

**THE CONDITION OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY AND
HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN THE PRESENT ECONOMIC
SCENARIO- A CASE STUDY ON PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD
UNITS IN SOUTHERN TRIVANDRUM**

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INTRODUCTION

The handloom sector of Kerala is once very much relevant in the state with most sought out of clothes. In case of employment, handloom sector is the second largest sector next only to agriculture in India. Roy (rural economist) stated that 'Handloom weaving occupies a key place in debates about Indian industrialization which tends to be identified with the rise of mechanized factories'. After British captured India, they took up and nourished the handloom industry for their purpose. At the end of the 18th century, the monopoly came to an end and since 19th century, with the advent of industrial revolution, the English people gave up patronizing the handloom industry. They started mechanical production of fabrics in their land. The 'Kerala kasavusarees' have special reputation all over India for its fineness of count and natural colours, texture and gold borders. Kerala is also known for its unbleached cotton handloom crepe popularly known as 'kora' cloth, which captured the foreign market and occupied a proud place. The total number of weavers of the state is estimated at 1, 35, 750 and the employment generated is 485 man-days in lakhs. The handloom industry is mainly concentrated in Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur districts. The major handloom clusters of Kerala are Balaramapuram/Thiruvananthapuram of the Travancore region. A major handloom cluster, Balaramapuram is a small village in Thiruvananthapuram district of south Kerala, which is famous for fine cotton sarees and dress materials. The Balaramapuram sarees are well known for its simplicity and worn as a traditional costume by the women folk of Kerala. It is woven from un-dyed natural cotton that compliments the tropical climate of Kerala. It is usually a cream stretch of cloth with "Kasavu" (exquisite embroidery work created from silver wires coated with gold) borders. The history of handloom weaving in Balaramapuram dates back to about 200 years ago and is associated with the royal family of *Travancore* (or *Thiruvithamkurin* Malayalam). The then princely state of *Travancore* with its capital at Thiruvananthapuram (also known as Trivandrum) comprised of most of the southern parts of the present Kerala and the modern Nagarcoil and Kanyakumari districts of Tamil Nadu. The Dewan (the Chief Minister) of the then Maharaja, His Highness Maharaja BalaramaVarma (from 1798 to 1810), Shri. UmminiThampi during his reign, brought weaving families from Valliyoor, in Tirunalveli District of the present Tamilnadu state. They belonged to the *Shalia or Chali* community and were brought to weave and supply cloths to the members of the royal family. The King allotted separate streets to them and gave financial assistance initially to

start the business.(T.K. Velu Pillai, 1940; NagamAiya, 1906; SreedharaMenon, 1962; Pattom G. Ramachandran, 1996)

In recent days the sector is seen losing its relevance in the industrial scenario of the state due to several reasons. This industry is facing severe crisis due to increased cost of production, marketing difficulties, encroachment of power looms and lack of human resources. In spite of all the rejuvenating measurements from the state government the handloom sector is still failing on its own ways. This study focuses on the problems in this sector and analysing the future of this traditional industry.

OBJECTIVE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- The main objective of the study is to overview the present working status of household handloom industry in the southern part of Trivandrum.
- To get the data on workers in the household units, wage structure, job structure and the financial status of the workers etc. Understanding the production process of weaving sector and checking whether there is any unique pattern followed by these units.
- To know about the impact of cooperative societies on the household units. Analysing whether there is any change happens in the financial status of the handloom workers or household production units after the implementation of the societies.
- To study the major problems faced by the weavers and the household entrepreneur
- To understand the future of this industry at the scenario of high industrial changes and checking whether innovation or through any modern market strategies handloom sector can be rejuvenated or not.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The methodology used for this study is presented briefly under following headings:

1. Research type: the type of this research is Quantitative. The demographic features of the weavers have been analyzed with appropriate statistical tools and results have been presented with the help of figures and statistical parameters.
2. Area of the study: In Kerala, southern part of Trivandrum has been selected as area of the study owing to the reason that the most of the

handloom weavers are staying and working there and the traditional weaving communities are living there.

3. Tools used for Data Collection and Sampling Design: A well structured tool for data collection in the form of questionnaire has specifically designed for the purpose of this study.

Primary Data: most of the information is collected through questionnaire method and through interview method. Observational method is also used.

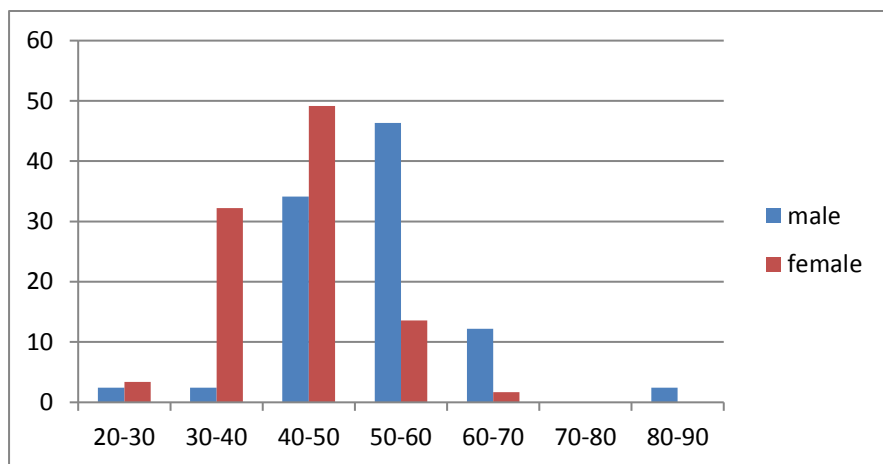
Secondary data: Secondary data were collected from the brochures, government reports, journals and books.

4. Sample Size and period of the Study: Based on the prior plan, 100 weavers and 13 household units have been taken as the sample size. The data used for this study were collected from June 2016 to August 2016.

ANALYSIS

SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN THE HOUSE HOLD UNITS

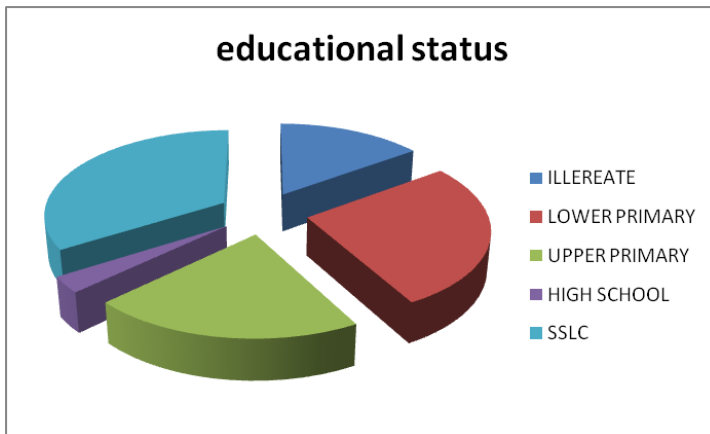
AGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL HANDLOOM WEAVERS						
AGE GROUP	MAL ES	PERCENTA GE	FEMAL ES	PERCENTA GE	TOT AL	PERCENTA GE
20-30	1	2.44	2	3.39	3	3
30-40	1	2.44	19	32.2	20	20
40-50	14	34.15	29	49.15	43	43
50-60	19	46.34	8	13.56	27	27
60-70	5	12.19	1	1.69	6	6
70-80	0	0	0	0	0	0
80-90	1	2.44	0	0	1	1
ALL	41	100	59	100	100	100



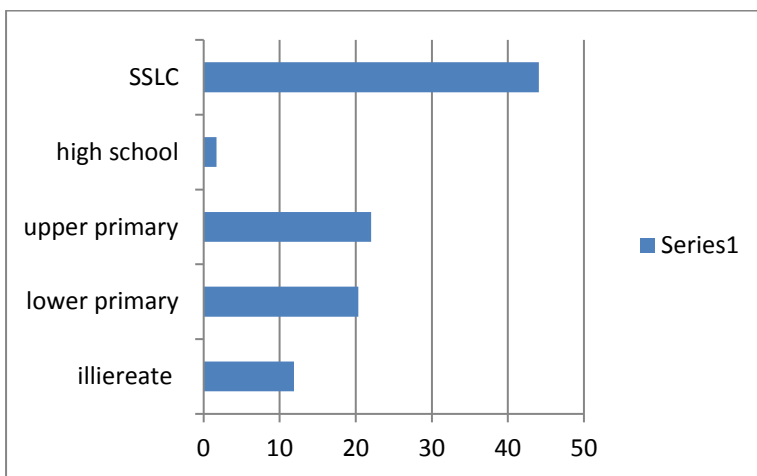
Demographic features: The study comprised of 13 handloom household units with 100 handloom weavers working in these units. There is a higher proportion of females (59%) in the population as compared to males (41%). The age group 40-50 constituted the highest percentage of the population with 43% percent of the total weavers with 29 female weavers and 14 male weavers, followed by 27% of the population in the 50-60 age group. While the highest proportion of male weavers were in the 50-60 age group (46%) that for the females was in the 40-50 age group (49%). The study found no child weaver below the age of 20 and there was only one man above the age of seventy. Among the youth

belonging to the 20-30 age group there was only one male and two females which shows the low degree of participation from the younger generation in this handloom sector.

