

The complete removal of forest and tree cover due to reckless felling of trees is called deforestation. It is the result of human activities.

Causes of deforestation:

1. Conversion of forests to farmlands: Forests are cleared by cutting of trees and burning of stumps. The land is used for cultivation and the ash is used as fertilizer. After cultivation of crops the land is left fallow to allow the soil nutrients to regenerate. With increasing population lands do not get enough time to recover and form forests.
2. Urbanization: Rapid urbanization has led to indiscriminate clearing of forests for various purposes such as agriculture, housing, industrialization, etc.

Reforestation: It is the process of restoring forest cover to a place where forests once existed but were cleared off. With sufficient time it can occur naturally. The process can be sped up by human intervention involving planting plants and trees.

Case Study of People's Participation in Conservation of Forests:

Bishnoi/Amrita Devi Bishnoi: The Bishnoi community peacefully co-exist with nature. In 1731, a forest nearby their village was ordered to be cleared by the King of Jodhpur. Amrita Devi, her family and around 200 members of her village died protecting the trees. In her honor, the Government of India instituted an award called as "Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award". This is awarded to individuals or communities that show exemplary courage and dedication in protecting wildlife.

Chipko Movement: Local women of Garhwal region in 1974 protected the trees against felling by hugging them.

Joint Forest Movement: It is an initiative by Government of India in 1980s. It aims towards the involvement of local communities and people in sustainable development of forests.

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