



A STUDY ON WEAVERS IN THE ATHAGARH ZONE OF ODISHA

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Abstract

The study explores the dynamics of local level trade in plant based handloom product in athagarh zone of cuttack district of odisha state. Two villages namely nuapatna village of nuapatna panchayat of tigeria block and abhimanpur village of alara panchayat of narsinghpur block were selected randomly. The study reveals that weaver community as a whole has lower socio-economic status. At the same time government is trying to mitigate the problem of weavers by implementing various schemes. The association between beneficiary level and household income, between beneficiary level and education of the weavers, between beneficiary level and awareness level is not strong. The study further revealed that weavers are facing marketing problems till today.

Key words: Handloom, Weavers, Beneficiary, Marketing problems.

1. Introduction

Basic needs of human beings are food, clothes and shelter. Apart from providing one of the basic needs of human beings along with a sizeable contribution to gross domestic product and export, handloom industry provides direct and in-direct employment to lakhs of people in the rural and urban areas. This sector provides employment to 43.31 lakh persons engaged on about 23.77 lakh handlooms, of which 10% are from schedule castes, 18% belong to the schedule tribes and 45% belong to other backward classes.

However, handloom industry needs to reorient itself for meeting the challenges being posed by rapid economic, social and technological changes. Efforts are required to produce defect free high quality handloom fabrics according to contemporary consumer preferences, and also to ensure reasonable wages so that younger generation will opt for this occupation. With a view to promote this industry on a sustainable basis, it is deemed necessary to produce quality fabrics with new design for winning the trust and confidence of the consumers.

Cloth weaving in handloom sector entails a number of different activities, both pre-loom and post-loom. Persons engaged may perform a single or multiple activities on a full time or part-time basis. Some women and children of a household engage themselves in allied activities in handloom sector like preparatory work, winding of prins (for weft), sizing, dyeing, post-loom operations, made ups etc. But till today their socio-economic status has not been raised satisfactorily.

Government is also taking keen interest to raise the social status by implementing many schemes like Integrated Handloom Development Scheme (IHDS), Marketing and Export promotion Scheme (MEPS), Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme (HWCWS), Mill Gate Price Scheme (MGPS), Diversified Handloom Development Scheme (DHDS), and Reformed Restructuring Package (RRRP) etc. BOYANIKA represent the primary weaver's co-operative society of Odisha. It has served weavers through marketing, in-put supply, design intervention and mentoring.

Hence, in the above context the present study proposes to find out the socio-economic condition of weavers, also evaluate the association of different socio-economic factors with the beneficiary level. The marketing problems faced by the weavers in also under the umbrella of focus.

2. Review of Literature

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 from around the globe. In spite of having distinct styles and ways of weaving, exchange of styles mainly observed among the diverse Indian handloom products.

Kumar (2010) has analyzed the production and marketing problems of handloom fabrics in prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh. He concluded that this industry is facing many problems like processing raw materials for weaving, inadequate working capital, and liking for traditional patterned sarees is gradually decreasing etc.

George (2011) noticed that the handloom work force is predominantly female, constituting more than two-third of the total work force. The age composition of the handloom workers show that nearly half of the weavers belong to 18-35 age group.



Workers above 60 years constitute only four per-cent. The handloom work force is predominantly young. The literacy rate among the weavers is less due to involvement of children in jalla uplifting and other related work of weaving.

Phaka (2012) has concluded that handloom sector plays a very important role in Indian economy contributing nearly one-fifth of the total cloth production of the country, also adds substantially to export earnings. Nearly three-fifth per-cent of women workforce gets their employment through this sector.

Yourset (2013) has examined the socio-economic condition of weavers in Srinagar city. The study reveals that the situation of the weavers working is feeble due to illiteracy, financial constraints, health problems, meager remuneration and poor governmental support.

Rani and Satvinder (2015) have analyzed the functioning and business operation of selected weaver co-operative societies in Asham. They concluded that demand of customers has changed altogether but the weavers are still weaving traditional patterns which are the main obstacle while boosting their sell.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To study the socio economic conditions of the weavers.
2. To evaluate the association of different socio-economic factors with the beneficiary level.
3. To analyze the marketing problem faced by the weavers.

