



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Volume - 2

Editors

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EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN HANDLOOM WEAVERS- AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract

Women have always been revered as a source of strength. In the early periods of Indian history during the Vedic Age, women's status and rights were arguably the most respected. The nineteenth century, which saw numerous political and social movements, was a significant period in the history of Indian Women. Women banded together under British control and began taking part in the country's freedom war. The final stage of the struggle for freedom made it clear that Indian women were willing to give anything up for a good cause. The suppressed women and the impoverished had become aware of these movements and social reforms, and they started to fight for their own rights. As the backbone of India's rural industrialization and one of the largest sectors on which women workers significantly rely for a living in both rural and urban areas, handloom weaving has long been one of the most traditional cottage industry. Along with India's most advanced textile machinery, handloom weaving is still available. The goal of the current study, which takes a gender perspective, is to examine the socio-economic status of the women weavers employed in the weaving industry of Udumalpet Taluk, Tirupur District and focus the role of government to improve the handloom sector in India.

Keywords: Social Reforms, Empowerment of Women, Women Weavers.

Introduction

"There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless conditions of women are improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly only with one wing."

- Vivekananda

Women participate in almost every industrial sector. Women used to prefer weaving as profession which they may think safe and secure though it is a restless activity and not considered much of a profitable occupation. The Ninth Five Year

Plan commits to empower women through creating and enabling environment where women can freely exercise their right both within and outside their home, as equal partner along with men. The objective of the plan is to equip women with necessary skills in the modern upcoming trades which could keep them gainfully engaged besides making them economically independent and self-reliant; and to increase access to credit through setting up of a 'Development Bank for Women Entrepreneurs' in small and tiny sectors. The Census of India, 2011 reveals that 25.5 percentage women in India have participated in the workforce. However majority of the women working in cottage and small scale industries are paid quite low. The handloom sector has been one of the most traditional cottage industries and has been the mainstay of rural industrialization in India and one of the largest industries where women workers depend heavily for livelihood both in rural and urban areas. This handloom weaving still continues alongside the most modern textile machinery in India.

Status of Women in the World

It is understandable that the status of women worldwide is imbalance and disparity in participation of women in the areas of political governing bodies, education, health and prevalence of violence. There is inequality in the opportunity given to girls for their formal school education worldwide. Of the world's nearly one billion illiterate adults, two-thirds are women. Women outlive men in almost every country. There are slightly fewer women than men in the world, 98.6 women for every 100 men. Around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime.

Status of Women in India

Indian projected population for 2021 was 136.3 crore, out of which the female population is around 48.6% and women workers constitute 17.5 per cent of the total workforce in the country (Census2021). A fluctuating trend emerged in the participation rate of this segment of India's workforce since 2016. Meanwhile, the participation at work for women in the country dipped from around 36 percent in 2021 to a little over 33 percent in 2022. The Census of India (2001) estimated that 21 per cent women participate in economic development. Almost 50 per cent of the rural workers were reported female of whom 55 per cent were reported as cultivators and only 24 per cent as agricultural labourers. Three-fourth of Indian women lives in rural areas, comprising around 5, 00,000 villages.

Women in Handloom Sector

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% of the total handloom workers. In addition, there are around 16,87,534 Women Handicraft artisans registered with Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). According to 4th all India Handloom census 2019-2020 there are 25,46,285 workers are in handloom sector. In India, hundreds of women who weave cloth by hand. They work from their cottages, often in very remote, rural areas. Their looms are at home so that they can attend to their household duties and nurture their children a while and at the same time, earn an income for their families. Man provides partnership in this demanding live hood mainly by selling and taking all the credit. The handloom in India is a neglected national treasure like the Indian women. Based on this information, the research study has the following objectives;

Objectives of the study

The major objectives of the study are:

- To study the socio economic status of the women handloom weavers
- To focus the problems faced by women handloom weavers in the study area
- To suggest the government measures to improve the status of women handloom weavers.

Scope of the Study

The empowerment of women in handloom sector is necessary during the present scenario. The study throws light on the socio-economic aspects of the sample respondents and the remedial measures to improve the status of women weavers.

Review of Literature

Shanmuga Priya and Sakthi (2015) have studied in their research, 'social media a tool for economic empowerment of women' that social media is a part of everyday life and also evolved with technological solutions for entrepreneurial ventures for women. This study also provides a new direction for enabling to provide the necessary technological education that this information era requires.

