



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH HANDLOOM INDUSTRY: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Women's issues are development issues and bypassing them in development programmes means leaving almost half of human resources outside development interventions. Feminization of poverty, lack of access and control over productive resources, limited opportunities to participate in decision-making process at various levels are among the critical issues that need to be addressed on an urgent basis. Handloom industry is perhaps the most important one among the hundreds of small scale and cottage arts and crafts that have survived in the present day in India. It is remarkable that in some cases it has been wiped out in most of the countries where modern textiles industry has been established. But still it occupies a strategic position in India's socio-economic set up. The industry is not only ancient but its change is unique, in the sense, that in no other country in the world, where hand weaving is in vogue on such a nation-wide basis. And nowhere else could the handloom industry so valiantly withstand the on –slaught of and stiff competition from the giant textile machine as in India. The present study covers economic development of women through the handloom industry in Anantapuramu district.

Keywords: Women, Economic Development, Handloom Industry.

Introduction

Handloom industry is perhaps the most important one among the hundreds of small scale and cottage arts and crafts that have survived in the present day in India. It is remarkable that in some cases it has been wiped out in most of the countries where modern textiles industry has been established. But still it occupies a strategic position in India's socio-economic set up. The industry is not only ancient but its change is unique, in the sense, that in no other country in the world, where hand weaving is in vogue on such a nation-wide basis. And no where else could the handloom industry so valiantly withstand the on –slaught of and stiff competition from the giant textile machine as in India¹.

Even in the wake of mobility, growing urbanization, scientific and technological revolution, India's time-honored handloom industry has remained unscathed preserving the ancient traditions of weaving and carrying out reasonable improvements in the use of tools and accessories. The Indian women weavers are not only providing enough cloth to meet the internal demand but also exporting numerous artistic varieties to the highly industrialized countries of the world².

Indian economic development has to be viewed in the light of the socio-economic factors, preservation of the traditional skills of the people and the use of the available resources. Handlooms have a great potential in this regard as they hold the key not only for sustaining the existing craft persons but for providing gainful employment, both full-time, to increasingly larger sections of the economically poor and dispossessed weavers. Village and cottage industries to which the handloom industry belongs are oriented towards balanced socio-economic development of our country owing to the built-in mechanism that encourages women weavers and craftsmen to seek an honorable place in the society. Handloom industry occupies a place of importance in our country's economy chiefly by virtue of its employment potential, production and export orientation³.

Review of Literature

R.G. Kakade's.(1939)⁴, study analysed the socio-economic conditions of weavers of Sholapur city was undertaken by the Gokhale institute of politics and Economic, Pune, at the invitation of the Sholapur

Municipality in 1939. The survey was undertaken with a view to study the organisation of the industry in Sholapur, one of the biggest centres of handloom weaving in India, in a comprehensive and detailed manner and to study the sociological aspects of the communities engaged in the industry.

Arulanandam (1980)⁵, in his study, observed that various Government policies towards handloom industry was a bundle of contradiction. He rightly observed that the Government have spent huge resources to agricultural sector and other large scale sectors, and neglected the handloom sector. It is the cause for the main problems handloom sector. The researcher felt that the Government should give priority to prepare plans and allot huge resources to handloom sector.

Sudalaimuthu & Devi (2010)⁶ their paper entitled “Handloom Industry in India”. They concluded that the sector is beset with manifold problems such as obsolete technologies, unorganized production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing link, overall stagnation of production and sales, above all, competition from power loom and mill sector. As a result of effective government intervention through financial assistance and implementation of various developmental and welfare schemes, the handloom sector to some extent, has been able to tide over these disadvantages. Thus, handloom forms a precious part of the generational legacy and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the artistry of the weavers.

Objectives

1. To study the handloom industry
2. To analyse the Economic empowerment of weaver
3. To draw the conclusions

Data Base

The primary data are elicited from the sample respondents of women weavers through a specially designed interview- schedule by personal interview method.

Sample Design

The weavers in this district were living in rural areas and some towns. The researcher has taken only Dharmavaram town and taken 150 women sample respondents from the selected area.

Secondary data

Secondary data were collected from the records of the office of Development Commissioner for Handlooms, various books, Journals, editorials, newspapers, dissertations and unpublished theses, in the present study using only percentages and pie diagrams and bar diagrams.

Analysis

Age and active participation of the members in various activities are intertwined. The age details of women weavers are shown in table 1. It is observed from the table that 70 out of 150 members representing 46.67 per cent are in the age group of 35-45 years followed by the members with age group of 25-35, 45-55, 55 years and above and only 2.3 per cent of the select women weavers are in the age group of less than 25 years. From the table concluded that, majority of the women weavers are representing middle age group members in the Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh.

Table 1 Distribution of Women Weavers According to their Age

S. No	Age group	No of respondents	Percentages
1	< 25 year	3	2.00
2	25 - 35	36	24.00
3	35 - 45	70	46.67
4	45 - 55	32	21.33
5	55 and above	09	6.00
	Total	150	100

Source: Field survey

Table 2 Type of House in Which the Selected Women Weavers are Dwelling

S. No	Type of House	No. of Respondents	Percentages
1	Thatched house	08	5.00
2	Semi pukka	33	22.00
3	Pukka	70	47.00
4	Govt. Pukka house	39	26.00
	Total	150	100.0

Source: Field Survey

The type of house being owned and lived by the select respondents can be seen in table 2. According to the findings shown in the table, it can be understood that out of 150 respondents selected 70 respondents representing 47 per cent have stated that they are living in pukka houses provided by the government. About 26 per cent of the respondents have said that they have Government pukka houses constructed by themselves, 22 per cent are dwelling in semi-pukka houses while 5 per cent of the respondents are living in thatched houses. From the above analysis, it can be understood that majority of the women weavers have pukka house and followed next majority of the samples have availed the housing scheme provided by the government accordingly living in government pukka-houses.

