INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

India is a developing country, with the majority of its masses living in rural areas. Agriculture is the main source of gainful employment to those living in rural areas. It is the predominant sector providing work to 70 per cent of the population and accounting for 45 per cent of the Gross National Product (GNP) in India. In developing countries, agriculture and agro-based industries play a vital role in the improvement of rural economy. The limited availability of land, the limited cash returns, and agriculture being confined to one or two seasons in the year, the villagers are made to look for supporting rural industries, such as weaving. Weaving is considered to be the second largest occupation of the country.

India is also the second largest producer of silk in the world with an annual silk production of around 18500 metric tonnes. India has distinction of being the only country producing all four kinds of silk, namely, mulberry, eri, muga, and tasar. However, mulberry silk contributes more than 87 per cent of the country’s silk production. The mulberry is cultivated mainly in five states of India, i.e. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Jammu & Kashmir due to favourable climatic conditions. These five states collectively account for 97 per cent of the total area under mulberry cultivation and 95 per cent of raw silk production in the country. Tamil Nadu occupies fourth position in silk production in the country. Silk weaving is a long-standing tradition in Tamil Nadu and that is best illustrated in its incarnation of exclusive and traditional silk sarees. But, this age-old tradition needs to find new forms of expression and market in order to survive in a globally competitive market.
Silk, the glorious gift of nature is an inimitable natural fibre synonymous with splendour, sibilant with luster and spectacular in vision. Silk is an obsession to the fashion conscious man of today as he is slowly returning back to nature and has started showing his increased preference to eco-friendly natural fibers like silk. Now, it finds a place in the manufacture of woven and knitted fabrics for garments, parachutes and its components, fishing lines, elastic webs, sieves for flour mills, insulation coils for telephone, wireless receiver, electric gadget, tyres for racing car, etc. As compared to the industrial utilization of silk, its predominant usage is in garments. Silk is woven in various weaves such as plain, crape, twill, georgette, satin and velvet. The various silk fabrics illustrate the wide usage of silk filament by man for beautifying body and satisfying tastes, variety and fashion.

Silk is synonymous with luxury, beauty, refinement, sensuality and elegance. Silk is light but strong, smooth and soft and superbly adaptable. Silk is sumptuous, royal and heavenly. It is exotic, erotic and sensual. The quality of silk is unrivalled by any other textile fibre or fabric, and any comparison to silk is flattering the compared. This century has seen the invention of man-made fibres or artificial silk, but there remains nothing that has all the qualities of silk. Therefore, the saying 'silk is silk only'.

Ever since its discovery in 2500 B.C., silk is surrounded by mystery and had an adventurous course of evolution. At the end of the journey traversing through the intricate ‘Silk Route’ for the past 4000 years, silk stands proudly today braving well the onslaught from the mighty art-silk sector, keeping high the flag of naturalism and proclaiming herself to be the ‘queen’ of textiles. Traditional Chinese accounts ascribe the cultivation of

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silk-worms and the weaving of silk to the wife of the legendary emperor Huang-ti, who is supposed to have lived in the 3rd millennium B.C. In any event, silk culture flourished by the time of the Shang Dynasty (B.C. 1523 – 1027 B.C). Once upon a time in an ancient Kingdom of China there lived queen Xi-Ling, wife of Emperor Huang-ti. She was interested in the art of loom. One day as she sat under her favorite mulberry tree in the garden sipping tea and admiring the beautiful spring flowers, something fell into her tea cup- she jumped up horrified and spilled the tea all over her lovely dress. Her subordinates in waiting rushed to wipe off the stains but lady xi-Ling stopped them. On top of the tea stain on her dress she spotted a lovely web of the most exquisite threads she had ever seen before. She carefully picked up the delicate threads. It felt soft and smooth to the touch. She understood that the silk threads came from the silkworm’s cocoon which fell from the mulberry tree. She sat on her loom and started working out a complicated pattern. This discovery of silk was celebrated with great feasting and rejoicing throughout the land. Later, when commercial relations were established between China, it spread to the rest of the world. Silkworm eggs and the technology of making silk, was brought to India by Buddhist monks from China and the industry is said to have spread to Tibet when a Chinese princess, carrying silkworm eggs and mulberry seed in her hair dress, married the king of Kotan in Tibet.

