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H.P. Forest Sector Policy & Strategy 2005



**Forest Department
Government of Himachal Pradesh**

FOREWORD

The Government of Himachal Pradesh has developed the Forest Sector Policy & Strategy 2005 in consonance with the Government of India Policy guidelines and by making important amendments to the previous HP Forest Policy of 1980. The policy has been developed through a multi-stakeholder consultation process by the Policy Analysis and Planning Unit (PAPU) set up under the Himachal Pradesh Forest Sector Reforms Project. This process is a model for policy development in the state and I would like to express my appreciation to PAPU for steering the process and would like to thank the Department for International Development (DFID UK) for the support provided under the Himachal Pradesh Forest Sector Reforms Project.

This policy will however remain only a 'statement of intent' until it is implemented and made workable on the ground, and this will require sincere and energetic efforts. I encourage not only the Forest Department staff, but also local people and their representatives, civil society groups, other government departments, and academics and teachers, all to become involved in realizing the spirit of this policy in day-to-day practice. To achieve this will require appropriate changes in the field practices, and reform legal and administrative framework.

The endeavor in the Forest Sector Policy is to achieve the vision of the Himachal Pradesh Government which aims to harmonize relations between people and environment. It seeks to address the aspirations of the people by making forestry a vibrant sector contributing towards livelihood enhancement of forest dependent communities through the departments working on natural resource management.

Ashok Thakur, IAS
Principal Secretary (Forest)
to the Government of HP



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BLEC	Block Level Expert Committee
CAT	Catchment Area Treatment
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDM	Clean Development Mechanisms
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna
CPP	Centre for Policy and Planning
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DFO	Divisional Forest Officer
EPA	Environment Protection Act
FCA	Forest Conservation Act
FIC	Forest Information Centre
FSO	Forest Settlement Officer
GoHP	Government of Himachal Pradesh
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HP	Himachal Pradesh
HPFD	Himachal Pradesh Forest Department
HPFSRP	Himachal Pradesh Forest Sector Reforms Project
HRD	Human Resource Development
JFM	Joint Forest Management
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAP	Medicinal and Aromatic Plants
NBA	National Bio-Diversity Authority
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NDPF	New Demarcated Protected Forests
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Produce
NWFP	Non Wood Forest Products
PA	Protected Area
PAN	Protected Areas Network
PAPU	Policy Analysis and Planning Unit
PESA	Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996
PFM	Participatory Forest Management
PRIs	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PURA	Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas
R & D	Research & Development
SBB	State Biodiversity Board
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
SLUB	State Land Use Board
SVY	Sanjhi Van Yojna
TD	Timber Distribution
TFRK	Traditional Forest Related Knowledge
UNFF	United Nations Forum on Forests
WTO	World Trade Organisation



HIMACHAL PRADESH FOREST SECTOR POLICY AND STRATEGY

1. PREAMBLE

Recognising that the forests and other natural ecosystems of Himachal Pradesh, which constitute two-third of the geographical area of the state, are crucial for its environmental, ecological and economic well-being and that the influence of the state's forests transcends well beyond its boundaries, significantly impacting on the ecology and economy of the Indo-gangetic plains;

Realising that there has been a paradigm shift in the objectives and management practices for forestry at the national and state level from the first state forest policy for Himachal Pradesh which was adopted on 3rd September 1980 in furtherance of the National Forest Policy resolution of 1952 to the coming into force of the Forest Conservation Act 1980 and the National Forest Policy of 1988 and a constitutional devolvement of power to the Panchayati Raj Institutions to usher in a democratic decentralisation process through the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992;

Responding to new developments such as participatory forest management which has been adopted as an alternative national approach to forest management and is premised on collaboration, decentralisation and democratisation which in turn has resulted in forestry becoming pluralistic recognising multiple use; multiple stakeholders and multiple values;

Introducing a *"Forest Sector Concept"* where it encompasses the entire biophysical and environmental components comprising lands and biological resources (i.e. forests, watersheds, wetlands, wildlife, biodiversity and habitats) and includes the stakeholders and institutions directly or indirectly dependent on or responsible for the management of these resources for livelihood security and sustenance. These include other sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, rural development and other institutions and organisations having interests and/or dependence on the 'Sector' directly or indirectly;

Conscious that biodiversity conservation, multi stakeholder approaches, livelihood security, gender and equity concerns have become central to sustainable development and forest management;

Committed to the need for comprehensive change in response to the changing scenario through a Vision, Mission and Value statement:

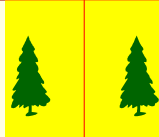
"The HPFD aims to be a committed organization of excellence in forestry, serving communities and the nation for harmony between people, environment, conservation and development. Working in partnerships, we manage and protect the unique Himalayan bio-diversity for the future. Creative and dynamic, we aspire to be the best forestry service."

