Society & Social Justice · GS - I

Distinguish between gender equality, gender equity and women’s empowerment. Why is it important to take gender concerns into account in programme design and implementation?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2024	GS - I	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Equality, equity, empowerment, equal opportunity, differentiated needs, affirmative action, agency, access-control, intersectionality, gender budgeting, unpaid care work, inclusive development

Model Answer

Introduction

Gender equality, equity and empowerment are related but distinct concepts. Together, they seek to remove structural barriers that prevent women from enjoying equal rights and opportunities.

Distinction

1. **Gender equality:** Equal rights, opportunities and treatment for all genders, such as equal access to education or employment.
2. **Gender equity:** Fairness in outcomes through differentiated support to address historical and structural disadvantages. For example, maternity support or targeted interventions for vulnerable women.
3. **Women’s empowerment:** Enhancing women's agency, capabilities, decision-making power, control over resources and ability to influence institutions.

Importance in Programme Design

1. **Avoids unequal outcomes:** Gender-neutral policies can reproduce existing inequalities.
2. **Recognises differentiated needs:** Women may face specific constraints relating to safety, mobility, healthcare and reproductive responsibilities.
3. **Addresses unpaid care work:** Programme timing and workplace arrangements should recognise women's disproportionate care burden.
4. **Improves effectiveness:** Women's participation in programme design increases responsiveness to community needs.
5. **Promotes inclusion:** Gender-sensitive design can address intersecting disadvantages of caste, class, disability and geography.

Conclusion

Gender-sensitive governance moves beyond treating everyone identically. It seeks equal rights, equitable support and genuine agency, making development more inclusive, just and sustainable.

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