

PRESENT SCENARIO AND SOME PROBLEMS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY A STUDY WITH HANDLOOM WEAVERS' IN TUFANGANJ BLOCK-I OF COOCH BEHAR DISTRICT WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Handlooms have been known to India right from the historic ages. Basic needs of the human being are the food, clothes, and shelter. This study explores the dynamic of local level trade in household-based handloom product in Tufanganj of Cooch Behar district. The handloom weaving sector plays an important role in the economic development of the rural areas. It contributes significantly to generating more employment opportunities and providing bread to the rural poor. In the present study, we have analyzed the socio-economic profile of handloom weavers and some problems of this industry in Tufanganj of Cooch Behar district. This study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. The study results revealed that the situation of the weavers was worrying due to illiteracy, financial constraints, health problems, middle man problem, and poor Government support.

KEYWORDS: *Handloom Weavers, Problems, Tufanganj*

INTRODUCTION

The handloom sector carries a very rich heritage coming down over the centuries of the vibrant culture of the Indus valley civilization. The handloom sector plays a very important role in the country's economy. It is the second largest sector in terms of employment, next only to agriculture. It provides direct or indirect employment to millions of artisans spread all over the country. Indian Handloom sector is an old age and the largest sector of cottage industries. This traditional rural and the largest semi-urban sector has widely spread all over the country. One-fourth of the total cloth production in the country is from the handloom sector. Although a very large number of cloth varieties are produced in handlooms, the major item is - Saree Mekla Chadar, Dokna, Orna, etc), Dhoti, gamchalam, bed sheet, lungi, shirting, and towel. The production of handloom cloth is concentrated in three states i.e. Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Apart of this west Bengal, Assam plays a very important role also.

The Study Area

My study area is Tufanganj Block-I which is located in the Cooch Behar district. The latitudinal extension of this block is 26°15'19''N to 26°20' N and longitudinal extension is 89°32'20'' E to 89°39'8'' E. The 3rd Handloom census 2009-2010 there are 43, 31,876 weavers in the country of which 7,79,103 weavers in only West Bengal. But in recent 2017-18 there are 14002 weavers in Cooch Behar district and 6166 in Tufanganj –I. (SOURCE: D.H.D.O)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are

- To study the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers in Tufanganj-I.
- To examine the problems and prospects of the handloom industry in this region.
- To estimate the improvement in the socio-economic status of handloom weavers in this region.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, there is three type of methodology i.e. 1.pre field 2.Field and 3.Post field.

PRE-FIELD

In the pre-field step, we review some literature which is related to this study and determines the sample size and techniques.

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Venkateswar, A (2014) in his paper A socio-Economic conditions of Handloom weaving: A field study in kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli District, studied on the socio-economic conditions the handloom weavers and the problems faced by the handloom weavers.
- Kumudha, M, Rizwana (2013) in her paper Problems faced by the Handloom Industry A study with handloom weavers co-operative societies in Erode district, focused on the problems of the handloom industry and the problems of handloom co-operative society weavers.
- Dr. Srinivasa Rao kasisomayajula (2012) presented a paper basing on the field work on the socio-economic analysis of handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh is a study on the selected districts. He studied the socio-economic analysis of handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh, a study on the selected district (East Godavari, Prakasam, kurnol, Nalgonda).
- D. Srinivas Rao, Dr. N. Sreedhar (2017) presented a paper on socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Gannavaram Mandal of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh. In this paper, he study on the socio-economic condition and some problems of handloom weavers in Gannavaram Mandal of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh.
- V. Narsaiah and Krishna (1999) studied the crisis in the handloom industry. It was identified in the study that the handloom industry has been facing the problem of improper financial facilities and irregular supply of yarn.

Sampling Techniques and Size

Simple random sampling was used in present research. Handloom weavers in Tufanganj block –I am the sample and Cooch Behar district is the population. There are 6166 handloom weavers in Tufanganj block –I and a sample of 100 weavers are randomly selected from this region in Cooch Behar district.

FIELD

In this step we collected different types of data related with this i. e. **primary data** – The main source of the data is from the handloom weavers who are working under societies or independent weavers. For primary data collection, 100 weavers were selected and observation method, personal interview method, and group discussion method are used.

Secondary data – Secondary data has been collect from published and unpublished reports by the Government, departments, and societies of the handloom sector and also from periodic journals and various websites related to present research study.

POST FIELD

In the post field step the collected data are analyzed and present them with a suitable cartographic method and also give some findings to solve the problems. Henry Garrett technique is also used to analysis the problems of the handloom industry in this region.

