



Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Forestry Report: FAO

For Prelims: Food and Agriculture Organization, India State of Forest Report, 2021, National Afforestation Programme, Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, Environment Protection Act of 1986, Biodiversity Diversity Act of 2002

For Mains: Forest Conservation and its importance, Forest Resources

Why in News?

According to the [Food and Agriculture Organization's](#) recently released report titled **"Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Forestry Report"**, **integrating biodiversity into such 'production forests' is paramount.**

- Mainstreaming Biodiversity is the **process of embedding biodiversity considerations into policies, strategies, and practices of key public and private actors** to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

What are the Threats to Mainstreaming Biodiversity?

- **Deforestation:** Deforestation continues at an alarming rate of 10 million ha per year (mainly for agricultural expansion) especially in lower income tropical countries.
- **Illegal Forest Activities:** Illegal timber harvesting is estimated to account for 15–30% of global timber production.
- **Low Conservation Profile:** Low profile of conservation outside protected areas.
- **Insufficient Capacity:** Developing countries struggle to enforce forest and biodiversity regulations.
- **Lack of Participation:** Lack of Indigenous People and local community participation.
- **Weak Governance:** Weak governance and law enforcement are the biggest stumbling blocks behind biodiversity conservation in protected areas.

Why is Forest Conservation Important?

- Forests that are **managed primarily for economic benefits** are critical for biodiversity conservation.
- **Forests cover 31% of the world's land surface**, store an estimated 296 gigatonnes of carbon and are home to most of the world's terrestrial biodiversity.
- The world's forests provide habitats for about 80% of amphibian species, 75% of bird species and 68% of mammal species. In addition, about 60% of all vascular plants occur in tropical forests.
- The **role of forests in maintaining biodiversity** is explicitly recognised by the **United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030**.
 - In 2019, FAO adopted the Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across Agricultural Sectors.

What is the State of Forest and Biodiversity Conservation in India?

- **Forest:**
 - According to [India State of Forest Report, 2021](#), the Total Forest and Tree cover is now 7,13,789 square kilometres, 21.71% of the country's geographical area, an increase from 21.67% in 2019.
 - **Largest Forest Cover (Area-wise):** Madhya Pradesh> Arunachal Pradesh> Chhattisgarh> Odisha> Maharashtra.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - Through the **42nd Amendment Act**, 1976 Forests and Protection of Wild Animals and Birds were transferred from State to Concurrent List along with Education, Weights & Measures and Administration of Justice.
 - Article 48 A in the [Directive Principles of State policy](#), mandates that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the **forests and wildlife** of the country.
 - Article 51 A (g) of the Constitution states that it shall be the **Fundamental Duty** of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests and Wildlife.
- **Policies Governing India's Forests and Biodiversity:**
 - [Indian Forest Policy, 1952](#)
 - [Forest Conservation Act, 1980](#)
 - National Forest Policy, 1988
 - [National Afforestation Programme](#)
 - [Wildlife Protection Act of 1972](#)
 - [Environment Protection Act of 1986](#)
 - [Biodiversity Diversity Act of 2002](#)
 - [Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers \(Recognition of Forest Rights\) Act, 2006](#)
 - [Forest \(Conservation\) Rules, 2022](#)

What are the Recommendations of the Report?

- Recognizing the **forest tenure of Indigenous Peoples** and local communities, with emphasis on **enhancing the equitable sharing of benefits**.
- **Preventing the conversion of natural forests** into monospecific forest plantations.
- Ensuring the **sustainable management of harvested species** to control overharvesting of plants and wildlife.
- Adopting a multisectoral perspective by mainstreaming biodiversity across other land use sectors.
- Providing **economic incentives**, like compensation for reduced production **to promote biodiversity benefits** and **investing in knowledge and capacity development**.
- Facilitating market-based instruments like engaging in [public-private partnerships](#) to leverage [corporate social responsibility](#) commitments.
- **Leveraging global momentum** on restoration to enhance biodiversity conservation.

Way Forward

- Biodiversity **mainstreaming** in the forest sector requires **integrated multi-stakeholder approaches that cross sectoral boundaries**.
- Mainstreaming biodiversity in forestry involves **prioritising forest policies, plans, programmes, projects and investments** that have a positive impact on biodiversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels.

[Source: DTE](#)

