

*Enlistment of Handloom Weavers  
through “3P Strategies” evolved from  
SWOT analysis*

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# Enlistment of Handloom Weavers through “3P Strategies” evolved from SWOT analysis

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## Abstract

In this article, the need of the hour of the handloom industry is analysed in the perspective of ‘SWOT ANALYSIS’, which is one of the problem solving techniques followed in the Total Quality Management (TQM). The 3P-strategies like Product diversification, Process modernisation and Personal skill upgradation are evolved from the analysis. Further, how these strategies are used to uplift the socio- economic enlistment of the handloom weavers are enlightened.

## Introduction

For the economic survival or the success (Paisa / Money) of any industry, it is necessary to critically analyse the “3P” or “3M”, which are known as PROCESS -METHOD, PERSON- MAN, and PRODUCT-MATERIAL.

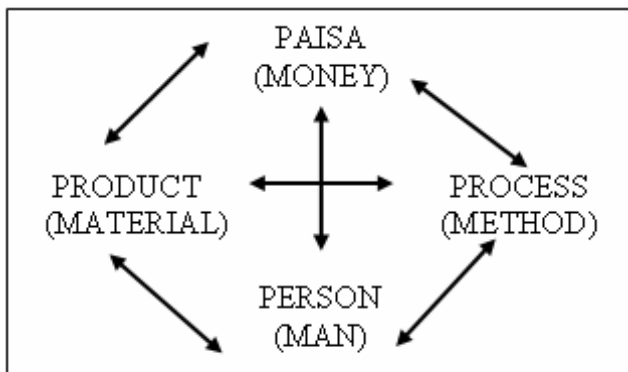


Chart1: 3P OR 3M Strategies

For any industry to survive with considerable profit-paisa, the products produced must satisfy the need of the customers, for which the industry has to keep the machines and the methods updated to produce the desired products and also have to develop the personnel skills of the persons to know about the

machines and methods thoroughly to produce the desired products. The products produced thus, will fetch demand in the market and in turn yield required ‘Paisa’ to the producer.

## SWOT Analysis

To evolve “3P” strategies of Quality Engineering and Management for Handloom Industry, it is essential that SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats) of the traditional Handloom sector has to be necessarily analysed first in order to overcome many challenges being faced by this sector today.

- ◆ The **Strength** of the handloom industry lies in its exclusivity, identity to weave intricate products, which are even today impossible to weave in mechanized, modern looms.
- ◆ On the contradictory, the **Weakness** is, in thinking or looking the handlooms for high production.
- ◆ The **Opportunity** lies in the fact that the handlooms should produce exclusive fabric meant for the high-class society, which constitutes its biggest market.
- ◆ The **Threat** is that due to modern changes in global activities, day-by-day, the number of traditional weavers are in declining stage and the younger generation is not ready to take up the handloom weaving as their profession.

## **Strength and Weakness**

Let us take that the handloom produces an intricate saree with Buttas and Pallau. The production per day is 2 to 2.5 meters (2 to 2.5 days per saree of 5 meters). The weaving charges paid to the weaver for 2 days are about ₹250 to 300/- per saree. Therefore the weaver can earn ₹125/- to ₹150/- on an average per day. The selling cost of the saree is ₹1000/- to ₹1200/-, which is the total cost of the saree produced in 2 to 2.5 days.

On the other hand, when the handloom is used to weave an ordinary plain towel, it can produce 8 to 10 meters per day (5 to 6 towels). The weaving charges paid to the handloom weavers per meter is ₹10/- and therefore the weaver could earn ₹80/- ₹100/- on an average per day. If the selling cost of the towel is ₹30/-, then the total cost of the towel produced in a day is between ₹150/- to ₹180/-.

But the same plain towel can be very easily produced in power-loom and it can produce nearly 24 meters (16 towels) per day. The weaving charges paid to the power-loom weaver is ₹3/- per meter. If the selling cost of the towel is ₹20/-, the total value of the towel produced in a day is ₹320/-. Hence, it is not at all viable or economical to produce plain towel using handlooms.

Therefore, the Strength of the handloom lies in its exclusivity, identity to weave intricate products, which are even today impossible to weave in mechanized, modern looms. On the contradictory, the Weakness is, in thinking or looking the handlooms for high production. Hence, the need of the hour is Product diversification.

