

Co-Operative Based Economic Development in Phulia

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Abstract: *The Handloom Industry is the most ancient cottage industry in India. The Indian handloom fabrics have been known for times immemorial for their beauty, excellence in design, texture and durability. Bengal handloom industry contributes a sustainable share in glorious Indian handloom craft floor. The excellence of TANGAIL cotton and silk sarees with extra warp and weft designs and also TANGAIL-JAMDANI sarees on cotton and silk are well accepted all over India. The Cooperative Societies have a major role in the movement of revival and development of Tangail Industry in Phulia. Among them Tangail Tantujibi Unnyan Samabay Samity is one of the pioneers in playing role of development in all aspect and to spread the flame of "PHULIA-TANGAIL" all over the country and abroad.*

Key Words: *Co operative Formation, Export & Import, Empowerment, Socio Economic Change*

I. Introduction

Phulia is in Nadia district of West Bengal is famous firstly as the holy birth place of **Krittibas**- a great poet of Bengali epic Ramayana, secondly and at present famous for the great prosperity of Tangail Handloom Industry. Once the idea of co-operative organization was derived in 1844 at Rochdale, a textile centre of England by a group of weavers which was spread and accepted throughout the world as successful economic system of poor and middle class peoples. Those 18 weavers were called as **Rochdale-Pioneers**. A successful cooperative movement was organized among the weavers of Phulia and got a very fruitful result through it and Phulia is now a renowned place in the map of textile world. The previous perspective is described in brief hereunder:

All the weavers of Phulia are displaced persons; they were being migrated gradually from their original inhabitation of the district Tangail of former East Pakistan firstly after independence/partition of India in 1947 and secondly the rest of the weavers of that place were again displaced and came to Phulia during the time of Bangladesh war in 1971. They are Hindus and mainly of **Basak community**. This displaced artisan were to fight seriously against their ill fate since a long period from 1948 to 1973, their economic condition became so weak that they were not be able to maintain their livings, many of them left their weaving occupation and went hither and thither in search of jobs, some of them returned back to Bangladesh again. This miserable condition was occurred for the exploitation of the master weavers- the cruel money lender of the village.

Once, form the immemorial times, a state of undivided India was very famous for weaving of a kind of finest cloth named MUSLIN. It was said that, those cloths were so finest that a piece of cloth of 36 inches width and 400 inches length was folded and packed in a small safety matches box. Also said that, it was passed through a finger-ring easily. The Scientists and archaeologists are now saying that in the mummy of Egypt muslin was found as its cover of chemical coating over the dead-body as there was no other so finest cloth except muslin at that time. These finest cloths were necessarily required so as to identify the clear and actual appearance of the dead person in mummy after being covered. The muslin has once worldwide market; especially it had highly fondness among the richest and aristocrat families like king, sultan and nawab (Muslim ruler) of India, Egypt and Middle East countries. In the British period in India, the English merchants were marketing the Bengal superfine muslin all over the world, they lend a lot of money for production by the expert weavers of Dhaka and Santipur and on the other hand they tried to destroy this Indian muslin industry to keep stand their Manchester cloths in competition. They started exploitation to the weavers and harassed them in different way; they did very cruel behaviour with the muslin weavers.

The whole India and the textile sectors of the world know Phulia to-day for production of excellent cloths of various kinds by different types of materials like cotton, silk, wool, linen of attractive design, pattern and colours. At present near about 25 thousand looms are running in Phulia, among them 80% are producing the traditional saree and rest 20% are engaged in exportable cloth production.

II. Objectives

- To identify co-operative base development in weaving in Phulia
- To identify the socio-economic condition due to co-operative formation
- To identify the infrastructural and socio-cultural change in Phulia

- To know about the status of weaver.
- To study the present condition of weaving industry
- To analyze the empowerment of weaver due to co-operative development.

