

A STUDY ON PROBLEM FACED BY HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Handloom weaving is an essential craft-based activity of India and comprises the largest cottage industry in the country. Indian handloom sector is one of the major unorganized economic activities after agriculture and it is an integral part of rural and semirural livelihood. Tamil Nadu handloom sector has a rich heritage and a history of outstanding craftsmanship of handloom weaving in the state. This industry is one of the largest and most ancient among the other industries producing varieties of handloom fabrics. Tamil Nadu handloom industry has a glorious past, and numerous references can be traced from the archaeological sites and Tamil Sangam literature. Objectives of the research paper is to study the present situation of handloom sector and to examine the problems faced by handloom weavers. Present study, the review the literature having authority and relationship between the problems and focusing on the objective in the study has surveyed with the help of structured questionnaires to collect the data about the problem faced by handloom weavers in Coimbatore District. The research design used in this study was Descriptive in nature. Primary as well as secondary data used in this study. Majority of the respondents i.e., 55 out of 140 (39.29 per cent) are suffering from back pain problem. Suggestions of this study is, While there are tips that handloom zone ought to expand its layout in response to adjustments in the market, the bottlenecks are many. The lack of exchange is now not due to the weaver now not being amenable to change, as is banded. Rather, it is due to unwillingness of the investor to take dangers and supply incentive to weavers for effecting the change. Thus the Handloom Textiles represent a timeless section of the wealthy cultural Heritage of India. The component of artwork and craft current in Indian handlooms makes it a practicable area for the top segments of market domestic as nicely as global.

Keywords: Health problem, investment wages etc.,

I.1. Introduction

Textile industry occupies a unique place in our country. One of the earliest to come into existence in India, it accounts for 14 per cent of the total Industrial production, contributes to nearly 30 per cent of the total exports and is the second largest employment generator after agriculture. Today, India's textile sector comprises four important segments: Modern textile mills, Independent Power looms, Handlooms and Garments.

I.2. Handloom Sector in India

The handloom industry is one of the largest unorganized sectors of economic activity in India providing employment to 43.31 lakh weavers from rural and semi-urban areas. Most of them are women and people from economically disadvantaged groups and 77 per cent of the adult weavers are women. As per the 4th All India Handloom Census (2019-20), there are 26, 73,891 handloom weavers and 8,48,621 allied workers in the country. The Handloom sector plays a very important role in the country's economy. It is one of the largest economic activities providing direct employment to over 65 lakhs persons engaged in weaving and allied activities. As a result of effective Government intervention through financial assistance and implementation of various developmental and welfare schemes, this sector has been able to withstand competition from the power loom and mill sectors. This sector contributes nearly 19 per cent of the total cloth produced in the country and also adds substantially to export earnings. Handloom is unparalleled in its flexibility and versatility, permitting experimentation and encouraging innovations. The strength of Handloom lies in the introducing innovative designs, which cannot be replicated by the Power loom sector. Thus, Handloom forms a part of the heritage of India and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the aristry of the weavers.

The Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been implementing, since its inception in the year 1976, various schemes for the promotion and development of the handloom sector and providing assistance to the handloom weavers in a variety of ways. Some of the major programmes relate to: Modernisation and Up gradation of Technology, Input Support,, Marketing Support, Publicity, Infrastructural Support, Welfare Measures, Composite Growth Oriented Package, Development of Exportable Products and Research & Development

The various schemes implemented by the Office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms address the needs of weavers who constitute the disadvantaged social strata and occupational groups, which are at the bottom of the economic hierarchy. A concerted effort are being made through the schemes and programmes to enhance production, productivity, and efficiency of the handloom sector and enhance the income and socio-economic status of the weavers by upgrading their skills and providing infrastructural support and essential inputs.

1.3. Problems of Handloom Industry

Handloom weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis because of adverse government policies, globalisation and changing socio-economic conditions. The national and state governments do have several schemes pertaining to production inputs, market support and development, meant to safeguard the interests of the weaving community. Ineffective implementation of the schemes and the changed context of textile industry, increasing competition from the power loom and mill sectors have been largely responsible for the crisis in the handlooms.

