

SERICULTURE AND ITS ECONOMIC POTENTIALITY

A CASE STUDY OF DHAKUAKHANA, UNDER LAKHIMPUR SUB DIVISION

Sericulture is a traditional agro –base and eco friendly economic activity. This is one of the ancient industries of N E Region. Seri silk worm rearing is a tradition of Assam. Seri worm feeds on castor, kesheru, borkesheru leaves etc. it's noted that the cocoon cannot be reel directly. It needs spinning. So the rearing spinning and weaving of Seri- silk is carried out in almost all the district of Assam. The rearing of silks worms and its exploitation for elegant fabrication is one of the salient feature of enriched agro and cultural heritage of the district of Assam. For this reason sericulture is considered as the most prominent and most common livelihood of Assam. Its contributes 25% to 30%of total domestic production of Assam as for silk is concerned .Large scale production of fabulous golden yellow muga cocoon and yarn, creamy white eri cocoon and yarn and silvery Mulberry silk yarn(Kecha part) is now becoming an identity of Assam.

In terms of contribution to employment and income by all the major sericulture activities of Assam such as Eri Mugha , Mulberry and tassar etc which are occupies the prime position among the rural peoples .Therefore, sericulture is the backbone of the rural areas .But its utility is comparative lower price than the other silk varieties. The cultural gained much popularity among the middle and lower middle income population across the state and other parts of India. In Assam more than 1.35 lakes families were engaged in

Manik Chandra Payun
U.M.K. COLLEGE

sericulture activities during 2005-06 (70% of them total sericulture practicing families in the state) produced about 700 MT of Seri cocoon (Directorate of sericulture, govt. of Assam, 2007). Through the export of sericulture products under the initiative of Assam Apex weavers and Artisans Co-operative Federation Limited (ARTFED), Significant amount of foreign exchange have been added to government treasury every year (De and Das, 2007).

Seri culture has been mostly practiced by the poor tribal communities like Mishing, Kacharis, Bodops, Mikirs, Rabha, Karbi ect in defferent districts of Assam .In most cases their women folk practice the same to supplement their family income and also provided nutritional support through the delicious by product ,pupae. A large number of families were found to come out of poverty or acute poverty due to their engagement in Seri-rearing and weaving activities .If it has undertaken properly there is ample scope for sustainable employment and income of a wider section of rural population .Seri-culture is also called as 'poor man's silk but it is more cheaper than and mulberry silk rather its highly durable than other. So sericulture is practiced in almost all the districts of Assam. It is highly concentrated in the districts of Majuli, Lakhimpur ,Demaji, Barpeta, Kokrajhar, Sibsagar and Dorang districts ect. It is noted that the people who mostly engaged in rearing cocoons are not weavers and a large section of them owing to their ignorance and poverty sell their produced cocoon to the few professional weavers working in the area or to the middlemen who collects from them on their terms and supply to the weaving mills. So that the returns from rears are comparatively lower price and their earnings is very low than entrepreneurs.

In this research study regarding future socio-economic conditions of the rural areas particularly people in Dhakuakhana and Ghilamara Block of Lakhimpur District in Assam that concentrated in sericulture industry .but it also highlights the important role in helping and development of the overall economic conditions of the people in their daily living .It attempts to examine the potentiality of increasing sericulture practices and thereby the revenue and profit. This topic is successfully shows the existence capacity such as activities

in the presence of widespread unemployment, poverty, and absence of smooth industrial progress in the last few decades.

So sericulture plays a vital role in the rural area as well as in the state economic activities by creating employment opportunities to the rural people of Assam. In this context, it may be noted that though the climate condition is favorable for production of various outputs of Seri silks in this region. There are some environmental factors that stand in the way of regular cultivation and production of the same like deforestation, repeating changes in humidity, recurring flood menaces of the belligerent Brahmaputra that have caused unexpected and serious loss of this area. Therefore it felt that these natural calamities are barred to concentrate the sericulture industry in this area luxuriantly.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The objectives of the proposed study is set as follow -

- To serve the role of sericulture in state economy in terms of income generation and employment argumentation.
- To examine the potentiality of sericulture industry.
- To observe the problems associated with the sericulture.
- To make policy prescription for the development of the industry.

