

Socio-Economic Profile of Handloom Weaver Households In Kerala In The Post-MFA Regime

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Abstract

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 handloom sector is one of the largest unorganized sectors in India, employs more than 35 lakh persons, of which more than 25 lakhs are women weavers and allied workers (Annual report, MoT 2023-2024). The textile industry in Kerala is one of the oldest industries, and it has a rich cultural heritage and thousands of years of tradition. The traditional handloom industry of Kerala is mainly concentrated in Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur, and Kannur districts and some parts of Kozhikode, Palakkad, Ernakulam, Kollam, and Kasargod districts (Economic Review, Gok 2024). The present study focuses on the socio-economic profile of handloom weaver households in Kerala in the post-MFA regime. It is confined to handloom units in northern, central and southern Kerala. The units selected from Trivandrum, Thrissur and Kannur sample districts. The major findings on the realities of the handloom industry at the grass root level, the suggestions and policy implications of the study would be helpful to the sustained growth of the handloom industry in future and also will be helpful to the policymakers and the Government to frame strategies and approaches for the growth and development of handloom industry.

Key Terms: Handloom industry, Multi-Fibre Agreement (MFA), Primary Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society (PHWCS), Weaving.

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I. Background Of The Study

Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur, and Kannur districts play a significant role in Kerala's handloom sector. Therefore, it is pertinent to understand the socio-economic profile of weaver households in this sector.

II. Review Of Literature

Mahapatro (1986), in his micro-level study in Orissa, emphasised the socio-economic background of handloom weavers, employment and organization characteristics. The study observed a significant difference between handloom weavers' socio-economic condition and handloom cooperative societies. Suggestions were made that credit facilities should be provided to weavers and co-operative societies on liberal terms and conditions. George (2011) analysed the socio-economic conditions of the handloom workers in India, mainly based on the results of the handloom census 2009-10 and put forward some policy options for improving the welfare of the handloom workers. Many socio-economic characteristics influenced the handloom industry (Venkateswara, 2014; John & Kamini, 2016 & Thaneja and Singh, 2001). The main findings of their study included-majority of weavers earned minimum wages, the working conditions of weavers are pathetic, they face health problems, and the maximum number of weavers are in the age group of 30-60.

III. Objectives Of The Study

To examine the socio-economic profile of the weaver households in the handloom sector of Kerala in the post-MFA regime

IV. Research Questions

What is the socio-economic profile of the weaver households in the handloom sector of Kerala in the post-MFA regime?

V. Research Method& Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative research techniques are used in this study. Cross-sectional data were collected by using a survey with the help of an interview schedule. The population for the present study consists of a total number of handloom weavers in the selected districts of Thiruvananthapuram, Thrissur and Kannur. It includes the detailed primary survey of weavers in the selected PHWCSs in the study districts.

In this context, a multi-stage (four-stage) sampling method is employed to determine the sampling frame and sample size and systematically collected. In the first stage, for choosing sample districts, regional representation is considered because the handloom industry in Kerala is concentrated in 3 regions. Out of 14 districts in Kerala, Trivandrum from the south, Thrissur from the centre and Kannur from the north were selected for the study based on their importance. The handloom industry in Trivandrum produces different varieties for domestic consumption or the local market, namely "thorthu", "neriathu", "double veshti", etc., also the most significant number of handloom circles, PHWCSS and weavers are concentrated in the Trivandrum district. The popular handloom products of Kasavu mund, double dhoti, set mund and veshti with golden jerry are produced mainly from the Thrissur district. Exports of Handloom products from Kerala are mainly from Kannur, viz., furnishing items, carpets, etc.

The second stage is the selection of handloom circles. In Kerala, PHWCSSs are grouped into handloom circles for easy administrative function and control based on locations (Directorate of Handloom and Textiles, Government of Kerala, 2022). Out of 26 handloom circles in the selected districts -7 (Four from Thiruvananthapuram, one from Thrissur and two from Kannur district), handloom circles are selected for the study based on their historical importance, the larger number of working PHWCSSs, handloom households and export-oriented units.

