ORIGINAL ARTICLE

AWARENESS, A DETERMINANT OF SOCIO DEMOGRAPHY OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS ASSOCIATED WITH RAJASTHAN RAJYA BUNKER SAHKARI SANGH OF JAIPUR DISTRICT.

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ABSTRACT –

Handloom industry is perhaps the most important one, among the hundreds of small scale and cottage arts and crafts that have survived in the present day in India. The present study concentrates on the awareness level and socio demographic profile of the handloom weavers of Jaipur district. The variables like housing, income, education, assets, child and mother mortality were analyzed to derive the socio demographic status. The study reflected the overall low level of awareness among the weavers on various aspects of cooperative society and government programmes. Analyses of socio demographic status scale depicts 56 percent respondents belonged to average category. This study further suggests various steps to strengthen the productivity of the weavers.

KEYWORDS:

Awareness, Socio-demographic, Handloom weavers, Rajasthan Rajya Bunkar Sahakari Sangh

INTRODUCTION

The Handloom textile constitutes a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of India. Tradition of weaving by hand is a part of the country's cultural ethos. As an economic activity, handloom is the 2nd largest employment provider next only to agriculture. The sector with about 35 lakh handlooms provides employment to 65 lakh persons. Weavers are the building blocks on which depends the progress of the handloom industry.

In India socio-demographic profile of handloom weavers was reviewed by Academy of management studies Napaser (2006), Infrastructure leasing (2000), UNIDO (2003), Department of women & child (2004) on different aspects such as sex, age, caste, income, education etc.

During 2011-12 production in the handloom sector is reported to be 5178 million sqr. meters. The sector has about 23.77 lakh handlooms and provides employment to 43.31 lakh persons. 95% of the world's hand woven fabric comes from India (Annual Report 11-12).

The state of Rajasthan is widely known for its significant contribution to the field of handloom. Handlooms of Rajasthan are the fruits of traditional India. Its textile products have been enjoying a high reputation for their distinctive designs and excellent workmanship. Jaipur is the heart of Rajasthan, the city has great potential for marketing and export of handloom products. Being the capital city all the head offices of major handloom government organizations are situated here. It is also the central place from which all the government policies and programmes are implemented throughout the state for the development of Handloom weavers and industry. The cooperative sector of handloom industry in Rajasthan state is operated and developed by Rajasthan Rajya Bunkar Sahakari Sangh (RRBSS), which was established in 1957. The main objective of the organization was to provide raw materials to weavers, market the handloom product & form handloom co-operative societies in the state (Samarika, 2001).All these efforts are undertaken to promote the handloom industry & to strengthen the weaver.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the awareness level of handloom weavers.
2. To study the Socio-Demographic profile of the handloom weavers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study concentrates on the socio demographic profile of the handloom weavers of Jaipur district and awareness of these weavers about the cooperative societies with whom they are attached, different development programmes run by the government. This work would give an insight that how enlightened the weaver is towards the various development programmes. A well informed weaver will influence the kind of product woven, his income and finally his socio economic status. An aware weaver can avail the various benefits given by the government and is capable of saving himself from exploitation and it will further determine his standard of living. This will enhance his quality of work directly and the handloom industry indirectly.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in Jaipur city. All the weavers from 18 active cooperative societies registered with Rajasthan Rajya Bunkar sahakari sangh formed the sample of 180 weavers. These were situated at a distance of 10 to 70 km from Jaipur. The data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary source data was collected through the Questionnaire. The Questionnaire had two sections

concentrating on awareness status of the weavers (16 items) and socio-demographic profile(29 items).For the development of questionnaire the *socio economic status scale of* G.Trivedi (1963) was taken as base & further Rao (1990) and Nambiar (1996) work on handloom weavers was consulted. The necessary modifications were made in the tool according to the objectives of the study. Questionnaires were filled with the help of interview method by the investigator herself. Secondary data was collected from published and unpublished records in the form of annual reports, survey reports, booklets and project reports, newspaper, magazines etc.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For more clarity and understanding results along with discussions are presented in Section 1 and Section 2 under the following heads:

- Section 1 comprising of awareness status of the weavers
- Section 2 comprising of socio-demographic profile

Section 1. Awareness status of the weavers

Here to probe into the situation it was necessary to know the awareness status in respect to organization & the society with whom they are attached & also about the government programme.

The president of each cooperative society was also interviewed, for the correct information and facts related to cooperative societies, present government programmes, products and designing aspects, this was done to triangulate the data.

