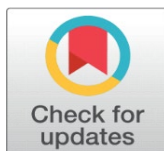


A STUDY ON KING CHILLI (NAGA MIRCHA) AS A SOURCE OF INCOME FOR SEIYHAMA VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the role of king chilli, also known as Naga Mircha, as a key source of income for the rural community of Seiyhama village in Kohima district, Nagaland. The aim is to assess and analyze how the cultivation, processing and sale of king chilli contribute to the livelihoods of local farmers, providing economic sustenance in this predominantly agrarian region. King chilli, recognized for its distinct flavor and intensity, holds both local cultural significance and commercial value, making it a viable agricultural product for improving rural livelihoods. A simple random sampling technique was employed to gather data from a representative sample of households involved in king chilli production. Through structured questionnaire and interviews, the study explores various dimensions such as income generation, employment opportunities, market access, and challenges faced by the farmers. By examining these aspects, the research sheds light on the socio-economic impact of king chilli cultivation and its potential to enhance the sustainability of rural livelihoods in Seiyhama village. The findings aim to provide valuable insights for policy makers and stakeholders in the agricultural sector to support and develop the local economy through targeted interventions in the king chilli supply chain.

Keywords: Rural, Seiyhama Village, King Chilli (Naga Mircha), Income, Assess, Analyze

1. INTRODUCTION

Seiyhama is a medium size village located in Botsa circle of Kohima district, Nagaland with total 181 families residing. The Seiyhama village has population of 903 of which 445 are males while 458 are females as per population census 2011. In Seiyhama village, population of children with age 0-6 is 191 which make up 21.14 % of total population of village. Average sex ratio of Seiyhama village is 1029 which is higher than Nagaland state average of 981. Child sex ratio for the Seiyhama as per census is 1170, higher than Nagaland average of 943.

The Seiyhama village is located in a hilltop and it is also the last village of the Angami's in the Northern area of the Kohima district sharing a boundary with Tseminyu district, it is 45 km away from state capital Kohima, the village being located in a remote area far from national highway connection faces a major challenges of dreadful route, yet despite its challenges the village is gifted with good fertile land and vast geographical area with bountiful natural resources which has been a major assets for the village community.

Seiyhama village was declared as an organic village during the year 2019 by the Government of Nagaland, since from the time of its interception the village has been producing some of the finest agro-based products purest in its form in the local market which are highly in demand in Kohima, one of their major source of supply is king chilli (Naga Mircha). The land being fertile and compatible for the cultivation of king chilli most of the cultivators of Seiyhama village normally depend on king chilli cultivation as one of their major source of income generation besides jhum and terrace cultivation which they generally engage in agriculture for self-sustenance.

Naga king chilli has received a geographical indication (G.I) tag in 2008, it was the first product in Nagaland to receive a G.I tag, after decades of king chilli cultivation the first ever king chilli (Naga Mircha) festivals in Nagaland was organized in Seiyhama village in the year 2022 under the chairmanship of Mr. Lhoulalie Zumu in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture, Government of Nagaland, the king chilli festivals is now an annual events which is celebrated every year.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is grounded in two interrelated theoretical framework: the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) and Diffusion of Innovations Theory. These frameworks provide a comprehensive lens to understand the economic and socio-cultural dynamics of king chilli cultivation in Seiyhama village.

1) Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF)

The SLF focuses on the interplay between livelihood assets, external factors, and strategies employed by communities to achieve sustainable outcomes. It emphasizes five key assets—natural, financial, human, social, and physical—that contributes to sustainable livelihoods [Scoones \(1998\)](#).

In the context of Seiyhama village:

- Natural Capital: Fertile land and the organic farming environment are central to king chilli cultivation.
- Financial Capital: Income generated from chili sales supports household needs and education.
- Social Capital: Community-driven initiatives, such as the king chilli festival, foster collective resilience and market awareness.
- Physical Capital: Challenges like poor transportation infrastructure illustrate the need for improvements to enhance market access.
- Human Capital: Farmers' traditional knowledge of chili cultivation and emerging awareness of market dynamics are critical for sustainable practices.

2) Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Developed by [Rogers \(1962\)](#), this theory explains how innovations—whether ideas, products, or practices—are communicated and adopted within a social

system. It identifies five stages of adoption: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation.

