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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

OBJECTIVES

HYPOTHESES

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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

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HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN RELATION TO ITS PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION: A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY IN TWO DISTRICTS OF WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Most of the traditional industries in developing countries like India are suffering from stagnation or decline and they survive even with the onslaught in the era of globalisation. This paper discusses on the economics of handloom industry in relation to its production organization. Production organization plays a vital role not only in economic activity but also in distribution of benefits of economic activity among the participants. Productivity of workers and earnings share vary substantially across different production organizations, namely independent (ind.), tied (under mahajan) and cooperative (copt.), and potentiality of growth also varies across the production organizations. The present note seeks to analyse the above- noted issues with reference to handloom industry of Purba Medinipur and Bankura districts of West Bengal. Our study reveals that production organization in handloom industry tied to mahajans is proliferating in the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization of the economy while independent and cooperative organizations rather stagnate or even suffer decline. Rural artisans mostly belonging to the weaker section of the society are hardly capable of coming out of the clutches of mahajans who exploit them using their merchant capital. Productivity, earnings and potential of growth of the rural artisans thus remain at low level not substantially contributing to rural development of the districts.

KEYWORDS

handloom industry, production organization, productivity, traditional industry.

INTRODUCTION

Most of the traditional industries in developing countries like India are suffering from stagnation or decline and they survive even with the onslaught in the era of globalization¹⁰. Handloom textiles constitute a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of India. The handloom sector occupies a place second only to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people. Handloom weaving in India is still largely a household enterprise, as well as being predominantly a rural activity, providing employment to the large number of people next only to agriculture. The sector about 23.77 lakh handlooms provides employment to 43.31 lakh persons in India. Out of which, 10% are scheduled castes, 18% scheduled tribes, 45% OBC and 27% are from other Castes (Annual Report 2009-10, Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India). The importance of the industry in our country can be gauged from the fact that it meets 24 percent of total cloth requirements of the masses in 1980-81 and it meets about 15 percent in 2009-10. Apparently it seems it decreased by 9 percent but actual production went up from 3109 to 6769 million sq. meters, i.e., increase in total production by about 118 percent. During last six years from 2003-04 to 2009-10 it increases about 23.23 percent, from 5493 million sq. meters.¹²

Indian weavers are not only producing enough cloth to meet internal demand, but also exporting numerous artistic varieties to the highly industrialized countries of the world (Anjaneyula², 1990). Handloom products have a good demand outside India for their unique colour combinations and attractive designs. Industries of this type are necessary for the expansion of international trade and commerce, for securing favourable balance of payments and strengthening the socio-economic tie with other countries. The importance of handloom sector in the national economy cannot be overemphasized on account of having the advantage of flexibility of small production run, uniqueness, innovation and adaptability to the exports requirement. Export of handloom has been identified as "Thrust area" for the overall development of the sector⁴.

Handloom production in West Bengal increased significantly both before and after economic reforms but employment therein remains stagnant (Tables 1, 2 and 3).

TABLE 1: YEAR WISE PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT IN HANDLOOM INDUSTRY OF WEST BENGAL, 1980-81 TO 1992-93

Equation	R ²	Adj. R ²	DW	F	CAGR(%)	Sig.(%)
InPro (WB) = 5.674 + 3.589 E-02t (224.190) (11.225)*	0.920	0.913	1.165	126.668	3.65	1
In employ = 6.574 - 3.52E-03t (115.199) (-.490)	0.021	-0.068	1.444	.240	-0.35	0

Source: Directorate of Handlooms, Govt. of West Bengal

TABLE 2: YEAR WISE PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT IN HANDLOOM INDUSTRY OF WEST BENGAL, 1993-94 TO 2004-2005

Equation	R ²	Adj. R ²	DW	F	CAGR(%)	Sig.(%)
InPro (WB) = 5.686 + .107t (41.714) (5.778)*	.770	.746	1.087	33.387	11.29	1
In employ = 6.493 + 7.660E-04t (544.124) (.472)	.022	-.076	1.304	.223	.08	0

Source: Directorate of Handlooms, Govt. of West Bengal

TABLE 3: OVERALL YEAR WISE PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT IN HANDLOOM INDUSTRY OF WEST BENGAL, 1980-81 TO 2004-05

