



Chapter 13:

SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

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Due to lack of proper institutional support and insufficient spread of product diversification and modernization, the handloom industry of Nadia shows an unequal spatial development pattern. Even though a few areas in Santipur Handloom Zone of Nadia District show promising growth trend, along with generation of employment in the rural non-farm sector, the other areas of the district fail to perform satisfactorily. In this concluding chapter, an attempt is made to bring together the **major findings** of the study.

13.01 Major Findings of Study:

The research carried out so far in respect of “The Handloom Industry and its Impact on the Economy of Nadia District in West Bengal” helps to identify the following which are discussed as follows:

➤ **Present Status of the Handloom Industry in Nadia district:**

Nadia district occupies a very important place in the field of handloom industry of West Bengal. Handloom activities are widespread in the district. Most of the weavers are highly skilled and are engaged in the production of traditional “Tangail” saris (both silk and cotton), “Jamdani” saris (silk and cotton), “Santipuri” saris (only cotton), dhotis, running lengths for dress materials and other value added fabrics. Semi-skilled weavers of this zone are engaged in the production of cotton saris of medium counts, lungi, napkins, towels and polyester shirtings. In recent years some areas show product diversification where a variety of fabrics is produced for the internal market as well as for export purposes, especially by the cooperative sector.

Though **handloom activities** are dispersed across a number of villages and towns in the district, still it is not **evenly spaced all over the region but occurs in major clusters**. The clustering phenomenon of handlooms can be noted in the blocks of **Santipur, Nabadwip, Ranaghat I and Krishnanagar II**.

However, the handloom industry of Nadia District has two handloom zones:

- **The Santipur Handloom Zone**
- **The Nabadwip Handloom Zone.**

These two zones are generally headed by two separate Handloom Development Officers, though currently only one officer is managing the workload. The offices are situated at Santipur and Nabadwip towns. The Deputy Director, Handloom and Textiles, coordinates the proceedings of the two handloom zones. He holds his office at Krishnanagar.

➤ **Raw Materials and Machineries Required by the Industry:**

The main raw materials for the production in the handloom industry are cotton yarn, zari, silk yarns and also the chemicals and dyes. Handlooms use **yarn** packed in straight hank form. Cotton yarns required for the handloom production in Nadia are obtained from traders or suppliers of Kolkata. Most of the fine yarn of the “Kora” variety comes from Tamil Nadu in the south. Some amount also comes from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Surat in Gujarat supplies the bulk of the Art Silk, Polyester Silk and Acrylic. A few mills situated in West Bengal supply only the coarser varieties that are required only in limited amounts. Yarn prices in open market have been abnormally high and vary spatially as well as temporarily. The rise of price of this essential raw material has led to an increase in the production cost of the handloom stuffs on the part of the weavers and has affected the product market adversely.

The main **classes of dyes** that are consumed in this sector for processing primarily the cotton fabrics are Vats, Naphthols, Bases, Reactives, Directs and Sulphur Black. The Vats are the costliest of the lot and produce very fast and permanent colours. The **chemicals** that are consumed in this sector are almost entirely manufactured in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

At present, the handloom industry of Nadia district uses **fly shuttle pitlooms** of width 130-140 cm with 100-150 hooks jacquard. With the exception of a few very poor weavers, who neither have sufficient capital nor are engaged by any organization or processing unit, all the other weavers, about 99%, use looms that have jacquard attachments. The machines are supplied mainly from Kolkata.

➤ **Weavers and Associated Population of the Industry:**

The different types of weavers and associated population of the handloom industry of Nadia can be categorized into the following types:

- **Core Cluster Actors** including the master weavers, general weavers, the hired weavers, the weavers under the cooperative fold, dyers and designers, who are actively involved in the production of the handloom products of the district and
- **Other Cluster Actors** including the raw material suppliers, equipment suppliers, mahajans/ financiers and the traders of handloom products, who might not be directly involved in the production process, but form an essential and inseparable part of the handloom industry.

