

## **A Study of Socio-Economic Status of Workers in the Unorganized Powerloom Sector of Sirajganj**

**Kazi Aysha Siddiqua\***

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### **Abstract**

The mechanical loom industry is a weaving sector and an important segment of the disseminate cotton textile industry in Bangladesh. This industry as a tool of small and medium enterprise has a greatest possibility to contribute a lot in the cloth production of Bangladesh. Power loom industries are functioning the middle level work in the cloth production. This industry generates a number of employment opportunities. Further, the industry contributes a lot of revenues to the government exchequer. Present study is concerned to represent the overall socio- economic status of workers who are engaged in powerloom in some selected area of Sirajganj district. This study is based on both primary and secondary data sources in order to understand the socio-economic status of workers. Primary data has been collected by observational study and randomly selected 50 weavers in Sirajganj district. Secondary data for the study has been collected from the government publications, journals, handloom census of Bangladesh, website etc. There is a lot of problems of the powerloom industry &workers in Sirajganj. Authors have identified those prominent factors that are moving the wheels of this industry slowly. Among them shortage of working capital, high cost of raw materials, inadequate supply of electricity, lack of policy support is bitterly hit the powerloom industry. Until and unless these problems are solved, the overall heightening of the corporation as well as the worker's living conditions cannot be achieved. But according to the results, most of the weavers think that if those problems are solved, this profession plays a positive role in improving their socio-economic conditions by their health and better education of their children.

**Keywords:** Socio-economic, Status, Powerloom, Unorganized, Sector.

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### **Introduction**

The most fundamental inventory of civilized human beings has been the cloth and it comes from the textile industry. The textile industry in Bangladesh has been classified into three sectors: pre-weaving, spinning weaving and post-weaving. The powerloom industry is one of the weaving hubs of the country an important segment of the decentralized cotton textile industry in Bangladesh (Rahman. 2014). Powerloom industry weaves cotton by power operated machines or loom and works into a fabric with the help of warp in the form of beam and weft directly through bobbins. Beams come from processing mills and weft yarn from spinning mills. Spinning mills produce only yarn thread as raw materials to the powerloom industries. Processing mills prepare warp in the form of beam and the powerloom industry used the beams for weaving the projected cloths (Bedi.2002). So, it is clear that the powerloom industries are functioning the middle level work in the cloth production. The study is concerned with only the powerlooms which are in small scale sector of Bangladesh and this sector is one of the most important segments of the textile industry in terms of fabric production and employment generations. In 2018, the Powerloom has been increased from 2170 to 3801 unit. The Power looms

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\* Assistant Professor (Home Economics), Social Science Group, National University, Gazipur.

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produces 14.75 million meters clothes annually (B.B.S. 2019). So, employment generation is one of the most important reasons for the introduction of powerlooms in the small-scale sector in Bangladesh. Most of the powerloom workers come from the down trodden families of Bangladesh.

\* Department of Home Economics, National University, Gazipur.

