

Chapter VI

Problems Faced by the Silk Weavers in Sualkuchi Village

6.1 Introduction

Weaving is the occupation of many rural people of Assam from ancient time period. Weaving is a part of our culture and heritage. There is a famous saying that “Assamese women are the born weavers.” Though silk weaving is one of the oldest livelihood activities, still it is in its subsistence level. Silk industry provides a huge amount of employment of the rural people specially for the females. Almost 60 lakh weavers are in this industry of the country, out of which 60.40% are the female weavers. These weavers contribute almost 19% of total cloth produced in the country and also affix significantly to export earnings. Silk productions need a very low cost of investment. So, anyone can easily make investment on this economic activity.

Though this silk industry is supremely suits for improving rural economy of Assam as well as India and it is used as a secondary industry to agricultural activities, it is stuck by various factors but this industry is passing through various challenging phases till date. The weavers facing a large number of economic and non-economic problems due to which they need to addressed accurately for the expansion of this sector.

In this chapter there is an aim to highlight the specific problems faced by the female weavers in Sualkuchi village of Kamrup district of Assam. The weavers mentioned these problems during the time of field survey. So, this chapter is fully based on field survey and primary data collection.

The basic problems of the weavers in the study area can be discussed on the following different sections- 6.2 Educational problem, 6.3 Non-Existence of Price Control of Silk Yarn, 6.4 Heavy Work Pressure of the Weavers, 6.5 Weavers Health Related Problems, 6.6 Problem Related with Pure Drinking Water in Work Place, 6.7 Sanitary Facilities of the Weavers on work place, 6.8 Lack of Electricity Facility on Work Place, 6.9 Wage Structure of the Weavers, 6.10 Festival Bonus Scheme, 6.11 Healthcare Facilities of the Weavers, 6.12 Pension Schemes for the Weavers, 6.13 Use Traditional Techniques, 6.14 Lack of development and Training, 6.15 Housing Facility of the Weavers in the Study Area, 6.16 Sexual Harassment at workplace, 6.17

Suggestions to Develop the Weavers Condition, 6.18 Prospects of Silk Weaving in Sualkuchi Village and 6.19 Conclusions.

6.2 Educational drawbacks of the Weavers in the Study Area

Education is the key tool for the development of any society and of course the country. Education is the main weapon for a huge range of global development. From the beginning of independence, India has always focused on improving the literacy rate of our country. Education helps to increase and improve knowledge and results in skill development consequently enhancing the superiority of human capital.

But it is seen that the education level of the weavers are very poor. The weavers are classified into six categories according to the base of their education, i.e.

- i. Illiterate weavers
- ii. Weavers who completed their primary education
- iii. Weavers who completed schooling up to class 8.
- iv. Weavers who passed out class X or HSLC
- v. Weavers who completed HS and
- vi. Graduate weavers

On the basis of these six categories, the number of weavers and their percentage out of total weavers are given on the following table-

Table 6.1
Educational Status of the Weavers in the Study Area

Educational Status	Number of Weavers	Percentage of Total Weavers
Illiterate	83	24.06%
Primary	125	36.23%
Up to Class VIII	74	21.45%
HSLC Passed	46	13.33%
HS Passed	17	4.93%
Graduate	0	0
Total	345	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Form table 6.1 it is seen that out of total 345 surveyed weavers, 83 weavers are illiterate that means they do not know how to read and write. They just put their thumb impression in any officials and necessary documents. These weavers are never gone to school. 125 weavers are just finished their primary education or just passed out class IV. After that they left their school. 74 weavers are class VIII passed out but they discontinue their education and left school. 46 weavers were completed HSLC level and 17 weavers are high secondary passed out. On the time of survey, it is found that not a single weaver is graduate. So, it is found that the education level is very poor to the weavers.

Since the educational background of the weavers is not strong, therefore it is seen that most of the weavers are not aware about the government plan and policies. They believe whatever their owner informed them. This is one of the most prominent weaknesses of the surveyed weavers which is arises due to educational drawback.

6.3 Non-Existence of Price Control of Silk Yarn

The basic problem faced by the entrepreneur in Pat-Muga industry is the non-existence of price control. This indicates the price of the products is not regulated. It is changes day by day or it is different on the basis of locality. Again, raw materials cost increasing in a rapid rate. It creates problems to production cloths. Apart from that, it also a major cause of silk price rise.

Table: 6.2

Price of Various Types of Silk Yarn (per KG)

Silk type	2010-2013	2013-2016	2016-2019
Muga silk yarn	Rs.25,000	Rs.30,000	Rs.40,000
Pat silk yarn	Rs.4000	Rs.4700	Rs.6,200
Tossar silk yarn	Rs.4000	Rs.4600	Rs.6,200

Source: Market study, 2016

Table 6.2 explains about the changes of silk prices on various years. On the period 2010-2013, Muga raw silk price was 25,000 per kg, which increases to Rs.30,000 on 2013-16. It again increases to Rs. 40,000 on the next three years i.e. Rs.40, 000. Again, in case of Pat Thread, the price of per Kg was Rs. 4,000 on the years 2010-2013, which increases to Rs. 4,700 and Rs. 6,200 on the next years i.e. 2013-2016 and 2016-

2019 respectively. On the other hand in case of Tassar raw silk, the price of per Kg was Rs.4, 000 which increases to Rs. 4,600 on 2013-2016 period and further the price increases to Rs.6,200 on the period 2016-2019.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the price of raw silk of silk yarn increases at very high rate, which affect the silk entrepreneurs as well as the weavers. Because due to high silk prices the entrepreneurs or the owners of the firms faces problems. They are not sure about the future silk yarn prices and it hampers on their production and which indirectly affects on weavers.

6.4 Heavy Work Pressure of the Weavers

Work pressure and stress at work are the burning issue at present world condition and this vital both employers and employees give these issues that awareness they deserve. Heavy work pressure and stress can lead to a weakening in the way employees work or even result in they are becoming sick. That influences an impact on the atmosphere in the workplace, the quality of work produced and so on. The reasons behind heavy work pressure and stress may lie in the work. It is based in the employee’s private circumstances or in a combination of both. Whatever the grounds, the problem affects employee performance. In many cases, the solution lies in the enclose of measuring targeting both the company and the individuals.

