

# FOREST BASED INDUSTRIES

## Introduction

Trees are the support systems of life on earth. A collection of trees is called a forest. From breathing to meeting our hunger forests provide us with not only the commodities to sustain life but also a shelter, a place to live with its valuable wood. Man has been dependent on forests for ages and slowly he is consuming the whole forest cover.

The Amazon forests are also known as the lungs of the earth. They are the largest forest cover on earth till now. They supply the maximum of the world's oxygen. It contains a vast number of species of plants and animals. It is a home to many animals and creatures. Some of the trees in this area are millions of years old.

Man has been exploiting forests for a number of his selfish reasons. To list a few are:-

- Wood for boat, house etc
- Leaves for thatched roofs
- Leaves and herbs for medicinal purposes
- Roots sometimes as food, oil and sometimes for its medicinal properties
- Fruits as food and also for extracting oils
- Flowers for decoration, worship, oils, and medicinal properties
- Nuts
- Even the excretory product of some plants is used for making products like rubber, latex from the rubber plant
- Wood for fire, cooking etc

These were a few reasons for which man needs trees. Many industries have developed in recent years (from eighties onwards) centering the forests. These industries extract their raw materials from the forests. They have set up their factories nearby. And they deliver the finished products from those raw materials. Such industries are called forest based industries. These industries are the main

culprits for the depletion of the forest cover. They draw their raw materials from these forests without replenishing them again. Hence it keeps finishing.

The forest based industries that have developed in and around the forest areas are-

- Wood working industry
- Furniture industry
- Paper and pulp industry
- Silk industry
- Match industry
- Boat making industry
- Wood for building construction
- Medicine industry
- Tea and coffee industry
- Food industry
- Rubber industry
- Leather goods industry

### **How are the raw materials taken to the factories?**

The raw materials that is the woods are heavy too heavy to be carried by manual power. Some logs measure 15-20 meters in length and 7-8 meters in diameter. In such a case using vehicular support would be uneconomical as lot of money would be wasted in transportation alone. So what is the solution? The people have come up with a technique of using the flow of the river to transport the logs to their factories without any effort at all.

The forests are located at a height (usually above a hill or cliff).cutting an sawing are done there. And the factories are located downstream or at a lower height. The logs that are sawed are put into rivers and flowed downstream utilizing the flow of water. The logs are carried easily and automatically by the water current. If there is more than one factory then the logs are tied up and branded or marked to make it sure to which company it belonged. It is then collected by the forest

industries located downstream and taken for processing. This process is known as 'log driving'.

Log driving is a means of moving logs (sawn tree trunks) from a forest to sawmills and pulp mills downstream using the current of a river. It was the main transportation method of the early logging industry in Europe and North America.

Different industries process different parts of the tree in different ways to manufacture the various products. To discuss a few are-

- **Wood working industry-** certain industries are concerned in making showpieces, utility items, wall hangings. Such industries depend upon the leftover wood of the furniture industry. They season such woods, carve them to the right shape and size and highly paint or polish them
- **Furniture industry-** furniture industry is the main industry where maximum of the wood supply goes. Furniture industry depends on good quality wooden logs. They are then sent for seasoning where they are dried of their moisture, seasoned against white ants, made durable and various other treatments for its longevity are done. Then they are cut to the required shape and joined and polished.
- **Plywood industry-** plywood industry also depends on the cast away woods of the furniture industry. Plywood is made of thin layers of wood pasted together. The throw away pieces of wood are joined together by an adhesive and compressed under high pressure. Then they are left to dry. On being hardened they are treated against white ants and well seasoned.
- **Rubber industry-** rubber industry is a major industry that thrives on trees. Making of rubber is a long process. First the milk of the rubber plant is tapped and collected in a bucket. It takes days to fill one such bucket. Then after it is filled it is taken to the factories to be processed into rubber. Different chemicals are mixed with it to increase its durability because ordinary rubber is very soft. Products such as rubber tires and rubber bands etc are made with it.
- **Food industry-** food industry means processing of the edible parts of plants, the roots, the fruits, the vegetables and various other items. The fruits are

cleanly washed and processed and packed. Even the vegetables are cleaned and quality checks are done. Rotten or vegetables with sizes not up to the mark are removed and sent for local markets to be sold at a lower price. Rest is processed and packed for transportation, shipping or for selling at the malls and restaurants.

Many other forest based industries function in different ways. But all of them utilize the raw materials obtained from forests and depend on them to earn their living.

### **Conclusion**

Forests are an important necessity to man. Hence they should be preserved as far as possible. Demand will never end. But demand can be controlled. Also the factors meeting the demands have to be replenished so that the supply doesn't stop abruptly. There should be a continuous flow of supply and demand.

*"The earth has enough for everyone's need but not enough for everyone's greed"*

The forest is not a place for making money. It's not a place for greed. Hence we should all contribute to increasing the forest cover so that they do not finish completely.

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