



IMPACT OF HANDLOOM AND ITS ALLIED ACTIVITIES UPLIFTING THE ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN WEAVERS IN BHAVANI VILLAGE OF ERODE DISTRICT

Dr.Hemasrikumar¹, Mrs.J.Karunambikai²

¹Associate Professor & Head, PG & Research Department of Economics, Providence College for Women, Coonoor.

²Assistant Professor, PG & Research Department of Economics, Providence College for Women, Coonoor.

Abstract

The handloom sector in India plays a crucial role in generating employment and revenue for the country. It is one of the few sectors in India that preserve and promote Indian culture. This sector has created means of livelihood for these women and their families. This Paper aims to study the Handloom and its allied activities are really improving the economic condition of rural women. The data has been collected from 75 respondents through Interview Schedule from Bhavani Village in Erode district. The data has been analyzed using One-way ANNOVA, Chi-Square test and Frequency Analysis to find out the result.

Key words: *Rural Economy, Empowerment of Women, Handloom sector.*

“The best thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its women. There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.” — Swami Vivekananda, Indian Hindu monk

Importance of Handloom in Women Empowerment in Rural Area

The importance of handicrafts and handlooms has grown multifold in rural areas because of our agricultural system being mainly a rain fed farming system. In Non-agricultural Season Handicrafts and Handlooms provide subsidiary employment to their practitioners. As per the annual report of the Ministry of Textiles the Handloom provides employment to more than 43 lakhs weavers and other associated people directly and indirectly, out of this 77 percent are women. Women’s engagement in these two sectors prove the role of handloom and handicrafts as important tools of bridging about women’s empowerment in rural areas

There were also a large number of part-time weavers in the countryside as well. While agriculture has been the mainstay of rural Indian economy, the dominant form of off-farm or non-farm activities in the older times was the crafts. Out of the 38.47 lakhs were adult weavers and allied workers in India, 77.9 percent are female and 22.1 percent are male. Weaving is major source of livelihood for rural women in industrially backward areas

This sector has created means of livelihood for these women and their families. Recently, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and even the governments have taken keen interest in promoting the process and providing financial support that would help them create/setup business ventures. Through the support extended by NGOs, Banks and GoI, the women have created Self-Help Groups and Cooperatives thus building a platform for generating income and inculcating entrepreneurial skills. Eventually, this has strengthened their ability to achieve increased control, enhanced their participation in decision making process and developed their level of confidence. As a result, this has established empowerment of women in true sense.

Scope of the Study

Handloom sector is one of the most incomes earning way of women in Bhavani Village. Many women are doing weaving for their full time work. The weaving sector has a vital role to get revenue in the research area. Through this industry women are empowered for economically. Even government and non-government organizations encourage women through weaving but they are facing lot of Challenges like getting low level of wages, and not able to get alternative job opportunities, health hazards etc. This research identified the economic condition of the women weavers through handloom sector and what are the Challenges they are facing in the research area. The main aim of pursuing this research is to identify the economic impact of women empowerment through weaving sector.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the socio- economic conditions of women weavers in Bhavani Village.
2. To find out the Issues and challenges faced by the women weavers in Bhavani Village.
3. To analyze the factors contribution for uplifting the economic empowerment of the rural women weavers in Bhavani Village.

4. Methodology

The methodology of the research is mainly tries to find the contribution of the weaving industry on rural women empowerment. Data were collected by two ways, such as primary data and secondary data. 75 sample women weavers were collected from Bhavani Village from Erode district. Cluster sampling method was used in the research. Secondary data for the study were collected from the published and unpublished sources, annual reports, former researches, journals, government and non-governmental reports, articles and various related website. The village vital information statistics were gathered from Directorate of Handlooms from

Review of Literature

Reshmi (2022) Feminist scholarship has shown time and again that women's labour influences rural economic setup and livelihood. The present study focuses on the precarity of women handloom weavers at Sualkuchi, Assam. This paper identifies the workplace and household challenges faced by women weavers and highlights their struggle for livelihood with the help of a qualitative approach. The study finds that economic necessity, poverty, lack of education and large family size are major reasons that compel women to join the handloom industry for livelihood. Women weavers are exposed to occupational health risks, which led them to a vicious debt cycle. Besides, unhealthy work environment, low wages and unpaid household work make women weavers more vulnerable. In addition, socio-economic constraints prevent women weavers from holding decision-making roles and place them at the bottom of the hierarchy compared to their male counterparts. These challenges must be addressed to empower the women weavers.

