

Problems and prospects of textile industry with special reference to Serampore region, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

Indian cotton textile industry has a scope for generating huge employment opportunity for the people of the country. Not only this, since many years it has been generating employment to almost over 35 million people (A brief history of Textile Industry in India, January, 2010” PDF). But now the cotton textile industry of West Bengal is in awful condition. Many renowned cotton mills have now been closed down due to various problems associated with it. In west Bengal, cotton textile units are in several clusters. Most of the clusters have been studied. The only region left to study is Serampore-Rishra belt of Hooghly district. So, in the present study we have tried to depict the actual scenario of textile industry including the problems and prospects of this industry in Serampore region, where once upon a time many renowned cotton mills were situated. In this context, we have come to the conclusion that the nature of dire condition of the textile units in the study area is more or less same as the other clusters in West Bengal. Hence, to make industry competitive, we have tried to recommend some way outs of the problems so that this industry can get back its lost glory in West Bengal.

Key Words : Textile industry, SWOT, Ecofriendly, Bio-degradable, Printing mill

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, the textile industry is the only industry in India that has generated huge employment for both skilled and unskilled labourers in textile after agriculture. Thus the textile industry can be considered to be the second-largest employment generating sector in India (“A brief history of Textile Industry in India, January, 2010” PDF). Data also shows that the textile industry offers direct employment to over 35 million people in the country.

The archaeological surveys have found that about four thousand years ago the people of Harrapan civilization used to practice weaving and the spinning of cotton. At that time, the products generated by that civilization were highly famous all over the world. India held world monopoly in the manufacturing of cotton textiles for about 3,000 years from about 1500 B.C. to 1500 A.D. In the middle ages, Indian cotton textile products were in great demand in the Eastern and European markets. Products of Dhaka (muslins), Masulipatnam (chintzes), Calicut (calicos), Cambay (baftas), Surat and Vadodara (gold-wrought cotton piece goods) acquired a worldwide celebrity by virtue of

their quality and designs¹. In this way the production spread all over the country in several clusters and gradually the production units turned from cottage textile units to large cotton textile industry in those clusters. But the industry started to face problems in the colonial period. We all know that at the time of Industrial Revolution in Europe, during the late 17th and 18th century, India became the chief source of raw material as well as India considered as the market for the power loom generated products of England. In this way, the colonial ruler ruined the old traditional process of spinning of yarn and weaving of cloths in the country. But this industry invigorated at the time of Swadeshi Movement.

In recent past during April–July 2010, the share of textiles in total exports was 11.04% (The Ministry of Textiles). Data also shows during 2009–2010, the Indian textile industry was pegged at 55 billion US\$, 64% of which was from domestic demand only. In 2010, there were 2,500 textile weaving factories and 4,135 textile finishing factories in all over India. According to A. T. Kearney's 'Retail Apparel Index', India was ranked as the fourth most promising market for apparel retailers in 2009. Further, as per the same data source, India was the second largest producer of fibre in the world and the major fibre produced here was cotton.

Previously, the cotton textile industry was concentrated in the cotton growing belt of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Availability of raw materials, market, transport facilities, labour, moist climate and other factors contributed to the localization. Once, in the early twentieth century, this industry played a significant role in Mumbai's economy but it was decelerated after independence. Weaving has highly decentralized while spinning continues to be centralized in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. As of 30th September 2013, there are 1962 cotton textile mills in India, of which about 80% are in the private sector and the rest are in the public sector or in the private-public partnership². Besides these, there are several thousand small factories with four to ten looms in all over India. India exports yarn to Japan, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, Russia, France, United States, Singapore, Nepal and other countries. Although India has a large share in world trade of cotton yarn, its trade in garments is only 4% of the world's total³. Data reveals that this is due to the incompetency of local spinning and weaving mills to process yarn. Though there exist some large factories, but most of the production is fragmented in small units, which supplies for the local market. This disparity is a major drawback for the industry. As a result, many of the spinners export yarn while apparel and garment manufacturers have to import fabric. The power supply is inconsistent and machinery is old-fashioned and needs to be upgraded. Other problems include low output of labour and high competition with the synthetic fibre industry. While coming to West Bengal scenario, according to the news published in Indian Express Newspapers (Bombay) Ltd. in 1999, the once flourishing cotton textile industry of West Bengal is now in awful straits in the land where it took its birth. The first cotton textile mill was established in West Bengal in 1818. But the industry is now almost on the edge of its extinction in our state due to some policies of the then state government and a misconceived notion that power looms may harm the interest of the weavers (Indian Express Newspapers Bombay Ltd. in 1999). Though West Bengal was never a cotton producing area, but the first textile mill was started here because of the facility of port and the market availability. Not only that, according to the newspaper, Bengal continued to be the third largest consuming centre at

