

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INSTITUTE LEVEL MONTHLY RESEARCH SEMINAR HELD ON 28.06.2018

10th Monthly research seminar on the title “**Forest Fire and Its Impact on Forest Management**” on the issue “**Managing Forests and Forests Products for Livelihood Support & Economic Growth**” was organised in the Conference Hall of the institute on **28th June 2018**. All the scientists, officers and researchers including technical staff of the institute were present during the seminar. In addition, two external experts **Sh. B. D. Suyal**, IFS, Regional Director, Forest Survey of India, Shimla and **Sh. Raman Sharma**, DFO (Projects), HP Forest Department were also present for sharing their perspectives and viewpoints *viz- a -viz* identification of the research needs and implementation strategies with specific reference to the reduction in the losses caused by the forest fire.



Dr. K.S. Kapoor, Group Coordinator Research, Chaired the proceedings of monthly research seminar. At the outset, he welcomed the external experts and extended heartfelt thanks for sparing their valuable time from their busy schedule. The Chairman even went to the extent by saying that despite holiday in the state, Mr. Sharma, Dy, CF (Projects) from the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department made it a point to attend this seminar.



After his welcome address, Dr. Kapoor, requested **Sh. B.D. Suyal**, IFS, Regional Director to share his viewpoint through a presentation for which he was specifically requested. Sh. Suyal gave a crisp but quite informative presentation on the “**Management of Forest Fire in Himachal Pradesh**”.

His presentation reflected complete analysis and integration of empirical data on the subject and highlighted the myths and realities of the fire incidences. He informed the participants that 11478 ha area get burnt every year in the state of Himachal Pradesh. He further elaborated upon the issue through support of relevant data from 1969-70 onward and said that forest fire incidences and area burnt are two different things but, still we normally confuse and mix these two words.



He flagged some important and significant issues for initiating research activities like creation of base line data, cyclical behaviour of fires, ecology of chirpine vis a vis forest fires, burnt area assessment and afforestation strategy in fire prone areas including preparation of models on these lines.

In the end of his presentation, he emphasised upon developing site specific strategies so as to estimate the losses in the realistic terms, thereby, enabling the states to make adequate budgetary provision to contain the problem in an effective and efficient manner. He concluded his presentation by emphasizing upon that the research on these lines should be carried out with its practical feasibility in mind.

Second presentation on the topic during the monthly research seminar revolved around **“Forest Fires and Their Impacts in Forest Management”** on the issue **“Managing forests and forests products for livelihood support & economic growth”** was made by **Dr. Ranjeet Kumar, Scientist-E** and **Mrs. Shilpa, ACTO**. The speaker elaborated upon the issue of Forest Fires in quite comprehensive way. In-fact, the presentation was too exhaustive where, variety of causes, factors and implications of the fires on forest compositions and soil physico-chemical characteristics were explained. Many



illustrated instances of forest fires, their origin and subsequent consequences on the national and global level were touched and explained. In his presentation, a checklist and photographs of the tools, which are very handy during the fire fighting operations, were also shown to the participants. They expressed their concern over the fast establishment of invasive weeds like *Lantana camera* and *Ageratina adenophora* in the burnt out areas in the forests. It was also pointed out that the research gaps certainly exist in the study on the forest fire ecology and research organization must take care of these issues.

There is a specific need to carry out studies with reference to the value additions of pine needles of the *Pinus roxburghii* for improving the livelihood of fringe villages of forests, they added. It was also pointed out that it will also help to mitigate the chances of forest fire in chirpine forests. He also apprised about the All India Co-ordinated Research Project (AICRP) being proposed to generate a database on the management of forest fire and capacity building on this issue. He also presented the progress and inferences of the ongoing research project on forest fires.

Sh. Raman Sharma, DFO (Projects) while expressing his views on this occasion highlighted and underlined concerns of the forest department for developing strategies for tackling and mitigating the forest fires. He emphasised upon the fact that forest fires quite often occur quite spontaneously and spreads like anything and controlling these fires certainly, pose a big challenges.

After the presentations, a wide ranging discussion on this topic amongst the participants was held. Queries and concerns were raised on different aspects of forest fires and its management. There was a general consensus that issue of forest fire is very complex and there is a dire need on the concerted efforts both on its part of research organization and administration line department are requested to evolve a viable and foolproof mechanism at least to reduce the incidents of blaze in the forests.



Outcomes of the Seminars:

1. Identification of the gray areas in the existing set-ups of forest fire fighting mechanisms.
2. Improvement of scientific knowledge and management of forest fires.
3. Revival of discussions on these issues between the research institutes and the stakeholder departments to deal with the problem.
4. Preparation of holistic model for managing forest fires.
5. Assessment of the burnt areas including development of afforestation strategy especially for fire prone areas.

Formulation of Future strategies & Networking:

It was discussed and unanimously agreed that HFRI in due course of time can take up research projects on “**Forest Fire Research and Knowledge Management**” with the following objectives;

1. Creation of Forest Fire Research and Knowledge Management by developing database and online repository on forest fire with the help of related agencies, NGOs, scientific institutions, experts and other stakeholders.
2. Research and development activities for managing forest fires.
3. Capacity building with respect to forest fire management of different stakeholders through trainings of potential stakeholders.
4. To design and develop strategy for nation-wide awareness campaign with respect to prevention, control & management of forest fires.

It was also proposed that collaboration on these lines can always be done with other institute like FRI, Dehradun or any other research institute.

In the end, Dr. K.S. Kapoor, GCR thanked the participants in general and the external experts in particular for their active involvement in this seminar and also providing the best of their inputs for prioritizing the research needs and areas, identification of the gaps for developing futuristic strategies. He further added that the intent of the seminar has been achieved to a considerable extent.

SOME GLIMPSES OF THE SEMINAR


