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Ridip Ranjan Saharia

Department of Extension
Education, Biswanath College of
Agriculture, AAU, Biswanath
Chariali, Assam, India

Bikash CH Das

Department of Extension
Education, Biswanath College of
Agriculture, AAU, Biswanath
Chariali, Assam, India

Haridra Sharma

Department of Extension
Education, Biswanath College of
Agriculture, AAU, Biswanath
Chariali, Assam, India

Muzaharul Islam

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Assam
Agricultural University,
Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon, Assam,
India

Sabita Das

Department of Agricultural
Extension, Uttarbanga Krishi
Biswavidyalaya, West Bengal,
India

Corresponding Author:

Muzaharul Islam

Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Assam
Agricultural University,
Kokrajhar, Gossaigaon, Assam,
India

Assessment of socio-economic correlates for analyzing the management orientation of muga silk entrepreneurs in Assam

**Ridip Ranjan Saharia, Bikash CH Das, Haridra Sharma, Muzaharul Islam
and Sabita Das**

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Abstract

Assam silk holds a distinctive position in the global sericulture map, given that all of India's muga silk output originates exclusively from Assam. Muga silk is highly valued by the elite class due to its intricate production method, making it the priciest among all silk varieties. Efficient Management is one of the crucial factors for growth and development of an enterprise. The present study was carried out at four blocks namely Sualkuchi, Rani, Rampur and Boko of Kamrup district under the state Assam with a view to assess the socio-economic correlates for characterizing the management orientation of muga silk entrepreneurs. The hundred muga silk entrepreneurs were selected through convenient sampling technique for final data collection. The data were collected with the help of structured interview schedule prepared for the study and statistical tool like coefficient of correlation used for drawing conclusion. The study revealed that Muga silk entrepreneurs in this region are smoothly managing their enterprise with a handsome profit. The formal education experience and training exposure of the entrepreneurs significantly contributes to the efficient use and management of existing resources in the enterprise. The medium level mass media exposure and social participation helps in increasing the management orientation of the muga silk entrepreneurs. In proprietorship oriented organizational pattern proprietors enjoy full and better control management. The study also revealed that higher the annual income of an entrepreneur leads to better management of his enterprise because he can effectively invest the money for utilization of different resources, hiring of skill labour and promote mechanization for increase the production level of his enterprise. Moreover source of finance and type of business found significantly and positively correlated with the management orientation.

Keywords: Management orientation, muga, entrepreneurs, Assam

Introduction

Muga silk is a variety of silk that has a beautiful golden colour and a shiny texture. It is produced specifically in the region of Assam in India and is known for its durability and resilience. The fabric made from this fibre is extremely durable, which creates a strong demand for it in both domestic and global markets^[1]. The silk is often used to create traditional Indian garments, such as sarees, and is highly valued for its beauty and quality. The triangular prism-like shape of silk's cross-sectional structure gives it a striking and magnificent appearance. This ability of silk fabric to refract the light at various angles causes a vivid exhibition of colours^[2]. In 2007, Muga Silk was given the "Geographical Indication" recognition under the legal framework of the Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999, and in 2014 it was granted the GI logo to maintain its trademark rights. This helps with the production and commercialization of this unique silk worldwide^[3]. Muga silk is highly demanded in Assam, but due to the shortage of silk yarn production, weavers are mixing it with local tasar silk, Chinese tasar silk or tasar-like polyester silk. This ultimately leads to a decline in the quality of authentic silk used for commercial purposes^[4]. Global warming, climate change, more tea growers in Upper Assam, excessive use of pesticides, and the decline of muga silkworm rearing and traditional muga plantations in Assam have caused a significant decrease in the production of muga yarn and fabric in comparison to other types of silk in India^[5].