4. Materials and Methods

The study was undertaken in athagarh zone of cuttack district of odisha state. Two villages namely nuapatna village of nuapatna panchayat of Tigiria block and abhimanpur village of alara panchayat of narsinghpur block were selected randomly. Athagarh zone was selected for the purpose that weaving is the main source of livelihood of the people. Two villages from two blocks were selected for the reason, that it is thickly populated by handloom weavers. One hundred and fifty households were selected by simple random sampling method. Interview and case study method was used for data collection. The data were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) such as percentage, Pearson correlation etc.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

Objective – 1: To study the socio-economic condition of the weavers.

Table No 1:Age and Sex Demography of Studied Population

Age Group	Gender		Total	Sex Ratio
	Male	Female		
BELOW 5	29	26	55	896
6 TO10	24	20	44	833
11 TO 15	30	24	54	800
16 TO 20	44	46	90	1045
21 TO 25	42	47	89	1119
26 TO 30	43	40	83	930
31 TO 35	41	30	71	731
36 TO 40	38	26	64	684
41 TO45	28	29	57	1035
46 TO 50	34	23	57	676
51 TO 55	15	11	26	733
56 TO 60	13	8	21	615
60 To Above	52	39	91	750
Total	433	369	802	852



Interpretation

Table no.1 depicts the age and sex ratio of the studied population. The total number of studied population is 802 from which 433 are male and 369 are the female members. The overall sex ratio is 852 female in 1000 male. This ratio is less in comparison to both all India and the state level ratio. Among the children age group (1month to 15 years) the sex ratio is much less which is a matter of great concern.

Table No 2: Caste Composition Of Studied Family

Ashinipatra		Goudia Patra		Saraka		Gouda		Kaibarta		Keuta		Total	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
105	70.0%	4	2.7%	27	18.0%	5	3.3%	6	4.0%	3	2.0%	150	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows the caste composition of the studied families. Caste wise Ashinipatara are the most dominant followed by Saraka, following Buddhist religion. Keuta, and Kaibarta belong to Scheduled Caste and rest come under other backward classes and their presence can be viewed from the table.

Table No 3: Educational Status of Studied Population

Age Group In Years	Education						Total
	Illiterate	Primary	High School	College	Post Graduate	Technical	
Below 5	39	15	0	0	0	0	54
6 TO10	1	42	0	0	0	0	43
11 TO 15	0	27	25	2	0	0	54
16 TO 20	3	3	23	49	0	14	92
21 TO 25	0	14	37	29	2	7	89
26 TO 30	0	29	33	18	0	3	83
31 TO 35	6	16	26	19	1	3	71
36 TO 40	9	19	23	11	2	0	64
41 TO45	15	19	16	6	0	1	57
46 TO 50	15	24	16	2	0	0	57
51 TO 55	7	14	5	0	0	0	26
56 TO 60	6	10	3	2	0	0	21
60 TO above	46	41	2	2	0	0	91
Total	147 (18.32%)	273 (34.03%)	209 (26.05%)	140 (17.45%)	5 (0.62%)	28 (3.49%)	802

Interpretation

The above table reveals the educational status of the studied population. Under illiterate group, below 5 years there are 39 children. But in actual practice they are yet to be admitted in the school. However, there are only 5 people who have post graduation degrees. 14, 7 numbers of youth in the age group of 16-20, 21-25 years possess technical degrees (studying Textile Diploma Courses) to support their parental occupation.



Table No 4: Occupational Status of Studied Population

Primary Occupation	Gender		Total	
	Male	Female	N	%
Weaving	167	115	282	68.61
Daily Labour	11	5	16	3.89
Agriculture	12	1	13	3.16
Govt. Job	21	6	27	6.56
Private Job	36	3	39	9.48
Business	30	4	34	8.27
Total	277	134	411	100%

Interpretation

The above table reveals out of total population, 411 numbers are involved in various occupational activities. Approximately about 70% depends on weaving which is their primary occupation. 115 number of female respondents also participate in weaving process.