The third stage is the selection of PHWCSSs. Out of 122 PHWCSSs in the selected handloom circles, 14 (Eight from Thiruvananthapuram, two from Thrissur and four from Kannur district) PHWCs are selected for the study based on the variety of products produced, the number of looms, total production, historical importance and export orientation.

The final stage is the selection of handloom weavers by using a simple random sampling method. The handloom weavers are selected based on lists given by the concerned PHWCSSs and the availability of weavers at the time of data collection. Out of 4085 weavers in the sample district, 408 (232 (56.9%) from Thiruvananthapuram, 36 (8.8%) from Thrissur and 140 (34.4%) from Kannur district) weavers were selected for the study (Details of district-wise handloom circles and PHWCSSs selected for the study given in Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Details of District-wise Handloom Circles and PHWCSSs Selected for the Study

Table 1.1 Details of District-wise Handloom Circles and PHWCSS Selected for the Study				
Name of the District: Thiruvananthapuram				
Sl.No.	Name of the Handloom Circle	Name of the Societies	Number of weavers surveyed	%
1.	Balaramapuram I	Vanitha Handloom Weaver's Production cum sale Co-operative Society HIND T.No.331	29	7.1
2.		Sree Bhagavathy Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd., No. H. IND.T 350	29	7.1
3.	Balaramapuram II	Alluvial Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society H 3365	29	7.1
4.		Vadakkevila Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society H 3403	29	7.1
5.	Nemom	Thittavelikkara Handloom Weavers Co-operative societyNo.3369	29	7.1
6.		The Travancore Textiles Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd. No. T315	29	7.1
7.	Venganoor	Vallamcodu Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd No. H(T)312	29	7.1
8.		Pulivila Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd., No. H. IND.T 335	29	7.1
Name of the District: Thrissur				
9.	Thrissur	Thiruvilwamala Handloom Weavers Co-operative Production & Sale Society Ltd., No. H. 83	18	4.4
10.		Kuthampully Kaithary Naithu Vyvasaya Sahakarana Sangam HIND(R) 196	18	4.4
Name of the District: Kannur				
11.	Thaliparamb	Kalliasseri Weaver's Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd No.HL IND (C)12	35	8.6
12.		Irina Weavers Industrial Workshop Co-operative Society Ltd.HL.IND(C)19	35	8.6
13.	Dharmadam	The Lokhnath Industrial Weavers Co-operative Society Ltd.LL.99	35	8.6
14.		Kanhirode Weavers Co-operative Production & Sale Society Ltd.LL44	35	8.6
Total	7	14 PHWCSSs	408	100.0

Source: Directorate of Handloom & Textiles 2022, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

VI. Data Source

Both primary and secondary data sources are used for the study. For a broad explanation of the handloom industry in the selected districts and to understand the working of PHWCSs, the data from the district statistical handbook, Government records/reports relating to the handloom industry and discussions with experts/officials in the field of the handloom industry were used. To examine the socio-economic profile of the weaver households in Kerala during the Post MFA regime interview schedule was prepared.

VII. Analytical Variables

The socio-economic profile of the weaver households in Kerala in the post-MFA regime is studied by categorizing the variables into three sections, viz. social and demographic variables, economic variables and weaving-related variables (identified from the review of literature). It is given in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Variables selected for the Primary data Analysis

Social and Demographic Variables	Economic Variables	Weaving Related Variables
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Religion Social Class Age Type of family Marital status & Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family status-Type of ration card Ownership status of the house Nature of the house they reside in Income Assets Amenities Saving pattern & Output Produced Per Day (Labour productivity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Years of experience Number of Working Hours Per Day/ Days Per Week/ Daily Wage Rate Perceived effect of the MFA/Globalization policies on the weaver's occupation, Changes in varieties of products produced, quality of the handloom products and benefits of the government policies during the MFA/Globalization regime

Source: Compiled from the Review of Literature

VIII. Statistical Tools For Analysis

The socio-economic profile of the weaver households in the handloom sector of Kerala during the MFA regime is examined by using percentages, Pearson chi-square test of association, correlation, binomial test and descriptive statistics.

