

**A BASELINE STUDY REPORT IN HANDLOOM SECTOR OF MORIGAON
DISTRICT OF ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BAGHARA
GRAM PANCHAYAT OF BHURBANDHA DEVELOPMENT BLOCK**



FY 2021 - 22

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ABOUT ICCo

ICCo is a development organization working to achieve the twin core principles of “Securing Sustainable Livelihoods” and “Justice and Dignity for All”. ICCo has been pioneering in India for more than a decade towards the goal of development and in doing so, has partnered with more than 100 agencies across India. We, at ICCo, believe that “Innovative” strategic thinking and “Collaborative” effort are the keys to bring a desired change in the society. At ICCo, we envision a just, inclusive and equitable society.

Thereby, working towards a brighter tomorrow, the organization is on a mission of designing and implementing innovative ideas and solutions, strengthening Community-Based Organisations for inclusive and high-impact growth in society. ICCo plays diverse roles as that of a Catalyst, Lobbyist, Networker, Implementer and an Entrepreneurship Booster. This helps in capitalizing on synergies with various stakeholders to amplify the impact of our work. Over the years, the organization has pressed upon three strategic pathways in the pursuit of its goals: Inclusive and Sustainable Agriculture System; Promoting Social Entrepreneurship for Rural Prosperity and Responsible Business Behavior Over the past decade, with its interventions in the areas of Agri-Value Chain, Clean Energy, Food & Nutrition & Social Entrepreneurship, ICCo has ensured accountability, integrity and upliftment of the society at large. Marginalized women are one of our key stakeholders whose capacity we have been building over the years. The organization continues to work extensively with its various stakeholders to empower communities and build a stronger economy which is the key to making Agenda 2030 and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) transformational and inclusive.

Acknowledgement

This report is an outcome of the study conducted by ICCo team in the Bhurbandha Development Block of Morigaon district, Assam under the project "REBUILDING LIVES BY RESTORING FARM AND NON-FARM LIVELIHOODS IN ASSAM AMIDST AND POST COVID-19" implemented by ICCo (2021-2026). The team spent a substantial amount of their time in collecting the data through door-to-door visits with a structured interview schedule and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) at the community level. ICCo acknowledges the hard work and dedication being put forward by the Community Resource Persons (CRPs) for the door-to-door study irrespective of all the challenges faced in the field. ICCo is also grateful to the respondents of the household study and the participants of the PRA exercise.

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ACRONYMS

APL	:	Above Poverty Line
BPL	:	Below Poverty Line
CRP	:	Community Resource Person
GP	:	Gaon Panchayat
PoP	:	Package of Practice
PRA	:	Participatory rural appraisal
PG	:	Producer Group
CFC	:	Common Facility Centre
SFURTI	:	Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries
GOI	:	Government of India
CATD	:	Computer Aided Textile Design
MNC	:	Multinational Corporation

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CHAPTER-1

Introduction

Handloom and Handicraft sector is highly associated with the culture and heritage of the rural communities of India. It is one of the largest economic activities next to agriculture having the capacity of absorbing a greater amount of human resource. Besides, it constitutes an important segment of the decentralized/unorganized sector of the Indian economy. In 2009- 10, this sector provided direct employment to over 65 lakhs persons in India of which 60.40% are women. In the context of the state of Assam, the handloom and handicraft have an overwhelming presence in the socio-economic life of local communities.

The handloom and handicraft activities have been widely practiced in Morigaon district of Assam since time immemorial. But, this traditional skill is not materialised to enter in the potential markets. There are only two handloom co-operatives in the district and these activities are naturally concentrated in a few particular localities or areas in the form of clusters. Also, some of the weavers above the age of 50 years are also skilled in practicing rearing and reeling of eri silk. Very few weavers and artisans are skilled in making dress materials, fashionable ladies products, home furnishing products and others but further training and upscaling is certainly required .

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1.1 Objectives of the study

1.1.1 Objectives of door-to-door study

- ◆ To assess the current loom along with the accessories possessed by the weavers, and their production level.
- ◆ To assess the status of adoption of technical practices and type of equipment used by the weavers.
- ◆ To identify the current market channel and analyse the present income through handloom weaving.
- ◆ To assess the status of access to Govt. schemes and policies.

1.1.2 Objectives of the PRA exercise

- ◆ To understand the potential resources of the study area.
- ◆ To understand the strength of the community and identify future scope of development around the Handloom sector.

1.2 Rationale for the Baseline study (Scope and Purpose)

The women of Assam are highly indulged with practicing handloom weaving, rearing and reeling of silk but rate of production is not up to the level. Proper technical production practices along with awareness is required to increase the production rate. Women empowerment through weaving and sericulture activities will build a strong status as well as strong will power among them to rise equally besides men. Moreover, the employment generation for the educated youths will lead to a secured future.

Targeting the local and national market through PGs, strengthening them along with quality production could uplift the livelihood of every individual artisan and the study wants to explore the potential interventions in the area viz. production, status of weavers, skills, financial status, technology adoption, product category and such others.

There is a high scope of scalability of handloom woven production in the study area. More than 80% women of the area are involved in handloom weaving and it is one of the major sources of income of the families. ICCo wants to bring significant changes around the Handloom sector in the area by intervening for a long period, i.e. not less than 5 years.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to household level status of handloom production and allied activities, but production and income from collective production and other activities have not been taken into consideration. But, through the PRA exercises, certain aspects were attempted to be covered like possible scope of castor plantation, understanding business mind set of the artisans, seasonality of production and household chores of women etc.

1.4 Period of the Study

July 2021 to September 2021

CHAPTER-2

Study Area and Methodology

2.1 Demographic details

Morigaon became a full-fledged district on 29 September 1989, when it was split from Nagaon district earlier to that it was a subdivision of Nagaon district. The district has five revenue circles and covers an area of 10,83,165 Bighas and 13 Lessas (1450.02 Sq.kms). The district is bounded by the mighty Brahmaputra on the North, Karbi Anglong district on the South, Nagaon District on the East and Kamrup district on the West.

The Baghara Handloom cluster is situated at Bhurbandha Development Block in Morigaon district of Assam. It is located at a distance of 60 KM from the state capital Dispur (Guwahati), Assam. The cluster covers a geographical area of 3KM of its radius with four different villages. (<http://morigaon.gov.in/>)

2.2 Methodology

Before the actual study was conducted, the methodology that was followed by the ICCo team was typically described as a rapid study to get an overall idea of the area. Thereafter, the household level study was done through a structured interview schedule by using a mobile app named gKobo collect h for 1 GP viz Baghara G.P of Bhurbandha Development Block which covers 500 marginal handloom artisans. Before the study, a comprehensive questionnaire had been carefully developed and piloted in 20 households. Necessary modification was done based on the pilot study. Transect walk for resource identification and mapping, venn diagram for problem identification and solution, market mapping to understand the existing market channel, seasonal calendar of production planning, a simple .force field analysis. existence and importance of middleman and presence of shared weaving etc were done through PRA.

2.2.1 Identification of Respondents

List of handloom artisan were prepared by the CRPs with the support of Gaon Panchayat representatives, Village head, Women SHG leaders, Progressive weavers, existing co- operative society etc. Accordingly, 500 handloom artisan households were selected irrespective of caste and communities for the study in Baghara GP of Bhurbandha Development block consisting of 4 villages namely No.1 Gunamara, No.2 Gunamara, Tengaguri and Charaihagi.

