

## **DRAFT NOTE IN RESPECT OF VISIT OF DG ICFRE TO HFRI & STATE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH FROM 3<sup>rd</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER**

After taking the reins of *Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE)*, Dehra Dun as its Director General, **Dr. VK Bahuguna, IFS**, visited **Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI)**, Shimla and its Field Research Stations located in different agro-climatic zones of the state from 03.12.2011 to 10.12.2011. His itinerary also included the inspection of field works and demonstration plantations as carried out/ established by the institute by the institute in the past under various Plan and Externally Aided Research Projects.

**Dated: 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2011**

On the first day of his tour, Dr Bahuguna, arrived at Chail from Dehradun late in the evening.

**Dated: 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2011**

On the following day i.e. on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2011, he alongwith the Director and other scientists of the institute visited Wildlife Sanctuary, Chail to inspect the area which was earlier infested with Deodar Root-rot disease- an issue posed to HFRI by the Wildlife Wing of the State Forest Department, for its detailed investigations. The institute after studying the area reported *Phytophthora cinnamomi* -the most notorious pathogen and having the potential to wipe out the vegetation because of its wide host range as the causal organism – thereby, posing threat to the economy, ecology and the environment of the area. **Infection of conifers in the Himalayas by this specie of *Phytophthora* was first ever report on deodar** and keeping the above explanations in view and in the present scenario of Climate change, this outbreak was noticed with great concern.

To minimize the possibilities of such outbreak of this contagious disease, the institute carried out detailed scientific studies in the infected areas including creation of barriers in the form of deep trenches in between the diseased and non-affected areas -fungus being the soil borne – proved to be an effective measures. Shri K Thirumal, IFS, Divisional Forest Officer (WL) also discussed the strategies and remedial measures adopted to contain the pathogen as per the suggestions of HFRI and informed the dignitary that regular visits were also undertaken in the area and the disease is now well under control.

- After analyzing the detailed feedback on the incidence and the remedial measures undertaken, Dr. Bahuguna directed the concerned scientists to publish the findings of the results in the journal, *Indian forester* at the earliest to benefit the SFD, as and when required by the department.
- He also emphasized that technologies developed on other aspects with special reference to forestry are essentially required to be propagated further in collaboration with the State Forest Department – the major end user of our research.

While on way to Narkanda to see the ongoing research activities at Field Research Station, Shillaru and the demonstration plantation of Hill Bamboos in Chhichhar Forest adjoining Narkanda, the Director General showed interest in the floriculture farm being managed by Mr. Guleria, one of the NGOs near Koti, Chail.

- DG, ICFRE, was of the view that floriculture being a remunerative option – the institute must try to link the livelihood of the people with such activities -especially through exploitation of wild flowers growing in the forest areas- those interests the farmers in particular and have the marketing potential.

Director General inspected Field Research Station, Shillaru and keenly discussed the issues concerning the research activities such as, standardization of agro-techniques of medicinal plants including the construction work undertaken.

- Director General was of the firm view that the research in question in this advanced stage should be taken to the farmers and other beneficiaries under the scheme '*Direct to Consumer*' as initiated by the Council recently. The outcome of such efforts will certainly link the people with forestry, he added.
- While inspecting the building constructed recently at the station and having space for office, laboratory and also for the inspection hut, need to be further renovated by putting good furniture, carpet and curtains etc. so that best possible facilities be created and provided to the officers and scientists visiting the stations for research purposes, he asserted.
- DG, ICFRE appreciated and accepted the proposal of the scientist for boring of the bore well to meet the acute shortage of water within the station.
- Director General desired that a detailed proposal for the estimated funds be prepared and sent to him for his perusal and further necessary action into the matter.

Demonstration plantation of Hill Bamboos as established by the institute over an area 2 ha in Chhichhar Forest could not be visited due to non-availability of the time. Later in the evening, DG with other officers and scientists left Narkanda / Shillaru for Shimla.

**Dated: 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2011**

Officers and Staff warmly welcomed Dr. Bahuguna, Director General at the main entrance of the institute and bouquet were presented to him and to Lady Bahuguna. He was then taken to the planting site where, the plants of Deodar – the sacred and state tree – were planted by him and Madam Bahuguna. While planting Deodar, he vehemently advocated its planting, conservation and protection.

