

# **Annual Report**

**2005 – 2006**

**C H E T A N A   S O C I E T Y**  
**A N D H R A   P R A D E S H**

## Report

### **Activity I: Enhancing the Power in markets of the Poor engaged in Cotton-textile Supply chain, supported by Oxfam (GB) India**

In this period, the following has been achieved, in line with the objectives of *CHETANA*:

1. This activity has been serving the role of *beacon light*, focusing on issues, current and past, hitherto never considered on the public agenda
2. Workshops and meetings organized under this project have been the *only* activities in the State on handloom sector for the past two years.
3. Achieved production in a few production groups
4. Continuation of staff capacity building process
5. Dissemination of information and ideas through workshops, meetings and publications
6. Moving in the direction of steering the handloom agenda in the public domain onto real issues
7. Continuous collection of information and continuous movement on the path of building the resource centre

There are multiple challenges in taking up this activity. Principal among them are:

1. Addressing the dominant paradigm of ‘handloom is old, and modernization is the key’
2. Advocacy for better public policies for handloom sector
3. Addressing the inherent structural weaknesses in the handloom sector
4. Building a leadership that can work for the betterment of the handloom sector
5. Building a united response from the handloom sector
6. Addressing social, economic, production and trade related concerns of handloom sector

The link between different activities is apparent this year, as each activity feeds upon the other. Through its centre in Chirala, titled Chenetha Vignana Vidhana Kendram, the documentation of information is being done. Information collection and dissemination is helping in developing agenda. This needs to be deepened. The challenges remain and continue – building people-centric agenda and maintaining credibility of efforts are the principal challenges, as we see now. Efforts have been made in this report to make the reader understand the activities of the project, and how it has sought and is seeking to achieve the objectives it has set out for.

#### **Draft National Handloom Policy**

After years of demand from the handloom sector, government has finally brought out a draft National Handloom Policy, which was drafted by a Committee. Though this was welcomed by everybody, the process of development of the policy was not participatory. The policy itself

falls far short of expectations. This is the only institution which has taken up the task of discussing this policy through three Round Tables.

### **Information documentation and analysis**

In general, information documentation on handloom sector is not limited to secondary sources such as books, and/or reports. In fact, there is no secondary source with contemporary information on handloom sector. Previous publications are more than a decade old, and also do not cover many issues. Thus, the organization is also making efforts to push primary information into secondary and tertiary sources. But, it is just a start given the scope of the sector and the range of issues. To authenticate information as knowledge, analysis of primary information has to be done at various levels, spatial and conceptual. This knowledge, once developed, has to reach out to the people, towards an appropriate response in terms of awareness, learning, capacity building and action.

Documenting reports, news and articles on handloom, and other sub-sectors of textile industry in India is part of the activity. The number of news clippings on handloom sector in Andhra Pradesh per se have increased in the last three years, which itself is an achievement, given that mainstream media is giving less and lesser attention to issues of the poor. Despite some achievement in numbers, the quality of news and reporting on handloom sector has to improve.

In general, several books related directly to handloom sector have been acquired. Collection of books is under process. Many new titles were acquired. In Chennai, there was a surprise find of book on widow weavers in Assam. This was based on a study of the Janata Scheme and how it benefited these families. Subsequently, contact was established with the All Assam Widow Weavers Association. They in turn have sent a few publications free of cost. Similarly, books on cooperatives were collected from Chennai library. This included studies done on cooperatives in pre-colonial days.

While research reports from the University libraries is continuing, internet browsing is also yielding a number of reports. These are being printed, bound and classified for reference in the library. Presently, two kinds of reports are being downloaded – on textiles and government approaches to textile development. While doing survey on women in Emmiganur, the team came across a wealth of reports by different committees.

These reports provide information on handloom sector and the historical events. A total of 17 reports were gathered from here. Given that nobody lends such books, the local Librarian was kind enough to photocopy whatever has been asked for. Some of these reports have helped in understanding the issues lined up for publication and dissemination such as powerlooms and government schemes.

### **Information Dissemination**

#### **Newsletters**

One issue includes information on the Experts Committee in AP, lesson from US and EU textile industries, suicides and hank yarn obligation. This was brought out both in Telugu and English. Telugu version was sent to all the MLAs of AP Legislative Assembly. There was good response from some journalists on the lesson from US and EU.

Second issue includes information on AP Textile and Apparel policy 2005-10, sectoral conflict in Indian textile sector, Geographical Indications protection for handloom products, handloom census, and handloom sector in Tamilnadu. This was brought out in English and Telugu. There is a little divergence in the issues covered by Telugu and English versions.

### **Small Report**

Two reports, which essentially discuss the handloom situation in Anantapur and East Godavari districts were brought out. A Report on cooperatives was published in Telugu. This report essentially tries to bring up issues related to cooperatives in Andhra Pradesh, and the options available. This is based on secondary and primary information collected through various channels. A Round Table was organized on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2005, on this issue with the Presidents of cooperatives and trade union leaders in order to understand their positions. Discussions here have enriched the preparation of the report.

