Environment & Ecology · GS - III

The expansion of wildlife conservation landscapes is increasingly influencing the relationship between local communities, traditional livelihoods and ecological preservation. In this context, discuss the socio-cultural dimensions of relocating and establishing new habitats for species such as the cheetah in India. (150 words)

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
Daily Practice 08/10/2026	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Balance species conservation with community rights, livelihoods, ecological carrying capacity, cultural practices, participation and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

Model Answer

India’s cheetah reintroduction programme represents an important experiment in restoring a species extinct from the country since 1952. The establishment of additional habitats such as Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve can reduce pressure on existing landscapes and strengthen ecological resilience. The New Indian Express

However, wildlife conservation has significant socio-cultural dimensions. Expansion of protected areas may restrict traditional access to forests, grazing grounds and minor forest produce, potentially affecting tribal and forest-dependent communities. Relocation, if poorly implemented, can weaken community institutions and traditional livelihood systems.

Conversely, successful conservation can generate employment through eco-tourism, local guiding, handicrafts and hospitality. Community participation can therefore transform conservation from a regulatory exercise into a shared economic opportunity.

The way forward requires recognition of **Forest Rights Act provisions**, informed consent, fair compensation, participatory conservation planning and equitable sharing of tourism revenues. Ecological corridors and coexistence strategies should accompany species-focused interventions.

Thus, India's conservation approach must integrate **ecological restoration with social justice, livelihood security and community stewardship**.

BECOME IAS
AI POWERED UPSC PREP