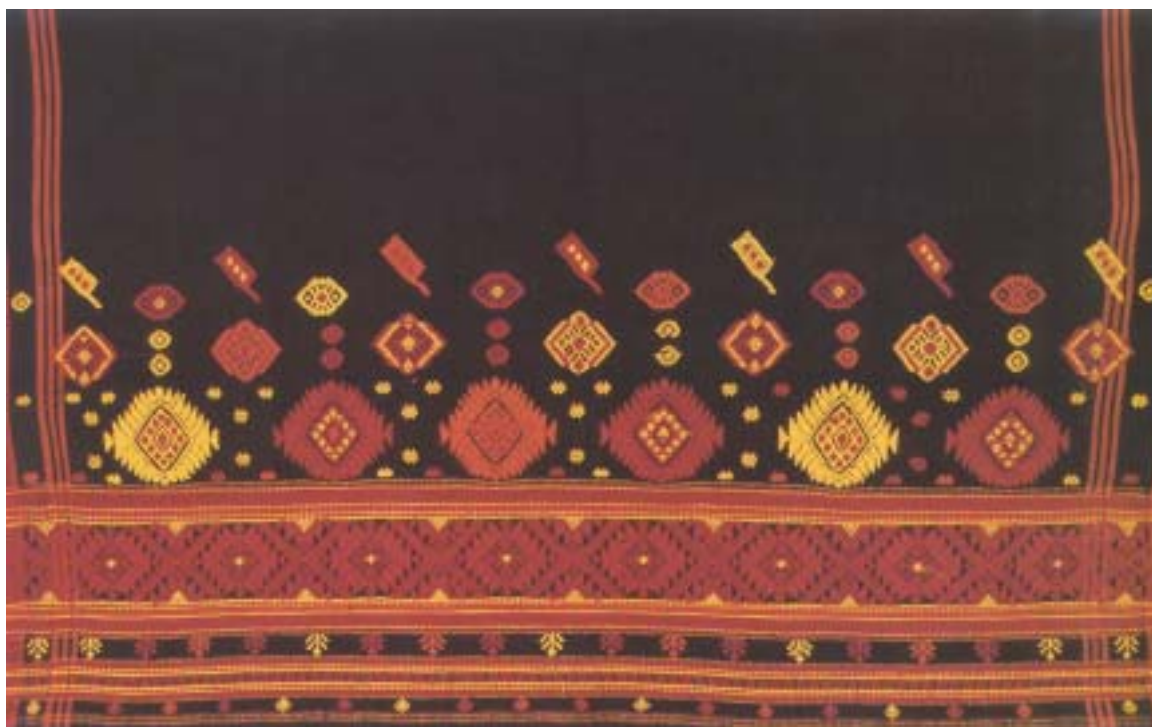


CHAPTER XV

TEXTILES IN NORTH EASTERN REGION



Cotton shawl from Gopalpur, Assam, woven on the lion loom, and worn by the women over their mekhala.

The North-Eastern Region (NER) comprises of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram and Sikkim. The textile based activities encompassing handlooms, sericulture, handicrafts, and jute are region's main source of gainful employment and income generation. They remain important due to their unique characteristics, exclusivity and flexibility for smaller production levels and export potential. The region's silk fabrics as well as cane/bamboo based crafts, have become popular not only in the country, but also abroad on account of their uniqueness, quality and designs. However, lack of basic, financial and infrastructural

facilities continue to constrain the production of these items on a commercial basis.

The Government, recognizing the immense potential of textiles related activities, is facilitating their promotion and development through various plan schemes. These schemes/programmes are expected to provide the requisite impetus not only for their preservation/ continuation but would also prepare them to face the challenges of globalisation. Adopting a strategy of focused approach towards the region's development, Special Policy Package for NER was introduced. As per the package, there has been an



earmarking of 10 percent of the Ministerial/ Department annual plan budget exclusively for implementation of developmental schemes & programmes in the region. Special policy incentives are also being given to NER, like raising the share of Central assistance upto 90 percent for all Centrally Sponsored Plan Schemes, as well as strengthening of the North Eastern Handicrafts & Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHHDC), now under the administrative control of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.

The concept of involvement of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in execution of plan schemes at the grass root level has been accepted and in sectors like handicrafts most of the

schemes are being operated through the NGOs.