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY EDUCATIONAL STATUS		
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
ILLERATE	15	15
LOWER PRIMARY	27	27
UPPER PRIMARY	21	21
HIGH SCHOOL	3	3
SSLC	34	34
	100	100



Female educational status



Educational Status: education is an agent of social change and egalitarianism. For a long time in India education was considered an exclusive privilege of the

upper strata of society. To correct this malady after independence programmes for democratisation of education was given emphasize in the overall socio-economic planning. Much head way in this sphere has also been made. This is particularly true in Kerala which is educationally more advanced. In order to examine the level of social development among the category from the angle of education, distribution of population by educational attainments is shown in this table. As can be seen from the table in the case of 15 percentage there was no formal education. While 27 percent possessed education below primary, 21 percent possessed education upper primary and 3 percent possessed education in high school. 34 percent were matriculate pass and the highest percent of the weavers had possessed the educational level of matriculation. It is noted that there is not even a single weaver possessing the educational level which is above than matriculation. In case of female weavers around 45 percent of them were matriculate pass and 20 percent and 22 percent of weavers possessed education in lower primary and upper primary respectively.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD WEAVERS		
CASTE DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
CHALIYA	3	3
EZHAVA	55	55
NADARS	40	40
NAIRS	2	2
TOTAL	100	100

Caste : weaving was the traditional occupation of Chaliya community at the early years and it was happening only at Balaramapuram in where this community was migrated. Now this sector has been expanded to the outskirts of Balaramapuram and there is little number of workers from this caste (3%). They are followed by Ezhavas and Nadars, a category which belong to the Other Backward Community accounting for 55 percent and 40 percent. It is noted that currently a large number of weavers are belonged to the Other Backward Caste. The rest 3 percent belonged to the forward caste Nairs. In the early 1970's the industry in the area experience a good market for handloom products from whole sale textiles and thus it has resulted handloom works turns out to be very attractive occupation and a number of persons from other communities took up the job as a detailed discussion with the households during the field survey revealed. But the people in chaliya community had started to stop weaving and

many of them became either the master weavers who have workers from other castes or owner account enterprises doing whole sales market of these products. Many of them had stopped this occupation by thinking about the declining social status of the workers in this sector.

Economic conditions of the weavers

- Earning of the weavers : the earning of the weavers is depended on the number of the handloom products produced by them and which type it is. Whether it is sari, set & mund or mund only. A handloom sari weaver gets 425 as the wage per sari and the same for a set&mund weaver. Those workers who are weaving only the mund get wage 150-200 range. To weave a sari or set & mund it takes one and half days. So they workers will not get 425 per day. But those who are weaving mund, they can weave around two and half mund per day. So they get 300-350 per day as wage. Excluding the owner cum weavers there are 34 workers who get 425 per one and half day and 51 weavers who get 300-350 per day since they weave mund. According to the quality of yarn used in weaving or quality of weaving, there will be variation in the wage for the same product. For weaving normal mund the weavers will be paid 150 per mund whereas for weaving ‘kasavu mund’ the weaver will be paid 200 per mund can be considered as an example for this argument.

In each year during the onam comes the workers are given bonus amount as 5000-10000 from each household units. Since the largest proportion of the workers in this sector is females their earning is a vital part of their family income; by considering their civil conditions it is noted that most of them are running their family alone, some of them are widows or living alone at their old age after the marriage of their daughters. Many of them are helping their husbands to run their family for a better economic condition. When thinking about the male weavers, earning from weaving is the main income for their family and all of them are full time weavers not depending on any other occupation. Many of the male weavers were farmers at their younger age and due to the decline of agriculture they were forced to find employment in other subsectors of agriculture since they do not posses any higher educational status. So they are trying hard to gain a decent amount of earning from this sector to at least find a mean for running the daily life.

- Financial assistance : since the wage they get from this sector is not enough for meeting the whole expenses of the family and if there is any emergency as health expenses or educational expenses for their children they have to find other financial sources like loans from banks or individuals. But many of the weavers do not hold any physical assets like land or gold which is needed for getting loans from banks they have to get money from individual money lenders with high rate of interest. Since many of the female workers are the members of Kudumba Sree units they have the system of chitty funds.

Economic conditions of owner

- Profit: In this 21st century, as a part of urbanisation and migration people who were working in the handloom sector are migrating to urban areas since they are not finding satisfying occupations in their areas. It is widely believed that handloom sector is not a profit making sector but it is a misunderstanding and still this sector makes substantial amount of profit as empirical study say. Out of 13 firms, 12 firms are making profit greater than ten thousand and one firm is gaining more than fifty thousand per month.

Factors affecting profit of the owner

- Availability of yarn with high quality - In order to satisfy the need of high quality yarns the owners are mainly depended on JAIBHARATH of Surat and VARADARAJA of Tanjore and Coimbatore. Since these yarns provide high quality, they are getting private wholesale textiles where they do not directly contact with the customers.
- Availability of skilled workers: From the study it is understood that one of the firms is making profits greater than fifty thousand. The reason behind this could be that the particular firm sells its products to an exporting company where they need products which are highly diversified with various designs. For meeting this requirement firm appoints highly skilled labours.
- Unstructured wage pattern: The owner is acting like master weaver and they hire workers at predetermined wages which is unstructured. Even though they are getting higher profits they don't share this marginal profit with workers. So the workers suffer from lower wages comparing to their labour effort.

- Marketing strategy: Since there are no direct customers, the firms sell products to other branded shops with lesser negotiation in terms of price.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Among the owners, other backward communities constitute a higher proportion and there is only one owner who belongs to Chaliya community. Majority of the owners possess education of lower primary but their children are well educated and one owner's son who has passed vocational education is interested in this area. The enrolment ratio of their children at schools is hundred percent. They hold higher percentage of lands and savings rates are very high for them. They hold deposits in LIC, local chittys, chitty operated by local banks and other banks .Out of these thirteen households, around eighty percentage of them having double storied houses.

PRODUCTION PROCESS OF HOUSEHOLD HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

It would be better to know the history of this handloom unit and its growth before going to know about the production process of the firm. As we know the Balaramapuram which is situated in south Kerala is renowned for the hub of handloom products. A major handloom cluster, Balaramapuram is a small village in Thiruvananthapuram district of south Kerala, which is famous for fine cotton sarees and dress materials. The Balaramapuram sarees are well known for its simplicity and worn as a traditional costume by the women folk of Kerala. It is woven from un-dyed natural cotton that compliments the tropical climate of Kerala. It is usually a cream stretch of cloth with "Kasavu" (exquisite embroidery work created from silver wires coated with gold) borders.

2.(ii).A. Production Process

A number of preparatory processes and accessories have to be adopted to convert the yarn in the hank form into a warp beam suitable for weaving in the loom. The processes adopted in different clusters are similar but for some minor Alternations. The various pre-loom activities involved in the production of handloom products are discussed below.

A.a. Raw Material

The basic raw material of the cluster is cotton yarn, procured in the form of hank by the co-operative societies/weavers / master weavers from the local yarn dealers or through the yarn bank or from state level agencies like *The Kerala State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd.* (HANTEX) and *Kerala*

State Handloom Development Corporation (HANVEEV). Nowadays cotton yarn is procured in the form of sized beam also. Besides cotton yarn, the cluster also uses golden or half-fine sari for designing and for border and cross-border. In some cases, coloured yarn (dyed yarn) is also used for border and cross-border. The cotton combed yarn procured consist of 100s , 80s etc. Cotton yarn of count 120s is also used in the cluster.

