International Journal of Applied Social Science **RESEARCH PAPER**
(An International Double Blind Peer Reviewed / Refereed Research Journal of Social Science) ISSN : 2394-1405 (Print)
Volume 13 (9 & 10), September & October (2026) : 1089-1093 ***Website :*** www.scientificresearchjournal.com
Received : 15.08.2026; Revised : 01.09.2026; Accepted :15.09.2026 **DOI** : https://doi-ds.org/doilink/11.2026-44464195/IJASS/13.9&10/1089-1093

A Geographical Study of the Changing Distribution Pattern of the Weaver Community in Eastern Uttar Pradesh

HIMANSHU MISHRA[1], ROHIT CHAURASIA[2], MAHIP CHAURASIA*[3], SONAM CHAURASIYA[4] AND ADITYA KUMAR[5]

[1&2]Research Scholar and [3,4,5]Assistant Professor

[1]Department of Geography, V.S.S.D College, Kanpur (U.P.) India

[2]Department of Geography, Buddha Post Graduate College, Kushingar (U.P.) India

[3]Department of Geography, Maharaja Suhel Dev University, Azamgarh (U.P.) India

[4]Department of Home Science, Mahant Avaidyanath Government Degree College Jungle Kaudia, Gorakhpur (U.P.) India

[5]Department of Computer Science, Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, Jaunpur (U.P.) India

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

The weaver community of Eastern Uttar Pradesh represents one of the most significant traditional craft based occupational groups in India. Historically concentrated in districts such as Varanasi, Mau, Azamgarh, Bhadohi, and Mirzapur, this community has played a crucial role in sustaining the region's renowned handloom and textile industry, particularly the production of Banarasi silk sarees and other traditional fabrics. However, in recent decades, the spatial distribution and occupational structure of the weaver community have undergone noticeable changes due to a combination of economic, technological, and socio-cultural factors. This study attempts to examine the changing distribution pattern of the weaver community in Eastern Uttar Pradesh from a geographical perspective. The research focuses on identifying the spatial concentration, regional disparities, and shifting settlement patterns of the weaver population across selected districts of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. It also analyzes the factors responsible for these changes, including mechanization of textile production, competition from power looms, migration, declining profitability of traditional weaving, government policies, and changing market demands. The study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources, including census records, government reports, field observations, and interviews with members of the weaver community. The analysis reveals that while traditional weaving clusters such as Varanasi and Mau continue to remain important centers, there has been a gradual decline in the number of active weavers in several rural areas. Many households have either shifted to alternative occupations or migrated to urban centers in search of better employment opportunities. At the same time, certain urban and semi-urban clusters have witnessed increased concentration due to better market accessibility and infrastructural facilities. The study highlights that the changing distribution pattern of the weaver community is closely linked to broader socio-economic transformations occurring in the region. Understanding these spatial changes is important for framing effective policies aimed at revitalizing the handloom sector and improving the socio-economic conditions of the weaver community in Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords: Geographical study, Changing distribution, Weaver community, Traditional craft

INTRODUCTION

The weaver community of Eastern Uttar Pradesh (Purvanchal), predominantly comprising the Muslim Julaha group (commonly known as Ansari or Momin), represents a significant component of India's traditional artisanal economy, closely embedded within its cultural and geographical framework (Singh *et al.*, 2005). For

How to cite this Article: Mishra, Himanshu, Chaurasia, Rohit, Chaurasia, Mahip, Chaurasiya, Sonam and Kumar, Aditya (2026). A Geographical Study of the Changing Distribution Pattern of the Weaver Community in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. *Internat. J. Appl. Soc. Sci.,* **13** (9 & 10) : 1089-1093.

generations, this community has sustained a rich handloom tradition, producing Banarasi silk sarees, zari embellished textiles, and cotton fabrics (Basole, 2015; Rai, 2012). Historically, weaving activities were concentrated in rural households and small towns across the Ganga plains, where they were closely integrated with agrarian livelihoods, local resource availability, and hereditary skills transmitted across generations.

