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SILENT SCREAMS OF FOREST

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ABSTRACT:

Although forests are valuable natural resources and gifts from God that meet human needs, human forest destruction causes serious environmental problems. An outline of the primary causes of deforestation and its effects on the ecosystem is given in this article. It also looks at how soil erosion, rising greenhouse gas emissions, and deforestation affect ecosystems. The national and international forest conservation policies, as well as their execution in India, are also covered in the abstract. Lastly, it outlines important methods for reducing deforestation, including international collaboration, reforestation initiatives, sustainable land management techniques, and legislative changes.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

"N. H. Ravindranath", "Rajiv Kumar Chaturvediand Indu K. Murthy's" Forest conservation, afforestation and reforestation in India: Implications for forest carbon stocks[941]

An evaluation of the effects of previous and ongoing forest conservation and regeneration policies and initiatives on India's forest carbon sink is provided in this article. This article also discusses the growing amount of land covered by forests, including the portion that is afforested, and the present percentage of land covered by forests. By 2030, the area covered by forest cover is expected to reach 72 mha, assuming the current trend continues.Over the next 25 years, the carbon stock in current forests is expected to remain relatively steady at 8.79 GtC. The study's calculations do not account for forest degradation and the loss of carbon stocks brought on by fire, grazing, biomass extraction, and other disturbances.

"Jurgen Bauhus" et al, "Ecosystem Goods and Services from Plantation Forests"[942]

The foundation for creating governance regimes that adhere to the principles of sustainable forest management is provided by the body of knowledge regarding the effects of plantations and their contributions to ecosystem goods and services, which is covered in this book. It talks about how tree plantations can help solve and mitigate some of the most pressing issues facing the world today, like poverty, climate change, biodiversity loss, and the growing demand for resources and energy, even though they are primarily simple in shape and structure and require intense management. But we also want to show that there is still more work to be done to maximize the various ways that tree plantations can meet human needs.

"Forest Governance" by "Jessica Stubenrauch; Felix Ekardt; Katharina Hagemann; Beatrice Garske", [943]

In addition to providing a thorough examination of the historical discourse around forests, this

[941] N. H. Ravindranath, Rajiv Kumar Chaturvediand Indu K. Murthy's, VOL. 95, NO. 2, Forest conservation, afforestation and reforestation in India: Implications for forest carbon stocks, , (25 JULY 2008)

[942] Jurgen Bauhus, Peter J. van der Meer and Markku Kanninen's, Ecosystem Goods and Services from Plantation Forests, Earthscan publishing for a sustainable future, (2010)

[943]"Jessica Stubenrauch; Felix Ekardt; Katharina Hagemann; Beatrice Garske", Forest Governance , (2022-04-23)

book analyzes and develops broad concepts for forest governance and policy. In contrast to highly technical large-scale types of climate geoengineering, it looks at the potential and constraints for negative emissions in a sector that, like peatlands, seems far less equivocal. The analysis demonstrates that international law's legally mandated climate and biodiversity targets are far more ambitious than most people realize. In light of this, the volume critically examines the possibility of afforestation and reforestation for climate mitigation, which is frequently touted as the new panacea for meeting the Paris Agreement's obligations and achieving future climate neutrality.

"Gopal Subramanium's" "Climate change and environmental law reduction of emissions due to deforestation and environmental degradation in India: Issues and Concerns", [944]

This article discusses the policies known as the REDD agenda, which seem to have been agreed upon by governments. It is a method designed to incentivize the preservation of forests by giving them a monetary value that is connected to their worth as carbon sinks. Although governments have found this paradigm acceptable, environmentalists, social workers, and non-governmental organizations have criticized REDD for a variety of reasons. The implementation of the agenda has been characterized as controversial. This paper seeks to explain the REDD agenda, its implications and the issues regarding its effective implementation in India.

"Environmental Degradation: Challenges and Strategies for Mitigation" by "Vijay P. Singh et al" [945]

This offers proactive answers to issues with environmental deterioration for strategic planning and their successful implementation, as well as issues brought on by population increase, industrialization, and changes in land use. The book is unusual since it covers a wider range of topics and shows how different parts are interconnected and dependent on one another.

AIM OF THE STUDY:

To determine how deforestation affects the environment and to offer important mitigation techniques

RESEARCH PROBLEM:

To examine the reasons behind deforestation as well as its effects on the ecosystem.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

• To determine the primary causes of deforestation

• To ascertain the environmental effects of deforestation

• To determine if laws are effective in light of the shifting social condition

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

This article's drawback is its inability to identify the reasons behind India's deforestation and the country's application of the Forest Conservation Act.

