CHAPTER – I
INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction:

Handloom Industry in India is an ancient cottage industry with a decentralized set up. The industry is an age old source of livelihood for millions of people in the country. About 10 million people directly depend on the industry to eke out their livelihood, while many more millions of people depend upon subsidiary occupations connected with Handloom Industry. The share of employment provided by the Handloom Industry in the total decentralized sector is about 5.5 per cent. Thus, the industry constitutes one of the major sources of employment in India. In regard to production, industry is meeting one-third of the total cloth requirements of the masses in the country.

Handloom Industry is perhaps the most important one among the hundreds of small scale and cottage arts and crafts that have survived in the present day in India. It is remarkable that in some cases it has been wiped out most of the countries where modern textile industry has been established. But still it occupies a strategic position in India’s socio-economic set up. The industry is not only ancient but its change is unique, in the sense, that in no other country in the world, where hand weaving is in vogue on such a nation-wide basis. And nowhere else could the Handloom Industry of valiantly withstand the on-slaught of and stiff competition from the giant textile machines as in India.

Even in the wake of the mobility, growing urbanization, scientific and technological revolution, India’s time-honoured Handloom Industry has remained unscattered preserving the ancient traditions of weaving and carrying

out reasonable improvements in the use of tools and accessories. The Indian weaver’s ace not only providing enough cloth to meet the internal demand but also exporting numerous artistic varieties to highly industrialized countries of the world.⁴

Indian economic development has to be viewed in the light of the socio-economic factors, preservation of the traditional skills of the people and use of the available resources. Handloom have a great, potential in this regard as they not only for sustaining the existing craft persons but for providing gainful employment, both full-time and part-time, to increasingly larger sections of the economically poor and dispossessed weavers. Village and cottage industries to which the Handloom Industry belongs are oriented towards balanced socio-economic development of our country owing to built-in mechanism that encourages weavers and craftsmen to seek an honorable place in the society. Handloom Industry occupies a place of importance in our country’s economy chiefly by virtue of its employment potential, production and export orientation.⁵

Clothing is one of the primary needs of mankind. This need has necessitated the invention, and in course of time, the development of the Handloom Industry. The importance of the industry in our country can be gauged from the fact that it meets one-third of the total cloth requirements of the masses.⁶

In India, since time immemorial, agriculture and handloom have existed side by side in every nook and corner of the country. Since independence self-sufficiency has been one of the goals of India’s planned economy. Self-sufficiency has been one of the national economy can however be built only on

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the edifice of the self-sufficiency of the rural units, namely, the villages which constitute India. Village and cottage industries to which the Handloom Industry belongs are concerned towards balanced socio-economic development in Indian economy due to built-in mechanism that encourages helping weaving craftsmen in seeking an honorable place in the society. Handloom Industry has a crucial role to play in supporting and strengthening the self-sufficiency of the rural economy. Indians will ensure that the basic minimum clothing requirement of the rural population, as far as possible, is met by cloth produced on handlooms which along with agriculture constitute the core of the self-sustaining rural economy of India.

The Handloom Industry has great socio-economic importance in Indian economy. In recent years the socio-economic life of waving communities is deplorable. A study brought about by the ‘Front-line’ investigation team in December 1991 observed that the handloom sector has been playing an important role in providing the livelihood to several lakhs of people; the conditions of the weavers are precarious; most of them being semi-starved and ill-clad. The average earnings of a weaver household are estimated at Rs 68 per day and they did not get even this pitiably small income all through day. Handloom weavers formed a significant component of the rural poor, the majority of them of them falling into the lowest income-expenditure group.

Though the Government of India has taken several steps for the development of Handloom Industry in Five Year Plans, no appreciable impact could be made to improve the working conditions of the weavers. The industry has been suffering from the problems of the lack of the organization strength, shortage of the basic inputs like yarn, finance, weak co-operative structure,

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absence of adequate marketing facilities, unhealthy competition from power-loom and large scale effective measures not having been to taken to remedy the basic ills, the industry is still in a weak and unorganized state.\textsuperscript{11}

\textbf{1.1. Significance of the study:}

Weaving is one of the most ancient handicrafts patronized all over the world and at all times. Like food and shelter, clothing is also a basic need of every human being. The Indian textile industry today comprises of the large scale, well established and well organized mill sector on the one hand and the largely dispersed and unorganized handloom sector on the other.