Realising that the Forest Sector Policy is a dynamic and consultative process involving all stakeholders and endeavours to achieve the vision of the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department as well as the aspirations of the people of Himachal Pradesh. We give to ourselves this new Forest Sector Policy including illustrative strategies to achieve the aims and objectives of the Policy.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Mountain Context

Himachal is a mountain state, exerting influence well beyond its boundaries. Like mountain regions all over the world, it is a source of water for the plains. Home to the catchments of four major tributaries of Indus river system, and the Yamuna River; its environment health has significant impact on the agriculture and economy of the Indo-gangetic plains which cuts across three South Asian countries. Apart from water and hydro-electricity, Himachal has valuable forest, agricultural and recreational resources. Being exceedingly fragile, even seemingly small changes can have far reaching impacts. Mountain environment thus requires different approaches than those for the lowlands. A forest sector policy and strategy for the state thus would have to be highly sensitive to the uniqueness of mountain environment and which places



people at the centre recognising the need to achieve a balance between people, environment, conservation and development.

2.2 Ecological Importance

The forests of the state are rich in biodiversity and play a vital role in preserving the fragile Himalayan ecosystem while also being a primary livelihood source for the rural population and prime source of fresh water for both urban and rural population. The major forest types represented are moist tropical, dry tropical, montane sub-tropical, montane temperate, sub- alpine and alpine scrub, comprising coniferous and miscellaneous broad- leaved tree species.

Although nearly 66% of the geographical area of the state is forest land as per records, the extent of actual forest cover on all categories of land in the state is only around 26%. Himachal Pradesh has more than 12% of its area under two National parks and thirty- two wildlife sanctuaries which are home to some rare and endangered faunal and floral species such as the snow leopard, musk deer, pheasants and Himalayan yew.

The cold desert region of the state comprising Spiti sub division of Lahaul and Spiti District and Pooh Sub Division of Kinnaur district is a distinct biome and manifests remarkable ecological and biological diversity having their unique characteristics of isolation and marginality. Cold deserts merit specially focused research and a concerted effort in terms of natural resource management as they have been so far governed by general development policies, disregarding the uniqueness of the region.

2.3 Developmental Context in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh has a population of 6.07 million (2001 Census), of which 90% live in rural areas. Its per capita income makes it one of India's less poor states; however, there are very substantial disparities in wealth within rural communities of the state. An estimated 26.7 % of its population is below the poverty line. Over 29% of Himachal's population are Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and of these groups about 45% are below the poverty line. Population growth has resulted in

increasing pressure on the limited land available for agriculture, and forests remain the principal source of grazing, fuelwood and fodder, especially among the poorest, as well as for rights and concessions such as Timber Distribution Rights. Non Wood Forest Products constitute an important source of livelihood for the poor and especially landless.

In the light of the increasing demand placed on the forest sector, its diminished capacity to meet the forest needs of the people, sustainability has become the major challenge which is being felt both at national, state and local levels.

Cumulatively, deforestation and forest degradation result in adverse ecological and livelihood consequences listed below, leading to reduced well- being of the present and future generations.

- Reduction in biodiversity due to destruction of habitats of fauna and flora.
- Irregular water flow and drying up of natural springs and increased vulnerability to flash floods during rains.
- Loss of soil fertility associated with soil erosion, resulting in the reduction of agricultural productivity.
- Widening gap between demand and supply for wood products resulting in rapidly increasing prices and increasing imports of timber and other wood products.
- Scarcity of fodder and fuel- wood.
- Increase in carbon levels contributing to global warming.

Forest Sector
Forest sector in the context of this Policy means and includes the entire biophysical and environmental components comprising lands, soil, water and biological resources (flora and fauna) under the control and management of the Himachal Pradesh Forest department as also the forest tree crops outside the forest lands and includes the stakeholders directly dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods and other sectors, institutions and the government departments having interests/ dependence in the 'Sector' directly or indirectly.

2.4 Policy Context

The need for an appropriate Forest Sector policy emerges from the recognition that the economic, environmental, social and institutional circumstances are changing. In order to periodically review and adapt to



these changes, the policies and programmes of the Government need to be made more responsive and capable, so that the interests of the forest sector and people dependent on the resource do not suffer. The "Sector" concept has been introduced in forestry to encompass the entire biophysical and environmental components such as land and biological resources (fauna and flora), the impacts of other land resource using sectors on forests, forest plantations and tree crops outside the forests, soil and water, the mitigation of atmospheric pollution and global warming, in addition to human needs and requirements.

