



A STUDY ON ANALYSING SOCIAL STATUS OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

Dr. JMJ. Vinodini

Associate Professor

Department of Econometrics

S.V. University, Tirupati

ABSTRACT

Textiles play a predominant role for human beings in terms of their basic needs, that is, first clothing and then agriculture. In the textile sector, there are so many domains like the handloom industry, power loom industry, job work, and the garment industry wherein each different kind of operation will be carried out by adopting different techniques. In all domains, employees will be called by different names, such as weavers, tailors, merchandisers, etc., who offer a variety of textile products to the customers. But one question remains the same in our mind. It is all about the life led by weavers and their status. Many weavers are leading their lives below the poverty line. They offer designed, trendy textile products but do not have nice clothes to wear. The present focuses on the social status of handloom weavers and the problems they face when working for an owner. The researcher main aims to find a living standard of handloom weavers for the betterment of the weavers segment.

Key words: Weaving sector, employment, education, source of loan, usage of yarn and sales.

Introduction

India has developed extended customs in weaving, particularly in hand weaving. We are moving through different diversities handloom is one of those. Also, handloom is one of the cultural heritages of India. This shows the dexterity and artistic ability of weavers to produce attractive products. Handloom always promotes innovations in its products through experimentation and exhibitions. Through its uniqueness and peculiar design, the handloom sector is a well-known industry all over the world. The handloom sector has a rich cultural heritage, so it has created a dominant role in the Indian textile industry.

Considering its contribution, the handloom sector has space nearby the agricultural sector. It has a major role in developing the livelihoods of rural people and eradicating poverty because most of the weavers' society is situated in a rural area. It provides employment opportunities to lakhs of weavers and allied workers. It helps in reducing the discrimination of men and women. A lot of female workers are working in the handloom industry. It offers a platform to close the gap between rural and urban residents. Notably, the status of weavers is deteriorating due to the generation gap. The ancestral owners respected weavers and gave different benefits to weavers, but today everything is upside down for weavers, who struggle to survive.

Objectives

1. To understand the weaving segment.
2. Analyse the impact of the weaver profession on social status.
3. Create a template that affects the social status of weavers.

Analysis of the social position of weavers

In Andhra Pradesh, the handloom sector is largely household-based and carried out with labour contributed by the whole family. These households are spread in rural areas as well as in urban areas in almost every district of the state. Table-1 presents the growth of household worker employment (both weavers and allied workers) units in Andhra Pradesh.

Every member of the household has a clear role to play in each stage of the production process, whether it is pre-loom processing, weaving, or finishing. In India, the handloom sector is largely household-based and carried out with labour contributed by the whole family. These households are spread across almost every state of the country.

The handloom sector is one of the largest economic activities, providing employment to 1,77,447 total workers, out of which 1,27,662 handloom weavers (71.94 percent) do weaving work only, while 77,978 weavers stay in rural areas with 61.08 percent and 49,684 weavers stay in urban areas with 38.92 percent. The proportion of workers to weavers in rural areas is 0.71, 0.73 in urban areas and the overall ratio of 0.72.

The employment provided by the handloom sector under Independent 61,710 weavers out of 74,737 workers (82.57 percent) making weaving work out of which 62.96 percent in rural areas and 37.04 percent in urban areas. The average ratio of workers to weavers in rural areas is 0.83 with the same ratio in urban areas and also total areas.

Under master weavers' employment, there are 85,528 workers, of whom 54,760 weavers (64.03 percent) carry out weaving work, 54.13 percent in rural areas and 45.87 percent in urban areas. The average worker to weaver ratio in rural areas is 0.61, whilst in urban areas is 0.69, and in total areas is 0.64.

Weavers made up 42.42 percent of the 462 total workers, with 82.65 percent working in rural areas and 17.35 percent working in urban areas. Rural areas have a worker to weaver ratio of 0.40, urban areas have a ratio of 0.59, and total areas have a ratio of 0.42.

The state handloom development corporation employed 1,719 workers out of 993 weavers (57.77 percent), with 59.82 percent working in rural areas and 40.18 percent working in urban areas. The average wage ratio of workers in rural areas is 0.73, with urban areas accounting for 0.44 and total areas accounting for 0.58.

