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Q15

Identify and discuss the factors responsible for diversity of natural vegetation in India. Assess the significance of wildlife sanctuaries in rain forests regions of India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · GS I · 15 marks · Indian Society and Diversity

Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

Core demand of the question

- Identify and discuss the factors responsible for diversity of natural vegetation in India
- Assess the significance of wildlife sanctuaries in rain forests regions of India

Revision summary

Rainfall length, Himalayan height, soil, and relief create India's vegetation mosaic.

Human fire and farming further split climax types.

Rainforest in the Ghats, north-east, and islands is the wet, endemic end of that mosaic.

Sanctuaries under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, protect species, catchments, and carbon there.

They fail if they stay as fragments without corridors and forest rights.

Flow diagram

Monsoon altitude soil relief -> Evergreen to thorn mosaic
Evergreen to thorn mosaic -> Western Ghats NE Andamans
Western Ghats NE Andamans -> Rainforest sanctuaries
Rainforest sanctuaries -> Endemics water carbon
WPA 1972 FRA -> Rainforest sanctuaries

Conclusion

- Notify corridors, fund anti-poaching and fire lines, and co-manage with gram sabhas in rainforest catchments.
- **Keep Silent Valley-type lessons:** some evergreen tracts should stay closed to dam and cash-crop conversion.

Monsoon, altitude, soil, and human use explain India's vegetational diversity from evergreen to thorn. Sanctuaries in rainforest regions matter because they hold endemics, water, and carbon that cannot be stored in a dry teak belt, but they work only with corridors and local rights.

Facts & figures

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Central law that creates sanctuaries, national parks, and schedules of protected species.

Western Ghats and north-east

Two of India's main tropical rainforest and biodiversity-hotspot belts.

Periyar and Kalakad-Mundanthurai

Examples of protected wet-forest landscapes in the southern Western Ghats.

Namdapha

Eastern Himalaya-Patkai wet forest complex in Arunachal Pradesh with high faunal range.

Forest Rights Act, 2006

Law that must sit beside sanctuary notification if local forest dwellers are not to be erased.

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