

## STATUS OF MUGA CULTURE AND LIVELIHOOD IN ASSAM

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### ABSTRACT

Muga culture represents one of the oldest and most significant traditional agro-based industries of Assam. Muga silk, produced from the semi-domesticated silkworm *Antheraea assamensis* Helfer, is globally renowned for its natural golden colour, durability, and lustre. The present study examines the historical evolution, traditional practices, present status, and livelihood significance of Muga culture in Assam. The study highlights the role of Muga culture in generating rural employment, preserving indigenous knowledge systems, and strengthening the socio-economic condition of rural households, particularly women. Historical analysis reveals that Muga culture flourished during the Ahom period and continued through the colonial and post-independence eras despite several challenges. The study further explores the traditional techniques associated with host plant cultivation, seed production, rearing, reeling, and weaving practices followed by rural communities. Statistical data indicate that Muga culture continues to be concentrated mainly in districts such as Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Golaghat, Sivsagar, Goalpara and Jorhat. However, environmental degradation, climate change, pest incidence, declining host plant availability, and shortage of skilled labour pose serious threats to the sustainability of the industry. The paper concludes that Muga culture remains an important component of Assam's cultural heritage and rural economy and requires integrated policy support, technological intervention, and market development for sustainable growth.

**KEYWORDS:** Muga Silk, Sericulture, Livelihood, Traditional Knowledge, Rural Economy, Women Empowerment

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