



Mains Practice Question

Q. Examine the reasons for rising incidents of forest fires in India and steps that can be taken to contain them. (150 words)

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Approach

- Give facts regarding rising incidents of forest fires.
- Describe and analyze the reasons behind increasing fire incidences.
- Suggest measures to contain the forest fires.

Introduction

- India, saw a 46 per cent increase in the number of forest fires in the last 16 years (2003-17), and witnessed a 125 per cent spike in such fires in just two years (2015 to 2017).

Reasons

- **Natural causes:** Many forest fires start from natural causes such as lightning which set trees on fire. High atmospheric temperatures and dryness (low humidity) offer favorable circumstance for a fire to start.
- **Man made causes:** Fire is caused when a source of fire like naked flame, cigarette or bidi, electric spark or any source of ignition comes into contact with inflammable material.
- **Climate change:** Experts believe that long dry periods, especially during winter and the pre-monsoon period, caused by increased warming, is a significant factor for more fires.
- **Geographical factors:** The forests of Western Himalayas are more frequently vulnerable to forest fires as compared to those in Eastern Himalayas, because forests of Eastern Himalayas grow in high rain density. With large scale expansion of chirr (Pine) forests in many areas of the Himalayas the frequency and intensity of forest fires has increased.

Prevention

- Early dissemination of the satellite based forest fire alerts to the State Forest Departments
- Awareness campaigns regarding forest fires and protocols to be followed to prevent and control forest fires
- Financially weaker states should be provided financial assistance for prevention and management of forest fire under the Centrally Sponsored Forest Fire Prevention and Management (FPM) Scheme.
- National policy for effective prevention, management and containment of forest fires. The state governments should prepare and implement a forest fire management plan for effective prevention and control of forest fires.

Conclusion

- Forest fires are among major disaster faced by India leading to massive loss of life and property and impact on environment.

- A holistic approach of management of forest fires through prevention, mitigation and control can lead to better outcomes saving natural resources and loss of life and property.

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