

CLASS:-10TH, ACTIVITY WORK

Conservation of Forest and Wildlife in India

Conservation in the background of rapid decline in wildlife population and forestry has become essential. But why do we need to conserve our forests and wildlife? Conservation preserves the ecological diversity and our life support systems — water, air and soil. It also preserves the genetic diversity of plants and animals for better growth of species and breeding. For example, in agriculture, we are still dependent on traditional crop varieties. Fisheries too are heavily dependent on the maintenance of aquatic biodiversity.

In the 1960s and 1970s, conservationists demanded a national wildlife protection programme. The Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act was implemented in 1972, with various provisions for protecting habitats. An all India list of protected species was also published. The thrust of the programme was towards protecting the remaining population of certain endangered species by banning hunting, giving legal protection to their habitats, and restricting trade in wildlife. Subsequently, central and many state governments established national parks and wildlife sanctuaries about which you have already studied. The central government also announced several projects for protecting specific animals, which were gravely threatened, including the tiger, the onehorned rhinoceros, the Kashmir stag or hangul, three types of crocodiles — fresh water crocodile, saltwater crocodile and the Gharial, the Asiatic lion, and others. Most recently, the Indian elephant, black buck (chinkara), the great Indian bustard (godawan) and the snow leopard, etc. have been given full or partial legal protection against hunting and trade throughout India.

Do you know that over half of India's natural forests are gone, one-third of its wetlands drained out, 70 per cent of its surface water bodies polluted. 40 per cent of its mangroves wiped out, and with continued hunting and trade of wild animals and commercially valuable plants, thousands of plant and animal species are heading towards extinctions.

- **Have you noticed any activity which leads to the loss of biodiversity around you?**
- **Write a note on it and suggest some measures to prevent it.**