CHAPTER II
ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF POWERLOOM INDUSTRY

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2.1 POWERLOOM INDUSTRY IN INDIA

In India fabric production is done by textile mills, hand-loom and powerlooms. Among these three sectors of textile industry, powerloom sector occupies an important place in terms of production, employment, export and contribution for better standard of living of the people.

2.1.1 Production

The production of fabrics from powerloom sector amounted to more than 50 per cent of the total production of fabrics in India. Table 2.1 reveals the sectorwise production of fabrics in India.

### TABLE 2.1

Sector-wise Production of Cloth in India

(Million metres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Mill Sector</th>
<th>Handloom Sector</th>
<th>Powerloom Sector</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981-'82</td>
<td>3,808</td>
<td>2,926</td>
<td>4,547</td>
<td>10,981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(34.68)</td>
<td>(23.91)</td>
<td>(41.41)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-'83</td>
<td>3,132</td>
<td>2,788</td>
<td>4,694</td>
<td>10,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(29.51)</td>
<td>(26.27)</td>
<td>(44.22)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-'84</td>
<td>3,487</td>
<td>2,956</td>
<td>5,315</td>
<td>11,758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(29.66)</td>
<td>(25.14)</td>
<td>(45.20)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-'85</td>
<td>3,432</td>
<td>3,137</td>
<td>5,445</td>
<td>12,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(28.57)</td>
<td>(26.11)</td>
<td>(45.32)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-'86</td>
<td>3,376</td>
<td>3,236</td>
<td>5,886</td>
<td>12,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27.01)</td>
<td>(25.89)</td>
<td>(47.10)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-'87</td>
<td>3,317</td>
<td>3,449</td>
<td>6,226</td>
<td>12,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(25.53)</td>
<td>(26.55)</td>
<td>(47.92)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-'88</td>
<td>3,627</td>
<td>2,597</td>
<td>6,457</td>
<td>12,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(28.60)</td>
<td>(20.48)</td>
<td>(50.92)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figures in brackets indicate percentage to total)


It is inferred from Table 2.1 that 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. This confirms that the powerlooms occupy a dominant place in cloth production in India.

2.1.2 Export of Powerloom Fabrics

The Powerlooms, Handlooms and Mill sector meet 40.52 per cent, 37.48 per cent and 22 per cent respectively of the clothesier need of the nation. 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. Powerlooms contribute to earn foreign exchange. The value of export made by the powerloom sector since 1985 is given in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2

Export of Powerloom Cloth

(Rupees in Crore)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Export Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>114.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>212.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>295.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tecoya Trend, Friday, 15th December 1989, p.3.

From Table 2.2 it is clear that there is a steady increase in the export of cloth produced in powerlooms. The value of cloth produced in powerlooms which were exported, have increased from Rs.88.7 crores in 1985 to Rs.295.3 crores in 1988. In other words, there is more than three fold increase in the value of exports in powerloom fabrics in 1988 as compared to 1985.

2.2 TYPES OF POWERLOOMS

According to the types of cloth produced, they 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. The main types of powerlooms are as follows:

2.2.1 Plain Loom

Plain loom is also known as ordinary loom. It has all the essential mechanism for sheeding, picking, battening, taking up and letting off motions to weave cloth. Plain loom has a width of 52 inches to 60 inches.

2.2.2 Semi-Automatic Loom

It is a development over plain loom. This has warp stop motion to facilitate stoppage of loom in the event of warp break. It has weft replenishing mechanism to facilitate change over of weft pirns on exhaustion. It has only negative let off motion as in plain looms. It is also known as autolooms with shuttle.