A.b.Curing & Washing

The first activity in the production process is to cure the yarn meant for the warp in water to remove the impurities and cleaning. This will help to carry out the subsequent processes smoothly. The same is again get washed in normal water and dried before taking up for further processes. In most of the cases, the weft yarn does not undergo the process of boiling.

A.c. Winding

Winding is a process of transferring yarn from one type of package to another hank to bobbin. The yarns for the warp and for the weft are separately taken up for winding. The yarn is normally received by the weavers in the hank form. The yarn in the hank form is converted into bobbins by the winding process. In case of warp yarns, recently the manual process as been replaced by a motorized machine. Once the winding is over, the yarn in the bobbin form is taken up for further processes. On the other hand, the yarn which is used in the weft does not require any further processing and hence it is wound into a 16pirn with the help of a small, hand-driven charkha and is called **Pirn winding**. Pirn winding is the process of transferring the yarns from the hanks into bobbin/pirn in the shuttle used in the weft while weaving. The yarn in the form of pirn or the saree, wherever is required, is used in the weft while weaving.

A.d.Warping

The warping is a process of making desired length and width of warp sheet by combining many small packages called bobbins/spools. There are various types of warping by which yarns from a large number of warpers bobbins are collected together and made into a suitable form of package. The process of warping used in Balaramapuram is known as **vertical sectional warping**.

A.e. Sizing

Sizing is a process where starch (sago or boiled Rice or Khoi or Kanji) is coated on the warp yarns for imparting strength; enhance abrasion resistance to withstand the stress and strains exerted during weaving process. In Balaramapuram, the traditional method of ‘streetwarping’ and ‘brush sizing’ is practiced. Natural materials such as rice starch, coconut oil and rice gruel form

the important ingredients for sizing. The process of sizing reduces the yarn breakage and improves quality and efficiency of weaving.¹⁸ Although the yarn is sized and dried in the sheet form, in which the individual threads are lying in a parallel condition, the threads are not free from sticking to one another. To rectify this defect, dividing rods, i.e. lease rods are used to effect separation of the threads. A brush is used to brush the yarn during the process of sizing.

A.f. Beaming & Preparation of Loom

The process of transferring warp sheet to a weaver's beam to mount on loom is called beaming. All these processes are carried out by manually without using power. The process of beaming is followed by looming, which finally prepares the loom beam for weaving. Preparation of loom is broadly classified into two categories of work, known as **Drafting and Denting**. Drafting is the process of passing the warp yarn through the heddle of the loom as per the design. In the case of denting the warp yarns are passed through the reeds and the heddles.

A.g. Weaving

The weavers use a primitive type of throw-shuttle pit looms for the production of exclusively cotton fabrics with pure zero. They do not use any type of improved appliances such as dobby, jacquard, Jala etc. for the production of designs for cloth with extra warp and extra weft. Identical appearance of designs, including warp and weft stripes on the face and backside of the fabric is obtained by this technique of weaving.

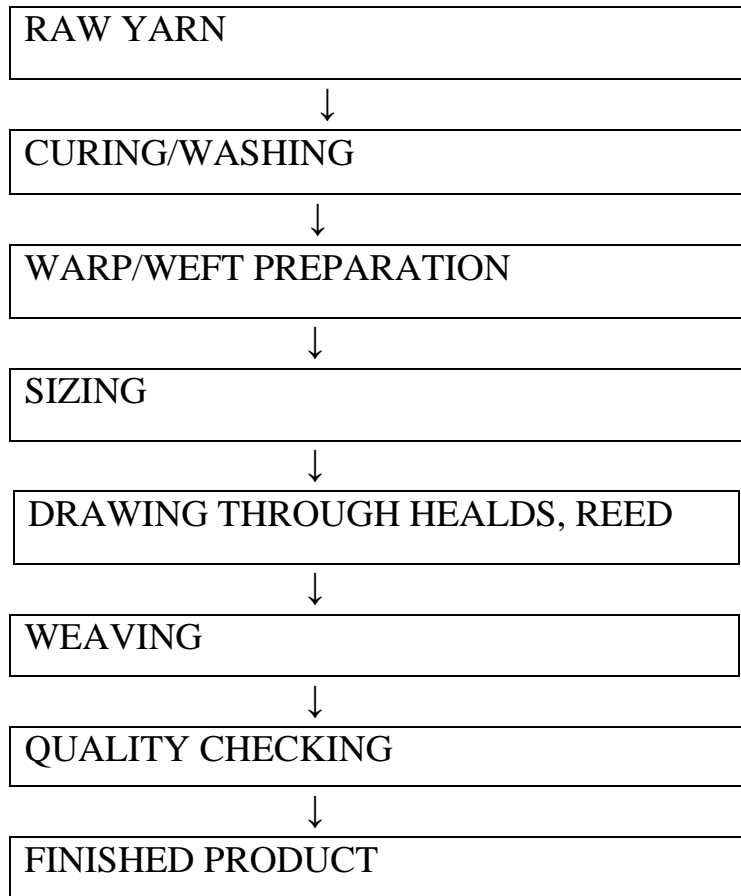
The variety known as "Pudava and Kavani" (veshti and upper cloth with pure zero) still remains as a prestigious bridal gift in marriages.. The designs with zero or coloured yarn, using the age-old technique still has unparalleled appeal which can attract even the most sophisticated customers. **Pit looms** are the most widely used handlooms in Balaramapuram/Thiruvananthapuram cluster for producing the traditional varieties. These are of two types; throw shuttle pit looms and fly shuttle pit looms. The Balaramapuram pit loom is of simple construction and there is no wooden super structure to support its parts. The sley is of light construction with provision to hold bamboo reeds. The shuttle used is peculiar and is made of bamboo instead of horn or wood. The finest varieties of fabrics, known for their beautiful designs and textures with pure sari are produced on throw shuttle pit looms. As the name implies, the loom stands over a pit and the process of picking is done by throwing the shuttle across the shed by hand and beaten by suspended sley. Though the productivity of the fly shuttle looms are 3 to 4 times more than that of an ordinary throw shuttle loom, but is unable to produce intricate extra weft figured patterns without the help of

dobbies²⁰ and jacquards. For products other than the traditional varieties in fine cotton fabrics, the weavers are using frame looms in this cluster.

A.h. Quality Checking & Packing

The quality of the woven products are checked thoroughly and taken up for packing. First it is folded properly and then packed according to the specification. Women are mostly employed for these activities.

PRODUCTION FLOW CHART



- **Uniqueness of the production of handloom products in Balaramapuram household units.**

Handloom creations are products of the artistic traditions of the area of production. The excellence of the fruit of the labour lies in the skill of the weaver and his ability to achieve a rapport with his equipment. Different geographical areas are renowned for its characteristic fabrics, which are the fruit of a long association between the weaver and the equipment and technique that he employs. The structure of the loom and the processes adopted to produce specific types of fabric are, therefore, subject to geographical variations. The materials used for the weaving are cotton

and Zara (*Kasavu*) or dyed yarn. **The quality of the cotton and the comfort one enjoys by wearing these products are the major attraction of Balaramapuram units.** Since the equipment they use for weaving is different from others, the weavers could identify the duplicates of their products at a mere glance.

Technology

The quality of the traditional products is connected with the equipments used for weaving and also with the pre-loom activities. This handloom firm has the unique reputation of having the weaving facility for manufacturing finer count cotton combed yarn of count 80s to 120s. The types of looms, installed here are

- (i) Pit looms (two types) -(a) Throw shuttle pit looms, (b) Fly Shuttle pit looms; and
- (ii) Frame looms. Even though all these looms are in use for the production of traditional handloom products of the cluster/district, the weavers use primitive type throw-shuttle pit-looms for the production of exclusive cotton fabrics with pure zari. Another specialty is that the “Reeds” in the weaving loom are made out of bamboo pieces. This, according to the traditional weavers, helps them to adjust the gap between yarns, which is very narrow when compared to the clothes manufactured using metal reeds.

