CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSIONS
Concentrated population of weaver castes is found in particular localities of Hubli city, where they have lived for generations. They are engaged in their traditional occupation of weaving and follow a particular life style of their own.

Industrialisation has brought about changes in the socio-economic conditions and has created new situation, in which persons are diversifying their occupation. However, the caste identity of the weavers has not been lost.

Weaving in Hubli is carried on by the castes such as Devanga, Kuruvinshetty, Padmasali, Pattasali, Pattegar, Swakulsali, Togataviraru and Momin.s. These various weaver castes are known by a common term 'Sali' 'Nekar' and 'Vinkar', meaning weaver.

The weavers of Hubli have a long history of migration in the past. Small groups from various parts of the country had travelled long distance and had established small settlements in these localities to enable themselves to continue their trading activities. Padmasali and Togatas are migrants from Hyderabad state, Swakulsalis are migrants from Maharashtra.
state and Pattegars are migrants from Gujarat State Kuruvinshetty and Pattasali are natives of Karnataka state. Momins are local converts of Sali caste.

Each of these weaver castes has a separate identity depending upon the texture of the clothes they weave. Pattegars and Pattasalis are well known for silk weaving, and other weaver castes weave both silk and cotton fabrics. There also exists difference in the languages spoken by them. The Devanga and Padmasali are Telugu and Kannada speaking groups, Momins are Urdu speaking, while Swakulsali speak Sali, Pattegars speak Pattegar and Togataviraru are Telugu speakers and Kuruvinshetty are Kannada speakers.

Though all these weaver castes are engaged in common occupation, there is no intermarriage. Each weaver caste is an endogamous group, and subcaste endogamy does obtain among the Devanga, Padmasali and Kuruvinshetty. Each caste traces its origin through a mythological personage and explains its origination as a group through a mystical legend. Each caste has a culture which is to some extent autonomous.
Each weaver caste has an effective and powerful caste organisation. The temples are the centres of social life and meetings of the councils of the concerned caste are held in their respective temples to adjudicate marital disputes. Caste councils also deal with all questions concerning morals, religion and members violating caste norms are called upon to adjudicate and offenders are punished by levying a fine, temporary or permanent outcasting. While arranging a marriage, approval of the caste council is sought by every household. The Swakulsali and Devangas have strong caste-councils, which run schools, award scholarships to the children for education and arrange mass-marriages for the poor members of their caste community.

Caste consciousness has increased in the past few years, and the result is an increase in horizontal solidarity between various weaver communities. Each of the weaver caste has founded its state level caste association. The main objective of such caste organisations is to strive for the social and economic upliftment of the caste. The weaver castes have claimed themselves economically more backward status in order to secure greater facilities in the field of education and Government
employment. The people of weaver castes are gradually becoming conscious of their political identity. Caste associations are being founded not simply to form an unity of the community but to modernize it with collective efforts and to raise a collective voice for better economic and political deals.

Each caste as a social system has retained its traditional framework, with regard to the inter-caste relations. The rigidity of purity and pollutions is not observed. However, each weaver caste has retained its age-old customs, each caste celebrates all important festivals. The festivals have both religious and social characteristics.

As conditions have changed we can observe a slight change in the religious activity in the performance of the rituals. These changes are witnessed mainly in the performance of the life-cycle rituals, the duration of which is lessened in view of the increase in the cost of performing them.

The life of an individual belonging to a caste is made of succession of stages like birth, puberty, marriage and death. Every one of these life-cycle events is an object
or rituals. The cultural celebration of these rites of passage of life-cycle rituals is different in details and manner from one caste community to another.

However, we can distinguish mainly three groups among the weavers castes according to the life-cycle rituals and the major religious traditions they follow. These are Brahmanic, Veerashaivatic and Muslim traditions. The Padmasali, Swakulsali, Telugu Devangas and Pattegars invite the Brahman priest for officiating at their ceremonies and follow Bharmanical traditions. The Kannada Devanga Kuruvinshetty and Pattasali have the Lingayat priest for officiating at their ceremonies and follow Veerashaiva tradition and the Mominas call Muslim priest for their ceremonies and follow Muslim tradition.

