CHAPTER - III
STATUS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY

This chapter covers the evolution of the handloom industry, salient features of the handloom industry. This chapter has also examined the importance of handloom industry in economic development and problems of handloom industry. The governmental measures to promote handloom industry are discussed.

The significance of the handloom sector in India lies in the fact that it is a major employer next only to agriculture. The dependence of 16 million weavers on this sector in the country is a clear evidence of its importance in terms of livelihood. The contribution of this sector to total cloth production in the country has been around 22 percent.

The State of Andhra Pradesh, following Tamil Nadu, has the second largest concentration of handlooms in the country. There are estimated to be around 1,71,660 handloom weaving families and 2,13,404 working handlooms in the State. Handloom industry in the State is characterized by variation and differentiation reflecting the social and cultural diversity and complexity in the State. This can be seen in the use of yarn type and count, and type of loom, the product specificity and the specific markets for which they are produced, etc. While the cotton weaving is the dominant practice, we also find silk and wool weaving in certain centres. The product range is amazingly varied in terms of design and colour, quality and quantity, demand and price, brand name and clientele. The variation could be captured from the fact that while at the lower end coarse lungis, dhotis and sarees in low counts are produced by a majority of
weavers in a large number of handloom centers, at the higher end could be seen expensive handloom center-specific silk and cotton brands with their unique designs and exclusive clientele; in between we have a wide range of moderately priced cotton and silk varieties that cater to the middle class clientele. The proportion of export varieties in this is not insignificant.

HISTORY OF HANDLOOM

Handloom has been around since the first men and women threw lines yarns over a tree branch and started braiding. Fabrics and spinning tools have been found among the earliest relics of human habitation. India is one place where handloom has been a continuous art form. While exact dates are hard to pinpoint, there has been evidence of cotton weaving in India since 3000 B.C. Silk weaving started in China around 1000 B.C. and spread across the Indian subcontinent.

The first color - Indigo - is commonly considered the first colored dye. This dark blue was the predominant color in the funeral wardrobe of Tutenkhamen and the only color found in linen fragments of ancient Israel and Palestine. Even the Bible speaks of "blue clothes" traded by the merchants of Sheba.

4th Century: The major textile trade, the "silk route" had begun and Indigo and handloom silks and cottons were highly priced commodities.

1602: Two small ships of the recently founded English East India Company sailed into modern-day Indonesia. They establish their first trading post on Java and started to dominate trade between Britain and Asia for the next 300 years.
Around 1700, the industrial revolution effectively wiped out the handloom industry in most parts of Europe.

1930: Mahatma Gandhi starts his civil disobedience campaign against the British. He advocates boycotting machine made European clothing and encourages Indians to embrace hand made cloth called Khadi.

1947: India achieves its Independence.

1991: India opens its economy through a liberalization plan orchestrated by Manmohan Singh.

1995: India enters the World Trade Organization (WTO)

2003: Indigo Handloom established.

2005: Due to WTO rules, subsidies for handloom weavers are cut or severely curtailed.

2006: IndigoHandloom.com launched.

2007: Indigo Handloom retail store established in Brooklyn.

Indigo Handloom tracks news about the handloom cottage industry and Row it pertains to our eco-friendly fashion designs and our global sustainability initiatives.

Since Good old days the Handloom Industry occupies a place of prominence in our country's economy for her handloom products, particularly sarees. To their product, Fulia's contribution is undoubtedly significant. It is stated by some noted historians that the Muslin' of Dacca, of earstwhile East
Bengal, created a sensation in the Western world for its qualitative superiority. It is stated that these sarees created law and order problems in Paris, when teen aged girls went out on streets in 'Muslins' for its transparency.

The history of handloom industry dates back to the Epic Ages. The Gossamer silk of Varanasi, fine Muslin of Dacca and Potala of Borada have been famous for ages. Export of Handloom cloth dates back to the time of Gautam Buddha. India occupies a priceless position in foreign trade of which such handloom products shared the major part of the trade revenues creating a huge favourable balance of trade. It is also confirmed by the Roman historian Pliny who lamented that a river of gold was flowing from the Roman Empire to India.
Figure 3.1

Handloom Clusters in India
ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

On the basis of the organisational structure and the relations of production, the handloom industry can be divided into the following sectors: i) independent weaver, ii) co-operative, sector and (iii) master-weaver sectors.

i. Independent weavers

Independent weavers are those who produce cloth on their own, that is, they own the instruments of production, purchase raw materials from market and produce fabric with family labour and sell the products in the local market or to traders. The stiff competition from the power looms and the rising prices of cotton hank yarn and dyes has been quite drastic on these weavers.

ii. Co-operative sector

The handloom co-operatives are a major segment accounting for a large proportion of weavers as members. The co-operatives, that emerged as a mechanism for protecting the weavers from the dominant master-weavers and traders and recorded notable success in their objective have seen a decline since the 1980s. If the increasing use of the handloom co-operatives as channels of political ascendancy by the community elite drifted the co-operatives away from their intended purpose, then the increasing political and governmental interference, development of bureaucratic tendencies and corruption hampered their autonomous functioning. Further, the ineffectiveness of the co-operatives in ensuring regular supply of the raw materials and the delays in the payment of wages, forced the average weaver to shift to the master-weaver system. As a consequence of this, a number of
co-operatives, which once had successful record, have been rendered non-functional. The bogus co-operatives, floated by influential master-weavers/traders/local politicians (and also by powerloom owners) to corner the subsidies and marketing facilities extended by the government and the state apex handloom co-operative body, have not only robbed the genuine co-operatives of their due share but also contributed to the credibility crisis of the co-operative sector.

The displaced independent and cooperative sector weavers were forced to migrate to the handloom centers to work under master-weavers and to powerloom centers. The migrant men weavers thus began shifting to powerlooms and women weavers to beedi making. In the urban areas where alternative employment opportunities are relatively better, we find the young weavers taking up job of shop assistants and also shifting to construction work, autorickshaw driving, etc., as the less skilled handloom weaving is found to be less attractive due to low wages and continual insecurity.

iii. Master-weaver sector

In this system the master-weaver or the entrepreneur produces cloth by employing wage labour. Either he directly markets the product or sells it to traders. Here two kinds of production practices exist: i) put-out system and ii) kharkhana system. In the put-out system, the weaver works at his home on his own loom using the raw materials supplied by the master-weaver for a piece rate wage. The entire family of the weaver is involved in the production process - with the adult members engaged in weaving and the aged and children helping in the preparation of accessories.
In the kharkhana or shed-worker system, the weavers work on the looms provided by the master weavers' under one roof. This system is prevalent in the handloom centres where migrant weavers are preponderant like Mangalagiri in Guntur and Koyalagudem in Nalgonda in Andhra Pradesh. With the decline of independent weavers and the marginalisation of the co-operative sector, the master-weaver sector has emerged as the dominant system by attracting the displaced weavers. It accounts for a major share in the handloom production.

**Context and Developments**

The present state of the handloom sector has to be seen in the overall perspective of the modernist development pursued in the post-independence period. A significant step in this direction, especially in relation to the rural economy and life in the countryside is the green revolution. The fastening of the process of modernization and commercialization of agrarian economy, following the green revolution, has had a drastic impact on the rural farming, artisan and other occupational communities like the potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc., in the sense of the erosion of their traditional livelihood patterns and social life. It is no exaggeration to say that it is only the handloom weavers who have shown a greater tenacity through restructuring of the industry both internally and spatially. A visible and unfortunate aspect of this story is the reduction of the weaver to a level of bare subsistence.

Within this broad context, the handloom sector could be seen witnessing remarkable changes in the nature and structure of production, technology and marketing since the late 1960s in response to (besides the agrarian transformation induced by the green revolution) the changes in the textile
production and marketing, albeit with regional and local specificities. Equally significant are the changes that have occurred in the social life of the weaver communities shaping their survival responses.

The factor that contributed significantly to this change is the phenomenal growth of the powerlooms, which recorded an unprecedented increase from 1.5 lakhs in 1963 to 3.09 lakhs in 1975. The direct impact of the powerloom growth on the handlooms can be gauged from the assessment of the high-powered committee of the Planning Commission, headed by Shivaraman, according to which the addition of one powerloom resulted in the displacement of six handlooms. The impact of the powerloom proliferation since mid-Sixties and stuff competition from its low priced products penetrating the local rural market could clearly be seen in the gradual and visible displacement of the weavers, decline in their economic well-being and loss of their independence in the production process.

Textile policies after independence, vowing to support and protect the handlooms, made several safeguards. The principal aspect of the policy perspective was that handloom industry is an important and distinct sector with its specific problems and it needs to be supported in order to ensure employment in the rural non-farm sector. Departing from this commitment, the 1985 textile policy made a policy shift and therefore it deserves to be analysed.

Policy Shift

The 1985 textile policy made a decisive shift in the policy regime in terms of perception, perspective and priorities. The earlier policy framework viewing the textile industry in terms of its employment potential accorded
policy priority to handlooms vis-a-vis the other two sectors (i.e. powerlooms and mills). The 1985 policy emphasizing productivity as the prime objective aimed at visualising an entirely different textile scenario.

