

## **FOREST PROTECTION**

Forest protection comprises of all the activities and actions taken by the forest owner to provide safety to the natural resources, growing stock and also the investments made thereof.

### **General Threats to the forest are:-**

Illegal felling, Encroachment or adverse possession, illegal mining of sand and other natural resources, illegal grazing and cattle/ human movement in seeded forest, soil erosion, dumping of wastes harming the natural ecosystem, infection due to fungi/ bacterial, pest attack on crop, obnoxious weeds, forest fires and many others that deplete the resource in any way and harm the natural system.

In the present global scenario even the activity not in coherence with sustainable development, carbon sequestration and climate change correlating principal and conservation concepts, is also regarded as a threat.

### **FIRE PROTECTION**

Forest fires can be due to natural or man-made causes. These can be ground fire, surface fire or crown fire. Forest fire is one of the major threats to the forest that leads to loss of valuable timber resources, disturbance in the ecological succession and hence ecosystem, loss and depletion of wild life habitat, reduction of forest cover, increase rate of release of carbon sequestered into atmosphere and other non-repairable loss.

### **Mitigation Measures and protection:-**

- Forest fires generally occur in a seasonal pattern. The major prevention taken for mitigation. Forest fires is removal of forest litter consisting dried twangs, leaves etc., from the “forest fire line”. Clearances of fire line prevent spread of fire from one to the rest compartment.
- Analysis of fire for past few years shows a general pattern of occurrence of fires. These areas have been mostly identified as vulnerable zones in West Bengal. Alerts have been issued in 2016 to field officers at the absent of forest fire season for taking adequate precaution and prediction in such vulnerable areas to prevent damage due to forest fires.
- G.I.S. lab of West Bengal also issued daily alerts based on satellite data regarding forest fires.
- The integrated forest protection scheme also funds activities for forest fire prevention.
- Pamphlets and other advisories have also been issued to locals especially ESCs/ FPCs for taking needful action and assisting forest staff in prevention and also during the forest fires.
- The state is in process of technological up gradation so that the forest fire alerts are line basis and even the minimum damage to natural resources due to fires is also prevented.

## **FOREST ENCROACHMENT**

The illegal occupation of forest land for any activity like dwelling, agriculture etc. is regarded as encroachment. This is one of the unauthorized activities that deplete the forest areas.

The National Forest Policy 1952 and other subsequent stipulate that minimum of 33% of the country's land under forest cover. In West Bengal only 18.96% of geographical area as per the Indian state forest report 2015.

The increasing population and depleting livelihood resources have been the major contributor towards such encroachment but in West Bengal the joint forest management has contributed quite well towards generation of required awareness and prevention of encroachment to some extent.