Table 6.3

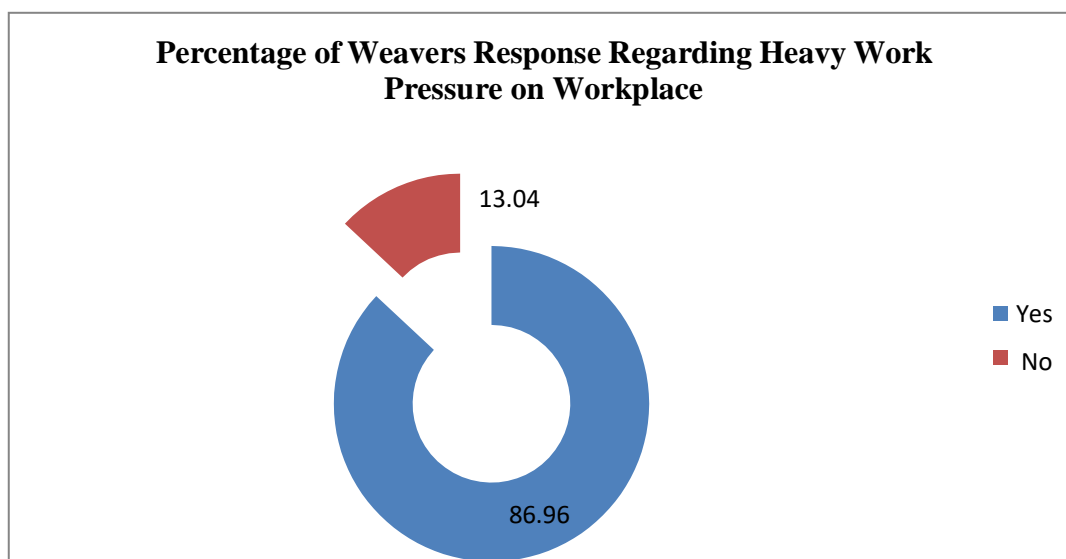
Heavy Work Pressure of the Weavers on Study Area

	Yes	No	Total
Total Number of Weavers	300	45	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.3 indicates weavers’ response regarding their work pressure. 300 weavers mentioned that they had to work under heavy work pressure. There are only 45 weavers out of 345, who said that they did not face heavy work pressure from their work.

Figure 6.1
Work Pressure of the Weavers



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Figure 6.1 indicates the percentage of weavers regarding their work load. 86.96% of the weavers mention that they have to face a very heavy work place. There were only 13.04% of the weavers whose work load are little bit lesser.

The heavy work load affects their work. These heavy work pressures are due to

- Lack of weavers
- Heavy demand on silk cloths

6.5 Weavers Health Related Problems

Sericulture is a labour oriented agro based industry which plays an important role in elevating Indian rural economy. Health problems are a bigger issue that is related with this sector. The weavers mentioned that they face severe health related problems during the time of weaving. The basic side effects of weaving are the various pain related problems such as back pain, neck pain, knee pain, foot pain etc, cold and fever, breathing problems and largely the eye related problems. Majority of the weavers informed about the various health related issues after joining weaving professionally. The basic reason of various health related problems of the weavers are the long working hours, mental stress, non eco friendly working environment and lack of proper lighting facility.

Table 6.4

Health Related problems of Weavers in Study Area

	Major Health Problem		Minor Health Problem		Total Number of Weavers
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	
Local Weavers	23	(16.08%)	50	(34.97%)	143
Outside Weavers	44	(21.78%)	69	(34.16%)	202
Total	67	(19.42%)	119	(33.62%)	345

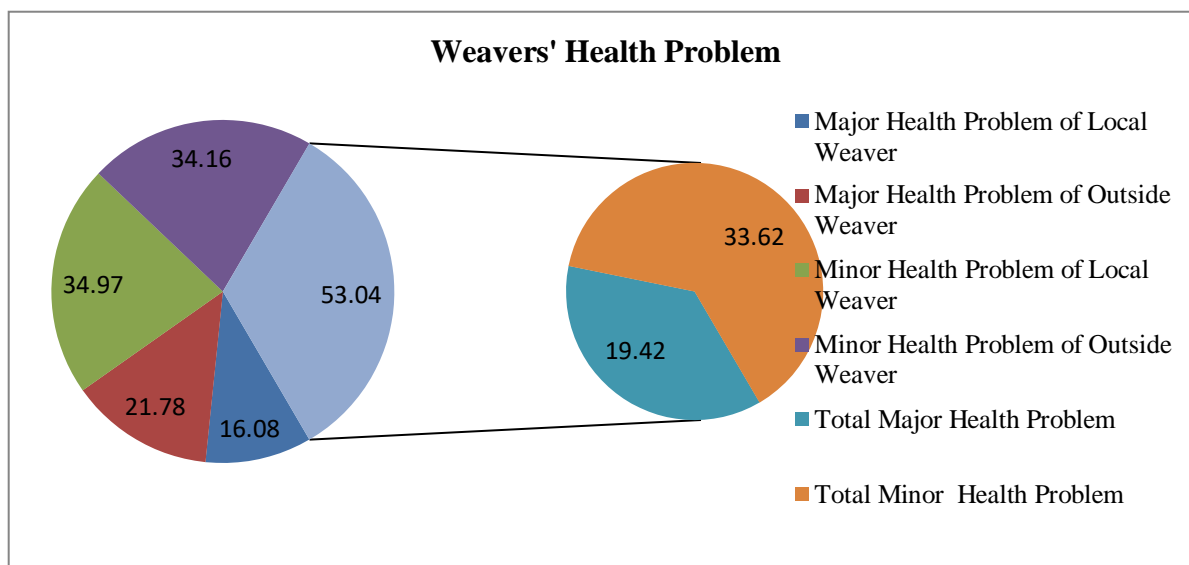
Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.4 explains about the health conditions of the weavers. The health problems of the weavers are divided into two parts- major health problems and minor health problems. 16.08% of the local weavers and 21.78% of the outside weavers were answered that they have major health problems. On the other hand 34.97% of the local weavers and 34.16% of the outside female weavers are suffered with various minor health problems.

The following diagram represents the health conditions of the various wavers-

Figure 6.2

Weavers Health Problems



Source: Field Survey, 2016

The figure 6.2 observed that out of total weavers 53.04% weavers are suffered with various health issues, out of which 33.62% of the weavers are suffered in minor health problems and 19.42% of the weavers are faced with major health problems. These health problems reduced the working hour, willingness to work or in other words reduce the marginal productivity of the weavers as they expected or originally having. On the other hand, it reduces the volume of production of the silk entrepreneurs. So, they also do not able to earn expected amount of revenue.

6.5.1 Eye Related Problems

Eye related problem is the major health problem related with the weaving sector. Most of weavers suffering from this problem. The basic reasons behind this problem are lack of proper lighting facility, constant stress on eyes and long working hours.

The following table indicates the amount and percentage of weavers having or not having eye related problems.

