

Socio-economic Importance of Bamboo among the Nagas of Nagaland

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ABSTRACT Bamboo is grown extensively in Nagaland and the socio- economic life of the Nagas revolves around the varied use of bamboo and its products. Beginning with the sharp bamboo blades prepared to remove the umbilical cord of a new born and even accompanying dead person with finely woven bamboo mats wrapped all over the body. It is also put to a number of uses. There is nothing about bamboo that can be discarded or treated as waste. Bamboo is found extensively all over Nagaland. It occurs as a predominant plant in portions of the districts of Dimapur, Peren, Mon and Mokokchung districts, while it is readily found mixed with other forest species in all other districts of the state. Bamboo being a fastest growing and highest yielding plant, its maintenance does not require much labour and is a source of livelihood to many people in the region. In the present time, it is being used as industrial raw material for pulp and paper, construction and engineering materials, health food, handicrafts etc. Taking into account the increasing demand of bamboo and bamboo products worldwide, it has enormous economic potential to generate employment opportunities for the weaker sections of the society. Thus, the present study looks into the utilitarian nature of bamboo as reflected from the social life of the Nagas and as a source of economy.