

Daily Mains Practice Answer 16-09-2026

Q. "Notification of Eco-Sensitive Zones does not necessarily translate into effective ecological protection." Examine the institutional and governance challenges in implementing ESZs in India. (10 marks, 150 words)

Direction: Intro---- institutional and governance challenges----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Describe Eco-Sensitive Zones.

Notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, around Protected Areas to act as a "shock absorber" between ecologically fragile areas and intensive human activity.

Main Body

Key institutional & governance challenges

- Delayed notification - ESZ boundaries are often finalised late, creating uncertainty.
- Poor coordination - Forest, environment, local and district authorities often work separately.
- Limited capacity - Shortage of staff, experts, technology and funds weakens monitoring.
- Weak enforcement - Illegal construction, mining and other violations may continue.
- Unclear boundaries - Poor demarcation and lack of clear maps create disputes.
- Development-environment conflict - Roads, tourism and infrastructure projects may clash with conservation goals.
- Low public participation - Local communities and Panchayats often have limited role in ESZ management.
- Overlapping laws - ESZ rules may overlap with forest, wildlife, mining and urban-planning laws.
- Tourism pressure - Excessive tourism can increase waste, traffic, water use and construction.
- Weak accountability - It is often unclear which agency is responsible for violations.
- Legal disputes - Boundary, livelihood and development-related disputes can delay implementation.
- Poor ecological monitoring - Cumulative impacts of multiple projects are often not properly assessed.

Way forward

Notification → Planning → Participation → Monitoring → Enforcement

- Establish integrated ESZ management authorities with clearly defined departmental responsibilities.
- Strengthen local-level monitoring, involving Gram Sabhas and local communities.
- Use remote sensing, drones and GIS for detecting encroachments and land-use changes.
- Strengthen staffing, technical expertise and financial resources of implementing agencies.
- Create time-bound grievance and dispute-resolution mechanisms.

Conclusion:

Give a positive conclusion.

