In the previous 3 chapters references have been made to some co-operative societies and other public institutions like the Khadi Production Centres playing a role by putting out raw materials among the cottage artisans and thereby providing avenues of employment and income to the poor. In this chapter a consolidated assessment is made about their role.

As in other states co-operatives like credit, marketing, consumers' and producers' societies sprang in Assam in the twentieth century. Their history is like the records of tides and ebb, rising and falling in different periods. Among the producers' co-operatives of Charles Fourier's 'Phalanxe' type, weavers' societies form the largest number followed by other 'industrial' societies. While the number of weavers' societies was 1515 in 1975-76, it declined to 1203 in 1980-81. Likewise the number of other industrial societies had fallen from 563 to 391 during the same period.1 In our surveyed areas too the same trend of growth and decay of different industrial co-operatives is evident. During our survey data were collected from the

---

active societies while some informations were collected about the dormant societies (the informers did not know whether such societies were liquidated). However, all the data supplied by the societies are not reliable; for example, the weavers' societies give to the investigators the same number of looms shown to the co-operative department with certain motives while the actual number of looms working under them vary from year to year; likewise there is a tendency to inflate the figure of production or sell of handloom products with the amount of rebate in view. Inspite of such limitations we try to present below some data showing the role of the co-operatives in their respective fields.

1. Dormant Societies

To take up the dormant societies first. Two weavers' societies one each at Sarthebari and Hajo formed during the fifties became defunct due mainly to the problem of marketing their products. The society in Sarthebari formed in 1952 with 47 members (and looms) became dormant after 8 years when the government sales emporia at Barpeta and Patharpara reportedly refused to purchase the products. The society in Hajo (Pahamela) had died, as had already been referred to in the last chapter, due to the same problem of marketing its products. A paddy husking unit at Hajo (Kolibartatola) run on co-operative basis under the auspices of the Assam Khadi and Village Industries Board with 14
Dhakli and 28 workers under a common workshed died in the seventies due to non-availability of paddy; the society was issued neither permit nor sanctioned finance to procure paddy.

A weavers' society in Ramdia with 18 looms under a common workshed died after 2 years in 1962 due to mismanagement. Likewise a potters' society in the same village supplying clay to 20 potters and marketing the products died as a result of mismanagement. The Ramdia Kamer Silpa Samsaib formed in 1980 by 52 members with the objectives of supplying iron and coal to the blacksmiths and marketing their products remained inactive for lack of working capital.

2. Active Societies

(i) Weavers' Societies

In the field of industrial co-operatives Susalkuchi occupies a unique position for its weavers' societies. There are 11 weavers' societies covering 1428 members or 65.35 p.e. of the 2236 families as per our listing (as per 1971 Census the number of households was 2165). Out of these societies 8 were active during our survey with a membership of 1128 covering 50.44 p.e. of the families (data on concentration of shares among the families are not available although the number of 3068 shares indicate concentration of shares as well as membership among some families in certain societies), while the other 3 societies became dormant due either to
lack of working capital or mismanagement or combination of the two. While 5 of the active societies have a fair amount of fixed capital in land and building (Rs. 9.07 lakhs), fixed capital of 3 other societies consists of furnitures alone and they are housed in rented buildings. Although four societies have their worksheds for looms only one society was running 10 looms in its workshed. The main objectives of the societies are production, purchase and sale of Pat, Muga and cotton cloths besides supplying and selling yarn and art threads to the weavers. The societies had, under them 769 Pat and Muga looms in Sualkuchi itself and 216 cotton looms in other neighbouring villages. Two societies, viz., the Assam Co-operative Silk House, the oldest (formed in 1938), largest and the most successful one in the area and the Assam Sanabhy Rasbhum Pratishthan also had put out in 1980-81 respectively 20.13 and 2.48 lakhs of Muga cocoons for reeling and paid respectively Rs. 26170 and Rs. 3236 as wages to the reelers (the number of reelers is not reported). Four societies have 25 branches or sales centres and they provide direct employment to 86 persons in their branches. The relevant data of the 8 active societies are presented in Table 10.1.
Table 10.1
Active Weavers' Co-operatives in Sualkuchi (1980-81) (Rs. in lakhs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Silk House (1941)</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>51.49</td>
<td>91.91</td>
<td>47.73</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Resham Pratisthan (1949)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>20.40</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Resham Sambay (1953)</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14.76</td>
<td>25.72</td>
<td>12.71</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Bayan Silpi (1964)</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pragjyoti Industrial 150 (1967)</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>10.88</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Phulbari Bayan (1968)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Resham Utpadan (1973)</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bayan Sahayika (1976)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 1,128 3,068 985 216 89.93 157.89 86.03 2.80