In fact, among the counties of the world, ancient India enjoyed an enviable position as a producer of the finest varieties of hand spun and hand woven cloth. The art of spinning and weaving had undoubtedly attained a high level of perfection and the craftsmen had acquired extra ordinary skills. Since ancient times, weaving has by and large remained the exclusive preserve of certain specific castes and communities. The principle of hereditary continuance of occupation for generations introduced an element of stability and also enabled the craftsmen to venture further and acquire greater proficiency.

The passage of time gradually witnessed more and more innovations, specialization and localization with reference to the nature and composition of the fabric produced and its aesthetic appeal in terms of choice of raw materials, colours combinations, patterns and designs woven, texture of the fabric and such other factors.

In the present economic environment where dependency on foreign capital and know-how is increasing all round, the handloom industry presents a sustainable model of economic activity that is not energy intensive and has low capital costs, as well as an extensive skill base. Its survival in and adaptability

to a wide range of economic conditions also needs to be understood in proper perspective, in order to underline the inherent viability of this enterprise. An objective assessment of handloom industry therefore, is the need of the hour.

To examine how the conditions of workers of the handloom sector have developed over the years and to see how far they are meeting the threats of globalization, a study of socio-economic conditions of workers of handloom sector has been undertaken.

During post independence period, government of India appointed many commissions and committees to study various aspects of the handloom industry from time to time. Some research studies have been made in states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andra Pradesh and Karnataka. These studies are related to the handloom sector. But we can’t deny the fact that in the states where the handloom industry is being developed, there are some lacunose found. It is therefore necessary to analyze the prospects workers of the handloom industry in India and also in Karnataka.

1.2. Statement of the Research problem:

The handloom sector plays an important role in the economic development of the rural poor in the state. It contributes significantly by generating more employment opportunities and providing bread to the rural poor. It absorbs more than 10 million people in its fold. Realizing its importance, a plethora of measures is undertaken by the government in order to promote the handloom sector.

Handloom industry in India is the most important cottage industry next to agriculture. Saree industry is a cottage industry for excellence with its agriculture base, industrial super structure, and labour intensive nature. It is remarkable for its low investment and quick and high returns which makes it an ideal industry, which fits well into socio-economic fabric of India.
Unfortunately the situation in Karnataka state is not in favour of handloom sector due to multifarious reasons. Despite several measures taken by the government by the way of institutional support and direct financial assistance to the handloom weavers, they have been in miserable state due to myriad problems and are sustaining continuous losses. These problems include improper supply of raw material, price hike in yarn, lack of proper marketing facilities, lack of market awareness and promotion, lack of proper financial resources, involvement of middlemen, competition from mill and power loom products, lack of modern technology, lack of prompt and timely support from the government and other allied agencies and so on.

Besides being the largest employment generating industry, saree handloom industry earns valuable foreign exchange for the country and forms a segment of handloom industry. There are about 3.8 million handlooms in India employing 10 million people directly or indirectly and provide a source of livelihood for a larger section of population in India. Out of 40,486 handlooms in Karnataka, 11,111 handlooms are engaged in weaving in Bagalkot District.

The weavers of Bagalkot district have been experiencing multifaced problems which range right from procurement of raw materials to marketing of finished products. Besides, inadequate working capital is an added problem. Further, the problem of exploitation poor independent weavers by the master weavers and the stiff competition from the growth of power looms and mill sector in Karnataka in general and Bagalkot district in particular, are also major problems which have resulted in periodical unemployment and under-employment among the saree weavers. The problems of this industry are nothing but the problems of weavers.

