

CHAPTER - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

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#### I.1. Importance:

Sericulture and main orchard crop i.e., mango have a vital role on the economic development of Malda district. Malda district is a very small district in the State of West Bengal in India having no separate subdivision of its own, the district has its past glory of silk production as well as of mango production. Due to favourable conditions of its soil and climate, Malda district, which is within Gangetic plain, has been developing its economic conditions and the production of Silk and mango have been increasing since independence. The district spreads over 3,713 Sq. Km. inhabited by 20.35 lakhs persons according to the Census report of 1981.

A large portion of the total population of the district is engaged in sericulture and mango orchard. So, sericulture and mango orchard can be termed as major labour intensive and employment generating sectors next to agriculture in Malda district. The district has remarkable earnings from these two sources.

Specially in 'Diara' tract of Malda district mulberry is carefully tilled and maximum Cocoons are produced in

this area. Mango production of this district is also maximum in 'Dara tract'. The mango trade is one of the most important trades in the district.

The speculative prices of mangoes of mango orchard and the various stages of mango trade have an important economic effect on the district. Dealers and merchants earn a lot during mango season by doing brokery business.

A good year of the mango production brings prosperity to a large section of the population of Malda. The owners of mango gardens make a good profit when prices are good. The poor people are also benefited because there is an unwritten law that windfalls are the property of first comer. Every storm brings them out to collect what they can. In this way they make considerable stock of mangoes which comprises half of their diet for about two months in a year. They also earn some money by selling various preparations of mango such as AMCHOOB, ANSWATWA etc. from their collected mangoes. Many traders export grafts from good mango trees and pickles of various kinds made of green mangoes.

At present about 50,000 acres of land are covered with mango orchard at Malda and in these orchards there are about 10 lakhs of mango trees. There are 70 thousand owners of mango orchards. The total value of exportable mango in the boom period is Rs. 6 crores. About 3 lakhs of people get

(1)  
employment during mango season at Malda .

In 1958-59 Rs. 1,00,000 were advanced to the mango processing Co-operative Society, Malda by district Co-operative Central Bank. The same Society received a further loan of Rs. 60,000 in 1959-60.

In 1977, about 40 lakhs rupees were earned by truck owners of Malda district by transporting mango from Malda to Calcutta, Assam and Dhulian in 3,200 trips (2) .

So, even to-day the different sections of people of Malda district are directly or indirectly benefited in every good year of mango production. At present the main markets of Malda mango are Calcutta, Assam, Manipur and Tripura.

In 1979, there were 16 factories of raw mango slice. But in 1980 there were 34 factories of raw mango slice. These raw mango slices preserved in salt are sent to Bombay and Delhi for further processing (3) . Of course, there are certain problems in extending the markets of these perishable commodities, but attempts are being made of late to solve these problems.

For sericulture, abundant mulberry leaves are grown in the 'Diara' tract of this district. Besides mulberry

1. Chowdhury, Suvas: "Maldaha Amra Fasaler Byabasaikvitti" - published on 30th, May, 1980 in "Gour Banga" Patrika, Malda.
2. Chowdhury, Suvas: "Maldaha Amra Fasaler Byabasaikvitti" - an article published on 30th May 1980 in "Gour Banga Patrika", Malda.
3. Ibid.

leaves the most important factor of sericulture is availability of cheap skilled labour. At Malda, specially in Englishbazar, Kallachak and Manikchak within 'Diara' tract, huge number of cheap skilled labourers are available for which sericulture is a thriving subsidiary business of the farmers of these areas of the district. Moreover, sericulture supplies the largest source of income that farm-women and children can contribute to the household.

At Malda, soil and climatic conditions favour growing mulberry and tending silk worms. In many sections spring, summer and autumn broods of worms are raised each year. Sericulture has been localised in these most populous areas of the district which favour the availability of huge skilled labours.

Moreover, the Government has been encouraging the various phases of sericulture to a certain extent since independence. Now Silk worm eggs are placed under strict supervision of the sericulture Department, Government of West Bengal, in order to provide disease-free worms. Moreover, varieties of worms and mulberry trees are being developed by scientific selection and crossing under Government supervision. Now a considerable portion of Malda Silk is being reeled by modern filatures. Although there is a market for Malda Silk in limited sense, attempts are being made for the extension of the

market inspite of having some problems.

