

CHAPTER XV

TEXTILES IN NORTH EASTERN REGION



The North Eastern Region (NER) comprises Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram and Sikkim. A special focus on the economic development of the region has been recognized as one of the important elements of a strategy to handle the region's complex problems, including its peculiar geographical and locational constraints vis-a-vis other regions. In pursuance of PM's Special Policy Package for development of NER, introduced at the end of the VIIIth Plan, there has been an earmarking of 10 percent of the Ministerial/Departmental plan budget along with scheme/programme specific concessions/incentives for the region.

The decentralised sector activities covering handloom, powerloom, sericulture, handicrafts, wool 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 besides being a major source of employment after agriculture. The region's woolen & silk fabrics, including the exclusive Muga/Eri silks as well as cane/bamboo based crafts, have now 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 scale.

The Government, recognizing the immense potential of handlooms, handicrafts, sericulture and jute based products in the region, 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. Special policy incentives are 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 (DONER).

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 implemented through the NGOs. The sector / scheme wise plan outlay and expenditure incurred in NER during second, third and fourth year of Xth plan (upto 10.02.2006) is given at Table 15.1.

Some of the important schemes being implemented in the region for development of textile sector are Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana(DDHPY), Welfare Schemes for weavers and Marketing Promotion Scheme, Integrated Handloom

Training Programme (IHTP) and Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana (MGBBY) for weavers in Handlooms, Catalytic Development Programme(CDP), Integrated Eri and Muga Development Project in Sericulture, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHYV), Design & Technical Development, Marketing Support & Services scheme and Training & Extension in Handicrafts and schemes/ programmes being implemented by the National Center for Jute Diversification (NCJD) in Jute Sector.

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 Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the region. There is an urgent need to make concerted effort to enhance the utilization of plan funds in this region.

Table 15.1

(Rs. in crore)

Sl. No	Sector	2003-04			2004-05			2005-06		
		Total BE	NER		Total BE	NER		Total BE	NER	
			BE	Exp		BE	Exp		BE	Exp(till 10.02.06)
1	Handlooms	156.77	28.00	20.48	154.56	34.20	20.60	156.00	25.00	16.64
2	Sericulture	92.68	27.00	18.05	102.46	30.00	25.20	110.00	30.00	22.00
3	Handicrafts	103.55	16.00	7.13	103.00	21.90	14.75	105.00	20.00	8.21*
4	Jute (Sector)									
	(a) NCJD	7.00	2.50	2.00	7.00	1.70	1.70	7.00	2.00	1.55
	(b)SJDF	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.00	0.00
5	Apparel Park	25.00	2.50	0.00	-	-	-	100.00	10.00	0.00
6	TCIDS	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.00	10.00	0.00
7	TUFS	-	-	-	-	-	-	450.00	15.00	0.00
	Total	385.00	76.00	47.65	367.02	87.80	62.25	1028.00	115.00	48.40

Source Based on sanctioned from B&A/IFW (latest available)

*Figure upto 15.02.06

Sector wise details of the developmental activities are as follows:

Sericulture Sector

The thrust on development of Sericulture North East Region is continuing. The region has a long tradition of silk production, especially of non-mulberry silks of eri and muga variety. The Central Silk Board (CSB) is implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes in the region for development of sericulture and silk industry with cost sharing between the centre and state in the ratio of 90:10 respectively. Under the Centrally sponsored Catalytic Development Programme in the Xth plan, there is thrust on development of non-mulberry sector. During 2005-06, an amount of Rs. 36.42 cr. (27.93% of Plan budget) has been earmarked for implementation of schemes in North Eastern Region. Besides, under the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY) project of the Ministry of Rural Development, financial assistance is provided for various sericulture projects being implemented in the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram & Nagaland with CSB's technical assistance.

Handloom Sector

The North Eastern Region 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 the weavers belong to North Eastern States. The share of these five states in the domestic looms is 82%. However, only 13.4% of the commercial looms of the country are in those states and the contribution of these states in total production of handloom fabrics is merely 20%.

