

KRISHNA RAJ FELLOWSHIP RESEARCH PROPOSAL

1.1 Objective of the Study

How does the existing Bamboo policy affect the livelihood options and commercial prospects of the poor especially the tribal population in North East India?

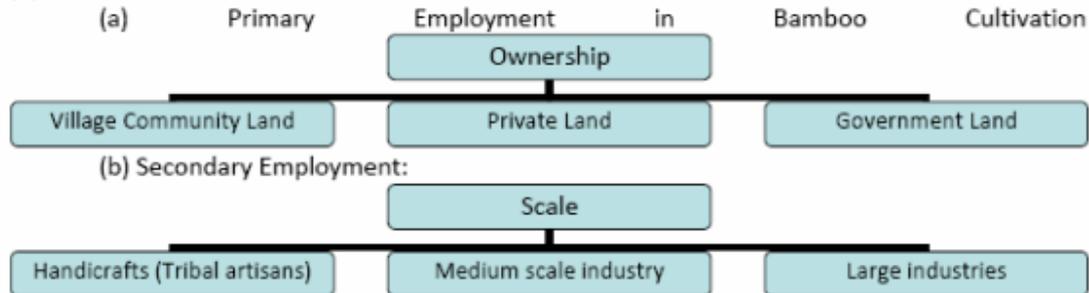
With more than 1500 uses the Bamboo is rightly considered a miracle plant in many cultures across the world. India is fortunate to have the largest area under Bamboo cultivation and the second largest pool of genetic pool of Bamboo species after China. From being termed as 'Poor Man's timber' to being called 'Green Gold' (Planning Commission Report, 2004) the perception of Bamboo, scientifically recognized as a versatile grass, has undergone a drastic change. What however has not changed is the fact that in the Indian Forests Act (1927) which is the primary legislation on Forests in India, Bamboo is classified as a tree! This inaccurate classification has brought Bamboo under the purview of myriad forest laws and pervasive state controls. While world over Bamboo is being discovered as a viable industrial substitute for wood, a source food security for the poor and an eco-friendly source of energy, India still grapples with outdated laws and state institutions which are in no way designed to promote the use of Bamboo or allow private parties to explore its potential. The gravity of the problem today however lies in the fact that nor have we failed to tap this resource for the modern economy, the traditional users of Bamboo viz. the poor people and the tribal artisans have been adversely affected due to this policy.

The affects of this policy are acutely felt in the North East region of our country where 66% of the growing stock of Bamboo in India is found. Not only does the North East have a rich tradition of Bamboo crafts, post independence, many Paper Mills which obtained Bamboo from *the* forest department were established here. While much that one hears about the North East is to do with the political instability of the region, there is very little attention paid to the real issues of development which underly the many challenges the North East faces. Infact the Mizo insurgency Movement was a direct result of the central government paying little heed to *the* Mizo people's traditional knowledge of the phenomena of Bamboo flowering which culminated in a famine in the region. We believe that the Bamboo policy has received inadequate attention given its immense socio-economic, political and even environmental implications especially for the North East.

1.2 Scope of Work

As enlisted in our hypothesis our focus areas are- Livelihood options and commercial prospects.

(1) Livelihood:



- (i) Recognition of Customary Rights to land,
- (ii) Extent of dependence on Bamboo based work
- (iii) Monthly income from farming, daily wages in bamboo mills, handicrafts (Selling price, retained profits)
- (iv) Differential impact on women involved in Small scale and cottage industries
- (v) Impact of Bamboo flowering on livelihoods and food security
- (vi) Alternative Livelihood options

(2) Commercial Prospects:

For any commercial enterprise there are 3 main issues-

- (i) Raw material: sustainability and stability of supply, quantity and quality of Bamboo, competitive pricing
- (ii) Other inputs: (physical, human and financial): Technology, credit facilities, Skill level and training
- (iii) Market Linkages: (Producer and Consumer awareness, export prospects, interlinked contracts)
- (iv) Support mechanisms: Infrastructure, credit facilities, tax incentives, Regulatory framework

1.3 Approach and Methodology

Our research will be conducted in 2 stages

(i) Desk Work:

General review of the Forest Policy, Bamboo policy and Property laws in Arunachal Pradesh through study of published official documents and other related reports with reference to the above in the state.

- Study of role-played by the state and the other support organizations.
- Literature related to the tribal culture, handicrafts
- Bamboo procurement and consumption patterns
- Bamboo industry

(ii) Primary Data Collection: Since the objective of our research is to evaluate the impact of the existing policy and institutions we shall not be determining the magnitude of employment or profitability of the Bamboo plantations or industry. We will investigate the policies through 4 carefully selected and intensively studied cases.

Type of Survey Site	Methodology	Prospective Sites
Bamboo plantation on private land	Owner's Questionnaire, Worker's Questionnaire, Questionnaire	East Siang district, Pasi trader's Ghat, Arunachal Pradesh
Bamboo plantation on Village/ land	Interview with Community with Village committee	Puilo Village, Champhai JFM District, Mizoram
Tribal community involved in Bamboo handicrafts	Household Survey, Questionnaire, Interview with officials, TERIFAC officials	Artisan Apatani tribe, Ziro district, Arunachal Pradesh & Mizo Tribe, Mizoram
Industrial involved in	Unit Owner's Questionnaire, Worker's	APIL, Namsai district,

1.4 Plan of Action

Desk Work (9 May- 21 May 2010)

Fieldwork (20 May- 15 June '10)

Mizoram:

22 May Delhi- Guwahati

23 May Guwahati- Champhai district

24- 31 May Fieldwork in Dulte Village, Champai District

Arunachal Pradesh

2 June Guwahati- Pasi Ghat

3-5 June Pasi Ghat- Fieldwork in private plantation

6- 8 June Pasi Ghat- Namsai (Survey in APIL factory)

9-10 June Namsai- Itanagar- Ziro

11- 13 June: Fieldwork among Apatani Tribe

14-15 June: Ziro- Guwahati- Delhi

1.5 TEAM:

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