



## Mains Practice Question

You are posted as the District Magistrate (DM) in a mineral-rich tribal district of central India. The district is home to significant reserves of iron ore, bauxite, and coal, making it a hub of mining activities. However, in recent years, illegal mining has become rampant, causing severe environmental degradation—forests are being cleared without permission, rivers are turning toxic due to slurry discharge, and agricultural land is becoming infertile.

Local communities, especially tribal groups, depend on forests and rivers for their livelihood. They are now losing access to clean water, forest produce, and fertile soil, creating discontent. Civil society organisations have documented cases where labourers, including women and even minors, are forced to work in unsafe conditions without proper safety gear. Frequent accidents, respiratory diseases, and lack of compensation for injuries have worsened the humanitarian crisis.

At the same time, mining activities bring employment and revenue to the region. Thousands of families depend on mining-related jobs, and shutting down operations abruptly could lead to unemployment and unrest. Local political leaders, some with direct business interests, exert pressure on you to adopt a “soft approach” towards the mining companies. Several lower-level officials in the mining and police departments are allegedly complicit, receiving bribes to overlook violations.

The judiciary, acting on petitions from NGOs, has now directed the district administration to submit a comprehensive plan to curb illegal mining. The media has been running campaigns questioning the administration’s inaction, putting your office under public scrutiny. However, taking strict action may invite political backlash, threats, and economic disruption.

- A. Identify the major ethical issues involved in this case.
  - B. How would you balance economic interests, political pressures, and your duty towards environmental protection and labour welfare?
  - C. What measures would you take to ensure accountability and transparency in the administration to curb corruption in this case?
  - D. State the ethical values that should guide you.
- (250 words)

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Answer will be published shortly.

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