

## SERICULTURE IN AZAD JAMMU AND KASHMIR

BY

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A vital role is played by Sericulture in the economy of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. This industry has always been main stay of the farmers economy in the State. In 1947, a part of the State was liberated and named as Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Despite varied types of constraints, the state government made modest efforts to develop this industry in the liberated area in the beginning. However, a marked development in this field has been witnessed during last decade. In the beginning the cocoons production was confined to boundary areas only. Later on policy was changed by introducing silkworm rearing in the specified area of Kotli District. The results were very encouraging therefore, the development of this cottage industry was extended to other parts of the territory.

It is an established fact that sericulture is a labour intensive cottage industry which provides income to the people. Farmers can obtain atleast two crops of cocoons in a year by rearing silkworms in spring and autumn, when they are usually free from cultivation and harvesting of agricultural crops. If this enables optimum use of both manpower and the cultivated and un-cultivated land through cultivation of mulberry trees.

In the beginning, sericulture could not be launched on full scale. Therefore, in order to promote this income generating industry among the rural population of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the technical and financial assistance of the FAO/UNDP was obtained through Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar, and the available infra-structure like rearing halls and other allied facilities were utilized by the Institute, in setting up of its sub-stations at Pateka for multiplication of germ plasm and at Chenari for the production of F1 hybrid disease free silkworm seed. These two sub-stations were also furnished with equipment such as floss removers, bed cleaning nets, mulberry leaves nails, generators, humidifiers, refrigerators, air-conditioners, leave choppers, power trillers, incubators binoculars, automatic moth crushing machines, and vehicles by the Institute, under its silk seed production project PAK/86/002.

The Department of Industries and Sericulture, Azad Jammu and Kashmir has so far developed the following infra-structural facilities in the area:-

- Eighteen mulberry nurseries with an area of 24 ha with production capacity of 1.2 million, plants per annum.
- 5.00 million plants have been produced and planted in the form of closures/archards in the area.

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- One silk grainage (silk seed preservation centre) with the total area of 38,000 sft.
- One silk reeling unit with a capacity to reel about 20,000 kgs of dry cocoon annually.
- Silk seed breeding and production centre to produce 'P' races and 'F' hybrid commercial silk seed, with the co-operation of Research Unit of Pakistan Forest Institute (Sericulture Division), Peshawar.
- Sericulture demonstration farm with an area of 1-6 ha acres.
- Staff Available

i) Professional 35

ii) Others 156

Presently, about 1,500 packets of silk seed are utilized in the area. About 7 metric tons dry cocoons were produced in the private sector during 1989. Further, 1,800 kgs of seed cocoons were produced last year from which 2,100 packets of 'F' hybrid disease free silk seed were produced under the technical guidance of Dr. K.E. Park, Chief Technical Advisor and staff of PAK/86/002-Silk Seed Production Project of the Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar.

To develop this industry further, the Department is planning to launch a comprehensive programme which includes the training of both male and female workers and to extend incentives to the private sector for mechanized sericulture farming.

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