



## Problems and prospects of sericulture women entrepreneurs in Andhra Pradesh: An analytical study

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### Abstract

The agriculture plays an important role in the economy, now the GDP declining from 1991. Its share in overall GDP fell from 30 per cent in the early nineties, to below 17.5 per cent in 2006; 18.3 per cent in 2013-14 and during 2015-2016 the agricultural sector contributed to 17.4 per cent to the India GDP. The women play a vital role in agricultural management and production activities in addition to their responsibilities at home and they are the backbone of the agricultural workforce. The women are involved in all aspects of agriculture and allied other activities, enterprises from land preparation to processing and marketing, and help generate local employment and improve rural incomes. Globally, the Asia is regarded as the main producer of silk as it produces over 95 per cent of the total global output. The bulk of it is produced in China, India, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Japan, Brazil, Vietnam and North Korea. The sericulture provides scope for the direct involvement of women in the process of production and decision making for improving their economic conditions and it enables them to gain greater recognition and status in the family and society. The women engaged in sericulture activities along with agriculture in Anantapur and Chittoor districts were chosen for the study. The objectives are to socio-economic conditions of sericulture women entrepreneurs; to identify the reasons and factors influenced women to venture into sericulture entrepreneurs and to problems faced by women entrepreneurs in sericulture. The study is random sampling method followed. The present study is based on an exclusive interview method and the schedules has been prepared and canvassed for the collection of data.

**Keywords:** agriculture plays, sericulture, GDP

### Introduction

The agriculture plays an important role in the economy, now the GDP declining from 1991. Its share in overall GDP fell from 30 per cent in the early nineties, to below 17.5 per cent in 2006; 18.3 per cent in 2013-14 and during 2015-2016 the agricultural sector contributed to 17.4 per cent to the India GDP. Despite declining share of agriculture in the economy, majority of workforce continue to depend on agricultural sector for employment and in rural areas as nearly 75 per cent of rural population is employed in the sector. The agro-processing industry in India is increasingly seen as a potential source for driving rural economy as it brings synergy between industry and agriculture.

The women play a vital role in agricultural management and production activities in addition to their responsibilities at home and they are the backbone of the agricultural workforce. The women are involved in all aspects of agriculture and allied other activities, enterprises from land preparation to processing and marketing. These women, despite the fact that they are performing several farm activities, their roles have been over looked by agriculturists and policy makers. A major reason for the failure of developmental planning lies in treating women as end products rather than agents of changes. A substantial part of this mystification has occurred because rural women are treated as farmers wives and not as farm-women. The agro-processing is defined as set of techno-economic activities, applied to all the produces, originating from agricultural farm, livestock, aquaculture sources and

forests for their conservation, handling and value-addition to make them usable as food, feed, fiber, fuel or industrial raw materials. The agro-processing sector has experienced expansion during last five decades, starting with a handful of facilities which were mainly operating at domestic/cottage level. The scope of the agro-processing industry, thus, encompasses all operations from the stage of harvest till the material reaches the end users in the desired form, packaging, quantity, quality and price.

Appreciably of late agro processing has been recognized as the sunrise sector of the Indian economy in view of its large potential for growth and likely socio-economic impact specifically on employment and income generation. Some estimates suggest that in developed countries, up to 14 per cent of the total work force is engaged in agro-processing sector directly or indirectly. But, in India, only about 3 per cent of the work force finds employment in this sector revealing it's under developed state and vast untapped potential for employment. In properly developed agro-processing sector can make India a major player at the global level for marketing and supply of processed food, feed and a wide range of other plant and animal products. The Agro-Processing Industries (APIs) based on both food-products and agro non-food products are faced with various constraints/problems. This will help generate local employment and improve rural incomes. The examples ranged from local co-operative managed by women groups to the large number of dairy co-operatives, which have helped to

make a clear impact on the role of private sector increasing the producers share in the consumers rupee by acting as price leaders in the market in most of the States.

### **Problems faced by Agro Process Industry (API)**

The Indian's context identified earlier relating to impediments of growth and prospects of APIs, did not adequately address the real problems and issues are to be urgently taken care of have been explained below:

- The inter-regional disparities in the development of the agro-processing industries have to be investigated. In particular, the constraints that have led to the location/development of the large scale agro-processing industries in regions away from the raw-material production centers need to be studied for devising the appropriate policies and strategies for promoting balanced development of the sector.
- To improve the productivity of the quality produce of the farmers' level and the productivity and efficiency of the agro-processing industry at the processors level and what type of marketing systems need to be adopted to reduce the costs and margins from the processor to the consumer level.
- What steps or policies need to be followed to improve capacity utilization which lagging far behind the capacity available in the agro-processing sector.
- The different models of developing the organized markets and market systems for improving the productivity of the agro-processing industry need to be focused and the strategies for developing the aggressive marketing system for agro-processed products.
- The types of specific public and private capital formation in the agro processing sector need to be promoted to improve the backward and forward linkages and increase the effectiveness of the multiplier effects.
- How to develop agro-processing centres or export zones, etc., with what type of infrastructure, investment, institutions and incentives to capitalize upon the economics of scale, cut down costs, create quality products with brand images, etc., especially to conform to the sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards.

