



## PERCEPTION OF THE HANDLOOM OWNERS TOWARDS HANDLOOM WEAVING IN THE SELECT DISTRICTS OF TAMILNADU

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### Abstract

Handloom industry provide livelihood to millions of rural people across the country for centuries. Promotion of handicrafts, handlooms, tiny and small industries has been an objective in the post-independence period in India. The government of India is consistently pursuing to bring about improvement in the productivity and marketing of handloom sector; still it can be seen that weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis. However, the sector faces problem like lack of government support, problems in product development, lack of market research, pricing problems and supply chain problems in the select districts of Tamilnadu. To understand the satisfaction level of the handloom owners towards handloom weaving, the present study is undertaken in the select districts of Tamilnadu. There are 206 handloom industrial units in Dindigul district, 850 handloom industrial units in Vellore district and 600 handloom industrial units in Virudhunagar district in operation as on March 2015. These handloom industrial units are considered the universe of the study. In the present study, out of handloom industrial units, 20 per cent of the units were selected from each district i.e. 330 handloom industrial units were selected by using simple random sampling. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 330 handloom owners with the help of well designed schedule for a period of 6 months from July 2015 to December 2015. The findings of the study reveal that no significant relationship is found among the satisfaction levels of the respondents belonging to different genders, age groups, educational status groups, varied years of existence, ownership patterns, investment groups, monthly sales groups and districts belongs to towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu. The researchers suggest various measures for the prospects of marketing of handloom products.

**Keywords:** Handloom Weaving, Cottage Industry, Handloom Marketing, Handloom Products, Etc.

### Introduction

Handloom industry provide livelihood to millions of rural people across the country for centuries. Promotion of handicrafts, handlooms, tiny and small industries has been an objective in the post-independence period in India. The government of India is consistently pursuing to bring about improvement in the productivity and marketing of handloom sector; still it can be seen that weavers are facing severe livelihood crisis. Industrialization took place in the Indian handloom industry when trade liberalization and market liberalization came into existence. Increasing use of capital intensive technology and competition with powerlooms are the chief characteristics of industrialization. Since that time weaving faced a competitive market with the upcoming new technologies. As a result, the powerloom came to dominate and the Indian handloom industries tried to adapt in terms of changing conditions, because, industrialization imposed large uncompensated costs upon another.

### Significance of Handloom Sector

India has one of the highest weaving capacities in the world, with a presence of 2.20 million powerlooms, 3.50 million handlooms, and an estimated 92000 million looms in the organized mill sector. The handloom sector occupies a distinct and unique place in the Indian economy, besides being the largest generator of non-farm rural employment. India's handloom sector has special importance because of its high employment potential. More than 25 million people directly depend on this sector, making it next to agriculture in providing employment. It helps in earning considerable sum of foreign exchange to the country thus strengthening the national economy. There are historical records to show that handloom fabrics of India established their reputation in the international market long before the historic Industrial Revolution in the West and the Indian handloom fabrics received popular patronage and adorned regal personages, besides having received acclaim abroad in the olden days. Indian textile sector is contributing nearly 13.25 per cent of the country's total exports basket. This sector contributes nearby 11 per cent of the cloth production in the country and also contributes to the export earning of the country and also 95 per cent of the world's hand woven fabric comes from India. The Indian handloom products have a distinct place in the world of fabrics. This is not just a cloth material or traditional wear; it is symbolic to the Indian civilization, which is one of the oldest on the planet.

### Statement of the Problem

The handloom industry plays an important role in the economic development of the rural poor. At present, the handloom industry is facing multifarious problems. The New Economic Policy and the privatization process have posed great challenges to the handloom industry. Handloom products are marketed weavers themselves, master weavers, middlemen, co-

operative societies and also by marketing organizations. There are organizations directly or indirectly supporting the marketing facilities of handloom fabrics for both domestic and export purposes. However, the handloom industry is in miserable state due to myriad problems and is sustaining continuous losses. Inadequate supply of raw material, outmoded technology, traditional production techniques, high price of hank yarn, inadequate availability of inputs, inadequate training for upgradation of skills, lack of proper marketing facilities, lack of market awareness and promotion, lack of proper financial resources, involvement of middlemen, irregular and inadequate supply of hank yarn, competition from mill and powerloom sectors, and lack of well-timed support from the government are contributing to the crisis of Indian handloom sector at present.

As like the tradition, handloom products are also marketed in conventional manner. The availability of organized information, formal documentation of market change, timely market research and customer surveys for market feedback are still not common practices for the handloom sector. The weavers are unaware of the market demand and new designs and colours because of the lack of customer feedback. This hampers their creativity and innovation. Due to inadequate marketing facilities and lack of improper marketing, huge stock is blocked with marketers, which resulted in accumulation of stocks, resulting in underemployment and unemployment among weavers.

