

SILK TEXTILE INDUSTRY

India is the **2nd largest producer of silk in the world after China**. It is **largest consumer of silk** in the world. It is **the only country in the world that produces all 5 varieties of silk on a commercial scale**— Mulberry, Oak Tasar & Tropical Tasar, Muga and Eri. Holds the global **monopoly for production of the famed golden 'Muga' silk**.

In India, silk fabrics were made in the cottage industrial sector. The first modern silk textile factory in India was started by the East India Company at Howrah in 1832. The beginnings of the industry in Karnataka and Kashmir were made in 1845 and 1892 respectively. After independence there has been a significant increase in the production of silk textiles in the country.

Mulberry Silk

Mulberry silk accounts for about 90 per cent of total natural silk produced in India. It is produced from the silkworms which are reared on the mulberry tree. Sericulture is the name given to rearing of silkworms on mulberry leaves. The significant producers of this variety of silk are Bengaluru, Mysore, Belgaum, Srinagar and Himachal Pradesh. The major mulberry silk producing states are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Jammu and Kashmir which account for 92% of country's total mulberry silk production.

Distribution

The states dealing with sericulture are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Manipur and Meghalaya. Karnataka accounts for 51.71 per cent of total production followed by Andhra Pradesh (26.4 per cent), West Bengal (6.76 per cent), and Tamil Nadu (4.48 per cent).

Karnataka: It contributes 70 per cent of the country's mulberry silk output because it has favourable climate for rearing silkworms. There are nurseries, silk farms and licensed seed distributors. Bengaluru, Mysore, Kolar, Mandya, Tumkur, Belgaum and Coorg districts are famous for silk industry. The state-owned Channapatna mill has a capacity of numerous spindles. The decentralised sector has many powerlooms and handlooms.

Andhra Pradesh: Andhra has 26.39 per cent of the total silk production in the country. Chittoor, Warangal, Karimnagar, Vishakhapatnam and Anantapur districts are actively involved in sericulture. There is a flourishing handloom silk industry in Mahabubagar, Karimnagar, Warangal, Adilabad and Kurnool districts.

West Bengal: The state produces silk of mulberry variety. Sericulture is chiefly carried out in Madla, Murshidabad, Birbhum and Bankura are located at Bishnupur, Baswa, Raghunathpur and Chak Islampur.

Tamil Nadu: The state is the fourth largest producer of raw silk (4.48%) in India. Coimbatore, Dharamapuri, Nilgiris, Salem and Tirunelveli districts are the main centres for the production of raw silk. The state has many handlooms and produces about 6.2 per cent of the silk-yarn in the country.

Tamil Nadu, which has been ranked among the leading silk producing States in the country, will receive about Rs 6.22 crore under the **Silk Samagra** — an Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry (ISDSI).

About Silk Samagra:

1. It is initiated by the **Central Silk Board**.
2. The scheme **comprises four major components viz.** (i) Research & Development, Training, Transfer of Technology and Information Technology Initiatives, (ii) Seed Organizations, (iii) Coordination and

Market Development and (iv) Quality Certification Systems (QCS) / Export Brand Promotion and Technology Up-gradation.

3. The **main objective of the scheme** is to maintain Breeders stock, Breed improvement through R&D Projects, Development of mechanized practices, Technology translation through Sericulture Information Linkages and Knowledge System (SILKS) Portal, Mobile Application for Stakeholders and for seed quality monitoring etc.
4. The main **aim of "Silk Samagra" Scheme** is to empower downtrodden, poor & backward tribal families through various activities of sericulture in the country including women.

Bihar and Jharkhand: These States produce silk of tasar variety. These are the largest tasar producing states in the country. Palamau, Hazaribagh, Bhagalpur and Ranchi are the leading silk producing districts.

Assam: Sericulture is an important cottage industry in the state providing sustenance to thousands of people. About 3.43 per cent of the country's total silk output comes from Assam. Assam is one of the largest producers of non-mulberry silk (tasar, eri, and muga). It is also the only muga producing region of the country. Goalpara, Kamrup and Nagaon are important silk producing districts.

Problems of Silk Industry

The main problems being faced by the silk industry are the following:

1. Competition from artificial silk is the main problem faced by the Indian silk industry. Artificial silk is cheaper and better in quality.
2. Import of better quality and cheaper raw silk from China is also detrimental for the Indian silk industry.
3. The changes in prices of raw silk badly affect both the weavers and the silk industry.
4. There is no systematic testing and grading of silk as in advanced countries like Japan.
5. The industry needs modern power looms for increasing production.

Other problems being faced by this industry are-Absence of proper market, Lack of transport facilities, Absence of storage facilities, Poor information on market trend, Lack of finance, High cost of production and low productivity, lack of technology penetration, prevalent rural nature of the industry etc., competition from synthetic fibers.

Central Silk Board

The Central Silk Board (CSB) is a Statutory Body, established during 1948, by an Act of Parliament (Act No. LXI of 1948). It functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, having head quarter at Bangalore .

In order to co-ordinate the sericulture development programmes in different States & for undertaking pre-shipment inspection of silk goods meant for exports, the Central Silk Board has established 8 Regional Offices at New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bhubaneshwar, Guwahati, Lucknow, Patna.

The mandated activities of CSB are Research and Development, maintenance of four tier silkworm seed production network, leadership role in commercial silkworm seed

production, standardizing and instilling quality parameters in the various production processes and advising the Government on all matters concerning sericulture and silk industry.

Stellar IAS