Lack of information to weavers regarding various policies and schemes is no less a significant cause for the dwindling fortunes of the weaver community. Even government departments and implementing agencies related to handloom suffer from inadequate information and data resulting in a widening gap between policy formulation and implementation. In the recent decades, due to lack of information and fast paced changes, practices in handloom sector became static and apparently redundant.

Presently, government policies are increasingly influenced by the globalisation processes and are related to WTO-induced trade regimes. As the controls on exports get liberalised and domestic markets open up, the textile scenario in the country is likely to undergo drastic changes in terms of skills, inputs like designs, market trends and changing demands therein.

In earlier planning processes at the national level, development of handloom sector was seen as a stimulation for rural development, being based on local resources, local craftsmanship and catering primarily for local markets. In the first decades following India's independence, all national policies emphasised this. However, current thinking at the apex policy level is that the handloom sector is a redundant profession and is a burden on the government exchequer. Political leadership, in general, has been avoiding taking up cudgels on behalf of the weaver community.

1.4. Handloom Industry in Tamil Nadu

Handloom weaving is an essential craft-based activity of India and comprises the largest cottage industry in the country. Indian handloom sector is one of the largest unorganized economic activities after agriculture and it is an integral part of rural and semi-rural livelihood. It is a decentralized sector and weavers are primarily from the weaker sections of the society, who weave for their domestic needs and contribute to the production in the textile sector. The weavers of this industry are struggling hard to keep the traditional craft alive. The level of artistry and depth of hands gained in handloom fabrics is unique and there are still some special weaves/designs are outside the scope of modern machines. The handloom industry is concentrated in three distinctive areas of the county the rural, classical and tribal. Indian handloom sector provides direct and indirect employment to about 35.22 lakh weavers and affiliated workers. This sector contributes about 15 per cent of the country's cloth production and adds to the country's export income. India meets the 95 per cent hand-woven fabric requirement of the entire world. The Tamil Nadu handloom sector has a rich heritage and a history of outstanding craftsmanship of handloom weaving in the state. The art of weaving of state has been very ancient is attested by the fact that the great Tamil Saint-bard,

Thiruvalluvar, chose it as his profession. It has a strong presence in textiles and the second largest contributor to the Indian textile industry and predominantly cotton based. The state has an overwhelming presence in all the sub-sectors of the industry namely, Spinning, Handloom weaving, Power loom weaving, Processing, Knitwear, Apparel and Garmenting. Some of the textile products from Tamil Nadu best known for their beauty and versatility are Kancheepuram Silk Sarees, Bhavani Carpet (Jamukalam), Madurai Sungadi Sarees, Coimbatore Kora Sarees, Paramakudi Sarees, Salem Silk Dhoties, Erode and Karur Home Textiles, Tiruppur Knitwear Garments, etc. Tamil Nadu serves as a hub of textile exports from the country namely, Tiruppur for Knitwear Garments, Coimbatore for Yarn, Karur for Home Textiles and Chennai for Woven Garment exports. The state accounts for 19 per cent of the nation's textile output with a strong network of all the sub-sectors of the textile industry [1]

I.5. Review of Related Literature

Srinivasa Rao .D & Sreedhar. N (2017) analysed the , “Problems of Handloom Weavers in Andhra Pradesh: A study of Krishna District”. The objectives of the study is to find out the problems of handloom weavers in Krishna District and make a focus on the welfare programme conducted by state and central Government.

Venkateswaean.A (2014) in his study entitled, “A socio Economic Conditions of handloom Weaving: A field study in Kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli District”, analysed the Socio Economic conditions and problems faced by the handloom weavers.

Kumugha.A & Rizwana.M (2013) in her study , “Problems faced by handloom weavers cooperative societies in Erode District”, concluded that the competition from mill and power loom sectors is considered as marketing problem followed by lack of attractive promotion. The findings of the study reflect on the weavers related problems a deficiency in active members as major problem followed by aged people.