### **District-level workshop**

A district level workshop was organized in Kakinada, on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2005. Officials and non-officials attended this workshop. Another district-level workshop was organized in Siddipet in Medak district, on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2005. Siddipet is famous for golla bama-design sarees. Presently they are on the decline. This workshop was precisely to enable learning for the weavers. Mr. Raju, Director, APCO Board, Mr. Shankaraiah, Asst. Director (Handlooms and Textiles), officials of local cooperatives and about 156 weavers participated in this workshop. There was good interest among the weavers in the publications, especially the report on the budget. Participants wanted a survey of the district and bring up issues related to their problems.

Another District-level workshop on Handloom sector was organized in Kurnool, on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2006. Participants included weavers and leaders of different handloom trade unions and reps. of cooperatives from different parts of the district, including famous clusters such as Kodumuru and Emmiganur. The State Secretary of Andhra Pradesh Chenetha Karmika Sangham, Mr. Shanta Ram, also participated. Mr. M. A. Gafoor, MLA and Mr. Shikhamani, MLA were the chief guests. They wanted the government to respond to the needs of the handloom sector. Mr. Gafoor lauded the efforts of the organisation in developing awareness on the issues of concern to handloom sector.

### **Survey on Women Weavers**

Living and working conditions of women in handloom sector have not been documented so far. This survey was primarily to develop an understanding of the issues therein and also identify possible solutions to the problems being faced by women. As part of the survey so far, the following has been done:

- i. Development of a Methodology and questionnaire
- ii. Identification of field areas
- iii. Selection of field assistants of survey
- iv. Pilot survey in three areas in Chirala

However, availability of field assistants with knowledge and inclination to work on handloom sector is becoming a problem. Though two college students were identified and trained, search for other two continued. Meanwhile, the original have also indicated their inability to continue with the survey due to education schedule. Because of this, the survey is behind the schedule. Field research was completed by the end of February, 2006. However, secondary information collection has continued.

### **Know Handloom Campaign**

The objective of this KHC is to mobilize social support, and to disseminate information on handloom sector. KHC workshop was organized for doctors in Warangal, on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2005. Similarly, another workshop was organized for writers in Ananthapur, on 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2005. The first ever round table for university faculty was organized in Anantapur, on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2005. Participants included academicians from SKD University, NIRD, leaders of trade unions, journalists and writers. Mr. P. Madhu, Rajysabha MP, also participated in the event as Chief Guest. He was quite vocal in supporting the efforts of the organisation to take forward the mandate of championing the cause of handloom sector and the livelihoods of the weavers. Mr. Sreedhar Sitaraman, from NIRD, traveled from Hyderabad to participate in the Round table. Participants were unanimous in demanding more research efforts from the Universities on vulnerable sectors such as handlooms, given the employment potential and the dependence of semi-urban and rural population on handloom sector as an alternative to agriculture.

With teachers being busy with elections, school work, strikes and oncoming holidays, it became impossible to organize a Round table for them. Then, it was decided to organize a Round Table of *littérateurs* and writers, which would enable wider dissemination of information on handloom sector. The title of the meeting was “Telugu literature on Handloom sector”. On 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2006, in Hyderabad, this meeting was inaugurated by Mr. A. B. K. Prasad, Chairman, Official Language Commission. He was fully supportive of the need to continue handloom sector, given the tradition and the dependence of huge population for employment on the same. He also released the book of compilation of stories and poems on the situation of handloom weavers, titled as *Chenetha Gundekotha* (Bleeding of the Heart of handloom weaver). A bevy of famous writers and weavers also participated in the meeting. Some of them reviewed the book at the meeting. The overall comment was that this book should serve as an information source and inspiration for more such books to come.

Another KHC Round Table on Handloom Sector for Universities was organized in Vijaywada, on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2006. Being an event in the aftermath of the budget, the focus of discussions was on budget allocations for handloom sector, disparities in allocation and in general neglect of the sector by government policies. One of the participant, Mr. Sambasiva

Rao, said this organisation is doing the work of Universities, while the Universities have abandoned their social responsibilities in responding to livelihood crises in the aftermath of economic reforms and globalization. Participants included faculty from Nagarjuna University, NGOs, leaders of trade unions, journalists and writers.

### **Formation and training of Market Access for Production Groups**

This activity was initiated to build self-help groups through cooperation among the handloom weavers. These groups would consolidate individual savings at the group level. It would also be utilized to enhance the skills of handloom weavers and increasing capabilities. Weavers require market awareness and market-oriented production. Under this programme, 5 self-help groups in Nalgonda district and 6 groups in Prakasam district were formed. However, each of the groups are in different stages of formation in terms of networking, understanding among members, records and books, capacities and preparedness to respond to the market needs. This activity is intended to bring an attitudinal change among the weavers and reduce dependency. It would enhance market opportunities, encourage production of environment-friendly varieties, encourage group production in a independent format, increase wages, enable direct linkages between producers and the market, build awareness on national and international aspects linked to handloom sector, utilise government schemes and empower the weavers through capacity and institutional building process to take control of their livelihoods. So far, nine groups have been formed. A few groups have also initiated production with support from the organization.