The 'Sector' concept lays a firm foundation for a new Forest Sector Policy and Strategy development in Himachal Pradesh based on principles of multiple stakeholders and multiple forest values that would create an appropriate enabling environment for enhancing forest-based livelihoods and sustainable forest management, that emphasises the involvement of local communities and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the management of forests in the state.

2.5 Policy Precedents - National and State

The first state forest policy for Himachal Pradesh was adopted on 3rd September 1980 in furtherance of the National Forest Policy resolution of 1952. In 1988, India introduced a progressive National Forest Policy that recognised the relationship between rural poverty and environmental protection. The National Forest Policy (1988) establishes a principal aim 'to ensure environmental stability and ecological balance', and directs that the domestic requirements of poor and marginalised forest users should be the first charge on forest produce. The policy calls for the enhancement of incomes and employment through improved and increased production of non-wood forest products (NWFPs), and proposes that a massive people's movement with the involvement of women should be generated to achieve the objectives. In pursuance of the objectives of the National Forest Policy mentioned above the Ministry of Environment and Forest issued a circular in June 1990 to various State Departments of Forest (vide no.6-21/89-F.P) encouraging the involvement of village communities and voluntary agencies for regeneration of forest land. Most of the States have now issued

notifications pertaining to Joint Forest Management in line with the Central Government circular. The Government of Himachal introduced the concept of JFM through its resolution in 1993 and subsequently PFM Rules in 2001.

Trends in the Forest Sector in the country as a whole and globally are reflected in the developments that have hitherto taken place and are intended in the future in Himachal Pradesh:

- The decision-making process is progressively being opened up to allow increased public participation as evidenced by the involvement of civil society organisations in the sector and of village communities through programs such as JFM / PFM.
- An increasing awareness and sensitivity about issues concerning local people and their rights on forest and forest based resources.
- A shift towards a more decentralised and people oriented forestry, including community control and management of community resources as encapsulated in legislation such as PESA [Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act, 1996].
- Increasing influence of international concerns and impacts resulting in forest issues are becoming more globalized. The UNFF process and Forestry Principles and other binding and non binding international instruments are few examples in this regard.
- The set of forest values receiving explicit consideration in management is being expanded to include Non Wood Forest Products (NWFPs), watershed functions, biological diversity, wildlife habitats, recreation values and ecological health among others.
- An increasing use and integration of participatory monitoring and evaluation in the Forest sector.
- Increasing efforts to create a new global market for forest based services and products through international instruments and mechanisms such as Kyoto Protocol, Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), and certification for sustainably managed forests and green products.
- A growing debate about intensively managed plantations versus integrated management and natural regeneration.
- Decreasing subsidies and increasing private participation in the sector.
- An increasing interest in open, transparent, accountable and efficient governance.

Many provisions of the H.P. State Forest Policy, 1980 have become redundant over time and new developments have taken place. Thus for example the contractor system for forest harvesting and providing wood for packing cases have been abolished while industrial development is taking place on a large scale and enactments such as the Forest Conservation Act are now in force. Moreover the 1980 policy was not revised in light of the National Forest Policy of 1988.

However, certain policy and legal measures were undertaken. Thus for example the Government of Himachal Pradesh issued an order on Joint



Forest Management (JFM) in 1993, and PFM Rules were notified in August 2001. Participatory Forest Management was promoted across the entire state through *Sanjhi Van Yojna* [SVY] and other Projects. In order to improve upon and remove difficulties of various programmes and projects on forestry especially their economic viability and institutional sustainability, a need has arisen to develop participatory management approach further to a more sustainable model that involves the forest sector as a whole effectively.

The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 mandates decentralisation through the three tier system of local self government known as Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The Government of Himachal Pradesh gave effect to this initiative through the Himachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj Act, 1994. The Forest Sector Policy supports this initiative by strengthening and working through the local government institutions at all levels, and actively pursuing the integration of state government department's activities through the PRIs. Similarly the 'scheduled areas' have a new mandate through the Provisions of Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) and the conforming state amendments in 1997. This Policy will support and benefit from these actions and amendments by pursuing change within government departments and strengthening PRIs.

3. GOAL

The Forest Sector Policy seeks to achieve sustainable forest management in Himachal Pradesh i.e. forests, watersheds, wildlife, biodiversity and habitats, for the maintenance and rehabilitation of its environment and strive for enhanced livelihoods of the people of the state, especially women and other resource poor groups.

4. PRINCIPLES

In the context of the physical, developmental and policy background described above, the following are set out as the guiding principles of the Forest Sector Policy of Himachal Pradesh.