Table No. 1: Awareness of weavers regarding cooperative societies & present government programmes

A	Awareness related to cooperative societies	Yes	No	Don't know
i	**Motive to join cooperative society**			
1	Easy availability of raw material, easy sales of product, benefit from programmes	110(61%)	70(39%)	
ii	**Awareness regarding infrastructure of society**			
2	Knows the correct no. of members in society	80(45%)	100(55%)	
3	Knows the correct no. of looms in society	50(28%)	130(72%)	
4	Knows the correct no. of working loom	50(28%)	130(72%)	
5	Knows the correct no. of idle loom	50(28%)	130(72%)	
iii	**Awareness regarding the meeting of society**			
6	Knows how many meetings are held in a month	20(12%)	80(44%)	80(44%)
7	Attend all the meetings held in a month	20(12%)	80(44%)	80(44%)
8	Knows the purpose of meeting	20(12%)	80(44%)	80(44%)
9	Facility is provided by society for weaving	40(22%)	140(78%)	
10	Facility is provided by society for personal work	40(22%)	140(78%)	
B.	**Awareness related to present government programmes**			

| 1 | Aware about the present government programmes | 100(55%) | 80(44%) | |
| 2 | Have any complaint about organisation | 50(28%) | 130(72%) | |

A. Awareness related to cooperative societies:

The awareness on various issues related to cooperative societies such as motive to join society, infrastructure of society and functioning of society was assessed as shown in Table no.1. The results show that 39 percent of the respondents were not aware about the benefits and bylaws of the cooperative society, they just joined it because their ancestors were working in this sector. They have not actually imbibed the policies of cooperative, they have not opted cooperative with choice, the main reason of their being into handloom weaving was that they were unable to get any other job and it was the last resort to earn at least minimal amount of income. The rest 61 percent respondents were aware about the various advantages of joining the cooperative society such as easy availability of raw material, easy sales of products and avail benefits from the government programmes.

It was further inquired about the awareness related to infrastructure of the society. The results revealed that only 45 percent respondents knew the correct number of members in the society and only 28 percent knew the correct number of looms, working looms and idle looms respectively. They bear the attitude of indifference towards their workplace. One reason could be that they are paid as wage earners so their concern is negligible.

The involvement of the weavers in the administrative functioning of the cooperative society shows their concern about the cooperative society. For this attributes included were information regarding number of meetings per month, participation in meeting, purpose of meetings. Table no.1 shows that only 12 percent of the respondents know the number of meetings held in a month attended all the meetings and knew the purpose of meeting respectively. Out of remaining 88 percent, 44 percent were in a state of not knowing anything regarding the functioning of society & another 44 percent did not participated in the society meeting. Results further show that 78 percent of the weaver community was unaware of the facilities provided by the society only 22 percent of respondents availed and acknowledged the facilities provided by the society. This shows that the awareness level is very poor as concerned to administrative functioning of the cooperative societies.

B. Awareness related to present government programmes:

The government has launched many programmes and schemes for the development and growth of the handloom weaver's. During the data collection, it was found that the programmes initiated in Rajasthan were Deen Dayal Prothashan Yojana, Kargha Ghar Yojana, Health Package Scheme, Naveen Bema Yojana, Millgate Scheme, and Thrift Fund Scheme. The results show that 44 percent of the weavers were unaware about the various schemes though the respondents have acquired health benefits (such as making of spectacles, eye operation), living under the work shed & participated in the training programme. One of the reasons for this could be illiteracy, as seen in table no.3 that 22 percent weavers were illiterate.

Unawareness among the weaver community makes him ignorant about his rights & benefits to be availed through programmes & fulfill his duties & social responsibilities towards his job. The results revealed that only 28 percent of the weavers had complaint with the organization they were associated.

Section 2.Socio-Demographic profile

The socio demographic profile of sample households can be examined through their demographic particulars such as sex, age, caste, type of family, no. of family members & other variables related to socio economy.

