

Problems of Handloom Weavers in Andhra Pradesh: A Study of Krishna District

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Abstract: *The handloom sector in India is the largest sector next to agriculture. The handloom sector in India today presents many sided and complex problems which are more complicated in view of its Socio-Economic Importance. It is the biggest cottage industry in India and there are about 48 lakhs of looms and a population of 40 millions depends on this industry. Prior to the invention of power loom, it was the handloom which was supplying entire cloth needs of the population on earth, with the development of science and technology and new methods of production. Handloom weaving gave to power weaving as surviving only in a few countries, of which India is the most important and predominant one. The main reason for the existing of handloom in India is the socio-economic condition of our country and the Industry's high employment potential.*

Key words: *Handloom weavers, Economic problems, Production and Marketing problems, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh*

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I. Introduction

The basic need for human being is clothing. It has equal importance to food and shelter. In olden days the handloom sector was the unique supplier to the clothing needs of the people in the world. The word handloom derives from the process of manual operation of a country wooden structure called the loom.

The handloom sector carries a very rich heritage coming down over the centuries of vibrant culture that of the Indus valley civilization. Handloom sector is a prime and emergent economic necessity since it sustains the economy of predominantly rural based nation. It provides direct or indirect employment to millions of artisans spread all over the country. Indian Handloom sector is an age old and the largest sector of cottage industries. This traditional rural and the largest semi urban sector has widely spread all over the country. One fourth of the total cloth production in the country is from the handloom sector. In terms of the employment, it ranks only next to the agriculture providing livelihood to more than 40 million people.

The sector has rightly been termed as an art and craft sector. Handloom accounts for over 40% of cloth produced in the country. Although very large number of cloth varieties is produced in handlooms, the major items are viz., sari, dhoti, gamchalam, bed sheet, lungi, shirting, and towel. The production of handloom cloth is concentrated in three states viz., Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Of these three states, Tamil Nadu has the highest concentration on handloom and handloom weavers in the country.

At present handloom sector is facing multiple problems that some other sectors do not have. Although the state and central governments are consistently pursuing to bring development in the productivity and marketing of handloom sector, still it can be observed that the weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis. In order to make the sector profitable the problems should be identified, strength and weaknesses should be estimated. Therefore the objective of this paper is to focus the problems of the handloom sector and further suggest a suitable action or remedial measures.

The handloom industry in India is an ancient cottage industry spread all over the country. This is a source of livelihood for the millions directly or indirectly. Its main role is very important in meeting the clothing requirements of the masses. It occupies a vital place with its wide inheritance into the socio-economic fabric of society. The handloom textiles have a long glorious tradition. They are symbolic of Indian culture forming part of great heritage of art. The Indian cotton fabrics enjoyed worldwide patronage. The handloom sector forms both warp and weft of cultural fabric of India. Because of three reasons handloom sector has an important position in the Indian economy i.e

- 1) It provides more employment opportunities.
- 2) It provides one fourth of the total textile production in the country.
- 3) It receives the foreign exchange money.

Handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh

The government says there are 43 lakh weavers in the country of which 2.5 lakh weavers in only Andhra Pradesh. There are 11,912 weavers in Krishna District. According to the Annual reports of Ministry of Textiles (2011-2012), the handloom sector with about 23.77 lakh handlooms provides employment to 43.31 lakh persons of which , 77.9% are women, and 28% belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

II. Review Of Literature

1. Dharma Raju P. (2006) in his paper “Marketing in Handloom Co-operatives” , 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.

2. Sehgal H. K. (2009) has examined that as far as the garment export sector is concerned, there have been mixed signals: continuing world economic downturn; some late recovery, however temporary for some people; recent Rupee appreciation and with a new Government, expected to be stable, assuming charge.

3. Prachi (2010) has observed that Indian handloom is growing in its popularity not only among the people in India, but also among the people admiring Indian handloom and Indian handicrafts around the globe. In spite of having distinct styles and ways of weaving, there is a lot of exchange of styles that happened among the diverse Indian handloom styles.

4. TNN(2011) has mentioned that the state government has taken several decisions to encourage weavers to boost handloom industry in the state. The state government with the co-operation of center has formulated several schemes to improve the socio-economic conditions of the weavers belonging to the handloom industry.

