

C H A P T E R - III

LOCATION OF SILK CULTURE AND ORCHARD CROP IN
MALDA DISTRICT.

CHAPTER - III

LOCATION OF SILK CULTURE AND ORCHARD CROP IN MALDA DISTRICT.

III.1. Factors:-

Climatic conditions, reeling facilities and availability of storage establishment are the important factors necessary for sericulture. Malda is proud of having these factors of sericulture.

Sericulture and silk production is one of the most intensive types of farming. It involves the production of a feed crop, i.e., mulberry leaves, and tending the lowliest of domestic animals, the silk worm, which turns out the finest of all clothing fibres. It is chiefly, a commercial type of farming because the fibre is sent away from the farm to be made into clothing.

The silk worm used in commercial production of silk is found, in general, only where the mulberry grows, but it does not follow that wherever the mulberry thrives there are silk worms also, for many factors limit sericulture, the most important being the availability of cheap skilled labour.

III.2. Distribution:-

In 1985 there are about 34,250 rearers family in this district spreading over 394 villages under 14 blocks and

raising 4 commercial crops annually viz., Jaistha, Bhaduri, Agrahayani and Chaitra consuming about 4 crores disease free layings.

Sericulture Department in this district is equipped with one district organisation for rural works and four seed production farms for supplying eggs of high yielding variety to the rearers covering about 98 acres for providing disease free layings and mulberry cuttings of high yielding variety to the Sericulturists. The important sericultural nurseries are:- Piasbari Central Nursery located at Piasbari (Gour), Sodallahpur Graft Nursery located at Sodallahpur, Krishnapur graft Nursery located at Krishnapur and Amrity Graft Nursery located at Amrity, Ramchandrapur Graft Nursery located at Ramchandrapur.

Besides these, there is 100 Basins State Filature at Madhughat, Malda for producing high grade silk yarn by reeling high yielding Cocoons ~~fm~~ of exotic races.

Moreover, to ensure success of crops and to produce uniform quality of Cocoons 34 young silk worm rearing centres have been set up in different tracts to supply silk worms after rearing under the "Intensive sericulture Development project" scheme. (47)

There is also the peddi silk reeling Institute at Malda town for imparting training in modern method of reeling

47. A glimpse into the sericulture industry of Malda district (a bulletin issued by the Deputy Directorate of Sericulture, Malda in 1985).

to the 15 trainees taken annually with the object of manning different reeling establishment with trained personnels. There is also arrangement for testing silk at the Institute.

The State Government has also a Silk Reelers' Organisation consisting of a number of Master-Reelers and four Co-operative Societies, to provide an assured market with a reasonable margin of profit for Charka raw silk. The Societies have also started hand-spinning of silk waste, thus providing part-time work to a number of women in Malda.

III.3. Silk Co-operative Societies:-

At present there are 12 Silk Co-operative Societies at Malda. Four of these societies are of silk reelers, four of rearers, three of silk waste spinners and one of weavers. The Silk Reelers' Co-operative Societies are located at:- (i) Sujapur, (ii) Jalalpur, (iii) Barhampur, (iv) Selimpur⁽⁴⁸⁾.

Out of these societies, the Sujapur Resham Katuni Samabaya Sangha Ltd., is in the most flourishing condition. The activity of the society consists of :-

- I. Advancing temporary loan to artisan - members for rearing Cocoons.
- II. Guaranteeing living wages to the artisan-members.
- III. Utilising the Silk waste, obtained as bye-products, for spun yarn and arrange for spare time - occupation of the family members of the artisans.

Four Rearers' Co-operative Societies are located at Jalapur, Bakharpur, Dariapur and Mohadipur. These Societies extend help to rearer - members by i) advancing money in times of necessity, ii) fixing the rate of Cocoons on yield basis, iii) giving reward to good rearers.

The three Silk Waste Spinners' Co-operative Societies are located at

I) Sujapur, (II) Ramkrishna Palli, (III) Aihoramkrishna Palli Spinners' Co-operative Society and Aihor Spinners' Co-operative Society and these have been formed by refugee women from the then East Pakistan, who were trained in Silk Waste Spinning by the Directorate of Sericulture, Malda. There are 125 Silk looms in Malda District. Besides this, there is one Silk Mill owned by R.I.C.

III.4. Thana-wise Location:-

(49)
Thana-wise location of important Sericultural villages of Malda .

Police Station Area	Names of Sericultural villages.
Kaliachak Kaliachak Block.	Alinagar, Nabinagar, Sujapur, Balshnabnagar Jalalpur, Birhampur, Kaliachak, Madhughat, Kadamtola.

Contd.....

