

CHAPTER IV

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CHAPTER IV

Analysis of data

Handloom sector is unique in India. It has been the most popular manufacturing sector in the previous centuries, and has been the mainstay of rural industrialisation in India. Handloom sector has been catering to the clothing needs of India, and various other countries for century's altogether. Modern textile industry has grown on the foundations of this sector, through mechanization and modernization. However, the most modern industry follows the principles of weaving set by the traditional handloom weaver. Unlike any other industrial endeavor, handloom sector still continues alongside the most modern textile machinery in India.

Handloom constitutes a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of India. Handloom industry is among the largest industries in the country. The sector is very important from the point of view of its size and employment potential. It provides direct and indirect employment to over 13 million weavers and is the largest economic activity second next only to agriculture and construction. The relevance of the Handloom sector in the agrarian economy is massive because of its linkages with crucial and sensitive sectors like agriculture and housing. It uses agricultural products as raw materials and, therefore, provides an ever ready market for agricultural products. Therefore, in an economy where majority of people rely on the agrarian sector for their livelihood, the significance of Handloom is well understood. Handloom provides utility clothing and products to households in the country. It also gives employment to a lot of women and, thus, plays its role in women empowerment. Improving the quality of life for rural people is an enormous and challenging problem. With the onset of economic liberalization in 1991 and consequent changes in policy, the

weaving industry as a whole, now faces a severe crisis. Since 1998, subsidies have started to decrease and by the end of the year 2000, purchases by Government corporations have also fallen. Solutions to the problem of poor economic growth are to be found within the rural areas. In essence, it comes down to generating employment, increasing income, harnessing and utilising the primary and secondary resources that the rural areas are rounded with. Diversification of manpower is required from already saturated agricultural sector to industry and secondary sectors. It has been recognised that in the long run agriculture and other land based activities, even with a high rate of growth, will not be able to provide employment to all the rural workers at adequate levels of income. Over one fifth of the rural workers are engaged in nonagricultural activities. This proportion has shown a remarkable increase in recent years. At present, rural small scale and cottage industries comprise of handicrafts artisan enterprises. The handloom industry is cottage or small scale industry. Its products are artistic in nature and require individual skills and craftsmanship in the manufacturing process. The handloom industry is a labour intensive industry, its products are of higher value added articles, whereas the village industry produces articles of daily use.

Most of the handlooms in Cachar are installed in houses which makes these cottage level operations that involve all members of the family. Scattered, isolated and remotely located producers at times manage their own raw materials, but were mostly dependent on the master weavers for the supply of raw materials and marketing. Cotton, is the major raw material used for products weaved on handlooms, however silk, polyester and wool were also being used. Within the industry, the bargaining power of suppliers is high because suppliers and customers are

fragmented and, mostly small units used to purchase raw material on credit. They are not able to make bulk purchases as large units do which enjoy economies of scale as well.

Although Cachar is a traditionally non-cotton growing state, it has a substantial and numerically larger size of weaving population depending on handloom industry for their livelihood. It is a traditionally castes based occupation and during monarchical rules the handloom industry and the different weaving sub-castes with their specialties in specific designs and fabrics flourished in different parts of Cachar with the local royal patronage. Since medieval days, it has gained the status of largest craft industry in Cachar and in the post-independence era also its importance in the economic life of Cachar cannot be ignored altogether. However, it is alarming to note that the industry is now in its declining stage due to lack of state support in the post liberalisation years. The various types of subsidies provided to the weavers through the cooperative societies in terms of inputs and marketing support is now no longer available from the state sector. The production of 'Janata' cloth such as plain sarees, dhotis, towels, napkins, etc. woven mostly by the lowly skilled scheduled caste weavers of Cachar in the co-operative sector is stopped all of a sudden, when the Government of India launched its NEP and SAP in early 1990s. This have resulted in occupational displacement of many lowly skilled weavers.

The co-operative system of production is undoubtedly beneficial for the weavers and also for the survival of this traditional industry in a district like Cachar. However, it is found that in majority of the cases the co-operatives have failed to serve the interest of poor and illiterate weavers. As vested interest non-weaving group runs the helm of affairs in the weaver's co-operative society at the primary society level, the society is often managed like a private master weaver's concern. The president and secretary of the primary society in collusion with a few other

enlightened members usually operate their private business in the name of co-operative society. They make private profitable sale of the good quality fabrics in the open market and show all rejected substandard items as their production stock for final marketing of such goods by the apex co-operative society.

It is because of these reasons; the co-operative system of production in Cachar have failed to serve the interest of the weavers. Most of the co-operative societies are now sick. The private master weavers-cum-merchant capitalists in the weaving centres of the state are found to be operating in a very dominant manner by dictating unfavorable terms and conditions to the poor weavers. Due to weakening of co-operative system of production the livelihood of lowly skilled and semi-skilled weavers is at stake.

4.1 Profile of the Handloom Textile in Cachar District:

Weaving in Cachar is replete with artistic sensibility. The handloom industry in the Cachar District has a long tradition in the socio economic life of the people for supplementing the family income to a great extent of the society .The Laichamphi, Phanek mosquito net etc. produced traditionally by the weavers of Cachar District. .The profile of handloom textile in Cachar district is divided into two part viz, profile of production and productivity and the profile of working status. The survey attempts to understand the District environment for weaving sector and it by looking at the matters like present production status and productivity, working status, appropriateness of techniques and tools used in production.

4.1.1 Production and productivity in Cachar:

At District Level

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

Office of the

Asst. Director of Handloom and Textiles, Cachar

Dak Bungalow Road. Silchar -788001

A table (4.1) of the name of the block in Cachar District and the total no of household engaged in Handloom weaving is formulated based on the secondary data collected from the office of the Handloom & Textile, Silchar.

Table 4.1 Statics of weaving households in Cachar

Name of Block	Total No. of weaving House hold
Barjalenga	287
Borkhola	879
Banskandi	2464
Binnakandi	2675
Kalain	660
Katigorah	881
Kumbha	12
Lakhipur	4359
Lakhipur(TC)	529
Narsingpur	1806
Palonghat	1314
Rajabazar	2018
Salchapra	644
Silchar	1561
Silchar(MB)	221
Sonai	1170
Tapang	224
Udharbond	1349
Total	23053

Source – 3rd National Handloom Census 2009 done by NCEAR.

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

Here in Barakvalley this traditional handloom textiles exists and also quite a good number of peoples are engaged with this industry. In Cachar district the maximum weaver uses country looms. This was the traditional technology. The country looms are owned by individuals and families. In this production system, the weavers are not attained in favour of factory system. The family labour including that of women and child is the main source of production. Thus the quality and the production technology continued for centuries without many changes. In this process the weaver or the craftsman have to concentrate his eye, feet and hand and apply the mind in every minute. Then only he could make a finished good suitable for the market.

This traditional village industries provide a vital means of livelihood to village artisans. In some parts, it has attained the status of a mature industry, and in other parts, it is still an enterprise confined to the needs of the particular home. Handloom industry in Cachar District is having glorious past but questionable present and uncertain future due to lots of internal and external factors that are acting behind this. Though it employs a massive number of rural people, the handloom sector is considered a sunset industry.

The handloom industry of Assam demonstrates the richness and diversity of Indian culture. It provides livelihood to millions of weavers and craftsmen in rural areas. Assam contributes 99 per cent of Muga silk and 63 per cent of Eri silk in country's total production of Muga and Eri,

respectively. The industry for generations are the major source of additional income for the rural women of Assam and women comprise of 60% of total weaver population.

Assam's 1.2 million weavers are organized into about 3,744 societies registered under handloom cooperative societies. Single loom household units are common in the State. The major weaving districts of vanya (wild) silks are Kamrup (Rural), Nalbari, Udalguri, Baksa, Kokrajhar, Nagaon, Morigaon, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Golaghat, and Mangaldoi. There are different varieties of Assam handloom products. Gamocha (Assamese towel), Mekhela Chaddar (Assamese sari) and Laichampi (quilt-like material) are the trademark of the traditional products.

In order to know the relative position of Cachar in comparison to that of Assam in respect of handloom and productivity, there is a year wise comparison of the status of handloom in Cachar with all India and Assam in terms of its key indicators like total production of cloth, total no. of part time and full time weaver etc. The following tables 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 representing the same.

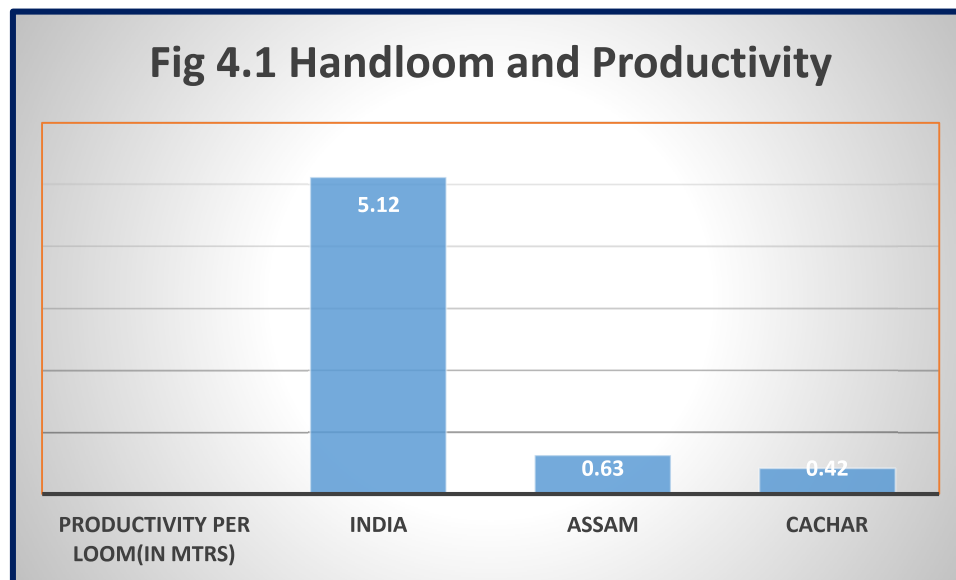
Table 4.2 Handlooms and productivity

Number of looms					
	Urban	Rural	Total	Working looms	Productivity per loom(in mtrs)
(in 000)					
India	630	3,261	3,891	3,612	5.12
Assam	65	1,344	1,409	1,299	0.63
Cachar	3	30	33	23	0.42