Source: Field Survey. Rounded figures and short names of the societies have been used. While 'Purchases' refer to Pat and Muga fabrics produced and purchased in the market, the dates refer to the years of registration of the societies.
The data on working capital, volume of business turnover, value of purchases and net profits show themselves the strength and weakness of each society. The membership and share structures are not indicative of a society's internal strength which can be seen from the working capital base alone. The share capital base of each society is, however, small as compared with the large amount of investment required for holding stocks of Pat and cotton yarn, Muga cocoons, gold and cotton art threads and of finished products. The share capital of the societies ranged from Rs. 12550 to Rs. 50760 with a total of Rs. 854350. The working capital base of a society is created mainly by credit in kind and ploughing back the annual profits which although declared as dividends are either converted to share capital or kept as deposits of the members by paying interest of 12 to 15 p.c. This shows that the member weavers derive little direct benefit from the societies save the wages earned or some marketing facilities except in the 3 relatively large societies which allow withdrawal of deposits in exigencies.

It may be noted that the number of Pat and Muga looms (983-216 = 769) given in the table does not tally with the number of looms working under them as per our listing. In the house to house listing we found 698 looms working under the co-operative and government or semi-government agencies. The discrepancy is attributable to the list of weavers maintained by the institutions; once a weaver takes
out yarn his/her name remains in the register till the end of the year even though the weaver does not take yarn for the next warp from the same agency. This contention is supported by the fact that the average quantity of cloth woven by a loom under the Export Oriented Handloom Project (it has 250 looms in its list) was only 82 metres as against 308 metres woven by the sample looms (Table 8.3). Anyway, the number of looms working under the co-operative and government or semi-government institutions at the time of our house to house listing in December 1980 was 698 constituting 23.28 p.c. of the 2998 looms (looms working under master weavers were 368, i.e., 12.28 p.c.).

As regards production of cloth by the looms working under them, the societies do not maintain separate accounts, rather all cloths whether produced or purchased in the market are shown as 'purchases' reportedly for convenience of maintaining their accounts. The purchase data show that the co-operatives had handled cloths worth Rs. 86.05 lakhs besides other handloom and mill made products (the societies are bound to hold stocks of other products for attracting customers). This investment in Pat and Muga fabrics constitute only 17.31 p.c. of the total estimated value of Rs. 497 lakhs produced annually by the silk looms in Suwalkuchi.* The government and semi-government institutions

*The estimate of the total value of Pat and Muga fabrics is based on the average value of Rs. 16580 produced by a loom in our sample of 218 looms in the 100 factories (Table 8.3).
had produced fabrics worth Rs. 125,80,19 in 316 looms and
direct purchase by them was worth Rs. 18,27 lakhs or a
combined production and purchase of about Rs. 30,66 lakhs by
them. Thus total 'purchase' by the co-operative and other
public institutions was worth Rs. 116,71 lakhs which
constitute 23.48 p.c. of the total products. This shows that
nearly 75 p.c. of the Sualkoshi products are marketed by the
petty and big private dealers, the remaining being direct
sell to customers.

