

A Socio Economic Conditions of Handloom Weaving In Kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli District

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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 dynamics of local-level trade in plant-based handloom product in kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli District. The handloom weaving sector plays an important role in the economic development of the rural areas. It contributes significantly by generating more employment opportunities and providing bread to the rural poor. In the present study, we have analyzed the socio-economic profile handloom weavers in kallidaikurichi of Tirunelveli 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, and poor Government support.

Keywords: Handloom Weavers, Employment Opportunities, Kallidaikurichi.

I. INTRODUCTION

Handloom weaving is an ancient industry. The textile cottage industry includes cotton, silk, and bleaching, dying, finishing, hosiery, lace embroidery, silk reeling, silk twisting. It is the chief means of livelihood to people who entirely depend upon it. Handloom sector plays an important role in state economy. Weaving is the basic process among the various manufacturing stages of handloom clothes. It is defined as a frame for weaving equipped with some wooden devices. The sound of the handloom is the music of rural home. In the process of weaving the handloom weavers achieve harmony of motion and rhythms in kallidaikurichi. It is only in this content the Tamilnadu Handloom weaver's cooperative society limited popularly known as co-optex was established in 1935.

The Tirunelveli Weavers' Co-operative Production and Sales Society Ltd., produces and sells yarns. The Kallidaikurichi Weavers' Co operative Production and Sales Society Limited produces bed sheets.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Clothing is a basic human need as much as food and shelter. Till the 19th century, when there were no machines for the production of cloth, the handloom industry was the sole supplier of cloth for the entire need of the world. Handloom weaving is the India's biggest cottage and labour intensive sector, which has been playing a very important role in the country's economy by forming part of India's rich heritage and exemplifying the rich artistry of the weavers. There are historical records to show that handloom fabrics of India had established their reputation in the international market long before the historic Industrial Revolution in the West and the Indian Handloom fabrics received popular patronage and adorned regal personages, besides having received acclaim abroad in the olden days. As an economic activity, the handloom sector occupies a place second only to agriculture in terms of employment.

Despite of its widespread across the country, there is significant under utilization of capacity in the industry. However, this sector is confronted with various problems, such as, irregular and inadequate supply of hank yarn. Sharp rise in prices of yarn, dyes and chemical is also the most disturbing factor contributing to the crisis of handloom sector at

present. Inadequate marketing facilities have resulted in periodical accumulation of stocks, resulting in underemployment and unemployment among weavers.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The primary objective of the present research work is to analyse the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers. The detailed objectives of the study are:

1. To study the present situation prevailing in the handloom industry with particular reference to the problems faced by handloom weavers.
2. To examine the policy of the Government of India towards promoting the handloom industry since independence.
3. To study the social conditions prevailing among the handloom weavers with an objective to find out their place in the society.
4. To examine the organizational issues having impact on the socioeconomic conditions.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

Weaving is one of the most ancient handicrafts patronized all over the world and at all times. Like food and shelter, clothing is also a basic need of every human being. Handloom sector has developed over the years and to see how far it is meeting the threats of globalization a study of handloom sector has been undertaken. In the present economic environment where dependency on foreign capital and know-how is increasing all round, the handloom industry presents a sustainable model of economic activity that is not energy intensive and has low capital costs, as well as an extensive skill base. The principle of hereditary continuance of occupation for generations introduced an element of stability and also enabled the craftsmen to venture further and acquire greater proficiency.

1.4 COLLECTION OF DATA:

We have collected the Primary data from 40 respondents by supplying the questionnaire and through direct interview method. Secondary data are those data which are already collected by some agency, through books, magazines and through internet for some other purpose. The data collected during the project on which the information where derived from so many sources.

1.5.1. PRIMARY DATA:

They are predominantly collected from the survey instrument the questionnaire contained qualitative data as well as quantitative data. Some questions were closed ended and some others were close ended for these study 40 respondents were selected. The researcher personally questioned all these respondents.

1.5.2. SECONDARY DATA:

Secondary data for the study collected from the published and unpublished sources annual reports, research, journals and various related website.

1.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES:

Simple random sampling was used in the research. Socio-economic conditions of Handloom Weavers in kallidaikurichi where the sampling unit and people of kallidaikurichi were the sample population. Questionnaire has been collected from 40 respondents randomly through friends and relatives..

1.7 AREA OF STUDY:

This study was confined to Handloom Weavers of kallidaikurichi alone.

