



Reserved Forest

For Prelims: Reserved Forest, Protected Forests, Village forest, Tropical Evergreen, Semi Evergreen Forests, Tropical Deciduous Forests, Montane Forests, Tropical Thorn forests, Swamp Forests

For Mains: Types of Forests in India and need to conserve Forests, Steps taken to preserve forests in India.

Why in News?

Recently, the Delhi government has **notified forest land in two villages in South Delhi** as **'reserved forest'**, which will give them legal status.

- It was notified under **Section 20** (declaration of reserved forest) of [Indian Forest Act, 1927](#).

What are the Different Types of Forests?

- **Reserved Forests:** Reserve forests are the **most restricted forests** and are **constituted by the State Government** on any forest land or wasteland which is the property of the Government.
 - In reserved forests, **local people are prohibited**, unless specifically allowed by a Forest Officer in the course of the settlement.
- **Protected Forests:** The **State Government is empowered to constitute any land other than reserved forests as protected forests** over which the Government has proprietary rights and the power to issue rules regarding the use of such forests.
 - This **power has been used to establish State control** over trees, whose timber, fruit or other non-wood products have revenue-raising potential.
- **Village forest:** Village forests are the **one in which the State Government may assign to 'any village community the rights of Government** to or over any land which has been constituted a **reserved forest'**.

How are Forests Categorised Based on Rainfall in India?

- **Tropical Evergreen and Semi Evergreen Forests:**
 - These forests are found in the **western slope of the Western Ghats**, hills of the northeastern region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
 - They are **found in warm and humid areas** with an **annual precipitation of over 200 cm** and mean **annual temperature above 22°C**.
 - Tropical evergreen forests are **well stratified, with layers closer to the ground and are covered with shrubs and creepers**, with short structured trees followed by a tall variety of trees.
 - In these forests, **trees reach great heights** up to 60 m or above. There is **no definite time for trees to shed their leaves**, flowering and fruition. As such these forests **appear green all the year round**.
 - The **semi evergreen forests are found in the less rainy parts** of these regions. Such forests have a mixture of evergreen and moist deciduous trees. The undergrowing climbers

provide an evergreen character to these forests.

▪ **Tropical Deciduous Forests:**

- These are the **most widespread forests in India**. They are also called the **monsoon forests**. They spread over regions which **receive rainfall between 70-200 cm**. On the basis of the availability of water, these forests are further divided into **moist and dry deciduous**.

▪ **Montane Forests:**

- In mountainous areas, the decrease in temperature with increasing altitude leads to a corresponding change in natural vegetation.
- Mountain forests can be classified into two types, **the northern mountain forests and the southern mountain forests**.

