

Problems of Handloom Industry-A Case Study of Guntur District

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Abstract

From ancient times India is known as the land of opportunities and the abundant amount of natural resources one of the major reason behind this opportunities. The agriculture and handloom industry remain mean as dominant employment sectors from long time and even in the age of industrialization they retain their positions has major employment providing sectors successfully, the excessive attraction towards the industrialisation and technology are considered as major threats to the handloom industry. The handloom industry have the potential providing the employment to over 13 million weavers and this factor makes it as largest cottage industry in the country, simultaneously the employment provided by it is second largest economic activity next to agriculture. The importance given to power loom industry is creating handsome of problems in the handloom industry and it's survival in this modern era is a major question because of large number of issues it is facing such as hike in the yarn prices, lack of proper infrastructure, treating as secondary source next to power loom and many others. In India, the Guntur district, which is once known as hub of Handloom industry, is now facing the problem of lack of raw materials, marketing problem and many others, a lot of research have been carried out over the years to find out an appropriate solution to protect the handloom industry and give hope to the weavers for its survival. This article highlights the importance of handloom industry in terms of employment as well as the root-cause analysis for finding the major issues related to it which helps to regain its lost glory.

Keywords: Handloom • Weavers • Problem • Spinning mills • Netha bazar

Introduction

Handloom industry in the India considered as one of the oldest cottage industry, which spreads across the country. A lot of importance is giving to handloom industry because it provides employment directly to 10 million persons in the Indian decentralized sector. It also have ability to provide the indirect employment 1.5% persons per every weaver in the production process [1]. It is also providing the employment to other industries like loom manufacturers, dyers, twistors, printers, processes and many others. On the note, 5.5% employment provided by the handloom industry and its share in providing the employment considered as vital in the total decentralized sector. The statistics revealed that 40 lakhs active handlooms are present in India, in that 22.1% are commercial looms concentrated in different states namely Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The quality of fabric produced by these commercial looms worldwide popularity and recognition but lack of proper marketing plans and policies is creating hurdles in commercializing the fabrics produced by this handloom industry. The majority of employees who work in handloom industry are women and this industry helps to provide the identity for women who dream to have their own recognition. The artisans in India are famous for spinning and hand dyeing and the products

which they produce out of total cloth requirement of the people show some important this industry in terms of employment as well as meeting the requirements. In the world of Handloom industry, Andhra Pradesh has special name and known for producing the colourful fabric on the Handlooms and the textiles produced by Handloom weavers in the Andhra Pradesh have distinctive designs designed by the excellent workmanship.

Even today, despite its decrease, it occurs to be the state's most significant household sector and hand-held products are quite renowned for their artistic elegance and complex designs. They are accustomed to the act of weaving as a hereditary occupation [2]. Although there is an inherited occupation. The weavers in Andhra Pradesh are renowned to produce intricate and unique designs for exclusive sarees. Every woven piece is often distinct from the rest. Every piece symbolizes the artisan's work accomplished closely. Depending on weaving operations and related events, there are about 3.50 lakhs Handloom weavers. About 50% of which are covered in the state by 1282 weavers cooperative societies. Handloom sector perpetuates the wealthy cultural heritage of India. Andhra Pradesh is one of the country's leading countries with a big traditional hand-held base and creates the most exotic hand-held products with traditional designs and methods.

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This study attempts to analyse the current situation of the handloom sector in Andhra Pradesh (AP) in order to reconcile the questions that arise from these contradictory perceptions and secondary information [3]. The state has always been a significant manufacturer of hand-held textiles and has the second largest amount of looms and employees in all countries, just off West Bengal. However, while the power loom sector in the state is relatively small, accounting for only about 2.8 percent of the country's total power looms, the handloom weavers themselves feel they are in an activity, which is in crisis, for the same reasons mentioned above. Suicide cases among weavers over the past couple of years.

The handlooms census for 1987-1988 and 1995-1996 indicates that the percentage of autonomous weavers has risen by 6% at all-India level as well as in Andhra Pradesh (Handlooms census 1987-1988 and 1995-1996). However, observations on the field level during the course of the research show that autonomous weaving in nature is extremely seasonal [4]. The comparatively better off weavers take up autonomous weaving during peak seasons such as festivals and weddings to boost their revenue by optimizing the use of household labour. In addition, this quintessential form of organization is also not widespread throughout the districts.

