

# Socio-Cultural Dimensions of Sericulture: A Village Study from Andhra Pradesh

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## Abstract

*The concept of 'Sustainable Development' has emerged as one of the important paradigms in the academia in post liberalisation era. It covers insights from politics, economics, history and most importantly social and cultural aspects. All these aspects are important in a given circumstance. But, social and cultural insights have greater role to play in the present context particularly in the changing global order. From this perspective, the paper attempts to examine the significance of socio-cultural factors in sustainable development.*

*The sericulture has been one of the agro-based economic activities being encouraged by the government and NGO's. This is supposed to have greater potential for sustainable development in the country. After Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh stands second in this farming venture. That is the reason why there is a need to study, the role of socio-cultural factors in sericulture and how the villagers, perceive sericulture. In this backdrop, the present paper focuses on the socio-cultural dimensions in the practice of sericulture in Kotha Indlu village in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh, India. It seeks to find the role of education among sericulturists and how it has made the activity to keep sustaining in spite of certain difficulties and how the practice of sericulture has transformed the village, became a model to neighboring villages by sustaining the sericulture activity. The lessons drawn would be of great significance for promotion of sustainable development.*

## Introduction:

In any kind of developmental activity, socio-cultural factors play a significant role. In this regard, the adopters of innovations attempt to interpret them in tune with their socio-cultural settings. They had to fit into their cultural matrix only then, would the innovations obtain a survival chance. It is in this context sericulture, an innovation for economic upliftment of rural masses has been examined in this paper. The roles of socio-cultural factors such as Education, occupational differences, caste and community differences, religion, beliefs, etc., which influence the practice of sericulture or aiding or effecting sericulture are looked into.

These socio-cultural factors are studied in terms of plantation methods, and rearing practices and in relation to marketing, social composition, shift from agriculture to sericulture. Further, the study also attempts to understand the change that has come about in the value system, inter-caste relations, notions of purity and pollution, etc through the practice of sericulture.

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The present paper is an outcome of a study, which is carried out in the Kotha Indlu village of Chittoor District, of Andhra Pradesh, India. This study is a qualitative micro-level study of a sericulture village. The primary data was collected through a structured household schedule administered to all respondents in the village, informal interviews using detailed checklists, key informant interviews, and case studies. Quantitative information with regard to the technological development, land holding, demographic aspects, cropping patterns, irrigation systems were collected by using household schedules and District statistical hand book. The paper has been organised into four sections: The first section of the paper provides the introduction; the second section is about the status of sericulture and its sustenance; the third section describes the location, people and their livelihoods and practice of sericulture and rituals in the village and final section examines the changes that have come in the village while practicing the sericulture activity.

### **The Background: Status of Sericulture and its Sustenance in India and Andhra Pradesh:**

In India sericulture has become the most promising allied agricultural activity in rural areas for the reasons of minimum gestation period, less investment, maximum employment potential and quick turnover for the investment. Sericulture generates direct and indirect employment in various ways. Firstly, mulberry cultivation creates employment on farm, and, secondly, cocoon production, which uses mulberry leaves as an input, creates large-scale employment for the family labour of the mulberry growers. There are, instances of non-mulberry growers taking up cocoon production alone as a full-time occupation. They buy leaves from mulberry growers and use them as raw material for cocoon production. Further, the reeling activity is also mainly undertaken in rural areas or semi-urban areas and the employment generated there would help reduction of the rural unemployment in a significant way. In short, sericulture as a whole, by its very nature of activity, creates large-scale employment and income generation opportunities in the rural and semi-urban areas accelerating the economic growth of these areas.

In its long history sericulture in India has experienced many ups and downs. However, during the last 30 years, India has made tremendous progress in the production of mulberry silk for which there is an increasing international demand. There is tremendous scope for the expansion of its production in the country. In recent years sericulture has achieved enormous progress in evolving suitable mulberry varieties and techniques to bring about new silkworm races suitable for tropical climatic conditions. With the evolution and introduction of more productive silkworm races, the productivity has increased and sericulture has become a highly remunerative activity. Attracted by these advantages many more farmers have taken up sericulture and the industry has spread to almost all the States in India (Narasiah and Jayaraju, 1999).