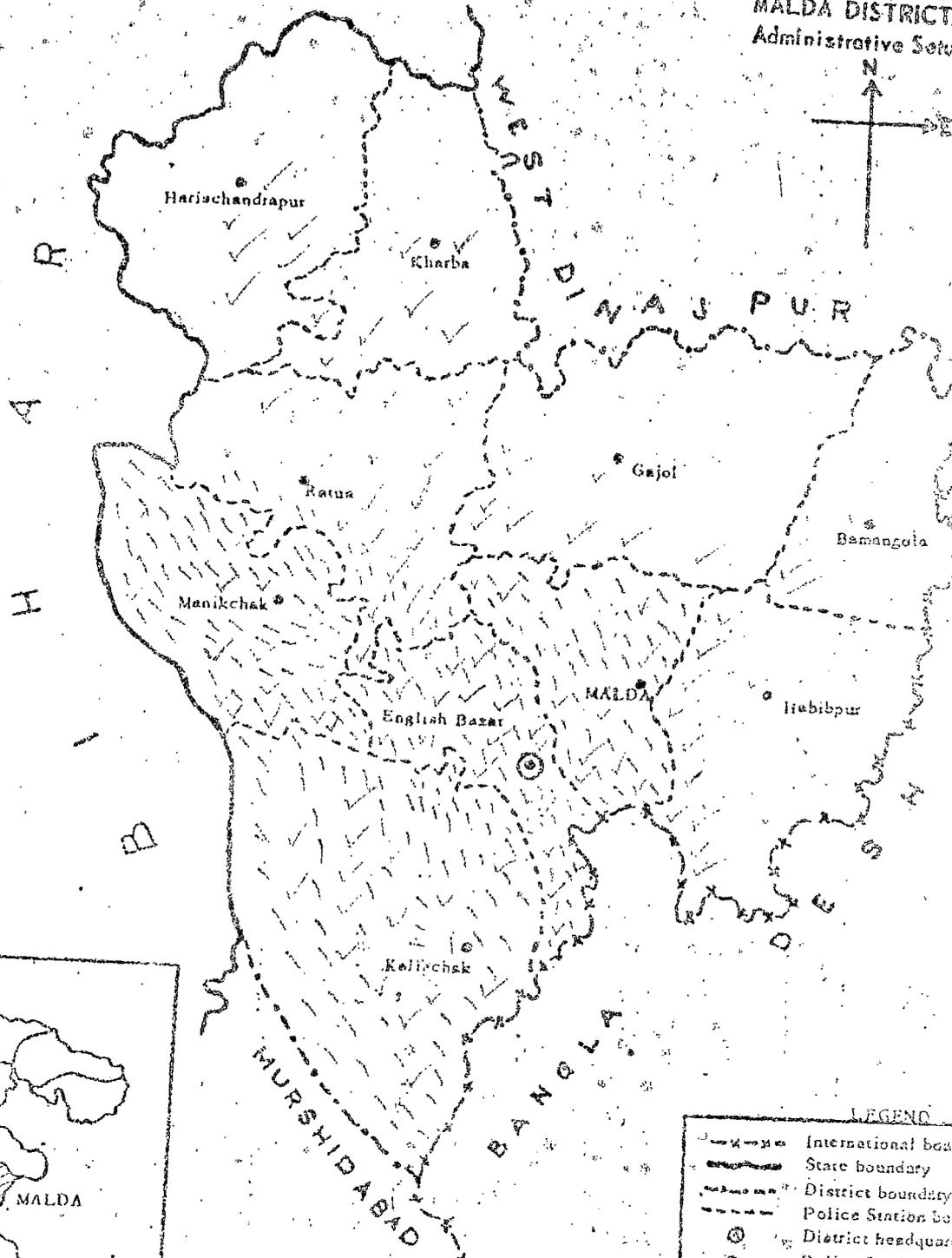
with a view to putting the sericulture industry on a better footing several comprehensive plans and programme have been undertaken under the Intensive Sericulture Development Project Scheme.