1. www.yourarticlelibrary.com, article by chand.s.

2&3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textile_industry_in_India& http://citiindia.com/images/data_base/table3.pdf

that time. The magnitude of the recent problem can be determined from the fact that industrial relation scenario in cotton textile mills in West Bengal become satisfactory and regardless of that nothing mentionable was done to improve the situation. According to Kumar Dubey (1999) out of total 65 mills in the Eastern region, there were 37 mills in West Bengal; out of which 19 were under private sector and 18 were under public sector. Again, out of those 19 mills in private sector, only four mills are running at present⁴. Government data (1999) also shows, only six mills in west Bengal are surviving now. This may be because of the fact that they are divisions of multi-unit companies like, Jayshree Textile or Eastern Spinning and Weaving Mills in Rishra, Hooghly district. Dubey (1999) has said that, "The industry, which once provided direct employment to near about 1.25 lakh people, is now employing less than 10,000 workers". According to GL Moondra, president of Eastern India Textile Mills Association (near about 1999), the substantial deterioration in the industrial relation scenario during the latter part of the 70s in West Bengal have forced promoters, managers and technicians to run away from the state and as a result of that many mills were forced to close their shutters. He has also mentioned, on one hand, while in other states new mills were started in rural areas and were permitted to pay lower wages openly or secretly, on the other hand, in West Bengal, the wages of workers irrespective of locations were maintained at equal level and this was one of the most important reasons behind the downfall of the industry. The other reason was the development of power-looms. A misconceived view was raised in West-Bengal that the looms may harm the interests of the handloom weavers and for this reason the spinning did not find any market here. So, producers had to sell yarns in distant markets. Most of the textile industries in our state were established with spinning sectors only while the weaving of cloth was subsequently transferred to power-loom sectors to encourage small entrepreneurs and to decentralize the control of the industry. It has also been said in the above mentioned newspaper that out of the 18 mills in the public sector, 12 belonged to National Textile Corporation and they had bad profiles. Even a suggestion by the centre to the state government to consider taking over the NTC mills has failed to bring in anything positive so far. The state government has urged the centre to arrange for funds for modernization and working capital of these units, but nothing had materialized till then and till now. In the meantime, the central trade unions and federation of textile workers have submitted fresh charter of demands of the workmen on expiry of the last industry wise tripartite settlement. While East India Textile Mills Association (an association of the employers on behalf of their member mills) has also issued notice intending to give effect to certain changes in the conditions of service of the workmen which was pending before the government. According to the Chamber of Textile, Trade and Industry member Arun Kumar Mehta (near about 1999), West Bengal is the third largest consumer centre of textile goods and in spite of that the activity of manufacturing here, is minimum. According to him, the position of Bengal is now in such condition that if yarn is manufactured here, it is sent to the other states for finishing, because there is no such kind of facility in our state, and from there the finished goods come here again which finds almost a ready market here. It is not that we cannot set up state-of-the-art mills in West Bengal, but lack of infrastructure is the fundamental problem in the present situation. He also said that no one can expect them to invest for modern mills with latest facilities if there is no road, communication and other infrastructure. He also cited the example of Surat, Bhilwara and Tanda, where textile industry has been developed significantly over the last 15 years because of proper infrastructure provided by respective state

