CHAPTER  V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.2 Suggestions
5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In India fabric production is done by three sectors namely, powerloom sector, handloom sector and textile mills. Powerloom sector occupies an important place by providing direct employment of 5 persons per loom and employment in allied activities. It produces more than 50 per cent of the total production of the fabrics and satisfies 40.54 per cent clothier need of the nation. Apart from meeting the domestic need, it contributes foreign exchange by way of export.

Among the cloth produced by the three sectors in textile industry, the share of cloth produced by the powerloom sector has steadily increased from 41.41 per cent in 1981-82 to 50.92 per cent in 1987-88.

Apart from meeting the domestic need, the cloth produced in the powerlooms are exported in the form of fabrics, garments, made-ups and the like. There is more than three-fold increase in the value of exports in powerloom fabrics in 1988 as compared to 1985.

According to the type of cloth produced, powerlooms are classified as flat looms and circular looms. On the
basis of technology used for production, they are classified as ordinary looms, semi-automatic looms and automatic looms.

There is a steady growth in the number of powerlooms in India. The total number of authorised as well as unauthorised powerlooms as on 1.1.1985 was 8.36 lakhs and it has increased to 11 lakhs on 31.12.1988.

Maharastra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu are having the lion's share of powerlooms in India. There is no powerloom in Jammu and Kashmir.

Like other industries the powerloom industry also faces numerous problems such as Government restrictions in manufacture, raw-material problem, financial problem and export marketing problem.

In order to help the powerloom industry, the Government has set up some agencies such as All India Powerloom Federation Board, Powerlooms Service Centres, Cotton Textile Export Promotion Council, Apparel Export Promotion Council and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Out of the total fabrics exported to foreign countries from India, the powerloom in Tamil Nadu amounted to more than 40 per cent in the total export of the fabrics.
The State Government is providing assistance through the District Industries Centre, Small Scale Industries Service Centre and Small Industries Development Corporation.

The types of fabrics manufactured in powerlooms differ from area to area. Powerlooms manufacture the conventional fabrics of the area of location. Cotton check lungis, cotton colour lungis, polyester blended lungis, cotton dhoties, rayon dhoties, polyester dhoties, cotton/polyester blended dhoties, cotton sarees, rayon sarees, kodambakkam sarees (artsilk/rayon or cotton yarn combined), takker towels, towels, terry towels, angavasthram, furniture coverings, bed sheets, tapes, surgical cotton fabrics, check cotton shirting and all kinds of export varieties including base cloth for export garments are manufactured in the powerlooms of Tamil Nadu.

There is a steady growth in the number of powerlooms in Tamil Nadu. The number of powerlooms which stood at 2.5 lakhs in 1985 had increased to 3.5 lakhs in 1988.

The number of people employed in powerlooms in Tamil Nadu has increased from 20.5 lakhs in 1985 to 27.5 lakhs in 1988.
The production of cloth by the powerlooms in Tamil Nadu has steadily increased from 300 crore square metres in 1985 to 400 crore square metres in 1988.

In Tamil Nadu powerlooms are not found in large number in all the districts. The powerlooms are mainly concentrated in three districts namely, Salem, Coimbatore and Periyar districts.

At present Tamil Nadu has 38 powerloom co-operatives with 3167 powerlooms and 3475 members.

Originally Komarapalayam was a popular handloom centre. Carpets, dhoties, lungis, towels and cotton sarees were produced in handlooms. At present powerloom industry has developed and it occupies a dominant place in Komarapalayam. The growth of powerlooms in Komarapalayam started during the middle of the present century. The first powerloom unit in Komarapalayam was started in 1952. The entire population of Komarapalayam depends on powerloom industry for their livelihood.

There are certain factors responsible for the development of powerloom industry in Komarapalayam such as availability of raw-material, processing facility, availability of skilled labour, ready market for finished goods and transport and communication facility.
Out of the total population of Komarapalayam, powerlooms provide direct employment to 60 per cent of the population and indirect employment to the remaining 40 per cent.

There are 10,904 powerlooms in Komarapalayam consisting of both registered and unregistered powerlooms. Out of the total powerlooms in Komarapalayam, 85.91 per cent is registered looms and 14.09 per cent is unregistered looms. More than two-third of the powerlooms of Komarapalayam are registered looms.

