

Study on Problems of Handloom Weavers of Varanasi District

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ABSTRACT

Indian handloom sector is an age old industry providing employment to the rural people in large level. They have separate space in Indian economy. The strength of handloom lies in the introducing innovative designs which cannot be replicated by the power loom sector. Among various states of India, Uttar Pradesh is known for many forms of arts. This state is famous for distinctive handloom products; handloom weaving is done mainly in four districts of Uttar Pradesh namely, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Mau and Azamgarh. The study was undertaken to study the problems of handloom weavers in different areas of Varanasi district of Uttar Pradesh. In present time, handloom industry in Varanasi district is facing multifarious problems in comparison to other industries. Therefore the present study was planned with the objective to analyze the problems faced by handloom weavers. The selection of samples for this study was done by purposive random sampling method. Fifty handloom weavers between age group 16 to 68 years were selected for the study from different areas of Varanasi district. The questionnaire was prepared with some close ended and some open ended questions to collect information's about the problems faced by handloom weavers during weaving. The results showed that handloom industry is gradually declining in Varanasi district over the years. There was lack of technological advancements in there handloom, they have to work in their traditional handloom because of which, the weavers were facing serious problems in weaving such as problem of yarn breakage. They were also facing the financial problem, problem in procurement of raw material and problem in marketing their products. There was lack of godowns in Varanasi district because of which the weavers were also facing the problem of storage. The weavers who inherited in this occupation were in a pitiable condition owing to the poor socio-economic conditions. These problems of the weavers can be eliminated by introducing some better policies by state and central government. The government should encourage the weavers by providing finance facilities with lesser interest rates. These steps can provide better improvements in the social and economical conditions of handloom weavers of Varanasi district.

Key Words : Handloom, Weavers, Varanasi, Problems, Weaving

INTRODUCTION

Handloom sector plays a very important role in the country's economy. As per Handloom Census (2015-16), there are 30.23 lakh handlooms and over 70 lakh handloom workers in India, of which 3.2 lakh belong to Uttar Pradesh. This sector contributes nearly 19 per cent of the total cloth produced in the country and also adds substantially to export earnings. Thus weaving became an important and developed industry of eastern Uttar Pradesh in the four districts namely, Varanasi, Gorakhpur,

Mau and Azamgarh. The strength of handloom lies in the introducing innovative designs, which cannot be replicated by the power loom sector. Thus, handloom forms a part of the heritage of India and exemplifies the richness and diversity of our country and the artistry of the weavers. The handloom sector is an everlasting part of the cultural heritage of India. The elements of art and craft present in Indian handloom makes it a perspective sector for the upper segments of the domestic as well as international market. Conversely the sector is surrounded with manifold problems. A lot of welfare measure and

schemes are introduced by government for handloom weavers of Varanasi district. But inspite of it, the problems and challenges has haunted this sector affecting its sustainability. Revival of the handloom industry is essential to protect India heritage, promote employment and development in Varanasi district. Therefore the present study is planned with an objective to identify the problems of handloom weavers in Varanasi district.

METHODOLOGY

The selection of samples for this study was done by purposive random sampling method. Total fifty respondents were selected for the study. The respondents were between age group 18-68 years. The respondents of both the genders were selected from different areas of Varanasi district. The questionnaire was prepared with some close ended and some open ended questions to collect information's about the problems faced by handloom weavers during weaving.

The present study is based on the primary sources of data by direct interview of the respondents. Questionnaire was used to collect the information pertaining to the problems of the handloom weavers of Varanasi district. After collection of data, the data were converted into the tabular form. Care was also taken in the selection of handloom weavers that they should be true representative of their wards. The data collected by the means of questionnaire was coded, tabulated and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Responses from the questionnaire were arranged and grouped according to different research questions. Frequency and percentage methods were used to analyze the tabulated data and presented in form of frequency and percentage in the tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic profile of the respondents:

Demographic profile of the respondent is shown in Table 1, it was found that, the 74 per cent weavers were male whereas 26 per cent of the weavers were female. A large proportion of male weavers are engaged in handloom weaving (%). The marital status of the weavers was studied and it was found that, 2 per cent of the weavers were widow and 42 per cent of the weavers were married whereas 56 per cent were still un-married. Table 1 also shows the education qualification of weavers. No weavers had degree and diploma. 14 per

cent of the weavers are up to plus two and 26 per cent of the weavers were up to 10th standard whereas 60 per cent weavers were illiterate. Table 1 also shows that 96 per cent weavers lived in nuclear family and 4 per cent weavers had joint family.

Table 1 : Demographic profile of the respondent (N=50)

Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Gender		
	Male	37	74
	Female	13	26
2.	Marital status		
	Married	21	42
	Unmarried	28	56
	Divorce	00	00
	Widow/er	01	2
3.	Education qualification		
	Up to 10 th std.	13	26
	Up to plus two	07	14
	ITI/ Diploma	00	00
	Degree	00	00
	Others	30	60
4.	Types of family		
	Joint family	02	4
	Nuclear family	48	96

Problems of handloom weavers:

Problems faced in weaving:

Table 2 shows the problems faced by handloom weavers during weaving. It was found that the weavers had multiple problems, maximum weavers had eye related problem (70 %), 64 per cent of them were facing the problem of body weakness. Another problem was of electricity that was faced by 48 per cent of the weavers and 48 per cent of the weavers responded that they had to work very hard during the weaving process. 38 per cent weavers are facing marketing problem and 20 per

Table 2 : Problems faced in weaving (N=50)

Sr. No.	Problem faced in weaving	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Breaking yarn	10	20
2.	Electricity	24	48
3.	Hard work	24	48
4.	Market problem	19	38
5.	Heart problem	10	20
6.	Eye problems	35	70
7.	Weakness	32	64

cent weavers were facing problems of breaking of yarn and 20 per cent weavers are suffering from heart problem.

