

Success Story on Farm to fiber to fabric -A systematic and scientific approach to eri silkworm rearing

Rearing of Eri silk worm is almost a prerogative of tribal people of the district and inherited from one generation to other as a tradition. It was believed that Ericulture is a poor's man job and a leisure time activity and is a secondary source of income for clothing and food. The rearing of Eri silk worm through traditional method was reported in decreasing trend by many authors and thus it was also noted that rural youth of the district are found migrated to other state in search of income avenues as eri silk rearing for livelihood strategy is unsure. The contributing factors of decreasing trend in eri silk rearing are due to lack of awareness of scientific method of rearing, availability and knowledge of secondary and tertiary food plants, lack of knowledge on intercropping of agricultural crop with sericulture crops, post cocoon technologies, poor management of infected larvae and mortality and morbidity of eri pupae in different temperature, relative humidity and environmental factors. Hence, scientific intervention of Ericulture over traditional method was found utmost important to save this old age tradition by attracting rural youth towards Ericulture.



Name, Address, Block, Village, Phone No. Adhar No.

Name	Shri Ghanakanta Brahma
Father's/ Mother's/ Husband's Name	Shri Akhil Chandra Brahma
Address	Kokrajhar ward no.10, PO: kokrajhar, PS: Kokrajhar, Dist: Kokrajhar-783370, Assam, North-East India, India.
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Adhaar No.	688861369942

1. Category-agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, fishery, Sericulture etc.

Scientific method of eri silkworm rearing in Kokrajhar district.

Eri silkworm rearing was initially done castor leaves and rearing was limited to 2-3 crops annually but feeding with secondary food plant as Kesseru (*Heteropanus frangrans Roxb*), tapioca (*Manihot Esculenta*) and gamari (*Gmelina Arborea*) leaves not only enhance the rearing up to 6-7 cycle annually but also able to get yield from tapioca in the form of tubers.

2. The journey to success:

Ghanakanta Brahma, an unemployed rural youth was born and brought up in the forest land of tribal district of Kokrajhar. He belongs to a very poor family, experience many hardships in his childhood and somehow complete his education with very limited resources and ultimately able to get his BA degree. Further, since from childhood he saw his villagers doing eri silkworm rearing primary for silkworm larvae/ pupae and secondary for cocoon production because eri pupae is the food of delicacy among Bodo people of the Kokrajhar-District. But as years passed by the old aged tradition of eri silkworm rearing was in decreasing trends and young youth were found least interested and reluctant to take up eri silkworm rearing professionally. Changing life style, improved socio-economic conditions etc may be some of the influencing factors.

As Ghanakanta is educated unemployed youth, he thought to save his old age tradition and started eri silkworm rearing with minimum resources. He collected castor leafs from road side areas and jungles by riding a bi-cycle and able to rear only 2-3 crops annually due to shortage of food plants and able to get 6-7 kg cocoon yield yearly. The cocoon was sold at a price of 800/- per kg and pupae

at the rate of Rs 400/- per kg and able to get very little earning.

Henceforth, he visited KVK, Kokrajhar to know the scientific technologies of Ericulture and different interventions for higher cocoon yield. He applies the updated technologies and started systematic way of eri food plantation in his under-utilized agricultural land. He planted primary food plant- Castor, secondary and perennial food plant - Kesseru and Tapioca- tertiary food plant in 60 bighas of land area. Intercropping of sericulture with horticulture/ tubers was also incorporated.

At present Ghanakanta is not only able to save his aged old tradition of eri silkworm rearing but also contributes in maintaining agro-forestry in the region. He applies the actual concept of “lab to land” practically and able to get increased yield and qualitative production. He is also able to attract youths especially the rural women tribal folks of the district towards ericulture and motivate them to take up silkworm rearing with scientific intervention with traditional amalgamation. He also set a live example of how convergence works in practical field. Contribution from different line departments like NABARD for providing financial support in food plantation; Department of Sericulture, Kokrajhar for providing rearing house; KVK Kokrajhar provide the scientific interventions along with overall input support for rearing, yarn and fabric production through ARYA project. All these contributing factors are responsible to grow his Green leaf NGO eri cluster unit at Bhawrawgwja village and at the same time able to uplift a poor farmer to a successful motivational entrepreneur.

At present, about 600-700 unemployed rural youth from in and outside the state were visited his enterprise to know the scientific no-how of eri silk worm rearing over traditional system of rearing intervened by KVK.Kokrajhar.

Horizontal spread of the technology was seen as most of the youth were ready to take the scientific method of eri silk worm rearing and thus visited the Subject matter specialist in KVK Kokrajhar to get the technology details.

3. Recognition:

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| 1. Best youth club award 2020 | Nehru yuva Kendra, kokrajhar BTAD under Ministry of youth affairs and sports.Govt. of India. |
| 2. Outstanding Progressive Farmers award in the field of ericulture | Provided by KVK. Kokrajhar in the year 2022. |

4. Future plan: He want to export the eri silk product to in and outside state and country.

5. **Recognition:** His enterprise was documented and telecasted by National TV news Channel “**Sansad TV, New Delhi**” in 2021 along with many regional news channel like ND TV, Guwahati etc.

6. Photograph:



Best progressive farmer award in the field of Ericulture, Kokrajhar, 2022 at KVK. Kokrajhar.



Best PIA Award from NABARD was provided Honorable Agriculture Minister Sri Atul Bora in NABARD Regional office, Dispur, Guwahati



Best youth club award, 2020



Spinning of eri silk yarn from cocoon



Harvesting and Marketing of eri silk cocoon and pupae



Sri Sanjay Saran, Joint Sect. Ministry of Textile, Govt of India visited his farm on 24th October 2021



Dr K M Bijayakumari, Director CMERTI, Ministry of textile, Ladioghar visited his farm



Eri food plants- farm



Dr. B.C Deka, Vice chancellor of Assam Agricultural University Jorhat visited his farm.

7. Contributor of the story:

Porna Sarmah, SMS, Community Science, KVK, Kokrajhar, AAU Jorhat, Assam.