I.6. Statement of the Problem

Tamil Nadu textile industry maintains a unique position in terms of its contribution to total industrial production, employment, exports and foreign exchange earnings. There are 998 spinning mills across the state which includes spinning mills, composite mills and exclusive weaving mills. The state has a share of about 47 per cent of India's total spinning mills. The structure of textile industries in the State continued to be spinning-oriented. Coimbatore, Erode, Karur, Gobichettipalayam, Perundurai, and Tirupur in Tamil Nadu are India's biggest garment exporters and sometimes referred to as India's textile valley. The garment units around this region provide employment opportunity to nearly 1 million people. These units also contribute sumptuous share towards the generation of foreign exchange through home textile exports such as bed linens, kitchen linens, toilet linens, table linens and wall hangings. Madurai and Kanchipuram are very famous for handloom sarees. This handloom sarees are on sale all over India. Eventhough number of problems faced by handloom weavers in Tamil Nadu. Handloom weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis because of adverse government policies, globalisation and changing socio-economic conditions. The national and state governments do have several schemes pertaining to production inputs, market support and development, meant to safeguard the interests of the weaving community. Ineffective implementation of the schemes and the changed context of textile industry, increasing competition from the power loom and mill sectors have been largely responsible for the crisis in the handlooms. Lack of information to weavers regarding various policies and schemes is no less a significant cause for the dwindling fortunes of the weaver community. Hence the researcher has made an attempt to analyse the “Problem Faced by Handloom Weavers in Coimbatore District”

I.7. Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to examine the problems of the handloom weavers in study area. The objectives of the study are :

1. To study the present situation of handloom sector.

2. To examine the problems faced by handloom weavers.
3. To give the suitable suggestions to improve the handloom sector.

I.8. Research Methodology

The research design used in this study is descriptive in nature. The study describes problems handloom weavers in Coimbatore District and suggests the ways and means to improve their working conditions with sustainable growth. Present study, the review the literature having authority and relationship between the problems and focusing on the objective in the study has surveyed with the help of structured questionnaires to collect the data about the problem faced by handloom weavers in Coimbatore District. Primary as well as secondary data used in this study. Primary data collected from structured questionnaire. Primary data collected from 140 respondents, their involved in handloom weaving Labourers. Secondary data collected from journals, magazines, websites etc., Non probability method under using convenience sampling method has used in this study. Handloom weavers in is the sample and Coimbatore region are the population. The data are collected from 140 sample respondents by supplying the questionnaires; the data is analyzed by simple tables on the basis of financial problems, marketing problems, production problems, social problems and health problems. Garrett ranking method has used in this study. The survey was carried out during the period from October 2020 to December 2020.

I.9. Limitations of the Study

- The research was faced many difficulties while during the interactions with the respondents in their busy schedule.
- Some respondents did not return their questionnaires on time. Made this research scholar approach them always till they do so, and

As the study mainly based on the primary data, certain limitations are bound to arise in the collection of primary data.

I.10. Analysis and Interpretation

TABLE - 1 HEALTH PROBLEMS

S.No.	Health problems	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Eye-sight/cataract	41	29.29
2	Back pain	55	39.29
3	Knee pain/ joint pain	29	20.71
4	Problem of lungs	15	10.71
	Total	140	100

Source: Primary Data.

The above table depicts that the majority of the respondents i.e., out of 140 respondents (39.29 per cent) are suffering from back pain problem. The lowest number 15 respondents (10.71 per cent) are suffering from the problem of lungs. According to the data 41 respondents (29.29 per cent) are suffering from eye-sight and cataract and 29 respondents weavers (20.71 per cent) are suffering from knee pain and joint pains.

Garrett Ranking Technique

This technique was used to rank the preference of the respondents on different aspects of the study. The order of merit given by the respondents were converted into ranks by using the following formula.

$$\text{Percentage Position} = \frac{100 (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where R_{ij} = Rank given for i^{th} factor by j^{th} individual.
 N_j = Number of factors ranked by j^{th} individual

The percentage position of each rank thus obtained is converted into scores by referring to the table given by Henry Garrett. Then for each factor the scores of individual respondents are added together and divided by the total number of respondents for whom the scores were added. These mean scores for all the factors were arranged in the descending order, ranks given and most important aspects identified.