Powerlooms in Komarapalayam produce cotton as well as polyester fabrics. Out of the total powerlooms in Komarapalayam, 98.99 per cent is producing only cotton fabrics and the remaining 1.01 per cent is producing polyester fabrics. Cotton fabrics are popular and production of polyester fabrics are negligible.

5.1.1 Weavers Working in Factory

Eventhough powerloom weavers are working in the factories, the hours of work prescribed for a worker per day in the Factories Act are not adhered to them. Factory owners do not follow the provisions contained in the Factories Act relating to the hours of work. Powerloom weavers are asked
to work for more than 8 hours per day. In the total population, 90 per cent powerloom weavers work for more than 8 hours per shift. Powerloom weavers working in factory at Komarapalayam are working without a fixed weekly holiday.

96.67 per cent of the weavers are working in powerloom factories for two shifts. Weavers working in factories with a single shift are negligible (3.33 per cent).

In Komarapalayam, women are also working in powerloom factories. If the factories are working the night shifts, women are also made to work during night shifts. Even though the Factories Act prohibits the employment of women in factories after 7 p.m., this rule is not followed by the powerloom factory owners in Komarapalayam.

In order to attract the powerloom weavers to work during the night shifts, incentive has been given for night shift. For work done at night shifts, wages are paid at the rate of 10 paise more per metre of cloth produced than the work done during the day time.

There is no special privilege in working conditions and hours of work for the women workers. Women workers are treated on par with men for their work in the powerloom factories in Komarapalayam.
Powerloom weavers working in the factories produce different products like lungis, dhoties, takker towels and cotton shirting cloth. But each weaver produces only a particular type of cloth as decided by the factory owner.

Nearly two-third of the powerloom weavers produce cotton lungis because of more demand for it. The products like cotton dhoties, takker towels and cotton shirting cloth are not given importance in production because of the lack of demand and competition from textile mills.

With regard to powerloom factories in Komarapalayam, a weaver is incharge of two looms in the factory. 95 per cent of the powerloom weavers produce upto 18 metres of cloth in two looms. Those who produce above 18 metres of cloth in 12 hours amounted to 5 per cent.

Piece rate wages paid to powerloom weavers differ differently depending upon the type of cloth produced.

Highest rate is paid for the production of polyester lungis and the lowest is paid to takker towels. There is difference in the wages paid by the powerloom factory owners for the production of cotton check lungis.
Majority of the weavers (56.67 per cent) are getting wages above 90 paise per metre for cotton check lungis.

Weavers in powerloom factories in Komarapalayam are working for more than 8 hours per day. There is no practice of payment of overtime allowance for the extra work done. But, the factories pay an incentive of Rs.2 per day if the weaver produces more than 20 metres (for 2 looms).

Powerloom factories follow the practice of payment of wages once in a week. Nearly three-fourth of the weavers get more than Rs.20 per day.

Weavers, who have worked between 8 and 10 hours, are asked to work 4 hours on Sundays for which neither extra payment nor compensatory leave is provided.

The powerloom factories in Komarapalayam do not provide the basic amenities that should be provided in factories such as adequate rest room, separate rest room for women, canteen facility and the like as required by law.

Powerloom factories in Komarapalayam do not provide the welfare facilities to the weavers such as Employees Provident Fund Scheme, Employees Family Pension Scheme, Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme and Employees
State Insurance Scheme because they have legally avoided registration under the basic Act.

5.1.2 Job Work Weavers

The production of cloth by the Job work weaver depends on the number of looms owned by him.

Majority of the job work weavers (53.33 per cent) own more than 4 power looms.

A powerloom costs Rs.15,000. Majority of the job work weavers have not borrowed funds from outsiders for investment in looms. Job work weavers in Komarapalayam are financially sound.

Commercial banks are popular in providing finance to job work weavers, followed by borrowings from master weavers and moneylenders.

Out of the total job work weavers, 90 per cent do not have separate work sheds for powerlooms. Residences of job work weavers are big enough to accommodate the powerlooms.
The types of fabrics produced by the job work weavers depend on the direction given by the master weavers. Production of cotton lungis is the main work done by the job work weavers in Komarapalayam.

Nearly two-third of the sample job work weavers produce cloth by themselves along with the paid employees. One-third of the job work weavers produce the cloth with the help of family members without appointing paid employees.

