



## Environmental degradation of Jammu and Kashmir : causes and consequences

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### **Abstract**

Every year on 5 June the World Environment Day is celebrated. On this day the world reviews its past performance and new environmental conservation programmers and policies draw on the proposals and recommendations from different environmentalists and consequently efforts are made to implement those fresh programs and policies in order to protect the environment. But we do realize the significance of this day and we truly want to wake up to the messages that nature is giving us overtly with respect to today's problems. The answer is definitely no, since we don't even contribute to preserve our own environment and don't participate in little actions that save the environment, which at least is our responsibility.

**Key words:** Environment, Degradation, Jammu and Kashmir, pollution etc.

### **Introduction**

The Jammu and Kashmir territory also faces environmental challenges in recent years at alarming rates including deforestation, human-generated disasters due to increasing agricultural and residential building and transformation of woodland, pollution of fresh water, waste dumping near watercourses or forest sites resulting in degraded forests, drying oils and forests. In addition to the population and government, the resourceful territory is one of the primary and fundamental needs for every State. Since the territory of Jammu and Kashmir which has a mountain ecosystem is blessed with lush green coniferous forests that are good quality timber reservoirs, where annually a large amount of timber comes from dry standing or dropping after the ban on green falls is imposed by SC and the timber is then extracted and transported by forest The tourism industry is another area for the production of income because the mild temperature with beautiful scenery and healthy destinations draws large-scale visitors from Jammu and Kashmir.

### **Forests and Wildlife**

The entire area of Indian forest administered by the State of Jammu and Kashmir is 7,810 sq. km., with a region of 3,138 sq. km, Kashmir, Jammu 4,659 and Ladach, 13,8 sq. km. In addition to the 46,660 sq miles that are administered in Pakistan by Jammu & Kashmir. As many independent businesses developed out of the state economy, forests played a significant role, including the eco-tourism, turpentine, resin industries, Kashmir's Willow sector, joinery, ply industry and other wood industries and pharmaceutical sectors. Not so long ago, Jammu & Kashmir was one of the most densely wooded regions in the globe but the state apparatus' continuing armed war, terrorism and counter-terrorism tactics had catastrophic repercussions not just on forests but also on its biodiversity.

Wood smuggling, while not a new problem, was the commencement of terrorist activity in 1989 due to the incapacity of law enforcement authorities to deal effectively with smugglers in



and near woods. The police and forest guards are unable to defend the woods due to continuing unease, and the smugglers continue to pillage unchecked. According to reliable sources, 72 Forest officials, including a forest conservator and several subordinate officers, were killed by gunshots during the insurgency to prevent wood trafficking.

A Forest Protection Group was established in 1996 but remains unarmed. Arms clearance by security authorities has yet to be provided, making it impossible for unarmed members of this organization to defend the woods from armed traffickers. Despite the presence of forest protection staff, there have been numerous instances of vandalization.

The wildlife, which was a disincentive to wood trafficking, declines quickly across the Valley as traffickers intentionally set fire to destruction.

The Kashmir valley has lost over 59 sq miles from a forest area of about 7,810 sq miles since terrorist activities started in 1989, disrupting the land of ancient forest leaves and exposing it to heavy rainfall, resulting in waters rushing down the hills to erode the lush soil that finally flows into rivers and lakes. Throughout addition, water deforestation and mismanagement have caused soil erosion, often causing flash flooding in the State. Around 8 percent of the region's land mass is prone to flooding. Thirteen floods during a period of 33 years, between 1973 and 2006, had a frequency of just 2.5 years and an average yearly damage of about \$15.6 billion.

The forest area has been reduced to only 4,247 m<sup>2</sup>, which we may call a 'good forest' for 7,810 kilometers, and the remainder of the forest area deteriorated by severe biotic pressure, intensive timber exploitation, fuelwood extraction, grassland, and other local uses. Data available indicate that the majority of the faunal diversity of about 66 percent is located along the 460 miles long and 15.5 miles broad LoC and a significant proportion was lost to landmines. In pursuit of terrorists, security forces and other methods such as electric fenced, solid steel walls, night-time lighting, multi-layered vehicle barriers, a vast network of new blades, the 24-hour flow of patrol vehicles (including all-round ATVs), constant low-level aircraft on fighters and football cars, are widespread. Though these precautions are intended to prevent terrorist operations, they also create obstacles to the movement of animals in the towns and woods around the Himalayan Valley.

Furthermore, the uncommon animals like Snow Leopard Ibex, Blue Sheep, Urian, Kashmiri Otter, the large horned sheep and Antelope, are often hunted and wildcatted for their valuable skin and teeth, sold at high rates on foreign markets.

- There were a number of decisions to convert forest areas for non-forest uses after the abrogation of Article 370, the reorganization of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two regions of the Union.
- Approval has been granted for the diversion of 727-hectare forest area, with 8 projects authorized over a period of one month. In contrast, 97 projects involving forest land diversion were cleared during 12 months in 2018.
- The new regional administration has selected about 15,000 acres in the area of Kashmir, mostly surrounding eco-sensitive zones like as wetlands and rivers for infrastructure development. Over 42,000 acres of land have been discovered in Jammu area.



- Repeatedly the Government has stated that it is building land banks to invite foreign investors to establish enterprises and industries in Cashmir.
- After 6 August 2019 when the India Government scrapped the former Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir from semi-autonomous status and divided it into two Union territories, news of and statements about the impending regional changes in land use have led to dismay among ordinary people and environmental activists. They claim that this would produce "in the name of development, environmental damage."
- As part of the abolition of the semi-autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Administration adopted the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act in the parliament which was introduced by the appointment of a new government in Jammu and Cashmir on 31 October 2019.
- The examination of official figures shows that in a major land harvesting operation the new regional administration has so far selected 120,000 kanals (15,000 acres) of 203,020 acres of state-owned land for industrial development in the Cashmire area. Most is environmentally sensitive because, according to officials, it is either part or proximity to rivers, streams and other water bodies.
- The development of 42,000 acres of state soil in Jammu has been recognized, but environmental degradation concerns have yet to be voiced clearly by the inhabitants of that area.

### Conclusion

Therefore, it is important for the government of Jammu and Cashmir to take the time to save the environment from further degradation so that sparse and bare parts of the forests can be healed and replenished with full health. while accepting policy, the livelihood of those with forest jobs is safeguarded by protecting them Secondly, a huge plantering activity is carried out every year, in particular in barren parts of woods, on a project-based basis with a fence for which tiny nurseries are extended with indigenous plant species with large results, by sister wings of the Forest Department in many locations Thirdly, road building is limited in forest regions, and only such connection that is required in view of the population of the area and which is the least damaging for forest crops is permitted.

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