



TOWARDS BUILDING A NATIONAL SERICULTURE (MULBERRY) INNOVATION SYSTEM IN INDIA - POSSIBILITIES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

Sericulture is an important agro industrial in India with foremost socio-cultural implications. Silk is an important export commodity and the nation has bestowed matching importance to the sector from very early days. Over the years, the sector has undergone tremendous technological changes through innovations mainly focussed on improvement of the farm produce, namely cocoon. But, innovative efforts of this level were not received by the immediate processing sector, namely reeling industry, which has affected the quality of the raw silk fibre. This paper attempts to establish that Indian sericulture sector has all the necessary ingredients, features *etc.* and is characterised by complex networks and linkages, by way of economic, social, political, organizational and institutional factors influencing the development, diffusion and use of innovations; hence, qualify as a Sectoral Innovation System in its own right. However, its progress and development are limited by the inherent weaknesses of the system. This study identifies important weaknesses of the system and suggests ways for improvement. The two important aspects related to weakness of the system were detected as, poor participation of the private sector in R&D and over emphasis of the agricultural aspect of sericulture. Bulk of innovation efforts were focussed on farm sector without matching modernisation of the silk reeling sector. This has rendered the efforts on up-gradation of raw silk quality, ineffective.

Key words: Absorptive capacity, India, sectoral system of innovation, sericulture.