It has already been discussed in Chapter 6 that a primary survey was conducted in respect of weavers and associated population in the study area. The gist of the results of the survey is appended here as a part of major findings:

- There is a **dominance of males** in weaving activities while the women are generally engaged in the preparatory works.
- A large proportion of the surveyed weavers are **migrants** from erstwhile East Bengal and northern districts of Bengal.
- The associated population are **mostly Hindus**.
- Though most of the people are literate, the **level of education** is low.
- A **high level of disparity can be noticed in the monthly income pattern** of the population engaged in the handloom sector.
- Many of the surveyed population have **secondary sources of income**.
- The survey also conveys that most of the families **have more than one earner drawing their income from the handloom industry**.
- Though banks, post offices and allied financial institutions are preferred as places of **savings**, still a large number of the surveyed people have a tendency to make small savings in chit funds and similar monthly saving schemes.
- Most of the surveyed population engaged as hired labourers **dwel**l in pucca houses. However the conditions of the houses are very poor. On the contrary, a few mahajans and master weavers dwell in palatial buildings with modern furnishings and ample amenities.

➤ **Production Process and Support Institutions Related to the Industry:**

Among the different products of the handloom sector of Nadia, saris occupy a predominant place. The **various steps involved in the production of saris** include bleaching and dyeing of yarn, sizing of yarn, warping and beaming, pirn winding, preparation of loom that include drafting, denting and setting up of jacquard, weaving and designing of the products. On an average, a production unit has four looms, producing about 20 saris per month.

The handloom production of Nadia district is aided in different aspects by some **support institutions** like Weavers' Service Centre, Directorate of Textile and Handloom, National Handloom Development Corporation, CAD/ CAM Centre, Regional Training cum Demonstration Centre, Indian Jute Industry Research Association, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Apparel Training and Design Centre etc.

➤ **Financing, Marketing and Sale of Handloom Products:**

The sources of finance for the weavers and the traders are mainly of two types: *a) the traditional sources of money lent by the mahajans b) the institutional finance from different governmental organizations, banks and cooperatives.*

Excepting the weavers of Fulia town, most of the other weavers of the district are in the grips of local mahajans offering private money lending system. After 1975, the nationalized commercial banks started providing loans to the handloom sector. The **NABARD, SBI, Allahabad Bank** and the **UBI** along with the **Nadia District Central Cooperative Bank Limited** are the major institutes of financial sources for both individuals and cooperative societies. The **National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation, National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation, National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation** also provide working capital loans to the weavers of the identified communities.

For the Handloom Industry of Nadia, the local markets perform more active roles compared to government distribution and collection centres. The mahajans play a central and dominating part in controlling the transactions in these local markets popularly called the **Haats**. The **exhibitions and fairs** are very important for the sale of the handloom products of the district where the weavers and the cooperatives can sell their products with a good profit margin avoiding the intervention of the traders and the middlemen. Besides, there are a few

organisations which are engaged in the marketing and disposal of the handloom products like **Tantuja, Tantusree, Bangasree and Manjusha. Advertisement media** mostly include canvassing and hoardings at local centres and newspapers. The export market is not exposed to all sections of weavers but to those under the cooperative fold and a few selected large scale well-to-do weavers. The main importers of textiles and clothing are the European countries, USA, and other Asian countries.

➤ **Major Schemes and Programmes:**

The schemes are weaver oriented and aim at meeting the objectives enshrined in the Directive Principles of State Policy for the growth of decentralized handloom sector. Some of the schemes that need mention are Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana, Mill Gate Price Scheme, Scheme for Reimbursement of CENVAT on Hank Yarn, Project Package Scheme, Integrated Handloom Training Project, Handloom Development Centre and Quality Dyeing Unit Scheme, Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme, Health Package Scheme for Handloom Weavers, Thrift Fund Scheme for Handloom Weavers, New Insurance Scheme for Handloom Weavers etc.

➤ **Role of Cooperatives:**

The handloom industrial cooperative societies of Nadia district play a vital role in the functioning and sustenance of the industry. Though the societies started operating in the mid 1970's, they have recently come into focus and gained tremendous importance in the handloom industrial sector in a very short period of time. Most of them are concentrated in the Santipur Handloom Zone. In the initial phase, the establishment of these societies was made uniformly over the whole district but after a certain period, the cooperatives of the Nabadwip Handloom Zone failed to perform. Again, although the cooperatives of the Santipur town are performing at a moderate standard, those of Fulia have set milestones of very high standards of performance. The amounts of exportable products at Fulia have increased dramatically in recent years due to the intervention of cooperatives. With active help from Directorate of Handloom, West Bengal and promptness from the society offices, the two initial societies of Fulia were transformed and reorganized into three proper cooperatives in the initial part of 1973. The re-division was made on the basis of area under their supervision.

