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Handloom Weaver's Co-Operative Societies in Chittoor District: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Co-operative form of organization is considered most suitable for the age old traditional and biggest industry in India. According to the census of 2011 it is estimated that 833 million people are currently lives in rural India. At present 150000 weavers co-operative societies and 35 million weavers across the country are benefited. Andhra Pradesh has traditionally been one of the major handloom weaving regions of India. This activity provides full time employment to 367 lakh persons and part-time employment to nearly 85000 persons. Every village in Andhra Pradesh is a weaving centre and various types of sarees, dhotis and khadi are manufactured. In the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, there are 39 weavers co-operative societies, provide an employment opportunity to nearly 2500 members.

KEYWORDS : Weavers Co-operatives – Growth & Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Industrial Cooperative form of organization is considered most suitable for the age old traditional and biggest cottage, village industry in India is the handloom cooperative industry. About 35 million people directly and many more million people indirectly are depending upon this industry to take out their livelihood.

Unfortunately, most of the weaver societies failed in achieving the desired results and most of them are either dormant or defunct. The crisis in the industry become alarming and it has reached to such a stage that some weavers committed suicide due to the poverty.

The question now arises whether the cooperative form of organization can play any role in the development of socio-economic conditions of weavers since there is no meaning of measuring the development of handloom industry without considering socio-economic conditions of weavers. Keeping this is in view an attempt is made to know the industrial cooperatives in Chittoor district.

Cooperative movement in the globe has already stepped into the hundred and sixtieth year of its existence. In our country it has a history of a century now since the enactment of the Cooperative Credit Societies Act 1904 which was published in the Gazette of India on the 26th March, 1904.

Cotton textile production, providing employment to about 35 million weaver's families. It fulfills 64% of domestic demands. So the per capita consumption of cloth from 30.55 sq. meters in 2000 to 41.85 sq. meters in 2013. It is heartening that over 60 percent of the garments exported are made from handloom cloth.

However, the other side of the sector shows that many weavers are still not improved, since weavers are unable to free himself from his burden with master craftsman-cum-employer, due to socio-economic factors. Even though weavers cooperatives have been established as early as 1907 to counter the exploitation of the weavers by the master-weavers, the movement has not made much advanced, which is borne by the fact that only 30 percent of the handlooms are covered by cooperatives and the rest work for private interest.

There are two aspects in such situation. One, the growth of the weaver's cooperative societies may be slow and there by the movement could not have much impact on the weaver population; second that the societies may not be fully utilized by the members.

Special attention had been given after Independence. One of the major efforts was directed towards the cooperativisation of handloom weavers. Subsequently, with a view to study the conditions of weavers, the Government of India and the State Governments have constituted various committees and study groups to strengthen the weaver's cooperative movement.

Origin of Industrial Co-operatives in India

Initially, the British India Government conceived this concept of co-operation in the agricultural credit sector. To give effect to this concept, it passed the Co-operative Credit Societies Act in the year 1904.[1] As a result; the Co-operative Movement in India began to evolve a scheme of Co-operative Community Organization which touched upon all aspects of life.[2]

The British Indian Government started providing financial assistance to Industrial Co-operation namely the Handloom Weavers Co-operatives, since the year 1923. This has helped boosting up the Co-operative Movement in India[3]. The Royal Commission on Agriculture which visited India in 1928 suggested that a Co-operative Organization should be developed for the weavers. This has given further support to Co-operative Movement in India. A handful of Industrial Co-operatives were organized here and there but unfortunately with the outbreak of the First World War no further steps could be taken to spread the message of Co-operation among the weavers. This crisis has dampened the spirit of Industrial Co-operative Movement in India.[4]

Growth and Development of Weavers' Industrial Co-operatives in five year plans

The real growth of Industrial co-operatives in the state of Andhra Pradesh concerned with the commencement of the plan period in 1951 because the building up of a co-operative sector as a part of the scheme of planned development was accepted as one of the aims of national policy. In accordance with the national policy, the State Government decided to develop the Co-operative sector through Five Year Plans. The State Government established two Regional Weavers' Centres, one at Hyderabad in 1950, another at Vijayawada in 1953 for marketing the finished products of Industrial Co-operatives.[5]

