

Rachal Sharma, FR



Government of Himachal Pradesh
Forest Sector Policy and Strategy
2005

Himachal Pradesh Forest Department



**H.P. Forest Sector Policy & Strategy
2005**



**Forest Department
Government of Himachal Pradesh**



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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 od and



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	
• 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
(Source: HP Forest Department Statistics 2000 & HP Crop Report 2001-02)	
• Area under Horticulture	2,230
(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 area of the state	

area under forest and tree cover in the state. According to the National Forest Policy, 1988 in the hills and in mountainous regions, the aim should be to maintain two third of the total geographical area of hilly States including Himachal Pradesh under forest and tree cover.

More than twenty thousand square km² of State's land is uncultivable comprising barren land, nallahs, river beds, water bodies, alpine pastures, snow covered peaks and area above tree line and cannot sustain forests (trees), although such areas fall within the legally classified forest

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.



- TD Right 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 graziers will

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.



Synergies between concerned government agencies, PRIs, CBOs and NGOs will be developed for supporting watershed approaches for natural resource management. This will be coordinated through a nodal agency.

The state will explore the potential of market based instruments for facilitating protection and development of water catchments and liaise with the national government for capturing watershed values so that the value of the state's forests to the rest of India and beyond is recognized.

The government will liaise with other mountain states in the country to explore markets for ensuring payments for watershed services to the state and village communities for protecting, managing and developing watersheds. The above concepts are gaining national and global importance and thus will be explored in the state.

Strategies

- Integrated approach to watershed management involving all land using departments, PRIs, CBOs and NGOs will be adopted to facilitate holistic development of Natural resources. Panchayat Level Micro-plans will follow watershed approach.
- Watershed programmes will also give due emphasis to grazing and pasture lands.
- A nodal agency which may be an organization, directorate or an authority shall be created for all watershed programmes in the state to enable convergence of approaches and resources to facilitate coordination.
- Meaningful partnerships with research institutions, NGOs, natural resources management (NRM) projects within the state and outside will be established for networking, experience sharing and capacity building.
- Incentives and regulatory mechanisms through appropriate legal and administrative measures for promoting rainwater conservation and harvesting will be established.



- The government will explore economic and market based instruments through standardizing methodologies, evidence gathering and providing incentives for public and private sector projects and programmes to promote protection and development of water catchments.
- Negotiations with the Centre for the capture of watershed values in the GDP calculations will be given priority.
- Participatory methodologies for assessment of watershed values from forests will be developed so that the value of watershed services is recognized by communities. This will serve as an incentive to promote participatory forest management as well as strengthen the communities in local self governance.

6.8 Non Wood Forest Products including Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

Non Wood Forest Products (NWFP) are important source of supplementary incomes for rural households. Its sustainability and management are thus crucial to rural livelihoods. Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) constitute an important aspect of NWFP management. Regulation of collection and trade of certain medicinal and aromatic plant (MAP) species has been entrusted to the panchayats. The Forest and Ayurveda Departments will build capacity and provide other support to effectively manage this activity in a sustainable and equitable manner.

The state will conserve, regulate, harvest, regenerate, use and export MAPs with emphasis on livelihood security in both public and private lands.

For other NWFPs such as resin, katha, bamboo, fibres, fruits, the government will promote collaborative arrangement between public-community and private entities for production harvest, benefit sharing, value addition, trade, marketing and support for developing micro enterprises.

The legal framework for NWFP including MAPs is inadequate to address the issues that have emerged in their management including collection, processing, cultivation, transit and trade. This needs to be addressed through a comprehensive Act on NWFP and MAPs.



Strategies

- A comprehensive action plan for the medicinal and aromatic plants will be prepared which will incorporate in-situ and ex-situ conservation measures, resource inventory and status assessment, documentation of variation, multiplication of gene pool, cultivation, value addition and processing, developing market links and interdepartmental co-ordination.
- Silviculture systems for propagation of MAPs in conjunction with trees (multi-tier forests) for integrated and sustainable management of forests for timber and MAPs will be developed and adopted. This will be done through a participatory approach.
- Organic cultivation of MAPs on private lands will be promoted through grower co-operatives.
- Criteria and Indicators will be developed for quality certification of MAPs and other NWFPs.
- Capacity building programs for Panchayats to fulfil the responsibilities of regulating harvest and export of MAPs, in a sustainable and effective manner will be undertaken.
- A nodal agency such as the Medicinal Plant Board or any other appropriate agency will be designated to promote in-situ and ex-situ conservation of MAPs, value addition and processing, develop market linkages for gathering trade related information and making it available to the resource user groups and to promote public-community-private partnerships in the sector. In this regard co-ordination between Forest, Agriculture, Horticulture, Ayurveda Departments, Forest Corporation, self-help groups, federation of user groups, NGOs, PRIs, trade and development Co-operatives, financial institution, will be done.
- Linkages with universities, NGOs, private/ traditional practitioners and other institutions for research support on cultivation, screening of plants, harvesting time and cycle will be developed.



