CHAPTER - V

PROBLEMS OF SERICULTURISTS IN

ANANTAPUR DISTRICT
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Though sericulture in Anantapur district is showing rapid progress during the past fifteen years, mulberry farmers are facing some problems pertaining to its organisation, marketing, finance, technology and extension. The researcher made an interview from the officials of sericulture department and sericulturists in the district. The following are the major problems.

Availability of layings:

Generally sericulturists buy layings (CBDFLS) from the government grainages and licenced seed producers. The availability of these layings is adequate round the year except in summer season. The grainages already existing are inadequate in number and often fail to meet the demand. Hence, the sericulturists obtain layings, either from nearby Karnataka State grainages or from private grainages. To meet the growing demand, grainages for local silkworm race have also to be setup. Moreover, the government had to take interest to introduce bivoltine layings for commercial rearing in this district, as no such effort has been made so far.

Shortage of labour:

Labour shortage is another problem expressed by the respondents. In spite of its employment potential, the
sericulturists are suffering from shortage of labour. 10 per cent farmers expressed that it may be because of the reason that mulberry cultivation can be done even in small segments of land holding. Hence, agriculture labour who won less than 0.20 hectares are also cultivating mulberry and silkworm rearing and thereby creating labour shortage for big farmers. The labour shortage in cultivating mulberry can be filled by introducing appropriate machinery in the mulberry fields on co-operative basis. The State Government should help farmers to overcome this problem.

Finance for investment:

Financial assistance plays an important role in promoting mulberry cultivation and rearing of cocoons. The normal sericulturist is either a small farmer or a marginal farmer with limited means. There is need to secure adequate finance for making higher investment in sericulture. Sericulturists have to borrow from other sources like friends, relatives and private money lenders at higher rates of interest. Hence, for an orderly development of sericulture, the institutional agencies should identify the special features and needs of sericulturists and the extent of finance required for fixed and working capital.
Problems of Diseases and pests of mulberry and silkworms:

There are number of diseases which affect the normal growth of mulberry. The infected leaves are not suitable for silkworm rearing. Finding out the diseases in perfect time and utilisation of the preventive methods leads to so many difficulties for the poor farmers. Hence, the Government Departments should supply the preventive medicines at lesser rates to the farmers together with the sprayers. Recently Uzy fly is causing considerable damage to silkworms leading to heavy losses to the cocoon growers. The only method of control against this fly is to prevent the entry of the fly into the rearing room by providing wire mesh of suitable size for doors, windows and ventilators. This is to be intimated to all the cocoon growers in the district.

Climatic disturbances:

Cool climatic throughout the year is a prerequisite for silkworm rearing, cocoon production and high renditta. Climatic disturbances upset the realisation of sericulture productivity. It is advised to adopt in the hot tropical climate especially during summer, new techniques like the use of air coolers, dripping of water on the rearing sheds, arranging the rearing rooms under the shade of big trees etc. The adoption of these techniques though increases the
cost of production marginally, but reduces adverse effects on the quantity and quality of cocoons and income per hectare of mulberry farm. High leaf yield from mulberry garden located in good soil with irrigation facilities may compensate for the higher cost arising out of the extreme summer climate. In any case climatic hazards add to the drudgery of silkworm rearing necessitating greater care and attention to be shown by the sericulturists.

Hence, other things being equal, hot climate is a deterrent for sericulture entrepreneurship. As sericulture is a labour-intensive enterprise, high wages that prevail in the agricultural growth centres also constitute an obstacle for sericulture expansion. Big farmers, though they possess better capacity to face the climatic hazards, may not like the increased managerial responsibility and time required to look after the sericulture. Small farmers lack resources to provide adequate facilities to counteract the hazard of severe heat during summer for silkworm rearing.

**Skilled workers:**

Unlike other crops sericulture needs special skill and techniques. There is shortage of skilled labour. The requirement of skilled labour is essential to maintain timely feeding with required quantity and quality of leaves and also
to safeguard them from pests. As sericulture is showing a progressive trend in the State and particularly in Anantapur district, the provision for the availability of skilled workers must be promoted through imparting required skills periodically by the department of sericulture in the district.

**Cocoon price fluctuations:**

During the period of survey, it was found that the price of cocoons ranged between Rs.60 and Rs.80 per kilogram of cocoons. The sericulturists are forced to sell the cocoons within ninth and tenth day for the price prevailing in the market undermining their income. In addition to this, the reelars also have the obligation to undertake reeling work immediately. To obviate these pressures, stifling units can be established by the government or private entrepreneurs. So that the cocoons may be stream stifled making the worm die in the cocoon. The cocoons can be preserved for a long time extending over months. This type of processing and preservation helps the sericulturists to realise better prices. The increase in the output of cocoons and raw silk should not be allowed to decrease the price of cocoons, through manipulation by the middle men. Fixation of cocoon and raw silk floor price is an essential ingredient of a package policy necessary to sustain the growth of sericulture in the State.
Inadequate market facilities:

Lack of proper marketing facilities constitute the main obstacle for the rapid development of sericulture in the district. Sericulturists have to send the cocoons to the Karnataka State every time for disposal. In the existing practice, in Karnataka regulated markets, cocoons are purchased by dealers in an open auction system in a visual examination of the lots. Due regard is not paid to the quality of cocoons anywhere. The problems which sericulturist are facing in the Karnataka markets are mostly in the loss of sample cocoons supplied to the brokers, absence of proper weighing and unnecessary deduction of certain percentage on the plea that the produce is of inferior quantity. Moreover, the market costs vary from place to place depending on the distance and problems of transport.

At present there are five regulated markets in the district one each at Kadiri, Hindupur, Dharmavaram, Penukonda and Anantapur. Sericulturists from other mandals have to bring the cocoons to these markets facing difficulties of transportation, physical strain etc. Some of the rearers take the cocoons to Karnataka to get fair prices, so efficient marketing organisation either through regulated markets or private dealers is an important necessity to be tackled on
priority basis in building up an appropriate structure, creation of proper marketing facilities economise the cost of cocoon transportation and eradicates the incidental difficulties, sufficient number of local markets may stimulate reeling activity and thereby promotes silk industry, in the region so as to generate more income and employment in the district.

**Extension service:**

The sericulture department field officers are required to pay frequent visits to the sericulturists to guide them in their work, to check diseases as and when they are detected and to direct them to cultivate better variety of mulberry with proper application of manure and fertilizer and watering and to make them adopt cross breed races of silkworms and better methods of rearing. Speedy growth of sericulture postulates intensive extension service to facilitate healthy innovation. The survey reveals that only 36.67 per cent of sericulturists could get access to the departmental extension service. Availability of adequate extension staff is one requirement and their dedicated service is most essential. In any case, speedy growth of sericulture involving innovations on the part of farmers will not be feasible without the establishment of a competent extension service.
department which has to enlighten and advise the small farmers.

Conclusion:

As sericulture in the district is leading towards prosperity, the problems expressed by the farmers hinder the progress of sericulture. New farmers may hesitate to take up this activity, because of these problems involved. Hence, the department of sericulture should pay adequate attention to solve these problems. Otherwise, it will affect the development of sericulture in the district and those who have already engaged in sericulture activity may withdraw and switchover to the cultivation of other crops the yield of which may not be as increasing as that of the sericulture.