



Mains Practice Question

Q. Explain the significance of the Eastern Ghats for India. Suggest steps that can be taken to conserve the biodiversity of the region. (250 words)

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Approach:

- Highlight the ecological and economic importance of eastern ghats while mentioning the challenges also.
- Highlight some steps to overcome these issues and conserve the biodiversity of the region.

Introduction

The Eastern Ghats are discontinuous and low hills which are heavily eroded by east flowing rivers like Godavari, Krishna, Mahanadi, Kaveri. Due to their peculiar physiography, geographical location in peninsular India and ongoing Anthropocene their significance for India is multifaceted.

Body

- **Ecological Significance:** The ranges cover diverse ecologies like the Eastern Highlands moist deciduous forests, East Deccan dry evergreen forests, Deccan thorn scrub forests, shrublands, and South Deccan Plateau dry deciduous forests, which is home to endemic flora and fauna. Many animals, including tigers and elephants, and some 400 bird species are found in these discontinuous forests that receive an annual average rainfall of 1,200 mm to 1,500 mm.
- **Economical Significance:** The broken hill-ranges of the Eastern Ghats spread across Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu also houses several minerals like Bauxite, Laterite Soils.
- **Challenges:** The eastern ghats face the challenges like effects of climate change, cyclones, haphazard construction leading to increased denudation and degradation, deforestation, poaching, illegal sand mining etc.

Steps to Conserve the Biodiversity of the Region

- **Sustainable Use of Forest Resources:** Promotion of sustainable use of forest resources should be done in order to counter overexploitation, for example, banning of illegal trade of red sanders.
- **Check Shifting Cultivation:** Government should incentivize settled agriculture in order to counter the impact of shifting agriculture because the practice of shifting agriculture will directly contribute to deforestation.
- **Use of Indigenous Plantation Crops:** Government should finance the plantation of indigenous plants and trees for restoring and strengthening the peripheral areas of the forest of Eastern Ghats.
- Conservation of their eco-systems like wildlife Corridors, specialised ecosystems, and special breeding site/area, areas with intrinsically low resilience, sacred groves and frontier forests.
- Measures should be taken to protect endemism, rarity, endangered species; species which are or may become threatened with extinction and centres of the evolution of domesticated species, are critical for maintaining the range and pace of evolution and speciation.

- Stricter implementation of laws to check poaching, illegal sand mining and promote sustainable construction.

Conclusion

In the face of global warming and the social challenges due to natural vulnerabilities, it is important to take a multivariate approach in conserving fauna and flora as per biodiversity principles.

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