Source: Office of Textile Commissioner

Assistant Director, Handloom and Textile, Silchar, Cachar and

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



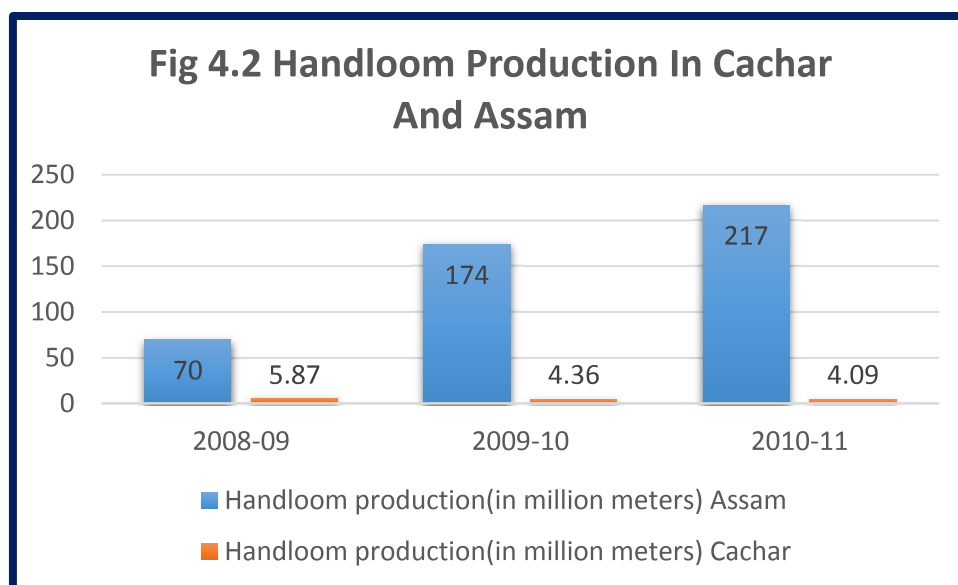
**Source: Office of Textile Commissioner
Assistant Director, Handloom and Textile, Silchar, Cachar and
Ministry of Textile, Govt. of India, Various Annual Reports**

Table 4.3 Present Status of handloom production (in million meters) in Cachar with respect to Assam

Year	Assam	Cachar
2008-09	70.00	5.87
2009-10	174.00	4.36
2010-11	217.00	4.09

Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2011

Assistant Director, Handloom and Textile, Silchar, Cachar



Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2011

Assistant Director, Handloom and Textile, Silchar, Cachar

Table 4.4 Statistics of handloom and textiles unit of Cachar and Assam, 2010-11

District/State	Handloom training Centre	No. of trainees in handloom training Centre	Weaver extension service unit		Handloom Production Centre	
			No	Production (in mtr)	No	Production (in mtr)
Cachar	1	15	4	15,000	Nil	Nil
Assam	102	1400	98	63047.73	21	9120.85

Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2011

Assistant Director, Handloom and Textile, Silchar, Cachar

Table.4.5 Statistics of weaver engaged in production in Cachar and Assam

District/State	No. of part time weaver	No. of full time weaver
Cachar	8356	3249
Assam	1012165	153860

Source: Statistical Handbook Assam 2011

Assistant Director, Handloom and Textile, Silchar, Cachar

4.2. Working status of the weavers in Cachar

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

4.2.1 Weavers by working status

Cachar is dominated with the independent weaver, very few being master weavers and labor weavers. Handloom weaving is a household-based activity and that most weavers have their own looms mean that the weavers work as independent producers. Weavers can be truly independent, in the sense that they manage their own production and marketing. Finally, there are some weavers who do not have a loom themselves. They are employed either by household-based weavers, or they may work in work sheds, run by cooperative societies or by master weavers an idea of which can be held from Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Distribution of weavers by working status

Category	No and percentage of respondents
Independent weaver	372(91.85%)
Master weaver	5(1.23%)
Left out weaver	17(4.20%)
Labor weaver	11(2.72%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

In Cachar near about 92% of the weaver are independent weaver. Most of the weaving family have their own country loom and they manage their own production and marketing. Moreover, master weaver and labor weaver constitute very less only 1.23% and 2.72%. Out of 405 weavers covered in the survey 4.20% of the weavers are left out weaver, they now shift to other occupation in order to maintain their family.

4.2.2. Weavers by working hour

Cachar is dominated by female weaver. The female weaver are engaged in weaving activity after meeting their all domestic responsibilities, thus they can't spend much time for weaving. Which results less productivity and less profitability. The results are tabulated and presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Distribution of weavers by working days

Working days in a month	No and percentage of respondents
0-10 days	360(88.89%)
10-20 days	45(11.11%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

About 88.89% of weaver are engaged in weaving for up to 10 days, while only 11.11% of them work for period of up to 10 to 20 days in a month but most of them are part time weaver, after meeting their all domestic affair they spend time for weaving and it is also not on regular basis.

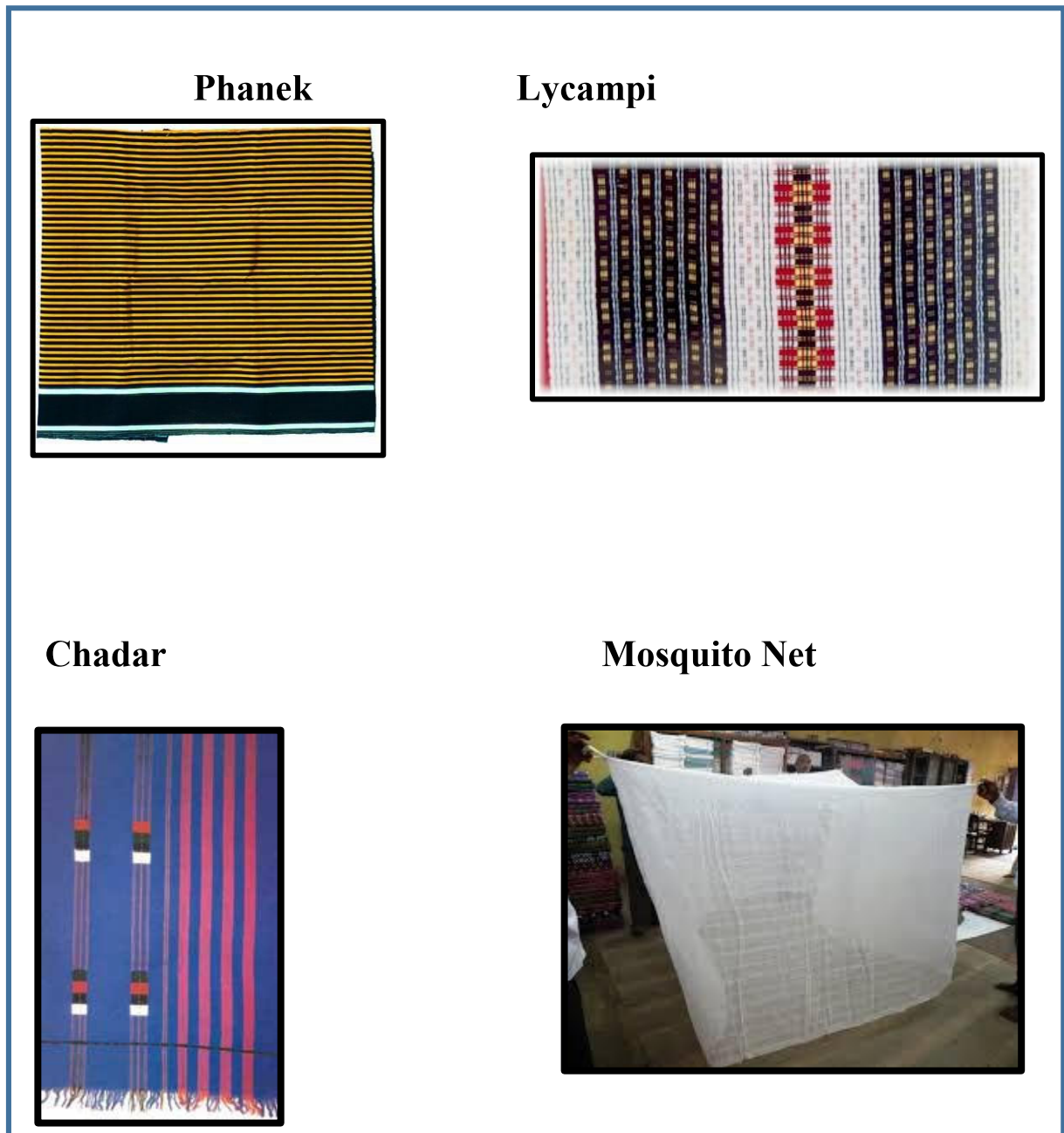
4.3 Description of existing products in Cachar

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

- ❖ Traditional Attire; The mekhala –chadar. The mekhala is a woven skirt usually plain but sometime strewn with small motifs.

-
- ❖ The chadar; which covering the upper part of a woman body and is usually decorated with spray of flowers and geometrical patterns.
 - ❖ Phanek; It is another traditional dress of Manipuri women in the District. That is worn like a sarong. It is a hand woven dress. There is a special Phanek that is called as Mayek Naibi, which has attractive horizontal stripes. Women look beautiful after wearing this dress includes a shawl known as Innaphi, Phaneks are mostly hand-woven and come either in block colours or stripes. Floral prints or bold designs are usually a miss in the traditional attire. Casual wear Phanek are traditionally block colours, whereas the ones worn for occasions, called Mayek Naibi, are often striped.
 - ❖ Lycampi; this is a colourful linguistic crafted Handloom product produced by Manipuri community in the District.
 - ❖ Traditional towel; The Gamocha is a traditional piece of woven cloth that has multiple use. Made of cotton and silk, it is used as a towel. Gamocha are adorned with a wide range of motifs, both floral and geometrical.
 - ❖ Running fabrics are made for house hold purpose they can be of different use such as for bed sheets, curtains, and napkin.
 - ❖ Mosquito netting can be made from cotton, polyethylene, polyester, polypropylene, or nylon. A mosquito bar is an alternate form of a mosquito net. It is constructed of a fine see-through mesh fabric mounted on and draped over a box-shaped frame. It is designed to fit over an area or item such as a sleeping bag to supply protection from insects.

Fig 4.3 Different types of product produced in Cachar



Source Field Survey

4.3.1 Issues and concerns:

- ❖ The available products mainly consist of traditional attire which includes chadar mekhala, Phanek, Innaphi, lycampi and traditional towel called Gamochoa.
- ❖ Designs are replica of what is already available in the market.
- ❖ The products are hardly made of pure silk or high twisted cotton yarn as the weavers can't afford it.
- ❖ Because of the above said reasons, the existing products are of low quality. There is lack of innovation.
- ❖ The designs does not reflect the current trend as most of the non-traditional attire are made by the artisans whose designs are inspired from environment and day to day life activity.
- ❖ Because of the high cost and lack of innovation in design most of the existing traditional attires have become out dated which people use occasionally during marriages and festivals.
- ❖ There is a definite need to give a fine touch during finishing, proper tools and techniques need to be provided to the weaver so that the products are accepted. In the current scenario the finishing touch is not up to the mark, and therefore the quality and price vary as per the requirements of the traders.
- ❖ There is no product diversification.
- ❖ The latest trend in market or color forecast or yarn quality is hardly considered while designing products.

- ❖ During rainy season the looms are folded and kept aside as most of the weavers don't have any proper shade facility.
- ❖ There is major problem of electricity due to which they can't work after sun set.
- ❖ As commercialisation is yet to take a ground, there is no fix working hours. Household chores and mood swings hamper the working hours therefore the product. Women work for 2-6 hours depending on their mood.
- ❖ Some of the raw materials are not of good quality. Weavers are completely dependent on the traders, who in turn are just worried about making profits rather than looking after weavers' welfare and product quality.

4.4 Description of existing looms in Cachar

Traditionally the country looms are used in Cachar. These looms required lots of energy or power and creativity, skill and patience. Each family in the village is equipped with one handmade loom. The looms are manually operated and each loom is not at all mechanized, it requires many techniques and skill to organize before going for weaving. Use of traditional preparatory work is more time consuming. Handloom weaving technologies vary by the types of producers in the industry. Country looms are employed mainly by rural weavers. The traditional country looms are made entirely of bamboo and are typically made using simple tools by a local hand crafter or by producers themselves. During the survey it is found that most of the weavers uses country loom, which they made of their own. Loom is an integral part of their house hold furniture. They still uses a bamboo and wooden spools. Each family in a village is equipped with one hand made loom. Most of the weavers in Cachar District were still operating on a very small scale and do not have a commercially sustainable size of operation. Thus maximum weavers uses country loom for

production which require lots of time and energy of the weaver to produce a particular unit of product causing low productivity. . This is the traditional technology. The country looms are owned by individuals and families. In this production system, the weavers are not attained in favour of factory system. The family labour including that of women and child is the main source of production. Thus the quality and the production technology continued for centuries without many changes. In this process the weaver or the craftsman had to concentrate his eye, feet and hand and apply the mind in every minute then only he can make a finished good suitable for the market. The following table 4.8 represent the percentage of weaver using different types of loom.

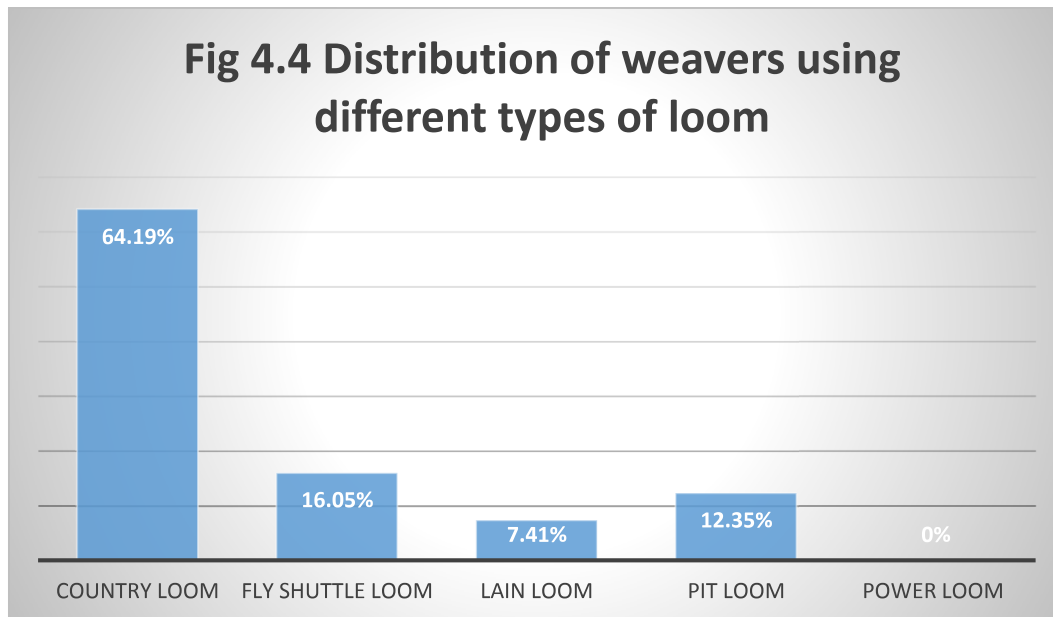
Table 4.8 Distribution of weavers using different types of loom

Types of loom	No. and Percent of respondents
Country loom	260(64.19%)
Fly Shuttle loom	65(16.05)
Lain Loom	30(7.41%)
Pit loom	50(12.35%)
Power loom	0(0.00)
Total	405

Source: Field Survey

Maximum weaver in Cachar uses the country loom nearly about 64.19% weaver uses country loom for production. 16.05% of weaver uses fly shuttle loom, 7.41% of weaver uses lain loom and remaining 12.35% of weaver uses pit loom. The uses of power loom in nill. Thus from the above it can be seen that in Cachar the weaver use country loom, this is a traditional type of loom which

require lots of time and energy to produce a particular unit of product. Thus the level of production is not satisfactory.



Source: Field Survey

4.4.1 Issues and concerns

- ❖ Most of the looms that are used traditionally are outdated; also the weavers don't have resources to introduce new technology. Neither the government nor the traders are providing them the latest technology.
- ❖ The quality of products is compromised due to lack of commercialism.
- ❖ Weavers don't get delivery of raw materials on time. Also the lack of proper loom comes in the way of delivering products on time. Better looms would be a boon in facilitating and increasing speed of work without compromising on quality.

- ❖ Conditions of the looms are not up to the mark as most of the weavers are still using old fashioned looms which are made of very low quality wood and are of poor finish, both the quality and quantity of the product gets affected
- ❖ The traditional looms used by most of the weavers are either outdated with no real modern technology available to them.
- ❖ Even in case of customize orders for high end products; products are made in ordinary looms because of which quality is compromised.

Fig 4.5 Loom used by the weavers in Cachar



Source: Field Survey

In order to identify the crucial problems assessment made in this part is based on primary data collected randomly from 405 weaving households. Important issues in this regard include raw material, marketing of handloom product, credit coverage, infrastructure, education skills research and training of the weaver.

4.5 Problems affecting the handloom weaving in Cachar District

Problem of Raw material

4.5.1 Procurement of raw material by the weavers

Most of the weaver are from economically disadvantaged sections of the population and with the limited resources they have to meet working capital and other requirements. They do not have regular access to formal credit sources, which leads them to the local moneylenders and gradually fall into the debt cycle. The supply of raw materials through co-operative society has progressively decreased; there has been a gradual shift by the weaver community to purchase their required materials from private sources, at relatively higher prices. Similarly, most weavers obtain their raw materials locally and normally do not get access to good quality raw materials at relatively low price. Table 4.9 representing the distribution of weavers by the Source of procurement of raw material.

Table 4.9 Distribution of weavers by the Source of procurement of raw material

Source of procurement	No and percentage of respondents
Local dealer	324(80%)
Cooperative societies	45(11.11%)
Master weaver	36(8.89%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

This is clearly revealed that most of the weavers are dependent on local dealer for raw materials. Weavers in the district have also not been able to take advantage of schemes or provision of raw material. All this have adverse impacts on income levels of the weavers. It is found that more than half of the weaver's purchases raw material *i.e.* threads, colour on credits from local dealers. Purchasing raw material from local dealer is convenient for the weavers in terms of time, energy, and money saving.

4.5.2 Quality

The weavers depend on the local dealer for raw material and the quality of the raw material also an important factor on which the level of production depends, the poor quality of raw material acts as a barrier to improve the level of production. Therefore, the information is collected on this important aspect from the weavers studied and presented in the Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Distribution of Weavers by Quality of Raw Material Procured

Quality of Raw Material	No and percentage of respondents
Poor	60 (14.81%)
Average	260 (64.20%)
Good	50 (12.35%)
Excellent	35 (8.64%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Nearly 64.20 per cent of the weavers reported raw material quality to be average, about 14.81 per cent reported this to be of poor quality and only 12.35 per cent reported raw material to be of good and 8.64percent excellent quality.

4.5.3 Availability

Today, a major difficulty of handloom weavers is the availability of adequate quantities of raw material at reasonable prices. The government took certain measures to deal with this problem, but majority of the weaver in Cachar District are now working outside the co-operative fold. Previously their exist one scheme viz, Janata scheme. Under this scheme weaver can get raw materials but now this scheme does not exist and the weaver have to purchase raw material at high price.

Availability and timely supply of raw material at a reasonable price and desired quality is a perennial problem for individual weavers. Weavers in the rural areas are unable to procure yarn

in small quantities or in required quality resulting in poor output and stagnation in their economic condition.

The situation of handloom producers in unorganized sector is very peculiar, because they have little command over the entire system and they are comparatively in a weak position. So when price level changes, they face acute problems of existence. What happens is that price of raw materials beyond the control of the producers. Not only that, they even cannot bargain because of their small purchases.

The issue of easy availability of raw materials at reasonable prices has been a key problem across centres of handloom production. The problem is far more acute for individual weavers. Access to raw material such as yarn, threads colour etc. has become a problem. Since this is a rural and semi-rural production activity; weavers purchase these raw material from local dealer. Colours is expensive; presently there is no system or mechanism to increase their availability to weavers. Raw material plays a vital role in the production of any product. The following table 4.11 representing the same.

Table 4.11 Distribution of Weavers by Availability of raw-material

Availability of raw-material	No and percentage of respondents
Easily available	75(18.52%)
Not easily available	330(81.48%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Around 18.52 per cent of the weavers, procuring raw materials on their own, reported no problems in getting raw material, while the remaining 81.48 per cent cited problems in procuring the raw materials.

4.5.4 Periodicity of purchase

Most of the weaver do not have any regular access to formal credit sources, which leads them to the local moneylenders and gradually fall into the debt cycle. The supply of raw materials through co-operative society also progressively decreases; there has been gradual shift by the weaver's community to purchase their required materials from private sources, at relatively higher prices. Similarly, most weaver obtain their raw materials locally and normally do not get access to good quality raw materials at relatively low price.

Table 4.12 Distribution of Weavers by Periodicity of Raw-Material Purchase

Periodicity of Raw-Material Purchase	No and percentage of respondents
Fortnightly	55(13.58%)
Monthly	30(7.41%)
As and when necessary	320(79.01%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

An analysis of the above tables on raw material reveals that nearly 13.58 per cent of the weavers were purchasing their raw material on a fortnightly basis, 7.41 per cent on a monthly basis, and majority of nearly 80 per cent of the weaver purchase raw materials as and when necessary.

4.5.5 Mode of payment of raw material

Most of the weavers purchase raw materials on both cash and credit and very few purchase on cash payment. Factors like the socio-economic status of the weavers might have influenced the mode of payment. At the time of survey it is observed that majority of the weaver are unable to purchase raw material because the high price of raw material. Thus the volume of production decreases and they can't produce as per their requirement.

Table 4.13 Distribution of Weavers by Mode of payment of raw material

Mode of payment	No and percentage of respondents
Cash	16 (3.95%)
Credit	51 (12.59%)
Both cash and credit	338(83.46%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

The above data clearly shows that most of the weaver purchase raw material on both cash and credit basis and this is convenient for the weavers in terms of time, energy, and money saving

and reduces the risk of stock accumulation. Only 3.95% of the weaver purchase on cash payment, 12.59% of weaver purchase raw material on credit basis.

4.5.6 Problem related to the procurement of raw material

Systems that ensure efficient supply chain management from the stage of availability of handloom raw materials up to sale of finished goods is essential for providing the weavers easy access to inputs and markets throughout the country and thereby resulting in higher returns for their products are yet to be set up. Provision of sustainable supply of good quality of raw materials can greatly aid in smoothening the operational crisis in handloom sector. In Cachar, the biggest challenges faced by weavers include regular and easy access to raw materials. The following table 4.14 represents the information regarding this aspect.

Table 4.14 Distribution of weavers by the Problem related to the procurement of raw material

Problems	No and percentage of respondents
Low weaving income	54(13.34%)
Less supply of raw material from cooperative societies	142(35.06%)
Increase price of raw material	209(51.60%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Due to growing deterioration of supply of raw material of the weaver co-operative societies and production centres, majority of the weaver has faced the serious crisis. The weaver co-operative societies have failed to ensure steady supply of raw material and this is the important problem of most of the weaver in Cachar district, rising price of the raw material is also another problem of the weaver. Nearly 51.60% of the weaver can't purchase raw material as per their requirement.

4.5.7 Scheme related to the supply of raw material

The formulation of various schemes has been seen as the most important strategy in reviving and supporting the handloom weaver, but their functioning, however, has not been uniformly successful. However, lack of information to the weavers regarding various policies and schemes is not less a significant cause for the dwindling fortunes of the weaver community.

Table 4.15 Distribution of Weavers by involvement in the scheme

Responses	No and percentage of respondents
Yes	80(19.75%)
No	325(80.25%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Involvement of the weavers in the different scheme is very minimal. Most of the weavers are dependent on local traders for raw materials. Thus, the weavers are confined to doing job work and not realise their true share in product value. Weavers in the District have also not been able to take advantage of schemes. All this has adverse impacts on income levels of the weavers.

Problem of Marketing

4.5.8 Problem related to the marketing of the product

Dearth of innovation and limited dynamism is associated with the handloom sector particularly in the field of marketing. One major factor impeding the expansion and growth of this sector is lack of adequate investment, mainly in marketing. Majority of the weavers necessarily bear all the risks associated with the business of procurement.

Scattered, isolated and remotely located producers lacks adequate domestic and International marketing information. Apart from that, old and outdated designs made of low quality raw materials are another hurdle in targeting the customers. . In addition, there is undistinguishable identity of handloom products from power loom products because both are sold from the same outlet in the market which resulted in increased market of power loom products, because they are cheaper in comparison and reduced the market of handloom products, which have its survival only in fetching minimum prices for their products. The decline of local markets for handlooms is a reality today, the separation of producers from the marker has given rise to middlemen. The centralized marketing bodies of weaver co-operatives too have been malfunctioning. Not receiving payments in time for the products supplied by the apex marketing agency, has led to the collapse of a number of co-operatives, since they are unable to generate/rotate capital for subsequent rounds of production. A vast majority of weavers during the survey reported selling their products in local markets. A very small percent of weaver are selling to showrooms or outside the district and the export constitutes very less. The lack of storage facilities and poverty forced the weaver to sell their produce as and when necessary. Further it is learnt from the survey that, most of them go for

direct selling because of want and need and rest in co-operative societies and the remaining are to the wholesalers and a very few to the master weavers. The pre-requisites for a healthy handloom industry are a broad and vibrant production base and appropriate marketing mechanisms that suit it. At present, the middleman entrepreneur, who concentrates more on the market and seeks high profit margins with low volume sales, dominates the market. Primary producers have no direct access to either markets or market information. As a result, there is a mismatch between production and market demand, which neither traders nor weaver co-operatives are able to absorb. The demand for handlooms at the middle and lower levels of the market need to be addressed.

During the fieldwork, data are also collected relating to the problem related to the marketing of the product. The findings and observations made in the field have been presented in the table 4. 16

Table 4.16 Distribution of weavers on the basis of Problem related to the marketing of the product

Problems	No and percentage of respondents
Ignorance of the weaver regarding the marketing of the product	63(15.56%)
Absence of the use proper marketing channel	200(49.38%)
Lack of capital	142(35.06%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Nearly 49.38% of weaver argued that they are not in a position to using proper marketing channel thus they are go for direct selling. Lack of market intelligence, product identification as per market segmentation is the important problem of the ignorant weaver in Cachar District.

4.5.9 Use of marketing channel

Table 4.17 Distribution of weavers on the basis of the use of Marketing Channel

Marketing Channel	No and percentage of respondents
Using 1 channel	253(62.47%)
Using 2 channel	128(31.60%)
Using 3 channel	24(5.93%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Due to growing deterioration of functional performance of the weaver co-operative societies and production centres majority of the weaver community have switched over to direct selling and they are not using other channel (62.47%) this kind of selling is generally on poor economic terms for the weavers and also lead to distress selling. Selling in local markets, essentially to traders, brings little value to weavers. The marketing facilities currently available to weavers from Cooperative societies are far from adequate. Even those made available through co-operatives rarely reach the

sections for whom it is intended. As a result, their profit margin decreases and their willingness to produce more are reduces.

4.5.10 Frequency of selling

Table 4.18 **Distribution of weavers on the basis of Frequency of selling**

Frequency of selling	No and percentage of respondents
Monthly	120(29.63%)
As and when necessary	260(64.20%)
Weekly	25(6.17%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Further it is learnt from this table 4.18 that, because of want and need, most of the weaver sell their product as and when necessary(64.20%)the decline of local markets for handlooms is a reality today, only(29.63%) of the weaver sell their product on monthly basis and (6.17%) of the weaver sell their product on weekly basis.

4.5.11 Poor Credit Coverage and High Cost

Weavers are prone to diverting credit towards consumption needs. Furthermore, majority of handloom weavers operate outside the fold of institutionalized financing. Institutional credit is currently being accessed mainly through the Scheduled Commercial Banks, Cooperative Banks,

Regional Rural Banks, etc., which have limited reach in interior/remote/rural areas. These factors reveal the extent to which the weavers are trapped in the vicious cycle of debt and resultant poverty. At the time of survey it is observed that for rural producers, the average starting capital was ranging between 300 to 1500. The most common method of starting capital for the rural weaver was household's own savings, All categories of producers indicates that the main source of their starting capital came from their own savings since their saving is very less thus they can't spend more for the same, The second most common source of starting capital is borrowing from parties. The majority of the weaver started their weaving practices before 20 to 25 years ago. Handloom sector by its nature is not a capital intensive business, but majority of the weavers in Cachar is poor thus the initial capital investment is very less, they are not in a position to spend much for weaving after meeting their daily necessities, thus most of the weavers take advance from parties for production and remaining are borrow from friends and families this is due to the ignorance and the lack of proper opportunities of loan from bank..

Table 4.19 Distribution of weavers on the basis of Frequency of initial capital investment

Category of responses	No and percentage of respondents
Yes	340(83.95%)
No	65(16.05%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

The table 4.19 indicates that since the earning of the weavers families are very less thus nearly 83.95% of the weaver has initial capital investment and remaining 16.05% of weaver has no capital investment.

Table 4.20 Distribution of weavers on the basis of Source of starting capital

Source of starting capital	No and percentage of respondents
Advance from parties	40(9.88%)
Private money lender	4(0.98%)
Borrowing from friends	11(2.72%)
Own saving	350(86.42%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Weavers suffer from scarcity of working capital. Most of the time, weavers acquire their working capital from their own money nearly 86.42% of the weaver acquire their working capital from their own saving. Thus a petty independent producer cannot compete in the market with his less capital investment. Remaining 9.88% of weavers have no capital investment they take advance from parties and continue the business and 0.98% weaver take loans from private money lender 2.72% weaver borrow from friends and relatives.

4.5.12 Infrastructure gaps

Infrastructure in the handloom sector continues to be inadequate, particularly in the District. Facilities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, and electricity, are not available in all hubs of handlooms production centre. This is due to the limited local organization through participation of SHGs, poor implementation of public schemes and lack of adequate public accountability as well as lack of institutionalized evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.

4.5.13 Lack of Education, Skills, Research and Training

The formal education system, including research institutes, have not included teaching, training and skill development for the handlooms sector into their mainstream Curricula/activities. As a result, the scope of introducing innovation in design and techniques is left to the initiative of the weaver families in the District is very less, who usually have no resources to devote to this critical field. While rapid changes in technology and processes have taken place globally, practices in the domestic handloom sector have tended to be relatively static and consequently unable to meet the market requirements. More over the District lack of proper training education which affect the level of operation of the semi-skilled rural weaver. Upgrading the skills and capacity building throughout the handloom chain is one of the most urgent need for bringing about positive transformation in the sector. Skills linked to production planning, costing, quality control and marketing as well as in design and technology development, are some of the areas that need concerted efforts to enable weavers to compete in open markets. Another crucial requirement is the technology and management-related education in order to turn the sector into a lucrative career option for the youth. Focused training and skill up gradation programmes must be instituted to help women workers to manage weaving and weaving related production. Existing training

modules and schemes should be more inclusive of women workers and it should be ensured that women get equal access to training and infrastructure under the schemes.

4.5.14 Problems faced by the weaver

However for the sake of better understanding, the information that are collected at the time of field survey regarding the types of problem they are facing is tabulated as under in Table 4.21

Table 4.21 Distribution of the weavers based on the problems

SI No	Problems	No and percentage of respondents
1	Infrastructure gap	30 (7.41%)
2	Absence of modern tools and technique	150(37.03%)
3	Lack of education, skills research and training	85(20.99%)
4	Less profitability	60(14.81%)
5	Health problem	50(12.35%)
6	Lack of incentive from Govt	30(7.41%)
Total		405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

Figures in the parentheses are percentage of column total

The above table 4.21 has been prepared on the basis of the information relating to the problems faced by the weavers. A perusal of the above table reveals that the most common

problems faced by the weavers community are absence of modern tools and technique ((37.03%), lack of education, skills research and training (20.99%), while low remunerative constitute (14.81%) In addition, and health and other constrain (12.35%). Lack of incentives from Government is another constrain as stated by few weavers (7.41%). Infrastructure gap (7.41%). During rainy season the floor of these houses often remain wet and sticky; the roofs start leaking at many places. As a result, the looms remain idle for most part of a day. It is observe that on normal days also the weavers are found to be working in an inhospitable environment. In the scorching heat of the summer the weaver is found to be working in an ill-ventilated loom-shed and that too without a fan. In these households the loom shed is so gloomy that the weavers are forced to use electric lamp or tube light even during the day time due to insufficient light.