The employment provided by the handloom sector under co-operative society includes 15,001 weavers out of 10,003 workers (66.68 percent) doing weaving work, of which 87.24 percent is in rural areas and 12.76 percent in urban areas. The average workers to weavers ratio in rural areas is 0.69, in urban areas is 0.53, and the overall ratio of 0.67.

Table-1
Employment status wise distribution of handloom workers and handloom weavers

Employment	Workers employment			Weavers employment		
	Rural	urban	Total	Rural	urban	Total
Independent	47050	27687	74737	38855	22855	61710
Percentage to total	62.95	37.05	42.12	62.96	37.04	48.34
Workers to weavers ratio	--	--	--	0.83	0.83	0.83
Under master weaver	48932	36596	85528	29640	25120	54760
Percentage to total	57.21	42.79	48.20	54.13	45.87	42.89
Workers to weavers ratio	--	--	--	0.61	0.69	0.64
Under KVI Commission/ board	404	58	462	162	34	196
Percentage to total	87.45	12.55	0.26	82.65	17.35	0.15
Workers to weavers ratio	--	--	--	0.40	0.59	0.42
Under SHDC	809	910	1719	594	399	993
Percentage to total	47.06	52.94	0.97	59.82	40.18	0.78
Workers to weavers ratio	--	--	--	0.73	0.44	0.58
Under co-operative society	12581	2420	15001	8727	1276	10003
Percentage to total	83.87	16.13	8.45	87.24	12.76	7.84
Workers to weavers ratio	--	--	--	0.69	0.53	0.67
Total	109776	67671	177447	77978	49684	127662
Percentage to total	61.86	38.14	100.00	61.08	38.92	100.00
Workers to weavers ratio	--	--	--	0.71	0.73	0.72

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

Table-2 shows that out of 1,27,558 handloom weavers, 38,811 weavers had never attended school, marking 30.43 percent. It means approximately 31 percent of weavers are totally illiterate. As is evident from the table, the handloom weavers in the census are generally well educated At graduation & above, only 4,435 handloom weavers out of 1,27,558 weavers were studied at graduation & above, recognising a very low percentage of 3.48, and 15,071 handloom weavers were studied below primary education (5th class),

marking 11.82 percent, while 30,431 handloom weavers completed primary education in 5th class, recognising 23.86 percent. 15,096 handloom weavers have completed middle education, 8th class, marking 11.83 percent. 18,370 handloom workers who are successfully completed high school /secondary education marking 14.40 percent. 5,344 manual workers completed upper secondary and intermediate education, or 4.19 percent.

Among 38,811 handloom weavers, 25,238 weavers (65.03 percent) never attended school in rural areas, and 13,573 handloom weavers (34.97 percent) never attended school in urban areas. Among the 15,071 weavers below primary education, 10,515 weavers (69.77 percent) were in rural areas and 4,556 weavers (30.23 percent) in urban areas. Among the 30,431 weavers who completed primary education, 17,842 were in rural areas and 12,589 were in urban areas.

Around 15,096 weavers completed middle level education, including 8,015 weavers in rural areas and 7,081 weavers in urban areas. Among the 18,370 weavers who completed high school or secondary education, 10,693 were in rural areas and 7,677 were in urban areas. Among the 5,344 weavers who completed higher secondary education, 3,104 were in rural areas and 2,240 were in urban areas. Around 4,435 weavers have completed their degree education, 2,508 weavers in rural areas and 2,927 weavers in urban areas.

Hence, in the middle of the 20th century, weaving stood first, and later it became very dull. The independent weavers had to stop their education due to poverty, lack of knowledge of education, unavailability of schools, etc. Educational dropouts were more as they went to jobs to sustain the family, leaving their education. Educated youths went to different jobs in the modern world and transferred to urban areas. As a result, weavers make up a smaller proportion of educators.

