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RESEARCH ARTICLE

STATUS OF HANDLOOM WORKERS IN SANT KABIR NAGAR DISTRICT UP A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Textile and handloom industry was the only industry of the district in the past. These industries are traditional and handed over by their elders from generation to generation. Handloom industry contributes significantly by generating employment opportunities to the rural people of the district. In the present micro-level study, an attempt has been made to explore the presence of handloom industry and analyse the socio-economic condition of handloom workers in the district. In the study it is found that 70% of the respondents are satisfied with handloom industry as an occupation.

This study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. A primary survey was conducted from the sampled villages in order to understand the status of handloom weavers in the district. The study unveils the perturbing situation of the handloom workers and total negligence of government machineries.

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INTRODUCTION

Clothing is one of the basic necessities of man. Textiles manufacturing is therefore, one of the oldest industries developed by man and it may be divided into three component i.e. handloom, power loom, and mill/industry (Alka, 2005). Handloom industry and weaving is among such occupations which have been practised from ancient time in different parts of India. This occupation is handed over from one generation to the other. Indian fabrics made by hand in the homes of villages both coarse and fine were known for their excellence. The oldest rural oriented industry of India occupies a place of importance both in providing employment opportunities and in its fine production. Household and village workshops fabrication developed sufficiently to meet domestic needs and to supply large surpluses for several countries for export throughout Asia and eastern Africa. With the entry of East India Company, India changed from an exporter of manufactured textile to an exporter of raw cotton and a consumer of British Woven cloth in mid nineteenth century. The Marxist school of thought has argued that colonial contact destroyed pre-existing industrial systems and brought about economic retardation. Marx himself observes: "It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian handloom and destroyed the spinning wheel (Marx 1979). With the effort of government of India the natures of Indian textile industries get changed and start running with the help of modern technology.

India's first Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru tried to develop the handloom industry on modern line to make better life of the weavers (Janarthan 1977). The handloom sector occupies a distinct and unique place in the Indian economy. With the involvement of the rural masses it became the largest generator of non-farm rural employment. India is the highest handloom producing country in the world. Seemanthini and Soumya (2001) in their study they reported that handloom providing employment to 12.4 million people and thus stands next to agriculture. The government stand can be examined by studying the various committees established and the textile policies formulated from time to time. Karve Committee was setup in 1955 to study the problems and prospects of village and small scale industries. In 1974, Sivaraman Committee on Handlooms was constituted to study exclusively the problems of the handloom industry. From the time of Mughal Empire textile weaving occupies the notable place in the cities of eastern Uttar Pradesh like Banaras, Mau, and Azamgarh. The present study is to underline the status of handloom weavers in Sant Kabir Nagar district.

Review of Literature

- Sorokin (1959), in his study he has suggested that the union and group of people and their network in a society help in the movement either upward or downward.
- Janarthan (1977), have mention in his work about Prime

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Minister Jawahar Lal who have given emphasis on the development of traditional handloom on the basis of modern setup and advanced technology.

- Apparao and Rao (2012) in their study have investigated various livelihood problems of handloom weaving and government policies in Andhara Pradesh.
- Venkateswaran. A (2014) in his study he has pointed out different problems faced by handloom weavers of Tirunelveli district. He has also talked about organizational solutions provided by Government of india to handloom weavers.
- Shazli and Abdul (2014), in their work they have not only assess the socio-economic conditions of female weavers in Mubarakpur Town but they have also suggested various remedial measures for the betterment of female weavers.
- Narsaiah and Krishna (1999), have tried to evaluate the different kinds of the problems faced by the handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh. It was identified in their study that the industry faced problems like improper financial grants and subsidies, costly and irregular supply of raw materials. These hardships hinders to the handloom industry in proper functioning.
- Kumudha and Rizwana (2013), in their work they have not only tried to examine different problems faced by handloom industries but they have also evaluated the role of cooperative societies in grieving the problems faced by handloom weavers in Erode district of Tamil Nadu.

