

Socio- Economic Conditions of Handloom Weavers in Gannavaram Mandal Of Krishna District in Andhra Pradesh

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I. INTRODUCTION

The handloom sector carries a very rich heritage coming down over the centuries of vibrant culture that of the Indus valley civilization. Handloom sector is a prime and emergent economic necessity since it sustains the economy of predominantly reveal based nation. It provides direct or indirect employment to millions of artisans spread all over the country.

Indian Handloom sector is an age old and the largest sector of cottage industries. This traditional rural and the largest semi urban sector has widely spread all over the country. One fourth of the total cloth production in the country is from the handloom sector. In terms of the employment, it ranks only next to the agriculture providing livelihood to more than 40 million people. The sector has, rightly been termed as an art and craft sector.

Handloom accounts for over 40% of the cloth produced in the country. Although very large number of cloth varieties are produced in handlooms, the major items are viz., saree, dhoti, gamchalam, bed sheet, lungi, shirting, and towel. The production of handloom cloth is concentrated in three states viz., Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Of these three states, Tamilnadu has the highest concentration on handloom and handloom weavers in the country.

The handloom sector in India is the largest sector next to agriculture. The handloom sector in India today presents many sided and complex problems which are more complicated in view of its Socio-Economic Importance. It is the biggest cottage industry in India and there are about 48 lakhs of looms and a population of 40 millions depends on this industry. Prior to the invention of power loom, it was the handloom which was supplying entire cloth needs of the population on earth, with the development of science and technology and new methods of production. Handloom weaving gave to power weaving as surviving only in a few countries, of which India is the most important and predominant one. The main reason for the existing of handloom in India is the socio-economic condition of our country and the Industry's high employment potential.

Handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh

The government says there are 43 lakh weavers in the country of which 2.5 lakh weavers in only Andhra Pradesh. There are 11,912 weavers in Krishna District.

According to the Annual reports of Ministry of Textiles (2011-2012), the handloom sector with about 23.77 lakh handlooms provides employment to 43.31 lakh persons of which , 77.9% are women, and 28% belong to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The basic needs of human beings are food, cloth and shelter. Handloom sector is spread over the several parts of the country and covers not only the clothing needs of people but also provides substantial for export. The handloom sector in India comprises of three major types namely 1) cotton weaving 2) wool weaving 3) silk weaving. Handloom sector in Andhra Pradesh is classified into two broad categories namely organized sector and un-organized sector. Organized sector includes the primary weavers, the co-operative societies and the industrial co-operative societies. The Unorganized sector consists of a profit-motivate businessman like producer, weaver, master weavers and the independent weavers. At this stage the following questions arise.

- ❖ What is the economic development of handloom weavers?
- ❖ What are the factors contributing to the backwardness of the traditional weavers?
- ❖ What are the solutions to the identified problem?

An attempt has been made in this study to find answers to these questions and possible remedies, based on the findings of the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to examine the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers in Gannavaram Mandal in Krishna district. The objectives of the study are

- 1) To study the general characteristics of the handloom industry in Gannavaram mandal in Krishna district.
- 2) To study the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers in Gannavaram mandal in Krishna district.
- 3) To estimate the improvement in the socio-economic status of handloom weavers by using government schemes.
- 4) To study the problems and prospects of handloom industry in India.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study mainly examines the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers in Gannavaram mandal in Krishna district from 2006 to 2016 ie. 10 years period.

COLLECTION OF DATA

The study is based on primary data and secondary data. We have collected primary data from 40 respondents by using a structured questionnaire and through personal interview method. The secondary data was collected from books, periodic journals, articles related to the present research.

PRIMARY DATA

The main source of the data is from the handloom weavers who are working under societies or independent weavers. For primary data collection 40 weavers were selected. A structured questionnaire is used for the survey which contain simple, multiple choice questions. For primary data collection the observation method, personal interview method and group discussion method are used.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data has been collected from published and unpublished reports by the government, departments and societies of the handloom sector and also from books, periodic journals and various websites related to present research study.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

Simple random sampling was used in present research. Handloom weavers in Gannavaram mandal is the sample and Krishna district is the population.

AREA OF THE STUDY

This study was limited to handloom weavers of Gannavaram mandal in Krishna district. The weavers spread throughout the mandal. Majority of weavers reside in Mustabada, Surampalli, Purushottamapatnam, Gopavarapu Gudem, Gollanapalli, Chikkavaram, B.B. Gudem, Narasimhapuram etc. villages in Gannavaram Mandal.