In the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) there were hardly about 850 Industrial Cooperatives in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The State of Andhra Pradesh for the speedy development of Industrial Co-operatives. The emphasis of the First Five Year Plan was on the "programmes which will develop a great deal of local initiating and co-operation and an economic environment in which they have reasonable chance of succeeding.[6]

The growth of Industrial Co-operatives was moderate in the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) also in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The Second Industrial Policy framed in 1956 played a key role in this regard. About the Industrial Co-operatives, the Second Industrial Policy

resolution of 1956 clearly states, "They provided immediate and permanent large-scale employment at relatively small capital cost, meet substantial part of the increased demand for consumer goods and simple producers goods they offer a method of ensuring a more equitable distribution of the national income, they facilitate an effective mobilization of resources of capital and skill which might remain utilized[7].

In the Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) in Co-operative approach has acquired a hottest character. The three separate Co-operative Acts hitherto existing in the State were replaced and a single Act namely the A.P. Co-operative Societies Act, 1964 was formulated. The Andhra Pradesh Co-operative Societies Act, 1964 consisted 134 sections with latest amendments and 70 rules made there under. The number of Industrial Co-operatives in Andhra Pradesh was about 5,100 in number by the end of the Third Five Year Plan.[8]

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) has laid greater emphasis on organization of artisans and craftsmen on co-operative lines, reduction of subside to the minimum, and introduction of technological improvements.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) many innovations were initiated for the growth and development of Industrial Co-operatives in the State of Andhra Pradesh. The Primary focus of attention of the Fifth Five Year Plan were removal of poverty, attainment of self-reliance and providing more employment opportunities to enlarge the income of the poorer classes. The main thirst of the programmes for the development of Industrial Co-operatives was to reach a larger proportion of artisans belonging to mostly to socially backward and vulnerable sections of society and upgrading their techniques of production[9].

The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) established a close linkage of the Industrial Co-operating programmes with Integrated Rural Development (IRD) Programmes. The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990) emphasized the development of Industrial Cooperative for increasing employment opportunities and to ensure full employment to artisans in their present occupations and also prevent their displacement from the existing activity[10].

The Seventh Five Year (1985-1990) plans provided several infrastructural facilities and introduced innovations in manufacturing and marketing to the Industrial Co-operatives in Andhra Pradesh. The State Government implemented a wide range of developmental programmes covering provision of processing facilities, the augmenting of production of raw materials to ensure adequate supply of inputs, the increased coverage of rural artisans by more of more number of Co-operatives, the Strengthening of the capital base of Andhra Pradesh State Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Society (APCO), the achieving of Product Development and diversification in production patterns by modernization of the looms, tools and other equipment of rural artisans and the imparting of training to the rural artisans for acquiring new skills[11].

In the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-1990), the APCO established a Training Center at Hindupur in 1986 with a view to training and exposing the member artisans with modernised skills. Further, the APCO introduced Thrift Fund-Cum-Savings and Security Scheme in 1984-85. This served as a measure of social security and inculcated the habit of thrift among the members of the Co-operatives. The members contributed 6% and the State and Control Governments gave 6%. In 1985-86, the APCO introduced the Work shed - Cum - Housing Scheme for artisan members in Co-operatives, the APCO continued the Janatha Cloth Scheme. Further, rebate claims of primary Industrial Cooperatives and the APCO are being settee quicks with appropriate monies being made available in the Annual Budgets. The Co-operative Spinning Mills of the A.P. State Federation of Co-operative Spinning Mills have, set up new mills at Satyavedu, Narasannapet, Warangal, Uravakonda, Godwal, Jadeherla, Siddipeta Panchur, Nandyal, Chilakaluripeta and Sincilla[12]. All, these schemes, programmes, improvements, and financial facilities have helped rapid growth of Industrial Co-operatives in Andhra Pradesh. Thus by the end of the Seventh Plan there were around 1200 Industrial Cooperatives in the State of Andhra Pradesh. In the Eighth and Ninth Plans, the facilities, schemes and programmes provided in the Seventh Plan Continued. The number of Cooperatives rose from 1100 to 1200 in the year 2000[13].