IX. Period Of The Study

To conduct the study based on the objective of the study, the Period from 2005-2006 to 2023-2024 has been chosen. The selection of the entire period of the study is not arbitrary, but it is based on significant policy changes in the country. The period 2005-2006 is the beginning of the quota phase-out stages of the MFA regime under the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC). In total, 20 years have been selected for the study (2005-2024).

X. Data Analysis And Interpretation

The socio-economic profile of the sample weavers is analysed in sections 1.10.1 to 1.10.3.

Social and Demographic Variables

The detailed analysis of the social and demographic profile of the respondents is presented in Tables 1.3 and 1.4.

Table 1.3: Social-Demographic Profile of the Handloom Weavers in Kerala in the post-MFA regime

Variables	Name of the District			Total (N=408)	Chi-square Test Results
	Thiruvananthapuram (N=232)	Thrissur (N=36)	Kannur (N=140)		
Gender					
Female	199(85.8)	5(13.9)	104(74.2)	308(75.5)	$\chi^2 = 101.79$ $df = 1$ $p < .001$
Male	33(14.2)	31(86.1)	36(25.8)	100(24.5)	
Total	232(100)	36(100)	140(100)	408(100)	
Religion					
Hindu	215(92.7)	36(100)	128(91.4)	379(92.9)	$\chi^2 = 5.280$ $df = 2$ $p < .001$
Christian	10(4.3)	0(0)	4(2.9)	14(3.5)	
Muslim	7(3)	0(0)	8(5.7)	15(3.6)	
Total	232(100)	36(100)	140(100)	408(100)	
Social class(Caste Category)					
SC/ST	11(4.7)	0(0)	11(7.9)	22(5.4)	$\chi^2 = 6.750$ $df = 2$ $p > .001$
OBC	179(77.2)	32(88.9)	112(80.0)	323(79.2)	
Others	42(18.1)	4(11.1)	17(12.1)	63(15.4)	

Total	232(100)	36(100)	140	408(100)	
Age (in Years)					
18-30	10(4.3)	0(0)	0(0)	10(2.5)	$\chi^2 = 26.755$ $df = 2$ $p < .001$
30-60	201(86.6)	23(63.9)	118(84.3)	342(83.8)	
60 & Above	21(9.1)	13(36.1)	22(15.7)	56(13.7)	
Total	232(100)	36(100)	140(100)	408(100)	

Source: Primary survey data, values in the parentheses are respective percentage values

The chi-square test for association results in Table 1.3 demonstrates that the percentage of female weavers (75.5 %) was significantly higher than that of the male weavers, $\chi^2(1, N = 408) = 101.79, p < .001$. Female weavers believe that weaving is a safe and secure job; still, it is a poverty-alleviating occupation. This is underscored by the findings of Prem Sundhar and Kannan (2013) and the Fourth National Handloom Census (2019-2020).

By observing the religion-wise distribution of the respondents (Table 1.3), the proportions of the weavers are not uniformly distributed across the districts. A higher proportion of weaver households pursue Hindu belief (94.6%), followed by Christian (3.4%) and muslim (2%). The main reason behind this is that most of the Handloom industrial units are located in Kerala near the temples.¹ The largest social category is represented (Table 1.3) by OBC. It denotes that weaving is the traditional occupation of specific communities.² Concerning the age of the respondents, the results indicate that the proportion of weavers was not equally distributed across the districts and reveal that the average age of the sample respondents stands at 47 years. So, it can be inferred that the younger generation does not come forward to the handloom sector due to hard physical labour, adverse working conditions, health hazards and resultant debt traps (John and Kamini, 2016).