Table No.2: Distribution of respondents by Sex, Age, Caste, Family type and Family size

S.no.	Particulars	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	**Sex**		
	Male	129	72%
	Female	51	28%
	Total	**180**	
2	**Age(years)**		
	Below 20	8	4%
	20-30	39	22%
	30-40	76	42%
	40-50	29	16%
	50-60	16	9%
	Above 60	12	7%
	Total	**180**	
3	**Caste**		
	SC	162	90%
	ST	15	8%
	OBC	3	2%
	Total	**180**	
4	**Family Type**		
	Nuclear	117	65%
	Joint	63	35%
	Total	**180**	
5	**Family size (members)**		
	Small (up to 3)	30	17%
	Medium(4-6)	116	64%
	Large (more than6)	34	19%
	Total	**180**	

Sex:

Table no.2 shows that out of 180 weavers 72 percent were males and 28 percent were females. Females were generally engaged in pre loom processes such as bobbin winding, preparation of warp, which need less skill and expertise and males did the weaving and post loom process such as printing and dyeing etc

Age:

The age of the respondents varied between 20-70 years. Only 4 percent respondents were below 20 years of age and 7 percent of the total population was above 60 years. Respondents between 20-30 years of age were 22 percent. Maximum (42 percent) respondents were between 30-40years. Respondents between the age group of 40-50 years of age were 16 percent. The mean age of the respondents was 37 years**.**

Caste:

Weaving is the hereditary occupation of certain communities like Mahaval, Kohli, Regar, Balai, Bairwa, Rana, Dhanaka and Meena. The results showed that 90 percent belong to scheduled caste, 8.33 percent to schedule tribe and 1.66 percent to other backward class.

Family Type:

Table no.2 reveals the structure of family of the respondents. Results showed that out of the sample of 180 weavers 65 percent weavers lived in nuclear family and 35 percent in joint family. The reason behind this was that they were forced to live in nuclear family due to migration from villages to cities in search of work.

Family size (members):

The income as well as expenditure of the family is affected by the size of the family. Table no. 2 shows that majority (64 percent) of weavers were living in medium size family with 4-6 members. The mean family members for the sample were four.

Scoring of variables constituting the Socio demographic status scale

Table no.3 shows the percentage of weavers against different categories of the variables comprising socio demographic status. The socio demographic status scale has been computed for the weavers. For this the parameters along with scores taken into consideration for the assessment of socio economic scale have been listed in Table no.3.Housing, Income and education are given a total score of 20 each and other property and assets are given a total score of 10 each and child and mother mortality, other mortality, fuel and ownership of present house are scored on 5each.

Table No. 3: Scoring of variables of Socio demographic status scale

S.No	Variables	Category	No. of respondents	SCORES		S.No	Variables	Category	*No. of respondents*	SCORES
1	Ownership of present house	Own	36 (20%)	**5**		**3**	Fuel	Wood	24(13%)	**1**
		Rented	60(33%)	**3**				Coal	30(17%)	**2**
		Govt. society shed	84(47%)	**1**				Kerosene	45(25%)	**3**
	TOTAL		**180**	**5**				L.P.G	81(45%)	**5**
2A	Structure	*Kaccha*	9 (5%)	**1**			**TOTAL**		**180**	**5**
		Pucca	117(65%)	**5**		**4**	**Other Property**			
		Mixed	54 (30%)	**3**		**A**	Agricultural land	Yes	6(3%)	**5**
B	No. of rooms	1	84 (47%)	**1**				No	174(97%)	**0**
		2	60 (33%)	**3**		**B**	Another house	Yes	30(17%)	**5**

		3	36 (20%)	**5**			No	150(83%)	**0**
C	Separate kitchen	Yes	51 (28%)	**5**		**TOTAL**		**180**	**10**
		No	129(72%)	**0**	**5**	Assets	Radio	132(73%)	**1**
D	Separate toilet	Yes	81(45%)	**5**			T.V	51(28%)	**1**
		No	99(55%)	**0**			Tape recorder	6(3%)	**1**
	TOTAL		**180**	**20**			Mobile	40(22%)	**1**
6	Education	Illiterate	40(22%)	**5**			Fan	157(87%)	**1**
		Primary	23(13%)	**10**			Cooler	33(18%)	**1**
		Secondary	81(45%)	**15**			Sewing machine	30(17%)	**1**
		Sr.Secondary	36(20%)	**20**			Cycle	150(83%)	**1**
	TOTAL		**180**	**20**		**TOTAL**			**10**
7	Family income	`3000-5000	54(30%)	**5**	**8**	Mortality	Yes	45(25%)	**0**
		`.5001-7000	66(37%)	**10**			No	135(75%)	**5**
		`7001-9000	45(25%)	**15**		**TOTAL**		**180**	**5**
		`9001-11000	15(8%)	**20**	**A**	Child mortality	Yes		**0**
	TOTAL		**180**	**20**			No	180(100%)	**2.5**
					B	Mother mortality	Yes		**0**
							No	180(100%)	**2.5**
						TOTAL			**5**

