



# The Himalayan Bio-Economy: "Green to Gold"

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**Syllabus Connection:** GS Paper III (Agriculture & Science)

## Contemporary News Pivot

Himachal Pradesh has officially legalized and initiated the regulated cultivation of **Industrial Hemp**. This move aims to transition the state's rural economy from "Illicit Narcotics" to a sustainable "Bio-Economy."

## Scientific & Legal Guardrails

- **The 0.3% THC Threshold:** The core of the policy is the distinction between Marijuana and Industrial Hemp based on **Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)** levels. Only plants with  $< 0.3\%$  THC (non-psychoactive) are permitted.
- **NDPS Act, 1985 (Section 14):** This section empowers state governments to permit and regulate cannabis cultivation for industrial (fiber/seed) or horticultural purposes. Himachal joins Uttarakhand in utilizing this legal window.
- **Agrarian Resilience:** Hemp is a "Carbon Negative" crop. It requires **50% less water** than cotton and is naturally resistant to pests, making it an ideal alternative for hill farmers facing climate change and wildlife-related crop raids.
- **Value Chain:** The initiative targets the production of **Hempcrete** (eco-friendly construction material), specialized textiles, and Ayurvedic medicines.