The handloom sector is the largest traditional cottage industry and the second largest employment provider after agriculture in Bangladesh (Rahmatullah et al. 2014). There are about 29282 house hold based hand looms and 116117 hand loom units and engaged 140045 male and 176270 female in handloom weaving (B.B.S. 2019). About 15 lakh people directly and indirectly are dependent on the weaving industry (B.H.B.). The provisional results of the handloom census 2018 reveals that the total number of handloom units has declined sharply by 36.79%, 45.79% from 2003 and 1990 respectively. Besides meeting, one of the basic needs of clothing this industry plays a very imperative role in the Bangladeshies economy. Number of handlooms decrease day by day. Besides this, due to extreme competition with in creative powerlooms, the number of unneeded loom increases. Dhaka and its surrounding area were once renowned as the Manchester of Bangladesh for powerlooms fabrics is in its fading glory now due to lack of the government's attention to its developments supports and proper planning. The main concentration of such power looms based fabrics manufacturing is in Narshingdi, Madhobdi, Baburhat and Araithajar which later extended to Gazipur, Sirajganj, and Pabna and in few other areas. Thousands of looms where operational and busy with employment opportunities of a large number of people coming from across the country (Alam.2020). Sirajganj district is famous for independent weaving units for a longtimes. Belkuchi, Shahjadpur, Chowhali, Ullapara, Kamarkhanda, Sirajganj Sadar, Kazipur and Raiganj upazilas are mostly dominated by weaving factories. According to the demand of time, powerloom industry in Sirajganj has been classified as organized sector and small-scale unorganized sector. Our study is only the powerlooms which are in small-scale sector of Sirajganj and this sector is one of the most important segments of the textile industry in terms of fabric production and employment generation. Sirajganj districts has the highest number of establishments. There are about 73345 weaving factories in these nine upazilas in Sirajganj. Of them, about 1197 are powerlooms while the rest are handlooms. About 63557 people work in the loom factories in Sirajganj (B.H.B.). Various problems over the last few years have forced more than 60 percent of handlooms and powerlooms in Pabna and Sirajganj to go out of Sirajganj to go out of operation. Out of a total 290282 looms in 9 upazillas of Sirajganj district only 191723 looms are now operational while the rest are idle. Even after producing 5 to 6 saris on a powerloom a workers daily wage could be as high as only Tk 350 to Tk 450 an experienced powerloom workers. Workers in other professions easily make Tk 600 to 700 a day (The Daily star, 2019). Sirajganj district earned a name for quality handloom products such as Grameen check, Aarong check, lungi, dhuti, bed sheets and saris. Due to shortage of investment, a large number of looms were closed in the last two decades. Many skilled weavers left the occupation (Manikandan,2010). Weavers in Sirajganj mainly devote themselves to weaving saris, lungi and gamsa. These products are supplied to different parts of the districts and also exported to

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Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Burma, Malaysia and Germany. Powerloom weaving can reduce unemployment and underemployment of rural households. Powerloom industry of Sirajganj faced with manifold problems since long because of increase in price of yarn and dye, lack of Government loan facilities and unavailability of quality chemical dyeing. At present, this industry is not in a good position; the unemployed youths of the day are not interested in working in this industry because of low wages and lack of job security. The industrial revolution, socio-economic conditions of the workers and the review of some developmental program relating to the workers engaged in small scale powerloom industry in Sirajganj are included in the present study.

### **Problem Statement**

Impact of financial performance of the powerloom industries on socio-economic conditions of powerloom weavers. The present study is an attempt to analyze the working functions of the powerloom industry and assessing the problems suffered by the industry in Sirajganj. The study is expected to reveal the deficiencies if any, and enable to suggest appropriate measures for the problems of the industries, and thereby serve the interest of weavers, traders & consumers more effectively.

### **Significance of the study**

This study concentrates on the socio-economic analysis of powerloom industry in Sirajganj. Now, most of the hand loom weavers close or sell their looms due to financial constraints, high- cost of materials, marketing problems of manufactured goods, not getting fair price of products etc. Working as a hired laborer in a neighbor's land or machine loom or living in unemployment as he has no other work experience. As the owners of handloom became indebted due to lack of funds, most of the owners and their next generation sold their looms and plots of land in the hope of earning more in a short period of time by closing or selling them, but they are working there as hired laborers. Skilled workers hired by handloom weavers are also gradually moving towards machine looms. Handloom weavers take more time and cost to produce sarees. On the other hand, low time, less expensive and colorful colored sarees are producing by powerloom. For this reason, though, the powerloom industry is facing several problems such as-high cost and non-availability of adequate quantity of quality raw material, shortage of working capital, non-availability of marketing facilities, credit needs to powerloom weavers in co-operative field, inadequate supply of electricity, low capacity utilization due to not utilizing of new technology and governments low budget allocations, non-utilized budgeted funds in a proper way and lack of policy support etc. The majority of the powerloom weavers in the district are financially sound because of the adequate earnings from their profession.