5. Dr. Srinivasa Rao Kasisomayajula (2012) presented a paper basing on the field work on Socio-economic analysis of handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh is a study on the selected districts. He studied the socio economic analysis of handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh, a study on selected districts (East Godavari, Prakasam, Kurnool, Nalgonda).

6. Venkateswaran.A (2014) in his paper 'A Socio Economic Conditions of Handloom Weaving :A field study in Kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli District', studied on the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers and the problems faced by the handloom weavers.

III. Objectives of The Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the problems of the handloom weavers in Krishna District, in Andhra Pradesh. The objectives of the study are

1. To study the present situation of handloom sector.
2. To examine the problems faced by handloom weavers.
3. To give the suitable suggestions to improve the handloom sector.
4. To make a focus on the welfare programs conducted by state and central governments.

IV. Hypothesis

- 1) To test whether the handlooms give the sufficient income support to the weavers or not.
- 2) To test whether there is any opportunity related to employment at present in the handloom sector or not.

V. Need of The Study

So many problems are faced by the handloom sector even it provides a livelihood to the majority of the people in the country. The sector faces various problems in many fields like production, marketing and finance. This study focuses some of the important problems faced by the handloom weavers along with the suggestions to these problems. The problems are

- 1) Insufficient Finance
- 2) Lack of supply of raw material
- 3) Supply of poor quality of yarn
- 4) Malpractices of master weavers
- 5) No upgradation of looms
- 6) Under utilisation of marketing channels
- 7) Absence of innovative designs and combination of colours
- 8) Lack of co-operation among the weaver members

In view of this, there is an inclusive need to undertaking a comprehensive study of the problems faced by handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh covering aspects such as, the impact of problems of weavers, structure of handloom weavers living conditions. Krishna district has been chosen for an intensive and detailed study.

VI. Scope Of The Study

The study examines the problems and welfare of handloom weavers in Krishna district from 2006-2016, i.e., 10 years period.



Wife and Husband Weaving A Beautiful Saree at Ghantasala of Krishna District.

VII. Source of Data

The study is based on primary data and secondary data. We have collected primary data from 120 respondents by using a structured questionnaire and through personal interview method. The secondary data was collected from books, periodic journals, articles related to the present research.

PRIMARY DATA

The main source of the data is from the handloom weavers who are working under societies or independent weavers. For primary data collection 120 weavers were selected. A structured questionnaire is used for the survey which contain simple, multiple choice questions. For primary data collection the observation method, personal interview method and group discussion method are used.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data has been collected from published and unpublished reports by the government, departments and societies of the handloom sector and also from books, periodic journals and various websites related to present research study and Assistant Director office of Handlooms & Textiles of Krishna District.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Simple random sampling was used in present research. Handloom weavers in Krishna district is the sample and Andhra Pradesh state is the population.

AREA OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to handloom weavers in various mandals in Krishna district. The weavers spread throughout the district. Majority of weavers reside in seven mandalas. They are 1) Gudur 2) Pedana 3) Ghantasala 4) Challapalli 5) Bandar 6) Movva and 7) Gannavaram.

SAMPLE SIZE

There are 11,912 handloom weavers in Krishna District. Among them 5,287 weavers are under the Cooperative fold and 6,625 weavers are out of cooperative fold. A sample of 120 weavers are randomly selected from seven mandals in Krishna district.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

These are the limitations of the present research study. The study is essentially a micro level study. The information through the questionnaires may not have covered correct figures problems. The opinions and

expressions of weavers are based on the personal experience with the societies. The secondary data are taken as reported in the records. However, the primary data is added to know the present problems of weavers.

VIII. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data are collected from 120 sample respondents by supplying the questionnaires, the data is analyzed by simple tables on the basis of financial problems, marketing problems, production problems, social problems and health problems.