Equation	R ²	Adj. R ²	DW	F	CAGR(%)	Sig.(%)
InPro (WB) = 5.539 + 4.595E-02t (43.695) (5.737)*	.622	.603	.483	32.916	4.70	1
In employ = 6.562 - 3.11E-03t (215.69) (-1.616)	.116	.071	1.373	2.612	-.31	0

Source: Directorate of Handlooms, Govt. of West Bengal

Note: Pro(WB) indicates handloom production in West Bengal and employ indicates employment in handloom industry in West Bengal

REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

Textile enquiry committee⁵ (1954) pointed out exploitation of handloom weaver by the middlemen and recommended for the abolition of those middlemen and also suggested necessary remedial measures to over come the difficulties of the industry. The National Council of Applied Economic Research⁹ (1958) made a

survey on handloom industry in four district of Karnataka. The study mostly has confined to the organization, production and marketing activities of the household units. In 1959 the National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi, conducted an investigation namely, Survey of the Handloom Industry in Karnataka and Sholapur". It elucidated the organizational structure and the size of cooperative and non-cooperative handloom sectors. It pointed out the need for giving encouragement to the handloom industry in those areas. Krishnamurthy⁷ (1970) pointed out that decentralized handloom weaving was beset with the crucial problem of funding adequate finance. Narasaiah⁸, (2004) pointed in his study that the fruits of the industry and actually grabbed by the usurious money lenders and extortionate middle-men and weavers are not conscious about their profession and are averse to their current activity. However, they are continuing in the profession, not because they like it but because they have no other way out. Syamasundari, Niranjana¹¹ (2006) made a case study. The study highlights different marketing experience and innovative strategies adopted by selected handloom marketing agencies. While the cases document the trajectories of particular players, the objective was not to evaluate their "success" or "failure", but to locate and analyse the implications of these marketing practices. Annapurna³ (2006), expresses his views in his paper that 'Despite many anticipation of its decline, the resilience of the handloom market in India demonstrates an inherent quality of the product as well as many intangible associations it carries for its customers. This article deals with different strategies used by the firms to face various challenges. It also presents a different perspective in which the artisan mode of production successfully negotiates and challenges markets and dominant mass production paradigm.'

Against this backdrop this paper discusses on the economics of handloom industry in relation to its production organization.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study sets the following objectives for itself:

- To examine the socio-economic status of the sample handloom weavers working under different production organizations in handloom industry.
- To examine the economics of handloom units under different production organizations of the industry, namely independent, tied to mahajan and cooperative.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses have been formulated to be tested in the study:

- Tied organization is proliferating in the handloom industry.
- Earning of independent units is higher than that of cooperative and tied units.

DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

Since secondary data available at present are not adequate to serve our purpose, we resort to primary data. Multi-stage stratified random sampling will be used to collect primary data on characteristic of the artisans' households, and production organization of handloom industries, economics of the industries. Stages here comprise District, Block, Village and Artisan Households while strata include relatively developed and relatively backward districts. One district each from among the relatively developed (Purba Medinipur) and the relatively backward (Bankura) districts will be selected purposively. Two blocks from each sample district and two villages from each sample block and sixteen (16) artisan households from each sample village will be randomly selected. Thus our sample comprises 2(two) districts, 4(four) blocks, 8(eight) villages and 128 households for our in-depth study on Handloom Industry. Simple statistical techniques like, mean, dispersion, correlation and regression will be used to analyze the data.

PLAN OF THE DISCUSSION

Section I: Types and status of handloom organizations

Section II: Socio-economic status of the sample handloom weavers

Section III: Economics of handloom units under different production organizations.

