



"Market Access and Sustainability in the Handloom Weaving Industry of Mothkur, Telangana: Challenges and Opportunities"

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ABSTRACT:

This dissertation investigates the challenges faced by handloom weavers in Mothkur, Telangana, and explores opportunities for growth and sustainability in the industry. The study employed qualitative research methods, including individual interviews with 11 weavers, and analyzed the data using thematic analysis.

The findings of the study reveal significant challenges faced by handloom weavers in Mothkur, including limited market access, financial constraints, inadequate skill development opportunities, and limited social welfare support. Despite these challenges, the weavers exhibit immense resilience, creativity, and dedication to their craft.

The study identified several opportunities for improving the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Mothkur, such as strengthening government schemes, enhancing market access, promoting financial inclusion, enhancing skill development, promoting social welfare, strengthening producer-consumer linkages, and fostering innovation and creativity.

The dissertation provides recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders to support the handloom weavers in Mothkur and promote the sustainability and growth of the handloom weaving industry in the region. These recommendations include policy interventions, capacity building initiatives, market promotion strategies, financial inclusion measures, social welfare programs, and collaborations with designers and creative professionals.

KEYWORDS: HANDLOOM, WEAVERS, CHALLENGES etc

INTRODUCTION:

The handloom weaving industry is a traditional craft that has been practiced for centuries, providing livelihoods to millions of weavers across the globe. Handloom weaving holds cultural significance, reflecting the rich heritage and artistic skills of communities involved in this craft. In India, handloom weaving is an integral part of the textile sector, contributing to the socio-economic development of numerous rural and semi-urban areas. However, despite its cultural and economic importance, the handloom weaving industry faces various challenges that impact the livelihoods of weavers and the sustainability of this craft.

Mothkur, a small village located in the state of Telangana, India, is known for its handloom weaving industry. Handloom weaving has been a traditional occupation in Mothkur, passed down through generations. The village is home to many skilled handloom weavers who produce exquisite handloom products such as sarees, dress materials, and home furnishings. These handloom products from Mothkur are known for their intricate designs, vibrant colors, and high-quality craftsmanship.

The handloom weaving industry in Mothkur, like many other handloom clusters in India, faces numerous challenges that impact the socio-economic conditions of weavers and the growth of the industry. These challenges include lack of market access, inadequate financial resources, limited skill development opportunities, inadequate social welfare support, and infrastructure issues. The complex interplay of these challenges often leads to low income, low bargaining power, and limited upward mobility for handloom weavers in Mothkur and other similar regions.

As a result, it becomes crucial to study and understand the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Mothkur, their challenges, and opportunities for growth and sustainability. This dissertation aims to explore these aspects through a comprehensive study of the handloom weaving industry in Mothkur, Telangana. The findings of this study can contribute to the existing knowledge and understanding of the handloom weaving industry, and provide insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers to address the socio-economic issues faced by handloom weavers and promote the sustainability and growth of this craft in Mothkur and similar regions.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Nikhata Sultana, Prof. Mohd Akbar Ali Khan (2016): The paper on “Role of Comprehensive Programmes in Development of Siricilla Powerloom Sector in Telangana State”. The study covered textile industry overview, Telangana State Industrial Policy and programmes of powerloom sector.

Dr. J Ramola Premalatha (2018): The paper titled “A Study on problems faced by powerloom weavers in Vellore district” studies the economic conditions, problems faced by powerloom weavers in Vellore district. The study reveals that they suffer a lot due to their poor socio economic conditions and health issues. The main problem of this industry is less knowledge about the insurance claims. It is found that most of the workers engaged in power loom industries in Vellore District are illiterate in the sense that they have no idea about the various provisions of the Legislative and Welfare Acts as well as health insurance.

Prof. Shobha.N(2018): The paper titled “Problems and Prospects of Powerloom Industry -A Case of Gadag District” says that, it may be mentioned that the establishment of Power loom Policy has given great importance for the growth and development of small Industries Power loom units.

Srabani Sanyal and Ram Yash (2019): The paper titles “Performance of Unorganized powerloom Industry in India: A Review” revealed that the number of powerlooms has increased to 25.74 lakh by 2016. The cloth production by powerloom industry has been approximately 3700 million sq. m. in 2015-16 which account more than 60% of the total cloth production in the country.

Vangala Rama(2021): The paper on “Socio economic conditions of Handloom weavers in Telangana state” reveals that most of the respondents reside working status in co-operative weavers (62.5%).Majority of the respondents reside on source of procurement, co-operative (87.50).Most of the respondents reside on mode of payment credit (80%).

Parvez Ahmed, Zeba Sheereen(2022) : The paper on “A Study of Socio-Economic Conditions of Handloom Weavers in Uttar Pradesh of India” reveals that there is a lack of education among handloom weavers, and the study shows that most have never attended school. It is concluded that the majority of the weavers, i.e. about 55 per cent of weavers, were working as independent, followed by master weavers of about 40 per cent. It is found that the majority, i.e. 59.5 per cent of the weaver households, belong to the income group of Rs. less than 5,000.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research design for this study was qualitative in nature, utilizing individual interviews as the primary data collection method. Individual interviews were conducted with 11 handloom weavers from Mothkur, Telangana, to gather in-depth insights into their work, income, and socio-economic conditions.

The participants for this study were handloom weavers residing in Mothkur, Telangana. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants based on their occupation as handloom weavers and their willingness to participate in the study. The participants were diverse in terms of age, gender, work experience, and income levels, to ensure a representative sample.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To understand the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Mothkur, Telangana.
2. To identify the challenges faced by handloom weavers in Mothkur in terms of market access, finance, skill development, social welfare, and infrastructure.
3. To explore the opportunities for improving the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Mothkur.

4. To provide recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders to support the handloom weavers in Mothkur and promote the sustainability and growth of the handloom weaving industry in the region.

INTERVIEWS IN TABULAR FORM

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Educational level</u>	<u>Family Income</u>	<u>Years of Weaving</u>
Swapna	45	Female	Illiterate	< Rs. 20,000	20 years
Ragoti Srinivas	35	Male	10 th class	< Rs. 30,000	15 years
Sujatha	44	Female	Illiterate	< Rs. 12,000	20 years
Dasharadha	45	Male	6 th class	< Rs. 12,000	20 years
Srinivas	33	Male	12 th class	< Rs. 40,000	12 years
Innaya	46	Male	Illiterate	< Rs. 10,000	30 years
J. Satayya	57	Male	Illiterate	< Rs. 10,000	40 years
Nagaraj	43	Male	12 th class	< Rs. 40,000	25 years
Ramesh	45	Male	5 th class	< Rs. 12,000	25 years
Giri	45	Male	7 th class	< Rs. 12,000	25 years
K Ramesh	48	Male	8 th class	< Rs. 50,000	30 years

Participant	Challenges	Support Needed	Opportunities
Swapna	Lack of capital, low market demand	Access to finance, market linkages	Government schemes, training programs
Ragoti Srinivas	Lack of innovation, stiff competition	Design support, marketing assistance	Government schemes, exhibitions
Sujatha	Low market demand, lack of skill diversity	Skill development, market linkages	Online platforms, government schemes
Dasharadha	Low prices, poor working conditions	Better prices, working capital	Design support, training programs
Srinivas	High competition, lack of innovation	Design support, better marketing channels	Government schemes, collaborations with designers

Innaya	Poor working conditions, low market demand	Better prices, working capital	Design support, training programs
J Sattaya	Lack of access to markets, stiff competition	Market linkages, financial assistance	Collaboration with designers, exhibitions
Nagaraj	Low prices, lack of government support	Better prices, working capital	Government schemes, capacity building
Ramesh	Low prices, lack of innovation	Design support, better marketing channels	Collaboration with designers, government schemes
Giri	Poor working conditions, low prices	Better working conditions, better prices	Skill development, financial assistance
K Ramesh	Lack of innovation, low market demand	Access to finance, market linkages	Government schemes, exhibitions

Themes that emerged from the interview transcripts along with quotes from the participants:

Theme 1: Importance of handloom industry

Participant	Response
Sujatha	"Handloom industry is an important source of livelihood for many people in our village. It has been a tradition that has been passed on for generations."
Srinivas	"Handloom is a part of our cultural heritage. It not only provides livelihood but also keeps our traditions alive."
Ramesh	"Handloom is very important for our community as it is a source of income and also helps in preserving our culture and tradition."

Theme 2: Challenges faced by handloom weavers

Participant	Response
Ragoti Srinivas	"The biggest challenge we face is the lack of marketing and promotion. We are not able to reach a wider audience and this affects our sales."
Nagaraj	"Lack of government support is a major challenge for us. We don't get any financial aid or technical assistance which is very important for the growth of our business."
Ramesh	"We face a lot of competition from power loom and machine-made products. They are cheaper and faster to produce, which makes it difficult for us to compete."

Theme 3: Impact of handloom industry on women empowerment

Participant	Response
Dasharadha	"Handloom has provided a platform for women to showcase their skills and earn an income. This has helped in empowering women in our community."
Sujatha	"Women have always been a part of the handloom industry. But now, they are playing a bigger role in the decision-making process and are getting more opportunities to learn and grow."
Swapna	"Handloom has given women an opportunity to be financially independent and contribute to the household income. This has boosted their confidence and self-esteem."

