

Quality of life of women workers in small scale handloom industries of Imphal city

SARJOO PATEL*, SURAMYA JOSHI AND BONY LAISHRAM

Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Masters Student
Faculty of Family and Community Sciences,
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat (India)
(Email: sarjoo_patel@yahoo.com, laishrambony@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Handloom sector is an important cottage industry in India, and is a very old profession. This sector, estimated provides employment for more than fifteen million people and is second largest rural employment provider next to agriculture. In the entire country, there are more than 38,00,000 handlooms. In Manipur, the main source of employment for the people particularly to the women folk is handloom industries. The handloom industry thrives in Manipur as almost every household owns a loom and women folk alone work as being a weaver. It is one of the industries, which gives and generate a maximum employment to the women-folk both young and older ones where they are required to perform various kind of tasks. The quality of life of the workers is affected by the working condition and the physical aspects of the workplace. Indoor environmental factors like illumination and noise, arrangement of the machines and tools along with the nature of the task collectively affect the workers. The nature of the task and the kind of workplace at handloom industries may affect the physical and mental health of the workers. Physical well-being and mental well-being is an important parameter of measuring of Quality of life (QOL). Hence the present study was undertaken to study the condition which affects the living and working conditions of women worker. The present study was conducted in Imphal west District of Manipur State. Women workers from the selected Small Scale Handloom industries were the unit of inquiry for the present study. Four small scale handloom industries were selected for the present study. The selection was on the basis of number of looms in each of the selected small scale handloom industry. From each of the four selected small scale handloom industries all the women workers were selected as the samples except the pregnant women. The total sample size was 82 respondents. The data were collected using interview schedule and observation and record sheet. It was found that the physical well-being and mental well-being of the workers are affected to a great extent. Thus the study was done to assess the quality of life of the workers and how to improve it. The findings of the study may prove beneficial to various people concerned with this field.

Key Words : Hyperlipidemia, Lipid profile, Faulty food habits

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INTRODUCTION

Handloom sector is an important cottage industry in India, and is a very old profession. Handloom weavers are known for their knowledge, innovation and brilliance in designs. Weaving is now considered almost an art form considering development of skills and knowledge. This sector, estimated provides employment for more than fifteen million people and is second largest rural employment provider next to agriculture. In the entire country, there are more than 38, 00,000 handlooms. However, in north-eastern states, there are more than 15,00,000 domestic handlooms (Phurailatpam, 2011). In the North-Eastern region, handloom industry is regarded as the largest cottage industry. In Manipur, the main source of employment for the people particularly to the women folk is handloom industries. The handloom industry thrives in Manipur as almost every household owns a loom and women folk alone work as being a weaver (<http://www.master.nic.in/handloom.htm>). It is one of the industries, which gives and generate a maximum employment to the women-folk both young and older ones where they are required to perform various kind of tasks (<http://dcimanipur.gov.in/handloom.html>). Their work participation has increased as well as the increase in per day working hour has resultant more health issues especially pertaining to the physical problems. The Work environment is the main factor which affects productivity and performance of the handloom women workers (Premsundar and Kannan, 2013). Thus the quality of life of the workers is affected by the working condition and the physical aspects of the workplace. Indoor environmental factors like Illumination and noise, arrangement of the machines and tools along with the nature of the task collectively affect the workers. The nature of the task and the kind of workplace at handloom industries may affect the physical and mental health of the workers. Physical well-being and mental well-being is an important parameter of measuring of Quality of life (QOL). Quality of life (QOL) is the general well-being of individuals and societies. QOL has a wide range of contexts, including the fields of international development, healthcare, politics and employment. Standard indicators of the quality of life include not only wealth and employment but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quality_of_life). Thus the concept of Quality Of Life was taken for the present study to provide a tool for community development which can be used to monitor key indicators that encompass the social, health, environmental and economic dimensions of the Quality of Life in the community. Hence the present study was undertaken to study the condition which affects the living and working conditions of women worker.

