

Loom Industry of Tangail: Major Challenges

Nasrin Akter Lucky

Lecturer of Mowlana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhashani Degree College

Department of Home Science

Ex-Lecturer: BBA, MBA, City University

M.Phil thesis submitted to Dhaka University

Date of Submission: 16-06-2021

Date of Acceptance: 01-07-2021

I. Introduction

Tangail is mostly known for its historical loom industry. People from all over the world loves Tangail Sari greatly. It has an ancient history and still growing. Loom industry of Tangail was mainly focused on Handlooms. After independence war of Bangladesh, power looms were initiated. Currently, Tangail loom industry is mostly based on power looms however, handlooms are on the verge of extinction. Different textiles are using power looms and few weavers also personally making cloths using power looms. That's why power looms now carrying the tradition further. Loom sector, specially handlooms are deteriorating due to different challenges like; lack of government support, communication gap between owners and weavers, lack of loan facilities with lower interest, lack of proper Human Resource Management policies, existence of black market, weavers not paid enough and lack of proper entrepreneurs. These issues need to be taken care for the growth of Tangail loom industry.

II. Objectives of the Study

- To know the major challenges weavers of Tangail loom industry currently facing.
- Current condition of loom industry during the pandemic Covid 19.
- Providing suggestion on what kind of initiative can be taken to improve current condition of loom industry of Tangail.

III. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Method

In order to collect data regarding current condition of loom industry and the problems this sector facing, three methods were followed.

- ❖ Through Survey
- ❖ Interviews of loom and textile owners taken. Weavers were also interviewed
- ❖ Through Observation

3.2 Area of Research

Loom Industry of Tangail is spread many areas of Tangail district. Here research areas were Pathrail of Delduar, Adi Tangail of Tangail Sadar area and Bolla of Kalihati. Few data were collected from ATM Textile.

3.3 Sample Size

Total 160 people were surveyed. Among these research samples, few higher officials of ATM textile Industry Limited, owners of different loom industry, workers and weavers of loom industry and leaders of few weaver communities were included.

3.4 Techniques of Data Collection and Analysis

Most of the information were gathered through interviews and survey reports. In addition, few online data were collected for further details.

3.5 Timeline of Data Collection

The time period of data collection is from 10th October 2020 to 30th November 2020

3.6 Research Problems

While conducting the survey few problems aroused. Those are-

- ❖ Respondents sometimes gave biased answers. Loom and Textile Owners sometimes tries to hide actual facts due to different reasons. Few workers also tried to give full support to the owners and gave biased answers.
- ❖ Many respondents acted neutrally. They were answering questions diplomatically, hiding the facts.
- ❖ Few respondents answered without understanding the questions properly, even after explaining the questions.
- ❖ Handloom workers were quite hard to find.

IV. Information Regarding Respondents

4.1 Age

4.2 Gender

4.3 Designation

4.4 Weaver Type

V. Research Findings and Discussion

Current Challenges for Tangail Loom Industry

Loom industry lacks proper government support. There is almost no funding given from government end for this sector. Mr Kartik Basak, president of "Tangail Basak Shomiti" said that, they have arranged ten lakhs taka on their own in order to use the fund for wellbeing of its members. He also added that, government has given no funding for loom sectors. In addition, if leaders of weaver's communities try to pass any specific policies for the loom industry, they face complex politics of different higher government authority. Different other sectors frequently tries to take favours from government end through illegal means. As a result, loom industry faces a lot of difficulties. Many officials pass negative remarks against loom industry which is heart breaking for the weaver communities. Moreover, weavers want full control over the different hats (markets) and wants to control the weaver activities all over the tangail so that they can boost up the handloom sector. However, government is not helping them in this case. The production cost of Tangail Sari is increasing due to the shortage of supply and price of raw materials and equipment of weaving machines. Customers are being attracted to Indian Saris because of its low price. The raw materials availability in India is higher and price of cotton is lesser which caused the cheap price of Indian Sari. It's destroying the market of Tangail Sari. According to Hasmot Sarker, manager ATM textile LTD, 40% of yarn is produced in our country and remaining 60% of yarn is imported from other countries. If the price of yarn decreases, the loom industry will have a great future. Both the textile and handloom owners informed that, they are not getting help from the government to solve these issues.