Karnataka has been the leading producer of mulberry silk accounting for more than 50 percent of its production in the country. This State is now regarded as the "Silk Bowl of India". Andhra Pradesh comes next to Karnataka in producing mulberry raw silk. In Andhra Pradesh, sericulture has proved to be a money-spinner for many middle class families. Except for Hyderabad district, almost all the districts in the State have taken to sericulture activity. In 1956, mulberry cultivation in the State was undertaken in 1212 hectares which went up to

90,800 hectares by the end of 1993-94 (Department of Sericulture, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1993-94).

Once confined to a few pockets like Anantapur and Chittoor districts bordering Karnataka, sericulture has caught up in such a big way that in just 10 years time the State of Andhra Pradesh has come to rank next only to Karnataka, the premier State of silk. Though, almost all districts in the State have taken up sericulture, the main concentration of mulberry silk production is in the four Rayalaseema districts, namely Anantapur, Chittoor, Cuddapah and Kurnool, of which Anantapur, followed by Chittoor, stand first and second in the entire State in producing mulberry raw silk. At present Anantapur and Chittoor show enormous growth rates in sericulture in Andhra Pradesh. Chittoor has been ambitious of achieving first rank in the production of mulberry raw silk in Andhra Pradesh. If the present tempo of growth is maintained, it would not be a surprise if it achieves its desired goal before long. Given these developments, it is worthwhile to study the changes that have taken place due to sericulture among the farmers, especially among the poor, in Chittoor district.

In Andhra Pradesh, mulberry cultivation and cocoon production are mainly concentrated in Chittoor district, which account for nearly 23 percent of the area under mulberry cultivation. The mulberry plant, being hardy plant adjusts well to low rainfall and drought conditions and responds well to irrigation. The district appears to be gradually finding mulberry cultivation to be a profitable proposition. Prior to the inception of Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) in the district, mulberry cultivation as well as cocoon rearing activities was found to be concentrated in the areas adjoining to Karnataka State. The cocoons used to be sold in Bangalore. However, after the inception of DPAP in this district, mulberry cultivation as well as cocoon rearing slowly turned out to be major activity, especially in Palamaner, Madanapalle, and Thamballapalle and Kuppam blocks. In course of time it spread to the adjoining localities of these blocks. Now, at present, there are around six to seven blocks where the rearing activity has become prominent. Overall, cropping pattern in the district has been found to be undergoing a change since the last decade. However, earlier not a single crop, except groundnut, was cultivated consistently for a reasonable period by the farmers of the district. This may be due to the uncertainty involved in the cultivation of such crops. However, what is interesting to find is that silk rearing activity has not only expanded and covered almost two fourths of the district but also it appears to have been stabilising in this region.

What is equally interesting to note is that notwithstanding the increasing cocoon rearing activity, reeling was never carried out in this region until the sixth plan period. The major part of cocoons produced used to find its sales outlet in Karnataka, where reeling activity is traditionally carried out extensively. The same raw silk used to be purchased by the weavers of the Chittoor district at a higher price. Price used to be higher due to the operation of the exploitative network of middlemen. However, with the Government intervention, silk reeling activity came up in the district to a reasonably good level. Subsequently, raw silk market as well as cocoon market got organised with the establishment of silk exchanges in those places where the concentration of silk weaving is relatively higher. As a result, weavers are relatively in a better position as they can purchase the raw silk at the "Government" price.

Now that sericulture from 'leaf to fabric' activity is more organised, a large number of

farmers are adopting sericulture. But, there are quite a few serious limitations, which might act as stumbling blocks for the development of sericulture in this district in the years to come. These are found not only in respect of the farmers but also at the Government level. Government assistance for sericulture development in this district can be seen in various forms, such as installation of seed farms, rearing units, grainages, silk reeling units, twisting units, cocoon markets, silk exchange, technical services and financial assistance in the form of subsidy and loan.