HYPOTHESIS:

Null Hypothesis (H0): The rates of deforestation in India before and after the Forest Conservation Act's implementation did not differ significantly.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Deforestation rates have significantly decreased in India as a result of the Forest Conservation Act's implementation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This assignment is not limited to a single research methodology; rather, it incorporates a combination of different research techniques The research methodology used for this task is more doctrinal.
In order to identify the flaws in the way national

[944] Gopal Subramanium's, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL LAW REDUCTION OF EMISSIONS DUE TO DEFORESTATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CONCERNS, Volume 52, Journal of the Indian Law Institute.
[945] "Vijay P. Singh"et al, "Environmental Degradation: Challenges and Strategies for Mitigation,",2022-04-28.

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policy is being implemented, this assignment also touches on the critical research approach.

INTRODUCTION:

Widespread forest destruction, or deforestation, has become one of the biggest environmental problems. In addition to supporting the livelihoods of millions of people, forests around the world are essential for preserving ecological balance, provide habitat for innumerable species, and controlling climatic trends. However, forest ecosystems and the services they offer are seriously threatened by widespread deforestation brought on by a variety of human activities. Deforestation rates continue to rise in many regions of the world despite increased understanding of the value of forest protection, highlighting the urgent need for action. Both the primary causes of deforestation and the underlying socioeconomic issues that contribute to forest loss must be addressed by conservation initiatives.

HISTORY OF THE ACT:

The earliest legislative proposal on this subject was the Indian Forest Act of 1865. The Indian Forest Act of 1927 was created solely to further British interests, yet each law that is passed is supposed to address the social issue for which it was created. The previous act mainly focused on timber and ignored other things. The Act of 1927's 86 Sections were organized into 13 chapters. It granted the state the authority to restrict tribal peoples' use of woods.

Its objectives included regulating and taxing timber and other forest products, which ultimately became the government's primary revenue stream. It never sought to protect the country's woods, only to regulate the collection of timber and other raw materials used by industry.[946]

CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE FOR FOREST CONSERVATION:

When the Indian Constitution was drafted in 1950, its framers had no clue that future forest conservation issues would arise. This was later accomplished with the enactment of the Constitution (Forty-Second Amendment) Act, 1976, which added Article 48A to the list of Directive Principles of State Policy and included Article 51A in fundamental duties. According to Article 48A, the state must enact legislation to preserve and enhance the environment in order to conserve our nation's forests. Every Indian citizen has an obligation to preserve and enhance the nation's natural environment, particularly its forests, in accordance with Article 51A(g).

CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION IN INDIA:

India's deforestation is caused by a number of sources, including:
1. Agricultural Expansion: One of the main causes of deforestation is the clearing of forests for agricultural uses, such as the growth of grazing areas and the production of crops.
2. Logging and Timber Harvesting: Deforestation is a result of both legal and illegal logging and commercial timber harvesting, particularly in areas with valuable timber species.
3. Infrastructure Development: Deforestation occurs when huge tracts of forest are cleared for the construction of roads, dams, mines, and other infrastructure projects.
4. Urbanization: Forested terrain is being transformed into urban areas, industrial zones, and residential complexes as a result of rapid urbanization and industrialization.
5. Forest Fires: Whether they are caused by human activity or natural causes, uncontrolled forest fires have the potential to extensively destroy forest cover.

6. Mining Activities: When minerals and resources are extracted from wooded areas, vegetation is cut down and habitats are destroyed.
7. Illicit Activities: Deforestation is also a result of organized crime networks' encroachment, poaching, and illicit logging operations.
8. Population Pressure: As a result of the

[946] . Forest (Conservation) Act, No. 69 of 1980, INDIA CODE (1980).

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increased demand for land and resources brought on by rapid population development, woods are being turned into infrastructure, towns, and agricultural fields in order to support the growing population.
9. Commercial Plantations: Clearing native forests to establish commercial plantations for products like eucalyptus, rubber, and palm oil frequently results in habitat loss and a fall in biodiversity.
10. Fuelwood Collection: Reliance on wood for heating and cooking, particularly in rural regions, results in overuse of forest resources and destruction.

11. Hydroelectric Projects: In order to build hydroelectric dams and reservoirs, vast tracts of forest land must be submerged, which results in the loss of important ecosystems and the uprooting of local inhabitants.
12. Climate Change: As a result of rising temperatures, altered precipitation regimes, and changing weather patterns, forests may become more susceptible to pests and diseases, deforestation may result.

