

Sericulture Farming – An Inspirational Story

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Mr. Dashrath Vithoba Shende and Mrs. Latika Dashrath Shende belongs to a small village Mahim, Taluka- Sangola, in Solapur district of Maharashtra state, India and hails from an agricultural family. He spent his early childhood assisting his family in doing agricultural work and cultivating vegetable crops. Sangola taluka in Solapur district is well known because of its extreme dry environmental conditions and water scarcity. Dairy farming is the major occupation practiced in this area. Mr. Dashrath Shende owns 2 acres of land and used to cultivate vegetable crops like brinjal and tomato. He was desperately striving hard to overcome the financial issues of the family but the unpredictable environmental conditions of the area made it difficult to do so. Hence, he decided to try something that will help him to generate good income and achieve better standard of living from only 2 acres of land.

In the mid of the year 2015 he visited a sericulture farm, underwent the training programme for near about 20-25 days and learnt in detail about the remarkable benefits of the sericulture farming. From the year 2016 he adopted sericulture farming in his own land. During the initial stages he faced many challenges. Spraying of pesticides and fungicides on mulberry plant led to the entry of toxic chemicals in the leaves of the plant which led to the death of the silkworm at instar stage before the formation on cocoon due to the residual toxic effect of the insecticides and fungicides in the leaves and Mr. Shende had to suffer the loss. But without getting discouraged he overcame such challenges and climbed the ladder of success.

In sericulture farming the rearing of instars, especially till third instar stage should be done very carefully because it is more prone to fungal, bacterial and viral diseases. Mr. Shende have constructed a shed having dimensions of 25 x 60 feet

which have cost him about 4 lakh rupees. The rearing area has proper ventilation system and appropriate conditions are maintained for proper rearing. Mrs. Latika Shende is a role model for all the women farmers in the area. She helps in the day-to-day activities carried out at the sericulture farm, pays crucial attention towards every aspect and also carries out proper observations. Mr. and Mrs. Shende personally carry out all the operations in the farm till the arrival of cocoon stage. On the arrival of cocoon stage cocoon collection is the major activity that is followed. Ten to twelve labours are hired to harvest the cocoons. The harvested cocoons are then sent to Ramnagar in Karnataka state where further processing takes place. Till date average profit earned per batch by Mr. and Mrs. Shende is nearly 70-80 thousand. Since last 4-5 years the minimum profit earned for a batch is 52 thousand and maximum profit earned for a batch is 1 lakh 53 thousand. The cocoon costs up to 500-600 Rs per kg, depending upon the quality of the cocoon. Quality can only be maintained by proper care and timely following all the necessary operations. Mr. Shende says that, “Proper management, timely observations, love for the work and hardwork is his key to success”. Mr. Shende is now one of the progressive farmers of the Sangola district. In spite of facing many challenges he took up sericulture farming, gave a promising career and is an inspiration to many farmers of the area.