4.1 Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is a complex term which has been variously defined globally. It has been defined as "improving the quality of human life in perpetuity, while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem, and not undermining the diversity and importance of other natural species and systems, indicating a positive change which does not undermine the environment or social systems on which we depend." Sustainable development has also been defined as a means to achieve livelihood security.

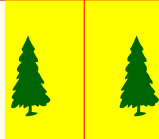
"Sustainable Development of natural resources is an enabling environment where conservation, use, access and enhancement of natural resources complement and balance each other for improving the quality of life of every individual who is affected by the natural environment".

The broad concern of sustainable development is thus to fulfil the essential needs of all human beings and all other species in an ecologically sound manner. It requires a coordinated approach to planning and policy making. Public participation is central, critical and indispensable to this process.

"For most mountain inhabitants of developing countries, fields, grazing land and forests are the main workplaces and source of sustenance. Their way of life is characterized by the complementary use of different altitudinal belts, which is conditioned by physical factors and infrastructure constructed over generations. Pressures to intensify the use of these landscapes threaten their careful management, on which not only mountain people but their downstream neighbours depend". (Mountains of the World: Challenges for the 21st Century)

4.2 Integrated Natural Resource Management

Integrated natural resource management is an essential ingredient of sustainable development and is of particular significance to mountain areas where sustainable management of natural resources that incorporates economic, social and environmental values and involves



the community, industries and governments in planning and decision making is promoted.

Integrated approach recognizes the inter-relatedness of all natural resources and it should promote coordinated policies, programs, plans and projects in the exercise and performance of administrative and statutory functions by government agencies, statutory authorities, local government bodies, and the community at large.

4.3 Decentralized Governance

The decentralization of power from capital cities towards towns and villages can be one of the best ways to empower mountain inhabitants, reduce costs and increase efficiency especially in the context of natural resource management. This will lead to a more secure property rights regime, improve access to financial resources, markets, information, training and ensure equitable participation in political decision making. The mountain communities should be empowered to act as the effective stewards of mountain resources.

In the context of integrated natural resource management, decentralisation means the application of principles of good governance - transparency, rationality, accountability, reduction in time and costs and participation at the local level.

4.4 Gender and Equity

Some sections of the society, who are the most dependent on forest resources for their livelihoods should not be marginalized in development processes. Special efforts are required to provide equal space in institutions and mechanisms of decision making to bring to the forefront, the perceptions, attitudes and choices of all stakeholders especially women and poor. Equity in the context of this Policy refers to both equity in entitlements and participation of all stakeholders in processes of decision-making over management and control of forest resources.

4.5 Policy as a Process

Economic, environmental, social and institutional frameworks and resource needs are rapidly changing, both within Himachal Pradesh and outside. The forest sector policy and strategy thus need a regular review and adaptation to address these changes through appropriate institutions and processes.

5. BASIC OBJECTIVES

Within the framework of the National Forest Policy, 1988, the basic objectives of the Forest Sector Policy of Himachal Pradesh are to:

- Conserve and improve the status of natural resources in the state, especially forests, wildlife and biodiversity through effective watershed management practices.
- Conserve and manage forests scientifically, contemporarily and incorporating the best practices from within and outside the state, for the present and future generations, and to increase their values – historical, cultural, religious, economic and aesthetic – for communities and the environment on a sustainable basis.
- Strive for livelihood security of forest dependent communities through protection of rights to forest goods and services.
- Establish and support an integrated governance system that effectively involves all stakeholders in protecting, conserving, using, managing and restoring forests and other natural resources of the State.
- Fulfil obligations under various national policies and laws, international instruments including covenants, agreements and protocols related to the forest sector.
- Strive towards an appropriate land use in the state especially in the context of sustainable forest management, focusing on other primary land use sectors such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and those related to infrastructure development.



- Strengthen the capacity for research, training, extension, education and awareness of government and non-government institutions, related to the forest sector.
- Apply the best scientific information, resources, management practices and strategies available to implement the forest sector policy and create a mechanism to periodically review the policy keeping in view the changing circumstances and needs.

6. POLICY MEASURES

Policy measures also include a definitive strategy. However the strategies mentioned are illustrative and inclusive and not limited to them.

6.1. Classification of Forests

While classification by vegetation and ecological types is relevant for silvicultural purposes and legal categorisation is based on degree of control, the functional classification of forests is important in the context of this Policy to promote appropriate land use for increased productivity, providing enhanced livelihood opportunities and improved conservation.

Conservation Forests: This category shall be delineated from the existing reserved / protected forests in the State having little biotic interference and shall be controlled and managed by the Forest Department primarily for physical, climatic, hydrological and ecological considerations for environmental and biodiversity conservation. This category of forests shall also include protected area network, which constitutes more than 12 percent of the State area. Such areas shall be managed as per established principles of protected area management. While fulfilling the functions of this category the existing rights of the local communities in these forests shall be safeguarded or duly compensated as the case may be.