- **Production Methods**

Sizing is a process by which a solution is applied to warps to protect the yarn from abrasion in the headland reeds of the loom and to strengthen the yarn. The traditional method of ‘**street warping**’ and ‘**brush sizing**’ is practiced. Natural materials such as rice starch, coconut oil and rice gruel form the important ingredients for sizing.

- **Weavers’ Skill**

The skill of weavers in Thiruvananthapuram district varies from place to place and depends upon the variety they have been producing continuously and the type of looms used for weaving. As this district produces all varieties from Thorth (bath towel) costing Rs. 10 to 20 per meter and costly fabrics with pure saree valued from Rs. 100 to 1500 per metre, the income of weavers will vary accordingly.

- **Lace Weaving**

They normally avoid any type of improved appliances such as Dobby, Jacquard, Jala, etc. for making designs in the cloth. The weavers use unique technique by which each end is separately controlled by hand to interlace with the weft wound in small pirns known as *lace weaving*. But the Butta and larger type extra weft designs are woven on the motif/pattern printed with wooden blocks using easily washable vegetable colours.

- The design is first etched on wooden blocks and then colour is introduced into it.
- While the cloth is being woven prints are made on it with the wooden block son it. Then,
- Each motif has to be threaded individually by lace weaving by skilled weavers. This kind of work is easily distinguished from Jacquard/ jala designs as both sides of the fabric will have the same design and not merely an outline on the wrong side in case of lace weaving.
- This type of unique weaving of finer count cotton fabrics with 100 percent pure sari is rampant in the cluster and also extensively used in the district also. The specialty of the lace weaving is that identical appearance of designs, including warp and weft stripes on the face and backside of the fabric is obtained by this technique of weaving.
- The designs with sari or coloured yarn, using the age-old technique still has an unparallel appeal which can attract even the most sophisticated customers. The identical appearance of the design on the face and backside of the fabric makes it unique and exclusive. **This technique of laced weaving is practiced only at Balaramapuram and its surrounding places.** For saree in the cross border of the fabric, rib weave is used with the help of treadle connected with extra cords.
- Due to this weave, there is a series of horizontal ribs (cross bar effect) in the cross border of the product.
- Another specialty of the weaving in this cluster is the ‘temple border’ or ‘puliylakkara’ with *kuridesigns* weaved into the fabric especially to the Dhoti, Saree and Set Mundu.

UNRESOLVED PROBLEMS FACED BY THE HOUSEHOLD HANDLOOM SECTOR

LACK OF PROPER WAGE STRUCTURE

The handloom is labour intensive industry where wages should be satisfactory. But it is generally believed that the workers in labour intensive industries generally receive lower wages than the capital intensive industries. The handloom weavers also get low wages in terms of their productivity. According to the survey result handloom weaver gets usually rupees 300 to rupees 450 for weaving a one mund or sari which takes at least two days. The wage range and days depend on the design and complexity of a sari. The difference between in the wage decided for a weaver who weave new designed sari and a weaver who weave normal kassavu sari is only fifty rupees. These wages are too low for their livelihood in present market price. This is the one reason of poverty and their detachment from this job.

This problem should be addressed on the basis of production system and capitalist control existing in this sector. Production system and capitalistic control is another reason behind the decline situation of handloom. The capitalism is another feature of Industrialization. The capitalist merchant wanted to produce larger quantities and to control over the increasing number of labourers. The mode of organization and control over labour process has changed with growing of capitalism. It means under a master weaver or mahajan or capitalist system, where the instruments of production possessed by the weavers and the capitalist advances the circulating capital (the wage fund and raw material). The weavers work only for wages. The wages are gradually turned down. The drop off in wages and wage labor system that causes alienation from the traditional handloom industry.

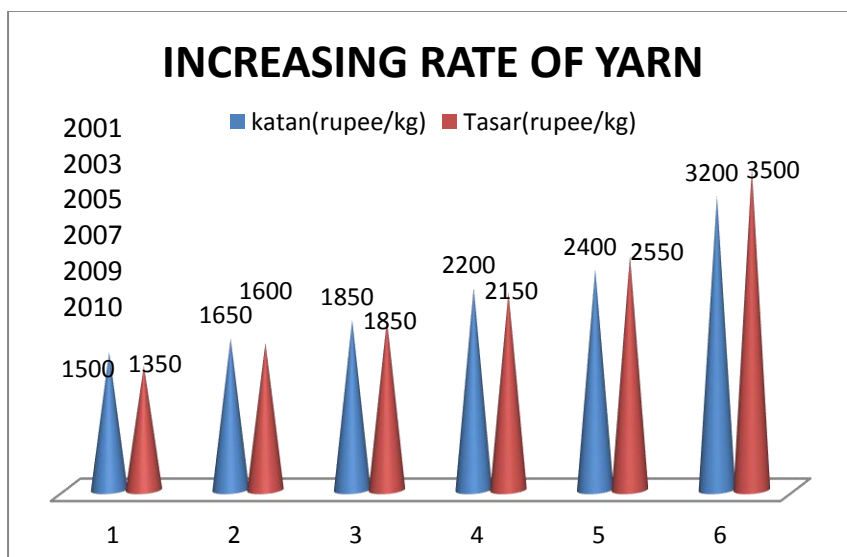
One of the main reasons behind the poor wage structure in this sector is the increasing feminisation of the industry. As the survey result shows that the higher proportion of the workers is female and they possess low level of educational status it is not difficult for the master weaver to set the wage at a level which is favour for him making profit. The important factor should be considered is that there is no negotiation between the weaver and the owner (master weaver) on making the decision about wage set up. The weaver has to accept that wage being set up by the owner and if he or she is not ready to work on that wage then they have to leave the sector. The male worker has some

dominance on the wage due to his skill in making variety of products with new designs whereas female workers are not trained such a way to attain skill in making different designed products. So she has to be satisfied with the prevailing wage. Thus the major problem of the industry is that the weavers do not get adequate wages for their labour. As a result many weavers do not want their children to be coming to this profession.

Labour problem: The daily wage or profit available to a weaver is less in comparison to other category of wage labourers. With all his technical skill and knowledge, the wages available to him even now are not attractive. Thus many of them in the colonial period continued this occupation just for a bare living. His life conditions were deplorable. Their habitats were huts and they were compelled to live in acute poverty. Many of them shifted to other wage labour. Some of them even went as coolies and their looms remained idle for want of capital and market. That is what happened in the streets of Balaramapuram. At early years there were at least two handlooms in each house in this area. Around 500 families belonged to Chaliya community were living there and everyone was occupied in this sector. But currently except one or two house hold every other family seized their units and started cotton textile shops or engaged in some other occupation like driving or coolie in which they can attain a decent amount of wage.

Rising price of yarn: The silk yarn (raw material) is most essential thing in weaving. The yarn comes from Bangalore, Thanjore, Surat and West Bengal and the Madanpura, Reibritala, and Baribazar sites are famous for yarn market. From the discussion with the master owner it is known that out of thirteen household units four units get the yarn from outside especially from Surat, Thanjavoor and Coimbatore. The yarn named Jai Bharat which is brought from Surat has high quality followed by the yarn named varadharaja which is brought from Thanjavooore. Since they rank high at quality the price of these yarns is also high. The units which have high profit or demand from branded shops will buy these yarns. Other units usually get yarn from corporative societies and local mills but they are not satisfied with its quality. The demand for their products is mainly depended on the quality of yarn. If the price of yarn increases then most of the units cannot afford it and they go for low quality yarn and will sell their products at low price which will affect again the wage amount given to the weavers.

As the yarn is vital resource in weaving, the market depends on its price. The yarn price and product cost are related to each other. With the price hike of yarn the cost of product also increases. In previous time, the handloom weavers in whole over India used silk from China. This silk is cheap in 1995-1998 Indian government imposed a ban on Chinese silk yarns. Surat and Bangalore silk are the best in quality but much expensive. Prior to 1990, the cost of this silk used to be Rs. 100/- per kg. Now it is available at more than Rs 1500/- per kg. One of the master weaver highlighted that in December 2010, the price of raw material just reached rupees 3500/ kg and rupees 3200/ kg. Thus, it is too tough for the weavers to buy yarn. Because of continuous increase in yarn price the societies consider high cost of production as a major input related problem followed poor quality of raw material. Sometimes, yarn price is increased due to the crisis of yarn. So the master weavers buy yarn in huge quantity in moderate price and stored. This way many master weavers invest their capital. When the crisis period of yarn appears in the market then these people sell their stored yarn with high price to the local market and get profit.