The sector / scheme wise plan outlay and expenditure incurred in NER during third, fourth and terminal year of Xth plan (upto January 2, 2007) is given at Table 15.1.

Sector wise details

Sericulture

NER has a long tradition of silk production, especially non-mulberry silks like eri and muga variety. The Central Silk Board (CSB) is implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the NER for development of sericulture and silk textiles industry with cost sharing between the

Table 15.1

Plan Outlay & Expenditure for Textiles & Textile based Schemes in North East Region during 10th Plan (2002-07)

(Rs. crores)

Sl. No.	Sector	2004-05			2005-06				2006-07		
		(BE) Total	NER		(BE) Total	NER			(BE) Total	NER	
			Outlay	Exp		Outlay (BE)	Outlay (RE)	Exp.		Outlay (BE)	Exp. (upto 02.01.07)
1	Handlooms	154.6	34.2	20.6	156.0	25.0	28.0	26.1	185.0	35.0	12.6
2	Sericulture	102.5	30.0	25.2	110.0	30.0	36.4	35.7	142.0	35.0	17.9
3	Handicrafts	103.0	21.9	14.8	105.0	20.0	20.0	18.0	110.0	25.0	7.9
4	Jute (Sector)										
	(a) NCJD	7.0	1.7	1.7	7.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	9.0	2.0	0.7
	(b) SJDF*	-	-	-		3.0	2.0	0.0		3.0	
5	Apparel Park				100.0	10.0	10.0	0.0	209.0	20.0	
6	TCIDS				100.0	10.0	10.0	0.0			
7	TUFS				450.0	15.0	10.1	0.0	550.0	15.0	
8	Other Items	510.9			122.0				144.5		
	Grand Total	878.0	87.8	62.3	1150.0	115.0	118.4	81.7	1349.5	135.0	39.1

Centre and State in the ratio of 90:10 respectively. Under the Centrally sponsored Catalytic Development Programme during the Xth Plan, there is thrust on development of non-mulberry sector. During 2006-07, Rs. 35 crores (24.65% of Plan budget) has been earmarked for implementation of schemes in NER. Besides, under the SGSY project of the Ministry of Rural Development, financial assistance is provided for various sericulture projects which are being implemented in the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram & Nagaland with CSB's technical assistance. Due to this convergence strategy, there is a substantially higher availability of funds.

Handlooms

The NER has the highest concentration of handlooms in the country. Out of 25.4 lakh units engaged in handloom activities, 14.6 lakh units (household and non-house hold) are concentrated in five States only, i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura as per the Handloom Census 1995-96. Over 53% of looms in the country and more than 50% of weavers belong to NER. The share of these five States is 82% of the total domestic looms. About 13.4% of commercial looms are from NER. The contribution of NER, however, is about 20 percent towards total production of handloom fabrics in the country.

Support through Schemes

Handloom Export Scheme: During the Tenth Plan (2002-03 to 2005-06), nine export projects were sanctioned in the NER - seven to Assam, one to Nagaland and one to Manipur, covering 420 weavers and a sum of Rs. 56.22 lakh was released.

In view of low capital base of the cooperative societies, low productivity of traditional loom looms and apathy of the State Governments in providing financial

assistance to the cooperatives, the State Governments have not been recommending adequate number of proposals for the export projects. Because of these reasons, despite allocation of funds for export projects for North Eastern States and other developmental and welfare measures, the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms found it difficult to release funds in NER.

Welfare Schemes: The details of funds released during the Tenth Plan up to 2005-06, to the North Eastern States under the Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme and Weavers' Welfare Scheme are as under:-

Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme:

Under Workshed-cum-Housing Scheme during 2004-05, Rs. 700.00 lakh were released and 5808 units were sanctioned and during 2005-06, Rs. 860.00 lakh were released and 14121 units were sanctioned.

Weaver Welfare Schemes:

- a. **Thrift Fund Scheme:** Rs. 0.53 lakh were released and 57 beneficiaries were covered.
- b. **New Insurance Scheme:** Rs. 0.56 lakh were released and 936 beneficiaries were covered.
- c. **Health Package Scheme:** In 2002-03, Rs.64.44 lakh were released and 13,870 beneficiaries were covered; in 2003-04; Rs. 73.88 lakh were released; in 2004-05, Rs.208.52 lakh were released and 34,355 beneficiaries were covered; and in 2005-06, Rs.379.47 lakh were released and 46,520 beneficiaries were covered.

