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## **Tradition to triumph: Jiten Patri's Sericulture Success Story**

Nikita Mandal and Parameswaranaik J\*

*Central Sericultural Research and Training Institute, Berhampore-742101, West Bengal, India*

*\*Corresponding Author: [drpnaik.csb@gmail.com](mailto:drpnaik.csb@gmail.com)*

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sericulture, the practice of rearing silkworms for silk production, involves cultivating mulberry plants and managing various stages of silkworm growth to produce silk cocoons. This eco-friendly industry supports rural livelihoods and sustainable development, globally and also in India. Various states of India are involved in silk production along with northeastern region, especially Assam, plays a significant role in this growth, with farmers like Jiten Patri of Jorhat achieving success through dedication and support from state and central sericulture authorities. Jiten expanded his operations from small-scale rearing to managing a Chawki Rearing Centre and rearing over 1000 Disease-Free Layings (DFLs) in each crop. His success has inspired others, showcasing sericulture's potential for economic growth and personal advancement.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sericulture is the practice of rearing silkworms for the production of silk, it includes all the stages from egg rearing to reeling of threads, and it also includes mori culture, which is the cultivation of mulberry plants to feed the monophagous *Bombyx mori*. The process includes the care of silkworm eggs, feeding the larvae, and harvesting the silk cocoons spun by the mature larvae. These cocoons are then processed to extract silk fibers, which are spun into silk threads. This Eco-friendly business not only provides sustainable development but also provides employment opportunities, especially in rural areas. Farmers, especially small-scale ones, benefit from the multiple stages of production. Silk has been historically valuable in many cultures and is still in high demand for traditional clothing and ceremonies.

Assam, in particular, is renowned for its mixed sericulture, where farmers rear two to three types of silkworms simultaneously. It is also home to the famous Muga silk, which is native to the state. Many families in Assam use sericulture as a major source of income. In the serene district of Jorhat, Assam, a farmer named **Jiten Patri** has made remarkable strides in the silk industry, successfully carrying forward the rich tradition of sericulture.



Jiten Patri

Age: 37 years

### First step towards the journey

His journey into the world of silk began at the age of 8 when he saw his parents meticulously rearing silkworms and weaving silk fabrics. It was a family trade, and even as a boy, Jiten found himself drawn to the work. Between school and studies, he would assist his father. His father used to weave clothes for his family for any festival and, also sold them within their village.

After completing high school, Jiten consciously decided to dedicate himself to sericulture. His first significant step was rearing 100 DFLs, provided by the Directorate of Sericulture. At the first attempt, he produced 45 kg cocoon from 100 DFLs. This initial help began a long and fruitful partnership with local sericulture authorities, with their support, Jiten received essential materials like plastic trays, Chandraki, and free eggs. Which enabled him to expand his operations.



Fig: a. Jiten Rearing room



Fig. b. Reeling room

### Current Scenario

Over the years, Jiten's sericulture venture flourished. He constructed a separate rearing house of 800 dimensions and a reeling room, ensuring a more organized and efficient process. Not content with simply rearing eggs, Jiten also operates the Chawki Rearing Centre in assisting with the State sericulture department, where he raises silkworms to the 2nd instar stage and sells them to local farmers at a subsidized rate of ₹1 per 2 DFLs (₹50 per 100 DFLs). Not only that Jiten and his wife

weave cloths from the silk thread and sell it to big city markets. This additional income stream has allowed him to further grow his business.

Jiten's dedication has not gone unnoticed. He has received substantial support from both the state and central departments. He also attended several training programs conducted by the Central Silk Board, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India in collaboration with the State Sericulture Department in the Jorhat district of Assam. That has honed his skills and expanded his knowledge. Today, he is not only rearing 400 DFLs for his possession but is also involved in larger operations, managing more than 1000 DFLs crop-wise in CRCs. His cocoons are sold across Assam and neighboring states like Nagaland, contributing significantly to the silk economy of the region.

Beyond sericulture, Jiten has diversified his income by opening a stationery shop and purchasing a four-wheeler, which he uses for part-time driving. His hard work and entrepreneurial spirit have allowed him to build a comfortable and happy life for himself, his wife, and their young son.

### **Future plans**

Jiten now aspires to become a certified chawki rearer and aims to rear more DFLs and expand his sales across India. He also wanted to establish a large reeling house, where he could employ all females to empower local women and support sericulture.

Looking ahead, Jiten hopes that his son will one day follow in his footsteps and continue the family tradition of sericulture. His success story serves as an inspiration to others in the community, demonstrating the immense potential of sericulture as a sustainable and profitable livelihood.