4. Dubey, K. (1999, Tuesday, July 6), West Bengal cotton textile industry in dire straits, retrieve from <http://expressindia.indianexpress.com/fe/daily/19990706/fec06013.html>. Accessed 16 June, 2017

governments for setting up textile units. According to him, the situation in West Bengal is 'ridiculous'. The government thinks that entrepreneurs should identify and purchase the land first and then it will make arrangement for its development and provide other facilities while entrepreneurs think otherwise.

So far we have depicted the present situation of textile industry in India and in West Bengal through secondary data but in our study we want to analyse the above facts on the basis of the primary data collected through field survey at Serampore region, Hooghly district of West Bengal where once this industry was initiated. In this regard, the next section deals with the objectives of the study. Section 3 throws light on significance of the study following a brief review of literature. Section 4 discusses data and methodology used in the study. In section 5, analysis of data and findings are made and lastly, section 6 deals with conclusions and suggestions.

Objectives of the Study :

In the above context, the major objectives of the study are:

1. To depict the present condition of cotton textile mills in the study area
2. To find out the origin and to analyse the various problems of the present printing mills including the workers
3. To study the efficacy of various government laws and policies which have already been implemented for the development of this industry in this region
4. To study the scope for the betterment of the mills and mill workers in near future so that the livelihoods of mill workers can be improved and the mills can remain operative

A brief review of literature indicating the significance of the Study

In West Bengal, India, there are mainly four clusters where textile and related activities are practiced. The clusters are in Murshidabad, Burdwan, Nadia (Fulia) and Hooghly (Dhaniakhali, Rishra and Serampore) regions in West Bengal.

In this regard, Mapdar (2011), pursued a research with the objectives, to Study the status of Handloom clusters in India with special focus to West Bengal, to identify the challenges being faced by the stakeholders (Weavers, Master Weavers and Designers) of the Shantipur handloom cluster, to come out with strategies for cluster development in West Bengal. The study revealed that only 2% weavers were organised in the fold of Weavers Co-operative Society; lower strata weavers and master weavers segments were totally unorganized. According to him there was urgent need from Government to provide a support to this unorganized sector. Migration of Weavers from this region was prevailing due to poor wages structure; mostly weavers were migrated to Delhi, Gujarat, Karnataka etc. Poor weavers of Shantipur were exploited by the "Mahajans" (Traders). These mahajans used to stock the finished goods and control the market and thus Shantipur cluster development programme was undertaken to create the direct market linkages.

The main aim of the project of Sarkar (2015) was to make our age old traditional handloom industry globally competitive and protect this sector from the threats of power loom. Therefore, her paper is concerned with the several features of Bardhaman cluster under Integrated Cluster Development Scheme. Here, researcher has made a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis to highlight the strength and opportunities and recover the weakness and threat by innovative marketing strategies. According to her, cotton handloom has its own demand because of the beautiful designs, quality, fine texture and attractive fret works of its products. There is no doubt that Bardhaman cluster is age old handloom cluster of Bengal as well as of India and renowned

