



CANE INDUSTRY AS A TRADITION: A CASE STUDY OF GUMUTHA- GAON OF NAGAON DISTRICT, ASSAM

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ABSTRACT: Assam is a home of cane and bamboo. There is suitable climatic condition, soil quality for growth of cane. There are 14 species of cane grows in cane brakes in forests of Assam. There are 480 units undertaking cane and bamboo works in Assam. Here, cane and bamboo items represent their ethnicity and also their tradition. They have unique and elegant styles which are liked by everyone. It is one kind of cottage industry popular in each part of Assam. This industry also shows labor intensive in nature and no mechanical device used. As a populous state of India, Assam is facing the biggest unemployment problem. So this kind of industry gives opportunity for create part time as well as full time job. And hence it boosts the economic condition of their people. Cane handicraft items are significant in our society specially in rural areas. The making of bamboo and cane product is the most universal of all crafts practiced by many artisans throughout the state. In this paper elaborate that how cane industry help for livelihood of the people of Gumutha gaon, their challenges and different items made of cane. In this area, all the family member, both male and female, take part in it. However, the male members are predominate.

Index Terms- Cane industry, economy, handicraft items, employment, livelihood

Introduction

Assam as well as North East India is famous for forest resources. Assam is well known for 'jungle desh'. The reason behind that the climatic condition and their soil quality. Cane and Bamboo is another significant plant growth in Assam with their natural condition without human's aid. There are 14 species of cane grows in Assam. Calamus Flagellum, Calamus Floribunadus, Calamus Latifolius are found widely distributed throughout Assam. From ancient time people of Assam directly or indirectly related with cane and bamboo products.

Though the people of Assam eventually rich in tradional crafts, the cane crafts is most significant one. They make different items and based on these items people make their economic based for their livelihood. Since

canes are easily grown in Assam specially on the bank of river so these are easily available for general people also. People make their necessary items like flower vase, chair, table, lamp stand, door, baby jhula, tray, dining chair, almira, mats, hats, fencing, jewelery etc.

In the twenty first century, the state's cane goods are mostly created at the cottage industry level, as there has been no change in this domain. Assam has highest concentration of cane resource. There are two types of cane –

1) *Jeng bet* 2) *Jati bet*

OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ To examine about how cane industry impact upon livelihood of the people.
- ❖ To identify about challenges of the cane industry.
- ❖ To study about cane items.

METHODOLOGY:

Secondary data sources: In the first stage, necessary books have been collected and the secondary data requires are collect from different research publications, articles, magazines etc.

Primary data sources: The next stage of the study begins with selected village primary data collection

ANALYSIS :

This part of this paper totally depend on primary data sources. These are-

3.1 Income generation from different craft product:

	Sofa	Flower stand	Jhula	Hanging lamp	Others
Items produced/month	10	20	10	40	15
No of days working/month	30	30	30	30	30
Market price/product	18000.00	2000.00	5000.00	1800.00	
Profit / items	2000.00	800.00	1500.00	750.00	100

Source: Calculated by author based on primary data

From the table 1 show that an artisan can earn maximum profit from sofa which is 2000 per sofa. 2nd highest profit earn from jhula which is 1500/-. Similarly, from hanging lamp and flower stand earn is 750/- and 800/- respectively. And remaining others like tray, japi, flower tab etc gives an average 100 Rs profit per items.

3.2. Profit analysis from the year 2016-2023:

Year	Profit earn/ year (in Rs)
2016- 2017	20,32,000
2017- 2018	20,80,000
2018-2019	18,35,000
2019-2020	5,31,000
2020-2021	2,12,000
2021-2022	2,99,000
2022-2023	8,85,000
2023-2024	10,35,000

Source: calculated by author based on primary data

From the table 2 show that the trend of profit earn is gradually decreases. Before pandemic situation, the earning profit from this industry is well. But due to covid19 pandemic the size of profit earn is decreases and they reduces their working team member. Even their impact falls upon post pandemic year also.