The table below shows the village wise distribution of weavers where the study was conducted and the proportion of representation from each village.

Village Name	Total no. of weavers	Percentage (%)
No.1 Gunamora	115	22.68
No.2 Gunamora	159	31.36
Tengaguri	128	25.25
Charaihagi	105	20.71
Total	507	100

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Fig 1: Map of targeted Block:

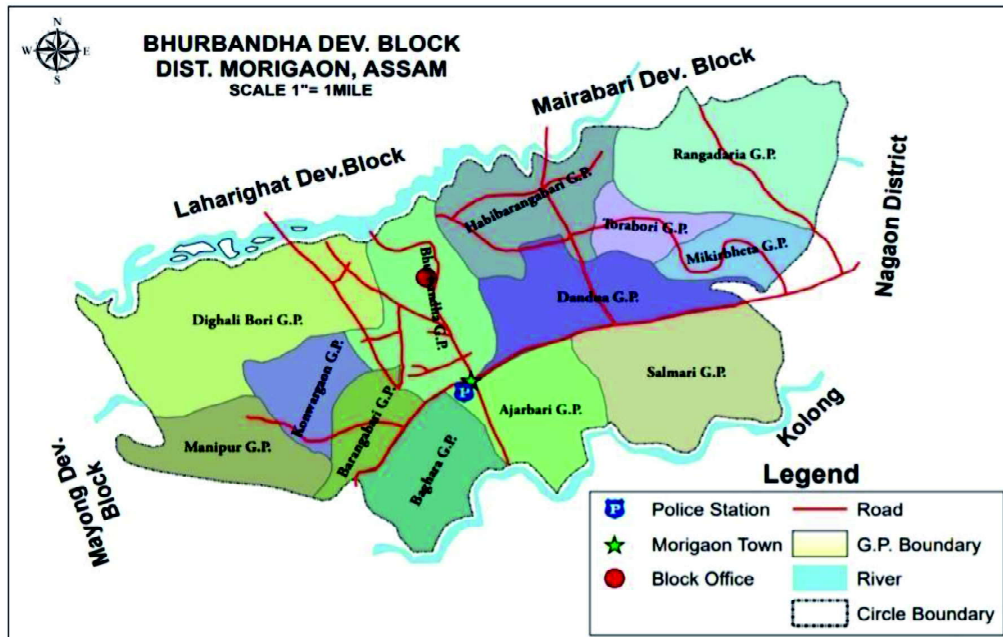


Fig 2: Map of targeted Gram Panchayat:

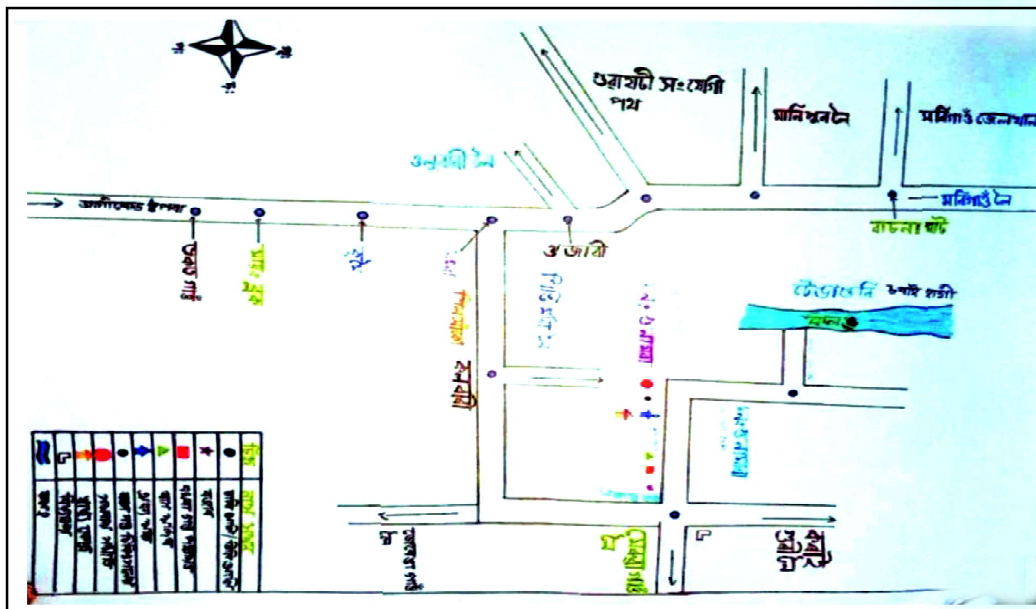
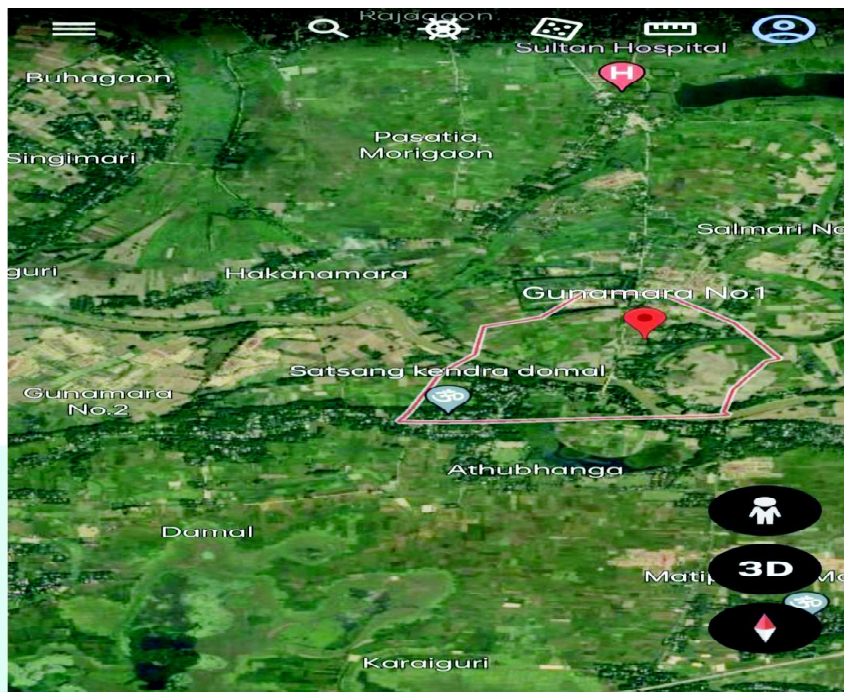
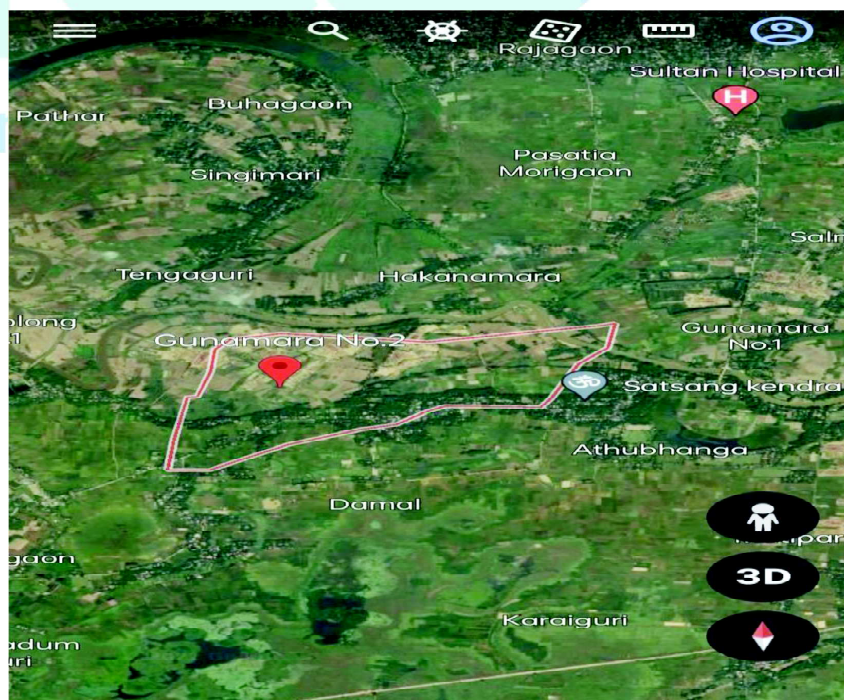


