

ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE HANDLOOM SECTOR IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to measure the problem of living standards for handloom in India. The data is collected with the help of secondary data and the fourth handloom census 2019-20. Women have been discovered to be uneducated and hardworking in their roles as housewives and handloom weavers, resulting in a friendly and cohesive environment. The job opportunities have improved their status in the family environment as well as their economic status in society. The paper shows the majority of problems in society. The most significant physiological issue for handloom women workers is menstruation. During that period, in the name of tradition and culture, they are not permitted to work. Weaving for more than 12 hours a day, they underwent gynaecological problems too. Handloom products are clothing produced by weaving cloth on a loom that works manually without electricity. Handloom is created by weavers across the country. Handloom decorative items, handloom fabric, handloom sarees, handloom textiles, cotton clothes, and other items are examples of handloom products. The "India Handloom" brand would be evolved based on high-quality, defect-free, socially and environmentally compliant products to cater to the needs of high-end consumers looking for niche handmade products.

Key words: Handloom industry, handloom femininity, women empowerment, handloom workers.

Introduction

Women should take part in economic, educational, socio-cultural, psychological, and political participation. It represents economic independence, self-reliance, self-confidence, leadership, respect, recognition, and political, social, and legal awareness. Handloom Women's offers savings and thrift entrepreneurship activities that change women's social attitudes and status in society at the micro level; these are economic activities that contribute to women's empowerment. Empowering women means empowering the entire nation. Women constitute nearly fifty percent of the total human resources in our country. But they are economically and socially backward. Handloom women are the source of their involvement in societal affairs. In Indian society, women's status varies significantly according to their social and ethnic background.

Objectives

1. to study about the women's handloom weaver workers in India.
2. to investigate the working conditions of female handloom workers
3. to pinpoint the living issue that women face in handloom society

Women empowerment in India

According to the Handloom Census 2019-20, about 35,22,512 handloom workers were employed across the country, out of which 25,46,285 were women workers, with a share of 72.29 percent of the total handloom workers. In addition, there are around 16,87,534 women handicraft artisans registered with the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). The figures show the number of women working in the unorganised sector, namely the handlooms and handicrafts sector of the textile industry, as well as state-specific women's data.

With a view to attracting investment, boosting employment generation, and positioning itself strongly in the global textile market, the government has recently approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Textiles and the Pradhan Mantri Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM-MITRA) Scheme, which have the potential to generate large scale employment in the sector. In addition, the government is implementing various schemes, viz., the Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (A-TUFS), Schemes for the Development of the Power loom sector (power-tex), Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITP), The Scheme for Capacity Building in the Textile Sector, Jute (ICARE-Improved Cultivation and Advanced Retting Exercise), Integrated Processing Development Scheme (IPDS), Silk Samagra, National Handloom Development Programme, National Handicraft Development Programme, Integrated Wool Development Programme (IWDP), National Technical Textile Mission, etc. for the promotion and development of the textile sector on pan-India basis.

Table-1 shows that of the total male workers, 9,75,733 or 27.70 percent are engaged in weaving and allied activities, with 77,87,732 or 79.81 percent (60,1562 weaving workers and 1,77,210 allied workers) working in rural areas and the remaining 6,99,631 or 20.19 percent (15,758,717 weaving workers and 39,374 allied workers) working in urban areas, for a total of 77.80 percent for weaver workers and 22.20 percent for allied workers in both rural and urban areas.

Out of 25,46,285 female workers, 72.29 percent are engaged in weaving related activities, with the remaining 22,74,516 workers employed. There are 89.33 percent of workers in rural areas (17,54,391 weaving workers and 5,20,125 allied workers), with a residual of 2,71,769 lakh (10.67 percent) in urban areas (1,60,108 weaving workers and 1,11,661 allied workers), for a total of 75.19 percent of weaver workers and 24.81 percent of allied workers located in both rural and urban areas.

In addition to the total number of transgender workers, 494 workers represented 0.01 percent, with 403 workers representing 81.58 percent of the total in rural areas (174 weaving workers and 229 allied workers) and 91 workers representing

18.42 percent of the total in urban areas (69 persons are weaving workers and 22 persons are allied workers), while the total number of weaver workers was noticeable at 49.19 percent and allied workers were noticeable at 50.81 percent.

The majority (75.19 percent) of handloom households with workers are weaver households, so at least one member of every such household is engaged in weaving.

Table-1
Gender-wise workforce of handloom workers in India

Type of handloom workers	Rural	Urban	Total
Male Weavers	601562	157587	759149 (77.80)
Male Allied workers	177210	39374	216584 (22.20)
Total Male workers	778772 (79.81)	196961 (20.19)	975733 (27.70)
Female Weavers	1754391	160108	1914499 (75.19)
Female Allied workers	520125	111661	631786 (24.81)
Total Female workers	2274516 (89.33)	271769 (10.67)	2546285 (72.29)
Transgender Weavers	174	69	243 (49.19)
Transgender Allied workers	229	22	251 (50.81)
Total transgender workers	403 (81.58)	91 (18.42)	494 (0.01)
Grand total	3053691 (86.69)	468821 (13.31)	3522512 (100.00)

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages to total

Number of Handlooms in Various States

The handloom weaving industry in India is the second largest employment provider after agriculture, as presented in Table-2. According to the fourth all-India handloom census, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, there will be about 3,52,512 handloom weavers in the country in 2020. Though the handloom industry exists in most of the States, handlooms operating on a commercial scale are concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal. Assam has a total of 12,83,881 handloom workers, while the women's handloom workers are 11,79,507, with a share of 91.87 percent holding the top position in terms of the number of handloom workers in the country. West Bengal has a total of 6,31,447 handloom workers, while the women's workers total 3,68,864, with a share of 58.42 percent, holding the second position in terms of the number of handloom workers in the country. Tamil Nadu has 1,26,549 handloom workers out of a total of 2,43,575 in the country, accounting for more than 51.95 percent of the total and holding the third position in terms of the number of handloom workers in the country.