In pursuit of this, the 1985 policy made a perspectival shift in its policy focus on the textile industry from a sectoral view (the three sectors being the handlooms, powerlooms and mills) to a process view (the important processes being spinning, weaving and product process). Thus the sectoral orientation is said to have led to the "structural rigidities" in the textile industry. Contrarily, it assumed that the prioritization of processes would contribute to a 'comprehensive view' of the industry and thereby eliminate its rigidities. Accordingly, it promised to provide "fuller flexibility in the use of various fibers" and "pragmatic policies regarding creation or contraction of capabilities by units to increase competition and promote healthy growth".

The process view of the industry as a matter of fact contributed to the under-emphasis of the specificities of different sectors, especially of the handlooms, in terms of the requirement of raw materials and capital, labour conditions, production and marketing structure and consumer demand pattern, etc. Thus the relative strengths and weaknesses or advantages and disadvantages of the different sectors are glossed over. By emphasizing productivity as the main objective and insisting on the process view of the industry, the 1985 policy aimed at the creation of a level playing field between the handlooms, powerlooms and mills. This policy perspective, needless to say was clearly to the disadvantage of the handloom sector as the crisis in the already vulnerable handlooms in the late 1980s and early 1990s amply demonstrated.
The 1985 policy, in spite of the shift, promised support to the handlooms. The Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985 reserving 22 varieties of articles for exclusive production in the handloom sector and the Hank Yarn Obligation are two important steps in this direction. The former challenged by the powerful powerloom and mill owner lobbies remained sub-judice for eight years. During this period, the aggressive powerlooms proliferated without any hindrance. Taking a serious note of the ground realities, a high-powered committee headed by Abid Hussain, constituted to review the 1985 policy, emphasized the urgency in the creation of necessary institutional mechanism for the enforcement of the act. Ironically, the government constituted another committee and as per its recommendation reduced the number of the reserved items to eleven. The fate of this act clearly illustrated how whatever limited legal safeguards the handloom weavers are promised with are diluted and rendered ineffective by the powers-that-be.

The Hank Yarn Obligation Order requires the spinning mills to process 50 percent of their output in hank form to meet the requirements of the handlooms. This order was more often violated than adhered to. Making use of various exemptions, the mills actually tried to avoid the target. Thus a World Bank report noted, "the actual deliveries of hank yarn generally averaged about 25 percent of total yarn output during the last decades". The obligation, instead, has been transferred to the public sector - NTC and State government - and cooperative mills¹³.
Economic Reforms

The macro-economic reforms initiated in 1991 pushed further the liberalization of the textile industry initiated by the 1985 policy. One of the important aspects of this, which had immediate impact on the handlooms, was the liberalization of the export of yarn and dyes. The trade liberalisation led to a sudden increase in the exports of yarn (and cotton); in this the proportion of hank yarn, especially in the counts of 20s and 40s used by a large proportion of weavers, increased many times.

The rise in the prices of inputs, i.e., yarn and dyes, is crucial to the handloom crisis. The violation of the Hank Yarn Obligation by the spinning mills, the crisis and closure of the cooperative spinning mills, trade liberalization encouraging exports of yarn and dyes have compounded the problems of the weavers by paving the way for an acute yarn crisis.

The handloom crisis witnessed in AndraPradesh in 1991 was the most acute one in the recent memory. Within a span of few months, with the prices of hank yarn mounting, following the increased exports and the master-weavers disinclined to continue production, the weavers found themselves out of work and were pushed into starvation. More than 110 weavers died out of starvation or committed suicides\(^\text{14}\).

The government's response to the yarn crisis consisted of two specific schemes. They were Mill Gate Price Scheme (MGPS) and Hank Yarn Price Subsidy Scheme. Needless to say the yarn supply targets aimed at under these schemes were far less than the actual requirements. While the per annum requirement of the hank yarn is assessed to be around 460 to 480 million kgs,
the hank yarn target under the MGPS was 10 million kgs and that under the HYPSS was 20 million kgs (with a subsidy of rupees 15 per kg). These schemes were meant for the weavers in the cooperative sector, when in fact a majority of the weavers are in the master weaver segment. Further the yarn supply was grossly out of tune with the diversity that characterizes the handloom industry in terms of the count, quality and requirement.

**NATIONAL TEXTILE POLICY**

The 2000 textile policy, it is stated, has become imperative to meet the challenges and requirements of the changed environment consequent upon the liberalization of the Indian economy and the new trade regime being initiated by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Thus it would be instructive to examine the possible implications of this policy to the handlooms.

The Government of India constituted a committee, under the chairmanship of SR Satyarn in July 1998, to make recommendations for this purpose. The report of the committee, which is kept confidential, contains recommendations that have far-reaching consequences for the textile industry in general and for the handloom sector in particular.

The Satyarn committee report, deviating from the established practice of differentiating weavers on the basis of organisation of production into co-operative, master-weaver and independent weaver segments, which has been an accepted method and basis for policy initiatives, argued for the categorization of weavers on the basis of the 'quality' of cloth produced. Accordingly, three tiers are identified. In the first tier are grouped the weavers "producing unique, exclusive, high value added items" in the second tier
producers of "medium priced fabrics and made up articles from not-so-fine
counts of yarn" and in the third tier are included those producing "plains and
low cost textile items"\(^{16}\).

What follows from this is the most significant of the recommendations
of the committee that is to shift the weavers of the third tier to other tiers of
handloom and powerloom sectors and other occupations. For the 'least painful
conversion' the first tier of powerloom and handloom sectors are identified as
'alternative avenues of livelihood'. The Government is suggested to take steps
in this direction by providing the weavers with semi-automatic looms and
necessary training.

The Principal objective of the report is to suggest the ways of coping up
with the competition in the international market. It therefore suggested the
government to support the weavers in this regard by devising special schemes.
In such a competitive context, it felt that there was no place for protections and
therefore in the same breath it recommended the scrapping of the Reservation
Act and Hank Yarn Obligation, the two crucial legal measures, though
ineffective in implementation, meant to protect the handloom sector.

Thus the major thrust of the government in the context of neo-liberal
reforms has been on orienting the handloom sector to die globalisation process
as a principal strategy for its survival. What is in the process lost sight of is the
strength of the handloom sector, which lies in the acceptance of and demand
for its products in the local market. Needless to say, the specificity and
specialty of handloom products is largely determined by the local traditions
and customs. The community skills, techniques involved in different stages of
production are historically evolved and are owned and imparted communally. For this reason, handloom production is characterized by region-specific diversity. Thus it cannot be reduced to or understood only in terms of abstract demand and supply principle of market. The emphasis on the export-orientation as a strategy of survival is not only against the very nature of handloom production but in fact would prove to be suicidal for the handloom weavers. What is in store for the millions of the already impoverished weavers is a future of further misery and starvation17.

It is therefore necessary to rethink the handloom question with a view to evolve alternative strategy to strengthen the sector and secure livelihood to the weavers. The following have to be the basic premises of such a strategy. Firstly, it must be recognized that the strength of the handlooms is the local society and market. This relationship has experienced serious strains and violence. It may be difficult to restore it. But it is politically possible to rediscover the handlooms - agriculture relationship on a different plane. For this, conscious civil society initiative and efforts are required in addition to the state support.

Secondly, in the absence of alternative sources of mass employment emerging, as the last decade and half experience with liberalization has shown, it becomes the responsibility of the state to protect the existing employment, of course with necessary changes. What is required and therefore to be demanded is a critical intervention and support of the state in terms of providing accessibility to raw materials, credit and market intelligence. Further, it is also necessary that the state plays its role in strengthening the welfare and security of the weavers in this sector.
Indian hand woven fabrics have been known since time immemorial. Poets of the Mughal durbar likened our muslins to baft hawa (woven air), aberawan (running water) and shabnam (morning dew). A tale runs that Emperor Aurangzeb had a fit of rage when he one day saw his daughter princess Zeb-un-Nissa clad in almost nothing. On being severely rebuked, the princess explained that she had not one but seven jamahs (dresses) on her body. Such was the fineness of the hand woven fabrics\textsuperscript{18}.

**HISTORICAL EVIDENCE**

Though India was famous even in ancient times as an exporter of textiles to most parts of the civilized world, few actual fabrics of the early dyed or printed cottons have survived. This, it is explained is due to a hot, moist climate and the existence of the monsoons in India. It is not surprising therefore, that Egypt which has an exceptionally dry climate would provide evidence which India lacks. The earliest Indian fragment of cloth (before the Christian era) with a hansa (swan) design was excavated from a site near Cairo where the hot dry sand of the desert acted as a preservative.

Later, fragments of finely woven and madder-dyed cotton fabrics and shuttles were found at some of the excavated sites of Mohenjodaro (Indus valley civilization). Indian floral prints, dating back to the 18th century A.D were discovered by Sir Aurei Stein in the icy waters of Central Asia. The evidence shows that of all the arts and crafts of India, traditional handloom textiles are probably the oldest\textsuperscript{19}.  

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HANDLOOMS, THE LARGEST COTTAGE INDUSTRY

Handlooms are an important craft product and comprise the largest cottage industry of the country. Millions of looms across the country are engaged in weaving cotton, silk and other natural fibers. There is hardly a village where weavers do not exist, each weaving out the traditional beauty of India's own precious heritage\textsuperscript{20}.

