Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Assess the significance of eco-certification initiatives such as the Blue Flag in promoting sustainable coastal tourism. What measures are necessary to reconcile tourism development with the conservation of fragile coastal ecosystems?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/11/2026	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Blue Flag certification, coastal ecosystem services, sustainable tourism, Olive Ridley nesting, CRZ regulations, carrying capacity, waste management, community participation, biodiversity conservation, ecotourism.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's extensive coastline supports tourism, fisheries and ecologically sensitive habitats. Eco-certification initiatives such as the Blue Flag encourage environmentally responsible tourism by linking beach management with internationally recognised standards.

Significance of Blue Flag Certification

1. **Environmental management:** It promotes water-quality monitoring, proper sanitation, waste disposal and pollution control.

2. **Tourism sustainability:** Certified beaches can improve India's international tourism profile while encouraging environmentally responsible visitor behaviour.

3. **Public safety:** Standards relating to lifeguards, emergency facilities and accessibility improve visitor safety.

4. **Conservation awareness:** Environmental education and community participation can strengthen public understanding of coastal biodiversity.

5. **Local livelihoods:** Sustainable tourism can generate employment for local communities through hospitality, transport and nature-based tourism.

Challenges in Ecologically Sensitive Areas

- Tourism infrastructure and excessive visitors may disturb Olive Ridley turtle nesting.
- Artificial lighting, noise and beach activities can affect nesting and hatchling movement.
- Plastic pollution, sewage discharge and coastal construction degrade habitats.
- Seasonal tourism pressures may exceed the ecological carrying capacity of beaches.

Way Forward

- Enforce Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) provisions and wildlife-protection laws.
- Establish seasonal restrictions around sensitive nesting areas.
- Regulate artificial lighting, vehicular movement and commercial activities.
- Strengthen scientific monitoring of water quality and turtle nesting.
- Involve local communities in conservation and sustainable tourism management.

Conclusion

Blue Flag certification can strengthen coastal environmental governance, but certification alone cannot guarantee ecosystem protection. Its success depends on continuous monitoring, strict regulatory enforcement and prioritising ecological carrying capacity over unregulated tourism expansion.

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