



The three areas where there are prominent gaps in research include:

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**Biodiversity:** Apart from a few mammals, trees, herbs and shrubs, the department does not have a record of the whole gamut of biodiversity in the Pune division. As such, the forest department has highlighted the need for a biodiversity assessment study (Pune division).

**Carbon sequestration:** Carbon sequestration is an important aspect of the contribution of forests towards climate change. However, since the forest department does not have base data, it is difficult to monitor the increase/decrease in sequestration levels. Also, the methodology for the assessment of different pools of carbon should be very clear to the SOFR units so that information is more accurate. Hence, research is needed for tier 3-level measurements of the key C-stock components over time.

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Non-timber forest products (NTFPs): NTFPs are integral to the health and productivity of the forests. Though the department has data on major NTFP tree species and a few prominent medicinal plants, there is a wide variety of species on which there is no data. Research is required for documentation of all species. Similarly, there is need to devise the methods for harvesting such species.

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Apart from these key areas, the department also wants to conduct research at selective sacred groves in the Pune division by declaring them as research plots/biodiversity heritage sites. Additionally, details of medicinal plants knowledge need to be recorded in the working plan. The working plan has also highlighted that some (Bhambhurda Range, Wadgaon and Shirota Range) have expertise in raising good stock, and that these are to be upgraded for raising quality seeds/seedlings and planting stock. The department, with the help of its staff, will undertake experiments related to different aspects of nurseries, a forest official said.

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A research proposal has been included in the 10-year working plan, which has been submitted to both state and central authorities. Further process will be implemented upon approval of the same, said Mahadev Mohite, deputy conservator of forests, Pune Forest Division.

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