



## 9. Weaving: A sustainable future, sericulture industry & economic empowerment of rural women

-Dr. Sashikumar, Asst. Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Govt. College for Women, Hassan, Karnataka

**Abstract:** *This paper looks at the significance of sericulture as a tool of rural women empowerment. It addresses the issues connected with of governmental initiatives in supporting rural women in sericulture & allied works. This paper analyzes the problems of silk rearing industry & impediments. Sericulture, as an agro-based rural industry has the foremost prospective for developing the rural economy in India. It plays a key role in equity distribution, as silk is mainly purchased by urban rich people and around 61 % of the final value of silk fabric is estimated to flow back to the rural farmers and reelers. Around 60 % of the workers in various sericulture activities – starting from mulberry plant cultivation and rearing of silkworms till the final production of fabric and garments constitute rural women. Silk industry, is an eco-friendly, sustainable and labor intensive economic activity for women in rural India.*

**Key words-** Sericulture, Government Initiatives, Rural Women, Empowerment,

### Introduction:

Women have been playing a vital role in all agro based industries. They form a major chunk of the labor force of rural India. Silk worm rearing has been an ancient industry in India. It has provided livelihood means to countless number of rural women. These days it has become a part of economic empowerment of women. It has given them an

experience of self reliance & self confidence.

### History of Silk in India

India is now the second largest producer of raw silk in the World after China, with a production of about 19,690 tonnes in 2009-10. This accounts for 15.5 % of total global production. India is also credited for being the only country producing all five distinct varieties of silk, namely,



Mulberry, Tasar, Oak Tasar, Eri and Muga silk varieties. India is the largest consumer of silk, with large imports of mulberry raw silk and silk fabrics from China. (Kumar R V & Others - Women Empowerment In Sericulture: A Current Scenario In Rural India).

Silk production in India has shown 7.2 %t growth during 2009-10, over the previous year. Vanya Silks such as Tasar, Eri and Muga, which is produced by the tribals from Central and North Eastern India, has shown 22 % growth during 2009-10 over the previous year. Vanya Silks have vast potential to be promoted as "Eco-Friendly Green Silks" and can create special market in the global market (Rajesh Malhotra-Sericulture for Developing Rural Economy 2011). Sericulture is recognized as a village-based industry providing employment to a sizable section of the population in India. Sericulture encompasses activities including mulberry farming, silkworm rearing,

reeling, twisting dyeing, weaving, etc., which is elemental in uplifting the rural folk through provision of adequate employment and income from the time immemorial. Though Sericulture is considered as a subsidiary occupation, due to significant breakthroughs in the technological innovations, has been possible to take it on an intensive scale for generating potential income and year round employment. (Sericulture & Silk industry chapter IV global national & regional scenario pp 86-96). Total export of silk year ending September 2014 was 1115.61 crores import of all silk 719.11 crores.( Kumar R V & Others -Women Empowerment In Sericulture: A Current Scenario In Rural India).

### **Issues for Women Empowerment in Sericulture**

Rural women need basic information support to pursue a good sericulture enterprise. Basic issues women face while selecting sericulture as an agro based rural enterprise are



1. Selection of location
2. Licensing and control
3. Selection of nearby market
4. Applicability of labour legislations
5. Provision for Technical know-how
6. Selection of micro Finance institution

### **Important Steps in the Empowerment of Rural women**

1. Identification of perspective rural women self-employees & helping them with information on pursuing sericulture industry
2. Selection of potential rural women self-employed /entrepreneurs from amongst prospective candidates & helping them with micro finance on pursuing sericulture industry ( Kumar R V & Others -Women Empowerment in Sericulture).
3. Arranging agro based entrepreneurship development

- training to rural women on pursuing sericulture industry
4. Providing help/guidance to rural women in selection of good silk product & plantation location in pursuing good sericulture sources
5. Helping rural women through mobilizing different resources of silk filature
6. Providing rural women o rganizational support in setting up a silk reeling, mulberry plantation or a local silk enterprise
7. Helping rural women with good promotional activities
8. Proper selection (every one cannot be made entrepreneur)
9. Good opportunity guide and developing a systematic business plan
10. Developing motivation and competencies
11. Developing managerial capabilities



12. Providing all information /counseling and follow up (Kumar R V & et el.)

**Empowerment through Training Prospects**

Empowerment program on sericulture should cover the following areas

1. Providing Information sources to rural women on market conditions
2. Providing product guidance to rural women by batches
3. Providing market Survey guidance to rural women through field trips & visits
4. Providing achievement motivation training to rural women through lectures by local women sericulture entrepreneurs'
5. Providing support to rural women on banking, finance & micro finance,
6. Providing managerial inputs to rural women