PRESENT STATUS OF SERICULTURE ON THE DHAKUAKHANA SUB -DIVISION:-

As per of sericulture department of Dhakuakhana Sub -Division of Lakhimpur District of Assam the following are the status of sericulture in this sub division.

1. Number of existing Seri rears- 9560Nos.
2. Annual requirement of seeds-1, 65,876qntls.
3. Area under Seri host plants -743 hectars.
4. Annual production of Seri spinning cocoons- 70Nos.
5. Number of Seri garners -65Nos.
6. Raw silk production - 2500kgs.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY AREA :

The study is confine to the Lakhimpur District of Assam is situated in between 26°48 and 27°53North latitude and 93°42 to 94°20 East longitudes. At present the Lakhimpur district sub divided into two sub- divisions Dhakuakhana and North Lakhimpur .It has total

population of 10,40,644 according to 2011 census .The literacy rate is 78.4% which is higher than that of Assam i.e. 72.19% .The density of population is 460 per square.km. The people inhabiting in the district is of heterogeneous communities.

The is one of the prolific Seri growing areas in the regions with on an area of 750.50 hectors under host plantation and about 31042 families are directly engaged in sericulture in which Seri rears 9030Nos, Mughra rears 7572Nos and Mulberry rears 14,441Nos respectively.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

This research study is mainly done on the basis of primary and secondary data. The primary data is generated through socio-economic survey of the sericulture village of Dhakuakhana and Gilamara Block of Lakhimpur district. In order to serve the purpose, at least 200 household is survey as constituted the universe. The Selection of household is depends on concentration of household in Seri production activities, skill and unskilled rears, spinners and traditional rears.

Secondary data is collected from the published and unpublished sources of the Government, different books and journals etc. However for the relevant of the data the participatory observation method would also be followed.

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS:

The data are collected through the spot survey from the sample household which is related directly to sericulture as livelihoods. The demographic composition of the sample households in such blocks are presents as follow-

DEMOGHAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE Household-2019

Name of Block	Name of Villages	Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Dhakuakhana Block	Bakulguri	56	69	115
	Dangdhara	60	62	122
	Tamar	67	70	137
	Tulsijan	62	58	120
	Kekuri pamua	58	56	114
Ghilamara Block	Bilmukh	61	60	121
	Kalabari	57	56	113
	Lotak	72	68	140
	Patarichuk	69	65	134
	Bengenagora	56	54	110
Total	10	618	608	1226

The number of total population is 1226 belong to 200 sample household of these 10 villages. It is seen that the number of male and female population is 618 and 608 respectively, in which male population is higher than female population. It is noted that both are the equally important for sericulture activities. But in growing of sericulture the role of female population is more important than that of male population

DISTRIBUTION OF WORKING POPULATION IN THE SAMPLE HOUSEHOLD :

The distribution of working population in the sample households are classified into three categories (1) Workers (2) Non workers (3) Helpers as shown in figure below

Age group	Dhakaukhana block			Ghilamara block			Total	Percentage of total grand
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total		
Worker	179	177	356	182	175	357	713	58.16
Helper	78	75	153	77	75	152	305	24.88
Non-worker	58	51	109	46	53	99	208	16.96
Total	315	303	618	305	303	608	1226	100

From the figure shown that in the sample households out of total population 1226 where 713 (58.16) and 305(24.88) are found as male and female workers respectively. The school going children above 12 ages and above 60 ages are considers as no workers where 16.96 percent. Those persons who are participated in economic activities consider as helpers where 24.88 percent. In generally the old persons in rural areas are mostly engaged in muga rears because it does not require most physical work. Sometime a non worker in economic sense may be a worker or helper in case of sericulture.

