

FUTURE ROADMAP FOR CONVERGENCE OF SERICULTURE ACTIVITIES UNDER MGNREGS

Silk which spells luxury, elegance and class, has been traditionally intermingled with the life and culture of the people inhabiting in the State. **Sericulture**, in West Bengal is a commercially attractive farm based economic enterprise providing employment and livelihood to more than **1.05 Lakh** rural families because of its relatively low requirement of fixed capital and higher returns at regular intervals.

The Directorate of Textiles (Sericulture) acts as a facilitator through execution of a large number of Schemes and Projects under State Plan and Centrally sponsored Schemes for ensuring steady growth of Sericulture in the State.

Sericulture consists of 3 (three) distinct categories of activities:

- i) Cultivation & Maintenance of Silk worm Host Plant.
- ii) Rearing of silk worm for production of cocoons
- iii) Extraction of silk yarn from cocoons i.e. Silk Reeling and other Post Cocoon activities like spinning, twisting, weaving, processing, printing etc.

The Directorate has been successfully linking various Sericulture activities for the last few years with major agro based programmes of the Union Government like **RKVY, MGNREGS** etc for better funding as well as to incorporate some need based programmes which could not be covered under the existing Schemes.

As for instance, some major activities have already been taken up in various Government Farms across the State like Land Development, Road construction within the Farm, Excavation/re excavation of existing ponds for the purpose of irrigation in the Mulberry garden, Excavation of trench around the boundary perimeter of the farm to check grazing, Filling of earth in low lying areas to make it suitable for Mulberry cultivation etc.

In the process of implementing these activities, the local Panchayet acts as the PIA while the local Office of the Directorate also acts as PIA.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE CONVERGENCE/DOVETAILING

There is immense scope for convergence of various Sericultural activities both at Government Units as well as beneficiary level under MGNREGS. The likely areas are:

(A) At Govt. Units

Preparation of Saplings / Seedlings of Silkworm host plants

Afforestation with Silkworm host plants

Irrigation at Govt. Farms and Nurseries

Plucking of Mulberry leaves in Govt. Farms

Development of drainage system in Govt. Farms

Lifting of Tank silt and application in Mulberry gardens

Development of roads inside and approaching Govt. Farms

Land development in Govt. Farms

(B) At Beneficiary Level

It is encouraging to note that a Scheme worth Rs. 11.24 Lakh has been approved by the District Authority of Nadia to provide assistance for labour and materials to the Sericulturists belonging to Small & Marginal and other admissible category under NREGP for New plantation of Mulberry, maintenance of existing plantation with development of irrigation facilities followed by Rearing of Silkworms thereby enhancing the employment generation. Provision of labour to individual Sericulturists' family under NREGP will not only provide succor to them economically but also serve the very purpose of NREGP i.e. generation of adequate rural employment, upliftment of their socio economic status and enhancing their livelihood security.

The Directorate is contemplating to replicate this concept in other districts of the State which would bring about a sea change in Sericulture sector in the coming years.

In view of huge demand of planting materials every year for augmentation of host plantation, the Directorate is also contemplating to raise saplings/seedling in the shape of Kissan Nursery at private level, which if approved, can be formulated under MGNREGS for future implementation.

