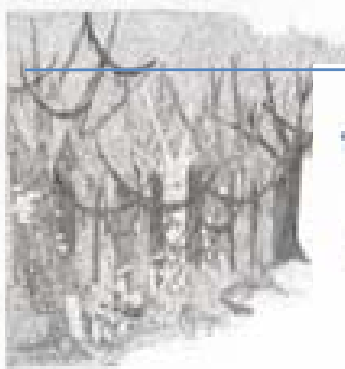


Facts and Politics



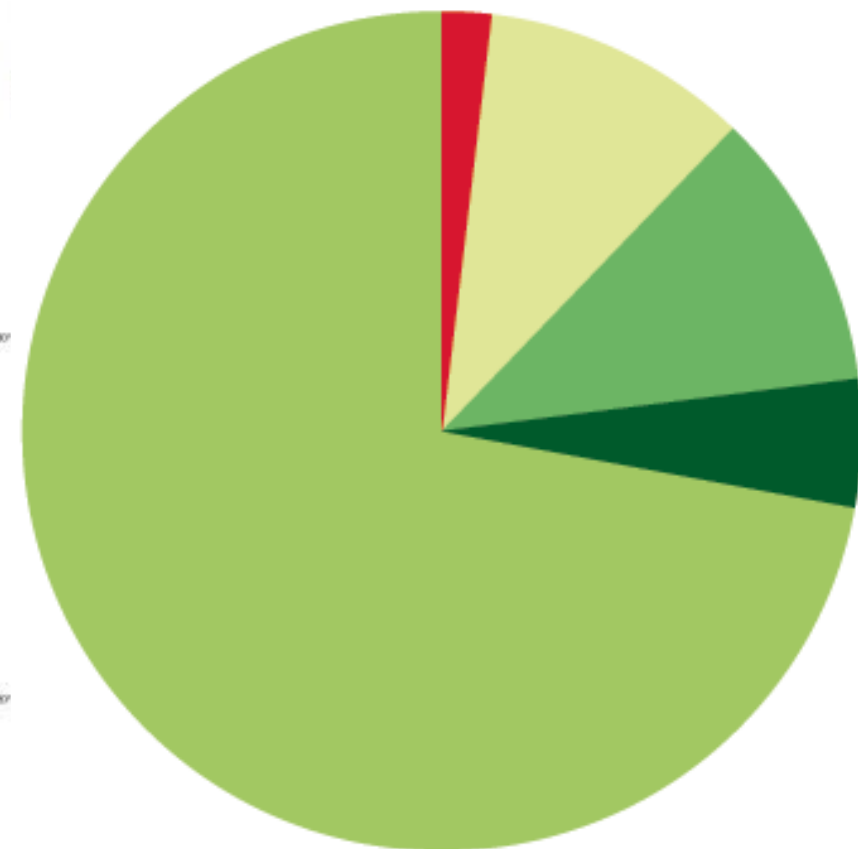
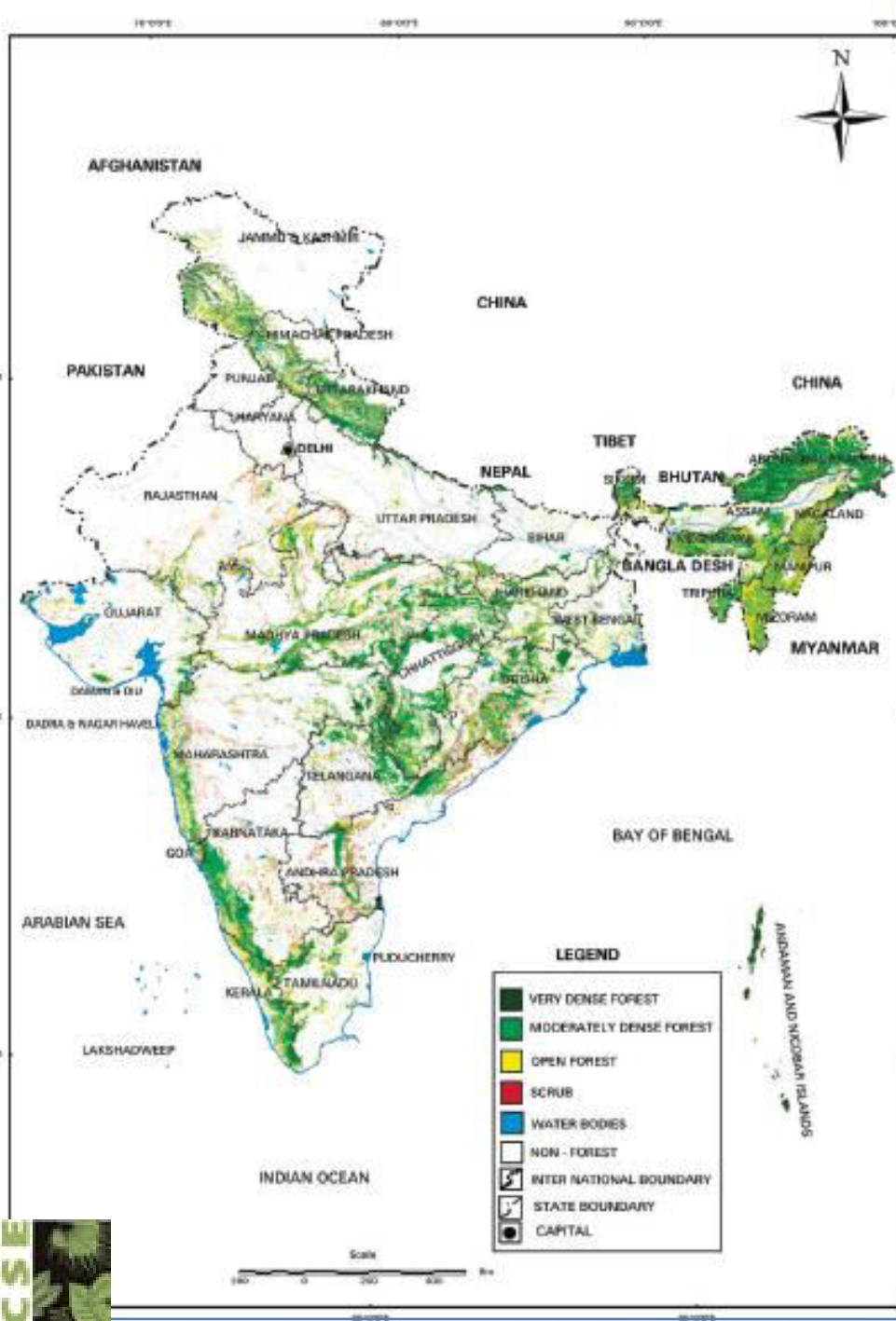


