



## Women's involvement in cocoon markets: The problem and its phobia

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### Abstract

The research provides a first-ever attempt to examine common problems that affect women while participating in cocoon marketing activities and their phobias in cocoon marketplaces. In order to accomplish this task, information regarding their participation in various sericulture activities was gathered and categorised. Furthermore, 60 respondents in the Arsikere taluk of the Hassan district were personally interviewed using the pre-tested questionnaire to gather data. The Garrett ranking and percentage were used to analyse the data by classifying the problems as personal, market, transportation, and institutional problems. The major personal problems revealed by our study are 'lack of formal education' (I), 'accessibility to modern audiovisual aids' (II), and 'patriotic family nature' (III). At the same time, our data also depicts "male dominance" (I), 'longer mobility towards markets' (II), and 'handling large quantum cocoons' (III) as the major marketing problems expressed by the farm women. Similarly, major transportation problems expressed by them were 'high cost of hiring a vehicle' (I), 'timely availability of vehicles' (II), and 'non-availability of one's own vehicle' (III). At last, major institutional problems disclosed by respondents were 'lack of regular organisation of training exclusive for farm women' (I), 'no special privileges were given to farm women in cocoon marketing' (II), and 'less accessibility of institutions' (III). As a result of our research, it is suggested that appropriate support and encouragement from society, family, and government can enable farm women to participate in cocoon markets independently.

**Keywords** – Women, Cocoon Markets, Problems

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### I. Introduction

Sericulture, being an agro-based enterprise, plays a predominant role in shaping the economic destiny of the rural people in Karnataka. In several southern districts of the State the sericulture is mainstay and livelihood of small marginal farmers and weaker section of the society. About 13 to 14 lakh families in the state are directly dependent on sericulture in the form of mulberry cultivation, cocoon rearing, and raw silk reeling, twisting, weaving, etc. It promises a year-long continuous job for 13 people, primarily in rural and semi-urban areas, in one hectare of Mulberry plantation (Sathish and Chandrashekar, 2022). Though it is an eco-conservative activity and an employment generating agro-based industry, the majority of aggregate work activities in sericulture are handled by women (Usha Rani, 2007; Sandhya Rani, 2006). Along with the shackles of gender-stereotyping, women in sericulture often take part in mulberry planting, weeding, manuring, irrigating, leaf picking, leaf transporting, and leaf storage. In addition with mulberry cultivation practices they are engaged in silkworm rearing practices like leaf-cutting, feeding, bed cleaning, worm spacing, mounting, harvesting and disinfections. Therefore, this is considered to be "occupation by the women and for the women" because women form more than 60 percent of the workforce and 80 percent of silk is consumed by them (Bukhari et al., 2019). Despite showing tenacity and persistence at work, their efforts remained confined to the indoor silkworm rearing activities; their involvements in cocoon markets and marketing remained unnoticed (Chowdhuri et al., 2011).

A cocoon market is a place where buyers and sellers are required to transact cocoons by open auction under the regulations of the law. There are a total of 35 cocoon markets established in different silk-producing areas of the state by the Sericulture Department of the Government of Karnataka; among them, 10 are major markets. These 10 markets handle almost 90 percent of the cocoon sales. Many of these cocoon markets are dominated by men who primarily participate in cocoon auctioning, while women's roles go unacknowledged,

which indirectly aims to impede women's personal growth and professional satisfaction, and eventually their work share remains unrecognized (Sathish and Chandrashekar, 2022). Since this marketing process stimulates the role of production as well as the promotion of sericulture enterprises, it finally ensures the socio-economic development of individuals who are involved in these activities. Therefore, the present paper makes a modest attempt to investigate the factors and problems that influence the participation in cocoon marketing among selected farming families in Arsikere Taluk.

## II. Material methods

The current study was carried out in the Arsikere Taluk of the Hassan District (Karnataka), which contains a total of 1,325 hectares of mulberry plantations and annually generates 89 MT of bivoltine raw silk (Seri States of India, 2019). Sixty farm women who were involved in sericulture activities were randomly selected, and information was gathered using the individual contact approach and a pre-made questionnaire. The percentage of respondents who participated in various sericulture activities was gathered and classified. The collection of typical issues that affect women in the marketing industry and produce phobias was further explored. The data was analysed using the Garrett ranking and percentiles (Zalkuwi et al., 2015; Ismanto et al., 2018; and Gopichand and Madhuprasad, 2022). The percentile positions for all of the ranks were determined in the first stage using the formula below.

$$\text{Percentile position} = 100 \frac{(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

