

# **Forest Preservation and Conflict in Manipur**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Forests play a critical role in the climatic system of the Earth. They provide multiple ecosystem services including societal, cultural, economic and ecological services. They are at the centre of climate change mitigation efforts in low- and middle-income countries like India. However, forests are degrading at an alarming rate and less attention has been placed on the conflict associated with forests preservation and conservation efforts. In the context of Manipur, a State of Indian Union, destruction of forests in the hill areas impact the whole state population in general and that of the hill population in particular. The loss of forests and degradation of quality of forests threatens the survival of many species and reduce the ability of forests to provide essential services. Increasing temperature and water flow disturbances due to unpredictable rainfall patterns including floods and landslides are common problems in Manipur in recent years. The governments have implemented many policies to conserve and preserve the forests but they are being criticized for ineffective and inefficient. Apart from it, there is also a conflict in certain areas of the hill districts between the government and ethnic communities related to the policies and programmes for conservation of forests in Manipur. The objective of the paper is to study how far the forest policies are effectively implemented in Manipur. It also examines the reasons behind the conflicts erupted between the government and ethnic communities by employing both qualitative and quantitative methods.

**KEYWORDS:** Forest, Preservation, Conservation, Policy, Conflict.

## **Introduction:**

The world's forests, which cover 31% of the earth's land surface (FAO, 2025), are one of the most valuable natural resources. These forests are crucial as they provide an array of services besides forests ecological benefits. They provide social, economic, cultural, spiritual and recreational values. Forests also stabilise and maintain local climates, including local temperature, water flow and rainfall patterns. Today, forests

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are threatened due to the deforestation, rapid urbanization, land conversion, fire and climate change. The destruction of these forests not only poses a threat to globally significant biodiversity but also impact a majority of the 1.6 billion people of the world who rely on these resources for their livelihood.

With the increase in population, dependency on forest also increases which has resulted in the overexploitation and depletion of forest land resources, causing negative impacts on the environment and local communities. The exploitation of forest such as deforestation, forest degradation, fragmentation and diversion of forests land for non-forest purposes are the main sources for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions thereby exacerbating the effects of climate change. On the other hand, forestry sector sequestered CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the atmosphere, making forests even more crucial for climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. Therefore, the degradation of forests both in terms of quantity and quality would have severe consequences for the environment, economy and social wellbeing.

Based on the Global Forest Watch released by the World Resource Institute (WRI), India has lost 393kha of humid primary forest between 2002 and 2022, a decrease of 3.9%. For tree cover from 2001 to 2022, India lost 2.19 MHA, equivalent to 5.6% decrease since 2000. Of this 50% of all tree cover loss in this period, the five States in North East India – Assam, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur were responsible for it. India faces a ‘paradox of plenty’ in term of forest resources with being one of the top ten most forested countries in the world while also facing degradation and depletion of resources at an alarming rate. This paradox highlights the need for sustainable forest management and preservation efforts. Protecting and preserving the forests is essential for maintaining a healthy planet and ensuring a sustainable future for all. In order to address the issue of degradation of forest, the government at different levels implemented various policies and initiatives such as Green India Mission, Compensatory Afforestation Fund and Management and Planning (CAMPA), etc. Over the last decades, they took the responsibility to conserve the forests with an objective to increase tree cover over time and also to achieve India’s long-term goal of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2070.

In Manipur, the forest and tree cover have declined. Approximately 77% of the total geographical area of Manipur is covered by the forest and trees. The forest area in Manipur is spread across both the valley and the hill areas. About 82% of the forest cover in the state is located in the hill region. Physiographically, Manipur can be categorized into two distinct physical regions- an outlying area of rugged hill and narrow valley and the inner area of the flat plain, with associated land forms (Indian State of Forest Report, 2019). The valley and hills in Manipur are organically connected. Forest is not only a vital source of resources for



the state's economy; it also holds significant value for the indigenous communities living in and around it. The indigenous communities of Manipur have a deep connection with the forest. The loss of forests not only have a detrimental effect on the environment and wildlife, but also has negative impacts on the livelihoods of local communities who depend on the forest for their sustenance. To resolve these challenges, the state government-initiated policies and programmes associated with forest preservation. However, there has been a conflict between the state's policy to preserve the forest and the communities who depend on this forest.