REASON OF THE ACT

This Act's major objective is to protect and maintain trees to benefit wildlife and the habitats of numerous other creatures.
• Monitoring the devastation and deforestation of naturally occurring renewable resources, including forests, is the main driving force.
• To provide forest residents with subsidized food, fuel, building supplies, and other essentials.
• To change the operational plans to more environmentally friendly ones.
• To preserve or protect the forest's uniqueness, variety, and health.
• To ensure that forests are preserved for use in farming, grazing, and the construction of homes and businesses.

• To save biodiversity.
• To preserve the ecological elements and prevent the extinction of plants and animals.
• To implement grant specific permission to hunt wildlife in order to carry out scientific research.

FEATURES OF THE ACT:
The following are the characteristics of this Act: The power of the State government and other authorities to decide on some topics without first receiving consent from the federal government has been constrained by this Act. The Central government is fully empowered to carry out the provisions of this Act. There are also penalties for violating the limitations of this Act. Under this Act, an advisory committee may be formed to advise the central government on matters concerning forest protection[947].

AMENDMENT:

Since its enactment, the "Forest Conservation Act of 1980" has undergone several revisions to align with evolving environmental and developmental priorities. Significant adjustments were made in 2003, and detailed recommendations for forest protection were developed. For example, the 1988 amendment gave the Central Government the last say over the first restrictions on state governments' ability to protect forests or use forest land for purposes other than forests. The Federal Constitution was amended in 1988, giving the Central Government additional authority over the State Governments.

The meaning of "non-forest purpose" was clarified. In order to create a regulatory procedure for asking the Central government for clearance and figuring out when no approval is needed at all, a thorough set of regulations was drafted in 2003. The addition of new sections 3C and 3D to Bill No. 139 of 2017 was proposed to the Lok Sabha. While Section 3C addresses the preservation of the rights of people who live in hilly areas over forests, Section 3D outlines that deforestation may occasionally take place without the consent of the central government. There was yet another amendment proposed in 2019.

[947] Ticktin, T. 'The ecological implications of harvesting non-timber forest products, Journal of Applied Ecology, vol 41, pp11–21,(2004).

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RESTRICTION ON THE DE-RESERVATION OF FORESTS

According to Section 2 of the Act, the state government or any other body must first acquire authorization from the central government before issuing any directives pertaining to de-reservation of a forest, The diversion of forest land for non-forest activities, such as infrastructure or industrial projects, raises critical legal and ecological concerns[948]:

- That any forest or a portion of it that has been declared as reserved under any law now in force in that State shall no longer be regarded as such.
- That any area can be used for purposes other than forestry, whether or not it is forested.
- That any forest land, or a portion of it, may be cleared of any naturally occurring trees in order to be used for reforestation.[949]

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION:

Among global environmental frameworks, "the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)" includes key provisions encouraging afforestation and reforestation. Even though the UNFCCC's main goal is to mitigate climate change, afforestation and reforestation are essential to reaching its goals. [950]

The Kyoto Protocol created the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the UNFCCC, enabling rich nations to offset their greenhouse gas emissions by funding afforestation and reforestation initiatives in developing nations. Developed nations can use the Certified Emission Reductions (CERs) produced by these afforestation and reforestation programs to reach their emission reduction goals. Furthermore, as part of the global response to climate change, the 2015 UNFCCC-adopted Paris Agreement contains clauses for encouraging sustainable forest management, protecting and boosting forest carbon stores, and aiding afforestation and reforestation initiatives.[951]

NATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR AFFORESTATION:

The National Afforestation Programme (NAP), which was introduced in 2002, is the main national afforestation initiative in India. Through a variety of afforestation and reforestation initiatives, the NAP seeks to expand the nation's forest and tree cover.

1. Increasing forest and tree cover to reach the goals established by India's National Forest Policy is one of the program's main goals.

2. Restoring wastelands and degraded forests which helps in improving the carbon cycle thus protecting biodiversity and prevent soil erosion.

4. Creating job and income opportunities for rural populations by means of livelihood enhancement initiatives and participatory forest management. The implementation of the National The federal government, state governments, local communities, others come together to improve this programme. To guarantee sustainable management of forest resources and optimize socioeconomic advantages for nearby people, the program promotes a variety of afforestation approaches, including social forestry, agroforestry, and shared forest management.[952]To counteract the loss of forest cover brought on by development activities, these funds are used for afforestation and reforestation initiatives all around the nation.

CONSEQUENCES OF DEFFORESTATION:

Deforestation in India has several consequences, including:

1. Loss of Biodiversity: Many plant and animal species' habitats are destroyed as a result of deforestation, which reduces biodiversity.

