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Exclude Tree Cover from Forest Surveys

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A high-power committee of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) recommended that **Forest Surveys should explicitly demarcate trees grown in forests from those grown outside, that is, in plantations and private lands.**

- The government also includes substantial patches of trees outside areas designated as forests, such as plantations or Greenlands, in its assessment.
- **Forest Surveys (the biennial exercise by the government to estimate forest cover)** count both plantations and private lands towards estimating the portion of India's geographical area covered by forest.
Including both is not ecologically sound.
- Getting India to have at least 33% of its area under forest is a long-standing goal of the government since 1988.
- Various editions of the SFR have over the years reported the area under forests as hovering around 21%.

India State of Forest Report (SFR) 2017

- A marginal 0.21% rise in the area under forest between 2015 and 2017.
- India has about 7,08,273 sq. km. of forest (include Tree cover), which is 21.53% of the geographic area of the country (32,87,569 sq. km.).
- The total tree cover, according to this assessment, was 93,815 sq. km. or a 2% rise from approximately 92,500 sq. km. in 2015.
- Tree Cover improved from 2.82% (2015) to 2.95% (2017) of India's geographic area.

Forest Survey of India (FSI)

Forest Survey of India (FSI), is a **premier national organization under the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, responsible for assessment and monitoring of the forest resources** of the country regularly.

Tree Cover & Forest Cover

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change defines

- 'Forest cover' in India as **"all lands, more than one hectare in area with a tree canopy density of more than 10%"**.
- 'Tree cover' is defined as **"tree patches outside recorded forest areas exclusive of forest cover** and less than the minimum mappable area of one hectare".