Table 1.4: Type of Family and Marital Status of the Respondents

Type of the Family	Number of Respondents (%)	Marital Status	Number of Respondents (%)
Joint family	160(39.2)	Married	365(89.5)
Nuclear family	248(60.8)	Unmarried	27(6.6)
		Widowed	11(2.7)
		Divorced	5(1.2)
Total	408(100.0)	Total	408(100.0)

Source: Primary survey data, values in the parentheses are respective percentage values

The type of family and marital status of the weavers (these two variables are interlinked with each other) play a very significant part in the weaving occupation because this occupation involves the helpful services of children to the aged in the pre and post-weaving activities. The sample data (Table 1.4) shows that more than half of the weavers lived in nuclear families (60.8%); they also have only one member engaged in handloom weaving, and more than three-fourths of the weavers are married (89.5%). It affected the post and pre-loom activities of the handloom sector (Taneja and Singh, 2001). The education status of the sample respondents is discussed in section 1.10.2.

Economic Profile of Weaver Households

The economic condition of weaver households has been analysed in tables 1.5 to 1.10 based on primary data from the survey.

Education and Family Status of the Sample Respondents across Districts

In this part, information about the education and family status of the respondents is analysed. Education is an important factor that influences the social and economic status of the weavers (Third handloom census, 2009-2010). Family statuses of the respondents are examined by categorising the weavers into four types of ration cards³ Possessed by them.

¹ Observed from the study area

² Kaikolans, Saliya and Devangas are the communities famous for weaving in Kerala

³ Very poor-Holders of the yellow card, Poor-holders of the pink card, Middle-income-holders of the blue card, and Higher middle-income-holders of the white card.

Table 1.5: Education and Family Status of the Sample Respondents across Districts

Variables	Name of the District			Total (N=408)
	Thiruvananthapuram (N=232)	Thrissur (N=36)	Kannur (N=140)	
Highest Educational Qualification				
Illiterate	17(7.3)	0(0)	5(3.6)	22(5.4)
Lower Primary	87(37.5)	9(25.0)	19(13.6)	115(28.2)
Upper Primary	67(28.9)	16(44.4)	75(53.5)	158(38.8)
High School	42(18.1)	10(27.8)	23(16.4)	75(18.3)
HSE/PDC & Above	19(8.2)	1(2.8)	18(12.9)	38(9.3)
Type of the Ration Card				
Very poor	33(14.2)	1(2.8)	19(13.6)	53(13.0)
Poor	143(61.6)	21(58.3)	93(66.4)	257(63.0)
Middle income	35(15.1)	14(38.9)	17(12.1)	66(16.2)
Higher middle income	21(9.1)	0(0)	10(7.1)	31(7.6)
Rich	0(0)	0(0)	1(0.7)	1(0.2)

Source: Primary Survey Data

Table 1.5 indicates that the sample respondents' levels of education were not equally distributed across the districts (in % terms). Most of the respondents completed lower (28.2%) & upper primary (38.8%) levels of education. Compared to the other two districts, the Thiruvananthapuram district has more weavers with a high school level of education, since there are more weavers in the general category. Out of 408 respondents, more than three-fourths of the weavers fall into the very poor and poor income groups. A little less than one-fourth of the weavers are in the lower-middle-income and higher-middle-income groups. The level of education and income groups of the sample weavers gives the idea that they have a low level of schooling and income.

Ownership of Assets of the Weaver Households in Kerala

Television, fan, mixer grinder and gas stove are identified as the most widely prevalent assets in the households of handloom weavers in the selected weaver households of Kerala. The chi-square test of association was conducted to find the association between asset ownership and the location of the handloom weavers in Kerala (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6: Asset Ownership of the Handloom Weavers' Households across Different Locations in Kerala

