

9/3/2021

Q. In the context of Simlipal forest fire, discuss the measures that are required to be taken to protect forests from fire. (200 words)

In 2021, February - March, Simlipal National Park experienced a forest fire that spread to  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd of the park. Such forest fires have become very frequent and intense - California, Siberia, Australia, Amazon fires.

In 2018 alone, 1.8 million acres were burnt.

The causes of the fire are 96% anthropogenic, some are -

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| i) Land degradation                      | v) Long summers (climate change)                 |
| ii) Drying of biomass                    | vi) Disruption of traditional use cycles         |
| iii) <del>Human</del> Ignition by humans | vii) Human encroachment                          |
| iv) Accumulated biomass                  | viii) Use of inflammable building materials etc. |

The damage to flora, fauna and the entire ecosystem, not to mention human life and livelihood is very severe. And forest fires release 2.5 - 4 billion tonnes of  $\text{CO}_2$  every year. So we must adopt the following measures to reduce forest fires.

(i) Implement the Forest Fire Prevention And Management Practices (2017)

- Thinning the tree line selectively
- Planting fire adaptable trees in sections
- Controlled burning to reduce biomass accumulation

(ii) Implement the National Action Plan on Forest Fire 2018

- Empower local communities to be first responders in a crisis, and work in the State Forest Department

(iii) Implement Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and Forest Act 1927 to strictly curb illegal encroachment and other activity on forest land.

(iv) Empower through information - GIS based, remote sensing

(v) Predict <sup>fire in advance</sup> with the Keech - Byram index

(vi) Alert the locals, detect at the earliest (fire)

(vii) Preserve and regenerate indigenous ecosystem

(viii) Support traditional, sustainable land use.

Forest fires are preventable disasters, especially. The Simlipal forest fire must serve as an impetus for the government to ensure full implementation of conservation policy, otherwise all our climate gains will be lost.