



Occupational Health Hazards In Aari Embroidery Artisans

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ABSTRACT

Aari work is a very intricate form of embroidery and is quicker to do than the basic hand embroidery and the effect is more rich, durable and luxurious. Now a days south Indian people like to do and wear Aari embroidery work. Many of the young women entrepreneur earn money with Aari embroidery. This study examines the professional health issues situation of Aari artisans in Tamil Nadu. We collected most of the data in Dindigul, Trichy, Namakkal and Chennai. The data illustrate many health problems in workers. Pain in various parts of the body: eyes, neck, back, legs, knees, arms, wrists. The artisan is aware of his health issues, but he takes the medication without a doctoral consultant. And most of the artisans facing back pain because of Improper posture, inadequate workstation design, and lack of breaks. We advised to do their regular exercise and encouraged them to take their medicine with doctor consultation and take proper break for work.

Keywords: Aari artisans, health issues, improper posture, doctor consultation

INTRODUCTION

Health and security are related to all sectors of industry, business and trade, including traditional industries, information technology companies, national health services, nursing homes, schools, universities, leisure facilities, offices, and more.

Health - The body protection from illness caused by materials, processes, or procedures used in the workplace and the mind of people with illness.

Safety - Protection of people from physical injuries. The boundaries between health and security are poorly defined, and the two words are usually used together to inform concerns about the physical and mental health of individuals in the workplace.

Happiness provisioning of facilities to maintain the health and well-being of people in the workplace. Welfare agencies include washing and hygiene agreements, providing drinking water, heating, lighting, clothing accommodation, seating (if necessary for work activities), and food and toilet rooms. First aid contracts are also considered welfare agencies.

Professional or work-related illness or physical and mental disorders either caused or caused by workplace activity. Such conditions can be caused by individual work activities or other people's activities in the workplace. The time interval between exposure and onset of disease is short (such as an asthma attack) or long (e.g. numbness or cancer).

Embroidery is the art of working ornamental designs on cloths, leather etc., with decorative stitches. There are different kinds of embroidery which are known by special names such as cut work, drawn thread work, applique work, Kutch work, Aari work etc. For successful embroidery work, it is essential that you should acquire the ability to choose the right kind of stitches, design and colour combination suited to the type of fabric and the purpose and use of the garment or article on which the embroidery is to be worked. (Mary Mathews, 1985)

Aari embroidery is practiced in various regions such as Kashmir and Katchi (Gujarat). The origin of Aari may be attributed to the 12th century. It was first developed by leather workers in the West India state of Gujarat and used to create decorated shoes. Aari work is a type of embroidery and can represent the health challenges of women, especially during pregnancy.

Aari work is a delicate and intricate form of hand embroidery which requires great efficiency and skills. For the stitches of aari work, the embroiderer needs the usage of both his hands; hence, instead of using the normal embroidery hoop, adda (frames) are used. Adda is a wooden adjustable frame with four wooden bars, used to stretch the fabric for embroidery. The fabric is attached to the adda mainly for doing aari work. Aari is a type of needle with a hook at its tip to do the embroidery while working on adda. Because of its name aari, the embroidery done by it is called aari work. Adda and aari help in working speedily, and with precision and neatness. Before starting this embroidery, one has to do some basic preparations, like preparation of the adda (frame) and attaching the fabric which is to be embroidered on it. Then, the design selected is transferred onto the fabric, using proper tracing methods. Mostly, the prick and pounce method is used to transfer the designs onto the fabric in aari work. (National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2018)

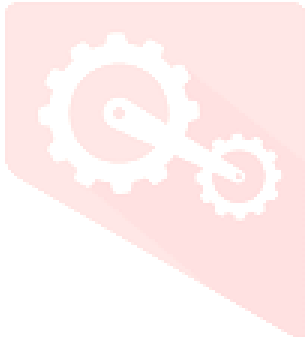


Plate 1: Aari embroidery

Aari Embroidery is a unique manual work using silk thread and beads (Plate 1).

Artisans work hard on this embroidered textile with global appeal and global market. To understand the overall spectrum of problems these artisans faced with the next goal of their research:

- ☐ To study the health awareness of Aari artisans.
- ☐ To study the health problems faced by the Aari artisans.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Different occupations have engaged different workers in Indian informal sector as well as have involved the varied work-related hazards. These occupational hazards are a consequent risk to the health of the workers. Different occupations namely weaving (handloom and power loom), construction, transportation, tobacco processing and fish processing were assessed by interviewer administered health questionnaire. Workers suffered from musculo-skeletal complaints, respiratory health hazards, eye problems and skin related complaints. a high prevalence was observed for self-reported occupational health problems in the selected sectors. The workers have occupational exposures to multiple hazards and the absence of the protective guards aggravates their health condition (Nag *et al*, 2016).