Table 6.5
Numbers of Weavers suffered with Eye problem

	YES		NO		TOTAL
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Local Weavers	83	58.04%	60	41.96%	143
Outside Weavers	150	74.25%	52	25.74%	202
Total	233	67.54%	112	32.46%	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

From the table 6.5, it is seen that 233 weavers are suffered with eye related problems out of total 345 weavers. In the division of local and outside weavers 83 weavers are affected from eye related problems and 60 weavers are not suffered with such problems. In other words, 58.04% of the local weavers are affected and 41.96% weavers are not affected with eye problems. Again in case of outside weavers 150 weavers are affected with eye problems and 112 are answered negatively. Almost 67.54% of the outside weavers are affected with eye related problems.

From the table, it is clearly seen that the outside weavers are affected more on eye problems than the local weavers. The basic reasons for this are:

- Lack of proper lighting facility in large size firms than the small size firms since they having more numbers of handlooms.
- Outside weavers have longer weaving hours than the local weavers.
- The local weavers take more break than the hired weavers in working hours, which give a rest to eye pressure.
- Average ages of the outside weavers are more than the average age of the local weavers.
- More of the local weavers are worked at small size firms. So, their numbers of handlooms are less and lights are properly come.

6.5.2 Weavers Pain Related Problems

The study shows that key health related problems of the weavers are classified under muscular skeletal problems such as back pain, knee pain and joint pain. The basic reason of these muscular skeletal problems are the long working hours of the weavers in various harmful positions on traditional looms and instruments used on the time of weaving. At the time of survey, more than 70% of the weavers are complained about various pain related problems such as neck pain, back pain, foot pain, joint pain etc.

Table 6.6

Numbers of Weavers Having Different Types of Pain Problems

	Having Pain	Not having pain	Total
Local Weavers	85	58	143
Outside Weavers	158	44	202
Total	243	102	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

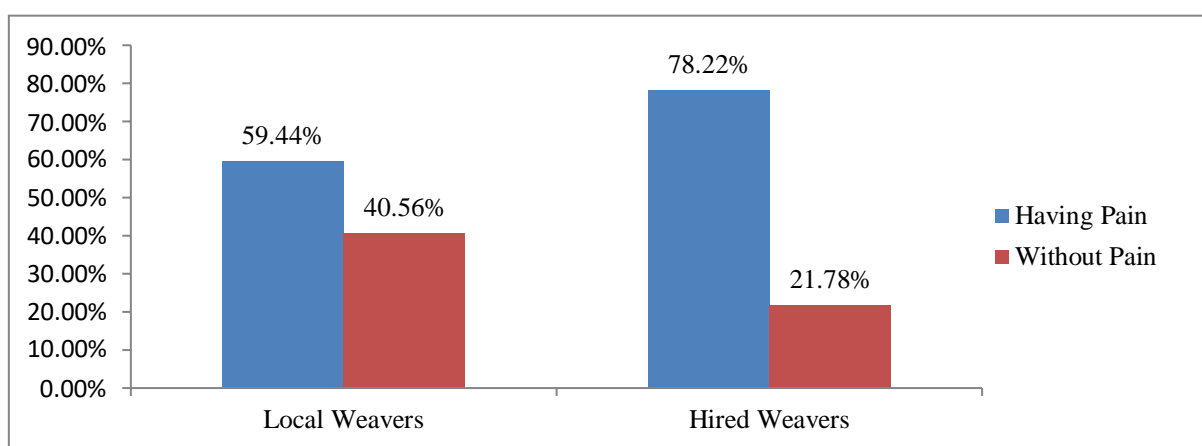
Table 6.6 observed about the number and percentage of weavers who complain about various pain related problems. The table is divided between the local weavers and the outside weavers. Out of 143 local surveyed weavers, 85 weavers having different

pain related problems. The observation clearly notified that the outside weavers having more pain related problems than the local weavers. The reason behind this

- Outside weavers have longer weaving hours than the local weavers.
- The local weavers take more break than the outside weavers in working hours.
- The local weavers' work place is near to their house. So they frequently go to their houses which give them a break and they feel relaxed.
- Average ages of the outside weavers are more than the average age of the local weavers.

Figure 6.3

Percentage of Weavers Having Different Types of Pain Problems

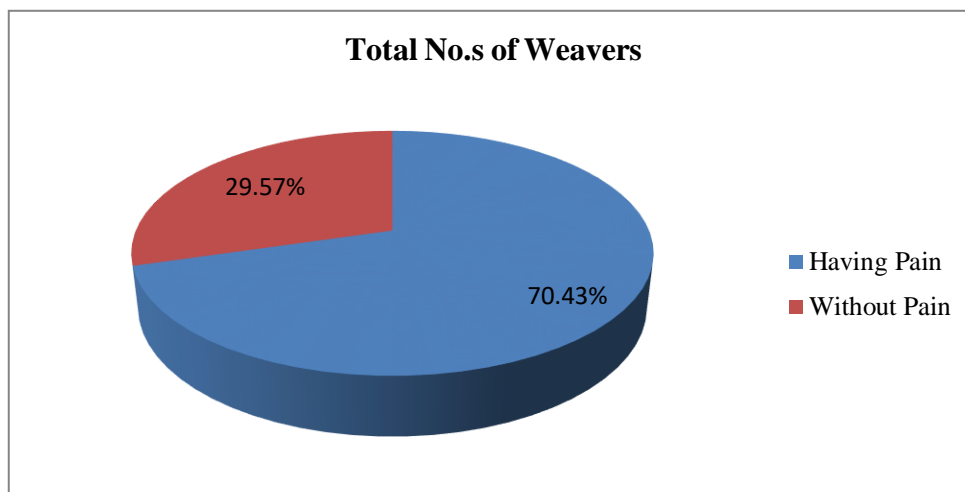


Source: Field Survey, 2016

Figure 6.3 presents the ration between the weavers having pain and without pain on the basis of local and outside weavers. 59.44% of the local weavers complain about neck pain, joint pain, back pain, knee pain and 40.56% of the weavers are informed that they do not have any type of pain related problems. On the other hand in case of outside weavers 78.22% of the weavers having various pain related problems and only 21.78% of the outside weavers' lives without any pain related problems.

The following pie diagram given an idea about the total number of weavers having pain related problems and without pain related problems.

Figure 6.4
Percentage of Total Weavers Having Pain



Source: Field Survey, 2016

Figure 6.4 clearly shows that more than 70% of the weavers having various pain related problems. So, pain is the one of major health related problems faced by the weavers in this sector.

Due to the pain problem, weavers are not able to seat longer time for weave. This reduced the working hour, willingness to work or in other words reduce the marginal productivity of the weavers as they expected or originally having. On the other hand, it also reduces the volume of production of the silk entrepreneurs. So, they also do not able to earn expected amount of revenue.