1.2. Handloom Sector

Textile industry is the forerunner in industrial development in the state of Tamil Nadu. Handloom, powerloom, spinning, processing, garment and hosiery are the various components of the textile industry. Handloom sector occupies a place of pride in preserving the country's heritage and culture and plays a vital role in the economy of the country. It has a long tradition par excellence in its craftsmanship. Even though, there is backwardness in the
handloom sector, its products are quite famous for their artistic elegance, and intricate design. The handloom industry of India is highly labour-oriented, having a legacy of unrivalled craftsmanship with a decentralized set up.

Handloom industry is largely household-based, carried out with labour contributed by entire family. It provides livelihood to millions of weavers and crafts person. The industry is survived and also grown over the decades due to its inherent strengths like production in small quantity of designing fabrics. India’s economic development has to be viewed in the light of the socio-economic factors, preservation of the traditional skills of the people and the use of the available resources. Village and cottage industries, which the handloom industry belongs to, are oriented towards balanced socio-economic development of our country, owning to built-in mechanism that encourages weavers and craftsmen to seek an honourable place in the society.

Handloom industry which is the oldest industry in the country has a glorious past. Handlooms have a great potential in economic development and they hold the key position not only for sustaining the existing craftsmen but for providing gainful employment to more than 30 lakhs weavers. It is the largest economic activity second only to agriculture in India. On account of production, this sector contributes nearly 23 per cent of the total cloth production in the country. Wave of ethnic revivalism and effective State intervention through financial assistance and implementation of various developmental schemes have brought about more than tenfold increase in the production of handloom fabrics. Export of handloom products has also been identified as a “thrust area” for the over all development of this sector.

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In spite of the presence of the power loom sector in a big way along with all its advantages, the handloom sector has been able to endure the competition.

Weavers have so far been defined in terms of two divergent perspectives. On the one hand, there is the orientalist representation of India as a museum within which weavers are bearers of “traditions of craftsmanship.” On the other hand, there is the modernist project for economic up-liftment, through technical and organizational reform. In either case, the regeneration of society through hard-work via key institutional intervention like the small factory, co-operative society, technical school and design centre-have disassociated weavers from the community context of their work both in theory and in practice.

Even in the wake of the mobility, growing organization, scientific and technological revolution, India’s time honoured handloom industry has remained unscattered, preserving the ancient traditions of weaving and carrying out reasonable improvements in the use of tools and accessories. The Indian weavers not only provide enough cloth to meet the internal demand but also export numerous artistic varieties to the highly industrialized western countries. Clothing is one of the primary needs of mankind. This need has necessitated the invention in the development of the handloom industry.

Handloom industry is spread across thousands of villages and towns in the country. It exhibits substantial diversity in terms of products, organizational base, as well as in relations between actors within the production structure. The Weavers’ Co-operative Societies, one of the decentralized village industrial institutions at the grass root level has been operating as the life blood of weavers. But to-day, the New Economic
Policy and the privatization process have posed great challenges to the weavers’ co-operatives.

Silk weaving was largely undertaken on handlooms. As per the Silk Processing Committee Report 1985, there were about 1.85 lakhs handlooms and 0.29 lakhs pokeroots exclusively engaged in pure silk weaving in the country. About 65 per cent of the Indian silk is woven on handlooms. While the large numbers of handlooms are concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, 80 per cent of silk power looms are located in Karnataka alone. Export of silk garments and silk textile products contributed significantly to foreign exchange earnings of about Rs.450-500 crores per annum. In order to boost the export of silk textile products including silk garments, the Indian Silk Export Promotion Council has taken up various promotion programmes including participation in trade fairs, organizing buyer-seller meets in different countries, publicity campaign, etc.