### **Methodology**

The study conducted a literature review on existing studies and policies related to forest preservation in Manipur. This provides a comprehensive understanding of the current state of forests and the existing policies governing them in Manipur. The information on the current policies, their implementation and their impact on forest preservation are collected and analysed. The sources used include academic journals, newspaper articles, government reports and relevant publications from international organizations and NGOs. Policy documents published and reports on the area of forest cover loss of India and Manipur are analysed. The current condition of forest in Manipur is also analysed and the policies that are in place to protect them with a focus on the hill districts of Manipur.

### **Forest of Manipur**

Based on the legal status, forest in Manipur is categorised as Reserved, Protected and Un-classed forests. Reserved forest including Wildlife Protected Area Network constitute around 8.42% of the total forest area. Protected forests are 24% and the rest i.e., 67.6% of the total forest area belong to the Un-classed forests (Annual Administrative Report, 2010-2011). The unclassified forests make up the majority of the total forest area in Manipur and are often subject to less stringent regulations and protection measures compared to classified forests.

Among the States of North East India, Manipur recorded the largest loss of forest cover during 2019 to 2021 which is 249 sq. km. and in between 2011 and 2021, a total of 492 sq. km of forest cover were lost in nine districts of the states (Table1) according to the Indian State Forest Report data. As per the ISFR-2017 overall forest cover of Manipur was 17346 sq. km but in ISFR-2019, it reduced to 16847 sq. km. further to 16598 sq.km. in ISFR-2021 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Changes in Forest Cover in Manipur 2011-2021**

| Year | Forest cover (sq.km) | Change in forest cover (sq.km) |
|------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2011 | 17090                | -190                           |
| 2013 | 16990                | -100                           |
| 2015 | 16994                | 4                              |
| 2017 | 17346                | 263                            |
| 2019 | 16847                | -499.10                        |
| 2021 | 16598                | -249                           |

*Source: Indian State Forest from 2011-2021, Manipur Report Data: Change of Forest Cover (sq.km.), Forest Survey of India, Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate change.*

Also, the data from the above (Table 1) shows the steady decline of forest cover in the state despite adoption and implementation of the forest policy. This explains the forest policy adopted in the state are ineffective and inefficient to maintain the ecological balance.

According to the observation of the district wise forest cover changes during the last decade, the hill districts of Manipur: Churchandpur, Tamenglong and Senapati have experienced the highest amount of forest cover loss. (Table 2). The decline of the forests in hill districts of Manipur has had a significant impact on the entire population. With the decrease in forest cover, the State is experiencing shortage of water. The severity of water shortage has gradually increased over the past few years. Mindless cutting down of trees has led to loss of biodiversity, threatening the delicate balance of ecosystem. It has contributed to the increase in natural disasters such as landslides and floods, affecting the lives and livelihood of different communities, putting the whole communities at risk. It has also led to the decline in the production of agricultural production and related activities. This in turn has had a direct impact on the economy and food security of the people in Manipur. Overall, the loss of forest and tree cover has had a detrimental effect on the environment and well-being of the whole population living in the state.

**Table 2: District Wise Changes in Forest Cover in Manipur from 2011 to 2021**

| Sl. No. | District      | Geographical area (sq.km) | Forest Cover in 2011(sq.km) | Forest Cover in 2021(sq.km) | Change of forest cover (sq.km) from 2011 to 2021 |
|---------|---------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1       | Churachandpur | 4570                      | 4275                        | 3879.04                     | -395.96                                          |
| 2       | Tamenglong    | 4391                      | 3902                        | 3794.62                     | -107.38                                          |
| 3       | Senapati      | 3271                      | 2183                        | 2091.79                     | -91.21                                           |
| 4       | Chandel       | 3313                      | 2829                        | 2811.07                     | -17.93                                           |
| 5       | Imphal West   | 519                       | 55                          | 51.95                       | -3.05                                            |
| 6       | Bishnupur     | 496                       | 21                          | 22.28                       | 1.28                                             |
| 7       | Thoubal       | 514                       | 56                          | 59.35                       | 3.35                                             |
| 8       | Imphal East   | 709                       | 220                         | 264.42                      | 44.42                                            |
| 9       | Ukhrul        | 4544                      | 3549                        | 3623.75                     | 74.75                                            |
|         | Total         | 22327                     | 17090                       | 16598.27                    | -491.73                                          |

