

Socio-Economic Conditions of the Hand Loom Weavers Vontimitta Mandal in Kadapa District of Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract: *The handloom sector plays a pivotal role in the country's economy. It is one of the largest economic activities next to agriculture. At present like sector with about 35 lakh looms, at present provides employment to 65 lakh persons. The traditional handloom weaving in India has been kept alive by those efficiently skilled household weavers, which inextricably is linked with the age-old The Government of India's policy for the handloom sector had twin objectives of social and economic. The business objectives anchored in the thrust for growth, were to update old technology, innovativeness, increase productivity, introduce new colors, new designs and to export the handloom fabrics.*

The sector is beset with various problems, such as obsolete technology, haphazard production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing links, overall stagnation of production and sales and above all, competition from power looms and mill sector. There is no doubt that India's textiles constitute one of the costly sources of textile designs in the world, drawn upon increasingly by textile designers, product designers and craze designers from all nationalities. Predominantly Mahatma Gandhi recognized the significance of textile handicrafts during the struggle for independence. A notable aspect of Gandhi's views on this issue is that he emphasized not only handloom weaving but also spinning by hand. Gandhi emphasized hand spinning so much that the instrument for this the Charkha become a leading symbol of the freedom movement. Most of the handloom weavers are willing to live in a joint family system. The income and living standards of the handloom weavers are very poor

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

The sector is beset with various problems, such as obsolete technology, haphazard production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing links, overall stagnation of production and sales and above all, competition from power looms and mill sector. There is no doubt that India's textiles constitute one of the sumptuous sources of textile designs in the world, drawn upon increasingly by textile designers, product designers and fashion designers from all nationalities. Many of these designs are in easy global access from books, museum collections, the web and commodities. The textile industry occupies a unique place in the economy of India by virtue of its contribution to the industrial output,

employment generation and foreign exchange earnings. The Indian textile industry contributes about one-fifth of total industrial production, nearly one-third of total exports and provides oodles of employment to 20 millions of people.

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

2. IMPORTANCE

Handloom industry is one of the vital industries of India and its survival is a remarkable one despite decline in some countries and it was wiped out in certain other countries where modern textile industry was established. The industry is unique in the sense that in no other country in the world, hand weaving is being carried vastly on such a nation-wide basis. It withstood the onslaughts and stiff competition from machine-made products. In the wake of mobility, growing urbanization, scientific and technological revolution, it escaped unscathed from annihilation keeping all the ancient tradition of weaving and carrying out improvements in tools and accessories. Indian weavers are not only producing enough cloth to meet internal demand, but also exporting numerous artistic varieties to industrialized countries of the World. Handloom is a way of life for many people in India. From the view point of employment, it ranks second next to agriculture and people dependent on it are heterogeneous in nature, among whom are Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parses, Zoroastrians, besides Tribal, hill people and the like.

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

3. ROLE OF HANDLOOM SECTOR IN INDIA

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

4. DIFFERENT TYPES OF HANDLOOMS

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

5. MEANING AND DEFINITION OF CO-OPERATION

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

6. WEAVERS WELFARE SCHEMES

6.1. Health Insurance Scheme

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

6.2. Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana

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

Table1. *Modifications under Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana*

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

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

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

6.2.1. Objectives

- To study the Socio-Economic conditions of the handloom weavers in the study area
- To study the income and expenditure of the handloom weavers in the study area

6.2.2. Methodology

A sample of 60 handloom weavers in Vontimitta mandal of Kadapa district is drawn for the study. The handloom weavers were selected by simple random sampling method.

7. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE-GROUP

As a prelude to an analytical study of the handloom sellers of the study area, a study of the age distribution of sample population is attempted. It is helpful to determine the proportion of labour force in total sellers. The age-wise sample population of the study is taken in class intervals often for convenience.

