Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The handloom forms a precious part of the generational legacy and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the artistry of the weavers. Tradition of weaving by hand is a part of the country’s cultural ethos.

Tradition of Indian Handlooms dates back to prehistoric ages. Its early origin and development through ages can be traced through various Hindu literary sources like Veda, Upanishad, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Kautilya’s Arthasastra etc. In Brihatsamhita, Varahamihir who lived in AD 405 describes a wide variety of textiles that were in existence in those days.

On the basis of the archaeological evidence i.e. fragment of cotton cloth dyed with madder found in Mohenjodaro and Harappa (Indus Valley Civilisation), it is known that the art of hand spinning, handloom weaving and dyeing/printing of cotton with natural dyes were practised by our people and it formed an established industry in the country, about 4500 years ago. All testifies to a glorious tradition that has remained for about fifty centuries with changing and reshaping according to the creativity of the artisan and the demands of the monarchs as well as market. It also has a lot of influence from the invasions, trade and cultural contacts with various sects like Mughals, Portuguese, Dutches, Britishers etc. Till 18th century, India was the largest exporter of textiles, obviously hand woven and hand processed with natural dyes, in the world.

Handlooms hailed by poets:

Beauty of Indian Textiles, through the centuries, was expressed in various poetic forms by many poets. Two thousand years ago the Tamil poets of Sangam age compared them to the ethereal elusiveness of smoke and vapour. Sheer muslins were the prized possessions of the Romans. They used to call them “Venti nebula”, clouded winds echoing their airy and transparent textures. Amir Khoosru, the poet described the muslin “A
hundred yard of it can pass the eye of a needle, so fine is its texture, and yet the point of the needle can pierce through it with difficulty. It is so transparent and light that it looks as if one is in no dress at all but has only smeared the body with pure water”. Sant Kabir, who is basically a Julah or weaver, has expressed many philosophical poetic versions of human life comparing with the process of weaving of cloth with the interstion of warp and weft threads on handlooms.

Poetic words like “Shabnam”, morning dew (cloth as transparent when moistened and spread over the grass in the dawn; “Abrawan” running water, fabric so fine as to be invisible when held in the flow of the stream; “Baftawa” woven winds, the lightest and the airiest of all textures are some of the expressions that exemplify the beauty and delicacy of our muslins which was only a part of the enormous range of our textiles.

In this chapter, there are three sections which present the status of Handloom Sector - the national scenario, initiatives of the Tamilnadu government and the developments in Tiruvannamalai district, respectively.

**Section -1**

**Woven wonders across India:**

Traditionally, handloom weaving and its related processes like spinning, dyeing and printing etc. is the second largest profession next to agriculture in our country.

Thousands of families across the country, from Jammu & Kashmir in the north to Kanyakumari in the south and Gujarat in the west to Manipur in the far east, spin, weave, dye, print, paint and embroider to clothe everyone from the richest to the poorest, adore the temples, make offerings to the Gods, export for earning foreign exchange, build the nation and what not.

Pashmina & Jamawar of Kashmir; Phulkaris of Punjab; silk Brocades, Kimkhab of Benaras; Chikankaris of Lucknow; Jamdanis of Awadh; Balucharis, Jamdanis & Muslins of Bengal; Muga silks of Assam; Tribal textiles of North-East; Ikats of Orissa; Gadwal, Venkatgiri, Pochampallis & Kalamkaris of Andhra Pradesh; Kanchipuram, Arani, Kumbhakonam & Sungudis of Tamil Nadu; Kasutis of Karnataka; Patolas & Mushroos of
Gujrat; Paithanis & Himroos of Maharastra; Chanderis & Maheswaris of Madhya Pradesh are only the tips of the iceberg of traditional textiles woven on handlooms in India.

**Handloom Sector in India - An overview:**

As an economic activity, handloom is the second largest employment provider next only to agriculture. The sector about 23.77 lakh handlooms provides employment to 43.31 lakh persons. Of which, 10% are scheduled castes, 18% belong to scheduled tribes, 45% OBC and 27% are from other Castes.

Resultant to the developmental and welfare measures initiated by the Government of India, the declining trend in production in the handloom sector had been reused and from the year 2004-05 there, in fact, has been a considerable growth in production in the sector. Production in the handloom sector recorded a figure of 6769 million sq. meters in the year 2009-10, which is about 23.23% over the production figure of 5493 million sq. Meters recorded in the year 2003-04.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cloth Production by Handloom</th>
<th>Share of Handloom in the total cloth production</th>
<th>Ratio of Handloom to Powerloom (in terms of cloth)</th>
<th>Total Cloth Production*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>5493</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>0.000751</td>
<td>33874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>5722</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>0.000752</td>
<td>35573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>6108</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>0.000752</td>
<td>38390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>6536</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>0.000753</td>
<td>41161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>6943</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.000752</td>
<td>43265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>6677</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>0.000753</td>
<td>42121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>6769</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>0.000757</td>
<td>45374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11 (upto Oct, 2010)</td>
<td>3770</td>
<td>13.98</td>
<td>0.000762</td>
<td>26967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The total cloth production includes Handloom, Powerloom and Mill Sector excluding hosiery, khadi, wool and silk. Source: Annual Report 2010-11, Ministry of Textiles, GoI
Handloom Clusters
Under Integrated Handloom Development Scheme

