

Significance of Bamboo Cultivation

Why in news?

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The theme of World Bamboo Day 2018 is bamboo as a tool for achieving economic and social sustainability.

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What is the status of bamboo cultivation in India?

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- Bamboo is grown on 10 million hectares in India and covers almost 13 per cent of the total forest area.

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- The total production of bamboo is five million tonnes per year.

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- About 8.6 million people depend on bamboo for their livelihood, the value of bamboo in India is estimated at \$4.4 billion.

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- Though Madhya Pradesh has the largest area under bamboo forests, bamboo culture thrives in the North Eastern region.

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- India is second only to China in terms of bamboo diversity.

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- The North-Eastern States are a storehouse of bamboo diversity, home to 58 bamboo varieties.

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What are the significant characteristics of bamboo?

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- The advantage of bamboo is manifold compared to monoculture tree plantations.

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- After planting, bamboo clumps start yielding after 4-7 years, it can become

part of agro forestry practice in small land holdings.

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- New bamboo plantations may curb the pressure from deforestation by serving as wood substitutes.
- It can be planted to reclaim severely degraded sites and wastelands.
- It is good soil binder owing to its peculiar clump formation and fibrous root system and hence also plays an important role in soil and water conservation.
- It is the fastest growing canopy, releasing 35 per cent more oxygen than trees.
- There are studies reporting that bamboo stands sequester 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide from per hectare.

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What is the role of Bamboo in Indian lives?

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- From the tender shoots as a delicacy food item to the rice cooked in the hollow of raw bamboo, it is part of everyday life.
- Due to its versatile nature and multiple uses, it is also called 'poor man's timber'.
- From house construction to flooring, agricultural implements, bamboo pervades all aspects of life and culture, artistic skills in bamboo weaving is also found in north-eastern region.
- Apart from this Bamboo is an integral part of North-east India's life and culture, as it is used in religious ceremonies, art and music.

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What are the initiatives taken by India to promote Bamboo?

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- India launched the National Bamboo Mission in 2007, it has failed to address the enormity of the issues related to bamboo.

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- Realising this lacuna, the Finance Ministry has allocated \$200 million in the 2018 Budget to provide new impetus to the bamboo sector, with huge support to the North-Eastern States.

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- In November 2017 the Centre relaxed the restrictions on harvesting, transit and trade of bamboo to boost the bamboo economy across the country.
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What India can learn from China in this regard?

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- China has achieved great success in growing and showcasing bamboo forests and products.
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- The headquarters of International Bamboo and Rattan Organisation (INBAR) is located in China.
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- It is a multilateral development organisation which promotes environmentally sustainable development using bamboo and rattan.
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- It has been making a real difference to the lives of millions of people and environments around the world with achievements in areas such as: raising standards; promoting safe, resilient bamboo construction; restoring degraded land; capacity-building; and informing green policy and sustainable development objectives.
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- Following the footsteps of China, India needs to support farmers to establish bamboo plantations in barren slopes.
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Source: Business Line

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