2.2.3 Dobby Loom

Dobby is an attachment to the ordinary or semi automatic powerloom. When it is attached to a powerloom, it is called as dobbey loom. It is used for forming small and simple designs (figures).¹

¹ Funk & Wagnalls, New Encyclopedia, Published by Funk & Wagnalls, Volume 16, p.203.
2.2.4 Jacquard Loom

Jacquard is an attachment to the ordinary or semi automatic powerloom like that of dobbý. When jacquard is attached to a loom, it is known as jacquard loom. It is used to form large and intricate designs.¹

2.2.5 Drop Box Loom

Drop box is an attachment to the plain loom. When a drop box is attached to an ordinary powerloom, it is known as drop box loom. This type of loom has 3 to 5 shuttle boxes at one end of the loom and a single box at the other end of the loom. This loom is used for the manufacture of stripe and check cloth by utilising different colours of weft yarn. Now micro lines drop box attachment is developed to replace the conventional drop box. This enables to make 9999 number of changes in a design.²

2.2.6 Tape Loom

Tape looms are special type of powerlooms designed to

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². The Hindu, Coimbatore, 21st December, 1989, p.3.
weave tapes whose width is small. There are two types of tape looms viz. spindle tape looms and cotton tape looms. Spindle tape looms are used to manufacture thick type tapes and cotton tape looms are used in the manufacture of light tapes.

2.2.7 Automatic Loom

Automatic loom is otherwise known as automatic loom without shuttle. In this type of loom, the weft is drawn from stationary supply by a dart or an air jet or water jet. The function of the shuttle in the ordinary powerloom is done by the dart or air jet or water jet. In case of shuttleless loom with dart, the dart grasps the yarn from a large package and carries it through the shed. The dart is also known as rapier. Shuttleless looms with rapier are of two types namely rigid and flexible looms. In the rigid type there is only one rapier and in flexible type there are two rapiers. In the second type, the rapiers meet in a central part at the time of operation.

2.2.8 Warp Weft Resal Knitter

In this type of loom, weft yarn is inserted in a warp knitting machine. The weft supply is on a rotating carrier
and each end of the weft is cut in the same way as it is cut on a shuttleless loom. This loom gives the advantage of knitting and weaving.

2.2.9 Non-woven Fabric Machine

This loom has a device of hooked needles. By this, fibres are tangled together and needle punched fabrics or needle felts are manufactured. This type of fabrics are used in making blankets, indoor and outdoor carpeting and insulation.

2.2.10 Canvas Loom

A heavy duty automatic or non-automatic powerloom with batching mechanism particularly used for the manufacture of canvas fabric is known as canvas loom.

2.2.11 Mosquito Netting Loom

It is either an ordinary or automatic loom with batching mechanism used for the manufacture of fabrics like mosquito nets and the like.
2.3 GROWTH OF POWERLOOMS

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. As a result, in order to regulate the working of powerlooms in India, since 1985 the registration of powerlooms is made strict to bring the unregistered powerlooms to a single fold. The State Government and Union Territory are empowered to register the powerlooms started in the respective State/Union Territory.

Table 2.3 shows the statewise progress report of the registration of powerlooms as on 31st August, 1988.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Name of the State</th>
<th>No. of applications received</th>
<th>Looms covered</th>
<th>No. of registration certificates issued</th>
<th>Looms covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andra Pradesh</td>
<td>6237</td>
<td>14574</td>
<td>4990</td>
<td>11307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>2246</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>2190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>1037</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chandigarh</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1658</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>1038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>25905</td>
<td>224191</td>
<td>24116</td>
<td>197537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>1248</td>
<td>5420</td>
<td>9086</td>
<td>4814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Himachala Pradesh</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>1019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>16455</td>
<td>41512</td>
<td>11461</td>
<td>51475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>2122</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Madya Pradesh</td>
<td>13998</td>
<td>30687</td>
<td>13314</td>
<td>29412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Maharasra.</td>
<td>115032</td>
<td>353759</td>
<td>99762</td>
<td>291125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pondicherry</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1006</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>3262</td>
<td>22813</td>
<td>2633</td>
<td>17394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>3890</td>
<td>29057</td>
<td>3065</td>
<td>24439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>50794</td>
<td>203691</td>
<td>43007</td>
<td>165454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Uttarpradesh</td>
<td>19853</td>
<td>55960</td>
<td>19122</td>
<td>53415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>4057</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>3613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.A. : Not Available

It is clear from Table 2.3 that Maharastra, Gujarath and Tamil Nadu are having the lion's share of powerlooms in India. The progress of registration in these states is attaining the peak. Maharastra ranks first with registration of 99,762 applications covering 2,91,125 powerlooms and Sikkim with registration of one application covering 5 powerlooms has the lowest edge. Further, it is ascertained that there is no powerloom in Jammu & Kashmir.