Source: Indian State of Forest Survey (2011-2021), Forests Survey of India, Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change

### **Forest Policy in Manipur**

Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV (Article 48(A)) of the Constitution of India, State is obligated to protect and improve the environment as well as safeguard the forest and wildlife of the country (Bakshi, 2017). Article 51A(g), citizens have a constitutional obligation to protect and improve the natural environment including forests as Fundamental Right. List III (Concurrent List) of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution has Entry No. 17A and 17B on forests and the conservation of wild animals and birds. Thus, both the Union and State governments have a stake in these issues. Thus, the Indian



Constitution has two provisions with the objectives of: (a) directing the state to safeguard and improve the environment and (b) citizens to protect and improve the natural environment.

The Indian Forest Act, 1927, the National Forest Policy of 1952, the Forest Conservation Act 1980, the Schedule Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 and the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 etc. have been enacted for regulation, protection and conservation of forests in Indian subcontinent. The National Forest Policy, 1988 has been adopted with the principle aim to ensure environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance. The policy provides that diversion of forest land for any non-forestry purpose should be subject to the most careful examinations by specialists from the standpoint of social and environmental costs and benefits. The Schedule Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 was passed to address the historical injustice done to forest dwellers by striking a balance between their right to the environment and their right to life and livelihood. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in 2022 passed the Forest Conservation Rules 2022, a set of regulations to ensure that forest conservation is properly managed. (Wangchuk, 2023)

The focus is on forest preservation and conservation policy in Manipur. The 20th century was a landmark in the history of forest management in the state because the Government started giving attention towards formulation of definite forest policy to check the process of overexploitation of forest resources. Forestry matters were looked after by the President of the Manipur State Darbar. The Darbar was basically the King in Council, primarily with the task of assisting the King in Administration. The practice continued till 1931 when the Manipur State Darbar set up with a separate Forest Department for the first time. Mr. Lairenmayum Ibungohal Singh became the first Forest Member of the Darbar in 1931 and in 1932 first forest policy guidelines were introduced by Darbar Resolution No.10A. Indian Forest Act 1927 was enacted in Manipur with some modification. (Rajkumar, 2008)

Detailed rules were enacted under the Manipur Forest Rules of 1971. It has the provisions regarding the protection and the right to manage the reserved forest directly and to take care of the protected forests. In Manipur a major portion of the forests is under unclassified forest area. Legally, the unclassified forest belongs to the state whereas the de-facto control lies in the hand of the village chiefs in the hills. Manipur has no sufficient legislation to protect the forests and wildlife like that of Assam or other neighbouring states except the Manipur Forest Rules 1971 and Wildlife Protection Act 1972. All the policies and the rules of the Forest Department of Manipur are guided by the Indian Forest Act, 1927.



The Indian Forest (Manipur Amendment) Act 2018 is a much-needed update to the original legislation enacted in 1927. With its focus on forest protection, management and community participation, this amendment aims to strike a balance between conservation and sustainable utilization of forest resources. The Act strengthens the Forest Department by giving the quasi-judicial power to the forest officers. By implementing this Act, government is taking up significant steps towards preserving its rich forest heritage and ensuring a brighter future for its forests and communities. The Forest Department of Manipur has implemented many schemes/ programmes such as Afforestation, Rehabilitation of the Jhumias, Joint Forest Management to involve the people in the management of their own natural resources, Social Forestry, Compensatory Afforestation and Environmental Restoration, etc.

The presence of a significant portion of unclassified forests and unsurvey forest land in the hill areas of Manipur raises serious concerns. As most of forest land especially in the hill areas is effectively controlled by tribal chiefs or communities, not by statutory forest authorities, the Forest Department of the Government of Manipur has been unable to act or effectively implement the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, 1927 (Daimai, 2011). Increase in illegal encroachment and activities in the remote unsurvey forest land not only harm the delicate ecosystem but also creates conflicts between the government and the people residing in the hills. Notably, concerns about forests preservation and land disputes have been long standing problem in Manipur but not a priority in the politics and governance in the state.