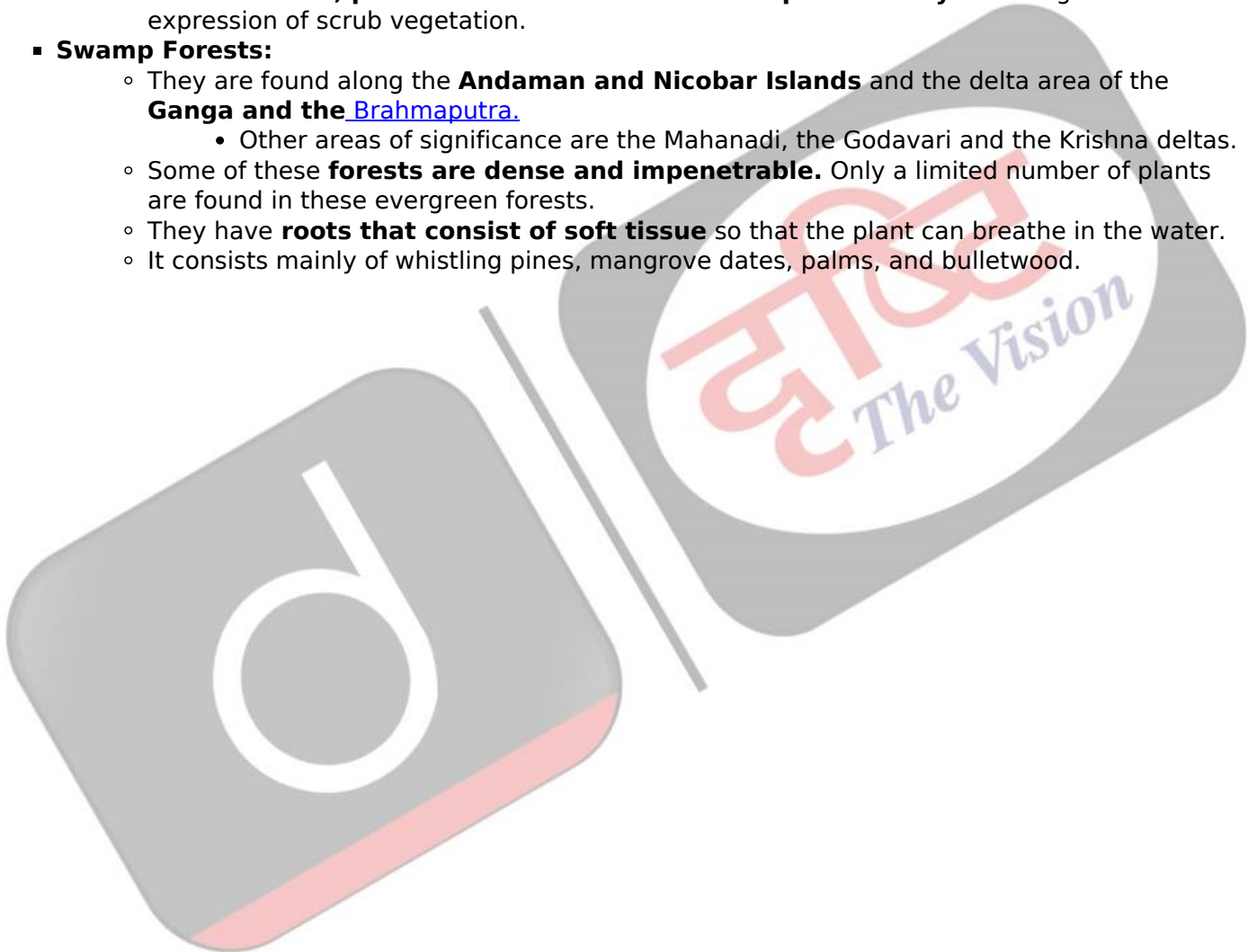
▪ **Tropical Thorn forests:**

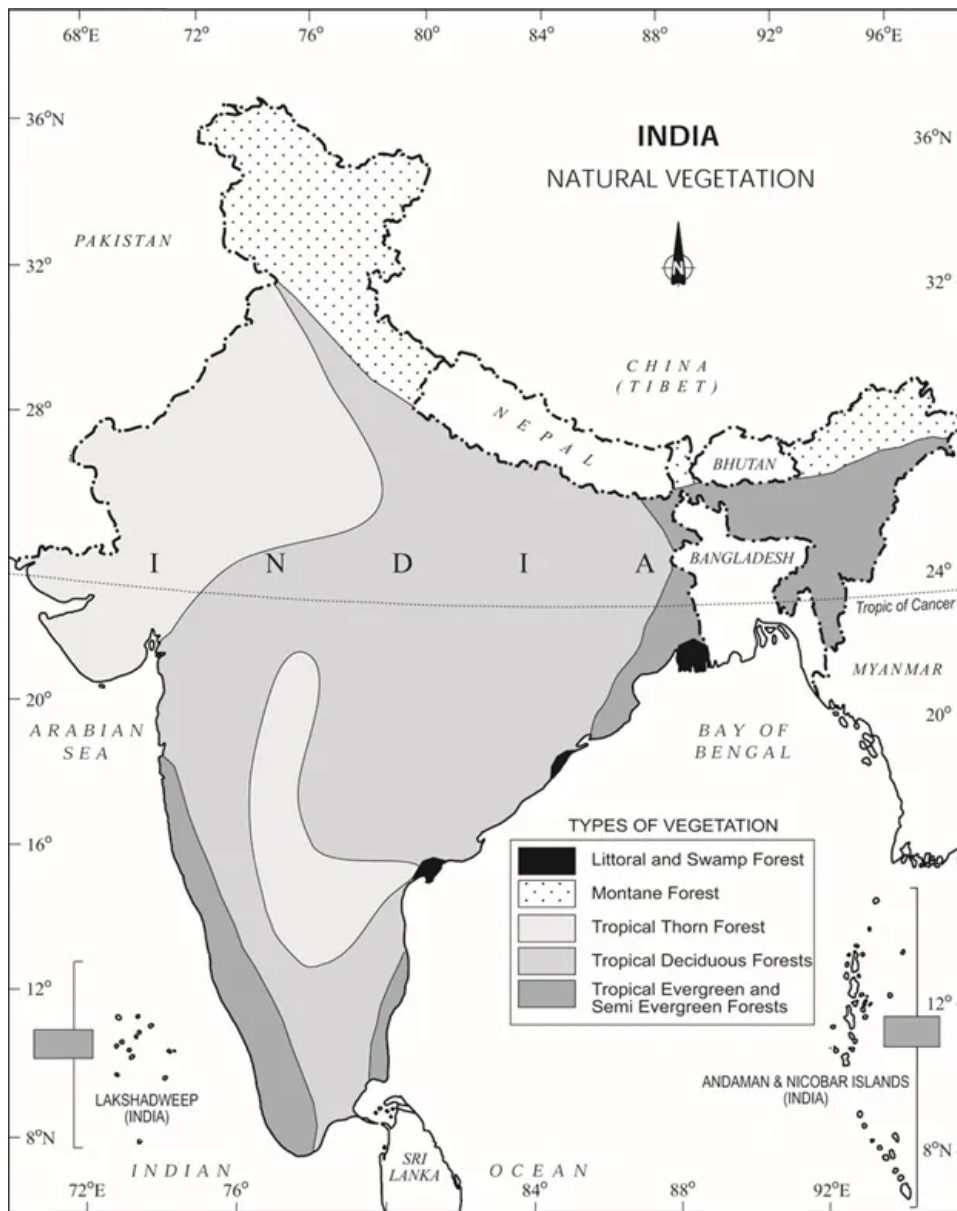
- Tropical thorn forests occur in the **areas which receive rainfall less than 50 cm**. These consist of a variety of grasses and shrubs. It includes **semi-arid areas** of south west Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- In these forests, **plants remain leafless for most part of the year** and give an expression of scrub vegetation.

▪ **Swamp Forests:**

- They are found along the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** and the delta area of the **Ganga and the Brahmaputra**.
 - Other areas of significance are the Mahanadi, the Godavari and the Krishna deltas.
- Some of these **forests are dense and impenetrable**. Only a limited number of plants are found in these evergreen forests.
- They have **roots that consist of soft tissue** so that the plant can breathe in the water.
- It consists mainly of whistling pines, mangrove dates, palms, and bulletwood.

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What is the Status of Forest Cover in India?

- According to the [India State of Forest Report-2021](#), the forest and tree cover in the country continues to increase with an additional cover of 1,540 square kilometres over the past two years.
- **Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country** followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
- **In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area**, the top five States are Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland.
- The states that **have shown the highest increase in forest cover** are Telangana (3.07%), Andhra Pradesh (2.22%) and Odisha (1.04%).
- Five states in the Northeast - Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have all **shown loss in forest cover**.

Source: IE

