



SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF INDIVIDUAL WEAVERS OF HAND LOOM WEAVERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN WARANGAL

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ABSTRACT

The Handloom Sector occupies a distinct and unique place in the Indian economy, besides being the largest generator of non-form rural employment. The available statistics indicate that there is still an immense scope for expansion. Handloom Industry is the largest cottage industry in India occupying a prominent place in the economy of the country and scattered over the Indian villages. Nearly one third of the clothing requirement in the country is provided by handloom sector. The handloom sector plays a pivotal role in the country's economy. It is one of the largest economic activities next to agriculture. At present like sector with about 35 lakh looms, at present provides employment to 65 lakh persons. The traditional handloom weaving in India has been kept alive by those efficiently skilled household weavers, which inextricably is linked with the age-old. The Government of India's policy for the handloom sector had twin objectives of social and economic. The business objectives anchored in the thrust for growth, were to update old technology, innovativeness, increase productivity, introduce new colors, new designs and to export the handloom fabrics.

The sector is beset with various problems, such as obsolete technology, haphazard production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing links, overall stagnation of production and sales and above all,

competition from power looms and mill sector. Predominantly Mahatma Gandhi recognized the significance of textile handicrafts during the struggle for independence. A notable aspect of Gandhi's views on this issue is that he emphasized not only handloom weaving but also spinning by hand. Gandhi emphasized hand spinning so much that the instrument for this the Charkha become a leading symbol of the freedom movement. Most of the handloom weavers are willing to live in a joint family system. The income and living standards of the handloom weavers are very poor.

Keywords: *Cloth, Expenditure, income, Weavers, Looms*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Handloom Sector occupies a distinct and unique place in the Indian economy, besides being the largest generator of non-form rural employment. The available statistics indicate that there is still an immense scope for expansion. Handloom Industry is the largest cottage industry in India occupying a prominent place in the economy of the country and scattered over the Indian villages. Nearly one third of the clothing requirement in the country is provided by handloom sector. The handloom sector plays a pivotal role in the country's economy. It is one of the largest economic activities next to agriculture. This sector, with about 35 lakh looms, at present provides employment to 65 lakh persons, the traditional handloom weaving in India has been kept alive by those professionally skilled household weavers, which inextricably is linked with the age-old tradition of weaving. Nevertheless, in India, handloom industry is an ancient cottage industry spread all over the country. This is a source of livelihood for the millions directly or indirectly. Its role is quite significant in meeting the clothing requirements of the masses. It occupies a pivotal place with its wide ramification into the socio-economic fabric of society. The hand-woven textiles have a long glorious tradition. They are symbolic of Indian culture forming part of great heritage of art. Centuries ago when Europe, the birth place of today's modern capitalism and industry, had little industrial development to boast of India was famous for its grand artistic skills of her craftsmen. The Indian cotton fabrics enjoyed worldwide patronage especially in Eastern and European markets in the world.

The sector is beset with various problems, such as obsolete technology, haphazard production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product

range, weak marketing links, overall stagnation of production and sales and above all, competition from power looms and mill sector. There is no doubt that India's textiles constitute one of the sumptuous sources of textile designs in the world, drawn upon increasingly by textile designers, product designers and fashion designers from all nationalities. Many of these designs are in easy global access from books, museum collections, the web and commodities. The textile industry occupies a unique place in the economy of India by virtue of its contribution to the industrial output, employment generation and foreign exchange earnings. The Indian textile industry contributes about one-fifth of total industrial production, nearly one-third of total exports and provides oodles of employment to 20 millions of people.

In history, there are evidences to show that the Indians have known the art of weaving for more than five thousand years. The fact that the Egyptian mummies of five thousand years old were found wrapped in Indian fine silks and Muslins. This proves the high artistic skills of Indian weavers in the past. India has been a producer of cotton cloth of superior quality and repute from times immemorial and generally regarded as the birthplace of cotton manufacturers. The gossamer like silks of Varanasi, fine Muslins of Dacca and other hand-woven fabrics of Assam, Baroda, Kanchipuram and Manipur have been famous for ages. Unsurpassed for their artistic craftsmanship and superb workmanship, they have freshness, vitality and charm and highly praised all over the world. The handloom witnessed a significant progress after the country- attained independence.

