

02/Dec/2019.

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Ques) Restoring grasslands in Saurashtra is the key to
make big cats thrive in their natural habitat.

Analyse it in the context of land degradation^B
neutrality. (200 words)

(Gs III. Environment)

Even though lions are carnivores, there exists an umbilical link b/w grass and big cats. Grass forms the starting point of all food chains.

Wild herbivores like - spotted deer, bull, wild boar form good prey base of the Asiatic lion which are highly dependent on grass.

Saurashtra is the region which has 20% of the of the grassland cover of Gujarat. It is also the last abode of Asiatic lion.

Good Maintenance
of Grassland

→ Good Prey
base

→ Ensure lion
population
healthy

Issue.

→ Gradual degradation of patches due to unwanted growth of woody and shrubby species minimised growth of good quality grass and has further increased the growth of prosopis, Van tulli, etc which is unpalatable for wild herbivores.

→ Grassland degradation has also lead to lack of

lack of fodder security and lack of good grazing ground which has further exacerbated the problem of shift of Asiatic lion to human settlement.

- 1) led to adverse effect to animal husbandry which further will effect the economy of the region
- 2) Lions shift to human settlement has given rise to Animal-human conflict.

Way forward.

- The forest, revenue and village must undertake a joint mission to restore the grassland.
- Grassland restoration not only enhances food security but also water security as it acts as watershed.
- Wild herbivores prefer open patches that will further make sure that Asiatic lion take interest in such land.
- Problems like crop degradation and human-animal conflict can be mitigated if grassland restoration is undertaken.
- Grassland restoration will also ensure the increased population of bustard, florican, wolves. as they prefer similar habitat.

→ Therefore along with grassland restoration not only India is able to check population of Big cats but also is able to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030.