Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine how the Forest Rights Act and PESA protect tribal communities affected by mining projects. What measures are needed to balance mineral development with tribal rights and environmental protection?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Forest Rights Act 2006, PESA 1996, Gram Sabha, Fifth Schedule, land and livelihood rights, informed consultation, environmental impact assessment, rehabilitation, sustainable development.

Model Answer

Introduction

Mineral extraction can support industrial development and public revenue, but it may also displace tribal communities and damage forests, biodiversity and traditional livelihoods. Constitutional safeguards and participatory governance are essential to address these concerns.

Legal and Institutional Safeguards

- **Forest Rights Act, 2006:** Recognises eligible individual and community forest rights and provides for Gram Sabha involvement in determining these rights.
- **PESA, 1996:** Strengthens self-governance in Fifth Schedule areas and provides for consultation on land acquisition and resettlement, alongside other protections.
- **Fifth Schedule:** Establishes a framework for the administration of Scheduled Areas and protection of tribal interests.

- **Environmental safeguards:** Applicable environmental and forest-clearance laws require prescribed assessments and approvals.

Challenges

Weak consultation, disputed land claims, inadequate rehabilitation and unequal bargaining power can undermine tribal rights. Allegations of unlawful arrests or suppression of peaceful dissent require impartial investigation and due process.

Way Forward

Authorities should ensure meaningful Gram Sabha participation, transparent environmental assessments, fair compensation, livelihood restoration and accessible grievance-redress mechanisms. Illegal mining and violations of environmental conditions must be addressed effectively.

Conclusion

Tribal rights and mineral development need not be mutually exclusive. Rights-based, transparent and environmentally responsible decision-making can promote equitable development.

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