SECTION I: TYPES AND STATUS OF ORGANIZATIONS

In our study three types of production organization are found in handloom production, namely independent, weavers working under cooperative societies and weavers working under mahajan (tied to mahajan). It is revealed that, 28 (22%) handloom units out of total 128 sample household units working independently, 32 (25%) handloom units working under cooperative societies and 68 (53%) handloom units working under mahajan (who supply required quantity of raw materials and paid *bani* or wages on piece rate system to the weavers after receiving the output). In Bankura district 15(23%) handloom units out of total 64 sample household units working independently, 18(28%) handloom units working under cooperative societies and 31(49%) handloom units working under mahajan. Where as in Purba Medinipur district 13(20%) handloom units out of total 64 sample household units working independently, 14(22%) handloom units working under cooperative societies and 37(58%) handloom units working under mahajan. From this, it can be said that 53% weavers working under mahajany system and merchant capitals of mahajan etc., controlled over the handloom industry in the era of globalization (Table 4). So tied organization is proliferating in the handloom industry

TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS BY TYPES OF PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION

Districts	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to mahajan	Total
Bankura	15(23.44)	18(28.13)	31(48.44)	64(100.00)
Purba Medinipur	13(20.31)	14(21.88)	37(57.81)	64(100.00)
Total	28(21.88)	32(25.00)	68(53.13)	128 (100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total.

SECTION II: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE OF THE SAMPLE HANDLOOM WEAVERS

EDUCATION

From the view point of educational qualification out of all the persons involved in handloom activity in the sample districts 4 percent are illiterate, 41 percent have primary education, 49 percent have secondary education and only 6 percent have above secondary education. In Bankura district 3 percent artisans are illiterate, 55 percent have primary education, 41 percent have secondary education and only 1 percent have above secondary education where as, in Purba Medinipur district 4 percent are illiterate, 29 percent have primary education, 57 percent have secondary education and 10 percent have above secondary education. So it can be said that most of the artisans involved in handloom activity are semi literate (Table 5).

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF WORKERS (INCLUDING ASSISTANT ARTISANS) BY EDUCATION

Districts	Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	Above Secondary	Total
Bankura	5(3.27)	83(54.25)	63(41.18)	2(1.31)	153(100.00)
Purba Medinipur	6(3.66)	48(29.27)	93(56.71)	17(10.37)	164(100.00)
Total	11(3.47)	131(41.32)	156(49.21)	19(5.99)	317(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

LAND HOLDINGS

In the district of Bankura about 87 percent independent handloom producing households possess more than one acre of land, 89 percent handloom producing households possess less than one acre of land and 61 percent handloom producing households possess less than 25 decimals of land. Whereas in the district of Purba Medinipur about 77 percent independent handloom producing households possess more than one acre of land, 86 percent handloom producing households possess less than one acre of land and 81 percent handloom producing households possess less than one acre of land. From this observation it may be said that due to the benefit of greater land holdings the independent weavers get a better scope of capital formulation than weavers of other production organizations (Table 6).

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM PRODUCING HOUSEHOLDS BY LAND HOLDINGS AND PRODUCTION ORGANIZATION

Districts		Below 25 dec.	26dec.to 1 acre	1.1 acre to 2 acre	More than 2 acre	Total
Bankura	Ind	0(0.00)	2(13.33)	9(60.00)	4(26.67)	15(100.00)
	Copt.	6(33.33)	10(55.56)	2(11.11)	0(0.00)	18(100.00)
	Tied	19(61.29)	10(32.26)	2(6.45)	0(0.00)	31(100.00)
	Total	25(39.06)	22(34.38)	13(20.31)	4(6.25)	64(100.00)
Purba Medinipur	Ind	0(0.00)	3(23.08)	8(61.54)	2(15.38)	13(100.00)
	Copt.	3(21.43)	9(64.29)	2(14.29)	0(0.00)	14(100.00)
	Tied	6(16.22)	24(64.86)	5(13.51)	2(5.41)	37(100.00)
	Total	9(14.06)	36(56.25)	15(23.44)	4(6.25)	64(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

SECTION III: ECONOMICS OF HANDLOOM UNITS UNDER DIFFERENT PRODUCTION ORGANIZATIONS**EMPLOYMENT**

Like other cottage industry handloom industry also involves small number of weavers because most of the very tiny units producing handloom goods with family labour. The number of weavers engaged in this industry is classified into three categories – (i) 1 weaver, (ii) 2 weavers and (iii) above 2 weavers. Distribution of handloom units by number of weavers engaged shows that 76 percent of the handloom units are very tiny units belong to the first category employing only 1 (one) weaver, 15 percent tiny units belong to the second category employing only 2 (two) weavers and rest only 9 percent tiny units belong to the third category employing number of weavers above 2. About 80 percent handloom units are very tiny units employing only one weaver in the districts of Bankura. Whereas in Purba medinipur district 72 percent handloom units are very tiny units employing only one weaver (Table 7).

