

Conservation of Forest: A case study report on a single man-made forest in Assam , Molai Forest located in Majuli district near Kokilamukh, Jorhat , Assam .

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ABSTRACT

As the world stands in the midst of a climate change crisis that is staring at humans, people like Jadav Payeng also known as Molai Payeng and “The Forest Man of India”, who was a local tribal from Assam has become a global reforestation hero, grew a 1360-acre forest in a barren sandbar .He spends 30 years of his life planting around 40 million trees to create a real man-made forest by changing a barren sandbar of the Brahmaputra, covering an area of 550 hectares of land which is known as ‘Molai . Eventually this becoming a forest reserve and came to be known as Molai forest located on Majuli district in the Brahmaputra River near Kokilamukh, located around 11 kms away from the city centre of Jorhat. It is named after Jadav Payeng, Indian environmental activist and forestry worker. He is often credited with the world’s largest man-made forest at Majuli Island in Assam. The forest also has a rich diversity of flora, including more than 100 species of trees and medicinal plants. In addition, this forest supports nearly 250 families who live in several clusters of 10 to 12 huts. This forest now provide shelter to Bengal tigers, Indian rhinoceros, over 100 deer and rabbits besides monkeys and several varieties of birds, including a large number of vultures. A herd of around 100 elephants regularly visits the forest every year and generally stays for around six months. There are several thousand trees, including Valcol, Arjun , Pride of India (Lagerstroemia), Royal poinciana , Silk trees , Moj and cotton trees and Bamboo covers an area of over 300 hectares.

Keywords – Forest, Environment, Flora Reforestation.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Forests are vital for human life because they provide a diverse range of resources: they store carbon and act as carbon sink, produce oxygen which is vital for existence of life on the earth, so they are rightly called as earth lung, help in regulating hydrological cycle, planetary climate, purify water, provide wild life habitat(50% of the earth’s biodiversity occurs in forests), reduce global warming, absorb toxic gases and noise, reduce pollution, conserve soil,mitigate natural hazards such as floods and landslides and so on. [1] But now-a-days, forest areas are depleting rapidly due to expansion of agriculture, timber plantation, other land uses like pulp and paper plantations, urbanization, construction of roads, industries, constitutes the biggest and severe threat to the forest causing serious environmental damage. Thus, there is need of awareness. This paper is a case study report on the man-made forest , Molai Forest and it’s significance in the conservation of forestry. Molai forest is a forest on Majuli district in the Brahmaputra River near Kokilamukh, Jorhat. It is named after Jadav Payeng, Indian environmental activist and forestry worker. The forest also has a rich diversity of flora, including more than 100 species of trees and medicinal plants. In addition, Molai Kathoni supports nearly 250 families who live in several clusters of 10 to 12 huts. After an initial 200 hectare planting by the social forestry division of Golaghat district was abandoned in 1983, [3]the forest was single-handedly attended by Payeng for 30 years and now encompasses an area of about 1,360 acres / 550 hectares. [3] He planted and tended trees on a sandbar of Majuli island in the Brahmaputra River, eventually becoming a forest reserve. Molai forest now house to Bengal tigers, Indian rhinoceros, over 100 deer and rabbits besides monkeys and several varieties of birds, including a large number of vulture. [4] A herd of around 100 elephants regularly visits the forest every year and generally stays for around six months. Initially, Molai attempted to grow bamboo and the few seedlings provided by the forest department. He affectionately watered and guarded the plants. After his hard work proved to be successful, he planted silk cotton saplings. [3] There are several thousand trees, including valcol, arjun (Terminalia arjuna), Pride of India (Lagerstroemia speciosa), royal poinciana (Delonix regia), silk trees (Albizia procera), moj (Archidendron bigeminum) and cotton trees (Bombax ceiba).

1.1 OBJECTIVE

1. To create awareness among people .
2. To study the creation and significance of Molai Forest.
3. To study the impact of conservation and management of forest .

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS

- i)Forests resources serves as a source of fishing ,hunting animals ,fruits from pants, to the local people.
- ii)They got fodder for their cattle, firewood etc.
- iii)Different species and varieties of plants are available, some of which are having medicinal properties and are acting as potential source of modern drugs.
- iv)Forests are used for sericulture, apiculture etc .
- v)It provide raw material to industries like paper ,plywood, rayon etc.
- vi)They provide employment opportunities to people.
- vii)Forest recourses became a source of foreign exchange in our country.
- viii)They play an important role in reducing atmospheric pollution.
- ix)It provide protection to wild life.
- x)It help in regulating gaseous cycle of the atmosphere and the earth's temperature.

II. FIELD OF STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 FIELD OF STUDY

The study has been conducted in the single man-made forest (Molai Forest) located in the district of Majuli and near to Kokilamukh, Jorhat .

