

What are multi-use forests?

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In news

Recently the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change stated that Leopards are seen Multi-use forests in India

The concept of multi-use forest

- The conceptual and practical development of MFM started in North America and Europe
- **Multi use forest is a concept of forest management that combines two or more objectives**, such as production of wood or wood-derivative products, forage and browse for domestic livestock, proper environmental conditions for wildlife, landscape effects, protection against floods and erosion, recreation, and protection of water

Background

The multiple-value nature of forests has long been appreciated and used by forest-dependent people in the tropics and the goal of multiple-use forest management (MFM) is stated in the laws of many countries, in much the same way as the guiding principles of sustainable forest management (SFM) **became entrenched in laws following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.**

Multi-use forest models

MFM models can also be found as part of longstanding practices in the tropics, **for example in India and the sacred forests described in the aranyakas.** Likewise, the spatial separation of forest use was practised in British India and Malaya from the late 1890s

How can this model be accomplished?

Thus, MFM may be accomplished by one or a combination of the following

- The concurrent and continuous use of several forest resources obtainable in a forest management unit (FMU), requiring the concurrent provision of several goods and/or ecosystem services from the same area (e.g. combining the extraction of rattan with wildlife conservation)
- Alternating or rotating the use of various resources or product combinations in a unit (e.g. through shifting cultivation);
- The geographic separation of uses or use combinations so that multiple use is accomplished across a mosaic of units, with each FMU being put to the single use to which it is most suited (e.g. zoning of a forest area).

Importance of Multi-use forests

- Under the right conditions, MFM could diversify forest use, broaden forest productivity and provide incentives for maintaining forest cover.
- It could also allow a greater number of stakeholders to receive forest benefits.
- In addition, developing workable MFM approaches could provide opportunities to reduce social conflict and exclusion in remaining forest areas, as well as help reduce forest resource degradation and assist in establishing REDD+ programmes