Later, the DG, inaugurated the newly constructed **MD Chaturvedi Memorial Training Complex** in the premises of the Institute. Interacting with the media, he said that the complex would be equipped with the latest audio-visual system, computers, LCD projectors and other related modern gadgets for the convenience of researchers and trainees. The training complex will provide a platform in dissemination of technologies developed by the institute to the target groups including the State Forest Department and will also be used for imparting trainings in the emerging issues of forestry sector like climate change, conservation of biological diversity, combating desertification and sustainable management & development of resources, he added. He encouraged the HFRI team to work in close collaboration with the state forest department and advise them to provide solution to the forestry research problems being faced by the state. Senior officers of the State Forest Department were also present on the occasion. Dr. Bahuguna was also appreciative of the help being provided by the state as and when required by the institute in different agro-climatic zones.

This Inaugural Ceremony was followed by a meeting of Director General, ICFRE, which was organized in the Conference Hall for having direct interactions with the officials of the institute.

Director, HFRI formally welcomed Director General for visiting HFRI and gave a brief introduction about the Director General as a very dynamic, professional and dedicated officer/forester, who has a vast experience of working in the field of forestry including his assignments in various capacities in Government of India. He informed that, he is also a winner of Best Forest Officer Award for his contribution in framing the policy of Joint Forest Management at the central government level during the year 2000 by the Commonwealth Forestry Association, UK. ICFRE under his dynamic leadership has successfully organized the First Indian Forestry Congress at New Delhi from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Director, HFRI hoped that ICFRE will achieve milestones under his able guidance in the times to come.

After formal welcome, the representatives of Forest Scientists Association of HFRI and Himalayan Forest Research Employees Union also welcomed Dr. Bahuguna in Himachali customs. Every member of the staff was also introduced personally.

After this, a detailed presentation on the research and extension activities of the institute, right from its inception to date was made by the Director. He also apprised the Director General about the various Field Research Stations situated in various agro-climatic zones of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. In his presentation, he urged the DG, ICFRE to take suitable administrative and developmental steps for this budding Institute.

- Director General appreciated the need for upcoming of the Field Research Station (FRS) Leh. He emphasized that if the institute want to work in the Cold Desert of Leh-Ladakh, the Institute must lay emphasis on research on Sea buckthorn – the main shrub species in collaboration with Defense Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR), Leh, who have very good infrastructure, excellent laboratories, sufficient manpower and funds and added that before initiating any research work at Leh, we have to be quite clear on all the related aspects. However, he firmly emphasized the need of expanding facilities at another Field Research Station, Tabo (Lahaul-Spiti), Himachal Pradesh, which is also situated in cold desert area. The development of FRS, Tabo will go a long way in achieving the end objective, for which this institute has been designated as a centre of excellence by the council, he informed.
- Need for developing a Modern and full-fledged Research Centre was also emphasized by him at Paonta Sahib with provisions of Laboratories, Office space and Rest House thereby, catering to the research needs of Shiwalik ranges. He further added that this centre will be developed in such a way so as to take up farmer centric research activities, in collaboration with FRI, Dehradun. He directed the Director, HFRI, to initiate and explore the possibilities for setting up FRS at Paonta Sahib and send a comprehensive proposal to this effect.

Director General appreciated the constant and sincere efforts of the institute and suggested to take up detailed research investigation on the following issues falling well within its mandate:

- Eco-rehabilitation of the cold deserts, where emphasis must be laid to the ecologically and socially relevant species endemic to the area. Need to take up further research on the species growing in the region including Sea-buckthorn was also stressed.