As the registration of powerlooms has seen an emphathatic progress, the pending registration of powerlooms have became less. Table 2.4 shows the pending position of registration of powerlooms.

**TABLE 2.4**

Pending Position of Registration of Powerlooms in India as on 30.11.88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications Received</th>
<th>Applications Registered</th>
<th>Applications Pending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,62,755</td>
<td>2,30,672</td>
<td>32,083</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From Table 2.4, it is clear that out of 2,62,755 applications received, 2,30,672 applications have been registered.
Only 32,083 applications are pending registration which are negligible.

2.4 PROBLEMS OF POWERLOOM INDUSTRY

Like other industries, the powerloom industry also faces numerous problems. The problems are as follows:

1. Government restrictions in manufacture
2. Raw-material problem
3. Financial problem and
4. Export and marketing problem

2.4.1 Government Restrictions in Manufacture

This problem is a direct outcome of the Government policy. The Government of India has enacted Handloom Reservation Act, 1985 in order to protect the handloom industry from powerlooms and mills. In that Act the Government has reserved 22 articles for exclusive production by the handlooms. The items manufactured in the Indian powerlooms coincide with items reserved for handlooms. There is no other go for them except to manufacture the restricted items because of the demand for the above items and the complications involved in the manufacture of other items. The industry temporarily
overcomes this problem by filing a stay against the Reservation Act. But this temporary relief will not be available if the Government proposal with a modification of reservation of 10 items in the Handloom Reservation Act, 1985 for the inclusion in the 9th Schedule to the constitution takes place.¹

2.4.2 Raw-Material Problem

The powerlooms are utilising cotton yarn in plain reel hanks of 2/20's to 2/80's for warp and cotton yarn in plain reel hanks of 10's to 80's for weft as their major raw-material. In case of blended lungis (polyester blended lungis) polyester cones are utilised for weft. In case of polyester dhoties pure polyester yarn is used.

The escalating prices of yarn is a problem affecting the powerloom industry frequently. This problem has been prevailing continuously in the last two years.² In order to solve the problem of continuous increase in the yarn prices, powerloom Industries Protection Federation has taken steps by bringing it to the notice of the Government, Minister concerned by

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¹ Indian Express, Madurai, 25th June, 1990, p.7.
sending memorandums and by organising rallies and tharnas to attract public attention. The federation has also filed a suit against certain textile mills under the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act to bring down the prices of yarn.  

2.4.3 Financial Problem

To set up powerlooms, an entrepreneur needs fixed and working capital. The fixed capital is needed to construct sheds and for the purchase of looms. Working capital is needed to purchase yarn, dyes and chemicals and to pay wages for the assistants employed. Commercial Banks are reluctant to provide the needed finance for the powerloom owners or entrepreneurs. The Commercial Banks are charging higher rates of interest for the loans granted to the powerloom industry. They are not given a preferential treatment in granting loans. Entrepreneurs face difficulties in the processing of their loan applications. Further they are charged at a

1. Secretary, Tamil Nadu Small Scale Powerloom Industry Protection Federation, Komarapalayam.

2. Ibid.
higher rate for the electricity consumed in the process of production because they come under commercial category. The Indian powerlooms need working capital to the extent of Rs.500 crores per year.¹

Powerloom industry uses old technology for production. In order to modernise the powerloom industry, they need Rs.200 crores investment.²

2.4.4 Marketing Problem

In the marketing of cloth, powerloom faces stiff competition from the textile mills. Textile mills with heavy investment and modern technology can produce cheaper and finer varieties of cloth. They can produce products with varieties of designs. Powerloom factory is facing these challenges in marketing the cloth.