As has been stated earlier the volume of production
of Pat and Muga fabrics in Sualkoshi shows the need of a
relatively large amount of investment by the societies for
safeguarding the interest of the weavers, particularly during
the slack season when prices fall as a result of decline in
demand. And notwithstanding the deviation of the societies
from the co-operative motto of 'Bahujana Hitaya, Bahujana
Sukhaya' (collective welfare and collective happiness) as a
result of their profit motive, they also lack the required
amount of working capital and therefore the societies fail
to offer a support price for the products. It may also be
observed that their total purchase consists of 56.37 p.c.
credit purchase (Rs. 48,68 lakhs) throughout the year from
some client medium and large factory owners (they may not be
members of the society) at a relatively high price due to
dearth of working capital.
Besides Pat and Muga, the co-operatives also produce traditional varieties of cotton fabrics in 216 looms under the putting out system in the neighbouring villages and purchase such products including Manipuri fabrics in the market, but none of the societies could provide us data on actual production as they are all shown as 'purchases'. The value of such purchases shown by some societies also outstrip the amount invested in Pat and Muga fabrics. Hence data on handloom products produced or purchased are not presented here. But the societies do actually sell a large quantity of such products amounting to over Rs. 10 lakhs.

It is worthwhile noting that the Pregjysti Industrial Co-operative Society had purchased 12 power looms for installation at Gauhati (subsequently it installed 24 power looms in its workshop) and the state government had sanctioned a loan of Rs. 85000 for the purpose. The ARTPE had also supplied 4 Pedal looms each to 3 societies in 1977 for installation at Sualkuchi, but all of them are rusting due to, as reported by the secretaries of the societies, dearth of trained weavers; it is also admitted that neither the societies have taken interest in the matter nor the traditional weavers are willing to forgo their income during the training period.

As regards government assistance, the societies have received besides share capital and rebates, sufficient amount of grants, subsidies and loans; four societies which
reported on this aspect had received Rs. 210,775 by way of grants or subsidies and loan to two societies amounted to Rs. 81,600 besides Rs. 3 lakhs sanctioned to the Rashtriya Pratishthan for the establishment of a Gum (Zari) factory which was pending till date for a dissent note struck by the All India Handloom Board reportedly as a result of interference by vested interests in Gujarat who supplied Zari all over the country. However, government grants, subsidies and loans are sanctioned not on any principle of equity to all the societies; as the secretary of a society had put it, such sanctions are dependent on the quality of "Puja" (worship) offered to the concerned authorities. As regards loans from local banks, the societies seem to be not interested.

(ii) Metallic Societies

In the bell metal industry in Sarthebari the Assam Co-operative Bell Metal Utensils Manufacturing Society commonly known as the Kher Sangha has its own history of growth. The industry in the area was under the control of Narowari Mahajans till the end of the forties of the present century. The Mahajans had exploited the artisans in various ways; besides ill treatment, they paid meagre wages, deducted on this or that pretext some amount even from the meagre earnings of the artisans, did not pay the dues in time and so on and so forth. In the situation the challenge came from a freedom fighter and scholar late Kohi Ram Das (he was
one of the compilers of the Chandra Kanta Abhidham) who
organised the artisans of Sarthebari, Garakushi, Gomorah,
Namgala and Baniyakushi with a view to freeing them from the
clutches of the Mahajans and formed the Kihar Sangha in 1935
which was subsequently registered as a co-operative society
in 1938. This society is one of the 9th industrial co-
operatives registered up to August 1938 in the composite
state of Assam.* The society has now 1277 shares distributed
among 1093 members with a paid up capital of Rs. 38000 and a
government share capital of Rs. 1 lakh.