At present there are about 34250 rearers' family in this district spreading over 394 villages within 'Diara' tract. Presently sericulture provides wholetime and part time employment to about 1,60,000 persons in the rural, suburban and urban areas of Malda district. Moreover, about 1,30,000 people are indirectly engaged in the ancillary trade of sericulture in the district (4).

Opening of the Farakka road and rail bridge has established easier transport link of Malda to the Southern parts of West Bengal. Its impact is being felt on mango trade and cocoon and raw silk trade in the district. Because, the main economic activity of the district is based on two important things viz. mango and sericulture. But <sup>not</sup> only do man's activities changes but also his environment changes, we find differences in the economic activities of the ancient people of Malda with that of the present people of Malda. Malda district at present, both politically and economically, is quite different from what it was prior to independence of India.

4. "A glimps into the sericultural industry of Malda district" (a bulletin published from Sericulture Department, Malda, Government of West Bengal in 1985.)

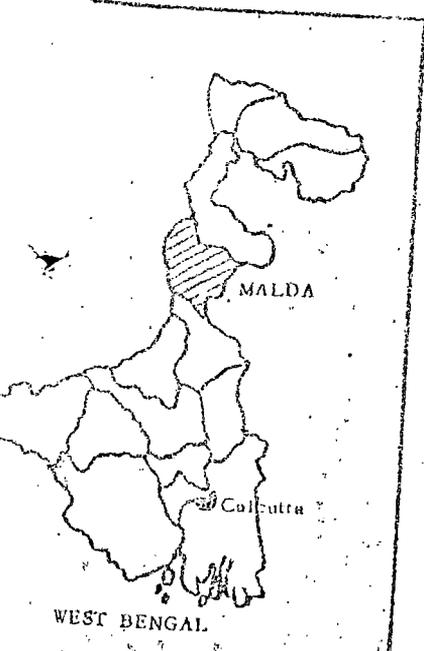
**SKETCH MAP OF MALDA DISTRICT**  
Administrative Setup



**LEGEND**

- International boundary
- State boundary
- District boundary
- Police Station boundary
- District headquarters
- Police Station

*M. A. ...*  
*V. V. ...*  
*Manjya ...*



WEST BENGAL

The district was partitioned in 1947 with the partition of India and at the present, the district consists of the following police stations:

1. Englishbazar (Head quarter of Malda district within Englishbazar Municipal area)
2. Kaliachak.
3. Malda with Old Malda Municipal area.
4. Habibpur.
5. Bamongola.
6. Ratua.
7. Manikchak.
8. Kharba.
9. Harischandrapur &
10. Gazole.

(Sketch Map of Malda district is enclosed)

Chapai Nawabganj (including Nawabganj Municipal area) Bholahat, Gamestapur, Nachol (Rohanpur) and Sibganj (Kanshat) Police Station areas of Malda district became the part of Rajshahi district of the then East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) as per the decision of Sir Radcliffe in 1947 (5)

With the increase of the growth of population of Malda the economic activities associated with sericulture and the production and trade of mango at Malda have been accelerated. Trend of population growth of Malda district has been shown in Table No.1.1.

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5. Sengupta, J. C. - West Bengal District Gazetteers - Malda, published in 1969.

In 1971 density of population was 434 persons per Square Kilometre. But in 1981 density of population was 548 persons per Square Kilometre at Malda which may be considered, as the present density of population of Malda district.

From Table No.-1.1, it is clear that the rate of growth of population was not so excessive upto 1951. But suddenly in 1961 a rapid increase in the rate of population of Malda is experienced.

Although in 1947 the land area of Malda district had been curtailed after partition but population has been increasing here day by day. The rate of population has been increased presumably for the arrival of refugees from the five Thanas of the then Malda district which are now attached to Rajshahi district in Bangladesh.

Moreover, huge number of families came here to settle from other districts also of the then East Pakistan. Some people also came here from adjacent Purnea district of Bihar Province.

In 1961 the total population of Malda district stood at 12,21,923. It is seen that <sup>there was</sup> comparatively more increase of population in the rural sector than in the urban sector. The slow progress in Urbanisation appears to be entirely due to non establishment of organised modern industries in the district.

