CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Fragments of woven cotton and bone needles have been discovered at Mohenjodaro and Harappa, the ancient sites of the Indus valley civilization. Even the Rig-Veda and the epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana dwell upon the craft of weaving at length. These weavers of the past were true masters of their craft. Such was their capability that legend even refers to the fabulous semi-transparent sari worn by Amarapali, the famous courtesan.

Indian cottons and silks were exported in huge quantities, causing concern among the Romans because their wives could not have enough of these beautiful fabrics! Fragments of cotton fabric were also found in the Egyptian tombs at Fostat. China too was another big importer of Indian fabrics in ancient times.

Moving ahead, silks were exported to Indonesia in the 13th century. India also exported a lot of cotton and chintz to Europe and the Far East before the advent of the British East India Company.

1.2 Handlooms in India

Handloom textile constitutes a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of India. As an economic activity, the handloom sector occupies a place second only to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people. It is estimated that handloom industry provides employment to 65 lakh workforce directly and indirectly and there is about 35 lakh looms spread all over India. The production of handloom fabrics is estimated to be approximately 6947 million sq.mtrs during 2007-2008 and the contribution of handloom to the total cloth/textile production, comprising handloom, mill and power loom sectors during the year 2007-08 is estimated to be about 16 percent.

1 http://www.tantuvi.com/history.htm
2 Ibid
3 Ibid
4 http://www.handloommark.gov.in/About-Scheme/HLM-Scheme.pdf
The last 100 years have seen the growth of mechanized textile production internationally. In part, due to competition handloom has lost much of its market and is almost non-existing in most countries. However, handlooms are still a force to reckon with in India and some other Asian countries such as Srilanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Cambodia.

Handlooms are environment-friendly. A handloom is an independent and autonomous technology. Energy impacts are almost zero. The sector thus lends itself to sustainable development policies aimed at reduction of negative impacts on environment and ecology.

"The handloom sector represents the continuity of the age-old Indian heritage of handweaving and reflects the socio-cultural tradition of the weaving communities". Though it employs the largest number of people, the handloom sector is considered a sunset industry, and there is an air of inevitability given the relentless march of mechanization, modernization and sophistication. Still, there are many advocates of handloom for reasons including ideology, philosophy, sheer love for handloom products and economic arguments. However, irrespective of policies, projects, and aspirations arising out of various quarters, the handloom sector is undergoing changes that are impacting the livelihoods of handloom weavers.

While the weavers face a dismal situation for their livelihood, there is a large market for India's handloom products both domestically and internationally. Handloom production has significant contribution to the National GDP and export earnings. According to the Ministry of Textiles, export earnings as late as 1998-99 was Rs 1956 crores. Current figures are expected to be around the same.

5 http://www.indiatogether.org/2006/feb/eco-handloom.htm
6 Ibid
8 http://www.indiatogether.org/2006/feb/eco-handloom.htm
Handlooms have an umbilical linkage with cotton farmers and the rural farm economy. Agricultural labour gets employment in handloom sector during the non-agricultural season. The sector has self sustaining mechanism, including training for young weavers, irrespective of gender. The inheritance of skills, resources and capacities has remained beyond the realm and reach of any modern training and educational institution. The sustaining of the weaving skill itself has not been dependent on the government or any modern formal institution. There is also inherent flexibility for all types of communities to take up handloom production as a profession\(^9\).

The government of India has been following a policy of promoting and encouraging the handloom sector through a number of policies and programmes. Most of the schematic interventions of the government of India in the ninth and tenth plan period have been through the state agencies and cooperatives in the handloom sector. However, in the face of growing competitiveness in the textile industry both in the national and international markets, a growing need has been felt for adopting a focused yet flexible and holistic approach in the sector to facilitate handloom weavers to meet the challenges of a globalized environment. A need has also been felt to empower weavers to chart out a sustainable path for growth and diversification in line with the emerging market trends. The Integrated Handlooms Cluster Development Programme is an attempt to facilitate the sustainable development of handloom weavers located in identified Clusters into a cohesive, self managing and competitive socio-economic unit. Handloom cloth is always stronger than the same type of mill-made or power loom cloth due to double reeds, proper sizing and lower speed of weaving.