[948] Forest (Conservation) Act, No. 69 of 1980, § 2, India Code (1980), https://legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/A1980-69.pdf.
9.Forest (Conservation) Act, No. 69 of 1980, § 2, India Code (1980).
[950] UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) Conference of the Parties, Eleventh Session, (2005).
[951] Conference of the Parties Serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, Report of the Conference on Its First Session, Nov. 28, 2005, U.N. Doc. FCCC/KP/CMP/2005/8/Add.1 (Mar. 30, 2006).
[952] India State of Forest Report, Forest Survey of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, (2021)

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Ecosystems may be disturbed by this loss and become less resilient to changes in their surroundings.

2. Soil: Tree roots play a crucial ecological role by stabilizing the soil structure, thereby significantly reducing the risk of erosion caused by water or wind.Reduced agricultural production, increased sedimentation in rivers and other bodies of water, and the loss of fertile topsoil are all consequences of higher soil erosion rates caused by the absence of trees.

3. "Climate Change": Due to loss of trees there is increase in global temperature. Trees act as carbon sinks absorbing the carbon di oxide and reducing ill effects of "climate change" [953]

4. Disruption of Water Cycles: By drawing water from the soil and releasing it into the atmosphere through transpiration, trees are essential for controlling the water cycle. This cycle is upset by deforestation, which raises the danger of droughts and floods, alters local and regional rainfall patterns, and reduces water supply.

5. Loss of Livelihoods: Millions of Indians, especially indigenous groups and those who depend on forests, rely on forests for their livelihoods. Poverty and social instability result from these communities' lack of access to basic resources like food, fuel, and medication due to deforestation.

6. Effect on Indigenous Cultures: Indigenous populations that have long resided in forested areas and depend on forests for their way of life and rituals are at risk of losing their cultural legacy and traditional knowledge due to deforestation.[954]

7. Increased Pollution: Deforestation decreases forests' ability to function as natural filters and releases pollutants that were previously trapped in forest ecosystems, which increases pollution in the air and water.[955]

ISSUES RELATED TO ENFORCEMENT OF AFFORESTATION:

Deforestation and the protection of wildlife persist despite the application of several legislation. To address these problems, people must be made aware of how important it is to safeguard the environment, human health, and the resources of the planet. To ameliorate the situation, environmental laws must be implemented adequately. Establishing a suitable institution that collects, handles, and forwards relevant data to the law enforcement agency would help achieve this. However, anyone who violates a rule or regulation, whether an individual or an institution, must face consequences in accordance with the legal process.[956]

Among the main concerns are:

1. Lack of Enforcement: Illegal logging, encroachment, and other actions that contribute to deforestation and the deterioration of forest ecosystems are caused by the lax enforcement of forest conservation regulations.[957]

2. Land Tenure Issues: Conflicts between forest agencies, local communities, and private landowners are caused by unclear land tenure rights and ownership disputes, which also impede afforestation initiatives.

3. Inadequate Funding: Programs for afforestation and forest conservation receive insufficient funding, which reduces their efficacy and makes it more difficult to implement sustainable land-use practices and livelihood improvement projects.

4. Poor Planning and Monitoring: Afforestation programs that are poorly planned, coordinated,

[953] Yi, H. and Moldenke, A. 'Response of grown-dwelling arthropods to different thinning intensities in young Dougas-fir forests of Western Oregon', Environmental Entomology, vol 34, pp1071–1080, (2005)

[954] Talkner, U., Jansen, M. and Beese, F. O.,'Soil phosphorus status and turnover in central-European beech forest ecosystems with differing tree species diversity', European Journal of Soil Science, vol 60, pp338–346, (2009)

[955] T. R. Shankar Raman ,"Framing Ecologically Sound Policy on Linear Intrusions Affecting Wildlife Habitats: Background Paper for the National Board for Wildlife", (January 20, 2011).

[956] Report of the Expert Committee on Net Present Value 2006.

[957] Thompson, I. D., Baker, J. A. and Ter-Mikaelian, M.,'A review of the longterm effects of post-harvest silviculture on vertebrate wildlife, and predictive models, with an emphasis on boreal forests in Ontario, Canada', Forest Ecology and Management, vol 177, pp441–469, (2003)

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and monitored provide less than ideal results and fall short of their intended goals, which include expanding forest cover and improving ecosystem services.

5. Biological Challenges: If improperly managed, invasive species, pest outbreaks, climate variability, and unsuitable soil conditions can hinder afforestation operations and result in project failures.

6. Social and Cultural elements: Traditional land-use practices, attitudes, and livelihood patterns are examples of socio-cultural elements that might affect community involvement in afforestation efforts. To promote cooperation and ownership, these aspects may call for customized approaches.