3.6. Asset Ownership of the Handloom Weavers' Households across Different Locations						
Sl. No.	Assets	Frequency & Percentage	District			Total
			Trivandrum	Thrissur	Kannur	
1	Television	Count	218	36	122	376
		%	94.0%	100.0%	87.1%	92.2%
2	Fan	Count	187	35	129	351
		%	80.6%	97.2%	92.1%	86.0%
3	Mixer Grinder	Count	178	33	106	317
		%	76.7%	91.7%	75.7%	77.7%
4	Gas Stove	Count	164	33	105	302
		%	70.7%	91.7%	75.0%	74.0%
5	Refrigerator	Count	150	23	51	224
		%	64.7%	63.9%	36.4%	54.9%
6	Grinder	Count	54	30	15	99
		%	23.3%	83.3%	10.7%	24.3%
7	Smart Phone	Count	46	19	20	85
		%	19.8%	52.8%	14.3%	20.8%
8	Washing Machine	Count	16	11	1	28
		%	6.9%	30.6%	0.7%	6.9%
9	Laptop / PC	Count	3	0	2	5
		%	1.3%	0.0%	1.4%	1.2%
10	Others	Count	0	0	9	9
		%	0.0%	0.0%	6.4%	2.2%
	Total	Count	232	36	140	408
Chi-square Test Results		$\chi^2 = 109.120, df = 18, p < .001$ Cramer's $V = .174, p < .001$				

Source: Primary Survey Data

The results indicate that there was a statistically significant association between the asset ownership and the location of the handloom weavers in Kerala, $\chi^2(18, N = 1796) = 109.12, p < .001$, however, the degree of association is weak, Cramer's $V = .147, p < .001$. It implies that the general pattern of asset ownership significantly differed but was weak across different geographical locations (i.e., districts) in

Kerala. In the cases of television, fan, mixer grinder, gas stove and the refrigerator, there is a relatively high degree of ownership across the districts.

Table 1.6 also revealed that more than 90 per cent of weaver households in central Kerala (i.e., Thrissur district) and southern Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram district) have a Television, while it was less than 90 per cent in northern Kerala (i.e., Kannur district). The percentage of households of handloom weavers with fan and gas stoves was higher in Thrissur and Kannur districts, but lower in the Thiruvananthapuram district. The proportion of households with the mixer grinder, grinder, smartphone and washing machine was highest in the Thrissur district but low in the Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur districts. More than half of the households in Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur districts have refrigerators, but only around 40 per cent in the Kannur district. The proportion of households with laptops was negligible in the Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur districts and was nil in the Thrissur district. Finally, the proportion of households with none of the above-mentioned assets was negligible in the Kannur district, and it was nil in the other two districts. The main reason behind the pattern of asset ownership significantly differed across different geographical locations (i.e. districts) in Kerala is due to differences in the social category.⁴cultural and behavioural differences across districts in Kerala.

Amenities in the Households of the Handloom Weavers in Kerala

The majority of the houses of the weavers in the sample are electrified, and the majority have drinking water, a bathroom and a toilet inside their boundaries.

The chi-square test of association was conducted to understand the association between the amenities of the households and the location of the handloom weavers in Kerala (Table 1.7)

Table 1.7: Amenities in the Households of the Handloom Weavers in Kerala across Different Geographical Locations in Kerala

Sl. No.	Amenities	Frequency & Percentage	District			Total
			Trivandrum	Thrissur	Kannur	
1	Electricity	Count	214	34	96	344
		%	92.2%	94.4%	68.6%	84.3%
2	Drinking water inside the boundary of the house	Count	165	15	92	272
		%	71.1%	41.7%	65.7%	66.7%
3	Bathroom/latrine inside the boundary of the house	Count	123	10	117	250
		%	53.0%	27.8%	83.6%	61.3%
4	A separate room for cooking	Count	93	27	54	174
		%	40.1%	75.0%	38.6%	42.6%
5	None of the Above	Count	5	0	0	5
		%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%
	Total	Count	232	36	140	408
Chi-square Test Results			$\chi^2 = 45.258, df = 8, p < .001$ Cramer's $V = .147, p < .001$			