III. Methodology

Field survey includes with pre-field survey, post field survey also. Pre-field survey refers the collection of the secondary data, theoretical materials collection about the study area. To know well about the climatic condition, physical constraints or physical topography, changing socio-economic and cultural condition of the study area is important. If we have proper pre-field knowledge about any perception about the socio-economic and cultural condition of the study area, then it is very helpful for preparing questionnaire which is an important pre-field work. The pre-field has been done covering Literature to be acquainted with the study area since similar types of report, articles will be very helpful to evaluate the changing pattern. Preparing the list of collected data and collection of maps, and other relevant documents etc.

This process relates to primary data collection methods for example questionnaire as a set of questions used mainly in direct interview and to gather data from a respondent. The subject of research mainly being on change in economy, transport, education, house types, household amenities, communication network, dress & language code, different types of schemes etc, due to the development of the cooperatives. I also had done the focus group discussions with the members of the cooperative and some weavers. Sometimes it includes quantitative data also. For this sample survey with the help of structured questionnaire has helped to interpret the socio-economic, cultural and demographic data in quantitative and qualitative way. Secondary data are also important. Collection of secondary data from different sources like the census, village directory, the Municipal office, district office, cooperatives has been incorporated. Analysis of the data collected, preparation of final maps, tables and report writing.

IV. The Study Area

Phulia is situated in Santipur Community Development Block in Nadia district, West Bengal. The fort area of this city, also known as Daak-Gharh (calling or gathering room) is thought to have been built by Raja Krishnachandra of Nadia. Phulia is the urban area of Santipur. The latitudinal and longitudinal distribution of Phulia is 23.25°N, 88.43°E to 23.49°N, 89°E. It has an average elevation of 15 meters (49 feet) from sea level.

V. Actual Condition Of Phulia

Gender is a social construct referring to range of characteristics of the development of socio-economic condition of an area. In Phulia the share of female population is less to the male population. According to 1961 census the number female population 960/1000 male. In 1971 and 1981 this ratio remained more or less same at 946 female/1000 male population. In 1991 there was a huge decrease in female population respect to male; the ratio was 936 female/1000 male. 2001 and 2011 had the ratio of this of 945 and 938. According to primary data present percentage of total male are 51% and percentage of total female are 49%. The male are mainly associated with the economic activities like, weaving and weaving related activities. Some are engaged with agriculture, business etc. The female population in the village are associated with weaving besides of household activities.(Table 1)

The population composition is shown in the percentage of population under different caste category. The composite bar diagram showing the percentage of population under different castes. It is evident that the share of the general caste population is high which is about 84% . Then the share of schedule caste and schedule tribe population is negligible which is about 7% and 9%. The General caste population are contributing the main share of population. The development work for the betterment of the SC & ST by the government should be improved here of these categories.

Occupational prestige as one component of socio economic status encompasses both income and educational attainment. The measures of social position is by describing job characteristics, decision making ability and control, and psychological demands on the job. Phulia has different types of occupation pattern. The people of the area mostly engaged in the household works. Near about 50% of the people are engaged in the work. The agricultural labours are total 1451 in number. The proportion of male labours are most in number. Female labours are very few in number only 117. In cultivator labours there are 14 female 551 male in number. From this Census data it is clear that the proportion of female worker is very few respect to the male population.(Table 2)

The overall level of education in the region is low. Mainly the large portion of male and female are only educated up to the level of upper primary standard. The male have higher literacy rate than the female in spite of the fact that the no. of male who have passed is relatively lower. In the urban area total educated persons are 86%, in which 57% are male and 43% are female and total illiterate persons. According to primary data the people are now willing to spend a good proportion of money of their labour cost for their children education.

The people of this area, mainly weaver get sufficient money for their labour cost. This may help them to invest in education. So we see that most of the people are interested to admit their children in a good quality school and wanted to ensure them to higher education.

