

Daily Mains Practice Answer 16-10-2026

Q. Environmental governance requires a shift from episodic crisis management to preventive, accountable and coordinated policymaking. Discuss in the context of India's air pollution problem. (15 marks, 250 words)

Direction: Intro-----Limitations of episodic crisis management + Preventive, accountable and coordinated policymaking + Existing Govt initiatives + Measures need to be taken----
--Conclusion.

Introduction:

Define Environmental governance.

Main Body

Limitations of episodic crisis management

- Construction bans - Address immediate dust pollution but do not ensure year-round dust management.
- School closures - Protect children during severe pollution but disrupt education.
- Work-from-home or reduced working hours - May reduce traffic temporarily but not address vehicular emissions.
- Vehicle restrictions - Have limited impact without adequate public transport alternatives.
- Industrial shutdowns - May shift pollution elsewhere without ensuring cleaner production.
- Crop-burning restrictions - Remain ineffective without affordable and accessible alternatives for farmers.

Preventive, Accountable and Coordinated Environmental Governance

- Preventive Policymaking - Preventive governance seeks to reduce emissions before they cause severe pollution.
- Example - Promote cleaner industrial technologies, emission-control equipment, electric mobility, reduce dependence on coal and other highly polluting energy sources, etc.
- Accountable Policymaking - Environmental accountability requires clear responsibility for achieving measurable pollution reduction targets.
- Example - Strengthening regulatory institutions, transparent monitoring, enforcing the polluter-pays principle, etc.
- Coordinated Policymaking - Air pollution is a multidimensional problem requiring

coordination among several institutions.

Existing Government Initiatives

- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)
- Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)
- Bharat Stage VI emission standards.
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana for cleaner household cooking fuels.
- Crop residue management schemes.
- National Bio-Energy Programme.
- Commission for Air Quality Management Act, 2021.

Measures need to be taken

- Adopt an integrated airshed management framework
- Strengthen scientific policymaking
- Institutionalise accountability - Every major pollution source should have measurable emission reduction targets.
- Promote sustainable urbanisation
- Provide alternatives to polluting livelihoods
- Strengthen citizen participation
- Integrate air pollution with climate policy

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

India's air pollution problem demonstrates the limitations of an environmental governance model that relies heavily on emergency restrictions after pollution levels become hazardous.

A sustainable solution requires preventive action at the source, accountable institutions and coordinated governance across geographical and administrative boundaries.