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Authored By: Mr. Sunny Sharma, Assistant Professor, Himachal Pradesh
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ABSTRACT:

“There is sufficient proof to reveal that dense forests as soon as protected India. The converting wooded area composition and cowl may be intently related to the boom and extrude of civilizations. Over the years, as guy improved the wooded area commenced regularly depleting. The developing populace and guy’s dependence at the wooded area had been especially liable for this. Forests had been respected through the humans and a massive variety of spiritual ceremonies focused on timber and plants. Around 2500 years ago, Gautama Buddha preached that guy must plant a tree each 5 years. Sacred groves had been marked across the temples in which sure policies and rules applied. Chandra Gupta Maurya found out the significance of the forests and appointed an excessive officer to appearance after the forests.

Ashoka released programmes to plant timber on a massive scale. These policies endured even throughout the Gupta period. The Mughals confirmed greater hobby in gardens and their development. Akbar ordered the planting of bushes in numerous elements of his kingdom. Jahangir becomes widely recognized for laying out lovely gardens and planting bushes. The records of present-day Indian forestry become a procedure with the aid of using which the British progressively appropriated woodland sources for sales generation. Trees couldn't be felled without earlier permission and understanding of the authority. These steps become taken to make sure that they had been the only customers of the woodland bushes.

With the independence of India in 1947, a fantastic upheaval in Forestry Corporation occurred. The new Forest Policy of 1952 diagnosed the protecting features of the wooded area and geared toward retaining 1/3 of India’s land region beneath the wooded area. Certain sports have been banned and grazing restricted. The subsequent 50 years noticed improvement and alternate in people’s wondering concerning the wooded area. In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight a historical perspective and changes that took place towards the development of forestry in India.

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Keywords: Forests, Programme, Conservation, Development, Forest Policy.

I. INTRODUCTION:

Along with other vegetation, including plants that dominate and cover a wide area of landmass, forest is a large area for the growth of trees, while the science that deals with the study of forest conservation management is known as forestry. The country's forests have played a crucial role in the growth of all human beings living on the planet; trees are a valuable part of the development of the land. Forests have been considered as an important part of the ecosystem, which provides all sorts of necessary material which has been needed by the people. The trees have been preserved by the people with great care. The people of ancient times considered them as the holy trees and worshipped them. They gave more attention to the growth of more and more trees. At that time rulers and kings also took great interest in the protection of forestry. The importance of forestry in the country may be discussed under the following three different periods.

II. ANCIENT PERIOD:

Forest History, is also known as the history of humanity. In India, the civilizations of Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa, and Channudaro date back from 4000 to 5000 B.C. Evidence gathered from different samples of wood and other material in the civilization of the Indus valley shows the complete reliance of people on wood as well as their devotion to faith and affection for trees.¹ From the earliest times, forests have been playing a dominant role in the history of mankind. In fact, the history of forests is inextricably interwoven with the progress of civilization. The history of the forests of a country can be properly understood only in the light of the evolution of its material culture. In Indian society, forests have always been revered by the masses in their daily life in religious rites, fairs, festivals folk songs, etc.²

II.I CONSERVATION IS AN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY:

In ancient times, our fore-fathers enunciated the basic philosophy of conservation and

¹ ID Pande and Deepa Pande, *Forestry in India through the Ages*, 151, (18 8 0)

² P.K Khosla, *A Short History of Forest in India*, 9, (1965)

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incorporated it in religious scriptures.³

"What are thee, 'O earth I dig out, let that quickly grow. Let me not hit thy vitals on the heart,"

Very ideas were repeated much later in the plenary session of the U.N. Conference of Human Environment at Stock Holm in 1972.

The ideas of soil conservation were disseminated in the following hymn of Atharvaveda⁴,

"Let us protect her with all the care- the soil that produces crops, fruits, and grows trees for us."

"Growing soil leads to the growth and development of a nation."

Similarly, in various Puranas, the importance of tree plantation and wildlife conservation has been highlighted.