Keeping in view the potential of the region, it was decided to upgrade the Weavers' Service Centre, Guwahati as a Regional Design Centre in pursuance of the recommendations of the conference of the State Ministers (Handlooms) of North Eastern States held on 21-22.09.2000, it is now functioning as a Nodal Centre for designs development and dissemination of designs to the weavers in the region.

The Centre has set up a website which includes a museum of North-Eastern designs. The web-site has been linked with the National Centre for Textile Design for the benefit of the user agencies. It will also help link all those connected with the handloom industry. The Regional Weavers' Service Centre also undertakes imparting of training to the weavers in and outside the cooperative fold under Integrated Handloom Training Programme for providing value addition to the fabrics.

A special dispensation has been made under the Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana for the North Eastern States, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh. Under the scheme, the grant portion of some of the components of the scheme is shared between Central and State Governments for North Eastern States and Jammu and Kashmir 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 North Eastern States & Jammu and Kashmir to facilitate marketing of handloom products in other parts of the country and strengthen backward linkages in terms of more employment opportunities.

HANDICRAFT SECTOR

NER has a predominantly tribal or clannish traditions/heritage and nowhere is this reflected more than in the Region's unique

and varied handicrafts. The exquisite handcrafted items or products of the Region include a wide range of items like wood work, jewellery, pottery and metal work.

The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) is implementing a number of schemes/programmes for promotion of handicrafts in the region through – (i) Regional Office/ Regional Design and Technical Development Centre, Guwahati, (ii) Handicrafts Marketing and Service Extension Centres Agartala (Tripura), Aizwal (Mizoram), Imphal (Manipur), Itanagar (AP), Kohima (Nagaland), Shillong (Meghalaya), Gangtok (Sikkim) and Gauripur and Joharat in Assam, (iii) Bamboo and Cane Development Institute, Agartala and the various other organizations including the Departmental Training Centres in Cane and Bamboo. The Institutional and Technical support for promotion of handicrafts in NER is also being provided by the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Limited (NEHHDC).

The important handicrafts based schemes being implemented in the region are the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Design & Technical

Upgradation, Export Promotion, Marketing Support & Service and Research & Development in Handicrafts. The concept of involvement of Non Government Organization (NGO's) in execution of plan schemes at the grass root level has been accepted and in handicrafts sector almost 90% of the schemes are being operated through the NGO's including that in NER.

The details of plan expenditure incurred in handicrafts sector in NER during Xth Plan (2002-03 to 2004-05) and Plan Outlay for NER in Annual Plan 2005-06 are given in Tables 15.2 and 15.3 respectively.

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 following schemes in NER in the Jute Sector

- **Jute Service Centre Scheme.** Under the scheme service and extension centres are set up to disseminate information, create awareness about new technologies for manufacture of jute products. The

Table 15.2
Xth Plan Expenditure

Sl. No.	Sector	(Rs. in crore)		
		2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
1	Handicrafts	7.44	7.13	14.75

Table 15.3
Annual Plan outlay 2005-06

Sl.No.	Sector	(Rs. in crore)		
		Total	NER	%age
1	Handicrafts	105.00	20.00	19.04

- Centre also provides training to entrepreneurs to enable them to operate commercially.
- **Jute raw material Bank Scheme.** The scheme aims at establishment of raw material banks for fulfilling the requirement of jute yarn, providing information about diverse application of jute, creation of awareness amongst entrepreneurs and organizing technical work shops on application of jute.
 - **Market support scheme.** The scheme aims at facilitating small entrepreneurs and NGOs to gain exposure through participation in national level exhibitions, local fairs, buyer-seller meets and provides linkage of demand centre with producers of jute for meeting the demand of jute.
 - **Design & Product Development Scheme.** The scheme aims at

keeping beneficiaries abreast of latest design through workshops, product evaluation, engagement of specialized design agencies and development of prototypes etc.

During 2005-06 (till November, 2005), 56 activities were conducted and 1400 persons were trained.

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 North Eastern Region. 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 of R&D works of IJIRA.