

Sericulture -Entrepreneurial opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Sericulture is a unique combination of art and science of raising silkworms for silk production, which is most precious and glamorous commodity in the world. It is one of the most labor intensive sectors, combining activities of both agriculture and industry. Silk production is regarded as an important tool for economic development of a country as it is a labour intensive and high income generating industry that churns out value added products of economic importance. The developing country like India relies on it for employment generation, especially in rural sector and also as a means to earn the foreign exchange. The production process consists of a long chain of interdependent and specialized operations. Sericulture is an occupation by women and for women because women form more than 60% of the workforce and 80% of silk is consumed by them. In India, sericulture related activities ensure the livelihood security of over eight million families spread over in some 59,000 villages across the country. The silk sector is also a valuable foreign exchange earner for the country. Entrepreneurship plays a critical role in promoting the economic growth and development in a country. Growth of entrepreneurship in any sector not only improves production systems and thereby productivity but also strengthens the basic foundation of the industry by generating opportunities & employment. The growing demand of silk in the domestic market can make the industry a viable and valuable enterprise. The pursuit of sericulture offers gainful employment not only to the rural masses but also for the educated youth in semi-urban and urban areas. With this background the paper aimed to discuss various entrepreneurial opportunities in sericulture industry.

Keywords: Sericulture, Enterprise, Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

India has a glorious sericulture tradition of its own, which no other country in the world can share. Silk is indispensable in ceremonies and religious rituals, being a 'must' in weddings and festivals. From this, it is very clear that it has very strong domestic market which is a real strength of Indian sericulture industry. However, under World Trade Organization (WTO) regime and General Agreement for Trade and Tariff (GATT) agreement with liberalized trade policies, India not only has to increase its silk production but also to improve silk quality standards, if it really wants to be competitive in the world silk market.

The challenge before us is to orient our production strategies to suit the requirements of both national and international markets. Therefore, Indian silk sector would have two distinct production lines to enable it to position advantageously both at home and abroad for deriving real benefits from globalization. The first is already in place, which is for the multivoltine based crossbreed silk catering mostly for domestic handlooms and home use. The second line would have to be developed which would be for the bivoltine based warp grade hybrid silk for own power looms and for export. While the first line would continue to be promoted as a poverty alleviating, employment generating occupation, the second line would have to be position as commercial venture.

The growing demand for quality products in the domestic market especially from the traditional handloom fabrics like sarees to lighter materials and export necessitates a look at the possibilities of achieving optimum quality with proper linkages in between silkworm rearing, silk reeling, silk twisting, weaving, chemical processing of silk and design and finishing aspects. Professionalism by adopting modern management strategies with a sound entrepreneurial competence is the basic requirement for bridging the gaps that exist.

Sericulture being an agro-based enterprise plays a predominant role in shaping the economic destiny of the rural people and fits very well in India's rural structure, where agriculture continues to be the mainstay. The industry encompasses different on-farm and non-farm activities, with diversified nature of skills, involving heterogeneous group of people, bringing people of various walks of life together work for the production of silk. The pursuit of sericulture offers gainful employment not only for the rural masses but also for the educated youth in semi-urban and urban areas. Silk industry is a labour intensive in nature, which is mainly a cottage industry in India providing livelihood to more than 9.42 lakh families. Nearly 7.9 million people are currently engaged in sericulture and silk production. Sericulture with a broad agriculture base is seen as an effective tool for rural development and reconstruction. Obviously sericulture is a hub of various entrepreneurial opportunities starting from leaf to fabric production is hereunder furnished.

- Raising of high yielding mulberry saplings
- Preparation and supply Silkworm eggs (DFLs)
- Young age (chawki) silkworm rearing centres
- Cocoon production
- Silk reeling
- Silk twisting
- Silk yarn degumming and dyeing
- Silk weaving (handlooms and powerlooms)
- Silk dyeing and printing
- Developing designs and screen making
- Garment designing
- Cocoon and silk based handicrafts
- Spun and Noil yarn production
- Recycling of sericulture By-products
- Silk trade (domestic and export marketing)
- Zari manufacturing

Apparently, sericulture industry is an excellent avenue for employment with various entrepreneurial opportunities. Entrepreneurship plays a critical role in promoting the economic growth and development in a country. Growth of entrepreneurship in any sector not only improves production systems and thereby productivity, but also strengthens the basic foundation of the industry by generating opportunities and employment. The pursuit of sericulture offers gainful employment not only the rural masses but also for the educated youth in semi-urban and urban areas. Sericulture growth will certainly lead to vibrant rural by creating income generating entrepreneurial opportunities enabling poverty reduction and arresting rural to urban migration of the rural poor.

One of the prime focus areas in sericulture sector today is identification of viable seri-business opportunities, encouraging investments in sericulture and promoting entrepreneurship through a variety of methodically planned and designed training programs. In view of the Entrepreneurship Development and to enhance sericulture business opportunities Central silk Board (CSB) conducting Entrepreneurship Development and other skill & competence enhancement training programmes with focus on Seri-technologies, soft and hard skills.

Some of the popular training programmes are:

- ❖ Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP)
- ❖ Resource Development Programme (RDP)/Trainers Training Programme (TTP)
- ❖ Technology Demonstration/Up-gradation Programme (TUP/TDP)
- ❖ Bankers Sensitization Programme (BSP)
- ❖ Competence Enhancement Training (CET)

These training programs are organized with a focus

- To motivate the potential entrepreneurs to initiate Sericulture enterprises.
- Aims to refine quality of human resource of the industry and develop groups of resource persons as master trainers with all desired sericulture knowledge, skills and competencies for imparting next level training to farmers
- To demonstrate the modern technology and recently developed techniques, processes and equipments pertaining to different activities of silk value chain for improved quality and quantity.

- For sensitizing the Bankers and updating their information/ knowledge about sericulture sector by providing inputs on latest cocoon and raw silk production technologies and introduction to various bankable Seri-Business options.
- For enhancing technical/professional/motivational levels of generally in-house participants and also DoS officers/officials for introducing new developments in the field of Sericulture, Science & technology and other functional areas.
- For updating technical & professional knowledge and office management tools for increasing work efficiency of administrative and accounting staff.

The Training Division of Central Silk Board (CSB) also conducts specific need-based & tailor-made training programmes on request from external agencies for the overall benefit & development of silk sector and entrepreneurial proficiency in sericulture.

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