Table No 5: Monthly Household Incomes of the Studied Families

Monthly Household Income													
1000-5000		5001-10000		10001-15000		15001-20000		20001-25000		25001 & above		TOTAL	
N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
82	54.7%	48	32.0%	10	6.7%	1	0.7%	9	6.0%	0	0.0%	150	100%

Interpretation

It is observed from the table that nearly half of the studied families (54.7%) income range is below Rs 5000 per month. The maximum monthly income of the household is below Rs 25,000 per month and only 6% come under this category.

Objective – 2: To evaluate the association of various socio-economic factors with the beneficiary level.

Table No 6: Correlation between Beneficiary Level and Monthly Household Income

Correlations		Beneficiary Benefit	Household Monthly Income
Beneficiary Benefit	Pearson Correlation	1	.306**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Household Monthly Income	Pearson Correlation	.306**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

The above correlation between beneficiary level and monthly household income is found to be significant at 0.01 level as the significant value is .000. However as the pearson correlation value is .306, the association is there but it is not strong.



Table No 7: Correlation between Beneficiary Level and Education of the Weavers

Correlations		Beneficiary Benefit	Education Of Weavers
Beneficiary Benefit	Pearson Correlation	1	.166*
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.043
	N	150	150
Education Of The Weavers	Pearson Correlation	.166*	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.043	
	N	150	150

In the above table correlation is shown between the beneficiary level and education of the weavers. The correlation is significant at 0.05 level as the value found is .043. However, the association between two variables is not strong at all as the value shows .166.

Table No: 8 Correlations between Beneficiary Level and Caste of the Weavers

Correlations		Beneficiary Benefit	Caste Of The Weaver
Beneficiary Benefit	Pearson Correlation	1	-.086
	Sig. (2-Tailed)		.298
	N	150	150
Caste Of The Weaver	Pearson Correlation	-.086	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed)	.298	
	N	150	150

The above correlation between beneficiary level and range of availability of that caste in the village is found to be insignificant as the significant value found to be .298.

Objective – 3: To analyse the marketing problem faced by the weavers.

Problems while securing the raw materials

Case Study: 1

Kulamani Sahu (aged 37 years) described

At times I purchase a stock of yarn, and then weave the fabric. I found a shortage of yarn while weaving. Then I went to buy the required yarn. I found in the mean time the yarn price has hiked, at times also I couldn't get the required count of the yarn (qualitative yarn) which puts me in trouble. Sometimes the middlemen don't supply me yarns timely stating I do not have the stock now. But, I know that he used to supply the same to some other weavers at high cost.

Analysis

Steps should be taken so that weaver co-operative society/middlemen should have enough stock at their disposal. They should provide the raw material to all weavers at the as and when price and when they approach them. All sorts of exploitation while supplying the raw materials should be controlled at the Government level mainly.

Problem related to looms and accessories.

Case Study: 2

Deburaj Nayak (aged 36 years) described

I am having 5 looms in an inconvenient setting. The entire family of mine is engaged in weaving. At times the accessories like reed, shuttle, heddle, bobbin etc need to be repaired or replaced. But I couldn't get their accessories easily all the time. The cost of repairment of the loom also pinches my pocket. I suppose I should have more space to accommodate these looms and which will ease my efficiency operation. I received solar lantern from the weaver co-operative society.

Analysis The Government is providing assistance to build the looms, reed, shuttle, bobbin, doobby, etc. could finding still they require more. Under one weaver co-operative society 200 above weavers are there. But within a year only 30 weavers are getting assistance. So to cover up 200 weavers approximately 6-7 years are required. The weaver who have availed the benefit during the first years, their accessories may require repairing after 3 to 4 years, but their turn will come after 6 to 7 years. So we can very well imagine their assistance is not at all sufficient, nor available to them when they require. But all the weavers agreed that they have been supplied solar lantern. Government should take weavers friendly steps to increase their income level and standard of living.



Availability of assistance, accessories and training at door step.

Case Study: 3

Urmila Das (aged 40 years) described

I am an active member of Weaver Co-operative Society. For expanding my handloom business further I need enough assistance. Training on various modern aspects related to weaving should be provided in our village so that I can better able to produce fabrics. Various parts of loom and other accessories are not sufficiently available in the village.

