

Constraints in sericulture enterprise

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ABSTRACT

Sericulture is a viable cottage industry catering to the economically small and marginal families and hence this enterprise is well accepted as an instrument for rural development. The present study was carried out in Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu with 120 sericulturists to assess the constraints encountered by them in sericulture. The major constraints experienced by the respondents in mulberry cultivation were high labour cost, labour scarcity, inadequate water supply during summer, pest and disease attack, non-availability of FYM and lack of awareness about application of bio-fertilizer. Non-availability of skilled labourers, lack of awareness on maintenance and regulation of room temperature, aeration and sunlight and lack of knowledge about disinfectants were the major constraints expressed by the respondent in silkworm rearing. The constraints experienced by respondents in marketing of cocoons were fluctuation in market price, distant location of market, more expenditure on transport and delayed payment from buyers.

Key words : Sericulture, Mulberry cultivation, Silkworm rearing, Constraints.

INTRODUCTION

Sericulture plays a predominant role in shaping the economic destiny of the rural poor. As an agro-based cottage industry, sericulture fits very well in India's rural structure, where agriculture continues to be the main occupation. The pursuit of sericulture offers gainful subsidiary employment to the rural poor. It is not only labour intensive but also an income levelling industry and plays a unique role in transferring wealth from richer sections of the society to the poor. It rightly fits in to the socio-economic structure of the rural areas and can serve as an effective tool for rural reconstruction benefiting the weaker sections of the society. The most important consideration is the effective utilization of family labour.

For the countries like India, with farming base, high population and small holdings, sericulture is a boon and tailor-made enterprise. Because of its small initial investment, short gestation period, labour intensiveness and high domestic demand, this could be properly exploited for rural development since sericulture has both on farm and non-farm activities and also decentralised for bringing a desired socio-economic change, at village level. This provides ample opportunity for increased employability of human resource.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Dharmapuri District of Tamil Nadu as the District has nearly 18, 700 farmers who are engaged in sericulture activities and it

constitute first rank in the production of cocoons (3900 metric tonnes) among the districts of Tamil Nadu. Two blocks Pennagaram and Dharmapuri were chosen based on the maximum population of sericulturists. In both of these blocks, three villages each were selected again considering the maximum population criteria. A sample of 120 sericulturists was selected by following the proportionate random sampling procedure. The possible constraints were identified in consultation with sericulturists of non-sample area, functionaries of State Department of Sericulture and based on available literature. The respondents were asked to mention the constraints they experienced in mulberry cultivation, silkworm rearing and marketing of cocoons. Based on the frequency, the constraints were ranked and interpreted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Constraints in mulberry cultivation :

'High labour cost' and labour scarcity' were the constraints experienced by majority of the respondents (95.00 per cent and 93.33 per cent) (Table 1). Harvesting of mulberry leaves is a labour intensive operation and require frequent and more number of harvest. At present labour scarcity is a common problem due to their diversified employment opportunities. Eventhough they are available, they have to be paid with higher wages and hence majority of the respondents reported those as major constraints.

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