The number of towns has not increased since 1947. English Bazar or Malda town and Old Malda are still the two towns of the district. Of course, the town of Englishbazar has prospered while the Old Malda has remained stagnant. The town of Englishbazar being the head quarter town of the district, naturally it attracts a greater number of immigrants than the town of Old Malda after partition in 1947.

From the Table No. 1.2 it is clear that the Police Station of Kaliachak is the most populous area in the district. After that comes the position of Englishbazar P.S. area which covers the district Headquarter town and Englishbazar Municipal area (6).

In 1947 Silk industry of Malda district suffered to a greater extent as the Sibganj and Bholahat P.S. areas, which were very famous for sericulture of Malda district, were included to Nawabganj Subdivision under Rajshahi district.

Of course, there was no effect of the partition of the district on the production of Mango. Mango production remained unchanged.

Although sericulture suffered to a certain extent in 1947 due to partition of the district but such loss was recouped within 1961 by extending sericultural activities within the existing sericultural villages of the district.

6. Sengupta, J.C. - West Bengal District Gazetteers, Malda, 1969.

Note : - 1 mile = 1.61 km.

Sericulture and mango orchard have been developed to a greater extent in the most populous areas of the district. From table No. 1.2 it is evident that Kaliachak is the most populous police station area of Malda district. Then comes the position of Englishbazar area. That is why Malda sericulture is mainly localised in Kaliachak and Englishbazar police station areas. Moreover, Englishbazar is by far the best mango growing police station area of Malda district.

So, inspite of having some soil and climatic favourable conditions in the 'Diara' tract of the district as a whole, only Kaliachak leads the sericulture and Englishbazar leads the production of Mango due to maximum density of population.

Thus density of population has been considered as an important factor for the growth and development of sericulture and main orchard crop of Malda.

However, Malda district, which is at present the southern most district of North Bengal, adjacent to the Western Border of Bangladesh, has its past glory of economic development due to the flourishing conditions of sericulture and mango orchards.

So, sericulture and main orchard crop i.e., mango of Malda have got real contribution for the development of the district. But without knowing the background of this district, its economic advancement and the impact of sericulture and mango

on such advancement, we cannot understand the exact footing of the economic development of Malda district since independence.

The background of sericulture and mango orchard crop of this area has been discussed in the context of other economic activities of the people of Malda district area in the next Chapter.

The economic development of Malda district presently stands on the background of sericulture and the production of mango of Malda. This background constitutes an important basis for understanding the origin and nature of sericulture and main orchard crop i.e., mango of Malda and its impact on economic development of the district

### 1.2. Objectives of studies:

My whole work has been designed to find out answers of the following specific questions:-

1. What is the background of Silk culture and mango trade of Malda?
2. What is the nature and general problems of sericulture and mango orchard of Malda?
3. What is the position of mango trade and sericulture of Malda after independence vis-a-vis before independence?

4. What is the nature and problem of financing sericulture and mango trade of Malda?
5. What is the relationship of labourers with the proprietors of mango orchard and sericulture?
6. What is the linkage between mango production, sericultures and agriculture at Malda?
7. What is the industrial prospect of sericulture and orchard crop of Malda?
8. What are the reasons for the location of sericulture and mango orchard at particular areas of Malda district?

All the above questions will be solved through field investigation and detailed analysis of the available data relating to sericulture and main fruit orchard of Malda district and the hypothesis is to be tested as to whether the climatic conditions of the district is congenial for Silk - culture and mango-trade; the relationship between the owners and labourers is congenial for the growth and development of such industries and the financing problem is duly tackled by the Government and other financial agencies. Some tentative suggestions to be put forward for the improvement of such industries viz., sericulture and mango.

### I.3. Plan of the work:

With a view to showing the importance of sericulture and orchard crop, i.e., mango on the economic development of Malda district since independence I have divided my work in the following Chapters:

- I. Introduction, showing the importance of sericulture and main orchard crop in Malda's economy.
- II. Background of sericulture and mango trade of Malda before independence.
- III. Location for sericulture and orchard crop in Malda district, showing the reasons for concentration in particular areas.
- IV. Nature of sericulture and orchard crop i.e., mango since independence:
  - (a) Growth and development.
  - (b) Capital invested.
  - (c) Workers employed.
  - (d) Other related issues.
  - (e) Comparative Study.
- V. Problems of financing sericulture and mango trade of Malda.