Analysis

Incentives to the progressive weavers should be provided. Various weaving accessories both traditional and modern should be made available to them instantly, or in their own or nearby places. Training programmer at their own place make them ease mentally and physically to learn it better.

Problems weavers face while marketing their products.

Case Study: 4

Brajabandhu Singh (aged 48 years) described

I face problems while selling the product at times because I purchase the yarn, make it appropriate to be woven into fabric, my labour cost etc. when considered altogether, at that time my selling price could not fulfill my needs. I take five days to make a single silk saree. The same single saree I complete it within seven days if I take a little rest meanwhile. But at the end I use to get a wage of only 500/week after handing over it to master weaver. If at all I could not satisfy the master weaver's design expectation, in that case also he use to give me less wages. I admit my knowledge regarding design making and colour combination is limited. Sometimes I become interested to weave a saree on my own to earn more profit. At that time the master weaver charges more on yarn cost from me. Hence my interest to earn more became a dream for me.

Analysis

Weaving is skill oriented, time consuming. Here more patience is required. In the above case the person does the work sincerely but at the end he has to satisfy himself with a meager amount which is not sufficient to meet the requirements of his family. .

Then I approached the Director of Textiles, Athagarh and wanted to know what steps have been taken at their end to strengthen their existing knowledge in pattern making and colour combination. He said they are imparting training to 30 weavers only in a year or twice in a year. So that rest of the weavers could not get the chance to be trained. So these aspects need to be carefully monitored and some incentives should be provided to them so that they will be attracted towards implementing the new designs and colour combination which will ultimately satisfy the consumers. After getting training they neither train other weavers about the new techniques nor do they apply it while weaving the fabric. They said that they lack interests and are unwilling to shift to modern intricate techniques which are more time consuming. While immersing in the dye bath, they remove it from the bath before the stipulated time period. As a result the materials fades earlier and ultimately the original colour shade the customer could not get. They know the fact but do not care for it.

Case Study: 5

Ramesh Singh (master weaver aged about 45 years) described

I am a master weaver, I feel that the demand of customers have changed altogether but still the weavers are mainly weaving traditional patterns which is the main obstacle while boosting their sell.

Analysis

Now-a-days demand for new design in sarees, touch of modern art and painting in the sarees are required by the customers.. But the weavers do not pay any heed to customers demand and involve themselves only in weaving traditional old designed sarees. So the master weavers are not able to sale the sarees in the market. Hence the need of the hour is to weave the sarees with motifs and design which are in demand by the customers.

Case Study: 6

Niranjan Barik (Secretary of Abhimanpur weaver co-operative society, aged 47 years) described

As a secretary I am saying due to weaving of traditional pattern in sarees, the sell is not up to the satisfaction level. Introduction of computer aided design should be a must in the handloom sector.

Analysis

I fully agree with Barik Babu's saying. They need computer aided design packages for making new designs which will be accepted in the competitive market. Government should bear all the travelling express while visiting weaving societies of various states and make them learn the techniques.



Conclusion

It was concluded that the socio-economic status of skilled weavers engaged in handloom sector as a whole is low. Further the association between beneficiary level and monthly household income, educational level is not strong. The Government should take weavers friendly steps to improve their standard of living.

They should be educated and their skill should be improved much to run the mechanized power looms for more productivity. Attempt should be made to enroll all the weavers under weaver co-operative societies so that they can get their requisites and direct market link for easy sell of their products.

Weaving work is mainly carried out by weaver's community. Hence efforts should be made by the Government and NGO working in this field to attract other caste people to this profession. To overcome the motivational problem faced by the weavers, all sorts of exploitation starting from supplying of raw materials to selling of their products should be controlled with iron hands by the Government level mainly. Enough assistance should be given to promising weavers to fully equip themselves in this field. It was also revealed that the weavers under study are not willing to shift to modern techniques as it is more time consuming and they are not paid accordingly. Hence their wages should be raised accordingly which will boost their interest and will power to do it.

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