

TRADING OF SILK PRODUCTS THROUGH FAIR-A PROSPECTIVE BOOSTER FOR SERICULTURE INDUSTRY IN PURULIA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Selling of products through fair is a years old practice of the traders. We find reference of trading through fair in ancient literature. Fair facilitate both producers and consumers a face to face interaction. Selling through fair widens the scope of sale and purchase. Marketing of silk products is one of the major problems of sericulture industry particularly in the district of Purulia. An analysis of Trading of silk products through fair and the comparative study of sales in fair & over the counter sales (OTCS) during same period shows trading of silk products in fairs may be a booster for sericulture industry in Purulia District.

INTRODUCTION

Fair may be defined as a gathering of people for entertainment or commercial purposes or both. Book fair, handicraft fair, handloom fair, travel & tourism fair are some of the mention worthy fairs.

Reference of trading through fairs is not scarce in the mythologies and ancient literatures. It was one of the must to do duties of muhgal empresses to organize minabazer-a woman run trade fair where the emperor was the only buyer i.e. a form of monopsony. We find trading thorough fair in the ages of Roman Civilization. In the middle Ages many fairs developed as temporary markets and were especially important for long-distance and international trade, as wholesale traders travelled, sometimes for many days, to fairs where they could be sure to meet those they needed to buy from or sell to. The Kumbh Mela, held every twelve years, at Allahabad, Haridwar, Nashik and Ujjain is one of the largest fairs in India. n the United States fairs draw in as many as 150 million people each summer.

Trading of silk products through fairs has its years old heritage. Organizing silk fairs at national and international level is one of the major functions of Central Silk Board of India. In this write up I would like to show that sericulture industry with so many marketing hurdles in Purulia district may find oxygen for the industry by virtue of trading of silk products through fairs.

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USUAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

“Production may be the door to economic growth of a developing country but marketing is the key that turns the lock” -Drucker.

Marketing of Raw Silk and marketing of finished silk products are the forms of marketing related to sericulture industry.

In order to facilitate marketing system to raw silk producers for marketing raw silk, Raw Silk Exchanges were set up in different states and regions where the reelers (Raw Silk producers) and the buyers (Traders, Twisters, Weavers, and Co-operative Societies etc.) meet and transact the raw silk.

Before transaction, raw silk is tested and graded according to specification and accepted standards. This is done in special organizations popularly known as Silk Conditioning and Testing Houses.

Tests of raw silk can be done by the following methods:¹

1. **Visual test:** under this method visual examination is done for the uniformity of colour, lustre and handle (feel).
2. **Mechanical test:** this method is sub divided into different categories such as, Winding test, Size test, Seri plane test, weight test etc. these methods have been used to test the quality of raw silk.
3. **Burning test:** this is very simple, a layman can do. If we burn the silk piece and then remove the burner fire gets automatically extinguish and produces unpleasant smell.

With satisfactory performance of raw silk in these tests it is marketed through the state exchanges. West Bengal has 2(two) Raw Silk Exchanges as compared to 36(thirty six) RSEs in India sharing 12.5% of total exchanges in RSEs of the traditional silk producing states.

In marketing of finished silk products state initiative is microscopic. Private traders rule the market. The comparative shares of state and private ownership in marketing of finished silk products is almost 20:80 percent.

MARKETING CONSTRAINTS FOR SILK PRODUCTS IN PURULIA DISTRICT

The district Purulia is a part of the major sericulture zone of West Bengal. This is exclusively a tasar culture region. This region caters to the need of tasar silk fabric consumption of the adjoining industrial areas of Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Sindhri , Khargapur , Asansol, Burnpur and Kulti along with local demand.

Tasar culture is a traditional occupation of the tribal people of the district. It has entered into the natural rhythm of tribal culture since long. In “Periplus of the Erythrean Sea” written in 1st century we find silk as one of the major foreign trade

items through the famous ancient port “Tamralipta”. Purulia district is situated approximately 270 K.M. away from this international river port. Initial development of the district took place since 1st A.D. when Damodar Shekhar Rao, the first king of the Pnachakot Raj, took the thorn. The Tamralipta Port has flourished during first B.C. to third A.D. During the same period raw silk, silk yarn, silk cloths were some of the important foreign trade items of the port. On the other hand tasar cocoon are natural products of the forests of Purulia district. It hints about the possibility of the district of being hinterland of the port with supply of raw silk, silk yarn, silk cloths made of tasar . Direct patronage of Panchokot raj developed the manufacturing stage of the industry. The silk fabrics produced at the royal patronage were supposed to be the foreign trade items through the port when produced in excess of royal requirements.²

The growth of silk production in this tasar silk dominated district as compared to global, national and state is very poor. Out of twenty blocks of the district sixteen blocks are engaged in sericulture. Almost all of those blocks are engaged in tasar culture with negligible mulberry production.

The industry is a vertical combination of two distinct phases, e.g. pre-cocoon and post-cocoon. Pre-cocoon stage starts being basically agriculture based starts with plantation of food plants ends with collection of cocoon the principle raw material for the industry. On the other hand post cocoon stage includes spinning, reeling, weaving, stitching etc. and ends with marketing of finished products.

In spite of a notable engagement of almost all of the blocks of the district trading cum marketing activities are concentrated in just four areas of the district. In under mentioned table the concentration is highlighted.