A.FINANCIAL PROBLEMS:

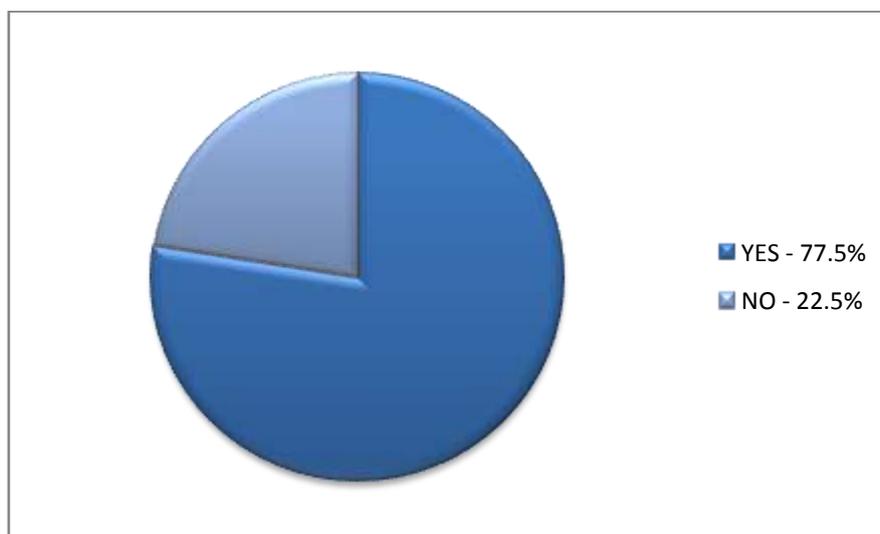
Handloom sector is extremely diversified in nature, in terms of product, it is capable of great flexibility in process, products and geographical shifts, it is decentralized, located both in rural and urban centers. The handloom industry can survive only if the government can provide a rehabilitation package similar to the many weavers in India work in extreme condition but still maintain the quality of the work. They put their heart and soul in their work one provided to the farmers who have lost crop, to the handloom sector also.

The central and State Governments provide assistance to handloom weavers, weaver's co-operative societies for strengthening the share capital, improving the management of societies and modernization of looms. Even then, the societies could not strengthen their financial position because, they are not able to repay in time the loan received and hence the societies have to pay interest to the District Central Co-operative Banks. The below table-1 shows the financial problems of respondents in the Krishna District.

TABLE -1 Financial Problems

| Financial problems | No. of respondents | Percentage(%) |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Yes | 93 | 77.5 |
| No | 27 | 22.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: primary data



According to the above table majority of the respondents have financial problems. That is out of 120 respondents, 93 (77.5%) weavers are facing financial problems. The lowest number 27(22.5%) respondents are not facing financial problems.

B. PRODUCTION PROBLEMS:

One of the important problems of handloom weavers is production problems. They are:

1. Inadequate supply of yarn by APCO to the weaver's societies: Due to the non-availability of yarn with AP co-optex, the societies suffer with shortage of yarn, in such situations the weavers work will be affected.
2. Poor quality of yarn: due to the availability of poor quality of yarn, the output has less quality.
3. Scarcity of raw material : Due to the scarcity of raw material the yarn is not supplied sufficiently.
4. Lack of technological up gradation of looms leads to less production.
5. Non-implementation of new design techniques: due to that the weavers can not meet the needs of the people, who are fascinated with new colours, designs and style of products.

The below table-2 shows the production problems of respondents in the Krishna District.

TABLE -2 Production Problems

| production problems | No. of respondents | Percentage(%) |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Yes | 111 | 92.5 |
| No | 09 | 07.5 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: primary data

According to the above table majority of the respondents have production problems. That is out of 120 respondents, 111 (92.5%) weavers are facing production problems. The lowest number 09(07.5%) respondents are not facing production problems.

C.MARKETING PROBLEMS

There are a number of reasons for the failure to create value for handloom products in the domestic market. There is a wide ranging opinion that the handlooms ignore the market trends and consumer tastes. This disconnect creates a place for a role which includes reading the market preferences and converting them into design and taking responsibility for making it possible at the production level. Marketing is the central problem that calls for the drawing up of a suitable strategy. Handloom is not only altering dominant market norms, but also changing the nature of the market transactions. The industry has been pursuing the sales oriented philosophy. Inadequate marketing services and facilities have resulted in periodical accumulation of stocks, resulting in underemployment and unemployment among weavers.

