POTENTIAL SCOPE OF AQUARIUM FISH INDUSTRY AS COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Aquarium keeping is said to be the second largest hobby next to photography in the world. Aquarium fish and accessories industry is fast gaining importance due to its tremendous economic opportunities and prospects. Ornamental fish keeping and their propagation have been an attractive activity for many people in the world, which provide not only aesthetic beauty and pleasure but also financial benefits. This art or technique of ornamental fish breeding and trade has a tremendous scope as a cottage industry.

Investment: Firstly, it requires very small investment only of a couple of thousand rupees initially. Later, the money automatically gets generated by the sale of the fish and aquarium accessories. Thus generally the further expansion of the business does not require funding through loans etc from the financial institutions.

Place for set-up: The whole set-up could be accommodated in the backyard of the cottage. The amount of water required is also not much. well water or that from hand pump will be alright.

Training and formal education: Training of a month or so could equip the entrepreneur to start this business. Later, by practice and experience he or she becomes an expert aquarium fish breeder and even trader. The village women learn and do this job more efficiently than men. The learner does not require any special formal education.

Maintenance: Ornamental fishes are very easy to breed and even maintain.

Associated business scope: Besides, the making of the aquarium fish food from the locally available ingredients, fabrication of different sizes of glass aquaria, small dip-nets, sale of the bottom material in the form of small round stones, coloured gravel, marble chips, plastic toys and even the air diffusers and aerators can be collected and stored or manufactured at the cottage level.

Sale: The sale of the fishes and aquarium related articles is easy as it does not require a special transportation infrastructure.

Aid from Government: As part of the poverty alleviation measures, the Government of India launched the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in 1999 where the major emphasis is on self help group (SHG) formation, social mobilization and economic activation through Microcredit finance. These groups use participatory processes to provide opportunities for people to share knowledge, common experiences and problems. Through their participation, members help themselves and others by gaining knowledge and information and by obtaining and providing emotional and practical support. Now, ornamental fish farming is included as one of the activities of SHGs and also plays an important role to maintain livelihood of the local people.

Scope: Ornamental fish trade is a multi million rupees industry in India and virtually multibillion dollar industry in the world. Financial institutions like NABARD, and National Fisheries Board support this industry as a cottage venture. Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Kochi
are the main business centres for this industry who get their supplies from the small entrepreneurs. About 90 per cent of ornamental fish is traded from Kolkata port followed by 8 per cent from Mumbai and 2 per cent from Chennai. India’s share to global ornamental fish trade is less than one percent but still she is projected as a “sleeping giant” because of yet untapped potential resources.

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