The income of a job work weaver depends on the number of shifts worked by him. Two-third of the job work weavers work for two shifts per day.

All the job work weavers in Komarapalayam work for more than 8 hours per day. Since they are paid on piece rate basis, they work for longer hours.

60 per cent of the job work weavers produce only 18 metres of cloth in twelve hours.

Job work weavers are paid on piece rate basis. The wages paid for the production of cotton check shirting and cotton check lungis have a higher rate of 10 paise more than the cotton dhoties.

Out of the total job work weavers, 56.57 per cent of weavers have an income upto Rs. 250 per loom, per month. Job
work weavers who have monthly income of above Rs.250 per loom amount to 43.33 per cent.

5.1.3 Independent Weavers

Working conditions of independent weavers are different from that of the factory weavers and job work weavers. Independent weavers in Komarapalayam produce cloth by themselves with the assistance of their family members and paid employees. All the independent weavers have separate working sheds for weaving. The sheds have adequate preparatory devices for weaving. But they are without proper basic amenities such as sanitary facilities, rest room, canteen facilities and the like.

The people employed by the independent weavers do not have contributory provident fund, group insurance, medical facility, housing facility, leave with wages, maternity leave with wages and the like.

The number of powerlooms owned by the independent weavers determine their working conditions. More than two-thirds of the independent weavers are owning less than 12 looms.

Powerloom needs more investment. Independent weaver needs money for investment in machinery as well as for working
capital purposes. Nearly two-third of the independent weavers invest their own money for the purchase of powerlooms.

In addition to the investment in machinery, the independent weavers need money to purchase yarn, other raw-materials and also to pay wages. Only one-third of the independent weavers borrow money from outside sources for working capital.

A vast majority of the independent weavers in Komarapalayam are financially sound to meet the fixed and working capital needs without borrowing from outside.

50 per cent of the independent weavers have income upto Rs.500 per month from each powerloom and the remaining 50 per cent have income of more than Rs.500 per month. The difference in income for a single loom varies because of the different varieties of cloth produced by different weavers. A cloth produced in the powerloom with more designs fetches a higher income than plain cloth.

Independent weavers have better working conditions to do weaving in two shifts per day. Nearly two-third of the independent weavers are engaged in powerloom weaving for not more than 10 hours per shift.
Weaving of cotton lungis is popular among the independent weavers than the other varieties of cloth. They do not produce polyester varieties because of their high cost, even though they are high remunerative.

All the independent weavers produce more than 18 metres of cloth in two powerlooms for 12 hours.

There are variations in the rate of wages paid by the independent weavers for cotton lungis production. But there is no discrimination in the wages paid by a single weaver for cotton lungis production.

There is uniformity in the rate of wages paid by the independent weavers for all varieties of cloth produced except cotton lungis.

Yarn is the basic raw-material used for the production of the cloth in the powerlooms. Independent weavers depend on the middlemen for the supply of yarn needed. Yarn merchants are the main sources of supply of yarn to the independent weavers in Komarapalayam. Yarn is purchased on credit basis because they lack liquidity to pay the price of yarn immediately.
Yarn suppliers charge a higher price because of credit sales. This practice is followed to compensate the loss of interest on account of delayed payment.

Independent weavers do not have the problem of scarcity of yarn needed by them. Two-third of them are in the habit of weekly purchase of yarn.

Among the independent weavers, 50 per cent of them sell the cloth to the master weavers and the remaining 50 per cent of them sell to the textile traders.

A vast majority of the independent weavers make credit sales because they have the facility of credit purchase of yarn from the suppliers.

Out of the nine independent weavers surveyed, only one weaver had the problem of bad debts on credit sales. The problem of unsold stock of the cloth is not common for powerloom fabrics.

There is male domination in powerloom weaving. Female folk is normally employed in preparatory work of powerloom weaving.

Three-fourth of the respondents are married. Widows and widowers form only a negligible percentage.
Majority of the weavers (61 per cent) belong to 20 to 40 years. Weaving work spoils the health and hence there is lesser percentage in the age group of above 40 years.

In the total population of weavers, 96 per cent of the powerloom weavers belong to Hindu religion. Devangas and Mudaliars are the dominant castes engaged in powerlooms in Komarapalayam. More than three-fourth of the powerloom weavers belong to backward class.