VI. Cooperatives Of Phulia

In this context, I like to inform that Phulia region is a weaver-concentrated area and approximate 42,000 looms are operated in the area and about 95,000 people are engaged in allied work of weaving . An individual weaver cannot create those units properly and he/she should depend on the cooperatives. So, cooperative based development is seen in Phulia out of the total major **65** handloom cooperative is registered in **2002-03** in West Bengal under this there are only **11** cooperatives active now in Nadia District and **6** Cooperatives are seen in Phulia of which **4** handloom cooperatives are active now in Phulia. (Table 3)

Handloom Cooperatives are:

- 1) **Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society:** It is established at the 1st registered handloom cooperative society of Phulia township.
- 2) **Fulia Tangail Shari Bayan Silpa Samabay Samity Ltd: Fulia progotisil tatubay samity**
- 3) **Nutan Fulia Tantubay Samabay Samity Ltd.**
- 4) **Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity Ltd.**

Female handloom cooperatives in Phulia are:

1. Ashanandapura Mahila cooperative society (1980)
2. Sutragarh Narimukti samity
3. Dhakapura Mahila samabai samity limited.
4. Santipur Garhpara Narimukti Tantubai samity(1984)

VII. Co-Operative Based Development

According to the survey of Phulia handloom cooperatives it is clear that the number of weavers are increased year by year. The weaver of the local area were not much benefitted working under the local Mahajans. But establishment of the cooperative societies helped them ensuring the high making cost and also secure their work. So the weavers are interested to work under those Mahajans who join with the handloom cooperatives. The Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity also is a handloom cooperative which has the direct contact of the foreign export market and also with the national and state local markets. So the no of A class labour (well skilled labour) increased (Table 4).

The total number of handlooms under the cooperative is nearly 500 and more in Phulia municipality area. 30% of the looms are used to make sarees such as, Jamdani, Tangail, Baluchori, Padma anchala, tant sarees etc. 70% of the total looms are engaged in making of exportable goods. Such as scurf made by pure silk. Though the sharee is the traditional wear of the Indian women, the demand of other products made by silk or tant thread increased. So the proportion of this looms are more because of the high demand of these goods at the foreign markets. The weavers get more benefit in making these materials. So the number of handlooms of sarees are rapidly lesser though the looms which made the exportable material rather than sarees increased. (Table 5).The members of the society took initiatives to weave diversified products; they had been started production of exportable cloths since 1985. The various kind cloths of different fibre like cotton, silk, wool, linen, tussar, muga etc. of different designs & patterns were being produced for the abroad market. The Handcrafts and Handloom Export Corporation of India Ltd., a Govt. of India undertaking was the main encourager, first initiatives was taken by them to give necessary technical guidance to the Society for production of cloth for the abroad customers and marketing support as the society needed.

Mainly the Tangail saree, jamdani, padma anchala sharee, baluchori etc high cost sarees are made under this cooperative. The weavers show a great interest in making this products. They get a big amount of making cost. The Mahajans buy raw materials from the cooperatives and make products by the weavers and they also sell the products to the cooperatives and also to the others (Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi and Maharashtra). But the increasing rapid demand of the exportable material decreases the production of traditional sarees.(Table 6).Though the Indian women prefer sarees rather than other wear, the sale of sarees decreased from 2010 to 2012. The increasing cost of raw material effects on the price of sarees. Sarees became high values; the women cannot afford their fund to buy a good quality sarees in a large amount. They prefer to buy medium quality sarees in their cost range. So the number of selling amount of sarees decreased. But a opposite picture is shown at the other exportable goods of the cooperatives. The exportable goods are mainly exported to foreign market such as USA, UK, and different parts of the country. The recent trend is to wear a scurf both men and women and in India and also in abroad. This cooperative produce different kinds of 'orna's by the weavers. Though they are as expense as the sarees, but the style trend attract more people. So the product of this product increase rapidly. (Table 7)