- Programmes to strengthen and support indigenous knowledge base, especially traditional systems of medicine through documentation and promotion of co-operatives will be undertaken. This knowledge will be used for development of programmes for conservation of MAPs.
- A comprehensive State Act for regulating cultivation, extraction, transit and trade of NWFP and MAPs will be made where inputs from Forest, Agriculture, Horticulture and Ayurveda Departments will necessarily be solicited.

6.9 Forest Harvesting

The state, recognizing, the ecological importance of forests has imposed a moratorium on commercial felling of green trees since early eighties, however there is a need to reconsider this position and resuming regeneration felling primarily for sustainable and scientific management of forests. Forest harvesting will be carried out strictly in accordance with the prescriptions of working plan approved by Government of India and every area felled will be regenerated within fixed time schedules. Mechanisms for regular monitoring of the progress of harvesting and regeneration operations will be developed. An adequate portion of the revenue generated from the sale of harvest will be utilised for regeneration activities and developing infrastructure for the benefit of local communities.

The existing forest management systems need to be re-examined in the light of significant shift from tree-centric to multiple-use based, people-centric approach.

The forest harvesting measures will give special emphasis on the protection of threatened endemic species in forest areas.

Tree harvesting on private lands are presently subject to detailed scrutiny and regulation depending on nature of species, transit requirements and felling cycles. Such detailed procedures will be simplified to encourage forestry on private lands.



Strategies

- Enabling executive orders will be issued to re-examine existing forest management systems for forest harvesting to facilitate the shift from tree-centric to multiple-use based, people-centric forestry.
- For mobilization of resources for regeneration activities and developing infrastructure for local communities, necessary changes in the administrative and financial rules will be made.
- Subsidiary silvicultural operations such as early thinning and cleaning will be carried out regularly and an incentive mechanism for involving local communities in these operations will be developed, particularly for community forests.
- Capacity building and welfare programmes for persons engaged in harvesting and extraction of forest produce will be given due thrust in the HRD strategy of the HPFD.
- For optimum utilization of the forest resource a multi product orientation to harvesting will be adopted.
- Tree species such as oaks, anogeissus, chilgoza pine, yew, junipers and walnut in forest areas will not be felled and effective measure to protect and regenerate these species will be undertaken.
- Silvicultural operations in natural forests will be carried out regularly. Wherever feasible, local communities will be involved to execute subsidiary silvicultural operations such as thinning and cleaning in natural forests as distinguished from PFM areas and allowed to take home the non-marketable material obtained from these operations.
- The procedures for harvest, sale and transport of forest produce from private lands will be simplified through enabling rules or



executive orders and tree planting on private lands will be promoted through extension programmes.

- The process for fixation of prices of trees/forest produce growing on private lands will be revisited to ensure a more just, equitable and transparent system.

6.10 Forest Based Industries

The government will develop incentives to encourage wood based enterprise to procure raw material from sources other than government forests. The wood based industries in rural areas will be regulated through Gram Sabhas. Special attention will be given to value addition and diversification of wood and forest based products.

Strategies

- Status of existing sawmills and timber sale depots/ furniture shops will be reviewed especially in areas adjoining the forests. Proliferation of private timber sale depots will be checked.
- The recommendation of the Gram Sabha will be mandatory to register new private timber sale depots, furniture shops and other forest based enterprise in the rural areas. Stringent regulatory measures will be reinforced through appropriate legal amendments or executive orders to check misuse of TD grants under the garb of such establishments.
- Value addition through high quality secondary and tertiary processing that reduces inefficiency and wastage and enhances the longevity of the forest based product will be promoted.
- The availability of market information for purchase of raw material and sale of finished products will be facilitated through the State Forest Corporation and other forestry extension services.

6.11 Nature Based Tourism

Nature Based Tourism including wilderness tourism will be promoted in



consonance with the eco-tourism policy of the state with an aim to maximise benefits for local communities through public community-private partnerships.

The government will build on the experience gained from the eco-tourism societies established under the Ecotourism Policy and extend and develop these societies or other such institutional mechanisms at the state level.

In addition the government will encourage rural tourism for enhancing rural livelihoods and promoting nature awareness by providing support and setting standards and norms for the same. Dispersed tourism will be encouraged to decongest popular destinations and promote equitable benefits to larger sections of society.

Regulatory systems to minimise potential negative impacts of tourism activities to the forest sector will also be set up.