1.8 STATISTICAL TOOLS:

The tables are prepared with the help of the primary data for easy understanding and these data are used for drawing simple bar diagram, multiple bar diagram, pie diagram and pyramid diagram. We have also applied percentage, average and correlation for analyzing the primary data.

1.9 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature helps to know the existing literature on the topic being pursued and also on the related aspects. It finds the gaps and also the uncovered areas on the topic. The methodologies adopted, statistical tools employed and also the conclusions inferred can be known. All these help and guide the researcher to know some new insights into the current topic for arriving at meaningful conclusions.

TNN (2011) has mentioned that the state government has taken several decisions to encourage weavers to boost handloom industry in the state. The state government with the cooperation of the Centre has formulated several schemes to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the weavers belonging to the handloom industry.

IANS (2011) has noted that Indian consumers need to change the thinking; they need to think 'swadeshi' rather than 'videshi'. The greatest tragedy weavers' face is being ignored not just by people but by designers as well. The fashion industry is a very powerful platform to convey the message across the masses that fashion is more than chic dressing; there has to be an essence to it.

Prachi (2010) has observed that Indian handloom is growing in its popularity not only among the people in India, but also among the people admiring Indian handloom and Indian handicrafts from around the globe. In spite of having distinct styles and ways of weaving, there is a lot of exchange of styles that happened among the diverse Indian handloom styles.

Sehgal H. K. (2009) has examined that as far as the garment export sector is concerned, there have been mixed signals: continuing world economic downturn; some late recovery, however temporary and for some people; recent Rupee appreciation and with a new Government, expected to be stable, assuming charge.

Shijina Shiji (2009) has marked that the weaving process is central to the quality of the rug. As a matter of fact, handloom rugs and carpets is an age-old profession practiced by village artisans. It is indeed unfortunate that the handloom rug making units are under threat of closure as they are encountering stiff competition globally from power loom units.

Mathiraj and Rajkumar (2008) made an analytical study on Handloom products production and marketing. The study narrated the production related problems of the Handloom Weavers' Societies and reviewed the marketing process carried out by the Weavers' Societies. It was found in their study that the societies in Tirunelveli District are facing wide fluctuation in yarn price, lack of availability of skilled labour force. It was suggested that the production pattern, sales design may be formulated to accelerate the handloom products in the market and modernization of handloom industries can be made with a moderate cost to ease down the problems of weavers.

II. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The data are collected from 40 sample respondents by supplying the questionnaires, the data are analyzed by using simple bar diagrams, pie diagram on the basis of age wise, sex wise, educational qualifications, family size, monthly income, assets owned, major health ailments, number of workers involved in production, awareness of the various schemes and relationship between the production and Sales.

TABLE 2.1 AGE WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

| S.NO | AGE GROUP | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|------|--------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | 15-20 yrs | 6 | 15 |
| 2 | 21-30Yrs | 20 | 50 |
| 3 | 31-40Yrs | 10 | 25 |
| 4 | 41-60Yrs | 4 | 10 |
| | TOTAL | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

From the above table it is clear that 50% of the Weavers are in the age group of 21-30, it indicates that middle aged group people are engaged in production when compare to other age groups. 15% of weavers are in the age group of 15-20 and 25% of weavers are in the age group of 31-40 and 10% of weavers are in the age group of 41-60.

