

ECONOMICS OF SERICULTURE

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INTRODUCTION

The word “sericulture” is derived from the Greek word “sericos” meaning “silk” and “culture” meaning “rearing”. Sericulture is a labour oriented, low investment, agrarian, small scale industry which suits both marginal and small land holders because of its high returns, short gestation period and it creates opportunity for women employment. Silk is the “Queen of textiles” no other fibre is a match to important role in natural silk. Among the four varieties of silk produced in 2015-16, Mulberry accounts for 71.79 per cent (20,478 MT), Tasar 9.88 per cent (2,819 MT), Eri 17.74 per cent (5,060 MT) and Muga 0.58 per cent (166 MT) of the total raw silk production of 28,523 MT. Mulberry raw silk production is mainly distributed in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in the tropical belt, and West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir in the sub-tropical and temperate zones respectively. India with its monopoly in the production of muga silk has the characteristic of being the only country producing all the four types of commercially exploited silks viz., Mulberry, Tasar, Eri and Muga. Major emphasis in the country’s production has been on mulberry silk. India is the major silk producing country accounting for 15,000 MT of raw silk. Sericulture is an art and science of rearing of silkworms to produce cocoons and silk.

ADVANTAGES OF SERICULTURE:

1. Sericulture is the only industry that gives a large number of job opportunities. So, the process of Sericulture is considered as tool for the economic reconstruction of rural areas.
2. The sericulture farmers are categorized into several sections like reelers, weavers, cocoon growers, traders. Hence, most of the income which is generated from the sericulture will be going back to the villages.

3. There are various sections involved in sericulture which includes management of the mulberry garden, harvesting of leaves, rearing the silkworm, weaving which can be done by women. Approximately 58% of the employees in sericulture are women.
4. The farmers which have fewer lands can also start sericulture. If the silkworm is reared in approximately 3/4th of the land, then it would support three members in the family and for rearing, there is no requirement to hire someone.

ECONOMICS OF SERICULTURE:

♣ Establishment Cost of Mulberry garden:

Mulberry plant has a bushy structure having life span of 15 years. Raising of mulberry garden is the basic need for rearing of silk cocoon. Since, mulberry garden and rearing of cocoon are two aspects of silk production, proper care of mulberry garden is very necessary for getting fresh, ample and continuous feed to larvae in the form of mulberry leaves in order to get fabulous silk cocoon production and to earn greater profit. This refers to the cost involves in establishing mulberry garden. It includes expenditure on different input uses during establishment period of garden.

♣ Establishment cost of rearing house:

This refers to the cost involved in establishing the rearing house. It includes the expenditure on different equipment uses during the establishment of rearing house. Rearing of silkworm is important to produce raw silk. In this process, silkworms are reared at appropriate temperature and humidity to get silk threads from cocoons. This rearing process is important to produce desirable quality of cocoon.

♣ Maintenance Cost of Mulberry garden:

It includes the expenditure incurred on the inputs used for the maintenance of mulberry garden. Maintenance cost starts after the establishment of mulberry garden after six months.

♣ Maintenance and rearing cost of silk cocoon:

Once the mulberry garden is established it is to be maintained every year, the expenditure involved in this operation is treated as maintenance cost. Side by side the DFLs are also to be needed to rear in rearing house for produced silk cocoon.



♣ **Cost and Return from silk cocoon production:**

The silkworm rearing activities end up with the production of cocoons. This is carried out as an indoor activity. Cocoon production in silk industry is the main produce from which silk yarn is produced. Silk cocoon grower also earned income from by-produce i.e. manure.

PROBLEMS FACED BY FARMERS IN PRODUCTION OF COCOON:

- Inadequate knowledge about improved method of rearing.
- High cost of establishment of rearing unit.
- Unavailability of timely labour.
- Lack of market information.
- More transportation cost for transport of cocoon to distance market.

CONCLUSIONS:

Sericulture found profitable enterprise to farmers and proved the best alternative with crop production. So sericulture venture will trigger the doubling of the farm income. For best utilization of resources available sericulture considered under the coverage of insurance.