Production Forests: This category shall be delineated from the existing reserved/protected forests and shall be maintained and managed primarily for sustained production of timber and non-timber forest products while also providing for the rights of the people and

environmental services. This category of forests will be the main source of revenue to the government.

Community Forests: This category of forests shall be carved out from the protected forests and village common lands and managed by village communities through the PRI system or other enabling village level institutions, in harmony with the provisions of the Participatory Forest Management Rules. The category will be introduced in a phased manner, beginning with villages and panchayats with strong, expressed commitment for managing these forests. These forests shall primarily be managed to meet the livelihood needs especially of the resource poor sections of the community in addition to providing environmental services. The HPFD will play a supportive and facilitative role in the management of community forests.

Urban Forests: These forests shall be managed for improving the urban landscape, aesthetic values and environment services.

Strategies

- The HPFD in consultation with other stakeholders will devise criteria and mechanisms to assess and categorise the State's forests into Conservation, Production, Community and Urban forests. Necessary modifications in the Working plan code will be made to accordingly reorganise these forests in a time bound manner and make provisions for periodically reviewing such categories.
- The rationale of Protected Areas Network (PAN) in the state including the extent of area required will be reviewed, taking into account the representation of the various bio-diversity resources of the state and the livelihood requirements of the people.
- An enabling legal framework including review of the PFM rules, 2001 will be made for the management and control of Community forests.
- The establishment and maintenance of green belts in urban areas as part of urban land use planning will be promoted by establishing linkage with Urban Authorities and Town and Country Planning department of the state government.



6.2 Area under Forests

The Government of Himachal Pradesh is committed to bringing more

Area Capable of Sustaining Trees (Km ²)	
• Total Geographical area	55,673
• Forest area (legal classification)	37,033
• State area (4000m and above altitude) unsuitable for tree crops	19,020
It is assumed that: Entire 19,020 Km ² area is part of legally classified forest area, without private ownership, is uncultivable and cannot sustain tree crops.	
There is also an area of about 1000 Km ² below 4,000 m altitude under streams, Nallahs etc, which cannot sustain tree crops	
	1,000
• Thus total legally classified forest area that cannot sustain tree crops	20,020
• Legally classified forest area that can sustain tree crops (37,033 - 20,020)	17,013
	or 30.5%*
(Source: HP Forest Department Statistics 2000 & HP Crop Report 2001, 82)	
• Area under Horticulture	2,230
	or 4.0 %*
(Source: Statistical outline HP 2002-2003)	
• Land area under Misc. tree crops included in agriculture	568
	or 1.0 %*
• Total area which is supporting or can support tree crops over Forest, Agriculture and Horticulture lands.	35.5%*

* Of the total geographical cover of the state

land. Thus only about seventeen thousand square km within the legally classified forest area can support tree crop, equivalent to 30.5 percent of the total State geographical area. In addition about 5 percent area of the state is under tree cover as horticulture and farm forestry.

In view of the above facts, the state will aim at bringing 35.5 percent of the total geographical area of the state under forest and tree cover and the balance legally classified forest land will continue to be managed for other purposes such as alpine pastures and glaciers.

Strategies

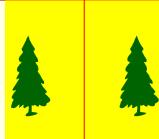
- The uniqueness of Himachal Pradesh as a hill state and its unique physical and ecological status especially those areas that are uncultivable needs to be explained in reference to the National Forest Policy for justifying the extent of forest and tree cover and will be taken up with the Central Government.
- A coordinated and collaborative effort from all land using sectors will be made to achieve and enhance the target of 35.5 % forest and tree cover through measures such as reforestation and afforestation, agro forestry, farm forestry and utilising marginal and private lands for fodder development.

6.3 Afforestation

Area under forest and tree cover will be expanded through systematic planning and implementation of afforestation and rehabilitation programme in degraded and open forests and available non forest lands. Regeneration of felled areas will be ensured in a time bound manner and productivity of plantations will be increased through use of improved seeds and planting stock. Monoculture especially of Chirpine will be discouraged and mixed plantations of broad- leaved fodder, fuel wood and wild fruit species will be promoted. Wherever feasible plantations would follow the multi-tier and multiple use afforestation and rehabilitation strategy.

Strategies

- The status of existing open forests (below 40% density) will be improved through multi-tier afforestation and rehabilitation programs, assisted natural regeneration and adopting participatory approaches to ensure that the productivity is maximised.
- The area under tree cover will be expanded through regular afforestation and tree plantation activities of appropriate species in wastelands, degraded forest areas marginal and private lands.
- The choice of species to be planted in a forest will be guided by the



management objectives. In community forests, the species for planting will be decided through a participatory approach.