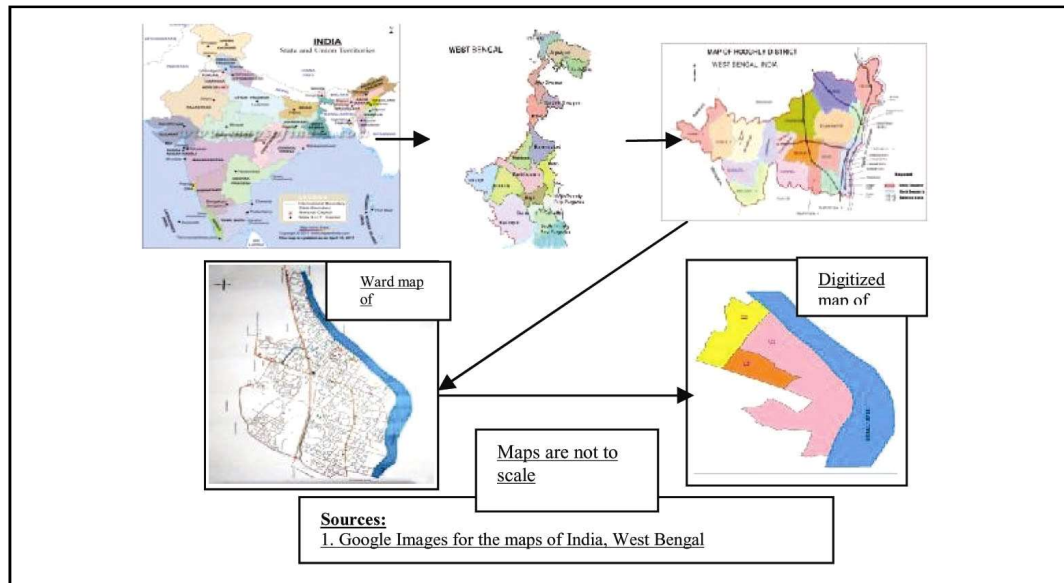
for two most traditional handloom products Jamdani and Tangail. Though this cluster is second after Santipur cluster but the inherent threats of powerloom still belong in it. The main strength of this cluster is its weaving efficiency and large number of weavers, so it can be assumed that they can cope with any kind of difficult situation. Central and State Governments have implemented various schemes like Integrated Handloom Development Scheme, Hank Yarn Subsidy Scheme, Marketing and Design Support, Health and Life Insurance Scheme etc. to rejuvenated the glory of this industry. So, according to the author, it is the high time to use those schemes in a proper way and to make innovative marketing strategy to link with greater volume of buyers which will ultimately develop the overall condition of the cluster.

Again, Sarkar (2015) has pursued an another study on handloom industry in Dhaniakhali, Hooghly district, with some objectives to evaluate the progress of Handloom Industry in Dhaniakhali block, to analyse the socio-economic conditions of the sample handloom weavers, to assess the adoption of technology and production of Handloom weaving, to observe the marketing facilities of handloom fabrics in the study area, to study the problems of Handloom weavers in the study area, to analyse the future prospects of the industry in the study area and lastly, to make strategies for survival of handloom industry of Dhaniakhali block. According to the author the cotton handloom has its own demand because of the beautiful designs, quality, fine texture, exact size and attractive fret works of its products. These qualities of handloom products are not accessed in the power loom mechanism. This paper was mainly based on extensive field work. Author mentioned that though handloom weaving has much strength and can be competitive under specific conditions but the seed of crisis is inherent in the sector. The poor performance of the co-operative sector and the poor economic conditions of the weavers are often called for sources of crisis. But the ray of hope is that both the Central Government and the State Governments are quite active to rejuvenate this sector, providing number of schemes for handloom production and marketing. The Central Government through, Office of the Development Commissioner (Handloom), under the Ministry of Textile has implemented numbers of schemes such as Integrated Handloom Development Scheme, Hank Yarn Subsidy Scheme, Marketing and Design support, Health and Life Insurance Scheme etc. The West Bengal Government also intended to highlight the handloom through Biwsa Bangla Project and tried to make Dhaniakhali as a Handloom Hub. The handloom products of Dhaniakhali have large demand as well as marketing scope because of its widespread name and fame and strong culture heritage. However, the researcher was hopeful that this handloom centre will be able to elevate its present stagnant condition by overcoming its present problems and will revive its past glory.