2.4.5 Problems in Export

Indian Textile industry is loosing its U.S.A. market.³

¹ Tecoya Trend, A Daily Published from Bombay, dated 10th December, 1987, p.3.
² Ibid.
³ The Economic Times, Bangalore, 8th July, 1989, p.4.
In exporting the powerloom fabrics Pakistan is a competitor to India. On account of the following factors Pakistan is in favourable situation.

1. Industry in Pakistan is comparatively of recent origin and therefore equipped with largest spinning and weaving machines.

2. The cotton crop is abundant every year and therefore cheaper. Quality of cotton is superior than India.

3. Pakistan rupee is much more under valued in terms of foreign currencies.

4. The Government policies in respect of subsidies and control of production are more pragmatic.

5. There is no compulsory inspection on export and every manufacturer sells on his own reputation of quality control.

2.5 GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

In order to help the powerloom industry, the Government has set up the following agencies:

1. All India Powerloom Federation Board
2. Powerloom Service Centres
3. Cotton Textile Export Promotion Council
4. Apparel Export Promotion Council and
2.5.1 All India Powerloom Federation Board

The Government of India has constituted the board in 1981 in order to have an up-to-date idea about the powerlooms and find out a solution for the problems arising now and then. However, the board has been utilised only as an advisory body.

2.5.2 Powerloom Service Centres

The 12 powerloom service centres established under the Textile Commissioner and 4 powerloom service centres established under the Textile Research Association are the current additions of the assistance provided by the Government of India for the decentralised powerloom sector.¹ They provide training, free testing, technical information for diversifying the products, suggestion in designing for the prevailing market and advices in manufacturing cost controlled varieties.

2.5.3 Cotton Textile Export Promotion Council

Cotton Textile Export Promotion Council is a Government of India agency established to promote, control and guide cotton textile export. It encourages export by giving Texprocil

award to the eligible exporters. It encourages foreign buyers to import from India by exhibiting the fabrics available and elaborating about it in all respects by organising textile fairs. It also guides the exporters by giving details of the demand in the foreign market. In this way it helps the powerloom sector alongwith the other sector of the textile industry.

2.5.4 Apparel Export Promotion Council

The Apparel Export Promotion Council established for the promotion of export of apparels is trying to extend its blessing to the powerlooms from recent days by way of guiding to increase the direct export opportunities.

2.5.5 National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

This is a financial agency providing financial assistance to powerloom sector. It is providing loan upto Rs.20,000 per loom for individual powerloom weaver for the maximum installation of 4 powerlooms. The recovery period is fixed for 12 years and the rate of interest charged is 12.5 per cent. It provides loan to powerloom co-operatives in the scale of Rs.25,00
per loom without a limitation to the number of looms. The rate of interest is 11.5 per cent.¹

2.6 POWERLOOM INDUSTRY IN TAMIL NADU

In Tamil Nadu powerlooms have developed only in traditional handloom centres. The handloom weavers have switched over to powerlooms because of higher wages in powerlooms. Among the powerloom owners in Tamil Nadu, majority of them have come from hereditary handloom families. In Tamil Nadu, the first powerloom was installed in Madurai in the year 1928.²

In 1989-90 the average monthly earning of a handloom weaver was between Rs.350 and Rs.500, whereas it was from Rs.600 to Rs.800 in powerlooms.³ The cost of production in powerlooms is low when compared to handlooms.

Next to Maharastra and Gujarath, Tamil Nadu has lion's share of powerloom establishments.⁴ As a labour intensive

¹. Superintendent, Directorate of Handlooms and Textiles, Government of Tamil Nadu, Madras.
². Ibid.
sector, powerloom industry has a great potential for utilisation of human resources available in rural areas of Tamil Nadu. Since powerlooms offer higher wages and better standard of living to the weavers, most of the traditional handloom weavers in Tamil Nadu have switched over to powerloom industry. The handloom in Tamil Nadu provides a direct employment to 15 lakhs people.¹ But the powerlooms provide direct employment to 17.5 lakhs people which is more than that of handlooms.²

In 1987-88 handlooms in Tamil Nadu produced only 50 crore square metres of fabrics whereas powerlooms have produced 400 crore square metres.³

2.6.1 Export

The fabrics produced in the powerlooms in Tamil Nadu are exported to foreign countries. The various items exported to foreign countries include the piece goods, textile made-ups and mill made goods. 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.¹ The quantity of powerloom fabrics exported to foreign countries in 1987 amounted to 27.75 crore square metres.²

2.6.2 Government Assistance

The State Government is providing assistance through the District Industries Centre, Small Scale Industries Service Centre and Small Industries Development Corporation. In spite of the existence of the above mentioned institutions their services to the powerloom weavers and powerloom industry are inadequate.