Source: Primary Survey Data

The chi-square test of association (Table 1.7) reveals that there is a statistically significant association between the amenities in the households and the location of the handloom weavers in Kerala, $\chi^2(8, N = 1045) = 45.26, p < .001$. But the strength of association is weak as per the Cramer's V statistic ($V = .147, p < .001$). It implies that the proportion of the households of the weavers having different amenities is significantly different but weak across different geographical locations (i.e., districts) in Kerala. More than 90 per cent of weaver households in central Kerala (i.e., Thrissur district) and southern Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram district) have an electricity connection, while it is less than 70 per cent in northern Kerala (i.e., Kannur district). The percentage of households of handloom weavers with drinking water availability inside the boundary of the house is higher in Thiruvananthapuram, but it is lower in the Thrissur district. The proportion of households having a bathroom/latrine facility inside the house's boundary is the highest in the Kannur district, but it is lower in the Thrissur district. Three-fourths of the households in Thrissur have separate kitchens, but it is only around 40 per cent in Thiruvananthapuram and Kannur districts. Finally, the proportion of households having none of the above-mentioned amenities is negligible in the Thiruvananthapuram district, and it is nil in the other two districts.

⁴ Table 1.3

Saving Pattern of the Handloom Weavers in Kerala

The majority of the weavers' saving patterns in the sample are chits and funds, post office savings and commercial banks. The chi-square test of association was conducted to understand the association between the saving patterns of the handloom weavers across different locations in Kerala (Table 1.8).

Table 1.8: Saving Pattern of the Handloom Weavers across Different Locations in Kerala

Sl. No.	Mode of Savings	Frequency & Percentage	District			Total
			Trivandrum	Thrissur	Kannur	
1	Chits & Funds	Count	117	33	5	155
		%	50.4%	91.7%	3.6%	38.0%
2	Post Office Savings	Count	77	28	11	116
		%	33.2%	77.8%	7.9%	28.4%
3	Commercial Banks	Count	66	29	16	111
		%	28.4%	80.6%	11.4%	27.2%
4	Insurance	Count	60	13	13	86
		%	25.9%	36.1%	9.3%	21.1%
5	Others	Count	12	6	7	25
		%	5.2%	16.7%	5.0%	6.1%
6	No Saving Habits	Count	69	1	108	178
		%	29.7%	2.8%	77.1%	43.6%
	Total	Count	232	36	140	408
Chi-square Test Results			$\chi^2 = 209.515, df = 10, p < .001$ Cramer's $V = .395, p < .001$			

Source: Primary Survey Data

Table 1.8 indicates that the mode of savings of the weavers is significantly associated with the location of the handloom weavers in Kerala, $\chi^2 (10, N = 671) = 209.52, p < .001$, but the degree of association was moderate, Cramer's $V = .395, p < .001$. It means that the saving pattern of the handloom weavers is significantly different across different locations (i.e., districts) in Kerala. A very large proportion of the weavers (i.e., 97 %) of central Kerala (i.e., Thrissur district) had saving habits. But the proportion of the weavers from Thiruvananthapuram who save in these modes is much less than that of the weavers from Thrissur. Interestingly, more than three-fourths of the weavers from Kannur did not have any savings habits. Similar findings were found in certain studies (George, 2011; Bortamuly & Goswami, 2012).

Productivity of the Handloom Weavers in Kerala

The proportion of the pattern of distribution of the output produced per day by the handloom weavers in Kerala is given in Table 1.9.

Table 1.9: The Pattern of Distribution & Descriptive Statistics of the Output Produced Per-day (Labour productivity) by the Handloom Weavers in Kerala

Distribution Pattern of the Output Produced Per Day					Descriptive Statistics	
Sl. No.	Output Per Day (Metres of Cloth)	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage	Statistic	Value
1	2	22	5.4	5.4	Mean	4.47
2	3	78	19.1	24.5	S.D.	1.24
3	4	112	27.5	52.0	Minimum	2
4	5	77	18.9	70.8	Maximum	6
5	6	119	29.2	100.0	Skewness	-0.20
	Total	408	100.0		Kurtosis	-1.08

