

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q5(e)

High concentration of economic activities and consumption patterns in post-liberalisation period has led to the failure of environmental movements in India. Elucidate.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · PSIR GS 1 · 10 marks · Party System

Party System: National and regional political parties, ideological and social bases of parties; patterns of coalition politics; Pressure groups, trends in electoral behaviour; changing socio-economic profile of Legislators.

Core demand of the question

- **Answer the following in about 150 words:** High concentration of economic activities and consumption patterns in post-liberalisation period has led to the failure of environmental movements in India. Elucidate. (10 marks)

Revision summary

Liberalisation clustered economic activity and high consumption in corridors, mines, and cities.

That geography raised the cost of environmental vetoes compared with Chipko's forest economy.

Narmada, SEZ, and mining conflicts show frequent defeat and occasional gram sabha or court checks.

Urban consumption politics is not the same as environmentalism of the poor.

The statement explains many failures; it overstates a total end of movements.

Introduction

After 1991, growth clustered in metros, corridors, mines, and branded consumption. That concentration raised the cost of saying no to projects. It did not simply kill environmental movements. It changed their battlefield and often their outcomes.

Body

Concentration after liberalisation

- Liberalisation pulled investment to coastal SEZs, mineral belts, expressways, and mega-cities. Ecological load followed capital, not the old licence-permit map.
- New middle-class consumption-cars, power, packaged water, real estate-created a constituency for growth that Hayek's market order treats as preference, not as a political defeat of Chipko.
- Ramachandra Guha's environmentalism of the poor still existed, but it now faced global capital, not only a forest contractor.

What happened to movements

- **Chipko** had slowed commercial felling in a pre-1991 Himalayan economy. **Narmada Bachao Andolan** faced a developmental state plus later private power and a Supreme Court that allowed dam height to rise.
- POSCO, Vedanta-**Niyamgiri**, Sterlite, and various SEZ fights show both losses and a few vetoes, including gram sabha votes after Court directions at **Niyamgiri**.
- The National Green Tribunal and **Article 21** environment cases are institutional traces, not proof of movement victory.
- Failure is real where displacement outran organisation. It is overstated as a total end of environmental politics.

Elucidation of the claim

- Concentration and consumption weakened livelihood movements by raising the opportunity cost of protest and by splitting urban consumers from forest users.
- They also produced new middle-class clean-air and waste movements that do not speak Guha's poor.
- So post-liberalisation geography explains many defeats. It does not license the word failure for the whole field.

Flow diagram

Post-1991 concentration -> Corridors mines metros

Post-1991 concentration -> Consumer class

Movements -> Narmada Chipko Niyamgiri

Post-1991 concentration -> Weaker livelihood veto

Conclusion

Post-1991 concentration of production and consumption stacked power against place-based ecology. **Chipko**-to-Narmada history shows harder defeats, not a completed burial of environmental movements.

Facts & figures

Chipko

1970s Himalayan forest movement; a pre-liberalisation livelihood ecology success in slowing commercial felling.

Narmada Bachao Andolan

Anti-displacement struggle around the Sardar Sarovar Project; mixed legal outcomes and continued submergence.

Niyamgiri

Dongria Kondh gram sabhas rejected bauxite mining after Supreme Court-linked process.

NGT, 2010

Special environmental tribunal; an institutional turn after movement pressure, not a substitute for it.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-1/2022/high-concentration-of-economic-activities-and-consumption-patterns-in-post-liberalisation-period-has-led-to-the-failure-of-environmental-movements-in-india-elucidate/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com

WRAP Exams