What is a Forest?

- **Oxford Dictionary** : “a large area covered chiefly with *trees and undergrowth*”
- **Ecological**: An *ecological community* comprising mainly of trees and woody perennials.
- **FAO**: land with a tree canopy cover of *more than 10 percent* and area of *more than 0.5 ha*.
- **UNFCCC**: a minimum area of land of *0.05-1.0 hectares* with tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of *more than 10-30 per cent with trees* with the potential to reach a minimum height of *2-5 meters* at maturity *in situ*.
- **CBD**: a forest is a land area of *more than 0.5 ha*, with a tree canopy cover of *more than 10%*, which is not primarily under agricultural or other specific non-forest land use
- **FCA, 1980**: ‘Forest land’ mentioned in Section 2 of the Act refers to reserved forest, protected forest or **any area recorded as forest in the Government records.**
- **FRA, 2006**: “Forest land” means land of any description falling within any area and includes *unclassified forests, undemarcated forests, existing or deemed forests, protected forests, reserved forests, Sanctuaries and National parks.*
- **FSI**: **all lands more than 1 ha with tree canopy density of more than 10%.**

Forests of India: Some Facts

- A huge variety of forests - 16 major types, 221 forest types - from Tropical to Alpine
- Harbour 8% of global biodiversity with about 45,000 plants species and 90,000 animal species
- Forest cover 21.34% of country's geographical area (FSI, 2015). Additional 2.82% Tree Cover.
- Concurrent list of Col - both State and Centre empowered to legislate over forests.



