



PROBLEMS FACED BY CUSTOMERS WITH REFERENCE TO BUYING OF HANDLOOM PRODUCTS - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Handloom industry is one the very old traditional industry which supports millions of rural artisans in our country. In the recent days the industry is facing tough competition from power loom and other mill made clothe producers. Though the government has taken some initiatives to differentiate handloom clothes from other mill made products, the extent to which it has reached needs to be studied. The customers are finding it difficult to differentiate handloom products from other mill made products. In this context, the present study is an effort to analyze the problems faced by customers while buying and using handloom products produced by Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Societies in Erode district. The present study has been conducted Erode district, which is one of the renowned handloom centers in the country. The study is empirical in nature. The data required for the present study has been collected from primary sources. A sample of six hundred respondents has been selected from five different taluks in Erode District. Henry Garrett ranking Technique has been used to rank the problems faced by respondents while buying and using handloom products.

Keywords: *Handloom, Customer, Satisfaction, Society.*

INTRODUCTION

The world famous handloom products of Tamilnadu which has won the hearts of people for generations because of its unique patterns, design, colour, eco friendliness is facing a major threat from the mill made cloths and power loom cloth . The main problem faced by the handloom industry in the present market scenario is the imitation of handloom designs by the other mill made cloth producers. Though the government has reserved some products exclusively for handloom industry, the fake handloom products which are produced by mill made and power loom cloth producers is posing a serious threat to the handloom sector and it is also acknowledged according to NEWS published in Deccan Herald (November 15,2014) the market is flooded by the fake handloom products produced through Power looms.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is very challenging for the handloom industry to make the genuine handloom products reachable to the end customers. On the other end, the customers are finding it difficult to differentiate genuine handloom products from other mill made products. Though handloom products are known for its texture, uneven finish, more threads per inch etc , the customers encounter their own problems like availability of color, design, accessibility the retail outlet etc while buying and using handloom products. In this context the present study is an effort to analyze the problems confronted by customers while buying and using handloom products produced by Handloom Weavers' Co-operative Societies in Erode district.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to CII (2001) on 'Handloom and Handicraft Sector' in North East India, it was found that 65% do not feel the products to be too costly, more than 70% of respondents felt that the products need redesigning to meet the requirements of the consumers more than 76% of the respondents felt that the channels of marketing of the Handloom and Handicraft products are insufficient and they also underscored the need to aggressively advertise the products. Karunakaran and Karthikeyan(2002) made an attempt to analyze factors influencing the buying behaviour and find out the post purchase behaviour of customer towards the Handloom products. The study found that more than 70% of the respondents were satisfied about handloom products with the product attributes such as quality, durability, design, colour, price and variety of handloom fabrics and percentage of respondents under not satisfied category is very minimal. The study conducted by March marketing Research (2003) stated that coarser, rough and in some instances fine quality are the key features on which people differentiate the handloom material from other type of cloth material. Aggarwal et al., in her study about Static or Dynamic-the Analysis of Handloom Industry of Assam stated that 48.5% respondents preferred handloom products over power loom products because of the ethnic design and traditional importance of handloom products in Assamese culture. The study also found that the respondents are satisfied with the color and design of the product and also stated that the quality of the handloom products is deteriorating gradually. Tanusree (2015) in her study about present situation of the Traditional Handloom Weavers of Varanasi opined that many customers want to buy a sari in a reasonable price not in high price. So when a customer could get a power-loom sari within a budget, then they do not go to buy handloom products. Furthermore, when seller sells the power-loom cloths as handlooms, the buyer could not classify the power-loom product from handloom.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to enlist the problems faced by the customers while buying and using handloom products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has been conducted in Erode District which is one of the most famous handloom center in Tamilnadu. The present study is empirical in nature and is based on primary data. The primary data has been collected through structured questionnaire method. Convenience sampling technique has been used to select a sample of 600 respondents from five different Taluks in Erode District. Henry Garrett ranking technique has been used to analyze the problems faced by customer while buying and using handloom products.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

An effort has been put to determine the percentage of respondents facing problems while buying and using handloom products The details are furnished in the following Table

Table - 1, Percentage of Respondents Facing Problems While Buying and Using Handloom Products

S.No.	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	259	43.2
2.	No	341	56.8
	Total	600	100.0

It could be observed from the above Table - 1 that 43.2 percent of the respondents are facing the problem while buying and using the handloom products and 56.8 percent of the respondents are not facing any problem while buying and using the handloom products.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS

In order to determine the most predominant problem faced by the respondents while buying the handloom products Henry Garrett ranking Technique has been employed. In this method, the respondents were asked to rank the given problems like need maintenance, limited varieties and pattern, limited colors, uneven cloth and weak structure, expensive, defective, not available at the close proximity, unable to differentiate from power loom and mill made clothes, less attractive point of display and poor quality of handloom products. According to the magnitude of the problem the order of merit given by the respondents was converted into ranks by using the Henry Garrett Formula.

TABLE -2, Problems Faced by the Respondents

S.No.	Problems	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1	Handloom products needs maintenance	15548	60.3	II
2	Limited varieties and pattern	14817	57.4	III
3	Limited colors	15852	61.4	I
4	Uneven cloth and weak structure	14048	54.4	IV
5	Handloom products are expensive	12396	48.0	VI
6	Handloom products are Defective	12518	48.5	V
7	Handloom products are not available at the close proximity	12049	46.7	VII
8	Unable to differentiate Handloom products are from power loom and mill made clothes	11931	46.2	VIII
9	Less attractive point of display	11397	44.2	IX
10	Poor quality of handloom products	9180	35.6	X

It is inferred from table 2 that the respondents consider 'limited colours' as the prime problem and the same has been ranked first with a Garrett score of 15852 points. It is followed by the 'needs maintenance', 'limited varieties and pattern' and

'uneven cloth and weak structure' were ranked second, third and fourth ranks with Garrett scores of 15548, 14817 and 14048 points respectively. The problems such as 'defective', 'expensive' and 'not available at the close proximity' was ranked fifth, sixth and seventh ranks with Garrett scores of 12518, 12396 and 12049 points respectively. On the other hand, the problems such as 'unable to differentiate from power loom and mill made clothes' and 'less attractive point of display' was ranked eighth and ninth with a Garrett scores of 11931 and 11397 points respectively. The last rank is placed for the 'poor quality of handloom products' with a Garrett score of 9180 points.

From the above analysis, it is very evident that respondents consider 'limited colours' and 'needs maintenance' as a major problem while buying and using handloom products.

CONCLUSION

It is found from the study that the respondents considered 'limited colour' as a predominant problem while buying handloom products and hence it is recommended that the handloom societies can segregate the colours into three categories viz., light, medium and dark. Based on these three categories the societies can further introduce more number of colour combinations in order to satisfy the customers' requirements. The findings of the study are in line with the declaration of Mohanty (2012) where handloom products are predominantly in red, yellow and black colors and it is also the dominant factor. The findings of the study also harmonizes with the opinion of Narzary (2012) that specific quality concerns about durability of colour, shrinking of the cloth and durability of products etc were expressed by the customers of handloom products. The findings of the study contradicts with the findings of Karunakaran and Karthikeyan(2002) that the customers were satisfied with the product attributes such as quality, durability, design, colour, price and variety of handloom fabrics.

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