- Mixed plantations of adaptable, economically useful species, including potential bio-fuel species will be promoted and where feasible multi-tier crops will be raised, to address livelihood concerns of the resource poor groups.
- Exotic species in afforestation will be introduced only after extensive field trials.
- Plantations of wild fruit trees will be done to augment the food base to wild animals and birds.
- Effective measures to regenerate threatened and declining species such as oaks, chilgoza pine, yew, junipers and walnut will be taken.
- Plantations of seabuckthorn will be given high priority in cold desert areas and plantation technology for seabuckthorn will be standardised through collaborative research for wider adoption and acceptance.
- Live-hedges will be adopted along the periphery of plantations as an effective fencing measure.
- General awareness for promoting afforestation and sustainable management of degraded areas, and identifying their linkage with rural livelihoods, will be created with the assistance of voluntary agencies, NGOs, PRIs and others.
- Better and modern nursery management practices will be adopted at the Range level to ensure the availability of quality planting stock. Programmes to encourage the participation of youth organisations, mahila mandals and CBOs in nursery raising will be put in place.
- Research programmes covering all important aspects of forest plantations including tree improvement, provenance trials, growth and yield tables and end uses will be planned and implemented.

6.4 Forest Sector and Land Use Planning

The need for land use planning becomes imperative to balance the competing demands of different sectors in order to promote balanced land use and check the diversion of prime lands under forestry and agriculture. The State Land Use Board will undertake this task on priority. The forest sector shall be an integral part of the land use planning.

Land under tree cover needs to be safeguarded for providing sustained benefits to the community and diversion of such land to other purposes should be done after careful examination from the social and environmental standpoint.

Strategies

- The State Land Use Board (SLUB) will be strengthened for streamlining the land use planning process and existing arrangements of the state land use resources by empowering it through adequate financial resources, representative staffing from all land using departments and regulatory functions.
- Land using departments will have an environment expert to integrate the environmental concerns in their planning process.
- Efforts will be made to increase awareness and sensitivity to environmental impacts of various schemes and programmes of the concerned land using departments.
- The community will be informed and their skills upgraded for adoption of appropriate land use practices in order to increase both productivity and incomes.

6.5 Rights and Concessions

As per settlement records local people enjoy certain rights and concessions to use forest resources either free of cost or on payment of nominal fee and such rights are appended to agricultural land. The National Forest Policy, 1988 unequivocally stipulates that rights and concessions should always remain related to the carrying capacity of the



forests. In Himachal Pradesh due to increasing human and cattle population and increasing demands and commercial needs the rights and concessions are now beyond the carrying capacity of the forests.

The holders of the rights and concessions in forest areas will have the responsibility to identify themselves with the protection, development and management of forests in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of such rights and concessions. Further, the rights and concessions which existed in the erstwhile princely states and territories will be reviewed in a participatory manner as impacts of such rights and concessions have changed over the years as a result of reorganisation of state, changing lifestyles, socio economic status and depleting forest resource.

Strategies

- The definition of 'right holder' will be standardized for application to the whole of the state.
- Rights will be non- transferable except by inheritance.
- Conflict resolution mechanisms such as *Lok Van Adalats* comprising PRIs, government departments and other stakeholders will be established to resolve issues relating to rights and concessions in forest areas.

6.5.1 Timber Distribution

According to the rights mentioned in the settlements, people are entitled to have trees at concessional rate. Splitting of families does not entail multiplication of Timber Distribution (TD) Rights. Similarly purchase of land of a right holder need not automatically transfer the right to TD.

TD Rights are currently given after recommendation by the Panchayat Pradhan, Revenue and Forest authorities in that order. The existing system will be further improved by ensuring more participation, collective responsibility and information. Hence, to ensure equity and transparency, instead of the current practice of recommendation by Panchayat Pradhan alone the system of granting of TD Rights will be

decentralised through the institution of Gram Panchayat/Gram Sabha prior to sanction by the forest department.

The periodicity, quantity and rates for TD Rights will also be rationalised on the basis of sustainability of resources and site- specific environmental and socio- economic conditions.

Wherever TD right holders are not able to perform the duties and responsibilities to protect and manage the right burdened forests due to reasons such as distance from forests or other bonafide reasons the exercise of rights will be in accordance and proportion to the efforts on protection and management. A mechanism for rights commensurate with responsibility will be developed to address the above.

Efficient use of timber, use of wood preservatives for increasing durability of timber and use of timber substitutes in construction will be encouraged and popularised.

