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Q8

Case study. In line with the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the government has a constitutional obligation to ensure basic needs - "Roti, Kapda aur Makan (Food, Clothes and Shelter)" - for the under-privileged. Pursuing this mandate, the district administration proposed clearing a portion of forest land to develop housing for the homeless and economically weaker sections of the society. The proposed land, however, is an ecologically sensitive zone densely populated with age-old trees, medicinal plants and vital biodiversity. Besides, these forests help to regulate micro-climate and rainfalls; provide habitat for wildlife, support soil fertility and prevent land/soil erosion and sustain livelihoods of tribal and nomadic communities. In spite of the ecological and social costs, the administration argues in favour of the said proposal by highlighting that this very initiative would provide housing to human rights as a critical welfare priority. Besides it, it fulfils the government's duty to uplift and empower the poor through inclusive housing development. Further, these forest areas have become unsafe due to wild-animal threats and recurring human-wild life conflicts. Lastly, clearing forest-zones may help to curb anti-social elements allegedly using these areas as hideouts, thereby enhancing law and order. (a) Can deforestation be ethically justified in the pursuit of social welfare objectives like, housing for the homeless? (b) What are the socio-economic, administrative and ethical challenges in balancing environmental conservation with human development? (c) What substantial alternatives or policy interventions can be proposed to ensure that both environmental integrity and human dignity are protected?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · GS IV · 20 marks · Ethics Case Studies

Case Studies on above issues.

Facts & figures for this PYQ only.

Numbers move. Confirm the latest Budget, Economic Survey or census round. This sheet is for revision, not a substitute for the model answer.

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Article 48A

A Directive Principle that the State shall protect the environment and wildlife.

Public trust doctrine

Courts have said the State holds natural resources in trust for the people, including those not yet born.

FRA

The **Forest Rights Act**, which recognises forest dwellers' rights and requires community processes before diversion.

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