

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2018 · 10 marks

Comment on substantive justice in about 150 words.

• FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes R1 procedural = fair rules / method → substantive = fair outcome → judged by condition of the disadvantaged
R2 justice not only in a neutral process → asks who actually gains → outcome-test over rule-test

Body flow content + outcome of laws, real distribution → close to socialism → can the poor improve their condition → needs-based over rights-based → progressive extension of self-development opportunity → state central: curb wealth concentration, redistribution / welfare / land reform → **Young**: change unjust structures, not just individual remedies → **Rawls**: substantive concern inside a procedural theory (Difference Principle)

Counter-view liberal worry: outcome-focus can weaken liberty and formal equality → substantive reply: formal equality alone leaves injustice untouched

Conclusion routes R1 procedure fixes the method, substance fixes the result → both needed; substance gives justice its social content
R2 in a deeply unequal society formal equality is not enough → substantive justice makes equality material

Procedural justice asks whether the rules were fair; substantive justice asks whether the outcome is fair. It judges justice by the actual condition of the disadvantaged, not the neutrality of the process.

Substantive justice evaluates the content & outcome of laws and policies, and the real distribution of rights and opportunities. It corresponds broadly to socialism, since the test is whether the poor and underprivileged can improve their condition. It is needs-based, not rights-based and demands progressive extension of self-development opportunities to disadvantaged groups.

This makes the state central: it must check concentration of wealth & widen opportunity through redistribution, welfare, and land reform. According to Iris Marion Young, this means changing the structures that reproduce injustice, not only individual remedies.

Even John Rawls, within a procedural theory, carries a substantive concern in his Difference Principle. The liberal worry is that stressing outcomes can weaken liberty; substantive justice replies that formal equality alone leaves injustice untouched.