There are no special agencies established by the State Government exclusively for the development of powerloom sector.

2.7 TYPES OF FABRICS MANUFACTURED IN TAMIL NADU

The types of fabrics manufactured in powerlooms differ from area to area. Normally the 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 (art silk/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.

2.8 POPULAR VARIETIES OF POWERLOOMS IN TAMIL NADU

The characteristic features of the popular fabrics manufactured in powerlooms in Tamil Nadu are given below.

2.8.1 Lungi

Lungi is a plain woven cloth. It is manufactured out of dyed yarn mostly in check pattern. Normally the length will be 1.8 metres and the width will vary from 70 cms to 140 cms. It may be manufactured out of cotton yarn or with polyester blending as required. If it is manufactured out of pure cotton yarn it will be called as cotton lungi and if polyester yarn is used (normally used as weft yarn) it is called as polyester blended lungi.

2.8.2 Dhoti

Dhoti is a grey or blended cloth of plain weave, woven with extra warp in the border. The normal length will vary
from 1.8 metres to 5.0 metres and the width from 70 cms to 140 cms. It may be manufactured out of pure cotton yarn or polyester yarn or cotton with polyester blending and called on the basis of the construction and length.

2.8.3 Saree

Saree is a cloth of plain weave. It is woven with grey or bleached or piece dyed or with coloured yarn with extra warp or extra weft. There will be border with or without headings containing coloured yarn. It will be normally manufactured out of cotton yarn, rayon or artsilk with rayon or cotton yarn. The length normally varies from 2.5 metres to 9.5 metres. According to construction it is called as cotton saree or rayon saree and so on. If cotton or rayon is blended with artsilk the saree will be called as kodambakkam saree. The name artsilk refers to viscose filament yarn.

2.8.4 Shirting

Shirting is a fabric normally made of pure cotton yarn and woven out in grey form. Coloured yarn is used to manufacture items with check pattern. Normally it is produced in running length and the width varies from 70 cms to 130 cms.
2.8.5 Towels

A towel is a piece of fabric normally woven with borders or headings. It is manufactured out of pure cotton yarn in different dimensions, in different colours and in plain or check designs. It may also contain decorative designs when produced on jacquard looms. Terry towels contain bushy and uniform protraction of yarn.

2.8.6. Tapes

Tape is a fabric of thick or light type and plain woven or basket woven. It is manufactured out of cotton or nylon yarn as required for the purpose it is going to be used. Spindle tapes of 5/8 inch width, woven in thick type, manufactured out of cotton are used in the spinning machineries. Cotton tapes of 1 inch width, woven in light type are used for coil winding. The tapes which are used to prepare holdings in the school bags etc., are basket woven type. The width of them will vary from 1 1/2 inches to 3 inches. The tapes which are used for winding in cots are woven in ordinary weave pattern. The normal breadth is 2 inches.
2.8.7 Gada

Gada is a grey fabric woven in plain weave with bleached or unbleached white yarn. The minimum width will normally be 90 cms.

2.8.8 Furniture Covering

It is woven by bleached or dyed yarn with any woven pattern and manufactured wholly from cotton or artsilk or in combination of both. It will be in different dimensions and may have borders on all the four sides. It is commonly known as table cloth, table mat, napkin and so on.

2.8.9 Bed Sheet

Bed sheet is a piece of cloth woven with coloured yarn in the border, both lengthwise and widthwise. It may be woven with or without dobby or jacquard. The length varies from 1.5 metres to 2.8 metres and the width from 110 cms to 155 cms.

