

## P R E F A C E

Handloom weaving is one of the ancient industries of India. Presently, the industry uses mill yarn for the production of different types of fabrics. The handloom sector plays an important role in the economy of India. It is one of the major economic activities providing direct employment to over 65 lakh persons who are engaged in weaving and allied activities and contributing over 23% to the country's total cloth production. In a poor country like India, the handloom industry is quite favourable because it requires nominal capital investment, cheap equipment and easy maintenance. Due to effective government intervention, mainly through increasing the cooperative coverage, providing raw materials and management assistance, marketing opportunities, regular financing and also through implementation of various developmental and welfare schemes, this sector has been able to withstand competition from the powerloom sector.

The importance attached to the handloom industry is also evident in the state of West Bengal. Handloom products of Bengal have a rich tradition. The heritage of the master weavers and artisans is now blended with new technological designs and threads to produce a wide variety of products.

Nadia district occupies a very important place in the field of handloom industry of West Bengal and handloom plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic status of the population. The traditional production of Jamdani sari of Nabadwip, Santipuri of Santipur and Tangail varieties of Fulia has been popular in the domestic market for years. With constant efforts both from the Central and State governments in the form of financial and technical support, a significant progress has been achieved in the field of product diversification and thus, penetration in the global market has also been made possible. Design development and production are attempting to keep pace with the consumers' changing demand and taste. Thus, modern technology is being employed in conformity with diversity and versatility of products.

The economy of Nadia district is supported by agricultural and industrial activities and also to some extent by tourism. Among the large scale industries are sugar mills, rolling

and spinning mills, various machines and liquor factories etc. Major small scale industries include food and fruit processing establishments, leather and forest based establishments, handicrafts (clay doll making, needle-work, terracotta, conch-shell carving etc.), jute based products and textile industries- both handloom and powerloom. Although all these small-scale industries are extremely important in the economy of the district, handloom holds a prime position among them. Under this backdrop, the present study “*The Handloom Industry and its Impact on the Economy of Nadia District in West Bengal*” has been contemplated.

The entire research has been arranged into thirteen chapters. The *first chapter* is the introductory one where the researcher intends to provide some preliminary information about the research work. The *second chapter* highlights the general perspectives of the study area- its physical setup and its social, cultural and economic characteristics. In the *third chapter*, discussions are made regarding the origin and evolution of the handloom industry in India, West Bengal and particularly Nadia district. The *fourth chapter* provides an account of the present status of the handloom industry, its distribution, production status etc. in West Bengal and Nadia. The *fifth chapter* deals with the different types of raw materials required for the working of the handloom industry, their sources, demand, supply and the problems confronted by the handloom workers regarding the procurement of such materials. The *sixth chapter* discusses the different categories of weavers and associated population of the handloom industry- particularly their status, nature of jobs and socio-economic condition, information about which was mainly obtained from primary survey of the study area. The *seventh chapter* provides an account of the production processes of the handloom sector and the different support institutions required for the working, sustenance and progress of the handloom industry. In the *eighth chapter*, the different procedures of financing, marketing and sale of handloom products are discussed with special emphasis on the role played by the governmental agencies like Tantuja, Tantusree etc. Major schemes and programmes related to the handloom industry are dealt in the next chapter that is the *ninth chapter*. Here, discussions are made about the different schemes undertaken from time to time for the betterment of the handloom industry and for the improvement of the performance and living standard of the weavers. The role of the cooperative societies of the Nadia district in the sustenance and development of the handloom industry is discussed in the *tenth chapter* with special emphasis on the performance of selected cooperatives of Fulia and Santipur. An attempt has been made in the *eleventh chapter* to assess the impact of the handloom industry

on the economy of Nadia district. Discussions are made about the different ways in which this industry has enriched not only the cultural traits of the region but also the positive impacts that the industry has exerted on strengthening the backbone of the district's economy. The *twelfth chapter* discusses the different problems of the handloom industry of Nadia district. The last chapter, that is the *thirteenth chapter*, deals with the major findings followed by suggestions and concluding remarks.