'Development of Silk Industry, During the Rule of Princely Mysore State (1866-1947)'-- A Study

Rekha HG
Assistant Professor of History
Government First Grade College
Vijayanagar, Bangalore

Abstract

The Mysore Silk is synonymous with splendour and grandeur of Royal Mysore State. Mysore silk has been registered as Geographical Indicator under Intellectual Property Rights. Mysore state is the homeland of Mysore Silk has a history of more than 215yrs .By the turn of nineteenth century; Mysore was poised to take off into the skies of progress and development. In the industrial advancement of the country measured by its turn sericulture next to agriculture was the most important industry carried on in the Mysore state. Present study focus on the development of silk industry in Mysore State., Credit of introducing the Sericulture in Mysore state goes to Tippu Sultan, were Tippu sent delegation to South China to collect seed for silk farming. , Mysore State had set a noble example because of energetic initiative by Maharajas and Dewans, and also Mysore enjoyed certain natural facilities and mineral resources, which have been exploited with a foresight worthy of all sorts. Delegates of Italian and Japanese sericulturists played the crucial role in the development of silk industry. Factories and filatures *were set up, good texture of silk were worn. World economic depression had a competition from imported silk and during the second half of the 20th century it was revived and Mysore State become the top multivoltine silk producer in India*.

Key Words: Silk, Sericulture, Mysore State, cocoons, reeling, filatures, weaving

1. Introduction

The silk industry played an important role in the economic development of Mysore State. Mysore owes its sericulture development to Tippu Sultan. The growth of silk industry in Mysore is first recorded during later part of 18th century, when the British had failed to introduce sericulture under their control; in South, Tippu was successful in introducing in Mysore. Silk industry can be classified in to two parts

- Firstly sericulture involves four important aspects viz Mulberry cultivation, silkworm egg production, silkworm rearing and marketing of cocoons
- Secondly silk industry includes reeling, twisting, dyeing, weaving and printing

The above segment played a prominent role in the development of silk industry .high grade silk of different variety were produced here and had given considerable boost to the sericulture, Dewans and Maharaja

Patronised the silk industry .It has transformed into a model in mulberry sericulture in the country. Mysore had the geographical benefits; nature was conducive for the growth of mulberry,

2. Objectives

- To study the progress of Silk industry in Mysore state during the reign of Tippu Sultan.
- To study the efforts of JRD Tata, Sir M Viveshwaraiah, Italian and Japanese sericulturists in developing silk industry.
- To study about the establishment of the silk filatures and factories in Mysore State.

3. Scope

Present study focuses on the development of silk industry in Mysore from the days of Tippu sultan, during the rule of Maharajas and the positive act of Dewans of princely Mysore State, till the dawn of independence.

4. Methodology

Study focuses on both primary and secondary sources, primary sources are noted from the archives and libraries. Secondary data are based upon the reviews and references, books, journals, periodicals, and websites.

5. Contributions made by Tippu sultan

The beginning of sericulture can be traced back to the last quarter of 18^{th} century. Tippu sultan, the ruler of erst while Mysore state organised a silk worm rearing unit in his kingdom He sent emissaries to different parts of the world in search of silkworms eggs and finally procured them from south china and a yellow silk producing race proved very suitable for the climatic condition of Mysore State.

5.1 Area under mulberry cultivation

Sericulture was practised as a subsidiary occupation by agriculturist of almost all the taluk in Bangalore and other parts of Mysore state. Area under mulberry in the Bangalore district alone was about 7700 acres during 1922-23, while it was about 9000 achers during 1925-26. Channapatana stood first with regard to this industry, Closepet came next in importance.

5.2 Developments during 1841 to 1866

In 1800 the Mysore Royal Government established sericulture in Mogenahalli near Channapatana, which became the centre of sericulture activities soon; in 1841 four specimens of silk grown in Mysore were sent to Bengal and found poor of quality through its bad colour and excessive gum. The article was good in itself but the method of preparation was defective. So in 1842 a garden for growing mulberry trees was suggested by Signor Mutti, and garden was made by the government at Bangalore and planted with it cuttings of mulberry plant brought from St Helena, China and Philippines. And eggs were brought from Chittor, Nilgiries and Bengal and hatched. The result was a great improvement in silk, but the task of looking after worms was so difficult that it became doubtful whether the cultivators of Mysore would handle them with sufficient care and intelligence. The Sub peshkar of Bangalore was sent to Chittor to be trained in reeling on his return appointed Superintendent of the government garden.

In 1846 the Calcutta chamber of commerce and Agri-horticulture society both reported most favourably on the clearness, evenness, roundness and good colour of certain specimens of being to the excessive finess in the reeling and want of sufficient trust. In 1850 a firms of brokers in London suggested that this Mysore with care in the getting up would prove a valuable substitute. But the people were indifferent because they would sell the whole of the annual produce (which then came up to 240000 pounds. In the local market at Madras, Tanjore, Coimbatore, Bellary and Dharwar they preferred quantity to quality. Bush cultivation was the most uneconomical and yet was continued by private cultivators. The madras exhibition jury remarked in 1857 that Mysore silk stuff was cheap, but that its quality was not good. They added that great attention to dyeing was necessary, the silk also are too narrow.

5.3 Efforts of Signor-De Vacehy 1866

In 1866 signor Signor-De Vacehy of Europe started a company called De Vacehy silk filature company at kengeri near Bangalore. This company got assistance from government. Signor-De Vacehy assisted the farms in growing mulberry properly. He had introduced two species of mulberry. It was also recorded that attempts at acclimatising the strains of silk worms which were obtained from Japan at signor factory. In kengeri had failed while crops raised out of eggs directly received from Japan were successful

5.4 Efforts of JRD Tata

19th century saw the decline of industry due to the diseases and famines from 1876 to 78. Government had devoted attention to measures for the improvement of the silk industry but owning to various reasons it had not been found practicable to devise a suitable scheme. One of the earliest attempts to organise sericulture in private sector credit goes to JRD Tata, who established the Tata Silk farm with a filature attached to it in Japanese pattern in Bangalore in 1896, with the help of Sri. K. Sheshadri Ayyar, the Dewan of Mysore. He

got the technical expertise from Japanese couple Mr and Mrs Odzu, who gave scientific outlook for the Sericulture industry which produced healthy eggs and offered training to sericulture.

Government approached Mr Tata farm for receiving the sericulture instruction to those engaged in silkworm rearing. Mr Odzu the superintendent of Mr Tata farm was requested to visit the centres of silk industry under instructions from the revenue commissioner and giving advice on the selection of seed and rearing of worms. The scheme started in 1906 of training a few village school masters in sericulture in the Tata Silk farm in Bangalore and employing them in touring the interior explaining to the villagers the modern method of sericulture did not prove success. These teachers were then reverted to the education Department and required to impart instruction out of school hours to the sons of sericulturists in the hope that the youngsters would take to advanced method more kindly than their counter part by 1905 acreage increased and Mysore state surpassed the original silk production stats of Kashmir and Bengal, from this on wards there was continuous growth and development in sericulture.

5.5 Role of Sir M Vishveshwaraiah

In 1911 a state level conference was held under the chairmanship of Sir M Vishveshwaraiah, and in the agenda sericulture was included as one of the main subject of discussion. Conference set up two committees viz Agri Industry and commercial committee. The former dealt with silk worm rearing and related silk diseases of silk worm and the latter committee concentrated to improve silk industry with a focus on converting raw silk in to marketable commodity.

5.6 Hybridization of silkworm races

As early as in1914 a silk farm was established at Channapatana under the Italian expert to produce the disease free silk worm seeds for sericulturists. In March 1914 twelve races of silkworm were imported from Italy. They were housed in an old house offered for the purpose by an important silk merchant at Channapatana as a trial. All the 12 races were sent through trial rearing. They were hibernated from March to May. On release, an attempt was made to incubate then. This involved raising the temperature by half degree centigrade every day there was no automatic incubator. The eggs hatched out and good crop was harvested. These races included 11 white European and one yellow Chinese. The mounting of individual races was done in green *hangarike* bushes perhaps this was the first time a hibernating race was imported. At this time there was only one race the old yellow multivoltine race imported during the time of Tippu. They are surviving even today as popular as pure Mysore race

Signor Mari continued a hot-air-drying chamber and dried these Mysore cocoons and sent them to Italy for examination. In 1915 the Italian expert successfully prepared a hybrid between the Mysore race and the exotic races. In 1917 35% of the total seed requirement of the state was diseases free. In 1919 Dasara

exhibition at Mysore sericulture had the more prominent place. In the same year Prof Pringle Jamsan, a scientist introduced a theory of Gut examination of the north. Mean while Mysore state obtained the services of an expert from Japan, during that year a separate unit was established by Government under guidance of Japanese expert Yonemura to whom goes the credit of evolving high yielding varieties of modern methods of grainage and silk form works and hybridisation between multivoltine and bivoltine silkworm races.. In 1919, Government hired the services of Japanese expert, Mr. Yonemura for conducting research and imparting training in sericulture. Government started Silk filature in 1922 and Silk weaving factory in 1931-32 at Mysore In 1919 there were ten taluk sericulture schools distributed throughout the sericulture parts of the state at eight the sons of ryots received training in the improved methods. A silk expert from Japan was now engaged for general development of the silk industry and was also entrusted with the control of all research and experimental work in the state. A lady expert from Japan was also engaged for the introduction of foot reeling as a home industry. The government grainage supplied large quantities of disease free eggs but as the demand was larger than the supply could meet a scheme for establishment of private grainage under the departmental supervision was also introduced

5.7 **Introduction of fly shuttle looms**

In 1921-22 Italian model reeling Basins were imported, while the government was paying attention to the developed machines the country charakas was improving production. The looms generally used were the primitive pit looms and it was a little later that fly shuttle looms were introduced in several places. Silk fabrics of good texture and excellent design were made by fly shuttles chiefly by Pattegars and khatires of Bangalore, Molakamuru, Dodaballapur and Anekal.

5.8 Effects of Global Economic Depression

Period during 1826-35, the silk industry was confronted with a serious setback, supporting as it did about one eighth of the total population of the state. One to the depressed state of market in America, the depreciation of the Japanese currency, large quantities of foreign silk including artificial silk especially from China were dumped on the Indian market at a very low prices. As consequences of this there was a marked fall in Mysore mulberry cultivation, production of cocoons and silk products. The exports of silk goods from Mysore to outside places which amounted to 866000 lbs in 1925-26 fell to 366800 lbs in 1933, while the imports which were comparatively insignificant in the previous year rose to 164400 lbs. The area under mulberry cultivation in the state decreased from 53000 to 30000 acres in seven years.

In 1932 a representations was made to the Government of India to increase the duty on raw silk and silk goods imported from China and Japan. The question was referred by that Government to their tariff Board to investigation the case for protection.

In the mean while the Mysore government also took vigorous measures for guarding this industry from ruin. In March 1927 the sericulture department was transferred to the control of the Director for industries and commerce. An officer of the department was also deputed to study the requirements of the Northern India silk markets. It was found that the most serious draw back was the inferior quality of the reeling due to primitive character the appliance in use. An improved reeling machine patented under the name of the Mysore Domestic Basin was designed by Mr N Rama Rao who was the Superintendent of sericulture; his object was to support the local chakra

A central sericulture Association was formed in 1927,grainager was introduced by the government was adopted with enthusiasm by those concerned and the supply of disease free eggs by the government farms began to be on a much larger scale than before. Erection of weaving and dying factory at Mysore was completed in November 1931and work was completed in Jan 1932. In 1928 next step in modernisation of the silk industry was taken. Power looms were imported in 1929 and were installed in the silk weaving and dying factors in Mysore adjacent to the filatures. A Swiss weaving expert and French dying expert commissioned these looms initially some of these looms are still in working condition. Only Mysore and Kashmir were the states of India which represented in the imperial sericulture commission

5.9 Establishment of the Mysore Silk Filatures Ltd

The government silk filature, Mysore was started in 1921; in 1937 it became a joint stock company under the name Mysore Silk Filature. The Mysore silk Filatures Ltd has been formed, with a capital of rupees 4 lakh, to carry on the business of silk filatures for reeling high grade silk .the rich sericulture tract comprising of the taluk of T Narasipur, Nahjangund, Chamaraj nagar, Yelandur and Malavalli has been selected for the company operations. To begin with a filature of 200 basins is to be established at T- Narasipur. The government has subscribed rs 15000 towards the share capital of company which will also have the cooperation of the sericulture department in several ways, and the government here granted 10 achers of land for factor free of cost and also granted other facilities as water electric power transfer of existing machinery and equipment of the government filature at responsible price

5.10 During II world war period

II World war period was a period of boom for the silk industry; in 1943 a silk Filature unit was started in Kanakapura in Bangalore dist. This was established for the supply of raw silk which was necessary for the production of parachutes. In 1943, the government silk Filatures was started at Kollegal by the Government of India. The purpose of starting this was to supply high grade raw silk required by the Defence Department of the government of India. The reeling of cocoons was commandeered under the Defence of India rules (DIR) No chakra or cottage basin was allowed to function. Government of India launched silk expansion

scheme and a conference of silk was held in 1942. High grade silk of different various were produced here and had given considerable boost to the sericulture.

6. Conclusion

The reign of Tippu, efforts of Maharaja of Mysore, attempts made by Dewan and the sericulturists from Italy and Japan etc. contributed to the development of silk industry in Mysore sate. The first silk factory was established in the land in the year 1912, and Mysore filature company Ltd was established in the Mysore. Silk Weaving Factory, became the country's oldest silk manufacturing unit. Mysore state is known the world over for lustre sheen and durability. The special feature of the local raw silk is that it takes dark shades and light shades while retaining the lustre. Later it was hit by a global depression, and competition from imported silk and rayon. In the second half of the 20th century, it revived and the Mysore State became the top silk producer in India

7 References

7.1Primary sources

1. Progress in Mysore, Quinquennial Record Reprinted from " The feudatory and Zamindari India of July 1931
2. Sri Krishna Raja Silver Jubilee Souvenir published in 1927
3. Mysore and Modern Industries , the story of Industrial Development in the Mysore State, issued by publicity officer to the Government of Mysore in 1938
4. Address to the Dewan of Mysore to the Representative Assembly 21st Oct 1904, printed at the Government Branch press 1904
5. A hundred years in Mysore, being a review of the work of the Wesleyan Mission During the century 1821 to 1921, printed at the Wesleyan Mission Press Mysore 1922
6. Tariff Board, (1933), Record of the Indian Regarding Grant of Protection to the Sericulture Industry, Manager of Government Publications, Delhi.
7. His Excellency , The Viceroy's visit to Mysore Jan 1939 printed by the superintendent at the Government Press 1939
8. A hundred years in Mysore, being a review of the work of the Wesleyan Mission During the century 1821-1921

7.2 Gazetteer

1. Karnataka State Gazetteer, (1982), Voi.I, p.899
2. Mysore State Gazetteer
3. Hayavadana Rao Mysore gazetteer vol 1 (1930)

7.3 Secondary sources

1. P Krishna Row *House of Mysore Princes Up to the death of Tippu Sultan*, Mysore Commission, Mysore Government Press 1868
2. T A Parthasarathy *Selections from the records of the Mysore palace*, Department of archives Bangalore Vol IV Dasara
3. Shama Roa MA *Modern Mysore from the coronation of Chamaraja Wodeyar X in1868 to the present 1936* printed by Higginbotham
4. Dr MB Gayathri Development of Mysore State Prasaranga University of Mysore pg-75-76
5. T.K Lakshman Rao and Ragavan *Cottage and small scale industries in Mysore*
6. M h Gopal (edited*), British sources of the economic, political and social history of Mysore state 1788-1812*, Bombay popular Prakashana
7. KN Venkata Subba Sastri *The Administration of Mysore under Mark Cubban (1834-1861)* published at London George Allen ltd, Museum street 1932
8. Vikram Sampath *Splendours of Royal Mysore, the untold story of Wodeyars*
9. N S R Chandra *Inside Mysore* Hosali power press 1940
10. Venkatnarsaiah P. (1992), *Sericulture in India*, Ashish Publishing House, Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi 110 02
11. Yonemura, M and Rama Rao, N. (1925*), A Handbook of Sericulture*, Vol.I, (Rearing of Silk
12. Gopal M H 1960, *The Finances of the Mysore state 1977-1831* Bombay orient Longman
13. Shastri KNV 1934 *Cash contribution of Mysore to British government 1799-1881*, Mysore
14. R R Diwakar, *Karnataka through the Ages*, Vol I and Vol II
15. Chandrasekhar. S (1985) *Dimensions of Socio-Political Change in Mysore 1918- 1940*, New Delhi: Ashish
16. Hettne, B. *The Political Economy and indirect Rule Mysore 1881-1947*. Ambika Publications: New Delhi. (197