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MOCK TEST – 42

Full marks – 15 Time – 15 minutes

Negative marking – 0.25

PART – I

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Directions (1-5): ***Read the following passage and answer the given questions*****.**

I first learned about Gustav Theodor Fechner in a reading group at Harvard University that I co-lead, where we discuss plant consciousness. The Secret Life of Plants, a bestselling book, reference Fechner as an advocate for plant sentience. In 2006, scientists called for the establishment of "plant neurobiology" to understand how plants perceive and respond to their environment. This field raises fundamental questions about the nature of the mind and consciousness in plants, challenging traditional beliefs about plant life.

Gustav Fechner, born in 1801 in GroB Sarchen, Saxony, was a medical student who became an atheists after abandoning medicine to study physics. In February 1820, he was blinded by the project of Naturphilosophie, which promised a unified worldview. Fechner's love for measurements, experiments and equations remained despite the top-down speculations of German idealism. Germany was a philosophical powerhouse during the 19th century, with major discoveries in biology. physiology, and psychology. Fechner's vision was damaged, neurotic obsession, and mania. By 1843, he could not read and accepted a physics professorship at the University of Leipzig. To pay for his education, Fechner translated multi-volume physics and chemistry works from French into German. He translated the Hauslexikon, a 19th-century equivalent of the Ladies' Home Journal, many thousands of pages. Fechner's life was radically altered by his experiences and the challenges he faced in pursuing a unified worldview.

Fechner recovered from illness with the help of his wife and rekindled religious thoughts. A significant moment of his recovery was when he experienced a profound connection with nature in his garden. This led him to declare a "higher calling" of contemplating "inner nature" and to bridge the gap between the visible and invisible worlds. He devoted the rest of his life to inviting others to see nature with new eyes and to appreciate its beauty in a different light.

Contemporary plant neurobiology researchers, like Fechner, reject the fetishisation of neurons and argue that plants possess something analogous to animal brains. They say that plant behaviour is intelligent, adaptive, flexible, anticipatory, and goal-oriented, rather than hardwired instinct. Some scientists support the cognitive capacity of plants and hold out the possibility of being sentient, what Fechner called ensouled (best). Fechner's later treatise Zend-Avesta (1851) extends his analogical reasoning to celestial bodies, suggesting that Earth could behave like the human body and have a soul. However, plant scientists who endorse the possibility of plant sentience face significant criticism, as panpsychism, which holds that all things have a mind or mind-like quality, is an ancient theory. Fechner saw plants as an accessible entry point into broader notions of mind, comparing contemplating plant souls to a graspable pot handle.

1. Exploring the nascent field of plant sentience research, what is the author's primary purpose in the passage:

(a) To elucidate a historical lineage for contemporary investigations into plant sentience.

(b) To engender widespread acceptance of the controversial notion of panpsychism.

(c) To advocate for a paradigm shift in our understanding of plant life, challenging anthropocentric biases.

(d) To exemplify the contributions of Gustav Theodor Fechner, a historical figure in the study of consciousness.

2. The phrase "fetishisation of neurons" in the fourth paragraph suggests that some scientists:

(a) Overemphasize the importance of neurons in intelligence.

(b) Deny the existence of neurons in plants.

(c) Advocate for transplanting human neurons into plants.

(d) Believe all living things have the same type of nervous system.

3. The word "analogous" most closely means:

(a) Identical

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(b) Opposing

(c) Derived from

(d) Similar in function but with different structures

4. The passage suggests a transformation in Fechner's worldview. What is the most likely impetus for this transformation, as described in the passage?

(a) His initial skepticism regarding the possibility of plant sentience was overcome by advancements in plant neurobiology research.

(b) His blindness, a consequence of his pursuit of Naturphilosophie, led him to seek solace in the natural world.

(c) The profound connection he experienced with nature in his garden catalyzed a shift in perspective.

(d) His recovery from illness and the support of his wife rekindled his interest in scientific inquiry.

5. Fechner's later treatise, Zend-Avesta, extends his analogical reasoning to celestial bodies, suggesting that Earth could behave like the human body and have a soul.

This extension can be interpreted as a:

(a) Heuristic device

(b) Teleological argument.

(c) Methodological overreach

(d) Metaphorical exploration

PART – II

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

Directions (6-10): ***Read the following passage and answer the given questions*****.**

The U.S. move to "take over" Venezuela, highlighted by the capture of Nicolás Maduro and his transfer to New York custody on narcotics-terrorism charges, signals a sharp turning point in the region. With the sitting president removed, Venezuela faces a sudden leadership vacuum, adding pressure to a country already struggling with economic collapse, hyperinflation, sanctions, and deep international isolation. In this situation, Washington's message suggests an interim external role-not necessarily running Venezuela directly, but guiding a political transition and shaping what comes next. The stated purpose is to support a change in leadership and restore stability. A major part of the plan focuses on the economy, especially reviving Venezuela's oil infrastructure, since oil has long been the backbone of the country's growth and remains central to any recovery. Geography also makes the crisis more sensitive. It borders Colombia, Brazil, and Guyana, and there is a long-running dispute with Guyana over the Essequibo region. Any outside intervention can quickly affect neighbours and wider regional politics. Overall, the "takeover" idea brings both promise and danger: it may speed up political change and economic rebuilding, but it can also increase tensions, raise concerns about sovereignty, and worsen U.S.-Venezuela relations if not handled carefully.

