

# **ABSTRACT**

## **THE DECAY OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN THE CACHAR DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSAL FACTORS AND SOCIO- ECONOMIC  
IMPACTS**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED TO ASSAM UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL  
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**SUBMITTED BY**

**TANAYA CHOUDHURY**

**Assam University Regn. No. 4830 of 1996-1997**

**Ph.D.Regn. No. - Ph.D./1332/2010**



**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS**

**MAHATMA GANDHI SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND COMMERCE**

**ASSAM UNIVERSITY, SILCHAR**

**Silchar – 788011**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study entitled "The decay of handloom industry in the Cachar District of Assam, an analysis of the causal factors and socio-economic impacts" is an attempt to evaluate the socio economic impact of the decay handloom industry in Cachar. The main part of the work is empirical in nature. The study also analyse factors that are responsible for the decay and the possibilities to avert the decay. The study is organised into six chapters.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The traditional skill of handloom weaving was not only a status symbol for the society but also an indispensable aspect of the of the socio economic life of the weavers. But though this home based cottage industry offers wide employment opportunity and depicts the cultural heritage the role and significance of the industry to the national development has started declining. The handloom weavers fail to compete with power looms and mills. As a result, they now want to adopt occupations other than handloom weaving. Handloom weaving is traditional occupations. Handloom weaving enjoyed its glory and experienced fall in the district. . It was understood as a way of life rather than an occupation that merely provides livelihood. Indian Textile sector occupies a unique place in the world economy. The present Indian textile has been classified as Modern textile mills, Independent Power looms, Handlooms and Garments. Of all, the Handloom industry is an ancient industry and it provides employment opportunity to the large section of rural people. It is subjected to drastic changes in the course of time. The industry is facing lot of problems like outdated technologies, lack of Unique Selling Proposition, unorganized production system, insufficient working capital, weak promotion strategies ,

competition from power loom and mill sector etc. The present study evaluates the social issues faced by weavers in Cachar District and also to find out the factors that are mainly responsible for the decay.

## **1.2 Evolution of Handloom in India:**

The age old handloom industry in India has passed through several historical and political developments like **Indus Valley Civilization, Vedic Period, Mauryan Period, Moghul Period and British Period.**

## **1.3 Development of Handloom**

The dawn of Independence provided an opportunity to accord priority to the handloom industry. At the time of Independence, there were about three million handlooms in India, largely of poor quality because of inferior raw material and ill-organised marketing infrastructure. The situation worsened in 1952 due to a slump in the textile market, which led to a heavy accumulation of handloom stocks. The All-India Handloom Board was reconstituted at the initiative of the Minister for Commerce and Industries, T.T. Krishnamachari, seven years after its dissolution in 1945, to advise the Government and propose schemes for the development and survival of handlooms.

## **1.4 Handloom Weaving**

Weaving is a method of textile production in which two distinct sets of yarns or threads are interlaced at right angles to form a fabric or cloth. Similar methods are knitting, felting, and braiding or plaiting. The longitudinal threads are called the warp and the lateral threads are the weft or filling. (Weft or woof is an old English word meaning "that which

is woven") The method in which these threads are inter woven affects the characteristics of the cloth.

### **1.5 Significance of handloom sector**

(i) its erection cost is much lower, which means lower cost of production of cloth; (ii) it permits frequent change of colour combination and designs in the fabrics produced on it; (iii) its mechanism is rather simple and needs little outside help for servicing or replacing an over worked or damaged part; (iv) the capital required for working it is so nominal that It can be independently worked by a weaver in his own homestead with the assistance of his family members; (v) the capital required for investment in this sector is low, which is hardly one fifth of that of the organised sector; and (vi) the employment potential is very high when compared to power loom and mill sectors.

### **1.6 Strengths of Handloom Sector**

Handloom sector is part of the culture and ethos of India and its glorious past. It has emotional bondage with nationalism and the champions of nationhood. It had a principal role in public opinion formation during the Independence struggle against the 'imported' goods and 'imposed' industrialisation. Handloom production has significant contribution to the national GDP and export earnings. Thus, it has some influence over the foreign exchange levels and the well-being of the economy.

### **1.7 Relevance in Modern Economy**

Handloom sector has different strengths in the modern economy. It is simple, appropriate technology, the knowledge of which lies with the people. Knowledge dissemination is not locked

in any consultancies, or training institutions. The very essence of this technologies that it can be assembled by anybody within no time. It is neither expensive to erect nor dismantle it.