VI. Industrial relationship.

- (a) Infra structure facilities of the industries.
- (b) Growth Centres.
- (c) Owners - labourers relationship in sericulture and in mango orchard.

VII. Linkage between mango production, sericulture and agriculture.

VIII. Role of Government in developing sericulture and in extending mango orchard and processing of its fruits in Malda.

IX. Conclusion, which will show the total impact of sericulture and the main orchard crop, i.e., mango on the economic development of Malda district, and some tentative suggestions for development of sericulture and mango orchard of the district.

I.4. Methodology and Limitations:-

Because my work is mainly based on field survey and different published works accompanied by many valuable informations obtained from different concerned departments, Government of West Bengal and Government of India and other Research Institutes, the work can be taken neither as purely theoretical nor an empherical one but to be taken as an UN approach. That is to say that the thesis is based on an

admixture of both theoretical and numerical approach. At the time of field survey both participation sampling and selective sampling is followed.

I sent questionnaires to almost 1000 sericulturists of different villages of Malda district which were accompanied by several follow-up systems, I received only 50 filled-in questionnaire signed by the sericulturists. The 50 questionnaires may not be the representative of all the sericulturists but I could not find any other alternative. Even most of the sericulturists who returned the filled in forms denied to give full statement of their sericultural activities due to some unknown fear and anxiety.

Similarly, when I visited the house of any owner of mango orchard personally, he showed me his orchard gladly but denied to give the particulars, probably due to some unknown fear. For these reasons visiting personally some mango orchards and mulberry orchards and depending on those available questionnaire I had to make my analysis.

As the metropolitan city Calcutta is 200 miles i.e., 322 Km away from Malda, I could not bring valuable books from different libraries in Calcutta always. Although the library of North Bengal University is an well equipped Library but I could not find out substantial number of authentic books on sericulture of Malda and mango orchard

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NORTH BENGAL  
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of Malda. Moreover, the District Library of Malda is the only library where I could not find any book required for my thesis work. So I had to depend mainly on those published works which I could collect from different educationists.

I met different officials of the Departments of sericulture and agriculture of Malda district to get different reports on sericultural activities of Malda district and I got encouraging response from them.

Similarly, I also contacted the office of the Malda mango merchants' Association for collecting different periodicals and reports on mango trade of Malda district but I could not get sufficient number of authentic reports or journals regarding sericulture or mango orchard of Malda district from that office, but I got some valuable informations regarding mango trade of the district. Again I talked to many officials of the Department of Sericulture, Malda, Government of West Bengal and collected various required informations regarding Malda Sericulture.

#### 1.5. An overview of literature & research gap:-

West Bengal District Gazetteers - Malda, written by J. C. Sengupta, published in 1969 is the only book where I found Historical and Geographical description of Malda District. In that book some descriptions have been given about Sericulture and mango orchard of Malda district. But those are purely descrip-

tive. No discussion has been made about the impact of sericulture and mango orchard on the economic development of the district.

The Bengal District Gazetteers - Malda written by J. E. Lambourn Esqr. I.C.S. is similarly historical and Geographical descriptive in nature and have touched sericulture ~~and~~ ~~and~~ and mango orchard of Malda District to a little extent but no analytical view has been expressed.

In the book of "Final report on the Survey and settlement operations in the district of Malda 1928-35" written by M. O. Carter, some description of Sericulture on Cottage scale basis of undivided Malda district is given.

In "Banijye Bengali - Ekal O Sekal" written by Subas Samajder, the author has described Silk-trade of ancient Bengal including Malda district area. He did not analysis the sericulture and its impact on economic development of Malda district.

In "A Statistical account of Bengal (District of Malda, Rangpur and Dinajpur) written by W. W. Hunter some statistical informations of sericultural activities of undivided Malda district is given only. No detailed discussions have been made.

The report "Industrial Potential of Malda district" had been published in 1973 by Small Industry Extension Training Institute, Government of India Society, Hyderabad and the

Directorate of Cottage and Small Scale Industries, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta jointly. In that report discussions have been made regarding the Industrial potential of Malda district as a whole including Sericulture and Mango processing industries of Malda district. But as this report has been prepared by Government officials, for all probability it might be biased.

