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**GUESS PAPER SERIES**

**SESSION - 10**

**DATE- 4 August 2019**

**VEGETATION OF INDIA**

**&**

**FOREST DRAFT POLICY**

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### DRAFT National Forest Policy

#### Why in news?

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) recently released the draft National Forest Policy 2018.

#### What are the highlights?

- **Objective** - The draft forest policy, 2018 will be an overarching policy for forest management.
- It aims at bringing a minimum of one-third of India's total geographical area under forest or tree cover.
- It seems to address the concern of decline in forest productivity.
- **Concepts** - The draft has introduced some new concepts such as:
  - i. economic valuation of ecosystem services
  - ii. forest certification
  - iii. national forest ecosystem management information system
- **Approach** - The 1988 forest policy had a local community- and ecology-centric approach.
- From this, the new draft shifts the focus to timber and forest-based industries.
- It identifies "production forestry" and plantations as the new thrust area.
- **Tribal to Timber** - The importance offered to the rights of local, forest-dependent communities are being diluted.
- It is substituted by the demand for raw material from forest-based industries.

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- The draft aims to use degraded land available with forest corporations to produce “quality timber”.
- This goes against the emphasis on “fuelwood and fodder development” as in 1988 policy.
- **Production forestry** - The 1988 policy had sections called ‘Rights and Concessions’ and ‘Tribal People and Forests’.
- These are replaced by ideas of 'Production Forestry', increasing the productivity of forest plantations and facilitating forest industry interface.
- **Industry** - The draft stresses the need to stimulate growth in the forest based industry sector.
- It encourages forest corporations and industrial units to step up growing of industrial plantations.
- **Livelihood** - The current draft mentions about the livelihoods of local communities -
  - i. as passive recipients of benefits accruing from wildlife tourism
  - ii. as labour for forest-based industries
  - iii. in relation to non-timber forest produce (NTFP)
- **PPP** - The draft proposes a public-private partnership model for afforestation and reforestation activities.
- This will be in “degraded forest areas and forest areas available with Forest Development Corporations and outside forests”.
- **Plantation choice** - The draft recommends 'commercially important species' like poplar and eucalyptus.
- Both of these are non-indigenous plantation species.

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- **Protection measures** - The policy proposes to restrict schemes and projects which interfere with forests that cover steep slopes.
- Catchments of rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, geologically unstable terrain and such other ecologically sensitive areas are also covered.
- The ecologically sensitive catchment areas shall be stabilized with suitable soil and water conservation measures.
- Planting suitable trees and grass like bamboo in these areas is also suggested.
- **Mechanism** - It suggests setting up of two national-level bodies for better management of the country's forests.
- These are the National Community Forest Management (CFM) Mission and the National Board of Forestry (NBF).
- NBF will have to be headed by the central minister in charge of forests.
- The state boards of forestry will have to ensure inter-sectoral convergence, simplification of procedures, conflict resolution, etc.
- The state boards of forestry will have to be headed by state ministers in charge of forests.
- Besides, efforts will be made to achieve harmonization between policies and laws like Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006.
- **Community participation** - Efforts to ensure synergy between gram sabha & JFMC (Joint Forest Management Committee) will be taken up.
- This is for ensuring successful community participation in forest management.
- The CFM mission will address participatory forest management.
- **Financing** - The compensatory afforestation fund which is being transferred to the states will provide for management of forests.

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- It will source afforestation and rehabilitation works in degraded forest areas and for bringing new areas under forest and tree cover.
- Efforts for tapping funds from other national sectors will be taken up.
- This may include rural development, tribal affairs, national highways, railways, coal, mines, power, etc.
- **Forest fire** - The draft policy includes measures to safeguard ecosystems from forest fires, which include:
  - i. mapping the vulnerable areas
  - ii. developing and strengthening early warning systems
  - iii. remote sensing technology to control fire
  - iv. improved community participation
- **Climate change** - Forests are natural carbon sinks, assisting in climate change mitigation.
- Climate change concerns will be factored in all forest and wildlife areas working/management plans and Community Ecosystem Management Plans.
- Wildlife rich areas and corridors outside protected areas would be identified and maintained for ensuring ecological and genetic continuity.
- **Human-wildlife conflict** - Quick response, dedicated teams of well equipped and trained personnel would be developed.
- Health and veterinary services, rescue centres, speedy assessment of damage and quick payment of relief to the victims are other short term actions.
- Monitoring and management of population of wildlife would be adopted as part of long-term measures.