"Ten walls are equivalent to the pond; ten ponds are equal to a deep reservoir are equal to a son and ten sons are equivalent to a tree."

The rulers of that time took a greater interest in the conservation and protection of the forests. However, even in ancient Indian society, there was a conflict between man and forests. Indians forest wealth has been slowly eroding over the ages.⁵ Forests are an integral and indivisible part of the fantastic Indian cultural tradition. Forests were the attentiveness of the dissemination of assorted sides of data starting from warfare and politics to non-secular enlightenment. The notable epics 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' that is today being televised and are capturing the hearts of millions echo and reverberate with an outline of assorted styles of forests.⁶ Opening up the Hindu mythology, the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and different ancient scriptures of the Hindu faith have given an in-depth description of trees, plants, wildlife, and their importance to folks. Yajna Valkya Smriti prohibited the cutting of trees by prescribing social control for such acts.⁷ Arthashastra of Kautilya, which was written during the Mauryan era that fulfilled the need for well-established forest management, and

³ *Ibid*, p.11

⁴ Quoted From Kautilaya's *Arthasastra*, (Pandit Pustakalaya, Kashi)

⁵ Sheela Nager, *Forestry in India*,9, (1960)

⁶ S.Ajay.Rawat, *History of Forest in India*,152, (1892)

⁷ Available at: <http://www.11 Legal Article Com/environmental-law> (last visited on 29th July , 2021).

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the fifth pillar of Ashoka that edict and expressed his devotion to the proper welfare of all creatures within his state. *Kautilya classified the forests in four classes, viz.*

1. *Forests for timber*
2. *Reserve forests*
3. *Elephant forests and*
4. *Forests for searching*

Everyone has tried the civilizations of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa that the population that lived in a mixture and in peace with each other and that has the relationship with the environment. The Hindu community of the time was therefore very sensitive to the negative environmental consequences of such deforestation.⁸

II.II FORESTRY THE ADVENT OF JAINISM AND BUDDHISM:

During the sixth century, B.C India had sixteen large states called Mahajanapadas during this period, forests were destroyed monarchs. Religions, like Buddhism and Jainism, preaching truthfulness,⁹ Purity of heart, non-violence and kind to all living beings, were also born during this period. Gautama Buddha was born under an Ashok tree, received enlightenment under a pipal tree, preached his new religion under a shady banyan tree, and died in a sal grove. Thus, all these trees became sacred and were worshipped by peoples.¹⁰ This resulted in the plantation of these sacred trees. In the same way, Jain scriptures are eloquent proof of the respect accorded to forests in India.

According to Jainism, the cultivation of soil implies violence against living beings. Therefore, Jains adopted the profession of trade and commerce. However, hunting became a pastime for the rulers of this time. Peasant proprietors had to have and enclose deer-reserve for hunting. These turned into reserved forests and were saved from the plough. We find the references of primeval forests like the Andhavana of Kosal, the Sitavan of Magadha, the

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid*, p.91

¹⁰M. S. Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India*, Vol. II, 110, (1980)

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Pacinavanasadaya of Sakiya territory, etc.¹¹ Many useful records concerning forest protection and management made by the rulers of that reign were found even in the earlier period of 300 BC. In Chandragupta Maurya, there was a forest superintendent for a time, and while doing so, his staff provided complete assistance. Punishment was levied for forest offences. It was during the reign of Ashoka the Great that towarar was given significance.¹²

II.III FORESTRY IN GUPTA'S PERIOD:

The historical history of forestry correlated during the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya with biological science. Most of the historical documents demonstrate the valuable contribution of the Greek ambassador Megasthenes (321-274 B.C.) and at the same time of Kautilya's famous Arthashastra, who had vividly drawn various aspects of forest and life management during that period. There was, at that moment.¹³ Arthashastra of Kautilya had dealt very smoothly and accurately with the proper classification of forests and tasks assigned to forest officers, different rules and regulations relating to the preservation, safety and exploitation of the forest, search and game laws, there was a strict panel provision for infringement of forest laws, etc. It thus set the milestone on various aspects of forest management during that period. Emperor Ashoka, adopted shortly after Chandragupta Maurya, persisted and made a significant change in these activities.