SAMPLE SIZE

There are 402 handloom weavers in Gannavaram mandal. Among them 198 weavers are under the Cooperative fold and 204 weavers are out of cooperative fold. A sample of 40 weavers are randomly selected from Gannavaram mandal in Krishna district.

III. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1. Dharma Raju P. (2006) in his paper "Marketing in Handloom Co-operatives", expressed his view that, over the decades, the experience of handloom co-operatives has been a mixed one. The arbitrary mergers, excessive control by master weavers and local power groups, politicization and bureaucratization and mismanagement of funds, are some factors that have obstructed the efficient functioning of co-operatives.
2. D.Narasimha Reddy (2008) is of the opinion that, it is time that the government recognized the value of the handloom sector in achieving sustainable development of the country. Despite the adverse conditions, due to larger support from consumers and being a livelihood option for millions of weavers, Handloom sector has been surviving and has the potential to be so. Government has to ensure a 'level playing field' for this sector towards competition among the different sub-sector of textile industry.
3. Mathiraj and Rajkumar (008) made an analytical study on Handloom product's production and marketing. The study narrated the production related problems of the Handloom Weavers' Societies and reviewed the marketing

process carried out by the Weavers' Societies. It was found in their study that the societies in Tirunelveli District are facing wide fluctuation in yarn price, lack of availability of skilled labour force. It was suggested that the production pattern, sales design may be formulated to accelerate the handloom products in the market and modernization of handloom industries can be made with a moderate cost to ease down the problems of weavers.

4. Shijina Shiji (2009) remarked that the weaving process is central to the quality of the rug. As a matter of fact, making of handloom rugs and carpets is an age-old profession practiced by village artisans. It is really unfortunate that the handloom rug making units are under the threat of closure as they are encountering stiff competition globally from power loom units.

5. Sehgal H. K. (2009) has examined that as far as the garment export sector is concerned, there have been mixed signals: continuing world economic downturn; some late recovery, however temporary for some people; recent Rupee appreciation and with a new Government, expected to be stable, assuming charge.

6. Prachi (2010) has observed that Indian handloom is growing in its popularity not only among the people in India, but also among the people admiring Indian handloom and Indian handicrafts around the globe. In spite of having distinct styles and ways of weaving, there is a lot of exchange of styles that happened among the diverse Indian handloom styles.

7. IANS (2011) has noted that Indian consumers need to change the thinking; they need to think 'swadeshi' rather than 'videshi'. The greatest tragedy weavers' face is being ignored not just by people but by designers as well.

8. Dr. Srinivasa Rao Kasisomayajula (2012) presented a paper basing on the field work on Socio-economic analysis of handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh is a study on the selected districts. He studied the socio economic analysis of handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh, a study on selected districts (East Godavari, Prakasam, Kurmool, Nalgonda).

9. Kumudha, M.Rizwana (2013) in her paper 'Problems faced by the Handloom Industry-A Study with Handloom Weavers Co-operative Societies in Erode district, focused on the problems of the handloom industry and the problems of handloom co-operative society weavers.

10. Venkateswaran.A (2014) in his paper 'A Socio Economic Conditions of Handloom Weaving :A field study in Kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli District', studied on the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers and the problems faced by the handloom weavers.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data is collected from 40 sample respondents. A structured questionnaire was given to the respondents to collect primary data. The data is analyzed by using the tables on the basis of age, sex, literacy, size of the family, income per month and health ground.

Table-1. CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS ON THE BASIS OF AGE

S.No	Age group	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	20-40yrs	12	30
2	41-60yrs	24	60
3	61-80	04	10
4	Above 80	00	00
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above table, majority of the respondents are in between the age of 41 to 60 years i.e, 60 % in the total respondents. 30% of the respondents are in between the age of 20 to 40 years. It is noticed that a very few respondents are above the age of 61 years i.e, of 10%.

Table- 2 TYPE OF WORKER

S.No	Nature of Work	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Weaving	18	45
2	Bobbin Winding	10	25
3	Warping	06	15
4	Dying	04	10
5	Others	02	05
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above data majority of weavers (45%) are doing Weaving. 25% weavers are engaged in bobbin winding. 15% of the weavers are engaged in warping, only few persons are engaged in dying.

Table- 3 RELIGION WISE

S.No	Religion	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Hindu	34	85
2	Muslim	06	15
3	Christian	00	00
4	Others	00	00
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above data, majority of the weavers (85%) belong to Hindu religion. Muslim weavers are of 15%.