### **Sericulture in India**

Globally, the Asia is regarded as the main producer of silk as it produces over 95 per cent of the total global output. The bulk of it is produced in China, India, Uzbekistan, Thailand, Japan, Brazil, Vietnam and North Korea. The China is first place in the production of raw silk, after that the India has the second place in the raw silk producer in the world as it contributes about 21 per cent to the total world raw silk production, with an annual silk production 28708 Metric Tons in 2014-15, 28523 Metric Tons in 2015-16 and 30265 Metric Tons in 2016-17. The sericulture and silk textiles industry is one of the major sub-sectors comprising the textiles sector. The sericulture is an agro-based labour intensive industry and refers to the mass-scale rearing of silk producing organisms in order to obtain silk. The production process consists of a long chain of interdependent and specialized operations. The major activities involved in a sericulture industry are:

- The cultivation of silkworm food plants;

- The rearing of silkworms for the production of raw silk;
- The reeling the cocoons for unwinding the silk filament; and
- Other post-cocoon processes such as twisting, dyeing, weaving, printing and finishing.

In India, the sericulture is a village-based industry practiced in about 53,814 villages and provides employment to about 6 million people moreover it is capable of providing continuous income to farmers. The sericulture suits both marginal and small scale land holders because of its low investments, high assured returns, short gestation period, rich opportunities for enhancement of income and creation of family employment round the year. In India, due to favorable climatic conditions, mulberry is cultivated mainly in five states, viz., Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir. These five States collectively account for 95 per cent of the total area under mulberry cultivation and 95 per cent of raw silk production in the country. The Andhra Pradesh occupies fourth position in the country in silk production and now it is working with an aim to occupy third position. In Andhra Pradesh mainly cultivated districts are Anantapur (First place) and Chittoor (second place), Kurnool (Third place) and Prakasam (Fourth Place) districts, and partially the average cultivated in Kadapa, East Godavari, West Godavari and Guntur districts. The annual silk production in Andhra Pradesh is 5970 Metric Tons during 2016-17 with area under mulberry are 85682.19 acres.

In developing countries like India, agriculture and agro based industries play a crucial role in the improvement of rural economy. The limited availability of land, the limited cash returns and agriculture being confined to one or two seasons in the year, have made villages to look for supporting rural industries, such as sericulture. In the sericulture is an occupation by and for women because women form more than 60 per cent of the workforce and 80 per cent of silk is consumed by them. The women constitute over 60 per cent of those employed in down-stream activities of sericulture in the country. The sericulture can generate employment up to 11 persons for every kg of raw silk produced. It is worked out that about 2,575 women work days comprising about 60 percent are generated per annum out of a total of about 4,225 work days in all the activities in sericulture per hectare of irrigated mulberry. The sericulture provides scope for the direct involvement of women in the process of production and decision making for improving their economic conditions and it enables them to gain greater recognition and status in the family and society. The sericulture thus provides rewarding occupation to women in the rural areas in India. The study the economic conditions of sericulture women, the identify the reasons and factors influenced women to venture into sericulture and understand the problems faced by women entrepreneurs and their participation in sericulture entrepreneurs. The women engaged in sericulture activities along with agriculture in Anantapur and Chittoor districts respectively of Andhra Pradesh were chosen for the study. The objectives are:

### **Objectives**

- To socio-economic conditions of sericulture women entrepreneurs in Anantapur and Chittoor districts;

- To identify the reasons and factors influenced women to venture into sericulture entrepreneurs in the study area; and
- To problems faced by women entrepreneurs in sericulture in the study area.

The study in undertaken to understand the participation of women in sericulture, factors which influenced them to venture into sericulture and the problems faced by them while starting and promoting the business. The study is random

sampling method followed. A total of 300 women sericulture entrepreneur in Anantapur and Chittoor districts were taken as the samples for the study. The present study is based on an exclusive interview method and the schedules has been prepared and canvassed for the collection of data. The secondary data were collected from various books, journals and magazines. The collected data were analyzed with averages and percentages. The socio-economic conditions of sericulture women entrepreneurs are presented in Table –1.