Currently, the dominance of low-cost fabrics in the textile market is posing a major concern for owners of loom. Assam silk fabrics are sold under this name, but consumers often get deceived by dishonest traders. The sale of counterfeit products labelled as Assam silk must be prohibited to ensure the seamless operation of the natural silk handloom industry^[6]. According to a report in The Assam Tribune, the weavers and small-scale handloom entrepreneurs of Sualkuchi, also known as the "Silk centre of Assam," faced numerous challenges and showed remarkable resilience in 2013. Due to such large number of issues, the states Silk business is steadily getting worse. Efficient Management is one of the crucial factor for growth and development of an enterprise. Therefore, it is essential to comprehend the issues and future possibilities of these businesses, for which it is important to investigate the phenomena in many contexts especially management of muga silk entrepreneurs point of view.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Kamrup district of Assam, which belongs to the Lower Brahmaputra Valley Zone of Assam. The convenient sampling technique was adopted for the present study. Kamrup district of Assam was selected purposively because the production of silk handloom weaving in Assam is centred in Kamrup district, accounting for approximately 70 percent of the state's silk post-cocoon activities. Silk activities after cocooning happen in Sualkuchi and Bamundi sectors of Kamrup which are important Silk Weaving clusters in North-East India. This cluster plays a central role in the trade and production of silk products. Approximately 75% of Muga cocoons and over 50% of Eri cocoons produced in Northeast India are concentrated in Kamrup district of Assam for trading, production, weaving, and marketing of silk cloth^[7]. Sualkuchi recognized by UNDP as the "Manchester of the East", is located in the Kamrup district of Assam is Asia's largest silk weaving cluster⁵. The Kamrup district of Assam is consist of 14 blocks and out of which Sualkuchi, Rani, Rampur and Boko were selected purposively for the study because muga silk weaving is highly concentrated in these areas. Among the selected 4 blocks highest muga silk entrepreneurs are concentrated in Sualkuchi followed by Rani, Rampur and Boko. Hence, following a convenient sampling from Sualkuchi (50), Rani (20), Rampur (15) and Boko (15) were selected for the study. The profile variables selected for this study were age, family type, education level, annual income, organizational pattern, experience, source of finance, mass media exposure, social participation, type of business and exposure to training. Meanwhile, the descriptive variables selected for the study were management orientation. Management orientation is operationalized in terms of managing their enterprise activities such as production, planning, and marketing to earn income. The overall management orientation was measured on the basis of mean of the obtained scores. The data were collected with the help of structured schedule prepared for the study after the pilot survey through the process of interview.

Results and Discussion

Personal and Socio - economic characteristics profile of muga silk entrepreneurs

Based on the data presented in the table 1 it is concluded that majority of respondents (87.00%) belonged to the middle-aged group having age between 36 to 50 years followed by the old age group (7.00%) above 60years age. Among the different level of education most of the respondents (52.00%) had completed Higher Secondary, followed by 32.00 per cent of respondents belonged to High School category, 11 per cent of respondents who had completed graduation. Majority of the respondents (70.00%) belonged to nuclear family, while the remaining 30.00 per cent belonged to joint family. As far as source of the finance was concerned majority (60.00%) of entrepreneurs did not go for outside source of finance or in other words had to put in their own finance for establishing their enterprise. While 40.00 percent went to banks and other financial institutions for financing their units and none chose to borrow finance from friends and relatives. Significant numbers of respondent i.e. (93.00%) was set up their enterprise individually without any other people's involvement. The rest 7.00 percent had started their enterprise on a partnership basis. Regarding training exposure, majority (68.00%) of the respondents engaged in entrepreneurial activities had medium level of training exposure, followed by low (21.00%) level of training exposure. Only small percentages (11.00%) were from high training exposure. In the study area all the muga silk entrepreneurs having good experience ranging from 20years to 25 years above. Out of total entrepreneurs 36.00 percent respondent had a experience of 25 years and above in the muga silk enterprise. Few respondents i.e., 23.00 percent found an experience ranging from 20-21 years. More than half (53.00%) of entrepreneur had medium mass media exposure followed by high (31.00%) and low (16.00%) level of mass media exposure. A good number of entrepreneurs (60.00%) were associated with one or more than one organization of that locality and 40.00 percent entrepreneurs were not found association with any other organization. Maximum percentage of the entrepreneurs (76.00%) was found under small enterprise category and 17.00 percent had micro level. Most of the respondents (75.00%) belonged to the medium-income group (income ranging between Rs.413835.54 to Rs. 644725.01 annually) followed by respondents' 13 percent in the lower income group (Up to Rs 413834.54). Very few numbers of entrepreneurs (12.00%) belonged to higher income group where total annual income ranged more than Rs.644726.01.