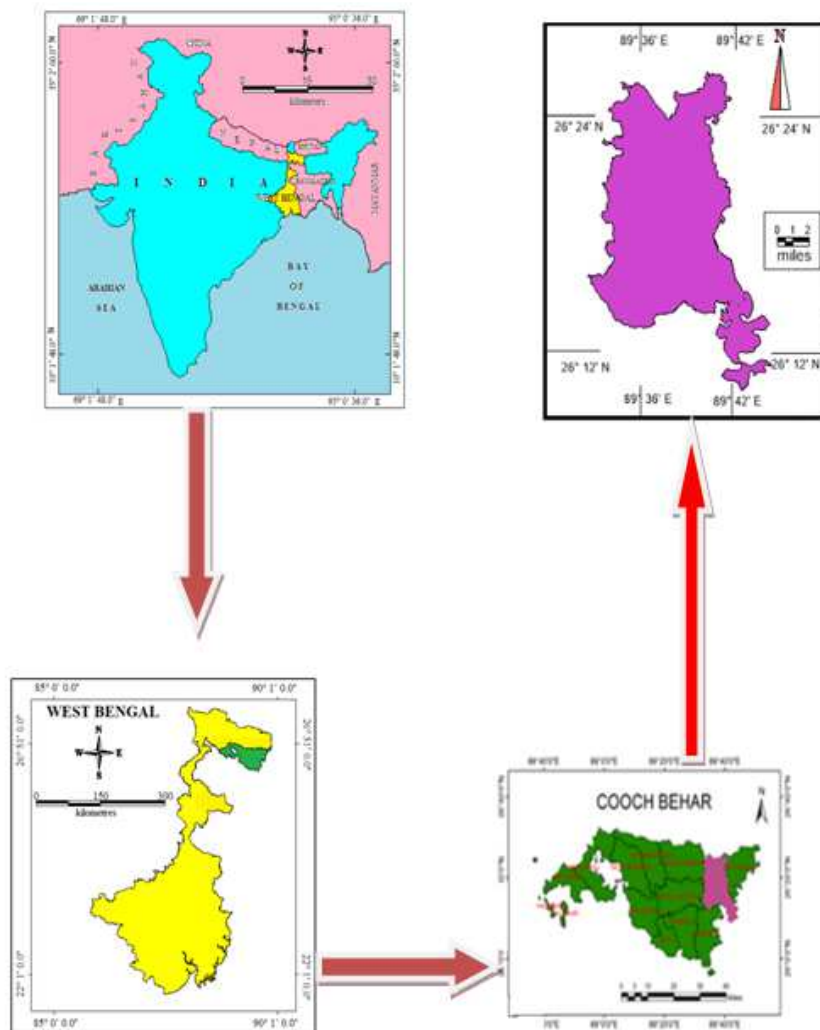


Figure 1: Location of the Study Area

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data is collected from 100 sample respondents by using a structured questionnaire and through personal interview. The data is analyzed by using the tables on the basis of age, sex, literacy, size of the family, income per month, saving policy, type of product, various problems of handloom weavers, weaver's health and industry etc

Table 1: Classification of the Respondents on the Basis of Age

Sl. No.	Age Group	% of Respondents
1	20-30	50
2	31-40	36
3	41-50	14
4	>50	00
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

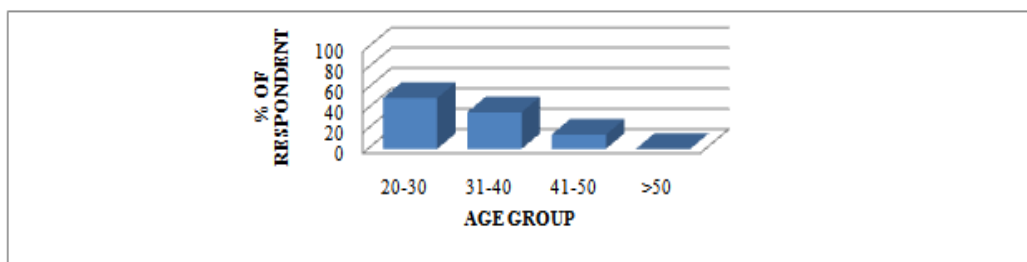


Figure 1: Classification of the Respondents on the Basis of Age

According to the above table, a majority of the respondents are in between the age of 20-30 years i.e. 50% in the total respondents, 36% of the respondents are in between the age of 31-40 years. It is noticed that very few respondents are above the age of 41 years i.e. 14%.

Table 2: Types of Worker

Sl. No.	Nature of Work	% of Respondents
1.	Weaving	64
2.	Bobbin winding	14
3.	Warping	13
4.	Dying	6
5.	Other	3
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

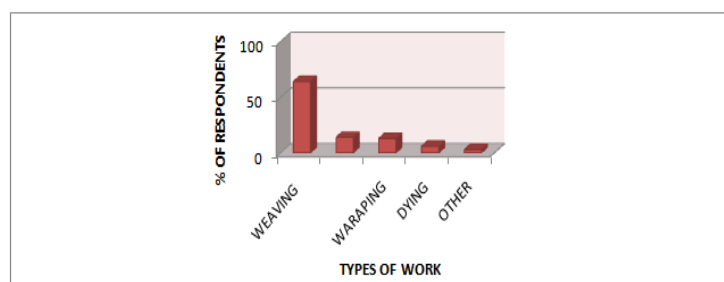


Figure 2: Type of Worker

According to the above data majority of weavers, 64% are doing weaving.14% weavers are engaged in bobbin winding.13% of the weavers are engaged in warping. Only a few persons are engaged in dying i.e.6%.