Prior to 1990, the cost of this silk used to be Rs. 100/- per kg. Now it is available at more than Rs 1500/- per kg. From the fig.1, it is clear that raw material gradually increases from 2001 to 2010. The yarn price is rapidly increased in the year 2009. The '*katan*' material increases in small amount i.e. average rupees 200 in the year of 2001-2007. After 2009, it increases just double to that of the previous time. The local merchant highlighted that in December 2010, the price of raw material just reached rupees 3500/ kg (in case of *tasar*) and rupees 3200/ kg (in case of *katan*).

Thus, it is too tough for the weavers to buy yarn. For that reason, all independent weavers had failed to buy the silk yarn independently. The independent weavers started to work under the *Mahajan* Because of continuous increase in yarn price the societies consider high cost of production as a major input related problem followed poor quality of raw material. Sometimes, yarn price is increased due to the crisis of yarn. The *Mahajan* bought yarn in huge quantity in moderate price and stored. This way many *Mahajan* invest their capital. When the crisis period of yarn appears in the market then *Mahajan* sell their stored yarn with high price to the market and get huge profit

INTERFERENCE OF POWER-LOOM: The power-loom sector is of more recent vintage and has shown enormous growth in the 19th and 20th century. In Kerala also, power-loom came with full control in the year of 1950. At present, handloom and power loom are both exist side by side in Kerala. The handloom market has now become limited and domain of few handloom owners. However handloom has clearly identifiable advantage in cloths made of certain types of yarn or carrying certain types of loom woven design and it will exist as long as there is many handloom clusters of south Kerala are gradually switched over to power driven looms, because of getting higher productivity and earning better livelihood. The handloom owners installed power-loom in their house premises or factory site where handloom was there. The reasons are

i. handloom products are costly than power-loom products. The power-loom can imitate design of handloom product and produce it in low rates. For example power-loom saris start from rupees 300 where as the handloom saris start from rupees 600. So, in adapting to large scale mechanical and automates weaving in handloom industry and beyond, the handloom weavers turned away from producing fine quality cloths to lower-quality products made with substandard raw material and sold at low prices.

ii. In power loom always used mixed silk, synthetic, bright, kichhi, polestar, rolex and plastic and handloom used expensive silk yarn. For that reason, the cost of handloom product is high.

iii. In handloom one weaver gets rupees 300-450 for weaving of one sari which takes at least 2 days. So, he can weave maximum 10-12 saris in a month. His monthly income is rupees 3500 to rupees 5500. Whereas a power-loom labour can weave two to three saris in a day if there is no power cut and he gets rupees 20-25 per meter. One sari is about 6 meter length. His income is in a day rupees

240-450. So, monthly income of a power loom labour is about rupees 5500 to 10000.

iv. Handloom is labour intensive job where many skilled people are involved in preparatory and post weaving activity. The power-loom weaving is a totally machine based technology, do not require skilled labour. For instance making design and warp, putting threads into bobbin, polishing etc are done by machine. Many people are not required. One man is enough for manipulating two or three power-loom machines at a time.

v. Many customers want to buy a sari in a reasonable price not in high price. When a customer gets a power-loom sari within a budget, then they do not go to buy handloom products. And the shop owners sell the power-loom cloths as handlooms to the customer. According to the field visit in the four streets of Balaramapuram 80percent of weavers had stopped their weaving occupation and has started the textile shops or occupied some other works. The 18% of the weavers have started to use power loom instead of handloom for weaving. But the weavers in powerloom sector are not technically skilled to make variety product like golden saris or set and mundu with new designs. The powerloom also is not made such a way to weave that kind of products. The power looms which can weave variety of products according to the new trend are highly expensive. Nobody in that area is using that kind of machines. So the units which were visited on the part of the field survey (those units are not included in the collected data since the study is completely focused only on the handloom household units) are using normal power loom which can produce only the normal kasavu mund. One weaver can manage three looms at a time and can weave three mund per day and receive 150 for each mund. The demand for their products is relatively high in the local market and they do not have any demand from any branded textile shops. There is not even a single female weaver in these power loom weaving units and those who had been working in these units were left due to the lack of proper technical skill and the discrimination in the wage pattern.

While considering the effect of industrialization on Indian industrial sector, the whole market of India is full of low costs power-loom products. It is fact that the high cost handloom product could not struggle with power-loom product. To compete with power-loom product and to hold the market demand, the handloom weavers, and the master weaver who have capital installed power-loom machines. Thus, the management uses technology for large scale

production with cheaper rate to hold the market demand and to gain more profit and control over the labour process. The handloom weavers adopt only for better income, less labour intensive and better livelihood. The female folk of the family are not essentially required in power-loom. Either they are free or engage separately in another jobs or power-loom activities as a paid worker.

Women in Handloom sector

Women weavers have been the principal stabilization force through years of crises and problems for the handloom sector Handloom sector is the only manufacturing sector wherein one finds large number of women producing products which are worn by large number of women. A **unique feature of handloom sector is women producing for women**. The cultural analysis frames the study of women's participation in Indian handloom industry.

Within the wider network of handloom production in India, women were involved in Production and marketing of the products, as workers, as participants in commercialized Domestic textile production, and as investors/master weavers. Because textile Manufacturing was and is the most profitable economic activity in many parts of the Country, it is no surprise that most illustrious families controlled handloom production as master weavers. Women within these elite families became master weavers through both inheritance and marriage.

Despite such features, which are outwardly unique, women weavers were never given the primacy they require. Their role in production was never acknowledged beyond the confines of the home. Their work most often went unpaid. Governments never recognized formally as a target group. Even the private initiatives of NGOs, or fashion boutiques, tend to ignore their contribution and role.

The most radical to rightist political mobilization structures in handloom sector are devoid of any issues and participation of women. Women participation in political mobilization is completely absent. Women constitute a major workforce in the handloom sector. Also, most of the handloom products are meant for women.

In the past ten years, with changes brought in by globalization, liberalization and economic reforms, handloom sector has been facing adverse government policies and discriminatory competition. As a result, the family economy has been in turmoil. The resultant burden is the most on the women weavers. In these circumstances, it became important to address the problems and needs of this 'vulnerable section' of handloom sector.

There is no recognition to women's work as weavers, even though women play a major role in all pre-loom operations and take on labor-intensive activities. Women do not have access to government identity cards, except in cases where they are widowed or are members of the cooperatives. Weavers depend on master weavers for credit, raw material and market support.

- Even in instances where women are paid wages for small, piece-meal activities like yarn winding, sizing etc, these wages range from Rupees 10-15/- per day. Single and older women suffer more since they cannot take on labor intensive activities and lack family support. Women constitute 65 percent of workforce in handloom sector, a fact acknowledged by the government. But, there is not even a single programme, or scheme, that addresses this segment, in the last 100 years.
- 80 percent of women do not know of any existing or past government schemes on handloom sector. 80 percent of women in handloom sector working for more than 10 hours per day in handloom production. Often, there is no payment for this work, or if paid, there are very low wages. Membership for women in handloom cooperative societies are very low.
- Number of women employees in the cooperatives is also low. There are only 12.1 percent of women employees in department of handlooms.

Financial Crisis: Majority of the handloom units have limited financial resources to spare to put even simple marketing concepts into practice. Many of them are faced with multiplicity of problems. If improvements are provided to their current problems and sincere efforts are made to change the marketing culture in which they are operating, can enable the handloom market to increase the sale of their products and thus increase the overall market demand for their products which will result in an increase in their market share. The field visit result shows that the master weaver possess relatively better financial stability than the weavers due to the possession of physical assets like land, house etc. But they also face financial crisis due to the decline in the sales of their products and thus the increasing losses which they cannot avoid. Many of the firms have seized their household units because of this reason. During the crisis they are not getting any back support from the government also. The weavers also face the after effects of this problem by loosening their job and become unemployment or under employment.