There is no good export process for the loom industry of Tangail. As a result, many products are sold through black markets. The current study reveals that a very limited amount of loom products is exported to the countries like, Canada, USA and India. The workers are not paid as they deserve, and the owners are making large profits by secretly exporting Tangail Sari to India. If this continues, our Tangail Sari industry will face a great danger in future. There is a huge gap between owners and weavers because an intermediary broker does all the dealings. Due to this communication gap, the intermediary broker takes lion's share of the profits of the sold products. In consequence, weavers are paid less. Moreover, as the weavers do not have proper channel to direct dealing with the owners, weavers are hardly able to discuss about their problems and necessities with the owners. In addition, weavers or workers hardly know about different terms and policies of the organizations. That's why sometimes they are unaware about many policies which are created for their own wellbeing.

Weavers do not get loan benefits which is a big problem. Tangail loom industry is held captive by the money lenders which is obstructing the proper development of Tangail loom production. Weavers take loans from different money lenders with higher interest rate. In consequence, most of their earnings are used to pay the loan installments. Moreover, many weaver community leaders lend money to the weaver in high interest rate. Weavers purchase products through taking loans from these community leaders and lenders keep all the purchased raw materials in their control. If weavers fails to produce and sell products, these lenders never consider the problem of the weavers. A training center was established by government named "Tangail Tant Board" where weavers can gets loans to start the business after finishing their trainings. However, weavers claim that they hardly get any scope to contact the loom board in loan related issues. Weavers who are working in handloom sectors are suffering extremely. Handloom products take longer time to produce cloths and it's a hard task for the weavers. In addition, these products are costly than the products made by power looms. As a result, due to high price, clients are getting interested to buy cheaper products which are made by power looms. As a result weavers are at loss and leaving the handlooms which is really heart breaking. Mr. Kartik basak also claimed that, if weavers get enough loans in lower interests, handloom sector can be saved. If loans with easy

conditions are available for the entrepreneurs, numerous young people will be interested to work with handloom products.

Last but not the least, there is no structured Human Resource Management practices for the workers. Weavers or workers are very important part of any industry. So, it is quite important to work on skill development and overall wellbeing of the workers. Workers need to get proper trainings, proper performance appraisals, incentives, motivation and recognition. In case of training the employees have no chance to get the trainings like arranging workshops or soft skills training. Challenges in accounting practices have been a common feature associated mostly with handloom industry. Few factors behind the lack of trainings in handloom sector which include lack of training facilities, wilful misconduct, and negligence. Hence a great number of Handloom Industry owners in the area operate without accounting knowledge. Workers also needs motivation and recognition to boost their efficiency. In Loom Industry of Tangail, there is hardly any rewarding system for the weavers of handloom sectors. For power loom sector in different textiles, the rewarding system is only limited to monetary rewards for the good performers, which is not ideal practice for any organization. For performance evaluation, mostly supervisor's feedback is considered to judge an employee's performance and to take different decisions for that employee. That's why, worker's performances are not getting judged fairly which creates grievances among the workers. In different textiles, workers gets incentives, monetary rewards but weavers of hand loom sectors hardly gets anything as rewards. If workers are not motivated and given recognition properly, they will never give their best which will be a great loss for any industry.

VI. Recommendations

It is quite possible to change the current vulnerable condition of loom industry. This is high time to take necessary steps to improve the condition of weavers.

6.1 Need Enough Government Support

Government support for this industry are not sufficient and effective. Government should be more responsible to save this ancient industry of Bangladesh. Handloom sector has positive contribution to employment generation and economic growth. The government and non-government agencies, should come forward with financial, technical and policy supports for development of handloom industry in Bangladesh. The study recommended the following steps will provide a direction for further improvement of this sector:

- In this case, our recommendation is that government should have a monitoring cell under Handloom Board of Bangladesh to monitor activities of those wholesalers and retailers who are engaged in selling raw materials for handloom products to prevent any unfair. In addition, all taxes and levies should be waived from all kinds of raw materials which will ensure the right price (Alauddin, 2017)
- The export potential of handloom industry needs to be practiced more to increase the flow of foreign exchange to the government.
- Weavers suffer from inadequate contemporary technology. So, government should take necessary steps to make availability of these technologies in local market and should waive all taxes on these technologies so that weavers can afford these technologies. (Basak, 2017)
- Both government and private sectors should work to solve this problem of working capital. Government and Private bank must ensure the credit facilities to the producers at lower rate of interest. Government should offer short term loan before the weaving season so that the weavers do not face any financial problem for handloom weaving. (Islam, 2017)
- The studies have found that handloom industry faces intense competition from mill and power loom sector. So, government can create a quota system for handloom products such as Sari, Panjabi, Lungi, Three Pieces, Bed-Sheet and other products which have high demand in national and international markets, can exclusively be produced. The export potential of handloom industry needs to be practiced more to increase the flow of foreign exchange to the government.
- Weavers need funding from government's end, so that they can help to flourish the loom industry of Tangail. Opportunities for more weavers need to be created through easy-condition or condition-free loans.
- microcredit program is able to create a positive impact on socioeconomic aspects of the loanee respondent households in the study area. So, credit support by different microcredit and other financial organizations should be strengthened among the handloom weavers in the study area and other parts of the country. (Nipa, et al., 2016)

Finally, government should establish a favourable policy to flourish handloom industry.

6.2 Initiating Proper HRM Policies for The Employees

Proper application of Human Resources Management will improve organizational performance. Every person directly or indirectly related to loom industry will be benefited by HRM policies. Muslin is gone forever, so

Tangail Sari is our only hope as a potential heritage of Bangladesh. To uphold Bangladesh as a developing country in the world, the loom industry has to be brought to light, that's why, the standard of loom industry must be increased through providing training to the employees by efficient trainers. In this case human resource management can be very helpful. Throughout the research it is mentioned that proper management of human resources is essential to keep the loom industry afloat. Textile industry and training sector have been developed. Online selling has started. Every sector is developing day by day as well as Human Resource Management sector is expected to be developed more by the help of both government and private organization.

6.2.1. Communicating HRM Policies with the Employees

To start with communication of existing HRM policies throughout the organization is crucial or else all efforts done by the HRM may remain under-rated or in the other words unrecognized. This communication gap between higher authority and employees can be eradicated if the authority arranges monthly employee meetings every month. On those meetings, employees of higher management will discuss company policies and goals with all the employees. Similarly, mid and lower level employees also can discuss about their needs and expectations with the higher authority. This way this communication gaps can be removed within the employees. The more the relation of employer with employee and the relation with the employees managed effectively, and then the organization will certainly grow. Organization in private sector becomes more effective because they use HRM in better way, but in public sectors personnel management is implemented, which don't work for the beneficial of employees.

6.2.2 Recognition

To make employees both productive and loyal they should be recognized with more rewards rather than only promotion or increment. Sometimes a simple "Thanks" note from HRM can be very effective to make an employee feel enthusiastic. Moreover, HRM can take initiatives to engage with the employees or let them engage with each other by different interaction activities like arranging a picnic or lunch.

6.2.3 More Training Opportunities

Employees should be given more opportunities to get trainings, that will keep them up to date with the current practice of the way of work followed by the others. As training is the only way to make the workforce capable of doing the upcoming challenging tasks with efficiency. For that, Competence on family education alone will not be able to make a specialist but a qualified trainer is necessary. Moreover, weavers and trainers for the Loom Industry and the Power Loom Industry are supposed to be different people. High level of skill is needed to produce handloom products, but weavers are unskilled or semi-skilled. At the same time there is no development program for weavers. So, various specialized trainings program should be launched for weavers that will keep them updated. Both private and public sectors can work for this. (Rahman, 2017)

6.15 Few More Recommendations

However, following recommendations are made based on the empirical data and research as a whole:

- Although expenditure in the Pit-Loom and the Chittranjan Loom is comparatively high, they both provide spectacular sari. On the other hand, the expense in the Power Loom Industry is very low, their usage is increasing day by day as well as the production. So, there should be a balance among the Chittaranjan, Pit and power loom production.
- Authority of loom market simply cannot think for efficiency with the participants, rather they should think effectively with people and efficiently with things.

VII. Conclusion

Tangail loom Industry has age old tradition and Tangail Sari is famous among beautiful ladies all over the world. Due to these issues the industry is facing great difficulties and is not growing the way it is supposed to grow. Moreover, due to Covid 19, weavers failed to export products in other countries. As a result, weavers are facing huge loss right now. Many weavers took loans and imported raw materials from India which they haven't got yet due to lock down. Those raw materials are stocked in India and many of it are getting ruined as well. Weavers are now getting extremely tensed because they will not be able to produce cloths and they will fail to pay their loan instalments. As export is not permitted yet due to Covid 19, many handlooms are getting shut down. Weavers who were working in handlooms are transferring to power looms. In last few months the number of handlooms has been reduced to alarming rate. For example, previously there were around 50 handlooms in Adi Tangail before the pandemic Covid 19. Within five to six months, the number of active handlooms reduced from 50 handlooms to 2 to 3 handlooms. It is almost facing extinction. Loom industry was supposed to be one of the growing industries of Bangladesh and Tangail was supposed to lead the market. Sadly, loom industry of Tangail now extremely neglected and underrated. Weavers who were involved with

loom industry for generations now gets emotional while comparing today's dying condition of loom industry with the glorious past of it. Both government and private sectors should come forward to solve these challenges so that the loom industry of Tangail can grow rapidly.

Keywords: Handloom Industry, Technical Inefficiency, Determinants, Tangail.