Table 3: Religion Wise Classification of Weaver

Sl. No.	Religion	% of Respondents
1.	Hindu	76
2.	Muslim	24
3.	Christian	00
4.	Others	00
5.	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

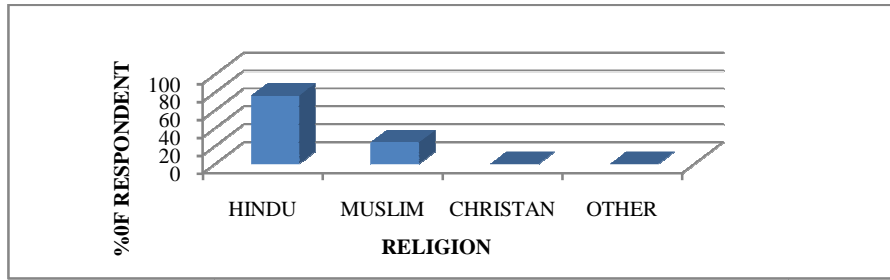


Figure 3: Religion Wise Classification of Weaver

According to the above data, a majority of the weavers (76%) belong to the Hindu religion. Muslim weavers are of 24%. Christian and other religion weavers are not found.

Table 4: Cast-Wise Classification of Weaver

Sl. No.	Cast	% of Respondents
1.	S.C	56
2.	S.T	00
3.	O.B.C	44
4.	Other	00
	Total	100

Source: primary data.

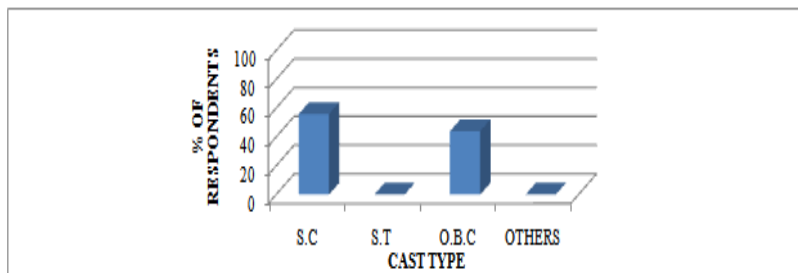


Figure 4: Cast-Wise Classification of Weavers

According to the above data majority of weavers, 56% belong to the scheduled cast and 44% belong to other backward casts.

Table 5: Educational Level of Respondents

Sl. No.	Educational Level	% of Respondents
1.	i-v	36
2.	vi-x	34
3.	h.s	26
4.	Graduation	04

Source: Primary Data

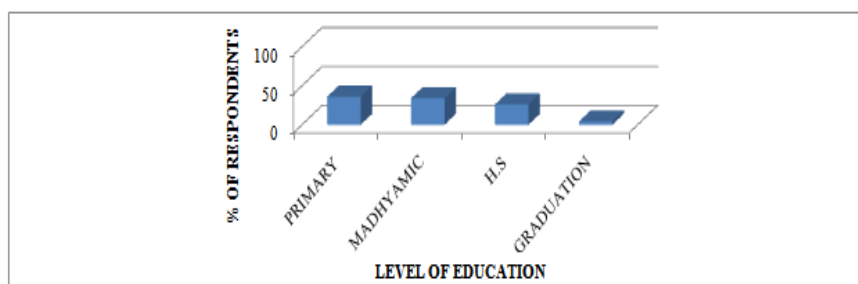


Figure 5: Educational Level of Respondents

According to the above data, all of the respondents are literates. Among these respondents 36% are below fifth class, 34% of the respondents are in between sixth class to tenth class, 26% belong to the higher secondary class and very few only 4% of the respondents completed the graduation.

Table 6: Type of Family

Sl. No.	Family Type	% of Respondents
1	Single	62
2	Joint	38
3	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

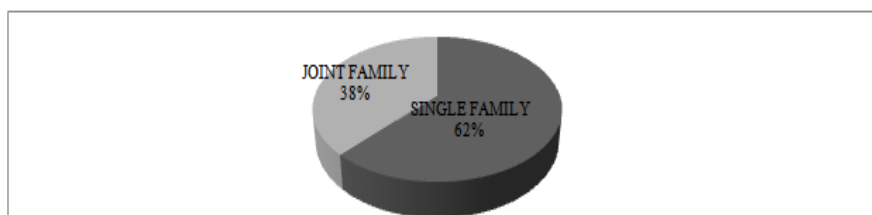


Figure 6: Type of Family

According to the above data, the maximum families are single i.e.62% of the respondents.38% of the respondents belong to the joint family.

