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Q6

"Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation to environment.'" Comment with relevant illustrations.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · GS II · 10 marks · Governance and Policy

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Core demand of the question

- "Policy contradictions among various competing sectors and stakeholders have resulted in inadequate 'protection and prevention of degradation to environment.'" Comment with relevant illustrations
- Use constitutional duties, environment statutes, and live sector clashes; end with a way to align policy

Revision summary

Articles 48A and 51A(g) and a full set of pollution and forest laws already exist.

Degradation persists because power, mining, roads, farms and cities run opposite targets.

Niyamgiri, corridors versus highways, coal versus air, urea versus aquifers, and Ganga versus sewage are working illustrations.

EIA holes and the push for faster clearance widen the gap.

A shared landscape limit and Budget conditionality are the way to align stakeholders.

Flow diagram

Arts 48A and 51A-g -> EPA 1986 EIA 2006

EPA 1986 EIA 2006 -> Sector targets coal roads farms

Sector targets coal roads farms -> Degradation

FRA NGT CAMPA -> EPA 1986 EIA 2006

Landscape plan -> Sector targets coal roads farms

Conclusion

- Make a single landscape-level carrying-capacity plan bind mining, roads and power, instead of project-by-project EIA in isolation.
- **Align the Union Budget:** green conditionality on infrastructure grants, and a public dashboard of EIA exemptions.

- **Give Forest Rights Act** consent and NGT orders the same political weight as a coal or highway target, or **Articles 48A and 21 (as in M.C. Mehta and later clean-air cases)** will remain courtroom repairs after the damage.
- **The comment is fair:** India does not lack environment Acts, it lacks one policy spine across energy, mining, farms, cities and forests. Protection will improve when EIA, Forest Rights consent, and sector targets are forced to use the same map, not when another scheme is launched beside a contradictory clearance.

Facts & figures

Article 48A

Directive Principle, inserted by the 42nd Amendment, directing the State to protect and improve the environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

Umbrella statute after Bhopal; basis for EIA notifications and many pollution standards.

Forest Rights Act, 2006

Recognises forest dwellers' rights and gram sabha role; often collides with mining and diversion clearances.

National Green Tribunal Act, 2010

Creates a specialist tribunal for environmental disputes and compensation.

T.S.R. Subramanian Committee (2014)

Reviewed environment laws with an emphasis on faster decision-making; widely debated as risking dilution.

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