

# Samir Jamatia: Man who makes wonders out of bamboo!

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One of the solutions prescribed to empower the rural economy is to create a worldwide market for indigenous local products. Following this mantra is of great help because the raw material required to make products are available locally.

This model can help the rural folks to earn additional income while not compromising on their main occupation- may it be **agriculture**, animal husbandry, or the likes.

Over the years, experts have been suggesting the successive governments help the locals to use their skills to create these kinds of value-added products. Though large-scale success has not been seen in this direction, in many villages, a few entrepreneurs have been able to create their own brands putting to use the same mantra and the results have been vibrant. One of the best examples of this is the bamboo products of Samir Jamatia from Tripura.

Tripura is one of the states in the northeastern part of the country, which boasts of a huge ethnic population. The difficult terrain has made industrial development a distant dream for the state and this leaves the state with very few options to explore in terms of economic growth. Its geographic condition makes utilization of the rich natural resources to boost the economy a brilliant possibility. Though several attempts to tap this potential had not yielded the desired benefits in the past, over the last few years, one entrepreneur has scripted a new beginning for the state.

Meet **Samir Jamatia**, who is also known as the **Bamboo Man of India** for all the right reasons. Jamatia has grown into being a national icon, showing the nation how locally available resources can be used to improve the socio-economic conditions of the people.

## **Making of India's bamboo man!**

Tripura and bamboos are inseparable. Bamboo is one of the major natural resources found in Tripura. According to an estimation, around 21 species of bamboo are grown in the state.

Jamatia, a native of Gariji village in the Gomati district of Tripura was always fascinated by the '**Green Gold**'- Bamboo. Seeing the struggles of the local communities, Jamatia had a deep desire to help the people in such a way that the local products could get global recognition. Thus began the journey of taking out the hidden Green Gold from the forests of Tripura to the world!

First, he decided to pursue a Diploma in Bamboo Technology and joined Nanjing University, China. With a scholarship in hand, he completed the one-month-long course. Soon, he visited neighboring countries like Cambodia, Vietnam, and Japan and learned how bamboos could be used to tap the potential in the world market.

In 2008, after returning from his tour he started experimenting with various bamboo products.

## **Unique products**

The first product launched by Jamatia was bamboo tea, a brew that had caught his attention during his stay in China! Since bamboo tea is said to have immense health benefits, it hardly took time for Jamatia to conquer the market. Orders started flowing from neighboring countries including China and during the COVID-19 crisis, his products even entered the European countries.

After the tea, Jamatia turned to make utensils and incense sticks using bamboo leftovers! He developed the eco-friendly utensil in collaboration with the Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology (CIPET) in Agartala city. Now an incense stick manufacturing company has taken up the initiative of making plates and bowls out of bamboo waste.

## **Say Cheers!**

The latest addition to the list of products developed by Jamatia is a Bamboo Beer. The alcoholic beverage brewed by Jamatia is the first of its kind because of its cost factor and health benefits. This beer is fermented using bamboo dust and leachate of the bamboo. It is getting great responses from all quarters.

## **Learning from environment**

Samir Jamatia says that the bamboo tea was the result of his observation of the environment. **“In our society, bamboo is used extensively to prepare food, medicines, etc. This bamboo tea used in China is similar to the tea made by the Molsom community of Tripura. But this community prepares the bamboo tea to treat various stomach-related ailments,”** he says.

## Catalyst of Change

There are many entrepreneurs doing business and filling their own pockets. What makes Jamatia stand out is the fact that he is here for a cause. Also, Jamatia is an entrepreneur who has been helping others grow too. In this quest of his, he has been handing over his knowledge to interested people free of cost.

*“The people should use these value-added products to get empowered. When we share our knowledge, we are also making sure that the recipes and the technology are conserved in the right manner so that it can be handed over to the future generations,”* he says.

In recognition of the great service done by Samir Jamatia, he has been awarded by the state as well as the central government and Jamatia continues to stand tall putting green gold to best use.