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Developing certification of Forest in India-rational and options

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ABSTRACT

Certification of forest is increasingly being used by a number of governments in both timber producing and timber importing countries as a means of identifying and encouraging good forestry practice. Globe over, Governments have promoted or have been requiring certification for ensuring sustainable forestry including by making it a condition of awarding concessions or resource utilization rights. It is not a new concept for the global forest sector which is already exposed to some or other forms of certifications of products (if not services). With the increased environmental concerns and measures, demands for forest certification in these markets ensures that the trade in wood and wood based products is responsible and sustainable in accordance with their national, regional and multilateral environmental policies. These pose a barrier to the economic prospects of Indian timber or wood based products/NTFP industry unless suitable steps are taken to comply with such measures at Indian level. But forest certification is yet to emerge and evolve in India, in big way. From domestic (National) point of view also, certification is necessary to ensure the continuity of forest goods and services through SFM approach. There is often limited knowledge of certification processes or standards and its potential available amongst the forest industry and various stakeholders. There can and will also often rise many new contentious issues that need to be resolved and worked through in this evolution phase. Looking the development of global scenario, it has become imperative to have a National policy framework and operational guidelines on 'certification'. This paper has tried to explore the various intricacies of developing principles and process of certification of forest in India with different possible alternatives.

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