It is only because of the human touch with every stage certifying the art and tradition of the craftsman. It has also a technical superiority in the production of fabrics in which gold and silver lace is artistically designed in making saris, along with striped and check fabrics etc\(^{10}\).


Handloom products are not just ‘Luxury’ items but also ‘wage-goods’ that are capable of catering to different kinds of national and local markets which need to be linked. It is also capable of producing a much larger volume of output for any given level of investment when compared with other sectors of the textile industry.\(^{11}\)

The office of the development commissioner for handlooms, Government of India has been implementing a number of developmental schemes and programmes to protect the interest and welfare of the weavers. It is proposed to introduce the ‘Handloom mark’\(^{12}\) which will provide a collective identity to the handloom products and can be used not only for popularizing the hand woven products but can also serve as a guarantee for the buyer that the product being purchased is genuinely hand woven.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Handloom industry in India is the most important cottage industry next to agriculture. Sericulture is a cottage industry par excellence with its agriculture base, industrial superstructure, and labour intensive. It is remarkable for its low investment and quick and high returns which makes it an ideal industry, which fits well into the socio-economic fabric of India.

Silk handloom industry earns valuable foreign exchange for the country, and forms a segment of the handloom industry.

Silk production including sericulture is well known as a highly employment oriented, low capital intensive activity ideally suited to the conditions of a labour-abundant and agro-based economy.

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\(^{12}\) http://handlooms.nic.in/handloom-mark.pdf
The weavers of Bangalore Rural district have been experiencing multifaceted problems which range right from procurement of raw materials to marketing of finished goods. Besides, inadequate working capital is an added problem. Further, the problem of exploitation of poor coolie weavers by the master weavers and the stiff competition from the growth of powerlooms and mill sector in Karnataka in general and Bangalore Rural district in particular, are also major problems which have resulted in periodical unemployment and under-employment among the silk weavers. The problems of this industry are nothing but problems of weavers. There is need to identify the problems and suggest immediate measures to overcome these problems faced by the pure silk handloom industry of Karnataka state in general and Bangalore Rural district in particular.

Handlooms are facing today a lot of challenges due to new economic policies. The competition has intensified, the government support is waning. Hence, there is need to collect empirical evidences to assess the impact of globalization on handloom industry as a whole and silk industry in particular.

Moreover, handloom industry ranks first among the village and cottage industries in Bangalore Rural district. It is the leading industry largely influencing its economic activity. In Bangalore rural district more than 30 percent of the people depend upon handlooms (especially in selected areas like Yelahanka, Doddaballapur, and Vijayapura).

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This research study on pure silk handloom industry is undertaken with the following objectives.

1 To understand the socio-economic conditions of weavers.

2 To study the organization structure, production and marketing activities of the weavers.
3 To examine the government policies and programmes for improving the living and working conditions of the handloom weavers.

4 To examine the special problems of the industry.

5 To suggest suitable measures for the betterment of the handloom industry.

1.5 Selection of the Field

The state of Karnataka was selected for two reasons. One, the number of rural people engaged in various village handloom industries is very significant. Two, there are no studies on silk handloom industries at rural level.

For case study, Bangalore Rural district has been selected because different taluks in the district present different geographical, agricultural and industrial environment and the concentration of handlooms also varies from taluk to taluk. Hence, it presents a better field.

In this district mainly Nelavagilu (Hosakote taluk), Vijayapura (Devanahally taluk) and Thyamagondlu (Nelamangala taluk) are the centres of handloom clusters. Thus, the study was finally restricted to Bangalore Rural District.

1.6 Sample selection

The present study is confined to the Bangalore Rural District of Karnataka State. There was no latest published data regarding the number of silk weaving households, particularly on master weavers, independent weavers and coolie weavers. The researcher selected thickly concentrated pure silk handloom weaver households, villages by adopting random sampling technique on the basis of discussions with knowledgeable persons in the industry and concerned government officials.

Care was taken to see that all the four taluks of the district were covered in the selection of localities/villages. In each taluk two remote villages, one
panchayat and one town were selected for the study. In each locality three coolie weavers, three members of co-operative societies, one master weaver and more than two independent weavers were selected by adopting cluster sampling method.