Strategies

- The government shall review the periodicity and ceiling for TD for construction of a new house and for subsequent repairs.
- The quantum and allocation of TD Rights shall be determined after the consent of the Gram Panchayat, through the Panchayat resolution and further depending on the silvicultural availability and socio economic condition of the TD Right holder.
- Right holder rates of trees will be fixed on sliding scale- the economically weaker sections/ BPL families to pay only one percent of the market rates and the better off to pay higher sliding rates based on the economic status of the person subject to a maximum of 20 % of the market rates. Possibility to eventually phase out economically well off right holders with respect to grant of Timber at concessional rates will be explored.
- A compilation of TD grantees in a year will be made and displayed at Panchayat and Division level. A computerised database of the TD grantees shall be maintained and updated at the divisional level and shall be displayed on the Forest department's website.



- TDRight holders will have the first charge on the salvage trees.
- Wood preservation treatment plants will be promoted to enhance the durability of timber.
- Substitutes for timber for construction purpose will be popularized and made available in rural areas.
- All timber used in government construction in rural areas should invariably be charged at the prevailing commercial rates.

6.5.2 Grazing

Although the livestock population of the state has declined in the last decade, the availability of grazing land is still far below the optimum requirement.

Regulating and controlling grazing and improving the quality of both grazing as well as cattle will lead to stall feeding and reduce incidence of open grazing and thus improve the health of the forest.

Migratory grazing poses another significant impact on the forests as well as causes

jurisdictional conflict with local grazing practices. This will be resolved through a consultative mechanism with the involvement of the Gram Sabha. Further the scope of the present grazing policy, which is currently limited to migratory graziers, will be widened.

Co-ordination between the Forest, Animal Husbandry, Agriculture and other concerned Departments will be increased to improve cattle breeds, augment fodder development, improve pasture lands and promote more livelihood opportunities. The welfare of the migratory

Live stock population of the state, which had been constantly rising, has recorded a decrease from 51.17 lakhs (1992 census) to 50.46 lakhs (2003 census). During the period between 1992 and 2003, the sheep population decreased by 1.73 lakhs whereas bovines number has recorded an increase of 97,278 of which buffaloes alone has contributed nearly, 70,000 towards this increase. The number of crossbred cows increased from 1,95,574 to 5,15,964 (163.82 %) and crossbred bulls from 84,819 to 1,34,779 (58.90%) between 1992 and 2003.

The minimum requirement per animal unit is 0.5 ha of grazing land while the availability is only about 0.26 ha statewide.

Source: Calculation based on Annual Season and Crop Report, 1997-98

graziers will receive due attention of the Forest Department, including the efforts to settle Himachali Gujjars.

Strategies

- The breed- upgradation programme for cattle will be intensified and the system of para- vets to facilitate the delivery of veterinary services at the doorsteps will be introduced by the Animal Husbandry department. Further programmes to discourage unrestricted breeding of less productive cattle will be undertaken.
- Plantations of fodder trees will be promoted in the community forests and fodder production will be increased on farm lands.
- An adequate budget for pasture improvement work will be ensured.
- Grazing permits to the migratory graziers will be issued for the actual number of animals and the existing grazing fee rates will be increased proportionally.
- A consultative mechanism with the involvement of the Gram Sabha to integrate migratory graziers and the local community to address grazing issues will be evolved. A cell will be created in the HP Forest Department to look into the problems and welfare issues of Himachali Gujjars, including their settlement in well planned colonies.
- New forest areas for grazing to migratory graziers will be given by the concerned DFOs on the recommendation of concerned Gram Sabha.
- Programmes for augmenting the productivity of grazing lands including alpine pastures will be implemented through introduction of better quality nutritious grasses and legumes, rotational closures, and eradication of obnoxious weeds and shrubs. Alpine pastures will be improved through indigenous species interventions, keeping in view the ecological sensitivity of these pastures. The Forest Department will work in close coordination with the Animal Husbandry and Agriculture Department in this regard.



6.5.3 Fuelwood

Fuelwood continues to be the predominant source of energy in rural areas of the state. High density plantations of fast growing, short rotation and site specific fuelwood species will be raised on both forest lands as well as private lands. This will be one of the objectives for planning and managing the Community Forests. The village communities will have the first charge on dry fallen fuelwood trees and will be regulated and managed at the Panchayat level through the Gram Sabha.

Efficiency in consumption through energy saving devices and substitution of fuelwood with alternative energy sources will be promoted especially in fuelwood scarce areas.