7. Limited Community Engagement: The viability of afforestation projects is threatened by the lack of local communities' participation in decision-making and forest management, which can also result in opposition or lack of support from impacted stakeholders.

8. Lack of Education and Awareness: Efforts to mobilize resources and participation are hampered by the general public's and stakeholders' lack of understanding of the value of forest conservation and the advantages of afforestation.

9. Inadequate Capacity Building: The ability of forest officials, community members, and other stakeholders to carry out and oversee forest conservation and afforestation projects is hampered by a lack of training and capacity-building initiatives. [958]

DRAWBACKS OF THE PRESENT LEGISLATION:

As mentioned before, this Act covers village woods, protected forests, and reserve forests. The Act has several clauses aimed at discouraging deforestation and encouraging afforestation of non-forest regions.[959] The National Forest Policy of 1980 states that the state government must first acquire consent from the federal government before designating any part of the state as non-reserve. Leasing the forest to anyone other than the government was prohibited by the 1988 revision to the Act. The average 30% increase in forest cover is a result of government activity.[960] However, every story has two sides. In a similar spirit, this Act does have some drawbacks, including:

• The Act's transfer of power from the state to the central government means that power is concentrated at the top;

• The Act has also failed to garner public support due to its violations of the human rights of poor native people;

• The Act's ineffectiveness is caused by the poor community's very low participation; and

• Tribal communities and forest dwellers possess extensive knowledge about forest resources, but their contributions are never recognized.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Strict Enforcement of Forest Laws: To discourage illegal operations and safeguard forest ecosystems, enforcement methods and penalties for illegal logging, encroachment, and forest degradation should be strengthened. This is one strategy that can be used to boost afforestation.
2. Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management: To preserve ecological balance and guarantee the long-term health of forests, sustainable forest management techniques such as controlled grazing, selective logging, and fire management should be put into practice.
3. Community Empowerment and Participation: In order to promote stewardship and sustainable use of forest resources, local communities, indigenous groups, and populations that depend on forests should be

[958] Sedjo, R. A, 'The potential of high-yield plantation forestry for meeting timber needs', New Forests, vol 17, pp339–360, (1999).
[959] Seeland, K., 'Recent developments in social and community forestry in India, Nepal and Bhutan', in Proceedings of Community Forestry, A Change for the Better, London, pp32–42, (1999)
[960] Moore, S. E. and Allen, H. L, 'Plantation forestry', in M. L. J. Hunter (ed.) Maintaining Biodiversity in Forest Ecosystems, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp400–433, (1999)

included in decision-making procedures, cooperative forest management projects, and benefit-sharing arrangements.

4. Afforestation and Reforestation Programs: Funding afforestation and reforestation initiatives to improve ecosystem services including carbon sequestration, soil conservation, and water control, as well as to rehabilitate degraded areas and expand forest cover.
5. Biodiversity Conservation: Putting protected areas, wildlife corridors, and conservation reserves in place to prioritize the preservation of endangered species, biodiversity hotspots, and environmentally sensitive places.
6. Promotion of Sustainable Land Use and Agroforestry: Promoting sustainable land-use planning strategies, agroforestry practices, and sustainable agriculture methods that incorporate forests and trees into agricultural landscapes to increase resilience, productivity, and biodiversity.

7. Education and Awareness: Educating the public, stakeholders, and policymakers on the value of forests, biodiversity preservation, and sustainable land management through outreach programs, educational campaigns, and environmental education projects.
8. Research and Innovation: To create best practices, instruments, and solutions for forest conservation, afforestation, and ecosystem restoration, scientific research, technological innovation, and knowledge-sharing platforms are supported.
9. Institutional Strengthening and Policy Reforms: Examining and revising forest laws, policies, and governance frameworks to address new issues, integrate indigenous knowledge systems, and support integrated landscape management strategies that strike a balance between development, livelihoods, and conservation.
10. International Cooperation: Working together with international organizations, nearby nations, and worldwide projects to share best practices, gather resources, and resolve cross-border problems pertaining to afforestation and forest conservation.

Countries may successfully conserve forests, rehabilitate degraded lands, and advance sustainable development for current and future generations by implementing these policies in a comprehensive and integrated way.

CONCLUSION:

We can reduce carbon emissions, repair ecosystems, preserve biodiversity, and establish sustainable livelihoods by planting trees on a big scale. However, to guarantee long-term efficacy, successful afforestation necessitates meticulous planning, community involvement, and continuous monitoring. All things considered, funding afforestation initiatives is essential to creating a healthier, greener world for present and future generations.

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