Environment & Ecology · GS - I

Achieving sustainable growth with emphasis on environmental protection could come into conflict with poor people's needs in a country like India – Comment.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - I	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Sustainable development, poverty, energy access, livelihoods, environmental justice, just transition, renewable energy, forest communities, inclusive growth

Model Answer

Introduction

Environmental protection and poverty alleviation may appear conflicting when environmental regulations restrict access to resources on which vulnerable communities depend. However, sustainable development seeks to reconcile both objectives.

1. Sources of Conflict

Strict conservation measures can affect forest-dependent communities, while higher environmental standards may increase short-term costs of energy, housing and transport. Restrictions on mining or industrial activity can also affect employment.

2. Environmental Injustice

Poor communities are often disproportionately vulnerable to pollution, climate change and environmental degradation despite contributing relatively little to these problems. Environmental protection is therefore also a poverty-reduction strategy.

3. Path to Reconciliation

India can pursue renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, public transport and green employment. Development programmes should include affected communities in decision-making and provide fair compensation and livelihood restoration.

4. Just Transition

Workers and communities dependent on environmentally harmful activities require reskilling, alternative employment and social protection rather than abrupt exclusion.

Conclusion

The real challenge is not choosing between the poor and the environment but ensuring that environmental transition is socially just. Sustainable growth must combine ecological limits with livelihood security and equitable access to development.

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