1.3 Handloom Co-operatives in India

Mahatma Gandhi said “the spinning wheel is a hand maid of agriculture and the handloom is the nation’s second lung”. He considered the spinning wheel, a symbol of revolution. The history of handloom industry in India can be traced back to the emergence of East India Company, and it constitutes an integral part of the rural existence during the contemporary times also. This industry has a long tradition of excellence, forming a part of the ancient cultural heritage. The handloom products are not only well recognized within the country but also abroad. However, the pessimistic policy influence of the British administration and the greater economic

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depression, which had occurred in the year 1930's have distressed the entire system of handloom industry in India to a great extent. During these periods, the handloom industry had to suffer in the country-side in the light of policies pursued by government from time to time. Therefore, the weavers had to endure competition from imported cloths and the Indian handloom sector was left with inadequate supply of yarn, dyes, chemicals, etc. In addition, the Indian handloom sector was losing its own traditional rural market potentials and becoming slaves of urban markets both for procurement of raw materials and also for sale of finished products.5

After Independence while the prices of the mill products were controlled, the handloom industry was left free and thus it had become a sellers market in 1949. With the advent of depression after 1949, all the sectors of the textile industry were badly affected. In 1951, the Indian Parliament adopted the Industry Policy Resolution put forward by the government. The planning began with the First Plan period and a massive programme was launched under All India Handloom Board, which was established in 1951.

The co-operative movement had made its mark in the development of the handloom industry in India. The weavers were very poor. As a result of the traditional poverty, the weavers borrowed money from master weavers for meeting their financial requirements. Since, they had no property to offer as security, and as institutional or bank credit was not available to them, they had to depend solely on master weavers for loans. Moreover, the weavers could not market their products in their individual capacity, since there was no local market for his product. Therefore, for marketing the goods also, they depended on the master weaver. They also depended on the master

weavers for the supply of the raw materials like silk, gold thread or zari, etc. Thus, the weavers were held in the crippling grip of the master weavers and they had to work for low wages much below the subsistence level. In order to free the weavers from the clutches of the master weavers and to provide them the continuous work with commensurable wages, weavers’ co-operative societies were formed mainly to supply the raw materials to the members and to undertake the responsibility of marketing their finished products.

The Government of India has laid stress on progressively increasing the handloom societies under co-operative banner about 60 per cent and it was programmed for the Fifth as well as Sixth Five Year Plans. Out of the 57 per cent looms, the co-operative was found to be only around 32 per cent. In certain States like Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, etc. the strategy of co-operativisation has achieved great success. It has been found possible to increase the co-operative coverage in West Bengal and North Eastern States on account of socio-economic, political, geographical, and other factors.

1.4. Need for the Study

Sericulture is, day by day, becoming prominent and also popular as a cottage industry with large employment potential. Simultaneously silk industry and silk weaving, both handloom and power loom, is gaining ground as an economically viable, if not, profitable industry. According to information from the office of the Director of Handloom, Chennai, it is evident that the silk weaving industry in Tamil Nadu has expanded extraordinarily compared with the other handloom production varieties.
Tamil Nadu occupies a unique position in the hand woven silk map of India. Naturally, Kanchipuram needs no introduction as no entry of power looms is being tolerated nor is an introduction of any new techniques of production readily accepted by the most quality-conscious weavers who are more concerned with the stable fineness of the texture of their hand-woven fabrics. It is usually believed that the handloom industry as such, does not have a concrete footing-with a sickness and an ailment for various reasons resulting in unemployment and picturing the poverty-stricken handloom weaver in the mind’s eye of one and all.

In Kanchipuram there are around 60,000 silk weavers, out of them 50,000 weavers work under co-operative fold. For more than 80 per cent of the weavers, the co-operatives serve as a social asset in terms of giving employment, ensuring a fixed wage, implementing government schemes etc., However, even the co-operative they belong to, is not managed by elected board of directors. Instead, government appointed special officers manage the affairs. They have no associations to protect their interest except in some places.