➤ **Role of the Handloom Industry on the Economy of Nadia District:**

The handloom industry influences the economy of Nadia district in various ways, such as employment generation, income generation, employment of manual labour, production of value-added commodities, generation of revenue, creation of opportunities for ancillary industries, production for export purpose and creation of different types of linkages for overall development of the district. Besides the handloom industry has also influenced the development of some urban growth centres. However, this industry has created inequality in its spatial distribution in the district.

➤ **Current Problems of the Handloom Industry:**

The nature and causes of the **contemporary crises** faced by the handloom industry of Nadia district can be outlined as follows:

- Poor socio-economic condition of the associated population, low wages, high levels of indebtedness, etc.
- Organizational disorders of the handloom industry, existence of less number of support institutions and steep competition from the neighbouring clusters.
- Problems in procurement of raw materials, poor dyeing quality in the local dyeing units, frequent fluctuation of yarn prices and lack of effective price control policies for yarn.
- Technological issues relating to the lack of diversification of products.
- Frequent credit needs and overdependence of the weavers on the local mahajans for fast and easy supply of money, on which they are charged a very high interest rate.
- Severe competition from the powerloom sector which not only produces cheaper products than the handloom sector, but also consumes a high amount of raw materials, which could otherwise be consumed by the handloom sector. This creates a prominent crisis of required raw materials.
- Failure of the marketing organisations, unorganized sale of products with limited export activities.

- Absence of reliable data required for future planning and development of the industry
- Ineffective policy of reservation for handloom sector in respect of procurement of raw materials, domestic sale of products and export of handloom commodities.
- Failure of welfare schemes to realize the real nature and magnitude of the needs and problems of the handloom industry. Many of the schemes were only partially implemented.
- Failure of cooperatives to upgrade the production status of the handloom industry, mobilize more working capital for production, clear the existing dues, increase export activities, expand their catchment area and improve the living standards of the associated population.
- Negative impact of globalisation on the handloom industry by exposing it to steep competition.

13.02 Opportunities for Future Development of the Industry:

- Enhancing demand for cotton fabrics across the globe.
- Creating opportunities for market diversification outside the state.
- Expanding the product range in the national and international market.
- Improvement of quality improvement in preparatory works, dyeing and packaging of the finished products.

13.03 Suggestions for Future Development of the Handloom Industry:

Handloom weaving in Nadia is an important industry that provides employment to thousands of people. Thus it is an urgent task today to devise proper structural and institutional support that would help the industry to work to its potential. The **important areas** where the industry needs future planning are:

- Credit needs of the producers
- Input support for the producers
- Product reservation for the handloom industry

- Research needs for quality improvement and product diversification
- Restructuring the present market pattern to reduce and then to eliminate the role of mahajans.
- Correcting misperceptions about the status of the handloom industry while implementing present policies and making future plans.

Implementation of the future plans for the development of the handloom industry can be taken over both by the cooperative sector and even by the unorganized sector:

A. Cooperative Sector:

- Opening of yarn depot/ yarn bank in the handloom concentrated area.
- Arranging market survey by trained personnels for capturing the domestic and international market.
- Suggesting revival proposals for non-functioning societies related to the handloom industry.
- Strengthening the share capital base of the cooperatives.
- Encouraging product diversification and export production.
- Advertising for the quality and uniqueness of the handloom products through electronic media.
- Arranging intensive training programmes for skill upgradation of handloom weavers.
- Opening of newer and computer aided design centres.
- Establishing processing houses.
- Arranging regular weavers' meet, seminars and fairs at the local, state and national levels.

B. Unorganized Sector:

- Sanctioning of loans by government to individual weavers for purchase of looms.
- Forming self help groups for the Below Poverty Level (B.P.L.) listed weavers.
- Forming proper market complexes in the locality for direct selling of the products of the individual weavers.
- Extension of welfare schemes to individual weavers.

13.04 Conclusion:

From the findings enlisted earlier, it is clear that the handloom industry plays a vital role in the economy of Nadia District. If due to a combination of circumstances, there is a decline in the performance of the industry in certain areas, this is offset by blooming activities in other regions. The declining performance of the Nabadwip Handloom Zone is compensated by the flourishing handloom industrial activities in Santipur Handloom Zone of the district. Studies also reveal that more areas should be brought under the cooperative control in order to organize the production and to uplift the socio-economic condition of the associated population dependent on the handloom industry. The government should come forward to support the efforts of the cooperatives to develop their own marketing network rather than attempting to market the products themselves. This will reduce the helplessness of the people belonging to the unorganized sector of the handloom industry. Thus healthy development of the industry should usher in.