3.3 Material used in cane industry and their coast (per unit):

Materials	Sofa	Chair	Lamp	Others
Wage	1500	800	400	150
Chemicals	200	70	50	30
GAS	300	180	110	70
OTHERS	1000	300	30	25

Source: calculated by author based on primary data

From the above table 3 show that the wage of sofa making is high i.e 1500. Similarly, the wage of chair, lamp is 800,400 respectively. Again, here others include like tray, flower tab, japi etc haing their wage is 150 (on an average). Chemicals like cannon, trijet etc are used. Chemicals used per sofa is 200, which is highest coast as compared to other items. Similarly, the cost of chemicals in chair, lamp and others are 70,50 and 30. Again, the cost of gas is more in making sofa which is 300 Rs. Per sofa. And the cost of gas by making chair, lamp and others are 300, 180,70. In others include, pin, gum like favicol etc are used for making items. They are used for making sofa is 1000, for making chair is 300, for making lamp is 30 and others is 25.

CHALLENGES:

❖ At present time, Cane industry facing some problem due to shortage of raw cane. Now, most of the cane deliver to the out of Assam. Cane owner want to sell raw cane to outer craftsman due to gain maximum profit.

- ❖ Cane furniture can not cope up with modern well settings wooden furniture , since wooden furniture having different cutting as we can want, their burnish quality, lamination facility etc.
- ❖ The price of any product is increases day by day. Therefore craftsman can not survive only making these items. They face some threaten condition for their livelihood.
- ❖ Due to low prices of fiber and plastic chair, table, people more prefer to buying these items.
- ❖ Low durability is another challenge for cane items.
- ❖ As compare to durability cane items having more price.
- ❖ At present, people are mostly interested in service sector. So people cannot interested on this crafting activities. Therefore shortage of labour is another factor for declining cane industry.
- ❖ Since cane basically grown on the bank of river, but for reducing flood people make concrete embankment. Ultimately cane resources lost their natural habitat.
- ❖ Lack of promotion is another challenge for grabbing market for cane industry.
- ❖ Lack of distribution channel across the state. It is due to gradual decreases of demand among people.

CANE ITEMS AND THEIR MAKING PROCEDURE:

The artisans are making items such as baskets, sofa, flower stand, hanging lamp, jhula, tray, flower vases, almirah, japi, fishing trap, mats etc. Some picture of these items are given below-



Source - the author

PROCEDURE:

Firstly, the qualities canes are collected from jungle and they moved to workplaces. After that these are cleaned and the stem is made smooth.

Secondly, the cane is sun dried for 4-5 days and these are cut into sizes as per requirement.

Thirdly, it is burnt and gives their shape as per needs of the artisans. The *jeng bet* is used to manufactured the frame for the product and the *jati bet* is used for weaving and binding purposes.

Fourthly, after finishing the work of the product, they dried up with colour and sun dried.



FINDINGS:

- Though Assam has rich in cane resource, but the valuable cane collect from Arunachal, Nagaland etc.
- Maximum people of this region is involve in cane industry. All the family member are partially or fully engaged in their household industry.
- Modern cane goods are becoming decorative items for many household of the people.
- This craft of cane requires different tools like cutting machines, kerosene burner, *hatori*, *botali*, *dawetc*.
- This craft does not require large capital, large technology, large machine.
- This is one of the subsidiary occupation of most of the people. They enjoy their leisure time for making this items.
- There are a few shop present in front of their home. But some people also have shop in Nagaon town. They permanently deliver their products at Nagaon town, Golaghat, Morigaon, Guwahati. But also some order come rest of the part of Assam as well as Arunachal, Nagaland, Meghalaya.
- They pray ROKHYA- KALI and every year they celebrate puja for safe their business in *Sot* month.

CONCLUSION: Modern cane based items are becoming decorative items for many people, even in urban areas also. These items are eco-friendly. It can be pursued as a subsidiary carrier by everyone or anyone in a family. For growing these craft industries advertisement is another closer step. Online retail trading is another step in 21st century since many people shopping their needs by e- commerce apps. Business intelligence must be built in this sector to promote the cane industry. Besides of these, Assam government should be taken some steps like schemes through which craftsman gets fund or subsidy facility or other government opportunity etc, exhibition even outside of Assam or international level, museum near the tourist place etc create people's interest towards the cane industry.

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