Table- 4. CASTE-WISE CLASSIFICATION

S.No	Cast	Number of respondents	Percent
1	B.C	34	85
2	S.C	00	00
3	S.T	00	00
4	Others	06	15
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above data majority of weavers (85%) belong to the backward class. Few weavers belong to other castes.

Table-5. RESPONDENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVELS

S.No	Educational level	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterates	12	30
2	1-5 class	08	20
3	6-10 class	16	40
4	10+2 class	04	10
5	Graduation	00	00
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

According to the above table, 70% of the respondents are literates and 30% are illiterates. 20% of the respondents are below fifth class. 40% of the respondents are in between sixth class to tenth class. Only 10% of the respondents completed intermediate - but nobody completed the graduation.

Table-6. TYPE OF FAMILY

S.No	Type of family	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear family	32	80
2	Joint family	8	20
	Total	40	100

Source: primary data

According to the above table the maximum families are nuclear families, i.e. 80% of the respondents. 20% of the respondents belong to joint family.

Table-7. SIZE OF THE FAMILY

S.No	Family size	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Small(up to 3)	04	10
2	Medium(4-6)	28	70
3	Large(above 6)	08	20
	Total	40	100

Source: primary data

According to the table, 10% of the respondents are small families and have only three members in their families. 70% of the respondents are medium families and have 4 to 6 members in their families. 20% of the respondents are large families and have more than six members in their families.

Table- 8 RESIDENTIAL STATUS

S.No	Houses	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Own	36	90

2	Rent	04	10
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above data, 90% of weavers have own houses. Remaining 10% of weavers live in rented houses.

Table- 9. TYPE OF HOUSES

S.No	Type of House	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Thatched	09	22.5
2	Tiled	17	42.5
3	R C C	04	10.0
4	Shed	10	25.0
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above data, majority of the weavers (42.5%) are living in tiled houses. 25% weavers are living in sheds. 22.5% of the respondents are living in thatched houses. Only few respondents (10%) are living in R C Houses.

Table- 10 LAND OWNERSHIP

S.No	Type of Land	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Wet Land	05	12.5
2	Dry Land	07	17.5
3	No Land	28	70.0
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above table, 12.5% of the respondents have wet land. 17.5% of respondents have dry land. But majority of the respondents (70%) have no land at all.

Table- 11 OTHER ASSETS OWNED

S.No	Name of the Asset	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Refrigerator	04	10.0
2	Television	22	55.0
3	Motor Cycle	05	12.5
4	Cycle	07	17.5
5	Mixi / Grinder	02	05.0
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary data

According the above data, 55% of the respondents have television. 17.5% of the respondents have cycle. Only 12.5% of the respondents have motor cycle.

Table-12 SELECTION OF THE JOB

S.No	Preferences	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Inherited	30	75
2	Job opportunity	06	15
3	Interest	04	10
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

According to the table, 75% of the respondents follow the work inheritance from their fore-fathers. They feel this profession as an honour.15% of the respondents are doing this job due to the lack of other opportunities and only 10% of the respondents are doing this job with self interest.

Table-13 CATEGORY OF WEAVERS

S.No	Category	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Independent weaver	12	30
2	Working under middlemen	08	20
3	Co-operative weaver	20	50
	Total	40	100

Source: primary data

According to the above table 50% of the respondent weavers are under the co-operative fold.30% of the respondents are independent weaver and 20% of the respondents are working under master weavers.

Table-14 WORKING HOURS PER DAY

S.No	Working hours per day	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Up to 8 hours	12	30
2	8-12 hours	20	50
3	Above 12 hours	08	20
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

According to the above table 50% of the respondents are working for 8 to 12 hours per day. 30% of the respondents are working up to 8 hours per day. 20% of the respondents are working more than 12 hours per a day.

Table-15 ANNUAL INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.No	Annual income	Number of respondents	Percentage
1	Below 25000	12	30
2	Between 25001-50000	20	50
3	Between 50001-75000	06	15
4	Above 75001	02	05
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

According to the above table 50% of the respondents are earning in between Rs.25001 to 50000/- per year. 30% of the respondents' income is less than Rs.25000/- only 5% of the respondents earn above Rs.75000/- per year.

Table-16 MODE OF PAYMENT

S.No	Mode of payment	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Cash	12	30
2	Credit	20	50
3	Cash &Credit	08	20
	Total	40	100

Source: primary Data

According to the above table, the mode of payment of 50% of the respondents is on credit basis.30% of the respondents purchase the raw material on cash basis .While other 20% of the respondent's mode of payment is on the basis of cash and credit.