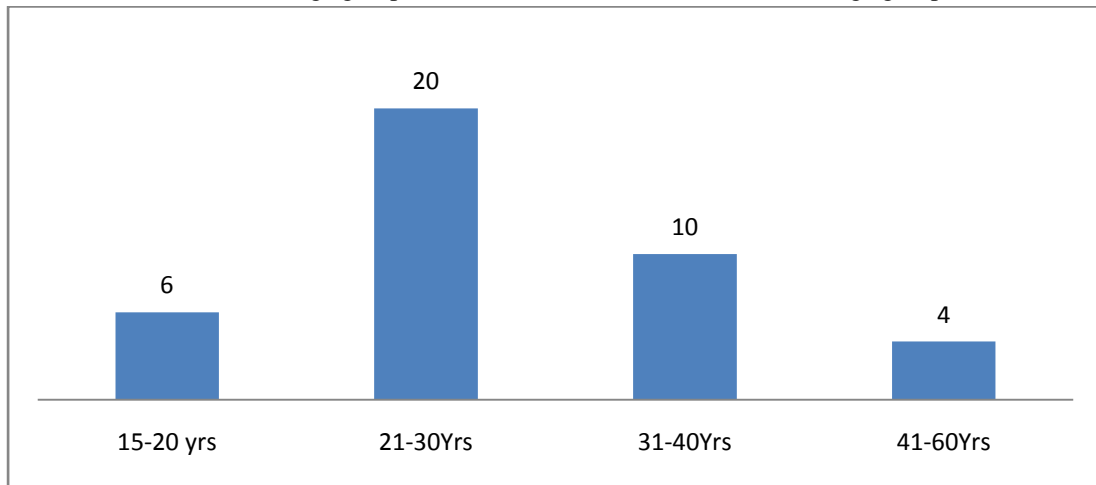


FIGURE 2.1 AGE WISE CLASSIFICATION

TABLE 2.2 EDUCATION QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

| S.NO | EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Illiterates | 6 | 15 |
| 2 | 1-5 | 10 | 25 |
| 3 | 5-10 | 20 | 50 |
| 4 | 10-12 | 4 | 10 |
| 5 | Graduation | 0 | 0 |
| | TOTAL | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

From the above table it is clear that 15% of the Weavers are illiterate. 25% of the Weavers studied 1-5th standard level, 50% of the weavers studied 5-10th standard level and 10% of the weavers have studied 10-12th standard. This shows that majority of the weavers were 5-10th standard. This will be explained below

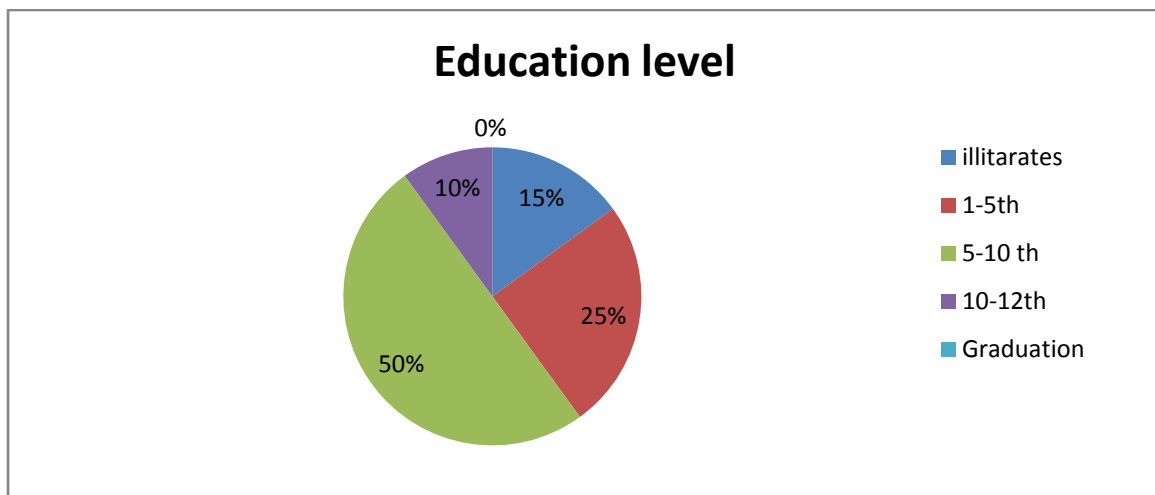


FIGURE 2.2 EDUCATION QUALIFICATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

TABLE 2.3 CLASSIFICATION BASED ON TYPE OF FAMILY OF THE RESPONDENTS

| S.NO | TYPE OF FAMILY | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Nuclear | 28 | 70 |
| 2 | Joint family | 12 | 30 |
| Total | | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

The above table says 70 % of the respondents live in the nuclear family and remaining 30 % the respondents live with the joint family

