

## **Recent Trends of Work Participation Rate in Santipur Handloom Industry: Case Study Bathangachi Village**

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**Abstract:** Handloom industry in India is an ancient cottage industry in India with a de-centralized set up. It has been an old-age source of livelihood for millions of people in the country. About 10 million people directly depend on this industry to eke out their livelihood, while many millions of people depend upon it as a subsidiary occupation connected with the handloom industry. The share of employment provided by the handloom industry in the total decentralized sector is about 5.5%. Thus the industry constitutes one of the major sectors employing the largest number of people next only to agriculture. In regard to production, the industry is meeting one third of total cloth requirements of the masses of the country. It is confined to the aspects of status of women in handloom living in Bathangachi village in Santipur. Its analysis is based on responses provided in the questionnaire, Qualitative methods such as focused group discussion and PRA. It studies the perceptions, preferences, satisfaction of the respondents

**Key Words:** Work Participation, Socio Economic Condition, Empowerment & Govt. Facilities

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### **I. Introduction**

The weaving activity was initiated in 1409, during the regime of Gaur Ganesh Danu Mardhandev. Saree weaving was practiced during 1683 - 1694 during the ruling of Nadia king Rudra Roy. The production got systematized and was well organized leading to good recognition during the period of Mughal empire. Saree was exported to Afghanistan, Iran, Arab Greece & Turkey. The healthy trend continued till the early twentieth century. The British controlled the industry through their East India Company. Those who opposed were severely punished. Finally the control of East India Company came to an end with the intervention of Governor General Kolkata, for the Common representation of grief of the united weavers. The product had its unique specific proposition in the market for its quality of yarn used in weaving. Hand Spun Yarn of 250 – 300s, which is beyond the scope of mill, was used for weaving, which could counterfeit even the imported cotton yarn of Manchester.

Shri Darga Das Kastha subsequently introduced barrel Dobby during 1920 – 1925, facilitating the conversion of the throw shuttle to Fly Shuttle. Later Shri Debbendra Nath Mukherjee introduced the Jacquard Machine, and this facilitated a broader cross section of new designs in the Market. It is learnt that 100 hook capacity Jacquard was first installed by Shri Jatindra Nath Lohori for producing varieties during the third decade of twenty century. During the same time sectional warping and sizing was introduced by Shri Hazari to produce a warp of 350 yards in length. The Santipur sarees in the past were very popular for the fine & uniform texture.

The sarees are termed as per the design used in the extra warp meant for side border. The Bengal Small Scale Aids Industry Act during the early eighties (1980 –83), was instrumental support of the government for the growth of the Handloom industry. As per the act financial aid to a maximum of Rs 10,000/- in shape of 50% grant & 50 % Loan was provided to the individual weavers for purchase of looms.

During the mid eighties and later in the mid nineties 1995, there were weaver movements for the wage hikes but were unsuccessful for the suppression by Mahajans. For wide popularity of Handloom Clothes of Santipur the East India Company established "clothes kuti " at Santipur for their business of Handloom Clothes in 1830. Besides they set up one Neel Kuti here for their business of "Neel". The relics of the said Neel Kuti are still found at Santipur . East India Company had a Kuthi at Santipur and from the old journals it was also found that cloth worth Rs.15 lac; was procured during the time. There was immense oppression on the weavers by making them sign bond during this period. But this was ultimately stopped after the middle of 1784, due to combined movement of the weavers of the area. Up to the year 1884, entire production was made from very fine hand-spun yarn of 250 / 300 count . Thereafter, due to cheaper price of yarn that came from Manchester, the raw material shifted to mill made yarn. Some typical names of sarees based on the designs were :- 1. Taskhupi, 2.

Sarbasundari, 3. Chakaram etc. Dobby for making design was introduced at the end of 19th century by late Girish Chandra Paul, whereas Jacquard came into operation from the beginning of 20th century by one late Debendranath Mukherjee. Bhupatinath Pramaink of Kuthipara in Santipur showed his excellence by using Silk, Jori and numerous coloured yarn. Some traditional designs synonymous with Santipuri Saree were Chandmala, Tajkalka, Vomra, Kaldumri etc. Another important Saree of Santipur is Nilambari Saree.

