

Seaweed park

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In news— Recently, the Union Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has stated that work on the seaweed park proposed in Tamil Nadu will commence as soon as the State government allots the land.

About seaweed park-

- The Union Finance Minister in the 2021-22 Budget had announced that to promote seaweed cultivation, **Multipurpose Seaweed Park will be established in Tamil Nadu.**
- The Seaweed park in Tamil Nadu , with an investment of Rs. 100 crores, will be developed as a hub to serve as a **One Stop Park** for the entire seaweed value chain linking all the activities from pre- and post-harvest infrastructure, logistics, marketing, export promotion, innovation, technology incubation etc.
- **India with a 2.2 million sq. km Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** area and 0.53 sq km continental shelf has enormous scope for seaweed cultivation and development of indigenous seaweed-based industries has the potential to provide alternative livelihood to at least 1.5 crore people, especially coastal fisherwomen.

What is seaweed?

- **Seaweed, or macroalgae, refers to thousands of species of macroscopic, multicellular, marine algae.**
- The term includes some types of Rhodophyta, Phaeophyta and Chlorophyta macroalgae.
- Seaweed species such as kelps provide essential nursery habitat for fisheries and other marine species and thus protect food sources; other species, such as planktonic algae, play a vital role in capturing carbon, producing at least 50% of Earth's oxygen.

- They **range in colours from red, green, brown and black** and also vary in size, from microscopic to large underwater forests.
- It is found on the shores across the world, but is more commonly a staple in Asian countries.
- It is a power pack of **nutrients like iron, zinc, magnesium, riboflavin, thiamin, vitamin A, B, C & K etc.**
- The **high amount of antioxidants present** in seaweed protects the body from damages caused by free radicals and protects cells from their impact.
- It is rich in plant compounds like flavonoids and carotenoids, which can limit the generation and effect of free radicals.
- It is low in calorie content while being high in Omega 3 fats and fibre. Thus, consuming seaweed can keep one fuller for longer.
- Animal studies have found that substances found in seaweed help increase production of a protein that metabolises fat effectively.
- Seaweed is high in fibre content, which is a boon for gut health.