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Passage No. 119

Directions: Read the passage and answer the questions that follow:

The catastrophic monsoon floods in Kerala and parts of Karnataka have revived the debate on whether political expediency trumped science. Seven years ago, the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel issued recommendations for the preservation of the fragile western peninsular region. Madhav Gadgil, who chaired the Union Environment Ministry's WGEEP, has said the recent havoc in Kerala is a consequence of short-sighted policymaking, and warned that Goa may also be in the line of nature's fury. The State governments that are mainly responsible for the Western Ghats — Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Maharashtra — must go back to the drawing table with the reports of both the Gadgil Committee and the Kasturirangan Committee, which was set up to examine the WGEEP report. The task before them is to initiate correctives to environmental policy decisions. This is not going to be easy, given the need to balance human development pressures with stronger protection of the Western Ghats ecology. The issue of allowing extractive industries such as quarrying and mining to operate is arguably the most contentious. A way out could be to create the regulatory framework that was proposed by the Gadgil panel, in the form of an apex Western Ghats Ecology Authority and the State-level units, under the Environment (Protection) Act, and to adopt the zoning system that it proposed. This can keep incompatible activities out of the Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZs).

At issue in the Western Ghats — spread over 1,29,037 sq km according to the WGEEP estimate and 1,64,280 sq km as per the Kasturirangan panel — is the calculation of what constitutes the sensitive core and what activities can be carried out there. The entire system is globally acknowledged as a biodiversity hotspot. But population estimates for the sensitive zones vary greatly, based on interpretations of the ESZs. In Kerala, for instance, one expert assessment says 39 lakh households are in the ESZs outlined by the WGEEP, but the figure drops sharply to four lakh households for a smaller area of zones identified by the Kasturirangan panel. The goal has to be sustainable development for the Ghats as a whole. The role of big hydroelectric dams, built during an era of rising power demand and deficits, must now be considered afresh and proposals for new ones dropped. Other low-impact forms of green energy led by solar power are available. A **moratorium** on quarrying and mining in the identified sensitive zones, in Kerala and also other States, is necessary to assess their environmental impact. Kerala's Finance Minister, Thomas Isaac, has acknowledged the need to review decisions affecting the environment, in the wake of the floods. Public consultation on the expert reports that includes people's representatives will find greater **resonance** now, and help chart a sustainable path ahead.

Questions:

1. Which among the following has been attributed by the experts as a reason of the recent floods in Kerala and Karnataka?

- A. The states do not have proper system in place of drainage and that is why the rain water always overflows in these two states.
- B. The states have no idea how to manage any kind of natural calamity and that is why they cannot tackle any situation however small it may be.
- C. The states should be entrusted with the responsibility of protection of environment in the areas within their jurisdiction.
- D. The political decision making strategy has always taken the upper hand as compared to the real interests of the environment.
- E. None of the above

2. According to the passage, the states affected by the floods should do which among the following to prevent such incidents in the future?

- A. The states should devote more funds towards the reduction of natural calamities in the states.
- B. The states should put in place proper warning mechanism so that the government can get to know the possibility of any natural calamity beforehand.
- C. The states should plan properly so that they can implement the recommendations of the expert panels regarding the preservation of the Western Ghats Area.
- D. The states should not do anything at present and should only focus on the idea of going all out in disaster management operations.
- E. None of the above

3. Which among the following is the main issue pointed out in the passage in the implementation of the expert panel reports in various states?

- A. There is no proper framework depicted in the expert panel reports to regulate the Ecologically Sensitive Zone in the Western Ghat Area.
- B. There is no issue pertaining to the Western Ghat area but the main problem is that the governments do not have enough funds.
- C. The reservoirs in the vicinity of the area will spell the doom for the area since they will exhaust the groundwater available in the area.
- D. The area will be flooded since the policy makers are not bothered about the environment until it affects their vote base.
- E. The balance between development and preservation should be there in order to develop the area properly.

4. Which among the following should be the objective of all concerned regarding the development of the Western Ghats Area?

- A. The development plan should be well supported by money and also manpower by all the states.
- B. The development plan must be drawn up correctly at the first place since it will help gain an upper hand in the whole process.
- C. The states should take the development of the Western Ghats region seriously so that the area is actually preserved.
- D. The Western Ghats Area should be preserved properly so that there is sustainable development of the area.
- E. The Western Ghats Area should not be taken for granted for development work by the states because they are not responsible for this.

5. Which among the following should be the course of action of the government in order to ensure that the Western Ghats Area is preserved properly?

- I. There should be utilization of various clean sources of energy such as the solar power in the area
- II. There should not be any restriction in mining activities as well as quarrying activities in the area
- III. There should not be new construction of hydroelectric dams in the area from now onwards

- A. Both I and II B. Only II C. Both I and III D. Only I E. All I, II and III

6. Which among the following is true regarding the regulatory framework recommended by the expert panel regarding the conservation of the Western Ghats Area?

- A. There should be a central regulator with no power given to states in order to avert any kind of dispute between the states.
- B. There should be decentralized regulators in the state level that should be accompanied by the Ministry executives.
- C. There should be only one authority regarding the region so that there should not be any confusion regarding the responsibilities of various authorities.
- D. There should be one central authority along with state-wise authorities so that the coordination is proper for sustainable development of the area.
- E. None of the above

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7. Which among the following is the view of the Finance Minister of Kerala regarding the efforts towards development of the Western Ghats Area?