Objectives of the study :

1. To collect the background data of women working in selected Handloom industries of Imphal city.
2. To collect the data about tasks and subtasks performed by the respondents at their workplace.
3. To assess the indoor environment namely illumination, noise and working facilities at the workplace of the respondents.
4. To assess the quality of life of the respondents through the parameters namely

physical and mental well-being in relation to their work and workplace.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was adopted for the present study as the prime objective of the study was to obtain data about Quality Of Life of the women working in small scale handloom industries and to assess the physical and mental well-being as parameters of the Quality of Life in relation to work and workplace. The present study was conducted in Imphal west District of Manipur State. Women workers from the selected Small Scale Handloom industries were the unit of inquiry for the present study. Four small scale handloom industries were selected for the present study. The selection was on the basis of number of looms in each of the selected small scale handloom industry. From each of the four selected small scale handloom industries all the women workers were selected as the samples except the pregnant women. The total sample size was 82 respondents. The data were collected using interview schedule and observation and record sheet. The researcher conducted the interview of the respondents personally at each Handloom Units with prior appointment with them. Data regarding physical aspects of the indoor environment of each Handloom units were observed. Details about size of the room, details of light fixtures, colour, material and texture of all the surfaces were gathered through observation sheet by the researcher. The illumination levels (natural and artificial level) were recorded personally by the researcher with light meter. The noise level was recorded by the researcher with sound level meter. Average noise level at each work spot was recorded.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Section-1 : Background Information :

The findings of the present study revealed that the mean age of the total sample was 32.1 years, 51.2% of the respondents were educated till 10th standard and 32.9% till 12th standard, the marital status of the respondent were found to be 50% unmarried and 39% married, and almost majority of the family belong to large and joint family. The overall total mean of the personal monthly income was found to be ₹3537.8 and for family monthly income was found to be ₹18777.8. The mean work experience of the respondents was found 5.6 years and the overall mean of the total work experience was found to be 5.38 years. The total working hour of the respondents was found to be 8.4. Majority of the respondents worked 6 days in a week, 31 to 40 minutes was found to be the duration of breaks for almost all the respondents, 32.9% of the respondent belonged to far place and 29.3% belonged to very far place and every Handloom Units had 6 to 7 spinning tools available.

Section-2 : Work related information :

Regarding the workplace, it was found out that sufficient leave were not provided except for personal and occasional reason. There was no provision for food and snacks and no proper sanitation facility was provided and no special incentives for working extra hours were provided to all the respondents.

Section-3 Parameters for Physical Well-being and Mental Well-being :

The information regarding the selected parameters namely Physical well-being and mental well-being are presented here.

Physical well-being of the respondents in relation to work environment.

The overall data revealed that more than half of the respondents felt that the everyday workload was high, the workplace arrangement was accident prone, the facilities and equipment available were not sufficient enough for comfort, frequent back pain, neck pain, visual fatigue and headache was experienced due to over concentration and continuous bending and working. They responded that more skill based trainings should be provided to enhance the speed of working to the workers. More than half of the respondents sometimes experienced low vision and watering of eye and they felt that light available in the unit was insufficient.

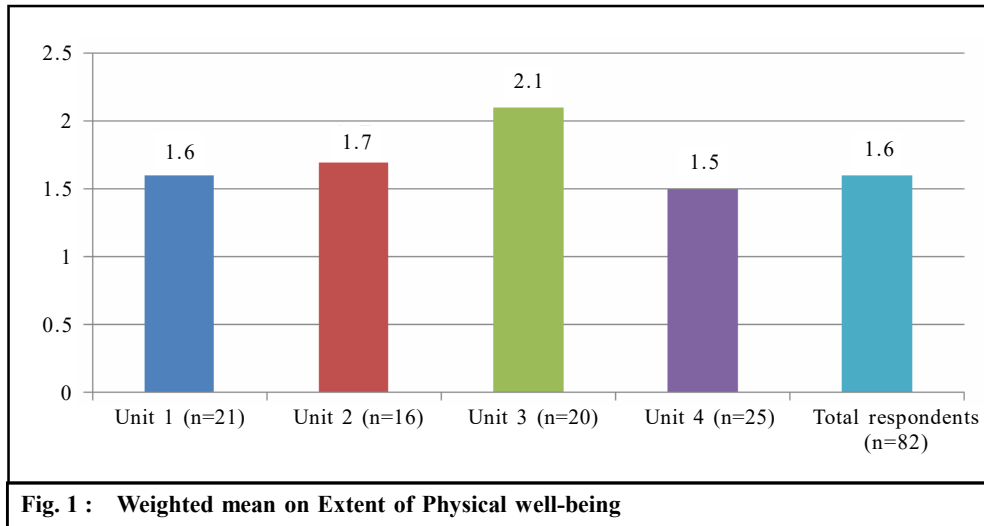
Majority of the respondents felt that sufficient number of breaks and proper sanitation facility were not provided at their workplace. More than three fourth of the respondents responded that first aid and medical support was not available at workplace, hitting and hurting against the equipment and looms resulted due to inadequate moving space and sleeplessness due to body pain and muscular pain was experienced. They also felt that less width of the passages within the unit adds to the risk of accident.