### **Research questions**

Each study has some questions that identify the purpose of the research. The questions in this study are-

1. What is the nature of employment of weavers in mechanized weaving industry?
2. What is the socio-economic status of weavers engaged in powerloom sector?
3. What are the limitations of working on machine looms?
4. What are the future prospects of powerlooms at the local level?

### **Research objectives**

The followings are the objectives of the study:

1. To portray the nature of employment of small-scale powerloom industries in Sirajganj.
2. To evaluate the socio-economic condition of the workers of this sector.
3. To find out the constraints of doing work in powerloom.
4. To identify the prospect of powerloom work in the locality.

### **Literature review**

There is no authentic and huge number of literatures about this area but some literatures are there which are helpful for the study and research purposes. Chorghade (1976) in his research work studied the “Powerloom Industry in Maharashtra”. He attempted to undertake a detailed study of structure and problems of Powerloom industry in Maharashtra. Ansari (1984) in his research work explained the marketing problems of powerloom industry in Malegaon City of Nashik District. He has very specifically indicated the marketing problems faced by the powerloom industry. Dolle (1992) in his research work revealed the socio-economic problems of powerloom industry in Malegaon. He studied the powerloom industry of Malegaon for the period of 1935 to 1985. Rahman et al. (2014) in their research work explained on powerloom business in some selected areas of Sirajganj district. In this paper, author tried to represent the overall socio-economic status of businessmen who are engaged in powerloom business. Authors have identified those prominent factors that are moving the wheels of this industry slowly. By whitewashing the socio-economic status of women workers involved in material weaving, the researcher showed that despite the progressive constitution on women’s and women’ rights, their participation was properly evaluated and even transmitted their rights. Their carpenter is living the lowest standard of living in addition to the lack of adequate levels and toilet facilities among the various problems established (Paul 2014). The discovery of new technologies, the scarcity of capital, the reduction of wages and the increase in the price of yarn are among the major problems faced by the mechanized weaving industry (Chaudhary et al. 2015). Islam et al. (2021) in this research work the aim is to identify the prospects and production efficiency of powerloom industry in Pabna, Bangladesh. The estimated results confirmed that main determinants of increasing the production efficiency and sales revenue of powerloom industry are quality yarn, skilled labour, machine and electricity. The main conclusion of the study is the powerloom industry in Sirajganj has been many ups and downs in its development and it is one of the important industries of Sirajganj. There are many socio-economic problems in the powerloom industry of Sirajganj like scarcity of the finance, marketing problems, labor problems etc.

### **Theoretical framework**

The present research work includes the development of technology and the study of the relationship between production and trade with the government as well as Marx’s theory of political economy. Most of the slow handlooms have now become mechanized looms on the one hand and on the other hand due to penetration of modern

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technology and capital in the handloom industry of Bangladesh and its related owner-worker relations wages and marketing at local level. The development of mechanized new productive forces has given birth to new production related forces. Analysis in the light of Marx's mode of production shows that a consistent production relationship is formed with the development of productive forces in a particular production system in the course of social development. It is the inconsistency between the productive forces and the relation of production that breaks up an economic system and gives birth to a new one. The backward technology, slow production, low wages, etc. in the handloom weaving industry is insufficient to meet the demand of the weavers and henceforth accelerates the development of capital and technology dependent machine weaving industry and transforms the individual weaving industry into capitalist system. In the capitalist system of production, capitalism, large-scale production and the tendency of the owner class to make a fair profit naturally emanate from the process of exploitation of the workers. Therefore, according to Marx's surplus value theory, machine-loom mills, on the one hand, create a division of labor in manual looms, and on the other hand, the owners of this industry continue to enjoy the exclusive benefit of surplus labor. As a result, the worker gradually becomes alienated from his field of production and later from the product he produces, and at some point, becomes detached from his own entity. The shift from manual weaving to machine weaving is related to development. High productivity of mechanized looms, guarantee of higher wages of workers and other benefits on the other hand motivate manual loom workers to move out of their familiar boundaries and move to machine loom (pull factor). On the other hand, slow and low wage manual looms are losing skilled workers (push factor). This can be explained in the light of E. S. Lees push-pull theory.

