



India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2019

Why in News

The Ministry for Environment, Forests and Climate Change has released the India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2019.

- ISFR is a **biennial publication** of **Forest Survey of India (FSI)**, an organization under the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change.
- The ISFR **assesses** the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires.
- The 2019 report for the first time has assessed the qualitative nature of the forest cover, including listing its biodiversity and the type of plants and trees found.
- It also created a **national forest inventory for the first time** on produce from forests.

Key Findings

- **Forest Cover**
 - **Forest Cover (Area-wise)** : Madhya Pradesh> Arunachal Pradesh> Chhattisgarh> Odisha> Maharashtra.
 - **Forest Cover (Percentage)**: Mizoram (85.4%)> Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%)> Meghalaya (76.33%)
- **Increase in Forest Cover**
 - The country's forest cover includes all patches of land with a tree canopy density of more than 10% and more than 1 hectare in area, irrespective of land use, ownership and species of trees.
 - The total forest cover of the country is 7,12,249 sq km which is **21.67% of the geographical area** of the country.
 - The **top five states** to have shown an increase in forest cover include **Karnataka (1,025 sq km) > Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km) > Kerala (823 sq km) > J&K (371 sq km) > Himachal Pradesh (334 sq km)**.
- **Decline of Forest Cover in North Eastern Region**
 - Total forest cover in the North Eastern region is 1,70,541 sq km, which is 65.05% of its geographical area.
 - There has been a decrease of forest cover to the extent of 765 sq km (0.45%) in the region. **Except Assam and Tripura, all the States** in the region show **decrease** in forest cover.
- **Forest Cover in Tribal Districts**
 - The total forest cover in the tribal districts is 4,22,351 sq km, which is 37.54% of the geographical area of these districts.
 - There has been a decrease of 741 sq km of forest cover within the Recorded Forest Area/ Green Wash (RFA/GW) in the tribal districts and an increase of 1,922 sq km outside.
 - There has been a decline in tree cover inside forests due to tribal populations getting **"land titles" (patta)** and there has been a rise in trees outside the forest area due to an increase in tree plantation and afforestation activities.

Note

- **Recorded Forest Area:** The area recorded as forest in the Government records.
- **Green Wash:** The extent of wooded areas generally shown in light green colour on the Survey of India toposheets.

- **Increase in the tree cover**
 - Tree cover comprises of tree patches of size less than 1 hectare occurring outside the recorded forest area.
 - The tree cover of the country is estimated as 95,027 sq km which is 2.89% of the geographical area.
 - **Maharashtra has had the highest increase in tree cover** and a large part of that is due to horticulture.
- **In comparison to 2017**
 - The 2019 survey has found an increase of 5,188 sq km in total forest and tree cover in the country.
 - **Tree and forest cover** together made up **24.56% (8,07,276 sq km)** of India's area. In the **last assessment** it was **24.39%**.
 - The nation's tree and forest cover has largely hovered from 21-25% and is short of the **National Forest Policy, 1988**, which envisages 33% to be under such cover.
- Mangrove cover in the country has increased by 54 sq km (1.10%) as compared to the previous assessment.
- **Carbon Stock**
 - The total carbon stock of the country was estimated at **7124 million tons**, which is an **increase of 42.6 million tons** from the last assessment.
 - It implies that India is on the right track to achieve its Paris Agreement commitment of 2.5 -3 billion carbon sinks.
- **Wetlands**
 - The total number of wetlands located within the RFA/GW is 8.13%.
 - Amongst the States, **Gujarat** has the largest area of wetlands within RFA in the country followed by **West Bengal**.
- **Forest Produce**
 - Dependence of fuelwood on forests is the highest in the State of Maharashtra, whereas, for fodder, small timber and bamboo, dependence is highest in Madhya Pradesh.
- The analysis reveals that 21.40% of the forest cover of the country is highly to extremely fire prone.

National Forest Policy, 1988

- The policy aims at maintaining of environmental stability.
- It looks at conserving the natural heritage of the country by preserving the remaining natural forests.
- Increasing forest/tree cover in the country through massive afforestation and social forestry programmes.
- Creating a massive people's movement for achieving these objectives and to minimise pressure on existing forests.

[Source: TH](#)

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