Further, a study on Murshidabad, done by Mandal (2015) was on mouza Chak Harharia, which is famous for silk weaving in Murshidabad, West Bengal. The main objectives were to bring out the demographic features, the socio-economic conditions and the over-all living status of the silk artisans of ChakHarharia. Researcher had also tried to realize the problems faced by the artisans and find out the possible remedies. Researcher found that workers live in a very plain simple manner, they suffer from scarcity in every material requirement. According to her, if both public awareness and Govt. initiatives can nurture the art and artists properly their products will earn enough foreign exchanges to strengthen the economy of West Bengal. So, according to him, silk based handloom and Khadi industry should find out the proper way to keep this art cum industry alive and to make it strong further.

These four notable studies have been done in the state West Bengal, India, as West Bengal has four main clusters of textile industry. The only region left in West Bengal to be studied is

Serampore-Rishra cluster which is in Hooghly district. So we have focused on that area in our present study. We have considered ward no. 11, 12 and 13 of Serampore municipality for the study as mostly the cotton textile mills are located there. The maps for the location of the study area are given below:



METHODOLOGY

To pursue the study we have collected data through secondary sources as well as through personal interviews based on structured questionnaires. Questionnaires were made for both mill owners and mill workers to understand the exact present situation of the production units as well as to get idea of the present livelihood condition of the workers associated with the mills. In the study area almost all the running printing mills (15 in number as they are small in numbers) have been taken into consideration to throw light on the present situations of mills and to analyze the future prospects. Again, while considering workers' families, to study the livelihood, we have collected data from every workers' family working in the mills and this is 495 in number. The basic information, like, historical background of the study area, geographical location, industrial profile etc. have been collected from different secondary sources like, different internet sources, official website of Serampore municipality etc. The ward map of Serampore municipality has been collected from the concerned municipal office.

It is expected that the data collected from Primary and secondary sources may help to assess the present situation of the mills and mill workers, to develop the industrial strategy for betterment of mills as well as the mill workers as a whole, to determine present employment status and its trends, to point out present weaknesses and threats of industry and to determine strategies for improving the present status, marketing prospects etc. In this regard, to analyse the above mentioned facts regarding strength, weaknesses and threats of the mills and opportunities for future expansion of the industry a qualitative analysis like, SWOT (Strength- Weakness- Opportunity-Threat) analysis has been done in our study on the hope that this may lead to upliftment of the entire region.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND MAJOR FINDINGS

This section of our study deals with the three subsections where at first present situation of the textile industry and the workers associated with the different units of this industry in the study area are depicted. After that a SWOT analysis is done and discussions have been made to find out future opportunities of the industry to flourish them and for upliftment of livelihood status of mill workers in this region incorporating the role of government and non-government organizations (NGOs).

Present situation of Cotton Textile Mills and Mill Workers in the study area :

It is very surprising, regretful and frustrating that while visiting the field we have found that at present very few cotton textiles mills in Serampore area are in existence, all the large cotton mills, like Bengal Laxmi, Laxmi Narayan cotton mill, Jayasree textile etc. (though few in numbers), are now closed down due to various problems like, deterioration in relation between owner and workers, continuous strikes, sickness of machineries, non-cooperation of governments (According to the owners and labourers' own opinion), weak marketing strategy, competition with other supplementary products etc. Our data reveals that after the closure of large cotton textile mills many workers lost their jobs and became unemployed, joblessness made their living condition deplorable. In this circumstances some workers, who were in much better condition than others, opened printing mills (cotton and silk) in their own houses. Few others who were working in the then large cotton mills and became unemployed due to the closure of these units engaged themselves in these newborn printing mills in different works like, washing, steaming, ironing, dyeing, and some skilled labourers, in printing also. Not only this, data reveals that many workers who are now engaged in these printing units, who are educated enough, some are even post graduate in textile or art etc.

To analyse the livelihood pattern of any community in any region it is important to study the demographic and socio-economic profiles. In Serampore region, among the studied population it has been seen that the middle-aged population is comparatively high and that reflects a satisfactory scope for supply of labour in the industry but our socio-economic data which reveals livelihood pattern (house type, source of cooking, source of drinking water, sanitation facility, education level, income group, average household size, nature of work, working condition etc.) indicate the low status of the workers associated with cotton textile industry in Serampore region. Hence, overall subjective well-being (SWB)⁵(calculated following UNDP measure, 2014)⁶ is less (= .5 approximately) in this region.