- Assessment on Himalayan biodiversity – Himalayas being the citadel of Biodiversity – is essentially required to be made and long term ecological monitoring be carried out as per the accepted norms and international standards. The institute must grow as a National Level Institute for such detailed investigation with special reference to Himalayan ecosystem, he added.
- Need for signing of MoU with the State Forest Department for assessment of Ecosystem Services in the Himalayan region because of uniqueness of forests growing in the area, was also stressed upon. He was of the strong opinion that this work will give an identity to the institute at the National Level.
- Emphasis to carry out research on medicinal plants growing in the Himalayan region must be laid and liaison with CIMAP, Lucknow be developed / strengthened for carrying out detailed and meaningful studies on various aspects related to these species including analysis of their active in-gradients.
- Revisiting of the forest types of Champion and Seth in the country, as per FAO standard were stressed upon and accordingly, directed HFRI to look into this aspect in the mandated states of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. Nodal officers to undertake the job from all the regional institute have already been identified, he informed.
- Initiation of research on the Forest Hydrology was also stressed upon. To overcome the staff constraints, the services of potential consultants, Senior Research Fellows, Junior Research Fellows for which the council has made special provisions can be utilized. He stressed to create the Divisions/ Cells as notified by the Council.
- Special emphasis must be laid on species like Hill Bamboos, *Pinus gerardiana* and other conifers for upliftment of the status of rural artisans, farming community and other stakeholders.
- Possibilities for providing consultancy services for preparation of EIA and EMP with special reference to Hydro-electric project must be further explored.
- Discussions should be done with the relevant authorities in the state for developing, conserving and sustaining forestry resources out of the funds available under research component of CAT Plan and CAMPA.

Director General met the press to share his thoughts and priorities for Forestry research in Western Himalayas. In his remarks, he specifically pointed out there is an urgent need to lift the ban on green felling and the states are required to go for selection felling of the trees following scientific basis so as to promote their regeneration. Any ban which is not based on scientific and technical facts will only harm the long term interests of forest conservation, he added. Talking about the growing man – animal conflict, Director General underlined the need for striking a balance between development and conservation. Laying stress on the Himalayan Ecosystem, he emphasized that this is an important ecosystem and council in general and Himalayan Forest Research Institute in particular must lay emphasis on it and accordingly, the council is re-orienting its forestry research and are trying to develop those kind of forest technologies which will help the livelihood of fringe villages including development and augmentation of water harvesting activities. Assessment of ecosystem services provided by the forests in the larger national context is another burning issue, which needs to be tackled.

### **Visit to the Office and Laboratories:**

Later in the evening, Director General made a visit to the Library, Office, Herbarium and laboratories and showed satisfaction over the maintenance of office records, cash books and upkeep of laboratories etc. He encouraged the staff to work with greater dedication.

As far as Herbarium and Laboratories of the Institute are concerned, he ordered;

- Strengthening of related infrastructure in all the four laboratories.
- Procurement of latest and relevant equipments for each of the laboratories;

Besides, he advised the scientists on the spot to further their research efforts/activities by;

- Initiating the digitization of Herbarium;
- Assessment of floral diversity including medicinal plants in the Himalayan region.
- Developing Models for eco-restoration of Cold Deserts.
- Research on the water shed management
- Research on Value addition and utilization of NWFPs
- Planting stock improvement works in Shisham and *Chilgoza pine* and other conifers.
- Standardization of synthetic pheromone formulations for managing insect-pests incidences in the forestry eco-system including *Ips longifolia* Steb. (Coleoptera: Scolytidae), a Bark borer and wood borer in Chir pine forests.
- To undertake research on beetle diversity including related roles and medicinal use for the welfare of mankind.

### **DG ICFRE interacted with the Staff associations of HFRI Shimla. The important issues discussed in these meetings are given at Annexure-A.**

DG ICFRE attended an interactive meeting with senior officers of the State Forest Department, where issues concerning the Himalayan eco-system were discussed and deliberated upon. Possibilities for greater collaboration with HP forest department, NGO, and communities was emphasized. He impressed upon that the states must utilized the technical capabilities and expertise of the institute.

**Dated: 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2011** : Performed journey from Shimla for Manali.

**Dated: 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2011**

DG ICFRE visited the tract up to Golaba on way to Rohtang pass to see the Alpine ecosystem including the distribution of vegetation along the altitudinal gradients. However, due to continuous snowfall, journey could be accomplished upto Rallah falls only. On return also entered Solang valley to visit Dhundhi area – the north portal of Rohtang tunnel - and visited this mega project, being implemented by the Govt. of India with foreign collaboration. Also inspected the field the trials on Nurse Crop established under one of the Externally Aided project in which, *Populus ciliata* was used as a nurse crop to facilitate the establishment / regeneration of Silver, fir and spruce – the shed loving trees in the stages of their establishment.

- DG, ICFRE appreciated the model developed by the institute and further stressed that the same need to be discussed with senior functionaries of the State Forest Department and further extended in the field along with their collaboration. He further advised that;

- Silver fir and spruce technology and other past innovative contributions may be sent to Headquarters for incorporation in future editions.
- Champion and Seth classification is to be revised. Vegetation survey to be done on ground, middle and upper storey.

