SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITION OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS: A STUDY
WITH SPECIAL REFERANCE TO HANDLOOM WEAVERS
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN
KANNUR DISTRICT

*Shamitha.K. V, **Dr. P. Balasubramanian
*Research scholar, Dept. of commerce and management, Amrita Viswavidyapeetham, Kochi.
E-mail: shamithasatheesh1985@gmail.com

**Assistant Professor (Sr. Grade) and Head, Dept. Of commerce and management, Amrita Viswavidyapeetham, Kochi.
E-mail: baladiwansapudur@gmail.com
SOCIO ECONOMIC CONDITION OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS: A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HANDLOOM WEAVERS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN KANNUR DISTRICT

ABSTRACT

Handloom sector is an important second position employer in the country after agriculture. More than 16 million weavers are living with the help of handloom. According to the census 2011 it is estimated 833 million people are currently lives in rural India. Now more than 35 million weavers and more than 150,000 weaver’s co-operative societies are build upon their dreams with the support of the handloom industry. The handloom industry is expanding both nationally and internationally because of the demand for hand crafted artefacts and unique traditional design. This study is concentrated in Kannur district of Kerala. Kannur is the place where “city of looms and lore’s”. That is Kannur is also a major handloom weaving region of India. In Kannur region there are 37 weaver’s co-operative societies, provide an employment opportunity to around 2600 members. These 37 weaver’s societies are categorized to above average, average, below average. The major products of Kannur handloom are table linen, kitchen linen, bed linen, furnishing articles, curtains, toilet linen, fabrics. Government intervention of this sector is endless. A lot of welfare measures and schemes are introduced by government. In spite of various schemes implemented the handloom industry facing a lot of problem, that is competition from global marketing, low level of income, poor market price. So as the development of social and economic conditions of weaving communities are not improved. They faced more vulnerably especially due to weak organizational structure, low wages, poor infrastructure, decentralized looms, poor marketing etc.

Key words: Handloom sector; weavers; socio economic condition; problems of handloom sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

India has long tradition in weaving especially in hand weaving. We are moving through different diversity; handloom is one of that. Also handloom is one of the cultural heritage of India. This shows the dexterity and artistic ability of weavers to produce attractive products. Handloom always promotes innovations in its products through experimentation and exhibitions. Through its uniqueness and peculiar design, the handloom sector is well known industry in all over the world. Handloom sector has rich cultural heritage so it created a dominant role in Indian textile industry. Considering its contribution handloom sector has the space near by agricultural sector. It has major role in developing the livelihood of rural people and eradicating poverty because most of the weaver’s society are situated in rural area. It provides employment opportunity to lakhs of weavers and allied workers. It helps to reducing the discrimination of men and women. Lot of women workers are working in handloom industry. It makes a platform to reduce the gap between rural and urban people.
Handloom industry are producing ecofriendly energy saving products the outcome is enhancing the sustainable development. The production of handloom fabrics in the year 2014-2015 are 7203 million sq. meters and exports are 2246 crores.

Weavers co-operatives gave the different ways for dormant in rural and regional level population. Thus co-operative provide a ready tool for addressing member’s difficulties.

Generally speaking, a co-operative society is a business organization in which group of persons are associate together for common interests jointly sanctioned to come together with the common goal of promoting their financial activities such as production, distribution or marketing of goods and services, and provision of satisfying welfare measures to their members. Co-operative as an autonomous association of person voluntarily meet together for common interest. The main motive of co-operative society is serving people not for making profit. So as that co-operative society is a generous one in our society.

In Kannur district lots of co-operative societies are working in financial sector. Kannur the northern district of Kerala, is popularly known as the “city of looms and lore’s”, “town of export excellence” etc. Due to its unending relation with handloom industry. The industry is spread in 37 Panchayath and 5 municipalities. Out of this 37 weaver’s co-operative societies are working. There is ample scope for fabrics in world market which is exclusively reserved for handloom industry. The Kannur handloom includes the co-operative societies both industrial and primary; Khadi units and unorganized individual units. Cloth can be produced by using both handlooms and power looms. Power looms are being more common in the private sector; the handloom are dominant in the co-operative sector.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. D. Srinivasa Rao and Dr. N. Sreedhar (sep.2017) studied about “socio economic condition of handloom weavers in Gannavaram Mandal of Krishna district in Andrapradesh. This study is based on extensive field work indicates that though handloom weaving has many strengths and can be competitive under specific condition, the seeds of the crisis are inherent in the sector. These can be traced to two major factors the low performance of the co-operative sector, and the very low economic condition of the weavers.

2. Dr. Dharam Chand Jain and Miss Ritu Gera (Jan.2017) conducted a study about “An analytical study of handloom industry of India”. In this study they can found some problems related to handloom industry. Lack of adequate and authentic data, poor quality of yarn, financial crisis, lack of proper infrastructure, lack of education, skills based training and research, shortage of input and their rising cost, problem of working capital, poor management.

3. K. srinivasalu (1994) conducted a study in “handloom weavers struggle for survival”. In this study the researcher identified a serious threatens is happening against handloom weavers from power loom weavers. Already seriously threatened by the unequal competition from power loom sector, the very survival of the handloom sector and of handloom weavers has now been imperiled by the sharp rise in prices of yarn and dyes the result of the economic reform programmed all out emphasis on developing exports and not considering domestic economic and social crisis.
4. Md. Kairul Islam and Md. Eliias Hossain (Sep.2012) focused a study in, “An analysis of present scenario of handloom weaving industry in Bangladesh”. The study analyzed the different aspects and issues of handloom industries. In this study they found that the handloom sector is raising employment opportunity in rural area and rising income, eradicating rural poverty, bringing equity in the distribution of income, substituting imports and increasing potentials for exports. However this industry is facing some problems which are the reasons for non operation of looms.

5. Department of Economics and Statistics of Government of Kerala (Nov.2009) submitted “A report of survey on handloom sector in Kerala”. In this study they mainly focused to study the socio economic impact taken place among weavers due to implementation of various activities, financial assistance received by each co-operative society under various schemes.

6. Dr. A. Kumudha and Mrs. Riswana (Jan-2012) focused a study of “promotion of handloom products with special reference to handloom weaver’s co-operative society in Erode district”. In this study they focused out that handloom is a traditional industry offering millions of employment opportunities to millions of weavers in India. But recently the industry is facing lot of problem and going towards the declaim stage.

7. Dr. Selvaraj A and Tamilarasi. N (May-2016) studied about “factors influencing handloom weavers to enter into the field”. The main objective of this study are
   1. To measure the factors influencing the handloom weavers to enter into the field.
   2. To offer suitable suggestions for further development.
   In this study a lot of factor is found to enter into this field that is heredity, easy to start, less working capital, practical knowledge, availability of raw material, availability of labour, government loan/subsidy, regular income, easy market facility, self employment, own interest. Out of this regular income is the most important factors to enter into the handloom field.

8. Anu Varghese and M.H. Salim (May-2015) studied “handloom industry in Kerala: A study of the marketing issue”. This study seeks to (i) study the significance of handloom industry in Kerala. (ii)study the marketing problem associated with handloom industry in Kerala. (iii)suggest suitable remedial strategies for the healthy growth of this sector through effective management of marketing and allied problems. In this study it is found that, given the vast potential of handloom products and the trend of constantly growing demand, especially in markets abroad, the future of Kerala’s handloom sector lies in how effectively it takes advantage of the market scenario.

9. K. Rari John and S. Kamini (Dec.2016) had conducted a study in “socio economic status of women entrepreneurs in handloom sector”. In this study they found the traditional weaver community is not active in the field in Trivandrum district. All the caste and communities are involved in weaving activities. Weaving makes income generating activity through caste diversity. Working conditions are pathetic. The sheds accommodate 8-10 loom; looms are too closed to each other. Most of the sheds are open, with unfinished floors, low roofs, thatches, tin sheet, cramped with pit looms and without proper lighting.
10. D.K. Singh, A.K. Singh, V.P. Yadav, R.B. Singh, R.S. Baghel and Mayank Singh (May-2009) focused a study related to “association of socio economic status with economic motivation of the farmers”. In this study the scale of Trivedi (1963) was used to measure independent variables like as education, land holding, caste, social participation and socio-economic status. While the scale of Supe (1969) was taken for measuring economic motivation. In this study they found out most of the respondents were middle aged, primary educated belonged to backward class, small land holding and agriculture are their main occupation and thus belonged to medium socio economic status.

11. A. Kumudha and M. Riswana (March-2013) studied about, “problems faced by handloom industry – A study with handloom weaver’s co-operative societies in Erode district”. In this study they introduced 3 types of problems in co-operative handloom sector; input related, marketing related, weaver’s related.

Major findings are,

- Yarn price is increasing day by day. So the cost of production proposing to increase.
  This is major important input related problem followed by poor quality of raw material.
- Considering the weavers related problem the societies consider lack of active member as a major weavers related problem followed by aged people.
- The Competition from mechanized sector such as mill and power loom Sectors is considered as a major marketing problem followed by Lack of attractive promotion.

12. Lakshmi Devi C. S (April-2014) studied about “An analysis of socio economic status of handloom weaver’s in India”. In this study she finds out the handloom sector or the non-farm sector has been slowly deteriorating over the years and there has been a steady decline in the industry over the years. Adverse government policies, globalization and change in socio-economic condition is negatively effecting the living status of the weavers. Schemes introduced for weavers are not working well, weavers have no idea about the schemes introduced by government and society, competition from the power loom and other mill sector these are another reason for crisis in handloom sector.

3. SIGNIFICANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Handloom sector is a major nonfarm industry in India. This sector gives major contribution to Indian economy. Every person who have interested to taken this job can enter into this field. This sector especially in the case of weavers need not to be offer a high qualification. Handloom providing employment opportunity to 65 lacs persons engaged in weaving and allied activities (dyeing, twisting, construction of work shed and acquisition of looms and accessories). So handloom is considering as a largest economic activity in textile sector. Government intervention of this sector is endless. A lot of welfare measures and schemes are introduced by government. If the significance of the handloom sector is such a discussing thing, then the question is why this industry is facing so many problems? Handloom weavers are facing so many problems, from government, societies and others. The wages are the major problem facing by the weavers. They are forced to
work hard at low wages in the society. This may be caused to termination of many handloom units and thus has resulted in extensive rate of unemployment.

4. **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To identify the problems of handloom society
2. To identify the socio-economic condition of handloom weavers

5. **HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN INDIA**

Indian handloom sector is an age old industry providing employment to the rural people in large level. They have separate space in Indian economy. Handloom industry is considered as the largest cottage industry in the country. The sector is leading second position after agriculture in providing employment. Because they are providing employment opportunity to large number of weavers and allied workers. The significance of the handloom sector in the agricultural economy is massive because of its linkages with imperative and sensitive sectors like agriculture. They are producing eco-friendly products. Raw materials are taken from agriculture, therefore, continuous market for agricultural produce. This shows the dexterity and artistic ability of weavers to produce attractive products. Handloom always promotes innovations in its products through experimentation and exhibitions. Handloom sector is one of the important employer who was given employment to the large number of women. It shows the role of women empowerment in handloom sector.

They are changing their products on the basis of market needs and aspirations. Industry can strongly say that their product is unique one. The major part of textile industry, like spinning, weaving (and knitting), fabric processing and garment-making units, have given about one-fifth of India’s total industrial output and GDP rate of handloom industry is about 7 percent. Around 35 percentages is providing by handloom and its allied sector in fabric production. Contribution of this sector in total cloth production is 23 percent.

The handloom sector is included in the cultural heritage of India along with traditional significance. This sector following hand-operated to automated technology, it has long 5000 years old in Indian industry.

i. **HANDLOOM CLOTH PRODUCTION & EXPORT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Production (m. sq. mtrs)</th>
<th>Exports (Rs. In cr.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>6947</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>6677</td>
<td>N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-10</td>
<td>6806</td>
<td>1252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-11</td>
<td>6907</td>
<td>1575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ii. **CURRENT TREND IN HANDLOOM SECTOR:**

Here the handloom cloth production and handloom exports are shows increasing tendency in starting stage but in last 2 years’ handloom exports are decreasing. The following are the important feature of current scenario of handloom sector.