Strategies

- Nature based tourism will be promoted in forest areas having such potential and eco-tourism societies or other institutional mechanisms will be established for sustaining it.
- An inventory of existing and potential locations for nature based tourism with information of facilities for tourists, recreational activities and resources in rural areas will be compiled and disseminated.
- Facilities and programmes for recreation activities, including cultural and visitor centers, to attract tourists from established tourist destinations to less visited areas with the twin aim to popularize dispersion of tourism and nature based tourism will be established.
- Specific areas within the state that are endowed with unique wildlife will be promoted as Wildlife tourism destinations. However a separate strategy for Protected Areas will be developed wherein



central government guidelines especially for PA based tourism will be adhered to.

- Public-community-private partnerships especially user groups and youth associations in the tourism sector will be strengthened through training for hospitality, wildlife tourism, safety standards, financial support, business support and networking, Nature based tourism guidelines, accreditation systems, setting standards and norms for responsible nature based tourism will be developed.
- The Tourism Master Plans for popular destinations will lay emphasis on ecological and environmental concerns.

6.12 Industry, Mining and Hydel Projects

Clearance from the Forest Department, concerned Gram Sabha and Panchayats at appropriate level for industries especially having impact on the forest sector including mining and hydel projects shall be mandatory in all cases involving forest and forest land.

Further the current Environment Impact Assessments, and forest clearances for industry/ mining/hydel projects do not take into account loss of forest use to village communities. The Central Government will be approached for necessary amendments in the guidelines under the FCA and the notifications under EPA.

Strategies

- A resolution from the Gram Sabha, a "No objection" from the Forest Department and advance payment for rehabilitation of the areas to be mined will be prerequisites for granting a mining lease. Necessary amendments in the Panchayat laws as well as Mining laws will be carried out in this regard.
- Environmental cess will be levied on the Mining lessee by the concerned panchayat. Panchayat laws needs to be amended in this regard.

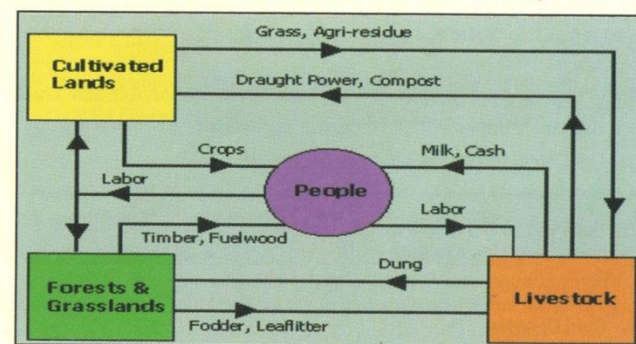


- Systems for transparency and participatory monitoring by communities and/or other stakeholders of industries especially having impact on the forest sector including mining and hydel projects will be introduced. The Central Government will be approached for necessary amendments in the guidelines under the FCA and the notifications under EPA.
- Participatory mechanisms for planning, implementation and monitoring of Catchment Area Treatment plans (CAT Plans) for hydel projects and mine management plans for Mining areas will be introduced. Special cost norms in the mountain context will be developed for rehabilitation of mined areas, dumping sites and other problem areas such as land slide prone areas and cloud burst affected areas. The plans including the compensation packages will give due consideration to loss of forest use to village communities.

6.13 Farming Systems and Forestry Interface

Farming systems adopted across Himachal Pradesh are directly linked to the long-run viability of rural livelihoods, rural communities and sustainable forests.

A hill based strategy will be formulated to reduce direct dependence on



Flows between cultivated lands, support lands, livestock and the people



forests while preserving the mountain ecology. Such a strategy will encourage a balanced regional development of agriculture sector with emphasis on cash economy through diversification to high value crops rather than subsistence economy.

Integrated projects will be formulated in consonance with the hill based strategy taking into account the linkages of cultivated lands, forests and grasslands and livestock.

Strategies

- Diversified farming and interlinked nature of mountain farming systems with an emphasis on high value and low volume crops such as spices, condiments and medicinal plants, off season vegetables, horticulture, fish farming and dairy and poultry farming, agro forestry, farm forestry will be promoted to increase income levels and reduce forest dependence.
- Organic farming will be promoted and mechanism for certification for sale of organic products will be developed.
- Mechanisms for preserving indigenous germ-plasm of traditional crops, livestock breeds and landraces will be developed especially in integrated projects.
- Cropping patterns will be reviewed in the context of climate changes especially for judicious use of water and forest resources in the hill context.
- The tree species exempted from Land Preservation Act and Trade and Transit Rules will be reviewed periodically to encourage agro forestry and farm forestry on private lands.
- Awareness, extension and advisory activities for promoting farm forestry and agro forestry will be undertaken by the Forest and Agriculture departments with collaborative arrangements with Universities, research institutions and NGOs.

6.14 Cold Deserts

The cold desert areas of the state will receive special attention of the



government with an aim to preserving the unique ecological and cultural characteristics of the region.

The government will promote native, medicinal and aromatic plants and will encourage cooperative micro-enterprises based on these species in the cold desert. Seabuckthorn will be given a special focus.

