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Degrading Sundarbans mangrove ecosystem of Bangladesh: An approach for sustainable management

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The Sundarbans forest is one of the most diverse and productive mangrove ecosystems in the world. This forest provides numerous economic, social and environmental benefits. In case of a developing country like Bangladesh, mangroves are an important source of livelihood generation through fishing, tourism, wood and non-wood products. But, the forest is now showing signs of degradation. Forest cover, species diversity and ecosystem functions have declined significantly, even though several forest policies, laws and management plans have been enacted to protect the forest. The aim of this study was to identify the leading causes of degradation of Sundarbans mangrove forest in Bangladesh by reviewing the available scientific literatures and to propose a sustainable management approach. The study found that, biodiversity and ecosystem of the Sundarbans is threatened due to several natural and anthropogenic causes i.e., overexploitation and illegal forest cutting, change in coastal agricultural patterns, sea port and industrial activities, coastal pollution, oil spillage, navigation, upstream structure, water flow reduction, increase salinity, spread of diseases, fire, natural disasters, climate change, sea level rise, inadequate knowledge of local people to Sundarbans, poor planning and management, tourism and increase man-animal conflict. So, proper implementation of the proposed resilient strategies becomes an important for sustainable forest management for Sundarbans and in similar mangroves forest in the world. Future management of mangrove forests will adopt an integrated approach by refining the current management and incorporating updated information throughout supplementary enthusiastic scientific expeditions and studies on mangrove forests. The achievement in the sustainable management of mangrove forests has indeed contributed to the sustainability of the wetlands in which is crucial to the survival and future health of the earth too.

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