Q1

Explain intra-generational and inter-generational issues of equity from the perspective of inclusive growth and sustainable development.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2020 · GS III · 10 marks · Inclusive Growth

Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Core demand of the question

- Explain intra-generational and inter-generational issues of equity from the perspective of inclusive growth and sustainable development
- Keep the explanation within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Intra-generational equity is fairness among people alive now; it is the core of inclusive growth.

Inter-generational equity is fairness toward the unborn; it is the core of sustainable development.

Jobless or unequal booms fail the first test even when GDP rises.

Aquifer mining, carbon lock-in, and weak environmental clearance fail the second.

Policy must raise present capability without running down the ecological and fiscal stock.

Introduction

Inclusive growth asks who shares today's income. Sustainable development asks whether tomorrow's people still have forests, aquifers, and a liveable climate. Intra-generational equity is fairness among those alive now. Inter-generational equity is fairness between present and future. The two must travel together; growth that lifts a few today by exhausting the commons fails both tests.

Body

Intra-generational equity and inclusive growth

- Intra-generational equity is the claim of the poor, women, Adivasis, persons with disability, and lagging districts to **jobs, assets, public services, and voice** in the same generation.
- Inclusive growth is not only a high GDP rate. It is growth whose **employment elasticity**, **real wages**, and **access to health, education, and credit** reach those groups.
- India's live issues are a large informal workforce, regional divergence, and asset inequality. Schemes such as **MGNREGA**, **NFSA**, **Ayushman Bharat**, **JAM**, and **DBT** are intra-generational tools when they actually reach the last household.
- If a boom is capital-deep and job-thin, the generation is growing on paper while a majority is excluded - that is an intra-generational failure even with a rising headline.

Inter-generational equity and sustainable development

- Inter-generational equity, in the **Brundtland** sense, is meeting present needs without stripping the resource base of those not yet born.
- Climate stock, groundwater, soil carbon, biodiversity, and fiscal debt are the ledgers the next cohort inherits. Mining a aquifer for this year's paddy, or locking in coal without a transition, taxes the future.
- **SDGs**, the **Paris** temperature goal, and India's **NDCs** are inter-generational promises. They constrain how inclusive growth may use energy and land.
- Weak **EIA** practice, untreated rivers, and stubble-plus-smog in the north-west are present consumption that the next urban child pays as disease.

How the two perspectives lock

- A coal plant may hire local labour (intra-generational gain) and dump a century of carbon and ash (inter-generational loss). A solar park with land consent and local jobs can serve both.
- **Green growth** is inclusive only if the poor are not asked to bear conservation without livelihood, and the rich are not allowed to pollute first and compensate never.
- Public investment in **human capital and ecological restoration** is the rare outlay that raises both present capability and future stock.

Flow diagram

Inclusive growth -> Intra-generational equity

Sustainable development -> Inter-generational equity

Intra-generational equity -> Jobs services voice now

Inter-generational equity -> Climate water soil later

Jobs services voice now -> Both required

Climate water soil later -> Both required

Conclusion

Intra-generational equity is inclusive sharing of today's growth. Inter-generational equity is leaving water, climate, and fiscal room for those after us. Sustainable development is the rule that one must not be bought by sacrificing the other.

Facts & figures

Brundtland 1987

Defined sustainable development as meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet theirs.

SDGs

2030 Agenda that pairs poverty and inequality goals with climate, water, and life-on-land goals.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Rural employment guarantee: an intra-generational floor that can also build water and soil assets.

India NDC

Climate pledge under Paris that binds current energy choices to an inter-generational carbon budget.

NFSA 2013

Legal food entitlement for a large share of the present generation; fiscal and grain-stock design also affects future buffers.