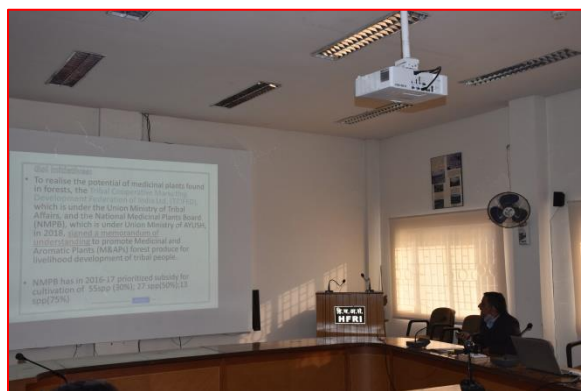


PROCEEDINGS OF THE MONTHLY SEMINAR OF HIMALAYAN FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE, SHIMLA HELD ON 29.12.2020

In the series of monthly seminar, scheduled for December 2020, a presentation on the topic **“Cultivation, Production and Trade of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants in Himachal Pradesh with focus on Laws and Policies”** under the theme **Managing forests and forest products for Livelihood support and economic growth** was delivered by **Dinesh Paul**, Dy. Conservator of Forests, HFRI, on **29.12.2020**. **Dr. S. S. Samant**, Director, HFRI chaired the proceedings of monthly research seminar. Scientists, Officers and Technical staff were present during the talk and temporary research personnel joined virtually through Google Meet.

At the outset, **Dr. Rajesh Sharma**, Group Coordinator Research welcomed **Dr. S. S. Samant**, Director HFRI, and all the participants and apprised about the overview of the topic and its relevance in view of the mandate of the Institute and requested all the participants to actively participate in the discussion and give valuable suggestions at the end of the presentation. In his presentation the speaker briefed about the status of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) Worldwide



as well as in India. The various facts and statistics regarding the usage pattern and collection of MAPs in India were presented. The efforts for encouragement for vast cultivation of MAPs by the Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Tribal affairs were also highlighted. The presenter apprised about the cultivation factors, patterns, constraints as well as futuristic approach for increasing and

motivating MAPs cultivators of the country. The MAPs collection-statistics, production-volumes, marketing trends, and various factors affecting production in the country as well as within the state of Himachal Pradesh were highlighted. The initiatives of Ministry of Tribal affairs regarding the purchase of 73 listed Items of MAPs from Gatherers/Cultivators at a Minimum Sale Price and finding marketing for products was briefed. Subsidized scheme of National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB) for MAPs as well as the involvement of state agencies, various cooperatives and private entrepreneurs for the benefit of cultivators/gatherers was also focused during the presentation. The issue of overexploitation due to destructive harvesting and danger of extinction of MAPs from the state was discussed and the need for cultivation, factors affecting cultivation, increased

production of MAPs in the State, encouragement and incentives to cultivators were also briefed. The resolutions such as identification of species critically endangered due to over-exploitation for the market demand, easy availability of planting material, establishment of standardized nurseries sufficient planting material, genetic transformation, use of biotechnology and issues regarding certification of MAPs were presented.

Under the Policy and Trade, the speaker highlighted the issue of illegal trade of MAPs, the Laws in force regulating the forest produce in trade and transit and the data regarding the violation of Indian Forest Act 1927 / Wildlife Protection Act, 1978. The various other Laws for Regulation of Trade of MAPs, The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, The Foreign Trade (Development & Regulations) Act, 1992, Ex-Im Policy of the Country were discussed and salient features of H.P. Forestry Sector Medicinal Plant Policy, 2006 along-with its strategy, mechanism and futuristic goals were briefed.

In the concluding part of the presentation the speaker briefed about the various works/projects done by HFRI, Shimla since 2002-03 and was of the opinion that HFRI must be a part of formulation and drafting of Policies on MAPs and Legal provisions notified by H.P. State Forest Department and the Law Department of the State so that the trading in contraband is controlled and mitigated and the cases of illegal harvest and trade come to end. The speaker also focussed on future research needs for MAPs which demands Identification of MAPs potential in the state, clonal fidelity studies and collaborative research for increasing production of MAP species using improvised technology.

During discussion various issues relating to the topic was discussed. **Dr. S. S. Samant**, Director, appreciated the efforts of the presenter and discussed about the MAPs cultivation in the State and measures to be adopted for increasing production by encouraging cultivation on the available cultivable land, may be mixed cropping pattern or other as well as the wastelands available within state and the need for exploring the markets for the produce. He deliberated upon the role of Cooperatives and Management Committees in selling of the forest produce. He even emphasized the fact that the in-vitro micro-propagation techniques would not be sufficient enough to achieve large scale production and insisted on making high quality stock available to the cultivators. **Dr. Rajesh Sharma**, GCR, HFRI discussed the difficulty being faced by pioneer organizations regarding identification of various plant species which are being traded legally or illegally and focused on the need for innovative measures for identification of MAP species as the DNA Bar Coding technique is not readily available and the cost involved. **Sh Jagdish Singh**, Scientist-F inquired about the complete process for selling and transporting the forest produce from field to the various notified Mandis (selling markets). The presenter informed about the provisions of The H.P. Forest Produce Transit (Land Routes) Rules 2013 and Amendment Rules, 2017 and the powers enshrined to Panchayat Pradhans in 2003 by the State of H.P. and revoking of these powers was also discussed.

Dr. Ashwani Kumar, Chief Technical Officer, inquired regarding the National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB) subsidized scheme for growing the MAPs on the private land and the parameters for obtaining the grant from the Board. It was discussed that the grant is released based on cultivated area. **Dr. Neelesh Yadav**, Scientist- E informed of NMPB website *e-charaka* and the opportunity this site provides by facilitating viewers with the details of marketing avenues and prevailing fortnightly rates of various medicinal plants. The discussion ended with the note of worthy Director wherein he focused upon collective effort of producers, traders and Institutions for MAP cultivation and production in H.P. and the futuristic prospects of the study and the role of HFRI, parallel research organizations for it.

In the end, **Dr. R.K. Verma**, GCR (Link Officer) thanked **Dr. S.S. Samant**, Director HFRI, the Forest Officers, Scientists, Technical Officers and Research Staff for their active participation and inputs for making the seminar successful.