TABLE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS OF INDEPENDENT AND TIED ARTISANS BY NUMBER OF WORKERS

District	Number of units by number of weavers employed			Total number of units
	1	2	Above 2	
Bankura	51(79.69)	8(12.50)	5(7.81)	64(100.00)
Purba Medinipur	46(71.88)	12(18.75)	6(9.38)	64(100.00)
Grand Total	97(75.78)	19(14.84)	12(9.38)	128(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total.

Distribution of number of weavers engaged shows that out of 171 weavers 69 percent weavers are male, 27 percent weavers are female and 4 percent weavers are child. In the district of Bankura 66 percent weavers are male, 31 percent are female and rest 3 percent weavers are child. Where as in the district of Purba Medinipur 70 percent weavers are male, 24 percent female and rest 6 percent child. So percentage of child weavers is higher in Purba Medinipur than Bankura but the reverse situation is found in case of female weaver (Table 8).

TABLE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF WEAVERS BY SEX

Districts	Male	Female	Child	Total
Bankura	55(66.27)	26(31.33)	2(2.41)	83(100.00)
Purba Medinipur	62(70.45)	21(23.86)	5(5.68)	88(100.00)
Total	117(68.42)	47(27.49)	7(4.09)	171(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Distribution of number of assistant artisans engaged shows that out of 146 assistant artisans only 6 percent are male, 73 percent are female and 21 percent are child. In the district of Bankura 6 percent assistant artisans are male, 76 percent are female and rest 18 percent assistant artisans are child. Where as in the district of Purba Medinipur 6 percent assistant artisans are male, 70 percent female and rest 24 percent are child (Table 9). So in general males are involved in weaving activity but females are involved in other assistance activities of handloom industry in the sample districts.

TABLE 9: DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF ASSISTANT ARTISANS BY SEX

Districts	Male	Female	Child	Total
Bankura	4(5.71)	53(75.71)	13(18.57)	70(100.00)
Purba Medinipur	5(6.58)	53(69.74)	18(23.68)	76(100.00)
Total	9(6.16)	106(72.60)	31(21.23)	146(100.00)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

CAPITAL

It is observed that out of 128 weavers household only 22 (17 percent) weavers household has fixed capital more than Rs.8000 and 60 (47 percent) weavers household has less than Rs.7000 invest as their fixed capital and the rest 36 percent weavers household has fixed capital more than Rs 7000 but less than Rs.8000 . Most of the weavers are not able to invest more amount as fixed capital by formulation of capital from their income as their earnings are very low (Table 10).

TABLE 10: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS OF INDEPENDENT AND TIED ARTISANS BY FIXED CAPITAL

Districts	Bankura				Purba Medinipur				Grand Total
Amount of Fixed capital (Rs.)	Ind	Copt.	Tied	Total	Ind	Copt.	Tied	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10=5+9
Upto 6000	7	2	12	21(32.81)	2	6	3	11(17.19)	32(25.00)
6001-7000	3	5	6	14(21.88)	1	5	8	14(21.88)	28(21.88)
7001-8000	2	3	12	17(26.56)	6	3	20	29(45.31)	46(35.94)
8001-9000	3	4	1	8(12.50)	2	0	6	8(12.50)	16(12.50)
9001-10000	0	1	0	1(1.56)	0	0	0	0(0.00)	1(0.78)
Above 10000	0	3	0	3(4.69)	2	0	0	2(3.13)	5(3.91)
Total	15	18	31	64(100)	13	14	37	64(100)	128(100)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent percentages

