the water cost of rice-wheat procurement.

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