Although, infrastructural facilities do not appear to be inadequate, response of the people to reeling activity is not substantial. This may be the reason why production of raw silk has been low. What appears to be true is that a large percentage of cocoons are sold outside the district especially in Karnataka, where the cocoon rearers of this district find it more profitable to sell cocoon.

Another interesting observation one makes is that around one-third of the total cocoon produced is marketed through the regulated markets. There may be two reasons for this, namely, price is less remunerative due to less number of buyers who bid and secondly, which is related to the first, there is a thin concentration of reelers in the district. It indicates that two-thirds of the total cocoon produced in the district is sold to the reelers of the adjoining State, namely Karnataka.

Therefore, in order to make "Leaf to Cloth" programme successful in the district of Chittoor what appears to be important at the moment is for the government to take steps in relation to improving the managerial capacity of the cocoon rearers through better extension mechanism and motivate people, irrespective of caste, to take up silk reeling as well as weaving in the process of development of sericulture in the district.

As observed earlier, sericulture activity is highly concentrated in the four Rayalaseema districts, i.e., Anantapur, Chittoor, Cuddapah and Kurnool. Among them, Anantapur ranks first with 33,190 hectares (36 % of the total area), followed by Chittoor with 18,108 hectares (24% of the total area). Kurnool and Cuddapah occupy the next places in ranking. The Rayalaseema region recorded good progress than other regions in sericulture activity. This is due to the favorable climatic conditions in this region and also rising interest of formers in this very lucrative activity.

### **Location, People and their Livelihoods:**

Kotha Indlu is situated in the Kotha Indlu Panchayat of Kuppam Mandal in Chittoor district, about 15 kilometres from Kuppam, the Mandal head quarters. It is a multi caste village inhabited by Balija, Vanniar, Scheduled Castes and Chakali (washer men) castes. The Balija is the dominant caste in this village in terms of politics, economy, education and also numerical strengths. While the Balija occupies the highest position in the local caste hierarchy, Vanniar, Chakali and the Scheduled Castes occupy the subsequent positions in that order. Vanniar, who are a backward caste, are competing with the Balija economically and educationally, though they are weak numerically and politically. Next to Balija, the Scheduled Castes are numerically more than that of Vanniar and Chakali castes. The total population of 274 is distributed in 50 families.

On the basis of land holdings, the residents of Kotha Indlu are classified into marginal,

small, medium and large farmers, and the landless. The number of small farmers forms the majority, followed by the medium farmers. The numbers of large and marginal farmers are quite few, while the landless are almost insignificant. The crops cultivated are Paddy and Ragi, which are the staple crops and they constitute the staple diet of all communities. Commercial crops like flowers and groundnuts are also grown in the village. Floriculture is specially found among the Baliya farmers, while all the castes raise groundnut crop in their lands. Though sericulture occupies the second position after agriculture, it is the major source of income for the farmers in the village. Cattle, goat, sheep, buffaloes and donkeys are the major livestock in the area. Several varieties of grass along with stocked paddy straw; maize stalk, groundnut and bhoosa are used as fodder. Poultry is widely prevalent in the village and only the Scheduled Castes raise pig/swine.

The village is very well connected by road and it has good transport facilities. The sericulture farmers use the tillers, tractors and bullock carts to transport their produce to the towns. The village has telephone as well as postal facility. This village has a primary school and a high school. It also has a ration shop under the public distribution system to supply the necessary commodities to the people, who have white ration cards, at concessional rates.

The president of the Gram Panchayat is from the Scheduled caste community. In fact, this (Panchayat) seat was reserved for the Scheduled Castes in the last elections held for the local bodies on rotatory basis. There is a farmers' club in the village, which takes care of their problems both in the society and outside.

