Sustainable Agroforestry – A boon for India
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INTRODUCTION

- Agroforestry is a land use system that integrates trees, crops and animals in a way that is dynamic, ecologically sound and culturally compatible.
- In the context of ongoing global dialogues on Climate Change, use of wood products is emerging as a versatile renewable alternative to its competing non-wood products. It is therefore necessary to increase the use of wood and wood products in construction, furnishing and interiors, paper and packaging, handicrafts, agricultural implements etc.
- A High Level Expert Group constituted by the XV Finance Commission of India in its report (July 2020) mentions that in 2027 total consumption of wood was 65 million cum of which 3 million cum (about 5%) was produced from forests, around 47 Million cum (72%) was produced from plantations (mainly agroforestry systems), and balance 15 million cum (22%) was imported.
- Wood is one of the important produce coming from forests/agroforestry that are renewable natural resource.
- It also contributes in meeting the SDG goals, and our targets under biodiversity conservation and the Bonn challenge.

Policies in India to promote agroforestry

▲ National Forest Policy ,1988
▲ National Agroforestry Policy, 2014
▲ Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture)

Wood based Industries

- Paper industry is the organized sector, and has been promoting tree cultivation of pulp wood species by farmers under agroforestry models, including clonal plantations, extending over 150,000 ha contributing to tree cover.
- Other wood based industries are largely in the small-scale or “unorganized” sector constituting 65-70% of the total sector.
- Half of the wooden furniture made in India uses teak; 30 % is from mango, sheesham, mahogany, and cedar, and roughly 20 % from other hardwood species.
- India imports small quantities of temperate hardwoods for other hardwood species.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

Promotion of Agroforestry:

- Agroforestry needs to be integrated with the concept of “Grow more wood use more wood”.
- Can help achieve the target of increasing forest/tree cover of India to 33%.
- Potential to sequestrate atmospheric carbon and mitigate the climate change effects.

Addressing Policy gaps in wood commerce:

- Productive use of degraded lands by raising plantations of suitable tree species in a mission mode It is necessary to permit/allow import of wood and wood products made only from wood sourced from certified forests.

Promote Credible Forest Certification process in India :

- The available Indian certification schemes having global recognition, shall be facilitated and promoted to enhance exports of wood products.
- The wood products industry should be encouraged to adopt voluntary certification for domestic markets by making certification as a requirement in public procurement policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NEED TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGROFORESTRY

Huge potential to bridge the gap between the demand and supply of industrial wood and reducing imports.

Additional assured income to farmers and reduces vulnerability to crop failures.

Paper industry uses 80 % of the total requirement from farm produced wood

Large quantity import of timber and other wood products, causing drain of foreign exchange reserves.

In 2013, agroforestry was estimated to be 25.32 Mha (8.2% of TGA): Comprising of 20 Mha in cultivated lands; 13.0 Mha in rain fed areas and 5.32 Mha in other

Enhancing use of wood products:

- Provide positive policy push for use of wood products in key growth sectors for green/sustainable development.
- Bringing in “sustainability” in public procurement policies to promote wood products and promote environmentally responsive consumerism.
- Promote and mandate ‘Green Public Purchasing’ (GPP) for procurement of wood products by government departments and agencies. Thus ensuring natural resource sustainability and a shift towards a greener and resource efficient supply chain.
- Establishing specific wood processing zones around potential agro-forestry growth regions.