Wilderness and wildlife based tourism activities with a livelihood focus will be promoted in the cold desert region with active involvement of the local community.

Strategies

- Seabuckthorn will be promoted as a regional plant of cold desert of the state to improve livelihood security and ecology of the region. Atleast fifty percent of the plantations on government lands will be Seabuckthorn plantations.
- Co-operative micro-enterprises based on Seabuckthorn and other MAPs in the cold desert area of the state will be promoted. This will also build linkages with traditional systems of medicine such as *Amchi*.
- Germplasm of seabuckthorn will be screened for quality and production potential. Plantation technology for seabuckthorn and other native MAPs will be standardised.
- Plantations of species such as poplars, willow, wild apricot (Chuli) will be promoted where irrigation is possible.
- Wilderness and wildlife based tourism activities with a livelihood focus will be promoted in the cold desert region with active involvement of the local community to develop it as a unique nature based tourism destination.
- Special provisions will be made in the plantation norms for irrigation of forest plantation in cold desert areas as the present allocations do not adequately cover such costs.



6.15 Demarcation and Settlement

Only about 36% area notified as forests has been demarcated and settled as Reserve Forests and Demarcated Protected Forests under the Indian Forest Act as applicable in Himachal Pradesh. The survey, settlement and demarcation of undemarcated and unsettled notified forests will be taken up on high priority. Forest and Revenue Settlements will be carried out simultaneously to avoid conflicts in the rights to be admitted under the two settlements.

Strategies

- Entries of forest areas already settled as reserved and protected forests in the revenue records will be revisited and confirmed.
- Survey, measurement and demarcation with boundary pillars of remaining undemarcated/ unsettled areas and their entry in revenue records will be completed within ten years.
- Modern equipments and measurement technologies will be introduced to facilitate and expedite the survey and demarcation process.
- The HP Forest Settlement Rules and guidelines issued there under for Forest Settlement Officers (FSOs) will be revised and updated.
- The roles of Revenue and Forest Departments with respect to management, control and cognisance of offences under the HP Ceiling and Land Holdings Act, 1972 and the HP Village Common Lands (Vesting and utilization) Act, 1974 and its linkage with the Indian Forest Act as applicable in H.P. will be clearly established. Necessary amendments will be made in this regard.

6.16 Encroachments

Lack of proper survey, settlement, demarcation and delimitation of forest lands has resulted in maximum encroachment or illegal occupation on forest land. To check the incidence of such illegal occupation, the Government will give priority to survey and settlement of the remaining undemarcated and/or unclassified forests. A thorough settlement



procedure including, demarcation and delimitation with boundary pillars in close coordination between the Forest and Revenue Departments will be carried out as envisaged earlier. The detection and eviction of encroachments on forest areas will be completed expeditiously and encroachments on forest lands ordinarily will not be regularised. However, the Central Government Guidelines of 1990 (FP) (1-6) as well as subsequent circulars including letter of the Central Government dated 21.12.2004 needs to be adhered to as it lays down special conditions of regularization of encroached lands.

Special fast track courts with powers of eviction will be set up to speed up the process of eviction.

For immediate detection of encroachments or illegal occupation on forest lands, mechanism to involve Gram Sabha members will be developed.

Strategies

- Close co-ordination between the communities and field functionaries of Revenue and Forest Departments will be ensured to prevent encroachment over forest area. Incentive mechanisms through necessary changes in the PFM Resolution will be made in this regard.
- A special action force comprising Revenue, Police and Forest functionaries for detection and report of the existing encroachments over forest lands will be constituted. Necessary changes in the Forest Act/Rules will be made to institutionalise the Special Action Force with enhanced powers of detection, removal and eviction of illegal occupant of forest land.
- Keeping in view the enormity and significance of the problem, special fast-track courts with powers of eviction for speedy trial and decision will be set up, specialised panels of legal experts will be set up especially at the circle level. Enabling statutory provisions will be made in this regard.



- Mechanism to involve Gram Sabha, CBOs for speedy detection, immediate report to the Forest Department and subsequent monitoring will be developed. The rights to forest such as TD rights, of individuals encroaching upon forest land will be suspended.

6.17 Fire Management

Forest fires cause irreparable damages to forests, biodiversity, wildlife, water sources and forest based livelihoods and well being. The government will reinforce systems for fire management including revisiting Fire Management Rules, 1999. These include fire control measures such as fire lines, effective communication and information systems, defined responsibilities and introduce incentives to local communities for participation in fire management including its prevention.

Strategies

- Regular preventive measures such as control burning, clearing and creating fire lines, engaging fire watchers during fire season will be ensured.
- Appropriate educational, extension and training programmes to create greater awareness of the causes and ill effects of forest fires will be undertaken and people's participation will be encouraged and motivated to reduce fire incidences.
- Adoption of improved and modern fire management practices and fast and efficient communication systems, quick mobilization of adequate human resources with modern fire fighting equipments and tools will be arranged particularly in fire prone Forest Divisions and Ranges.
- Incentive mechanisms and rewards for involving Panchayats and communities directly in forest fire prevention and control will be developed.



