

A Study on Constraints faced by Handloom Weavers of a Heritage City (Varanasi)

Jyoti Srivastava^{1*} and Indira Bishnoi²

¹Research Scholar¹ Dept. of Home Science, Banaras Hindu University
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221005, India

²Professor, Dept. of Home Science, Banaras Hindu University
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221005, India

Abstract

Indian Textiles Industry has an overwhelming presence in the economic life of the country. The present study has been conducted in Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh which is one of the major handloom hubs. It is based on primary and secondary data. The total sample respondents for the study were 370. The present study was conducted in two cluster-Ramnagar and Bajardiha and 100 cluster weavers were randomly selected. Out of 350 Handloom Co-operative Society 15 Co-operative Society were randomly selected and each societies 10 Handloom weavers were randomly selected. 50 Master weavers and 100 Independent weavers were purposively selected from densely populated area of Varanasi of handloom weavers. A structured interview schedule was prepared and administered on respondents through personal interview method and observation method of data collection. Secondary data for study collected from the published and unpublished sources, annual reports, research, journals and various related websites. Data were analyzed with the help of appropriate statistical tools like Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation-test and χ^2 test. The computer software SPSS 16 was also used to find results for finding out the socio-economic background of respondents the B.G.Prasad's scale of Socio-Economic Status 2017 were used and results were drawn from it. The study results revealed that the situation of the weavers was pathetic due to illiteracy, Poor marketing, designing, skill

upgradation, competition with Powerloom, lack of skilled workers, financial constraints, health problems, and poor Government support. But the 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 constraints.

Keywords- Textile industry, Handloom, Handloom weavers, Powerloom

1-Introduction

Clothing is a basic human need as much as food and shelter. Till the 19th century, when there were no machines for the production of cloth, the handloom industry was the sole supplier of cloth for the entire need of the world. Handloom weaving is the India's biggest cottage and labour intensive sector, which has been playing a very important role in the country's economy by forming part of India's rich heritage and exemplifying the rich artistry of the weavers. The Indian textile industry is one of the largest in the world with a large raw material base and manufacturing strength across the value chain. The Indian industry has inherent linkage with agriculture, culture and traditions of the country making for its versatile spread of products appropriate for both domestic and the export market. The textile industry contributes to 7% of industry output in value terms, 2% of India's GDP and to 15% of the country's export earnings. With over 45 million people employed directly, the textile industry is one of the largest sources of

employment generation in the country.(Annual report 2017-18). 95% of the world 's hand woven fabric come from India. The handloom sector has a unique place in our economy.This sector has been sustained by transferring skills from one generation to another. The strength of the sector lies in its uniqueness, flexibility of production, openness to innovations, adaptability to the supplier's requirement and the wealth of its tradition. There are 23.77 lakh handlooms in the country, providing employment to 43.32 lakh handloom weavers and ancillary workers. This includes 38.47 lakh adult handloom weavers and ancillary workers, of which 24.72 lakh are engaged full time and 13.75 lakh on part time basis. nearly 27.83 lakh handloom households are engaged in weaving and allied activities. (3rd. Handloom Census of 2009-10)

Varanasi is the heritage city of india.Varanasi is famous for its culture, value, tradition, religion, handicrafts, handloom weaving specially Banarasi brocades, zari brocades Tanchui, Munga and other silk products. Banarasi silk product is very famous and popular in india as well as in the whole world and its demand is increasing day by day globally. Weavers is the strong pillar of hand weaving but they are facing lots of problem. The exploitation in this sector has reached the peak. The labors did not get their actual wages. As a result they had begun to search for better opportunity. In Varanasi many skilled artisans have left the handloom weaving and migrated to other cities for doing other work. The handloom market has now become limited and domain of few handloom owners. However handloom has clearly identifiable advantage in cloths made of certain types of yarn or carrying certain types of loom woven design and it will exist as long as there is enough demand for these cloths. But Varanasi handloom could not hold the market. It is estimated that approximately 20 per cent weavers are still engaged in handloom where as 80 per cent weavers are joined in power-loom in Varanasi.(Rao Srinivas ,2017)The pathetic situations of weavers and their short comings due to illiteracy of financial constraints, bottleneck of marketing and support of the Government.(Singh Amrita and Shailaja, 2009).The Handloom weavers in Banaras, who have inherited this occupation, are in pitiable condition owing to the poor socio-economic conditions. Majority of them are wage weavers who earn minimum wages in spite of working for more than ten hours a day. Almost fifty per cent of the community belonged to middle income group; who were engaged with Master Weavers or in the Co-operative Societies.(Singh, 2014). The handloom weavers of Varanasi have lost their prestigious traditional industry. It has occurred due to the industrialization in all over

India. The capitalist production, invention of power- loom, increasing price of yarn, low wages and labor problem are pushed to handloom to an end. The production system is mostly under the control of a particular entrepreneurial class Gaddidar or master weaver.(Tanusree ,2015).The handloom sector has been slowly weakening over the years and there has been a steady decline in the industry. This industry faces a large number of problems today in spite of a very glorious past and huge potential for employment generation. Ineffective implementation of the schemes, increased unfair competition from the power loom and mill sectors are responsible for the crisis.(Rao and Kumar, 2018). In view of above the investigator thought to investigate in depth the present conditions of the hand loom weavers. In present study, an effort has been made to trace the constraints faced by Handloom weaver's of Varanasi.

2-Objective of study

- 1-To find out the various constraints faced by handloom weavers of Varanasi.
- 2-To find out the opinion regarding sufficient income for the family and its relation with their religion, region and socio-economic status.

3-Materials and Methods

The present study has been conducted in Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh which is one of the major handloom hubs. It is based on primary and secondary data.The total sample respondents for the study were 370. The present study was conducted in two cluster-Ramnagar and Bajardiha and 100 cluster weavers were randomly selected. Out of 350 Handloom Co-operative Society 15 Co-operative Society were randomly selected and each societies 10 Handloom weavers were randomly selected.50 Master weavers and 100 Independent weavers were purposively selected from densely populated area of Varanasi of handloom weavers. A structured interview schedule was prepared and administered on respondents through personal interview method and observation method of data collection. Secondary data for study collected from the published and unpublished sources, annual reports, research, journals and various related websites. Data were analyzed with the help of appropriate statistical tools like Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation-test and x2test.The computer software SPSS 16 was also used to find results for finding out the socio –

economic background of respondents the B.G.Prasad's scale of Socio-Economic Status 2017 were used and results were drawn from it.

4-Results And Discussion

Results of the study were discussed according to the objectives of the study.

Table : 1-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table No-1	Title	S No.	Categori es	Number	%
1.1	Age (In Years)	1	Up-to 35	97	26.2
		2	36-50	183	49.5
		3	>50	90	24.3
			Total	370	100.00%
		Average age \pm sd =43.27 \pm 10.94, Range=(18-27)			
1.2	Sex	1	Male	309	83.5
		2	Female	61	16.5
1.3	Religi on	1	Hindu	181	48.9
		2	Muslim	189	51.1
			Total	370	100
1.4	Caste	1	General	45	12.2
		2	OBC	159	43
		3	SC	166	44.8
1.5	Educa tional status	1	Illiterat e	136	36.8
		2	Primar y	60	16.2
		3	Middle	28	7.6
		4	High	74	20
		5	Inter	58	15.7
		6	UG	9	2.4
		7	PG	3	0.8
		8	Profess ional	2	0.5

Table no. 1.1 reveals that majority of respondents (49.5%) belonged to age group of 36 to 50 years followed by 26.2% respondents belonged to the age group of 35 and below 35 years. Only 24.3% respondents belonged to the age group of 50 and above 50 years. Table 1.2 reveals that majority of respondents (83.5%) belonged to the male followed by 16.5% respondents belonged to female. Table 1.3 reveals that the majority of respondents (51.1%) were Muslims while (48.9%) respondents

were Hindu. Table 1.4 reveals that majority of respondents (44.8%) belonged to the scheduled cast while (43.0%) respondents belonged other backward cast and only (12.2%) respondents belonged to general caste. Table 1 .5 shows that majority of respondents (36.8%) were illiterate and 22.0% respondents had high school education and 16.2% respondents has primary level education. 15.7% respondents had intermediate level education and 7.6% respondents had middle level education and 2.4% respondents had under graduate level education. Very few only 0.8% had post graduate level education and 0.5% respondents had professional level education.

Table no.2- Distribution of Respondents According to the working days in a month, working status and duration of work/day.

Sr. No	No. of working day/month	No	%
1	15-20	19	5.3
2	21-25	188	52.1
3	26-30	154	42.6
	Total	361	100.0
Average no. of working days \pm SD=25.19 \pm 3.15 Range = (15-30)			
Working Status			
1	Certain	42	11.6
2	Uncertain	319	88.4
	Total	361	100.0
Work Duration/day			
1	7	06	1.7
2	8	147	40.7
3	9	146	40.4
4	10	53	14.7
5	11	05	1.4
6	12	04	1.1
	Total	361	100.0
Average work duration/day \pm SD=8.77 \pm 0.85 Range=(7-12)			

The table no 2 shows that 52.1% respondents were working were working 21-25 days in a month while 42.6% respondents were working 26-30 days in a month. 5.3% respondents were working 15-20 days in a month.

The table also shows that majority of respondents (88.9%) were working uncertain period of work while 11.6% respondents were working for certain period of work.

It also shows that 40.7% respondents were working 8 hours/day. 40.4% respondents 9 hours/day. 14.7% respondents 10 hours/day. 1.7% respondents

7 hours/day. 1.4% respondents 11 hours/day. Only 1.1% of respondents were working 12 hours/day.

Table no.3- Distribution of Respondents opinion regarding sufficient income for the family according to their religion, region and socio-economic status.