- Pashmina Shawls
- Jammu & Kashmir (8)
- Kullu Shawls
- Himachal Pradesh (5)
- Lohi Shawls
- Punjab
- Uttarakhand (6)
- Banarsi Sarees
- Haryana
- Bhagalpur Silk
- Delhi (1)
- Sikkim
- Naga Shawls
- Uttar Pradesh (47)
- Apatani
- Punjab
- Uttarakhand (6)
- Arunachal Pradesh (15)
- Meghalaya (7)
- Rajasthan (3)
- Manipur (34)
- Naga Shawls
- Madhya Pradesh (16)
- Nagaland (24)
- Banarsi Sarees
- Chhattisgarh (8)
- Tripura (19)
- Maharastra
- Bihar (15)
- Mizoram (1)
- Gujarath (9)
- West Bengal (38)
- Phanek
- Kota Sarees
- Jharkhand (26)
- Pochampalli Sarees
- Chandri Sarees
- Jamdani Sarees
- Kutch Shawls
- Tussar Silk
- Phanek
- Gujarath (9)
- Ikbal Saree
- Orissa (32)
- Kosa Silk
- Uttarakhand (6)
- Chhattisgarh (8)
- Tamil Nadu (40)
- Andhra Pradesh (39)
- Balrampuram Sarees
- Kancheipuram Sarees
Initiatives taken by Government of India and various agencies

Handloom sector represents the continuity of the age-old Indian heritage of hand weaving and reflects the socio-cultural tradition of the weaving communities. Government of India has been following a policy of promoting and encouraging the handloom sector through a number of policies and programmes. All such schemes being implemented in Tamil Nadu and all other States/UTs may be classified in the following four major groups considering the nature of activities and assistances rendered:

1. **Mill Gate Price Scheme:** Raw material i.e. yarns of all varieties and specifications are supplied to the weavers under Mill Gate Price Scheme through National Handloom Development Corporation Ltd. Transport cost is borne by Government of India. In this way, the price and quality of the raw material apart from its consistent supply are ensured so that weavers may not face problem in their production process.

The National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC) has set up 715 yarn depots, covering all the handloom clusters, to ensure steady and timely supply of requisite yarn at Mill Gate Price to the handloom weavers. Under the Mill Gate Price Scheme NHDC supplied 1081.21 lakh kgs. yarn valued at Rs.987.23 core in the year 2009-10 as compared to the figure of 855.10 lakh kgs valuing Rs.793.77 core in the year 2008-09.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Dyes &amp; Chemicals Quantity (in lac kg.)</th>
<th>Value (Rs. in lac)</th>
<th>Yarn Quantity (in lac kg.)</th>
<th>Value (Rs. in cr.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>21.48</td>
<td>1897.78</td>
<td>678.21</td>
<td>563.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>39.13</td>
<td>2796.56</td>
<td>855.12</td>
<td>793.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>53.23</td>
<td>3107.04</td>
<td>1081.21</td>
<td>987.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11 (up to Feb’11)</td>
<td>31.71</td>
<td>2270.1</td>
<td>981.2</td>
<td>1043.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Annual Report 2010-11, Ministry of Textiles, Gol*

2. **Integrated Handloom Development Scheme:** Under this scheme, cluster approach has been designed to ensure an overall growth of the handloom concentrated areas having 300-500 looms through various
activities like formation of SHGs/Consortium, setting up of yarn depot, design & product developments, publicity & marketing, skill up gradation of weavers, construction of Common Facility Centre/Dye House & Workshed, provision of margin money, improved looms and accessories etc.

Under this scheme, 475 Handloom clusters have been taken up till December 2010 and financial assistance of Rs 101.59 crore has been released to various Implementing agencies for various components like skill up gradation, awareness programme, formation of consortium etc.

Table 1.3
Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>No. of Clusters sanctioned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase-I (2006-07)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase-II &amp; III (2007-08)</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase-IV (2008-09)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase-V (2009-10)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase-VI (2010-11) (Up to 23rd Feb., 2011)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>531</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report 2010-11, Ministry of Textiles, Gov

Outside cluster areas where number of looms is less than 300, group approach has been devised to carry out various developmental activities. Major portion of the cost of the proposal under these schemes is borne by Government of India.

Marketing Incentive (10% of the average sales turnover of the last 3 years, equally shared by Govt. of India and State Govt.) is given to the eligible handloom agencies for preparing conditions which are conducive to marketing of handloom products.

For strengthening of National and State level handloom organisations financial assistance, shared equally between Central and State
Governments is also provided to with a view to making them viable by enhancing their credit limit/working capital.

3. **Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare** Scheme: Under this scheme, the handloom weaver and the ancillary workers (including his wife and two children) engaged in winding, warping, sizing, dyeing, printing, finishing, design making, jacquard card punching etc are financially enabled to access the best healthcare facility in the country through Health Insurance Scheme.

So far, 16.11 lakh weavers are covered under the scheme. 80% of the premium is paid by the Government of India while only 20% is paid by the Weavers/State Government.

**Table 1.4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Insurance Scheme (ICICI LOMBARD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Zone-1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Clusters covered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt, of India Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Premium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Service Tax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (GOI share)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Weaver/State Govt, contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Premium (Including S. Tax)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Annual Report 2010-11, Ministry of Textiles, Gov*

Similarly, insurance cover to the handloom weavers in the case of natural as well as accidental death and in cases of partial or total disability is ensured through Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana. In addition to insurance coverage, scholarship to two children studying in standard IX to XII is provided under this scheme. Tamil Nadu tops the list of beneficiaries who are covered under these Schemes in the country.

During the Policy period (2010-11) the premium has been drastically reduced by 14% on an average throughout the country. 4.12 lakh weavers covered under the Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana upto December, 2010. The scheme is implemented through LIC of India.
91168 children of weavers have been given worth 8.27 crores (upto December, 2010).

4. Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme: Merchandising and Marketing have been recognised as being central to the growth and development of the handloom sector. Domestic marketing is important for providing linkages between the producer and the consumer, which is made through organising exhibitions, fairs, craft melas, setting up of marketing complexes & urban haats, publicity, awareness programmes etc. under Marketing Promotion of the Scheme. Likewise, export of handloom products is promoted through implementation of Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme which provides financial assistance to handloom agencies for building up, developing and marketing of export-worthy products, publicity of the products, participation in international exhibitions and buyer-seller meets etc.