Planting of fruit-bearing trees and trees that offer shades for the good being of the travelers who come during the period and at the right time customary people began. Ashoka was very in support of the non-violence creed and he produced 'Abhayaranya'¹⁴ that we presently termed them as National parks and sanctuaries. The forest management and activities that were taken into account improved and flourished to a greater extent during the Gupta period (320-800 AD). A famous known work of the 'Shukraniti' era that throws light weight on these improvements with lovely passion, Vana Mahotsav and Shalbhajika utsava were celebrated. In the entire time, four types of gardens or forests as Promodvan, Udyan, Brikshvatika, and

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² V.A. Smith, (Indian Print): *Ashok Tree Buddhist King of India*, 78, (1970)

¹³ S.S. Gupta, *Tree Symbol Worship in India*, 15-16, (1965)

¹⁴ *Supra note.4*

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Nandanvan were far-famous.¹⁵ In his poetry, Kalidas, the far-famed author of the Gupta Quantity, delineates the beautiful trees. Notable among those were manufactured inside the village areas from forest roads, plantation of trees carrying eatable fruits, and medicinal plants. For an assortment of forest revenue, there was a Gaulmikas appointment. Varied alternative literary works and 'Kamandaka's Neetisara'¹⁶. Thus, it's clear that within the ancient amount folks revered the forests and a sizable amount of non-secular ceremonies targeted on the trees and plants The Agni Puranas; written regarding 4000 years past¹⁷ explicit that man ought to shield trees to possess material gains and spiritual blessing. That the forests were of nice importance and each step was taken for the conservation of forests.

III. THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD:

A significant number of migrations occurred during the Islamic invasions, and people entered the forests seeking safe shelter. During the medieval era of Indian history, all these incidents destroyed forests. At the same time, immense forest degradation and mismanagement took place with the invasion of India by foreign forces. During the British rule, the rate at which deforestation and destruction of forest areas increased during the Mughal era had reached a peak. Large areas of forests were cut off in the Mughal era, while forests provided a safe place for the many dacoits.¹⁸ Forest area clearing for agricultural purposes has contributed to large-scale destruction.

In the meantime, however, several forest regions have been declared protected territories. In doing so, it played an important role for a long period of time in the protection of the land. There is no question that most of the medieval invaders or rulers were keenly involved in the protection and conservation of forests for their hunting and leisure purposes only. During this period, in India, a variety of trees of fruit and ornamental were also planted. Babar is like the Mughal emperor, Akbar. Jahangir and Shahjahan were all well known for their production of

¹⁵ S. K Maity, *Economic Life in Northern India, in the Gupta Period*, 119-120, (New Delhi, 1970)

¹⁶ V.P Agarwala, *Forest in India*, 121, (1960)

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Hundred Years of Indian Forestry* Vol.1 & II, (FRI, Dehradun)

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gardens and orchards of various kinds or styles. Akbar the Great took a particular interest in planting large numbers of trees along with his regime's canals and highways.¹⁹

III.I FORESTRY IN BRITISH INDIA:

The forests deteriorated significantly with the arrival of a people United Nations agency weren't accustomed to systematic biology. The forests deteriorated significantly with the arrival of a people United Nations agency weren't accustomed to systematic biology. They thought of India's most valuable and important wealth that is the forest which associates with the degree of inexhaustible resources. Biology at that time was also confined to the main exploitation of forests with no concern for replanting. Massive numbers of teak and different valuable timber were moved down from areas that were simply approachable for the establishment of the British admiralty's fleet.²⁰ Scented wood was additionally hewn and exported to varied European countries. Felling was allowed munificently and freely for the event of agriculture and native settlements. A commission was appointed within the year 1800 to enquire into the conditions of the provision of teak wood in Malabar forests.