## **1.8 Role of handloom sector**

Countries like India where 70% population live in rural villages and major portion of them are either illiterate or semi-literate are not fit for modern industries or computer software. Employment generations of these countries are mainly from unorganized small cottage and traditional crafts or agricultural sector.

## **1.9 Handloom organisational structure**

Based on the organisational structure and the relations of production, the Handloom sector can be divided into three broad segments:

1. Independent weavers,
2. Co-operative and
3. Master-weaver sectors

## **1.10 Production of handloom fabrics**

Handloom production is mostly carried out in the village. The loom is located in the weaver's home. The weaver almost always operates with the help of his family. Traditionally, pre-loom activities like dyeing & warping were outsourced and sizing, attaching the warp, weft winding & weaving activities were carried out by the weaver. These have changed over the years due to the breakage in traditional linkages; pre-loom activities like sizing are now also being outsourced.

There are several processes involved in the production of handloom cloth, which can be broadly categorized as pre-loom and post-loom activities.

### **1.10.1 Key handloom product areas**

The Handloom industry has been a wonderful testimony to India's rich and varied heritage. Over the years, this industry has stood the test of time and, today, it proudly commands an enviable position in the world market. The key handloom product areas are South India, North East Region, West India, East India, and North India.

### **1.11 An Overview of Handloom Industry in India**

As a major sub sector of the textile industry, the handloom forms a precious part of the generational legacy and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the artistry of the weavers. Tradition of weaving by hand is a part of the country's cultural ethos.

### **1.12 Need for the Study**

The handloom industry has been responsible for the economic and social well-being of the people in Cachar district. A careful study of the economic and social changes brought about by the decay of the handloom industry would be of great importance in assessing present status of the weaver community. The present research study takes into account the possibilities of the survival of the handloom industry in the Cachar district

### **1.13 Statement of the Problem**

Handloom weaving is a household-based activity and that most weavers own their own looms mean that the weavers work as independent producers. Weavers can be truly independent, in the sense that they manage their own production and marketing. In reality, handloom production is declining year after year in the district. The study attempted to

understand the District environment for weaving sector by looking at the socio-economic status of the weavers.

### **1.14 Profile of the Region**

Surrounded by hillocks and situated against the scenic background of Barail Hills and on the bank of meandering Barak Silchar the district headquarters of Cachar District and the commercial hub of Barak Valley, is an ever growing township. The town known for its lush green surroundings and sparsely scattered cottages adorned with flowers of beauty and colour was a favourite for the British. From the time immemorial handloom industry has been playing a vital role in the economy. The traditional skill of handloom weaving was not only a status symbol for the society but it was also an indispensable aspect of the socio economic life.

### **1.15 Objectives**

- 1) To identify the factors that brought about its decay.
- 2) To assess the socio-economic impact of the decay.
- 3) To examine if there is any possibility to avert the decay

### **1.16 Hypothesis**

- 1) Ho 1: Weaving income does not influence the socio-economic standard of living of the people of the Handloom Industry.
- 2) Ha 2: Non-weaving income improve the socio-economic standard of living of the people.
- 3) Ha 3: Higher the amount of time and capital invested on handloom production higher is the price fetched by the products.
- 4) Ha 4: Larger the marketing network, higher is the chances of survival.





## **1.17 Methodology**

The study is empirical in nature. The empirical data have been collected for analyzing the socio-economic status of the weaving family, & to investigate the problems that are encountered by the handloom industry. The secondary data were used to analyse the growth of handloom industries at all India level as well as the state level and district level.

Primary data from these units were collected by using a pre tested questionnaire by personal interview with the weavers. Secondary data were collected from published & unpublished sources. These were collected from books, journals, reports & published document of district industrial centre.

### **Construction of tools**

The study is based on primary as well as secondary data. The primary data were used mainly for analyzing the socio economic status of the weaver & for evaluating the problems of handloom industry, for these a structured questionnaire was prepared for the handloom weavers keeping in view the objectives of the study

### **Sampling design**

The study adopts at the first two stage the two stage stratified purposive sampling design i.e. block & villages from the first & second stage. In the third stage samples were collected on random basis. The block in the district was selected on the basis of discussions with the officials of the Assistant Director Handloom & Textiles, Cachar Silchar, & the key informants. There exist total 18 blocks in Cachar district. Out of theses 18 blocks, 9 blocks were selected purposively for the collection of sample. From each block 3 villages were selected for field work. The criteria used for the selection of villages include product diversification, working

systems etc. Finally at the third stage 15 weaving households were selected from each village i.e. 405 samples were selected by using lottery method of simple random sampling technique

### **Geographical coverage**

The study covers all the 9 blocks of Cachar Districts

### **The field work & collection of data**

The study adopts the survey methods. Survey methods includes administering of structure household questionnaire to the selected samples of weavers. Strategic interviews were conducted with various weavers both within and outside the cooperative fold & from different self-help groups.