THE INDIAN HERITAGE

In the world of handlooms, there are Madras checks from Tamil Nadu, ikats from Andhra and Orissa, tie and dye from Gujarat and Rajasthan, brocades from Banaras, jacquards form Uttar Pradesh. Daccai from West Bengal, and phulkari from Punjab. Yet, despite this regional distinction there has been a great deal of technical and stylistic exchange.

The famed Coimbatore saris have developed while imitating the Chanderi pattern of Madhya Pradesh. Daccai saris are now woven in Bengal, no Dhaka. The Surat tanchoi based on a technique of satin weaving with the extra weft floats that are absorbed in the fabric itself has been reproduced in Varanasi. Besides its own traditional weaves, there is hardly any style of weaving that Varanasi cannot reproduce. The Baluchar technique of plain woven fabric brocaded with untwisted silk thread, which began in Murshidabad district of West Bengal, has taken root in Varanasi. Their craftsmen have also borrowed the jamdani technique\textsuperscript{21}.

Woolen weaves are no less subtle. The Kashmiri weaver is known the world over for his Pashmina and Shahtoosh shawis. The shawls are unbelievably light and warm.
The states of Kashmir and Karnataka are known for their mulberry silk. India is the only country in the world producing all four commercially known silks - mulberry, tasser (tussore), eri and muga. Now gaining popularity in the U.S.A. and Europe tasser is found in the remote forests of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Another kind of raw silk is eri. Eri is soft, dull and has wool like finish.

Assam is the home of eri and muga silk. Muga is durable and its natural tones of golden yellow and rare sheen becomes more lustrous with every wash. The designs used in Assam, Tripura and Manipur are mostly stylized symbols, cross borders and the galaxy of stars. Assamese weavers produce beautiful designs on the borders of their mekhfa, chaddar, riha (traditional garments used by the women) and gamosa (towel). It is customary in Assamese society for a young woman to weave a silk bihuan (cloth draped over the chest) for her beloved as a token of love on Bohag Bihu (new year's eve).

From Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Gujarat come the ikats. The ikat technique in India is commonly known as patola in Gujarat, bandha in Orissa, pagdu bandhu, buddavasi and chitki in Andhra Pradesh. In the ikat tie and dye process, the designs in various colors are formed on the fabric either by the warp threads or the weft threads or by both. The threads forming the design are tied and dyed separately to bring in the desired color and the simple interlacement of the threads produces, the most intricate designs, that appear only in the finished weaving. The Orissa ikat is a much older tradition that Andhra Pradesh or Gujarat, and their more popular motifs as such are a stylized fish and the rudraksh bead. Here the color is built up thread by thread. In fact, Orissa ikat is known now as yarn tie and dye. In Andhra Pradesh, they bunch some threads together and tie and dye and they also have total freedom of design.
Some say that ikat was an innovative technique, first created in India, which was later carried to Indonesia, the only other place in the world with a strong ikat tradition.

USING DYES

The process of resist-dyeing, tie-dyeing and yarns tie-dyed to a pattern before weaving were the basic techniques of indigenous dyeing of village cloth. Shellac was used for reds, iron shavings and vinegar for blacks, turmeric for yellow and pomegranate finds for green. Before the artificial synthesis of indigo and alizarin as dye stuffs, blues and reds were traditionally extracted from the plants indigofera, anil and rubia tintorum (madder-root). These were the main sources for traditional Indian dyes.

Even today, the Kalamkari cloth of Andhra Pradesh is printed with local vegetable dyes. The colors being shades of ochre, deep blue and a soft rose derived from local earths, indigo and madder roots.

PRINTING

Tamil Nadu has made a significant contribution to the history of hand-printed textiles in India. Printing is native to the land, its pigments being obtained from the flowers, leaves and barks of local trees and it chemicals obtained from clay, dung and river sands.

A new technique has been developed in the northern sectors where warp threads are fined, measured and tied to the loom and then printed. The warp-printed material is a specialty of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.
The ideal seasons for block printing are the dry months. Excellence is achieved only if the block is freshly and perfectly chiseled. The designs are produced by artists and the designing is kept within the discipline imposed, the type of yarn, the dyes used and the weaving techniques, by the nakshabandhas (graph-paper designers).

India also produces a range of home furnishings, household linen, curtain tapestry and yardage of interesting textures and varying thickness, which have been devised by using blended yarn.

Muslims were forbidden the use of pure silk, and the half cotton half silk, fabrics known, as mashru and himru were a response to this taboo. Given the wide and exciting range of handloom it is not surprising that the rich and beautiful products of the weavers of India have been called exquisite poetry in colorful fabrics²³.

GOVT. MEASURES FOR PROMOTION OF HANDLOOM SECTOR IN TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu was the 3rd largest industrial state in the country. The gross output of its industrial sector was Rs.37,986 crores, accounting for 10.3 percent of the national output. Handloom industry Tamil Nadu plays an important role in improving economic conditions of the rural poor by providing employment about 65 lakh people are directly or indirectly employed in the Handloom Sector as weavers and allied workers. Tamil Nadu has identified 22 locations for establishing handloom clusters with financial assistance from the Centre²⁴.
The average annual production of handloom cloth in the State is about 2500 lakh metres, of which, contribution made by handloom cooperatives is around 1200 lakh meters. Average annual sales of handloom cloth are Rs.1500 crore, of which, the sales by handloom cooperatives accounts for Rs.700 crore. The average annual export of handloom doth by Tamil Nadu is Rs.600 crore, of which export sales by Handloom cooperatives through Merchant Export is around Rs.260 crore.

In the context of opening up of global textiles market, the approach of the Government is to 'sustain the handloom industry' and 'continue to provide livelihood to the Lakhs of weavers who depend on this activity'. This requires constant skill upgradation to produce marketable products, technology upgradation to increase the productivity and to maintain quality to compete in the world market besides product diversification through continuous design interventions. All the above measures will ensure sustenance of the industry.

A provision of Rs.256 crores has been made for this scheme. In order to continue the scheme for providing free power to handloom and powerloom weavers, as announced by this Government in the previous calendar year, a provision of Rs.78 crores has been made in this Budget. This initiative would benefit 1,50,000 handloom and 80,000 powerloom weavers. The monthly pension given to handloom weavers above 60 years of age will be doubled from Rs.200 to Rs.400 per month. The Government will bear the additional expenditure. This scheme will benefit about 13,000 handloom weavers currently receiving pension.
With a view to increasing the income of weavers, the Government is implementing a scheme to boost the sales of handloom cloth by introducing new designs in collaboration with the National institute of Design at Ahmedabad. With a view to producing adequate quantity of silk yarn necessary for silk weaving within the state itself, an additional 10,000 acres of land will be brought under Mulberry cultivation in 2007-2008. Sericulture Development Project will be implemented at an estimated cost of Rs.15 crores with central assistance.

**HANDLOOM DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES**

In order to develop the handloom sector, the Government has developed many schemes, which are as follows.

1. **Rebate Subsidy Scheme**

   Considering the handloom sector and its inbuilt disadvantages with regard to price of its products, rebate subsidy assistance is granted by the State Government. This is an indirect way of protecting the handloom sector from severe competition and also to safeguard the handloom weavers from the onslaught of market recession for handloom goods.

   The State Government permitted the primary weavers co-operative societies and Co-optex to allow rebate at the rate of 20 percent for the sale of handloom cloth. As per the policy of the State Government, the excess expenditure over and above the Government of India's contribution under Marketing Incentive component of the Deendayal Hathkargha Pratsahan Yojana Scheme will be borne by the State Government. For implementation of this Scheme, a provision of Rs.102 crore has been made in the Revised Budget for the year 2006-07.
2 Deendayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana Scheme

Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana Scheme is a comprehensive scheme for handlooms sector formulated by the Government of India, which has been implemented with effect from 1.4.2000. The funding pattern of the scheme is on sharing basis between Centre and State Governments in the ratio of 50:50.

The financial assistance provided under various components of the scheme is as follows:

A. Basic Inputs

Financial assistance in the form of Margin Money at the rate of Rs.4000/- per weaver shall be provided. A grant of Rs.2,000/- for purchase of new looms, Rs.1500/- for dobbay, Rs.2000/- for jacquard and Rs.1000/- for other accessories will also be provided.

B. Infrastructure Support

Financial assistance for infrastructure support will be extended to Primary Weavers' Cooperative Societies for setting up of Water and Effluent Treatment Plants, setting up of Common Facility Centres to carry out warping, pre and postloom operations, etc.

C. Design Input

State Level Handloom Organizations/Apex Societies having turnover of more than Rs.5.00 crore and Primary Societies with turnover of more than Rs.25.00 lakh in the preceding year will be eligible to get one time assistance in the form of grant of Rs.5.00 lakh per institution for provision of designs and installation of Computer Aided Design system to improve the design quality of the products.
The Primary Weavers Cooperative Societies are also eligible to get one time assistance in the form of grant of Rs.1.00 lakh to avail of the services of National Institute of Design, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Weavers Service Centre, etc.

