

INTER CROPPING WITH MULBERRY IN HILLY TRACTS OF MIZORAM FOR ADDITIONAL INCOME: SUCCESS STORY OF A WOMEN SERICULTURIST

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INTRODUCTION

Mizoram is a landlocked state in North East India, covers an area of approximately 21,087 square kilometres of which more than 91% is forested with rolling hills and valleys. About 60 percent of the people of the Mizoram engaged in agricultural activities. Shifting cultivation practice called “Jhuming” is the main pattern of cultivation in the entire state. It involves the clearing of forest by slashing the entire vegetation followed by burning, sowing and reaping. Cultivation is practiced only for few years and then is abandoned in favour of another site when the productivity of the soil declines.

SERICULTURE IN MIZORAM

Mizoram is a non-traditional area for Sericulture. Mulberry sericulture is an Agro-based industry engaged by nearly 8,000 families in over 300 Mizo villages. Mulberry trees are cultivated in hill slopes, purely under rainfed conditions and silkworm rearings

are taken up 3-4 times in a year. The state is gifted with natural grown food plants of non-mulberry silkworms called Eri and Muga and efforts are initiated to gear up production of these silks also. Both Central Silk Board, Government of India and Directorate of Sericulture, Government of Mizoram are jointly implementing number of schemes for expansion of sericulture and increase the silk production in the state.

INCOME THROUGH SERICULTURE

As per the recent survey in Mizoram, a farmer who hold one acre of mulberry cultivation is capable to rear silkworm at an average of 75 dfl and produce 45.540 kgs of cocoons and getting income of Rs. 13,662 /- per crop. The average annual income by 4 rearing is Rs. 54,648. The average annual expenditure for silkworm rearing is worked out as Rs.6680 and the net profit is Rs. 47, 968/-.



MRS LALHLUNI: A LEAD SERICULTURIST

Women are mainly involving in silkworm rearing in the state. Mrs Lalhluni wife of Shri Dingluaia Zadeng is belonging to Chawilung village of Aibawk block, Aizawl district is a lead sericulture farmer of the state and a role model for multiple farming with sericulture. She is holding 2 acres of land in hill slope, planted S1635 mulberry variety during 2015 and rearing bivoltine hybrid silkworms since last six years. She cultivated inter-crops viz., banana, pineapple, orange and Zawngtah (*Parkia speciosa*) in a scattered way without affecting leaf yield of mulberry and getting considerable income in addition to sericulture. Her average overall annual income is given below.

Average annual income of Mrs. Lalhluni through sericulture and inter crops

Sl.	Crop	Yield	Rate	Income
1.	Silkworm Rearing and cocoon production	280 kg	300.00	84,000
2.	Banana	80 Bunches	300.00	24,000
3.	Pineapple	300 numbers	40.00	12,000
4.	Orange	1500 numbers	5.00	7,500
5.	Zawngtah	200 bunches	100.00	20,000
Total				1,47,500

Mrs Lalhluni is a lead sericulture farmer and her average cocoon production rate is more than 60 kgs per 100 dfls whereas the state overall average production is below 50 kg. She is earning around Rs. 84,000 annually through sericulture and her inter crops also support considerable additional income of about Rs.63,500. There is total 9 members in her family. Before starting sericulture, she cultivated some vegetables, maize and rice by jhuming method for her domestic need only, held a small hut with very poor facilities for dwelling, suffered shortage money for her day-to-day expenses. Since mulberry is a perennial tree, she discontinued the shifting cultivation practice and this permeant cultivation system helped her to plant some commercial crops in between mulberry trees to get solid additional income.



Mulberry plantation in hill tract



Silkworm rearing house



Integrated farming

CONCLUSION

The income through sericulture has instantly supported Mrs Lalhluni for her livelihood security whereas the additional earnings through some important commercial inter crops facilitated her to construct a terraced dwelling house and her life standard is improved in a greater way with the facilities like television, fridge, washing machine, two-wheeler etc. Mrs Lalhluni is a successful sericulture entrepreneur and role model of tribal women in the state of Mizoram.



New house constructed by Mrs Lalhluni