Fixed capital intensity is measured by the ratio of fixed capital to the number of labourers employed in the manufacturing units.¹ It is observed that capital intensity (Fixed Capital per Labour) of handloom units of Purba Medinipur district is higher than the handloom units in Bankura district in all the cases except cooperatives. In Purba Medinipur district capital intensity for weavers under cooperatives is lower than weavers tied to mahajan and independent weavers because some weavers has no own loom and they working on loom in the workshop of cooperative society, that's why they have no fixed capital investment. In Bankura district for the cooperative units the capital intensity lies in between independent units and units tied to mahajan. Capital intensity in handloom industry is very low like other rural industry⁶. Variability of capital intensity is highest among the cooperative units (CV=17.44) followed by independent units (17.23) and tied units (16.02) in Purba Medinipur district. In Bankura CV is highest in independent units (15.85) followed by tied units (13.34) and cooperative units (12.11) (Table 11).

TABLE 11: CAPITAL INTENSITY (FC/L) OF SAMPLE UNITS ACROSS PRODUCTION ORGANIZATIONS IN DISTRICTS (Rs)

District	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to Mahajan
Bankura	3904(15.85)	3812(12.11)	3733(13.34)
Purba Medinipur	6185(17.23)	2415(17.44)	5756(16.02)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent coefficient of variation (CV)

CAPITAL PRODUCTIVITY

Capital productivity measured in terms of value of output per unit of fixed capital (Vo/Fc) of handloom units of Purba Medinipur district is lower than the units of Bankura district under all organizations. This productivity of independent units is higher than the other two organizations i.e., cooperative and tied units in Bankura district. But in Purba Medinipur district capital productivity is more or less equal in all organizations. It indicates that average amount of fixed capital investments in handloom units of Purba Medinipur district are greater than the units of Bankura district (Table 12).

TABLE 12: VALUE OF OUTPUT OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS PER UNIT OF FIXED CAPITAL (Vo/Fc)

District	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to Mahajan
Bankura	18.54(18.51)	17.22(11.14)	17.88(14.17)
Purba Medinipur	13.16(13.82)	13.06(16.48)	13.02(13.63)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent coefficient of variation (CV)

Capital productivity measured in terms of value added per unit of fixed capital (Va/Fc) of handloom units of Purba Medinipur district is lower than the units of Bankura district under all organizations. This productivity of independent units is higher than the units working under cooperative and units tied to mahajan in Bankura district. Whereas in Purba Medinipur district capital productivity (Va/Fc) is more or less equal in all organizations (Table 13).

TABLE 13: VALUE ADDED OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS PER UNIT OF FIXED CAPITAL (Va/Fc)

District	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to Mahajan
Bankura	11.77(19.65)	10.92(11.01)	11.34 (14.56)
Purba Medinipur	7.91(14.23)	7.85(17.19)	7.83(14.26)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent coefficient of variation (CV)

LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Labour productivity measured by way of value of output per man-day (Vo/md) of sample handloom units for Bankura district is lower than Purba Medinipur district under all the three organizations namely independent, tied to mahajan and cooperative. It is observed that this productivity for independent weavers is greater than cooperative weavers and weavers tied to mahajan in both the districts (Table 14). The causes behind low productivity are the weavers followed traditional methods of production and design due to lack of exposure, awareness and knowledge over changing technologies, methods and the requirements. Weavers must be oriented towards the betterment of their skills, knowledge and technology in order to ensure quality. Variability of labour productivity is highest among the independent units (CV=6.29) of Bankura followed by cooperative units (6.14) of Purba Medinipur district.

TABLE 14: VALUE OF OUTPUT OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS PER UNIT OF MANDAYS (VO/MD) ACROSS PRODUCTION ORGANIZATIONS IN DISTRICTS

District	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to Mahajan
Bankura	367 (6.29)	334(3.86)	319(3.34)
Purba Medinipur	379(3.96)	349(6.14)	329(4.16)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent coefficient of variation (CV)

Labour productivity measured by way of value added per man-day (Va/md) of Purba Medinipur district is greater than Bankura district in all cases. It is also observed that this productivity is highest for independent weavers (Rs 237) followed by cooperative weavers (Rs. 218) and weavers tied to mahajan (Rs. 204) in Purba Medinipur district. Same observations are found in the district of Bankura (Table 15).