D. Publicity

Financial assistance in the form of grant subject to a maximum of Rs.5.00 lakh per institution will be provided for projects involving expenditure towards Publicity, Advertisement, Printing of brochures catalogues, market research and market surveys/studies as well as production of films for promotion of sales of handlooms.

E. Strengthening of Handloom Organizations

Financial assistance will be provided towards financial restructuring of State Handloom Corporations and Apex Weavers Cooperative Societies / Federations with a view to making them viable by enhancing their credit limit / Working capital, etc. Under this Scheme, a provision of Rs.1190.01 lakh has been made in the Revised Budget for the year 2006-07.

3. Free Distribution of Sarees and Dhoties Scheme

This Scheme provides continuous employment to about 11,000 handloom weavers and 23,000 powerloom weavers, but also fulfills the clothing needs of 3.28 crore poor people in Tamil Nadu. The Sarees and Dhoties required for the scheme will be produced and supplied by the Handloom and Powerloom Weavers Cooperative Societies in the State.27
Towards implementation of Free Distribution of Sarees and Dhoties Scheme for Pongal 2007, a provision of Rs.273.00 crore has been made in the Revised Budget for the year 2010-11.

4 Free distribution of Uniform Scheme

The Scheme of Free Supply of Uniforms to School Children studying in std. I to VIII covered under Nutritious Noon Meal Programme is being implemented by the State Government from the year 1985-86 and the cloth required for the scheme is being produced by the Weavers' Co-operative Societies. Towards implementation of this Scheme, a provision of Rs.40.00 crore has been made in the Revised Budget for the year 2010-11.

5 Working Capital at concessional rate of interest to Handloom Weavers Cooperative Societies and Co-optex

Financial assistance at concessional rate of interest was provided by Tamil Nadu State Apex Cooperative Bank and the District Central Cooperative Banks under NABARD Refinance Scheme. The Primary Weavers' Cooperative Societies are being provided with Working Capital finance at normal rate of interest. The total Cash Credit limits sanctioned by the NABARD both to the Primary Weavers' Cooperative Societies and Tamil Nadu Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society (Co-optex) for the year 2010-2011 is Rs.315.51 crore.

6 Prize Award Scheme for the Best Exporters

To encourage the export trade in handloom cloth and to widen their market in foreign countries, the Government of Tamil Nadu have been implementing the scheme to Award Prizes to the Best Exporters in Tamil Nadu. This scheme is being implemented from 1975 onwards.
In order to encourage export production among primary weavers' co-operative societies, the Government have been sanctioning a sum of Rs.50,000/- every year towards the implementation of this scheme. Under this scheme, Trophies and Certificates to the best exporters including primary weavers' co-operative societies are distributed.

7 Prize Award Scheme for Best Weavers for New Designs

To encourage handloom weavers for developing new designs, the Government is implementing Prize Award Scheme. Every year, the best talented weavers who have developed new designs are awarded prizes as follows:

1) First prize - Rs.5,000/-, 2) Second prize - Rs.3,000/-
3) Third prize - Rs.2,000/-

This scheme will encourage the societies to introduce new designs so as to produce marketable/exportable varieties. The expenditure under this scheme is being met out from the Cooperative Research and Development Fund of the Tamil Nadu Co-operative Union.

8 Integrated Handloom Cluster Development Programme

The Government of India have formulated a new scheme called Integrated Handloom Cluster Development Programme for the overall development of handloom clusters. Under this scheme, assistance is being provided for various components such as upgradation, modification, purchase of looms and accessories, setting up of Dyeing Units, common facility centers, opening of showrooms, conducting of exhibitions/fairs, publicity, providing of design inputs etc. The maximum assistance for each cluster will be Rs.200.00
By way of implementation of this programme, the overall socio-economic status of the Handloom weavers of the clusters is expected to improve.

The Government of Tamil Nadu have selected Tiruvannamalai, Trichy and Kurinjipadi clusters for implementation of this programme and the same has been approved by the Government of India also. Based on the approvals given, steps are being taken to implement the Programmes in the above 3 Handloom Clusters viz. Tiruvannamalai, Trichy and Kurinjipadi.

9 **Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985**

To protect handloom weavers and the handloom industry from the onslaught of powerlooms, the Government of India have enacted handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985 for implementation by all the States in the country. The Government of India have reserved 11 items exclusively for production in handlooms. To implement the Handlooms Reservation Act effectively, separate Enforcement Machinery in Tamil Nadu has been formed with a Deputy Director at Head Quarters, Chennai and five Field level offices.

**HANDLOOMS AND TEXTILES POLICY**

Tamilnadu has played a key role towards achieving the growth of Textile industry in India. Spinning, Handloom, Powerloom and Garment are the four pillars of the Textile Sector in the State.

The objective and activities of the Department of Handlooms and Textiles is to promote the harmonious growth of Handloom, Powerloom and Textile Sectors and to work for the welfare of the handloom weavers.
Handloom industry in Tamilnadu plays an important role in improving economic conditions of the rural poor by providing employment for more than 4.29 lakh weaver households and about 11.64 lakh weavers. In Tamilnadu, 2.11 lakh handlooms are functioning in 1247 handloom weavers co-operative societies and the remaining looms are outside the co-operative fold. Out of 1247 handloom weavers co-operative societies, 1169 are cotton weavers co-operative societies and the remaining 78 are silk weavers co-operative societies. The handloom weavers co-operative societies mostly exist in Rural and Semi-Urban areas, where there is large concentration of handloom weavers. All the Development and welfare schemes implemented by the Government of Tamilnadu and Government of India are channelised through the weavers co-operative societies.

The handloom weavers co-operative societies have produced 1083.26 lakh metres of Handloom cloth valued at Rs.559.72 crore and sold handloom goods to the extent of Rs.696.58 crore during the year 2010-11. There is an increase of sale of handloom cloth worth Rs.121.97 crore in 2010-11 over the sales made during the year 2009-10. The number of handloom weavers co-operative societies working on profit has been increased from 527 during the year 2009-2010 to 601 during the year 2010-2011. Marketing is the major factor for the performance of the handloom weavers co-operative societies. To capture the consumer market, production of marketable / exportable varieties have been encouraged by the Department and suitable action plan have been given to the handloom weavers co-operative societies depending upon the market trend, so as to increase the sales. It has been programmed to adopt new marketing strategies by infusing more number of designs during the year 2010-11, so as to improve the sale of handloom fabrics.29
With a view to provide continuous employment to the powerloom weavers, it has been programmed to produce marketable varieties in the powerloom weavers co-operative societies and suitable action plan has been given to the powerloom weavers co-operative.

**SCHEME FOR HANDLOOM EXPORT DEVELOPMENT**

Export of handloom has identified as a Thrust Area for the overall development of the sector. The Government is exploring the possibility of making optimal use of the resources to enhance production capabilities of exportable products.

In order to give substantial impetus to the export of handloom fabric, made-ups and other handloom items from the country, a scheme for Development of Exportable Products and their Marketing was introduced during 1996-97. Under the scheme, the assistance is available for developing exportable products, building up production capability for export and thereafter marketing it.

National and State level Handloom Corporations, Apex Cooperative societies, Primary Cooperative societies and Handloom Cooperative Societies affiliated to /registered and sponsored by Councils/Corporations, Handloom Export Promotion Council, Association of Corporations and Apex Societies of Handlooms, Handicrafts and Handloom Export Corporation, Indian Silk Export Promotion Council, National Handloom Development Corporation etc. are eligible for assistance under this scheme. Private handloom exporters can also be assisted through HEPC.
The project cost in respect of the agency sponsored by the State Governments is shared by the State Government itself or by the beneficiary agency. The agencies sponsored by Central Government like HEPC, HHEC, NHDC, ACASH etc. are entitled to 100 percent assistance from the Government of India under the scheme.

HANDLOOM EXPORT ZONES IN TAMILNADU

Five handloom export zones (HEZs) are being established in Tamil Nadu as part of initiatives to promote exports in the sector, the state government would provide infrastructure and land for this, the Centre would provide Rs 60 lakh for each of the clusters. The HEZs will come up in Nagercoil, Virudhunagar, Kancheepuram, Tiruvannamalai and Nagapattinam. The first zone would be commissioned in Nagercoil by October this year.

"The HEZs would provide new focus for export of handloom and more jobs domestically. One new studio to improve designing are being established at Karur. Next year onwards a separate classification code for handloom, which would make it easy and convenient to generate data of handloom exports."
HANDLOOM MARKETS

The market for handloom products is four-tiered:

1. The self-consumption sector where handlooms are made for household requirements and not for sale, as in the northeast of India.
2. The rural market where weavers do the marketing themselves.
3. The distant domestic market, largely urban, and which is beyond the reach of weavers.
4. Export markets.