2. IMPORTANCE

Handloom industry is one of the vital industries of India and its survival is a remarkable one despite decline in some countries and it was wiped out in certain other countries where modern textile industry was established. The industry is unique in the sense that in no other country in the world, hand weaving is being carried vastly on such a nation-wide basis. It withstood the onslaughts and stiff competition from machine-made products. In the wake of mobility, growing urbanization, scientific and technological revolution, it escaped unscathed from annihilation keeping all the ancient tradition of weaving and carrying out improvements in tools and accessories. Indian weavers are not only producing enough cloth to meet internal demand, but also exporting numerous artistic varieties to

industrialized countries of the World. Handloom is a way of life for many people in India. From the view point of employment, it ranks second next to agriculture and people dependent on it are heterogeneous in nature, among whom are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parses, Zoroastrians, besides Tribal, hill people and the like.

Particularly Mahatma Gandhi recognized this significance of textile handicrafts during the struggle for independence. A notable aspect of Gandhi's views on this issue is that he emphasized not only handloom weaving but also spinning by hand. Gandhi emphasized hand spinning so much that the instrument for this the Charkha become a leading symbol of the freedom movement. This was important because while the handloom weaver was a symbol of a community's self-reliance in matters relating to a basic need (clothes), the availability of basic raw material in the form of hand-spun yarn within the community was a symbol of self-reliance of handloom weavers themselves. In addition as spinning work required little capital investment and could be taken up anywhere, anytime by any person, it offered a good source of employment for villages which could be adjusted to their rhythm of life.

3. ROLE OF HANDLOOM SECTOR IN INDIA

The Government of India's policy for the handloom sector had two objectives social and economic. The business objectives anchored in the thrust for growth, were to update old technology, innovativeness, increase productivity, introduce new colors, new designs and to export the handloom fabrics.

4. DIFFERENT TYPES OF HANDLOOMS

Handloom was given different names depending on the mode of operation. It was known as throw-shuttle pit loom. When the workers operates it by throwing the shuttle from one side to the another with either of his hands, sitting on the edges of a small pit in which the heads could be suitably operated with his legs. The improved fly- shuttles which swing the shuttle from one side to the other by pulling the strings tied to the shuttle-driving cocks on either side. The loom was taken out of the pit and fitted on the frame and hence called Frame loom. Primitive loom where weft is threaded by hand for interlacing the war ends. The vertical looms like woolen blanket looms, weaver looms and tape looms are also included.

5. MEANING AND DEFINITION OF CO-OPERATION

Co-operative is the sense of joint operational of two or more persons as old as human the social order. According to the co-operative planning committee (1946), “co-operation is a form of organization in which persons voluntarily associated together on a basis of equality for the promotion of their economic interests”. According to Belgian, “A Co-operative Society is on which is composed of members whose numbers and holdings are variable and whose share are not transferable to the third parties”.

6. WEAVERS WELFARE SCHEMES

Health Insurance Scheme

The Health Insurance Scheme (HIS) is a popular scheme and also boon and beneficial to the handloom weavers. Therefore, it is proposed to continue it during the Eleventh Plan period with extra benefits. It is expected to cover 3 lakh weavers in a year and 15 lakh weavers during the entire period of the Eleventh Plan along with renewals with Central assistance of Rs. 250.00 crore. A sum of Rs.2.00 crore will be kept for the publicity of the scheme over and above Rs. 250.00 crore so that all weavers can take maximum advantage.

Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana

The Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana (MGBBY) was launched in 2004-05 and provides life insurance to the weavers is another popular scheme. This scheme is proposed to be continued in the Eleventh Plan and more benefits are proposed to be included in the scheme with the following modifications in consultation with the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) as shown in table-1.

Table1. *Modifications under Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana*

Sl.No.	Component	Financial (Rs.) (benefits (Rs.))
1	Natural death	75,000/-
2	On death due to accident	1,50,000/-
3	Loss of use of two eyes or two limbs or one eye or one limb in an accident	1,00,000/-
4	Loss of one eye or one limb in accident	1,50,000/-
5	Permanent total disablement from injury other than named above	75,000/-

Source: *Office of the Directorate of Handlooms and Textiles, Hyderabad*

It is expected to cover 3 lakh weavers in a year and 15 lakh weavers during the entire period of Eleventh Plan along with renewals with a central assistance of Rs. 70.00 crore (approximately). Around Rs.2.00 crore will be kept for the publicity of the scheme over and above Rs. 70.00 crore so that all weavers can take maximum advantage.

7. Objectives

- To study the Socio-economic background of Individual Handloom Weavers in Warangal district.
- To study the income and expenditure of the individual handloom weavers in Warangal District

8. Area of the Study:

Warangal District is one of the leading districts in handloom Industry in Telangana Region. There are 45 Weavers' Co-operative Societies in the District at present providing work to 74,905 members. The main products are Sarees, Dhoties, Lungies and Towels. In addition to the above common varieties, export varieties of Shatranjies of Shatranji "Handloom Weavers" Co-operative Society Limited", Mattewada, Warangal, Silk Sarees of Jangaon area and Mercyized Tie and Die variety Sarees and Mercyized Dhoties of Ghanpur area are unique and pride products of the District.

