

SCIENCE**CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES****Conservation of natural resources:-**

Conservation may be defined as the controlled utilization of natural resources for the benefit of all life so that it may yield sustainable benefit to the present generation as well as the future generations.

➤ Forest :-

When we got independence more than 33% of land was covered with forest. During past 50 year indiscriminate cutting off forests for procuring more land for urbanization, for industries, for cultivation and for mining have drastically reduced the forest coverage to 12% to 20% as revealed by recent

insat-photo studies. In order to keep a natural balance country's 33% of land should be covered with forest. Developed countries like America has 40%, Russia 45%, Sweden 55% of land covered with forest.

➤ Importance of Forest:-

Forest is a very important natural resource and its balanced maintenance is just like ever yielding crop because

- Green plants by photosynthesis is not only produce organic food for animal world, wood for fuel but also maintains a healthy equilibrium between oxygen and carbon dioxide and help in reducing the air pollution caused by industries and auto vehicles.
- The roots of forest trees and the roots of under growing small plant- the herbs, make a dense network of roots just below the ground. This network keeps the soil intact and in place. Hence it is not easily swept away by the downpour of rain water. The fast flowing rain- water slows down due to heavy vegetation of forest, thus reducing the fury of the flood. This provides more time to rain water to percolate into the ground and thus level and the amount of ground water increases.
- There is much less cutting of ground and soil erosion because of vegetation cover.

The dead parts of plants such as stem, leaves continuously fall to the ground and form a thick layer on forest ground. They are decomposed by microbes, and nutrients are thus added to the soil. Humus increases and soil fertility is enhanced.

- Forest provides home, shelter and protection to a large number of animals. It provides nesting place to birds. We know all organisms are inter-related by food web and thus equilibrium in forest, ecosystem is maintained.
- Forest are economically very important. They provide timber for house and ship building, wood (or fuel), wonderful drugs and raw material such as grass, bamboo from which paper is made. They provide a number of edible fruits and seeds. Gum, resins and dyes are also plant products.
- Wild life living in forest is also of great economic importance. Skin, tusk, honey, lac, silk, fur and some medicines all are obtained from animals.
- Forest provides a great attraction to nature lovers. Their beauty is soul satisfying.

Deforestation means destroying the natural beauty. The indiscriminate cutting of forests has disturbed the ecological cycle. This results in drought and unprecedented floods, rise in atmospheric temperature, soil erosion and loss of wild life to the extent that now its stress is being felt on our economy and social life.