Importance of Afforestation in India

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Afforestation refers to the process of converting a non-forest land into a forest. Afforestation is highly important to maintain the biodiversity.

India is an emerging or developing country whereas the controlling of Carbon emission is very much challenging for the policy makers. The main reason is that India needs much more versatile industries to create jobs for unemployment youths which can directly increase the per capita income and the overall GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

Large industries and power plants need a large area to set up its facilities. In India, deforestation has happened in the past for creating Infrastructure (National Highways, Airports, etc.), Industries (Steel, Power, Fast Moving Consumer Goods – FMCG, Engineering, etc.), Mining (Coal, Minerals, Metals, etc.), Oil and Gas exploration, Thermal Power plants, etc.

Hence, Afforestation is necessary to combat the issues of global warming, soil erosion, pollution, and the maintenance of biodiversity and ecological balances. There are two ways, i.e. afforestation and reforestation, the development of new forest on a non-forest land is called afforestation, but reforestation means the reestablishment of the forest cover by either naturally or artificially (manual planting of trees).

Trees uses **water and carbon-dioxide (CO2)** to convert it into **organic matter (wood) and oxygen**. Thus, trees acts as the natural air-purifiers and helps relieve the environment. Considering the need of afforestation in India, many government, private and NGOs are engaged to create new forests through afforestation method to purify the environment, maximize the carbon capture, and control the soil erosion.

The total forest area was 40.48 million hectare in 1950 and then it was increased to 67.47 million hectare forest area in 1980. And finally 69 million hectare area was under forest had been

reported in 2006. So massive 70.5% increase of area under cover forests had been seen between the periods of 1950 to 2006 due to afforestation.

In India, 23% of overall land is under forest areas which are grouped into 5 major categories i.e.

1. Subtropical Dry Deciduous (38.2%)
2. Tropical Moist Deciduous (30.3%)
3. Subtropical Thorn (6.7%)
4. Tropical Wet Evergreen forests (5.8%)
5. Other categories (Pine, Temperate and Alpine, Tropical semi evergreen) – 17.5%

A large number of trees are planted during the afforestation process. On one hand, it helps the environment by reducing the CO_2 level. On the other hand, the fruit bearing trees becomes the source of food for a large country like India.