During 2005-06, 3123 weavers from Assam were covered under the Mahatma



Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana (MGBBY). However, under the Health Insurance Scheme (HIS) only a negligible number of weavers from Arunachal Pradesh were covered under the Scheme during 2005-06.

Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana is the flagship scheme for the development of handloom sector in the country. A special dispensation has been made for the special category States including NER. The grant portion of some of the components of the scheme is shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio of 90:10, except marketing incentive, which is in the ratio 50:50. The transport subsidy is extended to handloom agencies of NER and Jammu & Kashmir to facilitate marketing of handloom products in other parts of the country, strengthen backward linkages, and create more employment opportunities. The performance during the Tenth Plan period under DDHPY in NER is given in Table 15.2.

Handicrafts

The North-Eastern Region has predominantly tribal traditions, and nowhere is this reflected more than in the region's unique and varied handicrafts. NER, including Sikkim, has 8.87 lakh

handicraft artisans as per the Census conducted by NCAER in 1995-96. This works out to approximately 18.63 percent of the total artisans population in the country. The important crafts of this region are Cane and Bamboo, Mat weaving, Basketry, Wood work, Brass craft, Artistic textiles/Hand-block printing, Tribal Jewellery, Stone work, Terracota, and Jute Handicrafts.

Plan Schemes / Programmes for Handicrafts in the NER

The office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) has considerable presence in North East. The following offices are functioning in the Region:

1. Regional Office and Regional Design and Technical Development Centre at Guwahati.
2. Handicrafts Marketing and Service Extension Centres at Agartala (Tripura), Aizwal (Mizoram), Imphal (Manipur), Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), Kohima (Nagaland), Shillong (Meghalaya), Gangtok (Sikkim) and Gauripur, Joharat in Assam.
3. Bamboo & Cane Development Institute at Agartala.

Table 15.2
Outlay and Expenditure during 10th Plan under DDHPY

(in Rs. crores)

Year	Budget Allocated	Amount utilised
2002-03	12.00	14.67
2003-04	11.77	10.84
2004-05	13.20	9.57
2005-06	11.30	11.29
2006-07	18.50	18.50 (anticipated)
Total	66.77	64.87

4. Departmental Training Centres in Cane & Bamboo.

The important handicrafts based schemes being implemented in the region are Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Design & Technical Upgradation, Export Promotion, Marketing Support & Service and Research & Development in Handicrafts. The Plan Outlay for NER during Annual Plan 2006-07 is given at Tables 15.3.

Table 15.3

Plan Outlay for North Eastern Region during Annual Plan 2006-07

(Rs. crores)

Sl. No.	Sector	Total	NER	%age
1	Handicrafts	110.00	25.00	22.72

Although the handicrafts of this region are of good quality, utilitarian in nature and diverse in their range, yet they have not gained access to markets in mainland India or overseas. The crafts of this region also suffer on account of logistics problems, difficult terrain and the prohibitive cost of transportation.

Jute Sector

Raw jute and Mesta are grown mainly in the states of Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya and the fibre extracted is traditionally used for manufacture of items for local market like gunny bags, carpets, floor coverings, etc. The National Centre

for Jute Diversification (NCJD) is implementing the main schemes such as Jute Service Centre Scheme, Jute Raw Material Bank Scheme, Market Support Scheme and Design & Product Development Scheme in NER in the Jute Sector.

The Indian Jute Industries Research Association (IJIRA), Kolkata: IJIRA has set up its North Eastern Regional Centre at Guwahati, Assam. The Ministry of Textiles has sanctioned the necessary budgetary provision for North Eastern Regional Centre & Promotion of Natural Fibres (Jute, Ramie etc.) based Industries in NER. IJIRA Powerloom Service Centre (PSC) is rendering services to decentralized Powerloom Units of Assam for improvement in productivity. The Handicraft sector is also getting benefit through R&D works of IJIRA.

Constraints

In NER, difficulties in absorption of funds is a greater impediment than the availability of resources, funds are not being utilized due to a number of reasons, which include delay in submission of proposals, non release of the State Government's share in case of Centrally Sponsored Scheme and non-submission of utilization certificates, absence of infrastructure facilities and of credible Non Government Organisations (NGOs) in the region. There is an urgent need to make concerted effort to enhance the utilization of plan funds for the rapid economic development of this part of the country.