It is a well-known fact that the handloom weavers in some parts of the state are starving to death and even commit suicides, due to lack of facilities as well as disproportionate earnings corresponding to their labour, in the weaving activity. The standard of living of the weavers is significantly low and they are leading miserable and pitiable life due to unemployment and
underemployment. This situation prevails everywhere in our country. Bagalkot District, which is chosen for detailed research study, is no exception to this situation. This pathetic condition of handloom industry in Bagalkot District demands thorough investigation into the socio-economic problems and measures to plug the loopholes and find remedies to the problems confronting handloom weavers.

In this connection, large number of studies have been conducted during 1980 and 1990, but very few studies have been undertaken after 1995 i.e. especially after globalization. Most of them are at macro level studies. Only few studies conducted relating to micro level existing in India, but there is no any micro level studies taken place in Karnataka recently. Hence, my study, the present existing socio-economic conditions of workers, in this respect has tempted to take up this issue.

1.3. Objectives:

Keeping in view the above problems, this study has been carried on with the following objectives viz

1. To examine the government policies of small- scale Industry in India.
2. To assess the present status of Handloom industry in India and also in Karnataka.
3. To identify the status of Ilkal saree industry through SWOT analysis in the study area.
4. To assess the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers.
5. To identify the problems of the weavers.
6. To propose the remedial measures to solve the problems of handloom workers and also improve the conditions of handloom industries.
1.4. Conceptual clarification:

The different concepts are being used in this study are as follows.

**Rokhada Weaver:** An independent weaver who owns the loom and works in his dwelling place on his own. He purchases his raw materials out of his own or borrowed funds, brings out the finishing products with the help of family members and also markets them.

**Mungada Weaver:** A master weaver who generally does weave saree. He supplies loom, raw materials, equipment’s etc to the group of weavers working under him. The weaver delivers the finished products woven according to the specifications and design of the master weaver and gets their wages on piece rate.

**Coolie Weaver:** A weaver who is working under a master weaver. He does not own any loom and get his supply of yarn and other materials and weave on the loom provided by the master weaver at his working shed or residence. He weaves according to the type and design of saree specified by the master weaver and gets his wages on piece rate basis. He is also called loom less weaver.

**Looms:** The process of weaving primarily constitutes interlacement of two sets of threads viz, warp and weft and the equipment which operates this interlacement is called loom.

**Handloom:** An equipment made out of wooden frame to weave saree by human effort.

**Power loom:** An equipment made out of iron frame to weave saree by the use of power.

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

**Semi-automatic looms:** The loom operated by human effort by pedaling with legs or by moving the slay by hand.

**Shuttle:** An implement containing support of yarn for inserting the rows of weft through the shed.

**Fly Shuttle:** A shuttle jerked across the wrap by pulling a string attached to a lever.

**Throw Shuttle:** A shuttle thrown by hand through the shed while weaving.

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

**Wrap:** The length wise yarns in the loom or in a woven saree.

**Weft:** The weft is the yarn that fills the spaces across the width of the warp.

**Weaving:** Sending the shuttle which contains the weft thread from one side of the loom to other through threads of the warp, and in driving the weft threads closely together to form even cloth.

**Piecing:** Joining of thread ends of the old warp with the thread ends of the new warp.

**Beam:** Wooden/ iron creal/drum to wound the yarn required for producing large quantity of cloth.

**Pirn winding (weft winding)**

Transferring yarn from wooden cone to pirn with the help of spinning wheel, locally known as ‘Kandike Suttuvadu’.
Reeding or Gaiting up: Drawing the stands of the wrap yarn through the eyes of the healds (Beza) and the dents of the reed.

Household: It is a group of persons who commonly live together and would take their meals from a common kitchen unless exigencies of the work prevented any of them from doing so. But not on the road side, pavements or temple mandaps.

Household Industry: It is one in which an individual unit is run by the head of the household himself or mainly by the members of the household.

Jacquard: A contrivance used in the production of sarees 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 fiber.

Dobby: A contrivance used for the production of simple patterned fabrics.

Zeri: It is the special thread made up of silver, silk and gold. It 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 zeri is sold in terms of marc, one marc weights 242 grams.