Craftsmen working at different construction sites are exposed to different and friendly working conditions and the harshest environments at the workplace. The occupational health conditions that commonly affect the workers in designing our major Lee found to be cardiovascular, respiratory and musculoskeletal disorders on various construction sites where craftsmen work. The data analysis determines the effects of occupational health hazards over craftsmen and the construction project performance as well as it is helpful in obtaining the contractors commitment to occupational health and safety (OHS) (Tunji-Olayeni *et al*, 2018).

In the hand embroidery sector, the most prominent occupational health issues are primarily related to repetitive strain injuries (RSIs) due to prolonged, fine motor movements with the hands and fingers, often aggravated by poor posture and long working hours, alongside potential issues from exposure to sharp needles and sometimes, harmful dyes or chemicals used on the fabric.

Key occupational health issues in hand embroidery:

- **Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs):**
 - **Carpal tunnel syndrome:** Pain, numbness, and tingling in the hand and fingers due to repetitive wrist flexion.
 - **Trigger finger:** A finger that locks in a bent position due to inflammation of the tendons.
 - **Epicondylitis (tennis elbow):** Pain on the outer elbow from repetitive hand movements.
 - **Tenosynovitis:** Inflammation of the tendons and their surrounding sheath, causing pain and swelling.

- **Eye strain:**

Straining the eyes due to close-up work with fine details, potentially leading to headaches and blurred vision.

- **Skin irritation and infections:**
 - **Needle pricks:** Injuries from sharp needles, which can lead to infections if not properly cleaned and treated.
 - **Skin irritation from dyes and chemicals:** Contact dermatitis from exposure to chemicals used in the dyeing process of fabrics.
- **Psychological stress:**
 - **Work pressure:** Meeting tight deadlines and high production quotas can lead to stress and anxiety.
 - **Repetitive nature of work:** Monotonous tasks can contribute to mental fatigue.

Factors contributing to these issues:

- **Poor ergonomics:** Improper posture, inadequate workstation design, and lack of breaks.
- **Long working hours:** Extended periods of hand embroidery without proper rest.
- **Lack of awareness:** Inadequate knowledge about proper techniques and safety practices.

It was a good time initially when the public health workers took a good look at the meaning of this phenomenon in terms of health. The distribution of women workers in the American labor force was considered to have more illness than men along with the gynecological problems of the working woman and their effect on her. But this only scratches the surface! Later on so many works have been done on the topic and the Hazard analysis has been made wisely for the craftsmen in industries and especially for women as they have dual roles to play (Spiro, 1960).

METHODOLOGY

Survey method was used to study the health problems of Aari embroidery artisans. Though this craft is practiced in many parts of Tamil Nadu, we selected five districts' artisans where chose for the study: Dindigul, Trichy, Erode, Namakkal and Chennai. 100 artisans of Aari embroidery from the above five districts: 25 artisans from each district were randomly chosen as a sample for the present research. Interview schedule was used to generate data. The study was subjected to statistical analysis according to the objectives of the study. Percentages were calculated, tables and charts were generated in Microsoft excel sheet. Data was also examined using the statistical multiple regression test to find a relation between health issues and age of the workers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Maximum number of artisans do their Aari embroidery work as occupation. Recent days most of the women like to wear Aari embroidery blouse for their marriage and special event. The survey revealed lot of women make it us their occupation for earning money.

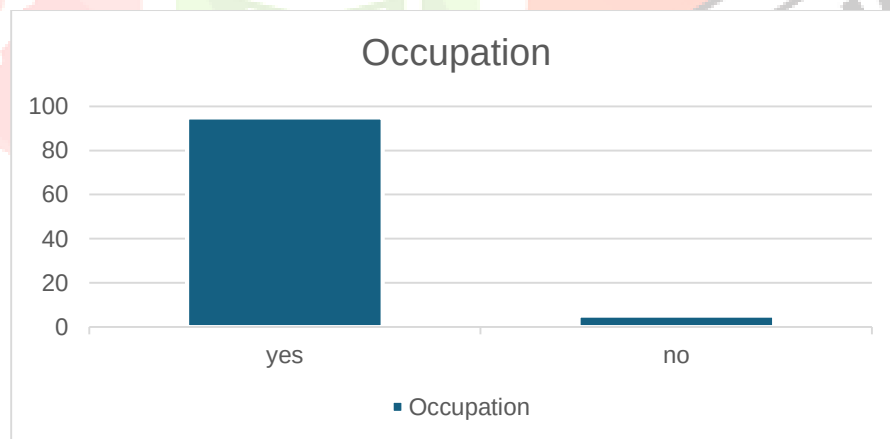


Figure 1: Distribution of respondents based on occupation of Aari embroidery

The above figure shows that majority of the artisans i.e. 95% artisans are pursuing Aari embroidery do as an occupational view. Remaining 5% of Artisans do their Aari work as a passion. The survey showed that is Aari embroidery as a medium of earning platform for artisans.