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY EDUCATION STATUS OF SILK WORM REARS :

The development of infrastructures for economic development in the rural areas is not satisfactory one as well as they are mostly illiterate. The majority of the rural populations are engaged in agricultural base as well as Seri worm rears because of illiterate and poor. In this research study out of total population of 1226 in the sample household only 367 persons 29.93percent are alliterated. The following in the table are shown as

Name of village	Illiterate	Primary To X	HSLC passed	HSSLC PASSED	Graduate	Post graduate	Other	Total
Bakulguri	30	42	24	12	5	-	2	115
Dangdhara	33	42	18	40	6	2	7	122
Tamar	48	45	26	12	4	1	1	137
Tulsijan	39	35	23	16	5	1	1	120
Kekuri Pomua	45	37	17	10	2	1	2	114
Bilmukh	25	45	26	14	4	3	4	121
Kalabari	22	32	35	12	5	4	3	113
Lotak	26	49	26	19	7	3	10	140
Patarichuk	49	42	24	12	5	1	1	134
Bangenagora	50	30	12	10	4	1	3	110
Total	367	399	231	231	47	17	34	1226
% of grand Total	29.93	32.54	18.84	10.68	3.83	1.39	2.17	100

The table reflects that 3.83percent are graduates and 1.39percent post graduate degree holders in the sample households and engaged in Seri worm rears as a results of the lack of employment opportunity . Which is signifies the popularity of silk culture among them as a educated circle too. The entire study area in the Dhakuakhana sub-Division is flood prone and the transport and communication facilities in this area also very poor. Therefore, most of the educated youths are compelled to take up some traditional occupations like agriculture, Sericulture, fishery and milk trading etc. as source of income.

DISTRIBUTION OF AGE GROUP OF SILKWORM REARS:-

Name of Block	Name of Village	Age group of the sample households		
		0-14	15-60	60 and above
Dhakuakhana	Bakulgori	-	8%	3%
	Dangdhara	-	7%	3%
	Tamar	-	6%	4%
	Tilsijan	-	7%	3%
	Kekuri Pamua	-	8%	3%
	Bilmukh	-	9%	3%
Ghilamara	Kalabari	-	7%	3%
	Lotak	-	8%	4%
	Patarichuk	-	7%	3%
	Benganegora	-	8%	3%
	Total		-	68%

PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION OF SERI YARN BY THE SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS:-

Name of Block	Sample of household	Total Yarn Produce (Qnts)	Total Value of yarn(in Rs)	Total Yarn utilized at home	Total yarn sold to others
	100Nos	250kg	1,50,000	180Kg	70 Kg
	100Nos	200Kg	1,20,000	150Kg	50Kg
Total	200Nos	450Kg	2,70,000	330Kg	120Kg

From the figure shows that out of the total production of Seri yarn .i.e 450kg, where 330kg yarn have been utilized by the concerned silk rears in production of various clothes and 120kg yarn have been sold to others.

After spinning the yarn woven production Shawl, Riha, Mekhela chadar are some varieties of cloths at home for the use of the womenfolk as well as for men.

PROBLEM FACED BY THE SERIWORM REARS :

There are many problems face by the Seri worm rears such as below

- Shortage of manpower.
- Shortage of worm feeds.
- Shortage of worm seeds.
- Absence of market facilities.
- Shortage of finance.

CONCLUSION :

The various developmental programs are undertaken so far by the concerned department of both the central and state government for eri silk in Assam. The Sericulture Department of the state government and the central Silk Board under the Minister of Textile, Government of India are two different organizations taking up developmental programs for silk culture in the state. Co-ordination between these two organizations are maintains only in identification of rears to be train by the Sericulture Department.

In Assam various seri cultures in rural area is dominating by some traditions, beliefs and superstition which are being prevailed among the rears from times immemorial. While taking up modernization of the enterprise with development technology, these factors shall have to be taken into accounts otherwise it may have an adverse impact on the rears. To boost up production and productivity of eri silk in the state, the immediate needs is to make adequate provisions for supplying DFSLs and suitable worm feeds to the rears according to their demands. By considering the popularity of eri fabric both in the national and international markets, it is assumed that it will be occupy an important place in the national economy if it developed properly with sincere efforts. ◆

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