Conservation of forests- various ways

Siviculture- A programme started to replenish the forests by growing more trees and plants. It replenishes depleting forests.

Advantages-

1. It produces a large quantity of raw materials for industry like timber and paper industry.
2. It increases the area of earth under forests which is good for the conservation of wildlife.
3. It maintains a perfect water cycle in nature.
4. It prevents soil erosion.
5. It prevents floods.

Activists-

People who want forest and wildlife to be conserved to prevent undue damage to the environment. They started by working for the conservation of large wild animals such as tigers, lions, elephants, and rhinoceros but they now recognize the need to preserve forests as well.

The case of Khejri trees- There is a Bishnoi community in Rajasthan state of India for whom conservation of forests and wildlife has been a religious belief. In 1731, Amrita Devi Bishnoi led a group of 363 persons who sacrificed their lives for the protection of Khejri trees in Khejrali village near Jodhpur in Rajasthan. This shows the determination of some people to work for the conservation of their natural environment. The Government has recently instituted an ‘Amrita Devi Bishnoi National Award for wildlife conservation’ in the memory of Amrita Devi Bishnoi.

The Chipko Andolan or ‘Hug the trees movement’- Example of the contribution of common people towards the conservation of forests. It originated from an incident in a remote village called Reni in Garhwal, in the early 1970s. A logging contractor had been allowed to cut down trees in a forest close to a village. The people of the village did not want this forest to be cut down because it would have spoiled their healthy environment. One day, when the men-folk of the village were out for work, the contractor’s workers came in the forest to cut down the trees. In the absence of men, the women of the village reached the forest and clasped the tree trunks with their arms, preventing the workers from cutting down the trees.

Participation of Local people in Management of forests-

It can help in increasing forest produce as well as in their conservation. In 1972, the West Bengal Forest Department formulated a novel scheme to revive the degraded sal forests by involving the local people. A beginning was made in the Arabari forest range of Midnapore district. A far – sighted forest officer A.K. Banerjee involved the villagers of the area around the forest in the protection of 1272 hectares of badly degraded sal forest. In return for help in protecting the forest, the villagers were given employment in both siviculture and harvesting operations of the forest, 25 percent of the final harvest produce and were allowed to collect firewood, and fodder from the forest area on a nominal payment. The degraded sal forest of Arabari became thick and green within ten years.