Strategies

- High density fuel wood plantations over government and private lands will be raised, particularly over degraded areas and community forests.
- No fuel wood lots for commercial purpose will be marked in forests contiguous to the villages to ensure availability of fuelwood to the local people.
- Non-conventional energy sources such as hydro-electricity, Biogas, solar and wind energy shall be promoted.
- Fuel efficient devices will be popularized. Thus for example smokeless chullahs, pressure cookers and improvised crematoria will be popularised.
- Low cost technologies for biomass based fuel such as lantana or pine needle briquettes will be encouraged.

6.6 Biodiversity and Wildlife

Biodiversity and wildlife conservation and management is supported by Central legislations such as the Biodiversity Act, 2002 and Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and statutory bodies such as State Biodiversity Board and State Wildlife Board.

The Government of Himachal Pradesh is committed to the conservation of the bio-diversity (genetic, species and ecosystem) to meet the needs and aspirations of present and future generations. The Government will promote the conservation of representative ecosystems, habitats and species. It is also committed to wise use of the biodiversity components. Wise use would include the linkage of biodiversity conservation to livelihoods, traditional knowledge systems and equitable benefit sharing arising out of the use of biological resources. In addition the Government will also support efforts to preserve livestock and agricultural biodiversity recognizing the endemic value of species and habitat.

The Government will further support and integrate efforts by concerned line departments, PRIs, community based institutions, NGOs with defined responsibilities in bio-diversity conservation initiatives in protected areas, wetlands, forest land outside the protected area network, farm forests and agricultural lands.

Efforts will be made to ensure that the integrity of ecologically sensitive areas is not compromised to meet competing development demands of the state. In this regard the existing processes and institutions such as Environment Impact Assessment, Forest Clearances, National Environment Appellate Authority and National Environment Tribunal (as and when created) shall be further strengthened.

The government will give special emphasis to increase the population of species that are endangered through measures such as habitat management and captive breeding.

The government will review existing mechanisms and develop new methods to mitigate the problem of damage to human life and property, livestock and agricultural crops from wild animals on a priority basis.

Strategies

- The management of existing protected area network will be strengthened to conserve the genetic stock of wildlife, especially



endangered species and increase their population through habitat management and captive breeding.

- Measures for conservation of biodiversity and genetic resources available in different types of forest eco- systems will be developed and promoted. This will include imparting education and raising public awareness about benefits and importance of biodiversity, capacity building of the government staff, NGOs and communities.
- The existing system of developing Management Plans for biodiversity rich areas will be revised to incorporate a collaborative methodology between the concerned line departments, PRIs, CBOs, NGOs and private enterprise. This will include clear definitions regarding benefit sharing, rights and responsibilities for all stakeholders.
- Existing threats to the biodiversity resources will be assessed and strategies to counter these threats will be developed and implemented. Systems to facilitate the inventory, monitoring and management of biodiversity resources at various levels will be institutionalised. This will include assessment and documentation of traditional conservation practices.
- The State Biodiversity Board will advise the State Government and the Central Government through the National Biodiversity Authority on matters relating to the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of biological resources.
- The Biodiversity Management Committees as required by the National Biodiversity Act, 2002 will be established and harmonised with the PFM Resolution of the State.
- A coordinated approach between the State Biodiversity Board and State Wildlife Board will be followed and adequate representation of the forest department in the State Biodiversity Board will be ensured.

- An assessment of the wetlands of the state will be undertaken to establish status, threats and management strategies for sustainable use and conservation. The HPFD will be the nodal agency for management of wetlands.
- Conservation and management of endangered faunal species such as pheasants, vulture, musk deer, snow leopard and Tibetan wolf and critically endangered floral species will receive special attention.
- The State Government will develop a State Wildlife Action Plan for the state of Himachal Pradesh in keeping with the provisions of the National Wildlife Action Plan 2002- 16 of the Ministry of Environment & Forests.
- The dynamics of human- animal conflict, especially in context of increasing damage caused by monkeys, wild boars and leopards, will be assessed. Effective measures to mitigate damage caused by such species will be devised. In this regard suggestion will be made to amend the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 especially the power of the State Government to declare vermin and update Wildlife Protection Rules, Orders and Notifications of Himachal Pradesh.
- Preventive measures to limit damage to crops, livestock and human beings will be promoted. Mechanisms to settle the compensation claims expeditiously will be developed. Cases involving damage by endangered species such as snow leopard will be given enhanced rates of compensation. Plantations of wild fruit species in forest areas will be done to augment the food base for wildlife.

6.7. Watershed Management

Watershed management is integral to sustainable forest management. Watershed approach is gaining importance in planning and implementation of natural resource management programmes especially forestry programmes. Such approach will be used to check soil erosion and denudation of catchment areas of important river systems for mitigating floods, landslides and for reducing siltation.