Assessing National Mission for Green India

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- A recent study looks critically at India’s National Mission for a Green India.
\n
- It highlights that the goals under it assume arbitrary targets rooted in habits of “(neo)colonial governance” rather than “sound science”.
\n

\n\n

What is the Green India mission?

\n\n

\n
- The Green India Mission is one of the 8 missions under the *National Action Plan on Climate Change.*
\n
- It is a $7billion environmental intervention, laid out in 2011.
\n
- The mission aims at protecting, restoring and enhancing India’s diminishing forest cover.
\n
- It is intended at responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures.
\n
- It seeks to put a third of the country under forest cover by increasing forest and tree cover to the extent of 5 million hectares (mha).
\n
- Besides, there are efforts at improving quality of forest/tree cover on another 5 mha of forest/non-forest lands.
\n
- The mission is also planned with improving forest-based livelihoods.
\n

\n\n

How is the afforestation approach in India?

\n\n

\n
- Over two centuries, afforestation has been viewed as a solution for a variety of ills.
\n
- These include civilizational decline, diminished precipitation, warming temperatures, soil erosion, and decreasing biodiversity.
\n
- Forest cover of Europe in the colonial period was estimated at roughly one-third.
\n
- An afforestation rate of 30-33% became the widely accepted minimum for civilization.
\n
- This targeted minimum, as a concept, was exported to India and continued to influence generations of forest policymakers in India.
\n
- Despite the nature of arid and semi-arid ecosystems and the knowledge of local communities, the imported mechanism continued as a compulsion in India.
\n

\n\n

Why is it flawed?

\n\n

\n
- There is an obsession with tree-planting in India that has its roots in the colonial forestry bureaucracy.
\n
- The approach is to plant trees to make up for deforestation and grazing habits of local people, especially pastoralists.
\n
- The commitment to fixed rates of forest cover encourages tree plantations in ecologically inappropriate sites and conditions.
\n
- Another problem of plantation ecologies in India is the enthusiasm for fast growing species and exotic and invasive species.
\n
- Afforestation typically extends the “authority” of Indian state forest

departments, mostly at the expense of local livelihoods rather than in support of them.
\n
- This has historically performed a reverse role of disinheriting forest-rooted populations.
\n
- Moreover, aggressive afforestation projects in India direct resources toward tree-planting, without addressing the drivers of widespread deforestation.
\n
- So in all, there is much of 'planting' and essentially less of 'greening'.
\n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

\n
- Greening would take a socio-ecological approach that treats the system as a whole.
\n
- It means a ‘Restoration Ecology’ of grasslands, streams, mixed scrub, agro-forestry, and so on.
\n
- The afforestation efforts should take seriously the peculiarity of local systems to preserve the diversity of the Indian ecological mosaic.
\n
- The approach should move out from the colonial mindset and adopt a scientific view, for true 'greening'.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n\n

\n\n

Quick Facts

\n\n

NAPCC

\n\n

The eight missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) are as follows:

\n\n

\n
i. National Water Mission
\n
ii. Green India Mission
\n
iii. National Solar Mission
\n
iv. National Mission on Sustainable Habitat
\n
v. National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency
\n
vi. National Mission for Sustaining Himalayan Ecosystem
\n
vii. National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture
\n
viii. National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Changes
\n

\n

IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative