

Chapter- 2:.....

Introduction To Weaving

Weaving is a method of fabric production in which two distinct sets of yarns are interlaced at right angles to form a fabric. The fabric is usually woven on a **loom**, a device that holds the **ends or warp** (vertical Yarns) in place while **picks or filling yarns** (horizontal yarns) are woven through them. The way the warp and filling threads interlace with each other is called the **Weave**.

2.1. HISTORY OF WEAVING

It is not known clearly how weaving began, but it appears that the idea of weaving certainly preceded looms by many thousands of years. There is mention of invention of weaving in the legends of most of the culture, except for the Chinese.

It can be presumed that the man first got the idea to weave by maybe observing certain birds that weave nests or watching the wind interlace the leaves of date palm or see the spider making its net on the bush or by studying the silkworm to see if thread can be made usable. There are innumerable legends and stories in every culture that are linked with notion of weaving but in every story it appears that nature itself planted the first seeds of weaving.

Plaiting and Baskets making was a preliminary step to weaving cloth. Various different forms of basketry techniques were employed wherein different types of fibers, roots were coiled, intertwined to make baskets. These were initially used as vessels for carrying fish from fish traps and roots and berries from forests but they were eventually applied to hampers, cradles, etc. Basketry was modified to mat-making used for carpets, coverings, wrappings as well as temporary shelters for house.

2.2. EARLIEST LOOMS

The weaving of textiles on the loom is believed to have begun in Neolithic Age (Neolithic Age or the New Stone Age was a period in the development of human technology). The "Loom" of that age is best defined as any frame or contrivance for holding warp threads parallel to permit the interlacing of the weft at right angles to form a web. Hence the looms have evolved from the simplest structure wherein the warp were freely suspended from cord stretched between two upright wooden poles to the sophisticated looms of the modern age.

2.3. DEVELOPMENT OF TEXTILE INDUSTRY

In early age, weaving on looms was a house hold activity practiced mainly by women. With the invention of horizontal loom men took over the activity of weaving and this signals the birth of European weaving as a commercial enterprise.

The horizontal looms made it possible to weave long lengths of fabric and at speed more than the primitive looms. This brought about the commercialization of cloth production in urban areas. The industry started becoming specialized which involved processes that occurred after the weaving of the cloth. These finishing processes distinguished the products of horizontal looms from the other primitive looms. However, in rural areas peasants still continued to spin, dye and weave their own cloth, till the cloth became cheap enough for the peasants to be able to buy for themselves.

2.4. MECHANIZATION OF LOOMS

The thrust towards mechanization of looms began before Industrial Revolution. Experiments towards making mechanical looms had started but the real push towards power-loom weaving came with the development of spinning machinery in order to keep pace with the spinners. After many unsuccessful attempts a solution was arrived at by invention of an Anglican clergyman named Edmund Cartwright. Cartwright powered his first loom by an ox and capstan but this was soon adapted for a steam version.

A Manchester factory manufactured this loom. Workers protested over loss of jobs which lead to rioting in early nineteenth century England, but Industrialization had started. One operator with one help could operate four looms and produce twenty times the output of a hand weaver. The golden age of hand-weaving came to an end in England and the artisans went in anonymity. Home weaving of course continued as before on traditional looms.

Summary:

This chapter will take the student through the journey of evolution of Weaving Industry. It starts from early age giving an idea as to how possibly weaving could have originated. The loom - device used to weave fabric - has also evolved. It started from a simple frame, to handloom loom to a power driven machine. The chapter traces the journey of this development of loom to the development of Textile Industry. It also explains as to how the demand of the fabric increased which lead to making it as an Industrial Product.