

ABSTRACT

STUDY ON THE POTENTIAL OF EXISTING MECHANISM TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF FOREST FIRES IN SRI LANKA

Lt Col SJMNS Perera

503MSS18013

Faculty of Graduate Studies

General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

Sri Lanka

The most frequent hazard in forests is known as the forest fires. During summer with less rainfall for months, forest get dry and littered with fuel loads which could burst into flames ignited with a sudden spark. During the recent past the intensity and frequency of the forest fires in the country have increased than ever before due to the climate change factors. The main factors triggers the forest fires are dry weather with high temperature, wind speed and relative humidity of the environment. Human involvement, fuel characteristic, forest canopy density, elevation, slope, and close proximity to the human settlement areas are the other crucial factors to consider. Forest fires can become disaster when it occurs in a wrong place, wrong time, and wrong frequency. Only 4 percent of forest fire occurs around the globe have naturally causes and other all forest fires started due to human induced factors.

Success of control the forest fires in the country is mainly depends upon the coordinating effort taken by all stakeholders including the community participation. None availability of a proper coordinated coping mechanism, communication lapses, none availability of firefighting equipment and gears, transport issues and lapses in law enforcement framework are the main reasons for not having a proper mechanism to control forest fires

in the country. Hence the objective of this study was to examine the potential of the existing mechanism to reduce the impact of forest fires in Sri Lanka, and to identify the actions that could be taken to improve and upgrade it. Accordingly, this study highlights the importance of taking preventive and mitigation measures rather than the action taken to develop the fire suppression mechanism. Since, Military forces are the main entity involve in fire suppression task importance of having a national plan with a civil military coordination program was suggested to implement. This program has to govern by a central body with government financial assistance for making policies and strategies to control the forest fire hazard in the country.

KEY WORDS

Forest fire, Human induced factors, Fire suppression mechanism, Preventive and mitigation measures,