## **Product Diversification**

From the Strength and weakness analysis together, it is clear that the handloom industry should not go for producing cheap fabrics, which can be easily produced by power loom. It should produce intricate, exclusive, varieties which are impossible for the powerloom to produce. By this, even if the average production of the handloom is less, the average earning of the weaver and the average cost of the products can be made equal or even more than the powerloom products by producing only exclusive products.

During 2003-04, the total production of Handloom products was about 5,493 million sq. meters. In 2004-05 it was about 5,722 million sq. meters. In 2005-06, it was about 6,188 million sq. meters. At this rate, if it is plotted, the figure would be approximately 12,000 to 15,000 million sq. meters in 2011. But it is important to point out here that as mentioned first, handlooms are not meant for higher production. It has to be used for producing intricate, value added fabrics, which make the total cost of the Handloom products higher even though the production is less.

Let the powerlooms produce any amount of cheaper products. It does not affect the handloom products, as long as the handloom produces exclusive fabrics. In fact, do the handlooms are threatened by the competition of powerlooms, now-a-days powerlooms are threatened by the competition of modern/ shuttle less looms. Powerlooms are nothing but the modernized or mechanized form of handlooms. Again, shuttleless looms are the modernized or mechanized form powerlooms.

It is also presumed by the experts that in future there might be only two kinds of looms, one is pure traditional, simple, low cost handlooms where in every pick is slowly woven to produce intricate, limited quantity but costly Handcrafted-Handloom Textiles. The other

one is very modern, sophisticated, high speed, and high cost shuttleless looms to produce very simple, cheap, huge quantity of textiles fabrics. Hence there is absolutely no threat to handlooms at any point of time as long as it produces intricate fabrics.

### **Opportunity**

If we recall the days, back to nineteen eighties, the cotton fiber and the handloom fabrics were very cheap and hence it was considered to be the poor man's fiber and fabric. At that time the powerloom / mill made fabric was considered to be the rich man fabric. But today it is totally reverse. The handloom, cotton fabric is the upper class identity. Actually this is very good sign for the handloom industry. Handlooms should produce targeting the upper class society. If anybody looks into the structure of the handlooms, it may be very simple and cheap in construction, but the structure and texture of the handloom fabric produced from this simple handloom should be very complicated and costly, which is for high end market.

### **Process Modernization**

To produce very intricate fabrics in handlooms, weaver must have traditional practice. He must be an artisan himself and able to operate intricate shedding mechanisms like multi treadle, dobby, jacquard either individually or combined. Technology upgradation is very much essential to reduce the strain on weavers in weaving intricate, diversified and quality products. Here, technology upgradation does not mean making the handloom slowly mechanized and converting into power loom. The aim of the technology upgradation is for ergonomic principle of working, child labor elimination and high wage earnings of the weavers by producing economically viable products.

### **Threat**

The Threat is that due to modern changes in global activities, many traditional weavers left the profession due to lack of confidence and awareness. Day-by-day, the number of traditional weavers are in declining stage and the younger generation is not ready to take up the handloom weaving as their profession.

Hence, the Government is trying its level best to retain the weavers to continue in the handloom profession and also encourage younger generation to take up the weaving as their profession. By overnight, one can bring a modern weaving loom if he has got huge money but cannot make an ordinary man to expert weaver, with any amount of money. Motivating the traditional weavers and the young generation who are new to the weaving profession is the foremost aim.

### **Personal Skill Up gradation**

No new weaver, by overnight, can directly go for weaving intricate varieties. He should first start with simple plain weaving and then go for multi treadle weaving. From there, he has to step into Dobby and finally jump into Jacquard mechanism. Taking them slowly / step by step to weave from simple plain varieties to complicate Dobby and Jacquard varieties is the goal to be achieved. Organizing "Skill upgradation" training programmes especially for the younger generation is very much essential.

## **Conclusion**

By summing up of the above explanation, it is imperative that in Handloom industry, innovative and intricate products, which are possible to produce by using only Handlooms and at the same time having good demand in the present market has to be identified. Then the suitable modernised methodologies / technologies in weaving processes have to be introduced to weave these innovative and intricate products easily and ergonomically. The personal skills of the weavers have to be upgraded to learn about the intricacy of the product and also to have thorough practice in using the modernised technologies which fetches considerable earnings to the weavers and enlist their socio- economic status in the society.

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