I have studied the portion of Basak para , Phulia and I have seen that there are some handloom centres are situated to supply the clothes for Tangail Tantujibi Unnyan Samabay Samity Ltd. All the weavers who are joined in the weaving programme they are all not the member of the cooperatives some weaver works through Mahajans and some are individual workers but who are joined with cooperative societies, they are much richer than the others. I have seen that in my study area consists of **63%** of the weaver joined with cooperatives but in the other side only **30%** are joined with Local Mahajans because Mahajans are producing low price sharee but the cooperative produced high price making sharee, if cooperative found any dispute in the making sharee, the weaver should refund the whole money, so all the time it should not be liable and also **7%** are individual weavers who weaved them selves and sell the product in the local market but they are poor.

I have to know one thing that after year **2000** a migration is seen in Phulia where other side people like from North Dinajpur , Cooch Bihar seen where we see some very small handloom cluster in West Bengal but the weavers migrate in Phulia because here they could get much money from other place of the India and also in West Bengal and a migration seen here from other parts of Santipur handloom cluster. total percentage of migrated workers here are **47%** and **53%** are local and adjoining areas. Another thing is to be noted that all the workers are works here they are mostly young people. we find **65% of** weavers are belongs to **20-40** years and only **20%** of people belongs to **40-60** years and another **15%** provide **>60** years people. But only male weavers are migrated here from other place. The gross profit of the cooperative is not increase rapidly through 2009. But the increase of net profit radically changed from 2009. The members of cooperative stated that the reason of this increase is the foreign export of their goods and the high quality of thread. The local economic condition improved after by this high profit. The local weaver paid more than before and they try to lead a better livelihood. Now they able to spend money in their different purpose of life such as health and proper nourishment of their family, better education to their children, food security, entertainment etc. So the area is developed socially beside of economically. A bottom up development found here by developing from the initial stage.(Table 8). Government had taken several schemes and plans for the cooperatives for better running. The schemes are for mainly developmental schemes and implemented by the Central Government. Some of the schemes as vegetable dyeing unit moderation scheme is only by the state government scheme. These mainly help the cooperatives to spread the Indian tradition globally. After independence the handloom industries weakened due to lack of capital. A huge number of cooperatives in India as well as West Bengal closed. The handloom cooperatives are also among them. But after these government schemes, the cooperatives got rebirth. Though the schemes helped the cooperatives in different ways, but at the present day context the schemes are not sufficient.(Table 9)

Government had implemented several schemes, insurances and allowances for the weaver of the cooperatives. The weavers who are joint with the cooperatives considered as the organized worker. The total no. of beneficiaries who get House cum work shed at 2007-2008 are 170. Government had sanctioned rupees 12.69 crore for this scheme. No. of weavers who are under the contributory provident fund are 430. Mahatma Gandhi Boonkar Bima Yojana had taken by 235 members. The most important scheme the health package scheme for 68 weavers and med claim insurance granted for 135 members. The old age pension schemes had implemented for 35 persons at 2007-2008. The education allowance had been given to 22 students of the weaver family of the cooperative. These all data was taken from the handloom cooperative society Tangail Tantujibi Unnyan Samabay Samity Ltd which is a case study of my dissertation topic. This scenario is also more or less same for other handloom cooperatives of Phulia. These schemes helped the poor weavers for a better livelihood and also increase interest to join the weaving as a profession for the young generation.(Table 10) The Nadia District Central Cooperative Bank provides loans at minimum interest to the cooperatives all over the state. The cooperative get loans from the Nadia branch of the bank. The bank also provides loans for construction purpose. Every year the cooperative society gets loans from this bank. The amount of loan increases through year wise. Though the annual interest rate of the bank is much high than any other government bank, but it provides loans in a very short time span and easy to access.(Table 11)

Total annual turnover increases from 2009 of the Tangail Tantujibi Unnyan Samabay Samity. The society had maximum turnover at the year 2011-12 of rupees 667.15 lakh. At the year of 2010-11 the turnover was more or less same of the mentioned year(rupees 662.03 lakh). The year of 2009-10 the annual turnover was 475.65 lakh rupees.(Table 12)

Formal shape to Khadi activities was given with the setting up of All India Spinners Associations/Akhil Bhartiya Charkha Sangh in 1925 followed by All India Village Industries Association in 1935. This was succeeded by All India Khadi and Village Industries Board in 1953 and finally Khadi and Village Industries Commission came into being by an act of Parliament in April, 1957. Khadi production, including cotton, silk and woolen varieties.