- Non Forest **77.40%**
- Scrub **1.26%**
- Open Forest **9.14%**
- Moderately Dense Forest **9.59%**
- Very Dense Forest **2.61%**

Forests of India: Some Facts

- Forests are home to **~300 million people** of India.
- per capita forests low at **0.06 ha** (global 0.6 ha)
- Against global average productivity of **2.1 million m³/ha/year**, it is only **0.7 million m³/ha/year** for India's forests.
- Of **530 million livestock population** in India, about **190 million** fully depend on forests
- **Most of the timber** in country comes from Trees Outside Forests (**TOF**): private lands, farms, homesteads etc.
- share of the forest sector in GDP has declined from **2.6% in 1950s to 0.67% in 2007-08** : Owing to **higher growth in other sectors** and **under valuation of the forest products**.
- Though claimed to be scientifically managed, Indian forests continue to be managed under archaic **Indian Forest Act, 1927** with **age old science and practices**.

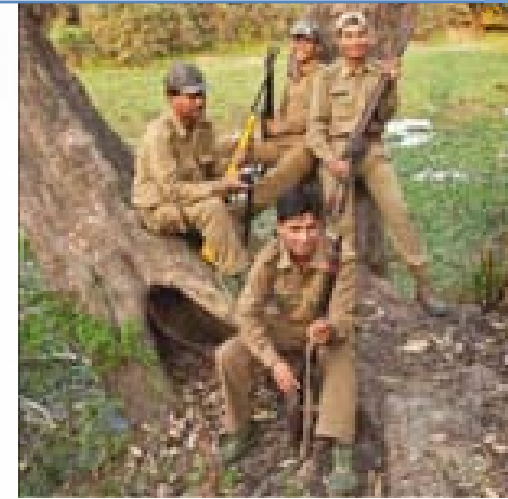


Multiplicity of Forest related Acts, Policies, Schemes and Programmes in India

Indian Forest Act, 1927	National Forest Policy, 1988	Biosphere Reserves Programme
Forest Rights Act, 2006	National Environment Policy, 2006	Joint Forest Programme
Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972	National Afforestation and Eco-development Board	EIA Notification, 2006
Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980	<i>Ad hoc</i> CAMPA & CAF Bill, 2015	Green India Mission
Environment (Protection) Act, 1986	National Afforestation Programme	National Forestry Action Plan
State level Forest/Wildlife related Acts & Rules	MGNREGA, 2005 (forest related activities)	Bilateral/Multi-lateral Projects (JICA, UNDP, USAID etc)
RFCTLARR Act, 2013	Multilateral Conventions and Regional collaborations	13 th Finance Commission
Biological Diversity Act, 2002	PESA, 1996	Constitution (73 rd Amendment) Act, 1992

Forest Bureaucracy

Unit	Circles	Territorial Forest Divisions	Ranges	Blocks	Beats
Number	197	788	4706	11,685	43,884



- Only 535 forest divisions have Working Plans.
- The Wildlife Wings of the SFDs – 673 Protected Areas (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves, Community Reserves), 48 Tiger Reserves, 29 Elephant Reserves
- Govt. agencies: WII, NTCA, WCCB, CZA, NBA, CAMPA, ICFRE etc.
- Forest Devp. Corporations (FDCs) in 21 States and one UT. Many FDCs sick units.

Forest Democracy? Largely a failure so far

- Indian forests largely a bureaucratically managed system.
- Failed Initiatives e.g. JFM, Social Forestry, SFM, EDCs etc.

Joint Forest Management : since 1990, adopted by all States.

- 112, 896 JFM Committees managing 24.6 mha forests
- Overall increase in JFMCs, but Many JFMCs dysfunctional.
- Sharing of forest produce major setback and cause of failure of JFM.

Evolution of Forest Politics in India

- **Pre-British era :** Flourishing forests
- **British period:** indiscriminately cut and exploited (IFA 1927, FP 1894)
- **Forest Policy, 1952:** recognized protective functions of forest, maintain a third land area under forest, certain activities banned, grazing restricted. Much of original British policy maintained to supply industrial wood. Diversions contd..
- **Until 1976,** forests seen as source of land and earning money, little thought on conservation or sustainable development
- In **1976,** forest came under the concurrent list. 'Development without destruction' and 'forests for survival' were the new themes of plans. **Still, ~5 million ha forests lost to developmental activities after 1947.**
- **FCA, 1980 :** To control destruction, all forest diversions require approval from Central Govt. Still, forests continue to be diverted albeit at a slower pace. **CAMPA (to compensate forest losses) largely a failure so far.**
- **Forest Policy, 1988:** maintaining ecological balance and environmental stability, Conserving the natural heritage, Checking soil erosion, Meeting the requirements for fuelwood, fodder, minor forest produce and small timber, efficient utilisation of forest produce , creating people's movement etc.