Housing Characteristics:

The results related to housing characteristics indicated that 47 percent of the respondents lived in society shades, 33 percent of the total sample lived in rented house, 20 percent of the total weavers lived in own house. As concerned to structure of the house 65 percent lived in mixed type of houses,30 percent lived in pucca house and 5 percent lived in kaccha house.Only20 percent of the total respondents had three rooms in their house, 33 percent had two rooms and 47 percent had one room. Out of the total respondents, 28 percent of weavers had a separate kitchen, 45 percent had separate bathrooms/toilets.

When the fuel used was examined it was found that that for cooking, LPG was used by 45 percent weavers, kerosene was used by 25 percent weavers, coal was consumed by 17 percent weavers, only 13 percent weavers used wood.

The results further show that only 3 percent respondent possessed agricultural land. Ownership of other house reflected that 17 percent weavers owned other house.

Ownership of consumer durables is also an indicator of the level of well being of the household. Majority of households possessed radio (73 percent), fan (87) and cycle (83 percent). The T.V. was possessed by 28 percent

of the total respondents, about 3 percent had tape recorder and 22 percent of the total respondents had mobile. As regards with the belongingness of home appliances 18 percent respondents had cooler and 17 percent had the sewing machine as shown in Table no 3.

Education:

Education is an essential pre-requisite of all-round development of individuals towards better quality of life. The distribution of population on education basis is shown in Table no.3.The rate of literacy among weavers was very low, 22 percent were illiterate, 13 percent had education up to primary level, 45 percent were secondary pass and 20 percent were senior secondary pass.

Family Income:

The income of the weaving family reflects its standard of living. A close look at the Table no.3 shows family income scenario where the monthly income of 30 percent weavers was `3000-5000.The monthly income of 37 percent weavers was `5001-7000.Respondents having a monthly income of `7001-9000 were 25 percent. The respondents earning monthly income of `9001-11000 were 8 percent. The mean family income of the sample was `6233.

Mortality:

The results show that there was 25 percent mortality, no child and mother mortality. The reasons for mortality were natural death (10 percent), Tuberculosis (7 percent) and Asthma (8 percent)

Computation of total scores of socio demographic status:

Table no. 4 reveals the score range and its corresponding category, which shows that 56 percent of the respondents were in the average category, 29 percent belong to poor category and only 14 percent to fair category and no one was in the very poor and good category. This shows that there is a need to improve the socio demographic status of the weavers by necessary actions.

Table No.4: Computation of the Total Scores

S.No.	Categories	Range	No. of respondents
1	Very Poor	0-20	------------
2	Poor	20-40	53(29.44%)
3	**Average**	**40-60**	**101(56.11%)**
4	Fair	60-80	26(14.44%)
5	Good	80-100	-------------
	Total		**180**

CONCLUSION

Handloom industry in India is an ancient cottage industry with a decentralized set up. The industry is an age-old source of livelihood for millions of people in the country**.** The salient findings indicated that rate of literacy among weavers was very low. The mean family income of the sample was `6233 & mean family members were four. The computation of the total scores of *socio demographic status scale* show that 56 percent of the respondents were in the average category. The results on various issues of awareness also revealed the same scenario. Weavers indifferent attitude towards cooperative systems makes them disinterested towards meetings, its agenda and various programmes and this is reflected through their socio economic profile. This shows that awareness level affects the socio economic status of the weavers.

Based on the findings of the study the need arises to encourage education on a large scale to weaving community so that they can better understand the market conditions, facilities and benefits provided by the government and make the fellow weavers be aware of such benefits. Therefore, the need is to adopt certain integrated programme to make handloom weaving an economic venture and at the same time maintain its traditional value.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To bridge gap and overcome the drawbacks in future and for sustainability and success of this industry, some of the following measures can be considered:

- Night schools can be organized for the education of the weavers especially for women weavers.
- Non-formal educational programmes can be planned to enhance their awareness level.
- Associations should also do publicity and promotion through catalogs and product specific information booklets.
- The apex organization can publish monthly Newsletter to update members about latest happenings in handloom and sector.
- Invitation to reputed designers/trend forecasting agencies to interact with handloom/handicrafts members exporters.
- The entire institutional support structure of the handloom sector need to be weaver centric rather than scheme centric.
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