

## A Study on Importance of Bamboo Industry in the State Of Kerala

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**ABSTRACT:** Bamboo is one of the most important segment in the socio- economic development of India. Though the industry is not much organized one, it contributes a good portion towards the economy of the nation. The North East states of India possess the highest production position of bamboo in India which followed by the Western Ghats. There are more than 36 genera and 136 species of bamboo found in India and as per the records there are 1500 listed uses for bamboos universally. The uses of bamboo in India are broadly classified as industrial uses, house hold, transportation, fisheries, energy, weapons, medicines, agriculture and construction. These uses of bamboo is exploiting by the peoples in India from the weaker tribal section to the corporate giants. The annual turnover of bamboo sector in India is approximately 9000 crores of rupees in 2015-16. It is one of the largest turnovers from a totally unorganized segment in India. The systematic and effective care taking of this unorganized sector will flourish like anything which will lead to balanced contribution to the national economy. This study intends to identify various commercial potentiality of bamboo products in India and he things to be done to improve the contribution towards the economy.

**KEYWORDS:** Bamboo Products, Paper pulps, Handicrafts, National Economy, Bamboo industry

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The ‘Green Gold’, nick name of bamboo is really apt for the gigantic plant. The bamboo based industries are giving thousands of employment opportunities and moreover it is the living hood for many peoples. This bamboo segments are playing a vital role in improving the standard of living of the peoples in the state of Kerala. Bamboo is the word derived from the Kannada word ‘Bambu’. It is a flowering, perennial, evergreen plant from the family ‘Poaceae’ and sub family ‘Bambusoideae’. India is the second largest producer of bamboo in the world followed by China. In India there are around 136 species of bamboos from 22 genera. The bamboo growing stock in India is around 80.43 million metric tone and india is having an annual harvest of 13.5 million metric tones of bamboo. The current domestic demand alone in India is 26.69million metric tones. The bamboo cultivation in Kerala is spreader over 4509.47 hectares of land (which is 3.05 of the total plantations in Kerala). Though the private plantations are very few in Kerala, however natural regeneration is really helping to maintain the bamboo production. ‘Ochlandra Tranvancorica’ is the common species seen in the forests of Kerala.

**Table No: 01**  
**Details of common species of bamboo seen in Kerala forest**

SI No.	Species	No. of Culms	Percentage
1	Bambusa Bambos	13003843	95.50
2	Bambusa Vulgaris	303835	2.23
3	Dendrocalamus Strictus	16000	0.11
4	Ochlandra	98440	0.72
5	Thyrsostachys Oliveri	188434	1.38
6	Psedoxytenanthera	8360	0.06
<b>Total</b>		<b>13618912</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: KSBC Ltd. 2011

The economically backward peoples in Kerala are living by doing many cottage industries and handicraft making such as products using bamboo. Bamboos have universally accepted 1500 uses and these uses are exploiting to make it money. However the number of uses of bamboo is comparatively low in Kerala.

**Table No: 02**  
**Basic statistics of bamboo in Kerala**

Circle	Total Area (Km <sup>2</sup> )	Bamboo Stock (Dry) Tonnes	Yearly availability (Tonnes)	%
Northern Region	1522.74	807151	67262.59	30.68
Olavankode Region	2230.98	895130.80	74594.25	34.03
Central Region	1723.79	234205.70	19517.15	8.91
High range Region	2820.51	122726.80	10227.23	4.66
Southern Region	12828.44	571232	47602.67	21.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>21126.46</b>	<b>2630446.3</b>	<b>219203.9</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: KSBC Ltd.*

The consumption of the utilities of bamboo is the best method to boost up the industry and that is what the Keralites are doing with bamboo. As per records India alone constitutes a market of 26000 crores of rupees from bamboo segment. Major portion of this contribution is from the north eastern states of the country whereas the portion giving by south India is also notable one.

#### **Objectives of the study**

- 1) To identify the financial contribution of bamboo industry towards the financial structure of Kerala.
- 2) To understand the problems faced by bamboo industry for its growth.
- 3) To identify the future prospects of bamboo industry in Kerala.

#### **Research Methodology**

This research was conducted with the help of a well structured questionnaire. The questionnaires prepared were circulated among 300 selected customers from the state of Kerala. Random sampling method is used for the collection of sample. However secondary data were extensively used for the purpose of framing conceptual frame work for the study.

#### **Commercial Potentiality of Bamboo in Kerala**

Kerala is inevitable in the production of bamboo in India. The financial contributions provided by the state are really appreciable in the history. The commercial utilities deriving from bamboo are basically classified into seven categories which are discussed below:-

- i. Transportation Uses
- ii. House hold Uses
- iii. Construction Uses
- iv. Handicraft Uses
- v. Food Uses
- vi. Agriculture Uses
- vii. Corporate Uses

The transportation usages are meant for the effective utilization of bamboo for various modes of transportation. The modes of transportation assistance include bridges, roads, bamboo rafts, coracle etc... The villages and remote areas are well connected with such bamboo transportation modes from the ancient periods itself. This construction will increase the demand of bamboo and create a monetary value for the same.

The uses of bamboo to produce household products are tremendous and fabulous. The day to day using household items such as baskets, hangers, light holders, pen stand, fruit tray, cloth baskets, window curtains etc... are very popular in Kerala. These products are selling through specialized outlets all over Kerala. Even other tourists from other states are interested in such products. This commercial viability can be effectively utilized to flourish bamboo segment in Kerala.