Marriage is universal in the weaver community. Marriage is looked upon as essential for both males and females. And the proportion of never married for the female persons is zero beyond the age of thirty-five years, whereas, at this age, some of the male persons have remained unmarried. This shows that parents are more keen and do not feel free unless they see their daughters married.
Instances of marital separation among female persons is high. The reasons are ill-treatment by the parents-in-law and extra-marital sex relation of the husband. However, legal divorce is absent, for, a man marries second time even without taking legal divorce from his first wife, while a woman's seeking divorce is considered as disloyalty to the husband and the family. Though such remarriage are not considered legal, nevertheless they have smooth going. For, the first wife does not raise her voice against such a marriage as the society tolerates the man's act and she receives no support. Moreover she does not fight for her rights as her economic condition does not permit her to take recourse to the legal battle.

There are also cases of polygynous marriages, wherein a man marries two wives and both the wives stay with the man. In such cases it is the second wife who enjoys more rights than the first wife. The first wife stay with her husband, just because she has to tolerate all the situation otherwise she has to leave the house herself which she cannot do as she is not economically independent. It is again the question of survival and there is a fear that she and her children may not get any share in the family property if she separates.
Though the marriage of a male under 21 years of age and female 18 years of age is considered as a child marriage and is legally banned, there are instances of child marriages. The practice of child marriage is continuing because such persons are punished only if a complaint is lodged against it. Otherwise all child marriages become valid in due course of time. Another reason for the child marriages to continue is marriage expenses. The marriage expenses are borne by the bride-grooms party. In a family with two to three sons the parents have to bear all the expenses of the marriage of their sons, and in order to lessen the burden the marriage of a older son is combined with the younger sons without bothering about the age.

All the weaver caste communities prefer uncle-niece and maternal cross-cousin marriages. Though the frequency of the kin marriages is not more, there are instances of kin marriages. It is thought that in such marriages daughter-in-law is related to the mother-in-law by blood, and thencefore, the mother-in-law will bestow greater love and affection on daughter-in-law rather than jealousy, revenge and hatred. Perhaps this is the reason why people prefer kin marriages, where conflicts between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law are less. Another
The nuclear type of families are more in number among the weavers. In the past the families which followed the family based traditional occupation of weaving were of extended type, since the occupation required more members. But now-a-days weavers go in for nuclear families wherein they enjoy more liberty and freedom as regards economic matters. If they want more hands to work in the household industry then they prefer to hire outside labour rather than have larger families. Thus the older values and attitude have been undergoing change.

Majority of the weavers are literates but their educational level shows that mostly their education is upto primary education only. Very few have attained higher education and are placed in white collar jobs. Though majority of the weavers are literates, a high percentage of the female persons are illiterate. Weavers do not like to send their girls to school, the argument being, "girls have to get married and settle down to family life and investment in a girl's education will be a mere waste".
Educational attainment is seen from the point of jobs prospects, and since girls activities are restricted to domestic sphere, their education is not given importance. Instead, it is felt she can as well learn the household work which helps her in her future life. Another reason for not sending the girls to school is their services are required at home to take care of the younger siblings.

It is also observed that though schooling is free, still at secondary school level many children of school-going age are out of school, and are actively involved in labour force. These children go out for earning a livelihood and thus supplement the family income. Parents feel that education up to secondary level in no way helps their children as there are no jobs easily available for matriculates. Moreover, a household industry like weaving requires help from the members of the family. If a weaving family has enough adult members to work and assist in weaving, then only the family spares the children and encourages them to attend school regularly. Thus it is the parents who shape a child's perception and his response to the educational facilities freely available.

It has been observed that the children from most weaving families do not go for higher studies. One reason is
that they cannot concentrate their mind fully on their studies since they have to assist the family in weaving and as a result they cannot successfully get through the examinations and due to stagnation are forced to discontinue their studies.

Parents feel that if their children have to have any education, then they should be able to go for higher education. For, when they think of education they certainly think that their children should be in white collar jobs, so that they can earn respect and recognition in the community. It is also a fact that families usually prefer to give their daughters to persons who are in government service so that their daughters need not have to work whole day in weaving, which they have to do if married in weaving families. However there are only nine persons who have graduated. This clearly points out that caught in the vicious circle of poverty and low level of educational attainment, the weavers have not considered education as a factor helping them towards economic mobility.

Economy of the weavers is relatively simple. Weaving being a household industry or cottage industry requires cooperation and assistance from all the family members. A male head of
the family, brings raw materials required. He also makes all the arrangements for weaving, weaves and markets the product, and also keeps all the equipments in good condition and repairs them if necessary.