There were 15 silk handloom weavers' co-operative societies during 2005-06. Out of these only ten co-operative societies were working at the time of the field survey (2005-06). Therefore, a majority of the co-operative societies were selected for a detailed study.

Thus, in order to ensure a fairly representative and accurate coverage, a minimum of 30 percent of the total handloom households working under those sub-centers was selected for personal interview and investigation.

1.7 Data Source

The study was based on both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was collected by conducting a survey on master weavers, independent weavers, coolie weavers (working under master weaver), and members of co-operative societies through structured, pre-tested interview schedule. Personal observations at the time of field survey with respect to previous occupational background of weavers, present living and working conditions, type of looms and accessories owned, sources of financing, the capital requirement of handloom industrial units, supply position of yarn, training imparted, benefits derived from training, production of cloth, varieties of fabrics produced, income generated from weaving and other than weaving activities, etc., were recorded separately and used at the time of analysis and interpretation of the data. The field work was very intensive and detailed. While writing and revising the draft of the thesis some brief visits to the field were given whenever necessary for filling up gaps in the data.

The primary data has been supplemented by the secondary data wherever necessary. The secondary data has been collected from office records and
annual reports of KHDC, Department of Handlooms and Textiles, Zillapanchayat, Bangalore Rural District, etc. The secondary data has been mainly collected from the following sources:

1. The government agencies at the district, taluk and village level such as District Industries Centre, District Statistical office, District Rural Development agency, Village Panchayat etc.

2. Government publications such as reports of the committees set up by the government, Five Year Plan documents, action plans, Economic survey reports etc.

3. Books, professional journals, earlier research works.

4. Information through weaver co-operative societies.

The primary data collected from the sample respondents through interview schedule have been organized in tabular form whenever necessary. Such organized data have been analyzed with the help of percentages, ratios, averages etc., to make projections and to draw meaningful conclusions.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The present study tries to analyze the multifaceted problems encountered by the pure silk handloom industry. It also examines the socio-economic conditions of different types of weavers of Bangalore Rural district. The approach of the study has been from the point of view of pure silk handloom weavers because a study of weavers is the study of the industry since both complement each other. This study does not cover the art silk weaving, silk weaving on power looms and sericulture industry.

The study is restricted to silk handloom weavers in Bangalore Rural district and it is micro in character. In depth investigation is possible when the study is restricted to manageable levels.
There are a lot of research studies on handloom industry but they are mainly focused on cotton handloom because of its sheer size. There are no studies on silk handloom industry. Hence, the study is restricted to single industry and single district.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The literature available on the subject was limited. Most of the available data is either clubbed into the cotton handloom industry, or with the sericulture industry. Such data is not much useful for any integrated and comprehensive study. The required information was procured with great difficulty from the cooperative sector and government departments for the purpose of the study. Handloom industries are in unorganized sector, so they don’t maintain proper accounting records. Hence, information has been collected orally.

The present research work is mainly based on personal interviews with the sample weavers in different villages. Answers are in some cases, approximate figures. There was a tendency among the respondents to slightly vary information about their income, expenditure, market conditions depending upon their perception of the researcher as a representative of a lending agency, government official, tax official etc. However, every care has been taken to obtain fairly accurate and usable data by dispelling their misconceptions. The information gathered by these interviews has carefully been cross-verified and cross-checked with official records maintained by weavers’ co-operative societies, Bangalore Rural District statistical office in order to avoid the element of subjectivity in their responses. Though an honest attempt has been made to record and report the responses by the weavers with utmost objectivity, the conclusions drawn in many occasions are based on the researcher’s own judgment. Therefore, the personal limitations of the researcher are quite obvious.

Another limitation of the study was that the information in many government reports has not been updated and the information was not available
on uniform basis. Hence, in some cases, without alternative, the information relating to the period much earlier to the study period has been used.

1.10 Operational Definition of Concepts

Master Weaver

A master weaver is one who generally does not weave cloth. He supplies loom, silk yarn, and other materials to the group of weavers working under him. The weavers deliver the finished products woven according to the specification and design of the master weaver and get their wages on piece rate.

Independent weaver

An independent weaver is one who owns one or more looms and works in his dwelling place on his own. He purchases his raw materials out of his own or borrowed funds, brings out the finished products with the help of his family members and also markets them.