Anupama Mishra, Puspita Das and W. S. N. Sangma (2021) their finds that Women weavers though largely dominated the handloom sector, with changing market structure and competition; they face most of the difficulties when confronted with the task of finding inspirations for making varieties of textiles. The researcher discuss the issues of women weavers and offers suggestions to overcome them for the wellbeing of women weavers and to analyses the factors that affect tribal women to own a handloom enterprise.

Dipti Baishya(2019) Tries to analyse the impact of microfinance in enhancing the handloom industry of Assam, particularly in the lower Brahmaputra valley and eventually empowering the women folk socio-economically. Exploratory Factor analysis has been used to find out important factors which contribute to the socio-economic condition of women weavers. To measure whether microfinance has improved the handloom industry of Assam and hereby enhancing the socio-economic condition of the weavers, descriptive statistics has been used by the researcher.. The study found that women weavers that are benefited under microfinance programme have eventually got empowered socio-economically.

TasneemShazli (2014) found in the study, females were not treated as an integral part of the labor force; they entered the labor market after the introduction of machines. They were largely employed in those manufacturing industries which required less and semi-skilled female workers. The objective of this paper is to assess the female work participation in handloom industry of Mubarakpur town. The study is based on the socio-economic conditions, derived from primary data collected through questionnaire. Results show that weaving is the major occupation of Mubarakpur town, as there is high concentration of handlooms. The major reasons which forced females to do work in handlooms are economic necessity, unemployment, poverty, low income, low literacy and education and large family size. Thus, the government should address the issues relating to the female work participation and chalk out an action plan for the upliftment of poor female weavers.

Raju (2014), according to his research article, traces the issues of women weavers and offers suggestions to overcome from them for the wellbeing of women weavers in India. The objectives of his research are facilitating an enabling environment for over-all development of women weavers in difficult Circumstances and highlighting important issues related to women weavers in India. This research is a descriptive study based on secondary data. He explains the women empowering through handloom working and government concentrate their needs. This research mainly focuses on problems of weavers and suggestions for governments.

Mridula Devi (2013), in her article explains, In silk industry of Assam, almost 60 percentages of weavers are women, it has been shown about the role of female weaver to empower them in the family as well as society through engaged themselves as a weaver in the Muga and Mulberry industry. Reasonably, 200 units of silk factories are taken as sample. She concludes that, through the weaving the female weavers get employment opportunities and makes them financially self-dependent. Female weavers contribute financial help to their family. Some of them take full responsibility of a family. She explains as a whole through the weaving they achieve economic empowerment which leads them to empower themselves in all respects

Prem Sundar and Kannan (2013) suggested in the research Recent days, women's empowerment has become a growing concern both at the national and international levels on the subjugated, the disadvantaged and status of women in the society. In India, this concern i.e. women's empowerment has to focused mainly in non formal sectors, where the women's work force is predominant. One among them is handloom sector. Nearly 78% of handloom workers are women, of which the state of Sikkim records the lowest in number, whereas the state of Assam records the highest. Commonly illiteracy and poverty are the two major factors that doubt the elevation and livelihood of these women workers. Thus, the handloom women workers should get benefit from the current scenario; need to move up the economic status in the sector from primary levels. On a whole the purpose of this paper is to familiarize with the current status and livelihood problems of unorganized women handloom workers and also to propose the importance of social protection and security.