A woman in the domestic sphere is engaged in cooking, washing and cleaning, and also assists the husband in preliminary processes of weaving. Many women have now taken up weaving, as men are deserting weaving in search of alternative source of income.

In a weavers family children also assist in preliminary processes of weaving. Thus all the members of the family satisfy the labour requirements of the household industry. Families with several adults have additional labour assistance.

It is the family income which reflects the standard of living and the status of the particular family in the society. The average monthly income of a weaver's family is Rs.1091. The monthly income is low and therefore, the standard of living is also very low. They are unable to fulfill the necessities of life like food, clothing, medical care.
Though most of the weavers own their houses, the housing and living conditions of these weavers are not satisfactory. They face problems like lack of water, electricity and sanitary facilities. The housing pattern and living conditions are closely related to the economic status of a family. The master-weavers who own looms and are well-to-do have pakka houses with all the facilities, whereas, poor wage weavers have only one room kachcha tenements.

Money earned is used for day-to-day necessities. Greater expenditure is required on rituals and marriages and for medical care, for which they depend upon money lenders like master-weavers. Weavers take advance loans on their wages from master-weavers. The loans are deducted regularly from their wages. As a result the wages received after deduction are not sufficient to meet domestic expenditure, so in turn they again borrow money from the master-weaver and are caught in a vicious circle of debts.

A striking feature is that the younger generation is not showing any interest in their traditional occupation and the youngsters are looking for new avenues of occupation.
for their living. As a result the female workers are involved more in their traditional occupation of weaving or it is the men of the age group of 55 years and above who are engaged in weaving.

Weavers are diversifying their occupation. Especially men are showing considerable diversification in their source of income. Many families have taken to petty business. They run small grocery stores, betal stalls which require a relatively small capital. Such families have converted front room of their house into a shop.

A weaver's family derives its income from more than one source. Income from weaving in most of the families is not sufficient to eke out an existence. Thus weavers are deriving their family income from varied sources, wherein the family members are engaged in more than one occupation.

Weavers of Hubli weave the fabrics like Irkal type sarees, and Khanas (bodice), white cloth, shirting material and Dhotis. These weavers purchase the necessary raw materials such as cotton yarn from the local market and Reshmi yarn.
from Bombay and Bangalore. After weaving the fabrics, the weavers sell the product in the local market and in the surrounding villages, making a normal profit of ten to twelve percent.

Master-weavers and cloth merchants are the important agencies in marketing the products. Due to weak economic conditions of the weavers, weavers are unable to hold the stocks. Master-weavers, wholesale dealers and retail dealers buy these products at a price unfavourable to the weavers. Hence the small weavers are always at the mercy of the master-weavers and wholesale and retail dealers.

In case of the families who work for the cooperatives, the yarn is supplied by the society and the finished product is returned to it. The society pays wages for the work done. The weaver therefore need not buy the yarn and consequently need not bother about marketing of the product.

Wage workers are paid low wages. Consequently their standard of living is low. They are ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-nourished. Most of the wage weavers are poor and indebted. Weavers have to fall back upon the master-weavers for the loans therefore, they are under obligation to
work for the master weavers. Thus the weavers are mercilessly exploited by the master-weavers. The wage weavers economy is running in sharp deficit and even the ordinary day-to-day needs of a family like clothing, performance of death and marriage ceremonies etc., have to be met from borrowings.

The handloom weavers are not getting proper raw material. As they have small capital, they are compelled to use cheap and inferior raw materials. This adversely affects the quality of the finished products. Credit facilities are not available to these handloom weavers. Normally they depend upon master-weavers. Thus they are compelled to work under master-weaver in order to repay the loan. They face many difficulties in marketing their products as they do not have upto date market information and they cannot wait for better prices due to lack of finance. Handloom industry is also facing problem due to the setting up of textile mills and powerlooms as they are producing indentical and similar products.

After India's independence, the government has taken several steps to provide financial assistance to small scale industries. State Government grants loan at low rate of interest. Every state has a State Financial Corporation to grant long term
loans. National Small Industries Corporation provides machinery to small producers under hire purchase system. State Bank of India provides special financial facilities. Thus for the setting up of the handloom weaving industry, all the facilities are provided by the government. But these measures are not properly organised. Weavers are not making use of these facilities as they are illiterate and lack information about the availability of these provisions.