Table 7: Family Size of Weavers

Sl. No.	Family size	% of Respondents
1	Small (up to 3)	46
2	Medium (4-6)	38
3	Large (above 6)	16
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

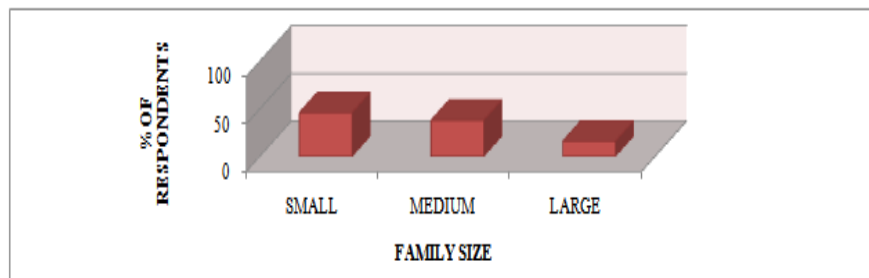


Figure 7: Family Size of Weavers

According to the above table, 46% of the respondents are small families and have only three members in their families. 38% of the respondents are medium families and have 4 to 6 members in their families. 16% of the respondents are large families and have more than six members in their families.

Table 8: Residential Status

Sl. No.	Houses	%of Respondents
1	Own	100
2	Rent	000
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

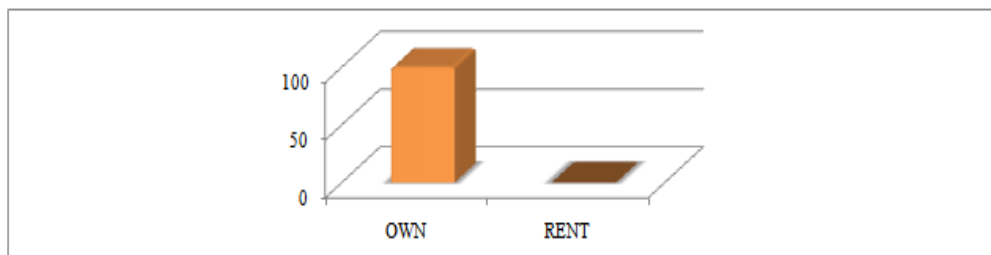


Figure 8: Residential Status

According to the above table, 100% of weavers have own houses. No weaver lives in rented houses.

Table 9: Types of Houses

Sl. No.	House Type	%of Respondents
1	Katcha	50
2	Semi-pakka	40
3	Pakka	10
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

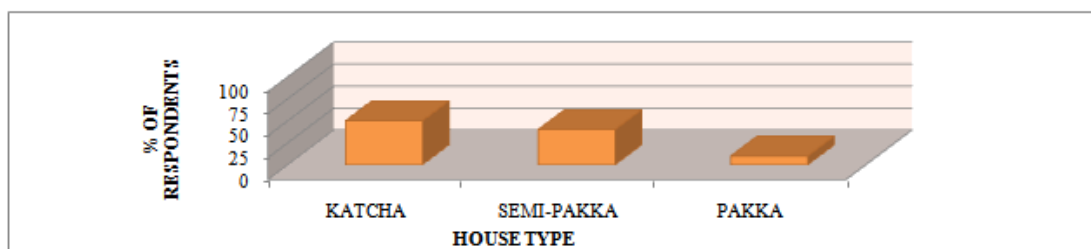


Figure 9: Type of House

According to the above data, a majority of the weavers 50% are living in katcha house.40% weavers living in semi-pakka house. Only a few respondents 10% are living in pakka house.

Table 10: Land Ownership

Sl. No.	Type of Land	%of Respondents
1	Agricultural land	76
2	Land only for household	24
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

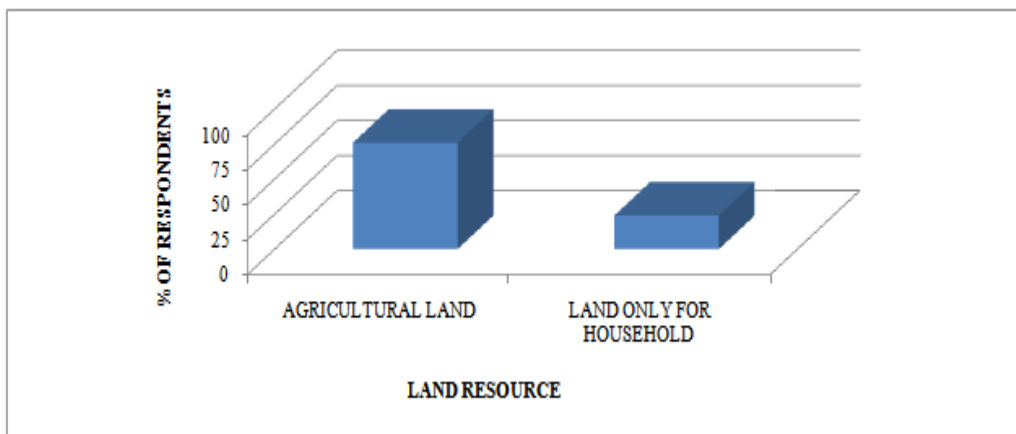


Figure 10: Land Ownership

According to the above table, 76% of the weavers have agricultural land and 24% weavers have only household land. The weavers those have the agricultural land are also engaged with cultivation and have an extra income source.

