Chattisgarh Forests and Vegetation

The state of Chhattisgarh being placed in Deccan bio-geographical Area, houses an important part of that rich and unique biological diversity. What is a more conspicuous is that the state is significantly rich in endemism with respect to many plants having medicinal importance.

Biogeographically, the state falls in Deccan bio-region comprising representative fauna of central India like the tiger , leopard ,gaur ,sambhar , chital , nilgai and wild boar . The state is a proud possessor of rare wildlife like the wild buffalo and hill myna which have been declared as rare and endangered. Apart from the species diversity, the state is also endowed with rich genetic diversity. The variation in the genetic composition of individuals within or among floristic and faunal species is large.

The recorded forest area in the state is 59,772 km2 which is 44.21 of its geographical area. Reserved, Protected and Unclassed Forests constitute 43.13%, 4021% and 16.65% of the total forest area respectively.

Dantewara has maximum forest cover while janjgir-champa has lowest forest cover.

The forests of the state fall under two major forest types, i.e., Tropical Moist Deciduous forest and the Tropical Dry Deciduous forest. The state of Chhattisgarh is endowed with about 22 varied forest sub-types existing in the state.

Tropial Moist Decidous Forests (Sal Forests)

These forests are found in areas of moderate rainfall of 100 to 200 cm per annum, mean annual temperature of about 27°C and the average annual relative humidity of 60 to 75 per cent. Found in southern part of chattisgarh. The trees of these forests drop their leaves for about 6-8 weeks during the spring and early summer when sufficient moisture for the leaves is not available.

The sub-soil water is not enough to enable the trees to retain their leaves throughout the year. These are very useful forests because they yield valuable timber and several other forest products. The main species found in these forests are , sal, padauk, laurel, white chuglam, badam, dhup, chikrosi, kokko, haldu, rosewood, mahua, bijasal, lendi, semul, irul, dhaman, amla,

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kusum, tendu, paula, jamun, bamboo, etc. It is comparatively easy to exploit these forests due to their high degree of gregariousness.

Tropical Dry Decidous Forests (Teak Forests)

These are similar to moist deciduous forests and shed their leaves in dry season. The major difference is that the species of dry deciduous forests can grow in areas of comparatively less rainfall of 100-150 cm per annum.

They represent a transitional type; on the wetter side, they give way to moist deciduous and on the drier side they degenerate into thorn forests. Such forests are characterised by closed and rather uneven canopy, composed of a mixture of a few species of deciduous trees, rising upto a height of 20 metres or so. Enough light reaches the ground to permit the growth of grass and climbers. Bamboos also grow but they are not luxuriant. The important species are teak, axlewood, tendu, bijasal, rosewood, amaltas, palas, haldu, kasi, bel, lendi, common bamboo, red sanders, anjair, harra.

Mixed Forests

The maximum forest cover in the state is that of mixed forests, which includes teak or sal mixed with other species like saja, bija, lendia , haldu ,dhaora , salai , aonla , amaltas , gamhar , etc. Dazzling white kulu trees scattered around stand out conspicuously among the various hues of green. The ground is covered with maze of grasses, plants, bushes and saplings. Pterocarpus marsupium is also used for control of blood sugar in Diabetes since ancient times in India.

Medicinal plants –

Medicinal trees and plants of various kinds are found in abundance in the forests of Chattisgarh. Important ones are: *Aegle marmelos*, *Azadirachta indica*, *Bixa orellana*, *Butea monosperma*, *Asparagus racemosus*, *Argemone mexicana*,*Buchanania lanzan*, *Aloe barbadensis*, *Acorus calamus*, *Cassia tora*, *Curculigo orchioides*, *Curcuma longa*.

State Forest Policy

The basic objectives that should govern the State Forest Policy are the following: -

Unlocking of the vast array of forest resources on sustainable basis for enhanced well-being of local people by converting these open access resources (OAR) into community

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controlled, prioritized, protected and managed resources.

- A shift in accent from major to minor forest produces, from crown to multi tier forestry and from flagship species to smaller denizens of the forests.

- Maintenance of environmental stability through preservation and where necessary, restoration of ecological balance that has been adversely disturbed by serious depletion of forests in the state.

- Conserving the Bio- cultural heritage of the state by preserving the biologically rich natural forests that provide the essential cultural milieu to the tribals of the state.

- Checking the denudation of forests and soil erosion in the catchment area of the rivers, and reservoirs for soil and water conservation; mitigating the floods and droughts; recharging of water bodies, aquifers and for the retardation of siltation of the reservoirs.

- Increasing the forest / tree cover in forest deficient districts through afforestation and agro forestry/ farm forestry programmes, especially on all denuded, degraded and unproductive lands.

- Meeting the requirements of fuel wood, fodder, minor forest produce and small timber of the rural and tribal population with due regard to the carrying capacity of the forests.

