The big debate over the past few days has been whether it's safe to open schools to children other than those of key workers or classed as vulnerable. However, this isn't quite the right question to be asking. There will never be any risk. In a world where Covid19 remains present in the community, it's about how we reduce that risk, just as we do with other kinds of daily dangers, like driving and cycling. What we should be asking is whether schools are safe enough to open. To answer this, of course, you have to have data. What is needed to inform decisions is information and real-time monitoring, at the local level, to tell us what the daily number of new cases and rate of transmission is. Those concrete numbers should be what drives policy, not a set of abstract arguments, even less an ideological battle.

1. Out of the following options, which one is a logical corollary to the passage given above?
(a) The proposal to reopen schools should be taken by the concerned minister and his department.
(b) In the absence of this data, the proposal to reopen schools remains controversial.
(c) The proposal to reopen schools should be based on mutual faith and trust.
(d) The proposal to reopen schools should be based on media reports.

2. Which of the following options, can be inferred from the given passage?
(a) Evolution of the education system has been witnessed during the pandemic.
(b) The pandemic has seriously impacted the education field.
(c) Opening of the schools should be a well informed decision based on real time data.
(d) Opening of the schools will be risky.

3. Out of the following options, which one, it true, would seriously weaken the author's assumption made in the passage?
(a) The collected data is well researched and covers the entire social space.
(b) The government policies are inclined towards helping the capitalist.
(c) NGOs want more assistance in fighting the current health crisis.
(d) The collected data does not cover every strata of the society.

4. The author of the passage is most likely to agree with which of the following:
(a) In times of a crisis, feuds based on principles are insignificant.
(b) In times of a crisis, we should all strive for an egalitarian society.
(c) In times of a crisis, the state should give credence to the vox populi.
(d) In times of a crisis, we should aspire for a socialist state.

5. Which of the following is implied by the author?
(a) Analytics can jeopardize policy making significantly.
(b) The government should ask for help from foreign countries when it comes to national emergencies.
(c) A pandemic can play havoc for the children of a country.
(d) Analytics can help frame policies in a state of emergency.

Answers & Explanations

1. Ans. (b)
Sol. The author mentions the importance of data. Hence, option (b) is the most logical.

2. Ans. (c)
Sol. The passage talks about the timeline of reopening of schools. That is to be based on, whether the schools are safe enough to be opened. This decision can be made only on the basis of some concrete data instead of only ideologies or abstract arguments. Therefore the other options are out of scope.

3. Ans. (d)
Sol. The author heavily relies on data. S/he says that real time data monitoring should guide the next course of action, Hence, option (d), if true, would seriously weaken the author's stance. Options (b) and (c) are out of scope. (Point to be noted: - Being irrelevant does not make it equivalent to weakening the author's argument) Option (a) supports the author's assertion.

4. Ans. (a)
Sol. Refer to the last sentence where the author mentions the redundancy of ideological battles.

5. Ans. (d)
Sol. "Analytics" refers to the systematic computational analysis of data or statistics. The author appears to trust data. The other options are out of scope and cannot be inferred.