

PROBLEMS FACED BY WOMEN HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN NAGERCOIL

By

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Abstract

Handloom is an important cottage industry of our country and it is an important key for cultural heritage of Tamilnadu. It is the pioneer state in India in the field of textile industry including handloom sector, power loom sector and mill sector. Tamil Nadu is the 4th largest industry in the country. The state has identified twenty two locations to establish handloom clusters with financial assistance from the centre. There are about 2388 co-operative societies; out of which only about 1393 are in working condition. Out of 1393 cooperative societies, 1125 are cotton primary weavers cooperative societies, 170 are industrial weavers' cooperative societies and 98 are primary silk weavers' cooperative societies. In Tamil Nadu, there are more than 3 lakh families involving in handloom weaving. In comparison with other traditional rural sectors, handloom weaving is a full-time family profession, involving all the members of the family. The handloom industry plays an important role in the development socio-economic conditions of women in the study area and the important objectives of this study is to know about the various schemes for handloom industries and to analyse the problems faced by women handloom weavers in Nagercoil.

Keywords: *handloom industry, development schemes, kanyakumari district.*

Introduction

Handloom Industry in Kanyakumari District

Kanyakumari district is the southernmost district in Tamil Nadu state and mainland India. It is the second largest district in the state in terms of population density and the second most urbanized, next to Chennai district. The district stands first in terms of literacy rate in the state. The district headquarters is Nagercoil. Kanyakumari district has a varied topography with sea on three sides and the mountains of the Western Ghats bordering the northern side. Geologically, the landmass of the district is much younger when

compared to the rest of state faulted as late as 2.5 million years during the Miocene, after which numerous transgression, as well as regression of sea, had shaped the western coast of the district. It was part of the princely state of Travancore during the colonial times prior to India's independence; four of the eight tehsils of Thiruvananthapuram district were separated to form the new district of Kanyakumari during the formation of the new state of Kerala, and they were made a part of the Madras Presidency under recommendations from the States Reorganisation Commission in 1956. The Presidency was later renamed Tamil Nadu and Kanyakumari, today, is one of the 32 districts of Tamil Nadu state. Many

historical assumptions persist in the district and state. The district is also the birthplace of Ayyavazhi.

The handloom industry of Kanyakumari district came into being more than 2000 years ago. The history of south Travancore says that handloom industry of Kanyakumari district had made wonderful strides of progress in its very early days. It provided the people in and around Travancore with all kinds of time texture handloom products product while making available to the royal families a variety of silk fabrics with gold lace works.

The handloom industry of Kanyakumari district was first established in a place called kottar, a few kilometers away Nagercoil. People had flourishing business in the district for a long period of time, as there was an undeviating small in the demand for handloom products.

The Report of the Assistant Directorate of Handloom and Textiles of Kanyakumari District brings out the fact that this district has 32000 looms to its credit. It is a relatively small district but it is credited with a sizable amount of handloom products of the district approximates to sew million meters. This forms 68percent of the total annual production of the state of Tamil Nadu.

Handloom weaving is an important cottage industry in Kanniyakumari District of Tamil Nadu. Once, each weaver's family in the village was equipped with at least one hand loom machine. Those looms are manually operated and each looms is not at all mechanised, it requires many technique and skills to organise before going for weaving. The initial investment to deploy a loom cost

was around Rs. 2,500 in early ages, but now if someone installs a loom newly it cost around Rs. 6000. In most of the cases it is seen people have not set up a new one they reused their ancestors' property by reshaping or modifying little. Handloom department is definitely a very important government department, which has been attempting to develop the weaving culture of the District.

Statement of the Problem

In every industry women were facing many problems in India. There are some differences between the women and men in their wage level. Engels insists on employment of women for their liberation and avoiding sexual inequality in the society. They are working in handloom industry 9 to 10 hours per day. In the mean time they are getting low level wage. Their socio economic conditions are very poor and their working and living conditions are not satisfactory and to know about the socio-economic conditions of the women handloom weavers the topic has been selected.

Objectives

- To study about the handloom industry in Kanyakumari district.
- To examine the various schemes for the development of handloom sector.
- To analyze problems faced by the handloom women weavers in Nagercoil.

Methodology

Data Source

The present study is mainly based on both primary and secondary data.

The primary data needed for the study have been collected by using personal interview method. For this purpose an interview

schedule was prepared with due care and caution. The secondary data have been mainly collected from the books, journals, magazines, and also from the internet.

Sampling Design

To analyse the problems faced by women handloom weavers in Nagercoil of Kanyakumari district 50 workers working in handloom industries are randomly selected from using convenient sampling method.