TABLE - 2 GENERAL PROBLEM FACED BY HANDLOOM WEAVERS

S.N O	Problems faced by respondents	TOTAL SCORE	MEAN SCORE	RANK
1	Investment	9731.4	69.51	1
2	Raw material prices	8610	61.5	2
3	Infrastructure	4095	29.25	13
4	Design improvements	6071.8	43.37	4
5	Market for products	8020.6	57.29	5
6	Patenting designs/varieties	7015.4	50.11	6
7	Free export/import trade - opportunity	5917.8	42.27	7
8	Cooperative system	5983.6	42.74	8
9	Intermediaries	4856.6	34.69	9
10	Budget allocations	4494	32.10	10
11	Enhancement of Value	4354	31.1	11
12	Competition and unfair competition from mills and powerlooms	4233.6	30.24	12
13	Wages, employment and livelihood issues	6868.4	49.06	3

Source: Primary Data.

The above table reveals the problems of the weavers. "Investment" was ranked first by the selected sample respondents with the total score of 9731 and mean score of 69.51. "Raw material prices" was ranked second with the total score of 8610 and mean score of 61.5 "Wages, employment and livelihood issues" occupied third and "Infrastructure and Investment" fourth position with the total score of 6868.4 and 6071.8 and mean score of 57.29 and 43.17 respectively. "Market for products" was ranked fifth with the total score of 8020.6 and mean score of 50.11. "Patenting designs/varieties" occupied sixth position with the total score of 7015.4 and mean score of 50.11. "Free export/import trade – opportunity" and "Cooperative system" occupied seventh and eighth position with the total score of 5917.8 and 5983 and mean score of 42.27 and 42.74 respectively. "Infrastructure" occupied the last position with the total score of 4095 and mean score of 29.25. It is evident that most of the respondents gave top priority to "Investment" for supporting nature of cause.

I.11. Suggestions of the Study

The suggestions are as follows,

1. Investment in handloom sector has thus far been limited to input supply costs. There is no investment on sectoral growth. While there have been some piece-meal projects such as workshed-cum-housing and project package schemes, they merely perpetuate the existing conditions. There has been no thinking on basic requirements of the producer. Facilities such as land, water and electricity need to be provided in many places that are a harbour for handloom manufacturing. On the other

hand, powerlooms are getting more usable support from the government in procuring land, water and electricity.

2. Access to raw material such as yarn, dyes and dyestuffs has become a problem. Weaving is a rural and semi-rural production activity and weavers have to go far to get these raw materials. To top it off, yarn prices are steadily increasing. As a result, there is a perennial shortage of yarn for the weavers. Despite a few schemes, the hank yarn access issue has not been resolved.

3. Wages have not increased in the last 15 years. Some sections of handloom weavers are living in hand-to-mouth conditions, with no house or assets. These issues need to be addressed by the government; at least effectively implement the Minimum Wages Act.

4. Handloom primarily uses natural fibres such as cotton, silk and jute. Prices of these fibres have been increasing during production and processing. Cotton production in India is expensive because of intensive and high usage of costly agricultural inputs such as pesticides and fertilisers. Secondly, while the fibre production most often happens in the vicinity of the weavers, their processing is done in distant areas, and as such the prices to the weaver are higher.

I.12. Conclusion of the study

The Handloom Textiles constitute a timeless part of the rich cultural Heritage of India. The element of art and craft present in Indian handlooms makes it a potential sector for the upper segments of market domestic as well as global. However, the sector is beset with manifold problems such as obsolete technologies, unorganized production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing link, overall stagnation of production and sales and, above all, competition from power loom and mill sector. As a result of effective Government intervention through financial assistance and implementation of various developmental and welfare schemes, the handloom sector, to some extent, has been able to tide over these disadvantages. Thus, Handloom forms a precious part of the generational legacy and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the artistry of the weavers.

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