Environment & Ecology · GS - IV

Keeping the national security in mind, examine the ethical dilemmas related to controversies over environmental clearance of development projects in ecologically sensitive border areas in the country.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - IV	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

National security, environmental sustainability, strategic infrastructure, Himalayan ecology, tribal rights, intergenerational equity, precautionary principle, public interest, EIA, local participation

Model Answer

Introduction

Development in border areas often serves strategic necessities, but ecologically fragile regions have limited carrying capacity. Hence, environmental clearance involves a conflict between competing public goods rather than a simple environment-versus-development choice.

Ethical Dilemmas

1. Security versus ecology: Roads, tunnels and communication infrastructure may be strategically essential but can increase landslides, habitat fragmentation and disaster vulnerability.
2. Present security versus intergenerational justice: Immediate strategic gains must be balanced against irreversible ecological costs.
3. National interest versus local rights: Tribal and local communities may face displacement or livelihood loss despite projects being justified in national interest.

4. Speed versus due diligence: Emergencies may require rapid infrastructure development, but bypassing environmental safeguards can create long-term risks.
5. Secrecy versus transparency: Security-sensitive projects require confidentiality, yet excessive secrecy can weaken accountability.

Ethical Approach

Strategic necessity should be assessed through cumulative impact assessment, disaster-risk analysis, scientific carrying-capacity studies, mitigation plans and meaningful local consultation wherever security permits.

Conclusion

Ethical governance requires harmonising security with ecological prudence. National security is strengthened, not weakened, when infrastructure is climate-resilient, locally sensitive and environmentally sustainable.

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