CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION:

The development of small business especially in rural segments is a viable remedy of enormous challenges and problem. Tiny units have been found to constitute that segment of small scale industries that is most prone to sickness or least likely to be viable. Handloom and handicraft an artisan enterprises, comprise of rural small scale and cottage industries. Since employment is a means to achieve growth with social justice, a number of programmes and schemes have been designed and implemented for their development since the dawn of the planning era. It will help in the redistribution of income and wealth. Improving the quality of life for rural people. India is a developing country with majority of its masses living in rural areas. Agriculture is the main source of employment providing work to 70 percent of the rural population. Next to agriculture was once handloom that provided employment to a significant number of people in rural India. Mahatma Gandhi said "the spinning wheel is a nation's second lung". He considered the spinning wheel, a symbol of revolution. So, handloom weaving is the most important cottage and labour intensive industry in India carried out with labour contributed by entire family of the total handlooms in India 72 percent are engaged in cotton weaving, about 16 percent in silk weaving and rest are related to art silk and mixture.

The Handloom is the most important industry of India in terms of providing employment to backward and down trodden people, maintaining the heritage and culture of the country, contributing in export sector. From the origin and past glory the handloom industry may be better termed as a time honored cottage industry, no other country in the world has preserved and upheld

this ancient craft in such pure form as India does. The evidences reveal that handloom industry is the most ancient industry of India and played very significant role in country's economy from very long time. Many historians and excavation work presented the old picture of hand weaving.

Handloom sector is an important cottage industry in India and is a very old profession. Handloom weavers are known for their knowledge, innovation and brilliance in designs. Weaving is now considered almost an art form considering deployment of skills and knowledge. This sector, estimated, provides employment for more than 15 million people and is the second largest rural employment provider next to agriculture. In comparison with other traditional rural sectors, handloom weaving is a full-time family profession, involving all the members of the family. From the early 19th century, handloom industry started to decline and have lost its market due to industrialization. Industrialization took place in the traditional handloom industry of India when trade liberalization and market liberalization came in existence. In other view, artisans, particularly handloom weavers, even represent a de-industrialization. Decline and transformation was a worldwide phenomenon in the nineteenth and early twentieth century in the artisan group. Increasing use of capital-intensive technology and competition with power-loom cloth are typically the chief characteristics of industrialization. Since that time, weaving faced a competitive market with the upcoming new technologies and foreign manufactured products. As a result, the power-loom came in dominance consequently Indian handloom industries tried to adapt in terms of changing conditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, because, industrialization in one part of the world imposed large uncompensated costs upon another9,4. In recent years, the power-looms comprise an industry of considerable proportions. The official data shared that power-looms have increased from 37 per cent in 1980 to 68 per cent in 1995 in India's total textile production. Increasing use of power-looms had influenced on the handloom market... Thus, the modern power

loom industry is the most significant form of industrialization in India and unquestionably one of the world's largest industries. Besides this, production system and capitalistic control is another reason behind the declination of handloom. The capitalism is another feature of Industrialization. The capitalist merchant wanted to produce larger quantities and to control over the increasing number of laborers. The mode of organization and control over labor process has changed with growing of capitalism. It means under a merchant or Mahajan or capitalist system, where the instruments of production possessed by the weavers and the capitalist advances the circulating capital (C.C) (the wage fund and raw material). The weavers work only for wages. The wages are gradually turned down. The drop off in wages and wage labour system that causes alienation from the traditional handloom industry. Increasing price of raw material also affected the handloom market. The handloom weavers no longer remained associated with handloom and they shifted to other jobs. Thus, technological change (power-loom), low wages and rising price of yarn (raw material) have adversely affected the handloom sector as well as handloom weavers. Viewing the decline situation of handloom, many scholars have showed their interested in finding out the problem faced by the handloom industry, handloom industry has been facing the problem of improper financial facilities and irregular supply of yarn. As a result, the price of raw materials increases every year and the cost of the handloom cloth increases in comparison to the power loom Cloth.

From the time immemorial, handloom industry have been playing a vital role in the economy of Barak valley. 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 .The economy of Barak valley particularly Cachar District is basically an agricultural economy .Naturally any development of the valley will call for primarily the development of its agricultural sector and

allied activities along with the development of those village and other industries which would not require too much of skill of labourers or other facilities of highly modern technology .Handloom industry in Cachar District is having glorious past but questionable present and uncertain future due to lot of internal and external factors that are acting behind this Handloom the traditional village and cottage industries provide a vital means of livelihood to village artisans. But inspite of its importance, the small scales sector is beset with the problem of sickness. An industry is considered to be sick when its financial position is not satisfactory and it becomes worse year after year. In India where 70% population lives in rural villages majority of them are either illiterate or semi-literate they are not fit for modern industries or computer software. Under such a situation unorganised small cottage and traditional industry provide huge employment opportunities. The household based industry have great economic potential given to its low capital and energy requirements. The impact of a handloom is far below its more modern competitors .Handloom industry used to play a significant role in the rural economy of the Barak valley in Cachar district. It was not just another way of earning livelihood rather it could also earn fame by its products outside the country also. Irrespective of the category and place of weaving, the weavers produce varieties of product. They are artistic and creative which they prove in the field of handloom and handicrafts. But like many other part of the country here also many of the industries has closed down and the remaining few are finding difficult to survive. The income of handloom weavers have declined to such an extent that they cannot even meet their basic needs on average a weaver is earning just Rs 50 to 60 in a day. Presently, handloom weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis because of adverse government policies, globalization and changing socio-economic conditions. However, in the present situation, there are too many issues, which are impinging on the development of the handloom sector.

1.2 Evolution of Handloom in India:

The age old handloom industry in India has passed through several historical and political developments. These are as follows.

1.2.1 Indus Valley Civilization:

As an excavation work was under taken at Harappa in 1921, the spindles and spindle whorls found during the excavations indicate that spinning of cotton and wool was very common in those days.

1.2.2 Vedic Period:

In the Rigvedic Period spinning and weaving became highly advanced occupations. In this era, the art of dying and embroidering was also started. During that time, a woolen thread called "Varna Sutra" is mentioned in the later Samhitus and Brahmanas.

1.2.3 Mauryan Period:

Before the Christian era, the popularity of Indian Printed cotton fabrics had spread all over the world. As the Great Greek which instead of fruit, produces wool of finer, better quality than that of sheep, and of this the Indians made clothes. It is believed that this period marks the stabilization of costumes design in India.

1.2.4 Moghul Period:

When the Mohammedans came India in 711 A.D. they were surprised by the Indian painted and printed cotton fabrics. The famous ancient Indian fabrics include Mulmul Khas (King's

Muslin), Jamdani (figured muslin), Banarasi brocade, Chand-tara, Dhup-chhaon, Mapchar, Morgala, Bulbul chashm, Doshala, Kasaba or Chaddar, Rumal, Kashmir Shawl, Kanikar,Jamawar, Amilkar, Kashida, Phulkar, Bagh, Makmal and other fabrics. The Moghul poets have described the scintillating muslin and brocades by various name like Abe-ravan (running water), Shabnum (morning dew) Sarbatt (Sweet as Sherbat), Bakt-hawa (woven air) etc. In Arab countries it was famous as 'Abe hayat' and in Greece as 'Ganjetica'. Many Historians like Bernier, Tarvenier, Valtaire and Daniel Defoe have spoken about the beauty, sensitivity and uses of Indian handlooms. As De Robertson had said that, gold and silver was brought in loads of India from other countries owning to her textile industry. Indian muslins and chint were the rage amongst fashionable women in Rome, Dacca, and Paitan were the noted centered respectively for muslin, chintz and pitambara

1.2.5 British Period:

As early as 1813, cotton and silk goods of india could be sold for a profit in the British market but at a price 50-60% lower than the cost at which the British goods could be produced as such, to be able to dump the cloth produced by their Lancashire and mills in India and to prohibit Indian exports to England. Britishers took resort to various positive and even brutal measures, including a heavy duty of 70-80% Advalorem on Indian fabrics. During 1813 to 1830 India was converted into an importer of cotton goods from England. As if this was not enough, the British rulers even resorted to the barbaric act of chopping off the hands of Indian artisans. Nevertheless this traditional craft of India is alive even today. The Indian artisans have stood the test of the time and have kept this great craft alive despite various hardships they have had to face. This is enough to prove that this traditional craft possesses inherent vitality and great potential. The maintenance of our cultural heritage demands that this traditional art of our country should be preserved. The other historians also consider that India is the birthplace of cotton manufacture, and it is as old as

our human civilization. From that time the hand spun yarn and the hand woven cloth has been handed over from one generation to other generation.

Given the changes in the society in the last 100 years, there has been growth of mechanized textile production across the world, principally driven by Industrial revolution and by Western countries. Gradually, due to competition and for other reasons, handloom has lost much of its markets, and is almost non-existent in most countries. However, handloom sector is still a force to reckon with in India, and some of the South Asian and Asian countries such as Srilanka, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Cambodia.

The past traditions of the Textile and Handlooms can still be seen amongst the motifs, patterns and designs and the old techniques of weaving are still employed by the present day weavers.

1.3 Development of Handloom:

Over the centuries handlooms are associated with excellence in India s artistry in fabrics Right from the ancient times, the high quality of Indian handloom products like muslin of Chanderi, silk brocades of Varanasi, the tie and dye products of Rajasthan and Orissa, the Chintas of Machhlipatnam, the himroos of Hyderabad, the Khes of Punjab, the prints of Farrukhabad, the Phenek and Tongam and bottle designs of Assam and Manipur, the Maheshwari sarees of Madhya Pradesh and the Patola sarees of Baroda have been famous all over

The dawn of civilisation that is art and craft traditions is kept alive despite of sweeping changes due to continuous efforts of generations of artists and craftsmen who weaved their dreams and visions into exquisite handloom products

The handloom industry now provides livelihood to over 90 million people in the country. It continues to be craft-oriented, even though it was circumscribed by a limited choice of

processing and technology. During the first half of the present century there was very little effort to develop the handloom sector and the handloom weavers were pitted against modern textile mills. They struggled to survive not only against the unfair competition but also against the unscrupulous middlemen who did everything to ensure that the weavers remained in perpetual debt trap. It is a tribute to their ingenuity and skill that they succeeded in preserving the long tradition of excellence in hand-weaving, dyeing, in-printing and craftsmanship.

August 15, 1947 marked a turning point for the handloom weavers of India. Mahatma Gandhi s use of Charkha, the spinning wheel, as a symbol of national regeneration and the subsequent focus on the handloom weavers during the freedom movement was largely responsible for the breakthrough. But little could be done in terms of fiscal assistance to protect them from the onslaughts of the machine.

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 Commence 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.

The handloom industry is largely household-based, carried out with labour contributed by the entire family. It is dispersed, spread across thousands of villages and towns in the country. The industry also exhibits considerable diversity in terms of products, organizational base, as well as in relations between actors within the production structure. This diversity is not reflected in the

aggregate data on the industry. And unfortunately, it is often such aggregate data, which form the basis not only for people's impressions about the industry, but also in attempts to formulate policies for the sector.

A study commissioned by Planning Commission (P C) in late 1990s points out that there is no such thing as 'the' weaver, but rather, a diversity of conditions that characterize weavers and weaving. It is this heterogeneity that needs empirical elaboration.

With a view of raising funds for the industry and organising weavers+ cooperatives, Parliament passed the Khadi and Other Handloom Industries Development Act in 1953.

To facilitate marketing of fabrics made in the handloom cooperatives (H C), a national level apex body called the All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Cooperative Society was set up in 1955. Subsequently, the Weavers Service Centre and the Indian Institute of Handloom Technology were set up to provide infrastructure back up in the vital areas of applied research, service and training.

The Handloom and Handicrafts Export Corporation of India Ltd (HHEC) was set up in 1958 to promote export of handlooms. To ensure a steady supply of raw materials such as yarn, dyes and chemicals to the State handloom organisations, the National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC) was set up in 1983. As these schemes for the development of handloom industry were not enough to revolutionise this sector, the Government appointed a high powered study team and on its recommendations the Office of Development Commissioner (Handlooms), a nodal agency at the Centre, was set up in 1976 to ensure a scientific growth of the handloom industry. Since then the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been implementing various welfare schemes for the benefit of the handloom weavers. Some of the major

programmes relate to supply of inputs, production, marketing, welfare package, training and enforcement of Handlooms (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985.

During the VIIIth Five Year Plan (1992-97) the Centre released Rs.1, 098.8 crore to the State governments and other agencies to implement various schemes for the benefit of the handloom weavers. As a result, the production of handloom fabrics registered more than 14-fold increase from a level of 500 million sq. mtrs. In the early 50s to 7,235 million sq.mtrs. in 1996-97.

The export of handloom goods also increased and touched approximately Rs.2, 100 crore in 1996-97. It has now become the largest economic activity in the country after agriculture, providing direct and indirect employment to more than three million weaver households. This sector contributes nearly 22 per cent of the total cloth produced in the country.

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.

Cloth is usually woven on a loom, a device that holds the warp threads in place while filling threads are woven through them. A fabric band which meets this definition of cloth (warp threads with a weft thread winding between) can also be made using other methods, including tablet weaving, back-strap, or other techniques without looms.

The way the warp and filling threads interlace with each other is called the weave. The majority of woven products are created with one of three basic weaves: plain weave, satin weave,

or twill. Woven cloth can be plain (in one colour or a simple pattern), or can be woven in decorative or artistic designs. In general, weaving involves using a loom to interlace two sets of threads at right angles to each other: the warp which runs longitudinally and the weft (older woof) that crosses it. One warp thread is called an end and one weft thread is called a pick. The warp threads are held taut and in parallel to each other, typically in a loom. There are many types of looms.

1.5 Significance of handloom sector:

Handloom development programme has assumed a significant place in rural development strategy as it provides continuous employment and sustained economic support to the weaker section of the rural population especially the rural women. Handloom sector being a highly labour intensive tiny industry creates large-scale rural employment especially for women. Handloom weaving is one of the most popular and potential avocation in view of its strategic role in providing wider avenues of income and employment. As a traditional occupation, weaving activities are pre-dominantly pursued by weaver communities and hence handloom development programme aims at not only benefiting this section of the population but also promotes the secondary sector activities as part of household industrial development. The degree of success of implementation of the handloom development programme largely influences the success of poverty alleviation strategy directed to raise the living standard of the weaver communities. A number schemes have been initiated by Govt. of India (GOI) and State Govt. for bringing about technological improvement in this field and for modernising the traditional looms and equipment to increase the efficiency of production.

Further, the significance of handloom industry in India can also be appreciated, taking into account the following facts: (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; (lv) 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 continues to employ large number of people in rural, semi-urban and urban areas of India. In some states such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, North Eastern States, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal, this sector is visibly large and dominant in certain categories of clothing. Market for handloom products is still large and wide. There is good domestic market as well as international market. There are die-hard consumers who would 'support' handloom products for every reason they can hold onto. Handloom sector continues to provide direct and indirect employment. There are estimatedly 32 other sectors which are dependent on handloom production, in various ways, including transportation, financial services, marketing services, service and maintenance services, hotels, etc. Many handloom centres are well known tourist spots, drawing visitors from far places of India and foreign countries as well. Thus, part of the tourism industry's fortunes is also influenced by handloom sector and its fame. Handloom sector has umbilical linkage with cotton farmers and rural farm economy. Agricultural labour gets employment in handloom sector in non-agricultural seasons. Handloom sector has self-sustaining mechanisms, including training for young weavers, irrespective of gender. The inheritance of skills, resources and capacities is beyond the realm and reach of any modern training and educational institution. It is a facilitation process,

which is not dependent on the government and or any modern formal institution. There is also sufficient flexibility for all types of communities to take up handloom production as a profession. 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.

In a world, which is gasping for clean air and water, and vibrant soil, caused by the pollutants and impacts of the modern textile mills and power looms, handlooms are ecofriendly. The environmental impact of a handloom is far below its more modern competitors. It is an independent and autonomous technology. Energy impacts from handloom technology are almost zero. While the world is becoming modern and globalisation is happening, fashions are also changing rapidly. Fashions are increasingly becoming customized-production i.e., productions of clothes or garments for particular person. This is possible on handloom with much more ease and lesser cost. Customised textile production is possible only with handloom technologies. Handlooms are environment-friendly.

A handloom is an independent and autonomous technology. Energy impacts are almost zero. The sector thus lends itself to sustainable development policies aimed at reduction of negative impacts on environment and ecology.

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.

In this regard Handloom sector plays a very important role in the country's economy. It is one of the largest economic activities providing direct employment to over 65 lakhs persons engaged in weaving and allied activities. As a result of effective Government intervention through financial assistance and implementation of various developmental and welfare schemes, this sector has been able to withstand competition from the power loom and mill sectors. This sector contributes nearly 19% of the total cloth produced in the country and also adds substantially to export earnings.

Handloom is unparalleled in its flexibility and versatility, permitting experimentation and encouraging innovations. The strength of Handloom lies in the introducing innovative designs, which cannot be replicated by the Power loom sector. Thus, Handloom forms a part of the heritage of India and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the artistry of the weavers.

The Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been implementing various schemes, since its inception in the year 1976, various schemes for the promotion and

development of the handloom sector and providing assistance to the handloom weavers in a variety of ways. These are Modernisation and Up gradation of Technology

- Input Support
- Marketing Support
- Publicity
- Infrastructural Support
- Welfare Measures
- Composite Growth Oriented Package
- Development of Exportable Products
- Research & Development of the major programmes

1.9 Handloom organisational structure:

Cloth weaving in the handloom sector entails a number of different activities, both pre-loom and post-loom. Persons engaged in weaving establishments, whether in household or non-household units, may perform a single or multiple activities on a full-time or part-time basis. Some members of a household like women and children engage themselves in preparatory work like winding of yarn for the purpose of warp, winding of pins (for weft), sizing, etc. Similarly, members could be engaged in dying, post-loom operations, made ups, etc. These are considered allied activities in the handloom sector. While members engaged only in weaving work are naturally classified as 'weavers', others engaged in allied activities, but also undertaking part-time weaving, are also included in the weaver category

Handloom household unit: A handloom household unit is defined as one that has any member of the household undertaking handloom related work (either weaving on the loom, or as pre-loom or post-loom allied activity, other than marketing is called handloom household unit.

Handloom non-household unit: handloom non-household unit is an establishment, which could be run by a private owner or a society, such as a master weaver, cooperative societies, handloom Development Corporation (HDC), etc. These could be placed in work sheds in the premises of non-household units, or else, they could be distributed in the houses of the hired weavers. In some cases, a mixed arrangement could be followed, with some of the looms on the premises, and the rest distributed in the houses of the hired weavers. Usually the non-household units operate by cooperative society and master weaver.

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) Independent weaver

Independent weaver: are those who produce cloth on their own, that is, they own the instruments of production, purchase raw materials from market and produce fabric with family labour and sell the products in the local market or to traders. The stiff competition from the power looms and the rising prices of cotton hank yarn has impacted these weavers adversely

2) Co-operative society

Cooperative society: A co-operative includes weavers located within a specific geography as members and is committed to provide production work to the members. Co-operative acts as the aggregation point for procuring yarn, chemical dyes and any other inputs required for production. The end product is sold in the immediate market, to co-operative societies and to whole sale trader. A co-operative has to also ensure fair wages to the weaver member and act as a conduit for the various welfare measures initiated by the State on behalf of the weaver.

The cooperative structure in the handloom sector is twofold: apex society and primary society. The apex society is an umbrella body for primary societies. Hence, weavers are basically members of primary societies. Handloom co-operatives are a major segment accounting for a large proportion of weavers as members. The co-operatives that emerged as a mechanism for protecting the weavers from the dominant master-weavers and traders, recorded notable success in their objective but have seen a decline since the1980s. The increasing political and governmental interference, development of bureaucratic tendencies and corruption hampered their autonomous functioning. To add to the crisis, the ineffectiveness of the co-operatives in ensuring regular supply of the raw materials and the delays in the payment of wages, forced the average weaver to shift to the master-weaver system. As a consequence of this, a number of co-operatives, which once had successful record, have been rendered non-functional. The bogus co-operatives, floated by influential master-weavers/ traders/ local politicians (and also by power loom owners), to corner the subsidies and marketing facilities extended by the government and the State Apex Handloom Co-operative body(SAHCB), have not only robbed the genuine co-operatives of their due share but also contributed to the credibility crisis of the co-operative sector.

3) Master Weaver

This is a traditional system where the master weaver cum trader provides work for weavers in the village. He also provides raw material, designs and looms for the migrant weavers. The finished products are aggregated for sale by the master weaver. He often advances loans for the weavers in times of need. Weavers may choose to work with the master weaver for lesser wages due to this facility of easy loans.

Handloom weaving provides a viable income for weavers in the village. When the weaver makes enough wage through consistent work, the weaver has a choice not to migrate out of his profession and village. Handloom weaving also uses the existing skill base, which is acquired by the weavers through their family. Handloom production is one of the oldest traditional production processes, which exists even today.

Master weavers**:** A master weaver also refers as a generic term to people who get the yarn sized, supply beams to smaller owner, get the fabric woven and get the cloth processed. This system of master weaver has evolved over years. In the past, master weavers used to advance yarn to weavers working in their own houses. In recent years, many master weavers have set up common sheds for weaving, where hired weavers come and undertaking the weaving activities. In this system, the master-weaver or the entrepreneur produces cloth by employing wage labour. Either he directly markets the product or sells it to traders. Here two kinds of production practices exist:

i) Put-out system and

ii) Karkhana system

In the put-out system, the weaver works at his home on his own loom using the raw materials supplied by the master-weaver for a piece rate wage. The entire family of the weaver is involved in the production process – with the adult members engaged in weaving and the aged and children helping in the preparation of accessories. In the karkhana or shed-worker system, the weavers work on the looms provided by the master weaver under one roof. With the decline of independent weavers and the marginalisation of the co-operative sector, the master weaver sector has emerged as the dominant system through attracting the displaced weavers. Master Weaver sector accounts for a major share in the production of handlooms.

1.10 Production of handloom fabrics:

Handloom has a complex history and this shapes the contradictions and strengths of the industry. It is decentralized in nature where the weaver operates from his house. The strength of the community in the village supporting in pre-loom has dwindled and the weaver family has become nuclear. The markets have moved away and the immediate markets becomes weak. In the face of all these adversities, the industry survives though in reduced numbers. Weaving has always been a community activity located in a specific group / caste in each geographical area. 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. Theses 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. Besides weaving, winding, sizing, warping and beaming are

the pre-loom activities while bleaching, printing, calendaring and finishing are the post-loom activities, which have to be done in a systematic process. Some of these handloom products may be directly sold soon after weaving and some other products required post-weaving process to find market. The process of weaving takes certain period of time which the weaver has to perform with much attention, care and patience. A simple mistake can spoil the material within no time. Further, the favour of suitable climatic conditions is essentially required. The production of handloom fabrics shows its due influence and impact on the socio-economic lives of the poor weavers.

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. A new facet of the Handloom sector has taken shape in the form of home furnishings. The art of weaving has extended beyond sarees and has entered the portals of our homes through curtains, tablemats, bed linen and so on. With creativity being the hallmark of India's work, it offers a rich blend of the traditional with the contemporary in the latest hues of the season, woven in the perfect symmetry of our skilled weavers. From the domestic point of view sarees, dress material, dhotis, handkerchiefs have major markets in India. In export markets, made-ups are the major foreign exchange earners. These largely are carpets and floor coverings, Bedcovers / bedspreads and curtains.

1) South India:

South India has a rich tradition of Handloom textiles.**Andhra Pradesh** is world-famous for **tie and dye cloth**, with its more recent innovation in furnishing fabrics, well-known brocade

and silk saris of Kothakota and Gadwal, the famous **Narayan pet saris** and superfine **venkatagiri saris**. Besides pondur khadi are among the better known Handloom textiles from the State. **Carpets of Eluru and Warangal** has long been known not only within the country but also in many parts of the world. Artistic durry industry has evolved in and around Warangal. The famous **pochampally ikat tie-and-dye sari** has won Intellectual Property Rights protection.

The **'kerala kasavu sarees'** are praised for their fineness and natural colours, texture and gold borders. Unbleached cotton Handloom crepe popularly known as **'kora' cloth** has entered in the foreign market and occupies a proud place in the garment industry. Furnishing fabrics from Malabar are well known for the excellent texture of the cloth. Balaramapuram produces super fine **'mundum neriyathu'** for the need of royal family. Chendamangalam of Ernakulam district is famous for **double dhoti** and **'mundu'** and **'neriyathu'.**

Tamil Nadu is noted for its variety of weaves, depth of colours and an infinite variety of checks and stripes. It is the home of the **real madras handkerchief** or **george cloth, bleeding** Madras and Madras Checks. Tamil Nadu is renowned for its **gossamer cottons** with intricate gold work and thread ranging from the traditional sheer white dhoti and bordered shawl, angavastram. Of the numerous saree weaving centers throughout the State the most famous is **kancheepuram**. Ever ready for innovation, the Handloom textile sector of Karur, Erode, Salem, Bhavani and Chennimalai have transformed a traditional **Handloom cotton carpet** and bed cover industry into a thriving center for home furnishings of all types, as well as fabrics for garments.

Molkalmuru in Chitradurga is considered the silk capital of Karnataka. The saree distinguishes itself with its rich, heavy pure zari pallu that uses motifs from nature like birds, mainly parrots, animals, fruits and flowers as well as geometrical designs. Ilkal saree takes its

name from a little town in the northern district of Bijapur. They enjoy pride of place in festivities and weddings in north Karnataka and towns of Maharashtra bordering Karnataka.

2) North East Region (NER):

Arunachal Pradesh can be called a store house of Handloom designs as its 20major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes has got a unique and appealing skillof Handloom designs. The products are Skirt (**gale**), Shirt (**galuk)**, **cottonshawl**, **side bag, curtain cloth** etc, in different pricing pattern according to the quality, traditional value, motive and design.The **carpet** making is one of the important occupations in the districts of Tawang, West Kameng, Changlang, Upper Siang.**cotton, muga, paat (mulberry silk)** and **endi** are the basic raw materials forhand-woven fabrics in Assam. Sualkuchi is the biggest centre of silk production and weaving in the State. There are more than 3,000 weavers in and around the township. Sualkuchi is known as the Manchester of Assam. Assam produces beautiful designs on the borders of traditional garments such as the **mekhela-chaddar** and riha and on the **gamosa (towel).** The **laichangphi fanek gamocha** etc. Produced traditionally by the weavers of CACHAR district, is a popular quilt sought after because of its warmth and softness. The tribals make beautiful shawls.Manipur's Imphal, Thoubal and Bishnupur districts are the main Handloom producing centres. **Polyester Cloths Like Sarees, Made Up Bed Sheet, Curtain, Towel (Bath Towels, Hand Towels, Face Towels, Etc), Table Cloths, Fashion Garments** with intricate designs, cushion covers, pillow covers, upholstery, draperies, scarves, terry towels, dressing gown, **laychamphee (cotton tweedcloth)** etc.

Tripura's Handloom is the single largest and perhaps the oldest industry in the State. Among the traditional produces are **Risa and Riha (Breast Garments**). The Bengalee weavers who have migrated in Tripura from the erstwhile East Pakistan (Bengal) are the main commercial

weavers and play a significant role in the development of the Handloom Industry. Today, with the modern inputs, artisans produce colorful furnishing cloth fabrics, bed spreads, polyester shirting, silk Kota sarees, cotton Jamdani sarees, Buti sarees, Buti long length dress materials, Lungees, Towel, Napkin handkerchiefs, **pachra, laisumphi**, Acrylic Shirting, Acrylic Shawl, **naga shawl** etc. which are in great demand both within and outside the State.

3) West India:

The famous **Cotton Bed Sheets** are woven in a range of hues in **Solapur.** Bedcovers, tablecloths, napkins, wall hangings, floor cushions, screens and window blinds, towels in pure cotton in a range of colours and sizes are made at Solapur, Aurangabad, Nagpur, Pune, Mumbai, Nashik, Kolhapur, Anchalpur etc. Paithani Sares are being produced for over 2000 years and is a must for every bride's trousseau. They are woven entirely by hand, without any mechanical aid like the dobby and in pure silk in rich vibrant colours. Famous as **Ganga Jamuna**, is a unique double colour sari which can be worn from either side. Solapur sarees are made of fine cotton saris woven in the Sholapur area, using the dobby mechanism. **Pune Sarees** are of pure silk, cotton, cotton and rayon (80-20), made with **Narayan Peth** borders of colour stripes with floral gold motifs, Paithani borders and **Khaullay Borders**. Tussar silk woven **Bhadhari Saree** creates attractive borders and pallus in even patterns and bright or dark colours. **Kasuti Embroidery** is sometimes used to decorate the pallus.

Gujarat is famous for the exquisite **Tie and Die Technique of Patola Saree**, dhoties, shirting, woollen shawls and long cloth. The artisans have developed eco-friendly fabrics in most important production processes like **Bandhani Weaving**, applique & artwork. Many plain and

decorative layers of fabrics are stitched by hand together to create wonderful ethnic bedsheet, bedcover, table cloth, cushion covers, etc.

Madhya Pradesh has absorbed and synthesized strong cultural influences from across its borders, which can be differentiated in the weaves and prints of its saris. The fine, rich handwoven and printed textiles represent the very fabric of central India. In the past, handwoven sarees went as part of a woman's dowry from one kingdom to another, symbolizing prosperity. **Chanderis and Maheswari Sarees** are now woven of fine silk and cotton yarn with narrow borders offsetting the tone and lustrous texture of the body fabric. **Carpets** are weaved at Chattarpur, Damoh and Depalpur, Durries and batik articles in Guna. Beautiful durries in subdued colours with geometrical designs are woven in Mandsaur area. Jobat is well known for its **Punja Duri Made by the Local Bhilcommunity.**

Fabrics of **Chhattisgarh** show auspicious, geometric, floral, faunal, divine and human forms, that are closely associated with the worship of rivers, villages, hills, soils, crops, water bodies and rocks of the land with a celebration of the unity of organic and inorganic features of its landscape.

4) East India:

Silks of **Bengal** were much acclaimed the world over since ancient times. The most well-known **Bengal Silk Saree**, which carry its legendary name, is the **Baluchari Saree** - a product of exquisite design and fabulous weaving technique. A revival in recent times of both the Baluchari and yet another outstanding, traditional Bengal Saree, the **Daccai**, has led to nationwide and worldwide popularity and renewal of interest in Bengal silks. The **Daccai 'Jamdani'** is a fabric on which the designs are raised in an inimitable style. The 'Batik' prints originating from Javanese

wax-designing have been revived in Santiniketan. Floral forms, circular 'kalka' shapes, pyramidal and variations of geometric designs are typical. **Butidar Baluchari** saree is produced in Bishnupur in Bankura district. Weavers use jacquard looms with silk and tassar yarn. Stoles are also being made for a wider urban market. Traditional garad silk saree had plain red borders set against a natural ground with widely spaced red paisley motifs arranged diagonally. The paisley design is also woven into the anchal. **Kowdial Saree** is woven on a solid ground with a blood red border a fine serrated edge in gold zari. The edge is said to resemble the trace of a kowrie or shell, hence the name. Shantipur sarees are famous for their loose weave in 100-120s count yarn with typical unbleached ground, offset by narrow, intricately designed borders in red, black, orange, sometime highlighted with gold. **Muga and Mulberry Silk** is also used on the border, woven with extra Geographical Mapping & Documentation of Handlooms 24 warp band. **Jamdhani Sarees with Extra Weft** designs similar to neighbouring Fulia are also woven in Shantipur. The high quality jamdhani technique embroidering on the weft creates the **Tangail Dhakari**. The weft embroidery of flower, tree, peacock, and other motifs are now woven on jacquard looms. Motifs on extra weft weaving are used extremely on the body and anchal on both coloured and white ground. Muga is used on the borders and motifs in costlier sarees while resham and art silk are used on the less expensive varieties. Dhatrigram and Nabadwip weavers are the most skilled in jamdhani patterns. **Tassar Fabric** is considered to be pure cloth. It is highly demanded by priests, as wedding saree and to be worn during prayers. Saree with a yellow ground with bright coloured borders are popular especially in south India. Santhal women wear plain sarees with red border as wedding saree. Muslim women as a wedding dress wear purple saree or long skirts with diamond shaped motifs in different colours.

Orissa has a rich tradition of producing Handloom products with skill and knowledge imbibed over generations. Handloom cloth is one of the richest and resilient medium. The most famous Handloom sarees of Orissa are **Passapalli Sari,** also called as **Bishitrapuri** which **Are Double Ikat Saris** woven in brightncolours with typical temple motifs, **Sonepuri Saris** woven by the highly skilled weavers of Bolangir and Sambalpur districts with varying colour, motifs, and combinations woven with zari, i.e. gold thread on the extra warp and weft. **Bomkai Saree** is woven with typical extra weft designs and motifs such as lamp stands, birds derived from the **Shakti** cult in cotton and tussar silk. The village of Bomkai is located in the Chikiti tehsil of Ganjam district. Bomkai saris are also named after the motifs which decorate their borders. Kandua is peculiar to Maniabandh areas of the coastal district of Cuttack. **Habasapuri Saris** are from a village in Kalahandi district. They are woven by highly skilled weavers in light colours with extra warp and weft designs. **Kotpad Saris** are of rare design from the Kotpad areas of Koraput district. Woven with typical tribal motifs like pot, snake, hut, axe etc., these are specially dyed with vegetable colours

5) North India:

Durries of **Punjab** are made entirely from cotton, waste material old clothes or even polythene. The designs include brightly coloured stripes, geometrical patterns, stylized birds and animal and human forms. **Khes Is a Bed or Floor Covering** made from coarse yarn in twill weave. Half the yarn is dyed in a bright colour to give a two coloured chequered effect. They are also made with stripes. Loi is a lighter Khes popular with men as a shawl and is also made in Jalandhar. Amritsar is one of the major carpet weaving centers of India specialising in hand knotted woollen carpets. **The Galicha or Kaleen** has been woven in Punjab for centuries. Some silk carpets have

also been recently introduced. Produced in traditional **Persian and Kashmiri Designs like Bukhara, Kaftaz, Hun, Kashan, Chandni, Tabrij and Prayer Rug** designs take on a variety of colours from rich maroon to pale grey. **Blankets, Chaddar** of wool or cashmilon is made in Barmalipur, Macchiwaria and Kauri, Ludhiana District. **Shawl** weaving was introduced in Punjab with the infux of Kashmiri weavers after the partition of India.

Handlooms from **Uttar Pradesh** are universally known for its shimmering brocades – the pride of many courts for centuries. Stunning silks woven by highly skilled weavers enhance weddings and ceremonial occasions. **Cotton Handlooms** are created for every need in an amazing range of tapestry, upholstery and soft cotton towels, gamchas, khes, bedspreads, table linen, curtains and running fabric for clothing for all occasions. Polyester yarn mixed with cotton is most suitable for menswear and uniforms for the workplace. Its hand-woven carpets and durries have reached every corner of the world. **Jacquard Weavers Called Nakshaband** have been practicing their craft since the reign of Muhammad Tughlak in 1325 AD. The famed Sufi poet Kabir Das was a weaver from Uttar Pradesh. **From Gossamer Light Jamdhani Saris** to the thickest of warm handwoven blankets, the weavers of Uttar Pradesh offer all. In fact, there is hardly a village where weavers do not exist. Weaving is a very basic industry in **Rajasthan** and a major center of wool carpets, durries, blankets, shawls and woollen lengths. **Reza Or Gadha** – a basic cotton cloth is woven all over Rajasthan. **Fine Kotadoria** is at the other end of the cotton range. Kotadoria, also known as **Masuria**, is a gossamer-fine checkered fabric woven in Kota, Kaithun and adjoining villages of Arankheda Dhulat, Katwas, Sultanpur, Khatauli, Keshoraipatan, Kapren, Nainwa in Baran district.

This section of the study presents an overview of handloom in India with respect to Assam and Cachar based on secondary data. This part of the study also presents a comparative analysis of the Present status of handloom productivity in Cachar with respect to Assam and India.

1.11 An Overview of Handloom Industry in India:

Threat to the handloom industry lies in the frustration of the weavers, who in spite of having excellent skills, are webbed in poverty and are not able to exploit the market in their favour. Handloom, being a traditional skill, once the elderly weavers give it up, the skill will be lost forever and it would be impossible to revive it. With appropriate direction and support for producing high value cloth, handloom weavers can be encouraged to continue weaving and overcome the threat. So far as semi-skilled weavers are concerned, there is no alternative than to improve skill and produce high value clothes, which are superior to clothes woven by the power looms. In the initial period, semi-skilled weavers can produce only for meeting domestic requirements and for sale in local areas by having the cost advantage over power loom products on account of transport and handling at different levels. This will not require much support from Government. Government resources shall have to be earmarked exclusively for improving the skill of weavers and helping them for production of high value cloth with good design and quality. For this purpose, the Weavers Training Centres in the 235 Handloom concentrated areas may be strengthened and revamped in order to make the semiskilled and lowly skilled weavers well conversant with not only the weaving work, but also with the new designs and motifs. They may also be taught to use advanced and higher productive technology of that type, which will help in reducing drudgery without causing any labour displacement problem.

The word handloom evolves from the process of operation for making cloth by hand on a wooden structure called loom. It is totally different from the power loom as well as automatic loom and shuttle less loom. Handloom woven cloth is always considered to be stronger due to many reasons. It has technical and aesthetic superiority and hence monopoly in the production of a variety of fabrics with gold and silver lace in wrought, like in the artistically designed saris, striped and checks fabrics, etc. The handloom industry, with its long tradition of excellence in craftsmanship, occupies a place of eminence in preserving the country's heritage and plays an important role in the economy of the country the Indian handloom sector hence symbolizes ethos of vibrant Indian culture and civilization a rich heritage and a long tradition of excellence.

Handloom is unparalleled in its flexibility and versatility, permitting experimentation and encouraging innovation. Weavers with their skilful blending of tradition, confidence, symbols and imaginary provide their fabric an appealing charm. The strength of handloom lies in innovative design, which cannot be replicated by the power loom sector. In fact the Indian motifs, the skills of embroidery in ornamentation and value addition have caught the fantasy of the world. 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.

1.11.1. Handloom production share of total textile cloth production in India

The Indian Textile Industry is the largest industry that receives acclaim from all over the world. Today, the products of the Indian Textile Industry play a pivotal role through their contribution to industrial output, employment generation, and the export earnings of the country. Over the years, the Government has granted many concessions and incentives to the decentralized

sector with the result that the share of this sector in total production has increased considerably. The details of handloom share of cloth production and total textile cloth production are presented in Table-1.1

Table 1.1 Handloom cloth production and share of total textile cloth production in India [1980-81 to 2013-14] (Mn. Sq. Mtrs)

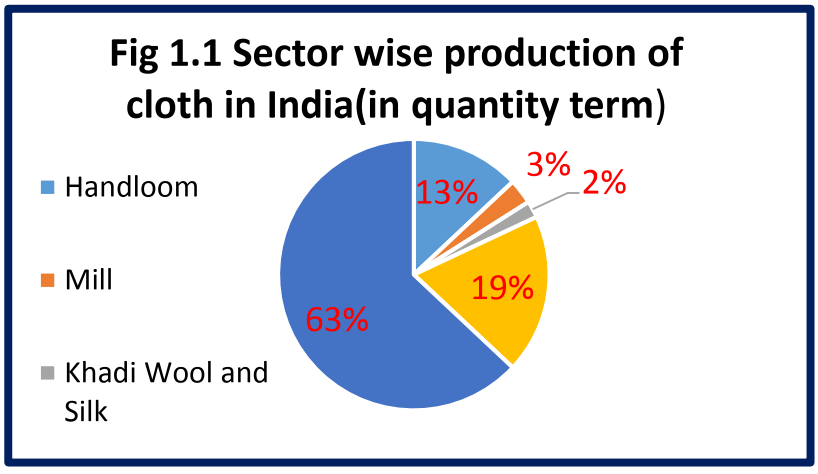
Year	Handloom Cloth Production	Share of Handloom in the total cloth production	Total Textile Cloth Production
1980-81	3109	24.98	12444
1985-86	4135	24.02	17213
1990-91	4295	18.41	23330
1995-96	7202	22.54	31958
2000-01	7506	18.66	40233
2005-06	6108	12.32	49577
2006-07	6536	15.88	41161
2007-08	6943	16.05	43265
2008-09	6677	15.85	42121
2009-10	6806	14.85	45819
2010-11	6900	14.65	47083
2011-12	6901	14.81	46600
2012-13	6952	14.66	47408
2013-14	7116	15.02	47388

Source: Ministry of Textile, Govt. of India, Various Annual Reports

Handloom cloth production noted a figure of 3109 million sqr meters and total textile cloth production was noted 12444 million sqr meters in the year 1980-81, then the handloom production rose to 4135 million sqr meters and total textile cloth production has also rose to 17213 million sqr meters during 1985-86, this trend was continuous to 2000-01 accounting 7506 million sqr meters, then its declined. In the year 2005-06, handloom cloth production was declined accounting 6108 million sqr meters. Production in the handloom sector recorded a figure of 6952 million sqr meters and production of total textile cloth production was recorded 47408 million sqr meters in the year 2012-13. During 2013- 14 production in the handloom sector is reported to be 7116 million sqr meters and total cloth production is reported 47388 million sqr meters. The share of handloom cloth production recorded 24.98 per cent in total textile cloth production in the year 1980-81, this share was continuously declined to 2013-14, accounting 15.02 per cent. Due to this, again the government should give grants, many concessions and incentives to the handloom sector and conducting encouraging programmes to handloom weavers.

Existing Production Capacity

Sector Wise Production of Cloth in India 2004-2005



Source: Compendium of Textile Statistics (2002), Textile Commissioner, Mumbai

1.11.2. Handlooms Export

The export of handlooms plays a pivotal role in the Indian economy and accounts for a major foreign exchange earner for the country. With free global trade, only those able to provide quality products at competitive price will be able to survive. Whereas opportunities for renewed growth are being created in the developed markets, there is an urgent need to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses so that the handloom sector can withstand the forces of global competition. It has been brought out that handloom sector indicates a better performance in terms of Aggregate Unit Value Realization as compared to the power-loom in export.

Table 1.2 Handloom Export of India (In ` Crore)

Year	Handloom Exports (Rs. in crore)	% growth
2009-10	1252.8	**----**
2010-11	1574.95	25.71
2011-12	2653.95	68.51
2012-13	2811.97	5.95
2013-14	2233.11	-20.59

Source: The Handloom export promotion council, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India

Export of handloom products during 2009-10 was Rs.1253 crores and showed a steady increase during the consecutive three years 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 with Rs.1575 crores, Rs.2654 crores and Rs.2812 crores respectively there was a decline during the year 2013-14 and export of handloom products has registered only Rs.2233 crores. In the year 2010-11, the handloom cloth exports growth was noted 25.71 per cent compare to previous year. The highest

share has registered in the year 2011-12, the lowest growth were recorded in the year 2012-13, the negative growth was registered in the year 2013-14 accounted -20.59 per cent.

1.11.3 Statistics of handloom weaver in India

About 29.09 lakh (more than 2.9 million) weavers reportedly worked in the handloom sector as per the Handloom Census of India 2009-10, but in 1995-1996, 34.71 lakh (more than 3.47 mn) were involved. It shows a 16 percent reduction in 15 years. As against the total number of weavers at 43.32 lakh as per the Handloom Census of 2009-2010, the number of weavers as per the earlier (2nd) Handloom Census (1995) was 65 lakh, thus indicating a significant fall in total employment in the sector in recent years as compared to the earlier period. The reduction can be attributed partly to the impact of the global recession in 2008 and partly to the impact of growing competition from the decentralized power loom and mill-made sector. This decline in employment in the handloom sector could have social and economic implications for the weaver community. If the trend persists, it will point towards the urgency of bringing in appropriate reforms to reverse the trend. However, although the number of weavers have declined between the 2nd and the 3rd (latest) Census, there is an increase in the number of full-time workers from 44% as per the 2nd Census to 64% as per the latest Census.

The number of Handloom weavers and allied workers as per the Second Census of Handlooms of India (1995-96) and Third Handloom Census of India (2009-10) presented in the Table no. 1.3

Table 1.3 Statistics of handloom weaver in India

Sl. No.	Census	Number of Handloom Weavers and Allied Workers (in lakhs)
1	Second Census (1995-96)	65.5
2	Third Census (2009-10)	43.31

Source: Second Census of Handlooms of India (1995-96)

Third Handloom Census of India (2009-10)

1.12 Need for the Study:

An economic study of handloom weavers in Cachar district have gained significances for a number of reasons. They can be explained as follows:

In applied economics, concept formulation or conceptualization is a task of paramount significance. As far as rural industrialization in India is concerned, what is absolutely essential is a conceptualization about the variety of industries a village should seek to foster. The present status of handloom weaving in Cachar District is far from satisfactory. The Decay of Handloom Industry in the Cachar District of Assam will be of considerable use in formulating a clear concept of rural industrialization. The present research study is based on one of the basic and very important Classical Theory of Economics, known as “Industrial Economics”. And, this is followed by another important related concept known as “Cottage Industrial Economics”.

Thus, it is clear that the process of conceptualization about rural industrialization suited for Cachar District will be accomplished perfectly with the help of an "explorative research" on the weavers of the handloom industry in Cachar district.

A fact finding research on the handloom industry is necessary to find out the link between the declining factors and the handloom industry in Cachar district. The present research study on the handloom industry will be of enormous use to the government in finding out its basic needs and problems of the handloom industry. Basic needs such as availability of steady supply of raw material, markets, finance generally influence the growth of this industry. Identification of the crucial factors that are responsible for the decay , helps in the revival of handloom industry through a systematic and scientific way and will be of great help to the government in providing proper support and improving the weavers welfare .

The present research study deals with the decline of handloom industry in respect of employment and income generation in Cachar district. Hence, it would be quite appropriate to find out the employment and income generation of this industry after the decline.

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:

Industry is the key to the rapid economic development because industrialization involves radical transformation of society in all its aspects such as economic, social, political and cultural. It is true that rapid industrialization is the only effective way of helping the Indian economy to come out of the vicious circle of poverty. To lay sound foundation for rapid industrialization, there is a need for huge investments in key and basic and large scale industries. But concentrating merely on large scale industries is bound to create miseries to millions in the form of unemployment, shortage of consumer goods, and concentration of wealth in few hands. As a result the basic problems like unemployment, shortage of foreign exchange and paucity of capital will be accentuated. Under the circumstance, small industries are undoubtedly better suited, since they are labour intensive and capital saving. Prof. K.T. Sash was the first Indian economist, who realised the importance of Small scale industries in India and tried to give a workable definition of these industries. He defined "A small scale or cottage industry may be defined as an enterprise or series of operations carried on by a workman skilled in the craft on his responsibility, the finished product of which, he markets himself". He worked in his home with his own tools and materials and provided his own labour along with family members to assist. These workers work mostly by hand labour and personal skill, with little or no aid from modern power driven machinery, and in accordance with traditional technique. Such supplementary energy as is provided by animal power may add to the economy and efficiency of the industry. He worked, finally, for a market in the immediate neighborhood that was in response to known demand with reference to quality as well as quantity.

A village and cottage industry has been defined by RBI as artisans (irrespective of location) or small industries activity that is, manufacturing, processing, preservation and servicing in village and small towns with a population not exceeding 50,000 (as per 1971 census) involving utilisation of locally available industrial resources/ or human skills, whose credit requirements do not exceed Rs. 50,000.

Small-scale Industries and Handloom and Power loom Industry

Small scale industries comprise of the (i) Traditional and (ii) Modern Industries.

(i) Traditional small scale industrial sector comprises of handlooms, khadi and village industries, handicrafts, sericulture, coir, etc. These are mostly artisan based industries located mostly in rural and semi urban areas with low investment.

(ii) Modern small scale industries comprise of units using power driven machinery possessing better production techniques and located mostly in urban areas. They include power looms, ancillaries, export oriented units, etc. Modern small industrial units manufacture some of the high value added and sophisticated products like electronic type writers, survey equipment's, television sets and other consumer durables.

Weaving is one of the most ancient handicrafts patronized all over the world and at all times. Like food and shelter, clothing is also a basic need of every human being.

The Indian textile industry today comprises of the large scale, well established and well organized mill sector on the one hand and the largely dispersed and unorganized handloom and power loom sector on the other.

In fact, among the counties of the world, ancient India enjoyed an enviable position as a producer of the finest varieties of hand spun and hand woven cloth. The art of spinning and

weaving had undoubtedly attained a high level of perfection and the craftsmen had acquired extra ordinary skills. Since ancient times, weaving has by and large remained the exclusive preserve of certain specific castes and communities. The principle of hereditary continuance of occupation for generations introduced an element of stability and also enabled the craftsmen to venture further and acquire greater proficiency.

The handloom sector plays an important role in the economic development of the rural poor in the district. It contributes significantly by generating more employment opportunities and providing bread to the rural poor. Unfortunately the situation in Cachar is not in favour of handloom sector due to various reasons. In fact, the industry is facing lots of problem such as men, material, methods, machines, money, marketing and management. Though it employs a massive number of rural people, the handloom sector is considered a sunset industry. While some of the sector's facing troubles is due to the relentless march of mechanization, modernisation and sophistication, however, irrespective of the policies, projects and aspirations arising out of various quarters, the handloom sector is undergoing changes that are impacting the livelihoods of handloom weavers.

It is a well-known fact that the handloom weavers in some parts are starving to death and even commit suicides, due to lack of facilities as well as disproportionate earnings corresponding to their labour, in the weaving activity. The standard of living of the weavers is significantly low and they are leading miserable and pitiable life due to unemployment and underemployment. This situation prevails everywhere in our country. Cachar District, which is chosen for detailed research study, is no exception to this situation. This pathetic condition of handloom industry in Cachar District demands thorough investigation into the problems and measures to plug the loopholes and find remedies to the problems confronting handloom weaver.

At present the Handloom weavers in Cachar District is at stake and the weavers are panic stricken with miseries since they are facing acute production and marketing problems. A majority of them are struggling hard to survive. Cachar District in Assam has much economic importance as high concentrated handloom fabrics are produced. But the conditions of the weavers are pathetic. The weavers in Cachar District are facing multiple problems in the production and marketing of their fabrics. Competition of mill or power loom products, unfavourable climatic conditions, as well as their poverty and under employment also have added fuel to the fire of the miseries.

The majority of the handloom co-operative societies are either dormant or facing liquidation. The income and employment of weavers are so pitiably low that they are living in utter poverty and starvation. Frequent price fluctuations of yarns, dyes and chemicals increase the cost of production and reduce the profitability. Consequently handloom fabrics are not able to compete with mill cloths and power loom products. Accumulation of the unsold stocks in the go downs of co-operative societies and with master weavers and gradually it becomes the practice of the day. It may be pointed out that the handloom industry has great potential for the utilisation of human resources. In a country with considerable man power and a high rate of unemployment, any investment that can utilise idle human resources is always welcomed. Unfortunately, certain traditional crafts appear to be slowly dying due to prolonged neglect as well as lack of awareness and inadequate appreciation of the skills involved. Despite their cultural and economic importance, handlooms sectors suffer from Limited private entrepreneurial support and these have increased the sectors' dependence on Government resources.

Despite several measures taken by the government by the way of institutional support and direct financial assistance to the handloom weavers, they have been in miserable state due to sever

problems and are sustaining continuous losses. Many Primary Weavers' Cooperative Societies (PWCS) 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. These problems include improper supply of raw material, price hike in yarn, lack of proper marketing facilities, lack of market awareness and promotion, lack of proper financial resources, involvement of middlemen, competition from mill and power loom products, lack of modern technology, lack of prompt and timely support from the government and other allied agencies and so on. It is a well-known fact that the handloom weavers in some parts of the country are starving to death and even commit suicides, due to lack of facilities as well as disproportionate earnings corresponding to their labour, in the weaving activity. The standard of living of the weavers is significantly low and they are leading miserable and pitiable life due to unemployment and under-employment.

Thus with liberalization of Indian economy, the modern textile industry has posed serious threat to the traditional handloom industry. Rapid technological up gradation and automation in textile industry has made high volume of production of a variety of quality synthetic and cotton textile items, enjoying competitive advantage over the handloom products. The handloom industry, both in co-operative and private sector, with its vast rural work force especially of weaver communities is confronted with challenge of competitive economic environment. The weakening position of handloom sector in the wake of global competition of textile industry has posed a serious threat to the socio-economic life of the traditional weaver communities, in general.

The traditional handloom sector is an important industry in the District Cachar. It is primarily a household activity, where mainly women and children involved. Cachar, therefore conforms to the conventional idea that weaving is primarily an artisan and home-based activity. Although handloom weaving exists in the State but there are considerable differences between

various District within the State, with regard to numbers of weavers and looms, trends therein and products made. Fanek,, Gamocha , Mosquito net , Chadder, bed sheet Bed Cover etc. are produced mainly in Cachar district. The fact is that handloom weaving is a household-based activity and that most weavers own their own looms mean that the weavers work as an 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. Varieties of factors either independently or jointly contribute to declining of handloom industry. 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. Handloom industry was one of the significant industry in Cachar. But like many other part of the country here in Cachar also many of the industries has closed down and the remaining few are finding difficult to survive. The main theme of the study is to identify the factors that are responsible for the decay of Handloom Industry in Cachar and to analyse its socio economic impacts. This study attempts to provide a field appraisal of the industry as it obtains primarily in Cachar district. Such an appraisal helps in the identification of the specific needs of this sector. These field accounts, along with the data on the handloom sector, will help in the development of appropriate institutional structures that supports and strengthens the industry and identifies its fundamental needs/ requirements and the different ways in which these are handled.

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.

1.14.1 Historical background of Cachar District

Origin of the Name:

There are two possibilities regarding the origin of the name. They are:-

The Kacharis gave this name Cachar when they ruled this land.

The word Kachar in Sylhette (Bengali of Sylhet) means a stretch of land at the foot of a mountain. Hence the name Cachar might have been given by Bengalies of Sylhet as the land is surrounded by mountains.

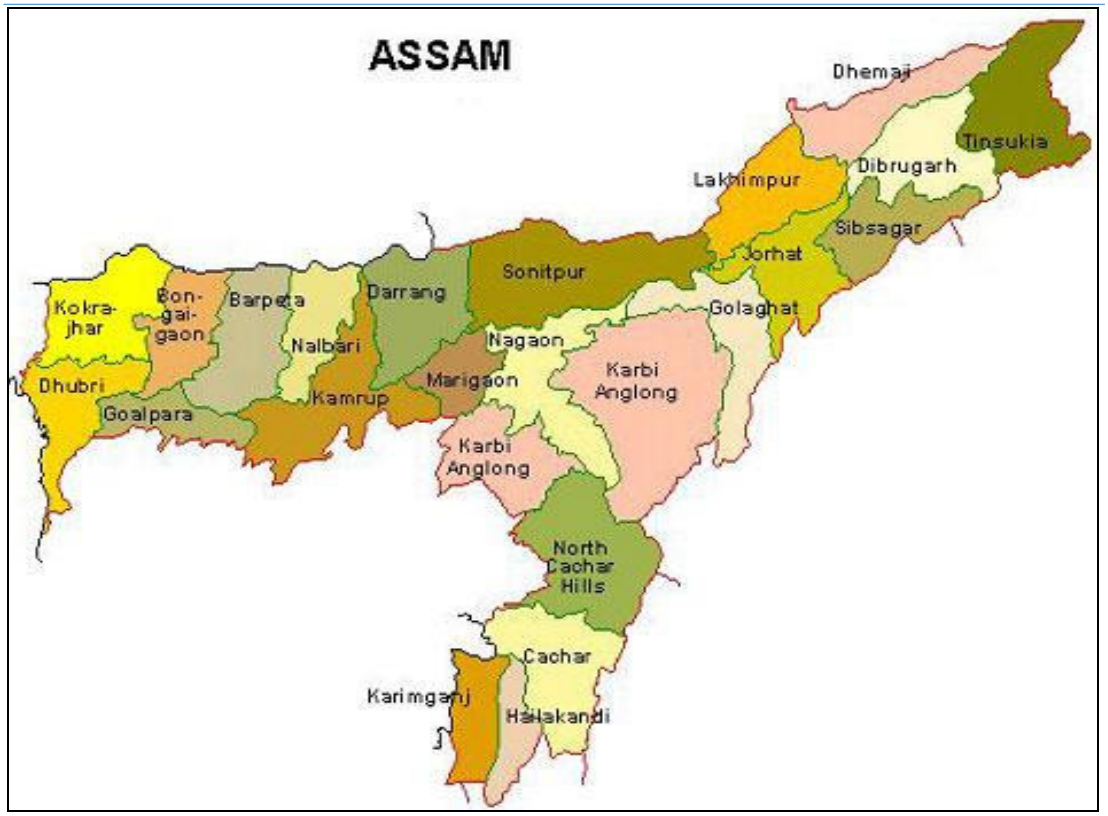
The District of Cachar is located in the Southernmost part of Assam is one of the oldest district of Assam. It is bounded on the North by Barali and Jayantia hill ranges, on the South by the State Mizoram, on the East by sister district Hailakandi and Karimganj. The district was created in 1830 after annexation of Kachari Kingdom by British. In 1854, North Cachar was annexed and tagged to the district. In 1951 erstwhile North Cachar Sub-Division was made a separate district and taken out of Cachar.In 1983 erstwhile Karimganj Sub-Division and in 1989, Hailakandi Sub-Division was made a separate District.