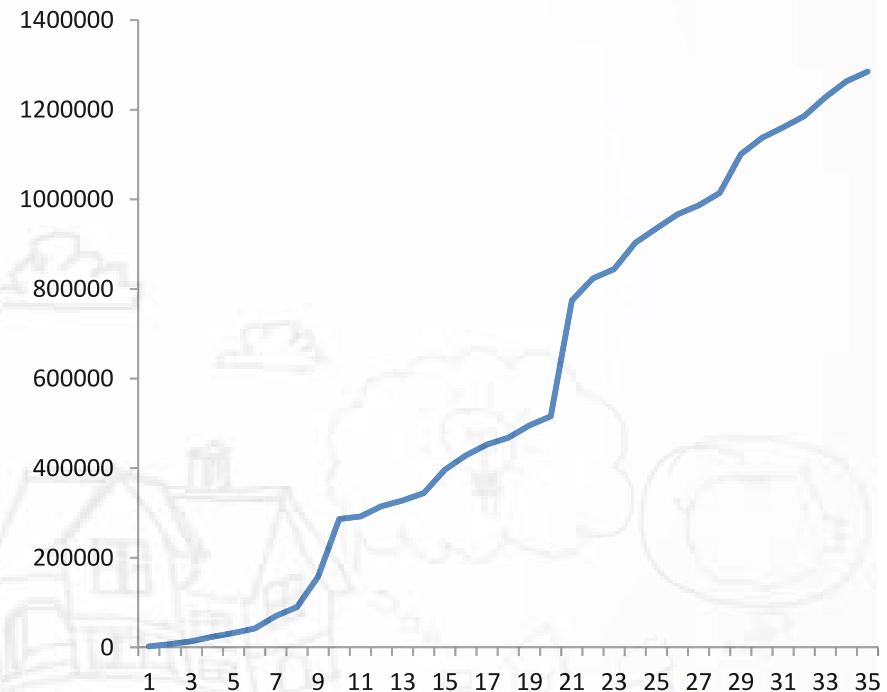
Forest Clearance

- To allow use of forest areas for **non-forestry** purposes such as mining, hydropower, roads etc.
- As per the Provisions of **Forest (Conservation) Act. 1980** [Including Forest (Conservation) Rules(2003)]
- A '**central**' but '**decentralised**' process.
- During **1950-80**: 1,50,000 hectares per year
- After **FC Act, 1980**: 35,000 ha per year



