

Conservation of Forest

Legal Framework for Forest and Wildlife Protection

India protects and manages its forest and wildlife resources through robust legal frameworks such as the **Indian Forest Act (1927)**, **Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam (1980)**, **Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972)**, and various **State Forest Acts** and **Tree Preservation Acts**. State Governments and Union Territory (UT) Administrations hold the primary responsibility for implementing these laws. They take necessary actions to safeguard forests and wildlife under these provisions.

Under the **Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam (1980)**, State Governments and UTs must minimize tree felling for developmental projects. They also mandate compensatory plantation to address environmental concerns.

Forest Fire Prevention and Management

The **National Action Plan on Forest Fire (2018)** outlines measures to prevent forest fires, enhance forest resilience, and train communities in fire prevention and control.

Human-Animal Conflict Management

The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) issues advisories to States/UTs for managing human-animal conflicts. Key recommendations include:

- Coordinated interdepartmental actions.
- Identification of conflict hot spots.
- Formation of rapid response teams.
- Adherence to Standard Operating Procedures.
- Provision of funds for ex-gratia relief in cases of injury or death.

Joint Forest Management and Community Involvement

In line with the **National Forest Policy (1988)**, the **Joint Forest Management (JFM)** initiative promotes local community participation in forest management. States and UTs have formed **Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs)** and **Eco Development Committees (EDCs)** to involve communities in forest and wildlife conservation.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes for Conservation

The Ministry supports forest and wildlife conservation through schemes like:

- **Forest Fire Prevention and Management**
- **Green India Mission**
- **Nagar Van Yojana**
- **Development of Wildlife Habitat (DWH)**
- **Project Elephant and Tiger**
- **MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes)**

Funding for these schemes comes from **CAMPA funds** and annual operations plans submitted by States/UTs.

Indian Forest Management Standards (2023)

The Ministry released the **Indian Forest Management Standard** under the **National Working Plan Code (2023)**. This standard offers a framework with criteria, indicators, and verifiers to monitor sustainable forest management. It supports the **Indian Forest and Wood Certification Scheme**, addressing challenges faced by small-scale timber producers.

Forest Cover Assessment

The **Forest Survey of India (FSI)**, under the Ministry, assesses India's forest cover biennially. According to the **India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021**, India's total forest cover is **7,13,789 sq. km**, or **21.71% of the geographical area**. The last three ISFR reports show an increasing trend in forest cover, with a growth of **1,540 sq. km** between ISFR 2019 and ISFR 2021.

Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam Campaign

On **June 5, 2024**, the Hon'ble Prime Minister launched the **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam** campaign, drawing parallels between Mother Earth's nurturing and a mother's love. This initiative encourages citizens to plant trees in honor of their mothers and pledge to protect nature.

India's comprehensive legal and policy measures, along with active community involvement and targeted initiatives, underscore its commitment to sustainable forest and wildlife conservation.



Reference

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