

## **8. Green India Mission**

**Prelims Level:** Environmental Impact Assessment

**Mains Level:** GS-III Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation, Environmental Impact Assessment.

### **Why in News?**

- According to the Economic Survey 2019-20 released on January 2020, a sum of Rs 343.08 crore has been released under the Green India Mission (GIM) for undertaking afforestation activities over an area of 126,916.32 hectare (ha) in 13 states.
- Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, the area brought under afforestation by GIM plantation activities stood at 87,113.86 ha, according to the data presented by Union Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- For afforestation to be achieved over an area of 126,916.32 ha in 2019-20, as the Economic Survey states, plantation activity under GIM would have to increase by around 45 per cent of where it stood in July 2019.

### **Green India Mission (GIM):**

- National Mission for a Green India or GIM is one of the eight Missions outlined under India's action plan for addressing the challenge of climate change -the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
- GIM was launched in February 2014, is aimed at protecting, restoring and enhancing India's diminishing forest cover and responding to climate change by a combination of adaptation and Mitigation Measures.

### **Objectives:**

- To increase green cover in India to the extent of five million hectares (mha) and improve the quality of existing green cover on another 5 mha.
- To improve eco-system services like carbon sequestration, hydrological services and biodiversity and provisioning services like fuel, fodder, and timber and non-timber forest produces.
- To increase forest-based livelihood income for about three million households.
- Eco-restoration of degraded open forests, Restoration of Grasslands, Restoration of Wetlands, Eco-restoration/afforestation of scrub, shifting cultivation areas, cold deserts, mangroves, ravines and abandoned mining areas etc.

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### **Concerns and Challenges:**

- The Lok Sabha Committee on Estimates' 30<sup>th</sup> report, 'Performance of the National Action Plan on Climate Change' pertaining to Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, released in December 2018 found fund shortage, leading to GIM missing its targets.
- The scheme is proposed for 10 years with an outlay of Rs 60,000 crore. During 2017-18, Rs 47.8 crore has been allocated for the scheme which is grossly insufficient as the committed liability for 2015-16 and 2016-17 is Rs 89.53 crore which is much more than the budget allocated.
- The afforestation done under the mission was only aimed at increasing tree count without considering the soil and weather conditions.
- Trees like eucalyptus were planted which make environmental problems worse rather than solving them.
- Planting of unsuitable trees may cause drought, and prevent biodiversity in the regions.
- Plantations only have value in terms of timber. The other ecological services provided by a forest like prevention of soil erosion, promoting biodiversity, providing livelihood etc. are not there at all.
- In most of the plantations, there is no resident wildlife.