Table 1.5
Sales through Exhibitions organised by NHDC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of events</th>
<th>No. of participating agencies</th>
<th>Total sale (Rs. in crore)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>25.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>34.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>44.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Report 2010-11, Ministry of Textiles, Gol

Besides these, NHDC has set up 8 marketing complexes at Jaipur, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kanpur, Indore, Navi Mumbai and New Delhi, where the handloom agencies from different parts of the country display and sell their handloom products to the discerned customers.

NHDC also undertakes the following programmes to disseminate the latest technologies in the handloom sector and also about the schemes being implemented by the Government of India for the development of the handloom sector and for the welfare of the weavers:-

a) Appropriate Technology Exhibitions (ATEs)

b) Quality Dyeing Training Programme.
c) Sensitization programme on scheme of Office of DC (Handlooms).

5. **Handloom Week:**

"Handloom Week" was celebrated for the first time in the country from 21\(^{st}\) December to 27\(^{th}\) December. During the Handloom week a number of promotional and awareness programmes, organisation of domestic marketing through handloom expos, fashion shows, publicity through newspapers, magazines, outdoor publicity, through electronic media were undertaken.

During the current financial year 2010-11, Handloom Week was celebrated throughout the country from 21\(^{st}\) to 27\(^{th}\) December, 2010. A series of fashion shows of handlooms designed by famous designers were held at Chennai, Delhi and Ranchi. During the handloom week, an exhibition of handloom products on silken them (TANTAVI) and Buyer Seller Meet was organized at Shilpi Haat, Rajiv Gandhi Handicrafts Bhawan.

Third National Handloom Census Report was released on 23\(^{rd}\) December, 2010 and Photo Identity Cards were also issued to some handloom weavers by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Textiles.

An exhibition-cum-sale of Handloom Mark and Silk Mark products in collaboration with Silk Mark Organisation was held at Indian Islamic Centre from 24\(^{th}\) to 26\(^{th}\) Dec, 2010. For the first time Essay Writing competition and Handloom apparel design competition was also conducted and winners were given cash award and certificates.

6. **Diversified Handloom Development Scheme (DHDS):** The Central Sector Diversified Handloom Development Scheme (DHDS) aims at upgrading the skills of the handloom weavers through organization of workshops and exhibitions, design development, documentation of traditional designs and providing linkage and meeting the market requirements.

This scheme includes components such as Strengthening of Weavers Service Centres/Indian Institutes of Handloom technology, Setting up of New WSCs/ IIHTs, National Centre for Textile Design (NCTD), Research & Development (R&D), and Conducting Third Census and issue of Identity
cards to Handloom Weavers. Against the approved outlay of Rs.20.00 crore, including Rs.5.00 crore for the NER, a sum of Rs.13.67 crore have been incurred till 30.11.2010, during the year 2010-11.

7. **Brand Building through Handloom Mark**

Emphasis has been laid on Brand Development through Handloom Mark during the XI Five Year Plan. The Handloom Mark was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 28th June, 2006. The Handloom Mark serves as a guarantee to the buyer that the handloom product being purchased is a genuine handwoven product and not powerloom or mill made. Handloom Mark is being promoted and popularized through advertisements in newspapers and magazines, electronic media, syndicated articles, fashion shows, films etc.

The Textiles Committee is the Implementing agency for promotion of Handloom Mark. As on 30th Nov. 2010, 1.77 crore handloom mark labels have been sold to 7328 stakeholders. 747 retails outlets are selling handloom goods with handloom mark label.

The new beneficiaries now included in the Handloom Mark scheme to get the benefits are: Self Help Groups, Joint Liability Groups, Consortia, Producer companies, Handloom Weavers Groups or any other legal entity organization involved in Handloom activities and approved by Development Commissioner for Handlooms with a onetime registration fee of Rs.500.

Sale price of one label has been brought down from Rs. 1.25 (at the time of launch) to 60 paise. Application forms are now available free of cost. The Registration fee for individual weavers is reduced to Rs. 25 (from Rs. 100) while for Master weavers Rs. 500 (from Rs. 2000).

8. **The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act 1999:**

The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act 1999 provides legal protection to Geographical Indications of goods etc., and prevents unauthorized use of these by others. The Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms provides financial assistance upto Rs.1.5 lakh per item to register for registering the handloom items
under GI Act. So far, financial assistance to register 35 items have been provided by this office to various States.

9. Weavers' Service Centres (WSCs)

At present, twenty-five Weavers' Service Centres (WSCs) are located across the country. They play a vital role in imparting training to weavers, upgrading the skill and productivity of weavers. They have developed new designs and revived traditional ones. WSCs also render extension services, which involve transfer of design inputs, skills and technology to weavers. All the WSCs are functioning primarily under Non-plan. During the year 2009-ID, a sum of Rs.2921.25 lakh (under Non-Plan) had been incurred against the Revised Estimates Budget of Rs.2994.49 lakh. During the current financial year 2010-11, an amount of Rs.2050.00 lakh has been incurred up to November, 2010 against the budget provision of Rs.2799.67 lakh.

10. Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS) - MEGA HANDLOOM CLUSTER:

There are 470 handloom clusters, out of which 240 clusters have less than 1000 handlooms and 230 clusters have more than 1000 handlooms. Out of these 230 clusters, there are 41 clusters, which have over 25,000 handlooms. Some of these clusters have very poor infrastructure and common facilities, causing hardships to the weavers. Since these clusters are very large, they would not be covered under the Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme, which caters to the small clusters in the range of 300-500 looms. These clusters will require massive investment to galvanize them to higher production.

