

Wood security is a step towards self-reliance

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The emphasis on speedy development of plantations and wood-based industries will not only meet their local demands but also help in increasing their exports. This will be a win-win situation for India as the expansion of this sector will increase the income of farmers, generate employment opportunities for labourers, business opportunities for various stakeholders, enhance the revenue of the government, fetch foreign exchange and help in environmental conservation.



FORESTS provide timber for the manufacturing of domestic and industrial products. The National Forest Policy (NFP), 1952, envisaged that the forests would meet the raw material demand of wood-based industries, while the National Forest Policy of 1988 shifted the focus to the conservation of forests. During the late 1970s and the 1980s, as per the recommendations of the National Commission on Agriculture, the states implemented externally aided social forestry projects which not only met the demand of raw material, but also led to the popularisation of agroforestry.

As per the India State of Forest Report (2019), the recorded forest areas (RFA) and the area under Trees Outside Forests (TOF) of India is 76.74 million hectares and 29.38 million hectares, respectively, which is 23.3% and 8.9% respectively, of the geographical area. The important species in rural areas are mango, kikar, eucalyptus, rubber, shisham and poplar. As per the report The Puzzle of Forest Productivity (2017), the annual harvest of timber from forests declined from 10 million cubic metres in the 1970s to 4 million cubic metres by 1990. The landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in the Godavarman case (1996) resulted in further decline in wood production from forests, which is presently about 3 million cubic metres. As per the report Tree Outside Forest Resources in India (2020), the annual timber production from TOFs was 85 million cubic metres in 2020, while 15 million cubic metres Roundwood Equivalent (RWE) of wood and wood products were imported, as per

Sustainable Trade of Wood and Wood- based Products in India (2021).

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