

Shifting Cultivation and Deforestation: A Socio-eco System Nexus

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses the environment-society nexus including both biological and socio-cultural factors. The impact of human activity on the environment, the environmental issues pertaining to development, deforestation and environmental degradation and the consequences of deforestation have been some of the major concerns of the paper. In this context the issue of shifting cultivation has been discussed not only as a cause of deforestation but also as a specific type of agricultural practice that has social, cultural and economic consequences on certain categories of people. The paper also suggests remedial measures to handle the problem of shifting cultivation and the resultant deforestation which was not seen in isolation but as a complex process between social ecological systems. The prolonged strategy which is suggested here is: firstly to wean the tribals from the practice of shifting cultivation and secondly, to undertake afforestation on a large scale. However any attempt to wean the tribals from the age old practice of shifting cultivation should take both biological as well as the human components in to consideration.