Thus from the above it can be concluded that the most common problems faced by the weavers community are inadequate marketing facility and interrupted supply of electricity and inadequate wok space. In addition, problems related to production are shortage of raw materials, hike in price of raw material, price instability and transportation etc. While data collection, the researchers encountered other problems related to low remuneration, health issues and several other constrain. Lack of incentives from Government is another major problem as stated by few weavers. Handloom weavers are adversely affected by the indiscriminate expansion of mills. The handloom sector is facing a number of problems like obsolete technology and traditional production techniques, high price of hank yarn, inadequate availability of inputs, lack of new designs, choking of credit lines, inadequate training for up gradation of skills, infrastructural constraints, lack of working capital, conventional product range competition from machine made products and inadequate marketing intelligence and feedback. Besides, it suffers from

disadvantages like unorganized structure, weak financial base of the weavers and bureaucratization/ politicization of cooperatives. In many belts of handloom weaving, the crisis of weavers have reached to such a situation that very significant number of weaves have been forced to give up their traditional skills and take up employment as construction workers, rickshaw-pullers, vendors etc.

4.5.15 Attitude towards traditional weaving

Family tradition is most important for the weavers in Cachar District. The weavers have great attachment to their traditional profession even when it is economically un remunerative. However, their recent attitude towards the traditional profession undergone a considerable change. Majority of the weaver now shift their profession, and engaged elsewhere, while few weavers still hesitate to leave their profession due to the lack of a better substitute and capital, they are now engaged in weaving because of their in capabilities of employing themselves in other occupations. Their age old sentiments towards handloom weaving are now started disappearing.

Some sections of handloom weavers are living in hand-to-mouth conditions, with no house or assets for them, for years together. These issues need to be addressed. Due to gradually decreasing in the return leads the younger generation to explore the other options of occupations. Their wish to continue traditional weaving was mainly to preserve and protect the inherited tradition alive. Table 4.22 representing the same.

Table 4.22 Distribution of weavers on the basis of opinion towards alternative income opportunities

Category of opinion	No and percentage of respondents
Yes	225(55.56%)
No	180(44.44%)
Total	405(100%)

Source: Field Survey

It is learnt from the above table 4.22 that nearly 55.56% of the weavers are not satisfied with their occupation. Majority of the weavers opined that having entered into this profession they could not go out of it, they do not want their children to enter this profession, and because inspite of hard labour put in by all the family members put together throughout the year they are unable to meet their ends.

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

The present study makes an attempt to examine the factors that brought the decay of handloom industry in Cachar district.

Varieties of factors either independently or jointly contributes to the decline of traditional handloom, as reported by the surveyed weaver respondents. The important factors that are responsible for the weakening of traditional handloom are discuss in the nutshell.

Technology Gap

Existence of plurality of technologies in every field is threatening rural traditional weaving industry. While small scale industries not only produces but also provides employment to the significantly large number of people and creates purchasing power in the economy. Rapid changes in technology and processes have taken place globally, but practice of technologies in the domestic handloom sector tends to be relatively static and consequently unable to meet the market requirements. The new technologies have allowed the various production stages to become one continuous process of interrelated activities, resulting higher quality and flexibility and thus resulting to faster response to changing market conditions. In the traditional sectors and branches, women are still predominantly found at the lower occupational levels. The most vulnerable group is older married women doing unskilled work, their skill, education level being very low does not contribute to the rapidly changing economy. The educational and training systems are responding with varying means and degrees of success in the individual economics. Very little if any technological change has actually occurred in the district. The technology gap is increasing day by day. The comparative advantage of the highly modern textile in these sectors, due to the use of advanced computer based technology. The technology gap is responsible for their labour cost disadvantage, where the introduction of information technologies has already taken place, but most of the new technologies have little or no applicability in the actual production system. This means that there has been little economic, organisational and personal changes so that the full benefits of the technologies cannot be exploited. Majority (8.64%) of the weaver respondents reported that use of traditional technology greatly hindering the improvement of this sector.

Unfair competition from mills and power looms

The power-loom sector is of more recent vintage and has shown enormous growth in the 19th and 20th century, many handloom weavers are gradually switched over to power driven looms, because of getting higher productivity and earning better livelihood. The power-loom can imitate design of handloom product and produce it in low rates. Handloom products are costly than power-loom products. Power loom always use mixed silk, synthetic, bright, kimchi, polestar, rolex and plastic. Whereas handloom use expensive silk yarn. For that reason, the cost of handloom product is high. Handloom is labor intensive job where many skilled people are involved in preparatory and post weaving activity. The power-loom weaving is a totally machine based technology, do not require skilled labour. One man is enough for manipulating two or three power-loom machines at a time. Many customers want to buy a handloom product at a reasonable price not in high price. When a customer gets a power-loom product within a budget, then they do not go to buy handloom products. And the shop owners sell the power-loom cloths as handlooms to the customers. The buyer cannot identify what is power-loom product or what is handloom one. The female folk of the family are not essentially required in power-loom. Either they are free or engage separately in another jobs or power-loom activities as a paid worker. Subsequently power-loom is start functioning for the huge production in short time, better wage, less labour and more profit, than the handloom weavers. Nearly 29.63% of respondents reported that the existence of the unfair competition with power loom is greatly responsible for the decay of the industry in Cachar.

Poor Institutional Frame work

While cooperatives do help in maximizing the benefits for weavers in the entire chain of production, their present condition is a cause of concern. The handloom cooperative system is

riddled with corruption and political interference. Many handloom weavers are not members of these cooperatives. Government departments have to stop using them as primary sources for routing government funds and schemes. Cooperatives have to become independent of district-level government officers in terms of management and decision-making. The Handlooms sector was encouraged to adopt a co-operative model and the Government policy facilitated the formation and running of Primary Cooperative Societies at the village level and Apex Societies at the State level. Besides, State Handloom Corporations (SHC) were also promoted with a view to supporting individual weavers. It was envisioned that the Apex Societies/ State Handloom Agencies would inter-alia, arrange for procurement of yarn from organized mills, supply the same to Primary Societies for producing cloth and also undertake marketing activities. Unfortunately, in the last 5 to 10 years, several Apex Societies /Handloom Corporations have become dormant due to a host of reasons such as financial losses, lack of professional management, overstaffing and poor marketing and distribution channels. These organisations are therefore, not able to arrange for sufficient work for the weavers' community. About 17.77% of the weaver respondents felt that the handloom sector is in the path of extension due to the poor performance of the cooperative and less financial support by the govt. to the poor weaver.

Low wages

Handloom industry is now in the path of extinction due to the low wages prevailing in the industry. Previously there was full of talented weavers who used to do magic in the looms to produce the best handloom products. The weavers are demanding a responsible role by the government to protect the handloom industry by providing subsidy for yarn and a rehabilitation package for the weavers. While the markets are changing, handloom sector cannot change itself

for different reasons and factors. Principal among them is that investment in handloom sector is now very minimal. Handloom industry is a labour intensive sector and thus need more labour taxes, which resulted in high cost of production as compared to capital intensive sector, e.g. power loom industry. The low income results to pushed the handloom workers to perform ancillary functions to earn their livelihood or leave the trade altogether for something more profitable. The handloom is labor intensive industry where wages should be satisfactory. But fact is that the workers in labor intensive industries generally receive lower wages than the capital intensive industries. The handloom weavers also get low wages in terms of their productivity. The weaver always passing through the financial crisis. The self-employed weavers usually bring yarn from the market on credit, the money earn is too low compared to the actual production cost. For that reason they leave this job if other option is open. The labors do not get their actual wages. As a result they now begun to search for better opportunity. The weavers do not sustain their life with the handloom. Nearly 13.83% of respondents reported that the low wage structure is one of the important cause of the decay of traditional handloom in Cachar.

Consumer preference to modern textile

Majority 20.25% of the weaver respondents reported that modern textile items are available at relatively cheaper prices, affecting the market for handloom products growing consumer preference and taste, in recent times, towards variety of modern fabrics have severely affected the demand for handloom items. Textile products are being manufactured by organized spinning mills offer variety of designs of fabrics and attract more number of consumers, squeezing the market size for traditional handloom products, handloom items are being costlier than the modern textile items thus find it difficult to attract more consumer segment. The modern fabrics are being

produced by organized mills captures relatively wider market. The growing consumer preference for modern textile products are directly result to increasing investment made by the organized sector for advertisement and promotion. In Cachar district, almost all the surveyed women respondents reported that growing consumer preference towards modern fabrics manufactured by the organized textile sector results to the crisis situation in traditional weaving industries. Since advertisement plays an important role in the promotion of textile products, traditional handloom sectors find it difficult to mobilize and allocate required funds and investment on advertisement through mass media channels.

Absence of Information and Resource gaps

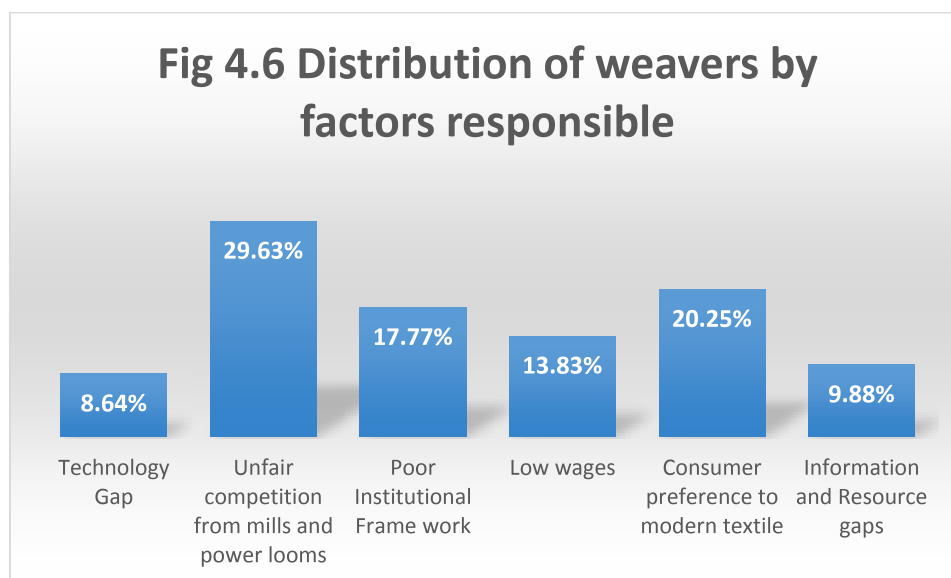
Last but not the least 9.88% of weaver respondents felt that absence of information and resource gaps are also one of the important factor responsible for the decay of the industry. Major institutions providing inputs-credit, research, technology, management and market development, etc. are largely centralized and hence unable to reach the dispersed and largely home-based weavers. There has been limited information flow between buyers and sellers and as such, weavers are often not familiar with the variety in usage of fabrics and thus find themselves unable to respond to dynamic market trends or suggestions by designers/ marketing agencies. Lack of information to weavers regarding various policies and schemes are not a insignificant cause for the dwindling fortunes of the weaver community. Even government departments and implementing agencies related to handloom suffer from inadequate information and data resulting in a widening gap between policy formulation and implementation.