Table 11: Other Assets Owned

Sl. No.	Assets name	No. of Respondents
1.	Refrigerator	08 of 100
2.	Television	94 of 100
3.	Mobile	100 of 100
4.	Motor cycle	60 of 100
5.	Cycle	100 of 100

Source: Primary Data

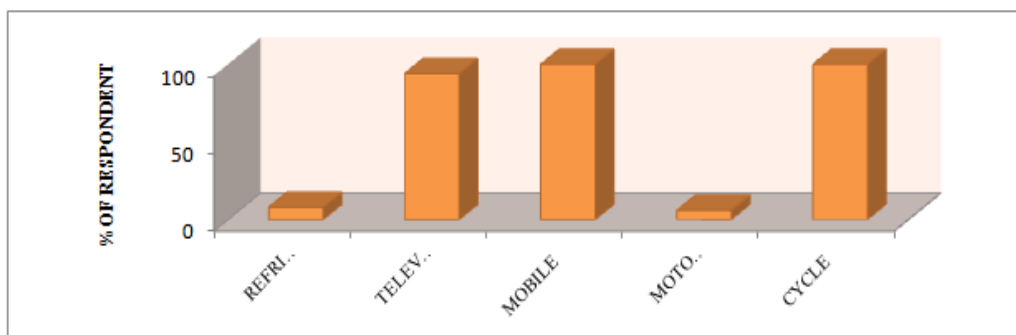


Figure 11: Other Assets Owned

According to the above data, only 08 number of the household have a refrigerator,94 number of a household have

television, 60 number of the household have motorcycle and 100 number of a household of 100 have mobile and cycle.

Table 12: Selection of the Job

Sl. No.	Preferences	% of Respondents
1	Inherited	23
2	No job opportunity	47
3	Interest	30
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

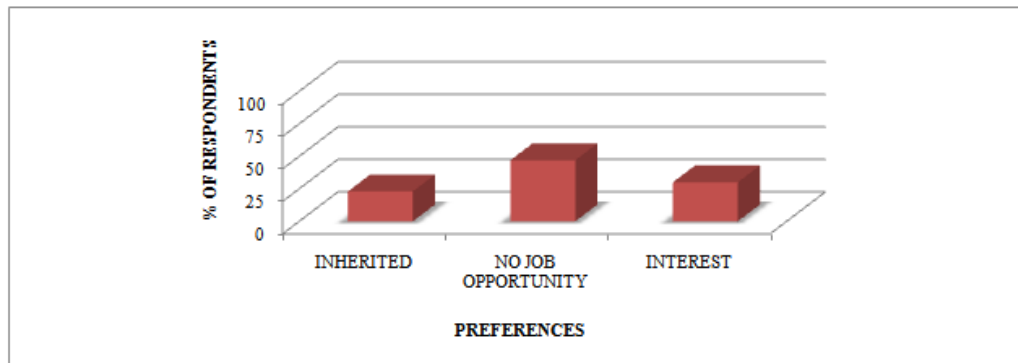


Figure 12: Reason of Job Selection

According to the above data, 23% of respondents follow the work inheritance from their forefathers. They feel this profession as an honor, 47% of the respondents are doing this job due to the lack of other opportunities and only 30% of the respondents are doing this job with self-interest.

Table 13: Category of Weavers

Sl. No.	Category	% of Respondents
1	Independent weaver	47
2	Working under middlemen	48
3	Co-operative weaver	05
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

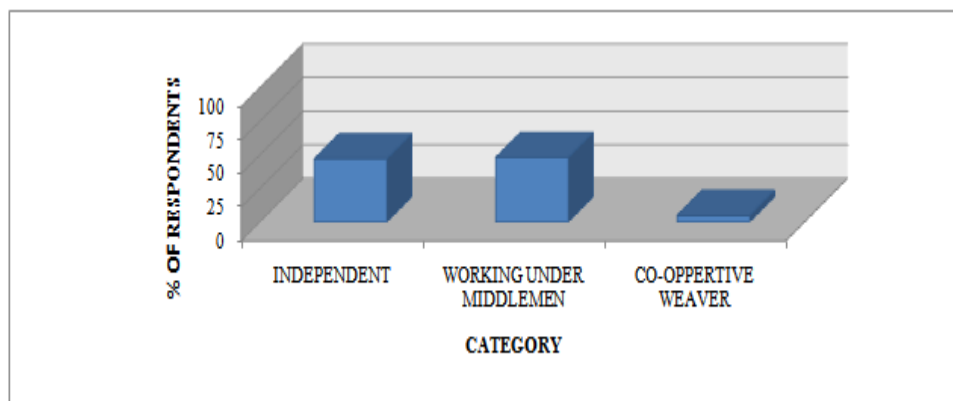


Figure 13: Category of Weavers

According to the above table, 47% of the respondents are an independent weaver, 48% of the respondents are working under middlemen and only 5% of the respondents are co-operative weavers.