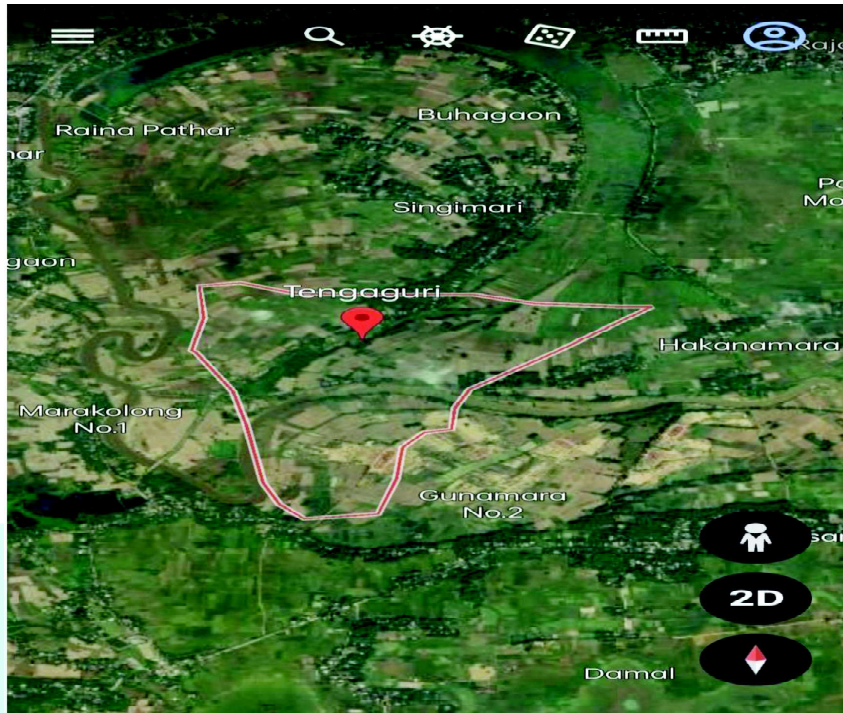
Fig 3: Google map images showing villages covered under the study area-



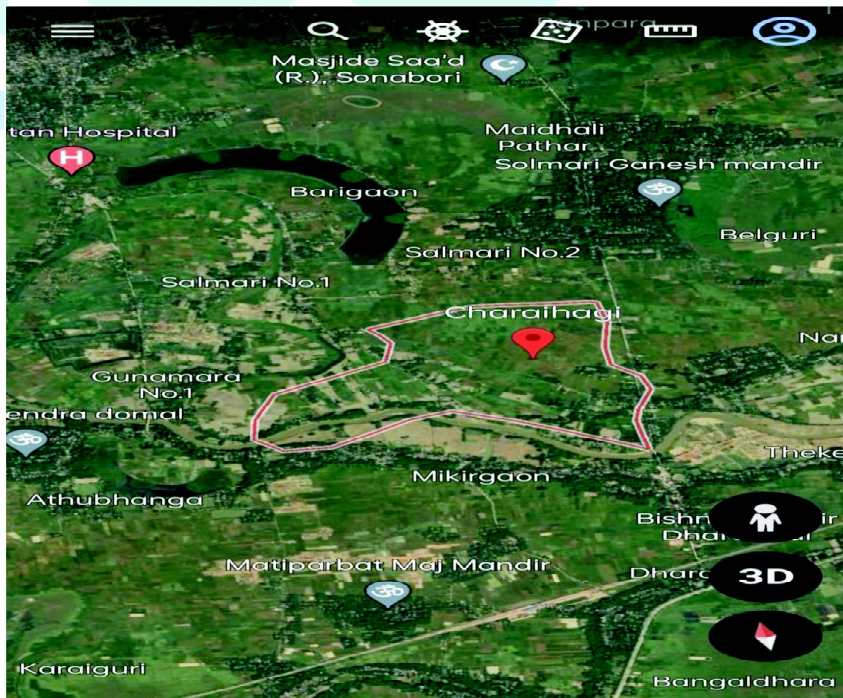
(No. 1 Gunamora)



(No.2 Gunamora)



(Tengaguri)



(Charaihagi)

CHAPTER-3

Results and Findings

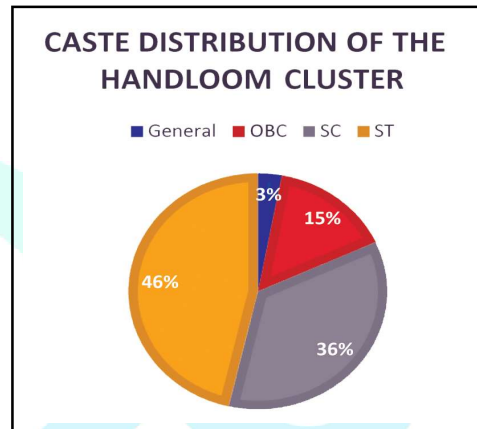
(Demography of the study area)

3.1 Caste Distribution

The study tried to understand the caste distribution of the Handloom artisans.