- Consideration of value addition
- Great improvement in quality of handloom products
- Presents of more weavers in full time profession
- Entry of large number of retailers for selling handloom products

6. **PROBLEMS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY**

Like as decentralised organisation sector handloom industry is facing mainly three types of problems.

i. Input related problem

   ii. Weavers related problem

   iii. Marketing related problem

   **i. Input related problem:** - The major input related problems are

   - Delay in supply of yarn: - sometimes the supply of yarn may be delay for the recognised authority. Then the society cannot produce the product in right time. Automatically they are forced to go to purchase of yarn from local source. This will reduce the quality of product.

   - Poor quality of raw material: - The major difficulty faced by the handloom sector is absence of sufficient supply of quality yarn at reasonable price. The government was taken certain measures to control these problems.

     a. To set the spinning mills in co-operative sector for raw material supply to handloom sector.

     b. The obligation on mills to pack 50% of their total marketable yarn as hank yarn.
- High cost of production: - co-operative societies are facing the problem of limited finance for their working. Cost of production sometimes increases comparing to previous year. This may be lead to shortage of finance. In order to solve this problems, the apex authority should take remedial action.

- Inadequacy of supply of yarn: - inadequacy of supply of yarn will effect the entire production of the society.

- Insufficient number of looms: - number of looms are less in most of the societies comparing to their workers. In order to overcome this problem their work should be on the basis of shift. Otherwise will lead to delay in production and supply.

ii. **Weaver’s related problem:** - This include

  - Aged people: - youngsters are not ready to enter the handloom field. Most of the weavers are above 50 years. This will lead to less production.

  - Lack of skilled weavers: -skilled and efficient labours are centralised figure of every organisation. In the case of weavers there has no need to achieve high qualification and high skill. Naturally that will lead to a headache to co-operative society.

  - Lack of active member: - this is also another important problem facing by the handloom society. Health condition is the main reason for this problem. Most of the weavers are facing health and psychological problem.

  - Lack of training: - it is the duty of the government to arrange advance training to co-operative weaver’s societies. Sometimes it may be delay. This delay will cause reduce updating in working.

  - Poor knowledge about modernised technique: - because of lack of training and updating, the knowledge of weaver’s is very less, and they have no idea about modernised technique. This is major hindrance of development in this field.

  - Not satisfied towards wages: - the main satisfaction of every worker working in an organisation is money satisfaction. This is the first and important problem related to weaver’s in weaver’s co-operative society. Weavers are getting less wages comparing to other organisation. They are getting all other amenities from government and society. But wages are comparatively less. Automatically they will go for justice.

iii. **Marketing related problem:** - This include

  - Lack of customer relationship management: - for clubbing information regarding customers and the functions of an institution, there should have been a good customer relationship management. But here there has no such post are functioning. This will reduce the contact between the society and customers.
• Not understanding the customer's preference: - the weaver's co-operative society are not able to supply the products in tune with the customer's interest. The taste and preference are different from person to person. The people are fascinated and interested with new colour, designs and style of products. It is the responsibility of every organisation to supply products on the basis of customer's preference and interest. For this purpose, they should create a management post related to customer relationship.

• Lack of intensive distribution: - under the intensive distribution strategy what ever outlets can get the company can use for distribution of their products. It may help to create brand awareness of products as well as increase sales. But this strategy cannot see in handloom industry.

• Lack of attractive promotion: - promotion means up gradation. In handloom there has no chance to upgrade one to another post. So people are not ready to enter this job. This is also an important limitation of handloom industry.

• Not stressing the unique selling proportion: -Unique Selling Proportion(USP) is a factor that differentiate your product and services from its competitors, such as highest quality, lowest cost, the first ever, or some other differential. But in handloom industry USP is less.