To overcome these constraints faced by the weavers within the cooperative sector and outside; including those attached to Self Help Groups, NGOs, Small and Medium Enterprises, Master Weavers and unattached weavers,

Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme was introduced in 2008-09 for development of 2 Mega Handloom Clusters i.e. Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) & Sivasagar (Assam). The handloom weavers shall be the focus for assistance under the new scheme.
The Comprehensive Handlooms Cluster Development Scheme will be implemented for development of 2 Mega Handloom Clusters, one each in the State of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. Each cluster will cover over 25,000 handlooms at upper Central of Rs.70.00 Crore. The scheme will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme.

Nature and level of assistance to each of the said clusters will be need based and would include the components that are necessary for meeting the objectives, such as, Technology upgradation, Product Diversification, Raw Material Bank, Credit, Market Development, Forward & Backward Linkages, Human Resource & Skill Development, Social Security, Physical Infrastructure, Export & Marketing, Margin Money for Working Capital, Corpus Fund for Yarn Depot etc.

Up to 10% of the budget allocated for the scheme may be utilized towards innovative ideas, which may emerge during the course of implementation of the programme and might have not been incorporated in the scheme at the time of approval.

Up to Rs.1.00 crore per annum for publicity, monitoring, supervision, research & seminars, information dissemination, administrative expenditure, training, studies, IT enabled monitoring mechanism and evaluation of scheme etc. will be available.

The project duration is 5 years. The quantum of assistance should be need based depending on the requirement of the cluster, the scope of the activities envisaged in the cluster development project, technical, financial and managerial capacity of the cluster development organization, level of maturity and track record of the cluster etc. The maximum permissible Central cost for each cluster will not exceed Rs.70.00 crore per cluster for a period of 5 Years. Scheme of other Ministries like MSME, Ministry of Rural/Urban Development, Commerce etc. shall be sourced to fund the project.

At the cluster level, the project will be monitored by the Board of Directors of the SPV, which shall also comprise District Magistrate of the area, representative of financial Institutions, exporter, designer, State Govt., Officer In-charge of Weavers Service Centre and representative of the office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms).
At the Headquarters level, each project will be monitored by the Project Approval And Monitoring Committee (PAMC), headed by Secretary (Textiles).

Section - II

Handloom Weavers of Tamil Nadu

The Sangam age saw the growth of Weavers’ Guilds which were part of village panchayats. These were called the Samaya, Sreni or Mata. Strongly caste based, each group had their own elected head and social organisation. They not only settled disputes within their community but arbitrated in temple disputes and acted as Counsellors to Kings. Respected and trusted, they were also at times custodian of cash. The main weaver communities now found in Tamil Nadu, are the Kaikolars, also known as Sengunthar, who belong to Kanchipuram area and the Saliyars whose original home appears to have been in Andhra Pradesh.

The other major castes are Saurastra community who imigrated from Surat and the Devangas who are mainly found in Salem, Coimbatore, South Arcot and North Arcot districts whereas Saurastra weavers are widely spread in many parts of Tamil Nadu like Madurai, Kumbhakonam, Tanjore, Ayyampettai, Bhuvanagiri, Arani, Salem, Rasipuram, Paramakudi etc.

The Devanga weaver caste is said to have originally hailed from Karnataka and probably moved to Tamil Nadu during the Vijayanagar period. They call themselves by different names like Chettis, Jedars, Naidus, Seran, Sendan etc. Among the weaver castes, the Saurastras and the Sengunthars are said to be more progressive. They are keen on education and are receptive to new ideas too.

Handloom Products of Tamil Nadu

The geographical location of Tamil Nadu having more than 600 miles long coastal stretch from east to south with a lot of humidity in the air plays the most important role in making the State very suitable not only for
weaving of cotton but also other fibres like silk, wool, banana, grass etc. The basic raw material i.e. cotton is cultivated in the black cotton soil of Coimbatore, Madurai, Dindigul, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli and patches in the districts like Kanchipuram, Vellore, Salem, Dharmapuri, Ramanathapuram, Virudhnagar and Nilgiri. Because of its abundance and the climatic condition being favourable, cotton fibre is predominantly used in the State for making the widest varieties of textiles ranging from finest muslins of Madurai to coarsest duris or jammakkalams of Bhavani.

Huge quantity of handloom textiles like Real Madras Handkerchief, Bleeding Madras, Lungi and Home Furnishing etc is exported to many African countries, United State of America, Europe, Japan and other Asian countries. Products may be grouped as per their end use irrespective their textures, styles and other characteristics. Major groups are Sari, Dhoti, Lungi, Dress material and Home Furnishing.

**Sari**

The sari is a traditional attire of not only of Tamil woman but also of Indian woman of almost all States irrespective of caste and creed and their status in the society. It is a unique dress to the world of fashion. It has passed through many centuries unaltered with minor changes in designing, colouring and materials used. In Tamil Nadu, important sari varieties are:

1. **Kanchipuram Silk Sari** - The heavy and gorgeous silk sari with pure gold zari used in designing in extra warp and extra weft principle over a plain texture is produced at Kanchipuram, the district town as well as the temple town of south, 70 kms away from Chennai. It has a very long tradition of handloom weaving. Its speciality lies in “Solid colour border” weaving, locally called as “Korvoi” with the help of three shuttles intersecting with each other at the places where border meets the body of the sari. The sari is also unique in its texture which is very heavy due to use of 2 ply and 6-8 ply mulberry charkha silk yarn in the warp and weft respectively. The anchal or pallav is also made contrast in colour to its body with a special technique called “Petni”. Design patterns are mostly of geometrical nature with or
without simple stripes and checks forming the body of the sari design. Pin stripe warp pattern or weft pattern or both (vaira oosi) 2/2 or 4/4 in two different materials, one is compulsorily gold zari and the other being dyed silk is also the speciality of the sari. Rudraksham, Kamalam (lotus), Samandi (chrysanthemum), Vel (triangular head of spear), Mayil (peacock), Kili (parrot), Manga (mango), Annam (swan), Yanai (elephant) etc are also woven in the borders. However, very rarely such patterns are used as figure (buti) in the body of the sari. Traditionally, a deep red colour known as “Arakku” is frequently used as contrast border with most colours like mustard yellow or dark green or deep blue etc in the body. Shot colours like red and green (manthulir - tender mango leaf), green and blue (mayil kazhuthu - peacock’s neck), brown and yellow (simham - lion), black and green (paasi - moss green), red and blue (Krishna megha varnam - blue cloud), red and yellow (kumkumam - vermillion), brown and black (pakku - areca nut), red and maroon (kempu - ruby) etc in warp and weft ways are also very popular in this sari. Designing of the sari is done by a special technique called “Adai” which is very primitive. Presently this technique is replaced with new technology of jacquard weaving which is more effective and quicker in operation. Computer Aided Designs and design card punching with the help of computer (CAD/CAM) are the present techniques being used in the sector, not only in Kanchipuram but also in other weaving centres in the State.

2. **Kanchipuram Cotton Sari** - Weaving of cotton sari is much earlier craft to that of silk weaving in Kanchipuram. Asmanapet and Vadamanapakkam are two villages about 28 kms away from Kanchipuram presently engaged in weaving of Kanchi Cotton Sari which has a very good demand in the market. Designs, patterns and colours are very exclusive and different to other cotton saris produced elsewhere. Solid contrast-coloured border using “Korvoi” technique is the speciality of the sari.

3. **Chettinadu Sari** - It is produced in Chettinadu and Karaikudi villages in Sivaganga district and hence the name. Traditionally, it is made of 20s coarse cotton yarn both in warp and weft but presently finer cotton like 60s is
predominantly used keeping the demand of the market in mind. Mostly this sari is worn by ladies of “Nattukottai Chettiyar” families.

Some of the saris are woven with solid colour border using “Korvoi” technique with “Pillayar mokku rekku” designs (temple motifs in triangular shape having serrated edges, depicting the dome of the temple i.e., Gopuram) at the place where the body and the border meet. Generally, the border is wider and the pallav is decorated with simple weft stripes without having any extra designing work. Simple warp stripes and checks add beauty to the body of the sari, which is very common in style. Limited shades of bright colours like yellow, maroon, black, white, green etc are used in the body with the contrast border.

4. **Pooja Sari** - As the name implies, Tamil ladies wear this particular cotton sari while performing pooja (worshiping) in temples. The sari contains extra warp design, mostly wavy twill or diamond twill patterns in white or golden yellow colour over a maroon colour body. The pallav is very simple without any extra designs except weft stripes in various colours. Karaikudi is the village where this sari used to be produced in olden days.

5. **Kandangi Sari** - Peasant women while working in the field wear this cotton sari that reaches up to her “Kandanga” ie, just below knee and hence the name. It is short in width and has small check pattern in the body with or without small extra warp border design. Arakku (red lac colour), mustard, black and white are shades that are mostly used in this sari. Karaikudi, once upon a time was famous for Kandangi Sari.

6. **Vilanthai Sari** - Vilanthai is a small village in Ariyalur district, 15 kms away from Jayamkonda Cholapuram which was a very well known historical place during Chola period. Senguntha Mudaliar, Padmasaliar and Vanniyar are the major communities engaged in production of Vilanthai Sari. It is made of fine cotton yarn with extra warp design either in cotton or in zari. The pallav has no extra designing but weft stripes of different colours and the body has mostly pin stripe pattern (vaira oosi) all over.

7. **Koranadu Sari** - Koranad is a village situated near Mayiladuthurai previously known as Mayavaram in Nagapattinam district. This sari is a union fabric made of silk and coarse cotton yarns, both in warp and weft
ways used in such a proportion that silk weighs 2/3 and cotton 1/3 of the total weight of the sari. Silk adds to its beauty, richness as well as value to the sari whereas cotton gives strength and comfort to the wearer. Originally, it had solid coloured contrast border and fine or tiny checks in the body. Narrow extra warp design in zari and simple coloured, weft stripes in the pal lav are used.

8. **Kodalikarupur Sari** - Kodalikarupur is a village 22 kms away from Kumbhakonam in Tanjore district. Maharaja Saraboji of Tanjore patronised this unique craft of weaving which is combined with resist painting with natural dyes as a post-processing technique practised not for simple dyeing or finishing but for ultimate decoration of the product. The basic sari is woven with fine cotton yarns, 80s or 100s, in warp and weft inlaid with extra weft design in gold zari in jamdani technique. Molten wax is painted all over the sari following the weaving pattern and it works as resist material that remains white forming the outline of the design. Woven zari design and the left over space of the sari are then painted with natural dyes, mostly red, black, blue and maroon. The bright gold zari becomes subdued, very eye soothing and totally matching with the rest of the colours so developed in the process.

9. **Thirubhuvanam or Kumbhakonam Siik Sari** - Thirubhuvanam and Kumbhakonam are twin weaving centres in Tanjore district, very famous for this silk sari woven with pure gold zari designs in border and body/pallav in extra warp and extra weft techniques respectively. Very intricate designs are woven with the help of jacquards (previously “Adai”). Many floral patterns unlike Kanchipuram Sari, are used both in border and body/pallav. The basic texture is little thinner when compared to that of Kanchipuram Sari. Majority of the weavers of these areas belong to Saurastra community.