Eastern Uttar Pradesh has long functioned as a major handloom center, with key areas such as Varanasi, Mau, and Azamgarh (particularly Mubarakpur) Chandauli ,Jaunpur playing a pivotal role (Rai, 2012; Singh *et al.,* 2005). The decentralized, home-based production system contributed to the development of a dense "weaver belt," supported by strong community networks of master weavers and skilled artisans. However, over time, processes such as colonial market integration, post-independence industrial competition, and economic liberalization have progressively weakened the traditional handloom sector. Rising input costs, the rapid expansion of powerloom industries, and declining profitability have reduced the sustainability of weaving as a primary occupation (Chakraborty *et al.*, 2026).

In recent years, large-scale migration especially to Gulf countries and major urban centers has significantly reshaped the spatial distribution of the weaver community. While remittances have improved household incomes, they have also led to a shortage of skilled Labour and disrupted the intergenerational transmission of traditional weaving knowledge. As a result, many rural weaving clusters are in decline, whereas urban and semi-urban centers, particularly Varanasi, continue to remain relatively stable due to better infrastructure and enhanced market access (Basole, 2015; Chaurasia *et al.*, n.d.).

These changes reflect broader processes of economic restructuring, globalization, and social transformation, contributing to increasing regional disparities and posing challenges to the preservation of traditional crafts. This study examines these evolving patterns through geographical and socio-economic perspectives to better understand the changing distribution of the weaver community. It further emphasizes the need for targeted policy interventions, including cluster development, technological modernization, and improved market linkages, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the handloom sector (Ahmed and Sheereen, 2022; Chaurasia *et al.,* n.d.).

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the historical and contemporary spatial distribution patterns of the weaver community (Primarily Ansari/Julaha) in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and identify the shifts from concentrated rural clusters to fragmented and dispersed patterns in districts of Varanasi, Mau, Azamgarh, Chandauli and Jaunpur .
2. To analyse the key factors such as economic liberalization, powerloom competition, declining handloom viability, and large-scale migration to Gulf countries driving the changing geographical distribution of the weaver community.
3. To assess the geographical implications of these distributional changes on rural economies, skill transmission, demographic structures, and the sustainability of traditional handloom clusters in Purvanchal region.

Study Area

The study area encompasses the core weaving belt of Eastern Uttar Pradesh (Purvanchal), focusing on the districts of Varanasi, Mau, Azamgarh, Chandauli, and Jaunpur along with adjacent pockets in Chandauli, Jaunpur, and Ghazipur (Rai, 2012; Singh *et al.*, 2005). This region, located in the fertile Ganga plains, has historically been a major handloom hub dominated by the Muslim Ansari/ Julaha weaver community (Mohammad, 2006; Singh *et al.,* 2005). It is renowned for producing GI-tagged Banarasi silk sarees, Mau sarees, and Zari-based textiles. The area features a mix of rural household-based looms and urban qasbas, making it ideal for analysing the shifting distribution patterns of the weaver community amid economic and migratory changes (Ahmad and Rahman, 2024; Ahmed and Sheereen, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the changing spatial distribution of the weaver community in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. The research is descriptive, analytical, and exploratory in nature. Quantitative methods are used to analyse spatial patterns and trends, while qualitative methods help in understanding socio-economic conditions, migration behaviour, and occupational changes (cf. Ahmed and Sheereen, 2022; Mohammad, 2006).

Both primary and secondary data sources have been utilized. Primary data were collected through field surveys in selected districts using structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews with weavers (including master weavers and skilled workers), focus group discussions, and field observations. Secondary data were obtained from Census of India reports, the Fourth All India Handloom Census (2019-20), government publications, and relevant academic literature (e.g., Ahmed and Sheereen, 2022; Basole, 2015; Rai, 2012).