Table2. *The Age- Wise Distribution of Handloom Weavers in Vontimitta Mandal*

Sl. No.	Age-group (years)	Kothamadavaram	Kondamachupalli	Total
1.	Below 30	10 (33.34)	11 (36.67)	21 (35.00)
2.	31-40	07 (23.33)	08 (26.66)	15 (25.00)
3.	41-50	09 (30.00)	07 (23.34)	16 (26.66)
4.	51 And above	04 (13.33)	04 (13.33)	08 (13.34)
Total		30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

The above table reveals that Vontimitta mandal has more handloom weavers. The age group of below 30 the numbers of handloom weavers are 21 and age -group 51 and above are only 08 respondents.

8. SEX

Sex composition of respondents has been furnished in the Table -3

Table3. *Sex-Wise Sample Respondents of the Study Area*

Sl. No.	Gender	Kothamadavaram	Kondamachupalli	Total
1	Male	26	28	54
		(86.67)	(93.33)	(90.00)
2	Female	04	02	06
		(13.33)	(6.67)	(10.00)
Total		30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

It is dramatic from the table that there are only males 26 (86.67%) in the Kothamadavaram, 04 females (13.33%) and 28 males (93.33%) are in the Kondamachupalli, only 02 (6.67%) female respondents. It could be concluded that above all there are 54 males (90.00%) and only 06 females (10.00%)

9. MARITAL STATUS

The data relating to marital status of the respondents were also collected during the survey and the details are presented in the Table-4.

The survey revealed that 23 respondents (76.67%) got married while only 07 respondents (23.33 %) are un-married in the Kothamadavaram. Around 25 respondents (83.33 %) got married and 05 respondents (16.67 %) are un-married respectively in the Kondamachupalli. It could be concluded that 48 respondents (80.00%) are married and the rest of 12 respondents (20.00%) are un-married.

Table4. *Marital Status of the Sample Respondents*

S. No.	Marital Status	Kothamadavaram	Kondamachupalli	Total
1	Married	23	25	48
		(76.67)	(83.33)	(80.00)
2	Un-married	07	05	12
		(23.33)	(16.67)	(20.00)
Total		30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

10. EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Education is the most important factor in improving the technical skills of weavers. It throws light on the impact of mechanization on mass production. It is also necessary to understand and keep pace with up-to-date change in the market and technical fields. It only through awareness, the weavers can protect themselves from the clutches of master weavers and money lenders.

Table5. Educational Status of Handloom Weavers

SI. No.	Level of Education	Kothamadavaram	Kondamachupalli	Total
1.	Primary	10 (33.34)	08 (26.67)	18 (30.00)
2.	Secondary	12 (40.00)	15 (50.00)	27 (45.00)
3.	SSC	05 (16.66)	03 (10.00)	08 (13.33)
4.	Degree/ Diploma	03 (10.00)	04 (13.33)	07 (11.67)
Total		30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

From the above table, it is clear that 12 handloom weavers have the secondary education in Kothamadavaram followed by primary education 33.34 per cent. Kodamachupalli has secondary education 15 respondents, but Kondamachupalli panchayat has more literacy rate. Most of the handloom weavers have only secondary and primary education.

11. NATURE OF THE FAMILY

Table6. The size of the Family of Handloom Weavers in Vontimitta mandal

Sl.No.	Size of Family	Kothamadavaram	Kondamachupalli	Total
1.	Below 4	10 (33.33)	12 (40.00)	22 (36.67)
2.	5-8	17 (56.67)	13 (43.34)	30 (50.00)
3.	9 And above	03 (10)	05 (16.66)	08 (13.33)
Total		30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	60 (100.00)

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

Nature of the family is one of the demographic indicators of the change in population of any region. It determines the standard of living of the people. If a family has too many members with less amount of income, surely the family will have to face poverty. Hence the family size must be small enough for the well-being of its members.

According to the size of the family shown in the table, 5-8 members are living in each of the 50 per cent families. Only from 13.33 per cent respondents, their family has 9 and above members. This shows that, most of the handloom weavers are willing to live in a joint family system.

12. INCOME

Income plays a significant role in determining the standard of living of the people. The income comes from selling handloom cloths and various other sources such as land, property, investment and the like. In this study the concept of income consists of income from marketing of handloom products.