#### **Research Methodology**

Research Method: Methods followed to conduct the research were-1. Sample survey (Random sampling method) & 2. Observation

Research area: Following areas of Sirajganj district were selected as research areas considering security, easy access and other facilities-Belkuchi, Shahjadpur, Chowhali, Sirajganj Sadar and Kazipurupazilas of Sirajganj district.

Sample size: Workers of powerloom industry of abovementioned areas. The workers were selected on the basis of their availability during interviewing time as sample. A sample of 50 workers from each of the five famous upazilas of Sirajganj district.

Techniques of Data Collection: Relevant information were collected by direct interview, using a pre-tested schedule and by general observation. Close ended questions were used in the schedule.

Secondary data for the study has been collected from the government publications, journals, handloom census of Bangladesh and website etc.

#### **Percentage distribution of Respondents Socio- Economic and Demographic background**

The powerlooms in the small-scale sector are not automatic; these are run by power and operated by the workers. Consequently, there should be a direct relationship

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between the number of powerlooms and the number of workers. Initial stage of small-scale powerloom industry in Sirajganj, the owners and their family members used to do the pre-weaving and post-weaving activities. The workers also engaged in the pre-weaving and post-weaving activities have not been considered, but only the workers directly engaged in weaving the cloth by powerlooms have only been considered. The owners engaged themselves and their family members in other works employing outside paid workers to look after the powerloom industry. But with the passage of time, there exists a soft gap between the owners-workers relationship and the owners distance themselves from the looms. They employ low-rate workers hired from outside for the looms and engage themselves in other types of work for earning higher wages. A large number of powerlooms were operated by the owners themselves and by other family members. A large number of powerlooms remained closed due to irregular power supply, lack of spun yarn etc. The owners (employers) were used to employing temporary workers for every type of job. The unemployed youths of the day are not interested in working in this industry because of low wages and lack of job security. Still the same tradition is going on in few places like Tangail, Pabna, Norshingdi, Kushtia and so on. The powerlooms of the remaining centers are being operated by the outside hired workers. The employment of the hired workers like weavers, winders and jobbers is on yearly basis and is made permanent without any job security. The jobbers and winders are employed for a fixed day rate basis and the weavers remunerations are totally variable as such that they get a fixed portion for attendance and dearness allowance and the variable portion of the salary is on the production basis. They enjoy weekly holidays without any pay but restricted holidays in a year with pay. Other workers like drawer and checker etc. are appointed on part-time basis and they are paid on fixed piece rate wages with some facilities for enjoying holidays.

The present indebtedness distribution of workers can be better understood from the following table:

**Table 1. Personal information of respondents**

	No. of workers	Percentage(%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	37	74.0
Female	13	26.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Age (in year)</b>		
Below-15	2	4.0
15-30	6	12.0
30-45	32	64.0
45-60	7	14.0
Above-60	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Literacy level</b>		
Illiterate	16	32.0
Primary education	29	58.0
SSC	4	8.0
HSC	1	2.0

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Graduation	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	41	82.0
Unmarried.	7	14.0
Widows	2	4.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Number of members</b>		
2-5	34	68.0
6-9	13	26.0
10-12	2	4.0
Above 13	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey (November, 2021)

