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No. NGT/Judicial/OA/425-2023

To,
National Green Tribunal
Faridkot House, Copernicus Marg,
New Delhi-110001

Subject: Representative statement, reply to objection and queries based on Compliance affidavit filed by DFO, Dehradun based on Original Application No. 425/2023 titled "Deepika Khari Vs State of Uttarakhand & Ors."- reg

Hon'ble Tribunal,

I, Deepika Khari an active volunteer of Taoveda Dimensions have received about the registered case via phone call on 31st July, 2023 and received that shared link to attend VC afterwards.

I, Deepika Khari appeared through VC dated 1st August, 2023 and had all the will to be related with filed complaint.

Later, due to lack of knowledge regarding dates and way to attend via VC, I have missed next hearings. I was at fault.

Thus, the applicant tenders her sincere apology before Hon'ble Tribunal for not attending later dates.

Reference to Pg.5, point 9, I Object as it is clearly mentioned in my complaint letter that the field workers presented their and assigned Policeman via Cm helpline affirmed me with the term 'Control Burning'. So, it was for me is burning dry leaves intentionally but not at all a 'Forest Fire'. I'm well aware of 'Forest Fire' and forest department has complete manual related to forest fire on their websites but no where mentioned 'Control Burning' as there is no manual with any instructions, guidelines, duration and time to conduct this traditional practice.



Point 10, reference It was clearly Mentioned in my complaint letter that Two men who were conducting the activity of burning dry leaves mentioned me as 'control burning'.

My objection to this was that it was not at all seemed to me as fire was controlled by any means.

Now, I would like to bring my concerned point on the 'Traditional Practice '(as mentioned by Deponent) and very much priority (as mentioned on pg5 and point 11- annexure 3) by forest department that if it was control burning then by which means their field staff was supposed to control that burning. In the field, there were two workers who came on in casuals.

Next, only scooty two men were present to burn dry leaves on the both side of highway road that extended over 150 meters. One side was left unattended and produced lots of smoke which interrupted the traffic and caused chaos on Highway.

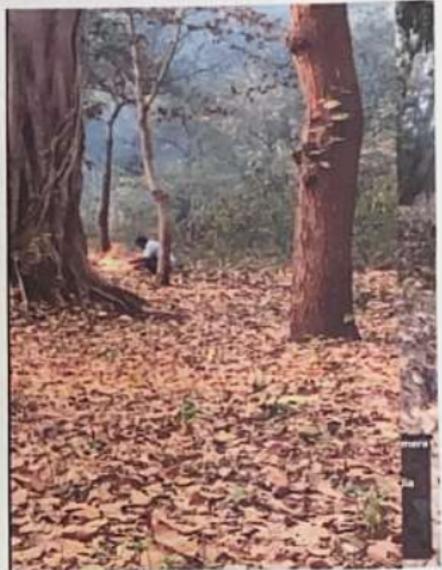
Moreover, it took only a few seconds for the smoke to spread and suddenly it caused zero visibility and vehicles stopped in the middle of the road.

On the other side, one man or worker in casuals was making a line of burning material by using only Dry small twig.

No equipment was in use or neither were they equipped with any safety instrument to stop fire.

They were not carrying any water discharge mechanism or any bucket to lift soil to throw on fire to stop it.

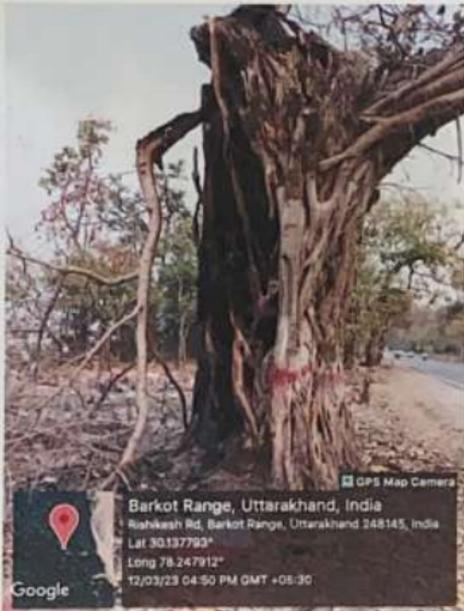
They were carrying no equipment to control the burning if it went out of control.



Third, there was no signboard placed to inform the vehicles or to slow down the traffic. Neither was there any help from Traffic Department to control traffic at National Highway to prevent any accident or mishap.



My next, concern is related to the safety of soil and trees. Burning for a long time causes harm to the soil. In addition I have witnessed on the same highway on the same road, where the Chandrabhaga bridge starts, a tree was completely burnt, and ashes were lying around. Find the image below:-



I want to raise a question here; who will ensure us that tree wasn't damaged or burnt during performing this control burning earlier? Where we can find any manual to refer guidelines associated with 'Control Burning' where before complaining we can educate ourselves about the details of the same.



On the forest department websites, there is a manual available with colour pictures related to 'forest fire'. In that manual there is an image displayed that showcased that there are lot of field workers well dressed and well equipped with instruments. But the workers we witnessed had no such gears on them.



Next, there is no information and guidelines related to 'control burning' on forest department's website.



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Now, I request to Honble' Tribunal lords is that for 'control burning' the forest department must issue Guidelines and publish manual like they have published for forest fire with detailed information as reference for layman, also any complaint could be filed if guidelines won't be followed properly.

We request, Hon'ble court that we only desire to protect forest wealth and that is soil and trees. We demand the protection for the both. "Control Burning' surely required practice but must be conducted under any norms and guidelines supposed to followed by field workers. for now, we have never experienced such control that is performing to protect the harm to forest or for the protection of trees or preventing 'forest fire'.

With due respect, I like to bring our other complaints reported to us by our other volunteers active in other parts of Uttarakhand experiences related to 'Control Burning' in attention. Even in deep woods or interior parts of forests Sitabani road Ram Nagar, Terha, Uttarakhand 263159 (29.430864, 79.140945).

We lost trees during this traditional practice which is known as 'control burning' because if we raise voice or filed complaint against this burning, they reject or ignore by saying it is control burning and measures taken by the department officials to stop this fire.

This is meant to be happen and trees are meant to be burnt and die.++



Applicant: DEEPIKA KHARI (extends sincere Thanks)

Deepika Khari

Dt. 6th April, 2024