6.18 Invasive Weeds

Invasion of forestlands by incidence of weeds is a serious problem faced by forest resource managers particularly in the Shiwaliks and lower Himalayas. The forest weeds compete with the native and desired forest flora, decrease forest productivity, reduce grazing lands and ultimately affect the livelihood of the rural populace. Programmes for control and management of invasive species, especially lantana will be accorded high priority. This will include research and application of tested methods, mass mobilisation for eradication programmes, developing incentive mechanisms, promoting technologies for commercial use of invasive species including lantana.

Strategies

- Invasive weeds eradication programmes will be enhanced in the state. Appropriate technologies for eradication/ economically viable uses of these weeds will be tested, introduced, implemented and monitored in a phased manner.
- Networking and collaboration with research institutions, NGOs, Integrated Projects and concerned line departments will be developed and supported.
- Use of invasive weeds in vermicomposting will be popularized in rural areas.

6.19 Stray Cattle Management

The stray cattle problem has become a serious threat to forest and forest based resources especially in the lower areas of the state along the inter-state borders of Punjab and Haryana. Unproductive cattle, scarcity of fodder and water and less remunerative farming often force the farmers to abandon the cattle in the open and thereby adversely affecting forest resources. The government will provide support for developing mechanisms to reduce the incidence of stray cattle by involving all stakeholders, including the cattle owners, NGOs and faith based organisations.



Strategies

- Fodder production on agriculture fields, private grass lands, and degraded grazing lands will be enhanced by cultivation of improved varieties of fodder crops, grasses and plantation of fodder trees.
- Registration of bovines (cattle and buffaloes) will be made mandatory in the state at the Panchayat and urban local bodies' level through appropriate legal changes in the Panchayat and Municipal Acts.
- Birth, death, sale and purchase of bovines will be recorded through the Gram Panchayat. Permanent identification mark to be allotted to individual bovine to discourage abandoning of unproductive animals by owners.
- The relevant Acts such as Panchayat Act and Cattle Trespass Act will be amended to make abandoning domestic animals a punishable offence.
- NGOs including faith-based organizations will be encouraged to establish Gosadans for housing stray cattle where treatment for infertility and induction of lactation will be provided.

6.20 Institutional Support

To support the implementation of the forest sector policy and strategy the Forest Department as a nodal agency for forest management will support other institutions (government and non government) in forest management through better coordination, new partnerships, clarification of roles and responsibilities and improved regulation.

Strategies

- The institutional support will draw on the strengths of various existing institutions to reflect the importance of technological and scientific cooperation, decentralized governance, planning and regulation for balanced land use, market support, capacity building, advocacy, research, monitoring and evaluation in the forest sector through the following institutions and measures:



- The Forest Department shall be strengthened as a professional, technical and managerial body, providing support to PRIs, relevant government departments and other stakeholders for assisting them in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities for sustainable forest management.

The role of the Forest Department shall further include:

- ❖ Working collaboratively with the various stakeholders for preparing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating forest management plans especially for community forests and ensuring coordination and synergy between various forest management plans.
- ❖ Providing and protecting the livelihood security of forest resource dependent communities, particularly the poor and marginalized, through skills upgradation and convergence of financial resources for this sector.
- ❖ Protecting the Traditional Forest Related Knowledge (TFRK) through intellectual property rights regime. Necessary legal and administrative measures will be suggested in this regard to the Central Government.
- ❖ Recommending strategic investment under State and Central funding programs.
- ❖ Developing strategies and implementing green accounting measures to ensure that the environmental values of forests and wildlife are recognized, accounted for and captured in state and national income.
- ❖ Developing community based conflict resolution mechanisms such as lok van adalats in the context of sustainable forest management within districts, in partnership with PRIs, government departments and other stakeholders.



- **Panchayati Raj Institutions** – at district, block and village level will be one of key planning and implementing agencies of the Forest Sector Policy and Strategy duly supported by funds and functionaries. They will play an active role in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of forest management plans for Community Forests. The Zilla Parishad will also function as a regulatory appellate body for certain categories of disputes in the forest sector arising from within the district. Necessary amendments to the Panchayat Act/Rules will be made in this regard.

- **The State Land Use and Wasteland Development Board (SLUB)** will be strengthened to facilitate forest sector planning in the context of balanced land use.