2.8.10 Angavasthram

Angavasthram is a grey or bleached or coloured cloth of plain weave with extra warp in the border. It may be manufactured from cotton yarn or manmade fibre yarn or in any combi-
nation. It will contain white or coloured yarn in its borders or headings. The length varies from 1.5 metres to 3.0 metres and width from 70 cms to 100 cms.

2.8.11 Surgical Cotton Fabrics

It is commonly known as bandage cloth. It is a plain and loosely woven fabric. Pure cotton yarn is used to manufacture this item. It is manufactured in various widths according to the requirement.

2.9 NUMBER OF POWERLOOMS IN TAMIL NADU

In Tamil Nadu the number of powerlooms are increasing year after year. Table 2.5 shows the number of powerlooms in Tamil Nadu.

**TABLE 2.5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Powerlooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unpublished Records of Tamil Nadu Small Scale Powerloom Industries Protection Federation, Komarapalayam.
From Table 2.5, it is clear that 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.

2.10 EMPLOYMENT IN POWERLOOMS IN TAMIL NADU

Powerloom industry offers scope for both direct and indirect employment in it. Table 2.6 shows the number of people employed in the powerlooms in Tamil Nadu.

**TABLE 2.6**

Number of People Employed in the Powerloom in Tamil Nadu  
(In lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Direct Employment</th>
<th>Allied Activities</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unpublished Records of Tamil Nadu Small Scale Powerloom Industries Protection Federation, Komarapalayam.
From Table 2.6, it is clear that the number of people employed in powerlooms in Tamil Nadu has increased from 20.5 lakhs in 1985 to 27.5 lakhs in 1988. Hence it is clear that there is wide scope for employment in powerloom industry.

2.11 CLOTH PRODUCED IN TAMIL NADU

The cloth produced in the powerloom sector is increasing every year. Table 2.7 shows the cloth production by the powerloom in Tamil Nadu.

**TABLE 2.7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Unpublished Records of Tamil Nadu Small Scale Powerloom Industries Protection Federation, Komarapalayam.
Table 2.7 reveals that 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. There is 33.33 per cent increase in 1988 when compared to 1985.

2.12 DISTRICTWISE DISTRIBUTION OF POWERLOOMS IN TAMIL NADU

In Tamil Nadu, powerlooms are not found in large number in all the districts. Concentration is only on certain districts. Table 2.8 reveals the districtwise distribution of registered powerlooms in Tamil Nadu.
### TABLE 2.8

District-wise Distribution of Registered Powerlooms in Tamil Nadu as on 31st December 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>Number of Powerlooms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chengleput &amp; Madras</td>
<td>4,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>North Arcot (erstwhile)</td>
<td>4,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Dharmapuri</td>
<td>805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Periyar</td>
<td>26,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>82,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Coimbatore &amp; Ooty</td>
<td>39,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Trichy &amp; Pudukottai</td>
<td>5,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>South Arcot &amp; Tanjuration</td>
<td>896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Madurai</td>
<td>4,269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Rammad</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Pasumpon Muthuramalingam</td>
<td>525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Kamarajar</td>
<td>6,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Dindigual Quid-e-Milleth</td>
<td>2,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>V.O.C. and Nellai Kattabomman</td>
<td>4,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Kanyakumari</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from Table 2.8 that the powerloom mainly concentrated in three districts namely Salem, Coimbatore and Periyar districts. Salem district ranks first with 62,814 powerlooms and Kanyakumari district with 138 has the lowest number of powerlooms.

2.13 POWERLOOM CO-OPERATIVES

The Government had decided to encourage co-operatives in the powerloom sector. It is fixed that those who are having not more than 5 powerlooms can join as members. It has also decided to provide loan for the powerloom development, sales assistance to technological development through the co-operatives. At present Tamil Nadu has 38 powerlooms co-operatives with 3,167 powerlooms and 3,475 members.