In the total population of weavers, 25 per cent of powerloom weavers are illiterates and 75 per cent is literates with education from elementary to graduate level.

Weaving in powerloom is done both by the hereditary and non-hereditary weavers. Among the respondents, it is found that two-third belong to the hereditary group and one-third belong to the non-hereditary group. Friends and relatives are the major sources of training for non-hereditary weavers (43.75 per cent) followed by the training provided by the factory owners (31.25 per cent).

Majority of the weavers have a small family with two children. Majority of the weavers employ their children in powerloom weaving work. Children who have not completed
14 years of age are the important labour force for preparatory work in powerlooms. Out of 52 weavers whose children are employed, 82.7 per cent has employed their children in work relating to weaving and 17.3 per cent employed in other works.

80 per cent of the weavers have income above Rs.900 per month and only 20 per cent has income of less than Rs.900. The powerloom weavers households are earning income not only from powerloom weaving but also from preparatory work, post manufacturing activities, agriculture, Government job, business and the like. 60 per cent of the powerloom weavers households have monthly income of above Rs.1,500. Three-fourth of the powerloom weavers households depend on weaving for their bread and butter.

60 per cent of weavers households have income above Rs.1,500. Only 40 per cent has monthly expenditure of more than Rs.1,500. Powerloom weavers are not spending their entire income. They are in the habit of saving their income.

The powerloom weavers households who spend upto Rs.1,000 per month on food amounted to 92 per cent and 62 per cent spends less than Rs.1,500 per month. Powerloom Weavers are spending Rs.500 per month on recreation, social ceremonies and the like.
Two-third of the sample of weavers have the habit of savings. This confirms that they are well paid. Chit fund is the popular method of savings among the weavers. Savings through post office and depositing in banks are not popular among the weavers. Other source of savings includes savings with master weavers, lending to neighbours, investment on buildings, jewels and the like.

Only 14 per cent of the weavers households are in debts. 91 per cent of the weavers spend upto 30 days in a year on religious functions. Number of days are wasted on religious ceremonies.

Among the three category of weavers, the independent weavers and job work weavers are literates. Among the children of the three category of weavers, the children belonging to job work weavers and independent weavers have better education (82 per cent and 89 per cent) when compared to the children of the weavers working in factory (31 per cent).

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

The work in powerloom depends on regular supply of yarn. Sudden scarcity in the supply of yarn and violent fluctuations in the yarn prices affect the powerloom industry and ultimately
the weavers. Hence, the Government should earmark certain percentage of yarn produced in the co-operative spinning mills for powerloom sector also.

Powerloom co-operatives may be started in Komarapalayam to ensure continuous work, to improve their socio-economic conditions and to provide better working conditions for powerloom weavers.

A service co-operative society may be established to provide the services needed by the powerloom units such as repairing the powerloom, electrical services, supply of inputs and the like.

In order to prevent the powerloom weavers from migrating from one unit to another for better service conditions, Government machinery should be geared up to implement the basic amenities stipulated in the Factories Act, provident fund, medical facility and the like.

The independent weavers who are producing only one item in their looms are facing marketing problems. Hence, they should be brought into co-operative fold to solve their problem of marketing. The advice of the Erode Powerloom Service Centre may be solicited for designing.
The Government should take steps to ensure compulsory registration of powerloom before providing power supply and other facilities to the looms. This will ensure better working condition for powerloom weavers.

The employment and exploitation of child labour in the powerloom industry in Komarapalayam should be stopped by the Government by penalising the employers.

Government machineries should be geared up to punish the employers who are making the female workers to work during night shifts.

Powerloom weaver's co-operatives may be started in Komarapalayam to provide common work sheds for the weavers.

Weavers who are working like bonded weavers with master weavers due to the advance money problem should be saved from bondage by providing loans.

In order to prevent the powerloom weavers from unproductive expenditure, savings habit must be encouraged by the various banks by approaching and offering them attractive schemes.
In order to prevent the weavers from saving in private chit funds, they should be encouraged to open bank account through advertisement about the safety in the bank deposits.

Adult education programme may be organised in Komarapalayam. So that the powerloom weavers can understand about the various Government programmes meant for uplifting the weaker sections.

To conclude, powerloom industry is doing an important service in providing employment opportunities to the people in Komarapalayam.