

Handloom and Handloom Industry: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Indian economy comprises of two sectors rural and urban. In economic transformation from agriculture to an industrial society handloom industry plays an important role in generating local employment as it is scattered in the rural and urban areas. It works as a vehicle for poverty alleviation, rural income generation and regional economic development. Various governmental policies and institutional framework can play a very important role in the field of development. In spite of these, it has been observed that a number of handloom weaving units are continued to be in the grip of problems. The problems range from limited products range to absence of market value chain along with poor front end marketing. Therefore the purpose of this research is to familiarize with the current status of handloom and handloom Industry of Assam.

Keywords: Handloom, Handloom industry, Cooperative society.

INTRODUCTION

The Handloom is a traditional industry of India and it provides employment opportunities to millions of people in the rural and urban belts of our country. India has extended custom in weaving particularly in hand weaving. We are moving through different diversity; handloom is one of that. Handloom always promotes innovations in its products through experimentation and exhibitions. Through its uniqueness and peculiar design, the handloom sector is a well-known industry all over the world.

Considering its contribution the handloom sector has space nearby agricultural sector. It has a major role in developing the livelihood of rural people and eradicating poverty because most of the weaver's society is situated in a rural area. It provides employment opportunity to lakhs of weavers and allied workers. It helps in reducing the discrimination of men and women. A lot of women workers are working in the handloom industry. It makes a platform to reduce the gap between rural and urban people.

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Practically noting the status of weavers is drastically getting down due to gen gap. Ancestral owners respected weavers and allotted various benefits to the weavers but in these days, everything is happening reverse to the weavers where they are struggling to sustain in their lives.

Handloom industry

Garg, et al. (2012) opined that the strength of handloom lies in innovative designs, which cannot be replicated by the power looms. The traditional handloom weaving in India has been kept alive by traditional skilled weavers. It is because of such inimitable designs and distinct weaving techniques that the handloom sector has managed to withstand the onslaught of the power loom and the mill sector in the country.

Katherine (2010) has observed that a significant percent of the population earns a living spinning, weaving and embellishing textiles, the majority of which are sold within India, at prices comparable to those of their machine-made Competitors.

Reddy (2008) is of the opinion that, it is time that, government recognized the value of the handloom sector in achieving sustainable development of the country. Despite the adverse conditions, due to larger support from consumers and being a livelihood option for millions of weavers, Handloom sector has been surviving and has the potential to be so. Government has to ensure a 'level playing field' for this sector towards competition among the different sub-sector of textile industry.

Kasturi, et al. (2006) in their paper on "DESI-Story of Many Threads", express their opinion that, the handloom industry, if managed well, can provide wealth and prosperity to rural India. This needs people who can understand how to invest in social and natural capital over a long period, with a concomitant ability to manage the process. The firm, DESI, in Karnataka treats its model as an innovation in the handloom sector.

Ghosh and Akter (2005) studied the factors affecting the Handloom Sector in Bangladesh. The study is analyzed by using

factor analysis in order to identify the predominant factors which hit the Handloom industry in Bangladesh. It is identified that shortage of working capital, high cost of raw material procurement, lack of organizing capability, inadequate technology and efficiency, and lack of policy support are major forces which are bitterly hit the handloom industry. It is suggested in the study that the Government monitoring cell under Handloom Board of Bangladesh has to monitor activities of those wholesalers and retailers who are engaged in selling raw materials for handloom products to prevent any unfair advantage.

Handloom cooperative society

Shyama (2001) has analyzed the case of the cooperative societies, whether they have helped or hampered the handloom industry. Secondly, he has advanced a theory "that its own qualities of resilience and dynamism have enabled handloom weaving to survive with some degree of strength." Thirdly, they contend that a countrywide policy to the problems of the handloom sector is not the right solution; and that any pragmatic attempt to alleviate the difficulties of the handloom weaver ought to be location-specific and regional in character.

