

Forests and Natural Vegetation of Rajasthan

- According to Forest Survey of India, State of Forest report 2019, forests of Rajasthan cover approximately an area of 32,737 sq km which is 9.57% of the total geographical area of the state and about 4.28% of India's forest area.
- The state has teak forests, which is northern most limit of teak zone in India.
- Apart from meeting the fuelwood and fodder demand, forest resources of Rajasthan contribute significantly to the state domestic product (SDP).
- The forests of Rajasthan are spread unequally in Northern, Southern, Eastern and South Eastern parts, and the western region of Rajasthan is devoid of any forest cover.
- Most of the forests are in hilly regions of Udaipur, Rajasamand, Kota, Baran Sawai Madhopur, Chittorgarh, Sirohi, Bundi, Alwar, Jhalawar and Banswara districts.
- However, the area under natural forests in Rajasthan is not only one of the lowest in the country but also in terms of productivity of forest, it is the lowest.

Climatic classification of forests

Forests are divided into five groups on the basis of climate:

1. Dry deciduous teak forests
2. Tropical dry deciduous (**Dhol**) forests
3. Tropical thorn forests
4. Mixed deciduous forests
5. Semi humid evergreen forests

1. Dry deciduous teak forests

- In Rajasthan these types of forests are mainly found in the districts of Udaipur, Dungarpur, Banswara, Jhalawar, Baran, Pratapgarh and Chittorgarh.
- These forests cover 6.87% of total forest area of Rajasthan.
- Average rainfall in these forests is between 70 and 110 cm.
- Height of these forests is 10 to 21 meters.
- Major trees found in these forests are Mango, Teak, Mahua, Bamboo, Banyan etc.
- These forests have highest cover in Sitamata Sanctuary of Pratapgarh.

2. Tropical dry deciduous (Dhol) forests.

- These forests are mainly found in semi-arid climatic regions of Rajasthan.
- These forests constitute 58.19% of the total forest area of Rajasthan
- Mainly thorny trees are found in these forests.
- Average rainfall in these forests is between 25 and 50 cm.

3. Tropical thorn forests.

- These forests are mainly found in Arid climatic regions of the state
- They constitute 6.3% of the total forest area.
- Mainly desert vegetation is found in these forests.
- Rainfall in these regions varies from 10 to 20 cm

4. Mixed deciduous forests

- These forests are mainly found in Eastern plains of Rajasthan
- They constitute 28.42% of total forest cover of the state
- Major trees of these forests are Teak, Saal, Peepal, etc.
- Rainfall varies from 50 to 80 cm.

5. Semi humid evergreen forests

- These forests are found around Abu region of Sirohi district on high altitudes.
- Rainfall reaches up to 150 cm.
- Area covered by these forests is 0.38% of total forest area of Rajasthan
- They remain green throughout the year and so known as evergreen forests
- Trees like Mango, Banyan, Jamun, Bamboo etc. are found in these forests.

Administrative Classification of Forests of Rajasthan

As per Forest Survey of India, State of Forest report 2019, Rajasthan has recorded forest area of about 32,737 square kms. This forest area forms 9.57% of state's geographical area and about 4.28% of India's forest area.

On the basis of legal status, the Government has classified forest area into three types:

- Reserved Forests - 12,475 Sq. Kms
- Protected Forests - 18,217 Sq. Kms
- Unclassified Forests - 2,045 Sq. kms

Reserved Forests:

- These forests are under the direct supervision of the government.
- No public entry is allowed for collection of timber or grazing of cattle.
- Rajasthan has 12,475 sq kms or 38% of forest as Reserved Forest.

Protected Forests:

- These forests are looked after by the government, but the local people are allowed to collect fuelwood/ timber and graze their cattle without causing serious damage to the forests.
- Rajasthan has 18,217 sq kms or 55% of forest area under Protected Forests.

Unclassified Forests:

- The unclassified forests are those in which there is no restriction on the cutting of trees and grazing of cattle.
- Rajasthan has 2045 sq kms or 7% of area has Unclassified forests.

Classification based on Canopy Cover

- Very Dense Forests (VDF) - 0.02%
- Moderately Dense Forests (MDF) - 1.29%
- Open Forests (OF) - 3.41%
- Scrubs-1.26%

- Non-Forest Area- 94.02%

Very Dense Forests (VDF):

- The Lands with forest cover having a canopy density of 70% and more are called Very Dense Forests (VDF).
- In Rajasthan, there are only 27 Sq kms of very dense forests.
- Percentage VDF: 0.02%

Moderately Dense Forests (MDF):

- The Land with forest cover having a canopy density of 40-70% is called the Moderately Dense Forest (MDF).
- In Rajasthan, there are only 2341 Sq kms of moderately dense forests.
- Percentage MDF: 1.29%

Open Forests (OF):

- The Lands with forest cover having canopy density of 10-40% are called Open Forests.
- In Rajasthan, there are only 6505 Sq kms of open forests.
- Percentage OF: 3.41%

Scrubs:

- The degraded forest lands which have a Canopy density of less than 10% are called Scrubs.
- In Rajasthan, there are about 22286 Sq kms of scrubs.
- Percentage Scrubs: 1.26%

Non-Forest Area:

- Rest of the area of the state, which includes all other lands except forest area.
- Percentage Non-Forest: 94.02%

Top 5 Districts with Forest Cover:

1. Udaipur
2. Chittorgarh
3. Baran
4. Karauli
5. Alwar

Last 5 Districts with Forest Cover:

- Churu
- Hanumangarh
- Nagaur
- Jodhpur
- Dausa