Objectives

- To assess the current trends and situation of handloom industry in the study area.
- To examine the extent of implementation of welfare schemes and policies.
- To evaluate the different problems faced by weavers.
- To study the socio-economic status of the handloom workers in the study area.

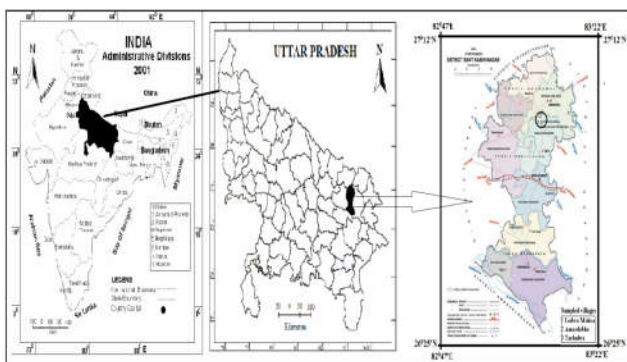


Figure 1 Locational Map of the Study Area

Study Area

District Sant Kabir Nagar lies between 26^o 25' to 27^o 12' North latitude and 82^o 47' to 83^o 22" East latitude. The district bounded by Gorakhpur in the east, Basti in the west, Siddharth Nagar in the north and Ambedkar Nagar in the south. Total population of the study area is 17, 14,300 of which 7.49% (census 2011) reside in urban areas of 5 towns Khalilabad, Mehdawal, Meghar, Ledwa Mahua and Hariharpur. The district

was selected purposely for the study of status of handloom workers for two reasons: convenience and interest of researcher. Two villages (Amardhobha and Tarkulwa) and a census town (Ledwa Mahua) were selected with consideration of concentration of handloom industry in the area. These adjacent villages and town are along SH 68 that connects them to the other cities of the state.

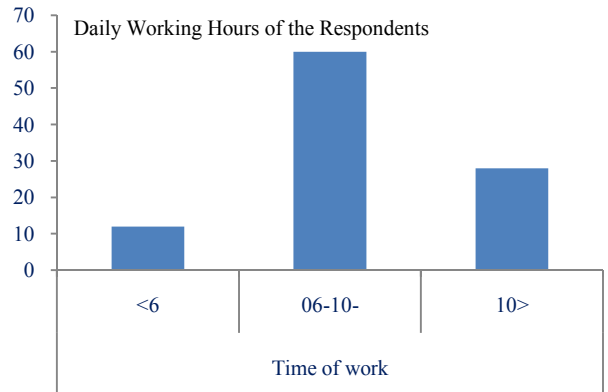


Figure 2

Source: Field survey conducted in March, 2015

Medium of Selling Products

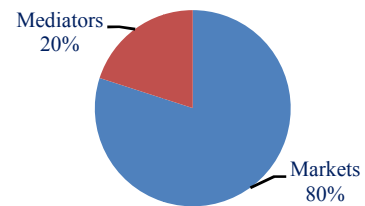


Figure3

Database and Methodology

In the present paper the researcher has used both primary as well as secondary data by field survey. The Primary data has been collected from two villages and one town of the Sant Kabir Nagar district through stratified purposive sampling technique. Random sampling techniques were used for the face to face interrogation of the local respondents by the researcher to obtain data and to identify different problems related to their handloom industry. Other statistical techniques and GIS techniques were also used. The primary data were processed on computer using the MS excel and MS words software.

General Profile of the Respondents

A brief account of the sampled villages is necessary to evaluate the Status of handlooms worker in the study area. In respect of Government educational institutions, they have only primary school in their respective villages. There are two private inter college and one private Montessori school in the sampled villages. Purvanchal Bank is the only bank in the village Amardobha. For proper banking they have to travel to adjoining village Bakhira which is also post office of the sampled villages. All the sampled villages are well connected to each other by mettled and semi mettled roads. These village

are along the State Highway 88 which connects the area with district headquarter (Khalilabad), Gorakhpur, Mehdawal, Nepal. All the sampled villages are well connected by landline or by mobile phones and have access to electricity facility, but they get the service on an average of 12 hours per day.