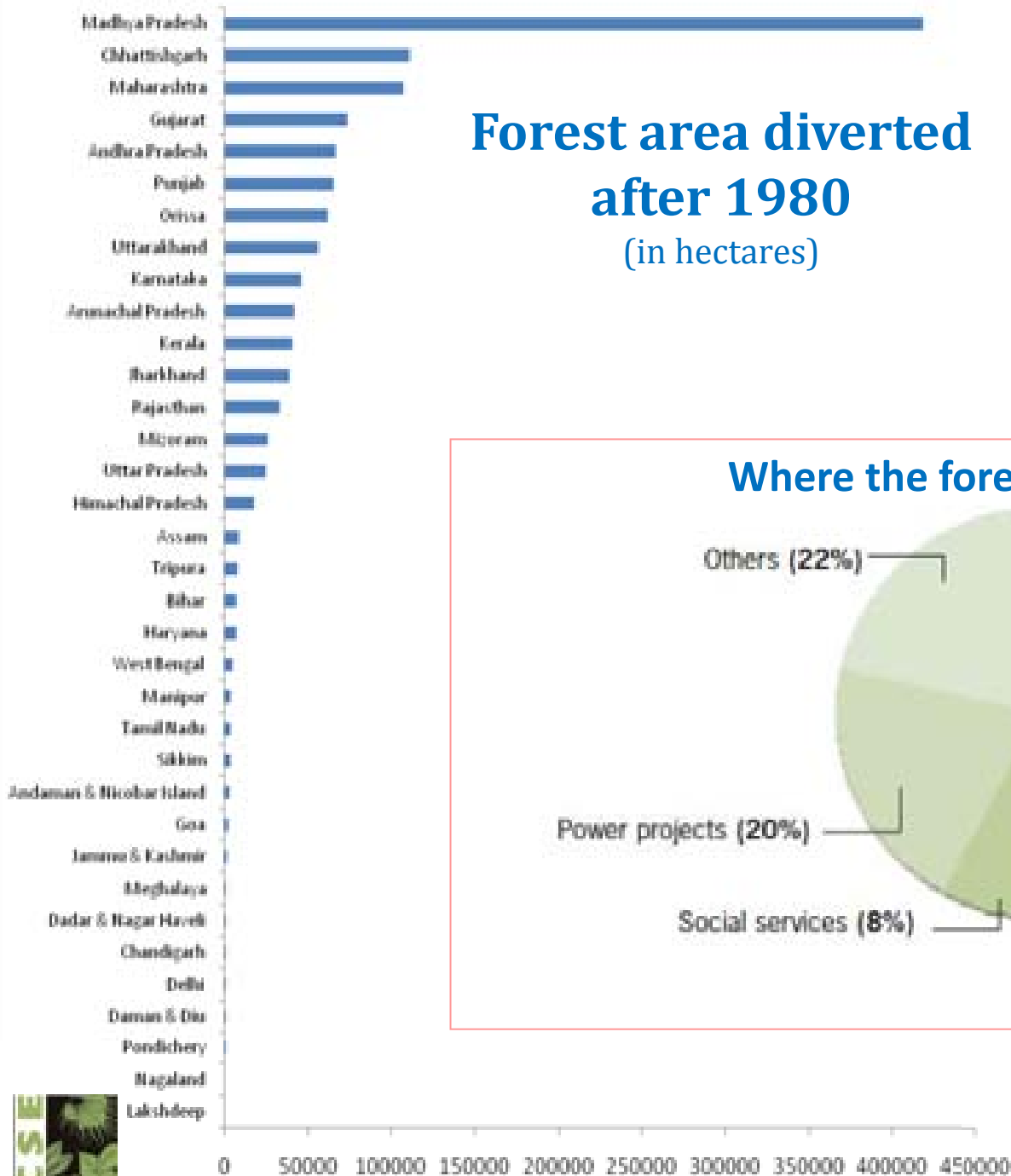
Issues in Forest Clearances

- Process **not working** to protect the environment
- **Hardly any rejection** of projects (only ~6%)
- No **cumulative impact** analysis
- Huge **devastation** of environment, biodiversity and adverse health impact on people

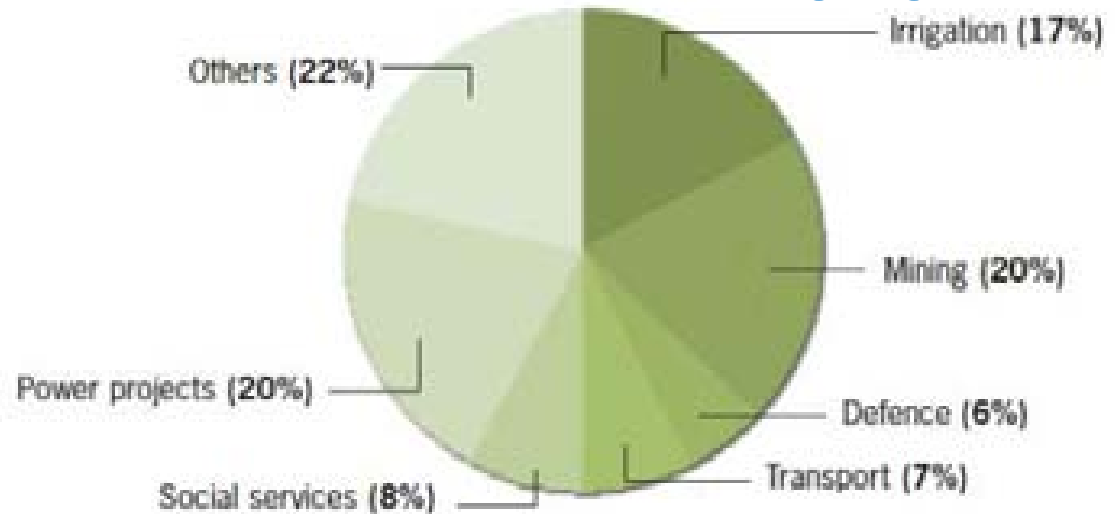


Since FCA 1980, **1.29 million hectares** of forests diverted in **49,370 cases** so far.

