

***Economic conditions of weavers – A study
with reference to Chittoor Dt. Andhra Pradesh***

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Cloths are major requirement of human being. The people irrespective of areas need and give importance to the cloths. India has been maintaining a dominating role in cloth making of different types from the olden days. Weaving and handloom industry is one of the oldest cottage industries in India. It is widely spread throughout the country both in rural and urban areas. It generates employment opportunities directly and indirectly to the millions of people. This is one of the major sectors, employing largest number of people next to agriculture and it holds similar position in the case of income generation. From the stand point of consumers, it meets a substantial part of their requirements. Its production patterns are selective and finally turned to meet the local and regional needs. The most unique and notable feature is its glorious survival despite the large scale mill sector. The importance of handloom industry can be gauged from the fact that it meets one third of the total cloth requirements of masses. Andhra Pradesh (AP) is widely known for its multiple varieties of colourful handloom fabrics. As a matter of fact, handlooms of AP are the fruits of traditional India. The formidable variety of handlooms have been drawn national and international attention. AP has been the traditional abode of exquisite handlooms. The state has significantly contributed to Indian handloom exports. In spite of the pre-eminent position enjoyed in AP and the statutory protection extended by the Government of India, handloom industry is not yet free from handicaps. Though the contribution of handlooms to the national economy is appreciable, socio - economic and working conditions of the weavers leave much to be desired. Actually the fruits of the industry are grabbed by the hard hearted money-lenders and middlemen with exorbitant rates of interest.

In history, there are evidences to show that the Indians have known the art of weaving for more than five thousand years" The fact that the Egyptian mummies of five thousand years old were found wrapped in Indian fine silks and muslins. This proves the high artistic skills of Indian weavers in the past. India has been a producer of cotton cloth of superior quality and repute from times immemorial and generally regarded as the birth place of cotton manufacturers. The gossamer like silks of Varanasi, fine muslins of Dacca and other hand-woven fabrics of Assam, Baroda, Kanchipuram and Manipur have been famous for ages. Unsurpassed for their artistic craftsmanship and superb workmanship, they have freshness,

vitality and charm and highly praised all over the world. A piece of muslin, twenty yards length and one yard width could easily be made to pass through a ring and required six months to manufacture. Heradotus, a renowned Greek historian (445 B.C.) was so much impressed with the Indian hand-woven fabrics as to remark that Indians wore clothes made of a type of wool which did not come from goats or sheep but was grown like plants in field. India's ancient literature abounds with a large number of references regarding clothes and fabrics. In Rigveda, a mantra which was chanted on the occasion of exchange of clothes in marriage categorically states that men should wear clothes woven by women. References to India's accomplishment in artistic weaving are found in Buddhist, Pali and Taina If literatures as well.

Hand weaving is one of the oldest crafts in India. The relics discovered at "Mohen Jodaro" and "Harappa" prove beyond doubt that Indians as early as to 5000 B.C. were stalwarts in the art of hand-weaving. Mention has been made in the travelogues of Bernier, Fahien, Hiuen Tsang, Marcopolo, Warthine etc., about the glory of handloom industry in India in the olden days. The early Indian religious texts contain umpteen references with poetic imagery to the glory of handlooms. Mot that hand-weaving was not professionally carried on by the artisans of other 8lllM.Dations in those days, but Indian variety occupied a place of pride in the world of cloth makers. It was here that the people's instinct was expressed in an infinite variety of forms with eye catching designs.

Handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh (AP) has rich, multi various tradition which is reflected in its arts and crafts. Next to agriculture, handlooms occupy an important place. The AP handlooms keep the traditional craftsmanship associated with the cultural glory of the country. The handloom industry plays a vital role in meeting the clothing needs of the people of the state. It accounts for one third of cloth production in the nation. It provides employment to about 4 million people, besides, it indirectly generates employment to those who are engaged in pre-loom and post-loom activities. The handloom weaver serves the state for centuries and has acquired name by producing durable and quality products with attractive designs.

