

Reforestation as Global Urgency

A. Introduction

- a. Forests are home to 8.7 million species
- b. Forests acted as catalysts for the rapid emergence of species in the Devonian Period
- c. Thesis Statement

B. How is Reforestation a Global Urgency?

1. Forests fight against global warming;
 - a. Forests act as carbon sinks, they absorb nearly 30% of global CO_2
 - b. Over 60,000 Europeans died from heat waves in 2024; Nature Medicine publishes
2. Forests preserve biodiversity;
 - a. home to 80% of world's land animals and plants
 - b. provide food, habitat and breeding grounds
3. When forests grow, people benefit too
 - a. More than 86 million green-jobs; UNEP
 - b. Over 90% of the people living in extreme poverty depends on forests; UNEP

4. Forests are barriers to natural disasters;
 - a. Case study of Pakistan: floods and land-sliding has been intensified due to deforestation
5. Plantation is urgent to control zoonotic diseases;
 - a. What are zoonotic diseases
 - b. Case study: outbreak ^{reaks} of Ebola Virus in Brazil
 - c. Nipah Virus outbreak Malaysia
6. Deforestation has been disrupting the water cycle
 - a. Reduction in rainfall and groundwater discharge
 - b. The South American rainforest influences regional as well as global water cycle
7. Absence of forests has been resulting into public health emergency
 - a. Case study of Lahore and Delhi
 - b. Early childhood deaths

C. Ways to Tackle the Issue Efficiently

1. Awareness to the people and community involvement
 - a. Local campaigns
 - b. NGOs
2. National level movements
 - a. Billion tree tsunami
3. Sustainable development approach
 - a. International best practices
 - b. Case study of South Korea
4. International cooperation
 - a. Case study: Loess plateau, China - World Bank Project
 - b. Making the environmental obligations binding

D. Conclusion

Earth is a home to 8.7 million species of animals. Trees are, directly or indirectly, a lifeline to almost all the species; providing food, habitat and breeding-grounds. Most importantly, trees are the major source of oxygen, which is a key component, supporting life on Earth. First appearing in the Devonian period (385 million years ago), trees became the paramount factor, paving way for the emergence of millions of species, including humans, on Earth. Along with this, various environmental processes such as water cycle, air purification, mitigation of climate change and prevention of soil erosion are supported by forests. However, the current status of forests, due to their ruthless cutting, is alarming. According to the United Nations Environment programme, since 1990, some 420 million hectares of forests have been lost through conversion to other land uses. Although the rate has decreased over the past three

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decades, some 10 million hectares are still being lost each year. These are not just some ordinary numbers, but the reflection of an existential threat to 8.7 million species on Earth. Thus, deforestation is a multifaceted issue, and reforestation—reestablishing forest on land previously forested—becomes a global urgency.

An important factor highlighting the urgency of reforestation is global warming. Global warming—the rise in average temperature of Earth—is a surging threat for the existence of all living organisms. The major culprit compounding the warming of Earth is carbon dioxide gas. Forests act as carbon sinks and absorb carbon dioxide to convert it into oxygen through a process called photosynthesis. They absorb almost 30% of global CO_2 and cool down the atmosphere naturally. Cutting of forests at massive level is expediting the process of global warming which is triggering other disastrous events.

such as rapid glacial melt, avalanches, floods, outburst of zoonotic diseases and heat waves. In fact, according to Nature Medicine's publication, over 60,000 Europeans died due to heat waves in 2024. Similarly, other parts of the world are also portraying the similar pictures: floods in Asia, frequent forest fires in America and severe summers in Africa. Reforestation is thus the only solution to these havocs which are putting the lives of millions in danger.

Equally significant is the fact that forests preserve biodiversity. They provide food, habitat and breeding grounds to animals. They are home to 80% of plants and terrestrial animals. According to the Britannica, tens of thousands of species go extinct every year (deforestation is not the only factor but the major one). This loss of faunal and floral diversity is not something

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happening far away in a deep forest but in front of the people. For instance, some years back, Indian myna was a common sight in Islamabad which could be seen sitting neat to every window, but today you hardly get to see one. In addition to that, thousands of moths could be seen around a single light source, however now you hardly get to see a hundred of them. Where have they gone and why? They have been sacrificed for unsustainable development, rapid urbanization, air pollution, climate change and loss of habitat (forest).

Similarly, one must have noticed the kind of vegetation they used to see in their childhood is no longer around them. The implications of these losses are not just bound to those species, but to the entire ecosystem. Forests are the reason for the survival of these species and reforestation can

bring these lost-childhood friends back. Beyond global warming and biodiversity, forests have economical benefits too. They ~~boos~~ support livelihood of locals and boost national economy. According to the United Nations Environment programme (UNEP), forests create 86 million green-jobs worldwide; of those living in extreme poverty, 90% depend upon forests. Local depend upon forests for firewood, wild fruits, animals hunting, honey, and resins etc. Furthermore, forests provide raw material to local ~~artist~~ artisans to create artifacts and musical instruments. Internationally, forests create a big market of timber for furniture and herbs for medicines. For example, forests are the backbone of allopathy, homeopathy and the Ayurvedic tradition. These modes of healing not only improve people's health but also boost national and international economy. Additionally,

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Forests boost tourism industry: A country covered with greenery attracts tourists ^{from} all across the world which provide livelihood to local public, create jobs, boost service sector and subsequently enhance foreign exchange reserves. These multidimensional merits of forests make reforestation imperative.