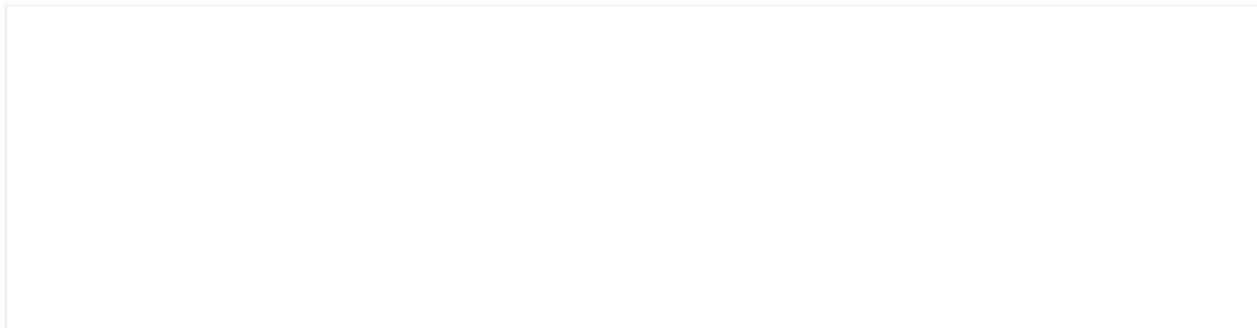


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INDIA

3 years ago

Rise In Carbon Footprint At Western Ghats Due To Deforestation Is The Cause Of Floods In Kerala, Karnataka



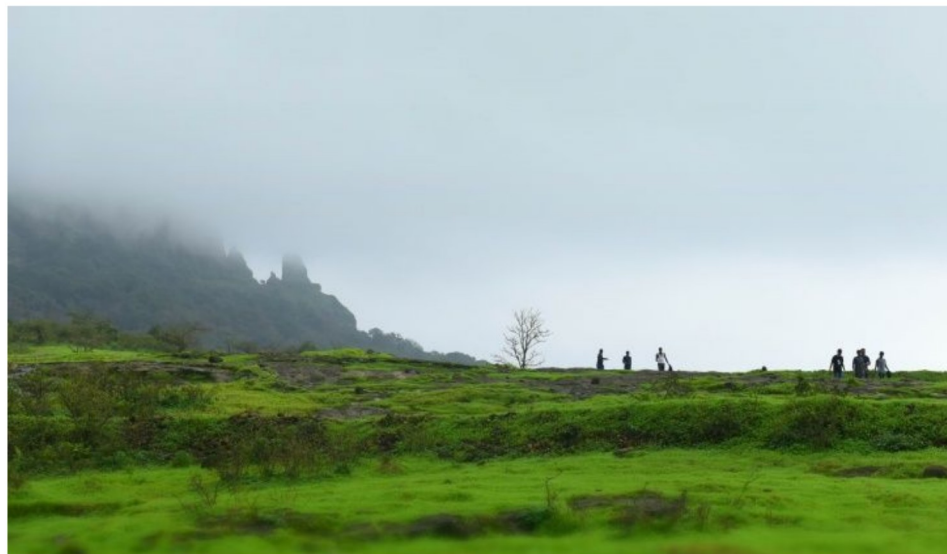
Bobins Abraham

Updated on Nov 21, 2019, 10:43 IST - 3 min read



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The Western Ghats that covers an area of 140,000 square kilometres in a stretch of 1,600 kilometres parallel to the western coast spread across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, and Gujarat is one of the hotspots of biodiversity in India.



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But, over the years the [ecologically sensitive area](#) has lost a large chunk of its biodiversity due to the rampant deforestation.

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It is estimated that the [Western Ghats](#) has lost 20,000 hectares of its area over the last 17 years because of deforestation. And such massive scale degradation of forests can have a major, long-lasting impact on the environment. And according to scientists, it is already happening.

A study by researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has found that there was a direct relationship between deforestation in the Western Ghats and the massive [floods in Kerala and Karnataka](#).

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The study, titled 'Carbon Sequestration Potential of the Forest Ecosystems in the [Western Ghats](#): a Global Biodiversity Hotspot' found that forest degradation and improper carbon sequestration is one of the causes of the recent flooding in the region.


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The research focused on the carbon budgeting through quantification of emissions and sinks in the forest ecosystems and changes in climatic conditions of Western Ghats.

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Carbon Sequestration is a p... ved from the atmosphere and held in solid.

Rapid loss in tree cover also means increased carbon dioxide emissions in the [Western Ghats](#).

"The Western Ghats is one among 36 global biodiversity hotspots and forests in this region sequester atmospheric carbon, which aid in moderating the global climate and sustaining water to ensure water and food security in peninsular India," the study said.

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The assessment of land-use land-cover (LULC) found that there was a decline of the evergreen forest by 5% with an increase in agriculture, plantations and built-up area.

The interior or intact forests have declined by 10%, and they are now confined to protected areas. The simulation of likely changes indicates that the region will have only 10% evergreen cover and 17% agriculture, 40% plantations and 5% built-up. Quantification of carbon reveals that the WG forest ecosystem holds 1.23 MGg (million gigagrams or GT) in vegetation and soils. The annual incremental carbon is about 37,507.3 Gg, (or 37.5 million tons, Mt) and the highest in the forests of Karnataka part of WG. Simulation of the likely changes in carbon content indicates the loss of 0.23 MGg (2018–2031) carbon sequestration potential under business as usual scenario.

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The data also showed that large-scale land-cover changes are leading to deforestation has contributed to an

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