Table-2

Education wise number of handloom workers in Andhra Pradesh

Education	Workers education			Weavers education (Passed)		
	Rural	urban	Total	Rural	urban	Total
Never attended school	36300	19315	55615	25238	13573	38811
Percentage to total	65.27	34.73	31.34	65.03	34.97	30.43
Below Primary	15494	6485	21979	10515	4556	15071
Percentage to total	70.49	29.51	12.39	69.77	30.23	11.82
Primary (V)	24924	17158	42082	17842	12589	30431
Percentage to total	59.23	40.77	23.72	58.63	41.37	23.86
Middle (VIII)	10900	9235	20135	8015	7081	15096
Percentage to total	54.13	45.87	11.35	53.09	46.91	11.83
High school/ secondary	14257	9912	24169	10693	7677	18370
Percentage to total	58.99	41.01	13.62	58.21	41.79	14.40
Higher Secondary	4356	2941	7297	3104	2240	5344
Percentage to total	59.70	40.30	4.11	58.08	41.92	4.19
Graduation & Above	3545	2625	6170	2508	2927	4435
Percentage to total	57.46	42.54	3.48	56.55	66.00	3.48
Total	109776	67671	177447	77915	50643	127558
Percentage to total	61.86	38.14	100.00	61.08	39.70	100.00

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

The Table-3 shows that out of 1,22,644 handloom households, 66.78 percent belong to the monthly income category of below Rs.5,000. Among the 81,901 weavers' households, 68.05 percent earn in rural areas and 31.95 percent earn in urban areas. 33,346 handloom households earned income in rural areas (50.54 percent) and in urban areas (49.46 percent), with 27.19 percent belonging to an income related handloom industrial category ranging from Rs.5001 to Rs.10,000. Among the 2,223 households, 1.81 percent has a monthly income of 10,001 to 15,000, with 63.97 percent of income earners living in rural areas and 36.03 percent living in urban areas. Out of 624 households (0.52 percent), 54.97 percent of income earners in rural areas and 45.03 percent of income earners in urban areas between 15,001-20,000. Among 1603 households (1.31percent), 21.27 percent of employees in rural areas and 78.73 percent of employees in urban areas are in the range of 20,001 to 25,000. 2.38 percent of household earnings in the range of 25,001-50,000 are recognised by 2,918 households, with 81.05 percent of income earners in rural areas and 18.95 percent of income earners in urban areas. In the 50,001-1,00,000 income range, there are 26 households with 0.02 percent earners, compared to 19.23 percent of rural income earners and 80.77 percent of urban income earners. Finally, only three weavers' households earn an income of 1,00,000 or more, with no mark in rural areas and 100 percent in urban areas.

Handloom weaving is not a suitable job for earning purposes. To earn the minimum amount to run the family, three of the family members are to be put to work for 5-8 hours per day. In order to earn a higher income, none of the family members and the working hours is to be increased in weavers. Hence, there are various schemes sponsored by the government for the development of handloom weavers and their income.

Table-3
Income group wise distribution of handloom households

	income from all sources			income from handloom related activities		
Income	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Less than 5000	49924 (72.37)	19058 (27.63)	68982 (56.25)	55735 (68.05)	26166 (31.95)	81901 (66.78)
5001-10000	18732 (61.93)	11515 (38.07)	30247 (24.66)	16854 (50.54)	16492 (49.46)	33346 (27.19)
10001-15000	3330 (43.95)	4247 (56.05)	7577 (6.18)	1422 (63.97)	801 (36.03)	2223 (1.81)
15001-20000	1327 (44.40)	1662 (55.60)	2989 (2.44)	343 (54.97)	281 (45.03)	624 (0.51)
20001-25000	612 (23.49)	1993 (76.51)	2605 (2.12)	341 (21.27)	1262 (78.73)	1603 (1.31)
25001-50000	3096 (30.76)	6970 (69.24)	10066 (8.21)	2365 (81.05)	553 (18.95)	2918 (2.38)
50001-100000	35 (21.88)	125 (78.13)	160 (0.13)	5 (19.23)	21 (80.77)	26 (0.02)
Above 100000	9 (50.00)	9 (50.00)	18 (0.015)	0 (0.00)	3 (100.00)	3 (0.00)
Total HH	77065	45579	122644	77065	45579	122644

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to total

The first round of the handloom census did not cover the information regarding the sources of finance, while in the fourth handloom census of 2019-20 the data was obtained about this source. As per the fourth handloom census, many sources have been mentioned like cooperatives, own, and commercial banks, but many informal channels like master weavers, traders, friends, and relatives were not covered as presented in Table-4.

The data reveals that in the country, 1,188 handloom households (32.09 percent) manage their financial requirements by getting from the government. The handloom weavers are also considered as a source, with 67.26 percent in rural areas and 32.74 percent in urban areas. The next major source was commercial banks' financial assistance to 765 handloom households (20.66 percent), whereas 63.14 percent in rural areas and 36.86 percent in urban areas. At the time of the highest financial assistance to handloom households, cooperative societies contributed 537 households (14.51 percent), of which 75.42 percent were in rural areas and 24.58 percent in urban areas. The role of master weavers was also to assist 525 handloom households (14.18 percent), 33.90 percent in rural areas and 66.10 percent in urban areas.

Self-help groups (SHGs) provide financial support for 258 handloom households (6.97 percent), of which 39.92 percent are in rural areas and 60.08 percent are in urban areas. The money lenders provided financial help for 231 handloom households (6.24 percent), while 29.87 percent were in rural areas and 70.13 percent in urban areas. 186 households are getting financial assistance from friends or relatives (5.02 percent), whereas 79.03 percent are in rural areas and 20.97 percent in urban areas. The last 12 households

(0.32 percent) receiving financial assistance from other financiers are 83.33 percent in rural areas and 16.67 percent in urban areas.

Table-4
Distribution of handloom households by Source of finance available from

source of loan	Rural	rural Percentage	Urban	Urban Percentage	Total	Percentage total
Cooperative societies	405	75.42	132	24.58	537	14.51
Commercial banks	483	63.14	282	36.86	765	20.66
Friends /relatives	147	79.03	39	20.97	186	5.02
Government	799	67.26	389	32.74	1188	32.09
Master weavers	178	33.90	347	66.10	525	14.18
Money lenders	69	29.87	162	70.13	231	6.24
Others	10	83.33	2	16.67	12	0.32
Self help groups (SHGs)	103	39.92	155	60.08	258	6.97
Total	2194	59.27	1508	40.73	3702	100.00

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

Weavers have found that borrowing from informal sources is more convenient than borrowing from the government, commercial banks, and cooperative societies. Weavers avoid obtaining loans from commercial banks because in banks there is a major problem of time delay in sanctioning, increasing transaction costs, and bureaucratic attitudes of bankers, lack of awareness among bankers about the handloom sector and lack of weavers' assets.

According to Dr. Manmohan Singh, "access to credit and the cost of credit are two major problems facing the handloom sector." The reasons for taking loans, mostly from master weavers, are due to changes in the employment structure. Previously, most weavers worked independently, but now the majority of them work for master weavers.

In Andhra Pradesh 2019-20, it is observed from Table-5 that the highest consumption of Mulberry silk yarn is used for 42,567 handloom households, marking 28.75 percent, of which 46.43 percent are in rural areas and 53.57 percent in urban areas. The next highest usage of Zari yarn was extensively 22.72 percent of consumption belongs to 33,644 households, while 37.19 percent in rural areas, 62.81 percent in urban areas, and 30,294 households mark 20.46 percent of Cotton 41to80 yarn has been consumed, while 74.89 percent of households in rural areas and 25.11 percent of households in urban areas. Cotton was used by more than 13,604 households (9.19 percent), with 68.14 percent in rural areas and 31.86 percent in urban areas. Thereafter, Eric silk yarn was used by 9,392 households, marking 6.34 percent, while 45.30 percent in rural areas and 54.70 percent in urban areas. The consumption of cotton 21to40 yarn has reached 7,531 households, representing 5.09 percent, whereas 76.14 percent in rural areas and 23.86 percent in urban areas. Another one of Cotton 1 to 20 yarn was 4,323 households, marking 2.92 percent, of which 83.62

percent were in rural areas and 16.38 percent in urban areas. Muga silk and other yarn consumption was 2,042 households (1.38 percent), with 51.67 percent in rural areas and 48.33 percent in urban areas; and 1,587 households (1.07 percent), with 88.34 percent in rural areas and 11.66 percent in urban areas. Viscose blends, Tussar silk, Linen, Wool, Acrylic wool, Polyester blends, and Jute yarns were used by handloom households, accounting for less than 1 percent of total used yarn.

