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## THE ROLE OF SERICULTURE AND ITS ECONOMIC POTENTIALITY TO THE RURAL AREA A CASE STUDY OF UJONI MAJULI DEVELOPMENT BLOCK UNDER MAJULI DISTRICT

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### ABSTRACT:

*Seri culture is a traditional agro-base and eco friendly economic activity. There are large numbers of people in the rural area engaged in the sericulture activities. Most of them directly related to the silk farms where silkworms are reared to produce silk. There are varieties of silk such as Mugha, Mulberry silk, non-mulberry silk, anaphe, fagara, coan etc, produces all over the world. But in Assam there are three types of silk - golden mugha, white pat and warm eri silk popular in*

*all over the world in the market today. In these paper highlights the role of sericulture and its economic potentiality a case study of Ujoni Majuli development Block under Majuli District. In Majuli, the majority of the people are lived in rural areas and most of them are illiterates and below poverty line. They are directly related to agro base industries such as bamboo, pottery, boat mechanization, mugha rearing etc. Sericulture industry is considered to be labour incentive farm where a large number of labors are employed. The majority of the rural peoples are directly related to silkworms rearing. The investment of silk rearing is considered to be very low but its returns relatively high.*

**KEYWORDS:** Sericulture, silkworm, mugha, labor incentive farm.

### INTRODUCTION

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. There are a large number of rural people directly related to silk farms. In generally, Seri worm feeds on castor, kesheru, borkesheru leaves etc. it's noted that the cocoon cannot be reel directly. It needs spinning. The rearing spinning and weaving of Seri- silk is carried out in almost all the district of Assam. Now the

rearing of silks worms and its exploitation for elegant fabrication is one of the salient feature of enriched agro and cultural heritage city of the district of Majuli. The majority of the people of rural area are produces purely elegant fabricant cloth domestically. The domestically produces fabricant cloth are more colorful and more demandable in the market. The people of rural area are produced varieties of silk which is sells their domestically produced fabricant cloth to the market in a minimum price. Thereby, they are expects to income for their livelihood. For this reason sericulture is considered as the most prominent

and most common livelihood for the people of rural area. It attracts especially the rural farmers and entrepreneurs to seek as profits at a low investment with relatively higher returns. It 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) etc 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 occupies the prime position among the rural peoples of Assam. So, sericulture is considered to be income prospect as the backbone of the rural people. Its utility is considered comparatively high than the other silk varieties. But its market price is lower than its other fabricant cloths also. Now the sericulture gained much popularity among the middle and lower middle income group of the population of rural areas of Assam. In Assam more than 1.35 lakhs families were engaged in 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 Mishings, Kacharis, Bodos, Mikirs, Rabhas, Karbis etc in different 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. Sericulture is also called as 'poor man's silk' but it is more cheaper than 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 Dibrugarh districts etc. 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 collect 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 the feature of sericulture and its economic potentiality under Ujoni Majuli Development Block of Majuli 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 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 -

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

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY AREA:-

The study is confined to the District of Majuli, Assam is situated in between 26°57 North latitude and 94°10 East longitudes. In this topic the research area is especially focused on the Ujoni Majuli

Development Block of Majulisss. The total population is `1,67,304 according to 2011 census .The literacy rate is 78.56% which is higher than that of Assam i.e. 72.19% .The density of population is 300per square.km. The people inhabiting in the district is of heterogeneous communities likes mishing,deori ,sonowal,kacharis,Koch.ahom,chutia,kalita,keot,and sut.

There is one of the most prolific Sericultural growing area in these regions in which 125hectors under host plantation and about 55,635 families are directly engaged in sericulture sector where Seri rears 9030Nos, Mugha 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 collected from the survey of the sericulture village ujoni majuli under Majuli district in which 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.

#### 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-

**DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE SAMPLE  
Household-2019**

Name of GP	Name of Villages	Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Cherepai	Kumarbari	36	76	112
	Namani cherepai	40	68	108
	Ujoni cherepai	56	78	134
	Major Deori	37	65	102
	Monbalchuk	45	85	130
Ratanpur	2 no borbil	40	67	107
	Puthsang	48	85	133
	Kulichapari	52	70	124
	Ratanpur	49	69	118
	Haldibari	35	72	107
Total	10	438	737	1175

From the above table shows that the number of total population is 1175 belong to 200 sample household of these 10 villages. It is seen that the number of male and female population is 438 and 737 respectively, in which female population is higher than male population. Here the number of female population is more involved than male population in which women are fully involved in the growing of sericulture sector. But in the rural areas the number of male population also participated with female in the rearing of sericulture sector. In this sense 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 HOUSEHOL:**

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	Cherepai GP			Ratonpur GP			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 1175 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 illiterates. 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 1175 in the sample household only 367 persons 29.93percent are illiterates. The following in the table are shown as

Name of village	Illiterate	Primary To X	HSLC passed	HSSLC PASSED	Graduate	Post graduate	Other	Total
Kumarbari	30	42	24	12	5	-	2	115
Namoni cherpai	33	42	18	40	6	2	7	122
Ujoni cherpai	48	45	26	12	4	1	1	137
Major deori	39	35	23	16	5	1	1	120
Monbalchhuk	45	37	17	10	2	1	2	114
2no borbil	25	45	26	14	4	3	4	121
Puthsang	22	32	35	12	5	4	3	113
Kulichapori	26	49	26	19	7	3	10	140
Ratonpur	49	42	24	12	5	1	1	134
Hardibari	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 above 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 and others opportunity which is signifies the popularity of silk culture among them as an educated circle too. The entire study in these regions found that transport and communication facilities are not satisfactory one. 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 GP	Name of Village	Age group of the sample households		
		0 -14	15- 60	60 and above
Cherepai	Kumarbari	–	8%	3%
	Namonicherepai	–	7%	3%
	Ujonicherepai	–	6%	4%
	Major Deori	–	7%	3%
	Monbalchuk	–	8%	3%
Ratonpur	2NO Barbil	–	9%	3%
	Puthsang	–	7%	3%
	Kulichapori	–	8%	4%
	Ratonpur	–	7%	3%
	Hardibari	–	8%	3%
Total		–	68%	32%

Above the figure shows that the different age groups in different regions are engaged in the silkworm rearing. Here the age groups 15-60 are engaged in to 68% and above age 60 are engaged in to 32% which reflected that the numbers of work forces are more engaged than non-workers.

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

Name of GP	Sample of household	Total Yarn Produce (Qnts)	Total Value of yarn(in Rs)	Total Yarn utilized at home	Total yarn sold to others
Cherepai	100Nos	350kg	75,000	150Kg	50 Kg
Ratonpur	100Nos	260Kg	96,000	195Kg	60Kg
Total	200Nos	610Kg	17,10,00	345Kg	110Kg

From the figure shows that out of the total production of Seri yarn i.e. 610kg, where 345kg yarn have been utilized by the concerned silk rears in production of various clothes and 110kg 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 that face by the Seri worm rears such as below

1. Shortage of manpower.
2. Shortage of worm feeds.
3. Shortage of worm seeds.
4. Absence of market facilities.
5. 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 DFLS 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 occupies an important place in the national economy if it developed properly with sincere efforts.

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