- A. It should not be carried out since any development activity in region would definitely put a lot of people in problem.
- B. It should not be stopped because the central government has already sanctioned it and the funds have also been released.
- C. Kerala should get special assistance from the central government in the present Finance Commission in view of the ongoing flood situation.
- D. The state government should be the sole deciding authority regarding the amount of compensation to be given.
- E. The state should engage public in the process of consultation regarding the blueprint of the development of Western Ghats Area

8. Which among the following is similar in meaning to the word **Resonance** as used in the passage?

- A. Delightful
- B. Blissful
- C. Consonance
- D. Credence
- E. None of the above

9. Which among the following is opposite in meaning to the word **Moratorium** as used in the passage?

- A. Adjournment
- B. Accommodation
- C. Continuation
- D. Termination
- E. None of the above

Correct Answers:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
D	C	E	D	C	D	E	C	C

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Explanations:

1. Refer to, “**Madhav Gadgil, who chaired the Union Environment Ministry’s WGEEP, has said the recent havoc in Kerala is a consequence of short-sighted policymaking, and warned that Goa may also be in the line of nature’s fury.**”

It is clear from the above that the experts are of the view that policy making has been the major reason of such floods in the country as it has not taken into account the environmental considerations of the area.

It makes Option D the right choice among the given options.

2. Refer to, “The State governments that are mainly responsible for the Western Ghats — Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Maharashtra — must go back to the drawing table with the reports of both the Gadgil Committee and the Kasturirangan Committee, which was set up to examine the WGEEP report. The task before them is to initiate correctives to environmental policy decisions.”

It implies from the above lines that the states should ponder over the steps to be taken in order to preserve the ecology of the Western Ghats Area and they should think about implementation of the expert panel report on this issue.

This makes Option C the right choice among the given options.

3. Refer to, “This is not going to be easy, given the need to balance human development pressures with stronger protection of the Western Ghats ecology.”

It is very much clear from the above lines that the objective of sustainable development is very difficult to meet with the political considerations in mind and that is why it becomes very difficult to strike a balance between the political objectives and the environmental requirements of the Western Ghats Area.

Statement A is incorrect since the expert panel has recommended formation of committee and authority to oversee the development in the Western Ghats Area. Statements B, C and D are not in sync with the given context though they may sound logical otherwise. Only Option E implies the same as has been depicted in the passage.

This makes Option E the right choice among the given options.

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4. Refer to, “The goal has to be sustainable development for the Ghats as a whole.”

It is very clear that the main objective of all the activities surrounding the Western Ghats Area should be overall development of the region and also for all the parties concerned. There should be sustainable development of all the regions in the area.

Except statement D, all the other options are not related to the given context and that is why they are eliminated. Option D implies the same as referred to in the above reference.

This makes Option D the correct choice among the given options

5. Refer to, “The role of big hydroelectric dams, built during an era of rising power demand and deficits, must now be considered afresh and proposals for new ones dropped. Other low-impact forms of green energy led by solar power are available. A moratorium on quarrying and mining in the identified sensitive zones, in Kerala and also other States, is necessary to assess their environmental impact.”

It is clear that in order to preserve the Western Ghats Area, the solar energy should be promoted in the area along with moratorium on the mining and quarrying activities in the area. Apart from that, there should be restriction on construction of new hydroelectric power dams in the area. This makes statements I and III true.

Hence, Option C is the right choice among the given options.

6. Refer to, “A way out could be to create the regulatory framework that was proposed by the Gadgil panel, in the form of an apex Western Ghats Ecology Authority and the State-level units, under the Environment (Protection) Act, and to adopt the zoning system that it proposed. This can keep incompatible activities out of the Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZs).”

It is implied that the central authority should be there to regulate the development of the area with the assistance from the state-level authorities so that there is proper coordination in the whole process. Statement D implies this whereas rest of the options clearly do not imply this type of regulation in the area.

This makes Option D the right choice among the given options.

7. Refer to, “Kerala’s Finance Minister, Thomas Isaac, has acknowledged the need to review decisions affecting the environment, in the wake of the floods. Public consultation on the expert reports that includes people’s representatives will find greater resonance now, and help chart a sustainable path ahead.”

It is clear from the above lines that the Finance Minister of Kerala is of the view that public should be engaged in the process of developing any blueprint for the Western Ghats Area in the country. It would then be possible to chart out a development roadmap in the area.

Statements E only implies the same with the other options being irrelevant in the given context.

This makes Option E the right choice among the given options.

8. The given word *Resonance* has been used in the sense that the expert panel report will find its way in the public and there will be a lot of public support and discussion regarding the recommendations of the panel.

Among the given options, *Delightful* refers to beautiful whereas *blissful* refers to being heavenly and *credence* refers to support. *Consonance* refers to being in agreement and this is the best synonym to the given word since they imply one and the same.

Hence, Option C is the right choice among the given options.

9. The given word 'moratorium' has been used in context to imply postponement or ban on mining and quarrying activities in the Western Ghats Area.

Among the given options, *adjournment* refers to deferment of an activity, *accommodation* refers to *shelter* and *termination* refers to the end of something. Only *continuation* refers to *continuance of something*. This is opposite in meaning to the given word.

This makes Option C the right choice among the given options.



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