



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the significance of biodiversity conservation in India and the steps taken by the government to preserve it. Also, evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in protecting the country's rich biodiversity. (250 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer with a simple definition of biodiversity.
- Discuss the Significance of Biodiversity Conservation
- Discuss the steps taken by the Government to preserve biodiversity.
- Write effectiveness of Measures.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

Biodiversity refers to the variety of living organisms and their interactions with each other and the environment. India is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, with over 7% of the world's biodiversity.

Body

Significance of Biodiversity Conservation:

- **Ecological Benefits:**
 - Biodiversity plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance and ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources.
 - It provides ecosystem services such as pollination, nutrient cycling, and soil conservation.
- **Economic Benefits:**
 - Biodiversity also has economic benefits such as providing livelihoods for millions of people through agriculture, forestry, and fisheries.
 - It also has potential for the development of new medicines and biotechnologies.
- **Cultural Benefits:**
 - Biodiversity is integral to the cultural identity and traditions of many communities in India.
 - It is also important for spiritual and religious beliefs (Sacred grooves).

Steps taken by the Government to Preserve Biodiversity:

- **Protected Areas:**
 - India has established a network of protected areas such as national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and biosphere reserves to conserve biodiversity.
 - As of January 2023, the protected areas of India cover 173,629.52 square kilometers (67,038.73 sq mi), roughly 5.28% of the total geographical area of the country.
- **Wildlife Protection:**
 - The government has enacted laws such as the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, to protect wildlife and their habitats.
 - It has also established institutions such as the National Tiger Conservation Authority and

the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau to address wildlife crimes.

▪ **International Agreements:**

- India is a signatory to international agreements such as the **Convention on Biological Diversity** and the **Paris Agreement**, which aim to protect biodiversity and address climate change.

Effectiveness of Measures:

▪ **Protected Areas:**

- The establishment of protected areas has been effective in preserving biodiversity in India.
- These areas have helped protect threatened species such as tigers, elephants, and rhinoceroses.
- However, some protected areas face challenges such as human-wildlife conflict, poaching, and encroachment.

▪ **Wildlife Protection:**

- The Wildlife Protection Act has been effective in reducing wildlife crimes such as poaching and trafficking.
- However, there are still challenges such as the demand for wildlife products and inadequate enforcement of laws.

▪ **International Agreements:**

- India's participation in international agreements has helped raise awareness about biodiversity conservation and address global environmental issues.
- However, there are still challenges in meeting the targets set by these agreements, such as the loss of habitat and the spread of invasive species.

Conclusion

While these measures have been effective in some ways, there are still challenges such as human-wildlife conflict, poaching, and habitat loss. It is important to continue to address these challenges and work towards sustainable use of natural resources.

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