

A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF NAGALAND BAMBOO MISSION

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Abstract

The Nagaland Bamboo Mission envisages encouraging bamboo development by adopting area-based development strategy. The study reflects on how bamboo has been integral to the life of the Nagas, from the cutting of the umbilical cord to the mats that have wrapped the dead for burial. It still continues to play a predominant role in the life of the people even today in every walk of life that ranges from shelter, livelihood, and food to agricultural implements and tools. Bamboo is one of the highest yielding and fastest growing renewable natural resource. It is found extensively all over the State and constitute one of the most important resources of Nagaland which has to be put to use in the present day context for the growth, benefit and development of the people.

Nagaland Bamboo Mission is an initiative by Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency. It was started in the year 2004, mainly to help rural communities create a sustainable livelihood using bamboo as a resource. The methodology used is quantitative and analytical to bring out the efficiency and efficiency of the Bamboo Mission. The Bamboo Mission is to promote and develop traditional usage of bamboo. This study has been designed to analyse whether it has been helping in the development of the state.

INTRODUCTION

Bamboo is found extensively all over Nagaland. The State is blessed with abundant resources of bamboo coupled with suitable agro climatic conditions for propagation of bamboo at large scale. Of all the bio-resources bamboo is one of the most important resources as it has been a part and partial of the social, economic structure and a source of livelihood for the Nagas from the time immemorial. The use of bamboo for the Nagas is indispensable. The Nagas have survived through the centuries with the diverse and varied use of bamboo and its products. It continues to play an important role in the life of the Nagas even today in every walk of life that ranges from agricultural tools to shelter, food etc.¹

Bamboos have retained their popularity and utility even today, despite being an ancient traditional art. Residents of Nagaland utilize bamboo for variety of purposes which includes household items for daily use, construction and multi other bamboo products. Nagas are expert basket makers that are capable of creating his own bamboo merchandise. Apart from the bamboo basket, the Nagas make bamboo combs, fish trap, bamboo spoons, mugs and different kind of hats and musical instruments like the bamboo flute, trumpet, cup violin etc.². The State of Nagaland produces a huge amount of bamboo and artisans therein make good use of these available resources to craft out amazing artifacts. Bamboo crafting makes it an integral part of Naga culture and their specialty lies in the making of furniture which includes tables, chairs, sofas and cots made out of bamboo.

Nagaland is one the States in North East India that have a policy for the promotion and development of bamboo industry as a resource and as an enterprise. A planned, scientific and holistic approach to the cultivation and management of bamboos on a sustained basis can be an inexhaustible source of goods and services and can play a significant role in the restoration and rejuvenation of rural economy and the overall economic development of the State. Nagaland implemented its State Bamboo Policy on 15th March, 2004 with the objective to foster in ecological security and economic growth through development and utilization of bamboo resources. The bamboo industry in Nagaland has a bright future for the State economy.

OBJECTIVES OF NAGALAND BAMBOO MISSION

Keeping in view, the ecological significance and vast economic potential of bamboos in the state, the Nagaland Bamboo Policy is envisaged achieve the following Aims & Objectives :

- To Protect and conserve the rich bio-diversity associated with bamboo forests and bamboo growth areas in the state.
- Sustainable development and utilization of bamboo resources through scientific management.

¹ Nagaland: blessed with abundant resources of bamboo, Northeast window, October 7, 2017.

² Ibid

- To promote bamboo plantation (by Government, Individuals and communities) as the key thrust area for future economy of the state.
- To promote bamboo based industries for utilizing the available resources for generating income in the state.
- Revitalizing and promoting the local traditional bamboo craft & art with improved technology & design and value addition for export through industrialized mode of production.
- Promotion of bamboo as an essential wood substitute by increasing bamboo production and promotion of bamboo based enterprise in the state in order to reduce pressure on forests.
- To promote awareness and understanding of bamboo as “Green Gold” among farmers, traders, industry, and the people in the state with a view to utilizing its full potential and to galvanize the rural and industrial economy in the state.
- Effective exploitation of existing mature bamboos before the impending gregarious flowering.³

Strategy of the Nagaland Bamboo Policy

The development of bamboo in Nagaland will be approached in a mission mode, which will have two approaches namely:

- Development of bamboo as a Resource
- Development of Bamboo as an enterprise

Development of Bamboo as a Resource

Strategy for cultivation and management of bamboo resources in the State shall be evolved with special focus to the following activities:

- Inventorization of the bamboo resources,
- Assess scope and potential of bamboo growth and regeneration,
- Evolve scientific management practices for naturally occurring bamboos and plantation bamboos to improve productivity and harvesting.
- Create massive and consistent awareness of the value of bamboo among the people, especially among major stakeholders.
- Evolve suitable policies to deal with gregarious flowering of Bamboo.
- Set up appropriate Institutes for research and development of bamboos, both for regeneration and industrial processing & value addition.
- Evolve suitable techniques of multiplication and develop infrastructure for mass production of planting materials for commercial cultivation.
- Introduce desirable species of commercial importance for cultivation in the state.
- Development of communication network for development of Bamboo as an Industry in the State.⁴

Development of bamboo as an enterprise

Development of bamboo as an enterprise involves policies and action plans that will focus on the following aspects:

- Promote bamboo based industries.
- Create awareness of the uses and value of bamboo by imparting training, seminar, workshop etc.
- Promote and develop traditional usage of bamboo.