TABLE 15: VALUE ADDED OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS PER UNIT OF MANDAYS (VA/MD) ACROSS PRODUCTION ORGANIZATIONS IN DISTRICTS

District	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to Mahajan
Bankura	231(8.71)	209(6.02)	201(5.46)
Purba Medinipur	237(8.35)	218(7.31)	204(3.43)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent coefficient of variation (CV)

EARNINGS

Monthly earnings from handloom are highest (Rs. 4560) in independent weavers followed by cooperative (Rs3030) and tied units (Rs. 2640) of Purba Medinipur district. Similarly in Bankura district earnings of independent weavers (Rs. 4290) are higher than the earnings of weavers working under cooperative organizations (Rs 2760) and weavers tied to mahajan (Rs 2550). Monthly earnings are very low in sample handloom units (Table 16). So earning of independent units is higher than that of cooperative and tied units in both the districts.

TABLE 16: EARNINGS (Rs.) OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM WEAVER PER MONTH

District	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to Mahajan
Bankura	4290(18.38)	2760(15.13)	2550(13.69)
Purba Medinipur	4560(14.98)	3030(21.94)	2640(19.69)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent coefficient of variation (CV)

Distribution of sample handloom units by earnings per month highlights that about 72 percent weavers of total (64) weavers in the district of Bankura earn only Rs. 3000 or below per month. Whereas in the district of Purba Medinipur about 77 percent weavers earn only Rs. 3000 or below per month. In Bankura district about 87 percent independent weavers earn more than Rs 3000 per month and about 89 percent cooperative weavers & 90 percent tied weavers earn only Rs 3000 or below. Whereas in Purba Medinipur about 92 percent independent weavers earn more than Rs 3000 per month and about 93 percent cooperative weavers & 95 percent tied weavers earn only Rs 3000 or below (Table 17).

TABLE 17: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS OF INDEPENDENT AND TIED ARTISANS BY EARNING PER MONTH PER ARTISAN

Districts	Number of handloom units							
	Bankura				Purba Medinipur			
Amount of profit/earning per month (Rs.)	Ind	Copt.	Tied	Total	Ind	Copt.	Tied	Total
Upto 2000	0	7	17	24(37.50)	0	5	20	25(39.06)
2001- 3000	2	9	11	22(34.38)	1	8	15	24(37.50)
3001 – 4000	5	2	3	10(15.63)	7	1	2	10(15.63)
Above 4000	8	0	0	8(12.50)	5	0	0	5(7.81)
Total	15	18	31	64(100)	13	14	37	64(100)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent percentages

Earnings from handloom activity of independent weavers per day are higher than the earnings of weavers working under cooperative organizations and weavers tied to mahajan in both the districts of Bankura and purba Medinipur. Per day earnings of weavers tied to mahajan are near about Rs.90 only in both the district (Table 18). The causes behind this i) most of the weavers tied mahajan produced low quality / low priced handloom cloth by the use their age-old techniques, tools and equipments as a result their productivity is also low after that ii) merchant capital controls over the production and marketing of handloom cloths that always want to maximize their share by exploit other. That is why their earnings are very low. Daily earning variability is highest among the weavers working under cooperative organization in Purba Medinipur district as Coefficient of variation (CV) is highest (16.62) followed by tied weavers (12.93) in that district.

TABLE 18: EARNINGS OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS PER WEAVER PER DAY (Rs)

District	Independent	Cooperative	Tied to Mahajan
Bankura	143(10.94)	92(9.85)	85(9.68)
Purba Medinipur	152(11.97)	101(16.62)	88(12.93)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent coefficient of variation (CV)