The findings were as follows:

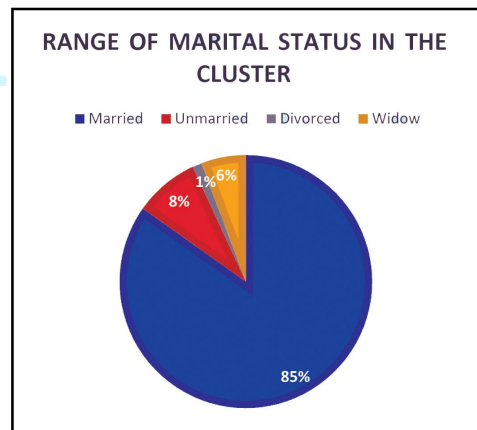
General	=	15 nos.	(3%)
OBC	=	77 nos.	(15%)
SC	=	180 nos.	(36%)
ST	=	235 nos.	(46%)



3.2 Marital Status

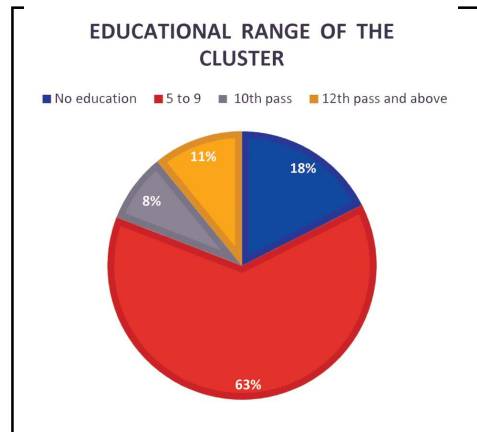
As all the selected respondents were female, and among all the targeted respondents, 85% were found married, whereas 8% were unmarried, 6% were widowed and 1% were divorced. In terms of numbers, the findings were as follows:

Married	=	430 nos.
Unmarried	=	42 nos.
Widow	=	29 nos.
Divorced	=	6 nos.



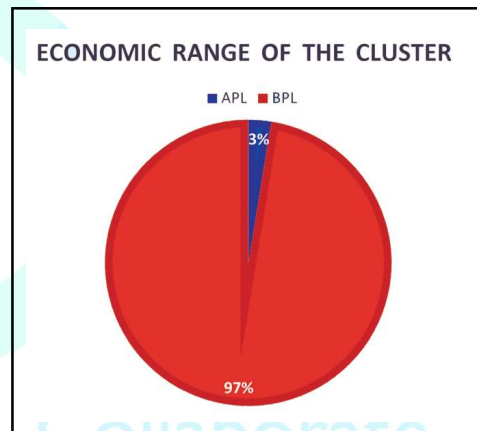
3.3 Educational Ratio

Based on Education qualification, 89 nos. of respondents were illiterate whereas 321 nos. of respondents studied up to class IX, 42 nos. were Xth pass and 55 respondents were XIIth pass and above. It can be indicated by the pie diagram that the literacy rate of the artisans from the target area was 82%.



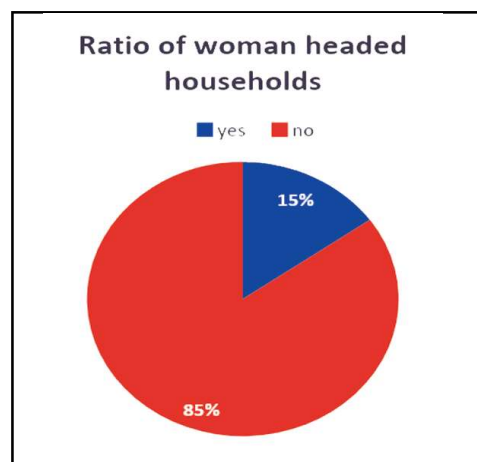
3.4 Economic Category

According to the study 13 nos. Handloom artisans belonged to APL (Above Poverty Line) category and 492 nos. were from the BPL (Below Poverty Line) category. The percentage ratio of the same is 3% and 97% respectively.



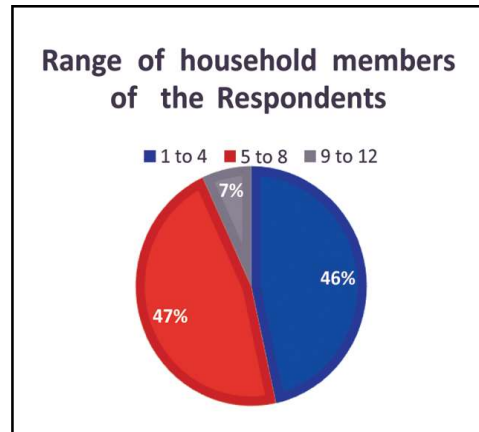
3.5 Women Headed Household

The study found that out of the total 506 households, 77 nos. of households were women headed. The percentage ratio was 15% and 85% respectively of the total households covered under the study.



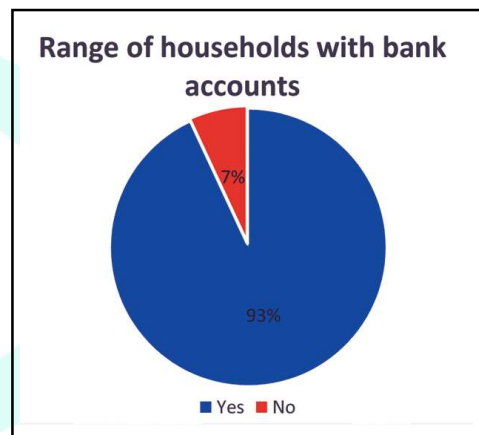
3.6 Number of family members in the Household

According to the study 236 nos. of households had 1-4 family members, 236 nos. of households had 5-8 family members and 35 nos. of households had 9-12 family members.



3.7 Range of households with bank accounts

Among all the targeted respondents, 469 of them had their bank accounts and 35 respondents still did not have their bank accounts. The percentage ratio for the same was 93% and 7% respectively of the total households covered under the study.

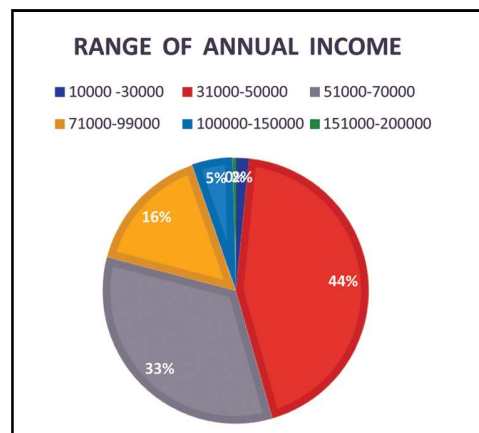


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3.8 Range of Annual Income

The study studied about the annual family income and the findings are as follows :

Family income in Rs.	No.of Households
10000-30000	8
31000-50000	223
51000-70000	170
71000-99000	79
100000-150000	25
151000-200000	2



CHAPTER-4

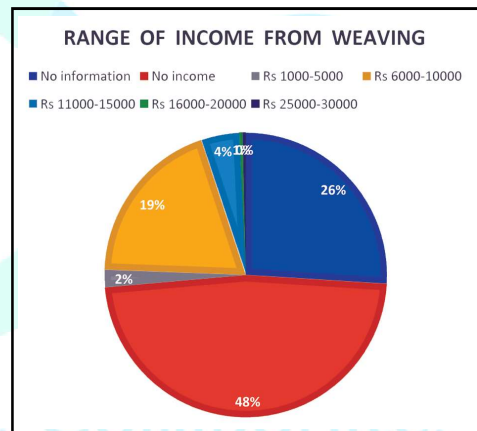
Status of Weavers and Production Details

4.1 Approximate annual income from weaving activities

The primary income source of the artisans of Bhurbandha block of Morigaon district was mainly related to weaving and agriculture activities. The weavers generally carried out their weaving activities in their conventional looms and sold their products at the local market, seldom to middlemen, and mostly for self-use.

