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Dist sees increase in forest cover over past two years

On Track To Achieve The Target Of 33.3% Forest Cover By 2030

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Coimbatore: The forest cover in the district has increased by 9sq km in a span of two years, said additional principal chief conservator of forests Debasish Jana.

He said compared to the forest survey of India's report in 2017, the 2019 report showed that forest cover in Tamil Nadu has increased by 83sqkm. In Coimbatore, it has increased by 9sqkm.

He said, "If tree growers and farmers continued at the same rate, we could reach our national target of achieving 33.3% forest cover by 2030."

Jana was speaking at the inauguration of day two of the tree growers mela organized by city-based Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding on Wednesday. Speaking about the country and state's target of achieving



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33.3% forest cover by 2030, he said the most recent forest survey report in Tamil Nadu showed a forest cover of 23.9%. "But we are seeing a definite increase if we compare the 2017 and 2019 reports. The credit for this goes to the tree growers and IFGTB which produces quality planting material for mass scale plantations," Jana said.

Jana admitted that they were practical difficulties in mass scale plantation of trees, because agricultural land or fertile land can't be used for this purpose as it would

create food production issue.

He said multiple institutions including TNAU and IFGTB were working on creating WhatsApp groups for tree growers.

"They will upload videos on how to prune a teak tree, because if you prune it wrong, the tree gets injured, knots will form, and you won't get good prices in the market. The group is also expected to update details like market price for the quarter, weeding technologies, soil working ideas etc.," he said.

He also advised farmers in the region who are eager

to cultivate sandal, because of its high monetary value, to first check if they have resources to set up a security system for the trees to ensure it does not get smuggled off. "It is also important to check if they have the right condition to cultivate sandalwood, because the real value and money is in the tree's heartwood. The outside sap is not that valuable," he said.

Farmers were also encouraged to get into tree farming because it acts as an insurance against sudden crop price falls or even natural disasters. "These trees are like an insurance policy and can be used for your child's education," he said.

"We want farmers to give us feedback on our varieties or even varieties they are growing, to tell us the issues they face, so that we can research ways to solve it," IFGTB director S Murugesan said.