THE STUDY ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN DHARAPURAM TALUK, TIRUPUR DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT--
The handloom industry is a vital part of India's cultural and economic heritage, particularly in rural areas. Handloom sector, which involves manually weaving textiles using traditional looms without electricity, is a labor-intensive craft practiced by skilled artisans. This study investigates the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Dharapuram taluk, Tirupur District, considering variables such as age, gender, and education and family type and income. The study emphasizes the urgent need for enhanced support systems and effective policy implementation to ensure the sustainability and growth of the handloom Industry. Data were collected from 50 respondents using simple random sampling method through structured questionnaires and personal interviews. Analytical tools were used Mean, ANOVA, and Chi-square Test, were used for analysis.
KEY WORDS: *Handloom Weavers, Income, Expenditure, Government Scheme, Subsidies, Etc-----------------------*

INTRODUCTION

The handloom industry in India is one of the oldest and most culturally significant sectors, deeply rooted in rural life and tradition. With a rich history spanning over 2,000 years, it has played a vital role in shaping the country's economic and cultural landscape. Across India, various regions have developed their own distinctive weaving techniques, patterns, and textiles, contributing to a diverse and vibrant handloom tradition. The industry witnessed remarkable growth under different dynasties, particularly during the Mughal era, when artisans produced luxurious fabrics such as muslin, silk, and brocade that were highly prized both nationally and internationally. Handloom, which involves manually weaving textiles using traditional looms without electricity, is a labor-intensive craft practiced by skilled artisans. This age-old technique, also prevalent in countries like Bangladesh and parts of Africa and Southeast Asia, yields unique products made from natural fibers like cotton, silk, wool, and linen, known for their intricate designs and vibrant colors. During India's independence movement, the handloom sector especially Khadi emerged as a symbol of self-reliance and resistance to colonialism. Even today, it remains a crucial part of the country's textile industry, reflecting regional identities through diverse weaving styles and fabric types. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to explore the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in the selected region of Dharapuram Taluk, Tirupur District in Tamil Nadu state.

REVIEW OF LITERTURE

Aswani et.al., (2024): This study explores the challenges facing the handloom industry in Chendamangalam, Kerala. Using descriptive research and interviews with 150 weavers and cooperative officials, it highlights key issues such as competition from power looms, falling incomes, and inadequate government support. The findings underscore the need for urgent government intervention, stricter control of counterfeit products, and better implementation of support programs to ensure the industry's growth and sustainability.

Das et. al., (2024): This study proposes a deep learning method to authenticate traditional handloom textiles in Assam, aiming to protect cultural heritage and support local economies. Using a dataset of 25,216 images across six categories, a modified deep metric learning model achieved 97.8per cent accuracy, outperforming existing methods. The system offers a reliable tool for verifying textile authenticity, promoting the sustainability of traditional industries

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
- To study on socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Dharapuram Taluk, Tirupur district.
- To know about government schemes and subsidies received by handloom weavers within the study area

METHODOLOGY
The study was conducted in Dharapuram Taluk, located in Tirupur District. A total of 50 respondents were selected through a random sampling method. A preliminary survey was also carried out to refine the questionnaire and interview schedule. Data collection involved distributing structured questionnaires and conducting personal interviews to gather relevant information. Field investigations took place between December 2024 to January 2025. The study primarily focused on understanding the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Age, Gender and Educational Status of the Respondents

Types of Loom	Gender of the Respondent		Total	Education of the Respondent					Total	Descriptive statistics	Average Age of the Respondents
	Male	Female		Illiterate	Primary	Secon dary	Higher Secondary	Collage			
Traditional	23 (79.3) [52.3]	6 (20.7) [100.0]	29 (100.0) (58.0)	2 (6.9) [66.7]	20 (69.0) [76.9]	5 (17.2) [41.7]	2 (6.9) [28.6]	0 (0.0) (0.0)	29 (100.0) (58.0)	**Mean S.D N**	56.48 8.895 29
Modern	21 (100.0) [47.7]	0 (0.0) (0.0)	21 (100.0) [42.0]	1 (4.8) [33.3]	6 (28.6) [23.1]	7 (33.3) [58.3]	5 (23.8) [71.4]	2 (9.5) [100.0]	21 (100.0) (42.0)	**Mean S.D N**	46.24 9.959 21
Total	44 (88.0) [100.0]	6 (12.0) [100.0]	50 (100.0) [100.0]	3 (6.0) [100.0]	26 (52.0) [100.0]	12 (24.0) [100.0]	7 (14.0) [100.0]	2 (4.0) [100.0]	50 (100.0) [100.0]	**Mean S.D N**	52.18 10.573 50
Chi square	.026			.033						ANOVA	.000