7. Providing counseling to rural women on sericulture industry knowhow's.

Sericulture may serve as an important source of income requiring less input, provides employment at home to entire family members by way of reeling, hand spinning of cocoons along with silkworm rearing. Women participation in silkworm rearing is higher than the men. The routine and risk free nature of sericulture has in fact facilitated greater and independent involvement of women in rearing activities. ( Dr. Neelam yadava)

**Governmental initiatives**

1. Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP)
2. Technology Up-gradation/ Demonstration Program (TUP/TDP)
3. Resource Development Program (RDP)
4. Bankers Sensitization Program (BSP)
5. Management Development Program (MDP)



6. Competence Enhancement Training (CET)
7. Skill Training and Enterprise Development Program (STEP)
8. Beneficiaries Empowerment Program (BEP)
9. Establishment of Sericulture Resource Center (SRC)

### **Catalytic development programme (CDP)**

Catalytic Development Programme (CDP) is the flagship scheme of the Central Silk Board (CSB), Ministry of Textiles for sustaining all round development of sericulture and silk industry in the country, and has been an important tool for effective transfer and adoption of improved technology packages developed by the research institutes of CSB at the field level through Five Year Plans. CDP has been under implementation in collaboration with State Governments since IX Plan period with periodic appraisals, modifications and additional inputs / components. The scheme consists of various

components and sub-components for promotion of all the four varieties of silk in the country i.e., Mulberry, Tasar, Eri and Muga. During XII Plan, the CDP has been redesigned to meet the sectoral requirements, and to ensure that the sector grows at a healthy pace. While some of the existing components of CDP have been deepened / modified by taking up certain additional inputs / sub-components, certain new interventions have also been proposed in order to meet the zonal requirements. The programme envisages several schemes with provision of sound financial assistance to the state department and stakeholders governed by the clear cut guidelines and parameters at 50% to 80% in its unit cost. (Rajesh malhotra- Sericulture For Developing Rural Economy).

Groups of women already marginalized – such as young, single and disabled women – are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. This will also assist in establishing associations of



silkworm rearers, reelers, and weavers to help small-scale silk producers articulate their ideas and needs, and gain up-to-date information on training and new technology. Besides supporting institutional reform, the Silk Development Project will introduce much-needed research into the various ways in which rural women can better compete on the world market. (Rajesh malhotra- Sericulture For Developing Rural Economy).

### **The Prospective Empowerment Implications**

#### **1. Building**

**Entrepreneurship-** Sericulture as a tool of rural women empowerment promotes women's business ownership skills. It helps them to acquaint themselves with microfinance efforts, and introduces them to procedures of financial markets.

#### **2. Asset-**

**Building.** Sericulture as a tool of rural women empowerment promotes financial empowerment

through women's land rights and property ownership

#### **3. Financial Literacy-**

Sericulture as a tool of rural women empowerment promotes women's financial literacy and provides them knowledge about financial literacy through practical supervision & training

#### **4. Better Jobs -**

Sericulture as a tool of rural women empowerment promotes strategies to improve wages, working conditions, labour standards, working benefits,

#### **5. Better opportunities-**

Sericulture as a tool of rural women empowerment promotes better opportunities as sericulture training opens opportunities for women workers helps them.

#### **6. Improves aptitude-**

It provides women knowledge about of running their own cottage industry including making, marketing and selling sericulture products. For example, by building their own silkworm houses rather than buying silkworm saplings, beneficiaries can save money and



village community will be helped through increased revenue.

### Conclusion

There are enhanced employment and poverty reduction opportunities for rural women through sericulture. Rural women's opportunities often remain limited to low skilled jobs and they remain vulnerable to unregulated working conditions but sericulture can support them to overcome these impediments. Government should help these women through access to credit, education and vocational training. Empowerment thus becomes a reality as strengthening, education and training opportunities for rural women helps in raising awareness of risks and rights in relation to migration and employment promoting a greater understanding of gender equity among local officials increasing investment in job creation, self-employment and vocational training in rural areas.

### References

1. Kumar R V & Others -Women Empowerment in Sericulture: A Current Scenario In Rural India. Asia pacific journal of rural development 2010 Vol. 20 No 1 pp 175-184
2. Rajesh malhotra- Sericulture For Developing Rural Economy- Press Information Bureau Government Of India 2011
3. Neelam yadava Dr -Cases of women entrepreneurs engaged in sericulture enterprise in Uttharakhand IN journal of entrepreneurship Vol. 2 No-3 - 2013
4. Silkworm Rearing by Rural Women in Karnataka: A Path to Empowerment Indian Journal of Gender Studies February 2011 18: 89-102,