Table 1 shows about the Sex -wise classification, age distribution, literacy, marital status and the number of family members of the workers. Out of the 50 sample respondents most of the workers are male (74.0 %) and some are female workers (26.0 %). Table shows that the ages of the workers are between 15 and 60 years. Here, 32 workers (64.0 %) the largest, are in the age group of 30-45 years. Again, 2 (4.0%) and 3 (6.0 %) workers are aged below 15 years and above 60 years respectively. Most of the responded workers are the age of above 30 years. It is very painful to say that 6.0 % of the workers are above 60 years of age when at this stage most of the government employees enjoy leisure and lead an anxiety free life. Another point is found here that 12.0 % workers are below 30 years of age, which signifies that the small-scale powerloom industry in Sirajganj fails to provide a little solution to the heavily loaded unemployment problems of Sirajganj. At present, the unemployed young generations, who are below 30 years of age, are not interested in joining the powerloom due to low- rate of wages and future insecurity. Only 32.0 % workers among the total respondents of 50 have no schooling or formal education at any time of their life. We observed that only 12.5 % of these illiterate workers have come under the Adult Education Program of the government and the rest totally ignored to achieve this program. We are pleased to note that, 68.0 % of the sample respondents are literate, though 58.0% workers have primary education and 8.0 % workers have SSC level education. It is also found that 2.0 % workers have higher secondary level education and there have no graduations workers. It is found that 82.0 % of the sample respondents are married and 14.0 % are unmarried. Again, some widows (4.0 %) are also engaged in this industry for their livelihood.

From this table it can be seen that about 68.0% workers have family member (2-5), about 26.0% workers have family member (6-9), about 4.0% workers have family member (10-12) and 2.0% workers have more than 13 people. From this data it can be seen that the powerloom workers like to stay in a nuclear family.

**Table 2: Economical information of respondents**

	No. of workers	Percentage(%)
<b>Reasons of the professions</b>		
Family tradition	27	54.0
No scope of other profession	2	4.0
Personal linking	8	16.0
Sufficient income in the past	13	26.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Monthly Earning</b>		
Below-5000	9	18.0
5000-10000	37	74.0
10000-15000	4	8.0
Above-15000	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Monthly Expenses</b>		
Below-5000	0	0.0
5000-10000	15	30.0
10000-15000	32	64.0
Above-15000	3	6.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Amount of indebtedness</b>		
Below-1000	13	26.0
1000-5000	29	58.0
5000-10000	7	14.0
10000-15000	1	2.0
Above-15000	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0

**Source: Primary data from field survey (November, 2021)**

Table 2 shows about the reasons of their choice of the professions, total monthly earnings of workers, total monthly expenses of workers, indebtedness position of the workers. Majority 54.0% of the respondents selected this profession because of their family tradition. For many years the people of this locality engaged in handloom and now transferring to powerloom. 26.0% people are engaged in this loom, because they had sufficient income in the past from doing this loom. 16.0% people work this loom because of their personal linking and 4.0% workers work this loom because they had no scope of other profession. Monthly earnings of the workers are between 5000 and 15000 tk. From this table it can be seen that about 74.0% workers have monthly earnings 5000-10000 Tk. about 18.0% workers have monthly earnings below 5000 tk, about 8.0% workers have monthly earnings 10000-15000tk who are the most experienced worker. Monthly expenses of the workers are between 5000 and 15000 tk. It can be seen that about 64.0% workers have monthly expenses 10000-15000 tk, about 30.0% workers have monthly expenses 5000-10000 Tk. about 6.0% workers

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have monthly expenses above 15000 tk. Again, out of the 50 sample respondents 58.0% workers have 1000-5000 Tk. about 26.0% workers have below-1000tk, about 14.0% workers have 5000-10000tk & about 2.0% workers have 10000-15000 Tk. monthly in debt. Most of the workers earning is less than their expenses so, borrowing is a common phenomenon to the workers of Sirajganj and almost all the workers (96.0 % of the sampled workers) borrow money from different sources to meet various purposes and casual contingencies.

