Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Air pollution is increasingly emerging as both an environmental and public health challenge in India. Examine its impact on public health and discuss the measures required to reduce the associated economic and healthcare burden.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 16/11/2026	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

PM2.5 and PM10, respiratory diseases, cardiovascular disorders, vulnerable populations, winter pollution, healthcare expenditure, National Clean Air Programme, emission control, public transport, clean energy, air quality monitoring, inter-state coordination.

Model Answer

Introduction

Air pollution has emerged as a major public health challenge in India, with particulate matter and harmful gases contributing to significant health risks, particularly in urban areas.

Public Health and Economic Impacts

Exposure to PM2.5 and other pollutants increases the risk of respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular diseases and premature mortality. Children, senior citizens and outdoor workers are particularly vulnerable. Rising illness leads to higher healthcare expenditure, reduced productivity and increased financial pressure on households.

Measures Required

India must strengthen the National Clean Air Programme, improve air quality monitoring and enforce emission standards. Cleaner fuels, public transport, electric mobility and industrial pollution control can reduce emissions. Special attention should be given to construction dust, crop-residue burning and regional pollution sources. Public health systems should integrate pollution-related disease surveillance and preventive healthcare.

Conclusion

Air pollution requires an integrated response combining environmental regulation, urban planning and public health investment to reduce both human suffering and economic losses.

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