

Chapter-2 Forest and Wildlife Resources

1. Summarizes the reasons for conservation of biodiversity in India under sustainable development.

- I. Conservation preserves the ecological diversity and our life support systems – water, air and soil.
- II. It also preserves the genetic diversity of plants and animals for better growth of species and breeding.
- III. For example, in agriculture, we are still dependent on traditional crop varieties.
- IV. Fisheries too are heavily dependent on the maintenance of aquatic biodiversity.
- V. Forests play a key role in the ecological system as these are also the primary producers on which all other living beings depend.

2. Examine how developmental works, grazing and wood cutting have impacted on the survival of forests.

- I. Rapid expansion of the railways, commercial forestry and mining activities led to depletion of our forests and wildlife.
- II. Forest area has been converted into agricultural land. For example: deforestation by shifting cultivation (jhum), a type of 'slash and burn' agriculture.
- III. Forest area has been cleared for river valley projects. For example: Clearing of forests is still continuing with projects like the Narmada Sagar Project in Madhya Pradesh.
- IV. Mining activities has disturbed the natural habitat and blocked the migration route of many species. For example: The Buxar Tiger Reserve in West Bengal is seriously threatened by the ongoing dolomite mining.
- V. Many foresters and environmentalists believe that the factor behind the depletion of forest resources is grazing and fuel-wood collection.

3. Describe the main measures taken to conserve forests and wildlife in India.

- I. The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act was implemented in 1972, with various provisions for protecting habitats. An all-India list of protected species was also published.
- II. The thrust is given towards protecting the remaining population of certain endangered species by banning hunting, giving legal protection to their habitats, and restricting trade in wildlife.
- III. Subsequently, central and many state governments established national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.
- IV. The central government also announced several projects for protecting specific animals, which were gravely threatened, including the tiger, rhinoceros, the Kashmir stag, crocodiles, the Asiatic lion, and others.
- V. Most recently, the Indian elephant, black buck (chinkara), the great Indian bustard (godawan) and the snow leopard, etc. have been given full or partial legal protection against hunting and trade throughout India.
- VI. Now the focus is on the conservation of biodiversity. For example, even insects and plants are have been added to the list of protected species.

4. Describe how communities have conserved and protected forests and wildlife in India?

- I. In Sariska Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan, villagers have fought against mining by citing the Wildlife Protection Act.
- II. In Alwar district, Rajasthan villagers have made Bhairodev Dakav 'Sonchuri', for protecting wildlife and have their own rules and regulations for forests conservation.
- III. Chipko movement in the Himalayas successfully resisted deforestation.
- IV. Beej Bachao Andolan in Tehri and Navdanya are for ecological farming and diversification of crops.
- V. Many societies in our country worship trees known as Sacred Grooves.
- VI. The Mundas people of Chhota Nagpur worship Mahua trees and the tribals of Orissa and Bihar worship the Tamarind and Mango trees during weddings. Many of us worship Peepal and Banyan trees.

5. Short note on Joint Forest Management Programme

- I. JFM programme is a good example for involving local communities in the management and restoration of degraded forests. This programme was started in Orissa in 1988.
- II. Under this local (village) institutions are formed that undertake protection of degraded forests.
- III. In return, the members of these communities get benefits like non-timber forest products and share in the timber harvested.