## **II. Objectives:**

- To analyze the type of work done by handloom worker.
- To identify the infra-structural facilities provided to the worker .
- To find out the wage pattern for weaving.
- To identify the various socio-economic problems of weavers.
- To study the effects of implementation of the various Govt. schemes.
- To study the socio- economic condition of the weavers of the Village.

## **III. Methodology:**

A well defined methodology is followed. Investigations is carried out to assess the socio economic condition of Santipur (rural) using a standard questionnaire. A primary data is collected randomly. Various secondary data's are collected from District Statistical Handbook, Gram Panchayet Office, Santipur Municipality, and Department Of Handloom (State & Central Govt), Articles and E Sources. The methodology can be considered to include multiple methods, each as applied to various facets of the part of the whole scope of methods. The study is divided between two parts qualitative and quantitative. This involved obtaining background information of the area with the help of secondary data sources, fixing up the venue and time of survey, etc. Socio economic aspects of the study area has been observed. This process relates to primary data collection method for example questionnaire as a set of questions used mainly in direct interview and to gather data from a respondent in a qualitative way. The subject of research is mainly on economy, health, education, house type, income, Govt. scheme facility, basic amenities etc. Sometimes it includes quantitative data also. For the sample survey a structured questionnaire has helped to interpret the socio-economic data in quantitative way. Post- field work are basically depend on the analysis of the collected data, tables and report writing.

## **IV. The Study Area:**

Santipur is under the Ranaghat Sub-Division in the District of Nadia in West Bengal is a place of ancient culture, religion, tradition and it has glory of its own. Its geographical coordinates are 23°15'N & 88°26'E which is about 90 km from Kolkata. The Study area is located in Bathangachi Village in Arabandi II Gram Panchayet under Santipur Community Development Block.

## **V. Condition Of Santipur**

The population characteristics have been analyzed by taking into account the population composition, the age and sex structure of the inhabitants. Here the population characteristics have been analyzed on the basis of the data collected from the secondary data. The development of the area is associated with the different population characteristics, the male, female ratio, and population composition have been shown with the help of different statistical tables. It is seen that Santipur has a positive growth rate of population in every census year. In the year 1961, the total population was 112432 and the population increased to 241080 in 2011. (Table 1)

In this village, sex ratio is varied in every census year and it mainly in favour of men. All the years have almost same sex ratio with Kolkata, except the year of 1961 where the sex ratio was 960 females per 1,000 males which was better than the state ratio of 947 women per 1,000 men and even when compared with the national average of 940 women per 1,000 men. But in this village from the year of 1961 till 2011 the sex ratio mostly declined. This is not a good sign. (Table 2)

According to the total population the SC population is higher than ST population growth rate. There is the population growth rate positively high of SC (20.92% to 41.28%) than the ST population growth (6.45% to 4.27%) in 1961 to 2011 census year. (Table 3)

In the area, the growth in the literacy rate is quite impressive. From the year of 1961 to 1981 (31.52% to 36.71%) this growth was same but after the year of 1981 to 2011 (64.06% to 65.65%) the literacy rate has rapidly increased and reached almost double. (Table 4)

According to total population the number of workers (4.09%) is low. Male workers (3.59%) are much more in number than female workers (0.50%). With the positively increase of total population after 2001, the perception of male (31.18%) and female (10.36%) working population have also increased till the year of 2011. (Table 5)

In the year 1961, according to total worker, household industry worker (37.62%) is lower than the non household industry worker (62.32%). In the year 1971, according to total worker, household industry worker (40.63%) is lower than the non household industry worker (59.37%). In the year 2001 of the total workers, household industry worker (34.46%) is lower than the non household industry worker (65.54%). In the year 2011, according to total worker, household industry worker (28.65%) is lower than the non household industry worker (71.05%). We know that Santipur is weaver dominated area but it is seen that, there the % of

household industry worker decreased and % of non household industry worker increased in the 1961-71 to 2001-11 census year.(Table 6)

In the Santipur region , the male weaver population rate is higher than female weaver rate. In the year 1995, 2005, 2014 total weaver rate has increased positively and male, female weaver growth rate also increased positively. The number of weaver population was low in 1995 but in 2011 it has increased.(Table 7)

## **VI. Major Findings And Analysis**

Bhangachi village is a weaver dominated village. It falls under Arbandi II Gram panchayet of Santipur CD block under Ranaghat sub-division in Nadia district of West Bengal. The village is about 883.98 acres and about 10 km from Santipur rail station.