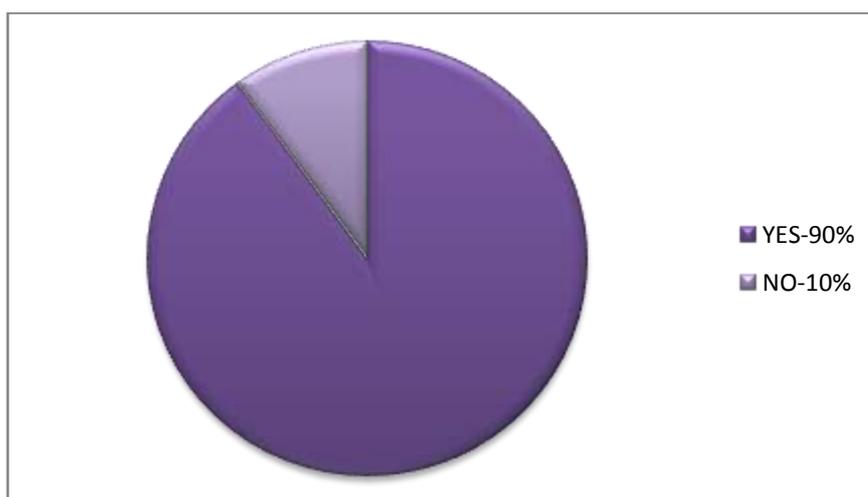
The below table-3 shows the marketing problems of respondents in the Krishna District.

TABLE -3 Marketing Problems

| Marketing problems | No. of respondents | Percentage(%) |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Yes | 108 | 90 |
| No | 12 | 10 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: primary data

According to the above table majority of the respondents have marketing problems. That is out of 120 respondents, 108 (90%) weavers are facing production problems. The lowest number 12(10%) respondents are not facing marketing problems.



D. HEALTH PROBLEMS:

Everybody knows that health is wealth. Good health can be defined as the state of wellbeing where a person is free from all kinds of physical or mental illness. Better health is one of the prerequisites for improved productivity and production. It is too common for handloom weavers to suffer from a variety of occupational health problems and these problems become severe and acute, as they become aged. Some of the health problems associated with handloom weavers include: poor eye sight, cataract, high or low blood pressure, heart diseases, damage of lungs, filaria, back pains, joint pains ,knee pains and so on. A majority of the weavers appear much older than their age.

The below table-4 shows the major health problems of respondents in the Krishna District.

Table-4 Health Problems

| Health problems | No. of respondents | Percentage(%) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Eye-sight/cataract | 38 | 31.67 |
| Back pain | 52 | 43.33 |
| Knee pain/ joint pain | 23 | 19.17 |
| Problem of lungs | 07 | 05.83 |
| Total | 120 | 100 |

Source: primary data

According to the above table majority of the respondents i.e.,52 out of 120 (43.33%) are suffering from back pain problem. The lowest number 07(5.83%) respondents are suffering from the problem of lungs. According to the data 38 respondents(31.67%) are suffering from eye-sight and cataract. And 23 respondent weavers (19.17%) are suffering from knee pain and joint pains.

E.WAGE PROBLEMS

The handloom sector is a labour intensive sector where wages should be satisfactory. But in general there is a belief that the workers in labour intensive sectors receive lower wages than the capital intensive sectors. The handloom sector is not exemption to this. The handloom weavers also get low wages in terms of their productivity. A handloom weaver gets normally Rs.400 to 600 for a saree. For weaving one saree it takes 4 to 5 days. The average income is Rs.100 to 150.The below table shows the average income of weaver respondents per day.

TABLE-5 Wage Levels

| Average income of a weaver per day | No. of respondents | Percentage (%) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Rs. 100 to 200 | 69 | 57.5 |
| Rs. 201 to 300 | 37 | 30.83 |
| Rs. 300 above | 14 | 11.67 |
| | 120 | 100 |

Source: primary data

According to the above data, majority of the respondents 69 out of 120 (57.5%) get Rs.100 to 200 as their daily wage. The lowest number 14 (11.67%) respondents get above Rs. 300 as the daily wage.

F.SUICIDAL DEATHS DUE TO OVER-BURDEN OF DEBTS

The weavers borrow the money for various purposes. They borrow the money not only for productive purpose but also unproductive purposes like marriages, festivals, death ceremonies etc..Due to lack of institutional credit sources they are depend upon money lenders. But due to some reasons they are unable to repay the money. In such situations some of the weavers committed to suicide.

For the last 10 years (2006-16) 15 suicidal deaths recorded in Krishna district. The following table shows the data.

