

## India State of Forest Report 2021 - Forest Survey of India (FSI)

India State of Forest Report 2021 was published by the [Forest Survey of India \(FSI\)](#). This article briefly throws light on the status of forest cover in India, in different states, in different regions and a brief comparison of the increase or decrease in forest cover in different parts of India when compared to India State of Forest Report 2019.

The India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021 is the **17th** report in the series, and this **report was first published in the year 1987**.

The article will provide information about the highlights of an important report - India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2021 and the previous report (2019) in the context of the [IAS Exam](#).

It is useful for the environment section (GS III) of the [UPSC Syllabus](#).

The candidates can read more relevant information useful for upcoming exams from the links provided below:

### Highlights of India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2021

**The highlights of the 2021 report are as under:**

- The forest and tree cover has increased by 1,540 square kilometres over the last two years.
- Current forest cover of India - 7,13,789 square kilometres (21.71% of the total geographical area).
- The forest cover is up from 21.67% in 2019.
- Five NE states (Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland) have seen a loss in forest cover.
- Current mangrove cover of India - 4,992 sq km (Increase by 17 sq km).
- 35.46 % of the forest cover is prone to forest fires.
- Total carbon stock in India's forests - 7,204 million tonnes (Increase of 79.4 million tonnes since 2019).
- Bamboo forests - 53,336 million culms (up from 2019's 13,882 million culms).

**States showing the highest increase in forest cover:**

1. Telangana (3.07%)
2. Andhra Pradesh (2.22%)
3. Odisha (1.04%)

**What's New in ISFR 2021?**

- For the first time, forest cover was assessed in tiger reserves, tiger corridors and the Gir Forest (which is home to the Asiatic Lion).
- The forest cover in tiger corridors has increased by 37.15 sq km (0.32%) between 2011-2021, but decreased by 22.6 sq km (0.04%) in tiger reserves.
- Among tiger reserves, the Pakke Tiger Reserve of Arunachal Pradesh has the highest forest cover at almost 97%.

### What has the ISFR 2021 Flagged?

- While the overall forest cover has increased, the trend differs among different categories of forests.
  - While 'very dense' forest cover has increased, the 'moderately dense' forest cover or natural forests have decreased.
  - Very dense cover refers to protected and reserve forests with active conservation activities.
  - This decline in natural forests coupled with an increase in the open forest areas shows a degradation of forests.
  - According to experts, this means natural forests are degrading to less dense open forests.
  - Scrub area has shot up indicating the complete degradation of forests in these areas.
- Decline in forest cover in the northeastern states.
  - The Northeast states account for 7.98% of total geographical area but 23.75% of total forest cover.
  - The reasons for this are:
    - Natural calamities like landslides and heavy rain
    - Anthropogenic activities (shifting agriculture, pressure of developmental activities, felling of trees)
  - This decline is worrying since the NE states are repositories of great biodiversity.
  - A decline in the forest cover can lead to a further increase in natural disasters like landslides, and also impact water catchment in the area.
  - Conservation efforts are more challenging in the NE region because unlike other states where forests are managed by the authorities, here, the forests show a different ownership pattern (community- and tribal-owned).
- Impact of climate change
  - By 2030, the report estimates 45-64% of forests in India will be affected by climate change and increasing temperatures. According to the report estimates, forests in all states (excepting Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Nagaland) will be highly vulnerable climate hotspots.

## Highlights of India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2019

### Forest Cover in India - Percentage of Forest in India & Total Forest Area in India

- 21.67% of the geographical area of India is covered by forests which come upto 7,12,249 sq km.
- 2.89% of India's geographical area is covered by trees and it is estimated to be 95,027 sq km.
- A total of 24.56% of the geographical area of India is made up of tree cover and forest area.
- Compared to the previous estimation i.e. India State of Forest Report (ISFR), 2017 there is an increase of 5,188 sq km (0.65%) of forest and tree cover put together.
- 65.05% of the geographical area of the North East region has forest cover. The total area of forest cover is estimated to be 1,70,541 sq km.
- 37.54% of the geographical area of tribal districts has forest cover. The total area of forest cover in tribal districts is 4,22,351 sq km.
- 40.30% of the total geographical area of Hill Districts i.e 2,84,006 sq km is the forest cover in Hill districts of India.
- Total bamboo bearing area of the country is estimated as 1,60,037 sq km.

### *Forest Area in India - States with Largest Forest Area in India*

In terms of area, the list of top 5 states in terms of Largest Forest Area in India are given below:

- Largest forest in India in terms of area is located in Madhya Pradesh.
- Arunachal Pradesh
- Chhattisgarh
- Odisha
- Out of the largest forest in India in terms of area, Maharashtra occupies the 5th position.

Forest Cover as a percentage of total geographical area, the top 5 states are listed below:

- Mizoram - 85.41 percent of the total geographical area of Mizoram is covered in forests.
- At second position is Arunachal Pradesh, where 79.63 percent of the total geographical area is covered in forests.
- Meghalaya occupies third place in terms of percentage of geographical areas covered with forests, it is 76.33%.
- Manipur occupies fourth place at 75.46%.
- Nagaland occupies the 5th position at 75.31%.

### *Increase of Forest Cover in India - Top 5 States*

In terms of increase in forest cover in India, the top 5 states which recorded the highest increase in forest cover are listed below:

- Karnataka was in the first position, it recorded an increase of 1,025 sq km.
- Andhra Pradesh was in the second position, it recorded an increase of 990 sq km.
- Kerala was in the third position, it recorded an increase in forest cover which has been estimated to be 823 sq km.
- Jammu & Kashmir is in 4th position in terms of increase in forest cover. It has recorded an increase of 371 sq km.
- Jammu & Kashmir is in 5th position in terms of increase in forest cover. The increase recorded is 334 sq Km.

#### *Decrease and Increase of Forest Cover in Different Parts of India*

- Compared to the previous assessment, the Mangrove cover in the country has increased by 1.10% to 54 sq km.
- There is a decrease in forest cover in the North-East region except in Tripura and Assam. There is a decrease of 0.45% in forest cover which is to the extent of 765 sq Km.
- In 140 hill districts of India, the increase in forest cover has been estimated to be 544 sq km.
- As compared to the estimate of India State of Forest Report (ISFR 2017), there is an increase of 3,229 sq km in the bamboo bearing area.