

Tripura passes non timber forest products policy to boost livelihood of tribal communities

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In an effort to boost livelihood opportunities of tribal communities dependent on forest produce, the Tripura government has approved a Non Timber Forest Product Policy that would fund cultivation of bamboo, cardamom, broomstick flowers, among other things using scientific methods.

“There was no policy for handling non timber forest products in the state till now. But it has huge economic significance. Broomstick flowers, incense, large cardamom, bamboo etc will be cultivated in scientific way from now on. Those depending on forest for their livelihood will immensely benefit due to this policy, especially people from the tribal communities,” Nath told reporters at the state secretariat here.

The state cabinet has decided to route 25 per cent of funds from the phase II of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funded forestry programmes for the next 5 years.

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Earlier in January this year, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb launched a project for Sustainable Catchment Forest Management to develop the quality of forestlands and livelihood of forest dwellers in the state. The project was also jointly funded by JICA and the Government of India.

As per agreement between the state government and JICA, Tripura is scheduled to receive Rs. 1,000 crores for 10 years to improve forestlands in targeted catchment area. The plan is expected to involve sustainable forest management, soil and moisture conservation and livelihood development.

JICA funded projects became operational in Tripura in 2007 with an initial grant of Rs. 4 crore. A host of forest management activities including joint forest management, soil conservation etc were done with a cumulative fund involvement of Rs. 304.62 crores till 2017 when Phase I of the Tripura JICA Project expired. Close to 80 hectares of forest land was developed in Tripura with involvement of 1,505 self help groups during the first phase. Phase II was approved after the incumbent government assumed office and initiated dialogue on the subject.

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