In the district of Bankura 69 percent weavers out of the total sample weavers earn less than Rs. 100 per day, 14 percent weavers earn more than Rs. 100 but less than Rs 120 per day and rest only 17 percent weavers earn more than Rs. 120 per day. About 67 percent independent weavers earn more than Rs 120 per day whereas about 83 percent cooperative weavers and about 73 percent weavers tied to mahajan earn less than Rs 100 per day. In Purba Medinipur district 66 percent weavers earn less than Rs. 100 per day, 17 percent weavers earn more than Rs. 100 but less than Rs 120 per day and the rest 17 percent weavers earn more than Rs. 120 per day. About 77 percent independent weavers earn more than Rs 120 per day whereas about 93 percent cooperative weavers and about 89 percent weavers tied to mahajan earn less than Rs 100 per day. So earnings of cooperative and tied weavers are very low, inspite of that they are involved in this activity because i) they have no better remunerative job through out the year ii) some weavers feel that it is a prestigious job than other job of something more remunerative iii) most of the weavers involved agriculture activity with this activity. So in the agricultural slack season they earn less by use their idle time. As a result they get job throughout the year and they are able to maximize their family income with this handloom activity (Table 19).

TABLE 19: DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE HANDLOOM UNITS OF INDEPENDENT AND TIED ARTISANS BY EARNING PER DAY PER ARTISAN

Districts	Bankura				Purba Medinipur			
	Ind	Copt.	Tied	Total	Ind	Copt.	Tied	Total
Net earnings/ pd (Rs.)								
Upto Rs. 80	1	8	18	27(42.19)	0	4	16	20(31.25)
81 – 100	1	7	9	17(26.56)	1	4	17	22(34.38)
101 – 120	3	3	3	9(14.06)	2	5	4	11(17.19)
121 – 140	5	0	1	6(9.38)	3	1	0	4(6.25)
141 – 160	3	0	0	3(4.69)	5	0	0	5(7.81)
Above 160	2	0	0	2(3.13)	2	0	0	2(3.13)
Total	15	18	31	64(100)	13	14	37	64(100)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

It is observed that about 60 percent of the weaver's household depends on handloom industry for collection of 40 percent-80 percent of their family income in both the sample districts, 28 percent and 24 percent weaver's household depends on above 80 percent of their family income respectively in the district of Bankura and Purba Medinipur. So handloom industry provide livelihood to the rural poor people in both the sample districts (Table 20).

TABLE 20: DISTRIBUTION OF ARTISANS HOUSEHOLDS BY PERCENTAGE OF INCOME FROM HANDLOOM IN THE DISTRICT OF BANKURA & PURBA MEDINIPUR

Percentage of income from handloom	No. of artisan households							
	Bankura				Purba Medinipur			
	Ind.	Copt.	Tied	Total	Ind.	Copt.	Tied	Total
10-20	1(8.33)	1(3.89)	0(0.00)	2(3.13)	1(7.14)	1(7.14)	0(0.00)	2(3.44)
21-40	3(16.67)	3(15.56)	0(0.00)	6(9.38)	3(21.54)	1(7.14)	2(4.59)	6(8.59)
41-60	6(41.67)	4(23.33)	8(24.19)	18(28.13)	6(46.15)	3(21.43)	9(22.97)	18(27.34)
61-80	4(25.00)	6(31.11)	10(32.26)	20(31.25)	3(21.54)	5(35.71)	14(37.84)	22(34.06)
81-100	1(8.33)	4(23.33)	13(40.32)	18(28.13)	0(0.00)	4(28.57)	12(32.16)	16(24.84)
Total	15(100)	18(100)	31(100)	64(100)	13(100)	14(100)	37(100)	64(100)

Source: Field survey, 2010

Note: Parentheses represent percentages

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Production organization plays a vital role not only in economic activity but also in distribution of benefits of economic activity among the participants. Productivity of workers and earnings share vary substantially across different production organizations, namely independent, tied (under mahajan) and cooperative, and potentiality of growth also varies across the production organizations.

Our study reveals that production organization in handloom industry tied to mahajans is proliferating in the era of liberalization, privatization and globalization of the economy while independent and cooperative organizations rather stagnate or even suffer decline. Rural artisans mostly belonging to the weaker section of the society are hardly capable of coming out of the clutches of mahajans who exploit them using their merchant capital. Productivity, earnings and potential of growth of the rural artisans thus remain at low level not substantially contributing to rural development of the districts.

CONCLUSIONS

Independent handloom units register higher profitability and prospects of growth than tied and cooperative units and that's why independent weavers enjoy better social and economical status than other weavers. Institutional measures should be taken for development of their socio-economic status through the development of handloom industry.

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