10. **Kodabakkam Sari** - This sari is a union fabric made of artificial silk (viscose rayon) in warp and fine cotton in weft having extra warp design in border and extra weft design in body and pallav. It gives some kind of shine similar to silk-cotton mixed texture. Madurai, Emaneswaram, Paramakudi and Dindigul are the major centres of production of this sari.
11. **Dhoti** - Madurai and Salem are famous for fine cotton as well as silk dhotis. Generally, it is made with white yarns, either grey or bleached having narrow coloured border. Presently, in Salem, silk dhotis with solid coloured border (two different colours in two borders) are produced having extra warp dobby/jacquard design with the help of “Korvoi slely”.

12. **Lungi** - Tamil Nadu is very famous for cotton lungi which is in great demand not only in domestic market but also in various foreign markets, especially in Malaysia and Arabian countries. A wide range of textures like 40sx40s, 40sx60s, 60sx60s, 60sx80s, 80sx80s etc in different checks, stripes and shot colours is available to suit the demand o all classes of consumers. There is another unique export variety of lungi called “Payadi lungi” which has two different colours, light and dark either of the same or different group of shades, both in warp and weft in 1:1 order. Villupuram, Cuddalore and Vellore districts are the major production centres in the State.

13. **Kutni Fabric** - It is Mushru of Tamil Nadu. The term Mashru means “Permitted” and has reference to the prohibition of Moslem ceremonial law to the use of pure silk by men, except in war or in the form of narrow border. Mixed silk and cotton fabrics are, therefore met with all over India. Weavers of Ayyampet in Tanjore district, belonging to Saurastra community used to produce this fabric as royal commodity for the then ruler of Tanjore Maharaja Saroboji. It is a satin fabric with tie-dye silk warp and cotton weft. The face of the fabric shows the silk and its richness whereas cotton forms the back that touches the skin when used as a costume.

14. **Real Madras Handkerchief** - it is not at all a handkerchief but a dress material fabric of a particular dimension, exported to various African countries and made of cotton yarns, both in warp and weft with extra warp and extra weft designs. The term “Real” is used to differentiate the product made on handloom from the identical product of powerloom and has relevance to its originality guaranteed to the buyer.

15. **Bleeding Madras** - it is a cotton dress material fabric decorated with multicoloured check patterns with very compact texture which is not normally produced in other parts of the country except Andhra Pradesh. It has 60s cotton warp, 40s cotton weft, 84s reed and 96 picks per inch. The fabric is
washed to get a pre-shrunk effect before it is calendered and folded. During washing, some of the colours which are topped with base colour (fast) of the yarn run out a little in washing and impart a muted effect that makes the fabric very interesting to the consumers of high fashion garments. There is another but similar variety of cotton check dress material fabric called “Madras Checks” which is made of dyed yarns of very fast colours which do not run out at all.

16. Home Furnishing - Karur is in the world map of handloom textiles known for its cotton home furnishing export products. Bed linen, kitchen linen, bath linen, table linen etc of various textures, patterns, styles and colours are produced in huge quantities to meet the demand of not only export market but also of the domestic market. Similarly, Chennimalai is also famous for such home furnishing products.

17. Jamakkaiam or Dari - Bhavani in Erode district of Tamil Nadu is known for its floor covering called “Jamakkalams” which is generally a product for domestic market. It is made of cotton used both in warp and weft. Broad weft coloured stripes of brilliant shades mostly red, yellow, green, blue, maroon, orange etc without much of interlock designs as found in other daris of Jaipur, Agra and Sitapur are the speciality of this product.

Table 1.6
Status of Handlooms - All India vs. Tamilnadu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl no</th>
<th>Subject of information</th>
<th>All India</th>
<th>Tamil Nadu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No of working looms</td>
<td>2,091,151</td>
<td>143,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No of handloom households</td>
<td>2,783,271</td>
<td>189,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Average earning of weaver household per annum (Rs.)</td>
<td>24,181</td>
<td>36,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Contribution of handloom to total household income (%)</td>
<td>79.42%</td>
<td>30.18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Handloom Census of India 2009-10

Handlooms in Tamilnadu - A brief scenario:

It provides employment to 6.08 lakh weavers through 4.13 lakh looms in Tamil Nadu. In Tamil Nadu 2.28 lakh Handlooms are functioning in 1,187 Primary Handloom Weavers’ Co-operative Societies as on 31.03.2011. The
Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Societies mostly exist in Rural and Semi Urban areas, where there is large concentration of Handloom Weavers. The average annual production of different varieties of handloom cloth is 1258.06 lakh mtrs and the sales transacted to the extent of Rs.1000.00 crore per year. All the developmental and welfare schemes implemented by the Government of Tamil Nadu and Government of India to the weavers are channelised only through the Weavers' Co-operative Societies.

As far as handloom weavers in private fold are concerned, there are 1.85 lakh looms are functioning under unorganized sectors in Tamil Nadu. The handloom weavers outside the co-operative sector are getting welfare benefits through Tamil Nadu Handloom and Handloom Silk Weaving Workers Welfare Board. 2,21,347 handloom weavers have been enrolled as members of this board as on 31.03.2011.

Initiatives for Handlooms by Government of Tamilnadu:

1. **Sanction of rebate subsidy / marketing incentive:** The State Government permit the Primary Weavers’ Cooperative Societies and Co-optex to allow rebate at the rate of 20% for the sale of handloom cloth throughout the year for the retail and wholesale, subject to the limitation of 20% or Rs.100/- per unit for cotton varieties and 20% or Rs.200/- per unit for silk varieties whichever is less. The Government of India is also contributing to the rebate subsidy scheme and provides their share of assistance under Marketing Incentive Component of Integrated Handloom Development Scheme. On the eve of Birthday of Perarignar Anna, an additional 10% special rebate over and above the normal rebate of 20% i.e., 30% rebate is allowed for a period of 139 days from September 15th to January 31st of every year. Under this special rebate 30% or Rs.150/- per unit whichever is less for cotton varieties and 30% or Rs.300/- whichever is less for silk varieties is allowed.