Case study of this village has been done to give a clearer picture of socio economic condition of weavers ,facilities are available to them,the progress of Governmental schemes. This village is having compact settlement and people are also engaged in household industry.On the basis of 2011 census, this village had a total population of 3826 persons (male-1963, female-1863) ,total number of households being 929. The village is mostly occupied by the people belonging to the general caste (3378) accounting 88.30% and SC population are about 11.70% , the rest are belonging to ST population. The overall literacy rate is 76.16%, male literacy (56%) is more than the female literacy(44%). There is less than half of population 1734 persons (45.32% to TP) as workers. Male workers(71.51%) are more than the female workers(28.49%). From the total working class category, the Main workers are majority in number (1232) accounting for 71.05% and marginal workers are 502 in number accounting for 28.95%. There is number of ICDS-2 , Sishu Siksha Kendra-2 , Primary school -2, High school -2, Bank -2(Canara Bank& Agricultural Cooperative Bank).

The contribution of women is very important in handloom sector in Bhangachi village. They are doing work equally as the male workers from ancient time. In earlier days, women worked in making thread from raw cotton applying ‘mar’ or thread, sun drying, ‘sana’ making, supplying it for weaving. The scenario changed after independence; with migration the women started assisting their family members to earn money. At present, 35% women are weaving and 45% are engaged related to weaving.Handloom industry is basically depend on labour power and Female worker plays a key role in the Handloom sector.Case study shows that about 90 percent female worker are engaged in Santipur Handloom Industry.There were a limited worked on about the working Females in Santipur Handloom Industry.(Table 8)

The population composition is shown in the percentage under different caste category. It is evident that the share of the general caste population is high which is about76%.The share of Schedule caste and Other Backward caste population is negligible which is about 1% and 23% and ST population is nil. The General caste population are dominating population.The overall status of education in the region is low. Mainly the large portion of male and female are only educated up to the level of primary standard. The male have higher literacy rate than the female in spite of the fact that the number of male who have passed is relatively lower. In the village total literate persons are 75% are male and 66% are female.It is seen that about 25% of the male and 34% of the female population are illiterate. There are a small number female studied up to HS or Graduate and above.So the status of women’s education is very poor.(Table 9)

In order to reduce poverty, illiteracy, and to improve their health status women needs to actively participate in income generating activities, this can have greater impact on household security to social status . Handloom is an important micro enterprise in most of the households in the village, supplementing households incomes, especially for those family who are relatively poor.It is seen that the number of female worker (55) is less than the male worker (80). In this village number of handloom worker is high and maximum in number.In this village,the number of traditional handloom weavers are 91 and 42 are nontraditional weavers because of the concentration of “joogi nath” sub caste people in the area and all are traditional weavers. (Table 10)

**Pattern of Work:** some women preparing thread for weaving or some are weaving saree. They weave only saree and most of the sarees are ‘mata saree’. For preparing thread it , goes through some stages, these are:  
**1<sup>st</sup> stage** With one hand little by little thread is separated from the lump and with the other hand they arranged it with the charka. From this, thick thread is made. Then this is clung in the bobbin and finishing is done then it become ready for weaving saree, dhoti etc.During colonial period thread came from mills of south India and from Kalyani spinning mill and Ramakrishna mill of Howrah of Bengal.

**2<sup>nd</sup> stage** Coloring the raw cotton after drying it in the sun light is done. Applying mar in the ‘latai’, sizing it, drying bobbin in the sun light. After that through a ‘Charka’ thread is cleaned. Drum is prepared by the clean thread.

**3<sup>rd</sup> stage** Supplying of thread winding of ‘latai’

**4<sup>th</sup> stage** Sizing of yarn is done.

**5<sup>th</sup> stage** Preparing bobbing.

**6<sup>th</sup> stage** Loom fitting and Weaving initiated.

The income of handloom workers declined over the years instead of increasing. This calls for policy changes both at the Central and State levels mainly. Though handloom industry is a small scale industry so that there is no separate wages for women. They get cash (money) from the Mahajan when they buy thread from Mahajan. They work 12 to 13 hours in a day. In this given data it is seen that female worker's monthly income is very low. Maximum workers (94%) monthly income is less than 1500 Rs. Few worker (2% and 4%) income is 1500-3000, 3000-5000. Most female workers prepare thread for weaving and those women weaving saree they get 50-60 Rs. per saree. They can complete 4-5 saree per week. As a result their monthly income or economic condition is very poor.

