



# Reading Comprehension

## Comprehension -1

**Direction:** Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions given below. Some words are printed in bold in order to help you locate them while answering some of the questions.

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.

**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

**Correct Option: D**

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. 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

**Correct Option: C**

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. 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.

**Correct Option: E**

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.

**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.

**Correct Option: D**

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. 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

**Correct Option: C**

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.



## Comprehension -2

**Directions :** Read the passage carefully and answer the questions given below :

For generations, companies have been selling fair skin to young Indian women, promising better marriage and employment prospects. However, over the last few years, men have become a favoured target audience. This followed the realisation that the Indian alpha male, denied a choice in male-specific grooming products, had been using women's fairness creams all along. Until the mid-2000s, deodorants and shaving creams were the only grooming products advertised for men. But India's largest consumer goods companies sensed an opportunity, and launched a slew of fairness products for male consumers.

In India, as in other parts of the world, light skin is the culturally accepted and endorsed form of beauty, and children absorb this message at a young age. According to a 2015 research report by Nielsen, urban Indian men believe that fair skin can improve professional prospects. The cultural pressure to look fair, argues Kiran Khalap, branding expert and founder at communications consultancy Chlorophyll, is something inherent in our society, not manufactured by companies. "And it is certainly not restricted to India: China and Japan have had skin-whitening products for centuries, well before they met Western 'white' people," he said. However, there is a growing awareness among consumers that companies are exploiting their insecurities, and critics have taken some of the biggest fairness brands, and the celebrities who endorse them, to task for their casual discrimination.

Earlier this month, Bollywood actor Abhay Deol took to Facebook to trounce his fellow actors who earn millions from endorsing fairness creams. This comes a few years after actress Nandita Das launched the "Dark is Beautiful" campaign to encourage Indians to embrace a wider definition of beauty. These efforts are slowly making a difference, increasing awareness and encouraging consumers to take pride in their natural skin tones. That means Indian companies will eventually have to change their approach. "My sense is that brands will wake up to the new reality, and you will see propositions reworked around clearer skin (and) glow, rather than pure fairness," Leo Burnett's Sinha said.

Rajesh Krishnamurthy, business head for the consumer product division at The Himalaya Drug Company, believes that over time the men's grooming category will evolve to include a wider range of products, including those for normal skin, just like in the women's skin care category. "Companies are increasingly realising that you cannot continue to bullshit consumers anymore; these are educated young men who will question what you sell to them," said Shantanu Deshpande, co-founder and CEO of the male-grooming startup Bombay Shaving Company.

### 1. What is the central idea of the passage?

- A. Though people endorsed skin fairness products, they are now realising that they are being taken for a ride by such products.
- B. Only men ardently use whitening creams to boost their personality.
- C. The brand marketing of fairness product companies are evolving to appease the target audience of India.
- D. Brands are frivolous when it comes to campaigning of their beauty products.
- E. None of these

**Correct Option: A**

The passage essentially talks about how we Indians are drawn towards the fairness syndrome and how this stance is changing thanks to the awareness among people that beauty companies are a farce and that natural skin tone is better rather than becoming fair. This is evident in option A.

Option B can be eliminated as it points at men being overtly fond of fairness products leaving the fact that even women obsess over such products.

Option C can be ruled out as it talks only about brand marketing and does not take anything else into consideration.

Option D can be ruled out as there is no inkling towards the brands being frivolous.

Hence, option A is correct.





**2. What were the findings of the 2015 research report by Nielsen?**

- A. Indian urban men presumed that being fair enhanced their professional opportunities.
- B. Indian urban men believed that being fair would give them better marriage and employment contracts.
- C. Indian urban men would eventually question the logic behind male-grooming product advertisements.
- D. Indian urban men do not endorse the concept of fairness helping them in their personal and professional life.
- E. None of these

**Correct Option: A**

Option A is corroborated by the sentence "*According to a 2015 research report by Nielsen, urban Indian men believe that fair skin can improve professional prospects.*"

As per the passage, all the other options are incorrect.

Hence, option A is correct.

**3. What is the tone of the passage?**

- A. Didactic
- B. Sceptical
- C. Descriptive
- D. Satirical
- E. None of these

**Correct Option: C**

A didactic tone implies that the author is trying to teach / introduce a new concept to the readers.

A sceptical tone implies that the author has a dismissive attitude towards the contents of the passage.

A descriptive tone is used when the author is examining and explaining a particular situation.

A satirical tone is used by the author when he wants to deliver a message in an indirect form or by using a prop.

The passage talks about the reign of fairness products prevalent mainly in India. The author points out how fairness companies have used the cultural notion of light skin being a scale to judge beauty. The author then describes the partiality of Indians towards fair skin which is gradually diminishing due to growing awareness among consumers who endorse beauty products.

Hence, option C is correct.

**4. With reference to the passage, why exactly was "Dark is beautiful" campaign initiated?**

- A. To motivate Indians to ditch their liking for the fair skin and accept their inherent beauty.
- B. To throw light on the sinister intentions of fairness brands.
- C. To make sure that Indians do not fall prey to misleading beauty product advertisements.
- D. To encourage Indians to be sympatric towards people with other skin tones.
- E. None of these

**Correct Option: A**



The passage mentions- "*This comes a few years after actress Nandita Das launched the "Dark is Beautiful" campaign to encourage Indians to embrace a wider definition of beauty.*" points at option A which mirrors the context of this statement.

Option B can be eliminated as it is extreme and not true with respect to the notion of the campaign.

Option C can be ruled out as it is not the reason behind the campaign.

Option D can be eliminated as it contradicts the fundamental idea of the campaign.

Hence, option A is correct.

### 5. Choose a similar word in meaning to the word "trounce"

- A. Vacillation
- B. Temerity
- C. Lambaste
- D. Nefarious
- E. None of these

**Correct Option: C**

The word "trounce" means 'to express sharp disapproval or criticism of someone'.

Option A can be eliminated as "vacillation" means 'indecision', it is unrelated in meaning to the given word.

Option B can be eliminated as "temerity" means 'excessive confidence or boldness', it is unrelated in meaning to the given word.

Option C is apt as "lambaste" means 'to criticize someone harshly' and is synonymous with the given word.

Option D can be eliminated as "nefarious" means 'wicked or criminal' it is unrelated to the given word.

Hence, option C is correct.

### 6. Which of the following statements is not true with respect to the passage?

- A. Since the inception of beauty products, men have been its most targeted audience.
- B. Light skin is a culturally endorsed notion worldwide.
- C. Skin whitening products existed for centuries in China and Japan.
- D. Deodorants and shaving creams were the only grooming products advertised for men till mid-2000s.
- E. None of these

**Correct Option: A**

Option A is incorrect as the passage mentions that first women were the targeted audience followed by the market gradually banking on men by making male-specific products apart from the shaving creams and deodorants.

The remaining options are implicitly mentioned in the passage.

Hence, option A is correct.