Table No-1
TABLE SHOWING CONTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE AREAS IN TRADING.³

NAME OF THE AREA	PERCENTAGE OF CONTRIBUTION
Raghunathpur-I	75
Singhbazar	7
Mohandi	10
Rajnowagarh	8
TOTAL	100

Table no.-1 shows that areas under Raghunathpur –I has the credit of producing and selling lion share of raw silk in the district. Among the traders in Raghunathpur, Raghunathpur Silk Weavers Co-operative Society and Khadi Silk Shilpodyaga contributes almost 90(ninety) percent of total trading in terms of quantity and value. Thus sample chosen in the study may be considered as representative of entire district.

The major constraints in marketing cum trading of silk products in the district may be outlined in following manner:

- Absence of integration among the phases of production.
- Middle men manipulate earnings of reelers and weavers.
- Persons engaged in both the phases scared to adopt modern technologies.
- The sericulture industry in the district operates basically on local demand base,
- Low productivity of labour.
- Low priced cotton goods.
- Chinese silk at cheaper rate..
- Tendency of traders to make silk cloths impure by mixing cotton and or synthetic fibers along with silk fibers.
- Young generation accepts the industry as non-prestigious. They even prefer to spend time idly.
- Lack of proper communication facilities.
- Inability of the traders to afford modernised marketing network.

Against these constrains trading of silk product of the district through different fairs may crop-up as booster for the industry in the district.

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MARKETING THROUGH FAIRE AND OVER THE COUNTER SALES AT THE SAME TIME- A CASE STUDY IN RAGHUNATH PUR AND SINGH BAZAR.

The traditional concept of marketing has been changed with globalization, teleshopping media hype, increasing consumer awareness, growing trend for using fashionable goods in recent times. Towering shopping malls, fashion shows, revolution in advertisement have many folded the world of consumerism.

Sericulture industry at national and international level is not also lagging behind.

Fashion shows on silk fabrics, outlets with silk fabrics only and regular advertisements for silk products are common in international and national level. The district as well as state lags far behind.

However participation in different fairs as a sales booster is not uncommon to the traders of Purulia. Particularly cooperative societies are regular participants to the fares organized by Government of West Bengal and other private agencies.

We have collected data from Raghunathpur Silk Weaver's Co-operative Society, Khadi Silk Shilpodyaga, Raghunathpur and Silk Weavers Co-operative Society of SinghBazar regarding their sales in different fairs and over the counter sales during same period. Our experience regarding comparative study between sales in different

fairs and corresponding over the counter sale (OTCS) of the selected units for the period from 30.08.08 to 30.09.2011 is presented in under mentioned table

Table(T-6.1.) Showing sale in fair as well as over the counter.³

SL. NO	NAME	DURATION	Sales in Fairs (Rs)			OTCS (Rs)		
			Raghunathpur Silk weavers co-op. society	Raghunathpur Khadi Silk Shilpodyaga	Singh Bazar Silk weavers co-op. society	Raghunathpur Silk weavers co-op. society	Raghunathpur Khadi Silk Shilpodyaga	Singh Bazar Silk weavers co-op. society
1.	Tant Bastra Mela- Purulia	30.08.08 to	381390	305112	457668	381390	171625.5	122044.8
		07.09.08	(47673.75)	(38139)	(57208.5)	(47673.8)	(21453.19)	(15255.6)
2.	Asansoll Mela	07-09-08 To	539760	404820	607230	506025	242892	161928
		21.09.08	(35984)	(28916)	(43374)	(36145)	(16192.8)	(11566.4)
3.	Spring Festival- Delhi	13.08.2009 to	826900	578830	868245	723537.5	372105	231532
		25.08.09	(63608)	(44525)	(66787.5)	(55656.3)	(28623.6)	(17810)
4.	Katwa Mela	21.12.10 to	498730	423920	635880	529900	224428.5	169568
		27.12.10	(71247)	(60560)	(90840)	(75700)	(32061.2)	(24224)
5.	Burdwan Mela	10.09.11 to	218853	170705	256057.5	213381.3	98483.85	68282
		18.09.11	(24317)	(18967)	(28450.5)	(23708.8)	(10942.7)	(7586.8)
6.	Midnapore Mela	07.09.11 to	288300	259470	389205	324337.5	129735	103788
		18.09.2011	(24025)	(21623)	(32434.5)	(27028.8)	(10811.3)	(8649.2)
7.	Kharagpur Mela	19.09.11 to	339655	288707	433060.5	360883.8	152844.8	115482.8
		30.09.2011	(28304)	(24059)	(36088.5)	(30073.8)	(12736.8)	(9623.6)

Figures in parenthesis shows average sales per day

The above mentioned table shows variation was found among the sales in different fares. However, it is evident that over the counter sales is always lesser than sales in fares. This is mostly due to greater exposure of the products to larger number of purchasers.

Through this write up I humbly suggest to all of the stake holders to make better initiatives to adopt this newly immersed technique to the fullest extent to develop sericulture industry in Purulia district. Consequentially all awaited development of this backward district

CONCLUSION.

The district has tremendous unexploited potential for development of sericulture industry. Present age of global marketing, online marketing, increasing demand for silk products in fashion world etc. are calling sericulture industry of the district to move from home- or cottage-based production to large-scale manufacturing. Sericulture a cottage industry par excellence is one of the most labour intensive sectors of our economy. It combines the features of both agriculture and industry. The industry in the district caters mainly to the domestic demand base. Almost 80 per cent of silk production goes for domestic consumption and the rest goes outside the district. There appears to be a marked imbalance in recent times regarding marketing. It is experienced over the globe that a very few industries survive in long run with the support of local demand base only. Need for widening of market with required supply is a must for the survival of sericulture industry in Purulia district. Trading through fair may in this regards opens a new horizon.

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