

Research Article

PLANNING FOR POTENTIAL, CONSTRAINTS AND RESOURCE USE FOR SERICULTURE AND SILK INDUSTRY SUSTAINABILITY IN DHAR BLOCK OF PATHANKOT DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Sericulture is a short gestation period labour intensive enterprise which can go a long way in promoting inclusive growth and alleviating poverty in rural areas. Socio economic status of trained sericulture farmers who owned a separate silk worm rearing house, better tools and equipments, adequate mulberry leaves and access to extension workers and cocoon market was higher as compared to those who did not have any training. Sericulture provides livelihood to some 8000 rural families spread over 1400 villages in Dhar Block area of Pathankot District. Currently, sericulture industry contributes state domestic product by sale of silk cocoons and raw silk. The total existing potential is estimated for production of 900 metric tons of silk cocoons against the current production of 150 metric tons and potential of raw silk production is estimated for 120 metric tons against the current level of 18 metric tons. In view of a very conducive climate, this is all the more necessary that the sericulture as an important economic activity is looked upon as an instrument of desirable change in the rural area of the state. The paper indicates current scenario, identifies the state's existing potential and constraints and suggests future planning for the development of sericulture & silk industry in the state. This paper also contribute improve the poor condition of that area by giving employment.

Keywords: Cocoon, Dhar Block, Sericulturist, Silk Industry etc.

INTRODUCTION

Sericulture is a short gestation period labour intensive enterprise which can go a long way in promoting inclusive growth and alleviating poverty in rural areas. Socio economic status of trained sericulture farmers who owned a separate silk worm rearing house, better tools and equipments, adequate mulberry leaves and access to extension workers and cocoon market was higher as compared to those who did not have any training (Kulshrestha, 1999). Dhar Block has scattered villages in the rural hill areas that have plenty of unutilized land that was not useful for traditional crops. The villagers are small land holders and do not have regular income. The lower Himalayan zones foot-hills of Shivalik are congenial for the growth of mulberry as well as the rearing of silkworms for the production of silk-cocoons (Kulshrestha, 1999). The region is best suited for a bivoltine silk producing area and has a favorable Climate to produce quality bivoltine cocoons.

Dhar Block is important for the quality bivoltine silk cocoons it produces. Presently, the industry contributes annually to the district domestic product by sale of silk-cocoons. Sericulture not only generates employment to the rural people of that area but also best utilize the wasteland (Kulshrestha, 1999). The mulberry tree, *Morus alba* which is the basic food of the silkworm *bombyx mori* L existed in the flora of this area.

The department has also been introducing high leaf yielding mulberry varieties for plantation to promote sericulture. Sericulture has developed as an important village industry in this district and has been adopted as a subsidiary occupation to the income of the rural people.

Currently, sericulture is being practiced as a subsidiary occupation by some 8000 sericulture families spread over in about 40 villages in Dhar Block area. The full potential of sericulture is yet to be achieved in this area of foot hill Shivalik. The present paper identifies potential including constraints and suggests resource use future planning for the sericulture industry in Dhar Block and generate employment of that area (Chauhan and Kulshrestha, 2000).

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sericulture in Dhar Block were classified into five categories according to availability of existing mulberry wealth with reference to different development indicators of sericulture like

- (1) Mulberry area is used to waste land available.
- (2) Silk cocoons productivity and silkworm seed consumption.
- (3) Silk cocoon productivity per Sericulturist' family.
- (4) Number of sericulture families per thousand rural households.
- (5) Overall share in silk cocoon production.

Attainment of a value of more than 25 percent above the state average by a district was classified as very level of potential/ development for that particular district, whereas a value up to 25 percent has been termed as 'high' level of development (Kulshrestha, 2000). Likewise, attainment of value of up to 25 percent below the state average and that of more than 25 percent below the state average have been termed as moderate and low levels of development respectively. Cities were classified as very highly (VH); highly (H) and moderately (M) potential for sericulture development have been taken into consideration for estimating the existing potential on account of production under sericulture industry (Kulshrestha, 2000).

On the basis of existing average percentage of mulberry plantation against the total wastelands available with the farmers in so classified Blocks, prospective potential areas for mulberry tree plantation for the districts classified very high and moderate was estimated for coverage of wastelands available in that particular district.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dhar Kala, Dunera, Lahroon, dorung khad, Narianpur, Thar uparla, Rohg and Dhar Khurd are some important villages of that area.

Rest of the villages fall in low developed areas with respect to the indicators of sericulture development (Chauhan and Kulshrestha, 2000). The estimated village wise existing potential on the basis of sericulture parameter is presented in given table 1.

Thus, the total current potential is estimated for production of 900 metric tons of silk cocoons against the current production of 150 metric tons and potential of raw silk production is estimated for 100 metric tons as against the current production level of 18 metric tons as per conversion ratio (Sujathamma and Neeraja, 2013).

Consumption of silkworm seed per sericulture's household and productivity of cocoons are further expected to increase through management practices.

The stakeholders therefore are suggested to involve another families against families presently engaged in sericulture occupation. An additional arable wasteland of hectare can be brought under mulberry tree plantation.

An annual growth rate of at least 19.7 percent in silk cocoon production reaching to the production level to 900 metric tons per year can be targeted (Kulshrestha, 2002).

It is estimated that a production of 120 metric tons raw silk can be achieved by appropriate inputs and strategic planning. The sericulture & silk industry sector can target to increase from present level, by augmenting production and value addition. This sector is expected to generate maximum men-years employment per annum.

Development of sericulture in the hilly area of Punjab state is most advantageous because of its ecological sustainability, economic-viability and social necessity as it can improve the ecology of foot hill area besides providing high cash returns with small investment in short period. Sericulture is beneficial to small landholders as, it gives them regular income. It is a profit giving occupation with low investments in period.

Mulberry is ideal tree species for economic management of unutilized wasteland (Sujathamma and Neeraja, 2013). It helps the maintenance of biological diversity and does not complete with other farming systems out for resources.

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Table 1: District wise Current Annual Potential of Production under Sericulture & Silk Industry in Dhar Block District Pathankot Punjab

S. N	Districts	Mulberry Tree Plantation Area (in Hect.)	Sericulturists' Households (in Nos.)	Silkworm Seed Consumption (in Ounces)	Silk Cocoons Production (in Tons.)	Raw Silk Production (in Tons)
1.	Dhar Kalan	375	4700	3750	150	17
2.	Dunera	75	900	750	30	03
3.	Lahroon	250	3125	2500	100	11
4.	Dhar Khurd	500	6250	5000	200	21
5.	Dorung Khad	375	4700	3750	150	17
6.	Rohg	350	4350	3500	140	16
7.	Narianpur	175	2200	1750	70	08
8.	Thar uparla	150	1900	1500	60	07
9.	Total	2250	28125	22500	900	100
	Potential	525	8000	3800	150	18*
	Current Achievements % Change	328.6%	257.6%	492%	500%	567%

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