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The prospects of bamboo products and need for maximizing bamboo lands for establishing bamboo factory in Manipur to increase the state economy

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Abstract

The state of Manipur has innumerable traditional products made from bamboo. The items include furniture, decorative items, fencing, chicken cages, rice and paddy containers and so on. Bamboo products in food items are also there from times immemorial. The only thing is that bamboo plants are now endangered due to over exploitation by the locals to meet the demands of the people in and outside the state. More over most of the hill ranges in Manipur are now lying barren due to jhum cultivation by the hill dwellers. Bamboo as it is a cash plant, the barren areas can be filled with bamboo plants which need little labour to look after and it will provide unlimited income to the state. The state and central governments must pay special assistance to develop bamboo farms along the hill ranges so that it will help to diminish the hazards of global warming. It will also help to supply raw materials for bamboo factories which if established in the state will decrease the unemployment problem to some extent and will also help in state economy.

Keywords: Jhum cultivation, barren areas, cash plant, and increasing state economy

Introduction

The state of Manipur is facing a lot of deficiencies in its development when compared to other states of India. The first and foremost deficiency is its per capita income. Every day we have to depend on imported products from outside the state from first morning till night. So to say we cannot even produce enough vegetables. But we have innumerable bamboo products made from our local bamboo varieties which will be able to add to our state economy if produced in large quantities. Here the prospects of bamboo factory are being discussed.

Discussion

The hill ranges in Manipur are dominated by the tribal people. Most of the slopes in the hills are now becoming barren areas due to the practice of jhum cultivation. It helps to increase environmental hazards like increase of temperature, soil erosion and landslides causing the loss of many lives. We must choose an alternative system of earning livelihood in place of jhum cultivation to save ourselves from vanishing from our mother earth. We have innumerable designs of different items made from bamboo which can earn lots of income for our family even above that earned by jhum cultivation. Cultivation of paddy along the hill slopes needs more labour than planting bamboo plants. One single bamboo costs around Rs. 100/-. Bamboo grows quickly and attains full size in one year. One acre of land in the hill slopes can give only 15-20 bags of paddy, but we can plant 2000-3000 bamboo plants in one acre of land in the slopes which will give above 2 lakhs if we sell 2000 bamboo per year. But the paddy bags will earn only a few thousands per year. Here some of the products of bamboo are shown below.

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Fig 1: Bamboo products used for different household purposes.



Leiwa

Bisenpur Soibum

Tamei Soijin

Bisenpur Soidon

Usoi Cookies

Fig 2: Bamboo products used as food.

The bamboo products are innumerable. Recently nutritious and high fibre Usoi cookies were presented by Prof. Nirmala Chongtham of Department of Botany of Punjab University to the Governor of Damyang, Choi Hun Sik and others during World Bamboo Congress held 17th to 22nd Sept. at Damyang, South Korea. Research is being conducted in Panjab University in collaboration with Centre for Science Education, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong to devise methods for fortifying food items with bamboo shoots.

Usoi cookies and many other products fortified with bamboo shoots are being researched and promoted by Panjab University and North Eastern Hill University with the financial assistance from the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.

Prof Nirmala is the chairperson of the technical committee of the 10th World Bamboo Congress, 2015. She has also been selected as a world bamboo ambassador from India to promote bamboo as a wood and food for the 21st century.

Acknowledging Nirmala's expertise in the field, Ned Jaquith Foundation, Oregon, USA awarded her a publication grant for writing a book entitled, 'Bamboo shoots as health food' (Source: The Sangai Express, Imphal, October 22 2015).

But the plantation of bamboo is decreasing day by day because of over exploitation and deforestation for human population and cultivation. In Manipur the hill ranges are becoming barren areas due to jhum cultivation for paddy production. But bamboo gives more profit than paddy in the hills, and also as a means of earning extra income for the

family; the hill people can plant bamboo in the barren areas which needs little labour when compared to paddy.

The potential of the young citizens are also numerous. The only thing lying empty is industries and bamboo plant resources. The state government must take up steps to establish Units for industrial training of unemployed youths and should also arrange special packages for more plantations of bamboo plants in the barren areas in the hills as well as in the suitable places in the plains.

Conclusion

As an outcome of the present views and discussions it can be concluded that the state, central governments should pay special packages for plantation of bamboo in the barren areas along the hill ranges and in suitable places in the plains in Manipur. The individuals should also pay attention to do the same thing.

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