As per a list maintained by the society 107 Khar-
Sals (hall metal units) spread in the aforementioned villages
work under it. However, the number of units working under it
and the quantity of metal put out to the units vary from year
to year. In 1980-81 only 59 units of the aforementioned
villages were working under it and the quantity of metal put
out for manufacturing utensils was 12257 Kg against Rs. 1.50
lakhs paid as wages to the artisans. The data on metal and
wages show that per unit had received an average 207.550 Kg
metal and earned Rs. 2676 as wages (an average unit consists
of 4.1 artisans working on partnership basis). This shows
that the society supplies about a month's requirements
(200 Kg) of a unit or nearly 13 p.c. of the annual (working
period is 8 months) requirements of 59 units and the

*An abstract of the Society, 1971
Viewed from the angle of liberating the artisans from the clutches of the private dealers which was the primary objective of the Sangha, the achievement is negligible; no doubt, Marrewari Mahajans had been eliminated but as the society failed to supply all the metals to the artisans, local intermediaries again appeared. As regards supply of metals, the society needs a huge amount of investment (over Rs. 150 lakhs) for stocks of metals and finished products, leaving aside the wage bill; but its working capital of Rs. 18.42 lakhs is sufficient for about 307 quintals of metal alone (per kg Rs. 60 at 1980-81 prices) as against the requirement of about 2568 quintals for 107 units working in the area. The society, however, claims other achievements, it has a dominating role in setting the prices of scrap metal and finished products as well as the wage rates for various types of utensils due to which the private dealers fail to exploit the weak bargaining power of the artisans. Its business turnover in 6 branches employing 21 persons was Rs. 24.76 lakhs and had earned a net profit of Rs. 2.40 lakhs in 1980-81.

As had been stated in the last chapter, the initiative of the society to mechanise the bell metal industry by installing a Re-Rolling Mill, casting and polishing machines failed due mainly to lack of working capital for
lifting quotas of copper, zinc and tin and finance for other machineries as well as dearth of trained artisans. The Department of Industries, Government of Assam is well aware of the problems of the industry as well as of the society. But till the end of the Sixth Plan nothing concrete was done to implement even its own proposals of replacing the diesel driven re-rolling mill of the society by an electric motor driven machine and introduction of casting and polishing machines under a common workshop save the construction of a building which became a resting place for stray cattle. We think the state government and the Small Industries Development Corporation (it controls the quota of metal in the state) may come forward for mechanising the industry with the help of the co-operative society which has practical business experience.

In the brass industry in Hajo 2 co-operatives, viz.,

Hajo Brass Utensils Workers' Co-operative Society (Muslimpatty) and the Bharulitola Pital Sambay Smity formed respectively in 1952 and 1956 had respectively 60 and 45 members. But the second society could not remain active due mainly to the insincerity of its members who while taking out metal did not care to return all the utensils. The number of Garh-Sala (brass smithy units) in the list of

---

the first society was 60, but it could supply brass sheets only among 21 units in 1980-81. The quantity of brass put out was also negligible, 3800 Kg alone, i.e., 180 Kg per unit or one month's requirement for an average unit of 1.5 persons. (The amount of wages paid was Rs. 15200, i.e., Rs. 724 per unit). Thus the society supplies about 8.3 p.e. of the metal requirements of only 35.59 p.e. of the 59 units in Byco. The business of the society is also very small, with a share capital of Rs. 10650 raised from 213 shares and a working capital of Rs. 56000 its total volume of business turnover was Rs. 2.67 lakhs and it had earned a net profit of Rs. 12745 in the year. Enquired about its business policy the management reported that the members were not interested in expanding its business by taking bank or government loans (the govt. had advanced Rs. 20,000 in the seventies and Rs. 16000 is outstanding) for their apprehension of probable theft in the store or mismanagement which might lead to the collapse of the society itself.