Not much serious academic work has been done on the economic, social and sociological aspects of the member weavers of silk co-operatives in India and Tamil Nadu, though a quantum of work has been done on some facets of sericulture and moriculture (mulberry cultivation).

This enthused the researcher initially to investigate prospects and problems of member weavers’ of silk co-operatives in Tamil Nadu especially in Kanchipuram and will especially focus attention on its peculiarities and uniqueness on the economic aspects and enable the researcher to arrive at certain findings which may be implemented by the concerned policy-makers.
It should, however, be noted that this thesis stresses the positive study of the industry rather than concern with policy recommendations.

1.5 Statement of the Problem

Weaving is a special skill which only certain communities living in certain specific places in Tamil Nadu possess. It is traditional and usually handed down from parents to their wards. Where it is weaved at the household level it is still viewed as a family occupation. The skill level and the entrepreneurship vary even within the weaving communities. Some are conventional and saturated into the same old tradition while others are enterprising and are on the look out for better designs that are market worthy and technologies that are less drudgery. The weavers play an important role in the development of silk industry. They, by their imagination, creativity and dint of hard work, create fabulous and exquisite designs on silk fabrics and attract the attention of foreigners. There has been a remarkable improvement in silk exports which is mainly due to the artistic display on silk fabrics by Indian weavers.

If a particular industry of profession thrives and surges forward, many factors can be attributed to its progress. Similarly, there are many reasons which have contributed to the development of silk industry in India and in Tamil Nadu in particular such as the extension of area under mulberry cultivation, awareness among the mulberry farmers, improvement in cocoon production, the sophisticated methods adopted in reeling, the exquisite designs created by weavers on silk fabrics and the plans conceived by the government for the development of sericulture are few factors which have paved the way for this progress.
It is very disheartening to note the social status of silk weavers, who are the backbone of the sericulture industry. Though they play an important role in the industry, they are confronted with many problems in their social life. The weavers are poor, uneducated and they belong to the lower strata of society who lead a miserable life. They do not get enough work to keep them busy round the year. They work in unhygienic and poorly lit loom sheds without proper ventilation and they live in improper residential accommodation. The silk weavers suffer because of the unprecedented fluctuation in the price of silk yarn and the delay in getting assistance from financial institutions like banks. The wages of the weavers are much below their calibre and expectation and they do not have adequate medical facilities.

It is quite difficult to become a member of the silk co-operative societies. The weavers' schemes initiated by the governments do not reach the intended beneficiaries. There are no adequate schemes to promote proficiency among weavers and to ensure the welfare of the weavers' families. Power looms and private silk producers have been posing a threatening challenge to the silk co-operatives. Only successful marketing strategies coupled with the active support of the government can save the silk weavers' co-operative societies from gradual decay and put them on a secure track.

Even though the mainstay of Indian silk industry is the large and growing domestic market, exports have also been showing trends of high growth currently in dollar terms. However, one major problem with the Indian silk has been that as per the international technical standards of grading, it is of a low quality. The reason for this could be that the production of silk in India has been traditionally driven by domestic demand mainly for heavier handloom-based fabric like sarees. Consequently, the
quality requirements as per international standards never got percolated into our production priorities. Moreover, the hardier varieties of silkworms like the multivaoltines that are predominantly reared in India do not produce cocoons that yield yarn of international quality. In fact, in the past, most of the exports from India have been handloom products with a marketing strategy totally relying on traditional and ethnic designs.

In the domestic market, the changing consumer tastes, especially from the traditional handloom fabrics like sarees to lighter materials, are sending signals to the industry to reorient its production plans to suit the changing demand patterns, which would eventually have to rely on international acceptability in the impending World Trade Organisation (WTO) post phase-out regime. The crucial parameters on which the long-term growth and viability of the industry are going to depend are becoming apparently clear to be quality and productivity.