Literature Review

Analysis

The handloom industry is going through tough phase in all areas of the country and now it reaches to the threshold point means its survival how became a question. The industry are suffering from various problems such as lack of good marketing plan, lack of good infrastructure, increase in yarn prices, low productivity, fail to stand grow along with the power loom industry, fail to adopt modern mechanisms and many others. In Andhra Pradesh, the handloom industry is providing the bread and butter for lakhs of people and the same industry is in deteriorating stage and the various factors that are considered as the root cause issues are discussed as follows.

Scarcity of raw materials: The performance of the handloom industry is critically affected by the inadequate supply of the raw materials specially the steep increase in the prices of yarn and hunk impacts in huge way [5]. These two considered as a major input to the handloom industry and the irregularity in supplying these two critical resources slow down the growth of the industry in unbelievable way. The hike in the prices of these two critical resources had unbelievable impact in four instances, in the years 1984, 1986, 1988 and 1991.

Skyrocketing input costs: The most substantial critical aspect keep on acting the growth of the handloom industry in the country is steady increase in the prices of the inputs and it has observed over the years of one look at the statistics. During the period of 1986 to 1990, the cotton yarn price increased in phenomenal way, which never seen in the history that is 40% to 130%, and the analysts have described this period as dark period in the handloom industry [6]. The steps taken by the central government is the another root cause for sudden increase in the cotton yarn price and again a 50% increase in the cost from 1991 to 1994 have taken the handloom industry worst to deteriorated stage. The central government initiatives to increase the handloom industry workers is fail to meet

the design requirements because of sudden increase in the prices of necessary inputs and that too in short span of time. Initiatives will meet its purpose only if requirements or the inputs of this industry is in controlled prices.

Increased cost of production: Although both central and state governments had giving good initiatives and schemes to increase the handloom industry helps to its survival, but on the other hand increase in the inputs will directly influence the production cost. The impact of production cost due to the sudden rise in the fabric cost and overall it drops the profits significantly. Famous analyst Goswami have reported in his report the production cost of the handloom industry is 22% more than the power loom industry and this factor considered as most devastating one, which affects the overall growth of the industry [7]. Handloom industry is once the leader in making the fabrics and now it is fighting for its survival and the increase in the production cost is forcing the weavers to put more cost on their products, which is indirectly decreasing the overall production.

Impact of spinning industry over handlooms: A transitional development have been observed especially in the region of Andhra Pradesh, the traditional handlooms instantly replacing with spinning mills and this development is one of the major cause downfall of the Handloom industry in the country especially in the Andhra Pradesh region. Spinning mills have the reputation of producing the low cost yarn which is a primary used in the home textiles. The instant profits gaining in the spinning mill industry increasing the handloom workers to shift to this industry and the statistics had revealed only one fact that no initiative or scheme had proposed from the government side to help the Handloom industry to stop this transitional migration from one industry to another.

Fail to adapt to technology: The technology have transitioned almost all traditional sectors and modernization implemented in almost in all the sectors. Handloom industry is one of the traditional cottage industry, which still adopts the traditional methodologies producing the high quality fabrics, which have good reputation at local and international markets [8]. However, this industry never have a scope to modernize itself by adopting to the current technology and the reasons behind it is lack of awareness, knowledge, and exposure to current trends and so on. The quantity produced by the handloom industry is low, compared to its counterparts and the cost is very high where counterparts they are available at the cheaper prices produce the other end superior quality fabrics. No substantial measures had taken by the government to introduce the technology in this sector, which keep on forcing this sector to work on traditional mechanism and methodologies.

Marketing related issues: From the initial years the Handloom industry adopted the sales oriented policy means it primary focus on sales not on marketing. The development of any sector depends on its marketing skills and it is clearly that the handloom industry lacks in it. The lack of proper marketing scheme over the period taken the handloom industry from glorifying stage to fighting for its survival stage and it in evidently increase the unemployment among the weavers. Key issues related to marketing in the handloom industry or as follows.