From times immemorial, AP handloom products which were bright, brilliant and bewitching, have found their way to West, Far East and won the hearts of the peoples, the world over. The creative urge of the Andhra weaver has found full expression in myriad forms in his cloth weaving. Inherited but un-rivaled skills and expert knowledge of colour chemistry

have all combined to make the Andhra weaver a marvelous artist. He produces fabrics which reflect not only the culture of the land but also merge with changing seasons, tastes and fashions almost everywhere. As a result of the interplay of historical, geographical and social forces, each region in the state has evolved over the decades its own pristine traditions in the growth of handloom industry

The handloom textiles of AP had been major commodities in international trade in the 17th and 18th centuries. Exported from Pedana of Masulipatnam, the bender mubarak of the Golkonda Kingdom, the dyed and patterned fabrics produced in the state virtually clothed all of the southeast Asian countries and were major commodities with international exchange value. The region produced the plain and the dyed and patterned cloth. It is interesting to note that in spite of short term disruptions to production because of political instability, the textile industry always managed to survive. Even during the 19th century, the "de- industrialization" which depleted textile production in Bengal and the Gangetic plains did not really materialise in AP but in fact the number of looms increased during the period.

AP had continued to be the major producer of handloom cloth. Till 1970s³², it had the largest number of looms. During 1978, the state accounted for 17.7 per cent of looms in the country. In the following decade, there was a decline in the number of looms across the length and breadth of India, but the decline has been extremely sharp in AP. The number of handlooms declined by 36 per cent in India while in AP it was 61 per cent. This fall might be on account of failure of weavers cooperatives, shortage of yarn, poor rate of adoption of technological know-how and competition from power looms. Weaving is a household activity with the individual weaver household as the unit of production. There are, however, hardly any truly independent weavers in the state and the individual weavers depend either on the master weaver/trader or on the cooperatives for marketing their products. The main product line is still the medium variety of textiles used for conventional dress in the domestic market.

The handloom industry is facing several problems such as non-availability of adequate quantity of quality raw material, shortage of working capital, non-availability of marketing facilities, credit needs to handloom weavers in co-operative field, low capacity utilization due to not utilizing of new technology, failure of co-operative movement, facing stiff competition from organized mill and power loom sector in the area of marketing the handloom products and central and state government's low budget allocations and non utilized budgeted funds in a proper way. 613 weavers suicide cases have been registered and

1500 weavers have attempted to commit suicide due to lack of reimbursement of their personal loans taken from micro financial institutions and money lenders during 1997 to 2010. Majority of the weavers in the state are not financially sound because of the inadequate earnings from their profession. Many Primary Weavers' Cooperative Societies are defunct, Very few societies are earning profits and the other societies are eagerly waiting for a savior to lift them from the disastrous conditions.

The weaving industry in Andhra Pradesh, mainly confined to the cottage and cloth manufacture, was a family occupation. Spinning, ginning, weaving and other processes were done only by hand. The entire handloom industry comes under the umbrella of Ministry of Textiles, National Handloom Development Corporation Limited at the central level, Directorate of Handlooms and Textiles Development Corporation, The Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Society Limited at state level and Primary Weavers' Cooperative Societies at village level. Government of India announced New Textile Policy 1985 and it was the most comprehensive textile policy of Independent India. According to the Konejeti Rossaiah committee report, the Government of Andhra Pradesh announced 'Handlooms and Textile Apparel Promotion Policy 2005-2010' for strengthening the handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh. The union budget allocation to handloom sector has been decreasing gradually and continuously for the past 11 years. Actually, overall budget allocation for the textile industry has been increasing, while there was continuous reduction in the allocations for handlooms and utilization of the allocation was also not proper. Diversified Handloom Development Scheme (DHDS) implemented during XI Five year Plan, with an objective of integrated and holistic development of the Handloom Sector.

Objectives of the study

1. To present the primary information of weavers in respect of Nation and state.
2. To detail the data of weavers of Chittoor District.
3. To analyse the economic conditions of the sample handloom weavers in Chittoor District.
4. To evaluate the problems of weavers on the basis views presented by the select weavers.

Sample design

The basis of the study is sample survey, the eclectic survey method has been used while drawing the samples. The Chittoor district has been divided into three divisions basing on concentration of weaving households: SriKalahasti, Madanapalle and Puttur. In each division, two mandals were chosen where weaving is concentrated. They are SriKalahasti, Varadhaiahpalem, Madanapalle, Kalakada, Narayanavaram and Satyavedu. The villages were selected by stratified random sampling with proportional allocation technique. The universe of weaver households has been divided into independent, master, weavers under middlemen, cooperative and labour weavers. The total number of sample weavers for all the classes is limited to 300. Ultimately, the sample was divided into 51 independent weavers, 22 master weavers, 78 weavers under middlemen, 43 cooperative weavers and 106 labour weavers.