Table- 17 HEALTH PROBLEMS

S.No	Health problem	Number of respondents	Percent
1	Eye-sight weakness	04	10
2	Back pain	16	40
3	Knee pain	12	30
4	Joint pain	08	20
	Total	40	100

Source: Primary Data

Majority of weavers are working on traditional looms. These looms are arranged at small places. These traditional looms are very harmful. They cause much strain to eyes, hands, joints and the entire body. The major health problems faced by the weavers are joint pains, back pain, eye-sight, weakness, knee pains and so on. Majority of the respondent weavers (40%) are suffering from back pain. 30% of the respondents are suffering from knee pains. 10% of the respondents are suffering from the weakness of the eye-sight.

V. MAJOR FINDINGS.

According to the information collected from the respondents there are some major findings. They are:

1. Majority of the weavers related to Hindu religion (85%).
2. Majority of the weavers related to back ward class (85%).
3. The weavers purchased the yarn at Vijayawada, Amaravathi, Mangalagiri, Guntur etc. cities through NHDC.
4. The price per the bundle of the yarn at 80 Count is Rs.1975/-
5. The price per the bundle of the yarn at 60 Count is Rs.1445/-
6. The weavers make saries, lungis, dhothits, dress materials etc/.
7. The price of the saree is in between Rs.600/- Rs.1200/-

8. Pendem Mallikarjuna Rao and his wife Smt. Rajeswari of Mustabada Village, told that it takes 2 to 3 days to make a saree for both but the price of saree is Rs.600/- only. If the saree is made in two days, the average wage for one person is Rs.150/- If it takes three days, the wage per person becomes Rs.100/ per a day for each.
9. 60% of the respondents are in between the age of 40 to 60 years.
10. The Annual income of the 50% of the respondents is in between Rs.25,000 to 50,000/-
11. Majority of the respondents work up to 12 hours per a day.
12. Majority of the respondents (55%) education is in between 5th class to 10th class.
13. Majority of the respondents have medium family size. (4 to 6 members)
14. Nearly 50% of the respondents are working under the cooperative society
15. Majority fo the respondents (75%) follow this occupation by inheritance.
16. 50% of respondents purchased the raw material on the basics of credit.
17. Chillapalli Venkata Lakshmi Narayana and his wife Smt. Sujatha of Surampalli Village, told that they paid 2% extra price per yarn, when they purchased on the basis of credit.
18. Maximum number of the respondents live in nuclear families.
19. Majority of the respondents (90%) have own houses.
20. 55% of the respondents are suffering from back pain.

SUICIDAL DEATHS DUE TO OVER-BURDEN OF DEBTS.

For the last 10 years (2006-2016) three (3) suicidal deaths are recorded in Gannavaram Mandal.

S.No	Name of the Weaver	AGE	Village	Way of Death	Date of Death
1.	Thati Venkata Sessa Giri Rao	50 Years	B.B. Gudem	Consumed Poison	13-01-2008
2.	Nandam Seshayya	31 Years	B.B. Gudem	By hanging	13-032009
3.	Kowthavarapu Siva Rama Krishna	54 Years	Narasimha Puram	Consumed Rat poison	08-02-2010

Source: Secondary Data

SCHEMES THAT ARE BEING IMPLEMENTING BY THE STATE & CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS

1. For Weavers Cooperative Societies:

(a) Marketing Incentive:

This scheme provides 20% rebate on the retail of Handloom cloth to the consumers in order to encourage the Weavers Cooperative Societies to improve their sales and also to provide continuous employment to their weaver members.

(b) Yarn Subsidy:

This Scheme provides reimbursement of 20% subsidy on purchase of Raw-material i.e., Hank yarn, Dyes & Chemicals from the N.H.D.C., & APCO by the Weavers Cooperative Societies.

(c) Pavala Vaddi Scheme:

Under this Scheme, the difference of interest over and above 3% charged by the Bank shall be reimbursed by the Government to the respective Cash Credit accounts of the cooperative Societies, subject to a maximum of 9.5% in the shape of interest subsidy.

2. For Individual Weavers:

(a) Life insurance Scheme to Handloom Weavers under Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana:

Under this Scheme, the weavers between the age group of 18 and 59 year are eligible. The individual weaver has to pay an amount of Rs.80/- per annum towards premium for enrolment into the scheme. The Govt. of India and LIC of India contribute the amount of Rs.390/- to each individual weaver. An amount of Rs.60,000/- and Rs.1,50,000/- are being paid by the LIC of India to the nominees of the individual weavers under natural and accidental deaths respectively.