6.6 Problem Related with Pure Drinking Water in Work Place

Pure drinking water is that type of water from a source which removed all impurities. Pure drinking water is also known as purified water or portable water. The issue of safety and accessibility of drinking water are foremost concerns throughout the whole world. Most of the health risks may begin from the consumption of water contaminated with contagious agents, radiological hazards and toxic chemicals. Improving access to safe and pure drinking water can result in substantial improvement to health. Access to safe and pure drinking water has created a huge problem for entire India, especially for the rural areas of the country, which creates health problems from decades. By 2013, a survey results that 30% of India's rural people continues to live

without proper access to safe and pure drinking water. More than 163 million people in India do not consume pure and clean drinking water.

Table 6.7

Weavers Pure Drinking Water Problem

	Yes		No		Total
	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	
Number of Weavers	263	76.23%	82	23.77%	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The survey results that 76.23% of the weavers lived without pure drinking water on their work place. They mentioned that they have to consume water either directly from “well” or “tube bells”. They do not have any filter or water purifier facility on the work place. This affects the health of the weavers. They mentioned that they frequently suffered with dysentery, diarrhoea etc. If the weavers are not physically fit, then it effects on the weavers productivity, as well as their income level. The incomes of the weavers have a direct relationship with women empowerment. The low income level reflects a lower level of women empowerment. Only 23.77% of the weavers mentioned that they have water filter in their work place and able to drink pure, safe and clean water.

6.7 Sanitary Facilities of the Weavers on work place

The work place should have proper sanitary facilities. Clean toilets, shower rooms and washing facilities are the essential of any work place. Almost all the developed countries around the world, the provision of these facilities has been made mandatory through laws and regulations. It is essential to make available a sufficient number of such facilities and to maintain them clean. The workplace should afford separate urinals for male and also toilets should be separated for both male and female workers. Apart from them, one wash basin should be there for every 30 workers. These sanitary facilities are mandatory for workers well being and to prevent them from various contagious diseases. A properly maintain sanitary system helps to improve productivity of the workers because a healthy worker is more professional and less

absenteeism. But, in our country, unfortunately, sanitary facilities are often neglected. They are often insufficient in numbers, poor maintenance and far from the workplace. These create lots problems to the workers and frequently infected with various types of diseases, which reduce their productivity.

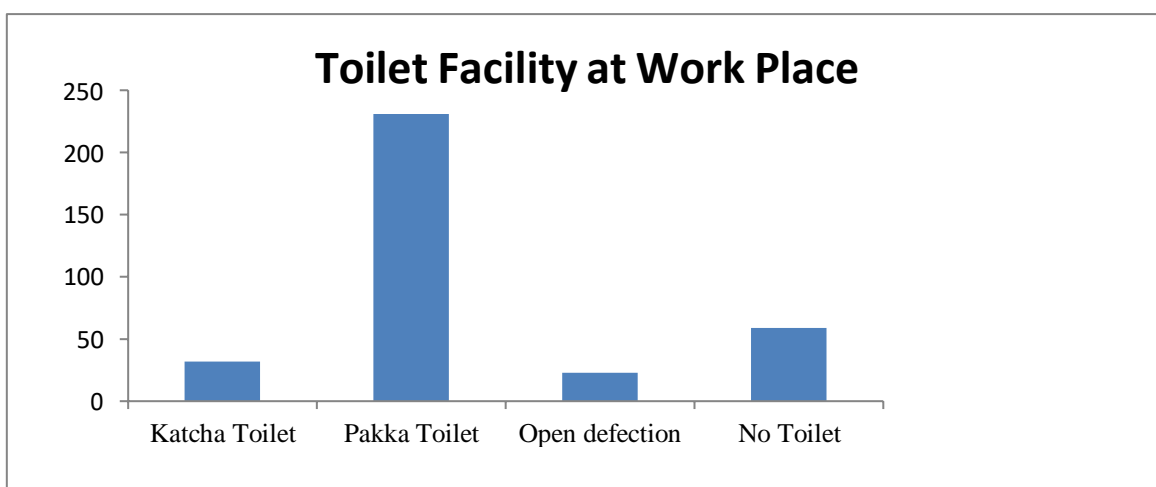
Table 6.8
Toilet facility on workplace

	Katcha	Pacca	Open defection	No Toilet	Total
Number of Weavers	32	231	23	59	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.8 observed about the sanitary facility of the weavers on their work place. It is found that though most of the weavers are facilitated with pacca toilet or proper sanitary facility but a lots of weavers faced sanitary problem. 32 weavers mentioned that they had “Katcha toilet” on their work place and 23 weavers mentioned that they have to go open defection. There are 59 weavers who informed that there are not any toilet or urinal facilities on their workplace. Apart from that, all the weavers mentioned that there are no any separate toilet facility for male and female weavers. They all have to use same toilets, which often create problems to them.

Figure 6.5
Weavers’ Toilet Facility at Work Place



Source: Excel Sheet (Field Survey, 2016)

From the figure, it is clearly seen that number of “pacca toilets” are more than the others. But according to the weavers, though they have “pacca toilets” on their work place, it is not properly maintained. It is not hygienic or clean. Water facility is too far from the toilets. So, they face a huge problem from the sanitary system.

Table 6.9

Bathroom and Urinal Facility in the Work place

	No Bathroom/Urinal		Having Bathroom/Urinal		Total
	Total Numbers	Percentage	Total Numbers	Percentage	
Number of Weavers	129	(37.39%)	216	(62.61%)	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.9 indicates about the numbers of respondents having and not having bathroom or urinal facility on their work place. From the table it is seen that out of total 345 respondents, 216 answered positively to having bathroom and urinal facilities. So, 62.61% of the total respondents having bathroom and urinal facility in their work place. But, 37.39% of the weavers mentioned that they do not have any bathroom or urinal facility in their work place and this create a big problem to them.

6.8 Lack of Electricity Facility on Work Place

India is the world’s 6th largest energy consuming country. The country consumes 3.4% total global energy. 65% of India’s total electricity consumption is generated by thermal power plants, 22% by hydroelectric power plants, 3% from nuclear power and the remaining 10% is generated from other alternative sources like sun/ solar, biomass, wind etc.

Lack of electricity facility on the work place is the biggest drawback for any workplace. The following table represents the amount of weavers having electricity facility on their work place.

Table 6.10

Numbers and percentage of Weavers having Electricity Facility at Workplace

	With Electricity Facility		Without Electricity Facility		Total
	Numbers	Total Percentage	Numbers	Total Percentage	
Numbers of Total Weavers	215	62.32%	130	37.68%	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

From the table 6.10, it is observed that 215 weavers mentioned that they have electricity facility with them on their work place and 130 weavers mentioned that they do not have electricity facility with themselves. This indicated 62.32% of the weavers having electricity facility on their work place and 37.68% of the weavers faced the problem of lack of electricity. The basic problems arise due to lack of electricity on their work place are-

- Workers have to finish their work before sun set.
- Their working hour reduced
- In bad weather condition, weavers are not able to work.
- Eye problem may arise due to lack of proper lighting facility.