### **Data processing**

After the completion of data collection field up questionnaire were edited properly to make them ready for coding & master table was prepared to incorporate all the information available in the questionnaire.

### **Frame work of analysis**

For presentation of facts both diagrammatic & percentage analysis was made. However, for testing of hypothesis appropriate econometric tools was applied on the basis of the nature of data as immerged out of the survey. The socio economic aspect was evaluated with the help of a composite index

### **Regression Models**

In order to measure the socio economic impact of the decay we applied multiple regression analysis in advanced statistical package like SPSS 17

## **CHAPTER II**

### **Review of Literature:**

The studies were classified into three groups, as 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3. The study on an international level is discussed under the group, 2.1. The national level studies are reviewed under 2.2 and the local or regional studies are categorised in 2.3.

### **2.1 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**

1) Lisa and Gezahegn (2011) based on a primary survey of rural handloom clusters in Ethiopia, examine the mechanism and performance of clustering. Given weak financial institutions, clustered producers and traders use trade credits to ease working capital constraints. They pointed out that, geographical clustering enables entrepreneurs with limited capital to enter the business through shared workspaces and fine division of labour. An improvement in infrastructure can further enhance firm performance in a cluster. In towns with electricity access, producers work longer hours by sharing workspaces at lower rental cost.

2) Banerjee, Md. Moniruzzaman Muzib, Shumona Sharmin (2014) conducted a study on the role of the industry as an increasingly essential element of economic, social development and it has become one of the largest economic industries in Bangladesh. Here the study tries to identify the factors of declining handloom workers in Tangail and their main causes of migration to India. Mainly case studies and interview had been taken to collect the primary data. Factors like fear of communal violence, increased price of raw materials, and absence of loan from government, insufficient transport facility, better facilities in India, and lack of security was identified for their rapid migration to India.

## **2.2. NATIONAL STUDIES**

1) In 1953 The Textile Enquiry Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Kanungo to make an in-depth study of textile mills and decentralised sector, the committee recommended the conversion of handlooms into semi-automatic looms or power looms to make them technically more efficient, and recommended abolition of middlemen to eliminate exploitation of primary producers.

2) Sahai (1956) reported that the problems of handlooms are due to the competition from power looms and mills. He felt the need to employ modern techniques of production and design, government should establish training centers for the benefit of weavers where they are concentrated and materials like, design books and related instruments have to be made available.

## **2.3 REGIONAL STUDIES**

1) Kar and Borthakur(2008) discussed about the dyeing handloom textile products and pointed out that Assam is floristically one of the richest states of Northeast India with more than 3,000 flowering plant species. The state is inhabited by five major tribes and nine minor tribes. The people of Assam have been using different herbs to dye their cotton, silk and woolen yarns, and garments. A survey on vegetable dye was undertaken during 2006-2007 in different parts and among different ethnic group of Assam. The paper deals with 47 dye yielding plant species and provided information on their botanical name, family, local names, and plant parts used, method of preparation, colour produced, and kind of garments dyed.

2) Phukan (2012) examined the need for up liftmen of handloom sector, identified the problems faced by this industry. Poor marketing and insufficient market linkage outside the state aided the industry from growing and earning more revenue. Apart from other, innovations in

design to cope up with the latest market demand are not sufficient and have posed a threat to this indigenous industry. Therefore, it is high time that all round efforts are made to revive this important and unique industry.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **SOCIO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF THE WEAVER DUE TO THE DECAY OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY**

This chapter is divided into two part 3.1 and 3.2. The first part 3.1 deals with the socio economic profile of the weaver in Cachar District. The second part 3.2 of the chapter deals with the socio economic problem of the weaver of the District. Socio economic profile of the weavers in Cachar District include Social Class, Age, Sex composition, Family status, Marital Status, Education, Housing situation, Income.