Table 14: Working Hours Per Day

Sl. No.	Working/day	% of Respondents
1	Up to 6 hr.	16
2	6hr.-8hr.	22
3	8hr.-12hr,	56
4	Above 12 hr.	08

Source: Primary Data

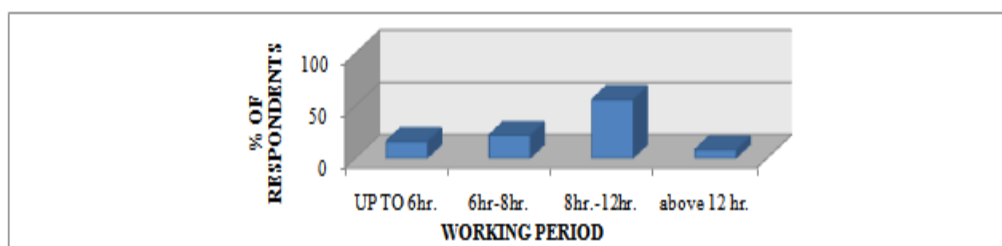


Figure 14: Working Hours per Day

According to the above table, 56% of the respondents are working for 8hr.-12hr.per day, 22% of the respondents are working for 6hr.- 8hrper day,16% of the respondents are working up to 6hr. per day. And only 8% of the respondents are working above 12hr.

Table 15: Product Type

Sl. No.	Product Type	% of Respondents
1	Mekla	72
2	Dokna	16
3	Orna	10
4	Tangaiei	02
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

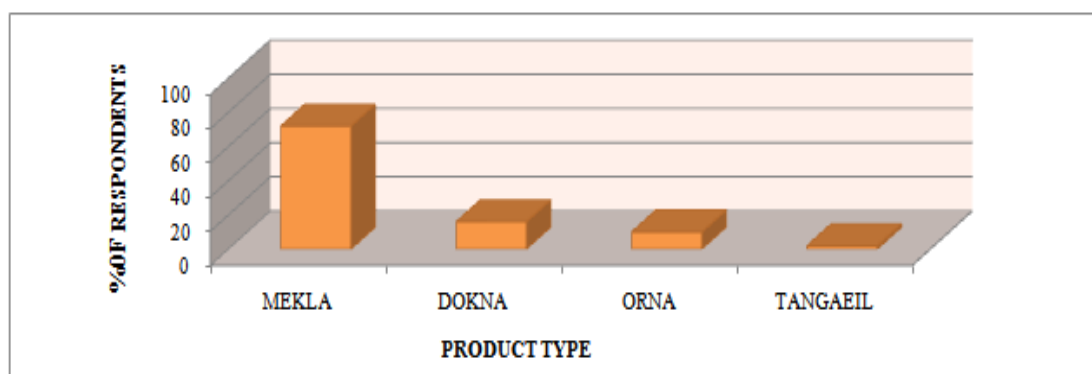


Figure 15: Product Type

According to the above data, the product which produced in handloom in this region is mekla, dokna, orna and tangaiel saree. Mekla belong to the high percentage i.e, 72%, then dokna occupied 16% and orna belong 10%. These all are the traditional dress of Assam and for these opportunities of Assam market, these products are highly produced in this

region. There are only few handloom i.e.2% produced tangaiel saree.

Table 16: Monthly Income of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Monthly Income	%of Respondents
1	Up to 15000	56
2	15001-20000	20
3	20001-25000	16
4	Above 25000	08
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

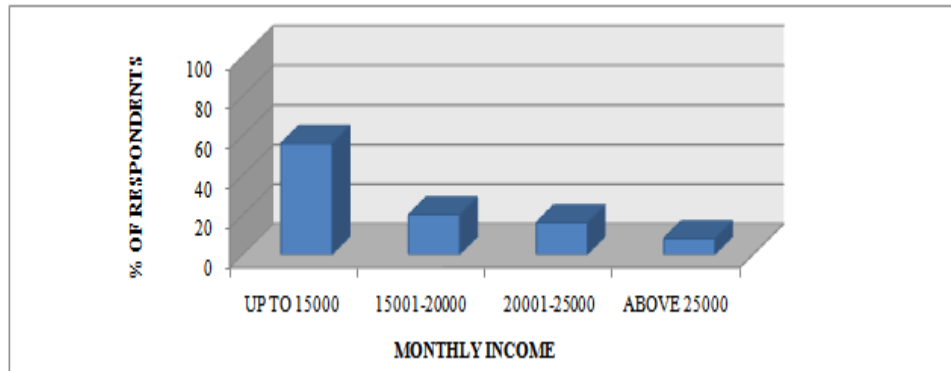


Figure 16: Monthly Income of the Respondents

According to the above table, 56% of the respondents are earning Rs. Up to 15000/- per month, 20% of the respondent's income is the Rs.15001-20000/-per month, 16% of the respondents are earning Rs. 20001-25000/-per month. and only 8% of the respondents are earning above a Rs.25000/-per month.