3. Government and Semi-Government Institutions

As has been stated earlier government and semi-government institutions are also playing a role in providing employment to a large number of persons particularly in weaving and spinning in the centres we had surveyed. Some of the data pertaining to the surveyed centres have already been given in the last 3 chapters. Here we present their
overall activities in the areas of their operation. Some of the data, therefore, may marginally differ from the data already given because of the wide coverage. In Susalkuchi, the Khadi Production Centre (KPC) of the Assam Khadi and Village Industries Board, the Export Oriented Handloom Project of the Assam Government Marketing Corporation (AGMC), the Assam Apex Weavers' and Artisans' Co-operative Federation (ARTFED) Centre and the Sales Emporium of the AGMC, are working. In Rampur, Rangia and Baje too KPC units are functioning. In Sarthobaari an Intensive Handloom Development Scheme is being launched by the Department of Weaving and Sericulture (now under the Department of Handlooms and Textiles) under the name of Weavers' Extension Service Centre (WESC). The data on activities of these institutions are presented below in a tabular form.
Table 10.2

Activities of Government and Semi-Government Institutions
1980-81

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>No. of workers</th>
<th>Value of production Rs.</th>
<th>Total wages Rs.</th>
<th>Per capita income of workers Rs.</th>
<th>Product line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sualkuchi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) KPC</td>
<td>Weavers- 51</td>
<td>475033</td>
<td>63796</td>
<td>1251</td>
<td>Pat and Muga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reelers- 73</td>
<td>258122</td>
<td>23093</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>Muga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B) ABNC</td>
<td>Weavers-250</td>
<td>700053</td>
<td>141448</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>Pat and Muga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reelers-150</td>
<td>459000</td>
<td>51000</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>Muga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C) ARTPED</td>
<td>Weavers- 17</td>
<td>63833</td>
<td>18780</td>
<td>751</td>
<td>Pat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Rampur : KPC</td>
<td>Weavers-257</td>
<td>854360</td>
<td>149181</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>Eri and Waste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spinners-452</td>
<td>602524</td>
<td>199080</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>Eri and NMC(cotton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ramdia : KPC</td>
<td>Weavers- 93</td>
<td>89000</td>
<td>11588</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>Eri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spinners-451</td>
<td>56784</td>
<td>16766</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Eri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sartheburi: WESC</td>
<td>Weavers- 58</td>
<td>11187</td>
<td>2947</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Cotton (1979-80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2919</td>
<td>3648080</td>
<td>696903</td>
<td>363</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey. Data have been collected from the respective office.
The data show that the institutions provided employment to 1919 persons, produced goods, mainly cloth and yarn worth Rs. 36,48,080 and generated an income of Rs. 606,003 among the artisans in the form of wages. They also show that per capita value produced by the workers as well as their income vary from area to area and trade to trade; while per capita value produced is about Rs. 1900, per capita income of the artisans is Rs. 363 per annum.*

In Sualkuchi income of the workers in the Pat and Muga weaving which is a whole time occupation is relatively higher* than that of Eri weavers in Rampur or Rambia where the occupation is part-time, while the income of the part-time cotton weavers in Sarthebari is negligible. Among the institutions the KPCs have provided employment to the largest number of 1439 persons, but their annual average income of Rs. 340 is not at all encouraging. In the context of poverty eradication, the total employment provided by all these agencies in their respective areas of operation is quite large as well as laudable, but in terms of per capita income

*The Sales Emporium at Sualkuchi is engaged in sale and purchase activities alone, it sold loom accessories worth Rs. 25000 and purchased silk cloths worth Rs. 10,50 lakhs. The ARTFED branch there had also sold 2346 Kg Pat and 495 Kg cotton yarn and the value of purchases of Pat and Muga cloth was Rs. 7.77 lakhs while that of handloom products was Rs. 10,000 in 1980-81.