The following table 4.23 represents the distribution of factors responsible for weakening of traditional handloom given by the weaver respondents.

Table 4.23 Distribution of factors responsible for weakening of traditional handloom as expressed by the weaver respondents.

Sl. No	Factor responsible	No and percentage of respondents
1	Technology Gap	35(8.64%)
2	Unfair competition from mills and power looms	120(29.63%)
3	Poor Institutional Frame work	72(17.77%)
4	Low wages	56(13.83%)
5	Consumer preference to modern textile	82(20.25%)
6	Information and Resource gaps	40(9.88%)
Total		405(100%)

Source: filed survey



Source: filed survey

The study of the impact of the decay of handloom industry in Cachar District is divided into two part viz, the first part deals with impact of decay of traditional handloom on weaving operation and the second part deals with the impact of the decay on socio economic life of the weaver engaged in traditional handloom.

4.7 Impact of decay of traditional handloom on weaving operation:

4.7 .1 Impact on weaving operation:

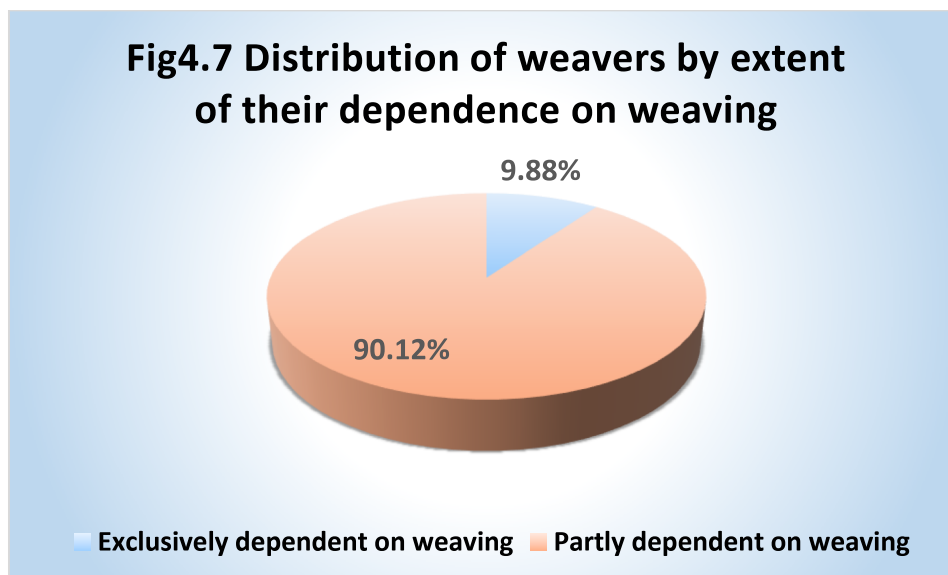
The sustainability of traditional weaving operation is greatly dependent on the prevailing market position, efficiency of management of the weaver's co-operative societies and production centres and the availability of basic raw materials. Though the sector is facing difficulty to survive and maintain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

Table 4.24 Distribution of weavers by extent of their dependence on weaving after the decay.

Sl. No	Extent of engagement in weaving occupation	No and percentage of respondents
1	Exclusively dependent on weaving	40(9.88%)
2	Partly dependent on weaving	365(90.12%)
Total		405(100%)

Source: filed survey

It is clear from the above table 4.24 that after the decay of the traditional handloom now it does not fetch sustainable income, and since past couple of years weaving has been a secondary source of the income of the maximum weaver. Now they are presently, involved in the weaving mainly for their domestic use and very less for the commercial purposes, only 9.88% of the weavers exclusively dependent on weaving for their livelihood.



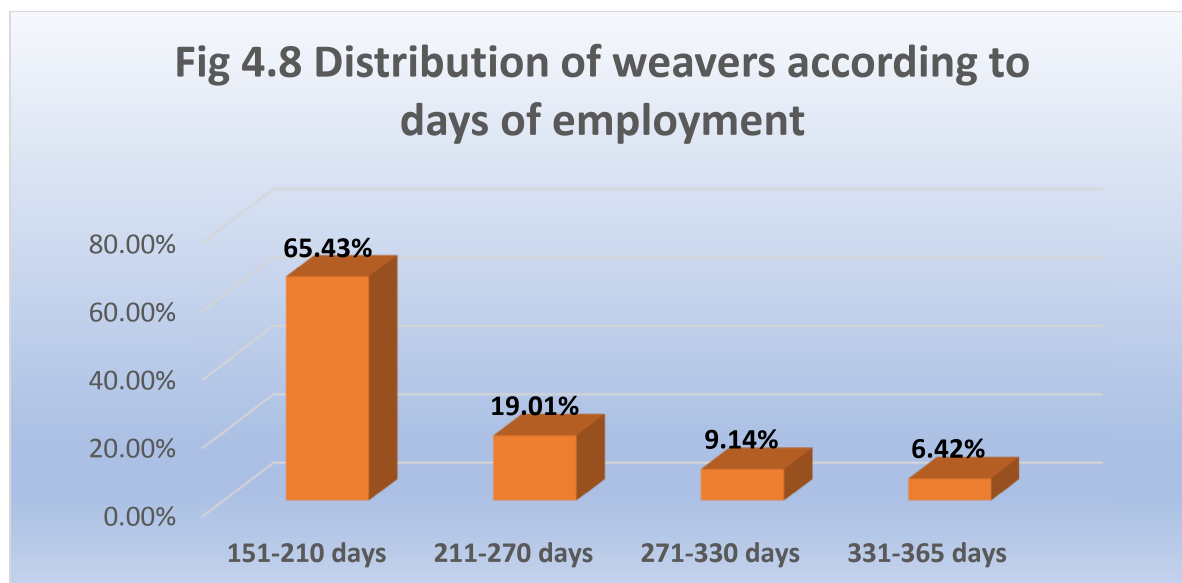
Source: filed survey

Table 4.25 Distribution of weavers according to days of employment in a year in weaving after the decay.

Sl. No	Weavers according to days of employment in a year	No. of respondents
1	151-210 days	265(65.43)
2	211-270 days	77(19.01)
3	271-330 days	37(9.14)
4	331-365 days	26(6.42)
Total		405(100%)

Source: filed survey

After the decay of traditional weaving, only 65.43% of weavers are engaged to weaving activity for 151-210 days in a year, 19.01% of the weaver are engaged to weaving activity for 211-270 days, 9.14% are engaged to weaving activity 271-330 days and only 6.42% are engaged to weaving activity for 331-365 days, naturally their income force them to shift to the other source of livelihood.



Source: Field Survey

Table 4.26 Distribution of weaver's households by their need to modernize (replace/repair) their Existing/old Looms

Sl. No	Households by modernization	No. of respondents
1	Need modernization	260(64.20%)
2	Not need modernization	145(35.80%)
Total		405(100%)

Source: field survey

All the surveyed weaver families opting for modernization reported that modernization would result in increase in the processing of the level of output and improving their level of operation.

As presented in the above table 4.26, nearly 64.20% of the surveyed weavers expressed their

dissatisfaction regarding their existing system of looms. Whereas 35.80% of weaver reported that there is no need to modernization of their existing looms.

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

With growing competition posed by the modern textile industries, spinning mills and power looms, the traditional handloom has gradually deteriorated over the last decades, rendering 1000 of weaver's unemployed and under employed, forcing large-scale migration and closer of several co-operative societies and production centres, which used to provide support to the weaving activities in rural areas. Weavers have led to occupational shift and as a result of this leads to the diversification to cope up with the negative effect of decay. The competitive environment in the textile sector has adversely affected the operation and growth of traditional handloom in rural areas, making many traditional weavers financially ruined and weaker. The impacts on the style of living and social status of the surveyed weaver families have been analysed with regard to their food intake, children's education, health and sanitation, domestic energy used accessibility to means of entertainment. family dependence on the handlooms.

4.7.2.1 Food intake:

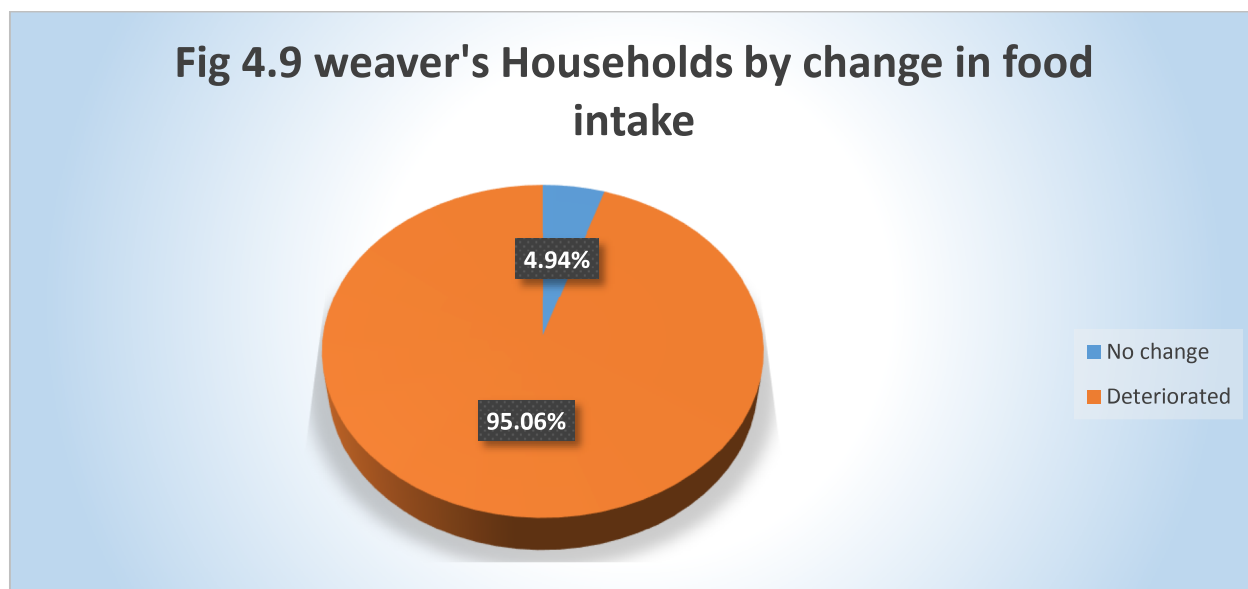
The following table 4.27 represents the changed conditions of livelihood of the weaver community with regard to their food security and quality of food intake. Nearly 95.06% of the surveyed weaver households, reported that, the quality and quantity of food intake has deteriorated due to

uncertainty of their weaving operation. About 4.94 % of the surveyed households reported that, there has been no change in the quality and quantity of their food intake.