Tools of analysis

Suitable and appropriate statistical tools and mathematical devices like averages, percentages, compound growth rates and the analysis of variance, and chi-square test were employed while tabulating, analysing and interpreting the data.

Scope and limitations

The present study is confined to the study of broad aspects regarding socio-economic conditions of the weavers and general problems faced by these weavers with regard to production and marketing of handloom products. For this purpose, a sample of 300 weavers is drawn from the total number of weavers. The sample weavers in each region and in each village are drawn so that the sample represents the characteristics of total population. Hence, the resultant conclusions in the study can be treated as having wide ranging conclusions.

The primary data are collected through schedules. Proper care was taken to explain the weavers all the aspects in the schedule and elicit truthful and unexaggerated replies from the weavers. The data are analysed with the help of multi-variant tables cutting across different inter-related aspects. However, major part of the data is analysed in terms of different types of weavers in order to avoid the complexity of tables.

ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE WEAVERS

The economic background of the sample weavers of Chittoor district in terms of housing facility, number of looms, earnings, income, expenditure, surplus, shortage and so on. The analysis gives as a backdrop to present the employment potential, production performance of weaving.

1. Category

As per the sample, 300 weavers are drawn into the frame from the area of the study. Of the selected weavers, labour weavers were 106, independent weavers 51, weavers under middlemen 78, cooperative weavers 43, and the rest master weavers are 22. Table gives category sample weavers.

Table 1 Categorization of the Sample Weavers

Category of weavers	No.of weavers	% of total
Independent weavers	51	17.00
Master weavers	22	7.33
Weavers under middlemen	78	26.00
Cooperative weavers	43	14.33
Labour weavers	106	35.33
Total	300	100.00

Source : Sample survey.

Category wise weavers in the total constituted 35.33 per cent, 17.00 per cent, 26.00 per cent, 14.33 percent and 7.33 per cent respectively. It can be concluded that nearly one third of sample weavers are labour weavers.

Sex composition

Table 2 shows the sex-wise particulars of the respondents of the sample weavers, 94.00 per cent are men and the rest women. In the case of independent weavers, men are 98.04 per cent and the remaining women. With regard to Weavers under middlemen, men constitute 98.72 per cent and the rest women. Men form 95.28 per cent and 79.07 per cent in labour and cooperative weavers respectively. It can be concluded that more than 79 per cent of the respondents are men, while women are mostly cooperative weavers and master weavers.

Table 2: Sex-wise Classification of the Respondents

Item	Independent weavers	Master Weavers	Weavers under middlemen	Cooperative weavers	Labour weavers	Total
Men	50 (98.04)	20 (90.91)	77 (98.72)	34 (79.07)	101 (95.28)	282 (94.00)
Women	1 (1.96)	2 (9.09)	1 (1.28)	9 (20.93)	5 (4.72)	18 (6.00)

Total	51	22	78	43	106	300
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Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to total.

Source: Sample survey.

Housing facility:

Housing is one of the basic needs of human beings, which constitutes the protecting base for any individual and his family. The housing requirement is more in the case of weavers. The weaving activity is usually carried out at the residence only. The loom and other tools needed for weaving, occupy a significant portion of the house. For an individual, weaving is a combined activity which needs assistance from the women and children to a large extent. It is observed that no weaver maintains specific timings for work, and every weaver spends 10 to 13 hours a day on the loom, for which he must have essentially a house of his own.

Table 3 reveals the particulars of houses owned by the respondents. It is evident from the table, that out of 300 sample households 247 households have their own houses, 53 households do not have their own houses, hence, they are living in rented houses. However, out of 247 households, 54 households have only poor thatched houses. The pucca houses are owned more by the independent and master weavers followed by cooperative, weavers under middlemen and labour weavers. Tatched houses are owned more by weavers under middlemen comparatively with other groups.

Table .3 : Nature of Housing facility of the Respondents

Type of house	Independent weavers		Master weavers		Weavers under middlemen		Cooperative weavers		Labour weavers		Total	
	Own	Rented	Own	Rented	Own	Rented	Own	Rented	Own	Rented	Own	Rented
Thatched	8 (16.67)	-	-	-	16 (27.12)	2 (10.52)	7 (21.88)	-	23 (26.14)	4 (23.61)	54 (21.86)	6 (11.32)
Terra	12 (25.00)	1 (33.33)	6 (30.00)	1 (50.00)	18 (30.51)	5 (26.32)	7 (21.88)	6 (54.55)	43 (48.86)	7 (40.20)	86 (34.82)	20 (37.74)
Pucca	28 (58.33)	2 (66.67)	14 (70.00)	1 (50.00)	25 (42.37)	12 (63.16)	18 (56.25)	5 (45.45)	22 (25.00)	7 (40.20)	107 (43.32)	27 (50.94)
Total	48	3	20	2	59	19	32	11	88	18	247 (82.34)	53 (17.66)

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to total.

