

Forest Resources:

Assam has a rich forest cover encompassing nearly a quarter of its land area. The forest cover in the state as per India State Forest Report 2011, based on interpretation of satellite data of November 2008 to January 2009 is 27,673 sq km, which is 35.28 per cent of the state's geographical area. There are about 74 species of timber, of which two-thirds are

commercially exploited. On the hills, at the foothills and in the plains one abundantly finds numerous varieties of valuable trees such as *sal*, *agaroo*, *bansum*, *sonaru*, *teak* etc. These trees are valuable because of their usefulness. They provide plank and timber for building houses and for making various types of furniture. †Bamboo is the best natural engineering material on this planet. Bamboo and cane are absolutely necessary for paper mill industry. On the basis of their availability, paper mills have been set up at Jogighopa, Jagiroad and Panchagram. Reeds and straw are also found in the forest of Assam, which are widely used in building houses and cottages, particularly in the rural areas. Various types of medicinal herbs and plants identified and unidentified are also found in the forest of Assam. Forest cover in Assam in different canopy density classes along with the change compared to 2009 assessment are given in the following:

	<i>Very Dense Forest</i>	<i>Moderately Dense</i>	<i>Open Forest</i>	<i>Shrub Forest</i>	<i>Non-Forest</i>	<i>Geographical Area</i>
2011 Assessment	1444	11404	14825	182	50583	78438
2009 Assessment	1481	11558	14673	179	50567	78438
Net Change (-) / (+)	-17	-154	152	3	16	

Source: Forest Survey of India, 2011 & Economic Survey, Assam, 2012-13.

The information above reveals that there has been a decrease of 17 sq. km. in very dense forest and 154 sq. km. in moderately dense forest an increase of 152 sq. km. in the open forest. This is worth to be mentioned that the National Forest Policies (1952 and 1988) aim at having one third of country's land area under forest and tree cover.)

Year	Area of Forest Cover (Sq. km.)	Area of Tree Cover (Sq. km.)	Total Areas of Forest and Tree Covers (Sq. km.)	Forest and Tree Covers to the Total geographical Area of the State (Percentage)
2005	27645	1484	29129	37.13
2009	27692	1590	29282	37.33
2011	27673	1564	29237	37.27

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14

The forest product of the state mainly comprises industrial wood, fuel wood, bamboo, stone, sand and gravel, thatch etc. A good amount of revenue is earned by the state government from its various forest produces. During 2010-11 the department has earned Rs. 5868.52 lakh as revenue from the forest product which is however, 24 per cent less earning than the previous year. The turn-out of major and minor forest products for 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 are as follows:

Forest Product	Unit	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
<i>Minor Forest Produce</i>					
Industrial Timber	Cubic Metre	9839	34142	19782	10804
Fuel Wood	Stack Cubic Metre	16063	1289	807	461
<i>Minor Forest Produce</i>					
Sand	Cubic Metre	2905333	2470587	3153610	1009242
Gravel/Stone	Do	34269919	1979815	1801173	1193385
Silt/Clay	Do	2243569	1730252	771577	248126
Others		4192455	6579400	3164926	1021568

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14

The amount of revenue earned from the various forest products during the last few years are shown in the following table:

Items	Revenue earned (Rs. In lakh)			
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Timber	6879	815.17	713.80	405.40
Fuel Wood	-	1.17	1.35	1.39
Sands	6857.72	2720.78	3153.60	1034.27
Gravel/ Stone	-	1360.39	2431.58	1551.40
Silt/ Clay	7751.60	257.19	115.73	65.97
Others	14678.11	713.82	590.74	291.72
		5868.52	7006.80	3350.15

Source: Economic Survey, Assam, 2013-14