The identified reason behind the decreasing consumption of yarn was that because power looms started producing cotton fabric materials like gamcha, dhoti, cotton saree etc., and due to the cheaper price of power loom produced articles, the demand for handloom woven articles declined and, consequently, the consumption of yarn has reduced. Mulberry silk, Jute, and Cotton 41 to 80 consumption increased, while Viscose blends, Tussar silk, Linen, Wool, Acrylic wool, Polyester blends, and Jute yarn consumption decreased.

The consumption of cotton yarn has been reduced while "other types" of yarn consumption has increased. The consumption of cotton yarn has decreased in AP as well as in all India because of the high cost of cotton yarn and often the unavailability of yarn. The other strong factor is the closure of the Janta Cloth Scheme, because for weaving Janta Cotton Sari, earlier the consumption of cotton yarn was very high.

Table-5
Distribution of handloom households by usage of yarn of Andhra Pradesh

Usage of yarn	Rural	Percentage	Urban	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Cotton 1 to 20	3615	83.62	708	16.38	4323	2.92
Cotton 21 to 40	5734	76.14	1797	23.86	7531	5.09
Cotton 41 to 80	22686	74.89	7608	25.11	30294	20.46
Cotton above 80	9270	68.14	4334	31.86	13604	9.19
Viscose blends	528	40.99	760	59.01	1288	0.87
Muga silk	1055	51.67	987	48.33	2042	1.38
Eric silk	4255	45.30	5137	54.70	9392	6.34
Mulberry silk	19764	46.43	22803	53.57	42567	28.75
Tussar silk	99	23.46	223	52.84	422	0.29
Linen	32	16.67	160	83.33	192	0.13
Wool	267	68.46	123	31.54	390	0.26
Acrylic wool	8	11.43	62	88.57	70	0.05
Polyester blends	354	72.24	136	27.76	490	0.33
Jute	136	62.10	83	37.90	219	0.15
Zari	12513	37.19	21131	62.81	33644	22.72
others	1402	88.34	185	11.66	1587	1.07
Total	81718	55.19	66237	44.74	148055	100.00

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

Table-6 shows the distribution of handloom households reporting major sources of sales for their major products. It can be seen from the table that 32,794 handloom households (25.20 percent) stated that they carry sales through the local market, while 62.37 percent of households in rural areas and 37.63 percent of households in urban areas. The majority of 66,433 handloom households out of 1,30,117 households support sales through master weavers, of which 55.13 percent of households in rural areas and 44.87 percent of households in urban areas. 25,275 handloom household weavers (19.42 percent) increase their sales through cooperative societies, with rural areas accounting for 83.57 percent and urban areas accounting for 16.43 percent. 1,777 handloom households (1.37 percent) will carry out promotional activities through exports, of which 78.50 percent will be in rural areas and 21.50 percent in urban areas. 607 handloom households (0.47 percent) increase their sales through organised fairs and exhibitions, compared to 63.10 percent of rural households and 36.90 percent of urban households. E-commerce is used by 66 handloom households (0.05 percent), 81.82 percent in rural areas, and 18.18 percent in urban areas. 3165 handloom households (2.43 percent) sell their clothes in different ways, with 84.55 percent in rural areas and 15.45 percent in urban areas.

The major reasons for the sale of their production depended on master weavers, local markets, cooperative societies, organised fairs/exhibition, export, e-commerce and others, because of lack of finance, lack of demand, working capital dependent on above mentioned people, shortage of raw materials, lack of knowledge of national and international markets etc.

