



State of the World's Trees Report: BGCI

Why in News

Recently, **Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)** launched the **State of the World's Trees Report**.

- The report warns that almost a **third of the world's tree species are at risk of extinction**, while **hundreds are on the brink of being wiped out**.
- **BGCI** is a **membership organisation**, representing botanic gardens in more than 100 countries around the world. It is an independent **UK charity established in 1987** to link the botanic gardens of the world in a global network for plant conservation.

Key Points

- **Species Under Threat:**
 - 17,500 tree species which is some **30% of the total** - are at **risk of extinction**, while **440 species have fewer than 50 individuals left in the wild**.
 - **11% of the flora or plant life of every country** was made up of threatened species.
 - Overall the **number of threatened tree species** is double the number of threatened mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles combined.
- **Most At-Risk Trees:**
 - Among the most at-risk trees are species including **magnolias** and **dipterocarps** - which are commonly found in Southeast Asian rainforests. **Oak trees, maple trees and ebonies** also face threats.
- **Countries with Highest Risk:**
 - Thousands of varieties of trees in the **world's top six countries** for tree-species diversity are at risk of extinction.
 - The greatest single number is in **Brazil**, where 1,788 species are at risk. The other five countries are **Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Colombia and Venezuela**.
 - There were also **27 countries that had no threatened species** of trees.
- **Island Trees:**
 - Though megadiverse countries see the greatest numbers of varieties at risk of extinction, **island tree species are more proportionally at risk**.
 - This is particularly **concerning because many islands have species of trees that can be found nowhere else**.
- **Major Threats:**
 - The **top three threats** facing tree species are **crop production, timber logging and livestock farming**, while **climate change** and **extreme weather** are emerging threats.
 - At least 180 **tree species are directly threatened by rising seas** and severe weather,

especially island species such as **magnolias** in the Caribbean.

▪ **Need of Saving Trees:**

◦ **Support System:**

- Trees **help support the natural ecosystem** and are considered **vital for combating global warming and climate change.**
- The extinction of a single tree species could cause a **domino effect**, catalysing the loss of many other species.

◦ **Act as Buffer:**

- They **store 50% of the world's terrestrial carbon** and provide a **buffer from extreme weather**, such **hurricanes** and **tsunamis**.

◦ **Habitat & Food:**

- Many threatened tree species provide the **habitat and food for millions** of other species of birds, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, insects and microorganisms.

▪ **Suggestion for Policymakers:**

◦ **Extend Protection:**

- Extend protected area coverage for threatened tree species that are currently not-well represented in protected areas.

◦ **Conservation:**

- Ensure that all globally threatened tree species, where possible, are conserved in botanic garden and seed bank collections.

◦ **Increase Funding:**

- Increase availability of Government and corporate funding for threatened tree species.

◦ **Expand Schemes:**

- Expand tree planting schemes, and ensure the targeted planting of threatened and native species.

◦ **Increase Collaboration:**

- Increase global collaboration to tackle tree extinction, by participating in international efforts.

▪ **Related Indian Initiatives:**

- [Nagar Van \(Urban Forest\) Scheme](#)
- [Sankalp Parva](#)
- [Compensatory Afforestation Fund \(CAF\) Act](#)
- [National Mission for a Green India](#)
- [National Afforestation Programme](#)

Source: IE