

Bamboo Harvesting -A New Opportunity for Agriculture Sector in India

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Abstract

Agriculture is rightly called the backbone for Indian economy and is the most employment generating sector in India. In 2026 nearly 46% of total employment is directly or indirectly depends on agriculture. The whole rural economy is mostly depending on agriculture. But majority of the farmers depends on traditional crops and old methods of harvesting and unpredictable monsoon. But due to limited resources, economic condition, proper irrigation conditions, storing facilities, the contribution of agriculture to GDP is between 18% to 20%. Modernization and the commercial crops which are less vulnerable to weather conditions and which requires less irrigation facilities are the need of the hour. In such background the Bamboo harvesting may prove to be a great opportunity for the farmers. Due to various economic, social and environmental benefit Bamboo is rightly called as 'Green Gold' for India's economy. The current paper aims to study various ecological, economic, social benefits and challenges in Bamboo harvesting in India.

Keywords: Green Gold, Carbon Sequestration, Agroforestry, Kharif, Rabbi & Zaid

Objectives:

The present paper aims to –

- 1) To explore the benefits of bamboo harvesting in India.
- 2) To understand the challenges of Bamboo harvesting in India.
- 3) To study various incentives plans of Govt for bamboo harvesting.

Research Methodology:

The current paper is a descriptive paper based on secondary data which is collected from Govt websites, reputed e-journals and reports.

Introduction:

Right from ancient era agriculture is providing direct and indirect employment to almost half of the population. The sectors like manufacturing and service sector are very much dependent on agriculture sector. Good or bad Agriculture season results in cascading effects on other sectors. Agriculture is lifeblood for the rural areas in India. But due to lack of irrigation, old technique of farming, credit facilities, lack of proper supply of fertilizers, seed, pesticides, modern storing facilities and Research and development, agriculture sector and farmers in particular are facing many challenges. The majority of the farmers are poor and helpless and are compelled to do farming activities for traditional crops by using old techniques. This is due to lack of knowledge and economic condition of the farmers. Traditionally farmers have limited option for crops. Indian agriculture season is divided into broad three categories i.e. Kharif, Rabbi and Zaid. The sowing in Kharif season is June to July and harvesting is done in September to October. The sowing in Rabbi season October to December and harvesting is done in March-April. While Zaid crops are taken in a short period of March to June.

Agriculture sector in India:

India's agriculture is rightly said to be the backbone of Indian economy. It contributes to about one-fifth of the GDP. (PIB), during last five years India shows a steady growth of 4.4%. the food grain production also shown promising growth with over 3500 lakh million tones. India is amongst the top most countries for the production of rice, wheat, spices and many more.

Bamboo Harvesting:

(Jamatia, 2012) Since 7th Century, Bamboo is being in use in many ways. Traditionally, Bamboo is used in India in construction of building, also mainly used as pulp for paper making. But in recent days Bamboo is used as input in furniture making and medicines too. In India Bamboo is traditionally grown in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Chhatisgarh.

(pib/gov.in) In terms of diversity India is only second after China, India has 13.96 million hectares of land under bamboo. Bamboo has variety of use like furniture, textile, food, energy, herbal medicine and paper making. Bamboo and rattan industry in India is worth 28,005 crores. The Govt of India introduced National Bamboo Mission in 2028 to encourage bamboo harvesting by the farmers.

Benefits of Bamboo harvesting:

1) It helps in soil conservation:

The most important benefit of bamboo harvesting is that it helps in the conservation of soil. The bamboo has deep roots system which helps in avoiding soil erosion and also helps in improving soil fertility.

2) It helps in creating rural employment:

The Indian rural economy typically faces a problem of disguised and seasonal unemployment. Bamboo harvesting creates immense opportunities for the rural youth as it provides opportunities of jobs. Different categories of jobs are created due to bamboo harvesting, it includes farming, handicrafts, sport articles and furniture making.

3) It is beneficial to construction industry:

Bamboo has a feature strong light weight, flexible and sustainable which makes a good option for the construction industry. Construction industry requires various raw materials for the construction purpose and bamboo provides a good option it is economical and ecofriendly option.

4) It serves as ecofriendly packaging:

Now a days packaging is essential. Attractive packaging is a must for successful product. Bamboo is a very effective and sustainable option for packaging. Plastic and other environmentally hazardous articles is generally used in packaging. This creates many environmental problems.