#### **3.2 Socio economic problems of the weavers**

- ❖ Hunger has become a major concern for women and children in this sector. In quite a few places. 32 percent of weaver have been going without proper food, both in terms of quantity and time
- ❖ 75 percent of women are suffering from ailments, from acute to chronic diseases such as anemia, poor eye sight, sugar and blood pressure.
- ❖ Women constitute 80 percent of workforce in handloom sector. But, there is not even a single programme, or scheme, that addresses this segment, in the last 100 years.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **Analysis of data**

#### **4.1 Profile of the Handloom Textile in Cachar District**

Weaving in Cachar is replete with artistic sensibility. The handloom industry in the Cachar District has a long tradition in the socio economic life of the people for supplementing the family income to a great extent of the society .The Laichamphi, Phanek mosquito net etc. produced traditionally by the weavers of Cachar District. .The profile of handloom textile in Cachar district is divided into two part viz, profile of production and productivity and the profile of working status.

##### **4.1.1 Production and productivity in Cachar**

###### **At District Level**

The entire Cachar District is divided into 18 Circles and each Circle is under the control of a Deputy Director of Handlooms and Textiles / Assistant Director of Handlooms and Textiles who are in-charge of implementation of the various welfare and developmental programmes of department at the field level. In Cachar district there exist the

###### **Office of the**

**Asst. Director of Handloom and Textiles, Cachar**

**Dak Bungalow Road. Silchar -788001**

##### **4.1.2 A comparative study of the Present status of handloom productivity in Cachar with respect to Assam and India**

Handloom industry in Cachar District is having glorious past but questionable present and uncertain future due to lots of internal and external factors that are acting behind this. Though it employs a massive number of rural people, the handloom sector is considered a sunset industry. In Assam the industry for generations are the major source of additional income for the rural women of Assam and women comprise of 60% of total weaver population.

#### **4.2. Working status of the weavers in Cachar**

This section of the study assesses the working pattern of weavers engaged in traditional handloom of Cachar District is based on primary data collection. The assessment in this chapter is based on primary data collected randomly from 405 weaving households regarding their work profile, work duration working conditions etc.

#### **4.3 Description of existing products in Cachar**

Manipuri women's are greatly involved in this handloom industry in Cachar district. They are artistic and creative which they prove in the field of handloom and handicrafts. They produce various types of product like Inafi (Sari), bed-cover, Manipuri Chadar & Manipuri gamocha, Mosquito net, etc. This not only makes them economically independent but also helps their families with their financial contributions.

#### **4.4 Description of existing looms in Cachar**

Traditionally the country looms are used in Cachar. These looms required lots of energy or power and creativity, skill and patience. Each family in the village is equipped with one handmade loom. The looms are manually operated and each loom is not at all mechanized, it requires many techniques and skill to organize before going for weaving. Use of traditional



preparatory work is more time consuming. Handloom weaving technologies vary by the types of producers in the industry. Country looms are employed mainly by rural weavers. The traditional country looms are made entirely of bamboo and are typically made using simple tools by a local hand crafter or by producers themselves. During the survey it is found that most of the weavers uses country loom, which they made of their own.

#### **4.5 Problems affecting the handloom weaving in Cachar District**

Different problems affecting the handloom weaving in Cachar District this include problem of raw material, Problem of marketing, Poor Credit Coverage and High Cost, Infrastructure gaps, Lack of Education, Skills, Research and Training.

#### **4.6 Distribution of weavers by factors responsible for weakening of traditional handloom**

Varieties of factors either independently or jointly contributes to the decline of traditional handloom, as reported by the surveyed weaver respondents. The important factors that are responsible for the weakening of traditional handloom are Technology Gap, Unfair competition from mills and power looms, Poor Institutional Frame work, Low wages, and Consumer preference to modern textile, Absence of Information and Resource gaps. Majority (8.64%) of the weaver respondents reported that use of traditional technology greatly hindering the improvement of this sector. Nearly 29.63% of respondents reported that the existence of the unfair competition with power loom is greatly responsible for the decay of the industry in Cachar. About 17.77% of the weaver respondents felt that the handloom sector is in the path of extension due to the poor performance of the cooperative and less financial support by the govt. to the poor weaver. Nearly 13.83% of respondents reported that the low wage structure is one of

the important cause of the decay of traditional handloom in Cachar. Majority 20.25% of the weaver respondents reported that modern textile items are available at relatively cheaper prices, affecting the market for handloom products, 9.88% of weaver respondents felt that absence of information and resource gaps are also one of the important factor responsible for the decay of the industry.

#### **4.7 Impact of decay of traditional handloom on weaving operation**

The sustainability of traditional weaving operation is greatly dependent on the prevailing market position, efficiency of management of the weaver's co-operative societies and production centres and the availability of basic raw materials. Though the sector is facing difficulty to survive and maintain its position particularly in the light of the serious challenge posed by advent of power looms and the organized mill sector, the weaving community still continues to struggle to maintain their livelihood by pursuing their traditional occupations.

