

1. A key issue in Environmental Governance is public participation. Comment.

(150 Words)

Answer:

- There are hundreds of legislations and rules for environmental protection but effective implementation and adherence to these laws are seldom seen.
- The main reason for its non effectiveness is that environmental protection cannot be forcibly implemented by applying law but it has to be followed by each and every person in his daily life so that it turns effective.
- Hence environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level.
- At the national level, each individual should have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States should facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, should be provided.
- Access to environmental information is important because an informed public is more alert to problems, more apt to challenge assumptions of government or corporate decision-makers, more capable of discussing issues, and more likely to organize for social and political change.
- It helps in bringing distributive justice as without the meaningful inclusion of those who will be impacted by the outcomes of environmental decision-making, fair distribution of environmental benefits and harms is unlikely to result.
- Participation builds the credibility and legitimacy of policies, plans and decisions in the eyes of the community, and ensures greater ownership and compliance. Involvement of communities in all aspects of planning and decision-making, gives effect to the notion of participatory governance, enshrined as a Constitutional right, and deepens our democracy.
- Example: Involvement of rural communities living close to forests in protection and management of forest resources has been enshrined in the National Forest Policy, 1988.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Answer the following Questions

1. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar understood that persistent inequalities pose fundamental challenges to the economic and social wellbeing of the nation and people. In this context, discuss the key contributions of Dr. Ambedkar in the history of modern India. (150 words)
2. It has been pointed out that in recent times, while the proportional share of nuclear households has dipped in urban areas it has risen in rural areas. Analyse the reasons behind this trend. (150 words)

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