Englishbazar - Englishbazar Block.	Amrity, Piasbari, Mohadipur, Milky, Jote, Arapur, Sodullahpur, Kotwali, Chandipur, Amjantola, Nagharla.
Manikchak - Manikchak Block.	Mathrapur, Manikchak, Kalindri, Lalbathani.
Old Malda - Old Malda Block.	Bachemari, Mangalbari, Sahapur, Old Malda, Muchia.

III.5. Reasons for the location of sericulture:-

Topography of this district offers ample opportunity for carrying out mulberry cultivation and Silk worm successfully. Being located in the Indogangetic plain, nature of the soil is mostly alluvial and loamy. Average rainfall annually recorded here is 1078 M.M. and the temperature ranges between 9°C and 41°C.

P. H. Value of the soil is 6.5. These factors are considered very conducive to the healthy growth of silk industry.

For this reason Malda enjoys the unique distinction of being the leading sericultural district of West Bengal accounting for more than 65% of sericulture of this State.

The land area of this district which is just on

the Southern side of the river Kalindri is known as 'Diara'. 'Diara area is the most fertile and populous area of the district. The 'Diara' are consists of Manikchak, Kaliachak and Englishbazar police stations. Here mulberry is grown. Because the soil of this area is of light variety with a sandy appearance. Due to this favourable soil condition huge number of mulberry plots are seen throughout Kaliachak, Manikchak and Englishbazar Police Station areas of Malda district.

Moreover, huge number of cheap skilled labourers are available in this area. For these reasons maximum number of sericulture villages are located in this area of Malda district.

Other areas of the district are not so much famous for sericulture because of soil condition. Kharba, Ratua and Harischandrapur are located within 'Tal' area of the district. The area of land situated just north side of Kalindri river is known as 'Tal'. 'Tal' means the land which floods deeply as the rivers rise, and drains meandering streams into Swamps.

Moreover, Old Malda, Gazole, Habibpur and Bamongola are located within 'Barind' region. This day the area to the east of the Mahananda is called the 'Barind'. Its characteristic feature is relatively high land of the red clay of the old alluvium. This area is also not so suitable for sericulture.

So, 'Diara' area consisting of Kaliachak,

Mankkchak and Englishbazar is by far the best area for the production of Mulberry trees and tending the silk worms in order to produce maximum Cocoons (50). Many families in Kaliachak and Englishbazar police station rear the silk worms at their own initiative in their own houses. They fetch mulberry leaves from the adjacent Mulberry gardens at Market rate to feed the silk worms. In this way tending the lowliest animals they produce Cocoons in large quantity and sell those to the Merchants who prepare silk yarn from those Cocoons.

In these areas separate groups of people are engaged in different activities of sericulture.

Firstly, a group of people only cultivate mulberry trees for seeing leaves as food of the silk worm. Secondly, a group of people only engaged in rearing silk worms from the disease free eggs available from the Sericulture Department, Malda, Government of West Bengal with a view to preparing Cocoons. Thirdly, another group of people are engaged in spinning silk yarn from the Cocoons for selling those to the weavers. Finally a group of people known as weavers prepare different varieties of clothes from those silk yarn.

So, Having favourable climatic conditions and availability of skilled labourers Malda district is famous for sericulture.

III.6. Location of orchard crop in Malda District:-

The main orchard crop of Malda is mango. Other orchard crops like Jack-fruits, Guavas, Bananas are available at Malda district. But these have got very negligible role on the economy of this district. Whereas mango has a vital role on the economic development of the district. That is why as regards orchard crops of this district, the name of mango comes first. Malda is famous for its mango production since the period of Sultans and Nawabs.

Distribution:-

It is extensively grown over the whole district with the exception of 'Barind' tract and the 'Diara' strip along the Ganges. The area covered by mango orchard is about 15 square miles. 44,000 acres of land in a compact area were under mango cultivation in 1968. In 1985 it has been raised to 51,000 acres. Normally an acre contains 18 to 20 numbers of mango trees. Besides Englishbazar, Ratua, Kallachak, Manikchak, Old Malda, Marischandra-pur and Kharba Police Station areas are also famous for the production of mangoes

III.7. Thanewise break-up of mango orchard:-

With a view to understanding the detailed distribution of mango orchards thana-wise break-up of mango orchard has been shown in Table No. 3.1. (51)

Nowhere in India such a vast area suitable for

mango plantation exists because of its advantageous climatic and soil condition. About 6.4% of the net cropped area of the district is under mango cultivation. The average orchard area under mangoes in West Bengal is estimated to be 69,960 Hectors forming about 61.2% of the total estimated area under all fruits. Malda itself accounts for about 25% of the total area under fruit and produces about 30% of the State's production. (52)

Plantation of mango tree is a long waiting and highly expensive job and requires a sincere care from the very beginning of its plantation. It requires 20 years for the plant to become properly matured for bearing fruit.