Table 4.27 Distribution of weaver's households by change in food intake due to less income through handloom activities.

Sl. No	households by change in food intake	No and Percentage of respondents
1	No change	20(4.94%)
2	Deteriorated	385(95.06%)
Total		405(100%)

Source: field survey



Source: field survey

4.7.2.2 Health care facilities:

Attempt has been made to study the impact of decay of traditional handloom on the livelihood status of the rural weaver communities in terms of change in their health status. As reported by almost all the surveyed weaver (83.95%) households, the health status of the family members have declined due to deterioration of their livelihood condition. Their capacity to provide better health care facilities have decreased due to their falling standard of living as a result of deterioration of their traditional weaving activities. The effect was considered marginal for majority of the surveyed weaver families.

4.7.2.3 Education:

The surveyed weaver households are interrogated whether the decline in their weaving activities have resulted in any financial problem in educating their children or not. It is found that, (79.01%) of the surveyed families faces financial difficulties in giving schooling facilities to their children due to decline in their family based weaving activities. This indicates that the competitive situation in textile sector has increased their financial pressure and burden, putting them in difficult situation to meet their social obligations and domestic needs. As a whole, education of children of these affected weaver families is suffering to a great extent.

4.7.2.4 Recreational Facilities:

The study has examined the adverse impact of the competitive situation in textile sector on the surveyed weaver families about their availing various recreational facilities. It is reported that, nearly 84.94% of the surveyed weaver families is suffering in availing recreational facilities due to their financial problems caused by the declining handloom business. However, nearly 15.06% of the surveyed households reported no effect of them in availing recreational facilities.

Table 4.28 Distribution of weaver's households suffered in availing recreational facility

Sl. No	households by suffered in availing recreational facility	Percentage of respondents
1	Affected	344(84.94%)
2	Not affected	61(15.06%)
Total		405(100%)

Source: field survey

4.7.2.5 Cooking Fuel:

The type of cooking fuel used indicates the social and financial status of a family. As the financial condition of a family weakens, it becomes difficult for these families to go for expensive cooking fuels. Since most of the weaver families in rural areas (75.31%) commonly use fuel wood, dung-cake, kerosene etc. as their cooking fuel. There has been limited effect of the decline of handloom business on use of cooking fuel.

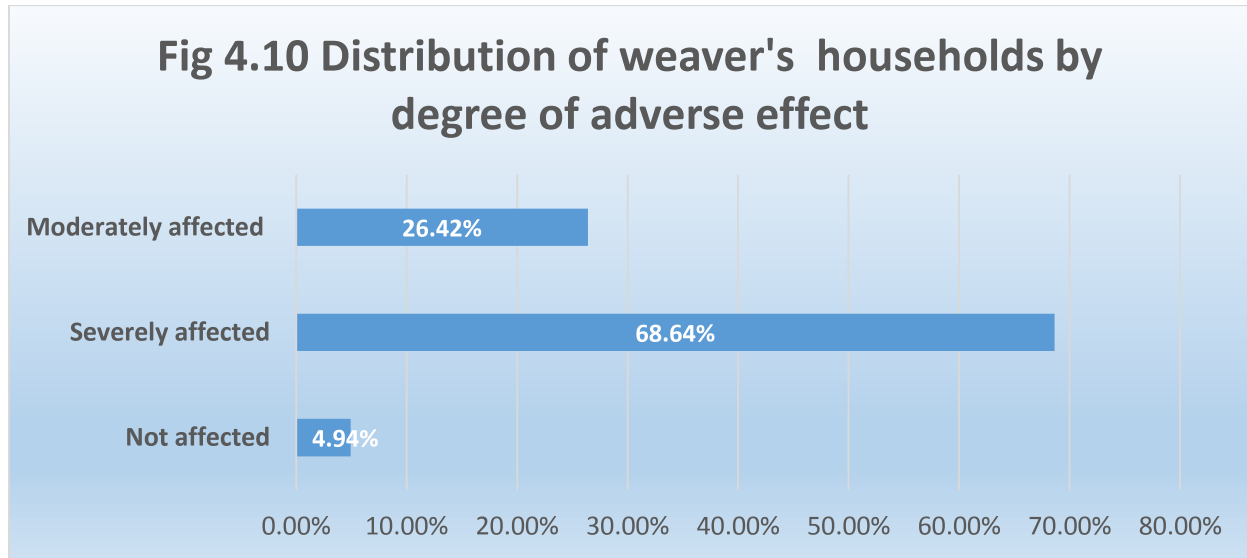
4.7.2.6 Effect on socio economic status:

Table 4.29 Distribution of weaver's households by degree of adverse effect on their socio economic status after the decay.

Sl. No	Degree of adverse effect	Percentage of respondents
1	Not affected	20(4.94%)
2	Severely affected	278(68.64%)
3	Moderately affected	107(26.42%)
Total		405(100%)

Source: field survey

Nearly 68.64% of the weaver reported that after the decay of their traditional business they are severely affected, and do not have any alternative income opportunities, at that time they are not in a position to meet even their daily expenses as weaving is their main occupation. The weaving income is very minimal, because they give very minimum time to weaving, and the non-weaving sources are also not much so they suffer from poverty. Thus if the weaving income improves it will uplift the standard of living of the people of weaving industry. Lower income earning means lower expenditure of food, clothing, education of their children and higher indebtedness resulting in to migration to other occupations. However, 26.42% of the weaver respondent are moderately affected as the weaving is not their only occupation, as the other members of the family are involved in other business. And 4.94% of the weaver respondent are not affected by the decay, because immediately after the decay they start new business as the economic condition of those weavers are good.



Source: Field Survey

From the field survey it is found that weavers in Cachar, mainly those who have inherited this occupation, are in a pitiable condition after the decay of the industry owing to the poor socio-economic conditions. The majority of them are now independent weavers who earn minimal return in spite of working for more than ten hours a day. Majority of the weavers in the district are not financially sound because of the inadequate earnings from their profession. A greater number of weavers in the country try to change their profession. Particularly after the decay majority of the weaver live in poverty. There are about 55.56 percent who said that they continue this profession only because there is no other choice. This is mainly because the weavers are habituated to weaving activity and they are accustomed to the conditions since their childhood. Most of the weavers' respondents as dark future of weaving. This is due to decreasing demand of the products resulting to competition from the power looms as well the products of the power loom resulting gradual curtail in wages of weavers. Due to gradual curtail in wages semi skill weavers shift to other

occupations like tea stalls, small business, tent house, PCO etc. The weavers who leave weaving work not getting proper work and wage to run their livelihoods. Due to continuous decrease in the wages of the weavers declining the interest of next generation to associate with weaving works. Thus this hampers their socio economic status.

Most of the handlooms in Cachar are now after the decay installed in houses which makes these cottage level operations that involve all members of the family is now starving. Scattered, isolated and remotely located producers at time manage their own raw materials, but are mostly dependent on the master weavers for the supply of raw materials and marketing. Within the industry, the bargaining power of suppliers are high because suppliers and customers are fragmented and, mostly small units used to purchase raw material on credit. They do not use to make bulk purchases as large units do, and enjoy economies of scale as well.

The handloom industry have, unquestionably, been going through periodic crises, and the situation have been particularly acute in the last couple of decades. This have resulted in the erosion of rural livelihoods in weaving, and also a displacement of labour. However, the handloom industry as such faces a great crisis from the competition initiated by the power looms and their cheap commodity production based on mechanization. In today's fast changing fashion, traditionality being the fame and interest of the elite in the society, but less accessible and affordable for the middle and low income groups. The weavers of Cachar district faces various problems most of these problems are outside the control of the average handloom weavers. Thus this industry needs immediate attention by the State Government to improve the socioeconomic status of local weavers. The impact of the decay on rural handloom industry is widely realised. The handloom sector, both co-operative society and private sector, with its vast rural work forces

especially women of weaver communities is confronted the challenge of competitive economic environment. The handloom industry is dwindling steadily over the last decade, rendering thousands of weaver's unemployed, forcing large scale migration to other states and closure of hundreds of co-operative societies and production centres. As a result, the socio-economic status of the rural weavers particularly engaged in traditional weaving activities have severely been affected.

In order to empirically measure the impact of the decay on the socio economic standard of living of the people of handloom industry we use multiple regression model specified in chapter 1. The multiple regression models (1) and (2) have been formulated in order to test the first null hypothesis that weaving income does not influence the socio economic standard of living of the people of handloom industry and the second alternative hypothesis that non-weaving income improve the standard of living of the people of handloom industry. These have been estimated by applying the OLS technique in SPSS 17.

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

In order to make more insight into the socio economic aspect after the decline of handloom it is necessary to mention here importance of independent variable of model (1) and (2).

In order to study the actual socio economic impact of the decay on the standard of living of the people we take present weaving income and non-weaving income as important independent variable because income determine the standard of living of a family and hence we take income that the weaver earn from the weaving as well as non-weaving sources.

Secondly, in a socio economic survey the impact of the per capita debt is important because the weavers are belongs to the poor families and it is obvious that they would require loans to meet the gap between income and expenditure. While very few families have availed the bank loan facilities, but maximum number do not have such access. However, despite access to bank loans, many have access to private loans as well. But these have proved to be burdensome for many families. However, most of them do not have insurance, against any emergencies, making them more vulnerable to debt and poverty cycle. Thus we choose per capita debt as one of the important independent variable.

Thirdly, the impact of proportion of dependent member is important because the family size and system are important factors that contributed to the family income, as the proportion of dependent member largely determine the actual economic status.

Table 4.30 Weaving, non-weaving income and socio economic standard of living (Model 1 and 2)

Regression result of the model as specified in chapter1 are as follows:

Dependent Variable: Socio economic index

Variable	Coefficient	Model-1 Socio economic index (depend on weaving income(WI))	Model-2 Socio economic index (depend on non-weaving income(NWI))
Constant		+3.23	+1.02
Income	β_1	+2.74***(0.09)	+2.87*(0.00)
Proportion of dependant family member(POD)	β_2	-1.65*(0.00)	-1.5*(0.00)
Percapita debt(PD)	β_3	+3.48*(0.00)	+2.1*(0.00)
R ²		0.60	0.60
F value		9.12*(0.00)	203*(0.00)
No. of observation		405	405

Figures in the parentheses are p values

* Significant at1% ($p < 0.01$), *** Significant at10% ($p < 0.1$)

The above table 4.30 presents the results from OLS regressions of weaving income, proportion of dependent family member, per capita debt, on socio economic index.