**Table 1:** Social Profiles of Sericulture Women Entrepreneurs in Andhra Pradesh

1		2		3		4	
Caste	Number	Age	Number	Education	Number	Family Size	Number
OC	82 (27.33)	Below 25	34 (11.33)	Illiterates	118 (39.33)	Small	123 (41)
BC	127 (42.33)	25-35	69 (23)	Primary Level	65 (21.67)	Medium	116 (38.67)
SC	65 (21.67)	35-45	123 (41)	Secondary Level	99 (33)	Large	61 (20.33)
ST	26 (8.67)	Above 45	74 (24.67)	Higher Level	18 (6)	Total	300 (100)
TOTAL	300(100)	Total	300 (100)	Total	300 (100)		

Source: Field Data

The Table-1 shows that 42.33 per cent of the respondents belong to backward castes, 27.33 per cent belong to the forward caste, 21.67 per cent belong to schedule caste and the remaining 8.67 per cent were from schedule tribes. In age group levels observed that the majority of the respondents were in the age group of 35-45 accounting for 41 per cent, 11.33 per cent are in the age group below 25, 23 per cent are in 25-35 age group and 24.67 per cent are in above 45, the most of the respondents are (41 per cent) between 35-45 years age group in the study area. In the respondents of the

educational levels observed that 21.67 per cent of the respondents were completed primary level education, while 39.33 per cent was in illiterate group. However, secondary educated respondents are 33 per cent and 6 per cent of respondents are completed up to higher education. In the size of the families, majority of them are (41 per cent) are small size families while 38.67 per cent are medium size families, whereas 20.33 per cent are belong to large size families in the study area. The occupational status and incomes of women sericulture entrepreneurial farmers are presented in Table-2.

**Table 2:** Occupational and Income levels of Sericulture Women Entrepreneurial in Andhra Pradesh

Occupational level	No	Income level (Rs.)	No
Agricultural labour	121(40.33)	Below 25,000	42(14)
House wives	97(32.33)	25,000-50,000	97(32.33)
Private employees	36(12)	50,000-75,000	129(43)
Business	29(9.66)	75,000-1,00,000	23(7.66)
Other Professionals	17(5.66)	Above 1,00,000	9(3)
TOTAL	300(100)		300(100)

Source: Field Data

From the Table-2 reveals that the occupational levels of the women entrepreneurial who engaged in sericulture are 40.33 per cent of agriculture labour followed by House wives (32.33 per cent), 12 per cent belong to private employees, 9.66 per cent belongs to business and other professionals (5.66 per cent) in the study area. The income levels of the women entrepreneurs who earn below are 14 per cent in below Rs.25,

000/-, while 32.33 per cent earn between Rs. 25,000/- to Rs.50, 000/-,43 per cent of them earn between Rs.50,000/- to Rs.75,000/-, 7.66 per cent earn between Rs. 75,000/- to Rs.1,00,000/- and 3 per cent of them earn above Rs.1,00,000/-. The motivational factors to start sericulture business and reasons for starting sericulture business are presented in Table-3.

**Table 3:** Motivational Factors to Start Sericulture and Reasons for Starting Sericulture Entrepreneurs in Andhra Pradesh

1			2	
S. No	Motivational Factors	No	Reasons for Starting Sericulture Business	No
1	Friends and relatives	81(27)	High net income	19(6.33)
2	Awareness programme	34(11.33)	To do independent business	74 (24.66)
3	Field officer	5(1.66)	Economic status will be increased	49(16.33)
4	Motivated by seminar	4(1.33)	Full employment for the family members	43(14.33)
5	Encouraging by parents	77 (25.66)	Low investment	36(12)
6	Previous knowledge of industry	11(3.66)	Suitable occupation for small farmers	19(6.33)
7	To Gain economic social Status	57 (19)	Availability of skilled labour	7(2.33)
8	Subsides and incentive offered by the Government	26(8.66)	Marketing facilities	24(8)
9	Motivated by magazine	5(1.66)	Labour and transport facility	29(9.66)
	Total	300(100)	Total	300(100)

Source: Field Data

From the Table-3 observed that, the majority of the respondents who started sericulture is motivated by friends and relatives (27 per cent) followed by encouraging by parents (25.66 per cent), to gain economic social status (19 per cent), to awareness programme (11.33 per cent), to subsidies and incentive offered by the Government (8.66 per cent), the previous knowledge of the industry (3.66 per cent), by field officer (1.66 per cent), by motivated by magazine is (1.66 per cent) and the motivated by seminar (1.33 per cent) in the study area. The major reasons for stating the entrepreneurs given by

the respondents are high net income (6.33 per cent), to do independent business (24.66 per cent), to economic status will be increased (16.33 per cent), to full employment for the family members (14.33 per cent), the low investment (12 per cent), to suitable occupation for small farmers (6.33 per cent), to availability of skilled labour force (2.33 per cent), the marketing facilities (8 per cent), labour and transport facilities(9.66 per cent) are the other reasons given by them. The women sericulture entrepreneurs faced the following problems which are given in the Table-4.