Among the above 38 co-operatives, 14 were started by Tamil Nadu Textile Corporation with 7 powerloom working shed each costing Rs.27 lakhs. Out of this 27 lakhs, 20 lakhs was sanctioned as grant.¹

2.14 POWERLOOM INDUSTRY IN KOMARAPALAYAM

Komarapalayam is a municipal town and one of the important industrial centres of Salem district of Tamil Nadu.

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 population of Komarapalayam mainly consists of Devangas and Mudaliars. 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.

2.15 FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POWERLOOM INDUSTRY IN KOMARAPALAYAM

There are certain factors responsible for the development of powerloom in Komarapalayam. The factors contributing to the development are:

2.15.1 Availability of Raw-material

The powerloom industry in Komarapalayam mostly produces cotton fabrics. The cotton yarn in different counts from 20's to 80's both hanks and cones are produced in 10 spinning mills located within the municipal limits and adjacent area of Komarapalayam.

1. Secretary, Tamil Nadu Small Scale Powerloom Industry Protection Federation, Komarapalayam.
palayam. In addition to that cotton yarn can be purchased from the nearby Salem and Erode yarn markets. Uninterrupted supply of yarn to the powerloom industry in Komarapalayam has helped the continuous production in powerlooms.

2.15.2 Processing Facility

Fabrics coming from powerlooms are soiled, twinkled and dull, hence they need processing. For the production of certain types of fabrics yarn must be dyed before production. Further powerloom fabrics need scouring, bleaching, shrink-proofing, singering, or shearing, stentering, mercharising and calendering. In order to help the powerloom industry there are number of yarn dyeing units and fabric processing units in and around Komarapalayam. Further Komarapalayam is getting river water from Cauvery which is helpful in dyeing.

2.15.3 Availability of Skilled Labour

Once upon a time Komarapalayam was a handloom centre. With the development of powerloom industry people who were

1. Secretary, Tamil Nadu Small Scale Powerloom Industry Protection Federation, Komarapalayam.
employed in the handlooms were easily observed as labourers in the industry. Since they had been already in the field of weaving, there was no need for training them for employment in the powerloom industry. The experienced manpower weaving available in Komarapalayam has also contributed to the development of the industry.

2.15.4 Ready Market for Finished Goods

Continuous production in the powerloom industry in Komarapalayam needs market for the finished products. Powerloom factory owners have no problem in selling their finished goods. Erode which is famous for fabric market is only 16 kilometres away from Komarapalayam. Hence finished products are sent to Erode market for sale. In addition to that middlemen also visit Komarapalayam to purchase powerloom fabrics directly from the manufacturers. Further master weavers also provide a ready outlet for powerloom fabrics.

2.15.5 Transport and Communication Facility

Komarapalayam is well linked by rail and road transports. Purchase of raw-materials like dyes, chemicals etc. are easily transported to the dyeing centres. Further lorry and other facilities are available for carrying the finished goods to the nearby markets. Komarapalayam is also well developed with
telephone facility, which helps to place orders for materials and also for entering contracts for sale.

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. Table 2.9 shows the total number of powerlooms in Komarapalayam.

**TABLE 2.9**

Number of Powerlooms in Komarapalayam in 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Registered Looms</th>
<th>Unregistered Looms</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9368</td>
<td>1536</td>
<td>10904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(85.91)</td>
<td>(14.09)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From Table 2.9, it is clear that 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.
2.16 TYPES OF CLOTH PRODUCED IN KOMARAPALAYAM

Powerlooms in Komarapalayam produce cotton as well as polyester fabrics. Table 2.10 shows the number of powerlooms engaged in the production of cotton and polyester varieties.

**TABLE 2.10**

Powerlooms Engaged in Production of Cotton and Polyester Varieties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cotton Only</th>
<th>Polyester Only</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton Only</td>
<td>10,794</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(98.99)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td>(100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


From the Table 2.10 it is clear that 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.
To conclude, powerloom industry which has an important role in employment opportunities also assure better standard of living to those who depend on it. Komarapalayam which was once a handloom centre has switched over to powerloom industry and is dominated by Devangas and Mudaliars. Powerloom industry needs further encouragement and assistance by the Government for its development and export.