Extent of physical well-being :

In Handloom Unit-1, Unit-2 and Unit-4, the physical well-being of more than half of the respondent were under low condition and less than half of the respondents were under moderate condition. The physical well-being of very few respondents was found low and more than three fourth were found moderate condition in Handloom Unit-3.

Sr. No.	Extent of	Range of score	Unit-1 (n=21)		Unit-2 (n=16)		Unit-3 (n=20)		Unit-4 (n=25)		Total respondents (n=82)	
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Low	23-37	11	52.4	10	62.5	4	20.0	18	72.0	43	52.4
2.	Moderate	38-53	10	47.6	6	37.5	16	80.0	7	28.0	39	47.6
3.	High	54-69	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Mean			53.1		53.9		49.6		50.8		51.7
	SD			4.6		3.4		4.6		3.8		4.4
	Weighted mean			1.6		1.7		2.1		1.5		1.6

The overall weighted mean was found to be 1.6. The weighted mean score of physical well-being revealed that out of the four Handloom Units, Unit-4 was found to be having lowest weighted mean for extent of physical well-being which indicated that the respondents of Unit 4 experienced low physical well-being (Table 1).



Mental well-being in relation to work environment :

The overall data depicted that more than three fourth of the respondents were not enjoying and were not satisfied with their job. Work hours were flexible according to all the respondents so the task was performed efficiently. Co-workers and supervisor were found supportive and provision of personal and social occasions leave was there in all the Handloom Units. More than half of the respondents responded that knowledge enhancing program and skill development programs were not conducted. Disturbance was there in performing tasks due to noise produced by the looms and from the surrounding and also they felt that environment was not healthy. More than half of the respondents felt that work life and personal life was not well balanced and feeling of anxiety and irritation was also experienced at workplace by the respondents. Very few respondents felt that adequate lighting condition was provided at the workplace. The physical indoor environment was depressive according to the knowledge of half of the respondents. The overall data highlighted that working in the Handloom Unit had added financial security and self-confidence to almost all the respondents though more than half of the respondents responded that the monetary earning were not sufficient to support their family.

Extent of mental well-being :

In Handloom Unit-1, Unit-2 and Unit-4, the mental well-being of more than half of the respondent was low and less than half of the respondents were moderate. The mental well-being of very few respondents was found low and more than half were found moderate in Handloom Unit-3.

The overall weighted mean was found 1.8. The weighted mean scores revealed that out of the four Handloom Units, Unit-4 was found having lowest weighted mean for extent of mental well-being which indicated that the respondents of Unit 4 experienced low mental well-being.

Sr. No.	Extent of	Range of score	Unit-1 (n=21)		Unit-2 (n=16)		Unit-3 (n=20)		Unit-4 (n=25)		Total respondents (n=82)	
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Low	25-41	11	52.4	9	56.3	7	35.0	16	64.0	43	52.4
2.	Moderate	42-58	10	47.6	7	43.8	13	65.0	9	36.0	39	47.5
3.	High	59-75	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.0	1	1.2
	Mean			59.5		58.2		55.7		66.8		57.5
	SD			4.0		3.5		3.6		8.3		5.6
	Weighted mean			1.8		1.7		2.1		1.6		1.8