After analysing the data which have been collected from the sampled villages showed that 100% of the respondents were from muslim community and all the respondents belong to the Other Backward Class (OBC). The textile weaving in the region is mainly confined and done by the Ansari caste of muslim community called Julahas (Ansari) and it is traditionally ancient occupation of these sampled villages. Education is the most important indicator to find out status and economic condition of a society. It opens the mind of dormant societies and an individual. It is clear from table (no.1) that 60% of the respondents are having primary education, while 14% were 10th standards, 8% have passed 12th standards, total number of graduate and post graduate were 6% and 2% respectively, remaining 10% respondents were illiterate. They have given due weightage to their occupation in the past and remain away from education.

cycle 40%, motor cycle 16%, four-wheeler 0% and nearly all the respondents have mobile in their hand.

Handloom Ownership and Economic Condition

Textile weaving is life line of handloom workers in the sampled villages. The workers of the villages earn their livelihood solely from weaving textiles because there are only 2% people who have agricultural lands. The ownership of handloom is the sign of richness and it exhibits the reputation of an individuals. The data shows that 84% respondents have their own handloom and 16% people don't have any handloom. So, due to insufficient handlooms, the later respondents have to work as labourers in the other's handlooms. It is analysed from the data that 32% villagers own 3 handlooms, 36% people possess 4-6 handloom, 12% have ownership of 7-9 handlooms, and 8% have 10-12 handlooms. Whereas, only 4% people possess 13-14 and 8% people have more than 16+ handlooms (table2). The study shows that there is uneven holding of handloom where 80% hold only 0-9 handloom that cause the economic disparity in these villages. As villagers don't have Any other source of income they have to work each and every

Table 1 Socio-economic Status of the Respondents

Religion and Caste of the Respondents					Age Groups of the Workers %					Marital Status		
Hindu	Muslim	OBCs	General	SCs/STs	0-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Married	Unmarried
00	100	100	00	00	10	6	14	26	30	14	88	12
Educational Status of the Respondents						Housing Status						
Primary		10th	12th	U.G	P.G	Illiterate	Katcha	Pucca	Semi Pucca			
60		14	8	6	2	10	18	58	24			
Toilet Facilities				Household Facilities								
No	Yes	T.V	Computer	Fridge	Washing Machine	Cycle	Motor Cycle	Four Wheeler				
70	30	14	12	10	8	40	16	0				

Source: Calculated by the author based on field survey conducted in March, 2015

Table 2 Handloom Status of the Respondents

Ownership of Handloom			Duration of Ownership			No. of Looms per Household					
Own	Rented		By Birth	<5 years	>5 years	<3	04-06-	07-09-	10-12	13-15	16>
84	16		78	8	14	32	36	12	8	4	8
Duration of work (Hours)			Monthly income (Rs)			Source of granting funds					
<6	06-10-	10>	<3000	3000-5000	5000-8000	8000-12000	12000>	Own	Loan (Banks)	NGOs	
12	60	28	16	40	24	10	10	74	20	6	

Source: Calculated by the author based on field survey conducted in March, 2015

Table 3 Different Diseases to the Respondents

Expenditure of Income on Different Items (%)				Medium of selling products (%)		
Cloths	Health	Education	Food	Markets	Mediators	
8	18	14	60	80	20	
Different Diseases To Respondents (%)						
Asthma	TB	Typhoid	Skin	Eye Sight	None	
20	12	8	12	6	42	

Source: Calculated by the author based on field survey conducted in March, 2015

Everyone make presumption about the economic condition of people of a village by seeing their housing status and possession of durable household goods. It have been examine (table1) that 58% of people are living in pucca dwelling, 24% houses of the respondents was semi pucca and 18% of the villagers are destined to live in kuccha house houses. Only 30% respondents have toilet facilities in their house remaining 70% use open field for defecation which is disastrous for health, privacy and safety of the villagers. The important household goods owned by respondents are TV 14%, computers 12%, fridge 10%, washing machine 8%,

day. Fig 2, display that, twelve per cent people work for six hours and sixty per cent work for 6-10 hours, whereas 16 per cent respondents work more than ten hours every day.