Lack of availability of marketing information: The success of an industry depends on the feedback of the customers and the

Handloom industry does not have any customer feedback. The general customers does not have any information about the Handloom products because of lack of good marketing plan and this ends in unsatisfied customers [9]. The Weavers who worked continuously over the hour's suit design new products does not have any information of current trends for colours and market demand. Although product design by the handloom weavers are highly innovative but lack of current trends friends them to meet the desired customers and this demands a good marketing plan for handloom weaver's products.

Failed to create awareness about their product features: Handloom product fabrics are smooth and non-allergic to skin. They use the vegetable dyes in the process of making the fabric, it is very good for human skin and these products are having high quality embroidery as well as rich look but Italy fail to create awareness among customers about their products features. The main asset in the Handloom industry is their adaptability to create customer choice fabrics but they fail to educate the customers about the product features and this seriously impact in the overall production.

Advertisement of handloom products: The fabrics designed by the counter parts are meeting up to the customers requirements because of good advertisements they keep on doing on their products. The handloom industry known for rich and high quality fabrics as well as high quality embroidery on their products bit lack of proper advertisements on their products is the main root cause, which is, keep on increasing the distance between the customers and them [10]. The handloom products have limited access to its customers through exhibition and some outlets, a proper advertising policy will bring the Handloom weaving products close to customers and will increase the sales.

Issues with quality standards mentioning: The handloom waived products known for high quality fabric and skin soft feel products. They used the penis quality products with top-notch selling propositions in designing the fabrics especially carpets, furnishings and many more fabrics. However the fabric products weaved by the handloom weavers never, mention the quality standardization factors such as shrinking, durability on their products. There is no observable practice to include the quality standard on the handloom products by their weavers and this is considered as one of the most significant aspect which is keep on drawing the attention customers and it's impact clearly witness on the sales.

Management of handloom logistics in improper way: A major change observed in terms of managing the logistics between the Handlooms waived fabrics and other competitors. There is no specific policy related to managing the completed products because maintaining the huge amount of stock sports serious problem to both the Handloom workers as well as the buyers. Maintaining the huge pile of stocks is acts as blockage of money and subsequently increases the interest burden [11]. The retails and cooperative societies who buy the Handloom made products induction loss because of miss management of the stocks and lack of proper marketing analysis has huge impact on the management of the handloom logistics.

Failed to exploit the export potentiality: Handloom products have reputation of rich look and high quality embroidery in all its and it's how use potential for exporting the products to various parts of the

world. There is an council named export promotion council export promotion council and the intention to set up this council is to promote the handloom made products on global stage and in order to do that the council needs to give up its strategies. Even though made by the handloom industry have great reputation per its quality as well as reliability improper platform is to highlight its talented the international arena.

Failure of Netha bazars: The intention for Forming Netha bazars is to provide the proper marketing facilities for the products developed by the Handloom industry over the country. In many occasions, it proved that Netha bazars substantially fail to reach its formation intention. They are supposed to provide a direct link between the buyers and the handloom industry traders, in practice it is happening but on a low scale. A strictly guide lined policy should be redesign for the betterment of the handloom industry traders through the platform of netha bazaars. The purpose they ought to serve can only practically possible if they work for the betterment of the lower and medium scale handloom traders and weavers.

Financial problems: In ancient times agriculture and the handloom industry used to have adequate funds for doing the necessary processing's. Along with time, the technology transition happened over the years how to change the face of financial situation in the handloom industry. This is one such industry where the capital considered as the primary input while the situation now really deteriorated because this industry is now starving for the financial AIDS from the government as well as cooperative societies. The employment potentialities directly imported by the budget allocated by the state and Central governments, in a surprising, move both the governments a considerable reducing the budget allocation from over the years, which make the survival of these industries a truly miserable thing [12]. The employers who depends on the handloom industry by this reduction of amount on the budget allocations and as a result majority of the handloom weavers workplaces closed in many areas of the country.

Discussion

Dakshina Murthy conducted a co-operative survey on handloom funding, NABARD. He proposed that the handloom industry needs liberal economic support for the weavers of the cooperative handloom department.