Source: Sample survey.

Income generation

The income of the weaver's family determines its standard of living and financial status. Individuals with higher income will naturally have the capacity to spend on various goods and services to have a decent life. In the sample, barring a few, all the weavers, do not have any other source of income. Most of the weavers have to depend invariably on the weaving activity for their livelihood. An insight into Table 4 throws light on the annual income of the sample weavers. The data relating to the household income are arrived at on the basis of the information given by the households and adjusted by the information from other proximate sources.

Table.4 : Classification of the Respondents by Annual Income

Income range (Rs.)	Independent weavers	Master weavers	Weavers under middlemen	Cooperative weavers	Labour weavers	Total
10000 - 20000	--	--	15 (19.23)	5 (11.63)	18 (16.98)	38 (12.67)
20000-30000	5 (9.8)	-	26 (33.33)	20 (46.51)	41 (38.68)	92 (30.67)
30000-40000	8 (15.69)	-	20 (25.64)	14 (32.56)	34 (32.08)	76 (25.33)
40000-50000	8 (15.69)	-	10 (12.82)	3 (6.98)	11 (10.38)	32 (10.67)
50000-60000	14 (27.45)	-	6 (7.7)	1 (2.33)	2 (1.89)	23 (7.67)
60000-70000	12 (23.53)	-	1 (1.3)	-	-	13 (4.33)
70000-80000	2 (3.92)	2 (9.09)	-	-	-	4 (1.33)
80000-90000	1 (1.96)	2 (9.09)	-	-	-	3 (1.00)
90000-100000	1 (1.96)	6 (27.27)	-	-	-	7 (2.33)
Above100000	-	12 (54.55)	-	-	-	12 (4.00)
Total	51	22	78	43	106	300
Co-efficient of variation	101.022	179.019	123.089	155.327	146.232	

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to total.

Source : Sample survey.

The income has varied between Rs.10,000 and Rs.1,00,000 & above. 27.45 per cent of the independent weavers are getting income Rs.50,000 to Rs. 60,000. 23.53 per cent

of the independent weavers are lying between income group of above Rs.60,000 to Rs.70,000, 15.69 per cent of the weavers are in the group of above Rs.30,000 to 50,000 of income group. The master weavers in this sample study are lying between the income group of Rs.90,000 to Rs.1,00,000 with 27.27 per cent. However, among the master weavers, 54.55 per cent are getting the annual income more than Rs.1,00,000. In the case of weavers under middlemen category, out of the total number, 33.33 per cent of the weavers are lying between income group of Rs.20,000 to 30,000, followed by 25.64 per cent of the weavers lying between Rs.30,000 to Rs.40,000. 19.23 per cent of the middlemen category weavers have Rs.10,000 to 20,000 income per annum. The same trend can also be noticed in the cooperative weavers. The labour weavers who have their wages as their income are in between income group Rs.10,000 to 60,000. 38.68 per cent are in Rs.20,000 to 30,000 income group. A close look upon the total samples shows that 30.67 per cent of the samples are under the income group Rs.20,000 to 30,000. No master weaver is getting less than Rs.70,000 per annum. Likewise no weaver under middlemen category is getting above Rs. 70,000 per annum. No cooperative weaver and labour weaver is getting income more than Rs.60,000 per annum. It can be inferred from the table that the most of the cooperative weavers and the labour weavers have a very low annual income i.e. less than Rs. Between 20,000 to 30,000. The independent weavers have relatively wider ranges of household income than the other weavers. The master weavers on the other hand have higher ranges of household income. Among the five types of weavers, independent weavers have the least coefficient of variation (101.022) which reveals that there is greater homogeneity in the income of Independent weavers than in the case of master weavers whose coefficient variation is (179.019).