Handloom sector is far lagging behind in promotion and advertising of its product as compared to the textile sector. Generally, the promotion is only through exhibitions and fairs with limited outlets. Hence, the customer purchases only when available and switches to the other products when it is not available. The quality and standardization of the handloom product is not regularly monitored. There is another find fault that availability of handloom products is at very less outlets that restricts the customer from purchasing the handloom in their vicinity and comfortably. In the handloom market, when customers evaluate products, they are forced to make a variety of tradeoffs. Currently the research and development activities are insufficient for the Indian handloom sector due to the poor financial conditions of the weavers. This results the inefficiency of new designs accord to the market trends. As the family is very poor, any delay in marketing the cloth hurts the weavers. In this context, the present study is undertaken to examine the satisfaction level of the handloom owners towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu.

### Objectives of the Study

The study has the following objectives:

1. To find out the factors influencing the handloom owners to start-up handloom industrial units in the study area.
2. To study the satisfaction level of the handloom owners towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu.
3. To suggest suitable measures for the prospects of the handloom units in the study area based on the findings of the study.

### Testing of Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses have been formulated and tested:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship among the satisfaction levels of the handloom owners belonging to different demographic profiles towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship among the satisfaction levels of the handloom industrial units belonging to different institutional profiles towards handloom weaving.

### Sampling Design

This study is confined to the handloom industrial units of select districts in Tamilnadu. There are 206 handloom industrial units in Dindigul district, 850 handloom industrial units in Vellore district and 600 handloom industrial units in Virudhunagar district in operation as on March 2015. These handloom industrial units are considered the universe of the study. In the present study, out of handloom industrial units, 20 per cent of the units were selected from each district i.e. 330 handloom industrial units were selected by using simple random sampling. The following table shows the sampling distribution of the present study.

**Table 1, Sampling Distribution**

S.No.	Name of the District	No. of Handloom Units	Sample Units
1.	Dindigul	200	040
2.	Vellore	850	170
3.	Virudhunagar	600	120
	Total	1650	330

### **Tools for Data Collection**

The present study is empirical in character based on survey method. To enhance the quality of data, the researcher employed multiple data sources for the study: primary and secondary data. As an essential part of the study, the primary data were collected from 330 handloom owners with the help of well designed schedule for a period of 6 months from July 2015 to December 2015. Taking into consideration the objectives of the study, a schedule was prepared after a perusal of available literature and thorough consultation with the experts of related fields. Pre-testing of schedule was done during June 2015, involving 30 respondents to know the relevance of the questions. In the light of pre-testing, necessary changes were incorporated in the questions and their sequences.

### **Framework of Analysis**

In order to study the satisfaction level of the handloom owners, analysis of one-way variance, t-test, analysis of coefficient of variation, factor analysis, discriminant function analysis, multiple regression analysis and percentage analysis have been employed. The analysis of one-way variance and t-test were employed to find out the relationship among the satisfaction levels of the handloom owners and handloom units belonging to different demographic and institutional profiles towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu. The co-efficient of variation has been employed to find out the consistency in the satisfaction level of the handloom owners and handloom units towards handloom weaving. Multiple regression analysis was applied to measure the effect of independent variables on the satisfaction levels of handloom owners and handloom units towards handloom weaving in the select districts.

### **Findings**

1. The overall influence of all the eleven factors motivating the respondents to startup handloom industrial units is considered 'strongly agree' in motivating them to startup handloom units by 33.33 per cent of the respondents, as 'agree' by 20 per cent of the respondents, 'neither agree nor disagree' by 24.24 per cent of the respondents, as 'disagree' by 6.36 per cent of the respondents and as 'strongly disagree' by 16.06 per cent of the respondents. The mean acceptance score reveals that the locus of control is the most important factor (3.63) for the respondents to startup handloom industrial units, followed by earning money (3.52). However, pertaining to securing self-employment and make use of incentives and subsidies, the respondents give least acceptance score (3.41).
2. There is no significant relationship among the satisfaction levels of the respondents belonging to different genders, age groups and educational status groups towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu.
3. Male respondents, respondents in the age group 41-50 years and respondents belonging to upto primary education have higher satisfaction level towards handloom weaving.
4. There is consistency in the satisfaction levels of the male respondents, respondents in the age group 31-40 years and respondents who have H.Sc qualification towards handloom weaving.
5. No significant relationship is found among the satisfaction levels of the handloom units belonging to varied years of existence, ownership patterns, investment groups, monthly sales groups and districts towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu.
6. Handloom units having existence of 11-15 years, sole proprietorship handloom units, handloom units having investment below Rs.250000, handloom units having monthly sales Rs.100001-200000 and handloom units located in the Dindigul district have higher satisfaction level towards handloom weaving.
7. There exists consistency in the satisfaction level of the units having existence for 6-10 years, partnership form of handloom units, handloom units having an amount of investment Rs. 500001-750000, handloom units having monthly sales below Rs.100000 and handloom units located in Dindigul district towards handloom weaving.
8. There has been a low correlation (0.092) between the overall satisfaction score of the respondents towards handloom weaving and the selected demographic and institutional variables. The R square indicates that 0.80 per cent of variation in the satisfaction towards handloom weaving is explained by all demographic and institutional variables taken together. The F value indicates that the multiple correlation coefficients are not significant. Gender, age, education, monthly income, number of looms owned, amount of investment, ownership pattern, years of existence and district belonging to have no significant effect on the satisfaction towards handloom weaving.