A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. Key weaving districts Varanasi, Mau, and Azamgarh were purposively selected. Within these, major weaving clusters were identified, and households were chosen using stratified random sampling, covering active weavers, part-time weavers, and migrant households. A sample size of 150–300 households was considered, ensuring representation from both rural and urban areas (Mohammad, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study analyses the spatial distribution of the weaver community as the dependent variable, influenced by factors such as income, technology, migration, infrastructure, and market access. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, composite index construction (CCDI), and GIS-based spatial mapping. Qualitative data are interpreted through thematic analysis and case studies of key weaving clusters (cf. Ahmad and Rahman, 2024; Chaurasia *et al.*, n.d.).

Sample Socio-Economic Profile

The socio-economic profile indicates that the weaver community is characterized by moderate literacy, traditional family structures, and a gradual disengagement of younger generations from weaving, which may impact the long-term sustainability of the sector (Table 1).

Table 1 : Demographic Profile of Weaver Households

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–30	28%
	31–50	45%
	50+	27%
Education Level	Illiterate	22%
	Primary	30%
	Secondary	35%
	Higher	13%
Family Type	Joint	58%
	Nuclear	42%

Occupational Structure

This shift clearly reflects the declining economic viability of traditional handloom weaving. The movement toward alternative livelihoods and migration indicates occupational diversification driven by financial instability and lack of sustainable income from weaving (Table 2 and Fig. 1).

Table 2 : Occupational Shift in Weaver Community

Occupation Type	Percentage (%)
Full-time Weaving	40%
Part-time Weaving	25%
Alternative Jobs	20%
Migrated Workers	15%

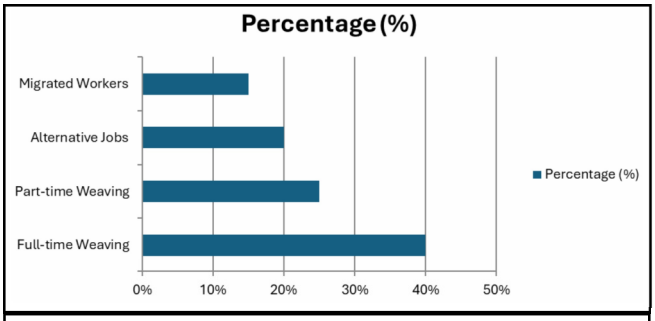


Fig. 1 : Occupational Shift in Weaver Community

Rural vs Urban Comparison

Urban clusters demonstrate greater economic resilience due to better infrastructure, market accessibility, and technological adoption. In contrast, rural areas are experiencing decline due to limited resources, leading to higher migration and reduced engagement in weaving (Table 3 and Fig. 2).

Table 3 : Regional Disparities

Factor	Rural (%)	Urban (%)
Active Weavers	60%	75%
Powerloom Usage	30%	65%
Migration Rate	40%	20%
Income Stability	35%	70%

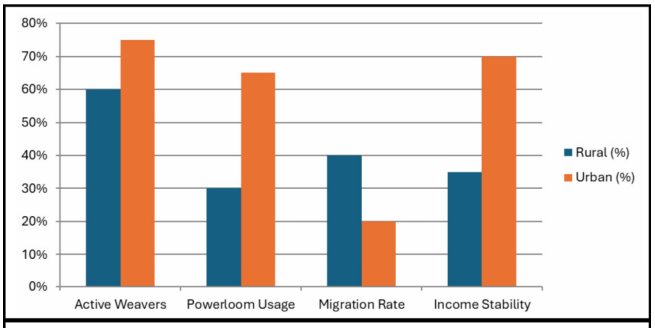


Fig. 2 : Regional Disparities

Migration Pattern

International migration, particularly to Gulf countries, plays a significant role in reshaping the occupational and spatial dynamics of the weaver community. While remittances improve household income, migration also leads to a shortage of skilled Labour in traditional weaving clusters (Table 4 and Fig. 3).