Kumudha and Rizwana (2012) explored in the research the Handloom industry is an ancient industry and it provides employment opportunity to the large section of rural people. The industry is facing lot of problems like outdated technologies, lack of Unique Selling Proposition, unorganized production system, insufficient working capital, weak promotion strategies, competition from power loom and mill sector etc. The data was collected from the primary sources. Stratified Random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 140 societies in Erode District. The following tools were employed to analyze the data like mean, Chi-square (02) test, Henry Garrett Ranking and Multiple Regression analysis.

Results and Discussion

According to the research, female get employment opportunity through handloom industry in Bhavani. 100 percentages of female accept that, weaving industry give employment to female in the research area and also it gives employment neighborhood female villagers and it helps to empower women economically. 18 percent of female weavers are head of their family. They run their family with their earning.

Table No-1.Demographic Profile of the Respondent

S.NO	Name of the Variable	S No.	Categories	Number of Respondents	%
1.1	Age (In Years)	1	31-45	1	1.2
		2	46-60	53	70.7
		3	Above 60	21	28
			Total	75	100
1.2	Sex	1	Male	-	-
		2	Female	75	100
			Total	75	100
1.3	Caste	1	OBC	42	56
			BC	20	26.7
			MBC	12	16
		2	SC/ST	1	1.3
			Total	75	100
1.4	Educational Status	1	Illiterate	33	44
		2	Primary	41	54.7
		3.	Middle	1	1.3
		4	Diploma	0	0
			Total	75	100
1.5	Nature of weaving	1	Primary	75	100
		2	Secondary	0	0
1.6	Type of Cloth Weaved	1.	Jamukkalam	52	69.3
		2.	Bedsheet	15	20
		3.	Bed Spread	8	10.7
1.7	Nature of House	1	Own	57	76
		2	Rented	18	24
1.8	Construction Method of House	1	Hereditary	2	2.7
		2	Own Fund	44	58.6
			Under scheme	29	38.7
1.9	Nature of family	1	Joint	24	32
		2	Nuclear	51	68
1.10	Size of the family	1	Below 4 members 4 to 6 members Above 6 members	21	28
		2		46	61.3
		3		10	10.7
		4			

Source: Field Survey

From the above table, Majority 71% of the respondents belongs to the age group of 46 to 60 and 54.7% of the respondents were educated up to Primary level. The total 75 respondents are doing handloom as a primary occupation. 69% of the respondents produce jamukkalam and 20% of the respondents produce Bed sheet and remaining 11% produce Bed Spread as their major work. The majority 59% of the respondents constructed their house in their own fund and nearly 68% of the respondents are living in joint family system having 4 to 6 members in their family.

Table.2.Nature of Weaving

Nature of weaving	No. of Respondents	% of the Respondents
Master Weaver	45	60
Co-operative Society	30	40

Source: Field Survey

In the above table clearly explains that majority 60% of the respondents are working under the master weaver and only 40% of the respondents are working under Co-operative society.

Table.3.No.of Product Produced per Day

No. of Product Produced	No. of Respondents	% of the Respondents
1	23	30.7
2	35	46.7
1 to 3	13	17.3
2 to 5	1	1.3
More then 5	3	4
Total	75	100

Source: Field Survey

From the table, Majority 47% of the respondents stated that they complete 2 products per day and nearly 31% of the respondents complete only one product per day. Only 4% of the respondents produce more than 5 products per day.

Table.4.Working Hours wise Distribution of the Respondents

No. of Hours	No. of Respondents	% of the Respondents
10	50	66.7
8	24	32
6	1	1.3
Total	75	100

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows that nearly 67% of the respondents are working more than 10 hours per day in their loom and 32% of the respondents are working 8 hours per day in their loom.

Table-5.Monthly Income of the Respondents before Involving handloom

Monthly Income	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
below 5000	15	20.0	7	9.3
5000 to 10000	43	57.3	32	42.7
1000 to 15000	16	21.3	28	37.3
above 15000	1	1.3	8	10.7
below 5000	75	100.0	75	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2022

The above table clearly explains the upliftment of handloom weaver's income after involving in the handloom activity. After involving in the handloom activity majority (37.3%) of the respondent's income has increased from lower income to higher income group.