Expenditure Pattern

With a view to find out the standard of living the weavers as reflected by level of expenditure, monthly household expenditure on important items was obtained. The data on expenditure, it is hoped, would be more reliable than the data on income. The expenditure pattern of the respondents on food, clothing, education, medicines, rent and personal activities per month are presented in table 5. Of the total income, each household spends 45.34 percent on food, 11.80 percent on personal activities, 8.78 percent on rent, 16.19 percent on clothing, 13.91 percent on education and 3.98 percent medicines. Regardless of the type of households, about 42 percent of expenditure is on food. It is interesting to note that the cloth-producer-weaver himself buys cloth from others for his domestic needs. This is

mainly due to the fact that certain varieties required for self and family members are not produced by themselves. A deep insight into the table reveals that the average expenditure of all the weavers on food is less than the total average except in independent and master weavers. The expenditure of independent weavers on clothes is more than that of other categories of weavers. Unlike the general public the expenditure of weavers on medicines is regular phenomenon due to the strain caused by continuous sitting at work place and keen observation of work. The need to earn more money does not permit the weavers to take rest. The economic conditions of the weavers do not allow them to have a proper medical care. Asthama, T.B, Eye, Herniya, etc., are the common "if diseases the weavers get. The expenditure on medicine by the master weavers is more than total average. In the case of labour weavers the monthly expenditure on medicine accounted for 3.11 which less than the total average. The weavers spend more on cloth, next to food items. The comparison between income and expenditure of different types of weavers shows that surplus is maximum for the master weavers, minimum for independent weavers.

Table 5 : Average Monthly Expenditure of the Respondents on Some Selected Items

(In Rupees)

Type of the weavers	Average monthly income	Item-wise expenditure						Total expenditure	Surplus or deficit
		Food	Cloth	Education	Rent	Medicines	Personal expenditure		
Independent weavers	3896	1637 (47.95)	615 (18.01)	450 (13.18)	300 (8.79)	127 (3.72)	285 (8.35)	3414 (100.00)	+ 482
Master weavers	5986	2372 (47.22)	730 (14.53)	575 (11.45)	525 (10.45)	245 (4.88)	576 (11.47)	5023 (100.00)	+ 963
Weavers under middlemen	2692	932 (44.11)	356 (16.85)	364 (17.23)	167 (7.90)	82 (3.88)	212 (10.03)	2113 (100.00)	+579
Cooperative weavers	2676	876 (41.83)	346 (16.52)	338 (16.14)	150 (7.16)	68 (3.25)	316 (15.09)	2094 (100.00)	+582
Labour weavers	2578	846 (41.15)	334 (16.25)	318 (15.47)	148 (7.20)	64 (3.11)	346 (16.83)	2056 (100.00)	+522
Average	3566	1333 (45.34)	476 (16.19)	409 (13.91)	258 (8.78)	117 (3.98)	347 (11.80)	2940 (100)	+626

Notes : Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage to total

Source: Sample survey.

Conclusion

The average production of handloom cloth per day is very small as the most of the weavers are in the lower ranges of production of cloth. As a result the average earnings also is low, lower in the rural areas than in the urban areas. There is need to examine the reasons for this low productivity levels and to ensure increase in productivity and earnings.

The educational and economic background of weavers shown by respondents is very backward. There is gross inequality in the distribution of assets in the form of land, house, looms etc. among different weavers. This inequality naturally leads to differences in income. The master weavers have greater income than other types of weavers. This is reflected again in the differences between monthly expenditure among food, clothing and personal expenditure. It is necessary to reduce these inequalities within the same activity. For this, the type of weavers whose asset value is at low levels should be strengthened through provision of land, looms and houses and thus enable the more weaker sections to increase their average income. This will put all the weavers in the same and also upgraded plan of income and standard of living. The lack of proper housing facilities for the weavers has a bearing on the production, income and standard of living. As most of them depend upon pit looms their weaving activity is badly affected during rainy season when the pits are filled with water and do not allow the weavers to carryout weaving. Provision of proper housing facilities or common weaving sheds will relieve the weavers from handicap of housing and enable them for higher earnings and increase their levels of living.

