Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Land needed for mining, dams and other large-scale projects is acquired mostly from Adivasis, hill dwellers and rural communities. The displaced persons are paid monetary compensation as per the legal provisions. However, the payment is often tardy. In any case, hit cannot sustain the displaced families for long. These people do not possess marketable skills to engage in some other accusation. They end up as low paid migrant laborers. Moreover, their development go to industries, industrialists and urban communities whereas the costs are passed on to these poor helpless people. This unjust distribution of costs and benefits is unethical. Suppose you have been entrusted with the task of drafting a better compensation-cum-rehabilitation policy for such displaced persons, how would you approach the problem and what would be the main elements of your suggested policy?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

Distributive justice; prior consultation; fair compensation; livelihood restoration; rehabilitation; tribal rights; skill development; social impact assessment; benefit sharing; accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

Development projects may generate national benefits but impose disproportionate costs on displaced communities. An ethical rehabilitation policy must uphold justice, dignity and sustainable livelihoods rather than treating compensation as a one-time payment.

Approach and Policy Elements

1. Participatory Planning

Conduct a social impact assessment before acquisition, consult affected families and respect applicable tribal and forest rights. Explore less-displacing alternatives.

2. Fair and Timely Compensation

Compensation should reflect replacement value, livelihood losses and associated costs. Payments must be prompt, transparent and independently reviewable.

3. Land and Livelihood Restoration

Where feasible, provide alternative cultivable land or livelihood assets. Offer skill training, employment assistance and support for local enterprises.

4. Housing and Essential Services

Resettlement sites should provide secure housing, drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, education and transport before relocation.

5. Special Protection for Vulnerable Groups

Recognise community ties, customary resources and cultural practices, particularly for Adivasis and other vulnerable populations. Ensure women's independent entitlements.

6. Benefit Sharing

Provide affected communities with employment opportunities, local infrastructure and suitable long-term benefits from project-generated

value.

7. Monitoring and Grievance Redressal

Establish independent monitoring, accessible complaints mechanisms and periodic livelihood assessments. Make project authorities accountable for rehabilitation outcomes.

Conclusion

Rehabilitation must restore or improve living standards, not merely pay compensation. Development becomes ethically legitimate when its benefits are shared fairly and displaced people participate meaningfully in decisions affecting their lives.

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