Master weavers and private traders market 90 percent of handloom products. The traders either retail these products through their own outlets or act as intermediaries supplying wholesalers or retailers. The bulk of exports are handled through merchant exporters and manufacturer-exporters, the former getting their supplies from manufacturers and master weavers, while the latter having their own production facilities.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Exclusively to assist weavers, the state govt. has started a corporation entitled. The Tamilnadu Handloom Development Corporation Ltd. This was a public sector undertaking started in the year 1964 with a view to provide financial Assistance to the weavers outside the cooperative fold. Members of the corporation will be eligible to obtain loan for working capital purposes. The Branches of the Corporation situated at Salem, Madurai, Coimbatore, Kancheepuram, Cuddalore, Kumbakonam and Tirunelveli.
The members of the corporation alone are eligible to obtain loan from the Corporation. A member can obtain loan to the extent of ten times the amount of share capital invested by him. A member can also avail loan if he has ten shares and also deposits a margin money equivalent to ten times the amount of loan. The amount of loan up to a limit of Rs.1,00,000/-. This loan will be sanctioned for production, marketing and processing of Handloom, Powerloom and Hosiery cloth. The entire amount of loan will have to be repaid within a period of 18 months in two equal installments. Interest should be paid in every quarter. The rate of interest is 18.5 percent. If member remits the installments of principal and interest promptly, he will be eligible for a rebate of 1 percent. For delayed remittance of Principal, penal interest will be levied.

**STEPS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT**

To improve the handloom sector, the Government has taken many steps like,

1. Implementation of Free Distribution of Sarees and Dhoties Scheme:
2. Steps taken for increasing the sales and to reduce the stock of handloom goods
3. New insurance Scheme for Handloom Weavers
4. Introduction of New Designs
5. Implementation of the Scheme of Free supply of Uniforms to School Children
6. Conduct of District Level Exhibitions
7. Exports by Weavers Co-operative Societies
8. Special Project Under Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarojgar Yojana Scheme
Training to weavers for upgradation of skills and improving designs

Restructuring of Co-optex

Financial Assistance for implementation of Voluntary Retirement Scheme

Settlement of dues to District Central Co-operative Banks / State Bank of India

Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme (TCIDS)

Establishment of Apparel Parks

Establishment of Shuttleless Powerloom Weaving Parks (Hi-Tech Park)

Handloom sector plays an important role in improving economic condition. The Government of Tamil Nadu is liable to promote the industry. Thus, the Government has announced many schemes and developed many policies to develop the sector. The govt., providing adequate financial support through the institutions to the wavers. Apart from that, the govt. promoting new handloom export zones in Tamil Nadu. Concerned with Tamil Nadu the weaver as well as the handloom sector is well established.

IMPORTANCE AND HISTORY OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY

Cloth is the second important Item for human life and it is provided by the handloom industry along with the mill sector.

"Among the cottage industries the pride of place is occupied by handloom weaving

This statement tells us the importance of the handloom industry. Handloom sector can be considered both as a small scale as well as a cottage industry"3
As a small scale industry, it presents a picture of contrasts a highly efficient master weavers sector and the not so efficient co-operative sector. As a cottage industry it consists of the petty master weavers and the independent weavers. Souraahtras, Mudaliars, Sallyars, Devangas and Muslims are the important communities engaged in weaving. Among them, Souraahtras play a dominant role. In Madurai City also it is true.

As for as the history is concerned, handloom industry in India has a very long history, spanning over several centuries.

There is solid evidence that man was practicing the art of weaving in the mid 5th Millennium B.C. and the evidence indicates that at that time he had been practicing it long enough to have grown fairly sophisticated in his techniques.

From the above statement we can understand the oldness of the handloom industry. To day this sector gives food for many people.

The history of weaving goes to 5,400 B.C. At that time the people were using the stems of plants, twigs and grass for wearing. They interlaced them to form a kind of fabric to form mats and baskets. In 5,400 B.C. it has been found. The Egyptian mummies have used fine fabrics for weaving. The tomb of Tuthmosis IV (1417 B.C.) tells us the early production of figured cloths. In 2,700 B.C. the Chinese had used the silk in their textile art.

The American Indian, both in North and South America, was already an expert weaver when the first colonist arrived. Indian weaving often has religious symbolism and shows a love of nature. Indians valued their cloth highly and wasted none of it by cutting".
The above statement tells us the role played by Indians in the history of weaving. The noted persons and their contribution to weaving industry is as follows:

In 1737 John Kay of Bury Lancashire, invented the flying shuttle which made it possible for one person to work a wide loom, sitting in front as before on a narrow loom.

In 1760 Robert Kay invented the drop box loom which facilitated the use of more than one shuttle and the production of check designs.

In 1801 - '08 Joseph Marie Jacquard, a silk weaver of Lyons invented the Jacquard loom, a handloom capable of weaving very elaborate designs. He culminated the work of other inventors -Bouchier (1725) Falcon (1728) and Vaucanson (1745).

The meaning of weaving is, "Production, of fabric by interlacing two sets of yarn so that they cross each other normally at right angles, usually accomplished with a hand or power operated loom.

**Dressing the Loom**

There are so many varieties of Handloom products. For each variety of cloth separate handlooms are there. We can't use one loom for many products. For example the "Rajkamal" Saree Design can be produced with the help of "Self-design loom". The Self-design loom is costlier than that of ordinary loom.

"Preparing the loom for weaving is known as dressing the loom". There are so many steps that follow in logical order which must be completed before the actual weaving can begin. It is also known as Pre-stage activities.
The first step is preparing the warp. The weaver must calculate number of warps threads and their length, as well as the total yardage needed to complete the project. Both the width and the length of the warp must be considered. The width of the warp corresponds to the width of the finished fabric, plus about 10 percent for pulling at the selvages.

The length of the selected warp is determined by how long the finished fabric will be, plus 10 inches at each end for winding and finished and an additional 10 percent for fabric shrinkage.

In dressing the loom, one end of the warp is attached to the back pron bar and then rolled into the warp beam; the most tedious (and often frustrating) step in weaving. When enough warp has been rolled so that it reaches the breast beam, the warp threads are threaded through the heddles. Finally, the warp is attached to the front pron bar, and the tension is adjusted.

In simple, pre-stage activities are


GROWTH OF TECHNOLOGY IN HANDLOOM INDUSTRY

Since the handloom industry is a rural based cottage industry, the Labour content in pre-weaving and weaving operation is perdominent as compared to mechanical operations. The efforts in machinery development for the handloom industry have been oriented to improve machine and labour productivity without sacrificing traditional labour involvement. This is necessary to sustain the employment generating potential of this industry. The production technology used in weaving of handloom fabrics is briefly described as follows:

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Bobbin Winding

In the handloom industry, bobbin winding is done by female members of weaver's families. An ordinary or improved charkha is used for this purpose. The winding speed of the formal model is 90 mts/min. and that of the latter models about 140 mts/min. This equipment is cheap, easily available even in the remotest centres of handloom weaving, and occupies less space and does not require electric power. However, certain amount of dexterity is required to ensure uniform yarn tension and to make clean and well built bobbins. Yarn tension is controlled by finger tip sensing.

Warping

Both vertical and horizontal sectional warping machines are used for warping operations. The former is widely used in many handloom centres. It costs approximately Rs.1000/- and is operated by a warper. Who is assisted by a helper. A beam of 5600 ends and 500 metres length can be prepared in one day. The machine requires a floor space of 10 ft x10 ft.

Yarn Sizing

Yarn sizing is done by warping yarn of full beam length around two poles in a street and applying size paste manually. Yarn is dried in natural environment. The size paste consists of natural adhesives, like wheat flour, maize starch or potato starch. The weaver's beam is prepared by winding the sized yarn using a beaming machine which is a simple, manually operated equipment.
**Weft Preparation**

The procedure adopted for weft winding is to employ the charkha using the finger tips for tensioning the yarn. This is a low cost operation and is done mainly by females and children.

**Weaving**

A large variety of handlooms are used in different centres of the handloom industry from the oldest throw-shuttle loom to semiautomatic and automatic handlooms. Throw shuttle pit loom is the most primitive loom in which head shafts are operated by the weavers with his legs and shuttle is picked through shed by his hands. Frame loom is a modification of a fly shuttle loom, in which shedding and picking operations have been modified to relieve the weaver from the strain of manual shedding and picking.

For winding, cycle wheel charkha and winding machine have been recommended to wind long and continuous lengths of yarn on bobbins and pirns. Introduction of drums warping and sectional warping machine has been recommended to improve productivity in warping operations against the conventional street warping procedure. Attachment of beaming mechanism and measuring and full beam stop motion on these warping machines will further improve warping productivity.

**Synthetic Weaving in the Handloom Industry**

Weaving of synthetic fabrics has been identified as a major thrust area for the development of handloom industry in India in the present century. Although technology of synthetic weaving is well established in the mill sector,
the handloom industry has still to develop its own appropriate technology. Indian Institute of Handloom Technology and Weaver's Service Centre, Varanasi has been working on loom developments for synthetic weaving. They have succeeded in modifying the pit loom and frame loom for weaving polyester and its blends. However, further research work is still to be done for pre-weaving operations, fabric development and design and chemical processing of polyester and its blends.