Theme 4: Role of government in supporting handloom industry

Participant	Response
Innaya	"Government should provide more financial aid and technical support to the handloom industry. This will help in upgrading our skills and infrastructure."
K Ramesh	"Government should take steps to promote handloom products both nationally and internationally. This will help in increasing our market reach and boost sales."
Giri	"Government should provide subsidies for raw material and also for setting up new handloom units. This will encourage more people to take up handloom weaving as a profession."

Theme 5: Future of handloom industry

Participant	Response
J Sattaya	"Handloom industry has a bright future if we are able to adapt to changing market trends and focus on quality products."
Ramesh	"We need to focus on innovation and design to stay relevant in the market. We need to offer something unique that power looms cannot replicate."
Srinivas	"We need to pass on our traditional knowledge and skills to the younger generation so that they can carry forward our legacy and keep our cultural heritage alive."

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:

The residents of Mothkur belonging to Padmashali community were predominantly indulged in the weaving. Both men and women of Mothkur village excessively depended on weaving for their livelihood. They have maggams (weaving machines) in the Kharkhana (place where they work) and other people also have maggams at their houses. The space and weaving machines in the Kharkhana are provided by the government. From the 11 respondents that we have interviewed, 8 of them have only weaving as their 'only means of living'. The husband of Swapna (our respondent from kharkhana) is working in Rythu Seva Kendram, so for her family weaving was not the livelihood. Srinivas (who has his own mogga at home and is a master weaver) has a small general (kirana) store at his home and also plays the role of master weaver for 3 weavers. The secondary income earning by the number of families is very limited is what we could infer. The income of the weavers is based on the material they weave. Largely, sarees are weaved in the handloom society. Besides sarees, there are also towels and dress materials. Silk sarees with the intense designs are paid higher prices than any other material.

1.Gender: Both men and women play a pivotal role in the process of weaving. Activities like dying, drying the coloured yarn, separating and weaving are done by both genders. But men dominate the activities related to monetary transactions and decision making. The three master weavers that we have interviewed were male and it is the role of the master weavers to purchase the raw materials and sell it in the wholesale markets or to other dealers/ middlemen. The design of the sarees were decided by the master weavers who are men and also the wages that are to be paid to the labourers are decided by the master weavers according to the designs and materials.

2.Caste: Weaving can be inferred as a hereditary occupation because it is being transferred from their grandparents and their fathers. Padmashaali caste is entrusted with the activity of weaving. But it's explicitly urged that they do not want their children to continue this occupation. The reason they stated was due to low level of income which has not resulted in any form of upliftment or changes in their lives. All the respondents have claimed that their future generation have to be educated and should not be struck in the caste occupation. Furthermore, the intermediaries also seem to be continuing their family business of purchasing the raw materials and marketing the final products.

3.Class: The economic status plays a very important role in explaining the power one exercises in the process of production and marketing. Depending upon the designs and sarees, the weavers receive their income. Dashrath(respondent) told us that on weaving 16 dress materials he receives only 10,000, whereas the master weaver would get a benefit of 1000 per dress material. Despite of receiving bare minimum incomes, they continue to work under the respective middle men.

4.Authority: This analysis is pertained to the position one holds in the handloom society; the rest was already discussed in the above. There were two instances to point out the operation of power in this context. Firstly, one of the weavers working in the Kharkhana accused that the head of the society is corrupt. The weaver was reluctant to continue this conversation when the head is either observing or approaching us. However, the head told us that due to lack of funds from the government and overdue of the loans taken, the middlemen play a greater role in Mothkur handloom society.

5. Economic Challenges: The interviews with the handloom weavers revealed that many of them face economic challenges, including low income and financial instability. For instance, weavers like Sujatha, Dasaradha, and J. Satayya mentioned that they struggle to earn a sufficient income from handloom weaving, and often have to depend on intermediaries for work and payments. Nagaraj, the intermediary, pays low wages to Ramesh and Giri, which indicates a lack of fair compensation for the handloom weavers.

6. Social Challenges: The interviews also highlighted social challenges faced by handloom weavers in Mothkur. Innaya, Srinivas, and Giri mentioned that they are dependent on other individuals or intermediaries for work, indicating a lack of independence and autonomy in their work. Additionally, J. Satayya mentioned that he weaves cotton sarees at home, indicating that he may face isolation and limited social interaction due to his work.

7. Government Support: Some handloom weavers, like Innaya and Srinivas, mentioned receiving subsidies from the government. Innaya mentioned receiving a subsidy for raw materials, while Srinivas mentioned

receiving a 40% subsidy for his weaving business. This indicates that there are government initiatives in place to support handloom weavers in Mothkur, which could be considered as an opportunity for the weavers.