##### **Impact of the decay on socio economic life of the weaver engaged in traditional handloom**

The impacts on the style of living and social status of the surveyed weaver families have been analysed with regard to their food intake, children's education, health and sanitation, domestic energy used accessibility to means of entertainment. family dependence on the handlooms.

In order to empirically measure the impact of the decay on the socio economic standard of living of the people of handloom industry we use multiple regression model specified in chapter 1. The multiple regression models (1) and (2) have been formulated in order to test the first null hypothesis that weaving income does not influence the socio economic standard of living of the people of handloom industry and the second alternative hypothesis that non-weaving income

improve the standard of living of the people of handloom industry. These have been estimated by applying the OLS technique in SPSS 17.

While applying the regression analysis we take socio economic index as dependent variable and choose weaving income proportion of dependent family member, per capita debt as independent variable in model (1). Similarly we take socio economic index as dependent variable and choose non-weaving income proportion of dependent family member, per capita debt as independent variable in model (2)

As the estimated regression lines show the unstandardised coefficients ( $\hat{\beta}_1$ ) on the socio economic index are positive and statistically significant for both two cases. But the coefficient for non-weaving income ( $\hat{\beta}_1=2.87$ ) is higher and more statically significant as compared to weaving income ( $\hat{\beta}_1=2.74$ ) implying that if non-weaving income increases by a rupee this will increase of socio economic index by 2.87 where as a rupee increase in weaving income increase the socio economic index by 2.74 this indicates that income both from weaving and non-weaving sources have been an effective means of enhancing the socio economic standard of living of the poor people and thus their ultimate welfare.

Proportion of dependent people in the family and the socio economic status of the family are inversely related, the equation shows that the coefficient for the proportion of dependent member ( $\hat{\beta}_2$ ) are negative for both the cases and statistically significant at 1% level. The sign of these estimates are correct on the theoretical grounds implying that there is an inverse relationship between the socio economic index and this variable. But higher value in case of non-weaving income implies the impact is less ( $\hat{\beta}_2= -1.5$ ) because when income improves the proportion of dependent in socio economic index is less affect.

Again the estimated regression line show that the unstandardised coefficient  $\hat{\beta}_3$  are positive and significant at 1% level in both the cases. The sign of these estimates are correct on the theoretical grounds implying that there is a positive relationship between the socio economic index and this variable. But ( $\hat{\beta}_3=3.48$ ) is higher in case of weaving income than on non-weaving income. This implies that since the income is less the weaver community goes for taking more debt and when their income improve they will go for taking less debt. The sign of this estimates is correct on the theoretical grounds implying that there is a positive relation between the socio economic index and per capita debt.

## **CASE STUDIES**

Individual stories of hardship within the weaver community expose the actual social issues, weavers are facing.

### **4.8 Possibilities to avert the decay**

In order to empirically measure the possibility to avert the decay of handloom industry we use multiple regression model. The multiple regression models (3) have been formulated in order to test the third alternative hypothesis, that is higher the amount of time and capital invested on handloom production higher is the price fetched by the products and simple liner regression model (4) have been formulated in order to test the forth alternative hypothesis Larger the marketing network, higher is the chances of survival.

The estimated regression line show that the unstandardised coefficient  $\hat{\beta}_1$  i.e., the capital invest per unit of product on profit per unit of product ( $\hat{\beta}_1=.95$ ) is statistically significant at 1% level and positive, implies that for a rupee increase in the capital investment will increase the product price by .95

Moreover, the coefficient of time spend to produce per unit of product on product price ( $\hat{\beta}_2=11.35$ ) is positive and statistically significant at 1% level indicates that for a one day increase in the time spend for production the product price will increase by 11.35

### **Marketing network and chances of and chances of survival of handloom industry**

The estimated regression line show that the unstandardised coefficient ( $\hat{\beta}_1$  i.e., total number of marketing network used by the weaver to produce per unit of product is ( $\hat{\beta}_1=9.49$ ) is statistically significant at 1% level and positive implies that for a number of one network increase in the marketing used by the weavers, the profit per unit of product increase by 9.49. This may be due to the fact that as the weaver uses different marketing network they become well acquainted regarding the market information and avail the market opportunities and the extent of market will also become wide. The size of market i.e. the existence of wide market determines the possibility of profit.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **Steps and initiatives taken so far towards the solution of the problem of the handloom weavers**

#### **5.1 Government policies**

Since Independence, the Government of India has been pursuing a policy of promoting and encouraging the handloom sector through a number of programmes and schemes implemented through the State Governments and their agencies working in the handloom sector like

- (i) Integrated Handlooms Development Scheme (IHDS).
- (ii) Marketing & Export Promotion Scheme (MEPS).



