

STATE LEVEL WORKSHOP ON FOREST FIRE MANAGEMENT

The Department of Environment, Climate change and Forest organized a one-day workshop on Forest Fire Management on 8th February 2023 at the Secretariat to devise effective strategies for prevention and mitigation of forest fires in Tamil Nadu. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. V. Irai Anbu, IAS., Chief Secretary to Government of Tamil Nadu.

Forest fires are as old as the forests themselves and are among the most serious hazards in forest eco-systems. They pose a grave threat to the forest wealth, seriously damaging the bio-diversity, ecology and environment in the affected areas. During 2022 nearly 1500 incidences of forest fires were reported. However, due to prompt and coordinated action by the department, around 91% of large fires were controlled by the field staffs within 24 hours as per the report of Forest Survey of India.

Government of Tamil Nadu is committed to conservation of natural resources and has been implementing a number of schemes for prevention and mitigation of forest fires. Under modernisation of forest force scheme, Rs.52.83 crores has been sanctioned for the period from 2022-2025. During the current financial year an amount of Rs.21.11 crores has been released. This workshop has been organised as the part of implementation of 'Modernisation of Forest Force' scheme.

Under NABARD, setting up of central Forest Fire Control Centre at Chennai has been sanctioned for monitoring forest fires in the state at a cost of Rs. 1.00 crore. Similar district level Forest Fire Control centres have also been sanctioned in 34 divisions at a financial outlay of Rs. 6.80 crore.

Chief Secretary released a Guide Book on forest fire management to provide necessary technical and field Guidance for effective prevention of forest fires. He also unveiled a mobile app and a dashboard for real time monitoring of forest fires. The Chief Secretary stressed upon the inter departmental coordination for forest fire management at the district level. He urged the department to use the State Disaster Response fund for district level training in vulnerable districts. He also urged the department to train youth volunteers and local communities to handle forest fires.

Under Forest fire prevention and management scheme, a sum of Rs.5.2 crores has been released for effectively managing the forest fires in the state. The Government has announced a compensation of Rs.25 lakhs to the kin of the forest department employees who lose their lives engaged in forest fire operations.

Ms. Supriya Sahu, Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment, Climate Change and Forest Department mentioned that climate change is creating new challenges before the department in the field of forest fire management. She highlighted that the department was accessing new technology and new knowledge to bring better management practices.

The workshop was attended by Thiru. S.K. Prabhakar, IAS., Additional Chief Secretary to Government/Commissioner, Revenue Administration & Disaster Management Department, Tmt. Supriya Sahu, IAS., Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Environment, Climate Change and Forests Department, Thiru. Kumar Jayant, IAS., Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Revenue & Disaster Management Department, Thiru. Subrat Mohapatra, IFS., Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (HoFF), Tamil Nadu Forest Department, DFOs, Conservators of Forests, Chief Conservators of Forests from all districts of the state and experts from National Disaster Management Authority and Forest Survey of India.

**ADDITIONAL CHIEF SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT
ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE & FOREST DEPARTMENT**

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