Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Rehabilitation of human settlements is one of the important environmental impacts which always attracts controversy while planning major projects. Discuss the measures suggested for mitigation of this impact while proposing major developmental projects.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
12.5	~200 words

Answer Hint

Displacement; environmental impact assessment; rehabilitation and resettlement; livelihood restoration; public consultation; compensation; social impact assessment

Model Answer

Introduction

Major infrastructure projects such as dams, mines, highways and industrial corridors can displace communities and disrupt livelihoods. Rehabilitation and resettlement must therefore form an integral part of development planning.

Measures to Mitigate the Impact

1. Assessment Before Project Approval

- Conduct environmental and social impact assessments to identify affected households, livelihoods and cultural resources.
- Examine alternatives that minimise displacement and ecological damage.
- Consult affected communities before finalising project design.

2. Avoidance and Minimisation

- Prefer routes and sites that reduce displacement.
- Explore redesign, phased development and alternative technologies.
- Avoid sensitive ecological and culturally significant locations where feasible.

3. Fair Compensation

- Provide compensation according to applicable law and ensure transparent valuation of land and assets.
- Recognise eligible landowners, tenants, livelihood-dependent households and other affected persons under the relevant framework.
- Ensure timely payment before displacement.

4. Rehabilitation and Livelihood Restoration

- Provide suitable housing, drinking water, sanitation, schools, healthcare and transport.
- Restore access to land, employment and common resources where possible.
- Offer skill training, livelihood assistance and support for vulnerable groups.
- Protect community networks and cultural heritage.

5. Participation and Accountability

- Ensure meaningful consultation and accessible grievance redressal.
- Monitor rehabilitation outcomes through independent assessments.
- Make project authorities accountable for compliance with rehabilitation plans.

6. Long-Term Monitoring

Track income recovery, housing quality, access to services and social integration after relocation. Corrective action should be taken where rehabilitation outcomes remain inadequate.

Conclusion

Development should not impose disproportionate costs on displaced communities. Early assessment, fair compensation, livelihood restoration and meaningful participation can reduce conflict and make projects more socially and environmentally sustainable.

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