ROLE OF CORPORATIVE SOCIETIES: the corporative movement seeks to help weavers in three ways: (1) in providing easy credits to the weavers from their indebtedness to money lenders, (2) in purchasing raw materials required for the industry at wholesale prices and selling them to members and in selling as agents the products manufactured by weaver members thus eliminating the profit of middle men and (3) in organising producer's societies. An attempt was also made to finance the trade in hand woven cloths by starting a sort of a loan and sale society for advancing loans to weavers on the security of their manufactures. The societies are classified under two heads: (1) the credit societies (2) non-credit society for purchase, sale and production.

The credit societies: credit societies exclusively for weavers are few. But there are some societies where weaver members predominate. There is an increase in the share capital, in the reserve fund and in the working capital and a reduction in the cost of management. But it is not clear that how many and how much of the loan amounts are given to actual weavers and how far the weavers are benefited by them nor is the purpose of the loans stated. Loans in credit societies are advanced to members against the security of property or on the surety of two other members. This being the case it is not known how far these credit societies have really benefited the weavers who are proverbial for their poverty. It is often said that loans are given mostly to the master weavers for manufacturing cloths they require. Most of the credit societies are on the limited liability basis. The societies could not have helped the poorer weavers very much for the following reasons: - (1) they are controlled by a group of people those who are either weavers or doing some other works and well to do people against whose domination the societies seek to protect the poor weavers; (2) as many of the weavers have no security to offer they are no better off for being members of the society; (3) and again the borrowing capacities of members are fixed very low.

Considering the case of the household handloom weavers, the 99% of them have membership in any of the primary societies. But since they are not working in the society handloom factories they are not able to receive the financial assistance from the societies whereas the regular weavers of these societies can acquire the aids provided by the government. The regular weavers in the societies can access credit in the form of loans with low rate of interest. But for the household unit weavers cannot access credit like them and if they want to get loans they should produce some collateral and have to pay the

money back with high rate of interest. Few of the weavers say that if they get loan or any kind of financial assistance from their societies then they could have started independent units. The educational aid for the children of the weavers provided by the societies also was given to five or six weavers as 20000 in one of the years. Two or three weavers got 2000 as the part of employment guarantee programme which was also distributed through the primary societies.

Non-credit society for purchase, sale and production: the main activity of the society is to purchase raw materials required and sell them to members. The sale of raw materials to members is generally for cash but the society often sells them on credit, treating such sales as advances of loan. It functions as a credit society as well.

The price of yarn which is provided by the societies is relatively low therefore many of the master weavers get the yarn from the societies. But the quality of this yarn is poor and the quantity they can buy is also less. Therefore the units which get order from branded textile shops or exporting their products do not use this yarn and they buy yarn from outside by paying high price. So the societies are not helping them this way also. The interesting fact is that around half of the members in these societies are not working in the weaving sector but receiving the aids by taking membership as weavers. The ever existing practise of corruption is also a threat to the workers.

These societies help the household units through buying their products and paying a fair amount. So the units have been selling products to these societies. But since due to large amount of default and outstanding payment they stopped to sell their products here and started to look for private textile shops.

To strengthen the activities of the societies Government has set up two societies Kerala State Handloom Weaver's Cooperative Society (Hantex) and Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation (Hanveev). Hantex and Hanveev are state sponsored marketing agencies in Kerala. Since the societies did not have financial resources and managerial capability to cope with yarn procurement, marketing of cloth etc apex societies like Hantex was set up in various states at the initiatives of the Government of India. The members of the society include the weaver's cooperatives in the state, central cooperatives, corporative spinning mills and the Government of Kerala. The objectives of the Hantex are (1) channel credit from central institutions to the societies (2) procure and supply yarn and other raw materials (3) provide technical inputs in the form of

improved design and knowhow and to (4) market the products of the member societies.

Hanveev was set up in 1968 as the Kerala Handloom Finance Corporation to promote the private handloom sector by providing finance for both working capital and for investment.

But according to the weavers and the master weavers these apex societies also has not made any impact on their life in terms of financial assistance or credit availability. These societies also channel their aids through the primary societies. Since the primary societies are not working properly this credit facility also not coming to the hands of needy people. Thus the problems are still continuing. Important financial problem is irregular payment of dues of the products supplied. Lack of rebate assistance to weaving accessories and charging of high interest rate by financial institutions are other financial problems. Another major problem faced is lack of assistance from the government in the form of subsidies to purchase weaving accessories. The banks are not ready to pay loan to the handloom sectors. Some scheduled banks are giving loans by charging high rates of interest.

Diseases related to weaving: Weavers also lack basic entitlements such as healthcare. The nature of weaving – which involves repetitive movement is linked to occupational health hazards. Body pain, pulmonary problems, chronic bronchitis, decrease in hand-grip and eye problems are common. Currently handloom welfare schemes provide life/health insurance.

Competition from Tamilnadu handloom sector, lack of training to the weavers especially to weave new designed products according to the demand from the exporting companies are some other problems faced by the handloom units. This also affects the market of the Kerala handloom products. For the efficient use of all the resources the employment of a suitable human force is essential. The need for capable working force is ever increasing more and better trained employees are constantly needed in all enterprises. Manpower planning plays a vital role in the achievement of the common goals of the enterprise.

One of the major problems relating to labour in the handloom sector is training to the labours. The basic requirement for the development of the industry is constant technical improvement. Due to lack of adequate and properly trained workers, the handloom sector is unable to pay constant attention to the technical improvement that makes the handloom cloth more durable and more attractive to the consumers. Technical and management problem also affect the

performance of handloom weavers society. Generally persons with no background of managerial knowledge are appointed to manage the affairs of the co-operative societies. Among the managerial problem the most important is the lack of efficient managing committee. Often retired officers from the industries department with no business ability are inducted into the society.

Lack of marketing strategies: one of the important problems faced by the handloom sector is the poor marketing strategies adopted by this sector. Since it is a cottage industry without having proper marketing strategies it will not be able to catch the market. The household handloom sectors mainly sell their products to branded textile shops like Karal Kada, Kasavukada and Kasavumalika etc. They are not using the local markets since the payment from the direct customers is less than these shops. But when they are weaving according to the orders they receive it is beneficial for them to negotiate for the high prices for their products.

Lack of information about the changing trends in the textile industry is also a major problem. Weavers or the handloom owners are not well aware of the information about the new designs, technical changes, new marketing strategies using network connections, the vital role of information technology in this sector and better credit facilities and so on. Realising the importance of information technology on the revival of this sector can be the major positive change happening to this industry.

IMPACT OF POLICIES IN HOUSEHOLD HANDLOOM SECTOR

The handloom and textile department have been implementing various programmes and schemes to protect and promote the handloom industry of Kerala. The various initiatives to support the stakeholders in the industry are given below:

- Production incentive scheme
- Income support scheme
- Promotion activities/Expo
- Skill Upgradation
- Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
- Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme at Kannur and Thiruvananthapuram
- Integrated Handloom Training Project
- Strengthening of Hantex and Handveev under DDHPY

- Welfare scheme like Contributory Thrift Fund, Health Package and House cum Work Shed Scheme
- Quality Raw material Distribution scheme under CENVAT
- Promotion of exquisite handloom products as work of art.
- Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana (DDHPY)
- Uniform programme scheme

Among these schemes and programmes there are only few are resorted to the household handloom sectors like DDHPY, Skill Upgradation, SGSY, Integrated Handloom Training Project and Uniform programme etc. The DDHPY scheme is characterised by its weaver centric nature and focus on sustainable development of weavers in co-operative and private sector. In the state the scheme is being implemented with the cluster development approach modelled on lines of UNDP programme. It mainly works through the primary cooperative societies and the members in these societies can access the benefit of this scheme.

But according to the weavers and the master weavers though they have membership in any of the societies they are not getting any benefit of these schemes. As the part of Integrated Handloom Training Project many of the household weavers had get the opportunity to learn new methods of weaving especially using different kinds of looms other than pit looms and as the part of training programmes they were given a chance to get financial assistance in form of low rate of interest bearing loans. The weavers those who complete six months training and acquire the training certificate have the chance to get the loans. But even though the weavers took leave from the household units and attended the training they did not get the loan as offered before. Except the proper members (the society weavers) no other weavers from this sector can access this credit aid. It has badly affected the household weavers, they have lost their regular weaving units and some other weavers got into their looms. So they lost their employment and not provided by any credit facilities also. Around 15 weavers had faced this situation and after suffering so much they could able to find out the units at which they are working now. So the household weavers are not satisfied or having a good opinion about the schemes was provided.