**But this income of the wage weavers under the public institutions is much lower than the average annual income of Rs. 2000 earned by the sample weavers in the 100 factories (Table 8.3). This aspect also vindicates our
of the workers, the amount of Rs. 363 constitute only 46.5 p.e. of Rs. 780 required annually for a minimum daily calorie of 2400 per person in the rural areas at 1977-78 prices (in the urban areas Rs. 900 is required for 2100 calories). 3

No doubt, the importance of such employment schemes may be considered in the context of some positive production by the employed as against zero production by the unemployed. But there is also scope for improving the physical productivity as well as money income of the artisans. The quantity of raw materials supplied by the institutions among the workers is generally limited by the monetary targets of production and therefore the larger the number of persons sought to be provided with jobs, the smaller becomes the quantity of raw materials distributed per head leading to low per capita physical production and money income. For example, 953 Kg of Eri cocoons were distributed among 451 spinners in Ramdia in 1980-81, that is, per spinner received about 2 Kg or only 2 months’ requirements. In Sarejheri only 279 Kg cotton yarn were distributed among 58 weavers, i.e., about 4 Kg per weaver as against weaving capacity of about 30 Kg per loom per annum. The New Model Charkha (Ambar Charkha) Unit at

contention that the weavers do not work under the institutions throughout the year.

3. Planning Commission, Sixth Five Year Plan, 1980-85, p. 16, note 1

*Some Assam income data have been presented at the last portion of section 2 in Chapter 4 which also show the same
414

Najo was reported to have remained closed for 10/12 days in a month (excluding holidays) for short supply of carded cotton. The instances show that productivity as well as income of the artisans can be raised and the trades may be made whole time profession even within the traditional product lines by putting out regularly the required amount of raw materials and by encouraging the workers to pursue the vocation as the principal source of income.

4. Conclusions

Industrial co-operative societies in different trades sprang up in different localities at different times; some died or remained dormant due either to problems of marketing their products, mismanagement or/and lack of working capital. The surviving ones are playing some positive role in providing employment and income to the rural poor by putting out raw materials and marketing their products. The brief review of the working of the active industrial societies show that there is great scope, as has already been referred to in the last chapter, for development of cottage and small scale industries on co-operative basis. The societies can play an active role in organising industries, supplying raw materials to artisans and collecting and marketing the products at remunerative prices. The societies
discouraging picture.
with strong financial base can also supply credit to artisans for working capital, arrange for their training in new product lines and help modernising the traditional industries by installing machineries and modern tools and implements. Therefore, new industrial co-operatives should be formed in the rural and semi-urban areas mainly with such objectives so that they may serve as small centres of industrial growth. The government should patronise such societies by participating in their share as well as working capital. Commercial and co-operative banks should also come forward to assist the societies by providing loans on easy terms so that the latter can provide a marketing channel for their products by opening their own depots or sale centres.

The government and semi-government institutions are also providing employment opportunities to a large section of the population in the rural areas. But the income of the workers under them is pitifully meagre. The agencies should try to raise their income by fully utilising the productive skill and capacity through the provision of sufficient quantity of raw materials. Since most of the institutions are found engaged in traditional industries, they should try to upgrade the skills of the artisans through programmes of on-the-job training by supplying improved tools and appliances to the artisans. In this context, particularly in view of the Bongaigaon Petro Chemical Complex going to produce 30,000 metric tonnes of polyester per annum and 4 spinning
mills to be set up in Assam for producing man-made fibres, the Assam Khadi and Village Industries Board with its wide network of Khadi Production Centres as well as the Departments of Handlooms and Textiles and Sericulture and Weaving of the Government of Assam should introduce training programmes for spinning polyester and blending them with cotton, Pat, Muga and Eri fibres as well as weaving them. Needless to emphasise again that the methods of spinning and weaving should be up-to-date as far as practicable.*

*No doubt, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission with its historical background has some "conceptual difficulties in introduction of mechanisation." In this context the Report on Village and Cottage Industries by the National Committee on the Development of Backward Areas (Planning Commission 1981) has emphatically recommended the introduction of improved technique for making the cottage and village industries attractive to the new generations. Ref, pp. 17-18 (Para 4.3 and 4.6).