1.14.2 Geographical Features

1.14.2.1Area and Location

Cachar district is located in the southernmost part of Assam. The total geographical area of the district is 3,786 Sq. Km. It is bounded on the north by the North Cachar Hills and the State of Meghalaya; on the south by the state of Mizoram on the east by Manipur State and west by Hailakandi District and Bangladesh. The district lies between 92^0 24′ E and 93^0 15′ longitudes and 24^0 22′ N and 25^0 8′ N latitude.

Fig 1.2 Map of Assam



Source: www.mapsofindia.com

1.14.2.2 Physiography

Cachar has an undulating topography characterised by hills, hillocks (tillah), wide plains and low lying water logged areas locally khonw as beels. The topography of the district varies from small hillocks to plain areas and low lying areas as bels, etc. Crops cannot be grown in more than 20 percent of geographical areas of the district during April to September due to water stagnation. On the other hand due to lack of rain from November to April, most of the cultivable land remains fallow during the period.

1.14.2.3 Climate and Rainfall

The climate of this district is characterized by an abundant rainfall, moderate temperature and high humidity. The year may be divided into four seasons. The cold seasons from December to Friday is followed by the hot seasons from March to May. The south west monsoon seasons are from June to September. October and November constitute the post-monsoon season.

Cachar district experiences two contrasting situation in relation to rainfall. The district shares the wettest zone of the globe. i.e. the Cherrapunjee and Mousynram belt as well as the scanty rainfall belt of Tripura and Mizoram. The climate of the district is very damp and humid due to heavy rain and high temperature. June and July are the months with highest rainfall. Generally the period from May end to October is considered as flood season.

1.14.2.4 Land and Soil

Total geographical area of the district (in hectares) is 377610. As per land utilisation statistics of the district, net shown area is 125000 ha which about 33.10% of the total geographical area is. About 1, 43,270 hectares are under fallow land and 41,701 hectares are under barren land. The soils of Cachar district originated from Shillong plateau and other surrounding hills to a large extent and the river Barak has also contribution to it. The soils are formed from the sedimentary rocks like sand stone, shale and sandy shale. The major soil types prevailing in the district are old reverine alluvium, old monuntain alluvium, non-laterised red soil, laterised red soil and peat soil. The soil is highly porous and therefore, lacks moisture retention capacity and is susceptible to erosion.

1.14.2.5 Temperature

The temperature in the region begins to increase from end of February and reaches highest point during June and July. January is the coldest month of the year. The air is highly humid throughout the year and winds are light in the district. But some of the cyclonic storm and depressions from Bay of Bengal occur in the monsoon and post monsoon period with heavy rain. Thunder storm occur in the period from March to May. Fog occurs in the winter months. The complex physical feature of this district also contribute a great extend to the occurrence of flood.

1.14.2.6 Rivers in Cachar District

The main river of the zone is the Barak which flows in an east-west direction originating from Naga and Manipur hill ranged through the central portion of Cachar district and the northern most part of Hailakandi and Karimganj districts. The river Barak bifurcates into the Surma and the Kushiyara near Bhanga of Karimganj district while the Surma enters into Bangladesh, the

Khushiyara flows along the northern boundary of the Karimganj district. There two rivers demarcate the info-Bangladesh border upto their points of entry into Bangladesh. The rive Barak is joining by its Barak at the eastern border. The tributaries viz. Chiri Badri, Madhurea, Jatinga and Kalain originating from the hills of North Cachar flow South wards while the tributaries viz-Sonai and Changra originating from the hills of Mizoram flow northwards into the Barak in Cachar district. Gumra originating from Meghalaya flows to Surma in Cachar district. The tributaries Katakhal and Dhaleshwari from the hills of Mizoram flow wards into the Barak in Hailakandi district.

1.14.2.7 Land Use Pattern

Land is a crucial input in the process of agricultural production. Its availability and proper use is an essential condition for the development of agriculture. Among the 15 agro-climatic regions of the country, categorized/identified on the basis of homogeneity in agro-characteristics, Cachar falls in the Barak Valley zone. The agro-climatic conditions of the district are conducive for various agricultural activities. Many of the plantation crops viz., tea rubber, cashew, coffee, area nut, coconut, and aromatic plant like Patchouli are also produced in the district.

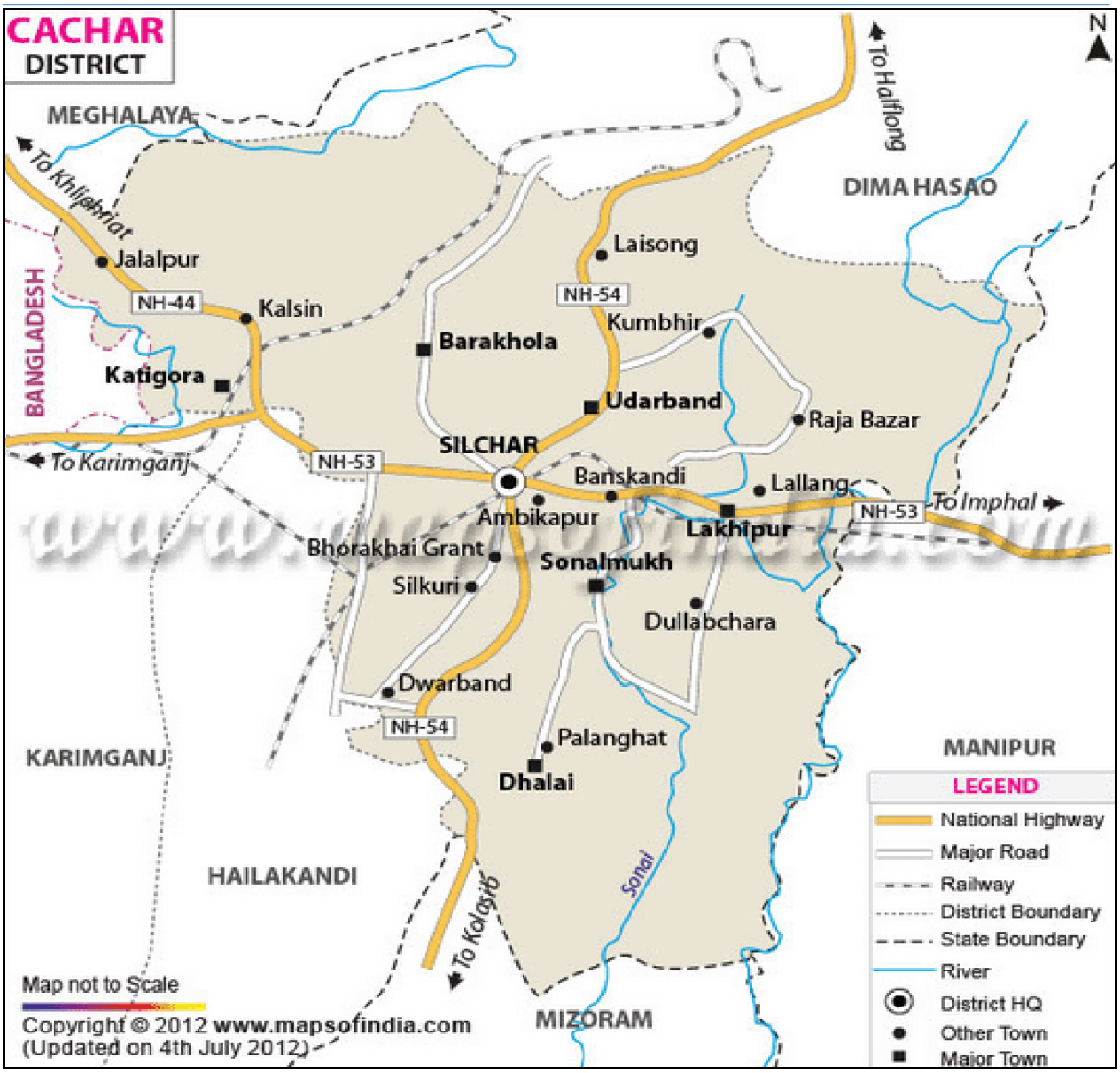
It is observed from the Table 2.1 that the total geographical area o Cachar district during 2010-11 was 377610 hectares. Out of the total geographical area 166576 hectares (44.11%) is under cultivation. The district has 1, 38,409 hectares (36.65%) of land covered under forests; 89148 hectare (23.60%) of the land is not available for cultivation. Of the total area under non-agricultural uses 27701 hectares (31.07%) is occupied by barren / uncultivable land. Others uncultivated land excluding fallow land occupied 21745 hectares (5.75%) of while 2600 hectares (11.95%) is occupied by permanent pastures / grazing lands, while 17108 hectares (78.65%) is land under miscellaneous free / graves not included in net area sown. Additionally 2037 hectares

(9.36%) of the area is covered by cultivate waste land. The total fallow land in the district accounts to 12922 hectares. The total net sown area is 115386 hectares (30.55%) and the area owned more than once accounts to 51190 hectares (13.55%) of the total geographical areas.

1.14.2.8 Agro Climate Situation

Among the 15 agro-climatic regions of the country, categorised/identified on the basis of homogeneity in agro-characteristics, Cachar falls in the Barak Valley zone. This zone comprises 8.9% of the state area and 11.7% of the state population. The agro climatic conditions of the district are conducive for various agricultural activities. The agro-condition of the district are conducive for various agricultural activities. The agro-climatic condition of the district is congenial for development of many of the plantation crops viz., tea rubber, cashew, coffee, areca nut, coconut and also aromatic plant like Patchouli. Apart from the tea gardens located at the hill slopes, the entire zone is growing rice as major crops occupying about 93% of the net crop area. The climate is subtropical, warm & humid during the summer (July / August) and the lowest temperature is generally recorded during December- January. The Humidity ranges from 65-70%, during winter to 85-90% during rainy season. Maximum rainfall is observed from May to August.