### **Practice of Sericulture in Kotha Indlu :**

Farmers in Kotha Indlu follow row system and S1, S5, and S36 varieties of mulberry predominate over the local variety, M5. Before planting, farmers perform certain rituals. Farmers perform puja (prayer) to their caste deity, which will be placed in the northern corner of their land, and light incense sticks. They apply kumkum (Vermillion) and turmeric powder to the deity and also sprinkle around the place where they put their deity. They start planting reshama kaddi from that end. The rituals observed here are akin to the ones that are being followed in agriculture in the village.

Farmers in Kotha Indlu maintain thickly populated gardens mostly of local mulberry (M5). They believe that local variety is more drought resistant and requires less water in contrast to the improved varieties, as they are time tested and are passed on to them by their predecessors. Though some of the farmers are willing to raise improved mulberry, they are unable to procure improved variety cuttings. Department of Sericulture, Kuppam, supplies S36 cuttings free of cost to farmers. However, it is not able to supply to all farmers. Farmers also get cuttings from their relatives and friends. According to the Convenor of the farmers' club, there is a scheme wherein the Department of Sericulture gives Rs. 500/- to the farmers who plant "Swarnandhra" and some farmers have adopted this improved mulberry in Kotha Indlu. Thus there is receptiveness among the sericulturists to changes in the cropping pattern, though they still tend to continue to follow the ritual processes with great fervour.

In a majority of the sericulture households, women do bed cleaning. This activity is compared with attending to the children and they believe that bed cleaning is part and parcel of women's routine activity. Sericulturists compare worms with children. So, they regard bed

cleaning and litter cleaning are women's activities. In some sericulture households, men also do bed cleaning. In Kotha Indlu, sericulturists do bed cleaning once in a day. One can notice some variation during different moulting stages in the village.

Sericulturists in Kotha Indlu say that there are so many reasons for the diseases to silk-worms. They are critical of the extension staff of Department of Sericulture. They complain that the staff lack experience with regard to disease control and also identification of diseases at an early stage of rearing. The Sericulture Inspector pointed out that there is inadequate ventilation in the rearing houses and also the farmers' rearing practices are bad. He also says that sericulturists are not taking proper care from the beginning of crop. In this regard, he points out that the farmers after collecting disease free layings (DFL) sheet they go to movies and upon reaching home they don't even cover any paper over the DFL sheet to protect the seed. He complains that they are not properly maintaining hygienic conditions in and around the rearing house. On the contrary, some sericulturists from the lower castes complain of discrimination by the extension staff. They aver that the extension staff favours always rich farmers, who rear Bivoltine.

Social composition could be seen in terms of caste differences, occupational differences, family structure, etc., in Kotha Indlu. Here, caste differences are reflected in different aspects of sericulture. For instance, every aspect of sericulture like mulberry cultivation, silk worm rearing, disinfection and upkeep, maintenance of rearing sheds, hygienic conditions in the surroundings of rearing sheds, chandrikas, stands and trays, etc., are shaped by caste differences.

**Table: Distribution of land among different land Size Classes (in acres)**

Land size class	Wet	Dry*	Leased in Wet	No of HHs
Landless				1
Landless	-	-	0.75	1
Marginal	01.25	01.50	-	4
Small	51.50	15.09	-	31
Medium	26.00	11.33	-	10
Large	18.00	04.00	-	3
Total	96.75	31.92	0.75	50

\* Figures under this should be multiplied by 3 to get actual dry land.

Majority of the sericulturists from the upper caste, Balija, have improved mulberry variety, where as the others in the village have local variety. This can be seen in terms of availability of land, irrigation water facility, etc. Moreover, Balija are more receptive to new innovations than the others.

There is a correlation between the family structure and sericulture. Sericulture requires an intensive involvement of family labour. The size of mulberry garden has a direct relationship with the family size. Irrespective of caste and land size class, almost all the sericulturists possess mulberry garden between ½ an acre to a maximum of 1 ½ acres (see Table below). Thus to a certain extent, it is acting as a leveller and the families who have productive labour are better suited to bring more land under mulberry. Kotha Indlu village has more number of

nuclear families and hence, their mulberry gardens are also smaller in size. There are totally 50 households in Kotha Indlu villages out of this 39 are involved in sericulture, three in agriculture, one in horticulture, three are in agricultural labour and others form a miscellaneous group of petty businessmen, employees, etc. Baliya caste members dominate the sericulture activities.