Source: Primary source
Note: Figures in parenthesis () indicates row wise per cent [] indicates column wise percentage

Table 1 show the data on the age, gender, and educational status of respondents categorized by the type of loom they use. Among traditional loom users, 79.3 per cent are male and 20.7 per cent are female, with most of the respondent having primary education 69 per cent. The average age for this group is 56.48 years. In contrast, modern loom users are exclusively male (100per cent), with a more diverse educational background; 33.3per cent have secondary education, and 23.8per cent have higher secondary education. Their average age is lower at 46.24 years. Overall, 88per cent of respondents are male and 12per cent female, with primary education being the most common (52per cent). The total average age across all respondents is 52.18 years.

Table 2: House and Family Type of the Respondents

Type of Loom	House Type		Total	Family Type		Total	Descriptive Statistics	Family Male	Family Female	Family Total
	Tiled	Concrete		Nuclear	Joint					
Traditional	26 (89.7) [60.5]	3 (10.3) [42.9]	29 (100.0) [58.0]	28 (96.6) [58.3]	1 (3.4) [50.0]	29 (100.0) [58.0]	**Mean SD N**	1.10 .673 29	1.24 .689 29	2.34 .974 29
Modern	17 (81.0) [39.5]	4 (19.0) [57.1]	21 (100.0) [42.0]	20 95.2 41.7	1 4.8 50.0	21 100.0 42.0	**Mean SD N**	1.57 .746 21	1.76 .768 21	3.29 .956 21
Total	43 (86.0) [100.0]	7 (14.0) [100.0]	50 (100.0) (100.0)	48 96.0 100.0	2 4.0 100.0	50 100.0 100.0	**Mean SD N**	1.30 .746 50	1.46 .762 50	2.74 1.065 50
Chi square	.381 [NS]			.669			AVONA	.025	.015	.001

Source: Primary survey
Note: Figures in parenthesis () indicates row wise per cent [] indicates column wise percentage

Table.2 presents data on the house type and family structure of respondents based on the loom type they use. Among traditional loom users, 89.7per cent live in tiled houses, and only 10.3per cent live in concrete houses. Most of them (96.6per cent) belong to nuclear families, while 3.4per cent are in joint families. In contrast, 81per cent of modern loom users reside in tiled houses, and 19per cent in concrete houses. Their family structure is more balanced, with 95.2per cent in nuclear families and 4.8per cent in joint families. Overall, 86per cent of respondents live in tiled houses, and 14per cent in concrete houses, with nuclear families being the dominant type (96per cent). The family size among traditional loom users is smaller (2.34 members on average) compared to modern loom users (3.29 members). The overall family size is 2.74.

Table 3: Main and Subsidiary Income Status of the Respondents

Types of Loom	Descriptive Statistics	Main Income	Subsidiary income
Traditional	**Mean**	12711.72	172.41
	SD	5383.237	644.702
	N	29	29
Modern	**Mean**	20733.33	.00
	SD	6406.975	.000
	N	21	21
Total	**Mean**	16080.80	100.00
	SD	7022.039	494.872
	N	50	50
	ANAVO	.000	.228

Source: Primary survey
Note: Figures in parenthesis () indicates row wise per cent [] indicates column wise percentage

Table 3 explain the main and subsidiary income of respondents based on the type of loom they use. Traditional loom users have an average main income of ₹12,711.72, with a standard deviation of ₹5,383.24, while their subsidiary income is very low at ₹172.41. In contrast, modern loom users earn a significantly higher main income of ₹20,733.33, with a standard deviation of ₹6,406.98, and they have no subsidiary income. Overall, the combined average main income of all respondents is ₹16,080.80, with a standard deviation of ₹7,022.04. The total subsidiary income is ₹100.00 on average, indicating its minimal contribution to overall learning.