Hence, in these circumstances, it is necessary to make some way outs so as to revive the industry from present threats and to enhance opportunities for future sustenance of mills as well as mill workers.

SWOT Analysis for delineating the problems and prospects of the textile (printing) mills:

The above discussions throw light on the present situation of the mills and mill workers in the study area. Our research would remain incomplete if we do not consider the strengths and weaknesses of the mills in the study area at present as from there we can get an idea of future

5. SWB describes how people experience the quality of their lives and include both emotional reactions and cognitive judgment, Diener, Lucus and Oshi (2002)

6. M.Phil thesis by Gupta, R. (2017), RBU

prospects and threats of this industry. It is expected that this may account for the development of the mills and mill workers in future. In this regard, we have done a SWOT (Strength-Weakness-Opportunity- Threat) analysis of the textile (printing) mills.

It has been seen that in textile industry the printing (cotton or silk) units are small scale units and use labour force intensively for production. So it has a lot of potential to provide employment. Similarly, the weaving units (cotton/silk) are also labour intensive units. As cotton and silk are eco-friendly and biodegradable products, pollution from this industry while producing goods is negligible compared to other industries like chemical industries which can be controlled with some measures. Moreover, as maximum mills found in this area are like cottage industry with a few numbers of workers, no single or multi unionism and related problems are present here. But the point is as the cotton and silk printing (on sari or other materials) units are labour intensive units; the wage rate is low for the workers employed in these units compared to the market wage rate. Sometimes it becomes quite hard for the workers to lead a better life or even to sustain themselves. Further it has been revealed from our survey that, in most of the cases the workers are illiterate or have less education. Their technical knowledge is almost nil. So initiatives should be taken from the mill owners to train the workers. But in reality this does not happen always. So another weakness of this kind of units is for having poor Research and Development (R&D) initiation. These units use the traditional technique and that decreases (quantitative) and even degrades (qualitative) production level. The reasons behind this are the lack of foresight or proper planning on the part of the government as well as industry owners.

Again for low rate and grade of production, profit of the owners decreases. They cannot re-invest in the production units and that sometimes lead to stop production and sack of workers. It come out from our study that for the above reasons these units become sick day by day and often it creates trouble to the mill owners to collect loan from the banks. In this situation, only if the government takes initiative to save the units, then the units as well as the workers can sustain and survive. Hence, it is very much needed to increase production and to maintain quality as well. It has been seen that improper washing due to engagement of unskilled labour in this category of work often hinders the quality of the product. Moreover, most of the time poor quality cotton and silk adds to quality problem. These issues should be taken into account so that quality can increase and product diversification can take place which will be channelised through marketing. In this regard marketing strategy can be considered as another weak point of this kind of units as the owners or managers have not updated themselves in most of the cases. So time has come for the industry to think how to market the output properly to sustain the industry. Within the state, wage for workers in textile (silk or cotton printing units) industry vary from Rs. 300/- to Rs. 350/- approximately, per man per day (generally for 8 hours), according to Minimum Wage Rule in West Bengal (*w.e.f July 1, 2017 to December 31, 2017*). But in reality, the semi-skilled to skilled labourers in these mills get maximum wage of Rs.150/- to Rs. 250/- per day while they have to work for approximately 8 to 10 hours per day. Government must take immediate steps in this concern and formulate 'need based wage structure' for this sector. While doing so, there should be productivity linked payment.

