

CHAPTER-11

Sericulture

11.1 Central Silk Board (CSB), constituted in April, 1949, by an Act of Parliament (Act No.LXI of 1948), is a statutory body under the Ministry of Textiles, established for the development of sericulture and silk industry in the country. India is the second largest producer of silk in the world. India has the unique distinction of being the only country producing all the five kinds of silk namely, Mulberry, Eri, Muga, Tropical Tasar and Temperate Tasar. Sericulture is an important labour-intensive and agro-based cottage industry providing gainful occupation. Since Labour Force Participation Rate in sericulture is far ahead in comparison to similar rural avocations, it has significantly contributed to poverty alleviation thereby achieving the national agenda of inclusive growth. There is substantial involvement of women in this Industry.

11.3 Although sericulture is considered as a subsidiary occupation, technological innovation has made it possible to take it up on an intensive scale capable of generating adequate income. It is also capable of providing continuous income to farmers. Export of Silk goods generates foreign exchange earnings to the country. The present global scenario clearly indicates enormous opportunities for the Indian silk Industry.

Raw silk production in India

11.4 About 72% of the commercial silk produced in India comes from mulberry and generally silk refers to mulberry silk. Mulberry silk comes from the silkworm, *Bombyx mori* L. that solely feeds on the leaves of mulberry plant. These silkworms are completely domesticated and reared indoors. In India, Mulberry silk is produced mainly in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jammu & Kashmir and West Bengal.

11.5 Vanya (Non-mulberry) silk is obtained from forest-based Muga and Tasar silkworms, which are wild, and domesticated Eri silkworms. The different types of Vanya silk are as follows:

11.6 **Tasar Silk:** Tasar silk is generated by the silkworm, *Antheraea mylitta*, which mainly thrives on the food plants such as Asan and Arjun. The rearings are conducted in natural conditions on the trees. Tasar silk is mainly produced in India in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Telangana. Tasar culture is the main stay for many tribal communities in India.

11.7 **Eri Silk:** Eri silk is the product of the domesticated silkworm, *Philosamia ricini* that feeds mainly on castor leaves. Eri yarn is produced in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Unlike other kinds of silk, the eri cocoons are non-reelable and therefore spun into yarn. It has natural copperish colour.

11.8 **Muga Silk:** This golden yellow coloured silk is prerogative of India. It is silk produced mainly in Assam from cocoons of silkworms belonging to saturniidae family, which are fed on Som and Soalu leaves. It has a rich golden colour.

11.9 Source of Information : The data sources of sericulture is Central Silk Board, Ministry of Textiles and its website i.e. www.csb.gov.in.

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