The construction uses are basically for making huts and tree houses. However bamboo stem are using as stand to concrete the upper layers of houses and buildings. Even five star classified resorts and house boats are using bamboo to finish their roofs and flooring with bamboo. This should be taken as a positive sign for the bamboo industry. The increasing demand of bamboo for such uses will balance the financial stability of the segment.

The bamboo handicraft products are inevitable for the foreign tourists in Kerala. Major portion of them are buying numerous handicraft products from the outlets. The handicraft products from bamboo like bangles, ring, chains, hair clips, photo frames, mirror stands etc... are very popular among tourists. There are so many self initiated societies engaged in making and selling such products in Kerala state.

**Table No: 03**  
**Details about the usage of Bamboo in India**

Uses	% of usage
Pulp	35%
Housing	20%
Non- residential	05%
Rural Uses	20%
Food	8.5%
Packing including basket	05%
Wood based industry	2.5%
Furniture	01%
Others	03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

The rice of bamboo is collected and used as a source of food by the local peoples in Kerala. The rice is used to cook boiled rice, kheer, upmav etc...The medical properties of the bamboo rice is well known among the peoples in Kerala and they are well using it for cooking. The price of this rice is Rs. 180- Rs. 250 per kilogram. The younger bamboo stem routes are also using as a mode of food. This part is prepared as a curry dish to serve with usual rice in Kerala. The ever changing food habits of peoples can be an avenue to make money for the bamboo industrialists.

Making various agricultural equipments from bamboo is usual in Kerala. The products like bamboo baskets to carry crops and fertilizers are examples for the products. The easiness in handling and cheap rate is the attracting factor here. The mat produced from bamboo is used to dry the commercial crops such as pepper, ginger, coffee etc...

The corporate use is the biggest use of bamboo. From Kerala bamboo is exporting for the purpose of paper industry. Bamboo is the main ingredient in producing paper. Thousands of tones of bamboo is using for this purpose. Bamboo ply wood factories and bamboo tiling factories are the recent trends in bamboo industry.

As rightly said these various utilities of bamboo make the nick name is worth for bamboo. Bamboo is the green gold and it is the plant of poor.

#### **Problems faced by Bamboo industry in Kerala**

There are numerous plans and policies adopted by the state as well as the central governments to protect the bamboo industry in the state. However the effectiveness of the same is questionable. The industry is suffering from many problems rather than its prospects. The basic problems faced by bamboo industry in Kerala are as follows:-

- Exploitation by the intermediaries is a crucial problem faced by the industry. The intermediaries are collecting bamboo products from the makers in very low cost and they are selling at a high price to the needy peoples. The producers are not getting exact value for their products.
- Seasonal importance of bamboo products reduces the demand of products at off seasons. This unstable mechanism makes tremendous financial problems for the peoples who are engaged in the bamboo product making.
- Lack of raw materials is the crucial problem faced by the makers. The availability of bamboo stems are very few and its still reducing year by year. If this mechanism continues, the industry itself will be vanished within few years.
- Lack of proper selling outlets is another problem faced by the producers. The imbalanced and temporary stalls cannot make any financial income for the producers. This is the main hesitating factor restricts the entry of new comers to the industry.
- Lack of a pricing mechanism is another factor adversely affecting the bamboo producers.

#### **Emerging Areas**

Some of the emerging prospects of bamboo and its products are listed below

- In tourism sector Clay made huts with bamboo structure, doors & windows are become very popular. The usage of bamboo for such an avenue will create a substantial source of income for the bamboo industry.
- The usage of bamboo to prevent soil erosion, collapse of river embankment, protecting slopes etc... increases the social as well as the economical progression of bamboo in the state.
- The geological and environmental studies shows the importance of cultivating bamboos throughout the wasting land. The process will help for more rainfall, higher ground water level and reducing felling of timber.
- The mechanism of creating coal out of bamboo is really a good potentiality of bamboo. Augmenting production of bamboo charcoal instead of Wood charcoal and Fossil fuel (Coal) will be a history in the era.

- Bamboo usages emphasizes on Medicinal application, Disability implements are having great usage.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the study the researcher gives the following suggestions to improve the present condition of bamboo industry in the state of Kerala.

- There should be an effective monitoring cell appointed by the government to look after the bamboo industry. This cell should be operating in every districts having bamboo products potential.
- In order to make avail the sufficient raw materials, every waste land of government should use to cultivate bamboo, if it is possible for cultivation.
- Government should bring new schemes to promote private bamboo cultivators.
- Plastic products is the main enemy of bamboo products. A green tax system should introduce to reduce the usage of plastic.
- A proper financial support should be given by government to produce and market the products.

## **II. CONCLUSION**

The usage and future prospects of bamboo industry in the state of Kerala is tremendous. However the peoples or the even the government is not taking substantial steps to uplift the industry. The social as well as the economical benefits providing by the green gold is inevitable in the state. Well systemized and structured schemes should be introduced to protect the endangering industry in the state. It will definitely contribute towards the economy of the state. The financial contribution and social benefits will be wondering. The employment opportunities creating by the industry in these days of higher unemployment will be a withstand for the sufferers.

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