• Competition from mechanised sector such as mill and power loom sector: -the main intimidation faced by the handloom societies are from mechanised sector and power loom sector. Power loom and other mill sectors are produce product without much quality as like as handloom sector. They are also produce illegally and market illegally. Weavers are attracted by power loom than on hand loom because they offer less energy, more wages, and good quality yarn supplied by him.

Out of these lots of problem facing by handloom societies through the government policies and programmes. By adopting this type of policies and programmes government should not introduce a review committee to verify the problem behind the society. Rebate scheme is also a good scheme introduced by government. But government is also failure to accomplish the rebate of the weavers' society. These are all will effect the socio economic status of weavers.

iv. **STAKE HOLDERS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY**

In any organisation greater involvement of stakeholders, though, create a negative effect in members. At the time showing a financial return on investment from socially and environmentally interfering behaviour is difficult. Weavers have become a much more involvement in the stakeholders group. Weavers are also the part of the stakeholders group. In that case the weavers are expecting to work with a non-discriminatory work environment. This will create a great threat in the society. Weavers concentration in work automatically loose. Suppliers expectation is to keep timeliness distribution of products. Then only they can go for further dealings in business. The existence of business is going through the hands of the good suppliers and large number of customers.
7. GOVERNMENT INTERVENTIONS:

Government interventions in handloom sector is endless. The brief of them are as follows:

(A) Support given to weavers in input related matters:

(i) Raw material accessing –yarn supply through National Handloom Development Co-operation (NHDC).
(ii) Institutional credit through banks on the basis of concession.
(iii) Arrange training in skill development by Weavers Service Co-operatives (WSC).
(iv) Seeking further assistance in product design through WSCs & NHDP professional designers & Mega Cluster Programme.

(B) Providing financial assistance to e-commerce.
(C) For marketing and promotion of export arrange indoor and outdoor exhibitions, providing handloom Mark scheme, Handloom India Brand.

(D) Facilitating revival & comprehensive package for loan waiver.

(F) Ensure cheap credit to primary/apex societies and also arranging recapitalisation facility.

(G) Providing welfare measures to weavers – health and life insurance.

(H) Providing infrastructure facility for cluster development.

(I) Novel initiation by government – distribute school uniform with the help of handloom sector.

8. CONCLUSION

The above related problems effecting the existence of handloom industry and socio economic condition of weavers. Adverse government policies, globalization and change in socio-economic condition is negatively effecting the living status of the weavers. Schemes introduced for weavers are not working well, weavers have no idea about the schemes introduced by government and society, power loom and other mill sector provide competition these are another reason for crisis in handloom sector. Handloom products are unique. They are promoting innovations and experimentations. They are considering the needs and aspirations of the customers so introducing innovative designs which cannot repeated by power loom sector. This is one of the existing strength of Handloom sector. Handloom sector one of the part of the heritage of India and depict the abundance and diversity of India and the dexterity of the weavers. Still it is a part of cultural heritage of India handloom sector and handloom weavers are facing many problems. The schemes and programmes may be in workable condition a group effort should be needed, that will highlight production process, ability of the handloom sector and productivity procedure and also increase the earnings and life style of weavers.

References

2. A. Kumudha and M. Riswana (2013). Problems of handloom sector (vol.no.2, issue no.3)
6. First, Second and Third Handloom Censuses.
8. Rickey Rani Borush and Dr. Satvinder Kaur (2015). *A study on the analysis of economics of weaver’s co-operative societies in Assam.* (vol.5, issue 1)


10. GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF TEXTILES WEAVERS SERVICE CENTRE MADEENA COMPLEX SOUTH BAZAR KANNUR-670002
E-mail : cmm- wsecan@sancharnet.in www.handlooms.nic.in texmin.nic.in


14. Dr. Selvaraj A, Tamilarasi N (2016). *Factors influencing the Handloom weavers to enter Into the filed.*(vol.2, issue.5)

15. Ankam Sreenivas and Kalakota Suman (2016). *Socio economic condition of handloom weavers-A study of Karimnagar district.* (vol.5, issue.5)


19. Website: http://www.handlooms.nic.in

20. Google website