Table 17: Mode of Payment

Sl. No.	Mode of Payment	%of Respondents
1	Cash	54
2	Credit	20
3	Cash& credit	26
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

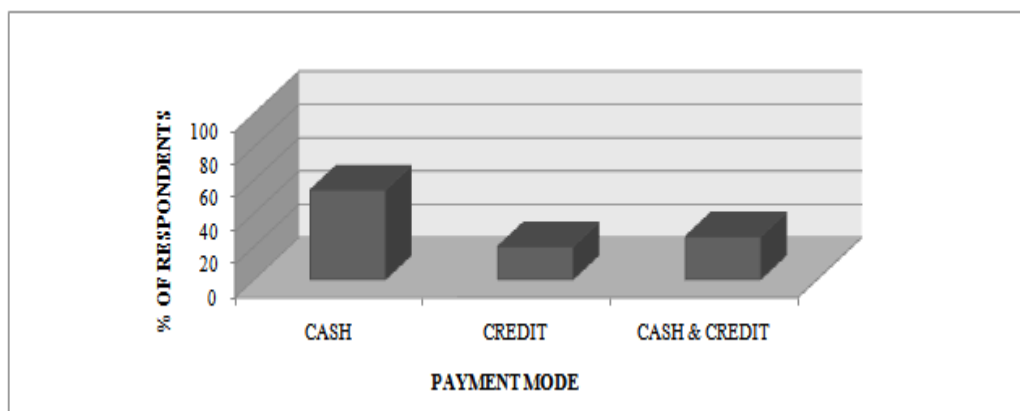


Figure 17: Mode of Payment

According to the above table, the mode of payment of 20% of the respondents is on credit basis, 54% of the respondents purchase the raw material on the cash basis. While the rest 26% of the respondent's mode of payment is on the basis of cash and credit.

Table 18: Loan and Saving Policy

Sl. No.	Have Loan & Saving Policy	% of Respondents
1	Loan	56
2	Saving policy	44
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

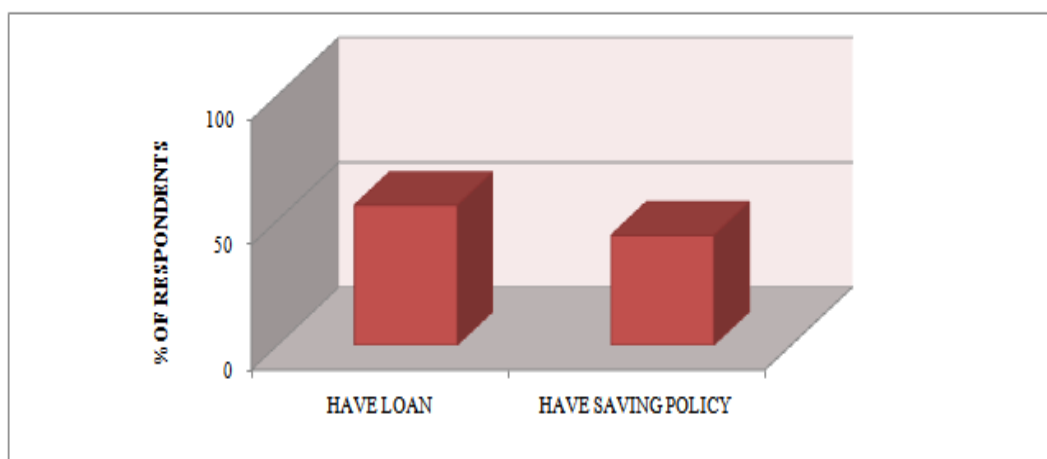


Figure 18: Loan and Saving Policy

According to the above table, 56% of the respondents have a loan for handloom and most of the loan from Bandhan bank, 44% of the respondents have saving policy and most of the saving policy in LIC.

Analysis of Problem of the Weavers and Handloom Industry

There are found a number of problems of weaver and handloom industry such as weaver health problem, poor quality of raw material, a high cost of production, inadequacy in the supply of yarn etc. These problems are analyses as follow.

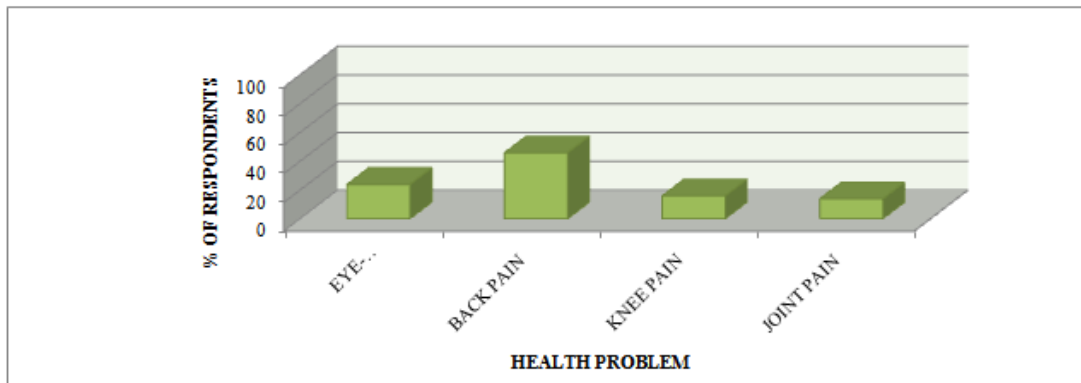
Weavers Health Problem

Due to long day engaged with handloom industry the weaver suffer many health problems such as joint pains, back pain, eye-sight weakness, and knee pains and so on. Majority of the respondent weavers 46% are suffering from back pain., 24% of the respondents are suffering from eye-sight weakness, 16% of the respondents are suffering from knee pain, 14% of the respondents are suffering from joint pain.