TABLE-6 Suicidal Deaths

| Sl.no | Name of the weaver | Age (years) | Village/Mandal | Way of death | Date of death |
|-------|--|-------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Busam Leela Prasad Rao | 27 | Polavaram(v) Gudur(m) | Hanging | 06.03.2008 |
| 2 | Smt.Busam Mutyala Bhramaramba w/o Leela Prasad Rao | 22 | Polavaram(v) Gudur(m) | Hanging | 06.03.2008 |
| 3 | Ummiti Sundara Rao | 51 | Veerabhadra Puram, Pedana. | Consumed poison | 26.09.2008 |
| 4 | Nanadam Seshayya | 31 | B.B.Gudem(v) Gannavram(m) | Hanging | 13.03.2009 |
| 5 | Yerra Naga Veeraiah | 35 | Polavarapu peta, pedana. | Consumed rat killer medicine | 10.10.2009 |
| 6 | Smt. Yerra Bala Tripura Sundari w/o Naga Veeraiah | 30 | Polavarapu Peta, Pedana. | Consumed rat killer medicine | 10.10.2009 |
| 7 | Bulasara Kota Venkata Subramanyam | 41 | Polavarapu peta, Pedana. | Fallen on railway track | 12.10.2009 |
| 8 | Prudhvi Subramanyam | 32 | Syamalamba gudi veedhi,Pedana. | Consumed poison | 04.08.2010 |
| 9 | Goru Nageswara rao | 46 | Polavarapu peta, Pedana. | Committed suicide on railway track | 05.09.2012 |
| 10 | Periseti Dattathreya | 36 | Kappaladoddi(v) Gudur(m) | Consumed poson | 05.04.2013 |

Source: Secondary data(Handlooms and Textile department ,Krishna District)

IX. Major Schemes That Are Being Implementing By The State & Central Governments

1. For Weavers Cooperative Societies:

(a) **Marketing Incentive:** This scheme provides 20% rebate on the retail of Handloom cloth to the consumers in order to encourage the Weavers Cooperative Societies to improve their sales and also to provide continuous employment to their weaver members.

(b) **Yarn Subsidy:** This Scheme provides reimbursement of 20% subsidy on purchase of Raw-material i.e., Hank yarn, Dyes & Chemicals from the N.H.D.C., & APCO by the Weavers Cooperative Societies.

(c) **Pavala Vaddi Scheme:** Under this Scheme, the difference of interest over and above 3% charged by the Bank shall be reimbursed by the Government to the respective Cash Credit accounts of the cooperative Societies, subject to a maximum of 9.5% in the shape of interest subsidy.

2. For Individual Weavers:

(a) Life insurance Scheme to Handloom Weavers under Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana:-

Under this Scheme, the weavers between the age group of 18 and 59 year are eligible. The individual weaver has to pay an amount of Rs.80/- per annum towards premium for enrolment into the scheme. The Govt. of India and LIC of India contribute the amount of Rs.390/- to each individual weaver. An amount of Rs.60,000/- and Rs.1,50,000/- are being paid by the LIC of India to the nominees of the individual weavers under natural and accidental deaths respectively.

(b) Thrift Fund Scheme:

This Scheme is applicable to the working weaver member of the Weavers Cooperative Societies in the District. Under the Scheme, 8% of deduction shall be made from the wage earnings of the weaver members and remit the same in the special Saving Account of the Society exclusively meant for the scheme and proposals can be submitted to the Commissioner of Handlooms & Textiles, A.P., Hyderabad to each Quarter for getting the matching contribution of 8% i.e., from the State Government.

(c) Weavers Credit Cards to Handloom Weavers:

The main object of the Scheme is to issue the Weavers Credit Cards and sanction of Bank loans ranging from Rs.25,000/- to Rs.2,00,000/- for the purpose of purchase of equipments and also for Working Capital to purchase the yarn etc. The Government of India will sanction Margin Money assistance to a maximum of Rs.10,000/- through NABARD for the loans advanced by the banks under the Scheme.

(d) Revival, Reform and Restructuring (RRR) Scheme to Handloom Sector:

Under this Scheme, an amount of Rs.9,20,348-00 (Govt of India share of Rs.7,01,217 + State Govt. share of Rs.2,19,131/-) is released towards Re-capitalization assistance under Revival, Reform & Restructuring Scheme in respect of (10) Weavers Coop. Societies of the District

(e) Modernisation and replacement looms:

The Government has implemented the scheme for replacement of existing looms by frame looms / raised pit-looms and modernization of existing looms by attaching Jacquard, dobbies, take-up motions and new looms etc., by assessing the actual requirement in consultation with the Weavers.

