

CHAPTER XI : MINISTRY OF TEXTILES

Department of Sericulture

11 Unfruitful expenditure

Unfruitful expenditure of Rs 3.93 crore on Poorvanchal Sericulture Development Project.

In order to develop Sericulture in non-traditional States, Ministry of Textiles sanctioned (June 1993) implementation of 'Poorvanchal Sericulture Development Project', jointly by the Central Silk Board (CSB) and the Director of Sericulture (DoS), Uttar Pradesh (UP) at a cost of Rs 564.16 lakh, which was shared by CSB and DoS at Rs 301.39 lakh and Rs 262.77 lakh respectively. The project with a life span of five years from 1993 but was extended up to June 2000 and was to be implemented in the districts of Varanasi, Ghazipur and Bhadohi.

The project envisaged raising of 3000 acres of mulberry plantation and production of 77 tonne raw silk after the project period. CSB and DoS had to implement various components as per the Memorandum of Understanding. CSB had to provide research and development support and technical guidance apart from funding some of the components of the project. The responsibility of DoS was limited to Host Plant Development (HPD), establishment of Chawkie Rearing Centres, establishment of service centres, providing credit component and crop diversification assistance in addition to implementing the components funded by CSB.

CSB incurred an expenditure of Rs 297.19 lakh up to March 1999 (i.e. 99 *per cent* of its share) comprising, HPD (Rs 15.22 lakh), Cocoon Market (Rs 25.77 lakh), margin money for cocoon purchase (Rs 50 lakh), strengthening of existing grainages (Rs 48 lakh), Project Sub-Offices (Rs 9.74 lakh), Project Monitoring Cell (Rs 10.41 lakh), Research Extension Centre and Training Study Tour for farmers (Rs 138.05 lakh), DoS, UP incurred an expenditure of Rs 95.42 lakh (Upto March 1999) towards HPD (Rs 4 lakh), Chawkie Rearing Centre (Rs 4.28 lakh), Technical Service Centre (Rs 42.41 lakh) and Margin Money Assistance (Rs 44.73 lakh) i.e. 36.31 *per cent* of its share. Regarding credit component and crop diversification assistance the expenditure incurred by UP Government was a mere Rs 0.87 lakh as against Rs 135 lakh provided in the scheme.

Implementation of the scheme was evaluated by a three member team constituted by CSB (February 1999). There was 100 *per cent* achievement in almost all the components except under mulberry plantation and raw silk

production- two critical ones. Achievements under these components were 1934.57 acres against 3000 acres to be developed and 1.27 tonne against 1.48 tonne during the project period respectively. While the development of mulberry plantation accounted for 64.5 *per cent* against the target, details of raw silk production after the project period was not available. Reasons attributed for the shortfall were (i) uprooting/deserting of plantations by the farmers (ii) delay in supply of mulberry cutting from Karnataka (iii) insufficient manpower (iv) wide gestation period between plantation of mulberry and silkworm rearing, besides various other reasons such as difficulties to bring the farmers into the fold of sericulture, and lack of motivation of the beneficiaries for taking up sericulture etc.

CSB stated in May 2000 that in so far as the activities of CSB are concerned, there is almost 100 *per cent* achievement. The lapses in activities of the Government of UP could be looked into by the Government of UP. Even the Government of UP acknowledged that though an area of 1935 acres was covered, the effective plantation was less than five *per cent* of the reported figure. In June 2000, Ministry also endorsed the views of CSB and stated that though the project had fallen short of its target of mulberry cultivation and production of raw silk, it had made an impact in the area. It was not understood in audit what 'impact' was being referred to by Ministry. Regarding the establishment of cocoon market by the CSB, the evaluation committee noticed that it was away from the city and quite remote which was likely to cause difficulty to farmers and reelers.

Thus the shortfall in the basic component viz. mulberry plantation and also lack of good marketing facilities rendered the other infrastructure developed at cost of Rs 392.61 lakh redundant, and the project had to be wound up on 31.3.2000.

The Joint Survey Team (JST) while recommending the Sericulture Development in the Districts of Ghazipur and Varanasi had kept in view all the factors such as climate, soil, irrigation, proximity to market, present cropping pattern and its return etc., and finally recommended the two districts subject to proper and suitable technical, administrative and financial support with proper and strong backward and forward linkages necessary for development of Sericulture. The evaluation team however noticed that in Varanasi the general community farmers occupied dominating position than the SC/ST community and held large land holdings of which substantial acreage was under cash crops and horticultural crops that fetched remunerative income and the land available for sericulture was a fraction of the total acreage and thus Sericulture had to face tough competition. Thus, JST has failed to appreciate the land distribution pattern which is an obvious factor affecting cropping patterns and accounted for the failure of the project. In the post project outlook also the committee took note of the shortfall in the fulfillment of the objective under the prevailing circumstance.