**Dated: 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2011**

Director General along with the Director and team of Scientists visited Bruhandhar Field Research Station and appreciated the ongoing trials like establishment of Gene pool, assessment of harvesting limits and development of agro-techniques on the medicinal plants wealth of temperate, dry-temperate and alpine zones. He undertook a detailed inspection of works of the research station and also saw the field demonstration of Hill bamboos spread over an area of 2 ha.

He concluded his visit to HFRI by bringing the following points to the notice of all concerned;

- The results obtained through different trials of medicinal plants till date / going to be achieved by the institute must be designed in a way so that they get fitted into "*Direct to Consumer*" scheme of the council. This approach will certainly take the institutes to the end users – the end objective of our research.
- Germplasm of Hill bamboos need to be conserved and its social and ecological relevance need to be disseminated further.
- The Field Research Station because of its ongoing works in for front followed by its majestic location / scenic beauty should be developed further keeping in view the concept of eco-tourism approach. This approach will not only facilitate the institute in particular and the council in general to reach to the various stakeholders but also will earn revenue for the institute that can be pooled for long term sustenance and maintenance of the Station.
- The infrastructure in the form of Office, Rest House, Mali Hut etc., as established earlier at the Field Station, need to be further strengthened by providing the additional facilities like TV, Fridge, Best Furniture, extension material etc. For this he desired that a detailed proposal should be prepared and submitted by the institute at the earliest. Performed journey from Field Research Station, Bruhandhar to Kullu.

**Dated: 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2011:** Performed journey up to Chandigarh.

**Dated: 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2011:** Meeting with PCCF Punjab in the forenoon

Director General met the Senior Officers of the Punjab Forest Department and research issues of common interests were discussed and deliberated upon during the meeting. Also saw the high-tech office building of the department, which was constructed recently.

In the afternoon, proceeded for Dehradun.

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ANNEXURE-A

**DG MEETING WITH SCIENTISTS, STAFF AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS**

1. The staff association of HFREU submitted the issue more ministerial staff to DG ICFRE. The DG desired that Director, HFRI may send a detailed restructuring proposal of the Institute and sent it to the Secretary, ICFRE for consideration at headquarters level shortly.

**Action: Director, HFRI/Secretary, ICFRE**

2. The staff association requested transfer of vacant posts of Foresters from other Institutes to HFRI, Shimla to provide promotional avenues for Forest Guards of HFRI. DG marked this representation of the association to the Secretary, ICFRE and accordingly the same has been forwarded to him for taking suitable action vide this office letter no. 1-1(35)2010/HFRI/783 dated 19.12.2011

**Action: Secretary, ICFRE**

3. The staff association submitted representation for up-gradation of pay scales of Research personnel in the council. The representation have been marked to the Secretary, ICFRE and the same has been forwarded to him vide this office letter no. 1-1(35)2010/HFRI/783 dated 19.12.2011 for taking up further necessary action at headquarters level.

**Action: Secretary, ICFRE**

4. The staff association further submitted another representation pertaining to promotional quota of LDC (from earlier Group-D to LDC e.g. 20%+5%). The representation of the association has been marked to the Secretary, ICFRE and the same has been forwarded to him for taking necessary action vide this office letter no. 1-1(35)2010/HFRI/783 dated 19.12.2011. It has become necessary in view of the abolition of erstwhile group 'D' cadre in the Govt./Council. The same need to be considered as an agenda for BOG so that Office Attendants could avail 25% quota against the recruitment of LDC post. Recruitment Rules needs to be amended accordingly.

**Action: Secretary, ICFRE**

5. The staff association also submitted another representation with regard to "**Providing better medical facilities to the employees of HFRI**". The DG, ICFRE agreed in principle and marked the same to the Director, HFRI and Secretary, ICFRE. In this regard, necessary proposal along with representation of the association have been sent to the Secretary, ICFRE vide this office letter no. 2-1(21)HFRI/785 dated 19.12.2011 for recognizing such private hospitals (which are already recognized by Govt. of H.P.), nearest to the Institute for the staff and their families of the Institute, .

**Action: Secretary, ICFRE**