

**Synopsis of
Ph.D Thesis**

on

**SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD GENERATION
THROUGH PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF SABAI
GRASS AND CRAFTS
IN PASCHIM MEDINIPUR DISTRICT, WEST BENGAL**

By

KOUSIK PAIK

Department of Economics with Rural Development

VIDYASAGAR UNIVERSITY

Midnapore, West Bengal, INDIA-721102

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Eulaliopsis binata, a tufted perennial natural fibre is commonly known as *Sabai* or *Babui* grass in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha and as *Bhabbar* grass in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal. It is grown extensively on marginal and sub-marginal rainfed uplands as a commercial grass crop which is principally used for pulp making in paper industry and the rest for processing into rope and crafts. In West Bengal it is abundantly cultivated in Paschim Medinipur, Bankura and Purulia Districts along the flanks of Chotonagpur plateau. The indigenous and backward caste community groups of these areas depend on this grass for their livelihood by converting this grass fibre into rope, plait and variety of crafts belonging to items of decorative, utility and fashion goods. The rope and grass are converted into various value added craft items like chair, doormats, hats, carpets, flower vass, tea containers, bottle holders, sofa set, litter bins, wall mats besides bags of different varieties and styles.

In West Bengal Paschim Medinipur stands on top in terms of coverage of area, production and also marketing. It covers 21,000 ha of marginal and waste land under Sabai cultivation; it grows 38,000 tons of Sabai per year of which 12.17% are converted into ropes, crafts and other processed materials. The district supports 48,000 households involved in cultivation of grass, rope making and processing of crafts. The three Blocks of Paschim Medinipur where Sabai cultivation, rope twisting and crafts making mainly concentrate are Nayagram, Gopiballavpur-I and Binpur-II. These three Blocks share 85% of the district's total Sabai growing area, and involve 81% of the working families in its cultivation, rope making and craft processing. These three Blocks are taken in this research as Study Area where 42% of the households depend fully or partially on Sabai based activities for their livelihood.

The present study probes into the problems of Sabai cultivation in the Background of the Socio-economic conditions of the Sabai farmers and agro-technical attainments besides impact of marketing on production and productivity of crop raising. It also studies the constraints of production and productivity rise in respect to rope making and craft production. Problems and prospects of craft making have been studied in detail and analysis of productivity and profitability of rope and craft making has been given a through economic and management treatment for understanding the basic reasons of low earning level in these processing activities. The role of technology development and transfer has been studied and based of the lacuna existed there, the necessary steps of improvement of the status have been

recommended. The role of institutions involved in production, processing and marketing of the crop and its processed products like rope, plait and variety craft items has been brought out from the analysis and necessary suggestions for improving their roles for effective services have been prescribed in this study. For this analysis, the existing marketing structure, marketing mix and market channel effectiveness have been dealt with in detail. With improved marketing system the value addition and entrepreneurs' net earning could be improved to attain sustainable level of livelihood by the workers of the Sabai based enterprises. For this, different on-going and proposed schemes of Government are suggested with necessary investment-income analysis to indicate the possible paths of livelihood improvement in this sector of the rural economy. Based on the above treatments on the subject a set of recommendations are put forward for faster progress of the Sabai economy vis-à-vis better livelihood to the Sabai cultivators and processors.

This research should not be taken as the point of culmination in the path of development of Sabai economy. It indicates many other directions of research for future researchers to follow. Such directions may be on development of agro-technology for productivity rise and quality improvement of the fibre, technology for production, quality and productivity rise in rope and craft production, identification of new and improved marketing system and channels, methods of reduction of ergonomic adverses through technology modification etc.