Both the Central and State Government is currently providing facilities to the handloom sector, providing a number of incentives for handloom production and marketing. The Central Government, through the Ministry of Textiles, Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms), implements a number of schemes such as Integrated Handloom Development Scheme, Scheme for supplying hank yarn at mill gate prices, marketing and design support, health and life insurance schemes etc. The State Governments are also implementing various schemes for the benefit of the handloom workers. The Plan allocation of the Ministry of Textiles for handloom schemes is Rs. 460 crores for 2011-12.

However, in spite of these, we have seen that the real incomes of handloom workers have declined over the years instead of increasing in tandem with the growth of the economy. This calls for policy changes both at the Centre and State levels. There is also a need for scaling up and intensifying both the Central and State Government's interventions in the handloom sector. State Govt. also provided Old Age Pension Scheme for weaver (750 Rs. Per month), BPL card facility, Weaver ID card for weaver. Majority of handloom workers are not aware of occupational health facilities.

Government of India is providing a Health Insurance Scheme for weavers for access to healthcare facilities from 2007-08 onwards and till the end of 11th Plan. The annual cover per family is Rs.15,000/- . Out of this, substantial provision of Rs.7,500/- has been kept for OPD. The process of filing claims is simple. The claims can be filed with the Cluster Coordinator of the Insurance Company or the representative office of the Insurance Company or TPA. Govt. also implement Health Card facility beneficiaries given indoor and out door patients, Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana (Rs. 6000 normal death, 1.5 lakh for accidental death) .

Central and State Government implement schemes for weavers but according to primary survey it is seen that percentage of Government scheme holder is low. Health card facility and Health Insurance Scheme beneficiaries percentage are medium to low and old age pension scheme and central government beneficiaries percentage are very low. There is having only 15% BPL Card holder and 43% Weaver ID Card holder or 85% do not have BPL Card where most people belong to the BPL category. Many people do not have any idea of Governmental Schemes. So it is seen that weavers are not aware for their improvement of their living condition.

With ancient times in the handloom sector there is no special priority of women from Govt. but after 1967 many cooperative for women and handcraft cooperative established. Co-operatives are one of the important part in handloom industry but after forming Cooperatives are basically inactive. Government efficiencies are minimum to promote handloom here and also to survive the Co-operatives.

Female cooperatives are :

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

After 1990s those women cooperative were closed down due to internal problem. At present there is no samities. (Source: Focussed Group Discussion)

The SHG strategy is an important component of the Government's overall thrust to mitigate poverty and has been included in every annual plan since 2000. In 2001 the SHG strategy was accepted by the Government of India as a major programme in mitigate poverty and provide small loan with low tranjection cost. Funds were allocated, targets set and groups were promoted by Central and State Government.

Presently, although there is an existence of few number of SHGs in the cluster, their activities related to production and marketing is very limited. Many of the SHGs are dependent upon the Govt. subsidies. In the present action plan, the groups would be pushed into common business activities like, procurement of raw materials, production and marketing through a reputed NGO so that they would be self sufficient in long run. In the Bathangachi village there are some SHGs Maa Tara Unnain Gosthi, Radha Krishna Mahila Unnain Samity, Sabuj Sathi and need 10 members group. This figure shows that SHG facility is very poor in this village. There the 80% responded do not get enjoy this facility and 20% of responded beneficiaries under SHG. Nearly 40% women does not know about this scheme because most women less educated or unaware.