Table-6.Source of Borrow

Source of borrow	No. of Respondents	% of the Respondents
Master Weaver	7	10.3
Friends/relatives	31	40.3
Co-Operative society	37	49.4
Money lenders	-	-
Total	75	100

Source: Field Survey

From the above table we clearly knows that majority 49% of the respondents are borrowing funds from Co-operative society and nearly 40% of the respondents are borrowing fund from friends and relatives.

Table.7.Purpose of getting Loan

Items	No. of Respondents	% of the Respondents
Consumption	3	4.0
Purchasing Assets	18	24.0
Children Education	25	33.3
Medical	17	22.7
Repayment of Old Loan	10	13.3
Emergency	2	2.7
Total	75	100

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows that majority 33% of the respondents borrows the money for their children's education Purpose and 23% respondents borrow the money for Medical expenses. Minimum 2% respondents borrow the money for emergency purpose.

Table.8.Challenges faced by the Respondents

Challenges faced	Frequency	Percentages	Cumulative Percent
low wages	19	25.3	25.3
Lack of awareness	13	17.3	42.7
Health Issues	23	30.7	73.3
Lack of Medical Facility	17	22.7	96.0
Lack of Material, Finance	3	4.0	100.0
Total	75	100.0	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2021-22

From the above table it is clear that 23 percent of the respondents face health issues by working in handlooms sector which is the biggest challenge of the respondents and 17 percent feels that lack of medical facility is the biggest challenge in the handloom sector.

Table.9. Role of Handloom in Empowerment of Respondents

S. No	Statements	No. of Respondents	% of the Respondents
1	Handloom Income improve Self-Confidence	55	74.7
2	Increase Leadership	66	88
3	Improve communication skill	63	84
4	Improve Accounts maintenance skill	56	73
5	Social recognition increased	66	88
6	Improvement of social Status	60	80
7	Awareness in social economic development Program	60	80
8	Active involvement in Social group	63	84
9	Better group Discussion	58	77
10	Better Planning in family maintenance	65	87
	Better Linkages with Social institutions	56	75
12	Successful Entrepreneurship	65	87
13	Economic independence	63	84
14	Increase the ability to increase family income	44	59
15	Improvement in Asset	36	48
16	Engagement in income generating activity	63	71
17	Reduce poverty Level	56	73

The above table clearly explains that handloom is playing an important role in empowering rural women. Majority of the respondents accepted that handloom and its allied activities are providing employment as well as income to them and also they stated it help them to increase their standard of living. Majority 88 % of the respondents agreed that handloom activities improve their entrepreneurial skill, leadership quality and increase their social recognition.