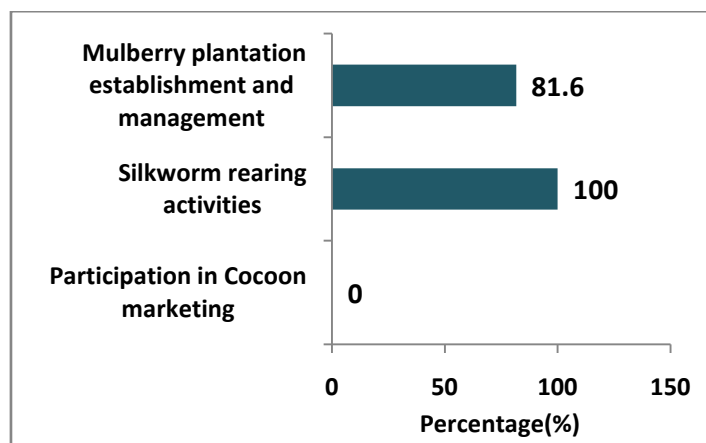
Where,  $R_{ij}$  is the Rank value and  $N_j$  is total number of ranks

The Garrett score for each rank was obtained from the Garrett ranking conversion table based on percentile points. The obtained ranks for the problems were multiplied with the Garrett rank score given to each rank, which is the result of the previous step. All the scores obtained in this way were added within a problem, and the total is divided by the total number of problems, which gives the average score of those problems. The Garrett scores were assigned and ranked accordingly. After reviewing the existing literature, consulting with experts, and conducting a pretest in a non-sampling region, a set of predetermined questioners was created to complete this task. The problems were discovered and classified into four categories, as shown below:

1. Personal problems
2. Market problems
3. Transportation problems
4. Institutional Problems

## III. Results and Discussion

According to Graph 1, in the work-sharing pattern of farm women on the major sericulture activities, 100 percent of them are primarily involved in silkworm rearing activities, and 81.6% are involved in mulberry plantation establishment and management work. However, it was remarkable that none of the farm women participated in the cocoon marketing process, similar report was also made by Chowdhuri et al. (2011). Since none of the female entrepreneurs expressed their involvement and desire to participate in cocoon marketing, our study was further conducted to identify the barriers that hinder their marketing participation.



Graph 1. Distribution of work sharing pattern of women in major sericulture activities

### Personal problems

Our study reveals that the expressed noticeable personal problems faced by the majority of farm women are ranked as "lack of formal education" (I), followed by "accessibility to modern audiovisual aids" (II), and "patriotic family nature" (III). Some of the farmers also express 'lack of communication with the neighbouring farmers" (IV), "lack of financial knowledge" (V), "self-confidence deficiency" (VI), and "influence of family ties" (VII) have an influence on their participation in cocoon marketing (Table 1). In developing countries like India, women are very emotionally attached to their families and their traditional customs (Sharma, 2013). As a result, the majority of women's education has been discontinued or modified from the formal education line. As a consequence, women's education should be emphasised to bring about desirable changes in their behaviour and give them self confidence, financial knowledge, good communication skills, and access to modern mass media (Ani and Baba, 2009; Lakshminarayan et al. 2010 and Viswanatha et al. 2014).

**Table 1:** Personnel problems faced by the farm women in marketing participation

| Sl. No | Particulars   | Pooled Percentile | Garrett Ranks |
|--------|---|-------------------|---------------|
| 1.     | Influence of family ties                              | 51.12             | VI            |
| 2.     | Lack of self confidence                               | 46.18             | VII           |
| 3.     | Lack of formal education                              | 78.70             | I             |
| 4.     | Patriotic family nature                               | 61.20             | III           |
| 5.     | Lack in financial knowledge                           | 55.97             | V             |
| 6.     | Lack of communication with the fellow farmers         | 60.50             | IV            |
| 7.     | Lack of access to modern mass media/audio visual aids | 64.85             | II            |

(n = 60)