2. **Sanction of interest subsidy:** The Primary Weavers’ Cooperative Societies obtain working capital assistance through District Central Cooperative Banks under NABARD refinance scheme. This scheme is
implemented to reduce the interest burden of the Primary Weavers’ Cooperative Societies and to provide continuous employment to Handloom Weavers. Under the scheme, 4% interest subsidy is reimbursed on the rates charged by District Central Co-operative Banks to the Primary Weavers’ Co-operative Societies by Government on quarterly basis wherever the Handloom Weavers’ Cooperative Societies avail cash credit loan.

3. **Free power supply to handloom weavers:** Free power supply upto 100 units for handloom weavers are being provided bi-monthly. At present 1,56,966 handloom weavers are getting benefits under this scheme.

4. **Health Insurance Scheme for Handloom Weavers:** 2,00,039 weavers have been enrolled so far under this scheme.

5. **Cluster Development Programme:** The Government of India, under the Integrated Handloom Development Programme, have so far approved 52 Cluster Development Programmes in Tamilnadu, at a total project cost of Rs.34.82 Crores. Under this scheme, handlooms in the range of 300 to 500 looms are grouped as handloom clusters and financial assistance to the tune of Rs.60.00 lakhs is being provided for each cluster over a period of 3 years, for various components, such as Skill Upgradation, Purchase of New looms and Accessories, setting up of Dyeing units, Common Facility Center, opening of showrooms, conducting exhibitions / fairs, publicity, providing of design inputs etc. *Tiruvannamalai* (Rs.200 lakhs) and *Arani* (Rs.59.55 lakhs) have also found themselves a place in the list of 52 centres chosen for CDP.

6. **Mega Handloom Cluster:** The Virudhunagar Mega Handloom Cluster is being implemented with the Government of India share of Rs.70.00 Crores, State Government share of Rs.8.84 Crores and Beneficiaries contribution of Rs.8.84 Crores.
7. **Silk Mark:** In Tamilnadu, out of 84 Silk Handloom Weavers Cooperative Societies, 32 Silk Weavers Cooperative Societies and 17 Cotton-cum-Silk Weavers Cooperative Societies have registered as Authorised Users in Silk Mark organization of India.

8. **Handloom Mark:** In Tamilnadu, 895 Weavers Cooperative Societies 4423 Weavers/Exporters have been registered under the Handloom Mark Scheme and are using the handloom mark labels.

9. **Geographical Indication:** Kancheepuram Silk Sarees, Bhavani Jamakkalam, Madurai Sungudi Sarees, Salem Silk (Ven Pattu), Arni Silk and Kovai Kora Cotton Sarees have been registered by the Department of Handlooms and Textiles under this Act. A total of 21 Silk Weavers Cooperative Societies and 10 private manufacturers who are producing Kancheepuram Silk Sarees have been registered as Authorized User under Geographical Indication of Goods Act.

10. **Weavers’ Training Centre:** Government of Tamilnadu has established a Handloom Weavers’ Training Centre at Erode at a cost of Rs. 25.71 lakhs. Annually, 600 weavers will be trained through this training centre. So far training to 288 handloom weavers has been imparted by this centre.

11. **Tamil Nadu Handloom and Handloom Silk Weaving Workers Welfare Board:** During the year 2000-2001, the Tamilnadu Manual Workers’ Board and 9 other Welfare Boards including Tamilnadu 57 Handloom and Handloom Silk Weaving Workers Welfare Board were established. The Tamilnadu Handloom and Handloom Silk Weaving Workers Welfare Board was merged with the manual workers Board from the year 2004. Subsequently, this board is functioning separately with effect from the year 2006. The Hon’ble Minister for Handlooms and Textiles is the Chairman of the Board and 7 Government representatives, 7 Employers representatives and 6 representatives of the Workers are included as members of the Board. At present, 2,21,347 weavers have been enrolled as members of this Board.
assistance such as Old Age Pension, Medical Assistance, Educational Assistance, Insurance coverage for Natural and Accidental death and disability are being provided through this Board. Upto 31.03.2011, financial assistance to the tune of Rs.24.06 crores has been provided for the benefit of 1,10,004 weavers through this Board.

12. Prize Award Scheme for the Best Talented Weavers: To encourage the handloom weavers, the Government is implementing Prize Award Scheme every year for the Best Weavers who have developed new designs in cotton and silk varieties. The prize for the best designs are as follows, First prize Rs.5,000/-, Second prize Rs.3,000/-, Third prize Rs. 2,000/-

Section - III

Tiruvannamalai Handlooms - Evolution and Growth:

Thiruvannamalai a famous Pilgrim Centre in Tamilnadu, is having handloom Weaving tradition by Mudaliars more than 500 years back and at present Thiruvannamalai Town is not having any handloom and the nearest handloom weaving location is available 10 Kms. away from Thiruvannamalai.

Vandavasi and Cheyyar are the Taluk head quarters in Thiruvannamalai District having handloom weaving villages hereditarily.

Kilkodungalur, Vazoor, Ponnur, Kannagampoonipudur, Cittaragavurpudur, Vedal, Ammaiypappatu, Koviloor, Cheyyar, Vadamanapakkam and Hasanamapettai are the villages having handloom weaving more than 100 years.

The Private merchants and Master weavers lived in the Villages gave yarn and wages and received finished goods from the Weavers and marketed them in shandies in Desur, Villupuram and Erode.

The products produced during those days were 20s Dhothy and Gada and Angavastram.
During the days prior to 1950 people used to wear 20s, 40s Dhothies and towels only and hence these two varieties were fast moving items and produced mainly.

