

Resource Use Efficiency in Sericulture - An Inter Group Analysis

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Constrained by limited resources, the sericulturists often fail to achieve the optimum level of income, mainly due to their inability in making judicious allocation of resources at their disposal. The study attempts to identify some of the major factors of production (both in mulberry cultivation and rearing of silk worm) in Murshidabad district of West Bengal, one of the three major sericultural districts in the State. The significant inputs for different size groups (classified on the basis of total operational land holding) have been identified. The study identifies that though organic manure, irrigation, labour (in cultivation of mulberry plant), purchase of Disease Free Layings (DFLs) and rearing appliances are the most common and significant factors of production in the district, judicious allocation of inputs is the need of the hour. Input use efficiency of the various factors of production has been judged with the help of Marginal Value Productivity(MVP) concept.

Introduction

Resource allocation is a difficult task especially in sericulture because sericulture is complex by its very nature. Sericulture comprises activities like production of leaf, rearing of silk worms, reeling of silk thread and weaving. In each phase, there are a number of factors influencing the output *inter alia* leaf production and rearing of worm are the basic ones which are primarily taken up at the farmers level.

In spite of a steady growth in area and production (Annual Report, Central Silk Board, 1994-95), relative growth in productivity is not encouraging (Lakshmana *et al.*, 1995). Though several packages of practices have been recommended, only a few are adopted by the rearers in full. One of the reasons could be the inability of the rearers to follow the recommendations in toto. Because, constrained with limited resource, a farmer is in a fix to decide upon relatively more important input(s) to which he can give more stress. Moreover, not all the factors are equally important in the production process and importance of these factors varies across different size groups of farmers too. That is why, identification of important input factors will be of immense help for different size groups of farmers and for the whole industry as well. Unfortunately, studies reflecting resource use efficiency of various inputs for different farm sizes in sericulture are very few. Hence, the present study is undertaken.

Methodology

Sampling Procedure

The present study is based on the data collected from Murshidabad district of West Bengal during the year 1993-94. Murshidabad is one of the three major sericultural districts of West Bengal and an analytical study in this district is expected to represent the West Bengal sericulture fairly. Therefore, the district was selected purposively. Primary data were collected from 150 farmers from nine villages (distributed over three different blocks of the district) with a pretested questionnaire. Multistage random

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