The functions of SLUB will include:

- ❖ the provision of strategic advice to the Government on the condition and management of land resources and its linkage with the forest sector in the State.
- ❖ formulation and subsequent implementation of land use policy with a focus on forest land use policy in the mountain context.
- **The HP State Forest Corporation** shall be responsible for developing mechanisms for production and marketing of timber and NWFPs. For NWFPs the Forest Corporation will work in close cooperation with PRIs, cooperative institutions of user groups, private entrepreneurship and other stakeholder groups. In scheduled areas, the Gram Sabha will be the focal point for NWFP ownership, control and management.
 - ❖ It will also equip itself to undertake programmes for production, value addition, marketing and capacity building in these fields. It is here that new models of public-community-private partnership will be developed as forest based enterprises.
 - ❖ In addition to NWFPs, the Forest Corporation will develop a

diversification strategy for forest based and other enterprises for augmenting business incomes building on its strength of its extensive presence in remote rural areas.

- **Non Government Organisations (NGOs) /Community Based Organisations (CBOs) /Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** will be integral to the development of the Forest Sector. Their main role will be capacity building, advocacy, research, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Centre for Policy and Planning (CPP):** The present Policy Analysis and Planning Unit (PAPU) will be further strengthened and reconstituted as independent, autonomous and multi-sectoral Centre for Policy and Planning. The CPP will be the nodal policy, planning and monitoring body for the forest sector in the State.

Specifically its functions will include:

- ❖ Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of the Forest Sector Policy and Strategy.
- ❖ Review of laws, rules, administrative orders, guidelines for effectively implementing the Forest Sector Policy and Strategy including other sectoral policies.
- ❖ Facilitate conflict resolution through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in the context of forest land use.
- ❖ Ensuring compliance with obligations under International Covenants and Treaties, while protecting national / indigenous rights to resources.
- ❖ Integrate learning of Policy Implementation in the policy process.
- ❖ Information dissemination of policy process, implementation and monitoring. It will further act as a platform for policy exchanges within and outside states.





6.21 Human Resource Development

To realise the full potential of this Policy, the government will aim to develop new skills and enhance the capabilities of the staff of Forest and other line departments and agencies, PRIs, CBOs, NGOs and other stakeholder groups. Important areas to be addressed will include knowledge building, positive attitudes, participatory integrated planning, improved communication and technical skills. Gender, equity and poverty alleviation measures will also be addressed.

An HRD strategy will be formulated for the HPFD with the key aim to effectively manage the existing large, diverse workforce and the imminent retirement as well as recruitment of staff. It will also strive to build joint capacity in stakeholders for effective forest management partnerships to respond appropriately to a rapidly changing forest sector operational environment.

Strategies

- A comprehensive human resource development strategy for the Himachal Pradesh Forest Department will be formulated and adopted covering areas and issues such as HRD management, setting up of a staff database system, communication, training and career development, employee support and appraisal system, gender balance and rationalization of workload.
- The HPFD HRD database will be utilized to provide a sound basis for establishing basic staffing requirements, making relevant changes in staffing patterns, job descriptions and responsibilities of persons at various posts.
- Primary recruitment process will be reoriented to include persons in the HPFD with skills other than forestry including community mobilization, livelihood enterprise development, nature based tourism and other facets of forest sector development.
- The strategic needs of women in the forest sector will be addressed



through developing and implementing a recruitment and placement strategy of women officials at all levels of forestry cadre.

- Government will ensure sustained availability of trained workforce at every level of Forest Department's hierarchy and fill up direct recruitment vacancies regularly to maintain high professional standards.
- The Forest Training Centres in the state will be strengthened and developed as autonomous, self-financing institutions and the scope of these centers will be widened in consonance with the provisions of this policy and strategy. Efforts will be made to evolve these as centers of excellence in forestry including community forestry, forest based livelihoods, HRD and other disciplines in collaboration with state and national institutions such as Himalayan Forest Research Institute, Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration and Indian Institute of Forest Management.

6.22 Research and Development

The government will promote cost effective research on forest sector that responds to the needs of local communities, government agencies, private investors and other stakeholders. Institutional co-ordination and collaboration between researchers and end users will be improved. Applied forestry research will be addressed through a specialized R & D unit within the HPFD. Participatory research relevant to sustainable forest management and enhancing forest-based livelihoods will be promoted. Indigenous knowledge will be documented and protected for ensuring equitable benefit sharing to communities. Appropriate rural technologies will be promoted for conservation and sustainable utilisation of forest resources.

Strategies

- A Research and Development Unit of HP Forest Department will be set up that will lead the process of developing a long term agenda for



Research and Development for the state, with special focus on applied forestry research.