Sharma and Joglekar (2002) in their study "Upgradation of Handloom Co-operatives" concerned only with the members of Veeravaram and Dulla Weavers' Co-operative Societies of East-Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. They examine the existing working pattern and performance of the two weavers' co-operative societies and identify the socio-economic conditions of weaver's families those who are working in these societies. In this context, 140 respondents have been chosen by stratified random basis from Veeravaram co-operative society (30% from the list of total 467 members) are selected on random basis from Dulla Co-operative Society. They analyze various problems, such as production, technical, marketing and managerial faced by the societies. Finally, they have tried to suggest measures for upgrading marketing to the finished products and usage of management techniques.

Mohanty and Acharya (2003) in their paper “Strategy for the Growth and Survival of Small Scale Sector in Orissa: A Case Study of Sambalpuri Bastralaya Handloom Co-operative Society Ltd”, express their opinion that, the society, which was once a profit making organization up to 1995, is now struggling for its survival in the form of early release of the funds to the society from the central and state government organizations, rescheduling of loans of district central co-operative bank, effective control of financial management and inventory control system, computerization and developing modern management information systems, an independent research and development unit etc

Subbaraj and Joseph (2004) state that weavers cooperatives have adopted a few product mix strategies over years. However, they have adopted these strategies mostly due to the factors (forces emerging) constituting their own inner environment and not the market/marketing environments. They still meddle with several of their structural and functional imperfections and barriers. They seem to have no full control over their own system. Provision of technical, financial, managerial and professional supports and backups including the freedom of self-governance with ruin of utmost accountability and transparency perhaps may enable with weavers cooperatives adoption of affective product mix and other strategies in tune with the changes in the market environments.

Dev, et al. (2008) presented a paper basing on field work. This paper examines the problems and prospects of the handloom sector in Andhra Pradesh. One major finding is that the growth performance of co-operatives determines the growth of other institution-the master weavers, middle men and independent weavers. Well-performing co-operatives are the best safeguard for the handloom sector, as they protect the weaver and also provide a counterbalance to the master weaver. Competition from power looms is an obvious threat, but this can be countered if the sector produces high value, unique (brand value) products or medium value products which can

be marketed locally or abroad, as distinct from power loom products.

Marketing of handloom products

Gary (2010) has observed that handloom industry to produce niche and designer products to create a market among the youth and high-end consumers. The way ahead is to pursue brand building and to make niche handloom products for high-end consumers and the fashion conscious youth. Stress has been given on the need to preserve the traditional craft as well as to integrate it in the contemporary context in a public-private-partnership mode.

Kumar et al. (2010) in their study on strategies to improve sales of handloom products with special reference to Puducherry primarily aimed at understanding the local market and secondly to develop a marketing strategy for Handloom exporters in Puducherry. The respondents were customers and the exporters in Puducherry state. The study revealed that the customers prefer to buy from retail outlet. The study suggested that customers prefers brand name for Handloom Products and hence the handloom products has to be sold with exclusive brand name.

Mathiraj and Rajkumar (2008) made an analytical study on Handloom products-production and marketing narrated the production related problems of the handloom weavers societies and reviewed the marketing process carried out by the weavers societies. It was found in the study that the societies in Ramanathapuram district are facing problems like wide fluctuation in yarn price, lack of availability of skilled labour force. It is also suggested that the production pattern, sales design may be formulated to expedite the handloom products in the market. He also suggested that modernization of handloom industries can be made with a moderate cost to ease down the problems of weavers.

Dharmarajan (2006) in his paper “Marketing in Handloom Co-operatives”, Dharmaraju has expressed his view that, over the decades, the experience of handloom co-operatives has been a mixed one. The arbitrary mergers, excessive control by master weavers

and local power groups, politicization and bureaucratization and mismanagement of funds, are some factors that have obstructed the efficient functioning of co-operatives.

CONCLUSION

The handloom sector plays a strategic role in the upliftment of rural economy of the Assam. Even today, most of the rural women depends on the handloom sector after Agriculture, which requires minimum capital and less technical skills, but earns for them a livelihood, which is otherwise a distant dream for the illiterate folks. Designing and construction of apparel and furnishing items using these handloom textiles has immense scope in the world of fashion and in the national and international market. Moreover, it will also help in preserving, popularizing and diversifying the end use of this textile. Environmental issues in the production and application of synthetic dyes once again revived consumer interest in natural dyes during the last decades of the twentieth century.

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