On the following table the number weavers are divided on the basis of local and outside weavers to check the percentage of electricity facility

Table 6.11

Electricity facility on work place based on Local and Outside Weavers

	With Electricity		Without Electricity		Total
	Numbers	Total Percentage	Numbers	Total Percentage	
Local Weavers	56	(39.16)	87	60.84%	143
Outside Weavers	159	78.71%	43	21.29%	202

Source: Field Survey, 2016

On table 6.11, it is observed that out of 143 local weavers, 56 (39.16%) weavers having electricity facility on their work place and 87 (60.84%) do not have electricity facility. The percentage shows that most of the local weavers work without electricity facility with them. On the other hand, it is seen that, in case of outside weavers, 159 (78.71%) having electricity facility and 43 (21.29%) weavers do not have electricity facility. So, more percentage of outside weavers in Sualkuchi area having electricity facility on their work place. From the above table, it is seen that in case of local weavers, more of them work without electricity and in case of outside weavers; more are work with electricity on their work place. The reason behind this are-

- The outside weavers working hours are more than the local weavers.
- Outside weavers continue their work till night.
- Most of the outside weavers' work place and their living place are same.
- Outside weavers are worked in more professional workplace.

6.9 Wage Structure of the Weavers

The wages of the weavers are different in various categories of silk garments. Basically there are 3 division of garments based on their work. The works are done by

4. Guna and Suta
5. Only Guna and
6. Only Suta.

The various wages are given by the following tables

Table: 6.12

Payment structure of weavers in Guna-Suta Design

Name	Wage per pc
Sador	Rs.700
Mekhela	Rs.500
Riha	Rs.400

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The wage of per piece Guna and Suta (design) mix Sador is Rs.700, Mekhela is Rs.500 and Riha is Rs. 400. That means in a full set of Assamese Mekhela Sador (which

contains Sador, Mekhela and Riha) the owner have to pay Rs.1600 to the weavers. Though the time range to complete the work is based on the design, skill and weaving speed of the weavers but normally it is seen that it takes 5 to 10 days.

Table: 6.13

Payment structure of weavers based on only Guna Design

Name	Wage per pc
Sador	Rs. 1000 to Rs.1200 (based on design)
Mekhela	Rs.700 to Rs. 800
Riha	Rs.500 to Rs.700

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The wage of per piece Guna (design) Sador is between Rs.1000 to Rs.1200, Mekhela is between Rs.700 to Rs 800 and in case of Riha, it is between Rs. 500 to Rs.700. That means in a full set of Assamese Mekhela Sador (which contains Sador, Mekhela and Riha) the owner have to pay Rs.2200 to Rs 2700 to the weavers. Though the time to complete a set is based on the design, skill and weaving speed of the weavers but normally it is seen that it takes 7 to 15 days.

Table: 6.14

Payment Structure of weavers based on only Suta Design

Name	Average payment per piece
Sador	Rs. 700
Mekhela	Rs. 425
Riha	Rs.375

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The wage of per piece only Suta (design) Sador is Rs.700, Mekhela is Rs.400-450 and Riha is Rs. 375. That means in a full set of Assamese Mekhela Sador (which contains Sador, mekhela and Riha) the owner have to pay almost Rs.1300 to the weavers. Though the time of the work is based on the design, skill and weaving speed of the weavers but normally it is seen that it takes 2 to 4 days.

6.9.1 Satisfaction level of the weavers regarding payment structure

Table 6.15

Satisfaction level of the weavers regarding payment

Satisfaction level of the weavers regarding payment structure	No	Yes	Total
Total	345 (100%)	0	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

To ask a question regarding the weavers' satisfaction with their payments, every weaver mentioned that they were not happy with their payment procedures. The given amount are too less to full fill their daily needs. The weavers informed that wage distribution is their basic problem. They deserved higher wage than they presently got. If the weavers are unsatisfied with their payments, then the weavers are not interested to perform their job accurately and this hampers their productivity and the level of empowerment.

6.10 Festival Bonus Scheme

Table 6.16

Number and Percentage of Weavers with and without Festival Bonus

	With bonus facility	Without Bonus	Total
Small size farm	100 (68.97%)	45 (31.03%)	145
Medium size farm	75 (72.12%)	29 (27.88%)	104
Large size Farm	90 (93.75%)	06 (6.25%)	96
Total	265(76.81%)	80 (23.19%)	345

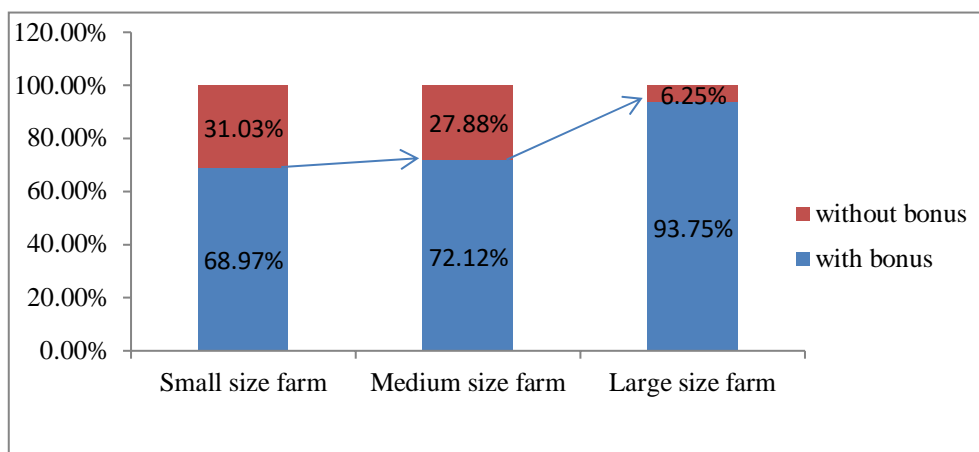
Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.16 observed the festive bonus facility of the weavers. 68.97% of the small size firm's weavers are getting festival bonus where 32.03% of the weavers

mentioned that they did not get any bonus during festival times. 72.12% of the weavers on medium size firms get festival bonus facility whereas 27.88% weavers mentioned that they did not. In case of large size firms, 93.75% weavers answered positively and 6.25% answered negatively regarding their festive bonus.

Figure 6.6

Percentage of Weavers with and without Bonus facility



Source: Excel Sheet (Field Survey, 2016)

From the figure 6.6, it is clearly seen that in large size firms, the weavers get more bonus facility than the other two categories of firms. It is because, they are more professional, and their amounts of outside weavers are more. So, they always try to make happy to the weavers by offering bonus. The weavers also get festival holidays during the time of festival. This worker bonus system makes the weavers happy and they tried to work harder. The opposite situation happens if the bonus system is not there. Bonus should be mandatory for every weaver.

