

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes [GS-II]

Topic: National Green Tribunal (NGT)-UPSC Notes on Indian Polity

National Green Tribunal (NGT) was established on 18th October 2010 under the NGT Act of 2010 as a specialized body for handling any environmental disputes that involve multi-disciplinary issues. It was formed by replacing the National Environment Appellate Authority. It also draws an inspiration from Article 21 of the India Constitution which assures to provide a healthy environment to the citizens of India.

What is NGT?

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a specialised body that was formed under the NGT Act, 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases that are related to protection and conservation of the environmental, forests and other natural resources. India has become the third country in the world after Australia and New Zealand, for setting up a specialised environmental tribunal and also the first developing country to do so. The National Green Tribunal has a total of five places of sittings namely: Bhopal, Pune, New Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai, amongst which, New Delhi is the Principal place of sitting.

Objectives of National Green Tribunal (NGT)

Some of the major objectives of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) are as follows:

- Effective and expeditious disposal of cases that are related to protection and conservation of the environmental, forests and other natural resources.
- To give reliefs and compensations for any damages caused to persons and properties.
- To handle various environmental disputes that involve multi-disciplinary issues.

Structure of NGT

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) comprises of three major bodies namely: the Chairperson, the Judicial Members and the Expert Members. Also, there should be a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 20 fulltime Judicial as well as Expert members in the NGT. All these members are required to hold the office for a period of five years and are not eligible for reappointment. The Chairperson of National Green Tribunal (NGT) is appointed by the Central Government of India in accordance with the Chief Justice of India. A Selection Committee is formed by the central government of India for the appointment of Judicial Members and Expert Members.

Powers of NGT

Over the past few years, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) developed as an important body for regulation of the environment and passing strict orders on issues related to pollution, deforestation, waste management, etc. Some of the major powers of National Green Tribunal include:

- NGT provides a way for the evolution of environmental jurisprudence through the development of an alternative dispute resolution mechanism.
- It helps in reduction of the litigation burden on environmental matters in the higher courts.
- NGT provides a faster solution for various environment-related disputes that are less formal and less expensive.
- It curbs environment-damaging activities. NGT ensures the strict observation of the Environment Impact Assessment process.
- NGT provides reliefs and compensations for any damages caused to persons and properties.
- The National Green Tribunal resolves various civil cases under the following seven laws that are related to the environment:
 1. Water Act (Prevention and Control of Pollution), 1974
 2. Water Cess Act (Prevention and Control of Pollution), 1977
 3. Forest Act (Conservation), 1980
 4. Air Act (Prevention and Control of Pollution), 1981
 5. Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
 6. Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991
 7. Biological Diversity Act, 2002