

In Bihar, natural vegetation follows its district topography. Three types of natural vegetation are prevalent. However, the percentage cover is much lesser than required under the National Forest Policy. The government of Bihar is carrying various measures to protect and develop forest areas, including rehabilitation and conservation measures. In this article, we are sharing you with Bihar State Exam Geography Notes: Vegetation in Bihar. It is crucial for the BPSA Prelims as well as other state Exams.

Vegetation in Bihar

Natural vegetation is the primaevial plant cover unaffected by man either directly or indirectly. Ecologically, a forest is a plant community, predominantly of trees and other woody vegetation, usually with a closed canopy.

RECORDED FOREST AREA:

- Most of the forest and wildlife resources are owned by the Government of India and is managed through several departments like the Forest Department. According to the India State of Forest Report, 2019, the **total Recorded Forest Area is 6,877.41 sq km, which is 7.76% of the total geographical area of the state.**

PROTECTED FOREST:

- Those forests where the **right to grazing and cultivation are allowed** subject to a few minor constraints are known as the protected forests. The protected forest area of Bihar is 6,183 sq km, i.e., **89.91% of the recorded forest area.**

RESERVED FOREST:

- Those forests which are **permanently earmarked either to the production of timber or other forest produce** in which the right of grazing and cultivation is seldom allowed are known as reserved forests. The Reserved Forest Area of Bihar is 693 sq km, i.e., **10.08% of the recorded forest area.**

UNCLASSIFIED FOREST:

- Those forests which largely consist of **inaccessible forests or unoccupied wastes** are known as Unclassified forests. The unclassified forest of Bihar is 1 sq km, i.e., **0.01% of the recorded forest area.**

FOREST COVER:

- According to the India State of Forest Report, 2019, the **forest cover of Bihar is 7,306 sq km**, of which
 - **Very Dense Forest: 333 sq km,**
 - **Moderately Dense Forest: 3,280 sq km,** and
 - **Open Forest: 3,692 sq km.**
- The forest cover of Bihar has **decreased by 3% compared to the 2011 report. Bihar's forest cover as a per cent of the geographical area stood at 7.8 per cent**, which is lesser than that of the national average of 21.7 per cent.

TREE COVER:

- Tree cover is defined as small tree patches and isolated trees outside the Recovered Forest Area, which are less than one hectare in extent.
- The tree cover of the state has been estimated using—tree Outside Forest (TOF) inventory data collected over a period of six years. The estimated tree cover in the state is 2,003 sq km.

Forest and Tree Cover

Category	Area (in sq km)
Tree Cover	2,003 (2.1%)
Forest Cover	7,299 (7.75%)
Total	9,309 (9.9%)

CLASSIFICATION OF FORESTS

Depending on rainfall availability, forests are divided into three types:

1. MOIST DECIDUOUS FOREST

- These forests are found in Kishanganj districts North-East area, the Himalayas Terai belt, and the Someshwar hills. Here, rainfall is more than 120 cm. Therefore, dense forests are found. Sal is the most abundant tree. They shed their leaves in the summer season. Semai, Champa, Ashok, Ken, Mango, and Jamun, Karanj are other varieties found.
- Sal mixed moist deciduous forests (Northern moist Sal bearing forest) are distributed mainly in West Champaran and partly in the valleys of Kaimur, Rohtas, Aurangabad, Gaya, Nalanda, Nawada, Jamui, Banka and Munger.

2. DRY DECIDUOUS FORESTS

- These are the most abundant forest in Bihar. Dry deciduous forests are found in both the plains and the peninsular region in the Southern districts.
- They are found in regions with less than 120 cm of rainfall. Not very dense, they are small in height.
- Amaltas, Shisam, Mahua, Khair, Palas, Amia, Harr, and Bahera are the main varieties. Sal mixed dry deciduous forests (Northern dry mixed deciduous forests) occupy a major proportion under natural vegetation cover and are predominantly found in Kaimur, Rohtas, Aurangabad, Gaya, Nalanda, Nawada, Jamui, Banka and Munger districts.
- They are found in the Northern part of the Chhotanagpur plateau and the Kaimur hills. Besides this, they are also found in Purnia, Arana, and Raxaul in North-East Bihar.

3. TERM FORESTS

- They are found in adjacent areas of the Nepal border. In hilly areas with more than 160 cm of rainfall, moist deciduous forests are found. Dry Shiwalik Sal forests are mainly distributed in the Shiwalik range in the West Champaran district.
- Canebreaks (tropical seasonal swamp forests) are predominantly found in the West Champaran district. Sal, Sheesham, Khair, Toon, and Semai are important varieties found here.

BIHAR FOREST POLICY

- Its objective is to increase the forest cover up to 33% of the total geographical area to meet the National Forest Policy target. The State Government has adopted a two-pronged approach which is as follows:
- **FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT**
 - The purpose of forestry development is to increase forest cover from 6,16,446 hectares to 31,03,011 hectares. It aims to increase forest cover on non-cultivable land. Around 1000 sq km of land has been selected for this purpose.
 - Fallow land, school, and college, private institutions have been selected under the afforestation programme.
- **REHABILITATION AND CONSERVATION**
 - In order to arrest the decline in bio-diversity, rehabilitation and conservation have been given due importance in State Forest Policy.
 - Important ways have been adopted, such as:
 - **REGENERATION OF DEGRADED FOREST AREA:** In areas where forest density has declined below 40%, non-governmental organizations, citizens, international institutes have been involved in forest regeneration. Forest protection and

management committees have been created on the village level. For keeping public involvement intact, the proceeds from this forest are distributed.

- **SOCIAL FORESTRY:** In degraded areas, reforestation by private and community participation is promoted.

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