**Table: Land under Sericulture (in acres)**

Type of Land holder	Own	Leased in	Total HHs
Landless		0.75	1
Marginal farmers	1.25		2
Small Farmers	23.50	-	27
Medium farmers	11.00	-	7
Large farmers	04.00	-	2
Total	39.75	0.75	39

When it comes to the institution of marriage, Kotha Indlu people prefer marriages within the family. They marry cross cousins. Usually, elders arrange marriages. There are two cases of inter-caste marriage, one between an upper caste woman (Baliya) and a lower caste man (Vanniar) and the second was between a Vanniar woman and a SC man. In both cases the women were considered as outcastes. The villagers consider the idea of inter-caste and love marriages as an influence of modern television and films.

Manjula, aged 25, studied up to 7th class and, being the eldest daughter, started helping her mother in sericulture activity. Her mother, Neelamma, did not have any formal education and her father, Ratnappa, is an attender in the school in Santhipuram. He studied up to 10th Class. Manjula eloped with a lower caste man and, following this, Ratnappa and other caste elders disowned her. Baliya in the village felt that this is their caste issue and no outsider should involve in this matter. Baliya in the village are afraid that through inter-caste marriage their caste status / prestige get declined. Manjula has left her home nine-month's back and started staying with Srinivas in the village. Even though, it is an inter-caste marriage, Vanniar have welcomed this marriage. The Vanniar in fact "look up to" such type of marriages in near future. They think that, this would enhance their caste position in the society in general and Kotha Indlu village in particular.

Kotha Indlu village has a high school. Girls are usually dropout before or on reaching the high school level. Very few boys go out for pursuing higher education. In the Anganwadi centre, pre-school children are given nutritious food. The teacher in Anganwadi centre is a scheduled Caste woman. The adult literacy program has not made its inroads in Kotha Indlu.

### **The practice of rituals and worship in the village:**

The chief deity of Kotha Indlu village is Timmaraya Swamy. After Timmaraya Swamy they worship Anjaneya Swamy. The local deities are Agnimaremma, Kunti Gangamma and Gangamma. The local deities are worshipped on special occasions. For instance, Gangamma is worshipped when children have problems; Agnimaremma is worshipped for health of women; Kunti Gangamma is regarded as a protector of cattle life in the village and is worshipped during Sankranti (in January). Untouchability is still in vogue. For instance, Sched-

uled Caste members are not allowed into the premises of Timmaraya Swamy temple.

In Kotha Indlu village people give more importance to rituals. Rituals are associated with all their activities. Before starting every activity they perform some kind of ritual, for e.g., while doing chawki, they perform puja and offer samrani, coconut and kumkum (Vermillion) to their family deity. Another example is, when a girl reaches puberty, certain rituals are performed. During every menstrual period, women are kept outside daily work for three days. Even rearing houses are also kept out of their reach.

In Kotha Indlu majority of the people are Hindus. Some from the Scheduled Castes follow Christianity. Every caste has their own deity as well as common deity in the village. For instance, the chief deity of Balija (Family deity) is Venkateswara Swamy and Vanniar family deity is Muneswera Swamy or Muneppaswamy temple, which is situated in Mallappagutta, which is 2 kms away from Kotha Indlu. Vanniar from Kotha Indlu go to Muneppaswamy temple for the first hair shaving ceremony (tonsure ceremony) of their first child only. Dharmarajulu is their caste deity. They claim him as their ancestor and claim themselves as belonging to Kshatriyas caste. They perform Dharmarajulu panduga (festive occasion) once in three years. They visit Dharmarajulu temple situated in Pedda Bangaru Nattam, 3 kms from Kotha Indlu village. During this ceremony, they perform animal sacrifice and have a communal feast. Scheduled caste people have their own religious ceremonies in Kotha Indlu. Hair shaving ceremony is practiced at the time of Munidevara panduga. They also perform animal sacrifice (offering pig, goat or buffalo) attended by their relatives and neighbours. Other caste people are not allowed to attend this ceremony.

