



ILS LAW COLLEGE, PUNE

ILS ENVIRONMENT LAW (HARIYALI) CELL

ONE DAY NATIONAL SEMINAR

“INTERFACE OF ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES”

Increased connectivity through faster means of communication, availability of housing with adequate water and sanitation facilities, availability of various energy resources are imperative for economic development of any nation. India, a developing country is no exception to it. Often large scale public investments are made in infrastructure sector. In the race to tick the parameters of being considered as an economically developed nation, infrastructure is one of the sectors which have received a rather blue eyed boy treatment in India and accordingly large scale public investments are made in this sector. Accordingly, public utilities in infrastructure sector such as railways, post, telegraph, ports, airports and power have received ample amount of impetus financially as well as commercially by way of active role of the public sector undertakings. Given this background, it is not unusual for the public sector to be lopsided in favouring infrastructure over its concomitants like environment and related social factors. Out of all the infrastructure projects, transport infrastructure is proliferating great pace.

These transport infrastructure development projects, however, are laid on the foundation of environmental compromise. Wide range of activities carried out for the construction, maintenance and operation of these projects pose serious threats to environment. The environmental impact ranges from being temporary to permanent; direct to indirect; repairable to irreparable and local to global. Citizens and academicians play an important role in aligning public sector goals of infrastructure with sustainable development. Worldwide, protests against such development projects on environmental grounds are on the rise. In India, projects like Golden Quadrilateral, Bangalore-Mysore Infrastructure

Corridor, Mumbai- Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor, Pune Metro Rail, High Capacity Mass Transit Route and many others have faced staunch opposition from the environmentalists and affected persons. This has resulted in stalling or delaying of the projects also causing loss of public exchequer.

In this scenario, it is incumbent to undertake environmental impact assessment of such projects. Often, the protesters are pacified on superficial basis by showing records of land brought under afforestation as against the deforestation carried out for the project. But, is it only about cutting the trees? Can this issue and the damage to the environment remedied just by planting trees elsewhere? There are many serious, long lasting impacts of these actions. They affect entire natural habitat in and around that area including humans. Soil erosion, sedimentation, increased emissions, climate change, changes in water levels, changes in landscape, loss of flora and fauna, displacement of innumerable living beings are some of the adverse effects of these projects. Such adverse environmental impact also affects our economy. Studies point out that environmental damage has cost India four to eight percent of GDP annually, and major portion of it comes from infrastructural projects.¹

Thus, development of transport infrastructure stimulates economic growth but with environmental costs. These costs, however, are avoidable. Proper and thorough environmental impact assessment before designing the project, well thought actions right from selection, design, implementation, supervision can play an important role in avoiding these costs. Apart from these, national level efforts in the form of framing of proper policies or regulations and its proper implementation are also equally important. It is pointed out that Asian countries lack in proper implementation of environmental policies.² Thus, there is ample scope for reducing the negative impact of these projects and safeguarding environment. This is possible by shifting from 'do no harm' approach to 'do good' approach while executing such infrastructural projects.

In order to bring about this shift we need to focus on 'Infrastructure – Environment Nexus' studies. It aims at fulfilling infrastructural requirements without compromising, rather by bringing positive impact on environment. The issue surely can't be approached by lopsided view either towards environment or towards development. Rather, holistic approach is the need of hour. This is possible only after meaningful deliberations about impacts, need of such projects, legal and policy framework, its implementation, political dedication towards environment protection, etc.

“One of the things that people don't realise is that natural beauty, those recreational forests, have an economic development impact for the state as well.”

¹ IEG (OED), 2001, India: The Challenges of Development: A Country Assistance Evaluation; IEG (OED), 2004

² http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTOED/Resources/infrastructure_environment.pdf

With this view, ILS Law College, Pune has decided to organize One Day Seminar on Interface of Environment Protection and Development of Transport Infrastructure on 27th February, 2020. At this seminar, we wish to discuss all the above mentioned issues by giving adequate representations to all stakeholders. The seminar aims at stimulating discussions so as to balance the conflicting interests of environmentalists and developmentalists and to evolve healthy practices to achieve sustainable development.

The Seminar will benefit students, academicians, lawyers, sociologists, economists, environmentalists, persons aggrieved by such projects, government personnel and also the persons involved in carrying out these development works.

Objectives of the Seminar:

1. To generate awareness about the environmental impact of transport infrastructure projects.
2. To find out ways, means and methods of mitigating and remedying the environmental damage.
3. To sensitize the students about the environment protection issues and hurdles in it.
4. To stress upon the importance of sustainable development while undertaking transport infrastructure projects.
5. To identify key issues which come up for consideration when environment is ignored in favour of infrastructure.
6. To understand the governmental approach towards these issues.
7. To discuss the adequacy and efficiency of legal and regulatory framework to deal with these issues.
8. To analyze the judicial opinion about the environmental protection vis a vis infrastructure development.

Themes of the Seminar:

Rehashed the themes:

1. The current legal framework for environmental impact assessment / clearance(s) at governmental level for undertaking transport infrastructure projects;
2. Role of government, NGT and Courts in integrating sustainable development in infrastructure projects;
3. Overlap of environmental jurisprudence like personhood of rivers and sustainable development with economic goals of infrastructure; and
4. Any other related topic.

Date: 27th February, 2020

Time: 10am to 6pm

Venue: Conference Hall, ILS Law College, Pune

Registration

Persons interested can register themselves on or before 22nd February, 2020. The registration must be done in online mode at www.ilslaw.edu

Paper Presentation:

Participants are allowed to present their papers at the Seminar.

Last Date for Submission of Abstract: 10th February, 2020

Announcement of Acceptance of Abstract: 14th February, 2020

Submission of Full Paper: 25th February, 2020

Registration Fees

ILS Students: Rs. 250 + GST

Non ILS Students: Rs. 500 + GST

Professionals/Academicians: Rs. 700 + GST

Paper Presenters (Students): Rs. 700 + GST

Paper Presenters (Other than Students): Rs. 1500 + GST

Conveners

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