

Red Sanders

[UPSC Notes]

What is Red Sanders?

Red sanders are endemic to a distinct tract of forests in Andhra Pradesh.

- Red sanders are restricted or can only be found in the southern part of eastern ghats.
- Andhra Pradesh government has absolute rights and authority over the sale and management of red sanders.
- This tree has dark greyish bark and grows 5-8 meters in height. The tree is traditionally considered not aromatic.

Recent Status of Red Sanders?

Red sanders again have been assessed as the 'Endangered' category in the red list, which the International Union represents for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

- The Union Ministry of Environment, forest and climate change (MOEFCC) tweeted out and declared that the species found in the Nellore, Kadapa, and Chittoor are endangered.
- Red sanders were declared 'near threatened' in 2018 and now fall on the 'Endangered' list again. India is the main market for the smuggling of red sanders for the world, so this topic has been in the news most of the time.
- Most cases we see about smuggling happen on the south side of India because now red sanders are prohibited in India, and it increases the case of smuggling.
- People find another way to smuggle the red sanders and harm the forest.

Uses of Red Sanders:

Indian Journal of Applied Research stated that the heartwood red sanders are good raw materials for furniture and musical instruments. The wood of the red sander is not famous now in the world, but it has been historically valued in China, especially during the Qing dynasty.

- It is used to treat the purification of blood. Red sanders are also used to treat digestive tract problems and coughs.
- It is said that red sanders can absorb nuclear radiation, though the primary purpose of the red sanders is to be decorative and ornamental. It also comes in use for coloring foodstuff.
- People also use this in treating conditions of cancer, fluid retention, wound, and many others.

- In China, red sanders have been in demand not from recent times but since ancient times. The wood of the red sanders is very different from the wood because of its deep red color and other features.
- People use this wood for agriculture implements because the wood needed for agriculture is hardwood, and if we use other softwood for the agriculture implements, then it will break easily.
- These were the most important uses of the red sanders for which this species has been in demand in the whole world, and people are ready to give a big amount for this wood.

Threats on Red Sanders:

IUCN has cleared that species have experienced a popular decline of 50% - 80% over the last three generations.

- Overharvesting and exploitation are other threats for red sanders. New species are not growing fast, and harvesting is happening continuously.
- Illegal smuggling of the red sanders. After the ban on red sanders, illegal smuggling has increased. People still smuggle the wood through roads, sea routes, and other routes. Most smuggling cases have been seen in the south side of India.
- Forest fire is also another threat to the red sender tree. In the forest, fire, trees, and birds have difficulty.
- Slow growth and continuous harvesting seem a big threat to the red sanders.

These are the biggest threats for the red sanders; I have been decreasing in previous years because of these threats.

Red Sanders Protection Status:

- Red sanders are described in Appendix II of CITES of wild fauna and flora.
- IUCN Red List has put it as Endangered.
- It has been added in the Wildlife protection act 1972: Schedule II.

Sandalwood Spike Disease:

For the first time, the disease was observed in 1889 in Kodagu, Karnataka. More than a million trees had to remove at that time because of the disease.

Phytoplasma produced this transferrable disease. Phytoplasmas are bacteriological bedbugs of plant tissues. It is spread by the insect vector and is tangled in plant-to-plant transmission.

There is no cure for this disease now, so to prevent the spread of the disease, we have to cut down and remove the infected trees so that they don't affect the other plants in the forest.

Red Sanders Export

As per the Foreign Trade Policy, the export of red sanders is banned from India, but smuggling is rife.

- DRI has seized the 95 and 96 MT of red sanders in the year 2021-2022 and 2020-2021, estimated to be worth 150 crores in the international market.
- In march 2022, DRI detained 12.20 MT from the ampule in CFS that was being transferred to Malaysia along with household items.
- India produces 90% of the sandalwood oil in the world. There is still an illegal trade of species to fulfill the demand of the world.
- The features of the red sandalwood, like a deep red color and the ability to resist harsh temperature and humidity, make this wood unique and expensive.
- Skilled craftsman makes stunning artifacts from red sandalwood. Red sandalwood is famous in India and all over the world because of its properties.

Difference between Sandalwood and Red Sanders:

Below we have mentioned the key differences between sandalwood and sanders

Sandalwood:

Sandalwood is the 2nd costliest wood after African black wood. An individual can grow this tree. It is renowned for its cosmetic value.

Red Sanders:

Very valued in Japan, China, and Middle Eastern countries. Red sanders are used in decorative items as well as for preparing some medicines. It is illegal to sell and possess it because it is fallen under the endangered species list. After all, has been decreasing than before.

Government Steps To Curb Illicit Trade of Red Sanders

Geographical information systems and remote sensing can be effective and useful in understanding red sanders bearing forests for objectives of Conservation, tree improvement, and legal commerce.

- It was the best moment when the species was lifted from the endangered category for the first time in 1997. Over the past year, species have experienced a huge decline in growth.
- In recent times, the union minister of the state of the home affairs called upon the state government of Andhra Pradesh to put efforts into protecting red sanders tree, which is endemic to the Seshachalam biosphere, by bringing down the smuggling activities to complete in the region.
- A conservation plan should be drawn for future sustainable utilization after mapping the red sanders area using a multitemporal satellite.

Society's Responsibilities Toward Saving Red Sanders

- People should be responsible for the Environment and surrounding them. They should understand that the species decreasing with time is not a good sign for our Environment and will affect the people in that area.
- We should take steps to the Conservation of the red sanders and other endangered species because these are part of another economy indirectly or directly. It will affect the Environment and other aspects of life.
- The government should also make a good plan for protecting endangered species and try to implement those plans properly at the ground level.