2.1.1.MAJULI

Majuli is a largest island in the Brahmaputra River in Assam. It has a total area of 1,250 km² (483 sq mi), but by 2014, erosion had reduced its area to 352 km. The island is formed by the Brahmaputra River in the south and the Kherkutia Xuti, an anabranch of the Brahmaputra, joined by the Subansiri River in the north. The island is about 300–400 kilometres (186–249 mi) east from the state's largest city —Guwahati. It was formed due to course changes by the river Brahmaputra and its tributaries, mainly the Lohit. It is the abode of the Assamese neo-Vaishnavite culture. This island is accessible by ferries from the city of Jorhat . Local environmental activist Jadav Payeng has planted a 550-hectare forest, known as Molai Forest to combat erosion on the island. Much of the island was barren sandbars that were vulnerable to erosion but with the effort of one man the impossible has been made possible in this barren sandbar, afforestation has become a lush forest. The forest has become a habitat for animals including elephants, tigers, deer, and vultures.^[6]

2.1.2. KOKILAMUKH, JORHAT

It is located around 11 kms away from the city centre of Jorhat. Kokilamukh is a small village which is located beautifully at the banks of river Brahmaputra and is a picnic spot. Molai Forest is a 5 minute boat ride away from Kokilamukh in Jorhat. The latitude and longitude of Kokilamukh, Jorhat is – 26°44'54.0"N and 94°10'58.4"E respectively.

2.2 METHODOLOGY –

The methodology of the study is done through primary and secondary sources. Primary data is collected from the locals living near Molai Forest and by personally visiting the forest with my co-author. Secondary data is collected from newspapers like Assam Tribune, Dainik Janambhumi and from online research articles namely – '*Jadav Molai Payeng – the Forest Man of India*', authored by- Debajit Borah at Royal Global University and Dhrubajyoti Gogoi of Dibrugarh University . We cycled from Jorhat to Kokilamukh and then crossed the mighty Brahmaputra in a boat with our Scooty. We reached the place in a 5 minute boat ride away from Kokilamukh. Most of the river is dry now and its an amazing feeling to just walk on the river bed of the mighty Brahmaputra. Once on the island we get to see the simple lives that the locals live. Self sustained right from weaving their own clothes to growing their own food. No electricity on the island, very house has a solar panel for their evening electricity needs. We rode across the island amidst the man made forest to collect information for our research work and to explore the beauty of the forest .

III. OBSERVATION AND FINDINGS

Upon interrogating with the locals near by Molai Forest we came to know that an erosion in between 1965 and 1970 of 10 kilometres happened and Mohgorh Khuti turned into a desert and Jadav Payeng wanted a forest in that desert area, so he built a small boat and started planting saplings. People first thought he was crazy but he didn't give up on the saplings and came back every day to see their progress. Gradually he turned the

barren land of 550 hectares (over 1300 acres) into a lush green forest all by himself. It took almost 30 years for him to turn into a forest and he is very protective about it. He started planting in 1979 and continues doing that even today. According to some wild life experts the forest now attracts 80% of the world's migratory birds has been declared by wildlife experts [8]. Molai forest now houses Bengal tigers, Indian rhinoceros, over 100 deer and rabbits besides monkeys and several varieties of birds, including a large number of vulture. [4] A herd of around 100 elephants regularly visits the forest every year and generally stays for around six months. Initially, Molai attempted to grow bamboo and the few seedlings provided by the forest department. He affectionately watered and guarded the plants. After his hard work proved to be successful, he planted silk cotton saplings. [3] There are several thousand trees, including valcol, arjun (*Terminalia arjuna*), Pride of India (*Lagerstroemia speciosa*), royal poinciana (*Delonix regia*), silk trees (*Albizia procera*), moj (*Archidendron bigeminum*) and cotton trees (*Bombax ceiba*). In addition, Mulai Kathoni supports nearly 250 families who live in several clusters of 10 to 12 huts.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Jadav Molai Payeng never failed to do the work of developing his forest. No procrastination. He went on trying and finally he developed this huge forest. Preserverance was the mantra he followed. From the story of Jadav Molai Payeng, we learn that we all need to make Earth a better place to live for us as well as for the coming generations. He single handedly transformed a barren land into a forest. It was due to his positive attitude, affection towards nature, and hard work, that he could achieve success in planting trees, in over 1360 acres of land. From the story of Jadav Molai Payeng, we learn that we all need to make Earth a better place to live for us as well as for the coming generations and it is clear that if a large crowd causes harm to the environment, even a single person, if determined can establish a forest and benefit the environment in great ways. Also, if one person can make such an impact, many people coming together in unity to take efforts for environment conservation can bring about a revolution. This is an inspiration for us and we can atleast plant one sappling a day and take proper care of it to conserve our forest resources .

V. CONCLUSION

It conclude that from the story of Jadav Molai Payeng, we learn that we all need to make Earth a better place to live for us as well as for the coming generations and activities like deforestation and other activities that causes destruction to forest must be discouraged. Forest conservation not only a single man responsibility it's our responsibility as well and we have only one earth to live in. Let's plant more and more trees to survive and sustain and we must stop destruction to our forest and environmental resources .

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