- The agenda would include issues related to sustainable forest management and forest based livelihoods.
- Need based and demand driven research will be taken up as a priority and will form part of the research plans of research institutions.
- Production of high quality tree seed and planting stock will be supported.
- Economic feasibility of raising Bio-fuel plants will be explored and if appropriate promoted both in forest and non forest lands.
- A Participatory Action Research for PFM and consequent Adaptive Forest Management programme will be developed in a phased manner.
- A state level network, coordinated by the R&D unit will be set up for research on forestry and forest based livelihoods. The network will inter alia prepare compendium of research findings, provide forum for sharing experiences and ideas and set up research dissemination systems. The network will identify hill area specific research problems which can be addressed to research institutions for finding cost-effective solutions, by promoting public-community-private-partnerships.
- The capacity of forestry field staff, communities, PRI functionaries and NGOs for facilitating, conducting forestry research and for adopting existing research knowledge will be enhanced through training, exposure visits and other participatory learning methods.
- A sound basis for green accounting will be established to further understand and quantify the actual contribution of forests to the National and State well-being and economy.



6.23 Forestry Extension

Forestry extension shall promote participatory and multi-stakeholder approaches to enhance the contribution of trees and other forest resources to sustainable land use and livelihoods security. Forestry extension will be demand driven; pluralistic in nature (i.e. it allows participation of a multiplicity of service providers); focused on capacity building of rural communities in the State for accessing technology and information; contribute to the development of benefit sharing mechanisms and access to markets.

Strategies

- The Forest Publicity Division will adopt an effective communication methodology and produce stakeholder specific quality information on items such as improved and innovative technology, schemes, research findings, incentives, laws and best practices in the forest sector.
- Effective communication through media, both print and electronic on various forestry extension programmes will be used for imparting training to local communities especially those dependent on the forest sector.
- Significant International, National and State events on environment and forests will be organised through exhibitions, awareness camps and other public events on a large scale to popularise and highlight the importance of sustainable forestry, sustainable livelihoods and respect for environment in general.

6.24 Information Technology in Forestry

Forest Sector Management requires vast data base on natural resources, comprises products and services as well as human resources who are directly or indirectly dependent on it. To sustainably manage & conserve the forests of the state for their multiple ecological, economic & social benefits, the application of advanced environmental information systems



can contribute to Sustainable Forest Management. This will also facilitate the implementation of Right to Information in the forest sector in the State.

Strategies

- Priority will be accorded to develop a comprehensive database regarding the forest resources (physical and human) for easy access and to bring transparency in the functioning of the department as well as other line agencies which impact the forest sector in the state & to update it on a regular basis.
- A Forest Information Centre (FIC) will be set up with trained human resource as well as for computation of hardware and software resources and the existing statistical wing of the department will be dovetailed with this Centre.
- Use of Geographical Information System & Global Positioning System will be encouraged to generate and update the information about forest extent, status, composition, planning and monitoring of forests, wild life and bio- resources. A state of the art Geomatics Center will be a part of the FIC and it will help in creating and analysing spatial & non- spatial digital database pertaining to the forest sector.

6.25 Planning and Management

Planning procedures for each of the forest categories will incorporate planning for multiple uses, multi-stakeholder participation and embedding monitoring and evaluation systems. The planning procedures, plan components and processes will ensure that appropriate roles and responsibilities for each of the institutions -Government, PRIs, Forest Corporation, NGOs/CBOs Market based institutions and communities are defined. The procedures and processes will aim to strengthen and supplement the methodology for developing Working Plans and micro plans on these lines. The plans will give due recognition



to rights, concessions and responsibilities in the forest and include rules for management of forests, incentive based mechanisms and activities for promotion of forest based livelihoods.

Strategies

- The planning process will be guided by the Working Plans. The micro plans will be integrated appropriately in the Working Plan and necessary changes will be made in the Working Plan Code.
- Plans for all categories of forests will include:
 - ❖ Technical interventions and management strategies including incentive based mechanisms to promote sustainable forestry and sustainable livelihoods.
 - ❖ Activities for enhancing forest based livelihoods.
 - ❖ Monitoring and evaluation.
- New methodologies and toolkits such as Participatory Action Research for planning for different categories of forests will be developed and tested on a pilot basis before its application in the entire state.
- The experience and outcomes of micro-planning under various initiatives will be reviewed periodically to enhance the planning process for better and sustainable management of forests giving due regard to livelihood security.
- Institutional mechanisms such as Block Level Expert Committee (BLEC) District and Circle Level Forum for ensuring backward and forward linkages between Panchayat Level Micro-plans and District Development Plans with regard to the forest sector will be developed. This will further be integrated with the Working Plans.

6.26 Monitoring and Evaluation

The government will set up monitoring and evaluation systems for the forest sector at the Division, Circle and State level based on clear



criteria and indicators, the target population and specific and measurable outcomes.

Strategies

- Monitoring and evaluation systems for assisting management and decision making will be done through regular and timely information on performance of activities, investments, measuring the progress to planned outputs, identification of problem areas and causes and remedial action in implementation.
- Specific M & E systems for different categories of forests shall be developed based on the learnings of the M & E unit of the Forest Department and other experiences and programmes.
- Periodic monitoring of the implementation of the Forest Sector Policy and Strategy will be done through agencies such as Policy Analysis and Planning Unit (PAPU) or the proposed Centre for Policy and Planning.