### VII. Concluding Remarks:

Since ancient times, Santipur and the surrounding region has been famous for handloom sarees. The handloom weaving style unique to this region is famously known as Santipuri Sari. After the partition of India, Bengal was split into two major regions. West Bengal became a part of India and East Bengal became East Pakistan (Bangladesh). Many skilled weavers from Dhaka at present situated in Bangladesh, migrated to West Bengal and settled around the areas of Santipur and Kalna (Ambika Kalna). But now a days condition of handloom industry is very bad and fall under tragic situation. People who live here mostly, are very poor . Middle aged people are unable to sustain a living in this area due to the lack of availability of job resources hence are compelled to migrate to other states in search of better jobs. Mostly old age people and females are engaged in weaving. Though once weaving was their primary occupation, it failed to earn reasonable money for them, so they dropped weaving from their priority list. Now only to conserve their tradition they have stuck to weaving. So now people are not wholly dependent on weaving and many of them have turned to agriculture for a better living. Middle men are one of the problem that local weavers face. They grab major portion of the production's profit and don't let the weavers get what they truly deserve. Middle aged population of Santipur specially the male ones, migrate to other states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bengaluru, Maharashtra for better job opportunities where they are resolved to take such menial works like bell boy in hotels, labourers, masons etc. It is such a pity that despite being well skilled in weaving industry they are disheartened to further pursue a livelihood in this field as it doesn't pay them well. To reduce this migration problem, they should be included as an integral part of the cooperative system. Government inefficiencies is a major problem that the weavers face. Schemes are not executed properly and all of the money and the facilities not reached to the grass root people. They are totally deprived. So that planning execution is essential by which local people could get those facilities properly.

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### List of Tables

Table: 1- Yearwise Population Growth Rate

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION
1961	112432
1971	144311
1981	157052
1991	167897
2001	217289
2011	241080

Source: Census, District Statistical Handbook.

**Table: 2- Decadal Sex Ratio**

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

Source: Census, District Statistical Handbook.

**Table: 3- Population Composition**

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	SC POPULATION	ST POPULATION
1961	112432	23532 (20.92%)	7756(6.45%)
1981	157052	34481 (21.95%)	8842 (5.63%)
2001	217289	85352 (39.28%)	8069 (3.71%)
2011	241080	99539 (41.28%)	10318 (4.27%)

Source: Census, District Statistical Handbook.

**Table: 4- Literacy Rate**

YEAR	LITERACY RATE (%)
1961	31.52
1971	31.31
1981	36.71
1991	59.98
2001	64.06
2011	65.65

Source: Census, District Statistical Handbook.

**Table: 5- Working Population**

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL WORKER	MALE WORKER	FEMALE WORKER
1961	112432	4602 (4.09%)	4047 (3.59%)	555 (0.50%)
1971	144311	7445 (5.16%)	6800 (4.71%)	645 (0.45%)
2001	217289	93725 (43.13%)	69536 (32.00%)	24189 (11.13%)
2011	241080	100143 (41.54%)	75178 (31.18%)	24272 (10.36%)

Source: Census, District Statistical Handbook

**Table: 6- Year wise Occupational Structure**

YEAR	TOTAL WORKER	WORKS IN HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRY	WORKS IN NON HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRY
1961	4602	1731 (37.62%)	2871 (62.38%)
1971	7445	3025 (40.63%)	4420 (59.37%)
2001	93725	32307 (34.46%)	61418 (65.54%)
2011	100143	28993 (28.95%)	71150 (71.05%)

Source: Census, District Statistical Handbook.

**Table: 7- Growth Rate Of Handloom Worker**

YEAR	TOTAL WEAVING POPULATION	MALE	FEMALE
1995	27816	22809(82%)	5007(18%)
2005	50138	32590(65%)	17548(35%)
2014	76138	45683(60%)	30455(40%)

**Source: Handloom Development Office,Santipur, Nadia.**

**Table: 8- Population Characteristics**

CATEGORY	POPULATION (%)	AGE CLASS						GENERAL POPULATION (%)	SC (%)	ST (%)
		<20	20-40	30-40	40-50	50-60	>60			
MALE	57	2	15	10	30	35	8	76	1	23
FEMALE	43	10	13	40	10	20	7			

**Source: Primary Data.**

**Table: 9- Educational Status**

STANDARD	MALE (%)	FEMALE (%)
ILLITERATE	25	34
PRIMARY	35	40
SECONDARY	30	26
HIGHER SECONDARY	5	0
GRADUATE	5	0

**Source: Primary Data**

**Table: 10- Handloom Worker & Their Income**

MONTHLY INCOME (Rs.)	% OF WORKERS (male)	% OF WORKERS (female)
<1500	20	94
1500-3000	56	4
3000-5000	24	2

**Source:Primary Data**