Agnimaremma is a common deity for all the villagers. But each caste has its own rituals and in this way every caste preserves its integrity and purity. For instance, Balija have the practice of inviting Guruvulu from Kanchi (Tamil Nadu) once in every five years. When Guruvulu arrives, he makes sacrifices for the betterment of Balija. He also does purification ceremony in case of any inter-caste marriage. Teertham or holy water is used for this purpose. Kotha Indlu villagers believe in magical spells and practices. For instance they believe magical spells can even save a person after snakebite.

Rituals are part of people's personality and life in Kotha Indlu village. Even before a child arrives into the world, when the child is in mothers womb rituals begin. So, when a woman is pregnant, a ceremony called "Sreemantham" is performed. After the child is born naming ceremony, "Namakaranam", is performed. When the first child reaches 3 years, hair removing / Tonsure ceremony is performed in the village. For this ceremony Balija go to Tirupati, Vanniar go to Dharmarajulu temple (Pedda Bangaru Nattam) and Scheduled caste people go to Mallappagutta, 2 kms from Kotha Indlu (Yellamma). When a girl reaches puberty it is celebrated within the caste members. Marriage ceremony takes places for three days. Death ceremony is performed in the village after 2 or 11th day of death. Those under the pollution period by custom are not allowed to enter into rearing shed. In case they want to enter rearing shed, they have to have a ritual bath and pray to their family deity. Women are engaged in domestic callings and also work in their rearing sheds. But when it comes to performing rituals, men dominate.

The physical structure of the village itself set boundaries between castes in the village. This means every caste maintained its own identity by performing its own rituals. In terms of

labour distribution, Scheduled Castes do agricultural labour. In case of those who have lands, they also hire Vanniar for labour. The payment is in the form of cash or kind. The upper caste Balija and Vanniar if they have rearing sheds, allow Scheduled Caste labour into the rearing house. The lower caste people (S.Cs.) are not allowed into temple premises. But now a day they do allow S.Cs to perform Puja outside the temple.

Goddess Agnimaremma is the chief deity of the village. On festival occasion, she is taken in a palanquin and taken around the village. For the convenience of lower caste darshan, the deity is kept in a common place and lower caste people are allowed to perform Puja. However, unlike the earlier times, now a day the deity is even taken up nearer to their dwellings.

The concepts of purity and pollution have special meanings for Kotha Indlu villagers. Purity is a matter of both faith and hygiene. For instance, purity is equal to hygiene in the maintenance of rearing sheds. They are very particular in maintaining the hygiene of rearing sheds with cow dung and bleaching powder. The concept of pollution is equally important for Kotha Indlu villagers. In most cases it is a question of faith or even taboo. For instance, the women's menstruation is considered a polluting phenomenon. When she is in periods she cannot enter rearing sheds and dwellings for a period of three days. In case there are no women for cooking and rearing, they are allowed to participate only after taking ritual bath. After taking ritual bath, urine of cow is taken as Teertham and sprinkled in and around the house for purification. Many sericulturists in the Kotha Indlu village still believe that allowing a polluted person into rearing house may cause crop failure (mulberry). Kotha Indlu villagers remember their elders through following these beliefs. Death is also considered a pollutant because of its strange nature. When in case of a death in a family, the persons are not supposed to participate in social gathering or rearing. They have to undergo the same process of purification for de-polluting themselves.

Krishnaveni, leader of a Dwra group, says that generally women do not participate in religious activities in Kotha Indlu. Usually men do all the activities. With regards to pollution and purity, she says that they practice these very strictly. Polluted women do not enter into rearing house in general and dwelling house in particular. If any body dies in the village, they consider it also as pollution. After taking ritual bath then they allow them into their house. With regard to purity, following their custom, they clean the rearing house and dwelling house with cow dung on every Friday.