Bar pirn winders used in powerloom centres of Surat and Ahmedabad have been recommended for weft winding of filament yarn. These machines are available in 20 spindle capacity and cost around Rs. 3,000. One machine occupies space of 6’ x 3’ and requires a 1 hp motor. The speed of such a machine is 150 mts/min. Conventional practice of preparing pirns on manually operated charkha is not suitable for preparing filament weft as improper control of tension, and soiling of weft will result in faulty cloth. Though it is possible to weave filament yarn fabrics on many handlooms currently used in the industry, it is necessary to introduce modifications to improve product quality and to increase efficiency of the loom. Pit loom, frame loom and semi-automatic handlooms can be modified in the following ways, by the introduction of or use of:

i) Smooth revolving take-up motion
ii) Rubber covered entry roller
iii) Separate cloth roller to get longer lengths of cloth.
iv) Rubber roller temples
v) A smooth sky race board covered with plush fabrics
vi) Restraining sky movement to get uniform pick density
vii) Use of glass or aluminum tease rods.
Growth of Manufacturing Process of Handloom Cloth

Weaving is the basic process among the various manufacturing stages of handloom cloth. On a casual observation, weaving processes may appear to be a simple process but in practice, it involves a number of diligent preliminary processes and stages. This section attempts to illustrate the various types of looms and other raw materials used for weaving as well as the preliminary production processes of handloom cloth of various coarse and fine varieties.

The Basic Tool Handloom and its Types:

The process of weaving, primarily constitutes interlacement of two sets of threads viz. warp and weft and the equipment which operates this interlacement is called 'loom'. The handloom is made up of a stick or wooden frame for weaving but more often it is defined as a frame for weaving equipped with some wooden devices. It is distinguished from that of powerloom on the basis of the source of power used for weaving. It is generally classified either on the basis of the raw materials used, the loom structure, its laying position on ground or place of its origin. However, the looms which are popular in olden days are called traditional looms.

In ancient days, there were many types of looms such as free warp loom, warping loom, box-frame free warp loom, warp weighted loom, vertical-warp loom, horizontal-warp loom, table loom, card and frame loom, bow loom, crossed stick loom, mat loom, hole-board loom, stand warp loom., back-strap loom etc., which were used in different places during different times.
In India, various types of looms are traditionally in practice. However, the types of handloom used particularly during the present century, is highly notable. They can be noted on the nature of cloth produced or the places of their origin. They are generally named as pit loom, frame loom, Manipuri loom, Rajasthani loom, Kashmiri loom etc. Very recently, automatic and semi automatic jacquard looms and mechanical jacquard looms are becoming familiar in India.

**Primitive Looms**

The term 'Primitive' merely indicates that the structure of these looms and the process employed in their working, though outmoded, have remained unchanged for generations. These primitive looms still exist in the Eastern zone as well as in tribal tracts of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar. They are also used in those parts of the country where some types of druggets, durries, carpets, newars, tapes and coarse blankets are woven.

**Pit Looms**

Pit looms are the most widely used handlooms in India. These are of two types. Till the advent of the fly shuttle sky, invented in England during the eighteenth century, throw shuttle pit looms were predominant. Interestingly, even today, the finest varieties of fabrics, known for their beautiful designs and textures, are produced on throw shuttle pit looms.

**Frame looms**

Frame looms have come into existence due to certain advantages they have in weaving designed varieties with more than two treadles. These
are also helpful in weaving fabric requiring mass production. In parts of West Bengal, Assam and elsewhere in Eastern region, improvised frame looms are replacing pit looms. These looms are also popular in many parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Delhi and Punjab where attractive furnishings, bed sheets and made up items are manufactured on a large scale.

**Semi-automatic Looms**

Semi-automatic looms are now acquiring popularity in some weaving centers in the country. Only a limited range of fabrics can be manufactured on these semi-automatic looms. These looms are operated by human effort by pedaling with legs or by moving the sky by hand. The Chittaranjan loom, the Hattersley pedal loom, the Madanpura loom, the Banarasi semi-automatic loom are some typical examples of this type of loom. Although productivity of these looms is considerably higher than that of traditional looms, their versatility is limited.

**Stages of Production Processes**

There are several stages involved in the process of production of handloom cloth starting from the stage of purchase of yarn. They are dyeing, loosening, twisting winding, warping, dressing, sizing, piecing and fixing the warp with the loom for weaving. Yarn is usually purchased either from the local market or from the co-operative market or directly from spinning mills. It may be classified either as mill made yarn or hand-spun yarn and either dyed yarn or undyed yarn. If the yarn is undyed it has to be processed before it goes to warp and weft- The counts of yarn used for weaving may differ from cloth to cloth and the size of the cloth is based on the reeds of loom.
The warp and weft yarn may be obtained either from dyed yarn or from undyed yarn. If it is undyed, it has to be dyed locally. In the non co-operative sector, few master weavers have dye-houses within their own establishment. The independent master weavers make dyeing process from the local dye-houses. But, in the case of co-operative sector, a few active co-operative societies have their own dye-houses. Most of the co-operative societies make dyeing yarn either from cooperative dye-houses or from government approved dye-houses.

Dye houses are run by different classes of people who specialize in it. The cost and the process of dyeing are based on the weight of yarn and dye & chemicals used. The dyeing process is based on a specific temperature. The quantity of colour powder depends upon the types of colour, shade and effect on yarn. There are two types of dyeing-direct colour dyeing and fast mixing colour dyeing. Dark shade needs high percentage of colour and light shade needs low percentage of colour.

The third stage covers loosening, twisting, rewinding and warping of the yarn. Loosening and twisting are based on the counts of yarn; rewinding of yarn is done on reels and hands. Rewinding is done in the case of weft yarn or breadth wise yarn. This is done with the help of charka wheels by women and children workers. Wages are paid on piece rate basis and the rate of wage varies according to counts and weight of yarn. After rewinding, the yarn has to be warped. The warp yarn is usually wrapped on round wooden frame. The processes of loosening, twisting, rewinding and warping are usually done by the family members of the co-operative weavers in the co-operative sector and by job workers in the non-co-operative sector.
Dressing and sizing are usually done at the time of dyeing and repeated after warping. Before sizing, it is to be noted that in the case of fine varieties, the warp yarn is dropped into a solution made up of boiled rice gruel and coconut oil and is squeezed and stretched. Then, the warp is given a dressing by stretching it in the open street. For this purpose, cross-wise bamboo rods are used. Dust and dirt are removed from the threads and finally the broken ends of the threads are joined. After these processes, the warp is removed from one end of the bamboo and is wound on a hank till it reaches the other end. Now, the new warp is ready for the next process of piecing.

The above said processes of dressing and sizing are practiced in open space only to the fine varieties of sarees but in the case of coarse varieties these processes are completed within the factory itself by job workers. The usual charges for these works are based on the various counts of yarn and the length of the warp. In the case of sarees, the warp length will be 50 metres and in the case of towels, lungies and dhoties, it will be 250 metres.

Piecing refers to the joining of the thread ends of the old warp with the thread ends of the new warp. Each loom contains at least one set of reed and one set of healds. The numbers of reeds and healds depends upon the thickness of the cloth. The thinner thread needs more reeds and healds and vice versa. There are two sizes of reeds, one is 60" width (for dhoty and saree) and the other is 36" width (for towel and shirting cloth). The new warp which joins with the old warp by means of piecing is again stretched in the street in the case of the fine varieties. The wage rates for this work is usually fixed based on the sizes of reeds, length of warp and design of the cloth.
After piecing, warp yarn is divided by many segments and is fixed into the loom. One end of it is fixed to the cloth beam and the other end to warp beam. The distance of the cloth beam and warp beam may depend upon the length of the cloth weaving. For a normal six-yards saree, the warp has a distance of 12 feet and for towels, dhoties etc., the distance will be 6 to 8 feet between the cloth and warp beam.

The ordinary check and straight line designs are prepared by the segments of warp and weft yarn. In the case of flowers and curve designs, the handloom designers used jacquard punch card methods. The jacquard box includes design cards with hooks. The number of hooks differ from cloth design to design. Turkish towels, half and full jacquard towels of the coarse varieties and putta border and petni designs on pure and art silk sarees of fine varieties are usually woven by the jacquard looms. Wage will normally be more for these complex nature of weaving. The weavers are usually getting wage for their work on the basis of the variety and length of the cloth.

The above cited preliminary production processes including weaving of handloom cloth are almost similar in various sectors of handloom industry. However, one can obviously notice the existing variation among the other factors of production viz. capital, fixed and variable costs, wage structure, types of employment, quality and quantity of goods associated with the production of cloth in this small industry. These basic economic variables, particularly relating to production arid marketing aspects of the handloom industry vary with different organizational structures and administrative functions.
The handloom industry, which is an important segment of textile industry has a very long history spanning over several centuries. Today, in India hand-loom industry holds a prime place for three obvious reasons viz.,

1) It provides the largest employment among the traditional industries, next only to agriculture. 2) Handlooms have maintained one-fourth share (23 percent) of total textile production in the country and 3) The textile industry, including handlooms, is a major foreign exchange earner of the country. It earns more than 35 percent of the total exports revenue made in our country.

There are many advocates among the Indian population, who support the cause of handlooms for various reasons including ideology, philosophy, sheer love for handloom products, economic arguments, etc. Irrespective of the policies, projects and aspirations arising out of various quarters, hand-loom sector is undergoing changes which are impacting on the livelihoods of the handloom weavers. Some of the factors are internal and some are external related to the growth of modern textile sector.