### **Conflict over forest preservation**

Conflicts over the use of forest resources are common all over the world. These conflicts may arise over conservation goals and access to potential economic benefits from the forests. These conflicts result into disputes over rights to access of forest land and resources. This study highlights the multifaceted nature of conflicts over forest preservation, ranging from resource scarcity and land use to societal attitudes and legal frameworks. Many steps have been taken up by the government to protect the reserved forests. State's control and regulation of the forests is contested by the certain group in the hill districts. In Manipur, there is a growing misunderstanding between the government and various hill communities regarding the preservation of forests in the hills. This lack of understanding impedes effective conservation efforts and threatens the sustainability of the ecosystem. It also creates conflict between the government and the people residing in the hills. In this regard, understanding the factors that contribute to the emergence of conflict over the forest preservation is utmost importance.

One of the main sources of tension between the government and the hill communities is on the protection of forests. The government aims to safeguard the forests for ecological reasons and also to use the forest in



a sustainable manner. The hill communities rely on these forests and forest land for their source of livelihood, economic security and empowerment. Therefore, the state's policies on land resources and forests, have been met with opposition by many village chiefs and tribal groups. The origin of the conflict regarding the forest preservation can be traced to the system of primitive customary land ownership and land use system in the hill areas of Manipur. The hereditary village chiefs among Chin-Kuki-Zomi own and have absolute control over the land and land uses in the hill areas (Haokip, 2004; Ngaite, 2004).

Among the Naga groups in the hills, land use is regulated by individuals, the clans, village chiefs and village councils (Peter, 2004; Kamei, 2004). The central valley region of Manipur which is about 10% of the state is inhabited by diverse population with Meitei as the largest community. The hill region which is over 90% of the total land of Manipur have multiple hill communities constitutionally recognised as the Scheduled Tribes (STs). Politically these multiple ST communities are mobilised and politicised as Naga or Kuki as well as in recent times as Chin-Kuki-Zomi or Chin-Kuki-Mizo-Zomi-Hmar etc. Since Manipur violence on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023, a new category of Kuki-Zo is politicised and used for separatist and communal political demands among Chin-Kuki-Zomi etc. groups.

There are two land systems in Manipur. One is the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960 (MLR & LR) which is for the whole of the state but implements in the valley areas of the central valley and valley areas of the hill districts including Churachandpur, Tengnoupal, Chandel, Noney, Kangpokpi etc. This democratic Act passed by the Parliament of India in 1960 is opposed by the village chiefs and tribal elites in the hill areas (Singh, 2009). The MLR&LR Act is extended to a sizeable number of villages in the valley and adjoining valley areas within the hill districts of Manipur (Gangte and Singh 2010: 132). The hill tribes practiced different land use systems in Manipur. The hill communities consider the land including forest land were inhabited by their forefathers (Daimai, 2011). They have their own customary and traditional land holding practices. The policies of forest preservation of the state is seen by them as a threat to their rights to land. There is also apprehension among the communities in the hill districts that the legislation or any law for the land tenure in the hill areas may erode their traditional land holding system. What is clearly visible is that the rich and powerful individuals are acquiring more lands in the valley areas as well as hill areas whether under MLR & LR Act, 1960 or not.

The absence of individual land ownership rights in the hills, no proper survey, no proper land records etc. in the hill areas due to the opposition to extend MLR & LR Act, 1960 has serious consequences. One is the land disputes among the village communities and others include illegal activities including deforestation, illegal occupation and settlement in the forest's areas (Singh, 2025). Another consequence is that there is



no land revenue from the hill areas which is over 90% of total land area of Manipur, a primary reason for low revenue of the State government. The failure to implement forests laws in the hill areas means the failure in the preservation and conservation of forests which in turn lead to rapid land degradation and fertility, and exploitation of forests. This clash of interests often leads to misunderstandings and disagreements making the forest preservation and conservation policy counterproductive in the hill areas.

