

India State of Forest Report 2023

GOI released the 'India State of Forest Report 2023 (ISFR 2023)' today at Forest Research Institute, Dehradun. The Forest Survey of India (FSI) has brought out the ISFR biennially since 1987. FSI conducts an in-depth assessment of the country's forest and tree resources. It is based on the interpretation of remote sensing satellite data and field-based National Forest Inventory (NFI). Consequently, ISFR publishes the results. The India State of Forest Report 2023 is the 18th such report in the series.

The report contains information on forest cover, tree cover, and mangrove cover. Additionally, it also covers growing stock, carbon stock in India's forests, instances of forest fire, agroforestry, etc. ISFR reports unique thematic information on forest cover and essential characteristics of forests. The objective is to present a detailed picture of forest health at the country level. As per the present assessment, the total Forest and Tree cover is 8,27,357sq km, which is 25.17 percent of the country's geographical area. The Forest Cover has an area of about 7,15,343sq km (21.76%), whereas the Tree Cover has an area of 1,12,014 sq km (3.41%).

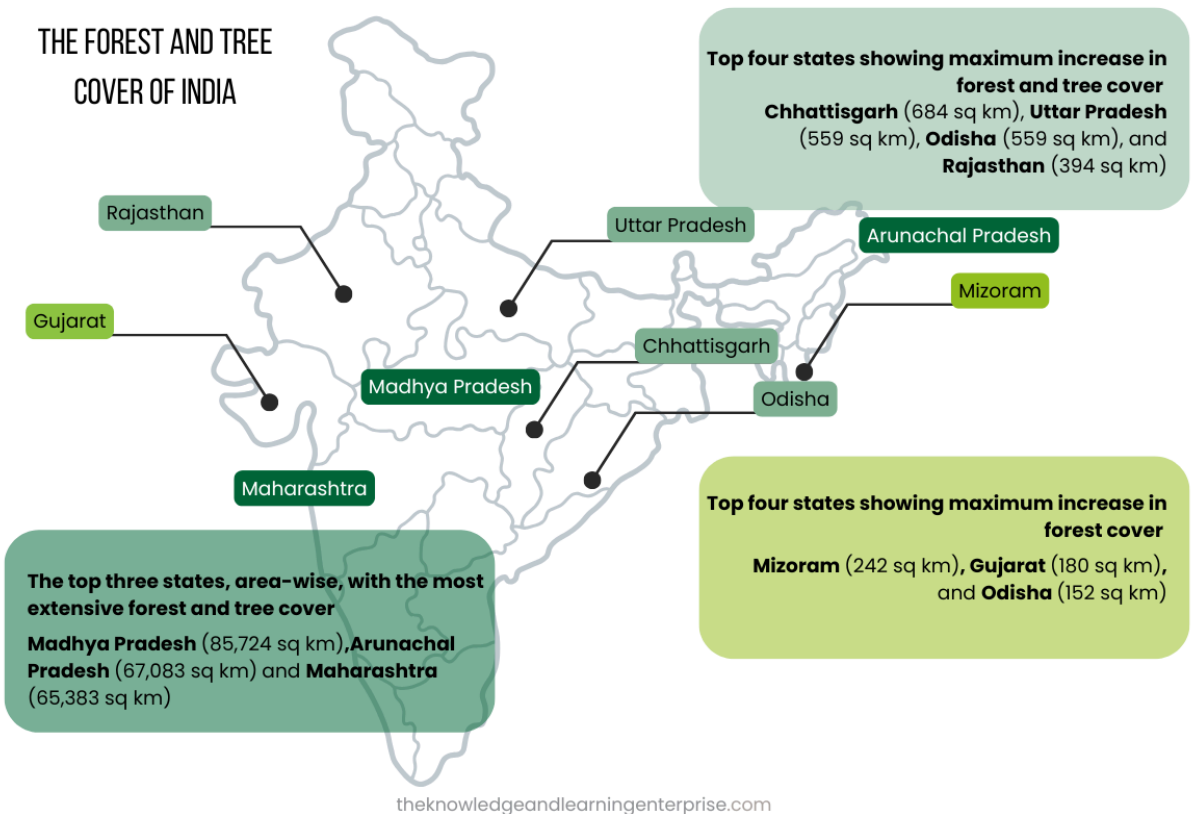
MAJOR FINDINGS

Forest and Tree Cover

- The forest and tree cover of the country is 8,27,357 sq km, which is 25.17 percent of the geographical area of the country, consisting of 7,15,343 sq km (21.76%) as forest cover and 1,12,014 sq km (3.41%) as tree cover.
- As compared to the assessment of 2021, there is an increase of 1445 sq km in the forest and tree cover of the country, which includes 156 sq km increase in the forest cover and 1289 sq km increase in tree cover.

- The top four states showing the maximum increase in forest and tree cover are Chhattisgarh (684 sq km), Uttar Pradesh (559 sq km), Odisha (559 sq km), and Rajasthan (394 sq km). Their significant contributions are a testament to the collective efforts in forest management. The top three states showing the maximum increase in forest cover are Mizoram (242 sq km), Gujarat (180 sq km), and Odisha (152 sq km).

The top three states, area-wise, with the most extensive forest and tree cover are Madhya Pradesh (85,724 sq km), followed by Arunachal Pradesh (67,083 sq km) and Maharashtra (65,383 sq km). Their conservation efforts have led to these impressive numbers.



Forest Cover

Area-wise, the top three states with the largest forest cover are as follows:

- Madhya Pradesh (77,073 sq km)
- Arunachal Pradesh (65,882 sq km)
- Chhattisgarh (55,812 sq km)