Statistical tools used

The collected data were analyzed using percentage analysis and presented in the form of tables.

Development Schemes for handloom weavers

1. Subsidy scheme

To increase the sales of handloom products the subsidy schemes is introduced to complete with the mill products.

Advantages

- 20percent rebate is provided by government on the sale of handloom cloth throughout the year.
- The weavers get employment continuously, when the goods are sold immediately.

2. Free distribution of do this and saree scheme

The government implemented free distribution of do this and sarees to the poor people one in a year, and to provide employment opportunities to the weavers for the whole year.

Advantages

- Every year during the pongal festival a free distribution of do this and saree issued to the landless agriculturist, poor in town, kattumara, fishermen and women.
- By producing free distribution do this and saree, the weavers get employment continuously and it makes ways to increase production and earn more profit for the society.

3. Free distribution of uniform scheme

Once in a year free distribution uniform is granted to the school children from std I to std VIII in the state under Noon meal programme "Co-optex" implements weavers societies by producing and procuring material.

4. Best Exporters price scheme

To encourage exporting of handloom products shield and certificates are given to the best handloom exporters.

5. Enforcement of handloom Reservation Act.

The handloom (Reservation of Articles for production) Act, 1985 aims at protecting the handloom weavers a separate enforcement wing with head quarters at Chennai and 5 field level offices at Madurai, Salem, Tiruchengode. Erode and Tiruppur have been established. Any complaint received regarding the violation of the handloom (reservation of Articles for Production) Act will be taken up and will be pursued against the persons violating the Act.

Analysis of data

Problems faced by the handloom women weavers

Handloom women weavers face certain problems. The problems were classified into social and economic problems.

Social problems faced by the women weavers

Four important social problems were identified from the opinion of experienced handloom weavers. The identified social problems are presented in the following Table.

Table 1. Social problems faced by the women handloom weavers

Sources	Garrett mean score	Rank
Long hours of work	38.12	I
Delay in getting wage	34.33	II
Domination of senior weavers	31.74	III
Abuse of the owner	29.08	IV

Source: Primary data

From the perusal of the above table it is understood that a long hour of work holds the first rank in social problem faced by the women handloom workers, delay in getting wage is the second problem and dominance of senior weavers is holds third rank and abuse of the handloom owner is ranked fourth.

Economic problems faced by the women weavers

The research identified four important economic problems faced by the women handloom workers. The identified economic problems are:

Table 2. Economic problems faced by the women handloom weavers

Problems	Garrett mean score	Rank
No incentives	39.41	I
Lower wage	38.22	II
Higher medical expense	36.17	III
Higher transport cost	34.86	IV

Source: Primary data

The above Table shows that no incentive is considered as the foremost and important economic problem as reported by all the respondents, Lower wage is ranked second as reported by 27 respondents, followed by higher medical expunge as reported by 21 respondent and higher transport cost as reported by 20 respondents.

Findings of the study

The important findings of the study are:

- Long hours of work and delay in getting wage ranked first and second respectively in the social problems faced by women weavers.
- 'No incentive' and lower wage holds first and second rank respectively in the economic problem faced by the women handloom weavers.

Suggestions

- Proper motivation and timely assistant would have the way the healthy and sustainable development of Handloom industry; this would ultimately lead to improve the standard of living of the handloom weavers.
- At present, the number of handloom units is one the decrease due to the

competition of power looms and textile mills. In order to protect handloom industry, certain items especially dhoti and cotton Shari must be exclusively allotted to handloom industry.

- Job security and fair wages must be ensured through legislative protection.
- An organization apart from the co-operative societies would be essential to ensure a healthy condition in the work place.
- The organization apart from the co-operative societies would be essential to ensure a healthy condition in the work place.
- The general public must be educated to buy handloom products to make the handloom industry functioned without the fear of less demand for the handloom product.
- Medical facilities should be provided by the owners of the handloom unit for the handloom weavers suffering from loom based disease in the work place.
- Proper training must be given to the weavers on latest techniques in dyeing and printing of handloom products.

- To increase sales an effort must be taken to publicity and exhibition of the handloom products.
- To compete with power loom products the cost of handloom of handloom products should be reduced.
- By introducing new products new designs the product line of handloom should be strengthened.

Conclusion

The number of employees in the handloom industry decreased as compared to the previous year now-a-days. Also the important economic problem is the payment of incentives to the weavers. The government must provide necessary amenities to the weavers So that they will lead a happy satisfied life. To help the handloom weavers exports the products produced by the weavers through agents. Publicity and exhibition of handloom products increase the sales. Proper training to the weavers in latest techniques leads to create more varieties of handloom products.

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