6. A key reason the crisis can spill beyond Venezuela is most closely linked to:

(a) Its landlocked position

(b) Its coastline and neighbouring borders

(c) Its lack of natural resources

(d) Its distance from trade routes

7. The charges mentioned against Nicolás Maduro were related to:

(a) Arms smuggling and piracy

(b) Money laundering and fraud

(c) Narcotics-terrorism

(d) War crimes

8. Venezuela has coastline along which two water bodies?

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(a) Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea

(b) Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea

(c) Indian Ocean and Atlantic Ocean

(d) Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean

9. The capital city of Venezuela is:

(a) Caracas

(b) Bogotá

(c) Lima

(d) Quito

10. The Lake associated with Venezuela's oil-producing importance is:

(a) Lake Titicaca

(b) Lake Maracaibo

(c) Lake Victoria

(d) Lake Baikal

PART – III

LEGAL REASONING

Directions (11- 15): ***Read the following passage and answer the given questions.***

Maternity Benefit Act, 1961

It is an Indian legislation that aims to regulate the employment of women in certain establishment for a certain period before and after childbirth. Some key points are:

Applicability: The act applies to all establishments employing ten or more people, including factories, mines, plantations, shops, and other entities.

Benefit Period; A women is entitled to maternity leave of 26 weeks, with the provision to extend it by an additional 4 weeks in case of medical complications or other specified circumstances.

Payment during Leave: The employer is required to pay the woman on maternity leave at the rate of her average daily wage for the period of her leave.

Medical Bonus: Employers are also required to provide a medical bonus to women who do not avail of the full maternity leave, as long as they have worked for a certain period preceding their pregnancy.

Prohibition of Dismissal: During the maternity leave period, it is illegal for employers to dismiss or discharge a woman or give notice of dismissal.

Creche Facilities: Establishments with 50 or more employees are required to provide creche facilities and allow women to visit the creche during working hours.

Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulations) Act, 2021

The act is aimed at regulation and supervision of the assisted reproductive technology clinics and the assisted reproductive technology banks, prevention of misuse, safe and ethical practice of assisted reproductive technology services for addressing the issues of reproductive health where assisted reproductive technology is required for becoming a parent or for freezing gametes, embryos, embryonic tissues for further use due to infertility, disease or social or medical concerns and for regulation and supervision of research and development and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The act defines:

Infertility under Section 2(j) as the inability to conceive after one year of unprotected coitus or other proven medical condition preventing a couple from conception.

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Commissioning couple under Section 2(e) as an infertile married couple who approach an assisted reproductive technology clinic or assisted reproductive technology bank to obtain the services authorised of the said clinic or bank.

11. Aruna works in a boutique shop that has 12 employees. She is pregnant and applies for maternity leave for 26 weeks. Her employer, claiming that her position needs to be filled urgently, dismisses her after she goes on leave and hires another worker in her place. Aruna's employer argues that since she works in a boutique and not a factory or plantation, the Act doesn't apply. Is the dismissal of Aruna during her maternity leave valid under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961?

(a) Yes, because the employer can dismiss her due to operational reasons and the Act only applies to factories and plantations.

(b) No, because the Act applies to any establishment employing 10 or more people, including shops, and prohibits dismissal during maternity leave.

(c) Yes, because Aruna had not worked long enough for the benefit of the Act to apply

(d) No, because the prohibition of dismissal only applies to government organizations, not private businesses.

12. Sushma, employed at a factory with 40 workers, takes 10 weeks of maternity leave instead of the full 26 weeks because of financial necessity. When she asks for her medical bonus, her employer denies it, claiming she did not take the full maternity leave and thus isn't entitled to any bonus. Is Sushma entitled to a medical bonus under the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, even though she didn't take the full maternity leave?

(a) Yes, she is entitled to the medical bonus since the Act allows women to receive it if they don't avail the full leave.

(b) No, she is not entitled to any bonus because she didn't take the complete 26-week leave.

(c) Yes, but only if she had medical complications during her leave.

(d) No, because medical bonuses are only given to employees of government institutions.

13. Rita and her husband Raj visit an assisted reproductive technology (ART) clinic after failing to conceive for 8 months of unprotected intercourse. The clinic refuses to provide treatment, stating that the definition of infertility under the ART Act requires one year of unprotected coitus before treatment can be offered. Is the clinic correct in refusing treatment?

(a) Yes, because the Act defines infertility as the inability to conceive after one year of unprotected intercourse.

(b) No, because the couple has a proven medical condition preventing conception, which should be treated immediately.

(c) Yes, but only if both partners are proven to have reproductive health issues.

(d) No, because the clinic must provide services regardless of the period of unprotected coitus.

14. Assertion (A): Creche facilities are only required in establishments with 50 or more employees.

Reason (R): The Maternity Benefit Act aims to provide support to working mothers, ensuring the safety and care of their children.

(a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation for A.

(b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation for A.

(c) A is true, but R is false.

(d) A is false, but R is true.

15. Which of the following assumptions underlies the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961?

(a) Employers will willingly comply with all regulations under the Act.

(b) Women need specific legal protection during and after pregnancy to prevent discrimination.

(c) Women who become pregnant through ART should be excluded from the Act's provisions.

(d) Employers are the best judges of how to manage pregnant employees.

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