### **Economic Factors**

The major concern of deforestation and diversion of forest land in the state is also due to the traditional practices such as shifting (slash/ burn) agriculture practices. The decline of forest mostly in the hill districts (Table 2) in Manipur, was attributed to shifting cultivation and illegal activities in the forest's areas. Shifting cultivation and jhumming in the forest land has been practice as way of life among the hill people. Shifting cultivation involve the process of slashing and burning of forests. The system is a primitive mode of agriculture; it provided the basic needs of a person on which they depended for survival. Although the cultivation system is deeply rooted to the indigenous tribal communities, earlier they practice in harmony with nature, presently owing to the population pressure and the roll up of the market economy and other factors, the shifting cycle is progressively shortened (Reimeingam, 2017).

Over the time the productivity reduced leading to serious implications on the livelihood and security of household which is solely dependent on shifting cultivation. With the transition of society, the inhabitants in the forest area look for alternative source of livelihood. Therefore, after shifting cultivation, as the land is readily available, the fallow land area is used cultivating the 'poppy' utilizing salt and other chemical fertilisers (Sangpui & Kapngaihlian, 2021). This led to the decline of land's fertility due to illegal activities which indicate lack or absence of civil and police administration specially in the remote hill areas. These practices negatively impact the society, culture, health and environment of the state.

That brings to the question, why do people take up poppy plantation instead of other crops in Manipur hill areas? In response to the question, two things can be mentioned. One is the lack of infrastructural development and other alternative livelihoods in the hills. The people's perception of not having enough opportunity in the hills, lack of investment and high poverty levels, they search for alternatives. The report of the United Nations Drug and Crime, titled "Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2023: Cultivation, Production and Implications", analyses data collected in Myanmar during the second growing season since the military takeover which shows an 18% increase from 40,100 to 47,100 hectares. In Myanmar, the most significant increases were registered in Shan State, where cultivation increased by 20%, followed by Chin and Kachin States where it increased by 10% and 6% respectively.

A targeted assessment also found indications of substantial opium cultivation in Sagaing, along Myanmar's border with India. Manipur has also seen huge increase in the area of poppy plantation as revealed by the data of Narcotic and Border Affairs, Manipur Government. Out of 4305 acres of destruction of poppy plants in 2022-23, Churachandpur, Kangpokpi (district curved out of Senapati District) and Tegnoupal (district curved out of Chandel District) districts account for 1250, 1108 and 566 acres respectively, i.e. 68% of the total area under poppy destroyed (Singh, 2024). One can relate here that above mentioned districts where poppy cultivation are the highest also found highest declined forest covers from 2011-2021 (**Table2**).

Large tracts of land have been brought under poppy plantation either by clearing forest or using the erstwhile area under shifting cultivation. Thus, there is link between allegation of the poppy plantation and loss of forest cover in select hill areas of Manipur. The forest survey initiatives and related measures undertaken by the BJP-led government such as the campaign against the illegal drug trade (officially termed the "War on Drugs") and the destruction of poppy plantations in the hills were generally viewed unfavorably particularly by few sections of the Chin-Kuki-Zomi groups. This was largely because, under their tradition and customs, there has never been a clearly defined boundary between government-designated forests and land traditionally owned by Chin-Kuki-Zomi chiefs (Singh, 2024).

### **Political and geopolitical factors**

The other factor for the conflict with respect to the forest in Manipur can be attributed to divisive and communal political and geopolitical factors. The political demands by the armed groups among the Nagas and Chin-Kuki-Zomi communities in the hills including for exclusive and communal homelands has led to settlement patterns that encroach upon forest land. Such communal exclusive homelands have overlapping territories which have led to conflict and violence since 1990s in the hills of Manipur. These competing and conflicting separatist communal political demands intensified during the 1990s, eventually escalating into violent ethnic clashes that caused widespread destruction (Kipgen, 2018). The struggle for territorial control and political autonomy has led to displacement and migration, with communities encroaching on government land and forest areas.

The geographical location and features of Manipur along with lack of effective border management with Myanmar play a role in the forest cover loss in Manipur. The political unrest in the neighbouring country of Myanmar, led to influx of immigrants to Manipur and settled in Tegnoupal, Chandel, Churachandpur, Pherzawl, Senapati, Kangpokpi and even Ukhrul and Kamjong (Singh, 2022) putting added pressure to the forest land and resources in these hill districts. The illegal infiltration from Myanmar to Manipur is mostly accommodated in the forest land in the hill areas which are poorly governed and inaccessible by the



authorities. Illegal infiltration and settlement after the military coup and violence in Myanmar to Manipur is also due to similar ethnic groups in the hill areas of Manipur bordering with Myanmar which are largely accommodated in the unsurveyed land. There are reports of Unrecognised village (*Khun*) expansion in 5 Manipur hill districts (Sharma, 2022).

