Environment & Ecology · GS - II

What are environmental pressure groups? Discuss their role in raising awareness, influencing policies and advocating for environmental protection in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - II	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Environmental pressure groups, civil society, advocacy, public awareness, environmental movements, PIL, Chipko, Narmada Bachao Andolan, policy influence, environmental justice

Model Answer

Introduction

Environmental pressure groups are organised non-governmental actors that seek to influence public opinion, governmental policy and corporate behaviour for environmental protection. They operate through advocacy, research, campaigns, litigation and community mobilisation.

1. Raising environmental awareness

Groups such as the Centre for Science and Environment, WWF-India and local community organisations disseminate scientific information on pollution, biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development.

Environmental movements such as Chipko transformed ecological concerns into mass public consciousness by linking forest conservation with community livelihoods.

2. Influencing public policy

Environmental groups provide research and evidence to policymakers, participate in consultations and highlight regulatory gaps. Their advocacy has influenced debates over forests, mining, pollution control, biodiversity and environmental impact assessment.

Public Interest Litigation has also enabled environmental issues to enter constitutional adjudication, contributing to the development of principles such as sustainable development, precautionary principle and polluter pays.

3. Protecting communities and ecosystems

They act as watchdogs by monitoring environmental violations and supporting affected communities. Narmada Bachao Andolan, for instance, brought questions of displacement, rehabilitation and ecological costs into national policy debates.

4. Limitations

Pressure groups may face questions regarding funding, representativeness, technical capacity and conflicts between conservation and livelihood interests. Excessive adversarialism may also delay legitimate development projects.

Conclusion

Environmental pressure groups strengthen participatory environmental governance by connecting scientific knowledge, citizens and institutions. Their greatest contribution lies in ensuring that development remains ecologically sustainable, socially inclusive and legally accountable.

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