In terms of forest cover percentage with respect to total geographical area, Lakshadweep (91.33 percent) has the highest forest cover, followed by Mizoram (85.34 percent) and Andaman & Nicobar Island (81.62 percent).

The present assessment also reveals that 19 states/UTs have forest cover above 33 percent of the geographical area. Eight states/UTs, namely Mizoram, Lakshadweep, A & N Island, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Manipur, have forest cover above 75 percent.

Mangrove Cover and Other Data

The total mangrove cover is 4,992 sq km in the country. Mangroves are vital ecosystems that provide a range of ecological services, including coastal protection, carbon sequestration, and habitat for numerous species. The preservation of these mangroves is crucial for the overall health of our forests and the sustainability of our environment.

- The total growing stock of India's forest and trees outside forests is estimated as 6430 million cum. All in all 4479 million cum is inside the forests and 1951 million cum is outside the forest area. Present assessment reports an increase of 262 million cum of total growing stock as compared to the previous assessment. This includes an increase of 91 million cum inside the forest and 171 million cum outside the forest area.

- The country's bamboo-bearing area has been estimated at 1,54,670 sq km. Compared to the last assessment done in 2021, the bamboo area has increased by 5,227 sq km.
- The total annual potential production of timber from trees outside the forest has been estimated as 91.51 million cum.
- The total carbon stock in the country's forests is estimated to be 7,285.5 million tonnes in the present assessment. Markedly, this is an increase of 81.5 million tonnes compared to the last assessment.
- Regarding the status of achieving the target under tender NDC related to carbon sequestration, the current assessment shows that India's carbon stock has reached 30.43 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. This indicates that compared to the base year of 2005, India has already reached 2.29 billion tonnes of additional carbon sink as against the target of 2.5 to 3.0 billion tonnes by 2030.

Data Relevance

Besides providing vital information for monitoring the country's forest and tree resources, the ISFR data is a useful information source. Policymakers, planners, state forest departments, and research organizations use this data. Additionally, the line agencies involved in various developmental works also benefit from this information. Academicians, civil society, and others interested in natural resource conservation and management, too, seek such data.

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