In Seiyhama village, the king chilli festival acts as a diffusion mechanism, fostering the adoption of innovative agricultural and marketing practices:

- Knowledge: Farmers gain awareness of the global value of king chilli through the festival.
- Persuasion: Exposure to successful outcomes persuades more households to engage in chilli cultivation.
- Decision and implementation: Adoption of new practices, such as organized marketing and festival-driven promotion, enhances productivity and market participation.
- Confirmation: Continued participation in the festival reinforces the economic and cultural benefits of king chilli farming.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to analyze and assess the income generation of the villagers of Seiyhama village from king chilli (Naga Mircha) cultivation and also understand their problems and challenges they faces during the process of their cultivation.

4. METHODOLOGY

The present study seeks to evaluate income generation, identify challenges, and explore the socio-economic impacts associated with king chilli cultivation in Seiyhama village. A qualitative descriptive design is well-suited for this research, as it enables the collection and analysis of detailed perspectives from villagers and stakeholders directly involved in the cultivation, processing, and sale of king chilli. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences, economic contributions, and socio-cultural dynamics surrounding king chilli farming in the community

Primary data for the study will be collected through a combination of structured and semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observation. Interviews will be conducted with farmers, village leaders, festival committee members, and other relevant stakeholders to gain detailed insights into cultivation practices, income generation, and the challenges associated with king chilli farming. Additionally, FGDs will be organized with groups of farmers to explore their collective experiences, highlight shared challenges, and gather suggestions for improvement. To complement these methods, field observations will be undertaken at farms and local markets to document cultivation processes, selling practices, and transportation challenges firsthand. This multi-method approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic and operational dimensions of king chilli cultivation in the community.

The study employed a simple random sampling technique to ensure a representative sample of households involved in king chilli cultivation. This method provided each household an equal chance of being selected, minimizing selection bias and ensuring that the data accurately reflected the diverse experiences and practices of cultivators in the community. By using this approach, the researcher could capture a comprehensive and unbiased perspective on the socio-economic impact of king chilli farming in Seiyhama village.

5. FINDINGS

As per the information and data collected from the interviewers, it was found out that more than 50% of the total families in the village are engaged in cultivation of king chilli besides Jhum and terrace cultivation, it was evident from the finding that king chili has been one of the major source of income for the villagers and through income generated from selling of king chilli production, villagers are able to not only finance their basic needs but also manage to finance their children education. Naga king chilli, one of the world hottest chilies a spice renowned globally for its extreme heat, which exceeds 1 million scoville heat units (SHU) holds significant cultural and economic value. The cultivation of the Naga king chilli is integral to Seiyhama's agricultural economy, however farmers face significant challenges particularly in transportation, as the nearest commercial hub is an hour walk from the village. The villagers being innocent and not knowing the true value of their product were once looted and price of their commodities were manipulated in the market by street vendors at commercial site. Despite different challenges and difficulties, the festivals of king chilli (Naga Mircha) has transformed the local market. Farmers, who once sold their produce at nominal rate, now recognized the true value of their king chili with demand growing both domestically and internationally. The Seiyhama king chilli festivals is a powerful example of how cultural preservation, community participation and agricultural preservation can work in harmony. In a rapidly modernizing world, this festival offers a model for sustainable development rooted in heritage and community. Seiyhama king chilli festival not only strengthens the bonds among its people but also secures a brighter future for the Naga king chilli on the global stage.

A report that was collected from king chilli festivals committee of Seiyhama village shows that from the first king chilli festivals the king chilli cultivators were able to generate income of rupees 88 lakhs from 28000 kg during the year 2022 from 120 household of cultivators and therefore the villagers having experience the taste and demand of Naga king chilli production more household started to engage in King chilli cultivation with 148 household registered for the year 2024. The production of king chilli has declined as compared to the year 2022 since the current year 2024 cultivators were able to produce roughly 14000 kg and able to generate revenue of 40 lakhs, climate plays a significant role for better harvesting of king chilli production if weather becomes too dry the king chilli cannot grow well and if it rains heavily it destroys king chilli plants since the king chilli plant are very fragile and it gets spoiled easily, therefore cultivators are always cautious and watchful whenever they go to work in their king chilli cultivation. Seiyhama village has an area of 154 hectare of land and over 70% of the total geographical area belongs to community and only 30% are owned by private individuals and clans, with its vast area and spacious environment the rural populations of Seiyhama village are able to cultivate king chilli in their own preference and favorable area suitable for king chilli cultivations.