Fig 1.3 Map of Cachar District of Assam



Source: www.mapsofindia.com

1.14.3 DISTRICT ADMINISTARTION DIVISION

Cachar is one of the 27 districts of Assam. Silchar, the district headquarter town, situated on the South bank to the barak river is an important commercial centre of the State. It is a gateway to Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura. Naturally, the town plays a vital role so far supply of essential commodities etc to those states is concerned. A medical college, All India Radio station, TV station and several other organizations has helped the town grow in importance. The district of Cachar is the home of a large number of Tea Gardens of the State. Lakhipur Sub-division is the richest pineapple growing area in the country.

Bengali is the status of Official language in this district as majority of the people of this district is Bengalee. Apart from Bengalee, other minority languages spoken communities in the district are Meitei Manipuri, Bishnupuriya Manipuri, Dimasa and Rongmei-Naga. There are also few Mizo, Hmar, Kuki, Vaiphei and Khasi people who from microscopic minority.

Administratively the district is now divided into two Subdivisions viz. Silchar (Sadar) & Lakhipur Sub-Division. Below the level, there are 5 Revenue Circles (Tehsils), namely - Silchar, Udharbond, Sonai, Lakhipur and Katigorah. Furthermore, from developmental angle, the district is divided into fifteen (15) Community Development Blocks. Below the block level set-up, there are 163 Gram Panchayats each comprising about ten villages on the average and governed by local-self bodies. From the angle of Police administration, the district area is divided among 8 Police stations- Silchar, Sonai, Udharbond, Katigorah, Jirighat, Lakhipur, Borkhola and Dholai

Table –1.4 Administrative Set-up in Cachar District

Administrative Level	**Name**	**Head Quarter**
District	Cachar	Silchar
Sub-division	Silchar	Silchar
	Lakhipur	Lakhipur
Revenue Circle	Silchar Circle	Silchar
	Udharbond Circle	Udharbond
	Sonai Circle	Sonai
	Lakhipur Circle	Lakhipur
	Katigorah Circle	Katigorah
Police Station	Silchar Police Station	Silchar
	Sonai Police Station	Sonai
	Udharbond Police Station	Udharbond
	Katigorah Police Station	Katigorah
	Jiri hat Police Station	Jiri hat
	Lakhipur Police Station	Lakhipur
	Borkhola Police Station	Borkhola
	Dholai Police Station	Dholai

Source: District information Centre, Silchar

It is clear from the table 1.4 that there are 1040 villages and 19 towns in the district. There are 15 Anchalik Panchayats, 163 Gaon Panchayats and 1 Zilla Parishad in Cachar District.

1.14.4 Demographic Features

1.14.4.1 Growth in Population

Population of Cachar as per 2001 census was 14, 44,921 which stood at 17, 36,319 in 2011 of which male and female ware8.86.616 and 8, 86,616 and 8, 49,703 respectively. There was change of 20.17 percent in the population compared to population as per 2001. In the previous census of India 2001, Cachar District recorded increase of 18.89 percent to its population compared to 1991. Cachar District population constituted 5.57 percent of total Assam population in 2011.

Table 1.5 Total population of Cachar District as per 2011 Census

Cachar District	Population			Literate		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Total	1736617	886284	850333	1174128	639946	534182
Rural	1421153	727083	694070	923736	509621	414115
Urban	315464	159201	156263	250392	130325	120067

Source: Census of India, 2011

1.14.4.2 Density, Sex Ration and Literacy Rate

The data suggest a density of 459 in 2011 compared to 394 of 2001. Average literacy rate of Cachar in 2011 were 80.36 compared to 67.82 percent of 2001. If things are looked out at gender wise, male and female literacy wer 85.85 percent and 74.62 percent respectively. For 2001 census, same figures stood at 75.73 percent and 59.41 percent in Cachar District. Total literate in Cachar District

were 1,196,892 of which male and female were 652,827 and 544,065 respectively. With regards to Sex Ratio in Cachar, it stood at 958 per 1000 male compared to 2001 census figure of 945. The average national sex ratio in India is 940 as per latest reports of Census 2011 Directorate.

1.14.4.3 Population Density

It is observed from the table 1.6 that the density of population of Cachar district has gone up to 459 in 2011 which was 394 in 2001 Census. The corresponding all Assam figure was 397 as per Census, 2011.

Table1.6 Population Density of Cachar District

District	Population of Cachar District	
	2011	**2001**
Cachar	459	394

Source: Census of India, 2011

1.14.4.4 Sex-Ratio

An important indicator of gender parity is the number of females per thousand males. According to 2011 census, in the district, there are 959 females for every thousand males. As in Cachar district urban sex ratio is 982 and rural sex ratio is 955.

Table 1.7 Distribution of Sex Ratio in Cachar District

District	Sex Ratio (Per 000)	
	2011	2001
Cachar	959	955

Source: Census of India, 2011

1.14.4.5 Literacy Rate

This literacy rate of Cachar district and the state of Assam is shown in Table 1.8 It is clear from the table that the literacy rate of Cachar district is much higher than the literacy rate of the state of Assam. As per 2011 census, Cachar district reached the literacy rate of 79.34 percent and the state of Assam literacy rate was only 72.19 percent. The district literacy rate increase to 11.52 percent over last decade.

As per 2011 census the male literacy rate in the district was 84.78 percent and female literacy was 73.68 percent whereas the state male literacy was 77.85 percent and that of female literacy was63 present. Compare to the last decade, the literacy rate of female increase to 14.27 percent.

Table1.8 Distribution of Literacy Rate of Cachar District

District	Literacy Ratio (Per 000)	
	2011	2001
Cachar	79.34	67.82
Male Literacy	84.78	75.73
Female Literacy	73.68	59.41

Source: Census of India, 2011

1.14.5 Education

The educational attainment status in the district as per the Seventh All-India Educational Survey, 2007, shows that of the total enrolled students in the Classes I-V, proportion of girl students is 47 percent. The data on GER in the district reveals that rural enrolment ratios are higher than rural enrolment ratios are higher than the urban areas. However, the enrolment ratios for girls at the upper primary stages are higher than that of the boys particularly in the urban areas.

1.14.6 Health

The infant mortality rate in the district which stands at 97 per thousand live births and is higher than the State average of 92 per while crude birth rate (per 1000) was 32.61 in the district. The availability of beds in hospitals of Cachar (per 15000 population) was 6.93 in 2003 (Assam Human Development Report, 2003).

1.14.7 Natural Resource

The types of land available in the district are classified as: medium land- 69048 hectares, high land- 11642 hectares, low land-19512 hectares, very low land-10792 hectares and beel area – 4735 hectares. The district has a total forest cover of 2225 sq.km area which is 58.77 percent of its total geographical area as per the estimates of Forest Survey of India. The dense forest cover in the district is 45 percent while 55 percent of the forest cover is under open forest.

1.14.8 Animal resources

Animal keeping is one of the major components in the existing farming system of Cachar district. Agro-climatic system situation is suitable for rearing of cows, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pig, duck and poultry. Cattle have been reared in almost all the rural household, especially for milk and draft purpose. Production of organic fertilizer in terms of cow dung, animal litter is also another

principal reason for rearing livestock. Rearing of goats and sheep are preferred by some rural marginal farmers living in high land and tillah land. Poultry keeping in the backward marginal and landless farmers is always considered highly profitable. Commercial broiler farming has gained a new momentum among the unemployed entrepreneur because of its early return and huge marketing potential. Pig rearing plays an important role due to its market potential of pork mostly among the tribal.

1.14.9 Human Development

Human Development index (HDI) in Cachar was 0.402 in 2003. This indicates that the district is lagging behind human development. However, the district ranked 8 in HDI, 2003 among the 27 districts of Assam. The dismal picture towards human development in the district is also reflected in the Gender Related Development Index (GDI), 2003 of the district which was almost identical to the district's HDI (0.409). This indicates gender inequality in the district with a GDI rank of 14 in Assam in 2003 (Assam Human Development Report, 2003).

1.14.10 Economy

1.14.10.1 1Agriculture

1) **Cropping Pattern**

Rice is the main cereal crop of the district. Rape and mustard are the important oilseed crops, through sesamum and linseed are also grown to a limited extent, Rajmah, Blackgram and pea are the main pulse crops. Pineapple, arccanut, coconut, banana, jackfruit and citrus are the important horticultural crops. Different vegetables are grown particularly on reverine tracts.

Homestead garden is common farming system of the district. Coconut, areacanut, banana, jackfruit, citrus, guava, ginger, turmeric etc. are grown in such gardens. Besides, vegetables are also grown in homestead gardens. Their cultivation methods are conventional and not scientific. Homestead gardens are characterized by high density haphazard planting without maintaining proper spacing. In most of the cases, presence of a small pond is common feature meant for drinking, washing and fishery etc. In case of livestock, local cow and buffalo are the main enterprises. They are used both for mulch and drought purposes. Poultry and duchery are also common. The livestock enterprises are still in subsistence level. Fishery is found in some places as commercial enterprise.

The major cropping system of the district is rice based cropping system, plantation based crop system, and horticultural crops based system and forest crops. Rice is grown as double crop, rice in sequence with vegetables/ mustard/ oilseeds. There are systems of intercropping like arccanut, banana, Assam lemon, pineapple, potato, French beans, black pepper etc. The firming system of Cachar district is mainly agriculture and agri-based allied activities. About 80% of population depends on agriculture and allied enterprises.

2) Horticulture

Horticulture with its various crop enterprises such as fruits, vegetables roots and tubers and floriculture, medicinal and aromatic plant species and plantation crops has emerged as an important sector for description of agriculture. The entire zone is growing rice as major crop occupying about 93% of the net crop area. Among the horticultural crops banana, pineapple, mango, citrus, jackfruit, guava litchi, papaya, coconut are important for the zone. A few parts of the hillocks and uplands are covered by tea. Pineapple is specialty of the zone for its sweetness and is grown on a commercial scale in tillah land of certain regions of the Cachar District. The

major areas of pineapple cultivation in Cachar district are Lakhipur block mainly in Hmarkhawlien areas, Rajabazar block and Udharbond block.

3) Sericulture

The agro-climatic condition of the district is suitable for sericulture. The activity is specially practiced by the SC/ST families in the district. Since sericulture mainly involves women in rearing and spinning, it has great potential for creating employment opportunities for them. A total of 182 villages in the district are involved in sericulture activities. The silk and weaving industry of Assam is one of the traditional handicraft activities which has generated employment and provided livelihood opportunities to activities which has generated employment and provided livelihood opportunities to people in the district. It is the most important agro based cottage industry in the district in terms of employment and income generating activities. The total numbers of family engaged in Eri, Muga and Mulberry accounts to 5544, 2285 and 949 as a source of income. The total area cover under silk worm food plants in the district as on 2011-12 is 1256.15 hectares.

1.14.10.2 Industry

The viable industries in the district based on local resources like cane, bamboo, pineapple & other agro based and fruit processing industries have potential for growth. The total industrial area in the district is spread across 38.68 acres of land.

1.14.10.3 Employment:

1) Working Population

The table 1.9 shows the working population of Cachar district as per 2011 census. It is clear from the table that in Cachar district the total main workers constitute 27.13 percentage of

the total population, while the marginal workers constitute 7.87 percent and non-workers constitute 65 percent.