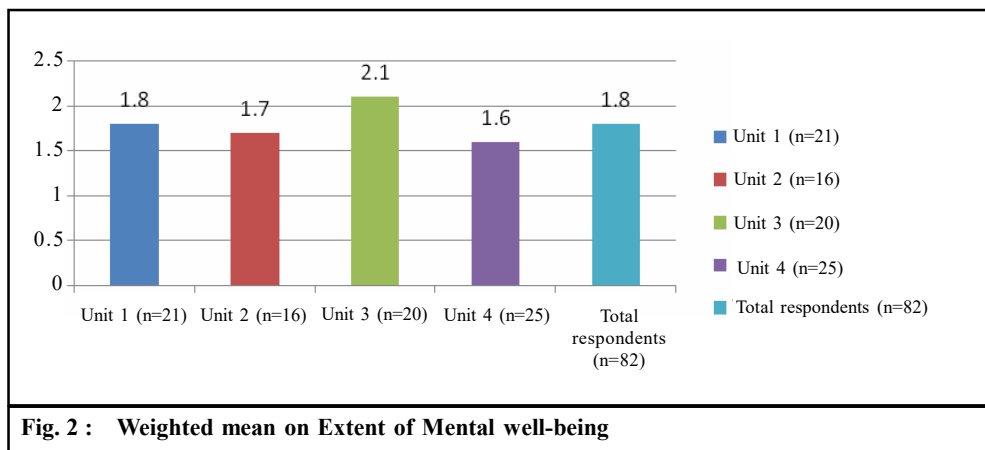


Fig. 2 : Weighted mean on Extent of Mental well-being

Section 4: Extent of pain experienced by the respondents in different body parts

This section deals with several aspects related to extent of pain experienced in different body parts of the respondents due to performing the task weaving and spinning.

The overall data revealed that due to performing the task weaving, more than three fourth of the respondents always experienced pain in head, eyes, shoulder, back of neck (nape of neck) and neck, chest, full arm, upper arm, lower arm, wrist, upper back, lower back, knees and calf muscles and less than half of the respondents sometimes experienced pain in buttocks and thigh.

For Spinning, more than half of the respondents always experienced pain in eyes, back of neck (nape of neck) and neck full arm, upper arm, lower arm, wrist, upper back, lower back, knees and calf muscles and less than half of the respondents experienced pain in wrist, thigh, knees and buttocks.

Extent of pain experienced due to weaving :

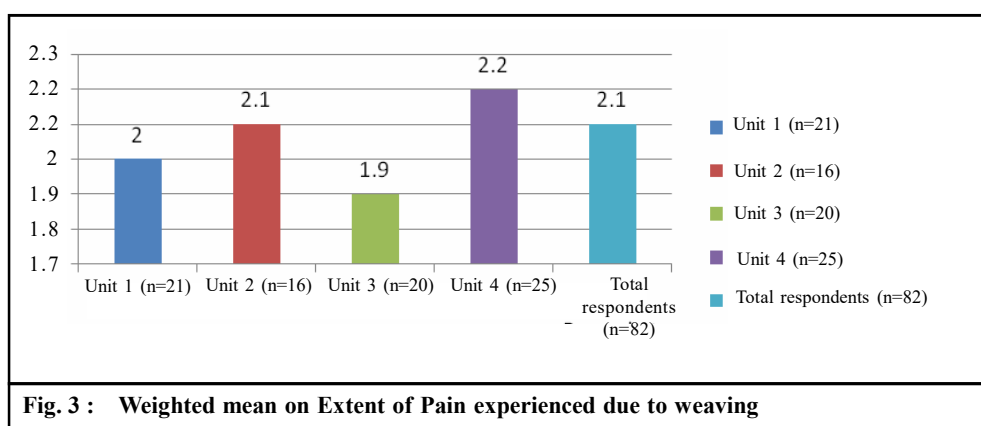
In Handloom Unit-1 and Unit-2, more than half of the respondents experienced high extent of pain and only few respondents had experienced moderate extent of pain in different body part. In only Handloom Unit-1, a single respondent was found who experienced low

extent of pain in different body parts due to weaving. Half of the respondents experienced high extent of pain and half of the respondents experienced moderate extent of pain in different body part from Handloom Unit-3. Majority of the respondent from Handloom Unit-4 were found having high extent of pain and only few were found having moderate extent of pain.