The findings on annual income through weaving activities are as follows-

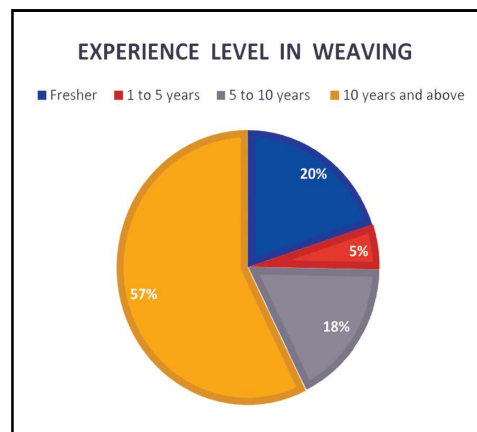
Seasonal income in Rs.	No. of household
No information	132
No income	242
1000-5000	10
6000-10000	98
11000-15000	22
16000-20000	2
25000-30000	2



4.2 Experience in Weaving

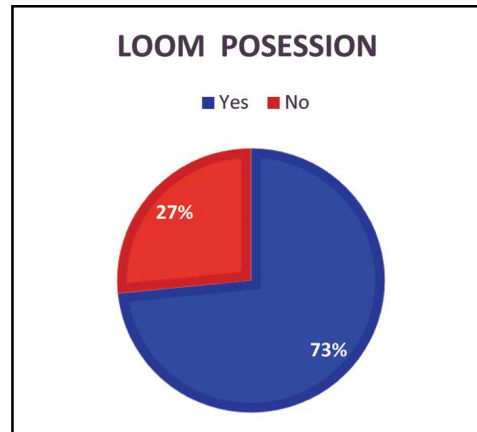
Though all the selected respondent artisans had the basic weaving skills, the study attempted to find out about the years of experience in the sector. The findings were as follows:

Level of Experience	No. of weavers
Fresher	101
1 to 5 years	27
5 to 10 years	88
10 years and above	290



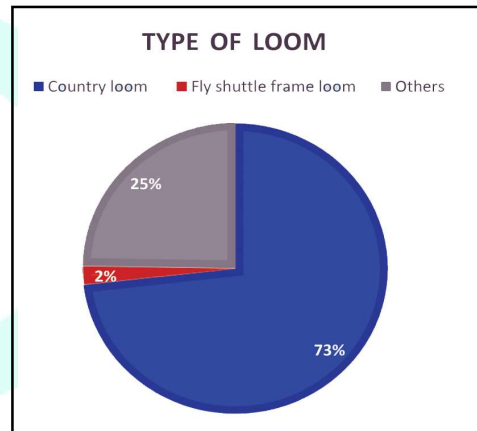
4.3 Loom Possession

Handloom is the basic requirement to carry out the weaving activities, and the study showed that 373 nos. of weavers had their own loom which was 73% of the total selected weavers but 135 which accounts to 27% were identified without loom.



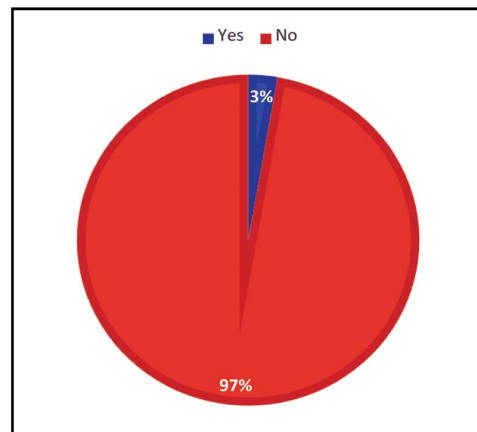
4.4 Type of Loom

The study revealed that most of the weavers had the traditional loom where they used to manage the production by adopting the conventional weaving techniques. In the study area only 8 nos. of fly shuttle frame looms were used by the weavers which was 2% of the total selected respondent weavers under the study. It has clearly indicated that for mass production and quality products, there is a need for an upgraded fly shuttle frame loom for the weavers.



4.5 Weavers working in others loom

The study comes out with data that out of the total selected weavers 14 weavers were working with the looms belonged to their neighbours.



4.6 Type of raw materials used

The study found that maximum weavers used cotton, acrylic and polyester yarns as raw material for weaving. Apart from that eri silk yarn was also used by the weavers.

The table shows the findings of the raw material uses:

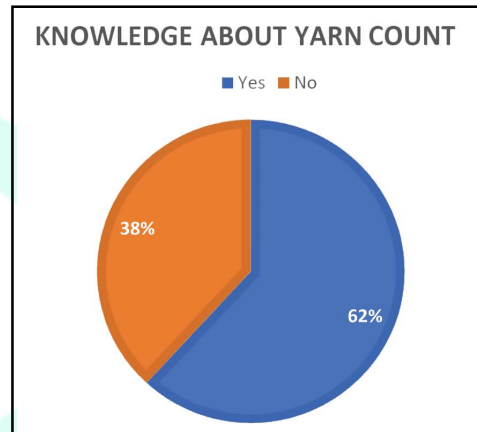
Type of Raw materials used	No. of weavers
Cotton	14
Cotton Acrylic Polyester	65
Cotton Acrylic Polyester Eri Silk	2
Cotton Acrylic Polyester Nylon	1
Cotton Acrylic Polyester Nylon Rayon	18
Cotton Acrylic Polyester Others Rayon	1
Cotton Acrylic Polyester Rayon	1
Cotton Acrylic Polyester Rayon Nylon	2
Cotton Acrylic Rayon Nylon Polyester	1
Cotton Eri Silk Acrylic Polyester	8
Cotton Eri Silk Acrylic Polyester Nylon Rayon	1
Cotton Eri Silk Muga Silk Polyester Mulberry Silk	1
Cotton Eri Silk Polyester	6
Cotton Eri Silk Polyester Acrylic Nylon Rayon	1
Cotton Eri Silk Polyester Wool Others	1
Cotton Eri Silk Wool Polyester	1
Cotton Eri Silk Wool Polyester Others	1
Cotton Others	16
Cotton Others Polyester	9
Cotton Others Wool Polyester	1
Cotton Polyester	209
Cotton Polyester Acrylic	7
Cotton Polyester Eri Silk	4
Cotton Polyester Others	45
Cotton Polyester Others Wool	3
Cotton Polyester Wool	3
Cotton Wool	1
Cotton Wool Polyester	1
Cotton Wool Polyester Others	1
Eri Silk Polyester	1
Others Cotton Polyester	5
Others Polyester Cotton	15
Polyester	3
Polyester Cotton	1

4.7 Annual Yarn Consumption

In terms of yarn consumption only 3 weavers used 20 kg & above of yarn annually out of the total targeted respondents (weavers), and rest of the weavers did not have records on their yearly yarn consumption. Therefore, the study shows that there is a lack of proper record keeping knowledge among the weavers covered under the study.

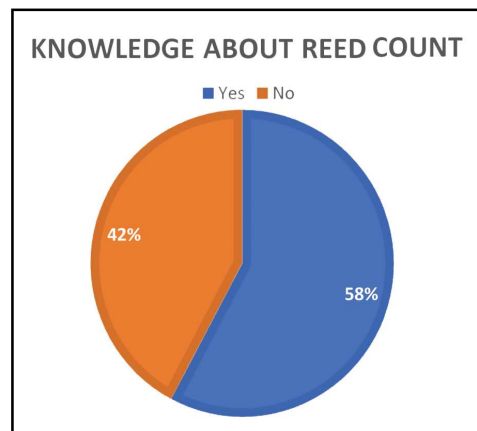
4.8 Knowledge on Yarn Count

For a weaver the knowledge on yarn count is very important to produce a quality product. The study revealed that 313 nos. of respondent (weavers) were aware of it which accounted for 62% of the total targeted weavers. Whereas 193 (38%) nos. of weavers did not have knowledge on yarn count.