**Features of Handloom Sector**

Handloom sector is an important cottage industry in India and is a very old profession. Handloom weavers are known for their knowledge, innovation and brilliance in designs. Weaving is now considered almost an art. Handloom sector continues to employ large number of people in rural, semi-urban and urban areas of India. There are nearly 3.8 million handlooms in India giving direct employment to about 3.5 million people in various pre-and post loom process. In some states such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, North Eastern States, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, this sector is visibly large and dominant in certain categories of clothing.
Handloom method of cloth production is also environment friendly and would be supportive of sustainable development policies aimed at reduction of negative impacts on environment and ecology. Handloom sector is an important channel for balanced economic growth.

Market for handloom products is still large and wide. There is good domestic market as well as international market. There are die-hard consumers who would support handloom products for every reason they can hold onto.

There are estimated 32 other sectors which are dependent on handloom production. In various ways, including transportation, financial services, marketing services, service and maintenance services, hotels, etc. Many handloom centers are well known tourist spots, drawing visitors from far places of India and foreign countries as well. Thus part of the tourism industry's fortune is also influenced by handloom sector and its fame.

Handloom sector has umbilical linkage with cotton farmers and rural farm economy. Agricultural labour gets employment in handloom sector in non-agricultural seasons.

Handloom sector has self-sustaining mechanisms, including training for young weavers, irrespective of gender. The inheritance of skills, resources and capacities is beyond the realm and reach of any modern training and educational institution. It is a facilitation process, which is not dependent on the government and or any modern formal institution. There is also sufficient flexibility for all types of communities to take up handloom production as a profession.
Handloom sector is part of the culture and ethos of India and its glorious past. It has emotional bondage with nationalism and the champions of nationhood. It has a principal role in public opium formation during the independence struggle against the imported' goods and imposed' industrialization.

Handloom production has significant contribution to the national GDP and export earnings. Thus it has some influence over the foreign exchange levels and the wellbeing of the economy.

PROBLEMS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY

Handloom sector is organized in three predominant forms of production independent weavers, cooperative systems and wage weavers. The most prevalent system is the wage weavers. Presently, most of these wage weavers work at home. Their work ranges from pre-loom processing to mere wearing, at different places. In any case, wages are decided as per the wearing and the skill involved in such wearing. Independent weavers are rarely seen. This is primarily because of the access and availability of raw materials and production investment.

There are many issues of handloom production, which have been lingering for the past several years, some even for the past hundred years. There has been no coordinated application to address these issues. They are likely to continue for the next ten years, with implications on production and thus the sustenance of handloom sector.
1. Raw Material Supply

Access to raw material such as yarn, dyes and stuffs has been a real problem. With increasing cotton and cotton yarn exports, yarn prices are steadily increasing. The availability of hank yarn, the basic material from which hand-loom weaving is done, is a serious issue because it is controlled by modern spinning mills, who see more profit in large volume cane yarn.

Secondly, since hand yarn is tax free and has subsidies, enormous amounts are diverted to the powerloom and mill sectors. As a result, there is a perennial shortage of yarn for the weavers. Despite a few schemes, hank yarn access issue has not been resolved. Colours are expensive, and presently there is no system or mechanism to increase their availability.

Handloom primarily uses natural fibers such as cotton, silk and jute. Prices of these fibers have been increasing during production and processing. Cotton production in India is expensive because of intensive and high usage of costly agricultural inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers. Secondly, while the fiber production most often happen in the vicinity of the weavers, their processing is done in distant areas and as such the prices to the weaver are higher, with the central government new encouraging primary fiber and yarn exports, hand-loom weavers would be on the last priority for yarn suppliers.

2. Infrastructure and Investment

Hand-loom production is largely facilitated by private investment from master weavers, entrepreneurs and money lenders. The costs of such private investment have been very high, though the transaction costs are low. In recent
years, the investment profile In hand-loom sector has also been changing. Traditional investors known as master weavers - who had been investing for several decades in handloom production have been moving away or have become reluctant to invest in new designs. There is also trend of diverting the capital accumulation to other businesses by the master weavers. Thus there is a change in characteristics of the production capital investment in handloom sector. There is no investment in sectoral growth. Common facilities have not been developed such as godowns, credit facilities (banks in the vicinity), roads, proper sanitation, etc. have not been provided anywhere.

3. Responding to Market Needs

While there are suggestions that handloom sector should increase its design in response to changes in the market, the bottlenecks are many. The lack of change is not due to the weaver not being amenable to change, as is bandied. Rather it is due to unwillingness of the investor to take risks and provide incentive to weavers for effecting the change. This apart, government has been providing substantial grants to the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) to provide design support to handloom co-operatives, but nothing much has come out of it.

Handloom designs are not protected As a result, investors are not interested lest they end up with the risk and those who copy the benefits. Production options include development of handloom / silk / jute marks and registration under Geographical Indications Act. Given the Indian scenario of governance and business cultures, protection for hand-loom designs is impossible.
4. **Co-operative System**

While cooperatives do help in maximizing the benefits for weavers in the entire chain of production, their present condition is a cause of concern. The handloom cooperative system is middled with corruption and political inference. Many handloom weavers are not members of these co-operatives, government departments have to stop using them as primary sources for routing government funds and schemes. Cooperatives have to become independent with district level government officers dishening the tasks of management and decision making.

5. **Women**

Women constitute a major workforce in the handloom sector. Almost most of the handloom products are meant for women. However their working, living and wage conditions need to be improved. They need to be empowered in various ways. Almost all the government schemes, projects and programmes on handloom sector have been and continue to bypass this major workforce through various means. They do not have identity cards, which are the principal means through which government welfare measures are sought to be implemented.

6. **Wages, Employment and Livelihood Issues**

Wages have not increased in the last 15 years. Some sections of handloom weavers are living in hand to mouth conditions, with not house or assets. With emphasis on labour reforms, growth in work sheds and competition, wages may not increase. As a result, the living and working conditions would continue to dismal. Poverty would drive people to hang on despite low wages. This is a black scenario on livelihood and working conditions
PROSPECTS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY

Handloom sector is a mature industries. Changes in mature industries tends to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary in nature, but also tends to be resisted. Rapid adjustment does not easily occur. The other sub-textile sectors in comparison are more recent although not necessarily less resistant to change. The main drivers of change in the handloom sector, for better or worse, would be the following:

1. **Focus areas of Handloom Production and Products**

   Significant production in handloom sector caters to the needs of women and the products are pre-dominantly sarees, dhotis and other traditional fabrics. While there is still a huge market for these products, the competition in these and the changing life styles would necessitate the handloom sector to change its products and broaden its consumer profile from particular segments to almost all segments. The ability of the handloom clusters to change has to be enhanced and this is where the future lies.

   Consumer base of the handloom sector has to widen to include products for young and old, men and women, class and the mass, high cost to the cheapest, intricate design to plain fabric and low production investment to high production investment. The response of the handloom sector to change in the last fifteen years has been very encouraging. Government has to encourage any positive change in the sector, which sustains the character and employment of handloom production.
2. **Skills, Training and Lifelong Learning**

Handloom skills have been passed down the generations through the engagement of the family. Sharing of skills, knowledge and design has been the strength of the handloom profession while the proprietary behaviour among handloom weavers is rare, modern markets and competition is forcing the trend for proprietary rights as the factor for achievements in the markets.

Formal research institutions like Weaver Service Centers and Institutes of Handloom Technology have failed in supporting the handloom sector through effective research into the strengths and needs of the sector. Most graduates of their institutions are employed in powerloom and mill sector, than by handloom sector. However the growth and sustenance of sharing of skills, training and lifelong learning depend on the ability of the handloom sector to regain its glory and structure.

3. **Markets**

Despite of export boom, the Indian textile industry is primarily oriented to domestic markets. The large domestic market and rapidly rising domestic incomes therefore open important market opportunities for the textile industry. But there is uneven competition, with mill and powerloom sector getting subsidies in various forms. It is also that, power-looms have been undermining hand-loom markets by selling their products as handloom.

Handloom sector has been a consistent source of textile exports from India, and has been the only sector which has successfully presented cheaper textile imports coming into India. Handloom sector has been catering fully to
the domestic needs and also value added exports in the international markets. It is time that the government of India recognized the strengths of its own textile sector, and work upon further strengthening of this sector by undertaking appropriate policy measures. Indian textile sector is likely to be balanced by the bulwark of handloom production and would be able to remain competitive in the international markets only through the growth and vibrancy of handloom production.

4. Globalization

For the first time after almost four decades, with the elimination of important quotas on 1st June 2005 pursuant to WTO rules, Indian textile and clothing sector will be subject to the same trade and important rules as any other industrial sector. So it is the responsibility of the handloom sector to meet the challenges and at the same time the government has to establish favourable framework of conditions in which handloom, like other sectors, can develop and enjoy the opportunities to compete, domestically and internationally on the basis of equity.

It is important to assess the implications of WTO related textile and clothing trade agreements on the handloom sector. There is need to educate the handloom weavers on what these provisions are, and how the application of the same would benefit or affect them negatively.

