



Socio-Economic Conditions of Handloom Weavers: A Case Study of Balaramapuram Area

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ABSTRACT

In recent days, the sector is seen losing its relevance in the Industrial scenario of the state due to several reasons. This Industry is facing a severe crisis due to increased cost of production, marketing difficulties and encroachment of power looms and lack of human resources. Despite all the rejuvenating measurements from the state government, the handloom sector is still failing in its own ways. This study examines the social and economic conditions of handloom weavers in Balaramapuram, Kerala state. This study analyse about problems of the handloom industry in Kerala such as lack of adequate working capital.

Keywords: Market demand, Skill development, working conditions, Cultural heritage

Introduction

The handloom sector of Kerala is very relevant in the state with the most sought of clothes. In case of employment, handloom is the second largest sector next to agriculture in India. India has a long tradition in weaving, especially in hand weaving. According to the census in 2011, it is estimated 833 million people are currently living in India. In which more than 35 million weavers and 15000 weaver's co-operative societies are built up on their dream with the support of the handloom industry. The handloom industry is expanding not only nationally but also internationally because of the demand for handcraft artifacts and unique traditional design.

Significance of the Study

- Handloom sector played a pivotal role in the country's economy.
- It is one of the largest economic activities providing direct employment to over 65 lakh persons engaged in weaving and allied activities.
- Handloom sector contributes nearly 19% of total cloth production in India during 2019-2020.

- However, the Handloom industry in Kerala faces all problems and challenges due to increased cost of production, marketing difficulties, encroachment of power looms and Lack of human resources.
- This research aims to study the problems and prospects of traditional weavers in modernized world and thus significant

Objectives

- To know the working status of the sample respondents.
- To know the income level of the sample respondents.
- To study the major problems faced by the weavers.

Methodology

This study is undertaken based on households in Balaramapuram area. Sample sizes are restricted to 50 households. Primary data are collected with the help of structured questionnaires. Secondary data sources are publications of state government, books, magazines, newspapers and government sites. Convenient Random Sampling Method used.

Data Analysis

1. Age of Weaver

Sl. No	Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 40 years	6	12
2	41-50	8	16
3	51-60	24	48
4	Above 61	12	24
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

The table 1 shows that 12 percentage of the sample respondents are less than 40 years of age and 48 percentage of the sample respondents are above 61 years are also engaged in the weaving

Education of the Weaver

Sl. No	Education of Weaver	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	13	26
2	Primary level	18	36
3	High School level	13	26
4	Higher Secondary level	3	6
5	Graduated	3	6
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table 2 shows that 36 percent of weavers have Primary school education and 6 percent of the sample respondents are graduates. Less government intervention to enhance the weaver's education is the reason for the low level of education of the weaver.

3. Reasons for Entering in to Weaving Profession

Sl. No	Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Hereditary	35	70
2	Only work known	15	30
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows that 70 percent of the weavers chose this profession as weaving is their hereditary job and 30 percent of the sample respondents entered into the profession due to only the work known.

4. Working Status of Weaver

Sl. No	Working Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Independent weaver	37	74
2	Under master weaver	13	26
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 shows that 74 percent of the sample respondents are independent weavers who have their own looms and do the weaving in their own house. Whereas 26 percent of the sample respondents are under master weavers and no one is Cooperative weaver.

5. Working Hours per Day

Sl. No	Working Hours	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 6 hours	13	26
2	7-9 hours	11	22
3	10-12 hours	13	26
4	Above 13 hours	13	26
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 5 explains that 22 percent of the sample respondents' works for 7-9 hours per day, 26 percent of the sample respondents work for up to 6 hours a day, 10-12 hours a day and more than 13 hours.

6. Experience in Hand Loom Weaving

Sl. No	Years of Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 5 years	1	2
2	6-10 years	2	4
3	11-15 years	2	4
4	16-20 years	15	30
5	Above 21 years	30	60
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 shows that 60 percent of the sample respondents have an experience of weaving above 21 years.4 percent of the sample respondent have an Experience of 11-15 years and 6-10 years.

7. Monthly Income

SL.NO	Monthly income	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Below 5000	18	36
2	5000-9000	29	58
3	Above 10000	3	6
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 7 shows that 36 percent of the sample respondents earn a monthly income below 5000 and 6 percent of weavers are getting above 10000 as monthly income.

8. Health Problems

Sl. No	Health Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Eyesight	9	18
2	Back Pain	9	18
3	Joint Pain	13	26
4	Other	8	16
5	Nil	11	22
TOTAL		50	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 shows that the most common health problem is joint pain which is 26% of the weavers and 18% weavers having back pain. 18% of weavers have eyesight and 16% complain about other illnesses like too much pain, headache etc. and increasingly about 22% have no complaint about their health.

Findings

- Majority of the weavers belong to the female category with the proportion of 90 Percentage and 10 Percentage of the people were male. There are no transgender employees working in the handloom industry where the research is carried out.
- 12 Percentage with the proportion of 48 Percentage and people above 61 years are also engaged in weaving with the proportion of 24 Percentage. The people between 41 to 50 years are engaged in the weaving process with 16 Percentage.
- 26 Percentage of weavers have High school education and 36 Percentage of weavers are having primary education. 26 Percentage people are illiterate and only 6 Percentage people have graduated. Less government intervention to enhance the weaver's education is the reason for the low level of education of the weaver.
- 38 weavers have their own house that covers 76 Percentage of the total sample collected for the study. Only 24 Percentage of weavers are leading their life in rented houses.
- 22 Percentage of the respondents work for 7-9 hours per day, 26 Percentage work for up to 6 hours a day, 26 Percentage work for 10-12 hours a day and 26 Percentage of people work for more than 13 hours.
- 60 Percentage of weavers have an experience of weaving above 21 years. 30 Percentage

have an experience of 16-20 years. 4 Percentage of having an Experience of 11 - 15 years. 4 Percentage of them having the experience of 6 – 10 years.

- 36 Percentage earn a monthly income below 5000 only and 58 Percentage earn between 5000 - 9000 and 6 Percentage of weavers are getting above 10000 as monthly income.

Suggestions

- Salary of weavers should be increased to retain the sector.
- Steps should be taken by the government to increase handloom melas and exhibitions.
- Government must ensure to see all the Schemes inefficiently.
- Most of the Schemes are benefited by master weavers and co-operative society weavers. It needs to be to the benefits of independent weaver, labour weaver and under with Middle man.
- Take necessary steps to control the trade of fake products in the name of Balaramapuram Kaithari.

Conclusion

This study has examined the Socio-Economic Conditions of Handloom Weavers in Balaramapuram Thiruvananthapuram District. Handloom sector is a major traditional industry. But now it is in the edge of its extinction mainly due to the invasions of power loom. The problem faced by the handloom industry affect the life of weavers. As a part of it, the traditional weavers also face problems and challenges. They faced various socio-economic and physical problems and challenges. The weavers get wages and on time, but it is not sufficient to maintain the economic balance. So, they seek other job parallel to it. Major it you weavers are women and the male members in the family not only involve in weaving they also goes to other job parallel to weaving which have more income. So, this study reveals the majority of the family is not only depending on the handloom. But a small portion of people still completely depending on handloom

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