4.9 Knowledge on Reed Count

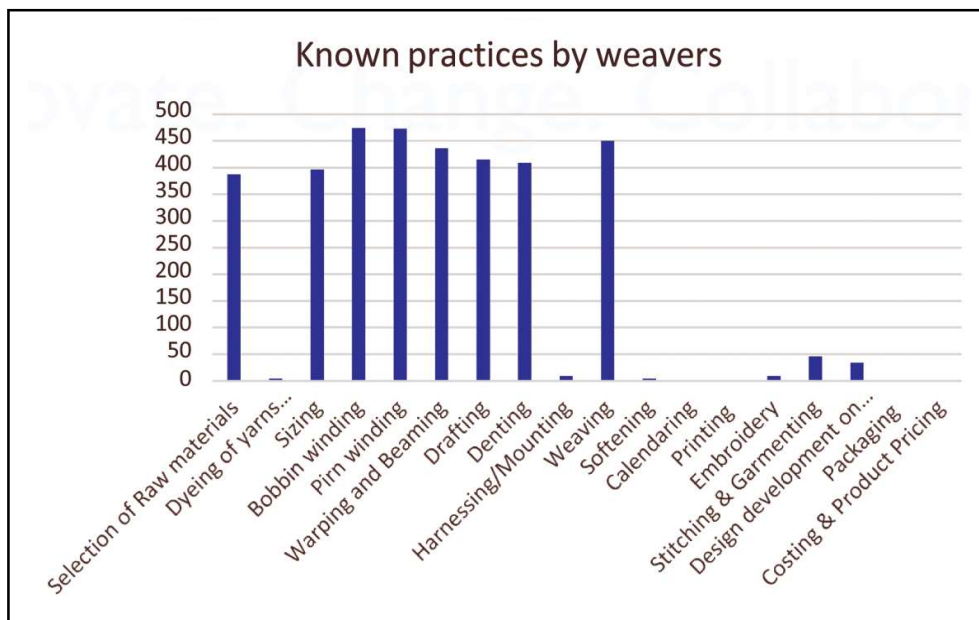
Reed plays a vital role in handloom weaving and the knowledge on reed count helps the weavers to produce a quality product in handloom. The study found that 290 weavers had the knowledge on the reed count and 212 did not.



4.10 Common Practices known by the weaver

To produce a quality product and for its sale a weaver has to know the proper sequence of practices. Following are the findings from the study.

Known practices by weavers	No. of weavers
Selection of Raw materials	387
Dyeing of yarns (Natural/Chemical)	4
Sizing	396
Bobbin winding	474
Pirn winding	473
Warping and Beaming	436
Drafting	415
Denting	409
Harnessing/Mounting	9
Weaving	450
Softening	4
Calendaring	0
Printing	1
Embroidery	9
Stitching & Garmenting	46
Design development on Graph paper	34
Packaging	1
Costing & Product Pricing	1



4.11 Using of warping drum

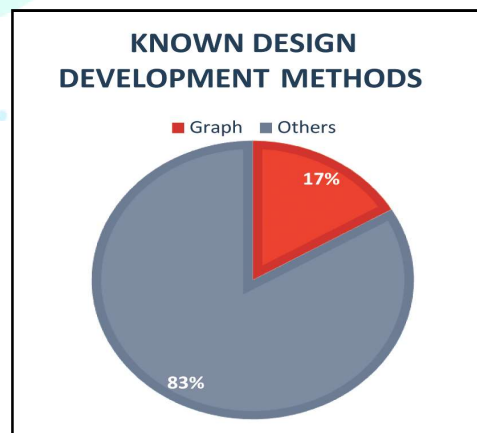
Warping drum is more useful rather than using conventional warping technique viz, street warping but the study showed that nobody was using warping drum for preparation of warp sheet in weaving.

4.12 Sort of designing attachments used by the weavers in weaving

The study came out with the findings that only one weaver was using a jacquard machine, one was using doobby and one was using drawboy arrangement for their designing intervention, and the rest of the other weavers were using conventional techniques of designing in their weaving activities. Using of warping drum

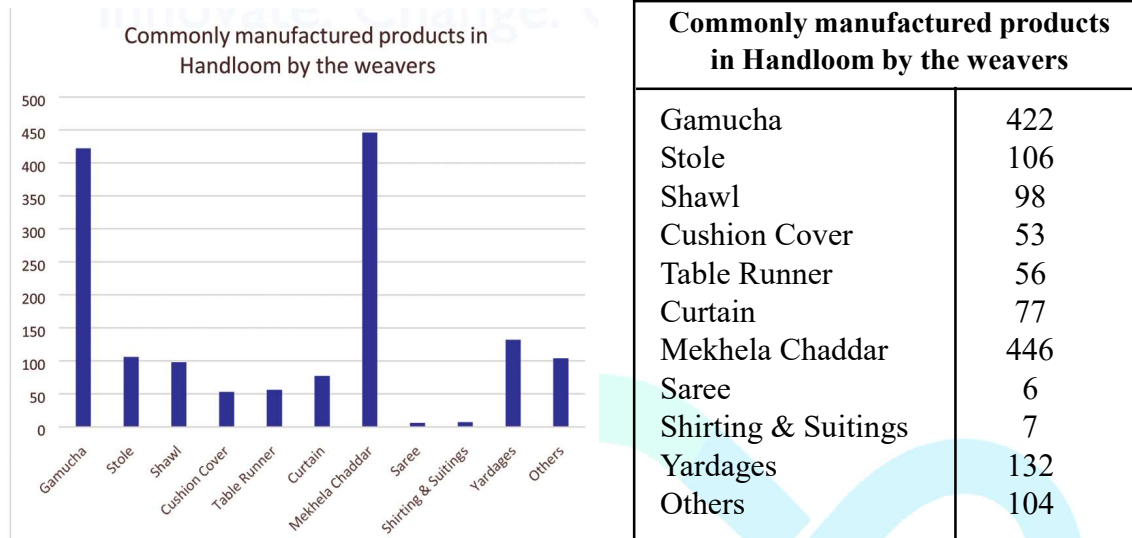
4.13 Design Development method known by the weavers

Design Development method known by the weavers To develop a value-added product, intervention of design/motif is very important and the study found that 84nos. of weavers have used graphs to develop motifs but 424nos. of weavers were still using conventional techniques for developing motifs.



