

Rainforests just to
lose an entire
ecosystem



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Rainforests around the world are being cleared, since people are misled to understand that these rainforests that are often hot and humid, insect ridden and difficult to penetrate are of no use to humanity. However, the truth is that when we clear rainforests we stand not just to lose an entire ecosystem but we risk our own quality of life as well; we are gambling with the stability of the climate and we are undermining the precious services afforded by their biological diversity.

The trees cleanse the air, they serve as effective sound barriers, they produce oxygen, they absorb carbon dioxide, they prevent soil erosion, and they serve as wind breaks. Loss of trees also reduces the availability of renewable resources like timber, medicinal plants, nuts, fruits and game. It also means loss of livelihood to the world's poor who rely on natural resources for their day- to-day survival. The continuous loss of natural ecosystems could make us vulnerable to ecological surprises in the future.

In such a scenario, we must find ways of preserving the trees we have. In order to prevent claiming of forest land for cultivation purposes in the rural sector, the government should concentrate on finding ways to increase the output of the already present farming land. The farmers should be provided with better fertilizers to increase yield. Wooden furniture should be banned and it should be replaced with other synthetic alternatives or steel which is just as sturdy. Rural areas should be provided an alternative to firewood which is used for cooking. Introduction of solar cookers could alleviate the problem.

Cancelling the subsidies given to industries involved with the trade of timber might be an effective way to stop timber manufacture. In urban areas the need for green cover is more than anywhere else. With cities transforming overnight into concrete jungles to accommodate the growing urban population, it is important that whatever mangroves remain in these areas be preserved. The government must make it mandatory for builders to keep a certain amount of green space not just for landscaping but for the planting of trees. A mature tree produces as much oxygen as is required by ten people for one year.

To preserve the trees we have, it is important that we lessen the mindless use of products made from trees: paper and wood. Catalogues should be banned and so should items like facial tissues and kitchen swaps that are not necessities. Paper should be recycled. In rural and urban India another use of wood needs to be addressed. Trees are felled to provide firewood for burning pyres. Yes, burning pyres accounts for a lot of wood. Since eighty percent of Indians are Hindus approximately eighty percent of deaths occur in Hindu families, which accounts for around eight deaths per minute.

That accounts for eight trees being chopped down every minute to bid farewell to the parting soul. Despite these staggering statistics electric cremation which is both environment-friendly and cost effective has yet to find large acceptance. In these times when all over the world natural resources are hard to come by, and survival has become necessary; it seems paradoxical that the dead are being allowed to deplete the resources of the living. The need of the hour is to educate not just ourselves but also our young.

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The children are the future and if respect for trees is inculcated in them at a young age, they will make sure that the earth might have a future still.