The above table shows the income range of handloom weavers. The highest number of 25 respondents has the income range between Rs. 20001-30000. The handloom weavers 20 respondents have the income of below Rs. 20000 per annum. This shows that the income and living standard of the handloom weavers are very poor.

Table7. Annual Income of the Handloom Weavers in the Study Area

Sl.No.	Income range	Kothamadavaram	Kondamachupalli	Total
1.	Below 20000	07 (23.33)	13 (43.33)	20 (33.33)
2.	20001-40000	17 (56.67)	08 (26.67)	25 (41.67)
3.	40001-60000	04 (13.33)	03 (10.00)	07 (11.67)
4.	60001 And above	02 (6.67)	06 (20.00)	08 (13.33)
Total		30 (100.00)	30 (100.00)	100 (100.00)

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

13. PATTERN OF EXPENDITURE

Consumption is takes away substantial portion of one’s income. Consumption expenditure incurred by the sellers on items like food, clothing, medicine, education, rent, loan, entertainment, electricity, drinking water, transport and religious festivals. It has a major role in determining the standard of living of the handloom producers and sellers. This may be shown with the help of a table, as it is shown below.

From the table-8 highest average expenditure in food 23.27 per cent of the respondents, 13.57 per cent of the respondents expenditure in cloth, 29.09 per cent of the respondents expenditure for loans and followed by 9.69 per cent of the respondents expenditure for festivals.

Table8. Average Expenditure Pattern of the Handloom weavers in the study Area (Per Annuam)

Sl.No.	Items	Expenditure (per Annum)	Percentages
1.	Food	12000	23.27
2.	Clothing	7000	13.57
3.	Medicine	2500	4.84
4.	Education	2200	4.26
5.	Rent	2250	4.36
6.	Loan	15000	29.09
7.	Entertainment	1000	1.93
8.	Electricity	1500	2.90
9.	Drinking Water	600	1.16
10.	Transport	2500	4.84
11.	Festivals	5000	9.69
Total		51550	100.00

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

14. HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME

The details on awareness of the respondents over health insurance schemes have been furnished in the Table-9.

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Table9. Awareness of Health Insurance Scheme

Health Insurance Scheme	Kothamadavaram	Kondamachupalli	Total
Yes	21	23	44
	(70.00)	(76.67)	(73.33)
No	09	07	16
	(30.00)	(23.33)	(26.67)
Total	30	30	60
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

Source: Primary data

Note: Figures indicate percentage to total

In the Kothamadavaram 21 respondents (70.00%) have awareness on health insurance scheme and only 09 respondents (30.00%) not have awareness on the schemes. Likewise, in the Kondamachupalli 23 respondents (76.67%) have aware on the insurance scheme and 07 respondents (23.33%) are not aware of health insurance scheme.

It could be concluded that majority of the respondents are aware of health insurance scheme and it is very interesting to note that equal number of respondents (16) in both the Villages are unaware of the health insurance schemes.

15. CONCLUSION

The traditional handloom weaving in India has been kept alive by those professionally skilled household weavers, which inextricably is linked with the age-old tradition of weaving. Nevertheless, In India, handloom industry is an ancient cottage industry spread all over the country. This is a source of livelihood for the millions directly or indirectly. Its role is quite significant in meeting the clothing requirements of the masses. It occupies a pivotal place with its wide ramification into the socio-economic fabric of society. Particularly Mahatma Gandhi recognized this significance of textile handicrafts during the struggle for independence. A notable aspect of Gandhi's views on this issue is that he emphasized not only handloom weaving but also spinning by hand. Gandhi emphasized hand spinning so much that the instrument for this the Charkha become a leading symbol of the freedom movement. There are 54 males (90.00%) and only 06 females (10.00%) and that 48 respondents (80.00%) are married and the rest of 12 respondents (20.00%) are un-married. Most of the handloom weavers are willing to live in a joint family system. That the income is living standards of the handloom weavers are very poor. Majority of the respondents are aware of health insurance scheme.

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