



## Tracing the Origin of 'Van Mahotsav' -The Nationwide Tree Plantation Festival

Van Mahotsav is a **week-long festival** celebrated in India. This is a festival of life and is usually celebrated between **1st July and 7th July**. It was **started by Dr. K M Munshi in 1950**. He was the Union Minister for Agriculture and Food at that time. The main objective behind starting this movement was to **create awareness** among people about **planting trees and conserving forests.** Dr. Munshi wanted this event to be considered as a festival and not just a mere plantation drive. He wanted people to participate whole-heartedly just as they would during any other festival. Van Mahotsav is a very significant event and thus questions based on this topic are most likely to be asked in various Government Exams. Read further to get the details on Van Mahotsav in brief which you can also download as PDF to revise later.

Through this movement, Dr. Munshi wanted to fulfill **objectives** which were:

- Increase production of fruits
- Help create shelter belts around agricultural fields
- Provide fodder leaves for cattle
- Boost soil conservation
- Prevent further deterioration of soil

Interestingly, the term Van Mahotsav originated in July 1947 after a successful tree plantation drive that was held in Delhi and saw national leaders like Abdul Kalam Azad. Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr Rajendra Prasad participate in it.

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As a part of Van Mahotsav celebration, afforestation drives are conducted across India. In the last few years, we have been cutting trees ruthlessly in the name of urbanization. Be it for construction of flyovers, roads, pavements or buildings, trees have been cut without been given a second thought. However, this in-human act has only affected us and in a big way. In fact, according to a report by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, **the total remaining tree cover of India** including forests and non-forest areas was just **24.16%** in 2015. Thus, this campaign helps to create awareness about benefits of trees and the harm caused by deforestation.

**Climate change** is one of the **biggest drawback of cutting down of trees** and the issue needs to address before it is too late. **Thus,** festivals such as **Van Mahotsav are** 





**the need of the hour! Van Mahotsav** will help reduce the declining number of trees and also bring about a change in the environment.



## How is the Van Mahotsav Celebrated?

Generally, **native trees are planted during Van Mahotsav** owing to its ability to adapt to the local conditions better and because these trees have a high survival rate. Additionally, native trees are also believed to support birds, insects and animals. As the onset of monsoon in India usually begins in the first week of July, it is considered an ideal choice of conducting the festival. Also, it has been observed that most **sapling** planted during this time have more chances of survival than those planted during other times of the year.

State Governments and civic bodies supply saplings to schools, colleges and academic institutions, NGOs and welfare organizations for planting trees during this week-long festival of life.

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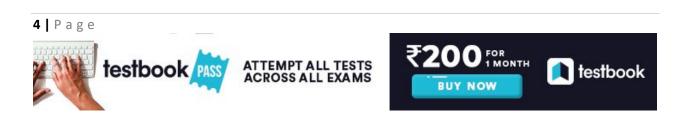
Van Mahotsav sees lakhs of saplings being planted every year. With the ever-growing threats of pollution and global looming around us, initiative such as Van Mahotsav are more than welcome!



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