Polity & Governance · GS - II

Can the constitutional mandate of rights-based welfare be effectively realised in the context of non-integrated governance and minimal public investment ? Examine.

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MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Directive Principles, Article 21, rights-based welfare, social justice, integrated governance, public investment, fragmented schemes, convergence, fiscal capacity, last-mile delivery

Model Answer

India’s Constitution envisages a welfare-oriented State through Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles. Articles 38, 39, 41, 43 and 47 emphasise social justice, livelihood, public assistance, humane conditions of work and improvement of nutrition and public health.

Rights-based welfare, however, requires more than constitutional recognition. Its effective realisation depends upon adequate resources, institutional capacity and coordinated delivery. Fragmented governance can produce duplication, exclusion and implementation gaps. The World Bank has noted that India’s social-protection architecture historically involved numerous programmes with limited coordination, varying eligibility systems and overlapping delivery structures.

Non-integrated governance particularly affects citizens facing multiple vulnerabilities. A malnourished child, for instance, may simultaneously require nutrition, healthcare, sanitation, education and social protection. Without convergence among departments, interventions may remain siloed. POSHAN Abhiyaan itself emphasises multi-sectoral convergence because nutritional outcomes are influenced by several social determinants.

Minimal public investment creates another constraint. Rights such as education, health, food and social security require public infrastructure, trained personnel and reliable financing. Underinvestment can make formally guaranteed entitlements difficult to access, especially for disadvantaged groups.

The way forward includes integrated social registries, interoperable databases with privacy safeguards, stronger Centre-State-local coordination, outcome-based budgeting, adequate public expenditure and decentralised implementation. Programmes should be evaluated for coverage, quality and exclusion errors rather than expenditure alone.

Thus, constitutional welfare cannot be realised merely through legislation. It requires a combination of enforceable rights, adequate public investment, institutional convergence and accountable last-mile governance.

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