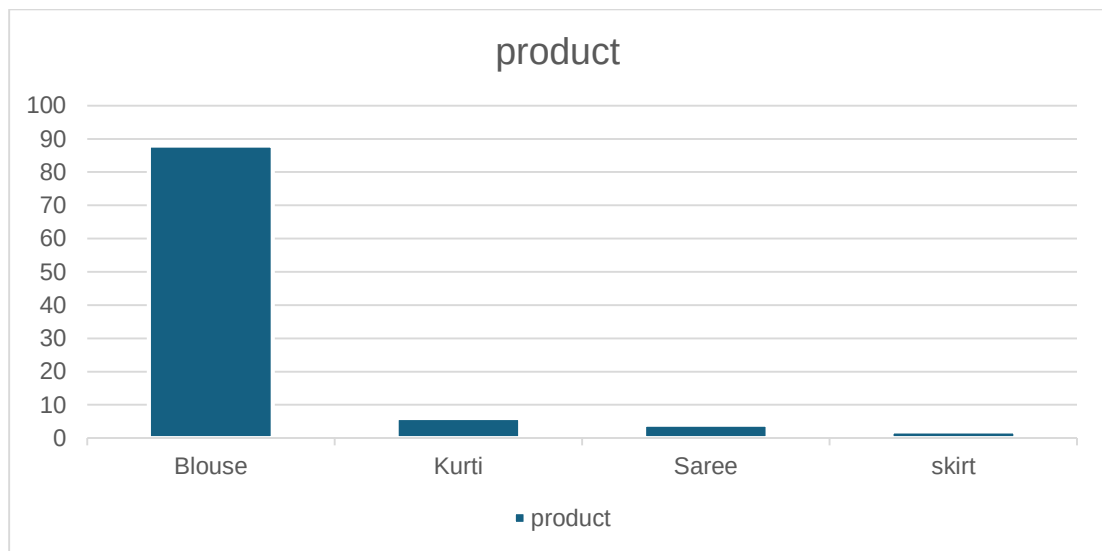


Figure 2: Distribution of respondents based on product for Aari embroidery

The above figure shows Maximum number of artisans (88%) embroider aari in blouses, (6%) artisans embroider aari in Kurti, (4%) artisans preferred saree and (2%) of artisans embroider aari in skirts. (Figure 2).



Figure 3: Distribution of respondents based on time conception for Aari embroidery

Maximum number of artisans (40%) work for 5-7 hours in a single product doing embroidery (Figure 3). (28%) artisans work for 8-10 hours in a single product. (15%) artisans worked 2-4 hours in a product. (12%) work 2 days for single product and (5%) artisans worked depend upon the design. (Figure 3).