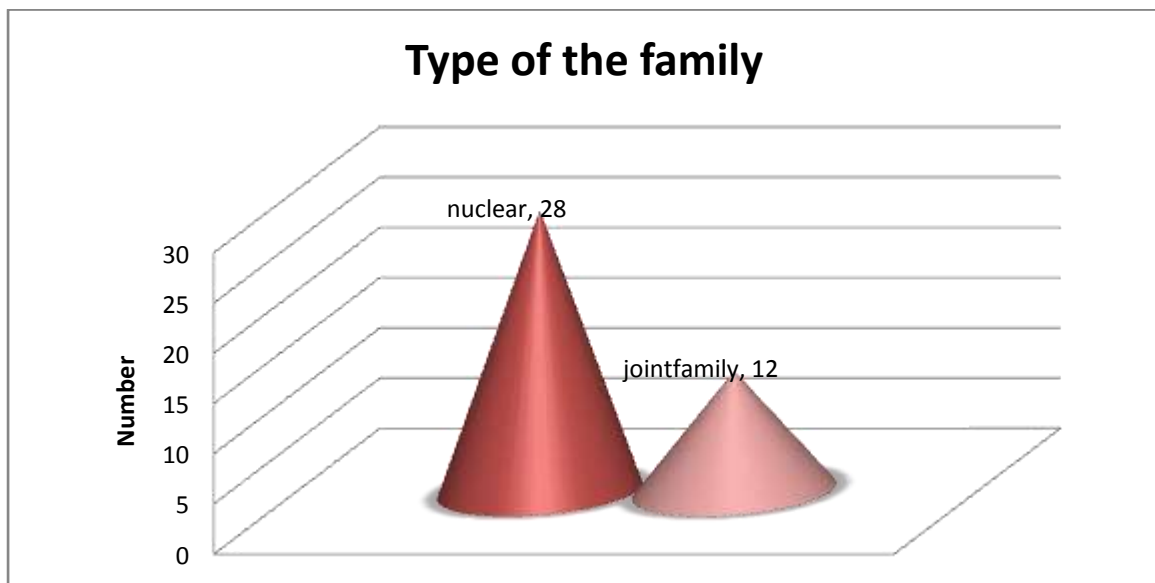


FIGURE-2.3

TABLE 2.4 SIZE OF THE FAMILY

| S.NO | FAMILY SIZE | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | SMALL(UPTO 3) | 2 | 5 |
| 2 | MEDIUM(4-6) | 30 | 75 |
| 3 | LARGE(ABOVE 6) | 8 | 20 |
| TOTAL | | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

Family size and system are important features that contributed to the family income. It is found that the joint family still prevails in the weavers' community with 4-6 members. The weaving occupation is one such profession which involves all family members from children to elderly, who contribute their valuable service in pre-weaving, weaving and post-weaving processes

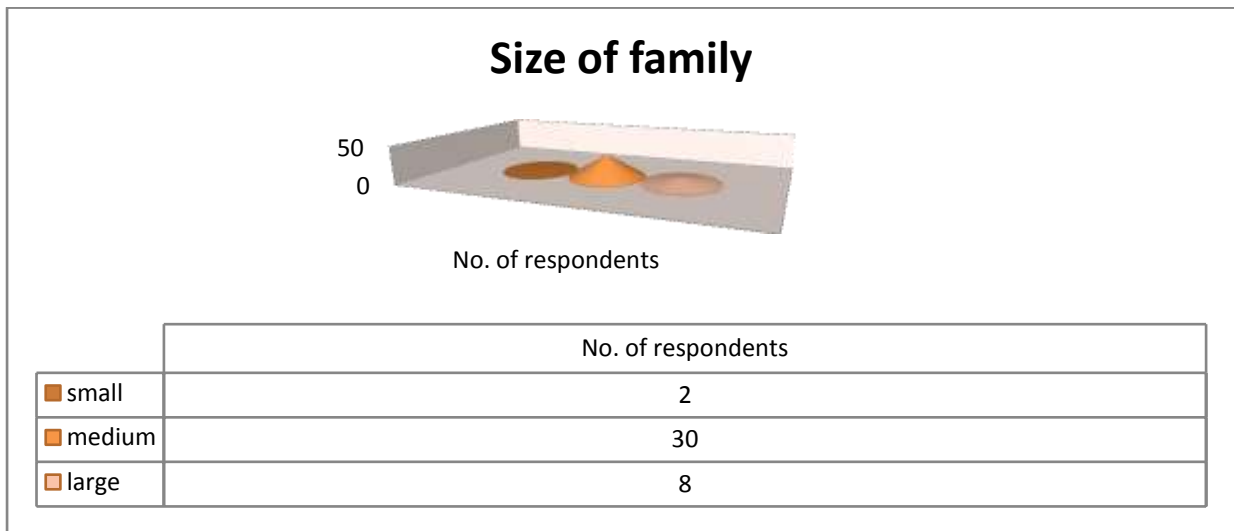


FIGURE-2.4

TABLE 2.5 TABLE SHOWS THE FAMILY MONTHLY INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

| S.NO | MONTHLY INCOME | NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS | PERCENTAGE |
|------|----------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 1 | BELOW-1500 | 22 | 55 |
| 2 | 1500-2000 | 14 | 35 |
| 3 | ABOVE 2000 | 4 | 10 |
| | Total | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