Finance is a problem for the weavers and they are usually indebted to traders and money lenders. However, for those who work under co-operative fold, yarn supply would be taken care of by co-operative society, but they have more liabilities for changing the design, every time they need to change the frames which cost heavy. Moreover supply of yarn may not be even for the whole year; it is supplied on the periodical routine basis.

A large amount of payments is blocked by the government agencies which procure their goods. The state and the central governments are not paying the silk co-operatives in time. The co-operatives are getting dues always late. The weavers in the state have always complained about the lower wages they are paid for. Though a finished silk saree is sold for good price in the market, the members of the silk co-operatives hardly get minimum wages for it. A skilled weaver takes anywhere between three days
to two weeks to produce a silk saree. The silk co-operatives are finding it difficult to pay the weavers properly.

Youngsters do not prefer handloom weaving and it could be noticed in most of the places visited that a major chunk of population in silk weaving is above 40 years. Hence, over the years the number of men involved in silk weaving has come down drastically. In most weavers households only women were found weaving. Men consider weaving as not remunerative or the wage they get is not commensurate with the labour and time they put in. They are on the look out for greener pastures elsewhere. Withdrawals of membership by men are more than the women from silk co-operatives. Fulfilment for sophisticated lives requires increase in household income. In the opinion of the weavers, handloom weaving is ‘a sector that keeps them scarcely fed, barely dressed and poorly housed for life long’.

Taking advantage of the change in consumer preferences, a section of weavers is also cutting corners. For instance, while in a traditional Kanchipuram silk sari the norm is to have 0.6 per cent of its zari weight in gold and 57 per cent in silver, in most saris now, the gold content is less than 0.2 per cent and the silver content less than 40 per cent. Moreover, the border is also being woven using a mixture of silk and polyester. While one mark (242 Gms) of pure zari costs Rs.3,150 the duplicate costs Rs.250-300, thus bringing down substantially the cost of the duplicate silk sari. The co-operatives use only pure zari and silk. This makes their saris costlier than the duplicate ones. While the larger co-operative societies have managed to survive the competition, smaller societies are finding it hard to survive. Many private master weavers and loom owners are also affected by this unfair competition. This has affected adversely the sale of silk saris in silk co-operatives.
To cater to the changing preferences of consumers, the traditional silk units have begun weaving churidar sets. It will not be long before they start making furnishings. Stocks have accumulated, working capital has dipped and several weavers are unable to get continuous work. In order to avoid losing customers to poor-quality silk saris and cut losses owing to accumulation of stocks, the societies now offer a discount on sari prices, ranging from 35 to 55 per cent. In a modernization drive, the societies are beginning to advertise, apart from giving customers the option of design and colour.

The future of the silk industry is not clear. It is certain that it cannot continue the same way. It has to adapt to the changing consumer preferences and attitudes. The industry has to diversify and move to value-added products, particularly as the use of silk sari is falling. Until now the silk sari has not been duplicated by the power looms due to its uniqueness, but soon that may also happen and the industry should be geared to take on the powerlooms as well.

Silk weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis because of adverse government policies, globalization and changing socio-economic conditions. The central and state governments do have several schemes pertaining to production, inputs, market support and development, meant to safeguard the interests of the weaving community. Ineffective implementation of the schemes and the changed context of silk industry, increasing competition from the power loom and private weavers have been largely responsible for the crisis in the silk co-operatives. Lack of information to silk weavers regarding various policies and schemes is no less a significant cause for the dwindling fortunes of the weaver community. Even government departments and implementing agencies related to silk suffer from inadequate information and data resulting in a widening gap between policy formulation
and implementation. The formal education system has not included teaching and imparting skills for this profession into its fold.