Table 4 : Migration Trends

Migration Type	Percentage (%)
Gulf Countries	45%
Metro Cities	35%
Nearby Towns	20%

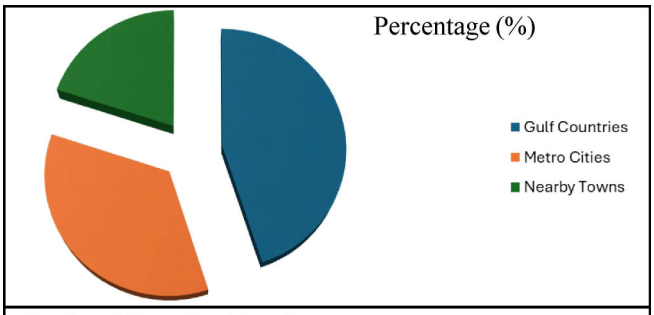


Fig. 3 : Migration Trends

Factors Affecting Weaver Decline

The dominance of powerlooms and increasing production costs have reduced the competitiveness of handloom products. Combined with market inefficiencies and migration pressures, these factors collectively contribute to the decline of traditional weaving practices (Table 5 and Fig. 4).

Table 5 : Key Influencing Factors

Factor	Impact Level (%)
Powerloom Competition	85%
Rising Input Cost	78%
Low Profit Margins	80%
Market Access Issues	70%
Migration	75%

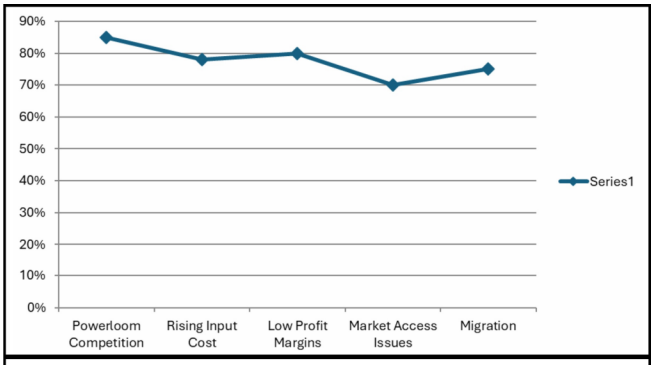


Fig. 4 : Key Influencing Factors

Cluster Distribution

The persistence of Varanasi as a major cluster can be attributed to its strong market linkages, GI tag advantage, and infrastructural support. The decline in other districts indicates uneven regional development and spatial fragmentation of the weaver community (Table 6).

Table 6 : Spatial Concentration of Weavers

District	Concentration Level	Trend
Varanasi	High	Stable
Mau	Medium	Declining
Azamgarh	Medium	Declining
Chandauli	Low	Emerging
Jaunpur	Low	Declining

Conclusion

The study demonstrates a notable transformation in the spatial arrangement and occupational structure of the weaver community in Eastern Uttar Pradesh. Traditionally concentrated within rural clusters and small towns, the community is now experiencing a gradual shift characterized by dispersion, fragmentation, and an increasing movement toward urban centers. While districts such as Varanasi continue to serve as key hubs of handloom production due to superior infrastructure, stronger market connections, and institutional support, regions like Mau Azamgarh, Chandauli, Jaunpur are witnessing a consistent decline in active weaving households. The findings highlight that multiple economic constraints such as reduced profitability, rising input costs, and intense competition from powerloom sectors have significantly weakened the sustainability of traditional weaving practices (Ahmed and Sheereen, 2022; Chakraborty *et al.,* 2026). Moreover, inadequate access to modern technology and organized markets has compelled many weavers to diversify their livelihoods or migrate in pursuit of better economic opportunities. Migration, particularly to Gulf countries and large metropolitan areas, has emerged as a major factor shaping the changing spatial patterns. Although remittance flows have improved household incomes, they have also led to a shortage of skilled artisans and interrupted the intergenerational transfer of traditional weaving knowledge. Additionally, the study points out that urban and semi-urban areas are gradually evolving as more stable and resilient centers due to improved infrastructure and connectivity. In contrast, rural areas are experiencing economic slowdown and declining participation in weaving, thereby contributing to growing regional

disparities within the Purvanchal weaving region (Chaurasia *et al.*, n.d.; Mohammad, 2006).