Table 19: Health Problems

Sl. No.	Health Problem	% of Respondents
1	Eye-sight weakness	24
2	Back pain	46
3	Knee pain	16
4	Joint pain	14
	Total	100

Source: Primary Data

**Figure 19: Health Problems**

Handloom Industry's Problems

For the analysis of problems of handloom industry, Henry Garrett Ranking Technique is used. By this technique, the problems of handloom industry are ranking and analyses on the basis of primary data.

Henry Garrett Ranking Technique

This technique has been used to rank the factors to identify the problems faced by the Handloom weavers in the study area. In this method, the respondents were asked to rank their opinion regarding the problems faced by them. The order of merit given by the respondents was converted into ranks by using the following formula.

$$\text{Percentage Position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j} \quad \text{Where, } R_{ij} = \text{Ranking Position}$$

N_j

$N_j = \text{Total No. of Ranks}$

The percentage position of each rank thus obtained is converted into scores by referring to the Table given by Henry Garrett. Then for each factor, the scores of individual respondents were added and divided by the total number of respondents for whom the scores were added. These mean scores for all the factors were arranged in order of ranks and from this inference were drawn.

Table 20: Problems of Handloom Industry (Input Related)

Sl. No.	Problems	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Inadequacy in the supply of yarn and high price.	5635	56.35	III
2.	Delay in supply of yarn and other materials.	4575	45.75	IV
3.	Poor quality of raw-material.	6135	61.35	II
4.	High cost of production.	6160	61.60	I
5.	Insufficient number of looms.	4010	40.10	V

It is identified from the table that the problem of →high cost of production, ranked first with a Garrett score of 6160 points. It is followed by the →poor quality of raw material,→ Inadequacy in the supply of yarn and high price,→ Delay in the supply of yarn and other materials were ranked Second, Third and Fourth ranks with Garrett Scores of 6135, 5635, and 4575 points respectively. The last rank is placed for the →Insufficient number of looms, with a Garrett Score of 4010 points. From the analysis, it can be inferred that the majority of the weavers considers their problems as the High cost of production and Poor quality of raw materials.

MAJOR FINDINGS

According to the information collected from the respondents, there are some major findings. Such as:

- Majority of the weavers related to Hindu religion (76%).
- All of the weavers related to backward class.
- The price per bundle of the yarn at 60 counts is Rs.1445/-.
- Majority of the weavers makes Mekla Chadar, Dokna, Orna, (Traditional dress of Assam) and series also.
- The price of these product more or less between Rs. 600/- Rs.1350/-.
- VI.50% of the respondents is in between the age of 20 to 30 years.
- Majority of the respondents work up to 8hr to 12hr.
- The monthly income of the 56% of the respondents is in between Rs.10000/- to Rs.15000/-.
- A maximum number of the respondents live in single families.
- All of the respondents have own house.
- Majority of the respondents (46%) are suffering from back pain.
- Majority of the respondents (36%) education is up to 5th class.
- One of the vital problems of handloom industry is high production cost.

SCHEMES THAT ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED BY CENTRAL & STATE GOVERNMENTS FOR WEAVERS COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Marketing incentive, Yearn subsidy are being implemented by the Government for weavers cooperative societies and beside these Bangla Tant Hat is also arranged For selling weaving product in West Bengal by the State Government.

FOR INDIVIDUAL WEAVERS

Weaver's credit cards to handloom weavers, thrift Fund Scheme, Life Insurance Scheme to Handloom Weaver under Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana, Revival, Reform, Restructuring (RRR) scheme to handloom sector, Modernization and replacement Loom etc schemes are being implemented by Government for Individual Weavers.

SUGGESTIONS

Handloom Industry is the largest cottage industry next to agriculture in providing massive self-employment to the rural poor. And it has a rich heritage. So there is a need to save the industry. To improve the living standards of the weavers the following suggestions are given:

- The Cooperative structure should be strengthened to absorb the new weavers.
- The weavers should be trained to improve their skills in manufacturing, marketing, etc.
- Handloom Reservation Act (1985) should be strictly implemented to protect the handloom weavers.
- There is a need to provide the institutional credit to the weavers to protect them from the exploitation of the money-lenders.
- To see that the benefits of the welfare programs and schemes launched by the State and Central Government should reach the weavers promptly.

CONCLUSIONS

This study based on extensive fieldwork. It indicates that though the Handloom industry offers a massive amount of employment opportunities to lakhs of artistic weavers, recently it is facing a lot of problems and it has been pushed towards the decline stage of the product lifecycle. These problems are a Poor economic condition of the weavers, High cost of production, to get less opportunities of Assam market throughout the year, the poor performance of the cooperative sector. Competition from power looms and middleman (Mahajan) the additional threat but these can be countered when the sector produces high-value products which can be marketed locally or abroad those are different from power loom products. So to bring the industry back to growth stage the above mention problems has to be well addressed.

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