Some bulletins as collected by me from different research Centres contain general discussions on sericulture and mango cultivation in India but not in particular of Malda district.

The Extension Bulletin No. 9 on Mango Cultivation published by the Central Mango research Station - Lucknow (U.P.) under the Indian Institute of Horticulture Research gives general description about the cultivation of mango.

The bulletin No. 25 published by the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore writes about pest control in Horticultural crops and discusses the different diseases of different fruits including mango and their remedies only.

Similarly the Folder No. 12 and extension Folder No. 3 published by the Central Mango Research Station, Lucknow - U.P. under Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Bangalore deals with 'Mango fruit flies and their control and control of Powdery Mildew in Mango' respectively. All discussions in those

bulletins have been made in general.

Different reports and bulletins on Sericulture Industry have been collected. Out of these, one important bulletin is "A glimpse into the Sericulture Industry of Malda district" published by the Directorate of Sericulture, Malda. In this bulletin only a brief description has been given about the present position of sericulture of Malda district. No analysis has been made about the impact of sericulture on the economy of Malda district.

Similarly a bulletin published by Malda Mango Merchants' Association which describes the total acreage of mango orchard and volume of mango trade of Malda district. Detailed discussions about the problems and its solutions have not been made. Moreover that bulletin does not contain any analysis of the impact of mango trade on the economic development of Malda district. "Gour O Pandua" written by Kalipada Lahiri in Bengali has been published from Malda. He has written the past history of Malda district area with its economic glory based on sericulture. But there is nothing about the present position and prospect of sericulture of Malda in that book.

In "Gour-er-Ithihas" written by Rajani Kanta Chakravorty and in "Sheikh Suvodaya" written by Rajani Kanta Chakravorty and Haridass Palit economic annals of the then Malda

district area have been discussed only.

In the economic Geography written by G. G. Darkenwald and C. F. Jones published by Macmillan Company, New York the authors gave a good description about the sericultural development in some districts of Japan. But there is no comparative study of the sericulture of some districts of Japan with that of any other district of developing countries, not to speak of Malda in India.

I have had the opportunity of study the Annual Action Plans of 1981 and 1982 under District credit Plan 1980-82 for Malda district, West Bengal, published by U.B.I., Research Division, Calcutta and District Credit Plan 1980-82, Malda district, West Bengal, published by U.B.I., Development Division, Planning and Development Department, Calcutta. But all these contain only the statistical informations of different commercial banks of this district. I have also collected some bulletins published by Central Silk Board for the periods 1980-1985. But all these bulletins contain only statistical reports of Indian Sericulture as a whole.

Moreover, there appeared some published articles in different Bengali and English Journals regarding sericulture and mango trade of Malda district which I have gone through. These types of articles are also found in different periodicals

and Magazines of different educational Institutions.

But there is no sufficient analytical discussions in those published articles and books regarding sericulture and mango orchards of Malda district and their impact on the economy of the district.

That is why my intension is to fill up the research gap through the detailed investigation and analysis of the data and information relating to sericulture and mango cultivation of Malda to show their impact on the economic development of the district since independence.

Table - 1.1Trend of population growth of Malda district.

Year	Total population	Rural	Urban
1901	6,03,649	5,86,239	17,410
1911	6,98,547	6,80,475	18,072
1921	6,86,174	6,68,972	17,202
1931	7,20,440	7,00,754	19,686
1941	8,44,315	8,17,137	27,178
1951	9,37,580	9,02,419	35,161
1961	12,21,923	11,71,138	50,785
1971	16,12,657	15,44,631	68,026
1981	20,35,009	19,37,814	97,195

Source : Census Reports, Government of India.

Table - 1.2

Density of population in each of the Police Station.

Name of the Police Stations.	Number of persons per square mile.
Englishbazar	1,335
Kaliachak	1,370
Malda (Old Malda)	600
Habibpur	571
Ratua	988
Manikchak	808
Kharba	967
Harishchandrapur	912
Gazole	477
Bamongola	601

Source : Census Reports, Government of India.