Krishnaveni believes that her lifestyle has changed a lot after becoming a member of the Dwra group and sericulturist. She also says that whenever they get leisure time they go on tour to Tirupati or go for watching movies. Regarding education, she wanted to send her children to convent school and she has definite idea about her children's future. She feels that, whatever they have now they got it because of sericulture. She has radio, wall clock and got gas cylinder during Janmabhoomi period.

The economic condition of Kotha Indlu village is largely dependent on the level of landholdings. There are big landholders, small landholders, marginal landholders and landless labourers. The big landholders have their impact on small landholders. For instance, the landlords of larger land holdings hire tractor and other machinery for getting better yield. This has led to denial of labour to the lower caste / class members, thus leading to unemployment. The distribution of land holdings also reflects the social status of each caste in Kotha

Indlu village. The big farms are held by the upper caste and the landless labour is usually from the lower castes. If we observe, the pattern of landholdings, in terms of number, we can see the impact of development programmes in Kotha Indlu.

Fifteen households hold big landholdings, 27 households hold small landholdings and 6 households hold marginal landholdings and two are landless (See below). The development schemes of the government strengthen and maintain such a divide. Supplying DFLs, promotion of drip irrigation, construction of rearing sheds, as part of development, benefit the big landholders rather than landless labourers.

**Table: Distribution of land holding by Caste (in acres)**

Size class	Baliya		Vanniar		Chakali		SCs		Total HHs
	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	Wet	Dry	
Landless	0.75*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Marginal	0.75	1.50	0.50	1.00					4
Small	25.00	17.50	6.50	3.50	7.00	2.00	12.00	22.25	31
Medium	22.00	28.00	2.0	4.0			3.00	2.00	10
Large	18.00	12.00							3
Total HHs	30		6		3		11		50

In terms of labour, Kotha Indlu villagers have their own wage structure and rates of payment. Landless labourers are paid both in terms of cash and kind. The cash payment differs between men and women. Men are paid Rs.35/- and women paid Rs.25/- per day. The miscellaneous services like running of tiffin stalls, teashop and general stores also fetch reasonable amount. For instance, Sridevi gets Rs.100/- per day from running a tiffin stall. For women and landless labourers, there is hardly any capital available. For women Dwera serves as a chief source of capital. Non-sericulturists either go for agriculture or economic services like running of tea stall or rice milling for livelihood.

The economic organization of Kotha Indlu village is sericulture based (See table above). There are no formal banking services for capital generation and economic organization, except for Dwera groups. The ratio between land, labour and organization is based on caste and other social factors than economic factors. Marketing of sericulture products is done through cocoon marketing centres of government as well as private agencies. However, private merchant agencies also exist for marketing.

The level of production depends on the quantity and quality of inputs given for production. For instance, if the production level in sericulture has to go up, it requires good quality seed, high breed mulberry plants, pesticides, labour intensive technology and clean atmosphere. If we consider supply of seed, upper caste people who already have proper infrastructure appropriate high quality "Swarnandhra" seeds. So, their income level also goes up. This in turn gives them enough purchasing power of labour. The lower caste people are left to practice conventional practices with non-hybrid varieties like cross breed DFLs. Such economic disadvantages perpetuate the connection between community and production differences.

## Changes :

Kotha Indlu has a home for families who have consistently been progressive. The chief factor for such a change is primarily attitudinal. If there are any political and economic factors behind the growth, it is only due to the positive attitude of the people in absorbing such factors. To go back to the stories of sericulture at first, the introduction and growth of sericulture itself is an attitudinal change. The first person who brought sericulture is a woman, who introduced it in the year 1977. She had faced lot of resistance in making sericulture rooted in Kotha Indlu.