8. Market Opportunities: Interviews with Nagaraj and K. Ramesh revealed market opportunities for handloom weavers in Mothkur. Nagaraj mentioned selling sarees at a higher price compared to what he pays to the weavers, indicating a profit margin. K. Ramesh mentioned selling a considerable number of sarees per month, indicating a demand for handloom products in the market.

Suggestions

1. Promote government schemes:

One of the key suggestions for improving the handloom weaving industry in Mothkur, Telangana is to promote the existing government schemes that are aimed at uplifting the handloom sector. The government of India and the state government of Telangana have several schemes and programs in place to support handloom weavers, provide financial assistance, and promote their products in domestic and international markets.

2. Skill upgradation:

Another crucial aspect of improving the handloom weaving industry in Mothkur is to focus on skill upgradation of the weavers. Weavers should be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to compete in the market, produce high-quality products, and adapt to changing customer preferences.

3. Technology upgradation:

Technology can play a crucial role in improving the handloom weaving industry in Mothkur. The adoption of modern machines and equipment can significantly enhance the quality and quantity of the handloom products, reduce labor-intensive processes, and improve the overall efficiency of the weaving process.

4. Market linkages:

Creating effective market linkages is crucial for the success of handloom weavers in Mothkur. Weavers should have access to wider markets, both domestic and international, to sell their products at fair prices and sustain their livelihoods. Efforts should be made to establish direct market linkages between weavers and buyers, eliminating intermediaries and ensuring that weavers get a fair share of the value chain.

5. Financial support:

Access to finance is crucial for handloom weavers in Mothkur to invest in raw materials, equipment, and other resources, and sustain their weaving businesses. However, weavers often face challenges in accessing formal credit due to lack of collateral, documentation, and credit history.

6. Capacity building:

Capacity building is an essential component of supporting handloom weavers in Mothkur. Weavers should be equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to manage their weaving businesses efficiently and sustainably. Capacity building initiatives can focus on various aspects, including technical skills, entrepreneurship skills, marketing skills, and social skills.

7. Social security:

Social security measures are crucial to ensure the well-being and welfare of handloom weavers in Mothkur. Weavers often face various social risks such as health risks, income volatility, and vulnerability to natural disasters. Social security measures can provide a safety net to protect weavers from such risks and ensure their social well-being.

8. Social welfare measures:

Social welfare measures are important to address the social needs and concerns of handloom weavers in Mothkur. Weavers often face various social issues such as education, housing, sanitation, and gender-based discrimination. Social welfare measures can help in addressing these issues and improving the overall well-being of weavers.

9. Market linkages and value addition:

Market linkages and value addition are critical for handloom weavers in Mothkur to access better markets, command higher prices for their products, and improve their income levels. Efforts should be made to connect weavers with markets through various channels such as exhibitions, trade fairs, e-commerce platforms, and collaborations with designers and retailers. This can help weavers in Mothkur to showcase their products, expand their customer base, and access higher value markets.

10. Access to technology and innovation:

Access to technology and innovation is crucial for handloom weavers to enhance their productivity, efficiency, and competitiveness. Efforts should be made to provide weavers with access to modern technologies, tools, and equipment that can improve their weaving processes and product quality. This can include initiatives such as providing electronic dobby machines, digital jacquard machines, and other modern weaving equipment that can help weavers produce complex and high-quality designs more efficiently.

12. Collaboration and networking:

Collaboration and networking can play a crucial role in promoting the handloom sector in Mothkur. Weavers can benefit from collaborating with other stakeholders such as designers, retailers, NGOs, research institutions, and government agencies to access resources, knowledge, and expertise that can enhance their weaving practices and market access.

13. Online Shopping:

With the increasing penetration of the internet and e-commerce, online shopping can be a significant avenue for promoting handloom products from Mothkur. Weavers can leverage online platforms to showcase their products, reach a wider customer base, and expand their market beyond geographical boundaries.

CONCLUSION:

The handloom weaving industry in Mothkur, Telangana, is a significant source of livelihood for the local weavers and their families. Through the interviews conducted with 11 handloom weavers in Mothkur, valuable insights have been gained into their socio-economic conditions, challenges faced, and the potential for improvements in the sector.

The findings from the interviews highlight that the handloom weavers in Mothkur are skilled artisans who are passionate about their craft. However, they face numerous challenges, including low income, irregular demand, lack of access to modern technology and marketing opportunities, financial difficulties, and dependence on intermediaries for raw materials and marketing support. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges, resulting in decreased demand and disruptions in the supply chain.

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