Table-6
Distribution of handloom households reporting major source of sales of their major products

Sales	Rural	Percentage	urban	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Local market	20452	62.37	12342	37.63	32794	25.20
Master weavers	36622	55.13	29811	44.87	66433	51.06
Cooperative society	21122	83.57	4153	16.43	25275	19.42
Organized fairs/exhibition	383	63.10	224	36.90	607	0.47
export	1395	78.50	382	21.50	1777	1.37
e-commerce	54	81.82	12	18.18	66	0.05
others	2676	84.55	489	15.45	3165	2.43
Total	82704	63.56	84413	64.87	130117	100.00

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

It is apparent from Table-7 that out of 1,05,521 weaver households, the majority of weavers produce more than one handloom product. 84.32 percent of the weavers (88,978) produce saree, out of which 60.27 percent of saree production is in rural areas and 39.73 percent of saree production in urban areas, and 5.06 percent (5,337 weavers households) produce saree dress material, suiting, shirting, and long cloth, of which 86.73 percent are in rural areas and 13.27 percent in urban areas. 4.65 percent (4,906 weavers households) manufacture Dhoti, Sarong, Lungi, and Angavastram out of 70 percent of weavers produced in rural areas

and 30 percent of weavers produced in urban areas. 2.27 percent (2,393 weavers households) produce others (including Bandage), which is 83.99 percent in rural areas and 12.24 percent in urban areas.

Towels, napkins, and dusters/gamcha are produced by 2.07 percent (2,186 weavers households) in rural areas and 15.46 percent in urban areas. 0.89 percent (935 weavers households) produce durries, rugs, and mats, of which 62.99 percent are in rural areas and 37.01 percent in urban areas. Bedsheets, furnishings, and blankets are produced by 0.70 percent (736 weavers households), 77.58 percent in rural areas, 22.42 percent in urban areas, and 0.13 percent (140 weavers households) produce shawls/Mekhla/Chadder/Loi/Stole/Scarf/Muffler.

A primary product of handloom weaving households is sarees, and the second is silk sarees. Since both products are part of different cultures like Tamil, Kannada, etc., they stand first among the products. The reason for the minimum production of other household products is that they are used only by a few rich people and they are considered to be export quality materials. Hence, it is concluded that the majority (84.32 percent) of the weavers' households produce sarees.

Table-7
Distribution of weaver households by production of major fabrics

Fabrics	Rural	Percentage	urban	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Dhoti, Sarong, Lungi, Angavastram	3434	70.00	1472	30.00	4906	4.65
Saree	53626	60.27	35352	39.73	88978	84.32
Saree dress material, Suiting, Shirting, Long Cloth	4629	86.73	708	13.27	5337	5.06
Towel/Napkin, Duster/ Gamcha	1848	84.54	338	15.46	2186	2.07
Bedsheet, Furnishings, Blanket	571	77.58	165	22.42	736	0.70
Shawls/ Mekhla /Chadder/Loi/Stole/Scarf/ Muffler	62	44.29	78	55.71	140	0.13
Durries, Rugs, Mats	589	62.99	346	37.01	935	0.89
Others (including Bandage)	2010	83.99	293	12.24	2393	2.27
Total	66769	63.28	38752	36.72	105521	100.00

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

Conclusion

The above model clearly expresses the social status and life of weavers. They are too hungry to go about their daily lives. They give well designed, trendy, costly sarees, but they don't have proper sarees to wear. They consume one meal a day. The problem occurs when some owners are exploited and the benefits offered by the government do not reach the weaver's segment. Also, traders who act as middlemen extract the work from the weavers without giving them proper remuneration. No due respect is given when they cannot lead a happy life with contentment.

Reference:

1. Fourth all India handloom census report 2019-20
2. Venkteswaran. A (2014) “A Socio Economic Conditions of Handloom Weaving in Kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli District” IJSSHR vol.2 issue2, pp: 30-49.
3. K. Srinivas Rao(2012)Socio-economic analysis of handloom industry in AP –a study on selected districts, journal of exclusive management science –September, Vol. 1, issue. 8, P. 28.
4. Basumatary, K. (2014). Socio-Economic Condition of Weavers in Handloom Sector: An Analysis from Handloom Sector in Bodoland Territorial Area District, Assam. Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities, 4(5), 344-353.
5. Desai, I.M, “Living with Indian Handlooms”, Journal of Industry and trade, Vol.XXVIII, No.9 &10, September& October 1978.

