

From 1950 to 1985, one half of Madagascar's forests disappeared. In 1985 only 34% of the original forests existing in Madagascar remained. Much of this destruction is for economic reasons; values which many westerners cannot agree. With a per capita national product in 1994 equal to $740.00 and population rate of 3%, the island nation is left as one of the poorest nations in the world.

One of example of where there has been a major loss of tropical rainforest is in Madagascar. Since 1896 when Madagascar gain became a French colony, the Malagasy forests have been rapidly depleting. Logging has occurred for shifting cultivation, grazing, fuel wood gathering, logging, economic development, cattle ranching, and mining. Prior to 1950 most deforestation that occurred was done by farmers on a very small scale, however, deforestation since 1950 has increased tremendously.

Today, tropical rainforests are disappearing from the face of the globe. Despite growing international concern, rainforests continue to be destroyed at a pace exceeding (32,000 hectares) per day. Tropical rainforests now stand at only 16.7 million square kilometres (6.4 million sq miles), an area about the size of the United States plus Australia. This represents around 3.3 percent of the world's land surface and much of this remaining area has been impacted by human activities and no longer retains its full original biodiversity.

Unfortunately, due to the hardship in Madagascar, citizens often resort to exploitation of their natural resources to find income. The people of Madagascar are attempting to survive and conservation of biological diversity is not a priority. In addition, corporations have significant influence in dealing with the problem of deforestation because the government of Madagascar wants their investment. Due to the extreme debt incurred by the Malagasy government, the country is exploiting its wood resources to pay off money owed to northern countries.