**Table 3: Living information of respondents**

	No. of workers	Percentage (%)
<b>Type of house</b>		
Tin shed	43	86.0
Semi pucca	7	14.0
Pucca	0	00.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Source of drinking water</b>		
Tube-well	50	100.0
Well	0	0.0
Total	50	100.0
<b>Hygienic sanitation facility</b>		
Yes	7	14.0
No	43	86.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Primary data from field survey (November, 2021)

Table 3 shows about the type of house, source of pure drinking water & hygienic sanitation facility. The table seen that 86.0% respondents have tin shed house, 14.0% respondents have semi-pucca house but there have no respondents who have pucca house. All of the respondents have the accessibility to safe pure drinking water. 100% respondents collect their drinking water from neighbors tube-well. From the table 3 we can see that 14.0% respondents have hygienic sanitation facility. But about 86.0% respondents have not hygienic sanitation facility.

#### **Case studies:**

In order to improve the working condition of powerloom weavers in the mentioned research work, case study has been done on 2 loom owners and workers directly involved in powerloom and powerloom weaving from Sirajganj. These are given below-

#### **Case-1**

Md. Ashraf Hossain's house is in Doulotpur village of Belkuchi police station of Sirajganj district. His father-deceased: Golgar Hossain and mother deceased: Ayesha Begum. According to the weavers of this area, handloom weaving probably appeared in this area in 1943-1943. Their weaving business dates back to the British period. First his grandfather then his father was in the weaving business. He is the

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eldest of 4 siblings. He is 55 years old. He married his two sisters in another district. His father died when he was 20 and his mother died two years after his death. At the time of his father's death, he left 5 looms and 50 percent of the land. His father taught him handloom weaving at an early age. In addition to his education he helped his father in weaving. Before his death, his father told him to keep his ancestral job. After the death of his father in 2005 the two brothers came to this profession with 5 handlooms left by their father. At that time 5 workers were working in the factory for hire. His family was doing well after he ate half of the income from the loom with his younger brother and the rest. He started a grocery business by selling 25 percent of his land as his younger brother did not like the weaving work. Productions of mechanical looms has been started in him area for a long time and its expansion is increasing day by day. Because the production cost of this industry is low, the quantity of products produced in a short time is high and the selling price of the product is low, so the sales of this product are high. Due to the high cost of yarn and dye, the cost of production of handlooms had increased, and the shortage of skilled workers, low selling price of products, has led to various problems. He has a family of 6 including 4 children. Whatever comes from the loom he was struggling to make ends meet. In this situation, on the advice of his family, he started working by buying 2 machine looms first, combining some of his savings with half of the money from the sale of 5 looms. Gradually his financial condition started getting better. Although his wife did it in the episode, now he also supervises the work of the workers of his organization. He married the girls in his own village. Her daughter, son in law and sons are all involved in her weaving company. He started production of machine looms with the help of the former workers and only 2 looms produced more products. Two years later he brought 8 more machine looms. In this way his business continues to expand. At present he has 20 machine looms. He thinks he is successful in this profession with the blessings of his presents. From a handloom weaver, he now owns a machine loom. He pays weekly wages to the workers of his organization. Among the mechanized looms in his area are China machines, Angle machines and Electric motor driven machines. He repaid the loan in monthly installments from a local NGO. Borrowing at high interest rates, high cost of materials, electrical load shedding, low selling prices, etc. are the main problems of this industry. He hopes that if the loom bank can be set up to provide low or interest free loans and uninterrupted power supply, he will be able to set up large scale factories with machine looms to export his products.