In Manipur, there are 2,24,684 handloom workers in the country, which covers 2,11,327 handloom women workers of the total number of handloom workers in the country, with the share of women workers at 94.06 percent and holding the fourth position in terms of the number of handloom workers in the country. In the state of Uttar Pradesh, there are 1,90,957 handloom workers in the country, which covers 93,054 handloom women workers of the total number of handloom workers in the country, with the share of women workers having 48.73 percent and holding the fifth place in terms of the number of handloom workers in the country. Andhra Pradesh has 86,398 handloom workers out of a total of 1,77,447 in the country, accounting for 48.69 percent of the total and ranking sixth in the country in terms of handloom workers. Tripura has a total of 93,589 handloom workers, with 1,37,639 women handloom workers, accounting for 68.00 percent of the total and ranking seventh in terms of the number of handloom workers in the country.

Odisha (57,640 or 48.92 percent), Arunachal Pradesh (86,398 or 48.69 percent), Karnataka (28,192 or 51.45 percent), Telangana (23,245, or 48.58 percent), Nagaland (37,142 or 85.42 percent), Mizoram (22083, or 80.19 percent), Meghalaya (30,320 or 70.88 percent), and Odisha (57,640) are the eight states. There is a very small number of handlooms in the states and union territories, like Goa (25 handloom workers, 96.15 percent), Punjab (332 handloom workers, 34.26 percent), Sikkim (673 handloom workers, 96.56 percent), Delhi (2219 handloom workers, 51.79 percent), Puducherry (1083 handloom workers, 64.08 percent), and Maharashtra (1266 handloom workers, 36.08 percent).

According to the Handloom Census of 2019-20, the total number of handloom workers is 35,22,512, which includes both weavers (26,73,891) and allied workers (8,48,621). As against the total number of weavers at 2,67,381 as per the handloom census of 2019-20, the number of weavers as per the prior handloom census (2009-10) was 43.32 lakh, and the number of weavers as per the earlier 2nd handloom census (1995) was 65 lakh, thus indicating a significant fall in total employment in the sector in recent years as compared to the earlier period. The reduction can be attributed partly to the impact of the global recession in 2008 and partly to the impact of growing competition from the decentralised powerloom and mill-made sectors. This decline in employment in the handloom sector could have social and economic implications for the weaver community if the trend persists, thereby pointing towards the urgency of bringing in appropriate reforms to reverse the trend. However, the number of weavers has declined gradually between the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th (latest) Censuses. From this, it can be concluded that the handloom households in India have been diffused across the greater length and breadth of the country.

Table-2
State-wise number of women handloom workers as per the fourth handloom census 2019-20

SL.N	States/UTs	No. of women handloom workers	Total handloom workers	Percentage to total
1	Andhra Pradesh	86398	177447	48.69
2	Arunachal Pradesh	73871	94616	78.07
3	Assam	1179507	1283881	91.87
4	Bihar	6444	12847	50.16

5	Chhattisgarh	9730	21503	45.25
6	Delhi	2219	4285	51.79
7	Goa	25	26	96.15
8	Gujarat	4725	10601	44.57
9	Haryana	14078	25542	55.12
10	Himachal Pradesh	10059	13688	73.49
11	Jammu, & Kashmir including Ladakh	13973	23328	59.90
12	Jharkhand	11614	22497	51.62
13	Karnataka	28192	54791	51.45
14	Kerala	14175	22084	64.19
15	Madhya Pradesh	9269	18072	51.29
16	Maharashtra	1266	3509	36.08
17	Manipur	211327	224684	94.06
18	Meghalaya	30320	42774	70.88
19	Mizoram	22083	27540	80.19
20	Nagaland	37142	43484	85.42
21	Odisha	57640	117836	48.92
22	Puducherry	1083	1690	64.08
23	Punjab	332	969	34.26
24	Rajasthan	6244	10090	61.88
25	Sikkim	673	697	96.56
26	Tamil Nadu	126549	243575	51.95
27	Telangana	23245	47852	48.58
28	Tripura	93589	137639	68.00
29	Uttar Pradesh	93054	190957	48.73
30	Uttarakhand	8595	12561	68.43
31	West Bengal	368864	631447	58.42
All India		2546285	3522512	72.29

Source: Fourth all India handloom census 2019-20, Ministry of textiles, Government of India.

Note: Total workers includes both weavers and allied workers

Conclusion

I feel handloom weavers can't survive if they don't change. In specific, this change doesn't improve the structural position of women except for a shift in their physique. Women's skills and social standing would suffer as a result. Only long-term vision and strong policies and schemes can protect women weavers and their custodians, and in particular, the frequent supply of raw materials will exempt this art and its barriers from the list of endangered traditional arts. The number of employees in the handloom industry has decreased compared to the previous year. There is also the important economic problem of providing incentives to the weavers. Even Jawaharlal Nehru wanted the weavers to shift from handloom weaving to mechanization. He says, "I feel handloom weavers can't survive if they don't change according to the change in industrialization." In specific, this change does not improve the structural position of women except through a shift in their skills and an increased burden on their physique.

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