

CHAPTER 11

SERICULTURE

11.1 India is the second largest producer of silk in the world with an annual silk production of 26,480 MT (Provisional) in 2013-14. 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*. Among them, mulberry silk is the most popular variety, which contributes around 73.6% of the country's silk production. Sericulture is an important labour-intensive and agro-based cottage industry providing gainful occupation to around 7.85 million persons in rural and semi-urban areas in India. Of these, a sizeable number of workers belong to the economically weaker sections of society. There is substantial involvement of women in this Industry.

11.2 In India, sericulture is mostly a village-based industry providing employment opportunities to a large section of the population. 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. Silk and silk goods are very good foreign exchange earners. The present global scenario clearly indicates the enormous opportunities for the Indian silk Industry.

Central Silk Board

11.3 For the development of silk industry in India, the Central Silk Board, a statutory body, is functioning under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India with its Headquarters at Bengaluru.

The following are the important functions assigned to the Board.

- (a) Promoting the development of silk industry by such measures as it thinks fit.
- (b) Undertaking, assisting and encouraging scientific, technological and Economic Research.
- (c) Devising means for improved methods of mulberry cultivation, silkworm rearing, developing and distributing healthy silkworm seeds, improving methods of silk reeling, improving the quality and production of raw silk.
- (d) Improving the marketing of raw silk.
- (e) The collection and compilation of statistics relating to the sector.
- (f) Advising the Govt. of India on all matters relating to the development of silk industry including import and export of raw silk.

Raw silk production in India

11.4 In India, Mulberry silk is produced mainly in Karnataka, West Bengal, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh although some other States have made some progress in this direction under their development plans. These five major mulberry silk producing states collectively account for more than 80% of the total area under mulberry cultivation and 97% of raw silk production in the country. Now, as a result of growing realization, sericulture is gaining ground in non-traditional areas too.

11.5 Vanya (Non-mulberry) silk comprising Tasar, Eri and Muga are produced in Jharkhand, Chattishgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland. The different types of Vanya silk and spun silk and noil yarn are further defined 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

the states of Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Orissa, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh. 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, Bihar, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and West Bengal. Unlike other kind of silk, this cannot be reeled and hence it is only spun. It has natural copperish colour.

11.8 Muga Silk - It is silk produced only 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 Spun Silk Yarn - Yarn composed of silk filaments of lengths ranging from 1 to 8 inches produced by bleaching, dressing and spinning the silk waste which is the by-product of the raw silk reeling industry.

11.10 Noil Yarn - It is short-staple residue obtained during dressing operations in silk spinning from silk waste. It is a by-product of spun silk industry. This can be spun into Noil yarn of coarse counts.

11.11 The information/data pertaining to silk sectors cover all the states of the country. Periodicity and source of Sericulture Data are given below:

Sl. No	Particulars	Periodicity of Data	Source
1	Production	Monthly/Quarterly/Annual	Department of Sericulture (States) & Allied offices of respective silk producing state.
2	Exports/Imports	Monthly/ Annual	DGCI&S, Kolkata
3	Prices	Daily/Monthly/Quarterly/ Annual	Cocoon Market/ Silk Exchanges & Allied offices of respective silk producing state.

Highlights of the Sector

11.12 Of the total raw silk production is provisionally at 26,480 MT in 2013-14, Mulberry accounted for 73.6% (19,476 MT), Eri 16.0 % (4237 MT), Tasar 9.9% (2619 MT) and Muga 0.5% (148MT).

11.13 Among the two varieties of silk yarn produced during 2013-14, Spun silk yarn accounted for 66.4% (850 MT) and Noil yarn 33.6% (430 MT) of the total silk yarn production in the country.

11.14 The silk goods exports from India comprise mainly items of natural silk, fabrics, made-ups, readymade garments, silk carpets and silk waste. The category of silk fabrics viz., dress materials, sarees and scarves & stoles constitute the bulk of silk exports followed by readymade garments with contribution around 60% and 30%, respectively to the total silk export earnings of the country. The Indian silk goods have high export potential because of their distinctiveness and low production cost. Indian silk exports, which reach more than 190 countries, have increased over the years. The demand for Indian silk is not only in the domestic market but in global markets too. The USA, the UAE, the UK, France, Italy and Germany are the top importers of Indian silk products. Indian silk are steadily gaining greater demand in the new markets like some Asian Countries viz, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan, Latin America and Russia also.

11.15 Exports earnings increased from Rs. 2,294.05 crores in 2002-03 to Rs. 3338.35 crores in 2006-07 showing an increase of around 45.5 %. However, on account of the global financial crisis and sharp depreciation of rupee vis-à-vis the US

dollar, there was a decline in exports of silk goods to the top destinations viz., the USA and the EU. As a result, a slump in silk goods exports from the country was witnessed during XI Plan period. The exports of silk and silk goods in 2012-13 was Rs.2,303.53 Crores and indicated a decrease of 2.1% compared to exports of Rs. 2,353.33 during 2011-12. During 2013-14, provisional export earnings were reported as Rs. 2,425.16 Crores indicating a decrease of 5.3 % compared to 2012-13.