The introduction of the textile mills and the powerlooms in the weaving industry have caused profound changes. As a consequence the impact of powerloom weaving on family the economy of the handloom weaver's decline, is further accelerated. The output of handlooms in comparison to powerlooms is very less. The increased productivity of the powerlooms and textile mills have rendered the handloom weaver's occupation unprofitable. Further it is observed that handloom weavers' earnings are less than the powerloom weavers whereas, the prices of handloom products are higher than those of powerloom products. As powerloom products are cheaper and durable than the handloom products, consumers prefer to buy powerloom products, and the demand for handloom is adversely affected.
Since achieving Independence efforts have been made by the Government of India to improve the socio-economic condition of the weavers. Khadi and Village Industries Commission has introduced and promoted Khadi production. Automatic loom, a new technological device is introduced by the Corporation Sector to distribute it to weavers on hire-purchase scheme.

The result of such efforts bring to one's notice a mixed picture. That is, these developmental programmes have brought both benefits, and disadvantages. It can be seen that traditional handloom weavers are now very keen to own automatic loom, and thus evince very little interest in handloom weaving. The reason is that Corporation Sector provides continuous work for the weavers. It supplies raw material regularly and markets the finished product. Thus the weavers working for Corporation Sector face no botheration with regard to the bringing of raw material and marketing the finished products and are in a position to concentrate only on weaving.

The disadvantage of the automatic loom is that the design of the loom is that, the weaver who weaves continuously on this loom often gets chest pain. The other disadvantage
is that the Corporation Sector supplies raw material for weaving coarse fabrics like dhoti and white cloth, which produces lots of dust while weaving, which is hazardous to health.

Inspite of these disadvantages, poor weavers desire to own Corporation loom, as it is profitable. Thus the Corporation Sector has made really remarkable progress in the field of handloom industry. It is growing year by year. That is more and more weavers have become members of the Corporation Sector and thus have owned corporation looms.

Many more weavers want to become members of the Corporation Sector. But they are disappointed for not getting the membership of the Corporation Sector, as the Corporation Sector is facing financial difficulties in providing the looms on hire-purchase scheme. Further weavers who are living in small huts and those who are staying in master-weavers' houses, as they do not have their own accommodation, they are not in a position to install such a device. Thus it is only those weavers who have their own house who are becoming the members of the Corporation Sector.
Thus the nature of work of a worker is undergoing change. Weavers are showing shift in work within weaving itself. That is, those who were handloom weavers earlier are now weaving for Corporation Sector and Khadi Gramodyoga. And the traditional handloom weavers are struggling in various degrees for their survival against modern form of production.

Women play a major role in the handloom weaving industry. Women are actively involved in almost all activities of weaving. Tradition and customs of Indian rural society do not encourage women to engage themselves in work outside the household, but handloom weaving being a household industry, women were engaged in the preliminary processes of weaving for earning and improving the economic condition of their families. The different developments in the weaving industry have adversely affected women folk. That is, the women folk who were working in handloom weaving in their own household industry are without work, as many handloom weavers have deserted weaving as it is becoming unprofitable.

As per the developmental programmes, the technological progress is thought of as a key element and is essential for economic growth in addition to the factors of capital and labour.
Yet, industrialisation has put the weaver artisans to misery, their skills and talents are reduced to nothing in the world of machines. Change in technology has led to the ruination of traditional art of weaving and handloom weaving industry, thereby suppressing the interest of the artisans. Thus the handloom weavers are without work as their skills do not suit the new methods of production.

In brief, the plight of the handloom weavers of Hubli is bleak. In a sick trade, they are experiencing a gradual and painful decline in wages, comforts of life, and status. Inspite of the developmental programmes, undertaken by the government, for the upliftment of the handloom weavers, the socio-economic condition of the weaver artisans, who, follow their traditional occupation, by and large has remained the same.

Thus, the modern facilities have not helped the weavers to gain either wealth or status in the community. The weavers feel that the government should try to take into account, the priorities and preferences of the local weavers, rather than, imposing its own ideas and developmental programmes upon the weavers. They express that, the developmental programmes
should help them to improve their condition without disturbing their traditional way of life. That is, the government should support the handloom weavers financially to weave the particular variety of fabric in which they are expert and for which there is also local demand. Or else, the government could provide the raw material to the weavers of a particular variety of fabric which they are already weaving in their household industry, and help them to market the finished products for which there is a local demand.

In brief, although the weavers traditional economy is still yielding subsistence, in the years to follow, development will make their traditional mode of production and style of living a burden.