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**Original Article****SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE INDIAN SILK INDUSTRY****Prashant Natarikar\*, Halagunde Gowda, G R, H S Sarvamangala and S. Manthira Moorthy***Scientists, Central Silk Board,  
Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Bangalore**\*Corresponding author: [shanthunatarikar@gmail.com](mailto:shanthunatarikar@gmail.com)**Received:10/05/2024**Published:14/05/2024*

**S**ericulture is an agro-based industry. It involves rearing of silkworms for the production of raw silk, which is the yarn obtained out of cocoons spun by certain species of insects. The major activities of sericulture comprises of food-plant cultivation to feed the silkworms which spin silk cocoons and reeling the cocoons for unwinding the silk filament for value added benefits such as processing and weaving. India is the second largest producer of silk in the world, next to China. Silk, considered as the queen of fibres, is proteinaceous in nature. The bulk of commercial silk is produced from the mulberry silkworm, *Bombyx mori*.

SWOT analysis is a tool that helps organization/ Department/sector to build a strategic plan to meet certain set of objectives and goals. It's an organized approach that identifies strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of organization/ department / sector. It helps the organization to identify the ways to improve efficiency and productivity. A two-by-two matrix is used to build a SWOT analysis, which determines whether objectives, production, quality and goals are strategic fits or not? The best strategic fits are when the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) align with the external environment (opportunities and threats). The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the silk farming are given below:

**STRENGTHS**

- Agro-based labour-intensive cottage industry with low capital investment & good returns.
- Large production base, availability of skills, land and labour.
- Short gestation period and higher returns.
- Women friendly occupation, where involvement of women are more than 75% work force are from women folk
- Established infrastructure, availability of silkworm breeds / hybrids.
- High employment potential.
- Ideal Programme for weaker sections of society.
- Easily adoptable technologies and strong domestic demand-pull.
- Input/ equipment support to sericulturists through various programmes of Centre/ State Government.

- Availability of structured training programmes & exposure visits and providing marketing and institutional support.

#### **WEAKNESS**

- Inadequate market accessibility, poor linkage among different stake holders.
- Gap in technology transfer and extension support.
- Unstable cocoon price and frequent price fluctuations.
- Lack of awareness among farmers regarding the optimum use of technology.
- Poor linkage with other sectors.
- Small land holding and poor socio- economic condition of most of the farmers involved in sericulture farming.
- Inadequate extension services shortage.

#### **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Huge potential to create more employment.
- Sericulture keeps rural population employed in villages and thus checks their migration to towns.
- Continuation of Government subsidy programmes is good for future perspective of sericulture farming.
- Scope of value addition and product diversification.
- In new areas, sericulture introduced with latest technology which reduced total labour input.
- Continuing the efforts to modernize and mechanize the post cocoon sector.
- There is space for the introduction of large reelers and establishment of power loom-based industries.
- Documentation and dissemination of innovations enable farmers to adopt the technology at wider/ large scale.
- Adoption of family training approach to make training more practical/ universal.
- Garment exports are on a steady increase with huge employment opportunities.
- Reduction of production of silk even by traditional silk countries like Japan, USSR etc.

#### **THREATS**

- Extreme climatic condition in specific regions and seasons.
- Falling international prices and heavy dumping from China at low prices.
- Inability of the silk industry to react and adapt to the changing needs in terms of quality both for the domestic and export markets.
- Lack of awareness in the domestic market to respond to the demand-driven milieu.
- More and more rural population is migrating from farming to urban areas.