Though it employs a massive number of rural people, the handloom sector is considered a sunset industry. While some of the sector's trouble comes from the relentless march of mechanization, modernization and sophistication, there's more to the troubled weavers' plight. Irrespective of the policies, projects and aspirations arising out of various quarters, the silk co-operative is undergoing changes that are impacting the livelihoods of its members.

The silk weavers' problems remain despite the Tamilnadu government's announcement of a relief package. Fifty years ago, their lives reduced to tatters, silk weavers were forced to go to community gruel centres to feed their families. When everything failed, and their families faced starvation, the weavers set up community gruel centres. Under the programme, the entire weaving community participated, a group of youngsters went around the village collecting food grains, pulses and vegetables, prepared gruel in a common kitchen, and supplied it to the weavers' families once a day. The weavers wanted a permanent solution to their problem, not just relief.

The State government's refusal to lift stocks, the delay in making payments for the material purchased, the mounting interest on loans, and the mounting burden of payment to Special Officers appointed by the government are some of the reasons for the weavers' woes. For instance, the Meenakshi Amman Society in Kanchipuram falls back every month in interest payment to the tune of Rs.31,000 to the co-operative bank. Politicization of the co-operative set-up, with successive governments dissolving the elected boards has further weakened the movement.
In the traditional handloom weaving districts of Vellore and Thiruvallur, over 3.5 lakhs saris have piled up with 200 societies. Over half the 520-odd co-operative societies in Salem, Namakkal and Dharmapuri districts, with over 30,000 weavers, remain closed. In Cuddalore district, the number of handlooms has dropped from 12,000 to a mere 2,000 in the past two years, and over 80 per cent of the 50,000 weavers are jobless. About 35,000 families, primarily from the Saliya community, are affected. The weavers, who usually work on farms during lean periods, have been left high and dry by the severe drought conditions in many parts of the State. While some have migrated to neighboring states in search of work, many work at construction sites. But the majority of the weavers and their families have been pushed to desperation. Therefore, the researcher thinks that it is worth to study the problems and prospects of member weavers’ of silk co-operative societies in Kanchipuram.

1.6 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the growth and progress of the silk industry in India in general and Tamilnadu in particular.

2. To review the working performance of silk co-operatives in Kanchipuram District.

3. To study the perception and level of satisfaction of the members towards working of silk co-operatives in the study area.

4. To find out the major problems of the weaver members towards silk co-operatives in Kanchipuram.

5. To suggest suitable ways and means to improve the effective performance of the silk co-operatives in the respective study area.
1.7 Hypotheses

The study is based on the formulation of the following null hypotheses.

1. **H$_1$**: The demographic variables of the weaver members will not influence their satisfaction with the weaving occupation in Kanchipuram.

2. **H$_1$**: There is no significant difference between the responses of the weavers on various problems faced by them.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The present study attempts to find out the problems and prospects of the weaver members’ of the silk co-operatives in Kanchipuram. The study is confined to only 10 silk co-operative societies. It examines how far the silk co-operatives have helped the weaver members in their social life.

1.9 Selection of Study Area

The area of the study is Kanchipuram District, Tamilnadu. Kanchipuram’s reputation as a silk weaving centre dates from less than few centuries ago. The temple city of Kanchipuram is world-renowned for the gorgeous hand-woven silk sarees of myriad rich colours, renowned for their luster, finishing and their matchless beauty. The exquisite silk sarees are woven from pure mulberry silk in contrasting colours and have an enviable reputation for luster, durability and finish. Today, apart from its temples, this small town is also known for its thriving handloom industry. Kanchipuram town is also known as ‘silk city’ since the main profession of the people living in and around is weaving silk sarees. More than 36,000 looms are engaged in this silk industry providing livelihood for nearly 60,000 people in Kanchipuram. Out of which 90 per cent have been brought into co-operative fold and their spectacular creations are marketed by a number of co-operative societies, located all over the State. It is evident from the fact that Kanchipuram is one of the districts of Tamilnadu which is outnumbered
in terms of silk co-operatives and stands first place in this regard. Today, 23 silk co-operatives are in operations, of which about 18 are very large. With this background, the researcher opted to conduct his study in Kanchipuram.

