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Bamboo Industry

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Why is in news? World's first 200-meter-long Bamboo Crash Barrier "Bahu Balli" installed on the Vani-Warora Highway, Vidarbha, Maharashtra

An extraordinary accomplishment towards achieving Aatmanirbhar Bharat has been made with the development of the **world's first 200-meter-long Bamboo Crash Barrier** which has been installed on the **Vani-Warora Highway, Vidarbha, Maharashtra**.

This Bamboo Crash Barrier, which has been christened Bahu Balli, underwent rigorous testing at various government-run institutions such as the National Automotive Test Tracks (NATRAX) in Pithampur, Indore and was rated as Class 1 during the Fire Rating Test conducted at the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI) in Roorkee. Additionally, it has also been **accredited by the Indian Road Congress**.

The **recycling value of the bamboo barrier is 50-70% whereas that of steel barriers is 30-50%**.

The bamboo species used in the making of this barrier is **Bambusa Balcoa**, which has been treated with **creosote oil** and coated with recycled **High-Density Poly Ethylene (HDPE)**.

This achievement is remarkable for the bamboo sector and India as a whole, as this **crash barrier offers a perfect alternative to steel** and addresses environmental concerns and their aftermath.

Furthermore, it is a rural and agriculture-friendly industry in itself making it an even more significant milestone.

Bamboo industry in India:

Bamboo is part of rural livelihood in developing countries like India.

Due to its versatile nature and multiple uses, it is also called '**poor man's timber**'. Though it grows tall like a tree, it belongs to the grass family.

It can withstand drought as well as flood.

India is second only to China in terms of bamboo diversity. India is blessed with 148 species of bamboo with 29 genera.

Bamboo is grown on 10 million hectares in India and covers almost 13 per cent of the total forest area. The total production of bamboo is five million tonnes per year.

Bamboo occurs in different bio-climatically defined forest types **ranging from tropical to subalpine zones**.

The diversity has considerably dwindled from natural habitats due to **over exploitation, shifting cultivation, gregarious flowering and extensive forest fires**.

Indiscriminate removal of forest cover has resulted in the domination vis-a-vis gregarious growth of certain species of bamboo and thus the reduced species diversity in natural areas of their occurrence.

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Also an appreciable percentage of bamboo diversity can be observed in undisturbed key areas of conservation such as National Parks (NP) and Wildlife sanctuaries (WS).

Forests and rural areas of **Northeastern and Eastern India** comprising the States of West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura have **over 50% of the bamboo species of the Indian floristic region**.

Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh (Himalayan part), Sikkim, North Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh is also **rich with high altitude elements** occurring under different ecophysiological conditions.

Madhya Pradesh has the largest area under bamboo forests, followed by Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh, and Odisha, as per the **2017 Forest Survey of India report**.

National Bamboo Mission:

The **restructured National Bamboo Mission (NBM)** was launched during 2018-19 as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**.

It is under the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare** and it is being implemented through the **state nodal department** which is nominated by the State/UT governments concerned.

The Mission envisages **promoting holistic growth of bamboo sector** by adopting area-based, regionally differentiated strategy and to increase the area under bamboo cultivation and marketing.

NBM mainly focuses on the **development of the complete value chain of Bamboo sector** to link growers with consumers starting from planting material, plantation, creation of facilities for collection, aggregation, processing, marketing, micro, small & medium enterprises, skilled manpower and brand building initiative in a cluster approach mode.

Objective:

To **increase the area under bamboo plantation in non-forest Government and private lands** to supplement farm income and contribute towards resilience to climate change.

Connecting farmers to markets so as to enable farmer producers to get a ready market for the bamboo grown and to increase the supply of appropriate raw material to the domestic industry.

It also endeavours to **upgrade skills of traditional bamboo craftsmen** as per the requirement of contemporary markets with a tie-up with enterprises and premier institutes.

Nodal Ministry: