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THE TASAR SILK INDUSTRY: A GATEWAY TO A PLETHORA OF OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

The tasar silk industry in India represents not only a rich cultural heritage but also a significant avenue for economic empowerment, social inclusion, socio-economic upliftment, and environmental sustainability. This research article delves into the multifaceted opportunities provided by the tasar sector in India. It explores how tasar silk production offers avenues for rural livelihoods, income generation, and market expansion. Furthermore, it investigates the potential of tasar silk to empower marginalized communities, particularly women, through skill development and community-based initiatives. Additionally, the article examines the environmental benefits of tasar silk production, including biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management practices. By analyzing these opportunities alongside challenges such as market diversification and technological advancements, this article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the tasar silk industry in India and offer insights for stakeholders to leverage its full potential for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Keywords: Tasar silk, economic empowerment, socio-economic upliftment, biodiversity conservation, income generation

1. Introduction

Silk, often referred to as the “queen of textiles”, has adorned the fabric of Indian culture and tradition for centuries, weaving a tale of opulence, elegance, and heritage (Padaki, 2015). Within this rich tapestry, tasar silk emerges as a radiant thread, shimmering with a history as illustrious as it is intricate. Derived from the silken strands spun by *Antheraea* silkworms, tasar silk embodies the essence of India's diverse landscape, flourishing in the tropical and subtropical regions that cradle its sericulture (Rheinberg, 2009). Tasar silk is renowned for being among the best textiles in the world, with notable characteristics like unmatched elegance, a natural lustre, an innate affinity for colors, superior quality, durability, soft touch, and natural disease resistance, among others. Because of these distinctive qualities, tasar silk is recognized globally as a unique silk and occupies a distinct position. The story of tasar silk unfolds like the delicate unfurling of a cocoon, with each thread woven into the fabric of Indian history, culture, and tradition. The tasar silk, with its lustrous texture and natural copperish hue (Pandey *et al.*, 2018), can be traced back to ancient Indian texts and scriptures, where it was extolled for its

divine beauty and celestial grace (Kundu, 2019). From the royal courts of emperors to the humble abodes of artisans, tasar silk found its place in the hearts and homes of millions, embodying the spirit of craftsmanship and creativity that defines Indian craftsmanship. Yet, amidst the splendour of its past, the tasar silk industry stands at a crossroads in the modern era, grappling with the winds of change blowing through the global textile market (Datta and Nanavaty, 2005). Because of its large employment potential, low capital requirements, and lucrative nature of production, it has long been regarded as the hub of the rural economy. India has a long and inspiring history of producing tasar silk, and the country has long engaged in the silk trade. India is the world's largest producer of Tropical tasar Silk, with Jharkhand ranking first in the country's tasar silk output. In rural and semi-urban areas across several Indian states, the tasar silk industry employs roughly 3.5 lakh people. A significant portion of these workers are women and members of economically disadvantaged groups in society. This makes this employment special and significant Fig. 1-2. India leads the world's silk market because of its wide variety of geographically unique

tasar silk textiles and its traditional, culturally rich home market. Its responsibility is to generate skilled and informed labourers for the tasar industry by providing a range of training programs tailored to different target groups, such as entrepreneurs, stakeholders, and officers/employees of command state sericulture departments Fig. 3. The advent of synthetic fibers and the shifting of consumer preferences have casted shadows of uncertainty upon the traditional silk industry, challenging its resilience and adaptability (Singh and Patel, 2020). As the journey is embarked through the corridors of time and tradition, this article seeks to unravel the enigma of tasar silk, tracing its path from the annals of history to the bustling markets of the present day Fig4. The production of tropical tasar silk is limited to India, which is one of its primary distinguishing characteristics. Millions of families rely on the tasar silk industry for their livelihood, and it has socioeconomic benefits for the environment and ecology. This illustrates the tribal population's significant potential for gainful rural employment and remunerative income Fig. 5. This industry is energized by the abundance of naturally occurring tasar food plants. It is also distinguished by a strong local and international market demand for tasar silk (Mohanti, 1998). It is a lucrative conventional business with the low investment needed to yield good returns from the silkworms that spin their magic to the skilled artisans who weave dreams into reality. This study delves deeper into the core of the tasar silk industry, unraveling its mysteries and unveiling its hidden treasures. From the ancient traditions that underpin its heritage to the modern innovations that shape its future, tasar silk emerges as a symbol of continuity and

change, tradition and transformation. From the sacred rituals of religious ceremonies to the opulent attire of royalty, tasar silk adorned the lives of the privileged and the pious alike, embodying the essence of craftsmanship and creativity that defined Indian civilization Fig. 6a. The practice of tasar silk weaving became a cherished tradition passed down through generations, particularly among communities residing in tribal and rural areas. According to historical records, tasar silk production was concentrated in regions characterized by tropical and subtropical climates, where the climate was conducive to the cultivation of silkworms and the primary food plants for tasar silkworms (Kundu, 2019). Tasar silk found its place in the annals of Indian history as a symbol of cultural identity and pride for the communities involved in its production. The intricate designs and patterns woven into tasar silk textiles reflected the rich tapestry of India's diverse heritage, with each motif telling a story of tradition and craftsmanship passed down through the ages. From the tribal weavers of Jharkhand to the skilled artisans of Chhattisgarh, tasar silk became a medium through which communities expressed their unique identity and cultural heritage (Vishakha *et al.*, 2020). As the centuries unfolded, tasar silk continued to play a pivotal role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of rural India. The vibrant markets of ancient trade routes bustled with activity as merchants traded tasar silk for spices, precious metals, and other goods, fostering a network of commerce and cultural exchange that spanned continents. Tasar silk was an unwavering emblem of Indian civilization, its legacy woven into the fabric of history for future generations, even as empires arrived and ventured.



Fig1. Various activities of Tasar Industry. (a) Farmer training (b) Cocoon shorting (c) Rearing at forest (d) Cocoon market (e) Rearing field



Fig. 2: Tasar Industry :A source of income generation



Fig. 3 : Various training programs conducted for Skill development offered by silk Industry (a) Reeling and weaving (b) Demonstration of new technology to the farmers (C) Exposure visit of PGDS student (d) Farmer training for women empowerment



Fig. 4 : Reflection of ancient scenario of tasar Industry carved in a painting.



Fig. 5 : Women's involved in tasar activities



Fig. 6a : Demand of Tasar silk fabrics in market

In India, the Central Silk Board (CSB), under the Ministry of Textiles, plays a significant role in the development of the tasar silk industry. The CSB operates several research and development institutes and centres dedicated to sericulture and silk production, including tasar silk.

Current Status of the Tasar Silk Industry

In contemporary times, the tasar silk industry in India stands at a pivotal juncture, navigating through the currents of globalization, technological advancements, and shifting consumer preferences. Despite its rich heritage and cultural significance, the

industry faces numerous challenges that impede its growth and development. These challenges range from inadequate infrastructure and outdated technology to limited market access and competition from synthetic fibers (Singh and Patel, 2020). The advent of synthetic fibers has posed a significant threat to the traditional silk industry, including tasar silk. The affordability and versatility of synthetic textiles have led to a shift in consumer preferences, thereby reducing the demand for natural silk products. Additionally, the tasar silk industry grapples with issues such as limited access to modern technology and mechanized equipment, which hinders productivity and efficiency in silk production processes (Singh and Patel, 2020). Despite these challenges, there are signs of hope and resilience within the tasar silk industry. The government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private stakeholders have initiated various interventions aimed at revitalizing the industry and enhancing its competitiveness. Initiatives such as the National Mission on Silk and the Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry have been instrumental in providing financial assistance, training, and market linkages to tasar silk producers across the country (Kundu, 2019). Furthermore, there has been a growing recognition of the ecological and social benefits of tasar silk production, both domestically and internationally. Moreover, tasar silk production provides a source of sustainable livelihood for millions of people, particularly in rural and tribal areas where sericulture is prevalent (Singh and Patel, 2020). In recent years, there has been an increased focus on promoting tasar silk as a sustainable and ethical alternative to conventional silk products. With rising awareness about environmental conservation and ethical consumption, there is a growing demand for tasar silk products in both domestic and international markets. Tasar silk's unique properties, including its natural texture, rich color variations, and biodegradability, make it an attractive choice for eco-conscious consumers (Kundu, 2019). Overall, while the tasar silk industry in India faces several challenges, there are promising opportunities for growth and development. By leveraging its inherent strengths, embracing technological innovation, and fostering market linkages, the industry can overcome its challenges and emerge as a sustainable and competitive player in the global silk market.

2. Tasar Value Chain Analysis

A comprehensive examination of the tasar silk industry's value chain unveils a complex interplay of processes and stakeholders, each contributing to the creation and dissemination of this exquisite textile. At the inception of the value chain lies the cultivation of host plants, primarily *Terminalia* species, which serve as the primary food source for tasar silkworms. This crucial stage sets the foundation for successful silkworm rearing, ensuring the availability of nutritious foliage essential for the growth and development of the larvae (Kundu, 2019). After the hatching of eggs, the silkworms undergo a meticulous process of feeding, moulting, and spinning cocoons, under controlled environmental conditions conducive to their optimal growth and silk production Fig. 6b. The next phase in the value chain entails the harvesting and processing of tasar silk cocoons to extract raw silk yarn, a delicate and labor-intensive endeavor that requires skilled craftsmanship and attention to detail (Singh and Patel, 2020). Traditional methods of silk reeling involve the degumming and careful unwinding of cocoons to obtain silk filaments, which are then spun into yarn and subjected to various post-processing treatments to enhance their quality and durability (Gulrajani *et al.*, 1999). However, modern technologies such as mechanized reeling machines have streamlined this process, increasing productivity and efficiency in silk production. Once the raw silk yarn is obtained, it undergoes further processing to prepare it for weaving into finished textiles. This involves steps such as degumming, dyeing, and sizing, which impart color, texture, and strength to the silk yarn, thereby enhancing its aesthetic appeal and marketability (Kundu, 2019). Skilled artisans then transform the dyed silk yarn into a myriad of products, including sarees, scarves, fabrics, and furnishings, each bearing the hallmark of their craftsmanship and creativity. Throughout the value chain, opportunities for value addition and socio-economic empowerment abound, particularly in rural and tribal areas where tasar silk production is prevalent. From the cultivation of host plants by farmers to the rearing of silkworms by sericulturists and the weaving of textiles by artisanal weavers, each stage in the value chain generates employment, income, and skill development opportunities for local communities (Singh and Patel, 2020). Moreover, the integration of modern technologies and marketing strategies into the tasar silk value chain has the potential to enhance its competitiveness and market reach.

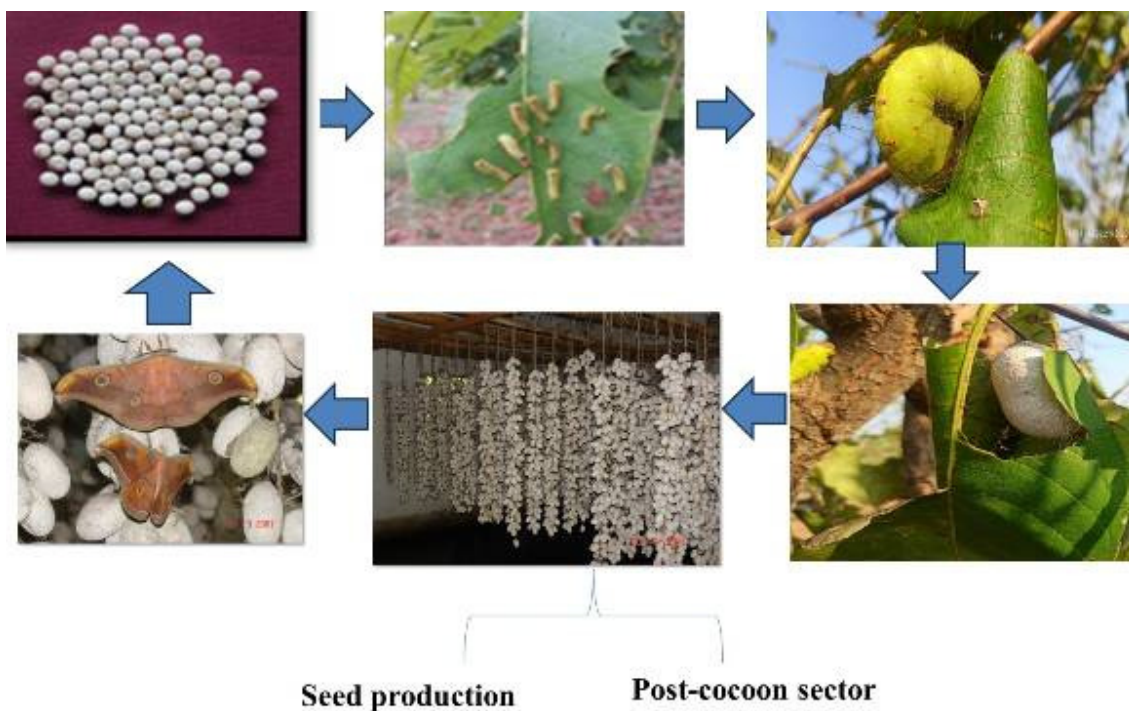


Fig. 6b : Overview of tassar silkworm life cycle and value chain

3. Market Dynamics of Tasar silk Industry

The tassar silk industry operates within a dynamic global market influenced by shifting consumer preferences, emerging trends, and evolving sustainability concerns. Understanding the market dynamics is essential for stakeholders to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities in this vibrant sector. In recent years, there has been a noticeable shift in consumer preferences towards sustainable and eco-friendly textiles, driven by growing environmental awareness and ethical considerations (Singh and Patel, 2020). Tasar silk, with its natural origins and minimal ecological footprint, aligns well with these shifting consumer values. Unlike synthetic fibers, tassar silk is biodegradable and does not contribute to environmental pollution, making it an attractive choice for environmentally conscious consumers seeking sustainable alternatives to conventional silk products. Furthermore, tassar silk's unique properties, including its lustrous texture, rich color variations, and versatility in weaving, have positioned it as a premium textile in the global market (Kundu, 2019). The demand for luxury textiles with distinct cultural and aesthetic appeal is on the rise, particularly among affluent consumers and discerning fashion enthusiasts. Tasar silk, with its rich heritage and artisanal craftsmanship, caters to this niche segment of the market, offering products that exude exclusivity and sophistication. Moreover, tassar silk's

ethical production practices and positive social impact contribute to its growing popularity among socially responsible consumers. Tasar silk production provides livelihood opportunities for thousands of rural and tribal communities engaged in sericulture and weaving, thereby supporting sustainable rural development and poverty alleviation (Singh and Patel, 2020). This socio-economic dimension adds value to tassar silk products, fostering consumer loyalty and brand reputation in an increasingly competitive marketplace. In addition to consumer trends, macroeconomic factors and trade policies also influence the tassar silk market dynamics. As economies grow and disposable incomes rise, there is a corresponding increase in demand for luxury goods, including high-quality textiles like tassar silk. Moreover, trade agreements and tariff regulations impact the international competitiveness of tassar silk products, shaping market access and export opportunities for producers (Kundu, 2019). The digital revolution has also transformed the marketing landscape, providing tassar silk producers with new avenues to reach consumers and expand their market reach. E-commerce platforms, social media marketing, and digital storytelling have emerged as powerful tools for brand promotion and customer engagement, enabling tassar silk producers to connect directly with consumers across the globe (Singh and Patel, 2020).

Thus, the tassar silk market dynamics are characterized by a convergence of factors, including

changing consumer preferences, sustainability concerns, socio-economic impacts, and technological advancements. By staying attuned to these market trends and leveraging its inherent strengths, the tasar silk industry can capitalize on emerging opportunities and consolidate its position as a premium player in the global silk market. In recent years, the global demand for silk products has witnessed a steady increase, driven by factors such as rising disposable incomes, changing fashion trends, and growing awareness about sustainable and eco-friendly textiles. India, with its rich tradition of silk production and craftsmanship, is well-positioned to capitalize on this growing market demand. Tasar silk, in particular, with its unique properties and ethical production practices, holds immense potential to capture a significant share of the global silk market. As a result, there is a growing interest among retailers, designers, and consumers in tasar silk products, both domestically and internationally, creating new avenues for market expansion and value creation.

4. Challenges Faced by the Tasar Silk Industry

Despite its potential for growth and sustainability, the tasar silk industry in India confronts a myriad of challenges that hinder its development and competitiveness. These challenges, rooted in a complex interplay of socio-economic, environmental, and technological factors, pose significant barriers to the industry's progress. The key challenges faced by the tasar silk industry and their implications for stakeholders across the value chain are presented in Fig. 7.



Fig. 7 : Various Challenges Faced by the Tasar Silk Industry

a) Competition from Synthetic Fibers: One of the foremost challenges confronting the Tasar silk industry is competition from synthetic fibers, which offer lower production costs and greater consistency in quality compared to natural silk

(Singh and Patel, 2020). The affordability and availability of synthetic textiles have led to a decline in demand for tasar silk products, particularly in price-sensitive markets where cost considerations outweigh other factors.

b) Limited Access to Technology and Infrastructure: The tasar silk industry suffers from inadequate access to modern technology and infrastructure, particularly in rural and tribal areas where sericulture is prevalent (Kundu, 2019). The lack of mechanized equipment for silk reeling, processing, and weaving hampers productivity and efficiency, leading to higher production costs and lower quality outputs.

c) Quality Control and Standardization: Ensuring consistent quality and standardization of tasar silk products remains a significant challenge for producers and exporters. Variations in raw silk quality, dyeing techniques, and weaving patterns can affect the final product's appearance and performance, thereby undermining consumer confidence and market competitiveness (Singh and Patel, 2020).

d) Market Access and Distribution Channels: Limited market access and fragmented distribution channels pose challenges for tasar silk producers, particularly small-scale artisans and weavers. The absence of organized marketing networks and the dominance of middlemen in the supply chain restrict producers' bargaining power and limit their ability to capture value from the market (Kundu, 2019).

e) Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability: Climate change poses a threat to tasar silk production by disrupting the natural habitats of silkworms and host plants. Erratic weather patterns, changing temperatures, and deforestation can affect the availability and quality of raw materials, thereby impacting sericulture activities and production yields (Singh and Patel, 2020).

f) Skills Gap and Capacity Building: The tasar silk industry faces challenges related to skills gap and capacity building, particularly among rural and tribal communities engaged in sericulture and weaving. Limited access to formal education and vocational training programs inhibits skill development and innovation, thereby constraining the industry's ability to adapt to changing market dynamics (Kundu, 2019).

g) Access to Finance and Credit: Access to finance and credit remains a challenge for tasar silk

producers, especially small-scale farmers and weavers who lack collateral and formal banking relationships. Limited availability of credit facilities and high-interest rates discourage investments in sericulture infrastructure and technology upgrades, hindering the industry's growth potential (Singh and Patel, 2020).

Apart from the above, the tasar silk industry also faces challenges from the diseases associated with the tasar silk industry.

Silkworm Diseases: Tasar silkworms are susceptible to various diseases. These can include bacterial infections (Bacterioses, Gram positive bacteria like *Serratia* and *Pseudomonas*), viral diseases (Virosis, *Antheraea mylitta* Cytoplasmic polyhedrosis virus (AmCPV)), fungal infections (*Penicillium citrinum* and *Paecilomyces varioti*), and parasitic infestations (Pebrine, *Nosema mylittensis*). These diseases can significantly impact the production of tasar silk by reducing the number of healthy silkworms available for silk production (Pandey *et al.*, 2023).

Tree Diseases: Since the tasar silkworms feed on leaves from certain tree species, any diseases affecting these trees can indirectly impact the tasar silk industry. For example, if there's an outbreak of a disease that affects the *Terminalia* or *Shorea* trees, it can lead to a shortage of food for the silkworms, ultimately affecting their growth and silk production.

Environmental Factors: Environmental factors such as temperature, humidity, and availability of suitable host plants can also influence the health and productivity of tasar silkworms. Changes in environmental conditions due to factors like climate change or deforestation can affect the prevalence of diseases and overall productivity of the tasar silk industry.

The tasar silk industry primarily revolves around the production of silk from the tasar silkworm (*Antheraea mylitta*). These silkworms feed on leaves of several species of trees, primarily the *Terminalia* and *Shorea* trees. The tasar silk produced is known for its strength, durability, and unique texture, making it highly valued in the textile industry. Thus, the tasar silk industry grapples with a host of challenges that necessitate concerted efforts from government agencies, industry stakeholders, and civil society organizations to address. By addressing these challenges through targeted interventions and policy reforms, the tasar silk industry can unlock its full potential as a sustainable and competitive player in the global silk market, while simultaneously contributing

to rural development and socio-economic empowerment.

5. Opportunities for Growth and Development:

Within the challenges faced by the tasar silk industry lie numerous opportunities for growth and development, offering a pathway towards sustainability, innovation, and socio-economic empowerment. These opportunities, rooted in the industry's rich heritage, inherent strengths, and evolving market dynamics, present a compelling vision for stakeholders to harness the potential of tasar silk and propel it toward a brighter future. The key opportunities for growth and development within the tasar silk industry is presented in Fig. 8. and their implications for stakeholders across the value chain have been discussed.



Fig. 8 : The key opportunities for growth and development within the tasar silk industry

- a) **Market Expansion and Diversification:** Despite the challenges posed by competition from synthetic fibers, there exists a significant opportunity for tasar silk producers to expand and diversify their market reach. Emerging consumer trends towards sustainability, eco-friendliness, and ethical consumption present a favorable environment for tasar silk products, particularly in high-end fashion, luxury textiles, and home furnishings markets (Kundu, 2019). By leveraging its unique selling propositions, such as natural origins, artisanal craftsmanship, and cultural heritage, the tasar silk industry can carve out a niche segment within the global silk market and capture the growing demand for premium, sustainable textiles.
- b) **Value Addition and Product Innovation:** Tasar silk offers immense potential for value addition and product innovation across the value chain, from sericulture and silk reeling to weaving and finishing processes. Opportunities exist to enhance the quality, aesthetics, and functionality of tasar silk products through innovative techniques such as eco-friendly dyeing, digital printing, and

sustainable packaging (Singh and Patel, 2020). Moreover, the integration of traditional handloom techniques with modern design sensibilities can create unique, contemporary textile products that appeal to discerning consumers and command premium prices in domestic and international markets.

c) Sustainable Sericulture Practices: With growing awareness about environmental conservation and climate change, there is an increasing demand for sustainably produced silk products. Tasar silk, known for its eco-friendly production process and minimal environmental footprint, is well-positioned to capitalize on this trend (Kundu, 2019). Opportunities exist to promote sustainable sericulture practices, such as organic farming, agroforestry, and biodiversity conservation, which not only enhance the quality and yield of tasar silk but also contribute to ecosystem resilience and rural livelihoods.

d) Technology Adoption and Digital Transformation: The adoption of modern technology and digital tools can revolutionize the tasar silk industry, enhancing productivity, efficiency, and market competitiveness. Opportunities exist to leverage technologies such as biotechnology, nanotechnology, and remote sensing for silk production, disease management, and crop forecasting (Singh and Patel, 2020). Moreover, digital platforms and e-commerce channels can facilitate direct market access for tasar silk producers, enabling them to reach a wider audience, bypass intermediaries, and capture a greater share of the value chain.

e) Capacity Building and Skill Development: Investing in capacity building and skill development initiatives is essential for unlocking the full potential of tasar silk producers and artisans. Opportunities exist to provide training and technical assistance in areas such as sericulture

best practices, value-added product manufacturing, and marketing and entrepreneurship skills (Kundu, 2019). By empowering local communities with the knowledge and resources needed to succeed in the tasar silk industry, stakeholders can foster inclusive growth, reduce poverty, and bridge the rural-urban divide.

f) Policy Support and Market Interventions: Government policies and market interventions play a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for the growth and development of the tasar silk industry. Opportunities exist to provide financial incentives, subsidies, and infrastructure support for tasar silk producers, particularly small-scale farmers and weavers (Singh and Patel, 2020). Moreover, measures such as quality certification, geographical indication (GI) protection, and market promotion can enhance the visibility, credibility, and marketability of tasar silk products, both domestically and internationally. Thus, the tasar silk industry abounds with opportunities for growth and development, offering a fertile ground for innovation, sustainability, and inclusive prosperity. By capitalizing on these opportunities and addressing the underlying challenges, stakeholders can unlock the full potential of tasar silk as a catalyst for economic growth, rural development, and environmental stewardship, while preserving India's rich textile heritage for generations to come.

7. Biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management

Tasar silk production, biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management are interconnected in several ways Table 1. Tasar silk is produced from the cocoons of certain species of silkworms, particularly *Antheraea mylitta*, which feed on the leaves of several tree species, such as *Terminalia arjuna*, *Terminalia tomentosa*, *Shorea robusta*, and others.

Table 1 : Opportunities provided by tasar silk industry in biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management.

| S.No. | Methods | Advantages |
|-------|---|---|
| 1. | Promotion of Tree Plantations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead to the promotion of agroforestry and afforestation programs. Contribute to the conservation of tree species and their associated ecosystems. |
| 2. | Preservation of Indigenous tree Species/ Habitat Conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the tree species used in tasar silk production are indigenous to specific regions. By promoting the cultivation and preservation of these trees, the tasar silk industry indirectly supports the conservation of native flora and the ecosystems they inhabit. |

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 3. | Community Involvement in Conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasar silk production is often practiced by rural communities living in forested areas. • Involvement of these communities in silk production provides them with an economic incentive to conserve forests and biodiversity, as their livelihoods depend on the health of these ecosystems. |
| 4. | Reduced Pressure on Wild Silk Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By promoting the cultivation of tasar silk, there's reduced reliance on wild silk sources, which often involve harvesting silk from wild silkworm species. • This can alleviate pressure on wild populations and contribute to the conservation of these species. |
| 5. | Biodiversity Research and Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can help identify key biodiversity hotspots and prioritize conservation efforts in these areas. |
| 6. | Agroforestry Practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tasar silk industry can promote agroforestry practices where silk-producing trees are integrated with other crops or vegetation. • It helps to maintain biodiversity, soil health, and ecosystem resilience. |
| 7. | Selective Harvesting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of clear-cutting forests, selective harvesting techniques can be employed where only mature trees are harvested for timber or other purposes while younger trees are left to grow. • This ensures the regeneration of forests and maintains suitable habitats for tasar silkworms. |
| 8. | Forest Conservation Agreements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative agreements can be established between forest-dependent communities, government agencies, and the silk industry to conserve forests and their biodiversity. • These agreements can include sustainable harvesting quotas, habitat restoration initiatives, and community development projects. |
| 9. | Certification Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing certification programs such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) for tasar silk production can help ensure that silk is sourced from sustainably managed forests. • This provides assurance to consumers that the silk they purchase is environmentally responsible. |
| 10. | Forest Conservation Agreements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative agreements can be established between forest-dependent communities, government agencies, and the silk industry to conserve forests and their biodiversity. • These agreements can include sustainable harvesting quotas, habitat restoration initiatives, and community development projects. |
| 11. | Community Empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging local communities in forest management and silk production activities empowers them to become stewards of their natural resources. • This can involve providing training in sustainable forest management practices, offering fair wages and working conditions, and supporting alternative livelihoods. |
| 12. | Research and Innovation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in research and innovation can lead to the development of more sustainable silk production techniques, such as breeding programs for resilient silkworm strains, eco-friendly pest management strategies, and efficient resource utilization methods. |

Overall, the tasar silk industry can play a significant role in biodiversity conservation and sustainable forest management by promoting sustainable land use practices, supporting local communities, and contributing to the preservation of forest ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity.

1. Policy Framework and Interventions

A robust policy framework and strategic interventions are imperative for fostering the growth,

sustainability, and competitiveness of the tasar silk industry in India. Effective policies, backed by supportive measures and targeted interventions, can address the industry's challenges, capitalize on its opportunities, and unleash its full potential as a driver of economic development and social empowerment. Thus, the key components of a conducive policy framework and proposes interventions to support the tasar silk industry is presented in **Fig. 9**.

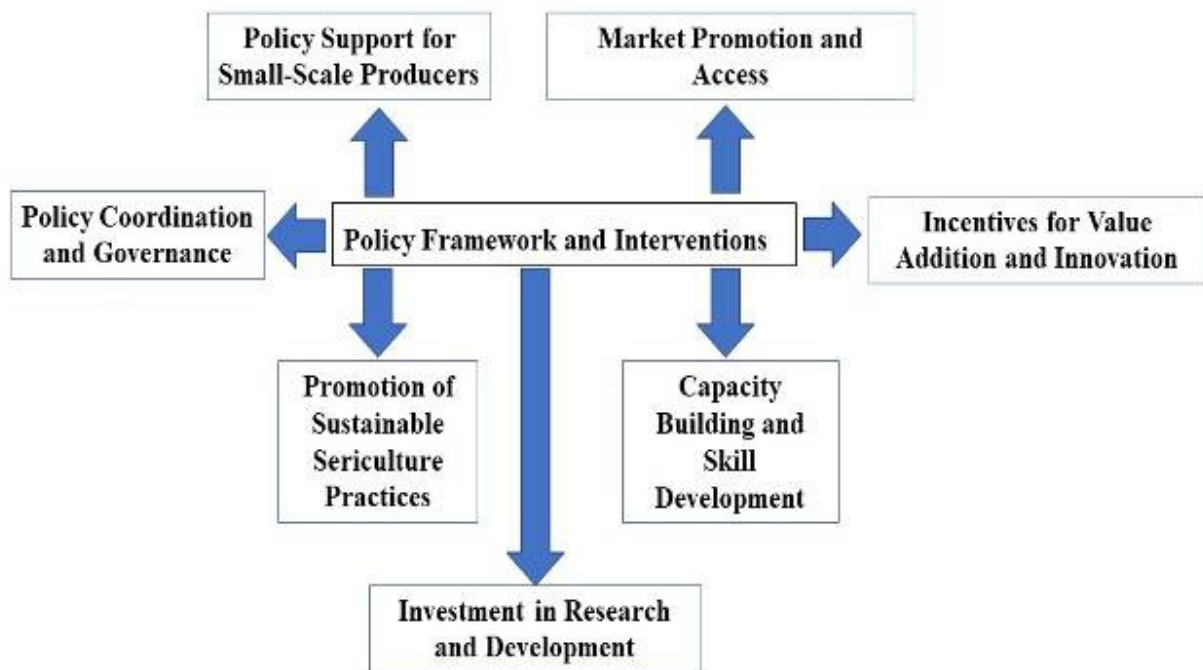


Fig. 9 : The key components of a conducive policy framework and proposes interventions to support the tasar silk industry.

a) Promotion of Sustainable Sericulture Practices: Government policies should prioritize the promotion of sustainable sericulture practices that enhance productivity, minimize environmental impact, and improve the livelihoods of tasar silk producers. This could include incentives for organic farming, agroforestry, and biodiversity conservation, as well as support for research and development in eco-friendly pest management and crop diversification (Singh and Patel, 2020).

b) Investment in Research and Development: Public investment in research and development (R&D) is essential for driving innovation, technology adoption, and product diversification in the Tasar silk industry. Government funding should be allocated for R&D initiatives focused on silk genetics, breeding, disease resistance, and value-added product development (Kundu, 2019). Collaborative research partnerships

between government agencies, academic institutions, and industry stakeholders can accelerate technological advancements and enhance the industry's competitiveness.

c) Capacity Building and Skill Development: Policies aimed at capacity building and skill development are critical for empowering tasar silk producers and artisans with the knowledge and capabilities needed to succeed in a competitive market environment. Government-sponsored training programs, vocational courses, and entrepreneurship development initiatives should be tailored to meet the specific needs of tasar silk stakeholders, with a focus on sericulture best practices, silk reeling techniques, and modern weaving methods (Singh and Patel, 2020).

d) Market Promotion and Access: Government interventions should focus on enhancing market access and promoting tasar silk products in domestic and

international markets. This could include financial support for participation in trade fairs, exhibitions, and marketing campaigns, as well as assistance in obtaining quality certifications and geographical indications (GI) for tasar silk products (Kundu, 2019). Moreover, efforts should be made to strengthen market linkages, facilitate e-commerce platforms, and establish direct procurement arrangements with retailers and wholesalers.

e) Policy Support for Small-Scale Producers: Policies should be formulated to provide targeted support for small-scale tasar silk producers, who often lack access to finance, technology, and market information. Government-backed credit schemes, subsidies for sericulture inputs, and insurance coverage against crop losses can mitigate the risks faced by smallholder farmers and encourage their participation in the tasar silk value chain (Singh and Patel, 2020).

f) Incentives for Value Addition and Innovation: Incentive mechanisms should be introduced to encourage value addition, product diversification, and innovation in the tasar silk industry. This could include tax incentives for investments in silk processing units, financial assistance for the adoption of modern technologies, and grants for research-driven startups and entrepreneurial ventures (Kundu, 2019). Moreover, policies should be designed to protect intellectual property rights and foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within the industry.

g) Policy Coordination and Governance: Effective policy coordination and governance mechanisms are essential for ensuring coherence, synergy, and accountability in the implementation of tasar silk-related policies and programs. A dedicated nodal agency or task force should be established to oversee the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of tasar silk policies, with representation from relevant ministries, industry associations, research institutions, and civil society organizations (Singh and Patel, 2020). Thus, a well-crafted policy framework and targeted interventions are indispensable for unlocking the immense potential of the tasar silk industry and positioning it as a sustainable and competitive player in the global silk market. By aligning policy objectives with industry needs, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, and empowering stakeholders across the value chain, policymakers can catalyse inclusive growth, rural development, and environmental sustainability in India's tasar silk sector. Thus, the tasar silk industry stands at a crucial juncture, poised between tradition and transformation, challenges and opportunities. The journey through the tasar silk value chain has illuminated the intricate interplay of

historical legacy, market dynamics, socio-economic factors, and policy imperatives that shape its landscape. Despite the challenges posed by competition, limited access to technology, and environmental uncertainties, the tasar silk industry holds immense promise for growth and development. Its rich heritage, eco-friendly production practices, which refer to methods of cultivating and processing tasar silk that minimize negative environmental impacts and promote sustainability and artisanal craftsmanship resonate with evolving consumer preferences for sustainability, authenticity, and ethical sourcing. Moreover, the industry's potential to generate employment, foster rural livelihoods, and promote inclusive growth underscores its significance as a catalyst for socio-economic empowerment. As we envision the future of the tasar silk industry, it is imperative to prioritize policy interventions that address the industry's challenges while leveraging its inherent strengths. Sustainable sericulture practices, investment in research and development, capacity building, and market promotion should form the cornerstone of a supportive policy framework. By nurturing innovation, fostering collaboration, and empowering stakeholders at all levels, policymakers can unlock the full potential of the tasar silk industry and position it as a global leader in sustainable textiles. In this journey towards a sustainable and competitive tasar silk industry, collaboration and partnership among government agencies, industry stakeholders, academia, and civil society will be paramount. By aligning interests, pooling resources, and sharing best practices, we can collectively overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and chart a course towards a brighter, more prosperous future for the tasar silk industry and the communities it sustains. As we embark on this collective endeavour, let us be guided by a shared vision of resilience, innovation, and inclusive development, ensuring that the legacy of tasar silk continues to shine brightly for generations to come.

2. Role of Self-help groups (SHGs) in tasar silk industry

Self-help groups (SHGs) play a significant role in the tasar silk industry, particularly in the context of rural and tribal communities engaged in sericulture activities (Baig *et al.*, 2020). SHGs serve as a vital mechanism for organizing and mobilizing tasar silk producers, primarily women, to collectively address their socio-economic needs, enhance their livelihoods, and promote sustainable sericulture practices Fig.10



Fig. 10 : Opportunity for SHGs formation and intersect with the tassar silk industry

a) Formation and Mobilization:

In tassar silk-producing regions, SHGs are often formed to empower women and marginalized communities engaged in sericulture. These groups bring together tassar silk rearers, weavers, and other stakeholders to collectively address common challenges and leverage opportunities in the tassar silk value chain. Facilitated by government agencies, NGOs, or local community organizations, SHGs provide a platform for knowledge-sharing, skill-building, and collective decision-making among tassar silk producers.

b) Access to Finance and Credit:

One of the primary functions of SHGs in the tassar silk industry is to facilitate access to finance and credit for tassar silk producers. Members of SHGs pool their savings regularly, which are then used to provide loans to members for various sericulture-related activities, such as purchasing silkworm eggs, host plants, or equipment, and investing in mulberry plantations or silk reeling units. This access to affordable credit enables tassar silk producers to overcome financial constraints, invest in their businesses, and improve their production and income levels.

c) Capacity Building and Skill Development:

SHGs play a crucial role in building the capacity and enhancing the skills of tassar silk producers through training and capacity-building initiatives. Training programs conducted by SHGs cover a wide range of topics, including sericulture best practices, silk rearing techniques, pest and disease management, quality control, and value addition. By equipping tassar silk producers with the knowledge and skills needed to adopt modern practices and technologies, SHGs contribute to improving the productivity, quality, and competitiveness of tassar silk production.

d) Market Linkages and Value Addition:

SHGs facilitate market linkages and value addition for tassar silk producers by connecting them with buyers, traders, and retailers in domestic and international markets. Through collective marketing initiatives, SHGs negotiate better prices for tassar silk products, ensure fair trade practices, and promote the branding and certification of tassar silk as a premium, sustainable textile. Moreover, SHGs encourage value addition through the production of diversified tassar silk products, such as fabrics, garments, and accessories, catering to the evolving preferences of consumers.

e) Sustainability and Environmental Conservation:

SHGs promote sustainable sericulture practices and environmental conservation among tassar silk producers. Through awareness campaigns, training programs, and community outreach initiatives, SHGs advocate for eco-friendly methods of silk production, such as organic farming, natural pest control, and water conservation. By promoting biodiversity conservation and responsible land management practices, SHGs contribute to the preservation of tassar silk ecosystems and the sustainability of the tassar silk industry in the long run. Thus, self-help groups serve as catalysts for empowerment, inclusion, and sustainable development in the tassar silk industry, empowering producers to overcome socio-economic challenges, adopt modern practices, and access markets effectively. By fostering collaboration, collective action, and knowledge-sharing among tassar silk stakeholders, SHGs play a pivotal role in advancing the socio-economic well-being of rural and tribal communities engaged in sericulture, while promoting the sustainable growth and competitiveness of the tassar silk industry.

3. Opportunities for women's empowerment and upliftment

Tassar silk production provides unique opportunities for women's economic empowerment, social inclusion, and skill development, contributing to their overall well-being and agency. Participation in the tassar silk industry empowers women by providing them with opportunities for income generation, asset accumulation, and economic independence. Women's empowerment and upliftment are integral components of the tassar silk industry, where women play a pivotal role in various aspects of sericulture, silk reeling, weaving, and value addition. Women are actively involved in sericulture activities, such as feeding silkworms, nurturing plantations, and harvesting tassar silk cocoons, which contribute to household incomes and livelihood security. Moreover, women are increasingly engaged in value addition activities, such

as silk reeling, weaving, and embroidery, which enable them to earn additional income and improve their economic status Fig. 11.



Fig. 11 : Tasar silk industry empowers women by providing them with various opportunities.

a.) Skill Development and Entrepreneurship:

Engagement in the tasar silk industry fosters skill development and entrepreneurship among women, enabling them to acquire technical know-how, business acumen, and leadership skills. Through training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and exposure visits facilitated by self-help groups (SHGs) and government agencies, women learn sericulture best practices, silk reeling techniques, and marketing strategies. Armed with these skills, women can establish their microenterprises, such as silk reeling units, handloom cooperatives, or boutique enterprises, thereby becoming entrepreneurs and job creators in their communities.

b.) Social Inclusion and Empowerment:

The tasar silk industry promotes social inclusion and empowerment by providing women with a platform for collective action, voice, and participation in decision-making processes. Women's involvement in SHGs and producer groups facilitates social cohesion, mutual support, and solidarity among tasar silk producers, fostering a sense of belonging and community empowerment. Moreover, women's participation in community-based organizations and cooperatives enables them to advocate for their rights, access social services, and influence policies that affect their lives and livelihoods.

c.) Gender Equity and Leadership:

The tasar silk industry promotes gender equity and leadership by creating opportunities for women to assume leadership roles and positions of authority within producer organizations, cooperatives, and value chain networks. Women's representation in leadership positions not only challenges traditional gender norms and stereotypes but also ensures that their perspectives

and interests are taken into account in decision-making processes. Moreover, women leaders serve as role models and mentors for other women, inspiring them to pursue their aspirations and realize their full potential.

d.) Empowerment through Education and Health:

Participation in the tasar silk industry opens doors for women's education and healthcare access. Increased income from silk-related activities enables women to invest in education for themselves and their children, breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Additionally, women gain access to healthcare services and nutrition programs, leading to improved health outcomes for themselves and their families. As a result, women's empowerment in the tasar silk industry extends beyond economic opportunities to encompass holistic well-being and human development.

4. Socioeconomic progress

The Tasar silk industry plays a multifaceted role in driving socioeconomic progress, particularly in rural and tribal communities where sericulture is prevalent. Tasar silk production contributes to various dimensions of socioeconomic development, including poverty alleviation, employment generation, income enhancement, skill development, and women's empowerment Fig. 12.:



Fig. 12. Tasar silk contribution to socioeconomic progress.

a) Poverty Alleviation: Tasar silk production serves as a potent tool for poverty alleviation by providing livelihood opportunities to marginalized communities, particularly in rural and tribal areas. The industry creates employment along the entire value chain, from mulberry cultivation and silkworm rearing to silk reeling, weaving, and marketing. The income generated from tasar silk-related activities helps lift families out of poverty, reduce vulnerability to economic shocks, and improve their overall standard of living.

b) Employment Generation: Tasar silk production is labor-intensive, offering employment opportunities to a

wide range of individuals, including farmers, sericulturists, weavers, artisans, and traders. The industry provides seasonal employment for agricultural laborers during mulberry plantation and tasar silk cocoon harvesting seasons. Additionally, tasar silk weaving and value addition activities generate year-round employment for skilled and unskilled workers, particularly women and youth, contributing to inclusive growth and rural development.

c) Income Enhancement: Tasar silk production enhances the income levels of individuals engaged in sericulture and allied activities, thereby augmenting household incomes and reducing income disparities. Farmers benefit from the sale of tasar silk cocoons and mulberry leaves, while sericulturists earn income from silk reeling and yarn production. Weavers and artisans derive income from the weaving and marketing of tasar silk textiles and products. Moreover, the value addition and marketing of tasar silk products enable producers to command premium prices, thereby increasing their profit margins and economic returns.

d) Skill Development: Engagement in the tasar silk industry fosters skill development and entrepreneurship among rural and tribal communities, particularly women and youth. Through training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and exposure visits, individuals acquire technical skills in sericulture, silk reeling, weaving, dyeing, and marketing. These skills not only enhance their employability and income-earning potential but also empower them to establish their microenterprises, such as silk reeling units, handloom cooperatives, or boutique enterprises.

e) Women's Empowerment: Tasar silk production plays a pivotal role in empowering women by providing them with opportunities for economic independence, social inclusion, and leadership. Women are actively involved in sericulture activities, such as mulberry cultivation, silkworm rearing, and cocoon harvesting, as well as in value addition activities, such as silk reeling, weaving, and embroidery. Their participation in self-help groups (SHGs) and producer organizations enables them to access credit, savings, training, and market linkages, thereby enhancing their decision-making power, agency, and socio-economic status.

f) Environmental Conservation: Tasar silk production promotes environmental conservation and sustainable land management practices by incentivizing the preservation of natural habitats and biodiversity. Tasar silk cocoons are primarily harvested from wild silk moth species that thrive in forest ecosystems, thereby providing economic value to

forest resources and discouraging deforestation and habitat degradation. Moreover, tasar silk production encourages the adoption of eco-friendly sericulture practices, such as organic farming, natural pest control, and water conservation, which contribute to ecosystem resilience and environmental sustainability.

12. Opportunities for research, education, and employment

The tasar silk industry offers a wealth of opportunities Fig. 13 for research, education, and employment across various domains, contributing to both academic advancements and socio-economic development.

a) Research Opportunities:

- **Silk Biology and Genetics:** Research in silk biology and genetics offers opportunities to understand the physiology, behaviour, and genetics of tasar silk moth species, as well as their interactions with host plants and natural habitats. This research can lead to the development of improved breeding techniques, tasar bi-product utilization, disease-resistant strains, and sustainable management practices for tasar silk production.
- **Sustainable Sericulture Practices:** There is scope for research on sustainable sericulture practices, focusing on organic farming methods, integrated pest management, and agroforestry systems that promote biodiversity conservation and environmental sustainability. This research can inform policy interventions and capacity-building initiatives aimed at promoting eco-friendly sericulture practices among tasar silk producers.
- **Value Addition and Product Innovation:** Research in value addition and product innovation can explore novel techniques for dyeing, printing, weaving, and finishing tasar silk textiles, as well as the development of value-added products such as blended fabrics, designer garments, and lifestyle accessories. This research can contribute to expanding market opportunities and enhancing the competitiveness of tasar silk products in domestic and international markets.
- **Market Analysis and Consumer Behaviour:** Research on market analysis and consumer behaviour can provide insights into consumer preferences, trends, and demand patterns for tasar silk products. This research can guide marketing strategies, product development initiatives, and market expansion efforts aimed at capturing niche segments and creating value for tasar silk producers and entrepreneurs.

b) Education and Capacity Building:

- **Vocational Training Programs:** Vocational training programs in sericulture, silk reeling, weaving, and entrepreneurship offer opportunities for skill development and capacity building among

tasar silk producers, artisans, and entrepreneurs. These programs provide hands-on training, technical assistance, and business management skills needed to succeed in the tasar silk industry.

Table 2 : List of training conducted at CTRTI Ranchi.

| S.No. | Vocational Training Programs |
|-------|--|
| 1. | Post Graduate Diploma in Sericulture (Vanya Silk) CTR TI, Ranchi, organises the training programmes in sericulture for the candidates who are nominated / sponsored by various Govt. or non-Govt. organizations. Duration: 15 Months |
| 2. | Farmers Skill Training (FST) In this programme, Farmers, unemployed youths, and rural women from different tasar-producing states will be provided training in different aspects of tasar culture viz., Host Plant Maintenance, Silkworm Seed Production, Rearing and Post cocoon Technology. Duration: 5 Days |
| 3. | Sericulture Resource Center (SRC) The Sericulture Resource Centre (SRC) is like a 'village forum' led by an elite / experienced farmer in a sericulture cluster for staging technology demonstrations/ discussions for the benefit of cluster stakeholders. Two SRCs have to conduct at least 10 batches (15 farmers/ batch) every year. Duration: 1 Day |
| 4. | Exposure visit for technology awareness Only lead/progressive farmers along with escort (one for 20 farmers group) is eligible for the programme. Duration: 5 Days |
| 5. | Technology Orientation Programme Technology based training for Students, NGOs, DoS / CSB Staff, Industries Duration: 5 Days |
| 6. | Dissertation/ Project Work on Biotechnology/ Microbiology/ Post Cocoon Technology Duration: 3 months-6 months |

- **Academic Courses and Research Programs:** Academic institutions can offer specialized courses and research programs in sericulture, textile technology, and silk science, providing students with opportunities to explore the scientific, technological, and socio-economic aspects of tasar silk production. These programs can foster interdisciplinary research collaborations and produce skilled professionals equipped to address the challenges and opportunities in the tasar silk sector.
 - **Silk Reeling and Weaving:** Employment opportunities are available in silk reeling and weaving units, where workers are involved in processing raw silk, spinning yarns, and weaving fabrics. Skilled weavers can create intricate designs and patterns using Tasar silk, catering to diverse market preferences.
 - **Research and Development:** Employment opportunities are available in research and development organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions engaged in Tasar silk research, innovation, and technology transfer. Researchers, scientists, and technicians contribute to advancing knowledge, developing new technologies, and enhancing the competitiveness of the Tasar silk industry.
- c.) Employment Opportunities:**
- **Sericulture and Farming:** Employment opportunities exist in sericulture and farming, silkworm rearing, and cocoon harvesting. Skilled workers are needed to manage silk farms, monitor silkworm health, and ensure optimal conditions for cocoon production.

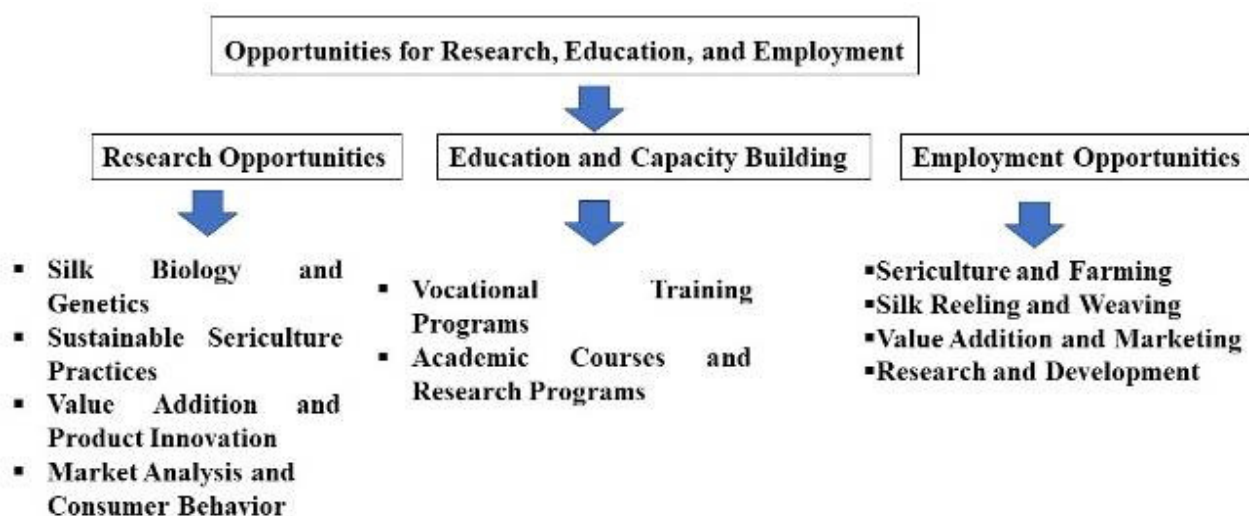


Fig. 13 : Avenues offered by tasar silk industry

Table 3: List of some potential job roles in the tasar sector.

| S.No. | Job profiles | Roles |
|-------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. | Sericulture Technician | Responsible for the cultivation of tasar silkworms, including feeding, rearing, and maintenance of optimal conditions for their growth and silk production. |
| 2. | Silk Reeling Operator | Operates machinery to extract raw silk from tasar cocoons, ensuring quality control and efficiency in the silk reeling process. |
| 3. | Silk Weaver | Crafts tasar silk into various textiles such as sarees, scarves, and fabric, using traditional handloom techniques or modern machinery. |
| 4. | Quality Control Inspector | Inspects tasar silk products at various stages of production to ensure they meet quality standards and specifications. |
| 5. | Research Scientist | Conducts research and development activities to improve tasar silk production techniques, develop new products, and address challenges in the tasar silk industry. |
| 6. | Project fellows | Tasar research provides wide opportunities to the students after graduation, post-graduation, PDGS (Post graduate diploma in sericulture) to work on a short-term project as research fellows. |
| 7. | Sales and Marketing Manager | Develops strategies to market tasar silk products, identifies potential customers, and manages sales channels to promote the growth of the tasar silk industry. |
| 8. | Farm Manager | Oversees the operations of tasar silk farms, including managing resources, supervising workers, and ensuring the efficient production of tasar silk. |
| 9. | Sustainability Consultant | Advises tasar silk producers on sustainable practices to minimize environmental impact, improve resource efficiency, and enhance the sustainability of tasar silk production. |

d) Self-Employment Opportunities:

The Tasar silk industry offers abundant opportunities for entrepreneurship and self-employment, particularly in rural and marginalized communities. Small-scale sericulture units, handloom weaving cooperatives, and artisanal silk production clusters empower individuals to harness their creativity and traditional skills for economic self-sufficiency (Sharma & Dashora, 2017). Government-backed initiatives, access to microfinance, and market linkages play instrumental roles in nurturing entrepreneurial ventures and fostering inclusive growth (Kumar &

Das, 2017). Additionally, initiatives such as cooperative farming, collective marketing, and skill-sharing networks empower Tasar silk producers to pool resources, mitigate risks, and access new market opportunities (Kundu & Biswas, 2017). By fostering collaboration and collective action, these self-help mechanisms strengthen community resilience and promote socio-economic development in Tasar silk-producing regions. Overall, the Tasar silk industry holds immense potential for individuals to embark on entrepreneurial journeys, pursue their passion for craftsmanship, and contribute to sustainable livelihoods and inclusive growth.

Table 5 : List of self employment opportunities in tasar silk industry.

| S.No. | Potential avenues for self-employment | Description |
|-------|--|---|
| 1. | Sericulture Farming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tasar silk farm can be started where one can rear silkworms and cultivate host plants like oak, sal, or arjun trees. This requires space silkworm rearing infrastructure, and knowledge of sericulture techniques. |
| 2. | Silk Reeling and Spinning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establishment of a small-scale silk reeling and spinning unit where one can process raw tasar silk cocoons into yarn. ✓ This requires basic equipment such as reeling machines and spinning wheels. |
| 3. | Silk Weaving | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A weaving business can be started to create various products like sarees, scarves, stoles, and fabrics. ✓ Either handloom weave or use power looms can be used depending on the scale and budget |
| 4. | Silk Dyeing and Printing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set up a dyeing and printing unit where one can add value to tasar silk by dyeing it in attractive colors and printing designs on it. ✓ This requires knowledge of dyeing techniques and access to printing equipment. |
| 5. | Handicrafts and Accessories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create handmade tasar silk products such as bags, wallets, jewellery, and home decor items. ✓ These products can be sold online, in local markets, or through craft fairs and exhibitions. |
| 6. | Industry Associations and Trade Bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Connect with industry associations and trade bodies related to sericulture and handloom sectors. ✓ Networking opportunities, training programs, and access to market information are often offered. |
| 7. | Field Visits and Internships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider visiting tasar silk production clusters and interacting with local farmers, artisans, and entrepreneurs. ✓ This hands-on experience can provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in the tasar silk industry. |

Table 6 : List of some notable institutes/organisations working with key mandate/additional of tasar sector in India.

| S.No. | Institute | Description/Role |
|-------|--|--|
| 1. | Central Tasar Research and Training Institute (CTR&TI), Ranchi | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Established in 1964. ✓ It is located in Ranchi, Jharkhand. ✓ Premier institute dedicated to research, development, and training in tasar silk production and processing. ✓ It operates under the aegis of the Central Silk Board and provides critical support to tropical and temperate tasar production. ✓ With its network of 6 Regional Sericulture Research Stations (RSRS), 3 Research Extension Centres (REC), a P4 Breeding Station, and a Raw Material Bank, CTRTI offers state-of-the-art technological expertise to stakeholders in the command states. ✓ It focuses on developing improved varieties of tasar silkworms, enhancing silk quality, and promoting sustainable sericulture practices. |
| 2. | Central Silk Technological Research Institute (CSTRI), Bangalore | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Established in 1983. ✓ CSTRI, located in Bangalore, Karnataka, is another important institute under the CSB. ✓ While it primarily focuses on mulberry silk, it also conducts research and provides technical assistance for tasar silk production, processing, |

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| | | and quality improvement. |
| 3. | Basic Tasar Silkworm Seed Organisation (BTSSO), Bilaspur | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is located in Bilaspur Chhattisgarh. ✓ This is the sole seed organisation of tropical tasar (<i>Antheraea mylitta</i>) came into existence in the year 1998-99 under the aegis of Central Silk Board, Government of India. ✓ As a flagship organisation, it plans and executes the production and supply of nucleus and basic tasar seed in the country. ✓ It consists of 18 units: 17 Basic Seed Multiplication & Training Centers (BSM&TC) dispersed throughout ten tasar-producing states, and one Central Tasar Silkworm Seed Station (CTSSS) located in Kargi-Kota. ✓ These units prepare high-quality, disease-free layings (both basic and nucleus), using the most recent tools and methods created by quality managements and research institutes for the production of tasar seeds. ✓ To increase the knowledge and proficiency of technical staff and the stakeholders involved in seed production, BTSSO also organizes various HRD and awareness programs. |
| 4. | Regional Tasar Research Station (RSRS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It is located at various locations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSRS Bhandara, Maharashtra • RSRS Dumka, Jharkhand • RSRS Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh • RSRS Warangal, Telengana • RSRS Bhimtal, Uttarakhand • RSRS Baripada, Odisha ✓ The CSB operates several Regional Tasar Research Stations across tasar silk-producing regions in India. ✓ These stations conduct research on local tasar silk varieties, develop silkworm rearing techniques, and provide extension services to tasar silk farmers. |
| 5. | State Sericulture Research and Development Institutes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Many Indian states have their own sericulture research and development institutes that focus on both mulberry and non-mulberry silk, including tasar. ✓ These institutes often collaborate with the CSB and other research organizations to promote tasar silk production and enhance the livelihoods of rural communities. ✓ These institutes play a crucial role in advancing research, disseminating technology, and providing training and extension services to stakeholders in the tasar silk industry in India. |

13 Conclusion

The tasar silk industry in India represents not only a source of exquisite textiles but also a gateway to a plethora of opportunities for economic growth, rural development, and sustainable livelihoods. By leveraging its rich heritage, embracing technological innovation, and fostering market linkages, the tasar silk industry can emerge as a beacon of hope and prosperity for millions of people across India's rural landscape. As we reflect on the multifaceted dimensions of this industry, it becomes evident that its future trajectory hinges on concerted efforts, innovative strategies, and supportive policies. The silk industry also catalyzes women's empowerment and upliftment, providing them

with opportunities for economic independence, skill development, social inclusion, and leadership. By harnessing the potential of tasar silk production to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, stakeholders can create a more inclusive and sustainable future for rural and tribal communities, where women are empowered to thrive as agents of change and progress. Further, the tasar silk industry catalyzes socioeconomic progress, driving inclusive growth, poverty reduction, employment generation, and women's empowerment in rural and tribal communities. By harnessing the potential of tasar silk production to create sustainable livelihoods, build human capital, and promote gender equality,

stakeholders can unlock the transformative power of sericulture to improve the lives and well-being of millions of people across India's rural landscape. Moreover, the allure of tasar silk extends beyond its exquisite beauty, encompassing a rich tapestry of ecological benefits.

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