With the passage of time, the technology of khadi production has also evolved. The four spindle wooden charkha developed by Ekambernath in 1961 gave way to the eight spindle charkha, and now KVIC even boasts

of e-charkha where, on a 2 spindle NMC charkha, the spinner rotates an armature / dynamo and charges battery which can be used for lighting, running a transistor and recharging of cell phones.

From 2000 and onwards the production of Khadi increased and the cooperatives has a better infrastructure of clearing raw cotton, washing, drying, colouring (natural or chemical) and ready for weaving. The society also has a good relation with the local Mahajans and also with the weavers. They sell their thread to them and the Mahajans weave cloths, sarees, dhoti, ornas etc. The quality of the products became better due to the skill labour and the fine designs. The weavers weaves the sarees with very fine designs.

VIII. Concluding Remarks

People are enjoying a moderately better condition due to that cooperative system development. But government support and help for the development is very much essential. In Santipur government ineffectiveness has worsened the weavers situation. But at Phulia people work together by forming cooperatives but they can not achieve up to their potentiality without significant government help. Government is inactive in promoting this Phulian Tangail sharee industry. It is also inactive in export promotion. So more government efforts are required to head towards success in Phulia. All the weavers who are joined in the weaving programme they are all not the member of the cooperatives some weaver works through Mahajans and some are individual workers but who are joined with cooperative societies, they are much richer than the others.

A migration (inter district as well as intra district) is seen in Phulia where other side people like from North Dinajpur, Cooch Bihar seen, Jalpaiguri, Murshidabad where we see some very small handloom cluster in West Bengal but the weavers migrate in Phulia because here they could get much money from other place of the India and also in West Bengal and a migration seen here from other parts of Santipur handloom cluster. Basically young age people are coming here for more job opportunity and we know that people are migrated from various places of West Bengal and those people are young in age. They engaged in this profession because of attractive income range.

One of the important thing is seen in Phulia is that here we see some Handloom Cooperatives. We know that all over the Santipur Handloom cluster contains many Cooperatives but some Cooperatives are closed today and some are active but those cooperatives can not act properly. Export promotion is an important part of Phulian handloom industry and Cooperatives export its products with the help of some foreign market agents or agencies but Government inefficiency is seen in export promotion. The house hold income of Phulia changed widely after generating various source of income which are created by the development of handloom cooperative. Earlier in the area the household income of the people of was relatively low. Now people are enjoying various rural development schemes such as Annapunna yojana, Antadoya Anna Yojana, IAY, Old Age Pension, Health Card, Mahatma Ghandhi Boomkar Bima Yojana Card etc but these schemes are not properly reach to the needy people. Medical facility is also good here and peoples of Phulia went to Municipal Hospital for any medical check up and they they have to go in Ranaghat Sadar Hospital for any critical case. The occupational structure of the Phulia is composed of workers, non-workers and marginal workers and secondary sector is much higher rather primary or tertiary sector