**Table 3 Women Weavers Approaches to the Financial Institutions for Getting Loans
N=150**

S. No	Financial Institution	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Loan from banks	124	83.00
2	Loan from Co-operative Societies	51	34.00
3	Loan from Money Lenders	105	70.00
4	Loan from Relatives	87	58.00
5	Jewels loan	78	52.00

Source: Field survey

Table 3 highlights that the, debt aspects of the sample respondents in Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. All the sample respondents have been taken the loan from different financial institutions in the Anantapurmu district. Out of the 150 sample respondents, 124 are taken their loan from the different banks, 51 sample women weavers are taking the loan from co-operative societies, 70 per cent of the sample respondents are taking the loan from money lenders, 58 per cent of the women weavers taking the loan from their near relatives and 52 per cent of the women weavers taking the loan through gold loan.

Table 4 Amount of the Loans Availed By the Women Weavers from Different Financial Institutions

S.No.	Borrowed amount (Rs in thousands)	No.of respondents	Percentages
1	< 20000	12	8.00
2	20000 - 40000	66	44.00
3	40000 - 60000	28	19.00
4	60000 - 80000	16	10.00
5	80000 and above	28	19.00
	Total	150	100

Source: Field survey

It is quite interesting to note from table 4 that the amount of loans availed by the women weavers in the study are ranging from between Rs. 20000 to Rs. 80000 and above. More specifically, it is found that 44 per cent have availed bank loans to the range between Rs. 20,000-40,000/- thousands. While 19 per cent have got loans from the banks the range between Rs. 40,000-60,000/- thousands in the study are, 10 per cent have took loans of in between Rs 60000-Rs. 80000, 19 per cent have taken the loan Rs. 80000 and above in the present study. On the

whole majority of the sample respondents are taking the loan amount from different financial institutions range between Rs. 20000 – Rs.40000 respectively.

Table 5 Purpose-wise details of utilized loan amount by the women weavers N=150

S. No	Purpose of expenditure	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	For construction of house	108	72.00
2	Modernization of existing loom	134	88.00
3	Buy raw material	115	76.67
4	Others	93	64.67

Source: Field Survey.

Table 5 furnishes the purpose –wise the loan amount utilized by the select respondents in the study. As in found in the table, 72 per cent of the respondents in the study have stated that they have been utilizing the money taken as loan from different financial institutions for the construction of new house or modernization of old house, 134 sample respondents represented 88 per cent are using their loan amount for modernization of existing loom in the study, 76.67 per cent of the sample women weavers are spending their loan amount for purchase the raw material in Anantapuramu district and only 93 sample respondents are using their loan amount for other purposes. From the above analysis, it can be inferred that the amount taken as loan from the different financial institutions is used both for productive purpose and also non-production purpose.

Table 6 Details of Annual Income of the Sample Respondents

S.No	Income	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	< 50000	10	7.00
2	50000-70000	113	75.00
3	70000- 90000	25	17.00
4	90000 and above	2	1.00
	Total	150	100.0

Source: Field survey.

Table 6 indicates that the annual income of the women weavers in the Anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh out of 150 sample respondents in the study area, 113 women weavers annual income is between Rs. 50,000 – 70,000/- (75. Per cent), 25 sample respondents annual income range between Rs. 70,000 – 90,000/- thousands, below Rs.50,000/- thousands of the sample respondents represents 10 weavers and remaining only two of the respondents are having their annual income is above Rs.90,000/- thousands in the selected study area. Table concluded that, majority of the sample women weavers annual income range between Rs.50,000-70,000/- thousands.

Table 7 Problems Faced By the Sample Respondents of Women Weavers in Anantapuramu District N=150

S.No	Nature of Problem	No. of Respondents
1	Inadequate Raw material	135
2	Increasing price of raw material	125
3	Inadequate credit facilities	127
4	Prevalence of power looms	120
5	Low price for handloom products	137
6	Lack of training and education	111
7	Lack of proper marketing facilities for weaving products	140
8	Existence of master weavers	90
9	No fair wage policy	105

10	Lack of co-ordination from the waving co-operative societies	84
11	Stock piling problem	62
12	Effect of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization policy on employment , production and exports	117

Source: Field survey.

Table 7 reveals that the women weavers are facing different problem in their weaving activity in Anantapurmau district of Andhra Pradesh. The table indicates that, majority of the sample respondents are indicates (140) of main problem is lack of marketing facilities for weaving products. 137 respondents are facing the problems is the sale of the handloom product with low price, 135 sample respondents are procure the raw material is one of the major problem for running the handloom unit, 127 wavers are facing the inadequate credit facility for all financial institutions in anantapuramu district of Andhra Pradesh. One of the other problems is for increasing the price of raw material is representing 125 sample respondents in the study area, 120 women weavers are facing the problem is prevalence of power looms, followed by 117 are facing by the Liberalisation, Privatisation and globalization policy on employment, production and exports, lack of training and education (111), no fair wage policy (105), existence of master women weavers (90), lack of co-ordination from the waving co-operative societies (84), and remaining 62 sample respondents are facing stock piling problem in the study area.

Finding

The study findings that the majority of the women weavers have pukka house and followed the samples have availed the housing scheme provided by the government accordingly living in government pukka-houses and it can be infrared that the amount taken as loan from the different financial institutions and majority of the sample women weavers are taking the loan amount rang between Rs. 20,000 – 40,000/- thousands from the different financial institutions. It can be further concluded that the majority of the sample women weavers annual income range between Rs. 50,000 – 70,000/- thousands. The present study found that the majority of the women weavers are facing their problem for selling the handloom product in the present competitive market.

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