9. Methodology

A sample of 200 handloom weavers in Warangal district is drawn for the study. The handloom weavers were selected by simple random sampling method. The Primary data is collected from the personal interviews with the individual weavers and member-weavers as well as the managements of different Societies.

TABLE – 1

AGE-WISE DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBER WEAVERS

Age of the Respondent	Number of the Respondents
20 – 35	34
35 – 50	83
50 – 65	58
Above 65	25

Table – 1. reveals that out of the 200 respondents under study, maximum number of respondents (83) belong to the age-group of 35-50 and least number (25) is in the age-group of above 65 years. Out of these 200 respondents, Maximum number of weavers (190) are married and just a least number (10) are unmarried. The age-group and marital status of weaver-members reveal that the middle aged and married members when interviewed informed that it is because of their ancestral profession and also because of unemployment. It is also observed that they were unable to go to other professions, as they are not qualified and inexperienced to go for other professions. The educational qualification of maximum number of respondents (108) is below SSC and (30) respondents are SSC and only (9) respondents are degree and P.G.

The educational qualifications of member-weavers is prescribed in Table – 2.

TABLE – 2

MARITAL STATUS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Male	Female
Married	190	120	70
Un-Married	10	6	4

Among the 200 respondents under study 190 respondents are married and other 10 respondents are unmarried. Out of the 190 respondents who are married, 120 (60 per cent) are male weavers and 70 (40 per cent) are female weavers. Out of the 10 respondents who are unmarried, 6 (60 per cent) are boys and 4 (40 per cent) are girls.

Table 3 shows the responses of the respondents about their earning after joining the Society.

TABLE – 3
EARNINGS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS AFTER JOINING THE SOCIETY

Increased	No. of Respondents	Male	Female
Positive	71	43	28
Negative	129	84	45

Regarding the increased income after joining the Society, 71 (32%) respondents responded positively and 129 (68%) opined negative. This is because of the supply of raw material from the Societies. Out of the 71 respondents who responded positively, 43 (62%) are male and 28 (38%) are female. Among the 129 who responded negatively, 84 (70%) are male and 45 (30%) are female respondents.

Only one (0.5%) hold position as Executive Member out of the 200 respondents. The other 199 (99.5%) of the respondents do not hold any position in the Societies. 114 (55%) respondents out of the 200 respondents have their own properties, while 86 (45%) do not own any property.

TABLE 4
SUPPLY OF RAW MATERIAL TO THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Table 4 shows the responses of the sample respondents about the supply of raw material and alternative sources of supply

Supply of Raw Material	Yes	No
By the Society	38	162
Alternative Sources (Retail Outlets)	113	87

About the supply of raw material supplied by the Society, 162 (81%) of the respondents responded negatively, while the other 38 (19%) opined positively. They do not get the raw material and that too not in good quality. The other source of raw material the weavers get in is through retail outlets. 113 (58%) of the respondents depend on the retail

outlets while 87 (42%) depend on Societies for the supply of yarn required for the production of cloth.

TABLE –5

Table 5 shows the assistance taken from family members and satisfaction with the professions.

RESPONSES OF THE FAMILY MEMBERS ABOUT THE ASSISTANCE FROM FAMILY MEMBERS

No. of Respondents	Assistance Taken		Satisfied	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
200	148	52	142	58

148 (72%) of the respondents opined that they do take assistance from their family members. 52 (28%) do not get any assistance from their family members as they go for other occupational works. 142 (71%) respondents are satisfied with this profession and 58 (29%) are unsatisfied as they do not get their wages at a proper time.

Most of the respondents i.e., 149 (75%) out of the 200 respondents selected production plant and the other 51 (25%) have gone for household plants. 144 (72%) of the respondents responded negatively about the advance wages paid to the workers by the Society. 56 (28%) opined positively about their payment of advance wages by the Society.

TABLE – 6

ALLOTMENT OF ASSISTANCE FROM SOCIETY

	Yes	No	Total
Medical	52	148	200
House	59	141	200
Educational	48	152	200

When asked about the allotment of houses by the Society, under housing board scheme, 141 (70%) respondents responded negatively that they are not provided any house

under the scheme. 59 (30%) respondents opined positively that they are provided some assistance under this scheme. About the medical facilities supplied by the Society, 148 (74%) respondents are in negative opinion and 52 (26%) are in positive opinion. Out of the 200 respondents, 152 (76%) opined negatively about the Educational facilities provided, and other 48 (24%) opined positively. Among those who responded negatively, 98 (62%) are male respondents and 54 (38%) are female respondents.