It is money for what we are engaged in different kind of occupation and the income is the result of it. An overview of table no.2 shows that the monthly income of the 16 per cent people is less than 3000 rupees and 40 per cent of people earn 3-5 thousands rupees in a month while, 24 per cent villagers earns 5-8 thousands every month. It is found that the respondents who have large number of handlooms draw more money, 10 percent of the respondents have monthly income of 8-12 thousands while, 10 per cent were earning more than 12 thousand rupees per month. Handloom industry requires investment to get income of it. A worker has to input 5500 rupees for the output of 6000 rupees out of it, (500 rupees profit) in the sample villages. About 75% of the villagers use their own fund for the investment in the weaving whereas 20% people borrow loans from different banks and NGOs. There are various government policies, schemes and

cooperative societies to promote handloom industries.

In these villages there is dearth of agricultural land and handloom is the only source of their living. It is found that the most of the earning of the sample villages are spent on Food (60 percent), health (18 per cent), education (14 per cent), while remaining 8 per cent are spent on clothing and other necessities. The textiles made by the villagers are of pure cotton. They have to import cotton yarns from southern states of India especially Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. The final product of the sampled looms 80% is directly sent to the market (fig.3). The remaining 20% are purchased by mediators on minimum price from the small handloom workers it leads to loss to the weaver. Small weavers are compelled to sell their final product to the mediator or rich traders due to dearth of money. No doubt Khalilabad (Bardahiya Bazar- on Sunday and Monday) is the only and one of the largest cotton textile markets of Uttar Pradesh. It attracts the Byapari from all over India to sell their goods especially, Bihar, Jharkhand, Ambedkarnagar, Mau, Azamgarh Gorakhpur etc. Khalilabad market benefits only to rich and big traders of the region as the big merchants have huge balance in their pocket. During off season the market of the textile gets fall sharply at that time they utilize their weakness and purchase all the final products from them.

Problems Faced By Workers

Handloom workers are facing most acute problems in carrying out their livelihood on handloom due to lack of working capital, shortage and uncertainty of electric supply, market/infrastructural problems and rising yarn prices. It is implied from Table 3 that there are various handloom borne diseases in the sampled villages. The workers frequently suffer from disease as their work is very prone to disease, therefore 20% weaver are affected by asthma, 12% by TB, and 8% workers suffered from typhoid whereas 12% and 6% of worker suffers from skin and eye sight diseases respectively. While 40 per cent respondent are of the view that they have not affected by any illness related to handloom. The problem like asthma and TB is only due to unhygienic condition of the drain and open areas.

Satisfaction Regarding Handloom Industry

Being traditional and only occupation in the sample villages every people are engaged with the handloom. The villagers are not happy with callous handling of handloom by the government. It is found in the study area that 70 per cent of the respondents are satisfied as a handloom worker because it is their ancestor's occupation and are carried out from one generation to others. They work day and night to earn the livelihood as they don't have any other source of income in the villages. The study area is predominantly an industrial area, where 90% people are landless and they don't have any agricultural land in these villages. About 55 per cent villagers are of view that handloom industry by some means has improved their economic condition.

About the incentives provided by government agencies they are of the views that it helps only to the powerful handloom owners.

The large owners hijacked and utilized all the loans and subsidies which is for poor handloom workers which makes the economic condition of the small handloom workers worst.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study we can conclude that the economic status of the handloom worker is not so good. They are lacking in education and don't have any other source of income for their livelihood. The price rise of yarn and ban and low price of their final products has discouraged them. That is why some have started to migrate to big cities for food. In order to increase the number of handloom industry in the study area the government should give incentives and interest less loan to the workers it will motivate the villages of the surrounding region. There should not be any criteria and interest for providing loans to the villagers. There should be a pressure group of the workers which act as a union and solve the different issues of the workers related to handloom industry. These sampled villages are lagging far behind in education. So, there is urgent need to develop educational institutions up to higher secondary school in their villages so that their children can get better education.

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