



National Biodiversity Authority released ₹55 Lakh to Farmers of Red Sanders in Tamil Nadu

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In a landmark initiative under the Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) framework for promoting the sustainable use of India's biological resources, the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) has released ₹55 lakh to 18 farmers/ cultivators of Red Sanders (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) in Tamil Nadu through the State Biodiversity Board. These farmers belong to 8 villages namely Kannabhiran nagar, Kothur, Vembedu, Siruniyum, Goonipalayam, Ammambakkam, Alikuzhi, Thimmaboopola puram under Tiruvallur District.

This first-of-its-kind benefit sharing initiative to farmers/ cultivators marks a historic step towards inclusive biodiversity conservation. It builds upon the NBA's earlier release of ABS share of ₹48.00 crores to the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, Karnataka Forest Department and Andhra Pradesh State Biodiversity Board for protection and conservation of Red sanders.

This initiative stems from the recommendations of an Expert Committee on Red Sanders constituted by the NBA in 2015. It prepared a comprehensive report titled 'Policy for Conservation, Sustainable Use and Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing Arising from the Utilisation of Red Sanders'. One of the key outcomes of the Committee's recommendations was the 2019 policy relaxation by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), permitting the export of Red Sanders from cultivated sources. It is a significant boost for farm-based conservation and trade.

Red Sanders, an endemic species to Eastern Ghats found in Andhra Pradesh alone, has ecological, economic, and cultural significance. It is also cultivated in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Odisha and other States. Promoting cultivated Red Sanders not only supports farmer's livelihood, but also helps to meet the growing market demand through legally sourced and sustainably grown Red Sanders, thereby reducing pressure on wild populations of the species.

This benefit-sharing model reinforces community participation in conservation while ensuring that those safeguarding biodiversity are duly compensated. The NBA is committed to link conservation with livelihoods, strengthening community stewardship, and ensuring that the custodians of biodiversity receive their rightful share of the benefits by safeguarding one of India's most valued and endemic tree species for future generations.

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