Ironically Captain Wanton of the local department was appointed because of the initial conservator of forest in 1806. He has appointed the duties of procuring the most potential amount of Indian timber for building in the UK.²¹ This resulted in plunder instead of conservation of forests, notably in Travancore and Malabar. Royalty rights were declared over teak within the south and its unauthorized felling was prohibited in 1823. This post of the conservator (a misnomer) was abolished. To meet the demand for large-sized timber, with the exception of teak, Sal associate degreed cedar tree was hewn in an unrestricted manner though officers weren't unmindful of the requirement of exchanging the forests on areas cut over. The data of a way to perform that need was absent. To quote Stebbing "the terribly intensive correspondences that passed between the three governments of geographical area, Madras and Bombay and also the East Indies Company administrators affords incontrovertible proof of this intention." Once a tennis player, who was a collector of Malabar

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ E.P Stebbing, *The Forest of India*, Vol-II, 169-175, (1976)

²¹ G.S.Pandit, *Forestry in India-A Critical Study*, 313-316, (1965)

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and Chatho Memon and was Assistant Sub Conservator, at that time, played a vital role in teak plantations on the range, the right step towards the growth of forests rose from South India in 1942. These types of plantations were highly triple-crowned and became world-famous in the coming years. The Director was forced by this conversion operation in the development of forests of Malabar by forming teak plantation.

III.II THE DOCUMENT ON THE INDIAN FORESTS:

It was in the year 1855 when, during his time, the Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie, supported or developed well-known ideas or cause and set out the blueprint for forest conservancy throughout the nation while doing so, on 3rd August 1885 he issued a memorandum of the Government of India.²² Again in 1856, when the laws for the protection of trees and blush wood in the district of Rawalpindi at that time were recorded and enforced in 1857 in Hazara by forest conservation rules. These rules formed the forum for launching one of the much-needed forest protection policies in the Punjab region. A network of railway lines and roads began opening up the country to meet this increasing demand sound conservation values were all but abandoned destruction of forests went unabated. For the manufacture of sleepers, railway coaches and to meet the different types of rising demands of fast-developing military centers, large stretches of forest land from neighboring areas have been transformed. However, the destruction of such a magnitude resulted in some concern, and serious thinking was given to protecting and improving the country's forest resources.

III.III AWAKENING/START OF WELL-PLANNED FOREST

MANAGEMENT:

It was thus in 1864 that one of the most important decisions was taken by the Government of India with regard to the treatment of the forest as the property of the State. The principle of seeking individual's possession of the forest was discarded and the entire state forest became inalienable. The need to take great care in clearing forest wastelands, to demarcate and define the boundaries of forests to be preserved as such and to enact a comprehensive Indian Forest Act implementing an all-India forest policy were some of the important points emphasized by

²² Berthold Ribbentrop, *Forestry in British India*, 42–143, (1885)

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the government.²³ Systematic management of forests began with the appointment of Distract Brandeis, a trained German forester, as the first Inspector General of Forests in 1864. The objective of forest management changed from obtaining timber for various purposes to protecting and improving forests and treating them as biologically growing units. The first Indian Forests Act was enacted in 1865, to be replaced by new laws in 1878 and 1927. The Forests Act formed the basis for the amalgamation, reservation and demarcation of forests and their protection. A distinction was made between reserve and protection forests. In the reserve forest everything was forbidden that was not expressly permitted, in the protection forest everything was permitted that was not expressly forbidden.

In 1894, the first forest policy of the country was formulated.²⁴ This policy had two main messages: first, the claims of management were given priority over the preservation of the forest, and second, the common good was the sole objective of forest management. In 1881, regular forestry training was introduced, first for the forester and later for other officials. Management plans were drawn up for most of the demarcated forests, taking into account the needs of soil and water conservation and the silvi-cultural requirements of the crops. The management plans (called work plans in forester-speak) were prepared to ensure that annual logging did not exceed annual forest growth.

