

## Silkworm, Pears and Tea Plantations can scripts Asur's Growth Story

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### **Introduction**

At the time when there are no alternatives, members of the primitive tribe Asur residing in the pat area of Netarhat struggling with all odds and migrating in search of livelihood, a farmer Tapnu Asur is reaping rich dividends by cultivating pears while others from rearing silkworm. Earlier involved in iron smelting and farming Tupnu along with few tribesmen have changed their lives with the cultivation of pears and rearing of silkworms.



Pix : Silkworm

Blessed with natural cover, climate and soil, Netarhat plateau (on high altitude) is most favorable for rearing of Silkworm and cultivation of Pear; can bring happiness among the Asur tribes, believes Heerak Manna Kerkatta, BDO of Mahuatand.

“Tea plantation on the slope of the hills can bring cheer to the tribe”, he added. With the sturdy initiative of the government and officials cultivation of Mulberry (Silk), Pear and Tea plantation can bring a drastic change an cheer not only among the Asurs but other tribes too, said expert.



Pix : Tea Plantation

Studying under Jharkhand Media Fellowship-2012 found that: Proper Trainings, Funding and Marketing facilities on cultivation and rearing of these three (Silk, Pear and Tea) can script a growth story among the Asur's. The government should provide subsidies for setting up silkworm rearing shed and to motivate the tribes to take up mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing. "According to an estimate one acre of mulberry plantation fetches good income ranging from Rs 30,000 to Rs 50,000 if cultivated in accordance with the scientific methods", said an expert. Though, recently tea plantation on the hill of Nepal brought a drastic change in lives of tribes residing there; tea is having well in demand in the international markets. Notably, many tribal women (including Asur and Birjia) from the remote corners of Jharkand are migrating to work in tea estate in Assam and other states for plucking tea leaves. Yet, for generations, they have been plucking tea leaves instead of Rs 50 daily, said Heera Birjia whose close kins' are still settled at a tea estate in Alipurduar (WB).



Meanwhile the conditions of Asur are pathetic. Deprived from their lands, forest rights which have snatched away their traditional rights over the forest and partially affected their traditional practice of iron smelting Asurs' are on the verge to extinct. They are under stern threat from existing model of development.



Pix : Pear Tree at Netarhat

In the year 2000 the Jharkhand State was carved out for the welfare of people of the region, especially for the tribals but the declining population of Tribal Groups (PTGs) finding hard time for their existence.

The paradox is that all Chief Ministers of Jharkhand were tribal during past and despite being tribal little has been done for the development of tribal population, particularly the PTG.

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