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Q69

In a particular region in India, the local people train the roots of living trees into robust bridges across the streams. As the time passes, these bridges become stronger. These unique 'living root bridges' are found in (a) Meghalaya (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Jharkhand (d) Tamil Nadu Official key: A.

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2015 · General Studies · 2 marks · Geography

Physical, Indian and world geography - Prelims GS Paper I.

Explanation**(a) Official key**

Living root bridges are grown by the Khasi and Jaintia peoples of Meghalaya, especially in the East Khasi Hills, by training *Ficus* (rubber-fig) roots across streams. They strengthen with time. This option is the official key.

(b)

Himachal Pradesh has wooden and rope bridges in the Himalaya, not living *Ficus* root bridges of the Meghalaya type. This option is not the key.

(c)

Jharkhand does not have this living-root-bridge tradition. This option is therefore wrong.

(d)

Tamil Nadu has other vernacular bridges and sacred groves, not these living root bridges. This option is not the key.

Summary

Official key is (a) Meghalaya. Double-decker and single living root bridges around Cherrapunji/Sohra and **Nongriat** are a documented Khasi-Jaintia practice. The humid climate lets aerial roots of ***Ficus elastica*** be trained over decades. Himachal, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu do not host this landscape. Only Meghalaya matches the passage.

Related possible facts

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

Ficus elastica

Indian rubber fig used for living root bridges

Nongriat

Village known for a double-decker living root bridge

Khasi-Jaintia

Communities that grow and maintain the bridges

Umshiang

Stream associated with famous root bridges near Sohra

Intangible heritage

Often cited as traditional ecological knowledge of the Khasi hills

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