

## **ISFR 2017: KEY FINDINGS**

- Forest and Tree Cover of the country has increased by 8,021 sq km (1 %) as compared to assessment of 2015. The very dense forest has increased by 1.36 % as compared to last assessment. This is very heartening as VDF absorbs maximum carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- The increasing trend of forest and tree cover is largely due to the various national policies aimed at conservation and sustainable management of our forests like Green India Mission, National Agro-Forestry policy (NAP), REDD plus policy, Joint Forest Management (JFM), National Afforestation Programme and funds under Compensatory Afforestation to States.
- Successful agro-forestry practices, better conservation of forests, improvement of scrub areas to forest areas, increase in mangrove cover, conservation and protection activities have also led to increase in the forest and tree cover.
- Green Highways (Plantations & Maintenance) Policy to develop 1,40,000 km long tree line with plantation along with both sides of national highways will go a long way in enhancing the forest & tree cover.
- Top 5 states where maximum forest cover has increased are Andhra Pradesh (2,141 sq kms), Karnataka (1,101 sq kms), Kerala (1,043 sq kms), Odisha (885 sq kms) and Telangana (565 sq kms).
- Top 5 states where forest cover has decreased are Mizoram (531 sq km), Nagaland (450 sq km), Arunachal Pradesh (190 sq km), Tripura (164 sq km) and Meghalaya (116 sq km). It is important to mention here that these states are in the North Eastern region of the country where the total forest cover is very high i.e. more than 70% in each state.
- The main reasons for the decrease are - shifting cultivation, other biotic pressures, rotational felling, diversion of forest lands for developmental activities, submergence of forest cover, agriculture expansion and natural disasters.

### **Water bodies inside forests have increased over a decade**

- Forests play a vital role in water conservation and improve the water regime in the area.
- State Forest Departments besides plantation and protection also undertake steps to improve water conservation through different interventions such as building Check dams, vegetation barriers, percolation ponds, contour trenches etc. under various Central & State Government schemes
- As per the latest assessment, water bodies inside forest cover have increased by 2,647 sq kms during the last decade.
- Maharashtra (432 sq kms), Gujarat (428 sq kms), Madhya Pradesh (389 sq kms) are top three states showing increase in water bodies within forest areas. Overall, almost all the states have shown a positive change in water bodies.

### **Mangrove cover of the country has shown a positive change**

- As per ISFR 2017, mangrove forests have increased by 181 sq kms. Maharashtra (82 sq kms), Andhra Pradesh (37 sq kms) and Gujarat (33 sq kms) are the top three gainers in terms of mangrove cover. 7 out of the 12 mangrove states have shown an increase in mangrove cover and none of them show any negative change.
- Mangrove eco-systems are rich in biodiversity and provide a number of ecological services. They also play a major role in protecting coastal areas from erosion, tidal storms and tsunamis.

### **Striving towards achieving NDC goal**

- India is striving towards achieving its NDC goal of creating additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3.0 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.
- As per present assessment total carbon stock in forest is estimated to be 7,082 million tonnes. There is an increase of 38 million tonnes in the carbon stock of country as compared to the last assessment.

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