When asked about their profession, 186 (93%) respondents said that it is because of hereditary and only 14 (7%) said it is because of no other work.

TABLE – 7

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF MEMBER - WEAVERS

Qualification	Number of Respondents
Below SSC	108
SSC	30
Intermediate	8
Degree	7
P.G.	2

Table – 7. reveals that the maximum number of weavers are depended on this profession because of their low educational qualification. The least number (P.G – 2) of respondents depended on this profession because of their ancestral profession and also as subsidiary profession and go for other works when they are free from their work. The qualified respondents are under other work other than weaving like packing, dying, accounting etc. The maximum number of respondents are stipulated to taking yarn and weaving and some assisting the weavers. The monthly income of the weaver-members is ranged from 2000-5000 and above. Out of the 200 respondents, 91 respondents earn a monthly income of Rs. 2000-3000, 38 respondents earn 3000-4000, 48 respondents earn 4000-5000 and only 22 respondents earn above 5000. It is revealed that the income of maximum respondents is low because of the variation in the distribution of raw-materials and also because of their incapability as they are engaged in other family works.

TABLE – 8

MONTHLY INCOME OF THE FAMILY

Income of the Family	No. of Respondents
2000 – 3000	91
3000 – 4000	38
4000 – 5000	49
Above 5000	22

It is revealed from the table that, out of the 200 respondents under study, 91 (45%) earn monthly income of 2000 – 3000, 38 (19%) to an amount of 3000 – 4000, 49 (25%) earn upto 4000 – 5000 and 22 (11%) of the respondents earn above 5000. The income of the most of the respondents families are very meagre.

TABLE – 9

THE MAJOR PRODUCTION OF LOOMS BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Variety	No. of Respondents
Sarees	51
Dhoties	04
Lungies	01
Towels	01
Shatranji	143
Nawar	00
Hand Kerchief	00
Any other	00

Out of the 200 respondents under study, 143 (72%) respondents are engaged in the production of Shatranjis, 51 (26%) are in the production of Sarees, 04 (2%) in the production of Dhoties, and only 01 (0.5%) and 01 (0.5%) and 01 (0.5%) in the production of Lungies and Towels. There is no respondents who is indulged in the production of Nawar or Hand

Kerchiefs or any other item. It reveals that the major number of respondents tend to go for the production of Shatranjis because the supply of raw material for Shatranjis is large when compared to the supply of other raw material. It is also observed that maximum respondents are skilled and efficient in the production of Shatranji.

The system of marketing of the cloth is followed differently among the respondents. It is prescribed in the following Table – 4.10.

TABLE – 10

SYSTEM OF MARKETING BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

System of Marketing	Number of Respondents
Selling to the Society	76
Selling to Traders	110
Retail Sales through own outlets	30
Selling at weekly bazaars	8

Table –10. reveals that the sales made by weaver-members are varied from respondent to respondent. 76 (38%) respondents sell their production directly to the Societies which supplied them the required yarn 110 (55%) sell to the traders which is a major share. As the weavers are unable to sell their production to the Societies or make their sales on their own, they depend on the traders. It is also because of the financial support given by the traders to the weavers for the production of the cloth. Some of the respondents 30 (15%) sell their production on retail and 8 (4%) sell their production in the weekly bazaars.

10. CONCLUSION

The traditional handloom weaving in India has been kept alive by those professionally skilled household weavers, which inextricably is linked with the age-old tradition of weaving. Nevertheless, In India, handloom industry is an ancient cottage industry spread all over the country. This is a source of livelihood for the millions directly or indirectly. Its role is quite significant in meeting the clothing requirements of the masses. It occupies a pivotal place with its wide ramification into the socio-economic fabric of society. Particularly

Mahatma Gandhi recognized this significance of textile handicrafts during the struggle for independence. A notable aspect of Gandhi's views on this issue is that he emphasized not only handloom weaving but also spinning by hand. Gandhi emphasized hand spinning so much that the instrument for this the Charkha become a leading symbol of the freedom movement. Among the 200 respondents under study 190 respondents are married and other 10 respondents are unmarried. Out of the 190 respondents who are married, 120 (60 per cent) are male weavers and 70 (40 per cent) are female weavers. Out of the 10 respondents who are unmarried, 6 (60 per cent) are boys and 4 (40 per cent) are girls. Income of the handloom weavers under study, 91 (45%) earn monthly income of 2000 – 3000, 38 (19.8%) to an amount of 3000 – 4000, 49 (25%) earn upto 4000 – 5000 and 22 (11%) of the respondents earn above 5000. The income of the most of the respondents families are very meagre. That the income is living standards of the handloom weavers are very poor.

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