

Deforestation

All of us know that there was a time when we would worship [plants](#) now we cut them brutally. These same [forests](#) are vanishing day by day just for our selfish needs resulting in deforestation. Have you ever given a thought to what will happen if deforestation continues? Let us study more about this.

What Does Deforestation Mean?

Deforestation means cutting down the trees to a large extent be it forests, any barren land or trees we see on our way to school every day. Natural forests are being destructed to use the land for cultivation, building houses, factories, logging, making space for cattle grazing, extraction of oil, mining, construction of dams or to obtain wood for making furniture and using it as [fuel](#).

Forest wood has been an essential need for us since the time of civilization and still continues to be the main source for many uses in our day to day life. Trees help to maintain the water cycle and give shelter to the [organisms](#). It takes place in an area that is densely populated by trees and is mostly observed in a forest like the [Amazon rainforest](#). Forests cover almost 30% of the earth's land.

The extinction of the forest cover affects the biodiversity which in turn threaten people's lives. Shrinking of the forests cause wide-reaching problems like [soil erosion](#), fewer crops, flooding, [water cycle](#) disruption, [greenhouse gas emissions](#), changes in the climatic conditions, and loss of [biodiversity](#).

Causes of Deforestation

The causes of deforestation are:

Logging

Illegal logging activities are very common that destroy the livelihoods of the people depending on forests. Wood-based industries like paper, match-sticks, furniture need a substantial amount of wood supply. Wood is used as fuel most commonly and so large amount of trees are cut down for fuel supplies. Firewood and charcoal are used as fuel.

Agricultural Activities

The conversion of forests into [agricultural land](#) is a big reason for deforestation. Due to overgrowing demand for food products, many trees are chopped down for crops and for cattle grazing. Over 40% of the forests are cleared to obtain land and meet the needs of agriculture and wood.

Mining

[Oil](#) and mining of [coal](#) require a large amount of forest land. Construction of roads leads to deforestation as they provide the way to remote land. The waste that comes out from mining pollutes the environment and affects the nearby species.

Urbanization

As the [population](#) grows, the needs of people increases which further leads to deforestation. Forests shrink to a great extent to meet the requirements like for construction of [roads](#), development of houses, mineral exploitation and expansion of industries. Increasing population directly affects forest as with the expansion of cities there is a need for more land for housing and settlements.

Timber Production

One of the primary cause of deforestation is the production of timber. There is a lot of demand for timber and so deforestation increases. It a source of raw material which is used for the production of paper and also for construction.

Forest Fires

We lose a large number of trees each year due to fires in the forest in various portions worldwide. This happens due to extreme summers and winters. The fire caused, by man or nature, results in huge loss of forest cover.

Effects of Deforestation

Some of the effects of deforestation are:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Gases such as [methane](#) and carbon dioxide trap heat in Earth's atmosphere, leading change in climate. Trees absorb the carbon dioxide and release oxygen and water into the atmosphere and this contributes to [global warming](#). Cutting carbon dioxide adds to the environment and then this lack of the tree creates an absorption deficit. Deforestation leads to the emission of greenhouse gas.

Soil Erosion

Cutting down on trees leads to clearance of forests and so soil erosion occurs. Exposure of the soil to the sun's heat dries up the moisture inside the soil. Nutrients evaporate and it affects the bacteria that help to break down organic matter. Due to this, rain washes the soil surfaces and erosion takes place. Large amounts of soil wash into local streams and rivers and cause damage to [hydroelectric structures](#) and irrigation infrastructure.

Biodiversity Losses

Deforestation alters land and so that many of the plants and animals do not survive. With more deforestation, the entire species can extinct. This is the ‘biodiversity loss’. Many wonderful [species](#) of plants and animals have been lost, and many others remain endangered. As each species of an ecosystem rely upon other species, loss of one species can have far-reaching consequences for other species. We lose about 50 to 100 species of animals each day due to the destruction of their habitats. Millions of plants and animal species are on the verge of extinction due to deforestation.

Floods

Deforestation leads to land erosion because the trees maintain the surface of the [mountains](#). The water level of the rivers increases suddenly, causing floods. When it rains, trees absorb and store a large amount of water with the help of their roots. Chopping down of trees disrupts the flow of water and leads to floods in some areas.

Solutions to Deforestation

Trees play a vital role in protecting our environment in several ways so we should protect the forest:

- The best way to stop deforestation is replanting.
- Ban on cutting of trees and new trees and planting more.
- There should be an implementation of regulations of laws at organizational and governmental levels due to the extent of deforestation.
- Spread the awareness about sensitization and organize educative campaigns about the effects of deforestation.