

Forest cover rises, dense canopy declines in Odisha

By Express News Service | Published: 14th February 2018



Image used for representational purpose.

BHUBANESWAR: The State of Forest Report 2017 has mixed news for Odisha. Even as green cover witnesses a rise, there is a decline in very dense and moderately dense forest cover in the State.

The report shows that forest cover rose by 885 sq km between 2015 and 2017 recording a 0.57 per cent rise. Another good news is mangrove forests are showing a continuous growth too in the State.

As per the report, the total forest cover in the State stands at 51,345 sq km which is 32.98 per cent of Odisha's geographical area. Of it very dense forest accounts for about 6,967 sq km while moderately dense forest stands at 21,370 sq km. Open forests

measured at about 23,008 sq km. Interestingly though, the cover of very dense forest has declined in the State. From 6,985 sq km in 2015, it fell to 6,967 sq km. Similar was the trend of moderately dense forest where the cover decreased by 100 sq km - from 21,470 sq km to 21,370 sq km.

It is the open forest cover which made for the loss by reporting a rise from 22,005 sq km to 23,008 sq km. The State of Forest Report also shows that Odisha has shown an increase in forest cover outside the reserve forest areas. Of the 885 sq km, 741 sq km was outside the reserve forest area. An interesting fact that has emerged from the survey is forest cover in tribal districts has risen. In

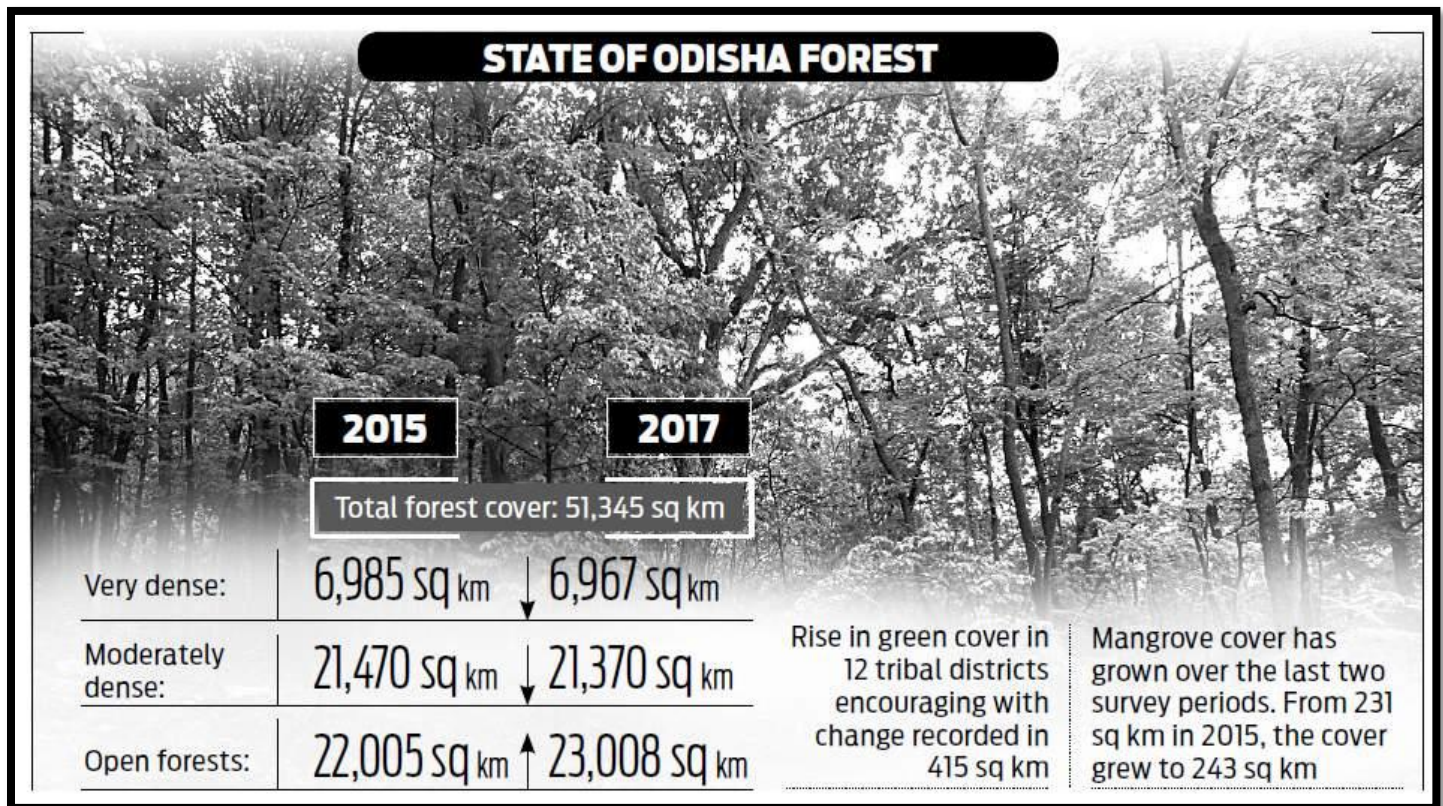
12 tribal districts, which account for much of the green cover, the change is recorded in 415 sq km. Scrubs in these areas stand at 2,655 sq km.

Similarly, mangrove cover has grown in the State over the last two survey periods. From 231 sq km in 2015, the mangrove cover grew to 243 sq km. Dense mangrove accounts for 82 sq km while moderately dense cover stands at 94 sq km.

Of the five coastal districts that have mangrove forests, Kendrapara recorded a rise of seven sq km,

from 190 sq km to 197 sq km. Balasore and Bhadrak reported another five sq km rise while Jagatsinghpur and Puri had shown a nil rise. In Puri, the total mangrove cover stands at one sq km whereas in Jagatsinghpur, it is eight sq km.

The State of Forest Report said, the positive change in mangrove cover is mainly due to plantation, natural regeneration and growing of mangroves in newly formed islands.



Source: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/2018/feb/14/forest-cover-rises-dense-canopy-declines-in-odisha-1773076.html>