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Q4

(a) Social values are more important than economic values. Discuss the above statement with examples in the context of inclusive growth of a nation. (10 Marks) (b) Some recent developments such as introduction of RTI Act, media and judicial activism, etc. are proving helpful in bringing about greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of the government. However, it is also being observed that at times the mechanisms are misused. Another negative effect is that the officers are now afraid to take prompt decisions. Analyse the situation in detail and suggest how the dichotomy can be resolved. Suggest how these negative impacts can be minimised. (10 Marks).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · GS IV · 12 marks · Probity in Governance

Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen's Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.

Core demand of the question

- (a) Discuss why social values matter more than economic values for inclusive growth, with examples
- (b) Analyse how RTI, media and judicial activism aid transparency yet are misused and slow decisions; suggest how to resolve the dichotomy and cut the harm

Revision summary

Inclusive growth is entry of the weak into development, which social values of dignity and equality must lead.

GDP without women's safety, clean water or fair land terms is not inclusion.

RTI, media and judicial review have increased transparency and can be misused as blackmail, trial by camera or endless stay.

Officers then fear prompt decisions.

Repair is suo motu disclosure, action on vexatious abuse, judicial self-restraint on administration, speaking orders and protection of bona fide reasoned action - not shutting the lamps.

Introduction

Part (a) asks what kind of growth is worth the name. Part (b) asks how lamps we needed - RTI, media, courts - can also frighten an honest file into sleep.

Body

(a) Social values and inclusive growth

- Economic values are output, profit, fiscal surplus and the growth rate. They matter. They are not the whole republic.
- Social values are dignity, equality, solidarity, trust, and care for those who cannot buy a market share.
- Inclusive growth is growth that the poor, women, Adivasis, persons with disability and backward regions actually enter, not only watch on television.
- If economic values sit first, a dam, a mine or a city can rise while a community loses land, school and health. The average looks fine; the bottom is out.
- Social values first does not mean poverty as a virtue. It means the extra rupee is judged by whether it widens capability: **Amartya Sen's** point that development is freedom to live a life one has reason to value.
- Example: a high GDP with falling female labour participation and rising crimes against women is not inclusive. Safety, education and property rights for women are social values that make later growth real.
- Example: the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005** spends money, but its ethical claim is a right to work and a village asset, not only a multiplier.
- Example: a factory that pays well and dumps effluent into a Dalit hamlet's pond has economic value and social failure. The National Green Tribunal cases are full of this split.
- Land acquisition that skips consent and livelihood is growth as capture. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, **Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013** tried to put social cost on the page.
- A nation that keeps social values first will still seek investment; it will not call a poisoned river a success because exports rose.

(b) RTI, media, judicial activism: help, misuse, fear, repair

- The **Right to Information Act, 2005**, a questioning press, and courts that stay an arbitrary demolition have pulled files into the light. That is a democratic gain.
- Misuse is real. RTI can be a tool of blackmail, of business rivalry, or of a flood of queries meant to freeze a desk. Media trials can destroy a career before a charge sheet. **Public interest litigation** can become private interest litigation with a camera.
- **Officers then delay:** every signature feels like a future summons. The honest become slow; the dishonest still move through informal routes.
- The dichotomy is not "people versus officers". It is accountability versus paralysis.
- Resolve it by quality, not by switching the lamps off.
- **RTI:** strengthen **Section 4** disclosure so routine data is public; penalise vexatious patterns without punishing a poor citizen's first application; protect bona fide decision notes that are already recorded.
- **Media:** a statutory or strong self-regulatory line against named trial before inquiry; officers should still brief facts, not hide. Contempt and defamation exist; they must not become a shield for graft.
- **Courts:** continue to strike down illegality; avoid running tenders and school boards from the bench. The executive must decide; the court must review.
- **Decision culture:** speaking orders, e-files, and a clear "reasoned dissent" practice so that a later inquiry sees judgement, not a blank.

- **Protection for honest error:** a defined safe harbour for bona fide decisions taken with reasons, as later company and public-servant debates have sought, so that fear of a fishing inquiry does not freeze a disaster order.
- **Training:** teach officers to write reasons, not to hide. Teach applicants that RTI is a right, not a weaponised delay.
- **Political example from the top:** if transfers punish the signer of an inconvenient true note, no Act will make officers brave.

Flow diagram

Economic values -> GDP and profit
 Social values -> Inclusive growth
 GDP and profit -> Inclusive growth
 RTI media courts media courts -> Transparency
 RTI media courts -> Misuse and fear
 Disclosure safe harbour speaking orders -> Accountability without paralysis

Conclusion

Inclusive growth needs social values in the lead, with economic numbers as servants. RTI, media and courts remain necessary lamps. Cut misuse with disclosure, fair process and protection of honest reasoned decisions, not with darkness.

Facts & figures

Right to Information Act, 2005

Citizen right to official information; **Section 4** asks proactive disclosure so that the Act is not only a battlefield of applications.

MGNREGA, 2005

A statutory right to rural wage work; an example of social value shaping an economic instrument.

Land Acquisition Act, 2013 (RFCTLARR)

Sought fair compensation, transparency and rehabilitation so that growth would count social cost.

Amartya Sen on development as freedom

The argument that growth of income is a means; capabilities and social opportunity are the point.

Public interest litigation

Judicial door for public wrongs; ethically strong when it protects the voiceless, weak when it is a rival's commercial tool.

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