Prior to 1950 Non-Chemical Minerals were used for dyeing of colour gada and 40s sarees. The cotton gada was used as blouse material and for Petty Coats.

During 1940, weavers co-operative societies were started in Kilkodungalur and at Kunnagampoondi Pudur and afterwards a number of weavers societies have been started and at present 28 Hanloom weavers co-operative societies are functioning in Thiruvannamalai District and 14 weavers co-operative societies are functioning in the cluster.

From 1940 to 1970 the vandavasi area societies produced Grey varieties like 20s, 30s Grey Gada and Dhothies. By this time the private merchants slowly vanished and co-operative societies became strong and provided job to weavers. The products produced were less cost and there was good demand in the market. Co-optex purchased the Gada, Dhothies, Towels and Sarees produced by the weavers co-operative societies and gave good marketing support.

Kilkondugalur Weavers Co-operative Society introduced production of 2 Ply Towels and Diamond Dhothies (2/40 x 20s) in early 1970s. The 2 Ply towel is having very good demand in market and many societies in the cluster are producing 2 Ply Towel presently.

Weavers Co-operative Societies have been started in Cheyyar Taluk from 1970 onwards and started producing 40s and 60s sarees and vadamanapakkam Village started producing 80s Kanchee Cotton Korvai Sarees from early 1960 onwards.

The Kancheepuram Pure Silk Sarees are produced with border in one colour and body in contrast colour to the body colour and the border and body portions are interlinked in weaving by a weaving technique called "Korvai system". The same system is used to produce Cotton Korvai Sarees and Cotton Sarees produced with Korvai system resembles Kancheepuram pure silk sarees called as Kanchee Cotton Sarees.
The Kanchee Cotton Sarees have very good demand in the market and the production is very less.

During implementation of 20 Point Programme, the Production of Janatha Cloth was introduced and the societies producing 40s sarees and 20s Dhothies have started producing Janatha Cloth which provided continuous employment in those days.

Production of Janatha cloth was stopped due to withdrawal of subsidy given by Central Government, the Government of Tamilnadu purchased the 40s and 60s Sarees and Dhothies produced by weavers' Co-operative Societies for supply to people living below poverty line.

From 1987 onwards The Government of Tamilnadu is purchasing 40s Sarees and Dhothies from Weavers' Co-operative Societies through Co-optex and supplying to the people living below poverty line.

The expansion of Kanchipuram Silk Weaving to Arani:

During 1990 there was very good demand for Kancheepuram Silk Sarees. The Silk Weavers earned increased wages, bonus and availed other benefits.

The Cotton Weaving low wages earning weavers were attracted by the benefits availed by the silk weavers in Kancheepuram and they have started thinking of producing Silk Sarees. The skilled weavers took training to weave Kancheepuram Silk and started production of Silk Sarees to private merchants and at present Arani weavers are producing Pure Silk sarees in the Cluster.

Till date the Cluster has no experience in producing export varieties. The Weavers Service Centre, NIFT, Department of Handlooms and Co-optex are giving training to the weavers to for capacity building and skill upgradation to weave export varieties. Exporters have started visiting the Cluster to find a Production Centre for them recently.

Handlooms Status in Tiruvannamalai District:

In Tiruvannamalai District, there are about 7000 weavers in Co-operative fold and about 5600 weavers in Private fold. In Co-operative fold
about 3000 looms are active and the main weaving communities are Mudaliars, Chettiars and Vanniars.

**Product Mix:**

The main products of Tiruvannamalai Cluster are as follows:

1. 80’s Kanchee cotton sarees
2. 40’s cotton and poly.mixed sarees and dhothis for Govt.supply.
3. 40’s Grey Thavani cloth
4. 26’s Dhothies 2yds
5. 60’s Dhothies 4yds
6. 20’s 2ply Towels
7. Pure silk sarees

**Highlights of the Cluster Development Programme in Tiruvannamalai:**

- **Total Cumulative sales:** Cumulative Total Sales achieved is Rs. 492.29 Lakhs. [Rs.215.94 Lakhs by Exhibitions & BSMs & BSMs; Rs.275.00 lakhs by other buyers, Rs.0.10 lakhs by CCIC & Rs.1.25 lakhs from Handloom House.]
- **Design Development:** Total 31 new Designs developed so far under the project.
- **SHGs formation:** 68 SHGs have been formed covering 700 weavers and bank account opened. Grading is done for 44 SHGs. 12 SHGs got credit of Rs.11.80 Lakhs
- **Yarn Bank:** Rs.341.00 lakhs yarn supplied completing 68 cycles to 1700 weavers.
- **Common Facility Centre:** Land has been identified at Arni.
- **Dye House:** Setup of Dye house was decided not to be done due to Pollution issue in the state as per decision taken by Director of Handloom & Textile, Chennai, Tamilnadu.

Arani, has been chosen for the Cluster Development Programme, as one among the 52 locations and the project cost of Rs.59.55 lakhs shall be utilised for developing this cluster and Cooptex is the implementing agency for the cluster development. Under the CDP, Arani cluster shall be benefited in terms of Skill Upgradation, Purchase of New looms and Accessories,
setting up of Dyeing units, Common Facility Center, opening of showrooms, conducting exhibitions / fairs, publicity, providing of design inputs etc.

Thus in this chapter, a clear understanding of the historical growth evolution of handlooms in India, Tamilnadu and Tiruvannamalai district has been obtained. Also the various schemes implemented by the Government of India and Tamilnadu for development of Handlooms, have also been presented. The upcoming initiatives for Arani cluster under the CDP programme have also been highlighted. In this scenario, the weaver base has to be strengthened to utilise the business opportunity created by the Cluster Development Programme. In the following chapter, the review of literature, identification of gap in literature and the methodology adopted to study the cluster dynamics and funding options available for Arani weavers are presented.

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