Ricky Roni Boruah, Satvinder Kaur(2015) in their research reveals that central and state Govt. have evolved many schemes to uplift the economic conditions by providing incentives in the form of grants and loans to impart training on new

designs, modernization of looms, etc. but handloom wearing units continue to be in the grip of problems.

K. Rari John and S. Kamini (2016) conducted a study on the Socio-economic status of women entrepreneurs in Handloom sector. This study focuses on technological backwardness and unsatisfactory working environments and tries to find out constraints encountered by the women entrepreneur weavers.

Methodology

The main source of the data is from the women's handloom weavers who are working as independent weavers. This study is based on both primary data and secondary data. The primary data is collected through interview schedule from the random sample of 85 respondents who lives in Valavadi Village, Udumalpet Taluk. The collected data is tabulated and analyzed with reference to the objectives of the study. Secondary data are collected from Government reports of the Government organizations i.e. the Handloom and Textile Department, Central Silk Board, Regional Office, publications in newspapers and journals.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

According to the primary data the following inferences are observed in the research study:

The age of the respondents: out of the respondents, 5 per cent respondents belongs in the age group of 19 to 25 years, 15 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of 26- 30 years, following 20 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of 31 to 35 years and remaining, 60 per cent of the respondents belongs to the age group of 36 and above years.

Majority of the respondents i.e. 75 per cent having primary and secondary education level 10 per cent have completed degree and only 5 percent women are illiterate.

The type of family in which respondents are living: Out of respondents, 20 percent of weaving women are Joint family and about 80 percent of weaving women are living in Nuclear family.

The numbers of looms having by weavers: nearly half of the respondents, 45 per cent, weavers having only one loom, like wise 35 per cent of the weavers having 2 to 4 looms and remaining, very less number of the respondents, 20 per cent weavers having 5 to 7 looms weaver's dominant as well as rich family.

The respondent's opinion on reason for opt the weaving occupation: Majority of the respondents i.e. 60 per cent, expressed their occupation by hereditary. Following, nearly one fifth of the respondents i.e. 30 per cent, opined that they have

other job's ideas along with this occupation and remaining respondents i.e. 10 per cent, have expressed that easy to do. Therefore, more number of people involved few of the people engaged weaving work due to nature of work easy and affordable.

The respondent's opinion on satisfaction of the income of weaving. Majority of the respondents i.e. 85 per cent have expressed that do not satisfied of income incurred by weaving. Less number of the respondents i.e. 15 per cent, have expressed the positive opinion on the income of weaving.

The opinion on the problems of the weaver facing are analyzed. Majority of the respondents i.e. 73 per cent, expressed their problems like eye, back pain, leg pain etc. and remaining the respondents 27 per cent, opined that they have physically and mentally stressed. Women are facing several problems in the weaving condition; it made her physically and mentally. Weaving occupation need to keen observation in all times. Therefore, its impact made on health conditions. Hence, The Ministry of Textiles has been taking following initiatives for the benefits of handloom weavers and promote welfare of the society:

- i. To support the handloom and handicraft sectors and to enable wider market for handloom weavers/artisans/producers, steps have been taken to on-board weavers on Government e-Market place (GeM) to enable them to sell their products directly to various Government Departments and organizations.
- ii. To promote e-marketing of handloom products, a policy frame work was designed and under which any willing e-commerce platform with good track record can participate in online marketing of handloom products. Accordingly, 23 e-commerce entities have been engaged for on-line marketing of handloom products.
- iii. Social media campaign #Vocal 4 handmade was launched on the 6th National Handloom Day by the Government, in partnership with all stakeholders, to promote the handloom legacy of India and to ensure people's support for the weaving community.

The financial assistance is provided for raw materials, purchase of looms and accessories, design innovation, product diversification, infrastructure development, skill up gradation, lighting units, marketing of handloom products and loan at concessional rates through the schemes such as;

- i. National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP)
- ii. Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS)
- iii. Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme (HWCWS)
- iv. Yarn Supply Scheme (YSS)

Conclusion

Since the dawn of civilization, women have always had a significant impact on the socioeconomic growth of society. Younger generations are changing their interest in weaving both hand looms and power looms using computerization and new weavers are interested in clothing with computer-aided design. Handloom Weaving not only provides options, it also improves women's traditional craft-making abilities while providing them with secure access to product and small business development, marketing expertise, and the ability to empower women weavers with the necessary tools to combat marginalization, poverty, and gender discrimination. These women weavers will be able to support themselves using their traditional talents by receiving marketing assistance, government assistance, and basic training facilities.

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