In his micro-level research in Orissa, Mahapatro emphasized the socio-economic context of hand-held weavers, features of jobs and organization. He also researched main and chosen apex societies. He suggested providing loan services on liberal terms and conditions to Prabhakara Sharma and P V N Jogiekar pointed out that Indian cotton is the biggest region in the globe. India has the second biggest spinning ability in the hand weaving industry after China and a lengthy tradition of making some of the world's best and most expensive fabrics. India is the world's largest yarn exporter with a share of 28% and is renowned for the quality of its line count cotton yarns [13]. An insight into the socio-economic and working circumstances of the weavers is difficult through the contribution of the state handloom to the Indian culture as well as to the domestic exchequer.

Ali Mubarak E pointed out that the hand-held sector is in doldrums today. In every part of their working lives, be it their manufacturing or

marketing or finance or anything else, the weaving community feeds the finch. Today the community has been driven to the government's mercy. The government has made the needed attempts to assist the sector in its revival process in every manner possible.

Kotaiah P proposed several interventions for safety purposes for weavers, such as insurance, provident fund and group insurance, in his research on handloom issues. The writer proposed that the state build hospitals for weavers and also provide tax-free on handloom sector inputs.

Socio-economic profile of weavers

The handloom industry not only represents the tradition of weaving communities throughout India, but also our entire nation's socio-cultural heritage. It plays a crucial role in the rural economy's development. "The nation cannot afford to allow the hand-held sector to quickly decline and in its fight die a brutal death." This background highlights the need for a human approach to the whole issue. The scope of this research is to cover certain social elements such as age, education, financial circumstances.

Andhra Pradesh's handloom market and Mangalagiri's market, especially Guntur district, face acute problems. The primary reason that cotton handloom activity in Mangalagiri is primarily a household sector to take a household as a sample unit [14]. Approximately 2,300 households are actively involved in hand weaving. Mangalagiri alone accounted for 20 percent (2,300) of the total number of households 11,064 in the district of Guntur out of 57 Mandals in the district of Guntur.

Mangalagiri also took first position in the district of Guntur with a share of 22.4 percent (3,203) of the complete looms (14,325) even in terms of amount of looms. Weavers face poverty issue and lack sufficient job to do and livelihood. Some weavers have committed suicides in latest years, especially in 2004 and 2005, and fatalities from hunger have occurred. Only 193 out of 242 total fatalities occurred in Telangana.

Andhra Pradesh's handloom market, and especially Mangalagiri's market in Guntur district, face adorable issues. Over time, different inferable variables have resulted to the decrease of the state's handloom sector. Even today, despite its decline, it happens to be the state's most important household industry. Despite the eminent place the handloom sector has enjoyed in our economy, it has many issues, although its contribution to domestic exchange and to contemporary culture is large. However, there is much to observe the socio-economic and working circumstances of the weavers in this. Approximately 150 households chosen in Mangalagiri who have been actively involved in weaving the handloom. For the research, stratified random sampling technique adopted for expediency and higher representation of the population.

The handloom is the biggest cottage industry with a place only next to agriculture in offering rural artisans with low capital investment and environment friendly jobs and adaptable to changing tastes, trends, designs, methods, fashion etc [15]. For various reasons, the situation of the handlooms industry in Andhra Pradesh is not favourable. Despite several actions taken by the government through institutional support and direct economic aid to hand-held weavers, they have been in miserable condition owing to countless issues and are sustaining ongoing losses. Therefore, the difficulties

encountered by weavers and multiple systems need to be studied methodically.

Conclusion

The handloom industry is thus the most significant tool for the development of rural non-farm sector, the absorption of resources and the advancement of justice in the nation, particularly in rural Andhra Pradesh. The government should embrace a multidisciplinary and multi-agency strategy for promotion and growth by providing integrated supplies of multiple kinds of environmental inputs in terms of manufacturing and other equipment for infrastructure. Although the weavers work hard, *i.e.* 10 to 12 hours a day and 23 days a month, the salaries paid to them are very small, leading to latest fatalities of suicide and hunger. The following are suggestions for eradicating the poverty of weavers.

- The government should set up production centers for every 1000 weavers in areas where the weavers are concentrated and these production centers have to provide the weavers with the required inputs and average for the handloom cloth marketing.
- The government should take measures to convert pit looms into contemporary looms to boost the manual loom weavers' efficiency and income.
- Training the weavers needed to develop fresh designs and manufacturing techniques to attract the consumer from the manufacturing of textile cloth would prove useful in resolving the crisis to a significant degree.

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