### **Case-2**

Ismail Hossain father-deceased: Jalal Mia, mother-Fatema Begum. His home is in Vangabari village of Belkuchi upazila of Sirajganj district. His father owned 20 percent of the land. His father was a farmer and his mother she worked as a day laborer. His father and family cultivate the land of others in the area including his own small land used to drive. He is currently 25 years old. His elder brother has a tea shop in the local market. He married off his sister in a nearby village. His-brother-in-law worked for a private company in Dhaka. He got married at the age of 20 and had one child. Before marriage, he used to look after the land left by his father and occasionally went to work with his mother as a day laborer. He used to live in the same family

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with his mother and brother with the income he earned. Soon after he got married, his elder brother separated him from his family along with his mother and shared all the land. At that time he had no income of his own. With the meager income from 10 percent of the land, it was not possible for him to make a living. And the day laborer's work was irregular. He has studied till 5<sup>th</sup> class. He doesn't want to go to the city to look for a job thinking that he will not get a good job in this city. Then there is no work that can be done by living in the area without finding a way. Due to the predominance of weaving in his area, he decided to work in the loom in consultation with his mother, but he did not know the work of weaving and did not have the courage to go to work for anyone. Despite the influence of weaving in his area, his ancestors were never involved in this profession. So, he had no previous experience in weaving. Unable to cope he told his elder brother Shahidul Islam about his problem. He has a factory of 20 machine looms in the area, where lungi is produced. He heard his problem and asked him to join him as a laborer in his loom factory. From then he started weaving. For the first 6 months, the owner himself trained him in various aspects of weaving. He has been in this profession for 5 long years since 2013. He gets 180 Tk. per pitch lungi production. He receives a wage based on the amount produced each week. Also get 2 bonuses every year. He has 4 family members. Now his family is doing well with the income from the loom. Although weaving is new to him, he has been able to adapt easily to this industry with the inspiration of his owner. In the future, he wants to set up a mechanical loom factory. The income is higher than the cost of production of this industry because the quantity of goods produced in a short time is higher. The number of workers is less. However, if the machine can be imported that low cost, the government will train the workers privately. It is possible to regulate.

### **Summary Findings**

The powerloom industry of Sirajganj mainly involved in weaving activities. Here, the male workers are engaged in weaving of cloth through power-operated machines and it is a laborious job, quite unsuitable for female workers. The ancillary works like sizing of bobbins, wandering etc. are generally done by the female workers. Most of the responded workers are the age of above 30 years. It is very painful to say that 6.0 % of the workers are above 60 years of age when at this stage most of the government employees enjoy leisure and lead an anxiety free life. Another point is found here that 12.0 % workers are below 30 years of age, which signifies that the small-scale powerloom industry in Sirajganj fails to provide a little solution to the heavily loaded unemployment problems of Sirajganj. At present, the unemployed young generations, who are below 30 years of age, are not interested in joining the powerloom due to low- rate of wages and future insecurity. From direct investigation, we observed that out of the 50 sample workers, only 3 workers (6.0%) have technical education about textile. There is one technical institution for providing training and education to the powerloom workers in Sirajganj sadar Tant Board office. The institution runs a very short course of 3 months duration only, but most of the workers are hesitated to acquire the technical knowledge due to some reasons. We may now state the reasons, if the workers take part in this course; they will lose three months earnings. Besides, the course does not provide the extra benefit to the workers in future and fails to provide their job guarantee. It is observed that the respondents, in

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general, have got married at their very young age and this has, to a great extent, compelled them to fall back upon this industry as the last resort for living with their spouse and children. From this data it can be seen that the powerloom workers like to stay in a nuclear family. Majority of the respondents selected this profession because of their family tradition. For many years the people of this locality engaged in handloom and now transferring to powerloom.