(b) Thrift Fund Scheme:

This Scheme is applicable to the working weaver member of the Weavers Cooperative Societies in the District. Under the Scheme, 8% of deduction shall be made from the wage earnings of the weaver members and remit the same in the special Saving Account of the Society exclusively meant for the scheme and proposals can be submitted to the Commissioner of Handlooms & Textiles, A.P., Hyderabad to each Quarter for getting the matching contribution of 8% i.e., from the State Government.

(c) Weavers Credit Cards to Handloom Weavers:

The main object of the Scheme is to issue the Weavers Credit Cards and sanction of Bank loans ranging from Rs.25,000/- to Rs.2,00,000/- for the purpose of purchase of equipments and also for Working

Capital to purchase the yarn etc. The Government of India will sanction Margin Money assistance to a maximum of Rs.10,000/- through NABARD for the loans advanced by the banks under the Scheme.

(d) Revival, Reform and Restructuring (RRR) Scheme to Handloom Sector:

Under this Scheme, an amount of Rs.9,20,348-00 (Govt of India share of Rs.7,01,217 + State Govt. share of Rs.2,19,131/-) is released towards Re-capitalization assistance under Revival, Reform & Restructuring Scheme in respect of (10) Weavers Coop. Societies of the District.

(e) Modernisation and replacement looms:

The Government has implemented the scheme for replacement of existing looms by frame looms / raised pit-looms and modernization of existing looms by attaching Jacquard, dobbies, take-up motions and new looms etc., by assessing the actual requirement in consultation with the Weavers.

(f) Weavers Debt Waiver / Capital Infusion Scheme, 2016:

The Government has implemented Debt Waiver / Capital Infusion Scheme for the year 2016 to the Handloom / Powerloom Weavers. The Weavers taken loans for weaving purpose limited to Rs.1.00 lakh for individual weaver and Rs.5.00 lakhs for Powerloom Unit.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

Handloom Industry is the largest cottage industry next to agriculture in providing massive self-employment to the rural poor. And it has a rich heritage. So there is a need to save the industry. To improve the living standards of the weavers the following suggestions are given:

1. The Cooperative structure should be strengthened to absorb the new weavers.
2. The weavers should be trained as to improve their skills in manufacturing, marketing, etc.,
3. Handloom Reservation Act (1985) should be strictly implemented to protect the handloom weavers.
4. There is a need to provide the institutional credit to the weavers to protect them from the exploitation of the money-lenders.
5. To see that the fruits of the welfare programs and schemes launched by the State and Central Government should reach the weavers promptly.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study based on extensive fieldwork indicates that though handloom weaving has many strengths and can be competitive under specific conditions, the seeds of the crisis are inherent in the sector. These can be traced to two major factors –the poor performance of the co-operative sector, and the poor economic condition of the weavers. It is clear that the two major institutional structures in handloom weaving, viz., co-operatives and master weavers, are closely inter-related, as is their growth performance. A good governance cooperative is the best safeguard for the handloom sector, as it protects the weaver and also provides a counter-balance to the master weaver. The economic condition of the weaver is the other point of the crisis. The average income of a weaver is rarely more than Rs. 50 per a day. Wages are low and the incidence of poverty high for weavers under the master weaver. But, the weavers are paid well where the co-operative societies are strong and provide adequate work for the weavers. In general, weavers also prefer the co-operatives to the master weaver, if the co-operatives are strong. So, the best way to regulate the functioning of master weavers is to strengthen the functioning of the cooperatives, and the master weaver can complement the cooperatives in providing work to the weavers. Competition from powerlooms is obviously a major threat, but, this can be countered when the sector produces high value, distinctive (brand value) products or medium value products which can be marketed locally or abroad that are different from powerloom products. If the provisions of protective legislation like the Handloom Reservation Act and Hank Yarn Obligation Order are implemented. It would help to strengthen the handloom sector. In addition, setting up of decentralised spinning mills and reeling units or opening of yarn depots by the NHDC with in handloom clusters would enable in overcoming the scarcity of yarn as well as arrest the resultant spiralling of prices of hank yarn. In the current policy environment, however, the focus of the initiatives should be to improve the functioning of the sector, especially the co-operatives. Lessons learnt from the management practices of the good cooperatives, especially to improve marketing through better designs and product diversification, accessing multiple market channels and accessing working capital from formal institutions would improve the performance of the cooperatives and benefit handloom weavers as a whole.

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