CHAPTER V

PROBLEMS OF SERICULTURISTS IN TUMKUR DISTRICT
Sericulture industry has been growing very rapidly during last 15 years in Tumkur district as well as in Pavagada taluk. But the farmers, who are engaged in sericulture activities, are facing some problems. The following are the major problems.

(1) Labour Problem

Shortage of labour is an important problem in this area. Inspite of its employment potential, the sericulturist is suffering from shortage of labour. Mulberry cultivation can be done even in small segments of land. The small farmers are also cultivating mulberry, therefore, it has created scarcity of labour problem. At the same time the major commercial crop in Pavagada taluk is
groundnut, coconut in Tiptur, C.N. Halli, Turuvekere taluks and arecanut in Sira, Gubbi Taluks. As such harvesting of these crops absorb more labour, consequencing upon shortage of labour required to work in the sericulture sector.

(2) Low rainfall:

Owing to uncertainty and low rate of rainfall in this area the mulberry cultivation was not developed as expected. Though the mulberry cultivation requires less quantity of water, it is not available, especially during summer. During the rainy season the area under mulberry was increasing, but after rainy season the water level in open wells would go down and the farmers are forced to decrease the area under mulberry. There is no canal facility in this area. The Government of Karnataka is assured to provide canal water to irrigate this area, but no progress has been made in this regard.

(3) Financial Problems:

Finance play an important role in promoting cultivation of mulberry and rearing of cocoons. The normal sericulturist is either a small farmer or a marginal farmer with limited financial resources. There is a need to secure adequate finances for making investments in sericulture. Majority farmers in Pavagada are below the poverty line. They have to borrow money from private
moneylenders at higher rate of interest which would be in the region of 24 to 36 per cent per annum. Construction of rearing sheds purchase of rearing equipments such as, DFLs, nets pesticides coolers, chawkis etc., and for other require capital, the lack it forced the sericulturists raise loans from local money lenders who exploit them.

(4) Availability of Layings

Generally sericulturists buy layings from the Government grainages and from licenced seed producers. The availability of these layings is in-adequate in the district. Though the Government permitted the private licenced persons to produce layings and they fail to meet the demand. Hence they have to pay higher prices for the layings. There is a need to increase the supply of quality layings and they are to be made available at reasonal prices.

(5) Problems of diseases and pests to mulberry and to silk worms

There are a number of diseases that affect the normal growth of mulberry. The infected leaves are not suitable for silk worms rearing. Failure to find out the diseases right in time and utilisation of the preventive methods lead to so many difficulties for the illiterate and poor farmers in the taluk. As a result the sericulturists incur often crop loss.
(6) Climatic Disturbances:

Climatic disturbances upset the realisation of sericulture productivity. Cool climatic throughout the year is a prerequisite for silk worm rearing. Cocoon production and high rate of returns, other things being equal, hot climate is a deterrent for sericulture entrepreneurship. As sericulture is a labour intensive enterprise, high wages prevail in the agricultural growth centres also constitute an obstacle for sericulture expansion. Big farmers, though they possess better capacity of 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 hazards of severe heat during summer for silk worm rearing.

(7) Lack of skilled labour

There is an acute shortage of skilled labour which is not allowing the sericulture sector to make rapid strides in the district, including Pavagada taluk. Many a farmer in the taluk, had suffered crop(s) losses in the past. However, the Department of sericulture has been rendering assistance to arrest the crop losses. But lack of sufficient field personnel, it was experienced that the department could not effectively monitor the entire district.
(8) Inadequate market facilities

It constitute the major obstacle for the development of the industry in the district. There is the only one state Government run cocoon market the district Head-quarter at Tumkur. Lack of more number of bidders in the markets, the rearers are not able to get better prices for their cocoons. As such the cocoon producers are forced to go to far off markets of Ramanagaram and Mysore to sell their cocoons. It is more inconvenient to the illiterate sericulturists to market mulberry cocoons.

(9) Lack of transport

The taluk of Pavagada is not connected with the railway line. In addition to it, there are not adequate number of government buses plying in the rural areas to facilitate the sericulturists to conveniently transport cocoons to the far of markets such as, Bangalore, Mysore and Kolar. Currently, the sericulturists are depending on the private bus services. The private bus owners are rather too heavy collecting freight charges for cocoon bags.
(10) Cocoon price fluctuations

The sericulturists are forced to sell the cocoons within 9th to 10th day for the price prevailing in the markets. In addition to this, the reelers are also have the obligation to undertake reeling work immediately. It causes for fluctuations in prices of cocoons and it affects the feeling of the sericulturists.

(11) Lack of extension services

It is reported that the Department of Sericulture, both at the district and at the taluk level lacks efficient administration of tone up the productivity of quality cocoons. There are some obstacles. There is political interference in the functioning of the Department's routine works. This, as many reported, came in the way of providing extension of services to improve the productivity of silk in the district.

(12) Lack of reeling units

Since there are no cocoon markets within the district of Tumkur, the silk reeling units are conspicuous by their absence. Almost all sericulturist market cocoons in the Ramnagar market, silk reeling units have been developed in and around Bangalore. In fact, silk reeling units from the pivot of the entire silk industry for the cocoons are not boiled within the time limit
to draw silk thread, the silk worms in cocoons come out cutting across the cocoons they have build around themselves rendering the cocoons waste and they are of no use to draw unbroken thread.

(13) Other problems

The illiterate farmers who do not seemed to have proper idea regarding weights and measures used in market cocoons and often get cheated by the middlemen. The sericulturists were exploited by the un-necessary deductions of certain percentage in the monetary proceeds due for them; delay in the payment of money in the markets by bidders; road robberies; and thefts are other problems faced by the sericulturist in this area.