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## **Uttar Pradesh govt plans to double silk output to expand textile exports**

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The Uttar Pradesh government is planning to double silk production to more than 700 tonnes in the near future in a bid to boost manufacturing and export of premium textile apparels in the state.

The government's plan also includes setting up silk clusters and research institutes to promote silk production to boost rural income, especially among the young sericulturists.

Based on recent study by a Karnataka-based institute, the state decided to allocate silk production districts for mulberry, eri, and tussar varieties depending upon the future potential.

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According to UP Silk Department Director Sunil Kumar Verma, although silk is produced in 57 districts, almost 90 per cent of the state's silk production comes from 30 districts. Despite the good quality of cocoons, UP's share in domestic silk production is about 10 per cent of the national tally of 35,000 tonnes.

The government provides 75 per cent and 90 per cent subsidy to general category and SC/ST category silk producers, respectively. It will now focus on these 30 districts. The centres under the remaining 27 districts would be run under the public private partnership model.

While UP is a prominent silk production and marketing hub with an estimated annual trade of ~5,000 crore, the state currently produces roughly 10 per cent of its annual requirement of 3,500 tonnes. The rest of the raw and finished silk is imported from states, such as Karnataka and Jharkhand.

India is the world's largest silk producing country after China. Among the three major varieties of silk produced in 2020-21, mulberry accounted for 70 per cent, eri 20 per cent and tussar 8 per cent.

India exports raw silk, natural silk yarn, fabrics, readymade garments, silk waste and handloom products of silk fabric. During 2021-22, the country's silk and silk products shipments were valued at \$250 million.

The main export destinations of raw silk from India are Vietnam, China, Nepal, the United Kingdom, and Bhutan.