All these factors heightened the tensions and contestation over land including the forest land and resources. The government cracked down on illegal occupation of the forest areas has further made the conflict inevitable. The misconception and rift between the government and various hill communities have a detrimental impact on preservation and conservation efforts. When the two parties fail to communicate effectively and align their interests, it becomes challenging to implement effective preservation policy measures. To address this issue, a comprehensive forest policy that respects forest rights, forest laws, enforces rule of law and promotes sustainable forest management is crucial. The government should actively engage with the hill communities through regular consultations and dialogue to understand their concerns and perspectives. This inclusive approach will help build trust and foster mutual understanding. It is essential to involve all stakeholders, including local communities, in decision-making processes related to forest preservation to achieve long-term peace and environmental sustainability in Manipur.

At the same time, both the government and the hill communities should invest in capacity building initiatives to enhance their knowledge and understanding of conservation practices. This may involve providing training on sustainable forest management, ecological restoration, and alternative livelihood options. Train Forest Department officers to understand **tribal customary practices and social systems**, so that government actions don't inadvertently generate conflict due to ignorance of local norms. Initiate and **complete the legal settlement of tribal land and forest rights** (as envisioned under the FRA 2006) within a fixed timeframe by reducing ambiguity about who owns/uses forest lands (Daimai, 2011). Establishing legal frameworks and providing incentives to encourage the preservation of forests can help bridge the gap between the government and the hill communities. Incentives such as community land ownership, royalties from forest products and support for sustainable agriculture can help align the economic interests of both parties with conservation goals.

## **Conclusion**

Ineffective forest preservation policy in Manipur particularly in the hill areas and conflicts are deeply rooted to the primitive customary land ownership and land use practices as well as competitive and conflicting demands for exclusive communal homelands in Manipur hills. The lack of a transparent forest policy in Manipur has led to tensions over protected forests, exacerbating conflicts between local communities. The



government's intention to preserve forest has a suspicion by the few sections in certain communities in the hills. There has been opposition to the democratic laws like Manipur Village Authorities Act, 1956, Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act, 1960 etc. passed by the Parliament of India in the hill areas as well as efforts for forest preservation and promotion due to multiple factors. As large chunk of forest is under the unclassified forest which is not under the legal control of forest authorities. The government should clarify and make the people aware about the rights mentioned under the Indian Forests Act 1927 and other forest laws. There is need for awareness among the hill communities that forest preservation and promotion is also in their interests and for future generation.

By fostering a collaborative approach and demonstrating a genuine commitment to preserving forests as well as by respecting some of the traditional knowledge and practices. The government can build trust and address suspicions among members of the hill communities. Additionally, implementing accountability measures, such as reporting on actions taken and planned with respect to conservation efforts, can help increase transparency and demonstrate the government's commitment to preserving forests in a responsible and sustainable manner. Efforts are also required to consider the complexities of Manipur's history, politics, and environmental concerns to develop sustainable solutions for forest conservation and peacebuilding in Manipur. Political will with good governance initiatives and strengthening conflict resolution institutions and mechanisms at different levels are essential. The key stakeholders must be aware of and able to exercise their forest-related rights, entitlements and responsibilities to maintain diverse livelihood system.

The indigenous people of Manipur specially the Meitei had and has the cultural beliefs and practices of preserving the forest including 'Umang Lai Haraoba' (worshipping of Forest Deities) and community-based forest management systems. Such kind of cultural practice should be given importance and there is need for reviving some good practices of preserving nature and forests by other indigenous communities in the hill areas. There is limit and disastrous consequences of human greed, immoral and illegal activities. Besides understanding of the forest's laws, there is need for awareness about the impact of deforestation on present lives and the future generation.

It is necessary that data on forest cover and decline etc. for all districts in Manipur in transparent manner by the concerned authorities with regular updates should be available which is absent or lacking at present. The above-mentioned factors must be taken into consideration while making efforts for the preservation of forests in Manipur. Forest preservation and maintaining ecological balance is necessity for all sections of Manipur.



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