

# The Sentinel

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## Sikkim: Conservation Policy Yields Results, Forest Cover Increase by 4 Percent

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Guwahati: Sikkim the first fully organic state in the country has also registered a 4 percent increase in the state's forest cover since 1993. Revealing about the increase in State's forest cover, CM, Pawan Kumar Chamling said that a plethora of initiatives for preserving biodiversity in Sikkim such as spreading mass awareness and adopting an eco-friendly policy has led to an increase in the forest cover. Chamling, while speaking at the international symposium on Evergreen Oak Forests in the Eastern



Himalayas in Gangtok on Tuesday said, the green cover in the tiny northeastern state has risen to 47.62 per cent in 2017 from 43.95 per cent in 1993. he also said that The state is "very committed" about conserving biodiversity by spreading mass awareness and necessary legislation. Noteworthy that Sikkim, covering just 0.2 per cent of the geographical area of the country, has

tremendous biodiversity and is a part of the global biodiversity hotspot. Talking about his Government's committed and continuous efforts in increasing the forest cover in the state, the CM said, "We have consistently focused on how best to bring additional area under forest cover and help contribute to a greener regional landscape as the Sikkim Himalaya is a part of one of the important Global Biodiversity Hotspots." Protection and conservation measures such as Ten Minutes to Earth, 'Smritivans', Mith or Mitini Tree (adopting a tree), besides 'Paryavaran Mahotsav' have helped the state to enhance its green cover in public and private lands. Referring to the importance of oak trees, the chief minister suggested growing oak trees in agro-forestry systems to reduce the huge pressure on natural forests. "It would be vital to see that our efforts ensure that the oak forests continue to provide ecosystem services to the people and environment," he said. It may be mentioned that the State Government over the years has been initiating several projects right from the school level to make the students aware and understand the importance of keeping the environment green. The State Government conceptualized and introduced eco-clubs and green funds in schools and colleges in the year 2000 and introduced compulsory environment education in schools till class VIII in the year 2002. The Chamling government

has also introduced “Chief Minister’s Green School Rolling Trophy and State Green Schools Awards” In order to promote environmental awareness amongst school children and to acknowledge the efforts of the school eco-clubs for their action towards environment protection and conservation. The award has been initiated to reward the best eight performing schools with cash prizes of Rs. 5 lakh to the best school, Rs. 1 lakh each to the four Senior Secondary and Secondary schools and Rs. 50,000/- each to one best Junior High School, Primary School and Private School as well. This State award scheme was constituted in the year 2011 and is presented during the State level World Environment Day celebration every year on 5th of June.

SOURCE:-<https://www.sentinelassam.com/news/sikkim-conservation-policy-yields-results-forest-cover-increase-by-4-percent/>