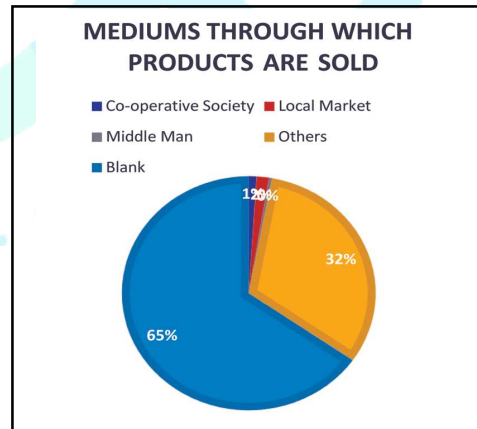
4.14 Commonly manufactured products by the weavers

On the basis of their existing skills, the weavers produce different types of products viz. home furnishing, yardages, dress material and others. The study came out with the following findings which were shown through a bar diagram for better understanding



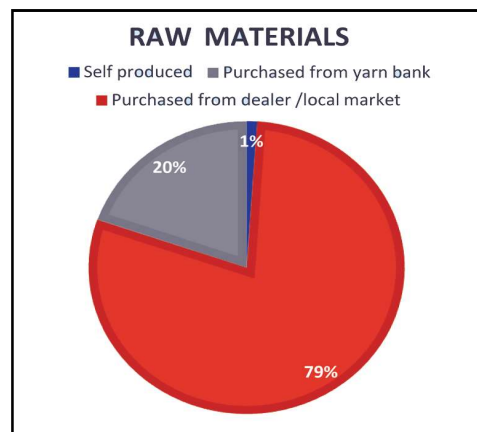
4.15 Medium for selling of Products

It was found from the study that to sell their products, the weavers used different types of medium. 5 weavers sold their products through Co-operative society, 8 weavers used the local market, 2 weavers sold through middle man 162 weavers used other mediums for selling their products and the remaining 333 weavers did not respond to the question.



4.16 Procurement of raw materials

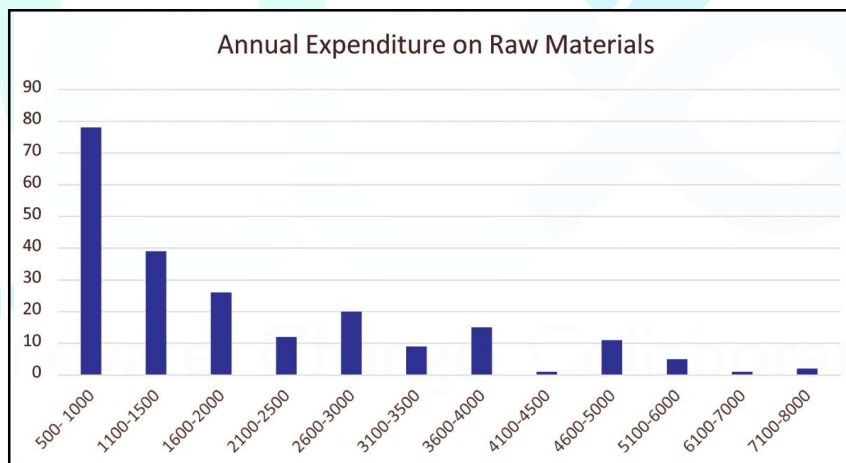
Raw material (Yarn) is the basic requirement to develop products and the study shows that 6 weavers produced the raw material by themselves, 447 weavers procured raw materials from the local market and remaining 111 weavers used yarn banks for procuring raw materials.



4.17 Annual expenditure on procuring raw materials

The findings for annual expenditure on procuring raw materials incurred by the weavers were as follows-

Seasonal Expenditure on Raw Materials	
500- 1000	78
1100-1500	39
1600-2000	26
2100-2500	12
2600-3000	20
3100-3500	9
3600-4000	15
4100-4500	1
4600-5000	11
5100-6000	5
6100-7000	1
7100-8000	2



4.18 Membership Details

The study found that 215 no. of weavers were associated as members with the co-operative society and 122no. of weavers were SHG members.



CHAPTER-5

Findings from the PRA Exercise

Through focused group discussion with the artisans, collective activities and further scopes were assessed.

Tools	Purpose	Observation
Transect walk and resource mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To understand the overall perspective of the availability of existing resources and history of the area. ◆ To understand the status of utilization of available natural and community resources 	<p>All 4 villages were covered under the exercise and it was found that a CFC is located at No.2 Gunamara village measuring about 1200 Sq.ft. Accordingly 2 spoke units are present(measuring 400 sq.ft)one each in Charaihagi and Tengaguri villages. The CFCs are constructed with the objective of providing weavers production related support to enhance their market-oriented mass production.</p> <p>It was also observed that there is a huge scope of sericulture activity of eri silk. Most of the participants had already been practicing in the activities like rearing and hand spinning of eri silk but it needs to be upscaled for commercial prospects because the current production rates were very low.</p>
Market Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To understand the local market and current market scenario 	<p>It was found that the participants used their manufactured products mostly for self-consumption. Few of them sold their products in local weekly haats and also through middle man. Further it was also observed that the participants did not participate in any exhibition, buyer sellers meet to promote their products and there is a need for a proper channel of market linkage for the participants.</p>
Venn Diagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To identify the problems and possible solutions by the community 	<p>The majority of the participants expressed that they were not aware about the selection of raw materials, standard product parameters, unavailability of upgraded looms and machineries, unavailability of quality yarn etc.</p>

Tools	Purpose	Observation
Seasonal calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To get a clear picture on their existing production plan and product line 	<p>It was found that the maximum number of participants did not follow the seasonal calendar of handloom production which resulted in less market-oriented products, less production and this affects their annual income.</p> <p>Generally, they developed products like traditional dress materials, yardage, stole, shawl etc but they did not follow proper production plan for the same.</p>
Existence and importance of middleman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To understand the perspective of the local people on the importance of middleman 	<p>It was found that most of the participants sold their products through middlemen as they did not have the adequate channel for direct market and also, they felt it to be convenient for them.</p> <p>There is a need to reduce the number of middlemen and awareness generation among the weavers. The need is to connect the weavers directly to appropriate markets in order to help them get better returns and stop them from getting exploited.</p>

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Fig: Photographs from PRA Exercise



CHAPTER 6

Constraints or Challenges faced during the Baseline Study

6.1 Following were the constraints faced during the study

- a. Since the study was carried out in the post second wave of Covid-19, the mobility of the interviewers (CRPs) and acceptance of the respondents. household to allow an outsider to conduct the interview caused a great constraint.
- b. Using KOBO tool for collecting data for the study rather than pen and paper method leads to an difficulty for the data collectors (CRPs) in the initial stage of the study as the data collectors were not to much user friendly with an electronic application, but with proper guidance and orientation provided by ICCo team helped them to work with the application and they did the task well.
- c. During the study, it was revealed by the localities that most of the time people visited their villages took a study, gathering data.s by promising to upgrade their livelihood, providing working sheds, upgraded looms and accessories etc. But they were not provided later due to which they were not willing to share their details.

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CHAPTER-7

Recommendations

The Handloom Textiles constitute a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of Assam. As an economic activity, the handloom sector occupies the place next to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people. The element of art and craft present in Indian handlooms makes it a potential sector for the upper segments of the market, both domestic as well as global. However, the sector is beset with manifold problems such as obsolete technologies, unorganized production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing link, overall stagnation of production and sales and, above all, the competition from the power loom sector but besides all handloom forms a precious part of the generational legacy and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the artistry of the weavers. Tradition of weaving by hand is a part of the country's cultural ethos. Handloom is unparalleled in its flexibility and versatility, permitting experimentation and encouraging innovation. Innovative weavers with their skilful blending of myths, faiths, symbols and imagery provide the fabric with an appealing dynamism. The strength of Handloom lies in introducing innovative design, which cannot be replicated by the Power loom Sector.

