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In the context of recent freebie debates, do you agree that current forms of welfare programs need to be revisited? Comment.

The Finance Commission warned the country about growing freebie culture as "quick passport to fiscal disaster". The priorities must be laid out before making calls on freebies.

Freebies - collapses growth

Freebies create macroeconomic instability as it drags the states to debt. Punjab debt to GSDP ratio is 53%. Andhra Pradesh spends 13% of its revenue on interest payments.

Free water and electricity to farmers endangers water security. The groundwater level has plummeted in Punjab, Haryana and Maharashtra due to free electricity. The subsidised power, and fertilisers are diverted for non agricultural use widening the social inequality.

However - as per the world inequality report India's top 1% own 51% of world and bottom 60% have more 5% of the wealth - stressing to give freebies.

Freebies - Ensures welfare state

Employment is guaranteed for the poor people by the MGNREGS which has been proposed to increase by 150 days.

Health is ensured through the midday meal scheme which has increased enrolment in schools.

Nutrition The PM Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav feed more than 80 crore people during the pandemic.

In Subramaniam Balaji case - court stated that as long as public funds are spent based on appropriations by legisature it is not illegal.

Way forward Election can reverse the model code of conduct to include freebies. Suitable amendments to the FRBM act to monitor modified use of resources. Finance commission can take states' debt condition while allocating resources to ensure fiscal discipline.