Weavers have appreciated the Uniform scheme of Government since it can give seasonal employment opportunity with fair wage to all weavers. But since it is

seasonal and there is a chance of loosening work in the current working units, weavers were not ready to take part in this scheme.

The overall analysis on the impact of policies in the private household handloom sector it is clear that the schemes cannot improve the life style of weavers in these units. The DDHPY scheme is supposed to provide Rs.2500/- per month for the beneficiaries. Except 13 weavers all other weavers are the members of 10 different primary societies. Among these thirteen weavers they were the members of any of the societies. But due the inefficient working of societies was made them to resign the membership. In these 10 primary societies only few of them are working properly and members of these societies are getting the aids at least once in a year. According to the weaver members the societies like ‘Sreenarayana Society’ and Vayalvaram are working properly and these societies distribute the financial assistance to the household weavers also. The activities of other primary societies should be evaluated by the officials.

SUGGESTIONS

Future of the household handloom sector

Possibilities of young generation in this sector Handloom weaving is not possible without having lots of physical strength and patience to work eight or nine hours continuously by ignoring the health problems like back bone pain and other health issues. But after working this much what they get as wage is not at all sufficient for raising their family into a better standard of living. So the major number of next generation workers of the traditional workers are not engaging and continuing in this sector. According to the weavers they are trying harder to give education to their children as much as they can, so that their children do not have to enter into this profession and end up in a semi poverty condition.

So then how can the new generation can find out employment from this sector with a fair wage and accept this as their profession. One possibility is that

E-commerce: This industry has much to gain from riding the e-commerce wave. Surveys show that the e-commerce market in India is growing fast. Once listed on an online platform, a weaver can instantly start selling directly to a population of a billion plus; whereas, currently he sells to a middle man at much lower prices. Enabling a mindset change (from offline to online), building trust among weavers, availability of internet, working knowledge of computer, imaging in rural locations, inventory management, etc., are some of the blockers that e-commerce companies will face while interacting with weavers. The first few challenges can be overcome by spending more time in clusters and interacting regularly with the manufacturers. Earlier, it was believed that imaging would be a major concern in rural areas but, now there are cost effective imaging solutions which make it possible to shoot the image at the weaving place of choice.

E-commerce players have already started to lend a helping hand to this industry. Amazon, for instance, has a store called Crafted in India which curates authentic handloom and handicraft. Flipkart has tied up with the Ministry of Textiles (2014) under its Abhiyaan program to resuscitate dying crafts. Snapdeal has a selection of six handloom state bodies that it merchandises under its Handloom Store. While craft is a new category for the already established e-commerce players, organisations such as FabIndia (1960), Jaypore (2012) and Indianroots

(2013) have been in this space for a few years now. FabIndia, for example, is already connected to 55 thousand artisans through unique community-owned companies business model wherein the artisan has access to design inputs, micro finance and have built mechanisms where everyone in the supply chain is incentivised to deliver quality products. Considered a behemoth in the retail space, Fab India has recently started selling online through their website. Jaypore and Indusdiva, on the other hand provide design inputs to artisans and then buy these products for sale on their website. More recently, we have seen new players like GoCoop and weavesmart who are providing market access to artisans through the online route.

There is a better example that I could find during my field visit on the young generation participation in this sector through the online handloom shops. A person named Yuvaraj who completed his under graduation started an online shop only for the handloom products called Southloom.com. He has started this shop in 2016 with the capital of 20000. Since his father is running a textile shop he could easily access household handloom units which produce good quality handloom products. So he has been going to the rural areas and has found around 10 household units and come to an agreement to buy the products at reasonable price which is higher than the market price which the household unit could access. For Yuvaraj he does not have to build any storage house to keep these products since he can able to collect the products directly from the units according to the orders he receives from the online customers and reaching it to the customers. According to him the last year turnover was 60000 excluding the initial cost. So through him the weavers are getting jobs and fare wage. The master weaver can gain more profit than selling to the shops. The handloom products get wide recognition through the social medias and he is able to conduct exhibitions of these products during the time of celebrations like onam and with the help of social medias he is able to increase the popularity of these products not only inside state but at country level also. Since he is confident at continuing this online shop at a wider level he can accommodate more household units and can give employment to other job seekers also. If there are people like him who are willing to start business enterprises after qualifying higher educational status can invest in this sector and can earn profit without facing the difficulties of huge capital investment.

Weavers have not been able to ride the e-commerce wave that has taken larger cities by storm. In most of the rural areas internet is not accessible and they are

not aware of the online market sales and its possibilities. So the young generation can help them by setting up online shops for their products without incurring huge costs especially they can avoid cost of rent and huge capital investment.

Effective implications of government policies

The important factor should be noticed is that many of the weavers are not aware of the government policies for this sector and for their welfare. The central and state government have brought down many policies which have not been reached to these poor weavers. Though Government has established many primary societies the poor functioning of these societies prevent the weavers to achieve the benefits of those policies and schemes.

Government has been making various interventions. The brief of Government interventions is as follows:

(A) Input support to weavers:

- (i) Access to raw material – supply of yarn through NHDC.
- (ii) Concessional institutional credit through banks.
- (iii) Skill development through training by WSCs.
- (iv) Support through WSCs & professional designers engaged under NHDP & Mega Cluster Programme.

(B) Infrastructure support through cluster development – 6 mega clusters, 20 large clusters & 610 small clusters, new approach for block level CFCs with internet connectivity.

(C) Marketing and export promotion – through domestic and international exhibitions, Handloom Mark scheme, India Handloom Brand, e-commerce platform.

(D) Welfare measures – health and life insurance.

(E) Revival & comprehensive package for loan waiver, recapitalization of primary/apex societies as well as to ensure cheap credit flow to this sector. 5.0

SCHEMES & BUDGET PROVISIONS:

Following schemes have been approved for implementation during 12th Plan:

1. National Handloom Development Programme – two components:

(a) Revival, Reform and Restructuring (RRR) Package for handloom sector.

(b) Comprehensive Handlooms Development Scheme.

2. Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme – two components:

a) Health Insurance Scheme for access to health care facilities 7

(b) Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana for life insurance

3. Yarn Supply Scheme.

4. Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (Mega Cluster Scheme). Non-Plan:

5. Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985 (Non-Plan Scheme) The total budget allocation for 12th Plan is Rs. 4314.31 crore.

It is shocking to hear that none of the weavers are aware of the schemes and policies. Even though most of the household handloom weavers are the members of any of the primary societies they cannot able to get the benefits which are provided through the societies. So it is inevitable to do some strict regulations and monitoring of the functioning of these societies.

For technological improvement

To empower handloom weavers and build their capacity to enhance competitiveness of their products in the domestic as well as global market in a sustainable and reliant manner;

Facilitate collectivization of handloom weavers and service provides for procurement, production, marketing and other support activities to promote sustainable growth and diversification;

Giving a proper thrust to design development through creation of design studio and involvement of professional designers,

Involving professional marketing chains and marketers to identify the items of production to meet the changing demands of the market,

Providing requisite support/linkages in terms of adequate core & technical infrastructure, technology, product diversification, design development, raw material banks, marketing & promotion, credit, social security and other components that are vital for sustainability of weavers engaged in the handloom sector;

Providing for development of handloom clusters in an inclusive and holistic manner in an environment of empowered and participative decision making;

Public Private Partnership (PPP) model in the form of collaboration between the Government, beneficiary weavers & their group, financially creditworthy & commercially linked marketing enterprises and the financial Institutions Nature and level of assistance under the Scheme will be need based and would include the components that are necessary for meeting the objectives.

Implementation of Mega handloom clusters, Cluster Management and Technical Agencies (CMTAs).

For the revival of handloom industry

(i) To prepare the handloom industry, the Government has to take the initiative to re-orient its focus and activities and programmes to create a 'Data bank' in the handloom department so as to build up a reliable Information System for Market intelligence.