In summary, the shifting distribution of the weaver community reflects broader trends of economic change, globalization, and social transformation. This situation calls for well-targeted policy interventions focusing on cluster development, technological modernization, enhanced market access, and the preservation of traditional skills to ensure the sustainable growth of the handloom sector and the socio-economic well-being of the weaver community.

REFERENCES

Ahmed, P. and Sheereen, Z. (2022). A study of socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Uttar Pradesh of India. *Saudi Journal of Economics and Finance*, **6**(10) : 339-350.

Ahmad, M. F. and Rahman, A. (2024). An analysis of weavers' migration to the GCC countries: A case study of Mau District in Uttar Pradesh. *European Economic Letters(EEL)*, **14**(1) : 558-566.

Basole, A. (2015). Authenticity, innovation, and the geographical indication in an artisanal industry: the case of the Banarasi Sari. *The Journal of World Intellectual Property*, **18**(3-4) : 127-149.

Chaurasia, R., Misra, K., Singh, A., Mishra, H., Chaurasia, M. and Kumar, A. Socio-Economic Impact of Integrated Rural Development Initiatives: A Micro-Level Analysis of Pratapgarh District.

Chaurasia, R., Misra, K., Singh, A., Mishra, H., Chaurasia, M. and Kumar, A. Challenges and Opportunities in Integrated Rural Development: Policy Assessment with Reference to Pratapgarh District, Uttar Pradesh.

Chakraborty, A., Sharma, M. and Mishra, M. M. (2026). Handloom weavers' landscape of India: an interpretation of their identity and existence. *Human Geography*, **19**(1) : 108-123.

Das, A. and Paltasingh, T. (2024). Weaving as a livelihood option: A study of the Bhulia weaver Community in Odisha, India. *TEXTILE*, ***22***(1) : 180-200.

Hussain, A. (2018). Gulf migration of traditional craftsmen owing to economic reforms: A case study of Ansaris of Eastern Uttar Pradesh. *ZENITH International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, **8**(9) : 33-39.

Kleisner, K. M., Fogarty, M. J., McGee, S., Barnett, A., Fratantoni, P., Greene, J., ... & Pinsky, M. L. (2016). The effects of sub-regional climate velocity on the distribution and spatial extent of marine species assemblages. *PloS One*, **11**(2) : e0149220.

Lal, A. (2015). Socio-Economic Condition of Handloom Weavers in Uttar Pradesh. *Asian Man (The)-An International Journal*, **9**(2) : 216-224.

Mishra, A. K. and Singh, R. P. Health and Working conditions of Women Carpet Weavers: A Case Study of Bhadohi District of Uttar Pradesh.

Mohammad, N. (2006). *Socio-economic transformation of scheduled castes in Uttar Pradesh: A geographical analysis*. Concept Publishing Company.

Rai, S. K. (2012). Weaving hierarchies: Production networks of the handloom industry in colonial eastern Uttar Pradesh. *Studies in History*, **28**(2) : 203-230.

Shukla, R. P. and Srivastava, S. (2017). Plant Diversity of North-Eastern Uttar Pradesh, India: Species Distribution and Depletion Pattern During the Last Five Decades. *International Journal of Ecology & Environmental Sciences*, **43**(2) : 99-128.

Singh, K. S., Hasan, A., Rizvi, B. R. and Das, J. C. (2005). People of India: Uttar Pradesh (Vol. 42). Anthropological Survey of India.

Vaish, P. C. (2020). Small Business Development and Rural Industrialization in Maunath Bhanjan District of Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

****