Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Malnutrition in India is not merely a public health concern; it is also a challenge of social equity, human development and effective welfare governance. Discuss.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Malnutrition, poverty, maternal health, child development, social inequality, food security, sanitation, education, Poshan Abhiyaan, ICDS, PM POSHAN, convergence, last-mile delivery

Model Answer

Malnutrition in India is a multidimensional problem arising from the interaction of inadequate nutrition, poverty, disease, sanitation deficiencies and social inequalities. Therefore, it extends beyond the domain of public health.

Socially disadvantaged households, women and children can face greater nutritional deprivation because of unequal access to food, healthcare, sanitation and education. Maternal malnutrition can also contribute to intergenerational cycles of undernutrition, thereby affecting human capital formation and productivity.

India has adopted several welfare interventions, including the Integrated Child Development Services, PM POSHAN and Poshan Abhiyaan, which seek to improve nutritional outcomes through food supplementation, maternal and child health services and behavioural interventions.

However, fragmented implementation, leakages, inadequate awareness and weak coordination between health, sanitation, education and food-security programmes can reduce effectiveness. Effective welfare governance therefore requires convergence among departments, community participation, real-time monitoring and special attention to vulnerable groups.

Thus, addressing malnutrition requires an integrated human-development approach combining nutrition security with healthcare, sanitation, women's empowerment, education and livelihood security. It is ultimately a test of the state's ability to deliver equitable welfare outcomes.

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