(ii) It is advisable to establish functionary centres in order to collect market facts on products, total market distribution and their channels, consumers competitions, import rules and regulations, economic factors and specific market characteristics and price trends, the availability and requirements of handloom products and disseminate this information among the Weavers Co-operative Societies involved in Export business.

(iii) The pending disbursements (like, subsidies, rebates etc.) to weavers and other workers in this industry needs to be fully paid so as to motivate them to put in their full potential.

(iv) Cost competitiveness of this industry segment, at present, is very poor. This in turn affects the profit margins and sales of the product. Stricter measures to control cost through adoption of advanced technologies, engagement of trained and skilled staff etc.

(v) Specialized training needs to be given to the handloom employees for the meaningful marketing of handloom products through cost-effective distribution channels.

(vi) Government should encourage the government-owned enterprises to purchase handloom products. It should insist on government employees to wear such garments at least once in every week so as to boost the demand for such products.

For capturing the markets

□ The sector has great market opportunities if it is ready to take them. Products made by using organic cotton yarn and natural dyes in high demand in the developed nations and upper segment that are health conscious. For these kinds of products research and development, training and knowledge sharing are crucial things. These R&D, training, information centers and mini spinning mills to be come up at weaving center level so that the weaver can have easy access to primary business needs.

□ To bring a turnaround in sector, establishment of brand image in the customer's mind, generating loyalty through long-term customer relationship and high quality services are required.

□ The processes must be standardized and quality control system should be introduced. To define the quality standards proper guidelines should be laid down.

□ Identifying high growth areas, new product categories and potential marketing avenues on continuous basis will direct the handloom sector towards profitable business model. New product categories can be organic cloth, high growth areas can be kids wear, and new market avenues can be forward integration setting up the tailoring units and readymade garment making units in the handloom cluster to produce readymade handloom garments. Finding opportunities to export customized products according to the external market needs.

- To keep logistic cost and cost of raw material low, decentralized spinning mills can be established in the handloom cluster level.
- To maximize the productivity and quality, the weavers should be given incentives for their skills and efforts. Incentives motivate any worker to give his best.
- Traders should change their attitude towards weavers and market. They should not become obstacles between market and weaver. They should maintain fair relations with weavers in promoting handloom products and they should help in establishing proper market information channel, which is of free flow in nature.
- Reviving and restructuring the weavers servicing centers (WSCs) to act as R&D centers which can be provided solutions in loom modifications for product innovation as well as process innovation to the weavers.
- Government should encourage new investments and entrepreneurs in handloom sector by providing better sops like any other new economy industry. The sops can be loans with low interests, cluster development, training and information. Priority can be given to the members of the weaver's families.
- Training and development to enhance the skills of weavers in manufacturing and marketing aspects in changing business environment.
- Innovative products, which can be supplied to niche markets within the country and abroad.
- Loom should be flexible for all designs and weaver friendly (user friendly).
- There should be a long-term plan from the government side to develop the clusters according to the domestic and international market needs and requirements.
- Just the product only cannot be marketable. The sector should adopt all marketing mix ingredients in it (product, price, promotion and place.)
- The hand weaving, which is called home textile, should be the part of the academics from the elementary levels itself in all handloom clusters.

For women workers,

- Specific programmes and policies have to be developed for women in handloom Sector. These programmers should aim at providing continuous employment Through special budget allocations.
- Minimum wages act has to be amended, to enable women to get proper and Appropriate wages for their work, while being dynamic to the inflationary trends.
- Women should get identity cards, artisan credit cards and insurance coverage.

- Bridge schools for school dropouts have to be established in handloom clusters and villages.
- Households with problems of hunger should be provided with Antyodaya cards and ration cards.
- Mobile health centers have to be established in major handloom clusters and villages.
- Exclusively for women, handloom cooperative societies have to be established.
- Hank yarn should be supplied to women through women cooperatives and groups.
- Handloom weavers should be brought under the ambit of National Employment Guarantee Scheme.

1. Credit needs:

- While adequate and timely credit for input procurement is the main need, at times, capital may be required for repairs or for domestic and social expenses. There is just no agency that can meet this wide spectrum of credit needs, and invariably weavers end up indebted to the local moneylender or master weaver.
- Credit institutions need to be designed which will provide credit in the way that is needed, large number of small loans, to suit the dispersed nature of the handloom industry and to suit market seasonality.
- Mechanisms must also be developed to support well-functioning producer groups and to ensure productive use of credit.
- The growth of self-help groups and thrift groups among weavers must be encouraged with matching grants and other incentives for this purpose

2. Input support:

To capitalize on the strengths of the handloom industry, it is necessary to build Ancillary support systems specifically suited to its dispersed nature. At present Yarn is produced in spinning mills located in distant towns and cities. The pre opening Process is also technologically intensive which affects the inherent Strengths of the cotton fiber.

- Since the end users of yarn, that is, the handloom weavers in this case, are dispersed across different regions and villages, developing smaller units of yarn production to cater to their needs will be feasible. Small-

scale, decentralized yarn production located near cotton fields and weaving clusters will provide crucial linkages between these sectors through which direct flows can be established between cotton cultivation and textile production.

- This direct relation would also eliminate many of the costly and unnecessary stages of the current pre-spinning process such as baling and reduce the need for carding.

Research and development should be taken up in this direction.

- In addition, continued attention needs to be paid to the right kind of yarn availability (for example, the counts woven and required in a particular region), price regulation and policies regarding the export of yarn, since all of these directly affect the viability of handloom weaving as an industry. While setting up of smaller retail yarn outlets would be beneficial, linkages between credit provision and yarn availability also need to be worked out.

3. Product Reservations:

The idea of Product Reservations was primarily to protect the handloom sector from power looms and mills taking over the production of items hitherto being produced exclusively by the handloom sector. Though it is seen in protectionist terms in this sector, in reality, the concept is not very different from market segmentation, which is the identification of market boundaries for different products and linking them up with best-suited production units, without entering into unnecessary competition across the whole production range.

The implementation of Handloom Reservation Act has always been the bone of Contention between officials and handloom weavers. Officials cite the technical specifications of products reserved under the Act as the main difficulty for effective implementation. To illustrate, though ikkat (tie and dye) fabric is reserved for production by handlooms, such a type can be produced by others if the fabric contains more than 45% of blended fibres. This provides a loophole those mills exploit to the maximum. A feasible solution would be to reserve entire Categories of items for production by the handloom sector, such as bordered sarees, dhotis, lungis, carpets, towels and so on. Local district level committees could be set up to closely monitor the proper implementation of the Reservations Act. Mechanisms for the local resolution of reservation violations should also be developed. The situation today is one where market demand dictates production; as a result, what were regionally specific products are now being produced in a number of distant centres across regions. The concept

of fostering an ‘area-based industry’ (indicated by the AbidHussain Committee Report) should be explored in order to promote handloom production. Also, as it has been suggested in the case of other small industries (Morris, et al., 2001), there is a need to protect ‘geographical indicators’ in products and to promote common brand names (that are regionally defined), such as, for example, Ikkats, Uppadasarees, Gadwalsarees, and other kinds of fabric. In the absence of this, handloom production will lose out on important market segments.

Such innovations and customised industry will have a long-term positive impact on the millions of lives touched by this sector. Only a concentrated effort by all the stakeholders in the value chain can help the sector overcome the challenges.

CONCLUSION

In developing economies like India small scale, village and cottage industries like handlooms can subserve several plan goals as rightly recognised by the Industrial Policy Resolution, 1956 “they provide immediate large scale employment, they offer methods of ensuring a more equitable distribution of income and they facilitate an effective mobilisation of capital which might otherwise remain unutilised. Some of the problems that urbanization tend to create will be avoided by the establishment of small centres of industrial products all over the country” (Vandana 1985). It is therefore no surprise that even in this scientific and technological era the need to protect and develop the small scale and village industries was accorded highest priority throughout the planned development of the country. Through modernization and innovative ideas the younger generation also can take part in this industry. Even though there are lots of problems in this sector, above all there should be a halt to the growth of new handlooms. Instead of bringing many policies, it would be better if the present policies can much more effective. Especially the proper functioning of societies are an important factor. The declining status of this sector can be prevented by incorporating the participation of younger generation by offering better incentives for them. Feminisation of this sector should not be a factor to follow the unstructured wage structure. The policies should have prime concern on these basic issues in this sector.

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