The above table shows that the monthly income wise classification of the respondents, 55% of the respondents were earning between Rs. Below-1500, 35% of the respondents were 1500-2000, and 10% of the respondents were earning above-2000. It can be found that, the majority of the respondents are earning between Rs. Below-1500

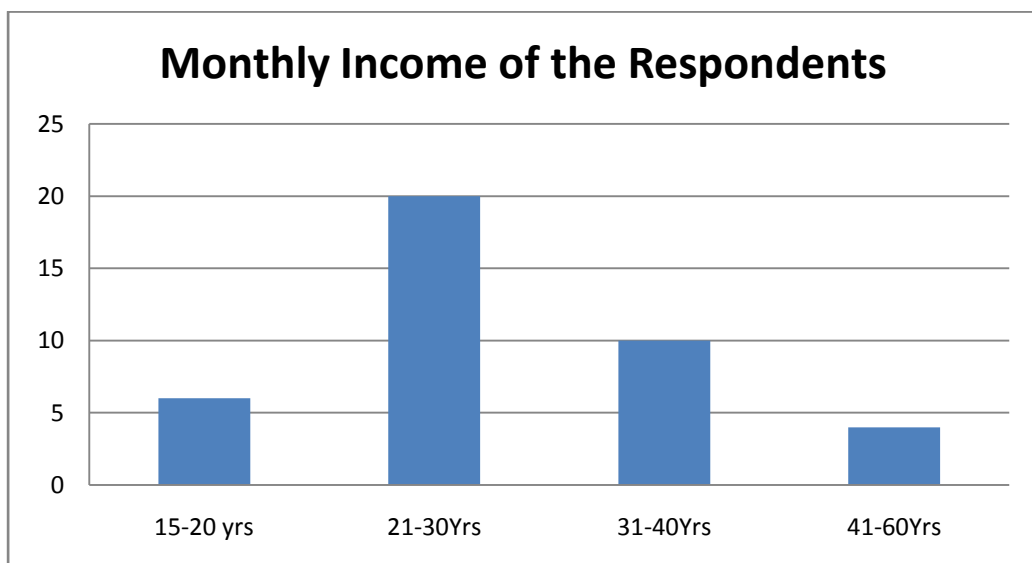


FIGURE 2.5

TABLE 2.6 WORKING STATUS

| S.NO | Category | No of Respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Independent weaver | 2 | 5 |
| 2 | Working under middlemen | 13 | 32.5 |
| 3 | Co-operative Weaver | 25 | 62.5 |
| | Total | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

The above table shows that the working status wise classification of the respondents, 62.5% of the respondents were co-operative weavers, 32.5% of the weavers are working under middlemen, and 5% of the respondents are independent weavers. It can be found that, the majority of the respondents are co-operative weavers 62.5%

