

## “Tree Transplantation Policy: Go Clean, Go Green”

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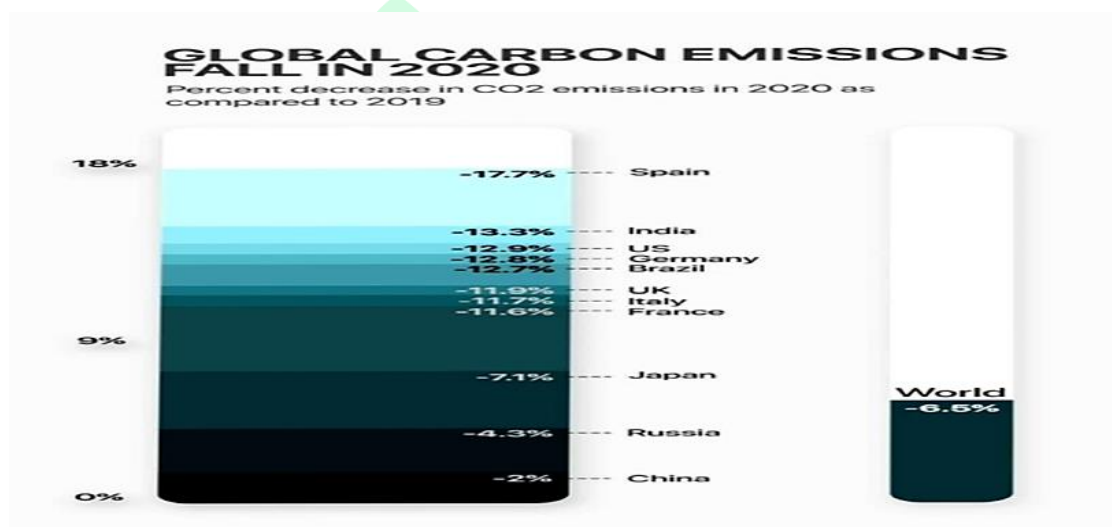
### Introduction

Tree transplantation policy became known recently when the Delhi cabinet has given its nod and with this, Delhi has become the first state in India to enact this policy. This transplantation policy is a ray to save the environment as we are seeing the current scenario of a world where climate change is on-trend. We must say, this is a very much-needed policy to stop deforestation and restore cutting trees. In this article, we are going to discuss about tree plantation policy, what is the importance of this policy, and its drawbacks.



Delhi Chief Minister Shri Arvind Kejriwal recently launched a **Tree Transplantation Policy**. According to this policy, during the construction/development process, agencies will

have to transplant 80% of the trees affected by their project to a new location. In the previous policy, Agencies have to plant 10 Saplings for each tree felled during their construction work or development activities. There was a need to change/update in previous policy because No one knows how much time would take to grow these 10 Saplings or how many saplings will sustain. So, according to the new policy, the number of trees won't be reduced and the previous policy will be also followed.



### Importance of Tree Transplantation Policy

Corona pandemic has given a great lesson to us. In this pandemic when almost all the factories which emit carbon was shutdown, all the construction and development activities were stopped, cars were stopped then the pollution level of our country especially metro cities which has been counted in the most polluted city in the world, surprisingly decreased and people of these cities are able to take fresh air. This pandemic has presented beautiful and eerie sights of cities. For example, In Jalandhar, people could see the Dhauladhar mountain range of Himachal Pradesh, 250 km away, for the first time in 30 years which shows how blind we were in the process of development that we continue ignoring and destroying natural habitats. Deforestation in Delhi:

- According to the Environment ministry, 78263 trees have been chopped for various redevelopment projects from 2008- 2018 along with about 50,000

trees that have been also chopped for the Delhi metro project from 2013 to till date. India came 5<sup>th</sup> after Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mongolia, and Afghanistan in 98<sup>th</sup> countries which have worst air quality in 2019.

- In India, the Average PM 2.5 level was found 152µg/m<sup>3</sup>, which was 5 times above than WHO recommendation. Delhi came 5<sup>th</sup> in most polluted cities of the world with an average PM 2.5 level 98.6 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. To tackle this problem, we here presented another fact of Delhi Government who continually trying to save Delhi from becoming a dusty gaseous chamber.
- Afforestation in Delhi: As per the report of the forest department of Delhi, During 2018-19, 32.5 lakh trees and shrubs was planted, In 2019-20, 23 lakh trees and shrubs planted, and in 2020-21 about 19 lakh trees and shrubs was planted to date and Delhi government set a target of planting 31 lakh trees and shrubs.
- Green Cover of Delhi: As per the report of India state of forest report (ISFR), the Green Cover of Delhi has increased to 324 sq km in 2019 from 26 sq km in 1997.

| State of Forest Report | Forest/Tree Cover ( in sq. km) | Percentage in Geographic Area |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2011                   | 296.20                         | 19.97                         |
| 2013                   | 297.81                         | 20.08                         |
| 2015                   | 299.77                         | 20.22                         |
| 2017                   | 305.4                          | 20.60                         |
| 2019                   | 324                            | 21.90                         |

Source – Forest survey of India, Ministry of Environment and Forests. G.O.I

#### **Drawbacks of Tree Transplantation Policy:**

- According to the new policy, 80% of the trees uprooted for any construction/development projects, must be transplanted elsewhere but the problem is chopping of full-grown trees will leave a void in that particular location, which cannot be replaced by planting saplings or transplanted at a distant location. This will also not help in improving air quality or in preserving the green cover of that particular area.

- The poor survival rate of transplant trees: As per the report, it was found that for the Pragati Maidan Project, 2583 trees were chopped, and out of 2583, 1713 trees were transplanted. Later an expert panel found only 573 trees could survive their rest died due to shock of transplantation or different culture medium. Another surprising fact came that, of these, only 36 trees based on good health, form, and good structure were found viable.

**Conclusion:**

Tree Transplantation Policy is excellent in view of preserving natural habitat and counterattack of Air Pollution until it's strictly followed. Delhi deforestation is lesser than saplings plantation (at least on paper) but still the air quality of Delhi has not improved yet and it is going worst year by year and today Delhi has become a dusty gaseous chamber, we feel it especially in Diwali occasion and start of the winter season. Deforestation has masked because of afforestation and social forestry programs. However the Government of Delhi has already taken several measures to prevent and control air pollution in the state and doing all the things which a government should do. Further, the government needs to enact laws and policies strictly for the prevention of increasing air pollution and pollutants. The government should actively monitor tree plantation policy atleast it should not be on paper only.