Forest area diverted after 1980 (in hectares)



Where the forests of India going?



Western Ghats ESA

- Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) is a hot issue.
- 56,825 sq km in 6 states.
- A UNESCO World Heritage Site too.
- Political tussle and lack of future clarity.



Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)

- Along periphery of Protected Areas (PAs): **673 PAs**
- **Purpose** : to create a kind of “**shock absorber**”.
- Activities in the ESZs are **regulatory** in nature rather than prohibitive.
- Only **less than 50 ESZs** have been finally notified so far.
- In ESZs, process same as Wildlife clearance but SC permission not required.



FRA 2006: 'Forest Rights' and Wrongs

FRA 2006 basically does two things:

- Grants **legal recognition to the rights** of traditional forest dwelling communities, partially correcting the **historical injustice** caused by the forest laws.
- Makes a beginning towards **giving communities a voice** in forest and wildlife conservation.

Limitations:

- Those who are **residing primarily** in forests and have **dependence** on forests for their bonafide livelihood.
- Along with **responsibility** of conservation of biological resource Rights (Occupation and Habitation).

FRA 2006: 'Forest Rights' and Wrongs

- 44,05,395 claims filed

(42,91,472 individual, 1,09,026 community)

- 17,08,973 distributed

(16,67,852 individual, 38,973 community)

- 86% claims disposed off.

(MoTA: data till October 2015)

- CFRs, NTFPs major areas of tussle between people and Forest Departments.

Forests under industrial development juggernaut

- 1976:** NCA supported *industrial plantations on forest lands*. 26 State FDCs were set up.
- 1988:** National Forest Policy is formulated. Asks industry to source wood from farmers. Industry demands captive plantations.
- 1991:** Karnataka-Harihar Polyfibers—for captive plantations. PIL (CSE) and others. Lease cancelled.
- 1992:** Industry kept pressing the demand. Kamal Nath proposed to give 1.7 million ha.
- 1994:** Draft guidelines for afforestation of degraded lands through industries.
- 1997:** Working Group of Planning Commission. WG suggests industry utilises non-forest wasteland.
- 1998:** Expert Committee, could not resolve the issue.
- 2000:** Andhra Pradesh proposed to sign an MoU with the Reliance, forced to give up proposal.
- 2011-14:** Planning Commission's WG (12th 5-Year Plan) recommends leasing 2.5 million ha of forestland to the paper industry. MoEF&CC rejects idea. Industry keeps demanding.
- 2015:** **Guidelines for participation of private sector in afforestation of degraded forests. Guidelines seek to give away forestlands with less than 10% canopy cover to private agencies (43% of all forests of India). If on ground, will have devastating impact on biodiversity, rural economics and social fabrics.**

Forests Vs Climate Change

- Forests are **major sinks of CO₂ emissions**. Absorb around **10% of all emissions of India**.
- Indian forests store **7,044 million tonnes** of Carbon.
- **Green India Mission:** increase the forest/tree cover by **5 mha** and improve quality on **another 5 mha**. Enhanced annual CO₂ sequestration by **50-60 million tonnes** in the year 2020 CO₂ equivalent annually. Increased forest-based livelihood of about **3 million households**.
- India's forestry target under UNFCCC's climate change commitment under **INDC** - **very ambitious**. It intends to create **an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ through additional forests by 2030**. **Where is land?**

Impacts on Biodiversity

- Large scale species and habitat losses.
- Many species extinct and declining populations of existing species e.g. tigers, elephants.
- Invasive Alien Species a big threat e.g. *Lantana*, *Prosopis*.
- Deforestation/degradation of forests reducing bio-resource base to local communities.
- Reforested and planted lands don't match natural forests in terms of biodiversity and ES complexity.
- Loss of genetic diversity and gene pool exchanges.
- Long term impact on Climate Change resilience of people and ecosystems.

Ways forward

- We must know what our forests are all about and why they are important to us.
- A mass movement to regenerate degraded forest areas is urgently needed. Academia can help greatly by educating youth.
- Governments must responsibly appropriate our common forest and biodiversity resources.
- Industrial use of our forests must be strictly regulated.
- Forestry must spread out of notified forest areas to farms, private lands and homes.



UNLOCKING FORESTS
DOES CAF BILL 2015 OFFER ENOUGH?



India's forest are much more than a 'Jungle Book'

Let's regenerate and use our forests sensibly.



Thank You



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