1.10 Sampling Design

The study was confined to weaver members of the silk co-operatives in Kanchipuram. There are 23 silk co-operatives in Kanchipuram. Out of which, the first ten silk co-operatives which are outnumbered in terms of weaver members only are selected for this study. The researcher has adopted simple random sampling to select the weaver members from the selected 10 silk co-operatives. As on 31st March, 2007, there are 17,904 weaver members altogether in selected 10 silk co-operatives. 684 respondents i.e. (4 per cent of the total population) are selected for this study. The following table shows the sampling distribution.

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<th>No. of Members</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
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<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr.Kalaignar Karunanithi</td>
<td>1640</td>
<td>65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kanchipuram</td>
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<td>43</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17094</strong></td>
<td><strong>684</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from the Annual Reports of the Societies.
1.11 Tools for Data Collection

The present study is empirical in character based on survey method. The first-hand information was collected from the special officers of the selected silk co-operatives. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from weaver members of the selected silk co-operatives. A pilot study was conducted during April 2006 with several weaver members. In the light of the experience gained from the pilot study, necessary changes have been made in the final questionnaire. The data so collected were entered into a master table and tabulated to arrive at useful conclusions. The secondary data were collected mainly from journals, magazines, government reports, books, websites and unpublished dissertations.

1.12 Framework of Analysis

The ultimate object of the study is to find out the problems and prospects of the weaver members within the weaving occupation. In order to study the perception of the member weavers, chi square test, analysis of co-variance, analysis of one-way variance, t-test, factor analysis and percentage analysis have been employed. The chi square test was employed to find out the association between the demographic variables of the weaver members and their satisfaction with the weaving occupation. The co-variance has been employed to find out the consistency in the satisfaction level of the weaver members towards weaving occupation. Student t-test and analysis of one way variance were employed to find out the relationship between personal variables of the respondents and their satisfaction with the various factors as identified in the factor analysis. The factor analysis was used to study the satisfaction level of the weaver members towards various factors contributing for the growth of weaving occupation. Kolmogorav Smirnov Test (KS test) was used to analyse the problems and determine which
perceived problem ranked first. The other important tools used to arrive at possible solutions for the present study are simple percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, coefficient of variation, two-way table, Annual Growth Rate (AGR) and Compound Growth Rate (CGR).

1.13 Limitations of the Study

Any study having a bearing on attitude, incomplete, wrong information and non-responses to some questions could not be avoided, however, the researcher took maximum efforts so as to minimize such errors by the cross verification to the statement made by the respondents. This limitation is inevitable in the field of any social studies. Though there are 23 silk co-operative societies in operation in Kanchipuram, the researcher has confined his study only to 10 silk co-operative societies.

1.14 Scheme of the Report

The thesis has been arranged in seven chapters as follows:

The first chapter, “Introduction and Design of the Study”, presents the introduction, handloom sector in India, need for the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, scope of the study, sampling design, tools for data collection, selection of the study area, framework of analysis, limitations of the study and scheme of the report.

The second chapter “Review of Literature” presents the previous studies related to the objectives of the present study.

The third chapter “Silk Industry: An Overview” elaborates the growth and progress of silk industry in India and in Tamilnadu.
The fourth chapter "Profile and Performance of the sample silk co-operatives" reveals the brief history and working performance of select cooperatives in Kanchipuram district.

The fifth chapter "Perception of Member Weavers of Silk Co-operatives" furnishes the profile of the sample members and their perception towards the working of silk co-operatives in Kanchipuram.

The sixth chapter "Problems of Silk Weavers – An Analysis" gives the problems of the silk weavers and determines which perceived problem ranked first.

The final chapter "Summary of Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion", presents the summary of the findings of the present study and offers appropriate suggestions for improving the effective performance of the silk co-operatives in Kanchipuram.