CONSERVING THE ENVIRONMENT

Bamboo Charcoal Production

Bamboo charcoal has a huge potential for economic upliftment of rural people in the bamboo flowering areas, as well as other parts of the state where large resources to enhance the income of the rural people and in the process contribute to the state economy. Bamboo Charcoal are classified as raw bamboo charcoal and bamboo briquette charcoal. Raw bamboo charcoal is made of bamboo plant parts such as culms, branches, and roots. Bamboo briquette charcoal is made of bamboo residue example, bamboo dust, saw powder etc. Bamboo Charcoal briquette can also be made from raw bamboo charcoal dust or powder mixing with water, starch and floor as adhesive in small ratio by compressing the paste into different shapes and dried. It not only provides a new way to utilize bamboo ut also benefits environment protection by reducing pollutant residue. Bamboo Charcoal is an environmentally functional material that has excellent absorption properties.⁵

The NBDA have been imparting Bamboo Charcoal making training to the villagers since 2006. Earlier in Dimapur area and Dungki Lamai where bamboo flowering took place and helped in generating income to the farmers. 45 numbers of kilns were constructed and conducted trainings in the areas such as Dimapur District, Dungki Lamai, Peren District, Longjemdang village, Mokokchung District with the assistance of NBM. The development of bamboo charcoal briquettes by the Agency has led to the

³ Nagaland Bamboo Policy, Government of Nagaland, Kohima, 2004. P. 5-6

⁴ Ibid p 6-7

⁵ Bamboo Infomag, Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency, Dimapur, 2010-2012, 85

establishment of a fully mechanized briquetting unit in Dimapur and Tuli. In NBRC, 6th mile Dimapur, the capacity for production of charcoal briquette is 500kgs/day and the rate per kg is Rs 50.⁶ The Annual production of Bamboo Charcoal in the State is 80 metric tons. The market demand of bamboo charcoal with and outside the state is very high.

Bamboo plantation

NBDA is implementing National Bamboo Mission's programme in development of bamboo resources. Bamboo plantation is being promoted in all districts of Nagaland in a commercial basis with intensive management to get maximum yield per hectare. Certain bamboo species with potentials are been promoted as plantation as too many species may lead to complications in future while processing for more value added products. Species-to-site matching has been given special importance because depending on the genetic characters, species vary in growth and development pattern and in their response to environment conditions.

The Agency has introduced plantation as a farm based activity for income generation; as such bamboo plantation has been taken up at:

Micro-level: Bamboo farming activity taken up by an individual for income generation. These are mostly in homesteads catering to domestic demands.

Small and medium levels: Farming activity taken up by groups, societies, SHGs etc. these farming provides raw material to small scale industries.

Large/community level: These are large bamboo plantation taken up by the communities. These plantations are targeted to provide raw materials to large scale users and industries like paper mill.

USAGE OF BAMBOO

Bamboo Furniture

Harnessing the traditionally acquired skills of the craftsmen and intervening with technology in the development of bamboo furniture by the Agency have so far evoked much interest and marketing potential. Since the use of bamboos guarantees the exclusivity of each item, every piece of furniture is an art itself. The Agency has been successful in promoting affordable and modern furniture with finer quality and designs by means of providing training, physical assistance and infrastructure. At present, around 21 Furniture units around the state are involved daily in producing such products. Along with these, the agency has also assisted other groups comprising of specially-able persons to establish a fully operational furniture production unit in the Resource Centre.⁷

Bamboo Handicrafts

The Naga artisans and craftsmen are adept in transforming the extremely adaptable bamboo into a variety of utilitarian, decorative and also ritualistic objects. Artisan communities depend on bamboo crafts for their livelihoods. Bamboo crafts replace plastic users and usher in eco-friendly utility items⁸. Looking at this vast potential, the Agency has been successful in revitalizing and promoting local bamboo craft and art with improved technology and designs, coupled with value addition initiatives and industrialized mode of production. With the assistance of the Agency, there are now about 120 persons directly employed under this segment, and even more getting trained on a daily basis at the Nagaland Bamboo Resource Centre. The NBDA focuses on promotion of quality handicraft production and its marketing. 40 innovative interventions were carried on under the guidance of NBDA⁹.