In 1891, Provincial Forests Service was inaugurated to recruit forest officers in India itself. The Imperial Forest Research Institute was established in 1906 to organize research on various aspects of forestry. During the period from 1871 to 1990, considerable progress was made in technical education, forest administration training, reforestation and fire prevention. As a result of the Indian Home Rule movement in 1916²⁵ and the non-cooperation movement that followed, there was a general disregard for forest laws and forest damage by fires and unnecessary felling in Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh in protest against British rule.

²³N. D. Bachketi, *Social Forestry in India, Problems and Prospects*, 13-15, (1980)

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Anonymous, *The State of India's Environment a Citizen's Reports Delhi*, 390-391, (1982)

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III.IV STATUS OF FORESTRY DURING THE WORLD

WARS:

The World Wars not only interrupted but reversed the path to scientific forestry. During this period, timber, firewood, charcoal, hay, and other forestry products were needed in large quantities and at short notice to meet the diverse wartime needs. Forestry was thus geared towards a single purpose, that of meeting the needs of the fighting troops, forests were cut down ruthlessly and thus the war took a heavy toll on Indian forests, both state and private. The state forests were cut down without regard to the order of deforestation laid down in the working plans. Privately owned forests also suffered, as skyrocketing prices were too tempting to resist. It was not until the 20 years between the two world wars that substantial progress was made in the scientific management of forests.²⁶

This included the preparation of working plans for almost all areas declared to be protected forests. Development of natural regeneration techniques for deodar in the Himalayas, sal in different parts of the country and artificial regeneration of teak in South India. During this period, successful plantations were established in some of the refractory areas and there was also considerable development in roads, buildings and division of forest areas into different management units.²⁷ Above all, the forest was no longer treated as an inexhaustible reserve for the expansion of cultivation, as the "hunter's dream and the logger's monopoly", but as a biological system whose productivity could only be maintained through care and scientific management.

IV. MODERN PERIOD:

IV.I FORESTRY AND INDEPENDENT INDIA:

With the partition of India, the forests of the former provinces of Sind N.W.F.P, West Punjab and East Bengal were transferred to Pakistan. Almost all the British officers left the scene and Indian officers took over the command both at the center and in the province. Another important policy change was the abolition of zamindari in all Indian states, which resulted in

²⁶S.Ajay. Rawat, *Forestry in India through the Ages*, 157-158, (1960)

²⁷*Ibid.*

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a large proportion of private forests becoming the property of the government. Anticipating that the private forests would eventually disappear from their hands, many private owners tried to make the most of the property they would eventually lose.²⁸ The main function of the forest offices in the early 1950's became to control the organization and management of the forest. An important feature of the post-independence period was the rapid expansion of agricultural land at the expense of forests. The net area under cultivation, which was 118 million hectares in 1950-51, increased to 143 million hectares in 1973-79. It is estimated that this increase in area was due to diversion of 2.2 million hectares of forest land and 22 million hectares of land categorized as cropland, tree crops, groves and pastures. This adversely affected the overall environment and led to various problems like floods, droughts, soil erosion etc.²⁹

The old forest policy was overhauled in 1952. It acknowledged the protective roles of forests and rejected the idea that forest dwellers had no inherent right to property, but that residual land not necessary for any other purpose could be permitted. The forest policy stipulated that 1/3rd of the country's total land area should be kept under forest, with a percentage of 60% in mountainous regions.³⁰ **New attempts started during the year 1950-52:-a new effort begins:**

1. *Adopting the national tree planting festival (Van Mahotsav);*
2. *Advising wildlife management measures; and*
3. *To put conservation of soil and water on an all-India footing.*

Forestry aspired more during the various plans. But because of financial limitations, he suffered poorly. A double edge financial sword was used by administrators of state finances.