At present several mango orchards of matured trees are seen in 'Jahara Tale', area, Mohadipur area, Gour area, Amrity area, Sodullahpur, Jadupur (Gabgachi) Arapur, Kotwali, Mimaisarai, Milki and Sovanagar area under Englishbazar Police Station and this Police Station has contained maximum acreage of land with Mango orchard as shown in Table No. 3.1

Mathurapur, Manikchak, Kalindri areas of Manikchak Police Station have also a number of big mango orchard.

Sujapur, Kaliachak, Jalalpur and other villages of Kaliachak Police Station area are proud of having big mango orchards.

Some big mango orchards are also seen in some

places in between Noorpurghat and Ratus under Ratus Police Station.

However, the most thickly grown mango orchards lie on fairly high land above the flood level along the banks of Mahananda, Kalindri and Ganges.

III.8. Reasons for its location:-

Temperature, rainfall, wind velocity are the main climatic factors which influence the growth and fruiting of mangoes.

It can be grown on a commercial scale in areas from sea-level to an attitude of 600 M.

The mango is very well adapted to tropical and sub-tropical climate. It can stand severe frost, especially when the tree is young. High temperature alone is not so injurious to the mango but if accompanied by low humidity and high winds, it affects the trees adversely.

Most of the mango varieties thrive in places with good rainfall (75 to 375 cm per annum) and dry season. The distribution of rainfall is more important than its amount. Rain during flowering is, however, detrimental to the crop as it interferes with pollination. Dry period before blossoming is conducive to profuse flowering. Rain during fruitening time is good but heavy rain causes damage to ripening fruits. Strong winds and cyclones during the fruitening season can play havoc and blow away the crop

completely.

Mango is grown on different types of soils, such as lateritic, alluvial, sandy loam and sandy soils. The loamy alluvial, well drained and deep soils with high percentage of humus are most ideal for mango cultivation.

In 'Diara' tract of Malda district maximum number of mango orchard are seen because of the existence of Alluvium sandy soils. This area includes Englishbazar, Kaliachak and Manikchak Police Station. Other mango growing areas - Kharba, Harischandrapur and Ratua are in 'Tel' tract of the district. Here soil mainly is of dark colour, that is deep soils with high percentage of humus. That is why several large mango orchards are seen in Ratua Police Station of Malda district.

Besides these, old Malda Police Station is also famous for mango orchard. This Police Station is within 'Barind' area of the district. Here land is high and the soil is of the old alluvium. Some mango orchards are also seen in Gazole, Bahibpur and Bamangola Police Station within 'Barind' tract of the district. For this reason we may declare that mango is extensively grown over the whole district with the exception of some small areas of Barind tract and some small areas of the Diara strip along the Ganges. Because the extremely sandy, shallow, rocky, water-logged and alkaline or calcareous soils are not suitable for mango cultivation and the 'Diara' strip

along the Ganges is excessively sandy and some areas of 'Barind' are rocky, mango is not grown in such areas.

Location of Mango processing factories at Malda:-

As a seasonal activity green mangoes are sliced and preserved in salt on a cottage scale basis. This activity is found at Malda in Englishbazar and Old Malda area during mango season. These sliced preserved mangoes find market in Calcutta and Bombay for further processing.

A second order processing of mango slices includes the preparation of mango pickles, chutney, etc.

From ripe mangoes different things like mango juice, syrup and nector are prepared.

There are 6 factories now in Malda which manufacture pickles, chutney, Jelly, Jam etc. from mango of Malda for internal markets. Out of 6 factories only one factory has recently been switched over to canning line though in a very smaller scale. Of course, after independence one mango processing factory under Co-operative Society was established at Old Malda. It earned good name and fame for its mango products. But no private investor dared to invest money for the establishment of mango processing industries at Malda before 1965 due to ignorance regarding the prospective market of Malda Mango product, both inside and outside the country. But after establishment of the Malda Mango processing Co-operative Society Ltd.,

in 1958, mango fruits had to be preserved chemically and various kinds of canned products were prepared and some of which were exported out of the district (53). Canned mango and various mango products were successfully exported to Australia, Japan, Singapore and United Kingdom. The value of export to Australia was Rs. 10,000 and that to the United Kingdom was Rs. 36,340. Orders were being received for greater quantities from all these countries and enquiries were also being received from other countries like West Germany and the U.S.S.R.

But unfortunately the Malda Mango Processing Co-operative Society Ltd., is now closed for unknown reason.

However, in the meantime different private investors have started different mango processing factories, of course, on a small and medium scale. These are mainly situated in between Mangalbari and Old Malda Municipal area of Malda district (54).

Balia Nawabganj Hat of Old Malda Police Station and Netaji Market of Englishbazar Police Station famous for the wholesale trades of mango during Mango Seasons.