In any case, It is obvious that interests of the handloom sector have not been integrate into the national trade negotiating positions. Infact, none is aware of the governments position on handloom sector. Everybody agrees that it is not easy to analyse market access barriers, influence international
standards or trace the impact of multilateral negotiations on exporters in handlooms. This becomes much more difficult when the government want to internationally keep out the handloom sector, as part of restructuring the Indian textile sector. Interests of crores of handloom weavers are being ignored.

In the era of economic liberalization and globalization, the current thinking is market competition is the best, and all subsidies are wrong. In the case of handloom sector, policy benefits offered on paper are being withdrawn, while tax reliefs and subsidies are being offered to the powerloom and mill sectors in the name of encouragement to exports. Presently handloom weavers are facing livelihood crisis because of adverse government policies, globalization and changing socioeconomic conditions.

There is a future for handloom sector in India beyond 2015 for different reasons. However, the living and working conditions for handloom weavers is likely to decline, unless there are specific interventions. The strength of the handloom sector is its large and skilled labour. This is also the strength of the Indian textile sector. One needs to enhance this strength and address factors that weaken this strength.

It is time that government recognized the value of the handloom sector in achieving sustainable development of the country. On its own, government would never be able to provide employment to such a large workforce. Going by the logic of liberalization, government inturn ought to formulate, promote and encourage policies which sustain this employment, and cant work to its detriment. Despite adverse conditions due to larger support from the consumers and being a livelihood option for millions of weavers, handloom sector has
been surviving, and has the potential to be so. Government has to ensure a level playing field for this sector towards healthy competition among the different sub-sectors of the textile industry.

IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC REFORMS POLICIES

Handloom sector's unique feature is its ability to provide employment to a large number of persons with far less average capital employed per worker compared to the other sectors of the textile industry namely power looms and mills. This is possible because the traditional handloom weavers use their simple pit and horizontal looms kept in their house-cum-shed as tools of production and this makes handloom sector one of the principal sources of employment in rural areas.

Since employment generation is a prime goal of any development strategy. In the past, whenever the handloom sector, faced tough times, the government responded positively and rescued them by undertaking various efforts, which aimed at protecting and promoting this economically significant handloom sector with huge employment potentiality. These efforts took many forms.

In 1964-65, the government imposed a freeze on loomage in the mill sector. Mills were also required to deliver specified quantities of yarn in hank format at pre-specified prices and differential duties were also imposed on handloom and other textile products that favoured the former. In 1985, the Handloom (Reservation) Act was introduced which reserved 22 variety for exclusive production and marketing by the decentralized sector, particularly handloom sector. Further, a subsidy in the form of rebates on sales of handloom products were offered during specified periods, to help keep down the prices of handloom products.
But, the advent of liberalization during 1980s and its acceleration since 1991 coupled with major changes in the global trade arena like WTO agreement, Multi-Fiber agreement, etc., changed the attitudes and priorities of the Government vis-à-vis the handloom sector. The successive liberal economic reformist policies gradually and in a systematic manner marginalized the handloom sector and worsened the plight of the weavers. Specifically speaking, the textile policy of 1985, which specifically concerned with expanding textile production, made a significant departure from the past by according high priority to productivity of textile industry in general, overlooking the employment potentiality of handloom sector. Productivity was sought to be increased in various processes of textile production, ignoring the relative strength and inherent ability of the different sectors of textile industry. Consequently, the handloom sector began to lose safeguards and privilege hitherto enjoyed by the industry with regards to growth was estimated at 11.7 percent per annum and over five lakh unauthorized power looms were regularized in 1985, leading to a current situation where the handloom sector is facing an aggressive and unbridled competition from the much superior power looms.

Further, the emphasis on free exports as part of new economic policy of 1991 came as a major blow to the handloom sector. In order to augment foreign exchange reserves and strengthen the precarious balance of payment position, the then Government allowed an indiscriminate export of various counts of yarn and cotton, with adverse implication for the domestic availability and the prices of cotton yarn and this resulted in the steep and unprecedented rise in the prices of yarn and cotton. No sooner than this policy was announced, the yarn
export increased from 94.68 million kilograms in 1990-91 to 110.99 million kilogram in 1991-92 of which 86.8 percent was low count hank yarn primarily used for production by handlooms. Though there was a continuous scarcity for yarn in the domestic market, there has been no let up in the export of yarn and it was 554.95 million kilogram in 1999-2000 as against 262.78 million kilograms in 1995-96, registering a growth of 53% between these periods.

In 1996, the Government amended the Handloom (Reservation) Act, 1985 (implemented duly in 1993 due to litigation) and shortened the list by half to 11 varieties. During this period, the Central Government withdrew fiscal incentives such as excise duty exemption for handlooms at the fabric stage and duty exemption for hank yarn on the advice of the Expert Committee on Textile Policy headed by S.R. Sathyarn. The Committee also recommended the complete removal of Handloom (Reservation) Act of 1985.

Finally, in the year 2000, the Government introduced another textile policy with the objective of readying the textile industries to cope up with the competition in the international market. To achieve this target, the policy seeks to dereserve the garment-making from the labour intensive small scale sector and throws it open to the capital and technology-intensive national and global investors. But the policy hardly makes any mention about the future of traditional handloom weavers. The policy is also silent on the ways and means of strengthening handloom co-operative societies and small and independent weavers.
The successive policies have precipitated the problems of handloom sector and left the industry in tatters. For instance, on one hand, the persistence of high and rising price level of cotton yarn and the unbridled competition from power-looms and mills have pushed the handloom sector to the wall and on the other hand, in the absence of timely and adequate support from the Government, the handlooms were forced to squeeze the wage levels as part of a strategy of economic survival. But even here the handlooms do not have much room for tactical decision as the wage levels were already below the subsistence levels.

The cumulative effect of the aforesaid developments was that handlooms are today losing out badly to power looms and mill sector and lurching one to another crisis and caught vicious cycle of lack of demand, piling stocks, mounting losses, raising unemployment and the resultant poverty.

This study shows that the handloom industry is in dire-straits and needs the immediate attention of the Government. In fact it is the time for the Government to act decisively, at once, to save the lives and the future of lakhs of people for whom weaving is the only source of livelihood. The Government supports to the handloom sector needs to be regarded as a social security net provided to "an economically vital industrial sector, based predominantly in rural areas of the country. It is in fact the social responsibility of the state authorities to protect and preserve the ailing handloom sector.

**HANDLOOM EXPORT SCHEME**

The importance of the handloom sector in the national economy is well recognized. On account of having the advantage of flexibility of production in small batches, uniqueness, constant scope for innovation, eco friendliness,
adaptability and, above all, the element of rich artistry, this sector has the potential to contribute towards export earnings in a big way. Therefore, export of handloom products has been identified as a "Thrust Area" for the overall development of the sector. The Government is exploring the possibility of making optimal use of the resources to enhance production capabilities of exportable handloom products.

To give impetus to the export of handloom fabrics, made-ups and other handloom items, a scheme for Development of Exportable Products and their Marketing (DEPM), was introduced in 1996-97 (October 1996), and it operated till 31.03.2002. During the 10 Five Year the scheme is continuing as "Handloom Export Scheme", and it covers development of exportable products, publicity of the products and the international marketing thereof.

The financial assistance under the scheme is extended to the eligible National and State Level Handloom Corporations, Apex Cooperative Societies and Primary Handloom Weavers Cooperative Societies. Private Handloom Exporters are also assisted under the Scheme only through Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC).

The Handloom Export Promotion Council, registered under the Companies Act, 1956, was constituted in 1965 by the Government of India as the nodal agency for export promotion efforts related to the cotton handloom textiles. The Handloom Export Promotion Council provides a wide range of services:
1. Dissemination of trade information & intelligence;
2. Publicity abroad for Indian handloom products;
3. Organisation of business missions/ buyer seller meets and participation in International trade events;
4. Consultancy and guidance services for handloom exporters;
5. Liaison with the Government of India on all procedural and policy matters relevant to the handloom export trade;
6. Dealing with trade complaints pertaining to handloom exports;
7. Liaison with the commercial agencies abroad for augmentation of handloom exports;
8. Facilitating product diversification and adaptation to meet modern market requirements;
9. Providing impetus to modernisation of handlooms for the export market; and
10. Provision of design inputs to promote export of handloom products.
11. The Indian cotton handloom fabrics and made-ups occupy a place of eminence in the markets of USA, UK, Germany, France, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands, Japan and Australia. The main items exported belong to the segment of home furnishing, which constitutes about 90% of our total handloom exports.

MARKETING PROMOTION PROGRAMME

To provide marketing support to handloom agencies and the individual weavers, the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) assists the state Government in organizing National Handloom Expos/Special Expos,
District Level Events, Craft Melas etc. in different parts of the country. For this purpose, financial support is provided to the implementing agency as recommended by the State Government towards infrastructure, publicity etc. These activities are supportive to the handloom agencies, weavers and also the consumers as it provides them an opportunity to purchase handloom products of various under one roof states.

RECAPITULATION

This chapter has presented the status of handloom industry India as well as in Tamil Nadu. It has also presented the governmental measures to promotion of handloom industry in the study areas.
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