³¹ The surpluses made by the state government from forests ranged from 55.50 percent to 126.08 percent of monetary investment made and forestry in India was reduced to a commercial enterprise rather than an applied science till 1981. Surprisingly yet true that allocations to forestry from the 1st to 6th plan could not surpass the figure of 10% of the total

²⁸J. B. Lal, *India's Forests myth and Reality*, 16-17, (1988)

²⁹*The Forest Survey of India Report*, (1989)

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Girijia Shankar Trivedi and Savita Bhatt., *Valmiki Kevan or Vrikish*, 161-168, (1982)

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outlay in the private sector, thus leaving a yawning gap between aspirations and efforts. In spite of these, due to dedicated efforts of foresters, forestry advanced ahead.³² Specific emphasis was put on improving productivity through artificial regeneration, fast-growing species plantations, particularly for pulp and paper, during the 3rd and 4th plans. The constitution of the Indian Forest Service in 1966 was an event of significant importance and the birth of state forest corporations brought a new phase in Indian Forestry. In 1970, the appointment of the National Commission on Agriculture was another significant event concerning forestry. Its report on forestry, which was published in 1976, was a complete volume (Vole IX).

It was made clear in its recommendation that the country could not rely on traditional forests alone for forest development, and that the expansion of forest operation outside existing forest areas was imperative.³³ Ecological understanding and social welfare gained priority at the beginning of the 1980s. Developments without deterioration are the focus of the 6th project. The production of forestry was linked to the tribal economy, more national parks and wildlife sanctuaries were created, and adequate attention was also received to protect natural forests and their regeneration a very big legislative commitment.³⁴

The 7th strategy had the theme 'Land for Survival.' The aim was to conserve biological diversity. Increasing the cover of vegetation through major forestry and forestry growth as a movement of people, increasing the productivity of existing forests and meeting the basic needs of people³⁵. In order to reclaim wastelands and green the continent, the creation of the National Wasteland Development Board in 1985 was significant. Integrated watershed developments in the Himalayan region, the practice of agro forestry, genetic species, and development of tissue culture, a methodology to minimize waste, and maximize production are some of the issues which have received adequate attention during this period. Other

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Quoted from. M.S.Randhawa, *A History of Agriculture in India*, Vol. I, 221–222,(1980)

³⁴ S. K.Jain, *Environment & Tropical Plants Journal of Environment* April,1982,74 (1980)

³⁵ One such Institute in Himachal Pradesh is the Dr. Y. S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry Nauni, (Solan)

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important landmarks in Indian forestry in the post-Independence era are the constitution of various high-level advisory bodies to review and recommend forest development work. Notable amongst them are Central Board of Forestry, Central Board for Wildlife, Forestry Commission, Forest Survey of India, Indian Institute for Remote Sensing and Photo-interpretation, and Wildlife Management Institute. It is of interest to note that various universities have opened the department of forestry with forestry as an elective subject at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.³⁶

Again, evolving ways and means are urgently needed to encourage the Indian masses to conserve forests, and these should be based on people's beliefs and beliefs. In spite of all these efforts, the forest wealth of India has been eroding constantly in the last few decades. Fast modernization, urbanization, industrialization, and lust for individual wealth in Indian society have done much damage to the very concept of forest conservation. It is necessary to ensure that the requirements of modern development are in harmony with those of forest conservation.

V. CONCLUSION:

All of us know the role of forestry and its importance in human life. Trees have been providing all sorts of valuable material, needed by the growing population of the country. The trees provide timber, fuel wood, building material, transport material, a shelter for man and as well as for the wild animals. The trees are not only providing the basic needs of the human being but, also help in maintaining ecosystem balance which protects people from various adverse effects of the atmosphere.

The forests are an important part of human beings and they have to be preserved with due care. In the ancient period ruler and kings were much more interested in their conservation but with the passage of time forest wealth started dwindling. During the medieval period when the foreign invader started invading the country. There were large-scale cutting of

³⁶*Ibid.*

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forests/trees. Large areas of forest were cleared down for the battlefield. The British ruler during the later period also appointed commissions and formulated policies and programs for the preservation of the forestry. But, as time passed and with the growing population and urbanization, the forestry sector, has been badly affected on the large scale.

The large areas of the forest land have been cleared town for industrial and agricultural purposes by the growing population. In spite of the enactment of a number of legislations and formulation of policies aimed at forest conservation. The forestry has been depleting from the earth at a faster rate which is a matter of great concern to all of us.

