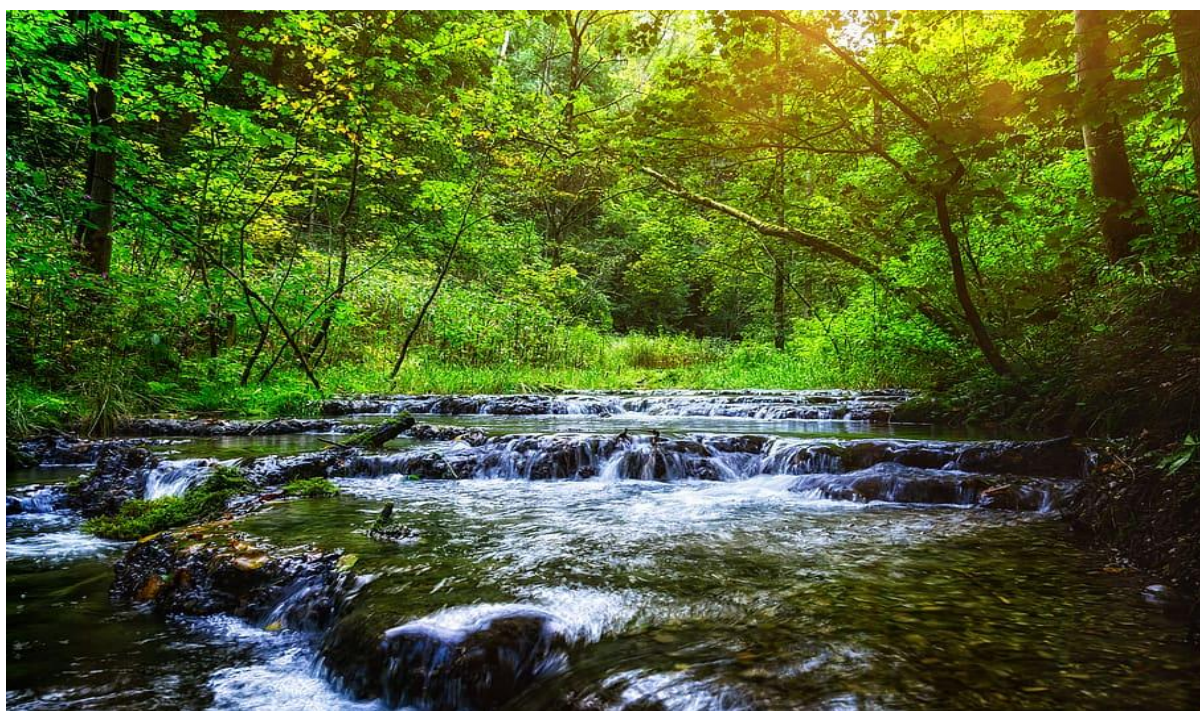


## Forest resources

Forests and wildlife are essential for ecological balance. Forests are important components of our environment and economy. Besides economy, forests check air pollution and soil erosion. They save the hill-slopes from landslides and in deserts, trees reduce wind erosion by checking wind velocity. Forests attract rainfall too. Forests are important renewable natural resources. Forest ecosystem is dominated by trees; their species content vary in different parts of the world. A forest is a natural, self-sustaining community characterized by vertical structure created by presence of trees. Trees are large, generally single-stemmed, woody plants. Forest can exist in many different regions under a wide range of conditions, but all true forests share these physical characteristics.



Forests have a tremendous importance to the humans. They constitute important components of our environment. Forests are important renewable natural resource. Forest ecosystem is dominated by trees, the species varying in different parts of the world. Forests are intimately linked with our culture and civilization. They contribute significantly to the economic development of our country.

Because a forest is a natural community, no forest is static in time. That is, because forest communities respond to outside influences, most forests are in a state of constant flux. Depending upon the systems within which forest communities exist,

such factors might include rainfall, fire, wind, glaciations, seismic activity, flooding, animal activity, insulation, and so on.

At any time, a forest is a collection of past responses to outside influences and internal competitive interactions. Therefore, the present status of any forest, indeed of any natural community, reflects what has gone on before.

A forest is a biotic community predominantly of trees, shrubs and other woody vegetation, usually with a closed canopy. This invaluable renewable natural resource is beneficial to man in many ways.



**The direct benefits from forests are:**

**(a) Fuel Wood:**

Wood is used as a source of energy for cooking purpose and for keeping warm.

**(b) Timber:**

Wood is used for making furniture, tool-handles, railway sleepers, matches, ploughs, bridges, boats etc.

**(c) Bamboos:**

These are used for matting, flooring, baskets, ropes, rafts, cots etc.

**(d) Food:**

Fruits, leaves, roots and tubers of plants and meat of forest animals form the food of forest tribes.

**(e) Shelter:**

Mosses, ferns, insects, birds, reptiles, mammals and micro-organisms are provided shelter by forests.

**(f) Paper:**

Wood and Bamboo pulp are used for manufacturing paper (Newsprint, stationery, packing paper, sanitary paper)

**(g) Rayon:**

Bamboo and wood are used in the manufacture of rayon (yarns, artificial silk-fibres)

**(h) Forest Products:**

Tannins, gums, drugs, spices, insecticides, waxes, honey, horns, musk, ivory, hides etc. are all provided by the flora and fauna of forests.

**The indirect benefits from forests are:****(a) Conservation of Soil:**

Forests prevent soil erosion by binding the soil with the network of roots of the different plants and reduce the velocity of wind and rain — which are the chief agents causing erosion.

**(b) Soil-improvement:**

The fertility of the soil increases due to the humus which is formed by the decay of forest litter.

**(c) Reduction of Atmospheric Pollution:**

By using up carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen during the process of photosynthesis, forests reduce pollution and purify the environment.

**(d) Control of Climate:**

Transpiration of plants increases the atmospheric humidity which affects rainfall and cools the atmosphere.

**(e) Control of Water flow:**

In the forests, the thick layer of humus acts like a big sponge and soaks rain water preventing run-off, thereby preventing flash-floods. Humus prevents quick evaporation of water, thereby ensuring a perennial supply of water to streams, springs and wells.

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