5) It is useful for making furniture and handicraft:

Another practical use of bamboo is its usage in furniture and handicrafts making. Due to improving economical conditions of people and increasing standard of living there is more demand for attractive furniture. Bamboo is a good option for innovative and durable furniture making. Due to increasing the awareness among people, there is more demand for bamboo furniture as it is excellent ecofriendly raw material for furniture making. Similarly, bamboo is used in handicraft making.

6) (Raut)It is good biofuel:

The industry can not run without energy. Some kind of energy is essential not only for industry but also for domestic cooking. It is well known that the conventional source of energy is limited and exhausted after some decades. So it is the priority of every government to search for some options before the conventional sources gets exhausted. The non-conventional sources include solar, wind power and other practical solutions like bamboo harvesting. Bamboo is ecofriendly and cheap source of energy.

Current status of bamboo harvesting in India:

(Jha), India has now over 80,000 hectares of land under Bamboo cultivation. Bamboo is cultivated in over 25 states across the country. The significant change which helps bamboo harvesting in India is the amendment in Forest Act in 2017. According to this amendment now bamboo is not regarded as 'TREE' on non-forest land. Previous to this amendment bamboo on non-forest land also was regarded as 'Tree' and it was not allowed to cut and use for commercial purpose. But after this amendment there is no such restriction which helps the farmers to grow the bamboo on non-forest land and sell it commercially. Govt of India also launched National Bamboo Mission. As per this Govt provides subsidies for many activities which are helpful in bamboo harvesting. It includes bamboo plantations, nurseries, publicity activities, processing units, and like activities. There is a special activity for boosting bamboo harvesting in North-East areas, for this Govt provides 90%

funding. It may prove to be a great help for bamboo harvesting in such states. It will help in improving the economical condition in such states. Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra are among the top states for bamboo harvesting. Mizoram is among the leading states in eastern India.

Challenges of Bamboo harvesting:

1) Lack of awareness among the farmers:

Bamboo harvesting is very useful for farmers economically. The bamboo harvesting is useful from environmental perspective. But the fact is that farmers are not very aware about the bamboo harvesting. Most of the farmers are not aware about many latest research and development in agriculture and also bamboo harvesting.

2) Slow returns:

Another challenge in bamboo harvesting is that bamboo harvesting requires at least four years. The growth of bamboo during initial years is very slow it takes years to grow. But in the later years the growth is fast. But compared to other crops the bamboo harvesting takes more time.

3) Wrong selection of species of bamboo:

There are various species of bamboo. Some of the species of bamboos are not very commercially useful. But the farmers are not very awareness about the particular species of bamboo which are commercially very useful. Proper guidance is required for such farmers to get complete information about the bamboo harvesting and varieties of bamboo and its uses. This will the farmers to plant those bamboo tresses which are commercially useful. This will avoid the future losses and frustration of the farmers.

4) Lack of processing units:

There are numerous commercial uses of bamboo. The uses of bamboo are furniture, handicrafts, construction materials and packaging materials. The furniture made from bamboo includes chair, table etc. which are extremely durable and ecofriendly. Flooring of bamboo is also very effective and attractive. Different housing articles used for decorating can be made with bamboo.

5) Lack of training centers:

Bamboo harvesting for its commercial uses is comparatively a new initiative for the farmers in India. There are various confusion and unawareness among the farmers regarding its actual commercial uses. Farmers do not have scientific knowledge regarding its harvesting and precautions to be taken throughout the growth stages.

Conclusion and Suggestions:

The farmers are typically facing many problems right from monsoon irregularity, irrigation issues, traditional farming, policy lacunas, lack of proper training regarding modern farming and many more. In the light of all such issues out of box thinking is a must. One such idea is bamboo harvesting. Bamboo is not only very beneficial from the point of environment but also economically too. Farmers may get an excellent opportunity of earning. Bamboo is used in furniture making, flooring, construction and many more. Govt is also promoting and encouraging bamboo harvesting for this they initiated National Bamboo Mission and many subsidies for the activities related to bamboo harvesting. Every state Govt should frame a policy for Bamboo harvesting which will cater the specific problems of the areas of their respective state. MSME processing units should be encouraged near the bamboo harvesting areas and Govt should give subsidies for making it cost effective. Farmers should be given free training and different time bound projects should be planned. Special efforts are needed for the export of bamboo because bamboo is imported to a large extent. The economic condition of the farmers can be improved to a great extent with bamboo harvesting. This will reduce the dependency of the farmers on traditional crop with required much water.

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