The weavers in Chittoor District are purchasing yarn from outside the district and even from outside the state. The prices of yarn have been increasing at high rates whereas the prices of finished products have been increasing at lower rate. That is why, the profit margin has been declining throwing the weavers into losses and debt trap. To save these weavers is the immediate necessity. This can be done by Government through supply of yarn at reasonable and concessional price at appropriate time. The Rebate Scheme has not helped all the weavers except about one sixth of the cooperative weavers. The fact is that all the weavers need the supply of yarn at concessional rates so that the production of cloth becomes cost effective and thereby save the weavers from the vulnerable position. Even the availability of facilities for processing and dyeing of yarn are scarce. Hence, they purchase the raw material in frequent intervals depending upon the availability of cash with them. Sometimes the lack of finance deters them from purchasing yarn at the appropriate time and at reasonable price. So, the Government should ensure the processing facilities particularly through cooperative units. These facilities can be used by the cooperative weavers and also outsiders on payment basis. This will also strengthen financial position of the cooperative sector. Otherwise, the Government can provide the processed yarn, after bulk purchases, through quota system. The weavers are facing the problems with other raw material also. The rising prices, the inadequate and untimely supply and poor quality are main problems

encountered by the weavers. Further, the prices of colours and chemicals have been increasing due to short supply. This also puts the weavers into teething troubles. The weavers can be saved from this by ensuring proper supply of chemicals and colours in terms of time, price and quantity. Otherwise, any shortage of these will put the weaving activity into standstill, throwing the weavers into clutches of poverty.

Handloom industry in the district has more fixed capital than the working capital. This peculiar situation of fixed capital being greater than the working capital in the handloom industry arises due to the fact that the working capital has been scarce. This is due to the non availability of institutional sources for the working capital. The weavers are depending more on their own sources for the fixed capital. This infers that the weavers with own capital alone are able to setup own looms. For the working capital the weavers depend on own sources, moneylenders and also friends and relatives. Very few institutional sources are coming forward to provide working capital to the weavers. The shortage of working capital is the main reason for the sad plight of weavers, in general, as also shown by other Studies and Committees with regard to small scale industries (Abid Hussian Committee). There is need for urgent realization that the working capital is the life blood of weaving industry. The Government should make adequate policy changes and direct the financial institutions to provide adequate support to the weavers.

The weavers in the district also face many problems in marketing of the handloom cloth. These problems are due to the seasonal demand for the handloom cloth, the existence of intermediaries, lack of storage facilities and lack of finance to wait for the reasonable price. All these aspects with regard to marketing need considerable attention by the Government. It has to maintain stocks by purchasing the finished cloth immediately of the production enabling the weavers to continue the activity. Necessary marketing finance should be provided so that the weavers can wait for the reasonable price. The handloom products have limited marketing outlet compared to mill and power loom cloth. APCO helps the cooperative weavers in marketing their products. Other weavers sell their products either directly or to the dealers. However, the weavers do not have their own marketing societies which can improve their bargaining power. APCO adopts seasonal rebate schemes to sell the handloom products. But this digs at the profits or margin accruable to the society. The prices of handloom products have also not been competitive. As the cost of production is increasing, the weavers are compelled to enhance the price of the product. APCO is also doing in the same. In this regard a commercial or business approach is needed so that the handloom

products compete with other products. A well organized market network is necessary for the handloom products of all the weavers.

Handloom industry, compared to mill sector, does not have well organized institutional setup in production and marketing. The weavers are widely dispersed throughout the length and breadth of the country so also in the state and district. They are unable to come under one organizational umbrella which can protect their interest. Cooperatives, of course serve the interest of the members to a limited extent, but the cooperatives do not cover all the weavers. Even the existing cooperatives are known for their weaknesses and even these are non existing in real terms. There exist some ghost cooperative societies which are used by some vested interests to corner the benefits given to the societies by the Government and financial institutions. These ills of cooperative societies are striking at the roots of handloom industry. Still, the fact is that, cooperativisation and strengthening of cooperatives are the only answers to the problems faced by the weavers and handloom industry at large. The cooperative net should be spread to cover all the weavers.

The handloom industry has been an integral part of an industrial, social and cultural system. It should not be reduced to the level of a mere vestige of our historical past, as it may happen if the industry is left to face rough weather situation through competition from the mills and the power looms on the one hand, and the multifarious problems faced by the weaver-hero of the industry. The handloom industry can be given fair weather treatment by the Government through series of steps, measures and programmes which include strict reservation of viable items to the handloom sector, providing necessary infrastructure for the handloom industry, supply of raw materials in appropriate time at reasonable price, providing necessary capital, and strengthening marketing structure for the handloom products. Above all what is needed is a right approach to the industry from the view point of its place in the economy, its role towards to the weaver sections without any other skills, and its significance in the labour surplus economy. The handloom industry forms both warp and weft of cultural fabric of India. Cooperative system of weaving will strengthen the handloom industry and thereby save the Indian masses from poverty and unemployment.