Though having several problems, there also remain enough scopes to expand the units as well as to revive the livelihood of the workers associated with it. If the owners or managers of the mills appoint skilled workers or take initiative to arrange several training programmes for the existing labourers (may be with collaboration of local bodies of government), then production can be enhanced in quantitative as well as in qualitative terms. Further, this initiation will help the owners to earn more profit than before, which can lead to re-investment and further expansion of the units. At that

time seeing the profitability, several financial institutions will also agree to provide loans (in terms of increase in the scope of loan repayment) to the units and that will lead to take strategies for better marketability. Even by collusion of different mills, joint profit can be increased. Consequently due to the increase in profit of the mill owners, they will be able to offer higher wage to the workers and in turn that will ensure better standard of living of the workers.

There remain several threats also for this industry. Often the cluster of mills cause pollution in the surrounding areas and therefore, it needs relocation. Further, due to non-use of green technology⁷, as this is costly, workers face some basic health hazards always and it leads to much more environmental pollution. Professional hazards also lead to mental stress of the workers, and that sometimes lead to involve in illegal activities or prone to addiction or to take step for suicide. Again Climatic hindrances are another weakness of this sector in this region. It is seen that almost 4-6 months in a year works remain stopped due to wet and humid weather caused by heavy monsoonal rainfall.

So identifying the problems, prospects, opportunities and threats of the mills from our survey we can summarize the whole in the following box which is known as SWOT analysis.

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Labour intensive technology used in the mills helps to provide more employment. - As mostly, environmental friendly product is produced in this industry, it accounts for the negligible amount of pollution in the environment. - As the production units are small in size, it leads to less labour problem and management problem. 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As traditional technique is used in production process, it accounts for low production level. - As labourers are not technically equipped, it leads to low level of production in terms of quantity and quality as well. - Marketing strategy of the owners is weak. - Low wage rate reduces the standard of living of the workers. - Low level of profit of the owners reduces the possibility of getting loans for further expansion of the units and that in turn reduces the status of workers' livelihood.
<p>Opportunities :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appointment of skilled labour or several labour training programmes can increase the profitability of production and in turn that can lead to increase the production level in quantitative term as well as in qualitative term. Diversification of products is also possible. - Profitability in production will lead increase the Subjective Well-being of the workers and further expansion of the production units. 	<p>Threats :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cluster of mills in a particular region causes environmental pollution and accounts for the emergence of slums in the nearby area. - Non-use of green technology while producing goods leads to several health hazards of the workers and increases environmental pollution. - Professional hazards lead to decay of lives of the workers. - Mal management can lead to closure of the factory units and thus there remains the chance always for reduction of Subjective Well-being of workers. - Climatic hindrances often become an obstacle for production.

7. Green technology: It is a means of energy production that is less harmful to the environment or environment friendly

Role of government and NGOs to determine the development strategies :

From the above discussions we have found several problems associated with mills and mill workers which account for weaknesses or threats to the textile industry developed in this area. In this regard, the role of government and NGOs to get rid of this drastic situation and to revive the industry for survival of the local people whose livelihoods are associated with this industry. In this regard, government has planned and promoted several policies like, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana (2005) but our study reveals that there are several problems associated with it. These are listed below:

1. Workers do not get the advantages of government sponsored initiatives like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rojgar Yojana (2005), which were actually taken in the concern of the urban poor. No implementations are seen in the study area that would help the poor people to enjoy a better life. Actually these Yojanas' activities are limited to infrastructural improvements like building roads, highways etc. Hence, the majority of workers are not at all satisfied with the role of the government towards the development of this sector. According to the workers Government inspections have taken place many times but no steps are taken in the real ground actually. Thus it can be said that, Government has failed to meet the needs of the target groups due to lack of implementation of beneficial policies for the mill workers.
2. Now, if we come to the point of NGOs or other local political bodies then our study reveals, benefits are not received from any kind of local political bodies. Benefits received from other sources, like, local clubs or NGOs are also very negligible.

Though several problems are associated with this industry, but the study also reveals some strengths or opportunities as well which may help to flourish the sector in near future. This may also help to improve the livelihood of the workers associated with this sector. Hence, government and NGOs should work altogether with mill owners and mill workers for development of the textile industry in this entire region.