**Table 4:** Problems faced at the time of Promoting Sericulture Business in Andhra Pradesh

S. No	Problems	No
1	Financial problems	78(26)
2	Labour problems	99(33)
3	Natural problems	39(13)
4	Technical problems	43(14.33)
5	Administrative problems	27(9)
6	Other problems	14(4.66)
	Total	300(100)

Source: Field Data

The Table-4 indicates that the majorly 33 per cent of the respondents face labour problems at the time of promoting sericulture, followed by 26 per cent of the respondents facing financial problems, natural problems (13 per cent), technical problems (14.33 per cent), administrative problems (9 per cent) and 4.66 per cent of the respondents face other problems like lack of research and innovation, subsidiary activities, and

lack of quality production in the study area. The opinion regarding the growth in sericulture business, problems faced by women entrepreneurs in sericulture business, time spend by women entrepreneurs in sericulture activity and respondents priority for opting Government subsidies and Government subsidy satisfaction levels are presented in Table-5.

**Table 5:** Opinion of Women Sericulture Entrepreneurs in Andhra Pradesh

Growth in Sericulture	No	Problems Faced	No	Time spend	No	Government Subsidies	No	Satisfaction level of Government Subsidies	No
Highly Satisfied	105(35)	Lack of time	98(32.66)	0-3 Hours	87(29)	Silkworm rearing sheds	55(18.33)	Highly Satisfied	114(38)
Satisfied	126(42)	Heavy work load	121(40.33)	3-6 Hours	174(58)	Water facility	29(9.66)	Satisfied	135(45)
Dissatisfied	69(23)	Physical problems	47(15.66)	above 6 Hours	39(13)	Drip irrigation	61(20.33)	Dissatisfied	51(17)
Total	300 (100)	Other problems	34(11.33)	Total	300 (100)	Plant maintenance	39(13)	Total	300 (100)
		Total	300 (100)			Diseases control measures	25(8.33)		
						Rearing equipment	26(8.66)		
						Mulberry cultivation	65(21.66)		
						Total	300(100)		

Source: Field Survey

From the Table-5, reveals that 42 per cent of the respondents are highly satisfied followed by 35 per cent of the respondents satisfied with their growth in sericulture business and remaining 23 per cent of the respondents are dissatisfied regarding their growth in sericulture business in the study area. The heavy work load is one of problem faced by most (40.33 per cent) of the respondents followed by lack of time (32.66 per cent), the physical problems (15.66 per cent) and other problems (11.33 per cent) in the study area. The table indicates that most (58 per cent) of the women entrepreneurs spend between 3-6 hours per day in sericulture followed by 13 per cent of the respondents spending above 6 hours and 29 per cent of the respondents spending below 3 hours per day in the study area. The Government subsidies benefitted on the silkworm rearing sheds (18.33 per cent), followed by water

facility (9.66 percent), drip irrigation (20.33 per cent), plant maintenance (13 per cent), the diseases control measures (8.33 per cent), the rearing equipment (8.66 per cent) and the mulberry cultivation (21.66 per cent) in the study area. The majorities (45 percent) of the respondents are satisfied, 38 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied and 17 percent dissatisfied with the subsidies provided by the Government in the study area.

**Conclusion**

Even though the participation of women is high in sericulture industry and majority of the women entrepreneurs are satisfied with subsidies provided by Government, still they face various problems while starting and promoting their sericulture business. The most of the women entrepreneurs involved in

sericulture have minimum educational qualification, so the Government and sericulture department can organize effective training and development activities for them, which will ultimately reduce the problems and also enable the women entrepreneurs to overcome the obstacles. The sericulture is one among the high income generating industry, hence promoting women entrepreneurs in sericulture will lead to economic development and empowerment of women. The most of the women have education only up to school level hence they are unable to understand modern techniques in sericulture. They face problems like heavy work load and lack of time, hence effective and efficient training programs in nearby places can be organized by Government and sericulture department.

### **Suggestions**

- The women are facing financial problems in sericulture, so sericulture department and Regional Rural Banks can make arrangements so that process involved in availing loans is simple and beneficial.
- The sericulture department should come out with advanced technology and make women entrepreneurs in sericulture to implement new technology in order to reduce the burden of heavy workload and labor problems.
- The women must be encouraged to participate with timely and continuous support in all the activities of sericulture and also extra subsidies can be provided to promote sericulture business.
- There is a need for commercialization of sericulture in order to compete in the world of new economic regime.

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