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Sub-Mission on Agroforestry Scheme

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Why in News

The **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Central Silk Board** on a **convergence model** for the implementation of **Agroforestry in the silk sector**. It is a part of the ongoing **Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme**.

Earlier, the Government of India allocated Rs. 2161.68 crores for three years i.e. 2017-2020 to its **Central Sector Scheme 'Silk Samagra'** for the development of **sericulture** in the country.

Key Points

- **Convergence Model:**

- **Aim:**

- To **incentivize the farmers to take up sericulture based Agroforestry** models thereby contributing to the Make in India and Make for the World vision of the Prime Minister.

- **About:**

- This linkage will add another dimension to agroforestry for **faster returns** to the growers as well as **support the production** of the range of silks that India is famous for.

- The **Central Silk Board (CSB - under the Ministry of Textiles)** will act as a catalyst to promote Agroforestry in the silk sector.

- CSB** is a statutory body established in the year **1948** by an **Act of Parliament**.

- The initiative of formalizing the collaboration in the sericulture sector is especially targeted for augmentation of sericulture host plants e.g. **Mulberry, Asan, Arjuna, Som, Soalu, Kesseru, BadaKesseru, Phanat, etc.** to be cultivated both as block plantations and border or peripheral plantations on farmlands.

- **Significance:**

- Planting sericulture based tree species on the farm bunds and rearing silkworms will help in **creating additional income opportunities for farmers besides their regular source of income** from agriculture activities.

- It will contribute to the Prime Minister's vision of **doubling farmers' income by 2022.**

- **Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme:**

- **About:**

- The **Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare** (DAC & FW) has been implementing the SMAF since **2016-17** as part of the recommendation of the **National Agroforestry Policy 2014**. India was the **first country to have such a comprehensive policy** which was launched at the World Agroforestry Congress held in Delhi in February 2014.
- The scheme is implemented **only in the states having liberalized transit regulations for the transport of timber** and will be extended to other states as and when such relaxations are notified by them. At present, the scheme is being implemented in **20 States and 2 UTs**.
- The scheme **promotes endemic species or tree species that come with medicinal value**. Exotic species are not promoted by the scheme.

- **Aim:**

To encourage farmers to **plant multi-purpose trees together with the agriculture crops for climate resilience and an additional source of income** to the farmers, as well as **enhanced feedstock** to inter alia wood-based and herbal industry.

- **Funding:**

It is operational under the funding pattern **60:40 (Central government: State government)** basis for all states except for 8 states of North East Region, the hilly states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand where it would be **90:10** fund sharing. For Union Territories (UTs), the assistance will be 100% from the Central government.

- **Beneficiaries:**

- Farmers would be supported financially to the extent of **50% of the actual cost of the interventions** (limited to 50% of the estimated cost as indicated in the Cost norms) for the respective interventions.
- **Farmers groups/Cooperatives** and **Farmer Producers Organization (FPO)** can also avail the benefit of the programme but the assistance can be accessed as per norms and provisions applicable to the individual farmers.
- At least **50% of the allocation is to be utilized for small, marginal farmers** of which at least **30% should be women beneficiaries/farmers**. Further **16% & 8%** of the total allocation or in proportion of SC/ST population in the district will be utilized for **Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP)** respectively.
- Farmers **must have a soil health card** to get the benefit under the programme.

Agroforestry

- Agroforestry is defined as a **land use system which integrates trees and shrubs on farmlands and rural landscapes to enhance productivity, profitability, diversity and ecosystem sustainability.**
- It is a dynamic, ecologically based, natural resource management system that, through **integration of woody perennials on farms and in the agricultural landscape, diversifies and sustains production and builds social institutions.**

Sericulture

- **About:**
 - It is an **agro-based industry.**
 - It involves **rearing of silkworms** for the production of raw silk, which is the yarn obtained out of cocoons spun by certain species of insects.
 - The **major activities** of sericulture consist of **food-plant cultivation** to feed the silkworms which spin silk cocoons and **reeling the cocoons for unwinding the silk filament** for value-added benefits such as processing and weaving.
 - Domesticated silkworms (*Bombyx mori*) are raised for the purpose of sericulture.
- **Silk Production in India:**
 - There are **five major types of silk** of commercial importance, obtained from different species of silkworms.

These are **Mulberry, Oak Tasar & Tropical Tasar, Muga and Eri.**
 - Except for mulberry, other **non-mulberry varieties of silks are wild silks, known as vanya silks.**
 - India has the unique distinction of producing all these commercial varieties of silk.
 - **South India is the leading silk producing area of the country** and is also known for its famous silk weaving enclaves like Kancheepuram, Dharmavaram, Arni, etc.

Source: PIB