

## **Mission Bamboo Plantation for Green and prosper Maharashtra under MGNREGS**

Agriculture is the backbone of our civilization and the primary food source that ensures our well-being through diverse crop production, supporting our physical and mental health. But due to untimely rains, sometimes floods and sometimes droughts, increased production cost of agriculture and shortage of labor, agriculture sector is suffering losses. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA focus on sustainable development of poor people by providing not only employment but also creating permanent assets for individual and community. Every household who wants to do unskilled work can get employment in rural area under MGNREGS. There are many permissible individual beneficiaries works for farmers under the scheme.

The Bamboo is the fastest growing plants and bamboo cultivation is also beneficial for environmental protection. A bamboo releases 320 kg of oxygen into the air in a year. One acre produces 60 tons of oxygen and one hectare absorbs 200 tons of carbon dioxide. There are varieties of bamboo that produce many times more than sugarcane. Bamboo produces thousands of products from clothes to toothbrushes and from hats and slippers to ethanol. More than 1800 types of products are made from bamboo in India. As compare Bamboo with sugarcane cultivation, the minimum production per hectare is 100 tons and the market price of per ton is at least 2 thousand 500 rupees. The minimum yield per hectare is 100 to 400 tons and the market price per ton is at least 4000 rupees. Accordingly, the farmers can be financially empowered by cultivating bamboo in their farm land. By examine these advantages of Bamboo cultivation and keeping in view market demand, Maharashtra state has decided to promote Bamboo Plantation under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme on mission mode.

Accordingly, Satara district of Maharashtra selected for pilot project and target set for Agriculture department, Social Forestry and Gram Panchayat for bamboo cultivated on about 27 thousand 500 hectares in this district in the financial year 2023-24. Bamboo plantation campaign is being implemented in the Satara district under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Scheme since June 2023. In this, bamboo can be cultivated from 10 *gunta* to 1 hectare. As bamboo is a multi-purpose secondary crop for farmers, efforts are being made at the government level so that the farmers can get additional business from bamboo cultivation. District Collector Hon'ble Shri. Jitendra Dudi, IAS also appealed that the farmers of the district to take advantage of the government scheme to move from agriculture supplementary business for economic stability. Special attention was drowned to focus on this program, departmental officers were directed to plant maximum the bamboo plantation.



Skill development and capacity building programmes for field functionaries to promote bamboo plantation among farmers were organized. Awareness created for development of bamboo sector from production to market demand and people were encouraged to take benefit of bamboo cultivation scheme. Guidance was also provided in gramsabhas to aware people for taking care while selecting plants for bamboo cultivation, number of acre plants, spacing between plants, fertilizer management, bamboo harvesting method, bamboo storage and its processing, selling after bamboo harvesting and making various products from it. Accordingly, 12 thousand 425 beneficiaries have shown their interest for bamboo cultivation in Satara district. After identification of beneficiaries total 8217 works were sanctioned which covers approximately 5 thousand 147 hectares of area. Under the Mahram Gandhi NREGA so far 1 thousand 217 works have been started and bamboo cultivation is done in around 684 hectares of lands. Through this work total 65408 mandays have been created and 180.57 lakhs expenditure has done on these works under MGNREGS.

As production from bamboo cultivation would start from the third year, farmers took intercropped in their land. Bamboo can be cultivated even on saline and infertile land, hence for cultivation bamboo in vast level state Government has issued a resolution on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2024 to take bamboo cultivation on public land too. Therefor now bamboo cultivation can be taken as community works in public places, Government land, waste land, E-class land, village land, forest areas, river banks, both sides of the road, all four sides of the water reservoir under MGNREGS. This will create more employment for the needy and protect atmosphere too.



Simultaneously, Ethanol is also produced from bamboo to boost the agricultural economy. For example, if 1 hectare of sugarcane is planted, 2 crore liters of water is required and if 1 ton of sugarcane is filtered, 80 liters of ethanol is produced. But if 1 hectare of bamboo is planted, 20 lakh liters of water is required. If 1 ton of bamboo is filtered, 400 liters of ethanol are obtained. It also produces 40 tons per acre. Its price is 4000 to 25000 rupees per ton. Aiming to that the bamboo plantation will definitely help to make green and prosper Maharashtra.

*“Bamboo is a very useful herbaceous plant. As bamboo cultivation is a good alternative to sugarcane farming, the farmers will get financial stability from Bamboo cultivation. This is also the best solution to prevent environmental degradation. Bamboo is an eco-friendly crop and farmers are growing their economy by planting bamboo in maximum quantity.”*

**- Shri. Jitendra Dudi, (IAS) Collector Satara District**

*I was informed about bamboo cultivation by Rozgar Sevak Shri. Sunil Shinde. Accordingly, I planted one hectare of bamboo on my land. Earlier I was cultivating sugarcane but not getting proper yield from that. I decided to take bamboo cultivation it also helped me to grow other vegetables, orchards and millets as intercropped. Its generated additional income for me. I also got employment under MGNREGS for this work.*

**- Shri. Khandoji Tukaram Shinde, Beneficiary of Morale village in Khatav Block**