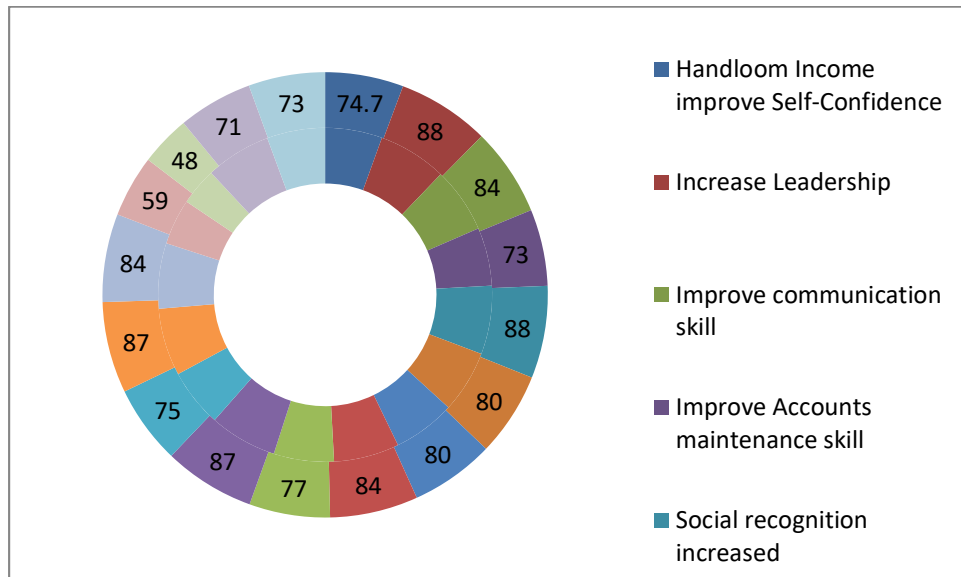


Table.10.The Relationship between the Age of the Respondent and Type of Cloth Produced-Regression

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2.035	2	1.018	2.279	.110 ^b
Residual	32.151	72	.447		
Total	34.187	74			

Table implies that with the significant value of 0.110, all the independent variables taken for the study does not have overall significant relationship with the dependent variable i.e. the respondent’s type of cloth produced on age of the respondent.

Table.11.Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.298	.622		.479	.633
	Age of the Respondent	.206	.165	.144	1.245	.217
	Educational Qualification of the Respondent	.282	.149	.217	1.885	.063

The significant value of educational status and age of the respondent is 0.217 and 0.063. As the significant value is more than .05 the null hypothesis is accepted. It is clear that the independent variables i.e., educational status does not influence the dependent variable i.e., type of cloth produced at 5% level of significance

Table 12. Paired Samples test between Monthly Income of the Respondent after and Before involving Handloom Work

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Monthly Income beforehandloom	2.0400	75	.68655	.07928
Monthly Income after hnadloom	3.4933	75	.81163	.09372

The above table shows after involving the Handloom work the Monthly Income of the Respondent is increased. Income empower the person, based on that assumption the paired sample test is proved that the rural women have become empowered through the handloom Work.

Conclusion

The handloom sector in India plays a crucial role in generating employment and revenue for the country. It is one of the few sectors in India that preserve and promote Indian culture. Yet, it has not received its due recognition in the market and needs to be promoted locally as well as at a global scale. Promotion of traditional skills and capabilities by encouraging capacity and skill building coupled with design, quality and marketing intervention will not only ensure sustainability of the sector but also help in reviving the waning skills of the artisans while fostering exports.

It is vital for all stakeholders, especially government and industry associations (such as FLO) to undertake measures that would infuse fresh energy into this sector, else these traditions could become extinct. We need to encourage members of the weaving community both financially and technologically to take this traditional sector to a higher level and spread its charm around the world.

References

- 1.Kumudha A and Rizwana M (2012). Promotion of Handloom Products with Special Reference to Handloom Weavers Co-Operative Societies in Erode District An Empirical Study. Namex International Journal of Management Research, 2 (1), 138-144
- 2.PremSundar B and Kannan J (2013).Women in handloom industry Problems and prospects. EPRA International Journal of Economic and Business Review, 1 (1), 32-38.
- 3.TasneemShazli (2014). Female Work Participation in Handloom Industry-A Case Study of Mubarakpur Town, Azamgarh District, U.P. Journal of Education & Social Policy, 1(1), 76-83
- 4.Women Empowerment Through Weaving Industry: A Case Study In Maruthamunai, Sri Lanka N. Fathima Safna & A.A.M. Nufile
- 5.Dipti Baishya, Empowering Women Weavers by Up-Gradation of Handloom Industry of Assam through Microfinance,International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering (IJITEE) ISSN: 2278-3075, Volume-8 Issue-12, October 2019
- 6.Anupama Mishra, Puspita Das And W. S. N. Sangma Handlooms Micro-Enterprises For Empowerment Of Women In Meghalaya,International Journal Of Current Microbiology And Applied Sciences,ISSN: 2319-7706 Volume 10 Number 01 (2021)
- 7.Reshmi (2022). Precarity Among Women Workforce in the Handloom Sector at Sualkuchi, Assam. In: Patel, V., Mondal, N. (eds) Gendered Inequalities in Paid and Unpaid Work of Women in India. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9974-0_15