There is a Malda Mango Merchants' Association at Englishbazar. The office of this association is situated on Netaji Subash Road just by the side of Malda Head Post Office near Chittaranjan Market. This association looks to the interest of the mango traders of Malda district. Malda district is situated between the latitudes $25^{\circ} 32'$ and $24^{\circ} 40'$ in the northern hemisphere

53. Sengupta, J.C. : District Gazetteers, Malda

54. Field Survey.

and is situated entirely to the North of the tropic of Cancer. On the otherhand this district is situated between the longitudes $88^{\circ} 28$ and $87^{\circ} 45$.

The river Mahananda, flowing north to south roughly divides the district into two equal parts, corresponding by local tradition to the old boundary line of the 'Rahr' and 'Barendra'.

This day the country to the East of the Mahananda is called the Barind. Its characteristics feature is relatively high land of the red clay soil of the old alluvium. West of the Mahananda the country is again divided into two well defined parts by the Kalindri river flowing West to East from the Ganges. The area of land is situated just on the north side of Kalindri river, is known as 'Tal'.

The land which is just on the Southern side of the river Kalindri is known as 'Diara'. 'Diara' area is the most fertile and populous area of the district. It is seemed through-out by old courses of the Ganges, and the city of Gour once stood on that bank.

Thus the area of district may be divided into three Zones:

1. the Barind,
2. the Tal,
3. the Diara.

Barind:-

Barind area consists of Bamongola, Old Malda, Habibpur and Gazole Police Station of the district and famous for the production of huge quantity of winter rice.

Tal:-

The tal area approximately covers Barischandrapur, Kharba and Ratus Police Station between the Mahananda in the North and the Kalindri in the South. Principal agricultural crops of this area are Jute and Paddy. Several large mango orchards are also seen in Ratua. Here soil is mainly of dark colour.

Diara:-

The Diara area consists of Manikchak, Kaliachak, and Englishbazar Police Stations. Here mango gardens are common and some mulberry is grown. The soil of this area is of a light variety with a sandy appearance. Wheat, Barley, Mustard and Aus Paddy and Sugar cane are grown in this area. This region of Malda district is rich in mango orchards and sericulture. So, location of sericulture and mango orchard can be seen mainly in Englishbazar, Kaliachak and Manikchak Police Station.

III.9. Production of silk and mango on the basis of region:-

The spinning of silk (not in Mills) is carried on almost exclusively in the Police Station of Kaliachak within 'Diara' region.

With a view to improving the quality of mulberry leaves and raw silk and reduce cost of production three graft Nurseries and a young silk rearing centre at Jalalpur have been established. Jalalpur is also within Kaliachak Police Station of Malda district.

Out of three Zones of Malda, viz., 'Barind', 'Tal' and 'Diara' the most suitable area for sericulture is 'Diara' region. Because for the cultivation of mulberry trees, the sandy alluvium soil of Diara region is most suitable. And the mulberry leaves are required for feeding silk worms. Moreover, for rearing silk worms and for the production of Cocoons huge skilled labourers are required which are sufficiently available in 'Diara' region. People of this area are hereditarily trained in sericulture. 'Diara' region consists of Kaliachak, Englishbazar and Manikchak Police Stations. Out of these three Thanas Kaliachak is mostly populous area. That is why the entire activities of sericulture starting from mulberry cultivation and ending at spinning of silk are easily done by huge number of local skilled labourers of Kaliachak. Although there are number of villages engaged in sericulture in Englishbazar and Manikchak of Diara region but Kaliachak stands first in producing Cocoons and raw silk throughout Malda district.

'Diara' region of Malda district and Kaliachak Police Station of the region in particular has favourable factors; such as availability of huge mulberry leaves from mulberry orchards and

huge cheap skilled labours, for the location of sericulture. For the same reasons the Sujapur Resham Katuni Samabaya Sangha Ltd., is in the most flourishing condition.

On the otherhand, for the growth of Mango trees sandy alluvium soil is most suitable and this is available in 'Diara' region. That is why huge mango orchards are seen throughout 'Diara' region of Malda district with the exception of some strips just by the side of the Ganges where the proportion of sand in the soil is excessive.

For these reasons, although the entire Malda district is proud of having mango orchards but 'Diara' region leads the other regions of the district regarding the location of maximum number of mango orchards, so to say mango trees of several varieties. Englishbazar Police Station of Diara region is by far the largest and best mango growing thana of Malda district.

In order to know the growth and development of sericulture and mango orchard the nature of these two must be analysed and that has been done in the next Chapter.

Table - 3.1.Thana-wise break-up of Mango orchard.

Name of the Police Station.	Area in acre.
1. Englishbazar	19,339.72
2. Ratua.	8,919.37
3. Kaliachak	6,311.35
4. Manikchak	5,459.59
5. Malda (Old Malda)	3,218.41
6. Harischandrapur	2,249.47
7. Kharba	2,217.16
8. Gazole	926.56
9. Habibpur	304.44
10. Bamongola	204.31
Total:	49,150.38