The villagers turned the adversity into an opportunity when their village got burnt accidentally. Some of the older generation persons say that it is like rejuvenating oneself by burning all the bad thoughts and things in the “Bogi” fire. Now sericulture is the main occupation of Kotha Indlu village. This village also stands as an example of better participation of women in economic development along with men. Women not only do family labour but also contribute for increase in production levels. Literacy rate of Kotha Indlu village is more than the literacy rates of Andhra Pradesh in general and Chittoor in particular ( See table below). Women also are enterprising. For instance, they run tiffin stalls and rice milling independently. They have also organized themselves for economic benefits as the case in Dwra.

**Table 2.2.2: Distribution of Education by caste**

Level of Education	Baliya	Vanniar	Chakali	S.Cs	Total*
Illiterates	28 (18.54)	06 (24.00)	06 (28.57)	22 (32.35)	62 (23.39)
Primary	67 (44.37)	08 (32.00)	09 (42.86)	26 (38.23)	110 (41.51)
Secondary	45 (29.80)	10 (40.00)	04 (19.05)	17 (25.00)	76 (28.68)
College	11 (07.29)	01 (04.00)	02 (09.52)	03 (04.12)	17 (6.42)
Total	151 (100) (56.98)	25 (100) (9.43)	21 (100) (7.93)	68 (100) (25.66)	265 (100)

\* There are 9 infants who are excluded from the total

Note : Parentheses indicate percentages.

Sericulture as an economic and social activity has brought a major change in Kotha Indlu life. They have given up looking at silkworm as worms and started looking them as babies and a lucky crop. People who are in sericulture get more benefits in terms of economic and social status. Agriculture and miscellaneous activities do not even match anywhere to sericulture. Dairy farming also complements sericulture activity. The leaves are not wasted and the hybrid cows (Jersey) are made to browse the mulberry leaves that are left behind by silkworms. This is something akin to mixed cropping in agriculture.

Sericulture has brought a change in the marriage pattern of Kotha Indlu villagers. Even though, they practice cross cousin marriage, earlier they were not taking dowry. But now, dowry has become essential in most of the marriages. For instance, according to one key informant, the convenor of the “Farmers club”, who got married two years ago, took about Rs.50,000/- as dowry. Sericulturists in the village think that, giving or taking dowry enhances

their status in the society. Sericulture enhanced the financial status of the farmers and now they spend more money on marriages, as it demonstrates the improved economic as well as social status.

Traditional occupational pattern in Kotha Indlu village is largely dismantled due to arrival of sericulture. Caste based occupations have been disturbed. Caste hierarchy has increasingly been questioned by the lower castes. The Vanniar now claim an equal, if not superior, status with the Baliya. Sericulture as a commercial activity has brought all caste groups to compete with each other in the open market. For instance, the people of Chakali caste have given up their age-old occupation of washing clothes. They have adopted sericulture as their main occupation. But, when it comes to utilisation of benefits like procuring of seeds, irrigation facilities, etc., upper caste people still maintain their traditional advantage over the others.

Economic independence of lower castes was made possible in Kotha Indlu due to sericulture. For instance, Scheduled Caste members traditionally used to do jobs such as agriculture labour, drumming (Dappu), etc., which were not done by the others. Since they did not have any powerful economic base, they felt highly insecure. But now they have sericulture to support. As one key informant says “we use to be Dappu and we did not have money, and we were frightened, what to do everyday. But now we have sericulture”.

The developmental activities like Catalytic Area Development Programme, implemented by the Government, have a significant role in complementing the growth of sericulture in Kotha Indlu. For example, they give loans for drip irrigation, offer new hybrid variety seeds and so on.

In spite of improved economic status of farmers from different castes, the lower caste members are still denied entry into public places like temples. Caste of a person continues to have a bearing on the patterns of landholdings, distribution of labour, appropriation of loans, etc. Most of the sericulturists have TVs and scooters / motor vehicles. The entry of cable television and other communication network have not brought about any change in the attitudes of the villagers with regard to their traditional caste attitudes. Thus, there is a greater need to understand the role of NGOs and Governmental developmental programmes in bringing about the desired change among the villagers.

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