Sr. No	Religion	income is sufficient for family					
		Yes		No		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Hindu	10	5.5	171	94.5	181	100.0
2	Muslim	19	10.1	170	89.9	189	100.0
	Total	29	7.8	341	92.2	370	100.0
$\chi^2 = 2.63, df = 1, P > 0.05$							
Region							
1	Urban	28	10.1	254	89.9	282	100.0
2	Rural	1	1.1	91	98.9	92	100.0
$\chi^2 = 7.73, df = 1, P < 0.01$							
Socio- economic Status							
1	Lower	3	1.7	177	98.3	180	100.0
2	Middle	7	4.4	153	95.6	160	100.0
3	Upper	19	63.3	11	36.7	30	100.0
$\chi^2 = 140.10, df=2, P < 0.001$							

The table number 3 shows about opinion regarding income sufficient for the family. The table show that 94.5% of Hindu respondents said that the income was not sufficient for the family followed by 89.9% of Muslim respondents.

The statistical tests χ^2 shows that there was no significant difference among sufficiency of income for the family and religion.

The table also show that 98.8% rural respondents said that the income was not sufficient for the family followed by 89.9% of urban respondents.

The statistical tests χ^2 shows that there was significant difference among region and sufficiency of income for the family.

The table reveals that 98.3% of lower income group respondents said that the income was not sufficient for family followed by 95.6% of middle income group respondents while 36.7% of upper income group respondents said that the income was not sufficient.

The statistical tests χ^2 shows that there was significant difference among socio economic status and sufficiency of income for the family.

Table no.4- Distribution of Respondents Views regarding facing different type of difficulties in Handloom industry.

Sr. No.	Facing Problems	Yes		No		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1.	Payment	332	89.7	38	10.3	370	100.00
2.	Market	362	97.8	8	2.2	370	100.00
3.	Design	218	58.9	152	41.0	370	100.00
4.	Electricity	162	43.8	208	56.2	370	100.00
5.	Illiteracy	121	32.7	249	67.3	370	100.00
6.	Loan	213	57.6	157	42.4	370	100.00
7.	Competition with power loom	360	97.3	10	2.7	370	100.00
8.	Nom availability of skilled weaves.	86	23.2	284	76.8	370	100.00
9.	skill upgradation	141	38.1	229	61.9	370	100.00
10.	Unawareness	337	91.1	33	8.9	370	100.00
11.	Not benefitted from govt. Facilities	325	87.8	45	12.2	370	100.00
12.	Old age weavers	92	24.9	278	75.1	370	100.00
13.	Not fulfillment of basic needs	346	93.5	24	6.5	370	100.00

The table no 4 shows the views regarding facing different type of difficulties in Handloom industry. The table shows that majority of respondents (97.8%) were facing market related problems while 97.3% respondents competition with power loom, 93.5% respondents not fulfillment of basic need, 91.1% respondents unawareness while 89.7% respondents payment, 87.8% respondents not benefitted with Govt. facilities while 58.9% respondents design, 57.6% respondents loan, 43.8% respondents electricity, 38.1% respondents skill up-gradation, 32.7% respondents illiteracy,

24.9% respondents old age weavers while 23.2% respondents were facing problem of non-availability of skilled weavers.

5-Findings

- 1- Majority of respondents (49.5%) belonged to age group of 36 to 50 years.
- 2- Majority of respondents (83.5%) belonged to the male.
- 3- Majority of respondents (51.1%) were Muslims
- 4- Majority of respondents (44.8%) belonged to the scheduled cast
- 5- Majority of respondents (36.8%) were illiterate.
- 6- 52.1% respondents were working were working 21-25 days in a month.
- 7- Majority of respondents (88.9%) were working uncertain period of work while 11.6% respondents were working for certain period of work.
- 8- 40.7% respondents were working 8 hours/day.
- 9- 94.5% of Hindu respondents said that the income was not sufficient for the family followed by 89.9% of Muslim respondents.
- 10- 98.8% rural respondents said that the income was not sufficient for the family followed by 89.9% of urban respondents.
- 11- 98.3% of lower income group respondents said that the income was not sufficient for family. there was significant difference among socio economic status and sufficiency of income for the family.
- 12- Majority of respondents (97.8%) were facing market related problems while 97.3% respondents competition with power loom, 93.5% respondents not fulfillment of basic need, 91.1% respondents unawareness while 89.7% respondents payment, 87.8% respondents not benefitted with Govt. facilities while 58.9% respondents design, 57.6% respondents loan, 43.8% respondents electricity, 38.1% respondents skill up-gradation, 32.7% respondents illiteracy, 24.9% respondents old age weavers while 23.2% respondents were facing problem of non-availability of skilled weavers.

6-Conclusion

The study results revealed that the situation of the weavers was pathetic due to illiteracy, Poor marketing, designing, skill upgradation, competition with powerloom, lack of skilled workers, financial constraints, health problems, and poor Government support. Many handloom clusters of Varanasi are gradually switched over to power driven looms, because of getting higher productivity and earning better livelihood. The handloom owners of Varanasi, installed power-loom in their house premises or factory site where handloom was there. But 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 constraints.

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