In the eighth and Ninth Plan new Co-operatives had come into being. Now the total number of Co-operatives comes to about 1200. The various state level Cooperative bodies are making efforts to run the Primary Industrial Co-operatives on sound lines. The APCO is trying take to take its annual sales turnover to much higher heights in the coming years by taking advantage of various Government Schemes in vogue for sales promotion and also by ensuring further design invention in cloth production, by simplifying the existing systems and procedures through computerization by improving efficiency of staff and officers through training and by improving the overall performance in a big way in the years to come.

The Tenth Five year plan (2002-2007) established a new scheme linkage of industrial cooperative programmes, provided several infrastructural facilities and introduced innovations in marketing to the industrial cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh. Indian hand craft sector one of the largest employment generating sectors in rural and semi urban in India. Instead of registering any noticeable growth country's export has come down form Rs.17288 crore in 2006-07 to the expected export of Rs.10533 crores for the year 2010-11

During the Eleventh plan (2007-2012) the Government of India has implemented several generic schemes in the central sector for holistic growth and development of handicrafts sector in the company.

- Baba Saheb Ambedkar hast shilp Vikas Yojana
- Social interventions.
- Technological interventions
- Marketing interventions
- Financial interventions.
- Cluster specific infrastructure related interventions.
- Design and Technical up gradation.
- Skill up-gradation
- Assistance for design and technology up-gradation.
- Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana – The first ever health insurance initiative for the artisans in the country, covering artisan, spouse and two children.[14]

Growth and Development of Weavers' Industrial Co-operatives in Chittoor District

Chittoor District also contains 4 types of Handloom Weaving: Polyster, Sarees, Janatha Cloth and Livery. There are 125 Co-operatives representing these 4 types of Handloom Weaving.

Cooperative Movement in Chittoor District

Cooperative form of organization has been widely accepted as promoting economic and social democracy. There was s systematic growth and development and cooperative societies and development of cooperative societies in the district.

Assistant Director of Handloom and Textiles, Chittoor District

The Assistant Director of Handlooms and Textiles at the district is responsible for the Administrative of all the weavers' societies, implementation of Textile Control orders, plans and schemes, distribution of yarn etc., in the district. The organization set-up of Assistant Director of Handloom and Textiles is given in Set up of the Assistant Director of Handloom and textile.

Handloom Sector in Chittoor District

Weaving is the art of making cloth and textile and a textile is a women fabric. A truly amazing range of textiles in Southern India are found in Andhra Pradesh. Every village in A.P. is a weaving centre and various types of sarees, dhotis and Khadi are manufactured. Its basically an agricultural district which is rich in artisanal wealth also. Many times honoured crafts have flourished and are famous even today in the district. Dyeing and printing as an allied activity to weaving is familiar in some parts of the district. Among 66 mandals in the district Nagirimandal is famous for power looms weaving, and Narayanavanam, Varadayyapalem, Sri Kalahasthi, Sathyavedu and Puttur are famous for handloom weaving. The silk and wool weaving is famous in Chittoor urban, Palamaner, Madanapalle and Kuppammandals. Handlooms and powerlooms in the district generally at present are producing solid bordered sarees, dhothies, lungies, tow-

els, bedsheets, shirting and angavasthrams as chief products.

At present, there are 8595 handloom and 21,619 powerlooms are operating in the district. The weavers in the district have been committing suicide due to lack of employment financial problems and burdened with debts. The loan waiver scheme for weavers did not materialized even-today. The Government is making all efforts to reach out to the beleaguered handloom sector and help the weavers to tide over the crisis.

Prof. G. Savaraiah and Prof. M. Devanajulu, Handloom Sector in Chittoor District.

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