To sustain the handloom activities and to minimize the weavers' exploitation the study tried to understand the underlying reasons for the same and came up with certain recommendations.

Ensure availability of quality yarn: Handloom sector is largely dependent on the organized mill sector for supply of its principal raw-material, which is yarn. This sector uses the bulk of its yarn in the form of hanks, but it is often observed that weavers do not get the proper quality and variety of yarn in their locality. Apart from that the strength and fastness is also low in locally available yarn and the input cost is high. Also, the government subsidized yarn is usually not available in quality shades and counts. All of these factors stress upon the need for a Yarn bank in the study area so that the weavers can get the quality yarn at their doorstep.

Lack of technology upgradation: It was found from the study that most of the weavers used traditional looms in the cluster. Although from a government of India funded SFURTI project 150 nos. of fly shuttle frame looms were distributed among the participants, still there is a need of technology upgradation to improve quality of fabric and productivity. Pneumatic jacquard system and above 120 hook capacity jacquard machine in existing loom, frame loom above 60 h, take-up and let off motions on the existing

handlooms, multiple box motion, multiple Buti weaving sley, twin cloth weaving mechanism, setting up of a garment construction assembly, finishing and effluent treatment plant etc. are recommended for the same.

Skill upgradation training: There is a need for proper skill upgradation training among the weavers. Most of them are using conventional techniques for their weaving activity which affects productivity and quality, therefore there is a need for decentralised skill upgradation training in various important techniques like dyeing, designing, weaving, spinning, rearing, grainage etc.

Infrastructural Support: It was observed from the PRA that most of the weavers do not have the proper infrastructure viz. individual work shed, lighting arrangement, storage etc. Which affects their productivity. During the rainy session it affects more in their day-to-day weaving activities. Most of the weavers belonged to the BPL category, thus it became difficult for them to manage infrastructural set ups by themselves. In this regard, individual infrastructural support is recommended.

Welfare Measures: In order to help weavers to meet their socio-economic obligation towards their family and to act as a support system against the uncertainty of their working capacity in old age, it is very important for them to be enrolled under health insurance and other welfare schemes like compensation towards family after death of a weaver, treatment of diseases, cost of testing of eyes and spectacles, maternity benefits to women weavers and others. GOI has launched many welfare schemes for the weavers but it was observed that weavers are not enrolling themselves in existing centrally implemented welfare schemes due to lack of awareness and proper channels to get the benefits.

Design development: To promote the traditional & contemporary designs in order to enable weavers to be responsive to the rapidly changing market demand, there is a need of emphasis on design development. Considering different segments i.e. International and Indian trends and colour forecast, panel of designers, design pool, linkages, yellow pages, archives and such other, a centre for textile design is recommended to facilitate design support for product diversification. It would be beneficial to include facilities like CATD system, services of designers to innovate and improve designs and fabric as per requirement to compete both at the domestic and international market.

Establishment of Sericulture activities: It was observed from the PRA that a few weavers also engaged themselves in sericulture activities where basically they were practicing grainage, rearing and reeling of Eri silk, but due to lack of available feed plant i.e. castor, keseru and lack of adopting proper PoP the production rate of Eri silk is very less, in this regard Eri host plantation drive and scientific PoP adoption initiative is recommended to increase the production rate of Eri silk as in international circuit the demand of Eri silk and its woven products is very high and also to take the pure and pristine woven silk to all the nook and corners of the world.

Establishment of Post loom activities: It is observed that a lot of system and support are actually required in post loom production activities. Generally, weavers develop their product in loom stage only but there is a need to extend the post loom product line to develop value added products. Practices like stitching, garmenting, printing, embroidery etc. Are recommended.

Development of Exportable Products: This sector has the potential to contribute towards the export market in a big way. But product development for export quality has not been materialised among the weavers till now. Therefore, in order to give an impetus to the export of handloom fabrics, made-ups and other handloom items from the country, proper guidance and assistance have to be given for developing exportable products and production capability for export marketing.

Marketing: The weavers need a regulated market to be able to sell their products in a regular manner and to be protected from being exploited. But it is observed from the study that weavers and the co-operative society themselves are not aware about the possible market, marketing strategies and platforms therefore they sell their products only in the local market at a minimal price or through middle man which results in low profit gain. Thus, there is a requirement of attention towards market linkage, awareness raising on existing govt.-initiated marketing platforms and participation, brand building and promotion, training on different marketing platforms and strategies and such others.

Apart from that, if all govt. departments procure handloom made fabrics and made-ups like curtains, cushions, table cloths, uniforms, bed sheets, pillows, towels etc. for offices, schools, hospitals, railways, which will provide a huge inside market for the handloom weavers.

Research and Development: Research & Development is an essential ingredient for any industry to keep pace with the fast-changing developments on account of the increasing global interest in Indian Handlooms. Research & Development in the handloom sector is very essential in order to have a regular system of feedback on economic, social, aesthetic, technical and promotional aspects of the handloom sector. There is a need for greater involvement of the help of the reputed research institutes, universities, non-governmental organizations, having basic infrastructural facilities to effectively implement ideas and thoughts through studies, need based surveys, research and development. There is a huge demand for naturally dyed products in the global market but due to lack of fast improvement techniques and natural resources for making the dye along with their mixing and grinding equipment, because of which the artisans fail to meet the demands. As a matter of fact, Eri silk can be treated as a bio diversified resource as the host plant for Eri silkworm maintains the ecosystem. Castor oil can be extracted from it, the fecal matter of silkworm can be used in vermicompost, the gum known as sericin can be used in cosmetics, fibres for making yarns and finally the pupa can be treated as protein powder and a health nutrition due to high protein concentration in it. The defatted Eri silkworm meal (75%)

with 44% total essential amino acids makes it an ideal candidate for preparing protein concentrate isolates with enhanced protein quality that can be used in nutrition (Eri silkworm is a good source of protein 16g%, fat 8g% and minerals).

Awareness generation on Handloom & Sericulture schemes: It was found that the weavers were not aware of schemes like Yarn subsidy scheme, one time assistance schemes, financial and physical schemes. There is a need for the involvement of Gram Panchayats and their representatives to disseminate information on the same. NGOs can also be involved to support the existing government mechanism.

Involvement of the students with the co-operative societies: Generally Co-operative societies are constituted with a group of sector specific artisans only. But, if students pursuing handloom and related courses are given an opportunity to become involved with the co-operatives, then there can be knowledge sharing from both ways. The artisans can gain knowledge about the new and updated techniques whereas the students can gain field experience.

Convergence among various stakeholders: As all the weavers within the study area are engaged with a co-operative society, there is a high scope of convergence among the stakeholder organizations viz. government departments, MNCs, non-governmental organisations etc. to bring greater impact in the lives of every artisan. If a composite structure of production is introduced with practices like rearing, spinning, weaving, stitching & garmenting, embroidery, printing, natural dyeing and such others, a lot can be achieved. In fact if managed strategically, the scope of textile tourism can also be explored for sustenance of artisans.

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CHAPTER-8

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