Management orientation of mugs silk entrepreneurs

Management is crucial for the success of any enterprise. In an enterprise good management helps in achieving targeted goals, optimum utilization of resources, reduces cost. In the present study management orientation was a combination of various functions of planning, production and marketing and expressed in low medium and high categories.

Table 1: Personal and Socio-economic attributes of the respondents

Sl. No.	Socio-economic characteristics	Category	Frequency (Percentage)
1	Age	Young	6(6.00)
		Middle aged	87(87.00)
		Old aged	7(7.00)
2	Education level	Illiterate	0(0.00)
		Up to primary	0(0.00)
		Up to middle	5(5.00)
		High school	32(32.00)
		Higher secondary	52(52.00)
		Graduation and above	11(11.00)
3	Family type	Nuclear family	70(70.00)
		Joint family	30(30.00)
4	Source of finance	Banks and other financial institutions	40(40.00)
		Friends and relatives	0(0.00)
		Own financial resources	60(60.00)
5	Organizational pattern	Proprietorship	93(93.00)
		Partnership	7(7.00)
		Private company	0(0.00)
		Public company	0(0.00)
		Co-operation	0(0.00)
6	Exposure to training	Low exposure to training	21(21.00)
		Medium exposure to training	68(68.00)
		High exposure to training	11(11.00)
7	Entrepreneurship experience	Short term	23(23.00)
		Medium term	41(41.00)
		Long term	36(36.00)
8	Mass media exposure	Low	16(16.00)
		Medium	53(53.00)
		High	31(31.00)
9	Type of business	Micro	17(17.00)
		Small	76(76.00)
		Medium	7(7.00)
10	Social participation	Social participation	40(40.00)
		No social participation	60(60.00)
11	Net Annual Income	Low-income group	13(13.00)
		Medium income group	75(75.00)
		High income group	12(12.00)

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to their overall management orientation

Category	Score range	Number	Percentage
Low	Up to 55	12	12.00
Medium	56-59	55	55.00
High	Above 60	33	33.00
Total		100	100.00

From table.2 it is evident that, majority (55.00%) of entrepreneurs had overall medium management orientation followed by 33.00 per cent and 12.00 per cent of the respondents high and low overall management orientation respectively. All the three categories i.e. planning orientation, production orientation and management orientation found medium category so overall management orientation is also medium category.

The table.3 presents the coefficient of correlation of management orientation with eleven causal variables. Out of 11 variables education level, experience, training exposure, mass media exposure, annual income, social participation, type of business, organizational pattern and source of finance were positively and significantly associated with the management orientation towards the enterprise. The variables age and family type had no significant relationship with the management orientation of muga silk entrepreneurs.

Table 3: Correlation coefficient of management orientation of the muga silk handloom entrepreneurs along with eleven causal variables.

Sl. No.	Independent Variable	Correlation coefficient (r)	't' Value
1	Age	0.014 (NS)	0.142
2	Education Level	0.340**	3.579
3	Family type	0.114(NS)	1.137
4	Experience	0.690**	9.451
5	Training Exposure	0.395**	4.259
6	Mass media exposure	0.624**	7.912
7	Annual income	0.486**	5.514
8	Social participation	0.344**	3.638
9	Type of business	0.431**	4.729
10	Organizational pattern	0.439**	4.842
11	Source of finance	0.551**	6.538

*Significant at 5% level of significant

** Significant at 1% level Of significant

Discussion

A perusal of the table 3 shows that the variable education($r=0.340$) is positively and significantly correlated with the management orientation towards muga silk enterprise. Majority of entrepreneurs have good educational background. Educated respondents are more likely to have more interest in acquiring the knowledge about muga silk enterprise. Good education helps in effective decision making process. Moreover

higher education improves not only the knowledge of an individual but sharing of knowledge and information is also more which helped in better management of the enterprise.