VEGETATION of India

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India is bestowed with a wide range of flora and fauna. The natural vegetation is the endowments of nature. They grow naturally by following the climatic variables. Due to a diverse geographical and climatic condition, an extensive range of natural vegetation grows in India. The types of natural vegetation differ according to precipitation, soil, climate and topography. The cultivated crops and fruits, orchards form part of vegetation, but not natural vegetation.

*Natural vegetation of India and types of vegetation in India are important topics covered under both geography and ecology and environment for the [UPSC](#) exam. This article talks about the natural vegetation of India for [IAS](#) exam.*

Types of Natural Vegetation in India

(Vegetation Types of India)

1. Tropical Evergreen Rain Forests
2. Deciduous or Monsoon Type of Forests
3. Dry Deciduous Forests
4. Mountain Forests
5. Tidal or Mangrove Forests
6. Semi-Desert and Desert Vegetations

Different types of vegetation in India

### **Tropical evergreen rain forests**

The Tropical Evergreen rain forests are found in the areas where precipitation is more than 200 cm. They are largely found in the Northeastern regions of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Assam, Nagaland, the Western Ghats, the Tarai areas of the Himalayas and the Andaman groups of Islands. They are also found in the hills of Khasi and Jaintia. The trees in this area have intense growth. The major trees found in this area are Sandal Wood, Rosewood, Garjan, Mahogany, and bamboo. It has a copious vegetation of all kinds – trees,

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shrubs, and creepers giving it a multilayered structure. The elephants, monkey, lemur are the common animals found in these areas.

### **Deciduous or Monsoon type of forests**

The Deciduous forests are found on the lower slope of the Himalayas, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Orissa, Karnataka, Maharashtra Jharkhand and the adjoining areas. The precipitation in this area is between 100 cm and 200 cm. The Teak is the dominant species seen in the area. Along with that Deodar, Blue Gum, Pal Ash, Sal, Sandalwood, Ebony, Arjun, Khair, and Bamboo are also seen. The trees in this forest shed their leaves during dry winter and dry summer. On the basis of the availability of water, these forests are again divided into moist and dry deciduous.

### **Dry deciduous forests**

These forests grow in areas where the precipitation is between 50 cm and 100 cm. These are mainly seen in the areas of the Central Deccan plateau, Punjab, Haryana, parts of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and South-east of Rajasthan.

### **Mountain forests**

Mountain forests differ significantly along the slopes of the mountain. On the foothills of the Himalayas until a height of 1500 meters, evergreen trees like Sal, teak, and bamboo grow copiously. On the higher slope, temperate conifer trees like pine, fir, and oak grow. At the higher elevation of the Himalayas, rhododendrons and junipers are found. Further, than these vegetation zones, alpine grasslands appear up to the snowfield.

### **Tidal or Mangrove forests**

The tidal or mangrove forests grow by the side of the coast and on the edges of the deltas e.g., the deltas of the Cauvery, Krishna, Mahanadi, Godavari, and Ganga. In West Bengal, these forests are known as 'Sundarbans'. The 'sundari' is a most major tree in these forests. The important trees of the tidal forests are hogla, garan, pasur etc. This forest is an important factor in the timber industry as they provide timber and firewood. Palm and coconut trees beautify the coastal strip.

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### **Semi-deserts and Deserts vegetations**

This area receives a rainfall less than 50 cm. Thorny bushes, acacia, and Babul are found in this vegetation region. The Indian wild date is generally found here. They have long roots and thick flesh. The plants found in this region store water in their stem to endure during the drought. These vegetations are found in parts of Gujarat's, Punjab and in Rajasthan.

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