### Market problems

The success of the sericulture industry depends on a proper and highly efficient marketing system that assures good prices to the farmers, reelers, weavers, and co-operatives (Das, 2015). From Table 2, it is clear from the Garrett ranking that farm women's major problems in cocoon markets are "male dominance" (I), followed by "longer mobility towards markets" (II), and 'large quantum cocoon handling" (III). Other problems faced by farm women and their respective ranks are listed as follows: "decision on fluctuation of price" (IV), "lack of cocoon storage facilities" (V), "lack of frequent marketing information" (VI), "lack of knowledge about proper techniques of marketing" (VII), and "involvement of the middleman" (VIII). According to Bhat and Choure (2014), another bottleneck in the silk industry is a lack of marketing information, which causes rearers to be underpaid for their produce. Despite the fact that the Central Silk Board developed SMS services to notify customers of regular market price fluctuations, the study area's farm women were unaware of their existence. Similarly, the inherent flaw and arbitrary nature of the manual bidding process with the human element deprived women farmers of a fair price discovery and gave male farmers dominance (Sathish and Chandrashekar, 2022). Therefore, proper guidance needs to be initiated by the government to disseminate necessary information about the market to the farm women, like the various cocoon markets' price status. Furthermore, cocoons are living materials that are easily vulnerable to pests and predators (Ganga and Chetty, 2008). As a consequence, the government has set up some storage facilities for them as well as temporary lodging options for the farm women. Similarly, to encourage women's participation, cocoon marketing know-how should be provided for women with proper incentives (Usha 2007).

**Table 2.** Marketing problems faced by the farm women in marketing participation

| Sl. No | Particulars  | Pooled Percentile | Garrett Ranks |
|--------|--|-------------------|---------------|
| 1.     | Lack of storage facilities                             | 45.60             | V             |
| 2.     | Large distance mobility                                | 66.25             | II            |
| 3.     | Large quantum handling of cocoon                       | 64.22             | III           |
| 4.     | Male dominance in cocoon auctioning                    | 67.62             | I             |
| 5.     | Decision on Fluctuation of price                       | 47.07             | IV            |
| 6.     | Lack of marketing information                          | 42.77             | VI            |
| 7.     | Lack of knowledge about proper techniques of marketing | 41.85             | VII           |
| 8.     | Involvement of Middleman                               | 36.55             | VIII          |

(n = 60)

### Transportation problems

In India, women's mobility is highly limited and has become a serious problem due to traditional values and their inability to drive vehicles. According to the statistics in Table 3, the majority of sericulture farm women entrepreneurs, regardless of gender, express a "high cost of hiring a vehicle" as a major cocoon

transportation problem (I). A similar point was also made by Usha (2007) on transportation difficulties in sericulture. And also, "timely availability of vehicles" becomes the second-most important transportation problem, followed by "non-availability of own vehicle" (III) and "poor condition of roads" (IV). Globalization in cocoon marketing is only possible if easy access to the cocoon market is achieved. Therefore, the government should take the initiative to establish a cooperative marketing system in sericulture so that farms around a particular area can market their respective cocoons collectively.

**Table 3. Transportation problems faced by the farm women in marketing participation**

| Sl. No | Particulars                                     | Pooled Percentile | Garrett Ranks |
|--------|---|-------------------|---------------|
| 1.     | Non availability of own vehicle                 | 52.2              | III           |
| 2.     | Poor condition of road                          | 30.4              | IV            |
| 3.     | High cost of hiring transportation vehicle      | 60.8              | I             |
| 4.     | Timely unavailability of transportation vehicle | 57.6              | II            |

(n = 60)

### **Institutional Problems**

Entrepreneurial aptitude is a matter of concern for women entrepreneurs; hence, there is no entrepreneurial bent of mind. Therefore, attending various entrepreneurship training programmes led by female entrepreneurs will help to mitigate the risks and difficulties that may arise in an organisational setting (Hashmi, 2019). As a result, institutions play an important role in shaping and governing women's entrepreneurial attitudes. Our study also revealed that the 'lack of regular organisation of training exclusively for farm women' (I) becomes the major problem, followed by 'no special privileges were given to farm women in cocoon marketing' (II) and "less accessibility of institutions" (III) (Table 4).

**Table 4. Institutional problems faced by the farm women in marketing participation**

| Sl. No | Problems   | Pooled Percentile | Garrett Ranks |
|--------|--|-------------------|---------------|
| 1.     | Lack of regular organization of training exclusive for women | 61.08             | I             |
| 2.     | Less accessibility of training institute                     | 39.23             | III           |
| 3..    | Lack of special privileges to women farmers                  | 49.68             | II            |

(n = 60)

## **IV. Conclusion**

India is a male-dominated society, and women are assumed to be economically as well as socially dependent on male members. Women entrepreneurs faced lots of problems like a lack of education, social barriers, a lack of marketing information, the high cost of hiring vehicles, a lack of need-based training, male dominated society, a lack of self-confidence, etc. Various factors like Pull and Push factors influencing women entrepreneurs in participating in Cocoon markets. Women, on the other hand, have the potential and determination to learn, establish, maintain, and supervise their own business in a very systematic manner. As a result, appropriate support and encouragement from society, family, and government can help these farm women become more self-sufficient and participate in cocoon markets on their own.

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