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List of Tables
Table 1

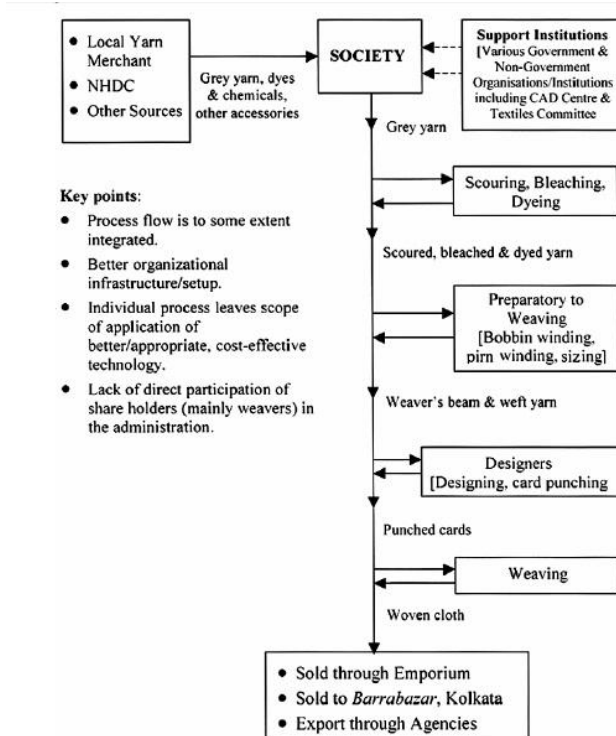
YEAR	NO. OF FEMALE PER 1000 MALE
1961	960
1971	946
1981	947
1991	936
2001	945
2011	938

Source: census
Table 2

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE	FEMALE	% OF FEMALE	MALE	% OF MALE
TOTAL WORKER	6911	42.59	18058	34.52
MAIN WORK	4664	28.72	17125	32.738
CULTIVATOR	14	0.08	551	1.053
AGRICULTURAL	117	0.72	1334	2.55
HOUSEHOLD LABOUR	3278	20	7107	13.58
OTHER	1255	7.7228	8133	15.55

Source: Census Data

Table 3



Field Survey

Table 4

Sl no.		2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
1	NO. OF MEMBERS:			
	A' Class (Weavers)	487	503	584
	B' Class (Govt.)	1	1	1

Source: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 5

No. of working loom:			
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
a) Sarees	200	168	162
b) Exportable cloth	287	335	342

Source: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 6

Production: Rs in lakh	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
a) Sarees	157.11	144.52	210.54
b) Exportable cloth	305.96	401.58	346.26
Total	436.07	546.1	556.8

SOURCE: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 7

Sale: Rs in lakh	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
a) Sarees	146.46	172.45	213
b) Exportable cloth	329.18	489.58	454.15
Total	475.64	662.03	667.15

Source: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 8

Profit:	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
a) Gross Profit	39.3	39.07	38.82
b) Net Profit	5.82	16.08	24.25

Source: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 9

Govt. scheme implemented by the society:	% values
i) Project Package Scheme	9.26
ii) N.C.D.C (House building loan & grant)	5.35
iii) D.E.P.M Scheme	17.5
iv) HDC, QDU, RSC Scheme	13.86
v) D.D.H.P.M Scheme	25.62
vi) Vegetable Dyeing Unit	1.6
vii) I.H.T.P.	3.21

Source: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 10

Govt. welfare scheme for the members implemented by the society:	% value	
i) House-cum-work-shed (up to 2007-08):		
a) No. of beneficiaries:	170	15.6
b) Amount sanctioned:	12.69 crore	0
ii) Contributory provident fund:	430 members	39
iii) M.G. Boonkar Bima Yojana:	235 members	21.5
iv) Health package scheme:	68 members	6.5
v) Med claim Insurance:	135 members	12.35
vi) Old age pension:	33 persons	3.33
vii) Education allowance:	22 students	2.02

Source :Field Survey & Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 11

Bank Finance: Rupees in lakh			
	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Nadia District Central Cooperative Bank Ltd.	110	115	115

Source: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity

Table 12

YEAR	RUPEES IN LAKH
2009-10	475.65
2010-11	662.03
2011-12	667.15

Source: Tangail Tantujibi Unnayan Samabay Samity