Table 4: Expenditure Pattern of Food Items of (per Month)

Type of Loom	Type of Loom	Descriptive Statistics	Expenditure of food items					
			Rice	Milk	Vegetables	Meat	Other	Total Food Items
Traditional	**Traditional**	**Mean**	733.45	457.41	432.07	643.45	643.45	3720.07
		SD	290.028	251.782	119.385	319.869	319.869	1156.359
		N	29	29	29	29	29	29
Modern	**Modern**	**Mean**	1047.62	653.57	535.71	988.10	988.10	4953.95
		SD	309.223	214.669	93.732	307.370	307.370	1229.541
		N	21	21	21	21	21	21
Total	**Total**	**Mean**	865.40	539.80	475.60	788.20	788.20	4238.30
		SD	334.110	254.163	120.003	355.744	355.744	1326.494
		N	50	50	50	50	50	50
	ANOVA		.001	.006	.002	.000	.069	.001

Source: Primary survey
Note: Figures in parenthesis () indicates row wise per cent [] indicates column wise percentage

The table 4 presents the monthly expenditure on food items among respondents using traditional and modern looms. Traditional loom users spend an average of ₹733.45 on rice, ₹457.41 on milk, ₹432.07 on vegetables, ₹643.45 on meat, and ₹643.45 on other items, totaling ₹3,720.07. In contrast, modern loom users spend significantly more, with ₹1,047.62 on rice, ₹653.57 on milk, ₹535.71 on vegetables, ₹988.10 on meat, and ₹988.10 on other items, totaling ₹4,953.95. The overall mean expenditure for all respondents is ₹4,238.30 per month.

Table 5: Sources of Borrowings by the Handloom Weavers

Type of Loom	Financial Assistance		Total	Descriptive Statistics	Initial Investment
	Government	Private			
Traditional	19 (76.0) [54.3]	6 (24.0) [66.7]	25 (100.0) [56.8]	Mean SD N	34982.76 10018.271 29
Modern	16 (84.2) [45.7]	3 (15.8) [33.3]	19 (100.0) [43.2]	Mean SD N	57952.38 14354.359 21
Total	35 (79.5) [100.0]	9 (20.5) [100.0]	44 (100.0) (100.0)	Mean SD N	44630.00 16510.606 50
Chi square	.504			ANOVA	.000

***Source*:** Primary survey
***Note*:** Figures in parenthesis () indicates row wise per cent [] indicates column wise

The table 5 presents data on the sources of borrowings for weavers based on the type of loom. Among traditional loom users, 76per cent received financial aid from the government, while 24per cent borrowed from private sources. For modern loom users, 84.2per cent r e l i e d on government aid, whereas 15.8per cent used private sources. Overall, 79.5per cent of all respondents obtained financial assistance from the government, while 20.5per cent used private borrowing. The data indicates that government support is the dominant funding source for both groups. The initial investment for traditional loom users averages ₹34,982.76, while modern loom users invest significantly more at ₹57,952.38. The overall mean investment for all weavers is ₹44,630.00.

Table 6: Awareness about the Government Schemes and Subsidies Received by the Handloom Weavers

Type of loom	Government						Total
	Subsidies		Total	Schemes			
	Yes	No		yes	No		
Traditional	25 (86.2) [55.6]	4 (13.8) [80.0]	29 (100.0) [58.0]	24 (82.8) [53.3]	5 (17.2) [100.0]	29 (100.0) [58.0]	
Modern	20 (9.52) [44.4]	1 (4.8) [20.0]	21 (100.0) [42.0]	21 (100.0) [46.7]	0 (0.0) [0.0]	21 (100.0) [42.0]	
Total	45 (90.0) [100.0]	5 (10.0) [100.0]	50 (100.0) [100.0]	45 (90.0) [100.0]	5 (10.0) [100.0]	50 (100.0) [100.0]	
Chi square	.293			.045			

***Source*:** *Primary survey*
***Note*:** Figures in parenthesis () indicates row wise per cent [] indicates column wise percentage

The table 6 presents data on the awareness of government schemes and subsidies among handloom weavers. Among traditional loom users, 86.2per cent are aware of government subsidies, while 13.8per cent are not. Similarly, 82.8per cent of traditional loom users are aware of government schemes, while 17.2per cent are unaware. Among modern loom users, 95.2per cent know about subsidies, whereas only 4.8per cent do not. Awareness of government schemes is even higher among modern loom users, with 100per cent of them being informed. Overall, 90per cent of all weavers are aware of government subsidies, while 10per cent are not. The same percentage applies to awareness of government schemes

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the critical socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Dharapuram Taluk, Tirupur District. Despite the rich cultural legacy of handloom weaving, the traditional weavers, who are mostly older and less educated, earn significantly lower income compared to their modern counterparts. Most of the respondents obtained financial assistance from the government, and the vast majority (90 Per cent) of weavers are aware of government subsidies, while ten per cent are not. Although government schemes exist, awareness and effective implementation remain limited. Strengthening financial support, improving technological access, and enhancing market opportunities are essential to sustaining the handloom sector . Immediate, targeted interventions are necessary to preserve this traditional art and ensure the livelihood of weavers.

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