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UPSC MAINS ANSWER WRITING

Q. Why do the largest tropical forests in the world have started emitting carbon dioxide instead of absorbing carbon emissions? Explain.

Ans. The Amazon forests in South America, which are the largest tropical forests in the world, but unfortunately due to human activity and some others its started emitting carbon dioxide (CO₂).

Major reason behind the emission of CO₂ by Amazon as follows:-

(i) Research over a period of more years in the eastern Amazon forests have show that a significant amount of deforestation in eastern and southern eastern Brazil has turned the forest into a source of CO₂ that has the ability to warm the forest.

(ii) Also in southeast Asia have also turned into carbon sources in the last few years as a result of formation of plantations and fires.

(iii) In 2019, fires in the Amazon were visible from space. Forest fires, according to Brazil's National Institute for space

Research (INPE), have doubled since 2013.

(iv) Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon, which comprises about two-thirds of the area of the rainforest, started in the 1970s and 1980s when large scale forest conversion for cattle ranching and soy cultivation began.

(v) Railway and road expansion projects have led to "unintentional deforestation" in the Amazon and Central America.

(vi) over the course of 20 years there has been a long-term decrease in rainfall and increase in temperatures during the dry season, because of this Amazon forests are no longer carbon sinks.

(vii) conversion of forests into agricultural land, which has caused a 17% decrease in the forest cover.

Now we can say that need to our ability of tropical forests to act as carbon sinks is to be maintained, fossil fuel emissions need to be reduced and temperature increases need to be limited as well.