

Sustainable Agroforestry - A boon for India

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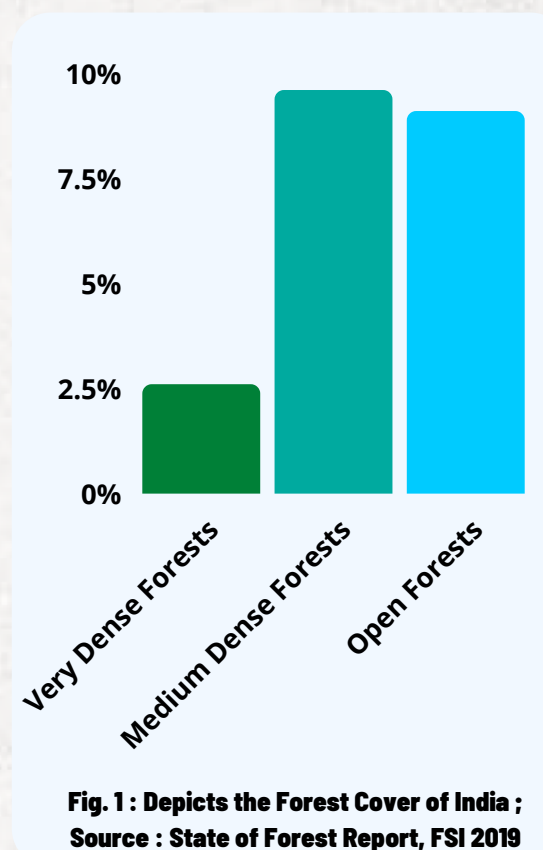
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INTRODUCTION

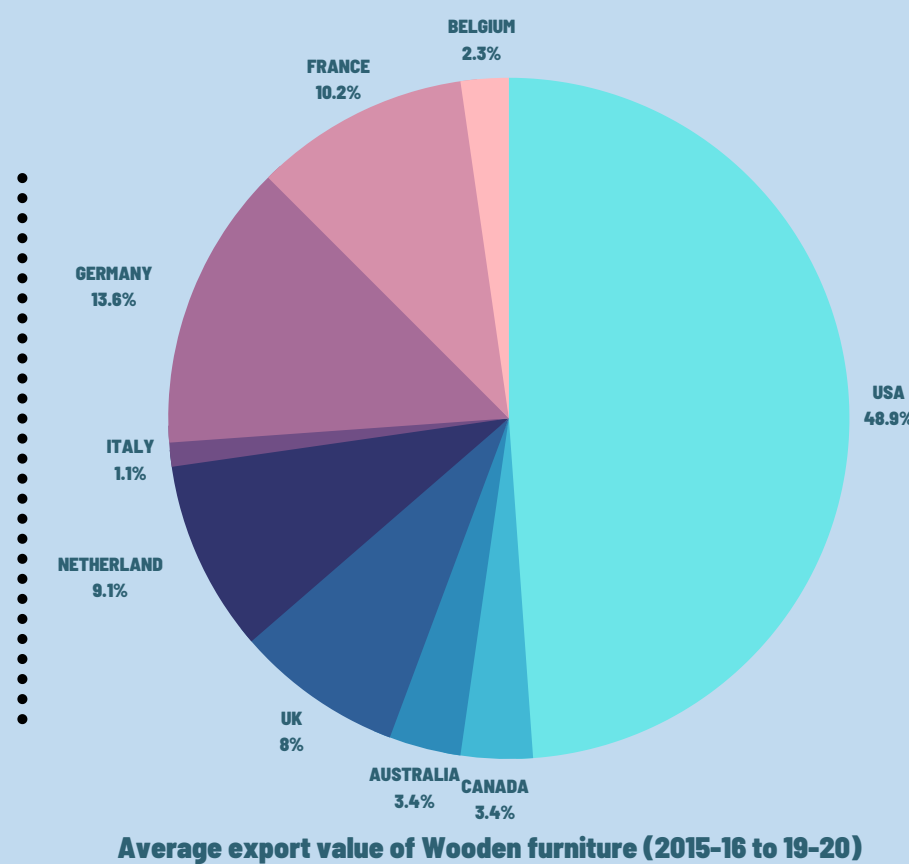
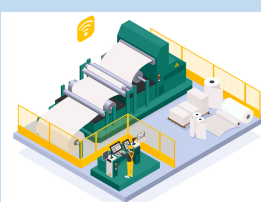
- Agroforestry is a land use system that integrates trees, crops and animals in a way that is dynamic, ecologically sound and culturally compatible.
- It has a great potential to contribute to India's target of bringing 33% of geographical area under forest and tree cover and meeting the nationally determined contribution of additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tone of CO2 equivalent by the year 2030 and towards doubling of farmers' income.**
- 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.

- 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 2017 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 (23%) was imported.



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 125,000 ha contributing to tree cover.
- Other wood based industries are largely in the small-scale or "unorganized" sector constituting 85-90% 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 commercial and home interiors and furniture, some of which is made for export.
- Wood based industries can immensely contribute in the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan under which GOI has planned reforms and measures for the revival and long term sustainability of MSMEs. Ministry of Commerce has identified Furniture sector as one of the focus sub-sectors under SCALE (Steering Committee for Advancing Local value-add and Export)



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

Agro Forestry offers tremendous opportunity for sequestering atmospheric carbon that remains locked when wood is used in manufacturing engineered wood products and reduced pressure on forests enables restoration of natural ecosystems.

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

Indian domestic furniture market expected to grow at annual rate of 12.9 % during the period between 2020 and 2024.

POLICIES IN INDIA TO PROMOTE AGROFORESTRY

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

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 sequesterate 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.

**In 2013, agroforestry was estimated to 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.