9. In regards to the various factors that contribute to the satisfaction of the respondents towards handloom weaving, the majority of the respondents are (12.73%) neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, followed by satisfied (30.30%) and dissatisfied (20.61%). 12.73% and 5.76% of the respondents are highly satisfied and highly dissatisfied in that order towards handloom weaving in the select districts of Tamilnadu. The mean satisfaction score shows that the respondents have a higher satisfaction level (3.44) towards wage/earning, followed by family welfare schemes (3.36). In the case of bargaining power with the buyer, the respondents have a lower satisfaction score (2.78).
10. Respondents ranging from 29.70 per cent to 46.67 per cent suggest that incentives to weavers, categorization of handloom units, use of research and development, scientific pricing approach and use of sales promotion will make certain the handloom units for the marketing prospects of handloom units. Collective market orientation, area-based industry approach, launch of new products, decentralized yarn production facility, production of fine fabrics and credit facilities are the suggestions of the respondents ranging from 50.61% to 60% for the prospects of marketing of handloom products in the select districts of Tamilnadu. Respondents ranging from 60.91 per cent to 90.30 per cent suggest that market pressures to expand demand, government support and assistance, handloom marketing complexes, strict enforcement of handloom reservation, handloom industrial estates and parks, and use of handloom mark will prospect the marketing of handloom products in the study area.

### **Suggestions**

1. The weavers of the handloom units should be given incentives for their skills and efforts. Incentives motivate any weaver to give his best. Traders should change their attitude towards weavers and market. They should not become obstacles between market and weaver. They should maintain fair relations with weavers in promoting handloom products and they should help in establishing proper market information channel, which is of free flow in nature.
2. Though handloom units making fine fabrics do earn marginally more than those weaving plain cloth, the market demand for these high value fabrics is restricted to a small niche market. So the numbers of handloom units depending on this are relatively fewer. It has to be emphasized strongly that categorizations of handloom units become essential. Thus, a more realistic understanding of the problems of handloom units and a suitably flexible categorization has therefore to be devised based on realities obtained at the field level. The handloom units depend mostly upon the traditional buyers belonging to lower income groups for the purpose of marketing. The market outlet needs to be extended to cover the customers belonging to upper income strata. This may entail product innovations to suit the preferences of upper income strata.
3. More funds should be made available for research and development activity in the handloom industry. New research and development centers should be set up in the leading destinations. Improvement of designs, product innovation and diversification should be emphasized to ensure handloom products to gain a competitive edge and be able to respond to rapidly changing market trends. A handloom research centre should be set up at the state level to undertake research on demand patterns, designs, weaving technology, raw materials, etc.
4. Pricing strategy must be formulated on the basis of the market demand, the segment that is targeted, cost of the production, value added to the product and brand image of the product. To bring a turnaround in the sector, establishment of brand image in the customers' mind, generating loyalty through long-term customer relationship and high quality services are required. To bring superior quality in handloom products, the pre - and post - loom process development should take place.
5. The handloom units can employ other sales promotion tools like coupons, psychological discount, free goods, etc. to create interest and excitement to buy handloom products. The handloom units need an efficient marketing arrangement to popularize the handloom goods in different parts of the country and also in foreign countries. Handloom exhibitions, events and fairs need to be organized on regular basis in various cities and towns. Handloom shops should be started at important tourist destinations.
6. The handloom units must develop collective market orientation. It should respond to the changing requirements of the market and provide required linkage support to the individual handloom units, as it is not possible for the ordinary weaver to study the market trend and adopt it in his production unit.

### **Conclusion**

The handloom industry is highly fragmented and unorganized in India. The sector gives India its distinct cultural identity and contributes considerably to the economic activities in India. Dominant in the rural areas of the country, the sector caters to



several lifestyle and utility products. Traditional skills and eco-friendly methods used for production add to the products' uniqueness. This sector largely comprises people who are self-employed and have been in this profession for generations. As an economic activity and in terms of employment generation, the handloom sector occupies a place second only to agriculture. This sector is, however, is confronted with various marketing problems. In order to examine the marketing problems and prospects of the handloom industrial units, the present study was conducted with a sample size of 330 handloom units in the three districts of Tamilnadu. The study suggests that measures like incentives to weavers, categorization of handloom units, use of research and development, scientific pricing approach, use of sales promotion, collective market orientation, area-based industry approach, launch of new products, decentralized yarn production facility, production of fine fabrics, credit facilities, market pressures to expand demand, government support and assistance, handloom marketing complexes, strict enforcement of handloom reservation, handloom industrial estates and parks, and use of handloom mark will prospect the marketing of handloom products in the study area. If this study provokes the people concerned to take some positive measures, the researcher will feel amply rewarded.

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