Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

Suppose the Government of India is thinking of constructing a dam in a mountain valley bond by forests and inhabited by ethnic communities. What rational policy should it resort to in dealing with unforeseen contingencies.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Environmental impact assessment; tribal rights and community consultation; precautionary principle; rehabilitation and resettlement; disaster-risk assessment; alternative planning; transparent decision-making

Model Answer

Introduction

A dam in a forested mountain valley inhabited by ethnic communities presents a complex policy challenge involving development, environmental protection, and social justice. The government should adopt a rational, participatory, and precautionary approach to manage unforeseen contingencies.

Rational Policy Approach

1. Scientific Assessment: Conduct a comprehensive environmental and social impact assessment to evaluate ecological damage, biodiversity loss, geological instability, and displacement risks.

2. Community Consultation: Consult affected tribal and local communities, respect their cultural identity and customary rights, and ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making.

3. Risk Management: Identify possible contingencies such as landslides, floods, dam failure, and rehabilitation difficulties. Develop emergency preparedness and disaster-management plans.

4. Alternatives and Precaution: Examine alternative sites, smaller projects, and less damaging technologies. If risks are excessive or irreversible, reconsider the project.

5. Rehabilitation and Compensation: Ensure fair compensation, livelihood restoration, proper resettlement, and access to basic services before displacement.

6. Transparency and Monitoring: Establish independent monitoring, grievance-redressal mechanisms, and contingency funds.

Conclusion

The government should balance public welfare with ecological sustainability and social justice. A project should proceed only when its benefits justify its risks and affected communities' rights are adequately protected.

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