

UNIT-5

Recreational Forestry

Recreational Forestry or Aesthetic forestry refers to the practice of growing trees primarily for purpose of recreation. Forest recreation is ultimately concerned with **improving the quality of the existing resource** and the goods and benefits gained from management, just like any other component of natural resource management, whether it be timber management, wildlife management, or water management.

What is Recreational Forestry?

- In 1973, the Indian government's **National Commission on Agriculture** coined the phrase "**social forestry.**"
- It was becoming clear that woods were under threat as a result of the rising population, and that land was being degraded as a **result of human activity.**
- Social forestry was intended as a program including people's engagement in order to attain certain vital goals.
- One sort of **social forestry** is **recreational forestry.**
- Recreational forestry is the **technique of growing flowering and avenue trees and shrubs primarily for the purpose of recreation** for the urban and rural inhabitants.
- The practice of forestry with the aim of creating or preserving a forest with a high scenic value is referred to as **aesthetic forestry**, which is another name for this type of forestry.

What is Forest Recreation?

- The forest is a priceless resource for those looking to revitalize or amplify their physical, mental, and spiritual states.
- Outdoor activities that are somehow connected to our renewable resources make up forest recreation.
- Although this setting is typically where these activities take place in or near the forest, it is not the only one.
- Driving, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, nature study, picnicking, sightseeing, skiing, snowmobiling, and swimming are some of the most well-liked pursuits.
- Visitors can spend time outside among some of our natural riches through forest recreation programs.
- For the majority of individuals, traveling to and from forest recreation involves a significant price.

Demand for Recreational Forestry

- Natural resources owned or managed by government or the private sector are the basis for resource-based recreation.
- Forests have historically been used for food, shelter, and clothing. Our forefathers primarily managed our forests for timber, watershed areas, wildlife, and forage.
- People hiked, hunted, camped, and fished in forest areas for survival rather than recreation. There was little time to enjoy forest land for recreation.
- However, in the last two decades, there has been a surge in demand for more outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Following are some of the factors responsible for this sudden increase in demand:

- **Urban Living** - Since the early 1960s, people have expressed a desire to be more active outside. However, the steady trend toward urban living reduces the availability of daily outdoor recreation. As a result, the demand for existing recreational areas is increasing, and some areas are already overcrowded.
- **Leisure Time** - Automation and industrialization have generally increased the amount of leisure or spare time available to each individual. More cars and better public transportation increase mobility, which drives up demand.
- **Income** - As per capita income rises, people have more money to spend on outdoor recreational activities.
- **Communication** - The media fosters interest in and raises awareness of available outdoor resource-based recreational activities.
- **Supply of Resources** - On the one hand, overcrowding in recreational areas can deflate people's interest. People, on the other hand, have demonstrated a willingness to travel further to less congested areas in order to have a more rewarding experience.
- **New Recreational Products** - Products such as trail bikes, snowmobiles, and lightweight camping equipment may create new outdoor recreation demand.

Recreational Forestry Management - Benefits

- The health benefits of an active lifestyle, as well as increasing urbanisation, have created a demand for outdoor recreation.
- Forests provide an environment in which to escape the stresses of modern life, connect with nature and the countryside, and enjoy tranquil and scenic areas.
- Forests also provide wild areas in which to engage in activities such as mountain biking, orienteering, and other active and challenging sports.
- Recreational forest development is viewed as an important aspect of sustainable forestry, and there is growing recognition of the numerous benefits that forests provide to society.
- Recreation is now possibly the most important non-timber service provided by forests.

Recreational Forestry Management - Challenges

- Poor management has the potential to undermine the advantages of effective planning.
- **Highly Subjective:** We must presume that since no two individuals are completely alike, the attitudes and conduct of the users will also be very diverse.
- Several issues develop when a recreational place is heavily used, such as, site deterioration, including erosion, soil compaction, and vegetation loss.
- **Safety and Health Hazards:** Health and safety risks such as clogged toilets, broken tree limbs, tin cans, broken bottles, and insufficient waste facilities.
- **Fire Hazards:** Fire risks such as irresponsible smokers, unauthorized campfires, and unsupervised campfires.
- **Vandalism:** It includes **willful destruction of things** like buildings and vegetation.

Mitigation Measures

- Many of these issues can be avoided, or at the very least mitigated, with careful planning during the site's initial development and ongoing maintenance.
- The management team can motivate people to contribute to the upkeep of a beneficial, healthy leisure place.

- The people will be able to appreciate the beauty of nature and its susceptibility to exploitation with the aid of effective educational initiatives.

The recreational demands of different people vary accordingly. However, the recreational forests serve as a social platform for people to engage in recreational activities that provide advantages and value to them, independent of gender, race, or age. Therefore, it is crucial for forest management to guarantee that recreational forests' physical features are preserved so that people can benefit from them and frequently visit them.