The search for the plot of land for cultivating king chilli is done during the month of December and January. A set of huge clumping bamboo becomes an ideal spot for the cultivation. The weed surrounding the bamboos are cut down rigorously after that the arable land are burned down during the month of February and March, in the month of March the debris are cleared and sowing begins and in the month of May the weeds are cleared and transplantation is done to occupy the arable land and finally in the month of June the pollinated king chilli flowers start bearing its fruits, the first harvest of king chilli starts in the month of July, the king chilli is most

abundantly harvested in the month of August and September and the last harvest of king chilli is harvested in the month of November and December.

6. DISCUSSION

The study demonstrates that King Chilli cultivation is a cornerstone of the livelihoods of over half the households in Seiyhama village, complementing traditional practices like jhum and terrace farming. The income generated from king chilli production supports basic needs and educational investments, highlighting its critical role in sustaining rural households. This finding aligns with the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), which emphasizes the role of livelihood assets such as natural resources (fertile land) and social capital (community cooperation) in achieving sustainable economic outcomes [Scoones \(1998\)](#). However, the challenges faced—such as the lack of access to commercial hubs and exploitation due to limited market awareness—illustrate the vulnerabilities that need to be addressed within this framework.

The introduction of the king chilli festival in 2022 reflects the principles of Diffusion of Innovations Theory [Rogers \(1962\)](#). The festival functions as an innovation catalyst, raising awareness about king chilli's market value and fostering the adoption of new practices such as organized marketing and value-added activities. The increased market participation and improved negotiation power of farmers demonstrate the stages of innovation adoption, moving from awareness to implementation. By showcasing the global demand for king chilli, the festival facilitates community engagement in modernized agricultural practices and enhances the product's commercial potential.

In 2022, the festival enabled the sale of 28,000 kilograms of king chilli, generating ₹88 lakhs for 120 households. This success illustrates the synergy between livelihood assets and innovation diffusion, as farmers recognized the value of their produce and accessed broader markets. However, by 2024, environmental challenges caused production to drop to 14,000 kilograms, reducing revenue to ₹40 lakhs. This underscores the need for climate-resilient strategies within the SLF to safeguard yields and incomes against climatic variability.

Moreover, the king chilli festival strengthens community bonds and preserves cultural heritage, showcasing how agricultural sustainability, cultural identity, and economic development intersect. This aligns with the SLF's focus on social capital as a critical component of sustainable livelihoods, while also demonstrating how innovation diffusion can drive community-led economic transformation. Together, these frameworks provide a robust explanation of the observed dynamics, offering actionable insights for addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities in rural development.

7. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the economic and socio-cultural significance of king chilli cultivation in Seiyhama village, Kohima district, Nagaland. King chilli serves as a crucial livelihood asset for over half the households, enabling income generation that supports basic needs and educational opportunities. The findings underscore the transformative potential of community-driven initiatives such as the king chilli festival, which has enhanced market access, empowered farmers to recognize the true value of their produce, and fostered economic resilience. By applying the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF), the study reveals the importance of leveraging natural resources, community cohesion, and market awareness to

achieve sustainable development. The integration of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory further illustrates how events like the king chilli festival promote the adoption of innovative practices that elevate local agricultural products to global markets.

Despite its success, the study identifies challenges such as climatic vulnerabilities, geographical remoteness, and market exploitation that limit the full potential of king chilli cultivation. Addressing these issues through targeted interventions—such as climate-resilient farming practices, improved transportation infrastructure and farmer education on market dynamics—can further enhance the sustainability and profitability of king chilli farming.

In conclusion, the Seiyhama king chilli model demonstrates how rural communities can combine cultural heritage, natural resources, and innovative strategies to achieve socio-economic development. These insights provide a valuable roadmap for policymakers and stakeholders to replicate and scale similar initiatives in other rural contexts.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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