Table 3 : Frequency and Percentage distribution of the respondents according to extent of pain experienced in different body parts due to Weaving

Sr. No.	Extent of pain	Range of score	Unit 1 (n=21)		Unit 2 (n=16)		Unit 3 (n=20)		Unit 4 (n=25)		Total (n=82)	
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Low	21-34	1	4.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.2
2.	Moderate	35-49	6	28.6	5	31.3	10	50.0	5	20.0	26	31.7
3.	High	50-63	14	66.7	11	68.8	10	50.0	20	80.0	55	67.1
	Mean		31.3		32.0		33.2		30.2		31.6	
	SD		6.7		3.3		5.7		4.6		5.3	
	Weighted mean		2.0		2.1		1.9		2.2		2.1	

The overall weighted mean for extent of pain was found to be 2.1. The data revealed that out of the four Handloom Units, Unit-4 was found having highest weighted mean score in extent of pain experienced in different body part which revealed that the respondents from Handloom Unit-4 experienced pain to a great extent while weaving.



Extent of pain experienced due to spinning :

In Handloom Unit-1, Unit-3 and Unit-4, majority of the respondents experienced high extent of pain and few respondent experienced moderate extent of pain in different body parts. While in Handloom Unit-2, less than half of the respondent experienced moderate and high extent of pain.

The overall weighted mean for extent of pain was found to be 2.2. The data revealed that out of the four Handloom Units, Unit-4 was found having highest weighted mean score in extent of pain experienced in different body part which revealed that the respondents

Sr. No.	Extent of pain	Range of score	Unit 1 (n=21)		Unit 2 (n=16)		Unit 3 (n=20)		Unit 4 (n=25)		Total (n=82)	
			f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.	Low	21-34	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Moderate	35-49	4	19.0	6	37.5	2	10.0	2	8	14	17.0
3.	High	50-63	17	80.9	10	47.6	18	90.0	23	92.0	68	82.9
	Mean		24.5		22.2		23.9		24.2		23.8	
	SD		2.6		1.5		2.2		2.6		2.4	
	Weighted mean		2.0		2.3		2.2		2.4		2.2	

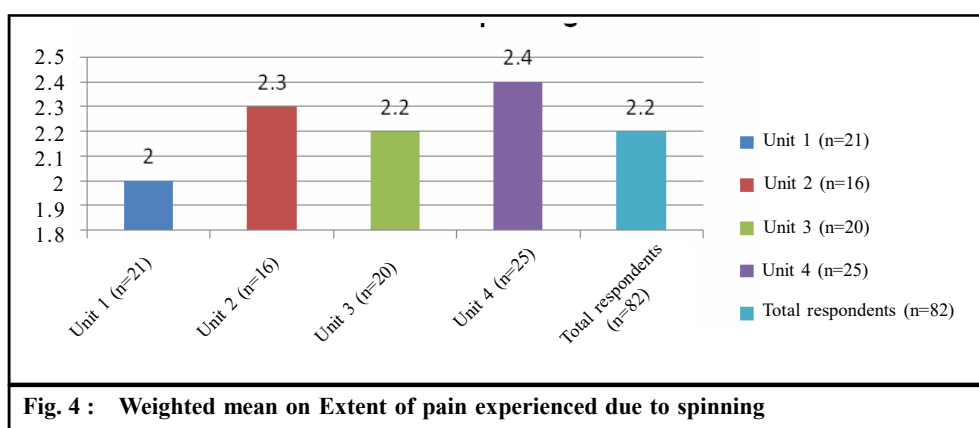


Fig. 4 : Weighted mean on Extent of pain experienced due to spinning

from Unit-4 experienced pain to a great extent while spinning.

Conclusion :

The physical and mental well-being is a parameter to measure the quality of life of the workers. It was found that the physical well-being and mental well-being of the workers are affected to a great extent. Thus the study was done to assess the quality of life of the workers and how to improve it. The findings of the study may prove beneficial to various people concerned with this field. The field of the Family and Community Resource Management is concerned with ergonomics and interior designing as the subjects. The finding of the study will help the students as well as the teachers to understand the importance of maintaining a good quality of life and apply the principles in their interior designing projects. The finding of the study which is undertaken will be helpful and beneficial to all the individuals working in the units who may or may not be aware of the adverse effect of the poor working environment on their health, physically and mentally. This finding will prove to be a boon to the workers who wish to improve their quality of life.

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