

'Involve local communities to control forest fires in state'

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Bhubaneswar: Several civil society organisations (CSOs) on Tuesday urged the state government to involve local communities in controlling forest fires in the state.

The CSOs, led by iFOREST, held a discussion here on forest fires, climate change and non-timber forest products' collection in Odisha where environmental experts deliberated upon on forest fires, which has risen to alarming proportions recently in the state.

The experts opined that the only scientific method to douse such fires will not help it must be blended with the traditional knowledge. "Forest fires can be natural or man-made, but controlling it can be routed through local communities," Chandra

Bhusan, the president of iFOREST, said. Vasundhara's director Giri Rao, who also participated in the discussion, said that forest fires make a major impact on the ecosystem. "We need to put the safety of the biodiversity at the top while attempting to come up with a solution to douse forest fires," he added.

The experts also suggested the government to come up with a special provision in the budget and a dedicated management plan for the forest fire.

"During every summer season, this becomes a problem but the state or central government has never taken it seriously," Bhusan added.

He said that a long-term plan needs to be drafted by the government to control such incidents.



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