6.11 Healthcare Facilities of the Weavers

Healthcare is mixed up directly or indirectly with the provision of health services to individuals. These services include variety of work settings, started from hospitals, clinics, dental offices, emergency medical facility, birthing healthcare, out-patient surgery centres, nursing homes and home healthcare.

Table 6.17

Number and Percentage of Weavers obtained Various Healthcare Facilities

	Medical facility	Payment during sick period	ESIC facility	Insurance facility	Total
Small Size Firm	14	-	-	-	145
Medium Size Firm	20	-	-	-	104
Large Size Firm	35	-	-	-	96
Total	69	-	-	-	345

Source: Field Survey, 2016

The above table, i.e. table 6.17 explains about the medical facilities provided by the owner to their weavers. The medical facilities are divided under the columns medical facility which include first aid box etc, payment during sick period, ESIC facility and insurance facility.

The weavers are arranged on the basis of their working firm size. The 145 workers are worked under small size firm, out of which only 14 weavers mentioned that they got medical facility on their work place. 104 weavers are worked under Medium size firms and out of them only 20 weavers got medical treatment from their owner. 96 weavers are under large size firms and out of which only 35 are getting simple medical facility from their owners.

On the other hand, no one get ESIC facility, which Government make compulsory for the owner of an organization who has 10 or more employees. There are not any provisions for the sick payment and insurance policies for the weavers in the study are. So, it is clearly seen that the weaver's medical facility is very poor and they need some strong policy against it. If there is some healthcare facilities on their work place, then weavers feel more secured with their job and health. If the weavers have healthcare facility then they can easily go to consult with doctors on any type of health

problem which they suffered and they stay fit. A physically fit weaver has more marginal productivity than a physically unfit weaver, which affects on weavers Monthly income.

6.12 Pension Schemes for the Weavers

Pension is a vital mechanism that helps in leading a financially stable life after retirement or at the age when a person is not willing and physically permissible condition due to his or her old age to continue his vocation. With rapid economic growth, the cost of living has augmented multiple for every individual, providing them with funds to cover the daily expenses, medical needs and other eventuality expenses to lead a comfortable and easy life. Pension is also necessary to cover up post retirement expenses like to maintain an independent life and social security.

But during field survey, it has been noted that weavers are not get any pension facility from their work place. There are some weavers who worked more than 35 years under the same owner, though they unable to get any type of pension facility or remuneration. In fact, the weavers do not have any provident fund facility.

6.13 Use Traditional Techniques

Almost all of the producers use the old traditional technique to produce Pat or Muga cloth. It is more time consuming and expensive. If they use the developed machineries and modern techniques then their cost of production will reduce as well as them able to give better quality. Due to the old and traditional technology used by India i.e. handlooms, the average productivity of handlooms were 4-10 meters per day. If country adopt power looms than per day productivity can be increased by 40-60 meters per day.

According to K.K. Shetty, the Joint secretary of Central Silk Board, “handlooms account for about 85 percent of silk consumption in India while power looms uses by only 15 percent. We have developed silkworm seeds that can produce silk suitable for power looms” (CSB report, 2016)

6.14 Lack of development and Training

Lack of management and training is another problem faced by the entrepreneurs in this silk industry. Weaving is a skill which one generation learn from the another

generation. For example, daughters are learning from their mother, sisters or from their mother in laws. Though they know how to weave but they are not skill weavers. They need more time to produce one item and they do not up to date with modern fashion. Now a day, people are very aware and attracted to modern fashion technology. Customers always wants new item or in silk cloths, customers want new designs. So, if government and NGO's are provide training to the weaver and entrepreneur, then their profit margin will be much higher. Though there are various schemes adopted by Central Silk board, but it is not sufficient to give training to the weavers and silk related peoples.

6.15 Housing Facility of the Weavers in the Study Area

Proper housing facility plays a significant role in the well being of an individual, a community and thus influencing a lot of the social and economic activities carried out in the area. Proper housing facility indicates Electricity facility, proper hygienic toilets, urinals and bathrooms, pure drinking water facility, cooking with LPG facility etc. in absence of proper housing facilities or unhygienic environments reduces health quality as well as standard of livings.

Table 6.18

Housing Characteristics of the Weavers in Study Area

	Own house	Rented house	Owners house
Local Weavers	143 (100%)	NF	NF
Outside Weavers	NF	64 (31.68%)	138 (68.32%)
Total	143	64	138

Source: Field Survey, 2016 *NF = Not Found

Table 6.18 indicates that out of total respondents, 143 were local weavers and 202 were outside weavers from various nearby places of Sualkuchi. It is indicates that all the local weavers lived in their own houses. That means 100% of the local weavers are stayed on their own residence. On the other hand, out of total 202 outside weavers, 64 (31.68%) weavers stayed in rented houses and 138 (68.32%) weavers are lived on houses provided by the owner. No outside weavers lived on their own houses on the study area. From the study it is clear that most of the outside weavers (more than 60%) stayed on the houses provided by the owners.

6.15.1 Housing Facility of the Weavers Lived On Their Own House

Table 6.19

Housing Facility of the Weavers Lived On Their Own House

	No Electricity facility	Un hygienic Toilet	No pure drinking water (Filter Water)	Without LPG cooking facility	Total
Small Size Firm	-	13 (14.60%)	46 (51.68%)	18 (20.22%)	89
Medium Size Firm	-	7 (22.58%)	22 (70.96%)	8 (25.81%)	31
Large Size Firm	-	5 (21.74%)	10 (43.48%)	4 (17.39%)	23
Total	0	25 (17.48%)	78 (54.55%)	30 (20.98%)	143

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.19 indicates the housing conditions of the weavers who lived on their own houses the study area. It is observed that out of total 143 weavers, who lived in their own houses, 89 are belongs to small size firms, 31 are belongs to medium size firms and 23 are belongs to large size firms. All the respondents informed that they have electricity facility on their houses. 14.60% weavers from small size firms are with unhygienic toilets, 51.68% of the weavers do not consume pure drinking water and 20.22% weavers do not use LPG for cooking. In case of medium size firms 22.58% weavers with unhygienic toilets, 70.96% without pure drinking water and 25.81% weavers lived without LPG cooking facility. Similarly in large size firm weavers category, 21.74% without hygienic toilets, 43.48% are without pure drinking waters and 17.39% are without LPG cooking facility. As a total of the weavers who lived on their own houses, 17.48% weavers are lived without hygienic toilets, 54.55% without pure drinking water and 20.98% of the weavers without LPG cooking facility.