Based on the above result we fitted the following regression equation:

$$\hat{Y}_j = 3.23 + 2.74X_1 - 1.65X_2 + 3.48X_3 \dots\dots\dots$$

Where, X_1 stand for weaving income

X_2 stand for proportion of dependent family member

X_3 stand for percapita debt

$$\hat{Y}_j = 1.02 + 2.87 X_1 - 1.59X_2 + 2.1X_3 \dots\dots\dots$$

Where, X_1 stand for non-weaving income

X_2 stand for proportion of dependent family member

X_3 stand for percapita debt

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

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

A possible reason behind this might be when the proportion of dependent member increases this means that proportion of earning member decreases and this will reduce the level of income. Thus when the proportion of dependent increase the socio economic status decreases and vice versa. Dependent member is either children and an old age-population group of those typically not in the labor force .A high dependency ratio can cause serious problems for a family because a large proportion of families expenditure is goes on health care etc. Thus a growth in the non-productive population will diminish the socio economic status of the family.

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

This might be due to when the weaver goes for taking debt, immediately their socio economic index improves. Since the weaver community is very poor they can't maintain their family expenses with their limited income, thus they take loans from the informal sources. As maximum of them take loans from their friend, local money lender, Mahajan's etc., they have to pay high rate of interest, but with their limited income they are unable to refund the debt. As a result though their standard of living improves immediately, but they have to bear the ultimate burden of the debt throughout their life span.

Thus our results show that, among all the independent variable the Proportion of dependent family member have significant negative impact on the socioeconomic index in both the cases.

It is further observed from the table that the value of R square is (0.60) in both the cases implying that the variable proportion of dependent family member, percapita debt, weaving income and non-weaving income explain (60%) variation in socio economic index. Moreover, above estimated regression equation is also good fit in case of socio economic index dependent on non-weaving income as the value of F is (203) is much higher statistically significant with p value < 0.01 . Thus first null hypothesis is rejected. Our second alternative hypothesis i.e. the non-weaving income improves the socio economic standard of living of the people is accepted.

4.7.2.7 CASE STUDIES

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

Case Study 1:

A man from Gorerbon village in Borkhola Block is of 46 years and has studied up to 8th standard. He has six other members in his family (his mother and father, two sisters, wife and three Children). He is the only son of the family he faces significant economic hardship during the decline of the weaving industry. To avoid poverty and pay for treatment of his malnourished children, he sold his bicycle and other possessions. His eight-year-old son is bound to work as a labourer in a tea stall. For this work he typically earned 500 rupees in a month. Despite being a skilled weaver, he has no good job, and no land or any other way to get food.

Weaving was their main occupation. The family owns one loom and they produce 6 to 7 pieces of fanak, chadar etc. for every week. The man and his two sisters and wife are mainly involved in the weaving activity. Earlier they supplied the finished product to the cooperative societies and master weaver and received wages at the rate of Rs. 50 per piece. And after the production each unit was sold by him. Their weekly income, therefore, was in the range of Rs. 400.

But after the decay of the industry they are now totally dependent on other means. Presently they work as a part time independent weaver and hardly produce 2 to 4 pieces of fanak in a week, and hardly can he sell 1 piece of fanak per week. Their present income is calculated in the following table.

Income

	Before the decay	After the decay
Output per week	9 to 10 pieces of fanak	2 to 4 pieces of fanak
Sell of output per week	8 pieces	2 pieces
Income per week	400 (Wage @ Rs.50 per fanak)	120 (Wage @ Rs.60 per fanak)
Monthly Income (Four weeks)	1600	480

It is clear from the above that there is a significant decrease in his selling of output and, thereby, in his income.

Therefore, it is clear that there have been considerable change in his income and which affect his socio economic condition. Moreover when he was asked about the declining selling rate of handloom product he reported that modern textile items are available at relatively cheaper price, affecting the market for handloom products. Growing consumer preference and taste, in recent times, towards variety of modern fabrics have severely affected in the demand for handloom items. Textile products being manufactured by organized spinning mills offer variety of designs of fabrics and attract more number of consumers, squeezing the market size for traditional handloom products.

Thus he is now no longer interested in continuing weaving as an occupation. He encountered significant economic hardship during the decline of the weaving industry. The two

major institutional structures in handloom weaving are cooperative societies and master weavers are closely inter-linked. Usually master weavers follow exploitative practices which develop unhealthy competition. In the recent past as master weavers are also not in a position to provide at least minimum work for weavers due to the frequently changing prices of raw material some time up to a large percentage. Hence the only secured best way for weavers' welfare is cooperative societies. But the condition of the cooperative societies is also not well. A number of promotional schemes are extended to weavers from time to time but none of them reach the weavers.

Case Study 2:

A woman of 58 years old, was a weaver from Purna gram Lakhipur block. She failed in her high school examination and did not pursue with her studies further. She is a housewife and her husband is a cultivator. She lives in a semi-pucca house with her husband, two sons and three daughters. The family has one loom and weaving is the main occupation of the family in the past. The family has decayed, daughters help in making bobbin and starching and the sons operate the loom and together produce 6 to 7 chaddar a week.

Like most other weavers in her village, she also was a 'labour weaver'. She receives orders and the raw material from a specific trader and supplies the finished product to him for wages (paid at piece-rate). Manipuri women contribute immensely in the socio-economic transformation and upliftment to the family. This is not only makes them economically independent but also helps their families with their financial contributions. Weaving has been a traditional occupation of these households and women members of the weaver households have acquired such skills from their childhood. During peak seasons such as festivals and marriages, they are relatively in better

position as weaver, take up independent weaving to enhance their income through optimum use of family labour.

But from the last few years inspite of hard labour put in by all the family members in her family they are fail to earn as per their expectation. Thus since past couple of years weaving has been a secondary source of their income, and as a result old experienced weavers in traditional weaving produce only for their domestic uses and very less for commercial purpose. In spite of the whole family involved in weaving activity per day income is not exceeding more than Rs.50, where as in other activities such as construction, agriculture and other allied activities one member in the family is earning not less than Rs 250 to Rs. 300 per day .

Moreover, their recent attitude towards the traditional profession have undergone a considerable change. Majority of the weaver in her village now shift their profession, and they are now engaged elsewhere, while few weavers still hesitated to leave their profession due to the lack of a better substitute and capital, they are now engaged in weaving because of their in capabilities of employing themselves in other occupations. Their age old sentiments towards handloom weaving have now started disappearing.

The lack of finance affects the ability of the small units severely. Every kind of problems, whether of raw material, power, transport or marketing faced by a weaver in its ultimate analysis turns out to be a problem of finance. While cooperatives do help in maximizing the benefits for weavers in the entire chain of production, their present condition is a cause of concern. This

situation is making her family to shift to other alternative employment on account of desperate need to make the livelihood successful.

4.8 Possibilities to avert the decay:

In order to empirically measure the possibility to avert the decay of handloom industry we use multiple regression model specified in chapter 1. The multiple regression models (3) have been formulated in order to test the third alternative hypothesis, that is higher the amount of time and capital invested on handloom production higher is the price fetched by the products and simple liner regression model (4) have been formulated in order to test the forth alternative hypothesis Larger the marketing network, higher is the chances of survival.

In model (3) our first independent variable is time spend to produce per unit of product. Time spend has a significant impact on the dependent variable price per unit of product. As we know that weaving is an artistic and creative work which requires more time and patient to produce a good quality of product.

Our second important independent variable is capital investment per unit of product. The impact of it on dependent variable i.e. on the price per unit of product is important because capital investment include all kind of investment which is necessary for the production purpose and which have an important impact on the price of the product.

Regression result of the model as specified in chapter are as follows:

Table 4.31 Capital and money investment and possibility to avert the decay of handloom industry

Dependent Variable: Price per unit of product

Variable	Coefficient	Model-3
Constant		27.34
Capital invest per unit of product	β_1	.95 *(0.00)
Time spend to produce per unit of product	β_2	11.35 *(0.00)
R ²		.56 *(0.00)
F value		20509.81 *(0.00)
No. of observation		405

Figures in the parentheses are p values

* Significant at1% (p<0.01)

Based on the above result we fitted the following regression equation

$$\hat{Y}_i = 27.34 + .95 X_1 + 11.35 X_2 + \dots$$

Where, X₁ stand for Capital invest per unit of product

X₂ stand for Time spend to produce per unit of product

The above table4.31 presents the results from OLS regressions of capital invest per unit of product and time spend to produce per unit of product on per unit product price.

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

A possible reason behind this might be that if the weaver invest more in production the quality and the standard of the product improve, he can produce according to the taste and preference of the consumer and can apply variety of designs and latest technique, and this will increase the demand of the product and the weaver can charge high price of the product.

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

This might be due to the fact that if the weaver spends more time in production it will be possible for them to produce variety of products and it can meet every need, ranging from the exquisite fabrics, which take months to weave to popular items of mass production for daily use. Thus if they spend more time the output will be more perfect and artistic and hence they get high price of their product.

Thus multiple regression results show that, both the two independent variable have significant positive impact on the dependent variable price per unit of product. It is further observed from the table that the value of R square is (0.56) implying that the variable capital invest per unit of product, time spend to produce per unit of product explain (56%) variation in price per unit of product. Moreover, the above estimated regression equation is also good fit as the value of

F is (20509) and statistically significant with p value < 0.01 . Thus we accept our third alternative hypothesis.

In model (4) we take total number of marketing network used by the weaver as important independent variable and study its impact on the dependent variable profit per unit of product. As the volume of selling is partly depend on the marketing channel used by the producer. It has a significant impact on the total return and profit.

Regression result of the model as specified in chapter are as follows:

Table 4.32 Marketing network and chances of and chances of survival of handloom industry

Dependent Variable: Profit per unit of product

Variable	Coefficient	Model-3
Constant		33.78
Total number of marketing network used by the weaver	β_1	9.49 *(0.00)
R^2		.40 *(0.00)
F value		267 *(0.00)
No. of observation		405

Figures in the parentheses are p values

* Significant at 1% ($p < 0.01$)

Based on the above result we fitted the following regression equation

$$\hat{Y}_j = 33.78 + 9.49 X_1$$

Where, X_1 stand for total number of marketing network used by the weaver

The above table 4.32 presents the results from regressions of total number of marketing network used by the weaver to produce per unit of product on profit per unit of product.

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

Thus regression results show that, the independent variable has significant positive impact on the dependent variable profit per unit of product. It is further observed from the table that the value of R square is (0.40) implying that the variable Total number of marketing network used by the weaver explain (40%) variation in profit per unit of product. Moreover, the above estimated regression equation is also good fit as the value of F is (267) and statistically significant with p value < 0.01. Thus we accept our forth alternative hypothesis.