- The derivation of direct economic benefit from the forests of the state shall be subordinated to the requirements of the environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance in the state.

- Creating appropriate policy and legal framework for the achievement of these objectives.

Chattisgarh Populations

Size and Density of population

The total population of Chhattisgarh is 2,55,45,198 as per census 2011. It constitutes 2.04 percent of the total population of India. Chhattisgarh is the 17th largest State of India on population basis.

The annual growth rate of population is 1.67 percent during the period 1991 to 2001; whereas it is 1.93 percent annually for all India. The density of population is 189 person per sq. km. whereas it is 324 per sq. km. for all India. It witnesses that the density of population is low as compared to all India in the census 2011.

In Chhattisgarh State, there is wide variations in the population of

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different districts. Raipur is the largest district in population and Durg is the second populated district of Chhattisgarh State. On the contrary, Kawardha or Kabirdham district is the lowest population district.

Through the density of population of C.G. is low 189 as compared to all India 324 persons per sq. km. however Janjgir-Champa and Durg Districts have higher density of population as compared to all India 324 respectively. Dantewada is the district in which density of population is 41 persons the lowest in the State.

Rural –Urban Distribution

Out of total population of Chhattisgarh, 23.24% people live in urban regions. The total figure of population living in urban areas is 5,936,538 of which 3,035,401 are males and while remaining 2,901,137 are females. The urban population in the last 10 years has increased by 41.83 percent. Sex Ratio in urban regions of Chhattisgarh was 956 females per 1000 males. For child (0-6) sex ratio the figure for urban region stood at 932 girls per 1000 boys. Total children (0-6 age) living in urban areas of Chhattisgarh were 717,554. Of total population in urban region,12.09%werechildren(0-6). Average Literacy rate in Chhattisgarh for Urban regions was 84.79 percent in which males were 91.63% literate while female literacy stood at 77.65%. Total literates in urban region of Chhattisgarh were 4,425,077.

Of the total population of Chhattisgarh state, around 76.76 percent live in the villages of rural areas. In actual numbers, males and females were 9,792,514 and 9,811,144 respectively. Total population of rural areas of Chhattisgarh state was 19,603,658. The population growth rate recorded for this decade(2001-2011)was17.75%. In rural regions of Chhattisgarh state, female sex ratio per 1000 males was 1002 while same for the child (0-6 age) was 972 girls per 1000 boys. In Chhattisgarh, 2,866,474 children (0-6) live in rural areas. Child population forms 14.62 percent of total rural population. In rural areas of Chhattisgarh, literacy rate for males and female stood at 78.20 % and 55.40 %. .

Sex Ratio

There are more than 13 million males and 12.9 million females in Chhattisgarh, which constitutes 2.11% of the country's population. The sex ratio in the state is one of the most balanced in India with 991 females per 1,000 males, as is the

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child sex-ratio with 964 females per 1,000 males (Census 2011). Notably the sex ratio is found maximum in tribal districts of Chhattisgarh. Rural Sex Ratio is recored 1002, and urban is 956. Highest sex ratio is in Rajnanadgaon and Bastar(1024) while lowest is in Koria district.

0-6 Age Group Population is found 35,84,028 (35 Lakh). 18,24,987 are male children and 17,59,041 are female children. Child sex ratio declined from 975 to 969 in a decade. Rural CSR is 977 while Urban CSR is 937.

Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Population

With the exception of the hilly states of the north-east, Chhattisgarh has one of highest shares of Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations within a state, accounting for about 10 per cent of the STs in India. Scheduled Castes and STs together constitute more than 50 per cent of the state's population. The tribals are an important part of the state population and mainly inhabit the dense forests of Bastar and other districts of south Chhattisgarh.

The Scheduled Caste (SC) population of Chhattisgarh is 2,418,722 as per 2001 census constituting 11.6 per cent of the total population (20,833,803). The proportion of Scheduled Castes has increased from 11.6 per cent in 2001 to 12.8% in 2011. The percentage increase in the population of the scheduled list of tribals during the 2001-2011 decade had been at the rate of 18.23 per cent. The share of the tribal population in the entire state had been 30.62 per cent which was 31.76 per cent during 2001.

Literacy Rate

With respect to literacy, the state fared just below the national average. The recent estimates from Census (2011) are also similar, with the literacy rate of 71% (81.4% Males & 60.5% Females), which is close to the all India literacy rate of 74%.
According to NSS (2007–08), the literacy rate for Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) was better than the corresponding national average.

Among the marginalized groups, STs are at the bottom of the rankings, further emphasizing the lack of social development in the state. Bastar and Dantewada in south Chhattisgarh are the most illiterate districts and the drop out ratio is the highest among all the districts. The reason for this is the extreme poverty in rural areas.

Working Population

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