6.15.2 Housing Facility of the Weavers Lived on the House provided by the Owner

Table 6.20

Housing Facility of the Weavers Lived on the House provided by the Owner

	No Electricity facility	Un hygienic Toilet	No pure drinking water	Without LPG cooking facility	Total
Small Size Firm	3 (30%)	4 (40%)	7 (70%)	4 (40%)	10
Medium Size Firm	10(24.39%)	17 (41.46%)	35 (85.37%)	17 (41.46%)	41
Large Size Firm	28 (32.18%)	34 (39.08%)	72 (82.76%)	36 (41.38%)	87
Total	41 (29.71%)	55 (39.86%)	114 (82.61%)	57 (41.30%)	138

Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.20 indicates the housing conditions of the weavers who lived on houses provided by the owners in the study area. It is observed that out of total 138 weavers 10 are belongs to small size firms, 41 are belongs to medium size firms and 87 are belongs to large size firms. In case of small size firms, 30% of the weavers do not have electricity facility. 40% weavers from small size firms are lived with unhygienic toilets, 70% of the weavers do not consume pure drinking water and 40% weavers do not use LPG for cooking. In case of medium size firms 24.39% weavers were without electricity facility, 41.46% with unhygienic toilets, 85.37% without pure drinking water and 41.46% weavers lived without LPG cooking facility. Similarly in large size firms, 32.18% are without electricity, 39.08% without hygienic toilets, 82.76% are without pure drinking waters and 41.38% are without LPG cooking facility. As a total of the weavers who lived on their owners' houses, 29.71% were without electricity facility, 39.86% weavers are lived without hygienic toilets, 82.61% without pure drinking water and 41.30% of the weavers were without LPG cooking facility.

6.15.3 Housing Facility of the Weavers Lived On the Rented Houses

Table 6.21

Housing Facility of the Weavers Lived On the Rented Houses

	No Electricity facility	Un hygienic Toilet	No pure drinking water	LPG cooking facility	Total
Small Size Firm	1 (10%)	2 (20%)	6 (60%)	4 (40%)	10
Medium Size Firm	2 (9.52%)	3 (14.29%)	14 (66.67%)	9 (42.86%)	21
Large Size Firm	5 (15.15%)	4(12.12%)	20 (60.60%)	25 (75.76%)	33
Total	8 (12.5%)	9 (14.06%)	40 (62.5%)	38 (59.38%)	64

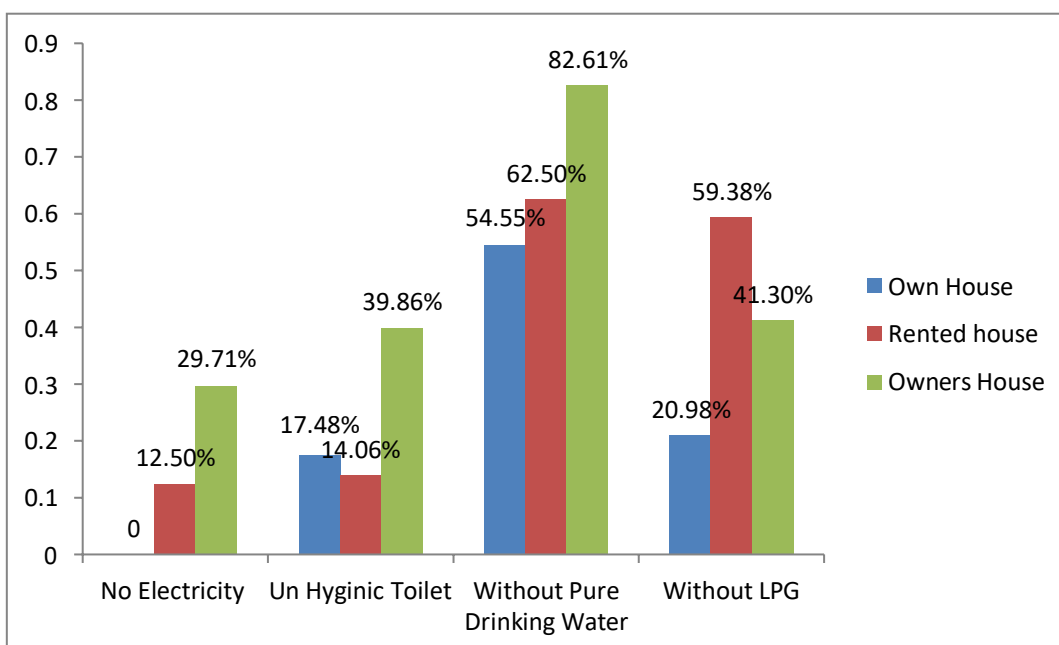
Source: Field Survey, 2016

Table 6.21 indicates the housing conditions of the weavers who lived on rented houses in the study area. It is observed that out of total 64 weavers who lived on rent, 10 are belongs to small size firms, 21 are belongs to medium size firms and 33 are belongs to large size firms. In case of small size firms, 10% of the weavers do not have electricity facility. 20% weavers from small size firms are lived with unhygienic toilets, 40% of the weavers do not consume pure drinking water and 40% weavers do not use LPG for cooking. In case of medium size firms 9.52% weavers were without electricity facility, 14.29% with unhygienic toilets, 66.67% without pure drinking water and 42.86% weavers lived without LPG cooking facility. Similarly in large size firms, 15.15% are without electricity, 12.12% without hygienic toilets, 60.60% are without pure drinking waters and 75.76% are without LPG cooking facility. As a total of the weavers who lived on their rented houses, 12.5% were without electricity facility, 14.06% weavers are lived without hygienic toilets 62.5% without pure drinking water and 59.38% of the weavers were without LPG cooking facility.

6.15.4 A Comparison among the living conditions of the weavers in case of their Own House, Owners House and Rented House

Out of total surveyed weavers, 143 were lived on own houses, 64 lived on rented houses and 138 lived on the houses provided by the owner. There is a comparison among the housing conditions of these three categories of houses are represented through the help of the following bar diagram.