Financial problems:

Table 3 shows the financial problems faced by the handloom weavers. There were 76 per cent respondents who were having infrastructure and investment problem. 24 per cent handloom weavers complained that, they do not get credit when there is a need and no weavers had budget allocation, taxes and subsidies problem. The explanation is in accordance with the findings of Rao and Sudheer (2017). He reported in his study that the majority of handloom weavers of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh have financial problems (77.5 %).

Sr. No.	Financial problems	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Infrastructure and investment	38	76
2.	Budget allocation	00	00
3.	Credit needs	12	24
4.	Taxes and subsidies	00	00

Marketing problems:

Table 4 shows the marketing problems faced by the weavers. It was found that 96 per cent weavers suffer from competition from mills and power looms, 4 per cent weavers complained that they have problem in marketing of good. No weavers had free export or import trade and market environment problem. Satyanarayan (2016) reported the problems of handloom weavers of Andhra Pradesh in his study. He found that 94 per cent of the respondents face marketing problems, 82 per cent of the respondents faced financial problems, 97 per cent of the respondents had production problems, 89 per cent of the respondents had social and personal problems and almost all the respondents were facing health problems.

Sr. No.	Marketing problems	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Competition from mills and power looms	48	96
2.	Marketing for products	02	4
3.	Free export/Import trade opportunity	00	00
4.	Market environment	00	00

Production problems:

Table 5 shows the production problem of handloom weavers. 60 per cent respondents complained that they were using handloom of old model because of which they are facing lots of problem. 40 per cent weavers were suffering from problems of raw material. The Table 5 also reveals that, design improvement was not the problems of handloom weavers.

Sr. No.	Production problems	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Lack of technology development	30	60
2.	Raw material problems	20	40
3.	Design Improvements	00	00

Problems in procurements of raw material:

Table 6 shows the problems faced by handloom weavers in procurement of raw materials. When asked about the problems faced during the procurement of raw material, all the weavers responded that they have problem of high price of raw materials. 44 per cent handloom weavers were having problem in the quality of raw material. After analysis it was found that no weavers had problems of transportation. Sadanandan (2016) also reported in his study that, handloom societies of Warangal district (Telangana state) have problems in procurement of raw material. According to him 11 per cent weavers have problem of transportation and non-availability of credits. 9 per cent of handloom weavers have problem of high price.

Sr. No.	Problems in procurement of raw material	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Transportation	00	00
2.	Quality	22	44
3.	High price	50	100

Problems regarding storage of raw materials:

Table 7 shows the problems regarding the storage of raw material, it was found that a majority of the weavers (86 %) were facing the problem of lack of godown and 14 per cent were suffering from high cost of storage. The Table 7 also reveals that no weavers complained about godown condition. The above

explanation is in accordance with the finding of Sadanandan (2016). He reported that the majority of the handloom weavers of Warangal district (Telangana) are facing a problem of godowns and high cost of storage (70 %), 15 per cent are facing the problem of lack of godowns and 15 per cent weavers were facing the problem of high cost of storage.

Table 7 : Problems regarding storage of raw materials (N=50)

Sr. No.	Problems regarding storage of raw materials	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Lack of godown	43	86
2.	Godown not in proper condition	00	00
3.	High cost of storage	07	14

System of marketing:

Table 8 reveals the system of marketing of handloom weavers of Varanasi district. It was found that 66 per cent weavers sell their products in weekly bazaars and 34 per cent weavers sell their products through their own retail outlets whereas no weavers were selling their products through middle men or any other method. The explanation is in accordance with the finding of Sadanandan (2016). He studied on system of marketing by handloom weavers of Warangal district (Telangana). He reported in his study that most of the handloom weavers were selling their products through retail outlets (21 %), 15 per cent handloom weavers sell to APCO and others depend on their own sales perspectives either on retail outlets, selling through middlemen, on any other method.

Table 8 : System of marketing (N=50)

Sr. No.	System of marketing	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Selling through own retail outlets	17	34
2.	Sell in weekly bazaars	33	66
3.	Selling through middle men	00	00
4.	Any other method	00	00

Nature of competition:

Table 9 shows the nature of competition faced by the handloom weavers . It was found that most of the handloom societies had a great competition from mill

made cloth (60 %) and 40 per cent respondents had competition from power looms products. The Table 9 also reveals that, no weavers had competition from plastic products. The explanation is in accordance with the finding of Sadanandan (2016). He studied on nature of competition of the handloom societies of Warangal district (Telangana). He found in his study that most of the handloom societies have a great competition from power looms (80 %) . 6 per cent handloom societies face problem from plastic production, 6 per cent from power looms and 2 per cent from mill made cloth.

Table 9 : Nature of competition (N=50)

Sr. No.	Nature of competition	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	From mill made cloth	30	60
2.	From plastic products	00	00
3.	From power loom	20	40

Conclusion:

The present study was undertaken to assess the problems of handloom weavers because the problems and challenges has haunt this sector, affecting its sustainability. Revival of the handloom industry is essential to protect India heritage, promote employment and increase development in Varanasi district. It was found that the handloom weavers of Varanasi had many problems such as financial problems, infrastructure problems. Handloom weavers were also facing many marketing problems, they had competition from mills and power looms. The weavers were having the problems in procurement and storage of raw material. There was lack of godowns in Varanasi district for storage of raw material. It was also found that system of marketing was not good.

Awareness can be created to the handloom weavers about various welfare and development schemes launched by the central and state government. So that the handloom weavers can improve their social and economic status which in result will help them to improve their standard of living.

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