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SERICULTURE AS A VERSATILE ENTERPRISE

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Abstract

In this article the authors have just tried to bring the focus of the readers towards the importance of sericulture, as now a days being self-dependent is the moto for a successful life. In the article the versatility of the sericultural industry has been focused as it helps to empower the women community of the society as well as helps in the upliftment of the rural population. When small scale cottage industries will develop in the rural areas, the migration of the youth towards the urban can also be checked. The multiple use of mulberry plants and the silkworms make it a very profitable source of income. Thus, sericulture can be a blessing for the farmers if focussed properly.

Introduction

Sericulture is an Agro-based enterprise which is labour intensive as it is a combination of both agriculture-based work as well as industrial work. In the agriculture-based work there are lot of activities involved such as growing of food plants with proper care and management. Similarly, in industry-based work rearing of silkworms and spinning od cocoons are the main activities. One of the best fascinating features of sericulture is that it is multidisciplinary in nature. Moreover, women participate in the activities of this work, so they enhance or help to build up the socio-economic status of the rural community, by spreading awareness, demonstrating the techniques involved in all the activities starting from mulberry leaf production, cocoon production, silkworm egg production, silk reeling warp and weft making, printing and dying, weaving, finishing, garment designing, marketing etc.

Silk industry in India (Central silk Board, 2013)

The silkworm entry background for India is always a mystery. There are so many evidences of use of silk in the ancient times. But the documentation of these records is not well maintained as exact date or time of the start of this sericulture is difficult to mention. Systematic silkworm stock breeding and maintenance started in 19th century. Earlier only pure races were reared, hybrid silkworm rearing only started later. Sericulture provides employment opportunities, improvement in the economic development hence, uplifting the rural community (Suryanarayana and Srivastava, 2005; Rao, 2007).

Importance of sericulture (Sharma and Kapoor, 2020)

- Provide an exceptionally good quality of various silk.
- The mulberry fruits can provide lot of vitamin and minerals.
- Leaves, roots etc can be crushed and used for its herbal and medicinal properties.
- The soft wood can be used to make toys or few sport items.
- The plantation of mulberry is mostly done by stem cutting so planting seedlings may also help to prevent soil erosion.
- Eri pupae is consumed by few tribes as they are rich source of protein.
- The pupal case of silkworms is used in cosmetics as it contains essential oils.

Eco-friendly nature (Sharma and Kapoor, 2020)

Sericulture is very eco-friendly in nature because of the nature of the crop. The mulberry plants which are the host for silkworm are perennial in nature, so the soil need not to be opened frequently. The buy products are extremely useful along with the silk fibres. The pests and diseases can be managed well with the help of bio-control agents. The maintenance of the rearing houses is also very well done by using organic and safe chemicals. The perennial crop can be grown and cultivated in a wide range of soil and climate. The integration of sericulture can be done with poultry, horticulture crops and other plantation crops for a resources sustainable agricultural system. Thus, sericulture can be also considered as a versatile or multipurpose enterprise.

Mulberry silkworm is mainly reared in 5 important states of our country:

Karnataka- Mysore silk
Andhra Pradesh- APS105×APS126 (Bivoltine)
Assam- CSR46×CSR47 (Bivoltine)
West Bengal- PM×C110
Tamil Nadu- APS45×APS12 (Bivoltine)

By-products of mulberry silkworm (www.indiastudychannel.com)

1. Garlands can be prepared from the shells of the pupae that can be stored after out the silk filament.
2. In the soap manufacturing industries, the oil is extracted from the dead pupae.
3. The exuviae that is remained after oil extraction is used in poultry feed which are rich source of vitamin E and K.
4. The excreta of silkworm are rich in organic matter and can be used to feed fish.
5. Mulberry wine is also extremely popular among the wine lovers.
6. Few sports items and toys can also be prepared using the woody stems of mulberry plants.

Conclusion

The sericulture industry in India is incredibly old, since the ancient times people are fond of silk garments. If more focus can be put forward in a very systematic way sericulture can result into a booming industry. Many states are contributing towards the manufacturing of different silk clothes, earlier only indigenous varieties were grown or reared, but now hybrid is also in fashion, multipurpose nature of silkworms and the host plants also contributes towards the economy of the country.

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