Figure 6.7
Housing Conditions of Own House, Rented House and Owners House



Source: Field Survey, 2016

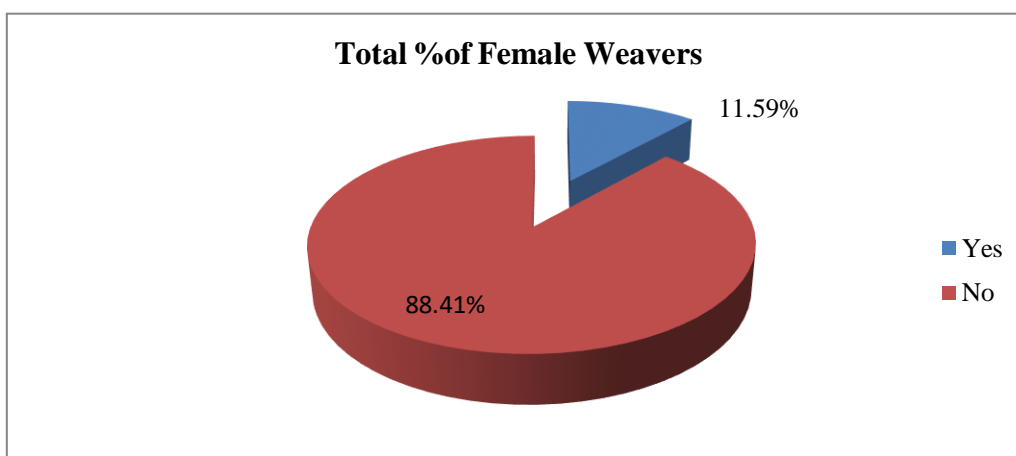
Figure 6.7 represents the housing facilities of weavers own house, rented house and the house provided by the owner. From the above bar diagram, it is clearly observed that, the housing facilities are poor on the houses provided by the owners in comparisons to the own house and rented houses. It is only the LPG cooking facility where rented houses conditions are worse than the owners provided house.

So, the owner should provide hygienic living conditions to the weavers. The living facilities of the weavers should be improved; they should maintain the standard of living of the weavers. A hygienic and well developed housing condition can increase the quality of the weavers and increase the productivity.

6.16 Sexual Harassment at workplace

Sexual harassment at the work places is an appearance of unauthorized sex discrimination. The law defines sexual harassment as unwanted verbal, non-verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature or based on someone's sex that is strict or pervasive and affects working condition or creates an unfriendly work atmosphere. It is a universal problem around the world whether the country may be a developed or a developing or an under developed. Atrocities and cruelties against women are common in everywhere. Sexual harassment directly violates the principal rights of a women to equality under article 14[2] and article 15[3], her right to life under Article 21[4], and her right to practice any profession and transmit on any occupation, trade or business [5], which includes a Right to safe environment free from sexual harassment.

Figure 6.8
% of Weavers affected with sexual Harassment



Source: Excel Sheet (field survey, 2016)

Figure 6.8 indicates the percentage of weavers out of total respondent weavers who suffered the problem of sexual harassment. It is observed that 11.59% (40 weavers) of the weavers face the problem of sexual harassment and 88.41% (305 weavers) were not. This is the one of the core problem of the weavers due to which they had to leave their workplace. It is also observed that many weavers are not willing to answer about this question. They tried to avoid this question due to trepidation or shame.

6.17 Prospects of Silk Weaving in Sualkuchi Village

Unemployment is one of the major obstacles for the development in our region. The region lacks of industrialization. There are no proper employment opportunities in this region. It is therefore very necessary to develop the silk or sericulture sector to create as many employment opportunities as possible. The climate of Assam as well as Sualkuchi village is also very suitable for sericulture. More women workers can be absorbed in sericulture sector if the sector extended and utilized properly.

The market study shows that the demand for silk cloths and silk readymade garments are continuously increases. The owners of silk farm in study area are mentioned that they face a huge problem due to the shortage of weavers. They are not able to produce according to their market demand only because of lack of weavers.

There is a very good prospect of silk industry to export earnings. The demand for silk product increases day by day. So, it is the golden opportunity to earn foreign income of our country. Sericulture is an agriculture based industry. The investment cost of silk weaving is very limited. So, it is very easy to develop such industry and generate income opportunity for the rural people. Weaving is the skill which learns by the female specially the rural female from their previous generation. So, they can easily select it as a professional activity and will able to earn a suitable income to be independent.

The cooperation of all sections of people involved in this industry such as traders, rearers, weavers and government engaged in any activity connected with the silk industry will be necessary to reach the most wanted results.

6.17 Conclusion

11.59% of the weavers face the problem of sexual harassment in the work place. One of problem faced by the entrepreneur in Pat-Muga industry is the non-existence of price control.

Weavers' response regarding their work pressure, 300 weavers mentioned that they had to work under heavy work pressure. There are only 45 weavers out of 345, who said that they did not face work load from their work.

In case of weavers health problems of the weavers are divided into two parts-major health problems and minor health problems. 16.08% of the local weavers and 21.78% of the hired weavers were answered that they have major health problems. On

the other hand 34.97% of the local weavers and 34.16% of the hired female weavers are suffered with various minor health problems. Out of these, 233 weavers are suffered with eye related problems. 59.44% local weavers suffering from pain. On the other hand, in case of hired weavers almost 78.22% weavers having pain related problems. The observation clearly notified that the hired weavers having more pain related problems than the local weavers.

The survey results that 76.23% of the weavers lived without pure drinking water on their work place. They mentioned that they have to consume water either directly from “well” or “tube wells”. 32 weavers mentioned that they had “Katcha toilet” on their work place and 23 weavers mentioned that they have to go open defecation. There are 59 weavers who informed that there are not any toilet or urinal facilities on their workplace. Apart from that, all the weavers mentioned that there are no any separate toilet facility for male and female weavers. 62.61% respondents answered positively to having bathroom and urinal facilities on their work place. 62.32% of the weavers having electricity facility on their work place and 37.68% of the weavers faced the problem of lack of electricity.

No weaver is satisfied with their payment structure. The given amounts are too less to fulfil their daily needs. Only 68.97% of the small size firm’s weavers are getting festival bonus. 72.12% of the weavers on medium size firms and 93.75% of large size firm’s weavers get festival bonus facility.

14 weavers from small size firm mentioned that they got medical facility on their work place. 20 weavers from medium size firms got medical treatment from their owner and only 35weavers from large size firms are getting simple medical facility from their owners. No one get ESIC facility, which Government make compulsory for the owner of an organization who has 10 or more employees. There are not any provisions for the sick payment and insurance policies for the weavers in the study are. It is seen that no weaver get any pension facility from their work place. Using traditional weaving technique is another basic problem of the study area.

100% of the local weavers are stayed on their own residence. On the other hand, out of total hired surveyed weavers, 31.68% stayed in rented houses and 68.32% weavers are lived on houses provided by the owner. All the respondents informed that they have

electricity facility on their houses whereas 17.48% weavers are lived without hygienic toilets, 54.55% without pure drinking water and 20.98% of the weavers without LPG cooking facility.

It is observed that 40 weavers answered positively in case of sexual harassments. The other 305 female weavers answered negatively in the question of sexual harassment.

From the study it can be concluded that the Sualkuchi silk industry though has an excellent panorama to provide direct and indirect income to rural people, which helps to reduce poverty and make the female weavers independent but this industry struggles with lots of problems from the time immemorial. If these problems are solved through the help of government and individual helps, then this industry becomes the most powerful industry and able to capture a huge unemployed females. Employment is the basic weapon to make financially independence and an independent female is an example of empowered women.

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