

# Bamboo Home Gardens in Kerala and World Bamboo Day Celebrations

S. Suresh Ramanan\*

Bamboos are grown in the home gardens system of Kerala for the long time because of its various uses to local people.

Bamboos belongs to the family Poaceae under the subfamily Bambusoideae. They are distributed mainly in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. They are often called as timber from 'Cradle to Coffin', Green Gold and by many other names because of their ultimate usage in various different forms. There are 1250 species of bamboo in the world, 137 species grown in India and 28 species grown in Kerala (Asha, 2004). One of the naturally occurring reeds is known by the botanical name *Okhlandra travancorika* has been used by the people in Kerala.

For bamboo development, the Government of Kerala established Kerala State Bamboo Corporation Ltd on 13th March 1971 long before the establishment of National Bamboo Mission under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation, Government of India, aiming at holistic development of the bamboo sector in the country. Its main objectives are, to develop & promote industries based on bamboo, reed, cane and rattan, to undertake manufacture and trading of bamboo, reed, cane and rattan products, provide financial, technical, marketing or any other assistance and guidance etc. The Development of bamboo cultivation and products started long before the implementation of this state corporation. Other than the Bamboo Corporation, Kerala has a dedicated state level research institute – Kerala Forest Research Institute-Field Research Centre, Velupadam, in Thrissur District that has excelled research on usage of bamboo for economic benefit of people through various means.

World Bamboo Organisation celebrates World Bamboo Day on 18 September every year since 2009 to increase the awareness of bamboo globally. This was declared by the Thai Royal Forest Department on 18 September 2009 in Bangkok during the 8th World Bamboo Congress. Even before that the Bamboo Festival locally known as "Mula Thirvulla" has been celebrated in Kerala from 2004. In order to commemorate the day, KFRI, Velupadam sub-center arranged open day and bamboo entrepreneurs meet. District Panchayat President inaugurated it. The participants were oriented towards the sustainable usage of bamboo resources available at their home gardens. Daya Bhai, a social worker who works with tribal for the past 32 years in Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh was the chief guest. He shared his experiences on bamboo cultivation and played musical instruments, which made only of Bamboo.

## Reference

Asha, K. (2004). "Bamboo and a Bitter Struggle: Livelihood Issues" *Front Line*, Vol.21, No.8, P.66.



Inaugural of World Bamboo Day at KFRI - Field Research Centre, Velupadam



Musician playing bamboo instrument



Display of musical instruments made up of bamboo

\*M.Sc. Forestry (Silviculture and Agroforestry), College of Forestry, Vellanikkara, Kerala Agricultural University. Email: sureshramanan01@gmail.com