(f) Weavers Debt Waiver / Capital Infusion Scheme, 2016: The Government has implemented Debt Waiver / Capital Infusion Scheme for the year 2016 to the Handloom / Power loom Weavers. The Weavers taken loans for weaving purpose limited to Rs.1.00 lakh for individual weaver and Rs.5.00 lakhs for Power loom Unit.

X. Major Findings

1. Majority of the respondent weavers (77.5%) told that they have financial problems.
2. Nandam Venkateswara Rao and his wife Sridevi of Rayavaram village, Guduru mandal, told that the financial assistance provide by the government is not sufficient to survive the weavers.
3. Majority of the respondent weavers (92.5%) told that they have many production problems.
4. Vimmuti Agasthaiah of Pedana (village and mandal) told that they are using outdated machines till today. So the the production is very less.
5. Majority of the respondent weavers (90%) told that they have marketting problems.
6. Dokuparti Siva Nageswara Rao and his wife Ramanujamma of Mustabad village, Gannavaram mandal told that the marketting facilities are not enough to clear the sales.
7. Almost all the respondent weavers stated that they are suffering from any one of the health problems, due to weaving.
8. A large number of respondent weavers (43.33%) are suffering from back pain.
9. Majority of the weavers appear much older than their age.

10. Balla Subrahmanyam of Challapalli (village and mandal) told that he is suffering from joint pains from 10 years.
11. There is a wide range opinion that the handlooms ignore the market trends and consumer tastes.
12. Majority of respondent weavers (57.5%) get Rs. 100 to 200 as their daily wage.
13. Pendem Mallikarjuna Rao and his wife Smt. Rajeswari of Mustabada Village, told that it takes 2 to 3 days to make a saree for both but the price of saree is Rs.600/- only. If the saree is made in two days , the average wage for one person is Rs.150/- If it takes three days, the wage per person becomes Rs.100/ per a day for each.
14. Due to the various economic reasons some of the weavers were committed to suicide.
15. The government implementing the various welfare schemes to the weavers, but they are not reached to poor weavers.

XI. Suggestions

Handloom Industry is the largest cottage industry next to agriculture in providing massive self-employment to the rural poor. And it has a rich heritage. So there is a need to save the industry. To improve the living standards of the weavers the following suggestions are given:

1. The malpractices of the master weavers should be controlled.
2. Marketing facilities should be provide to clear the stock.
3. There must be a fair propaganda relating to the use of handloom cloth to increase the sales.
4. A legislation should be passed by the government to use the handloom cloths once in a week by central and state employees.
5. An order should be passed by the government to use the handloom clothes by school children, public and private sector employees once in a week.
6. The Cooperative structure should be strengthened to absorb the new weavers.
7. The weavers should be trained as to improve their skills in manufacturing, marketing, etc.,
8. Handloom Reservation Act (1985) should be strictly implemented to protect the handloom weavers.
9. There is a need to provide the institutional credit to the weavers to protect them from the exploitation of the money-lenders.
10. To see that the fruits of the welfare programs and schemes launched by the Sate and Central Government should reach the weavers promptly.
11. The weaver members are urging for provide new health insurance schemes in the place of ICICI Lombard, which has been discontinued from 30.09.2014

XII. Conclusion

Handloom weaving plays an active role in the growth process of the state as well as the nation. This sector has been considered prominent because of the traditional artisan craft skills of the weavers which meet the local needs and demands. Handloom sector has different strengths in the modern economy. It is simple, and is associated with appropriate technology. The world, which is seeking for clean air and water, handlooms are well suited because they are eco-friendly in nature. Handloom sector has self sustaining mechanism, training for irrespective of gender. The inheritance of skills and capacities is beyond the realm and reach of any modern training and educational institution. There is a sufficient flexibility for all types of communities to take up handloom weaving as a profession.

The decade 2006-16 is the decade of manufacturing for India. So there is a need for focused attention to the specified sectors of manufacturing which are labour intensive and also enjoy competitive advantage. To enhance the scope of weaving activity, measures should also be taken to provide raw materials, finance, marketing facilities and other requirements. To enable the sector to realize full potential, the bottlenecks which hinder the development must be removed. Both the central and state governments should recognize the role of handlooms in achieving sustainable development.

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