Coolie weaver

The coolie weavers are working under a master weaver. They do not own any loom and get their supply of yarn and other materials and weave on the loom provided by the master weaver at his working shed/residence. They weave according to the type and designs of fabric specified by the master weaver and get their wages on piece rate basis. Coolie weavers are also called loomless weavers.

Primary Co-operative Society

Primary co-operative society means the silk handloom weavers co-operative society whose membership is open to individual weaver and affiliated to the Karnataka Co-operative Handloom Weaver's Federation Limited (apex society). The main objective of the society is to improve the handloom industry and the socio-economic conditions of weaver members residing in its area of
operation. The societies are registered as silk weaver’s co-operative production-cum-sales societies under the Mysore Co-operative Societies Act No L.11 of 1948.

**Karnataka Co-operative Handloom Weavers Federation Limited**

Karnataka Co-operative Handloom Weavers Federation Limited is the apex body for both silk and cotton. The objective of the federation is to carry out activities conducive to economic and socio-economic development of handloom weavers by organising effectively on production, procurement, processing and marketing of handloom products.

**Pit looms**

A receptacle with four poles with cross bar to support the slay and having a pit at the back of the weaver to sit.

**Loom**

Loom is an apparatus for weaving yarn or thread cross-wise into fabric.

**Handloom**

Handloom is a loom for weaving of cloth by using yarn made of any fibre singly or in blends and used manually without the aid of power.

**Frame loom**

A wooden structure of upright and cross beams erected above the ground level over which the warp of foundation threads can be stretched to the necessary tension of weaving. The weaver can sit on a raised platform or a stool.

**Shuttle**

Implement used to carry the weft through shed.
Weft

Weft is the yarn that fills the spaces across the width of the warp.

Warp

The length wise yarns in the loom or in a woven fabric.

Jacquard

A contrivance used in the production of fabrics with elaborate designs and colour patterns. In this type of loom, cards with perforations control the action of the headless and consequently the pattern in the fibre.

Dobby

A contrivance used for the production of simple patterned fabrics.

Throw shuttle

A shuttle thrown by hand through the shed while weaving.

Fly shuttle

A shuttle jerked across the warp by pulling a string attached to a lever.

Reed

The reed is a comb fixed in a slay with a reed cap.

Head

One of the sets of small cords or wires between which warp is passed in loom before going through the reed.

Pirn

Cylindrical weft package.
Pick

Single weft thread woven across the width of the warp.

Beam

Cylinder in loom on which warp is wound.

Shed

A V-shaped opening formed in the warp when the yarns are separated by the raising and lowering of harness to allow for passage of the shuttle carrying the weft.

Zari

Zari is special thread made up of silver, silk and gold. It is used for creating special designs either on the body of the fabric or on the border. Sometimes it is also used as weft.

Marc

The zari is sold in terms of ‘marc’ one marc weighs 242 grams.

1.11 Presentation of the Study

The whole study is presented in nine chapters. The contents of these chapters are briefly stated below:

The first chapter deals with the introduction, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, methodology, sample selection, scope of the study, selection of the field, limitation of the study and operational definition of concepts.

The second chapter is devoted to the review of literature on the subject. It highlights the existing gaps in the literature.
The third chapter attempts to bring out in detail the evolution of handloom industry at national and state level and the silk handloom industry at the national and state level.

The Fourth chapter explains the structure and organization of pure silk handloom industry in Karnataka. It covers government sector, co-operative sector, private sector of handloom silk weaving industry.

Fifth chapter contains the schemes, programmes and various policies implemented by Government of India and Government of Karnataka for development of handloom industry.

Sixth chapter highlights the geographical characteristics of the study area and different taluks at Bangalore Rural district.

Seventh chapter presents the socio-economic conditions of selected weavers of Bangalore Rural District.

Eighth chapter deals with performance evaluation, impact of globalization and various problems faced by silk handloom weavers in the Bangalore Rural District.

The last chapter gives the summary of findings and based on these findings some suggestions are made to remove the constraints to growth in village handloom industries.
HANDLOOM INSTRUMENTS

- Throw Shuttle
- Silk and Zari Bobbin
- Fly Shuttle
- Warp Beam
- Pirn
- Saree Beam
Read
Heald
Winding Machine
Pick
Jacquard
Border Design Chain