6.27 International Covenants and Agreements

India has signed a number of international agreements that influence the forest sector such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, World Trade Organisation, Kyoto Protocol and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna and is party to other non-legally binding instruments such as the Forestry Principles and United Nations Forum on Forests. The Government of Himachal Pradesh will meet its national obligations to these Agreements, Protocols and Conventions through enabling instruments such as executive orders, policy and legislative measures.

Strategies

- A careful inventory of international instruments to which India is a Party and its status will be carried out in the State context. Thus for example the role of State Biodiversity Board (SBB) and National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) will be assessed in the context of Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the state's position on the same.



- In formulating the Working Plans special attention will be given to the international instruments such as CBD, Forestry Principles and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).
- Protocols for sharing benefits arising from the utilisation of biological resources will be developed by the State Biodiversity Board in consultation with the Biodiversity Management Committees and in line with CBD and with various stakeholders giving due weightage to the Forest Settlements.
- Benefits for afforestation activities on both public and private lands will be optimised through developing Clean Development Mechanisms (CDMs) under the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. These mechanisms will also be used for both, providing incentives for tree plantation and for sustainable management of forests.
- Capacity building programmes for all stakeholders on international covenants and national agreements, legislations and mechanisms for supporting the covenants will be developed and implemented. This will include capacity building with respect to the WTO Agreement on Agriculture and its challenges particularly in the realm of medicinal plants and rare plant varieties and landraces (seed varieties improved by farmers) of agricultural products.

6.28 Administrative and Legal Changes

The government will review the prevailing administrative and legal framework related to forest sector to determine the nature of legal reform that will be required to support the new forest sector policy.

Strategies

- Necessary amendments in forest sector related Acts, Rules, Orders at the State level and suggestions at the Central Government level including appropriate interventions in the appellate courts on forest



sector related matters will be given priority to give effect to the Forest Sector Policy.

- Rules and enabling Orders for activities based on appropriate incentives and disincentives conforming to this policy and strategy will be put in place.
- Giving legal sanctity to the PFM resolution, appropriate amendments and enabling rules in the Panchayat Act including State PESA, Cattle Trespass Act, Wildlife Protection Rules, Biodiversity Act, suggestions on Central Acts such as the Wildlife Protection Act, Forest Conservation Act and Guidelines will be carried out to realize the full potential of the Forest Sector Policy as has been indicated variously in the Policy.
- The Government of Himachal Pradesh will meet its national and international obligations, participate fully in the implementation of cross-border cooperation agreements and apex court orders through policy and legislative action.

6.29 Extra-sectoral Policy Influences and Inter-sectoral Coordination

Extra-sectoral policies and institutions such as Grazing Policy, Water Policy, Agricultural Policy, Power Policy, SLUB, Medicinal Plants Board, State Biodiversity Board, that influence the forest sector will be analysed and discussed to understand their impacts on forests, so that they become more responsive and meet long term challenges. Cross-sectoral collaborative mechanisms will be established to promote complementarities and recognize and remove inconsistencies.

Strategies

- A State Level Consultative Forum will be established as a forum for discussion, co-ordination and harmonization of policies that relate to the natural resource management sector in general and forest sector in particular. The forum will be supported by specialised agencies such as Policy Analysis and Planning Unit (PAPU) or the proposed Centre for Policy and Planning.



- The process of consultation on forestry issues and co-ordinated planning through Circle and District Level Forums, Block Level Expert Committees and Group Development Support Teams will be strengthened in light of the past and ongoing experiences.
- The Panchayat Micro plans and recommendations of the above consultative forums on the forest sector will be integrated with the district level planning process.
- A common micro-planning formulation format will be followed by all development departments to ensure coordinated implementation in the forest sector.
- The State Land Use Board will be strengthened to play an active role for coordination and convergence between all natural resource based departments and programmes in order that it functions as a compliment to the proposed Centre for Policy and Planning in the forest Sector.

6.30 Financial Support to the Sector

The implementation of the Forest Sector Policy and Strategy will require significant financial and human resources. The State Government will develop a long-term investment programme for forest sector funding, commensurate with the contribution of forests to the State GDP, through public sector participation and need-based international funding, in addition to the regular budgetary allocation.

Strategies

- The International funding shall be treated as additional to the regular budget of the Forest Department, and such funding shall be in conformity with the Forest Sector Policy.
- Efforts will be made to improve the financial basis for the sustainable management of forests through exploring the potential of green accounting and capture of watershed values.



- The State Government will also promote self-generating mechanisms on mobilisation of resources such as value addition to forest products, market linkages and nature based tourism to supplement the financial resources to the sector.





"Have a bias toward action -let's see something happen now.
You can break that big plan into small steps and take the
first step right away."

- Indira Gandhi