We observed that most of the workers spend their major part of monthly earnings for food and provisions. 73.0% of the total monthly expenses for food and 9.0% of the total monthly expenses spend for cloth, which is one of the basic needs of life. Here the recreation expenses include the expenses for all sorts of social functions such as-Puja, Eid, attending the relative marriage ceremony etc. Most of the workers earning is less than their expenses so, borrowing is a common phenomenon to the workers of Sirajganj and almost all the workers (96.0 % of the sampled workers) borrow money from different sources to meet various purposes and casual contingencies. All of the respondents have the accessibility to safe pure drinking water. From this study it can be seen that most of the workers of this area have no financial solvency and awareness, for that reason they can bear the tin shed house and not uses hygienic sanitation. The economic conditions and illiteracy of the workers engaged in the powerloom industry in Sirajganj found to be relevant in this context. There are some common diseases they and their family members suffer from and a major portion of their earnings is spent for their medical treatment. It has thus become very difficult to them to keep pace with the steady spiral of rising prices with their little earnings. The workers are suffering from poor eye sight and the disease is widely spread in the industry. Consequently, the workers have to get the medical treatment by their own coins, which are obviously burdensome to them. Naturally, they have been suffering from various diseases. Gradually, they are losing not only their productive capacity, but also shortening their span of life. So, it is found that there is a lot of problems of the power loom industries workers in Sirajganj.

### **Policy recommendations**

To solve the problems of the powerloom industries of Sirajganj and to come out of the prospects of industry the following suggestions and recommendations are given bellow:

1. Upgradation of plain powerlooms to Semi-Automatic level: The majority of the power loom owners are small weavers having 4 to 24 powerlooms. The governments should initiate conversion of plain powerlooms to semi-automatic level.
2. Marketing complexes: In Sirajganj marketing of the Textile produce is one of the major problems of the weavers. So, the government should develop and encourage the Textile marketing Complexes in which the government should control the pricing policies.
3. Processing facilities: The major product of the powerloom industry is grey cloth which is semi-finished. The weavers sell it without processing so, they cannot enjoy the main profit. The government should provide infrastructural facilities to develop the power processing units in Sirajganj.

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4. Electricity: The electricity board should ensure to supply uninterrupted power supply to the powerloom industry. The quality of the supply should also be constant. Because the voltage and frequency variations in Sirajganj are stated to be very grave.
5. Technical Training: The workers employed powerloom industry are mostly technically untrained. Labor productivity can be further enhanced by providing systematic training to the powerloom workers. The powerloom service center, technical institutes and textile department should conduct special technical training programs for the workers.
6. Census of Powerloom Industry: Census of the powerloom industry should be conducted after every five years in which basic statistics of their needs, raw materials, growth etc. should be conducted.
7. Awareness about powerloom service center: Most of the weavers are unaware about the powerloom service center. The governments should strengthen the powerloom service center in terms of capacity and infrastructural facilities.

### **Conclusion**

The importance of the textile industry in the economy of Bangladesh is very high. This industry generates a number of employment opportunities. The powerloom industry is largely household based, carried out with labor contributed by entire family. This industry provided individuals with gainful employment and was seen as a means of ensuring self-sufficiency and survival of the countries traditional crafts and artistry. Many of the workers engaged in the industry are refugees of Bangladesh and due to their poor economic background they are mostly satisfied by their meager earnings and they do not want to go in direct confrontation with the management. Almost all the looms used in this sector are less productive, and consequently, the workers have become victims of meager earnings as they are paid on piece rate system on actual production. Besides, low productivity due to the lack of automatic looms, shortage of finance, tax structures and poor organizational efficiencies of industries as well as the owners were identified as other reasons for decreasing employment and the number of powerloom industries in Sirajganj. We found that most of the workers engaged in power loom industries in Sirajganj are illiterate in the sense that they have no idea about the various provisions of the Legislative and Welfare Acts. The marketing development program has a vital role in the powerloom sector. So, an activity for the promotion and marketing of powerloom products through different mechanisms has to be placed for the implementation and monitoring. For that Organizing exhibition and buyer, Seminars and Workshops, Publicity and awareness program, film on Powerloom, print publicity-these activities can be carried out singly or jointly by the implementing agency. It should be extended the helping hand to the Government and NGOs to pave the way of development for our poor weavers. So for the overall development of powerloom industries it is required a wholehearted support with proper encouragement from the Government.

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