PREFACE

Since time immemorial the handloom industry has been playing a vital role not only in the Indian economy but also in the Andhra Pradesh economy. It is by far the largest and most important cottage industry, next only to agriculture. The industry attained a high degree of excellence, centuries before the machines were invented to produce cloth. It continues to be so even now. Andhra Pradesh occupies the second position in Indian with 5.29 lakh looms which is 17.50 per cent of the national total of 30.22 lakh looms.

The present study is basically a socio-economic study of handloom weavers in Cuddapah district of Andhra Pradesh. The unique feature of handloom industry in the district is that the industry in eastern zone of Cuddapah district is providing gainful employment to the handloom weavers, whereas the industry in western zone is producing traditional varieties and not able to improve the socio-economic status of the handloom weavers. The present research work is a modest attempt in the direction of analysing the reasons for disparities in the socio-economic status of the handloom weavers in these two sectors viz., eastern and western zones of Cuddapah district. Data pertaining to the evolution of handloom industry for over a period of 20 years (1970-90) had been collected and analysed. The study tries to identify the important factors responsible for the existing inter-regional disparities of the handloom weavers in the eastern and western sectors of Cuddapah district.
The thesis comprises of seven chapters. The first chapter presents the introduction to the handloom industry and outlines the objectives of the study. The policy of the Government, before and after independence, has been analysed in the second chapter. The general nature and characteristics of the handloom industry are dealt with in chapter three. A detailed comparisons of the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in eastern and western zones of Cuddapah are presented in chapter four. The fifth chapter deals with the cost structure, price and capacity utilisation of handlooms in different regions of Cuddapah district. The sixth chapter is devoted to the study of evolution or the process of change the industry has undergone over a period of time. The seventh and last chapter is exclusively devoted to present the main issues, findings and conclusions.

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