Conclusions and Suggestions :

Cotton and Silk Printing industry have their own demand because of the beautiful designs, quality and fine texture of their products. Many workers earn their livelihood on the basis of these handloom based industry. Textile industry of this kind has much strength and can be made competitive under specific condition. On the basis of our analysis and findings of the study it is clear that the textile mills in the study area are going through a dire state. The condition of printing mills and the mill workers are deplorable in Serampore region due to various problems which have been the units are facing since the past few years. Mismanagement within the mills, absence of proper marketing strategy, increasing labour-owner conflict, negligence from the part of government, are the main reasons behind this situation. But now, the ray of hope is that both the Central Government and the State Government have become quite active to revitalize this fact. Number of schemes for handloom production and marketing has been introduced for this purpose. Ministry of Textiles under the Central Government, through the office of the Development Commissioner of Handloom sector has implemented some schemes such as Integrated Handloom Development Scheme, Hank Yarn Subsidy Scheme, Marketing and Design Support Schemes, Health and Life Insurance schemes etc. But, it is necessary to make the workers informed about such schemes and about the path way so that they can take the advantages of such schemes. It is seen that many of the workers even don't know about these schemes yet now. In this context the mill owners have to take initiative

otherwise the workers will not be able to get benefits of such schemes. However, the West Bengal Government intends to introduce this sector through Biwsa Bangla Project to the world. The products of this industry have large demand as well as marketing scope. It is expected that this sector may upgrade itself through this project and come out from the present stagnant condition mitigating the inherent existing problems and perhaps in this way, the sector can get back its past glory. On the basis of the analysis and findings from the field study, we have reached to the above conclusions.

Now, it is expected to suggest something for the development of the mills in the study area. The mills' authorities and Government both should pay attention to recover the present problems of the mills. There is an urgent need of rejuvenation in the industry through reconstruction, introduction of new technologies, product diversifications to meet the changing demands of market. So, some suggestions are formulated from our side through which the present problems of the mills and the mill workers may be solved to some extent.

(i) First of all, the government should take a strong and committed step through market survey to increase the quantity or volume of export, not only at inter-state or national level but also at international level.

(ii) Government can also organize Buyers-Sellers Meet through various state, national and International Fairs, in association with the mill authorities.

(iii) It is necessary to increase productivity, to improve product quality, to diversify the products and to expand the market for the final product. In this regard, mill authorities can contact with local Research Laboratories, technical institutions of textile and other related bodies to get assistance for new technologies and designs.

(iv) Restructuring of mills with respect to the hand printing tools, machineries, using of colors and chemicals, engagement of more skilled workers etc. are necessary to make the products commercially profitable and to increase its viability in market. Again, as the cluster of mills is causing pollution in surrounding areas, it needs relocation.

(v) There is a huge local demand of printed silk and cotton sarees. Not only this, demand is increasing for diversified silk and cotton hand printed sarees also in the national and international Market. So, there is a need for implementation of proper marketing strategy.

(vi) In the printing mills, there is lack of trained workers at all levels of production which causes serious hindrances in productivity and in maintaining quality of products. To overcome this situation, it is important to develop a comprehensive Human Resource Development Program through the various local training Institutions.

(vii) The mill owners should give some additional benefits to the workers such as free health checkups, helping in children's' education, giving the facility of life insurance, providing proper welfare facilities and wages should be paid according to the wage structure as mentioned by government.

(viii) NGOs should work in coordination with the government and help in providing the facilities of free medical checkup and healthcare facilities, access to potable water, proper sanitation and educational facilities to workers' children to the workers.

Hence, lastly, we can summaries the fact that as the present condition of textile industry in Serampore region is more or less same like the other clusters in West Bengal, so, to make this industry competitive nationally cum internationally, government should take initiative through proper implementation of proper schemes incorporating the people whose livelihoods are associated with this industry. Otherwise, the cotton textile industry will be in a direr situation in the near future and will lose its importance from the state of West Bengal.

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