The variable experience of an entrepreneur plays a crucial role in the success of any business. Maximum numbers of entrepreneurs were associated with this particular enterprise more than 20 years at the same time we got a reflection that a long term entrepreneurial experience is not only helps in entrepreneurial performance but also a key factor in the growth and development of the enterprise. As a result variable experience ($r=0.690$) had positive and highly significant relationship with management orientation towards the enterprise. The study reveals that a large majority (68.00%) of the respondents engaged in entrepreneurial activities had medium level of training exposure. Training programmes related to this enterprise had improved the capacity of the entrepreneurs in terms of production of quality product and their marketing. That is why the variable training exposure ($r=0.395$) is positively and significantly correlated with the management orientation towards muga silk enterprise.

More than half of entrepreneurs had medium mass media exposure followed by high level. The finding reveals that majority of the muga silk entrepreneurs keep updated their knowledge related to their enterprise through booklets published by Handloom and Textile board, handloom related websites, articles published in the newspaper and expert discussion telecasted in television. Mass media played an important role not only upgrading the knowledge or information but also allowed entrepreneurs to get the word out about their business venture and starts making the brand known to people. Hence the variable mass media exposure ($r=0.624$) is found positively and highly significant correlation with management orientation towards the enterprise.

Several research findings revealed that increased annual income is responsible for efficient management of an enterprise. The study reveals that higher the annual income of an entrepreneur leads to better management of his enterprise because he can effectively invest the money for utilization of different resources, hiring of skill labour and promote mechanization for increase the production level of his enterprise. As a result annual income ($r=0.486$) is significantly and positively associated with management orientation towards the enterprise.

Participation of entrepreneurs had been seen in different organization such as Panchayat, co-operative society, farmer organization and others. The study reveals that majority of the respondents were associated with one or more than one organization. Social participation can also create value for both society and business. Social participation improves communication between customers, might reach a wider audience, customer loyalty and improves service delivery. Therefore, the variable social participation ($r=0.344$) is positively and significantly correlated with management orientation.

The variable type of business in the study reflects the micro, small and medium categories. Majority of the entrepreneurs found under small category enterprise which gives flexibility in works, less capital investment, less number of labour and ultimately better management practices are possible with the enterprise. Hence the variable type of business ($r=0.431$) is positively and significantly associated with the management orientation.

Under organizational pattern highest score had been assigned to proprietorship that is more than 90 percent. Proprietorship oriented organizational pattern proprietors enjoy full control and profits from the enterprise. Moreover proprietorship offers a

high degree of flexibility in operation and management. As a result organizational pattern ($r=0.4390$) is positively and significantly correlated with management orientation towards enterprise.

The variable source of finance has been classified into several financial sources but the higher score is assigned to own source of finance for enterprise. The study revealed that own source of finance gives much more control than other finance option. Moreover own finance gives freedom to run your enterprise your way and compelled to prioritize your business expenses and prevent wasteful spending. Due to the fact the variable source of finance ($r=0.551$) is found positive and highly significant with management orientation.

Conclusion

Muga silk holds immense significance in the cultural heritage of the state. Kamrup district, both in its urban and rural areas, stands out as a prominent hub for the production and trading of Silk in India. Entrepreneurs dealing with muga silk enterprise are earning handsome amount from their enterprise and this enterprise was found to be very lucrative as well as economically viable for that particular region. Proper planning was considered an important factor in management orientation by most of the respondents and they felt it was necessary to follow their own strategy to run their business. The production and marketing of Muga silk enterprise were impacted by the poor planning of a few entrepreneurs. Majority of the muga silk entrepreneurs were performing production related operations, such as timely planning and investment, use of labours and raw materials (raw silk) without compromising the quality but there is room for improvement in terms of boosting production and meeting customer demands. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents were concerned about market and customer centered approach had given top priority which is reflected in their income from this enterprise. It can be interpreted that the Muga silk entrepreneurs in this region are smoothly managing their enterprise with a handsome profit but more emphasis is needed in sound management covering all the aspects for better growth of this enterprise. To make this industry robust and sustainable enough these factors should be taken into consideration and accordingly need some effort for growth and expansion of this industry.

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