Environment & Ecology · GS - III

What role do environmental NGOs and activists play in influencing Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) outcomes for major projects in India? Cite four examples with all important details.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2024	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

EIA, environmental NGOs, public participation, judicial intervention, environmental movements, expert scrutiny, project clearances

Model Answer

Introduction

Environmental NGOs and activists contribute to India's environmental governance by generating evidence, mobilising affected communities, participating in public hearings and seeking judicial or administrative scrutiny of major projects.

Body

1. Narmada Bachao Andolan

The movement questioned the social and environmental consequences of large dams in the Narmada valley. It brought displacement, rehabilitation and ecological concerns into public and judicial debate.

2. Sterlite Copper, Tuticorin

Local activists and environmental groups raised concerns regarding pollution and environmental compliance. The prolonged public mobilisation eventually became part of wider regulatory and judicial scrutiny surrounding the

plant.

3. POSCO Project, Odisha

Civil-society groups and local communities opposed the proposed steel project, highlighting forest rights, land acquisition and environmental concerns. The controversy contributed to prolonged regulatory and legal examination.

4. Vedanta's Niyamgiri Project

Activists and tribal communities raised concerns regarding bauxite mining and its implications for forests, biodiversity and tribal rights. The Supreme Court recognised the role of Gram Sabhas in determining community and religious rights under applicable law.

Conclusion

NGOs and activists strengthen EIA by bringing local knowledge, independent scrutiny and affected-community voices into decision-making. Their role is most effective when supported by transparent assessments, meaningful public consultation and evidence-based regulatory institutions.

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