The bamboo industry is one which includes all industries engaged in the production of value added products with the help of bamboo. These industries produce handicrafts, food products and construction material with bamboo as the raw material. According to the National Bamboo Mission the most popular use of bamboo is for the production of paper with 20% and 24% of Bamboo harvested allocated respectively to the paper and pulp industries.

The State Forest Report 2011 has estimated that out of 23,297 million Bamboo culms available, the percentage of green sound, dry sound and decayed are estimated as 79%, 16% and 5%, respectively. Over 39% of the total area under Bamboo is available in the North Eastern Region of India, which is also the leader in availability of dense bamboo brakes.

**Bamboo Industry of India**

'Bamboo' is also known as 'Green Gold' in Asian culture. It has a deep cultural significance in the Indian as well as Chinese culture. India has 20% of world's bamboo resources. India is the second richest country in the world in terms of Bamboo genetic resources, after China. Indian Bamboo forests contain 23 genera of which 19 indigenous. Bamboo is the fastest growing and highest yielding renewable natural resource and different species occur in different parts of the country.

The estimated bamboo resources of the world are about 20 million hectares and the estimated market of bamboo was US $ 10 billion in 2001 and is expected to increase to US $ 20 billion by 2015.

**Bamboo Industry in North Eastern States**

India's bamboo market is expected to grow to 5.5 billion USD by 2015 while the North East's bamboo production to grow up to 1.25 billion USD in the same period estimates the UN's Industrial Development Organization.

Analysis of forest area according to bamboo density shows that pure bamboo brakes are found in less than 1% of the country. They are found most commonly in Mizoram (220 sq km).

Dense Bamboos are found in 7% of the total area, and 8% is occupied by scattered bamboos. Dense bamboos are found mostly in Arunachal Pradesh (516 sq km) and Manipur (5825 sq km).

The total bamboo bearing area of the country is estimated to be 13.96 million hectares. Arunachal Pradesh has maximum bamboo bearing area (1.8 m ha).

Four States of North east, i.e., Tripura, Assam, Mizoram and Nagaland have formulated their own policies for development of Bamboo industry and conservation of Bamboo forests.

**Assam** is one of the largest bamboo producing states of India. The main bamboo growing areas of Assam are the districts of Cachar, Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills, Nagaon and Lakhimpur. The extent of bamboo bearing area in the forests of the state is 7,235 km as per the State of Forest report 2011. Bamboo forms an integral part of culture and life style of the people of Assam. In Assam the major use of bamboo is paper manufactured by Hindustan Paper Corporation Ltd. which functions through its units in Panchgram, Hallakandi district and Jargon, Morigaon.

**Nagaland** is one of the states in North East India that have a structured policy for the promotion and development of Bamboo Industry. Nagaland has adopted a bamboo policy since 2004. Bamboo is found extensively all over Nagaland. It occurs as a predominant plant in portions of the districts of Dimapur, Peren, Mon and Mokokchung. It is readily found mixed with other forest species in all other districts of the state. Nagaland promotes Bamboo as a resource as well as an enterprise.

**Tripura State Bamboo Policy** has been formulated to develop bamboo sector in the State through a market-led community-based utilization, development and conservation of the resource in forest and farm areas. At present, the level of extraction of bamboo in Tripura is 184.60 million p.a. The most common uses of bamboo are housing and supply to paper mill in Assam. Only about 2% of the extracted bamboo is utilized for value addition through handicrafts and other products. The State Government has identified bamboo as a major focus area for development. The Tripura State Govt. has also signed a MOU with INBAR (International network for Bamboo and Rattan) for effective implementation of the Bamboo Policy of the State. The main industry which is based on bamboo in Tripura is Cane and Bamboo Handicrafts.

**Mizoram**: Bamboo development Agency of Mizoram was established by the Government of Mizoram, Industries Department pursuant to the notification of the Bamboo Policy of Mizoram, 2002. Mizoram is richly endowed with bamboo forests (6,446 sq km), covering 31% of the area of the State. The growing stock is estimated at 25.3 million tonnes, and the potential availability at 5.8 million tonnes.

**Bamboo industry for employment generation**

Bamboo industry has the potential to become a major employer in the North Eastern States. Bamboos are used in the incense sticks industry, for sericulture and handicrafts. All these are labour intensive industries which have an employment potential to the developing states. Nearly 12 lakh people are directly or indirectly employed by the bamboo industry in North East India. Of the total 2040 incense stick (garbball) market of Rs 1,100 crores, the size of the organised market is about 40% of the total market. About 2 billion sticks are burnt in a day.

**Definitions:**

* Culum is a stem of bamboo plant which is hollow except at the nodes.
* Green weight is a measurement done at the time of harvest of bamboo.
* Soundness is a quality measurement of bamboo; they are classified as green sound, dry sound and decayed.
* Bamboo Brake is dense thicket of bamboo plants.

**Government of India through the National Bamboo Mission** Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation has targeted raising of 1.75 lakh hectare area under bamboo plantation over a period of 5 years, employment generation of 50-4 million man days of work by plantation and 8.7 lakh man days by raising bamboo nurseries both in public as well as private sector, besides many direct and indirect benefits. (The author is Associate Professor, Department of Management, Institute of Innovation in Technology and Management. E-mail: chieffeditor@cpmr.org.in)