Table 1.9 Percentage Distribution of Working Population in Cachar District as Per 2011 Census

Working Status	Total	Percentage
Main workers	471259	27.13
Marginal workers	136803	7.87
Non workers	1128555	65
Total	1736617	100

Source: Census of India, 2011

2) Sectoral Composition of Employment

Around 69% of total employment in Cachar in 1991 came from the primary sector followed by secondary sector (only 6.4%) and tertiary sector (24.2%). This indicates the dominance of the primary activities in the agriculture based economy of Cachar in providing livelihood to its population. However, the share of female workers in total employment in the district in 2001 was 20.48%.

1.14.10.4 Unemployment Scenario in the District

As per Economic Survey of Assam 2003-2004, the number of registered job seekers in the district increased from 44882 at the end of December 2001 to 63293 at the end of December 2002.

1.14.10.5 Gross District Domestic Product (GDDP)

Total GDDP of Cachar for 1997-98 at current price was Rs.117528 lakhs. Per Capita Gross District Domestic Product of the district for the same period was Rs.8523 (Source: Statistical Hand Book of Assam 2004).

1.14.10.6 Infrastructure

1) Roads

Availability and access to infrastructure is one of the major inducing factors for economic and social growths across space and communities. The transport connectivity of the district comprises of roads, railway and air services. The total road length in the district is 951.64 km, of which only 25.65 percent is surfaced. The district has a total of 75 km of state highways besides 707km of rural roads. The total road length of the national highways in the district is 77.14 kilometers. Three national highways viz. NH-44, NH-54 pass through Cachar. The road density in the district which was 25.5 km. per sq. km area in 1996 has decreased to 23 km per sq. km in 2006. This indicates that access and availability to good road connectivity in the district is not only low but has worsened over the years. As per the estimates of 2001 census only 39 percent of the villages have paved approach road and 37 percent of the villages have bus connectivity which indicates that 61-63 percent of the villages have no availability or access to faster modes transportation in the district.

2) Railway and Water transport

The nearest railway station to the district headquarter of Cachar is Silchar. The Lumding Badarpur section of NF railway is the most vital link of Cachar, Mizoram and Tripura with the rest of the country. The total railway route length in the district is 201 kilometers of BG route length from Lumding to Silchar and 215 kilometers of meter gauge route from Lumding to Silchar. The district has no steamer service as there is no demand for the same. However ferry services are available. The district also has air connectivity and the airport is located at a distance of 30 km away from Silchar, the district headquarters.

3) Electricity

Power or electricity is the most convenient and versatile from of energy and a vital component for sustained economic growth. The continuous growing demand for power in the industrial, agricultural and commercial sectors of the economy means the economy is growing towards modernization and industrialisation of these sectors. Assam state is rich with both the non-renewable sources of fossil fuels as well as huge renewable sources of energy in the form of water resources. However, the growth of the power sector is not encouraging over the years and rapid increase in demand for power has created a wide gap between demand and supply of the electricity for years together.

Table 1.10 Number of Village Electrified in the district of Cachar

District	No. Of inhabited villages 2011 census	No. Of villages Electrified (Cumulative)	
		2010-2011	2011-2012
Cachar	1040	890	890

Souece:http://www.nedfi.com/cachar-district#Demo

The Assam State Electricity Board (ASEB) is solely responsible for coordinated development of generation, transmission and distribution of electric power in the district of Cachar and all Assam. Cachar district, being one of the highly industrialised districts of Assam has a great demand for power. It is clear from the Table 1.10 that in Cachar district 890 villages were electrified up to the year 2011-12 out of 1040 numbers of inhabited villages as per 2012 Census.

4) Drinking Water Facilities

Drinking water facilities have become an important indicator of human development. Drinking water facilities exist in almost all villages and towns in the district. Availability and access to safe drinking water has been the most crucial factor involving serious health concerns in rural areas. Rivers and ponds is the major drinking water source in the district. In most villages open well, tube wells and hand pump are the main sources of drinking water.

Table 1.11 Cachar District at a Glance

1	Area in Sq. Km.	3,786 Sq. Km.
2	Longitude	Longitude 92 Degree 24′ E and 93 Degree 15′ E
3	Latitude	24 Degree 22′ N and 25 Degree 8′ N
4	Total Population (Census 2011)	17,36,319
a)	Total Male Population (Census 2011)	8,86,616
b)	Total Female Population (Census 2011)	8,49,703
c)	Schedule Caste (in %) (Census 2011)	14.70%
d)	Schedule Tribes (in %) (Census 2011)	1.36%
e)	Density per Sq. Km (Census 2011)	459/Sq. Km
5	No. of Sub Division	2 Nos.
6	No. of Revenue Circle	5 Nos.
7	No. of Villages (Revenue)	895 Nos.
8	No. of Development Blocks	15 Nos.
9	No. of Gaon Panchayat	163 Nos.

Source: www.cachar.nic.in

1.15 Objectives:

The main purpose of the study is to identify the problems encountered by handloom industries and thereby to suggest some measures that would resolve the problems. The specific objectives of the study are:

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:

On the basis of above objectives, this study sets the following hypotheses for testing in the process of investigation.

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.

For identifying the variables to be used in the questionnaire, a pilot survey was conducted with 30 weavers. The rough draft of questionnaire was prepared for the pilot survey. After survey the questionnaire was revised in the light of their comments. Their suggestion were incorporated & the final questionnaire was prepared.

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 District .This is represented with the help of the following table 1.12.

Table 1.12 Name of the nine blocks of Cachar district

Sl no.	Name of the blocks
1	Silchar (MB)
2	Borjhalega
3	Borkhola
4	Banskandi
5	Lakhipur
6	Binnakandi
7	Udharbond
8	Salchapra
9	Sonai

Source: Field survey

Table1.13 Sample coverage under the survey

Block	Villages visited	Number of weavers interviewed
Silchar (MB)	Manipuri basti, Malugram sibbari road, Assami basti	45
Borjhalega	Madhu Tilla, Babu Tilla, Irong mara,	45
Borkhola	Leburband, Madhuramukh, Gorerbond	45
Banskandi	Badripar pt. 1, Alipur pt. 1, Badripar pt. 2	45
Lakhipur	Tolangram, Lakhipur (T C), Purnagram	45
Binnakandi	Binnakandi pt. 2, Hazarigram, Kaptanpur	45
Udharbond	Borabandha, Pangram pt. 2, Pangram pt. 3	45
Salchapra	Hatirhar pt. 1, Srikona burikhal, Hatirhar pt. 2	45
Sonai	Dakhin krishnapur, Bhaurikandi, Dakhin mohanpur pt. 1	45
Total		405

Source: Field survey

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. In order to collect first-hand information's about their working & living conditions. Discussion was also held with officials & others involved in the handloom sector. The field up questionnaire were checked & edited.

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 which has indicators like the status of domestic house, children education and the amenities the family have etc.

In order to make more insight into the socio economic aspect, we applied regression taking the composite index as dependent variable and proportion of dependent family member, per capita debt, weaving income and non-weaving income as independent variable.

Regression Models

The study analyses the socio economic impact of the decay of the traditional handloom. In doing so we took indicator like status of domestic house, children education, amenities of the family, per capita family expenditure, as measures of weaver's household welfare in Cachar district. In other words, domestic house status, children education, amenities are directly related to socio economic welfare of the weavers. In order to measure the socio economic impact of the decay we applied multiple regression analysis in advanced statistical package like SPSS 17. In this regard, we tested the following hypothesis

Ho1: Weaving income does not influence the socio economic standard of living of the people of the handloom industry.

Ha 2: Non weaving income improves the socio economic standard of living of the people.

Model 1 tests the association of each independent variable viz, proportion of dependent family member, per capita debt, weaving income that would influence the dependent variable socio economic standard of living of the people.

Model 2 tests the association of each independent variable viz, proportion of dependent family member, per capita debt, and non-weaving income that would influence the dependent variable socio economic standard of living of the people.

Apart from the regression models as specified above, we use composite index for measuring the impact of the decay of handloom industry on the socio economic standard of living of the people engaged in the handloom industry.

The socio economic index was constructed by taking some indicator like per capita family expenditure which is calculated following Tendulkar Poverty Line (Poverty Estimates of 2011-12), amenities, status of domestic house, and education of the children of the weaver's family. While calculating the socio economic index we have given value in respect of the indicator like amenities (electricity) if the weaver respondent have the amenity we have given 1. In case of house status, for pacca house we have given 1 and for non pacca house we have given 0. In case of education we have two option literate for which we have given 1and in case of illiterate we have given 0.The value which was given to the different indicator is discussed with the help of the following table1.14.

Table 1.14 Value in respect to the indicator

Different indicator	Value corresponding to the indicator
Amenities(electricity)	(Yes-1, No-0)
House status (pacca house, non pacca house)	(pacca house-1, non pacca house-0)
Education of weaver children(literate, illiterate)	(literate -1, illiterate -0)

The formula for composite index is given by

Composite index (CI) =Per capita expenditure + amenities+ status of domestic house+ education. While applying the regression analysis we took socio economic index as dependent variable and

took proportion of dependent family member, per capita debt, weaving income and non-weaving income as independent variable.

Model 1

$$Yi=\alpha_i + \beta_1 X1_i + \beta_2 X2_i + \beta_3 X3_i + \varepsilon_i$$

i=1, 2, 3 …405 as we cover 405 weaving households

Where, Yi is the socio economic index of the weaver; X1 is weaving income; X_2 is the proportion of dependent family member; X_3 is the per capita debt and εi is the random error term. α, β_1,β_2,β_3 are regression coefficients .

Model 2

$$Y_j=\alpha_j + \beta_1 X_{1j} + \beta_2 X_{2j} + \beta_3 X_{3j} + \varepsilon_j$$

j=1, 2, 3……405

Where, Yi is the socio economic index of the weaver; X1 is non-weaving income; X_2 is the proportion of dependent family member; X_3 is the per capita debt and εi is the random error term. α, β_1,β_2,β_3 are regression coefficients

Model 3

$$Y_i= \alpha_i + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \varepsilon_i$$

i=1, 2, 3……405

Where, Y_i is the price per unit of product and X_1 is the capital investment per unit of product and X_2 is the time spends per unit of product.

In **Model 3** multiple regression was run to test the impact of independent variable time spend and capital invested per unit of product on the dependent variable per unit product price.

In this regard, we tested the following hypothesis

Ha 3: Higher the amount of time and capital invested on handloom production higher is the price fetched by the products.

Model 4

In **Model 4** we test the association of the independent variable marketing network and how it influences the dependent variable profit per unit of product.

$Y_j = \alpha_j + \beta_1 X_{1j} + \varepsilon_j$

j=1, 2, 3……405

Where, Yi is the profit per unit of product and X_1 is the number of marketing network used by the weaver in order to produce per unit of product.

In this regard, we tested the following hypothesis

Ha 4: Larger the marketing network, higher is the chances of survival.

In order to test the above hypotheses we ran simple linear regression model.

Apart from the regression models as specified above, in order to measure the chances of survival of the handloom industry we at first calculate the profit per unit of product which we can do by deducting the capital spend per unit product from the price per unit of product and hence we take profit per unit of product as dependent variable and total number of marketing network used by

the weaver as independent variable. The first, second, third and fourth hypothesis has been tested on the basis of OLS estimates.