Source: Primary Survey Data

Table 1.9 shows that the large majority of the sample respondents produce 3 to 5 meters per day (second handloom census, 1995-1996; third handloom census, 2009-2010). To understand the output produced per day by the male and female weavers across different geographical locations, descriptive statistics have been used (Table 1.10)

Table 1.10: Summary Statistics of the Output Produced Per Day by the Male and Female Weavers across Different Geographical Locations

Sl. No	District		Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	N
1	Thiruvananthapuram	Female	4.38	1.19	-0.17	-0.87	199
		Male	4.45	1.15	0.18	-1.39	33
		Total	4.39	1.18	-0.13	-0.92	232

2	Thrissur	Female	5.20	1.10	-0.61	-3.33	5
		Male	5.06	0.93	-0.67	-0.41	31
		Total	5.08	0.94	-0.61	-0.67	36
3	Kannur	Female	4.28	1.35	0.01	-1.34	104
		Male	4.94	1.33	-0.82	-0.69	36
		Total	4.45	1.37	-0.18	-1.36	140
	Total	Female	4.36	1.24	-0.12	-1.07	308
		Male	4.82	1.18	-0.48	-1.01	100
		Total	4.47	1.24	-0.20	-1.08	408

Source: Primary Survey Data

Table 1.10 demonstrates that the average output produced per day by the male and female weavers in the Thrissur district (5.08) is higher than that of Kannur (4.47) and Thiruvananthapuram districts (4.39) because in the Thrissur district, male weavers is higher than females (Table 1.3). In general, the contribution of output by male weavers is higher than females (various handloom census reports).

Weaving related variables

Weaving-related profiles of the sample respondents are analysed based on Table 1.2. The average years of experience of the sample respondents are 26.06 years. The sample respondents' average working hours per day are 6 hours, and more than three-fourths of the workers work 4-8 hours a day. Nearly 50 per cent of the sample respondents are working 5-7 days a week, and more than 90 per cent of the weavers receive Rs 500-750 daily. The average wage of the sample respondents is Rs 606.07.

The perceived effect of the MFA/globalisation policies on the handloom industry in Kerala under the MFA regime is measured using a set of five-point Likert scale statements (Table 1.11). The responses are measured on the five points labelled as: "Highly harmful", "Harmful", "Neutral", "Beneficial", and "Highly beneficial", and these responses are coded as 0,1,2,3, and 4, respectively.

Table 1.11: Perceived Effect of the MFA/Globalisation Policies on the Handloom Industry in Kerala under the MFA regime

Variables	Highly Beneficial	Beneficial	Neutral	Harmful	Highly Harmful
Effect on Weaver's Occupation	14.2	36.5	30.4	16.9	2
The benefits of the Government Policies	9.3	40.2	30.4	1.2	18.9
	Highly Increased	Increased	Neutral	Decreased	Highly Decreased
Quality of the Handloom Products	10	48.3	16.9	20.1	4.7
Changes in Varieties of Products Produced	40	20.0	16.2	13.8	10.0

Source: Primary Survey Data

The frequency distribution of the responses of the weavers given in table 1.11 reveals that, on the whole, only around 36.5 per cent of the respondents in the sample perceived some beneficial occupation effects, and 40 per cent of the respondents perceived beneficial effect of the MFA and Globalization policies on the Handloom industry in Kerala. Table 1.11 also demonstrates that nearly 50 per cent of the respondents reported increased quality and variety of handloom products.

XI. Conclusion

The percentage of female weavers (75.5%) is higher than that of male weavers, highlighting that females across the districts mostly do weaving activities. This is underlined by the findings of Kannan and Prem Sundhar (2013) and the Fourth National Handloom Census (2019-2020). The socio-cultural and behavioural practices of the handloom households across the districts are also a factor that influences the different patterns of asset ownership, amenities and saving patterns across different geographical locations (i.e., districts) in Kerala. Since the study is confined to three important handloom centres in Kerala. So it will not provide a comprehensive picture of the handloom industry at the state, national, and international levels.

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