Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Air pollution in Indian cities highlights gaps in urban governance and environmental enforcement. Examine the role of judicial intervention and local authorities in ensuring the right to a clean environment.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/10/2026	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 21; right to a healthy environment; urban air pollution; judicial review; municipal accountability; CPCB and SPCBs; construction dust; inter-agency coordination; public health; sustainable urban governance

Model Answer

Introduction

Urban air pollution poses serious risks to public health, productivity and environmental sustainability. Judicial scrutiny of pollution-control measures highlights the need for effective enforcement and accountable urban governance.

Causes and Governance Challenges

- **Construction and road dust:** Poor site management and inadequate dust suppression increase particulate pollution.
- **Transport emissions:** Congestion and fossil-fuel-based transport contribute to deteriorating air quality.
- **Institutional fragmentation:** Multiple agencies may have overlapping responsibilities, weakening coordinated action.

- **Enforcement gaps:** Monitoring deficiencies and inconsistent penalties can undermine pollution-control measures.

Role of Judicial Intervention

Article 21 has been interpreted to protect environmental conditions essential for life and dignity. Courts can examine administrative failures, require compliance reports and direct authorities to fulfil their legal obligations, while respecting statutory procedures.

Role of Authorities and Way Forward

Municipal bodies should enforce construction-site standards, control road dust and improve waste management. The CPCB and State Pollution Control Boards should strengthen monitoring and enforcement. Public transport, cleaner fuels, transparent air-quality data and time-bound action plans are also necessary.

Conclusion

Judicial oversight can promote accountability, but lasting improvement depends on scientific planning, inter-agency coordination and consistent implementation of environmental laws.

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