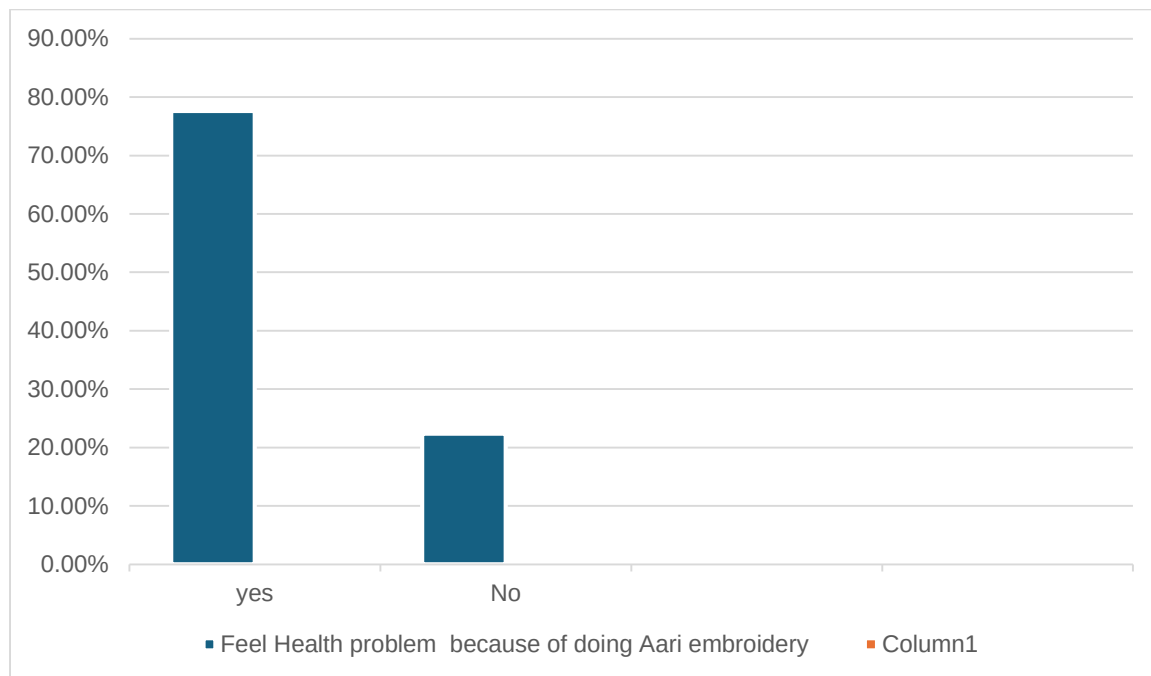


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents based on artisans feel health problem because of doing Aari embroidery

The above figure shows maximum number of artisans (77.60%) facing health problems and (22.40%) artisans are not faced any health problems (Figure 4).

Aari embroidery artisans are facing different types of health problems as shown in Figure 4.

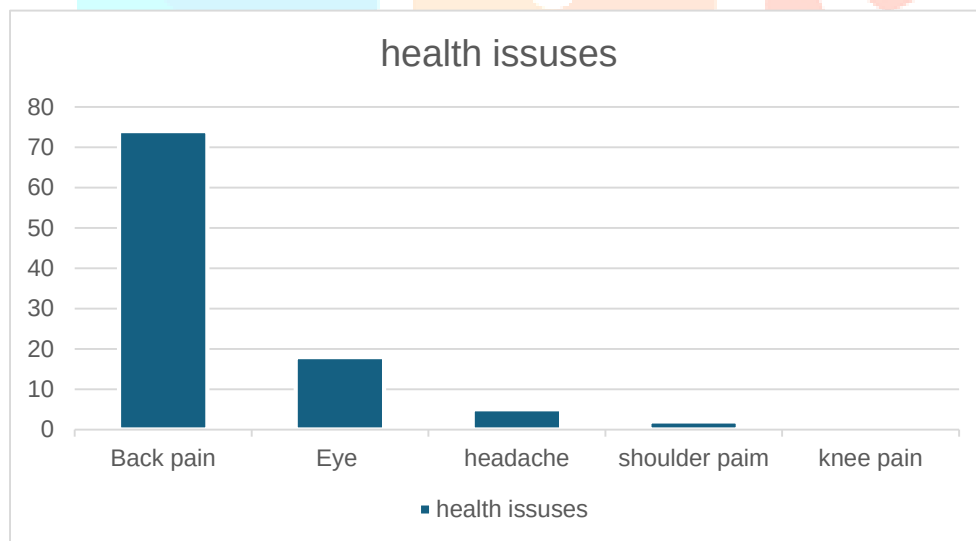


Figure 5: Distribution of respondents based on health problem

Aari artisans are facing different types of health problems as shown in Figure 5. The problems faced by the workers included Back pain (74%), eyes pain (18%), Headache (5%), Shoulder pain (2%) and knee pain (1%).

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that women engaged in Aari embroidery face many health problems: Pain in different parts of the body i.e. eyes, neck, back, arms, finger tips, hand joints, headache, acidity, dizziness hand and foot numbness. These workers sit on a cot or on a floor keeping their neck, back, knees bent in an awkward position for long hours. The silken floss thread used for embroidery has sheen and with bright hue and a focused continuous work using such yarn many times irritated artisans' eyes. As the movement of arm is repetitive from inserting the needle into the fabric and then taking it away from the fabric, stresses the arm too-these are some of the reasons for the health issues faced by the artisans. They do embroidery dedicatedly without taking their pain seriously. Artisans are aware of the importance of health and their own health problems. They visit doctors or chemists when they have excessive or regular pain in different body parts. Maximum women do not exercise but some of the women do exercise or yoga to maintain their health, but they do not follow this regime very seriously. If these artisans are trained to keep their posture correctly, they will be able to overcome many of their health issues leading to better productivity and enhanced income. And we advised to do their regular exercise and encouraged them to take their medicine with doctor consultation and take proper break for work.

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