### **Street Play – Chenetha Gosa (Plight of Handloom)**

A street play was developed which essentially highlights the policy making process on handloom sector in the context of crisis and how the result only depends crisis leading to suicides. This play requires 7 persons to play different characters.

### **Round Table on Experts Committee**

This was organized to disseminate information on the Experts Committee Report, on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2005. The State government had appointed a Experts Committee when it came to power in 2004. This Committee took its time in preparing a report about the handloom sector. Such an approach was taken to increase the learning process both ways. One immediate result was the participation of Mr. Udatha Subba Rao, who was recently appointed the member of Advisory Committee on Handloom Reservation Act by the government of India. From the responses of the participants, it was clear that they were looking for more information and analysis from the organisation on different aspects of handloom sector.

### **Round Table on Cooperatives**

This was organized to enable greater interaction with the local advocacy groups, and also get their inputs on cooperatives, on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2005. Cooperatives have been the mainstay of revival of handloom sector, before. However, issues have not been crystallized with regard to the cooperative sector. Participants were unanimous in their opinion that this issue needs to be assessed for possible policy options.

### **Consultation and Advocacy Workshops**

A workshop was organized on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2005, given the request from the participants of the Round Table, held before on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2005. It essentially discussed the oral presentation by the organisation on the report of the Experts Committee appointed by the AP government and also the AP Apparel and Textile Policy 2005-10 brought in its aftermath. Political leaders such as Mr. Koratala Satynarayana, CPIM Politburo Member, Dr. K. Narayana, CPI State Secretary, and representatives of all political parties, representatives of handloom trade unions and weavers participated in this meeting. Participants unanimously resolved to meet under the organization to convey the opinion on the report and the policy to the state government. On its own, this organisation promised to invite the Minister for handlooms and Textiles to the meeting to convey the feelings of the participants.

Another workshop was organized on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2006. This meeting was specifically organized to present the responses of the previous meeting to the government, through Mr. G. Vinod, Minister for Handlooms and Textiles. After listening to the presentation by this organisation, the Minister promised to hold a meeting with the officials at the same place to discuss on what needs to be done. However, the meeting has not materialized, so far.

### **Round Table on draft National Handloom Policy**

Indian government after a long time appointed a Committee which had produced a draft National Handloom Policy. While not many people knew about this Committee and its policy, this organisation obtained a copy of the policy. In order to promote discussion and debate, leading to better policies, this organisation organized a Round Table on draft National Handloom Policy, in Chirala, on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2006. This meeting was attended by weavers and rep. of organizations.

### **State-level Round Table on draft National Handloom Policy**

Buoyed by the response, this organisation had organized another Round Table Meeting on draft national Handloom policy and Handloom Budget 2006-07, in Hyderabad, on 29<sup>th</sup> March, 2006. Dr. K. Narayana, CPI General Secretary, Mr. P. Madhu, Rajysabha MP, Mr. Akurathi Venkateshwar Rao, formerly with APCO, Mr. E. Sudhakar Reddy, from NIRD, weavers and leaders of various trade unions and journalists participated in this workshop. Once again participants were unanimous in giving the mandate to this organisation to pursue the improvement of the draft policy. They did fully accept the presentation given by the organisation on both the budgets and the policy. This organisation had translated selected parts of the draft policy into Telugu, for the participants to develop their own understanding and learning. More work needs to be done.

### **Chethana Society- change in guard and other developments**

Mr. Pulugu Srinivas Reddy, President of Chethana Society, died on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2005, due to brain infection-related complications. Subsequently, Mr. T. R. Kolanu, Faculty, Administrative Staff College of India, was elected as President of the Board.

### **Staff Capacities**

Staff have undertaken exposure visit on cooperatives. They were also trained on process documentation and violence against women, both of which were coordinated by Oxfam. Mr. P. Suresh has completed his post-graduation, and has been making efforts to register himself for research at Nagarjuna University. He also underwent a training programme on research methodology at College of Social work, Hyderabad.

Institutional networking is being pursued within the handloom advocacy groups, as well as with academic and NGO sector institutions, within and outside the State of Andhra Pradesh, such as NIRD, NABARD, etc.. Primary surveys in the districts have enabled direct access to weavers, which was a great help in building bridges with grassroot activists and conscientious individuals. ‘Know Handloom Campaign’ was also helpful in breaking the barrier between handloom sector and the larger sections of the society. There are challenges because of the constraints on resources, human, financial and time. Thus, strategies have to be developed and monitored constantly to be effective.

**Activity II: Industrial Pollution in Andhra Pradesh: Developing Information Resource, supported by Global Green Grants Fund, USA**

A status report on the situation in the identified industrial areas is under preparation. This report would include the current environmental management initiatives. These initiatives would be analysed in terms of their objectives, efficacy and results. An employee is assisting in collecting information. Visits were also made to several places in India to enable learning and education by the staff of this organisation.

This Report would help in educating the people on various options and strategies to mitigate the problem of pollution. The broad activities envisaged include regular information collection, interactions (one-to-one meetings, round table, group meetings, and small workshops) and other formal and informal sources.