Bamboo Shoot

Consumption of Bamboo shoot in Nagaland in the fresh form is largely only during the season and fermented bamboo shoot, bamboo shoot juice and dried shoots are found throughout the year. With the purpose of promoting the consumption of fresh bamboo shoot all round year other than fermented or dried which would not only add health benefits but also effect the local economy, the NBDA has been taking up training of SHGs for bamboo shoot pickle making. To further encourage and promote pickle making among the SHGs, they were assisted with a revolving fund of Rs 25,000 in 2012.¹⁰

Being the first year of production, the Agency also assisted in marketing, acting as marketing agents by buying the pickles from the SHGs at wholesale and distributing among the shops like Star mart and Kitchen Queen in Dimapur and Kohima at the same rate. In this way the pickle production has been steady and continuous. Production of bamboo shoot is seasonal but its demand is high throughout the year. At present 24 SHGs are involved in bamboo shoot making and it produces 34.5 Metric Tonnes per year.¹¹

Employment Generation

⁶ Ibid. 86

⁷ Metha Tolto, Building lives with bamboos, Nagaland Post, 22 September, 2014

⁸ Bamboo Infomag, Nagaland Bamboo Development agency, 2005-2009, p.41

⁹ Metha Tolto, Building lives with Bamboos, Nagaland Post, 22 September, 2014.

¹⁰ Bamboo infomag, Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency, Dimapur, 2012-2015, p.122

¹¹ Ibid.

The NBDA provides great employment opportunities amongst the people of Nagaland. It encourages the unemployed people of both rural and urban areas to invest their talents and potentials to uplift their socio-economic condition which will in turn help in contributing to the economic development of the state as well as the country. It not only encourages the people to work in bamboo sector but also provides adequate tools, machineries, logistic supports and imparts them with free trainings on bamboo construction and making handicrafts and aids them in promoting their stalls. After the intervention of NBDA, more than 700 households all over the state are engaged in mat production. Over 61426 men of labor are involved in plantation and management and above 200 people are directly employed in handicrafts and charcoal production.

Employment opportunity in bamboo sector is anticipated to be generated from the primary and secondary processing sectors, harvesting of bamboos and in support activities like training, transport, marketing and communication through tertiary sector. Employment generation from the development of bamboo sector by 2020 is anticipated which is tabled as under¹²

TABLE 3.1

Area of Activity	Employment
Plantation and harvesting	200000 nos
Primary processing	12500 nos
Secondary processing	2500 nos
Support activities	30000 nos
Total	245000 nos

(Source: Bamboo Infomag, 2009)

The efforts of the NBDA in taking up activities for the development of Bamboo and the trainings and other capacity building provided by them have paid off and there has been a remarkable increase in the income of the bamboo farmers and artisans and many of the unemployed youths trained by the Agency have also established their own handicraft units which now provides them good income.

Economic empowerment of rural women, Self Help Groups through Bamboo

Women have made important contributions in almost every aspects of our society from time immemorial. Women are an integral part of every economy. All round development and harmonious growth of a nation would be possible only when women are empowered. Empowerment of women is essential to harness the women labor in the main stream of economic development. In Nagaland, the concept and practice of Self Help Groups is more than two decades old. Thousands of poor rural population is building their lives, families and their societies through SHGs. The present scenario of Nagaland in bamboo sector, the SHGs have become the vehicle of change for the rural women through bamboo mat weaving and supply, bamboo food processing and market linkage, bamboo handicrafts and other bamboo related activities.¹³

The NBDA has been successful in promoting bamboo based industries in the State thereby generating income for hundreds of people especially the rural women. For example, a home based society like Aitlenden in Tuli under Mokokchung District was struggling to generate income when it first started in 2008 but is now weaving baskets of success after the NBDA stepped in.¹⁴ It was a society formed by 10 women members in 2008. The Agency imparted training in mat and basket weaving to the women and later officially engaged them in business. The society now takes monthly orders from the Agency. For every order placed, the women make a profit of about 10 to 15 thousand rupees. Now there are about 32 Self Help Groups across the State working with the NBDA.

CONCLUSION

The Nagaland Bamboo Mission is a one of its kind to address issues in strengthening the socio-economic status of the people of Nagaland. Overall it is a holistic growth focusing on comprehensive development of bamboo sector through cross sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach.¹⁵ It is an initiative that encourages livelihood and sustains the environment as a whole for a sustainable living.

¹² Ibid. 31

¹³ Bamboo Infomag, Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency, Dimapur, 2011-2012, p.19

¹⁴ Bamboo: Promoting sustainable development in Nagaland, The Morung Express, 19 January, 2014.

¹⁵ Ibid.