

Chawki Rearing Center—A Sustainable Enterprise



Sericulture is part of the cultural heritage of Mysore district. Mysore silk is popular world over and has a history of over 220 years. Mulberry, the host plant for silkworms, is being cultivated on an area of 2,371 ha in Mysore district contributing to an average yield of 59kg cocoons/100 Disease Free Layings (DFL). Farmers generally purchase worms of about 10 days (2ndMoult) from Chawki Rearing Centers (CRCs) and rear them for the next 30 days to avoid pests and diseases at the very young, vulnerable stage due to poor hygienic condition, especially when the rearing house is part of the farmers' dwelling house. Here, 'Chawki' refers to the young silk worms reared from hatching to 2ndmoult stage. The quality of these chawki worms is the crux of successful silkworm rearing. Despite the fact, there were hardly any CRCs operating in Mysore district until 2006.

With this background, KVK Mysore introduced Chawki Rearing Centers in a project mode in two districts viz., Mysore and Chamarajanagar in 2008. So far, three CRCs have been initiated by the KVK, two in Mysore and one in Chamarajanagar district. All the three CRCs have completed one year of successful operation. Two of the three CRCs are being run by farmers' SHGs whereas the KVK is directly managing one CRC. The three CRCs put together generated 2520 man days of employment. With this kind of engagement in CRCs, each SHG member is earning between Rs 1000 to Rs 1500 per month, which works out to a total of Rs 126000 wages earned. It may be noted here that this is an additional income for those involved in chawki rearing since it is only a part-time work for the members that involves about 3 hours of work a day. Further, it has an incremental contribution to silk industry through increased cocoon yield is worth Rs 7800000. This apart, the CRC as a seri-enterprise has witnessed



Salient Features

- CRCs provide healthy 2ndmoult worms ensuring better cocoon yield
- By hatching under controlled temperature, humidity and hygienic conditions, the disease incidence on silkworms is reduced significantly
- Additionally, through black-boxing technique, the CRCs ensure uniform hatching of eggs
- CRCs, in the process, save about 10 days of rearing time for farmers thus reducing their overall production cost
- Created a lot of part-time as well as full-time rural employment opportunities among low income families

innovations like black-boxing for uniform hatching, institutional innovations like participatory chawki management by farmers' SHGs and use of indigenous techniques in temperature and humidity management.

Inspired by the success of the three CRCs, three more CRCs have already started working, two in Mysore and one in Chamarajanagar district. What is heartening is that the traditional dry land sericulture areas like Kuderu in Chamarajanagar, where sericulture had almost disappeared due to poor monsoon and irrigation facilities, the sericulture enterprise is re-emerging. The success of CRCs is owed to the firm conviction of the host institution JSS Mahavidyapeetha, which believed that this is possible, and hence supported the initiative taken up by both the JSS KVK and an additional effort under the special SGSY project.

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