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Bamboo Mission

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Why is in news? 6,100 plants, species from Jammu & Kashmir to Lakshadweep: how a project on India's bamboo biodiversity is shaping up on Delhi's Yamuna floodplains

From species native to Jammu and Kashmir in the north to the kinds grown in Lakshadweep island in the Arabian Sea, and from the varieties belonging to the Western Ghats to those found in the highest reaches of Arunachal Pradesh, over 6,000 types of plants from across the length and breadth of India are coming together in one place as part of an ambitious bamboo biodiversity project on Yamuna floodplains.

The initiative is part of the "Meri Maati, Mera Desh" programme undertaken by the Department of Forests and Wildlife.

Under this, plants of more than 53 species have been planted at 'Bharat Kunj' Bambusetum spread across 12,000 square metres of land at Baansera on the floodplains. Saxena will inaugurate a musical fountain at the location.

Current status of Bamboo in India:

Bamboos are integral not only to the culture of India but that of the entire Southeast Asia.

The wide range of their uses qualifies this group of species to be the one foremost associated with the mainstay of rural life and culture in our country.

Its versatility has led to the coinage of such terms as "**bamboo culture**", "**green gold**", "**poor man's timber**", "**friend of the people**" and "**cradle to coffin timber**". In fact, bamboo can be used as a substitute of timber in many respects.

Bamboos belong to the grass family **Poaceae** (Gramineae).

In India, there are **136 indigenous as well as exotic species** of bamboos belonging to 23 genera.

Bamboo forests occupy an **area of 10.03 million ha, roughly 12.8% of the total forest area** in the country.

They are found in almost all the states of the country, **from the tropical to the temperate regions** and the alluvial plains to the high mountains, the only exception where they do not occur naturally is Kashmir.

More than 50 per cent of the bamboo species occur in **Eastern India** – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and West Bengal.

Other areas rich in bamboos are the Andamans, Bastar region of Madhya Pradesh and the Western Ghats.

Although, bamboos are more common to the tropics, they also occur naturally in subtropical and temperate zones of the world, except in Europe.

India is the **world's second-largest cultivator of bamboo after China**, with 136 species and 23 genera spread over 13.96 million hectares.

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Around **80 per cent** of bamboo forests lie in Asia with **India, China and Myanmar** having 19.8 million hectares of bamboo.

Bamboo forests have grown from 13,882 million culms (stems) in 2019 to 53,336 million culms in 2021 - **Forest Survey report 2021**.

Despite all this, the country's share in **the global bamboo trade and commerce** is **only 4 per cent**.

National Bamboo Mission:

The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare is implementing a **100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme** called **Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)** in which National Bamboo Mission (NBM) is being implemented as a **sub scheme**.

The **restructured National Bamboo Mission (NBM)** was launched in 2018-19 for holistic development of the bamboo sector **through a cluster-based approach in a hub** (industry) and spoke model to harness the opportunities by providing backward and forward linkages among the stakeholders – linking farmers to markets.

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.

Under the Mission, steps have been taken to **increase the availability of quality planting material** by supporting the setting up of new nurseries and strengthening of existing ones.

To address forward integration, the Mission is taking **steps to strengthen marketing of bamboo products**, especially those of handicraft items.

It aims to inter-alia **supplement farm income of farmers** with focus on the **development of complete value chain of bamboo sector** linking growers with industry.

The scheme is being **implemented in non-forest Government land, farmers field** in States where it has **social, commercial and economical advantage**, including the bamboo rich States of North Eastern region and Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Objectives:

To promote the growth of the bamboo sector through as an area based regionally differentiated strategy;

To increase the coverage of area under bamboo in potential areas, with improved varieties to enhance yields;

To promote marketing of bamboo and bamboo based handicrafts;

To establish convergence and synergy among stake-holders for the development of bamboo;

To promote, develop and disseminate technologies through a seamless blend of traditional wisdom and modern scientific knowledge.

To generate employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled persons, especially unemployed youths.

Benefits of Bamboo:

The **importance of the crop as a source of raw material** for industrial and domestic use with its growing demand all over the country necessitated its cultivation in farmlands as well.

It can be a **key crop to double farmers' income**, increase employment opportunities and improve the livelihood of the people, especially in the North East region.

Biochar produced by anaerobic combustion of bamboo has a tremendous beneficial effect on soil health by increasing organic carbon.

Bamboo has tremendous untapped potential for transforming India's rural economy.

Initiatives to Promote Bamboo:

Bamboo use has been an old practice in India, and it is currently being **supported by contemporary technology** and youth training for the bamboo business.

In 2017, the **Indian Forest Act of 1927** was **revised to exclude bamboo** from the list of trees. As a consequence, anybody can cultivate and sell bamboo and its products without the requirement for a felling and transport permit.

Import policy has also been altered to support the growth of the country's bamboo sector.

NBM helps local artists by using locally grown bamboo species, which will help farmers boost their revenue and reduce their reliance on raw material imports.

The ten most important species required by industry have been identified, and excellent planting material for plantations is being made accessible to farmers.

In addition to the existing **Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs)**, 10,000 additional FPOs will be founded during the next five years.

Well-organized FPOs aid farmers by teaching improved farming methods, collecting input purchases, providing transportation, connecting to markets, and achieving greater price realisation by eliminating middlemen.

Common Facility Centres are being established near the plantations to cut transportation costs and encourage local entrepreneurship while moving toward a zero-waste strategy.

Conclusion:

The National Bamboo Mission (NBM) fosters holistic growth in the bamboo sector by applying an area-based, regionally differentiated strategy to bamboo cultivation and commercialization, as well as to increase the area under bamboo cultivation and commercialization.