1.5. Hypotheses tested/verified\textsuperscript{12}:

1. The handloom households are declining in Bagalkot district.
2. The contribution of women is greater in the handloom saree industry.
3. The health of weavers is affected by the occupational diseases.
4. The productive efficiency of workers is affected by the indebtedness and habits of the worker.

1.6. Research design and Methodology

The basis of the study is sample survey. Stratified survey method is used while drawing the samples. District is divided into six taluks, namely,

\textsuperscript{12} Verified the hypotheses in page no. 136,259,260,263
Bagalkot, Jamakhandi, Bilgi, Mudhol, Badami and Hungund. In Hungund taluk, four villages are chosen for sample where weaving is highly concentrated i.e. Ilkal, Kamatagi, Amingad, and Sulibhavi. Again specific areas from every village are selected by stratified random sampling with proportional-allocation techniques.

According to recent census 2009-10, it is estimated that there are 4986 households weaving Ilkal sarees in Hungund Taluka, Bagalkot District and 4480 weavers’ households are selected from sample villages. Using simple random sampling technique, 10 percent of the households in each sample weaver’s village are selected for the study. Thus the study is confined to 448 handloom weavers’ households in Hungund Taluka.

1.7. Sources of data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data are derived from the responses of the sample handloom weavers to the pre-designed schedules. Proper care is taken to explain to the weavers all the aspects in the schedule and elicit truthful and unexaggerated feedback from them. The schedules are pre-tested before conducting the field survey.

Secondary data are also used for the background of the study has been collected from the following sources viz

1. Department of Industry and commerce, Bangalore
2. Karnataka Handloom Development Corporation, Bangalore
3. Khadi and village Industries commission, Bangalore
4. Department of Handloom and Textiles Bangalore and Bagalkot
5. Integrated Handloom Development Project center Office, Hungund
6. Co-operative Societies, Ilkal
7. University Libraries
8. Census reports of government of India
9. N I R D, Hyderabad
10. Internet
11. Gazetteers
12. Books
13. Theses
14. Published research papers
15. Discussions with Executives, Chairpersons and Directors and officials of departments of handlooms and textiles and connected Co-operative societies.

1.8. Tools of the analysis

The data obtained from the field survey have been processed and compiled in suitable tables to derive appropriate inferences and conclusions.

Suitable and appropriate statistical tools and mathematical devices like averages, percentages, sampling technique, line chart, pie diagram, component bar diagram, percentage bar diagram, multiple bar diagram and also observation and opinion methods have been used for presentation and analysis of data are employed.

1.9. Scope of the study

At present the state of Handloom weavers in Bagalkot District is at stake and the weavers are panic stricken with miseries since they are facing acute problems. A majority of them are struggling hard to survive and labour weavers have become bonded laborers. Bagalkot District in Karnataka has much economic importance as high concentrated handloom fabrics are produced there. As the handloom industry is established in a larger scale in Bagalkot district and most of the people in this district are weavers, therefore an organized study is required. And the fabrics are being exported to various countries. But the condition of the weavers is pathetic. The weavers in Bagalkot District are facing multiple problems in the production and marketing of their fabrics. Competition of mill or power loom products, unfavorable climatic conditions, as well as their poverty and under employment also has added fuel to the fire of the miseries. There is the need of systematic
investigation with regard to the economic problem faced by both the
handlooms at national, state, district or even at Taluka level.

1.10. Limitations of the study

The present study is confined to a general survey of some broad aspects
regarding the socio-economic conditions of the independent weavers called
as Rokhada and the general problems faced by these weavers with regard to
technology, production and marketing of handloom fabrics. For this purpose, a
sample study of 448 weaver’s households is made out of an estimated 4480
weavers' households in sample areas of Hungund Taluk of Bagalkot District in
Karnataka as per the census records of the year 2009-2010. The area is selected
on the basis of a good concentration of handloom and power loom units in the
Taluka. Hence an in-depth study of the Socio-economic conditions of weavers
in handloom units could be made with analysis of the requisite data. Moreover
proximity and convenience of the location of the units was another compelling
reason for the selection of the area for the field survey. Though the sample is
limited to about 10 per cent owing to certain constraints, the samples are drawn
in such a way as to reflect the characteristics of the total population. Hence, the
resultant conclusions in the study can be treated as having universal
application.