## **5.2 Handloom Sector allocation**

Budget allocations to the Handloom and Handicrafts sector have not matched their role in the economy. Despite employing approximately 3% of the total workforce, budget allocations only amount to 0.05% of total budget, expenditures. The overall budget for the textile sector has been consistently increasing over the years but the total budget for handlooms reduced over its previous year allocations in six out of the last thirteen years. The budgetary allocations to the textile sector grew by over 350 percent from Rs.739.04 Crores in 1997-1998 to Rs.3, 389 Crores in 2009-10. However, the share of handlooms registered an increase of only 61 percent over the same period, from Rs. 203.50 Crores to 328.07 Crores.

## **5.3 Various Development Schemes of Handloom & Textiles Department**

### **Cachar, Silchar**

In Cachar District also, various development programmes and schemes were adopted for the development of the handloom sector like

- 1) DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME FOR THE YEAR 2006-07(EMPLOYMENT GENERATION SCHEME) FOR PRODUCTION OF HANDLOOM FABRICS**
- 2) DISTRIBUTION OF LOOM AND ACCESSORIES ETC. TO POOR WEAVERS (GRANTS-IN-AID) FOIR THE YEAR 2007-08 UNDER GENERAL AREA PLAN.**
- 3) SCHEME FOR ECONOMIC UPLIFTMENT OF S.C./GENERAL WEAVERS THROUGH WEAVING AT MOONLIGHT S.H.G. CHANDRAPUR/ ROSE**

**S.H.G., KULICHERRA/ PANGRAM PART 3 S.H.G. PANGRAM, UDHARBOND  
FOR THE YEAR 2009-10 :**

**5.4 Weaknesses regarding the implementation status of different schemes in  
District Cachar**

- ❖ Due to the inefficient utilization of resources some people get double benefits of the schemes while others don't get even one.
- ❖ Artisans still rely upon local moneylenders. They charge heavy interest rate, leaving the artisan in vicious poverty cycle.
- ❖ Even the Mill Gate Scheme 1992-93, intended to deliver the hank yarn to weavers at mill rates is not properly implemented anywhere in the district.

**CHAPTER VI**

**Conclusions and suggestion**

**6.1 Conclusions**

The weaver communities in the District have been pushed down to the lower Strata of the economic ladder. There are 59 percent households, belongs to the low income group. All these households would come under poorest section of the society. Majority of the weaver families reported that the extent of their engagement in terms of working hour in handloom activities has declined. The weavers' earnings is lower in spite of the weavers' willingness to work for longer hours, the whole family involved in weaving activity but their per day income is not exceeding more than Rs.60,



The impact on living style and social status of the weaver families especially the women engaged in weaving activities have declined with regard to their food intake, children's education, health and sanitation, domestic energy use, accessibility to means of entertainment. Nearly 95.06% of the weaver families reported that the quality and quantity of food intake has deteriorated. Weavers' food expenditure is less but Weavers' indebtedness is greater. About 4.94% of the weaver families reported having experienced no change in quality and quantity of food intake. Nearly 84.94% of the weaver families have suffered in availing recreational facilities due their financial problems caused by declination of handloom business.

## **6.2 Suggestions**

It is important to note that in spite of growing competitions and pressure caused by a modern textile sector and shortage/irregular availability of raw materials, which adversely affect the traditional handloom in the District, very few weaver families surveyed are still been continuing their weaving operations to a limited scale. The growing consumer preferences for modern textile products is directly attributed to increasing investment made by the traditional sector on advertisement and promotion.

Handloom weaving is an integral part of the rural culture and economy of Cachar. The growing awareness among various communities is about the role of indigenous textile items in verifying cultural identity has helped in their continuance. Handloom weaving is lightly to survive and prosper because of the force of traditions as well as for the new meaning and substance acquired by it in the present times. The distinctive cottage industry is indeed of organized help and assistance so that it can further develop and flourish. Traditional practices used are mostly

organic, ecofriendly, sustainable, viable and cost effective. But there is a need to explore, verify, modify and scientifically validate these practices for their wider use and application.