The areas covered for the present study is restricted to four places only
vizIlkal, Kamatagi, Amingad and Sulibhavi. The study is confined to workers
i.e. independent weavers of the Ilkal Saree industry only. The word Worker in
Research Topic refers to the weaver. The literature available on the subject is
very much limited. Most of the available data are either clubbed into the cotton
handloom industry, or with the saree industry. Such data is not much useful for
any integrated and comprehensive study. Therefore the researcher conducted an
independent field survey for the present study to obtain the requisition data in
required form to fill up the gap to some extent. However, it was inevitable to
restrict the field survey to a manageable number of weaver households and
sample observation on account of lack of literature available in respect of independent weavers in Bagalkot district.

Neither the published nor the unpublished literature was on private sector. Apart from this, some saree weavers did not know the language used in survey and quite often the respondents were reluctant to give information. The possibility of understatement or overstatement by the respondents under the circumstances might not be ruled out, in spite of precautions taken.

A majority of respondents being illiterates, the answers given by them were approximate figures. Weavers did not come out openly about the hours of work and they were found to be prone to slightly understate the income and overstate the expenditure. However, an attempt has been made to avoid bias and lopsidedness in an analysis and present the findings of the study keeping in mind its objectivity, accuracy and clarity.

Another limitation which may be mentioned is that reliance had to be put on official reports and records both published and unpublished for collection of and other information.

1.11. Chapter scheme of the study

The present study is organized into Eight Chapters as given below;

- First chapter, **Introduction**, deals with the significance of the study, problem of the study, objectives of the study, methodology adopted along with sample design, scope of the study, limitations and organization of study

- Second chapter, **Review of Literature**, assess the various dimensions of studies of the handloom industry, research gap identified, and research issues tackled.
Third Chapter, Small-Scale Industries in Indian Economy: An Overview reveals the significance, characteristics, role, problems and remedies, critical evaluation of the small-scale industry.

Fourth chapter, Present Status of Handloom Industry: An Overview, analyses the significance, the distribution, the status and the promotion of handloom industry in India and also in Karnataka.

In chapter five, Profile of the Study Area, deals with the salient features of Karnataka State, Bagalkot district and Hungund Taluk, historical growth of handloom industry, handloom saree industry in Ilkal, type of weavers and characteristics of weavers.

Sixth chapter, Status of Saree Industry: SWOT Analysis, deals with evolution of saree, characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Ilkal saree industry.

Chapter Seven, Socio-Economic Conditions of the Weavers: An Assessment provides the glimpses of social and economic conditions of workers in Ilkal saree industry.

Chapter Eight, Major Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion, presents major observations, suggestions, conclusion, and scope of further research.

1.14. Summing up

Handloom Industry is the most important one among the hundreds of small- scale and cottage industries in India. It is remarkable that in some cases it has been wiped out in most of the countries where modern textile industry has been established. But still it occupies a strategic position in India’s socio-economic set up. The industry is not only ancient but its change is unique, in the sense, that in no other country in the world, where hand weaving is in vogue on such a nation-wide basis. And nowhere else could the Handloom Industry of valiantly withstand the on-slaught of and stiff competition from the giant textile machines as in India.
At present, the state of Handloom weavers in Bagalkot District is at stake and the weavers are panic stricken with miseries since they are facing acute problems. A majority of them are struggling hard to survive and labour weavers have become bonded laborers. Their socio-economic conditions are worst. Bagalkot District in Karnataka has much economic importance as high concentrated handloom sarees are produced there. As the handloom industry is established in a larger scale in Hungund taluka, Bagalkot district and most of the people in this area are weavers experiencing multifaced problems. This pathetic condition of handloom industry in Bagalkot District demands thorough investigation into the socio-economic problems and measures to plug the loopholes and find remedies to the problems confronting handloom weavers. Therefore an organized study on socio-economic conditions of workers in handloom industry in Karnataka is carried out.