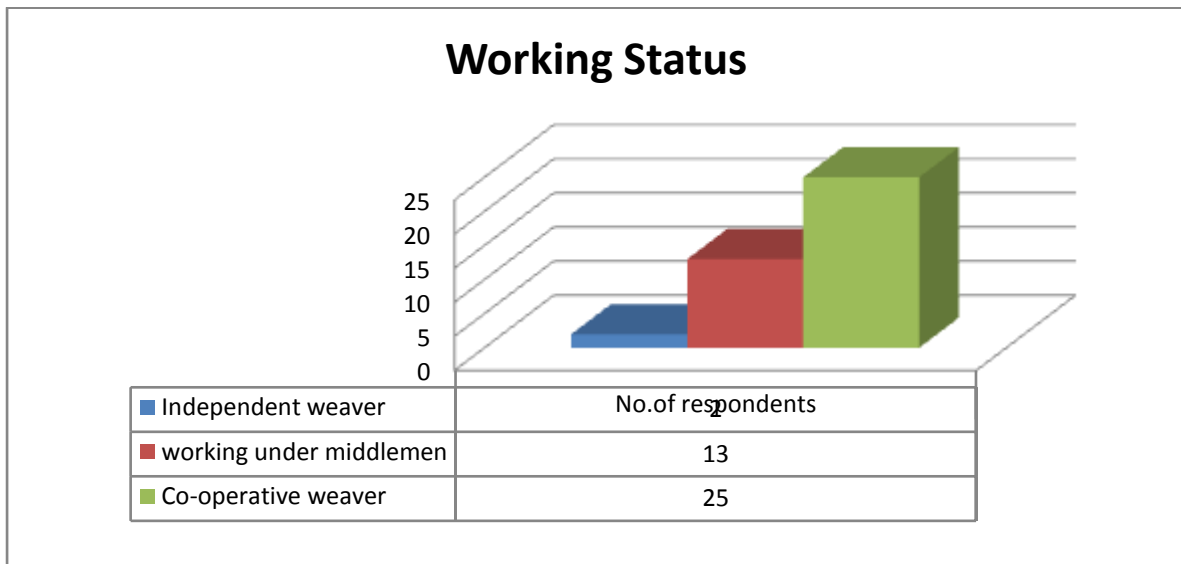


FIGURE 2.6

TABLE 2.7 WORKING HOURS

| S.No | Working Hours /Day | No of Respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Up to 8 Hours | 26 | 65 |
| 2 | 8-10 Hours | 8 | 20 |
| 3 | 11-15 Hours | 6 | 15 |
| | Total | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

Further, it has been revealed that 65% of the weavers are engaged in weaving for up to 8 hours a day, while 20% of them work for period of up to 8-10 hours and 15% of the weavers are engaged in 11-15 hours per days.

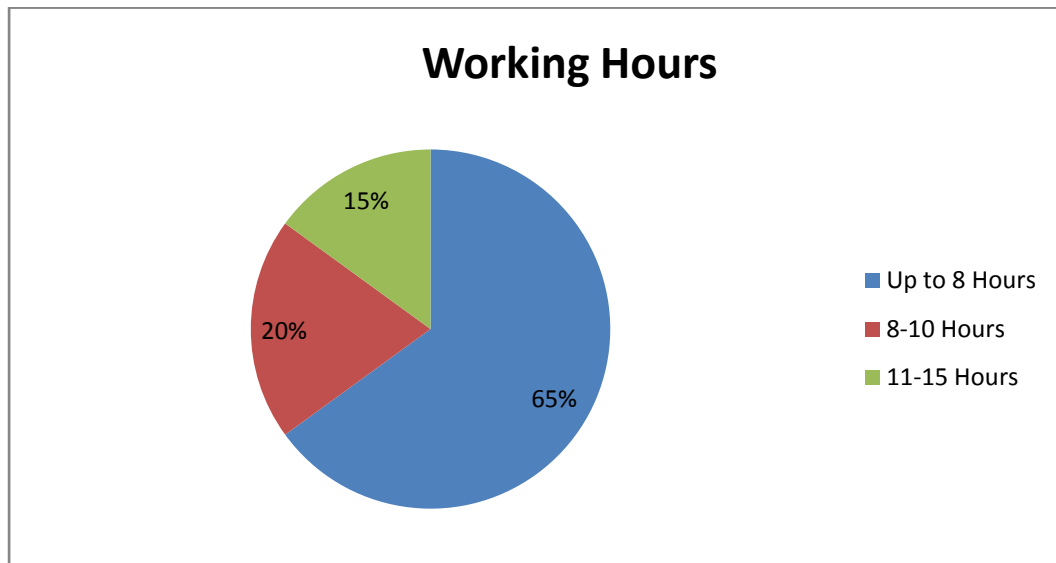


FIGURE 2.7

TABLE 2.8 SOCIAL-PERSONAL STATUS

| S.No | Preferences | No of Respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Inherited | 32 | 80 |
| 2 | Job opportunity | 4 | 10 |
| 3 | Interest | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Educated Unemployment | 4 | 10 |
| 5 | Training | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

The majority of the weavers 80% in kallidaikurichi, who inherited weaving from their forefathers, insisted to continue the family profession This mind-set and nature of weavers all over India is found to be the same in various areas and it focuses on the respect, regard and honour for the profession, whether profitable or not. Their wish to continue traditional weaving is mainly related to preserving and protecting the inherited tradition alive.

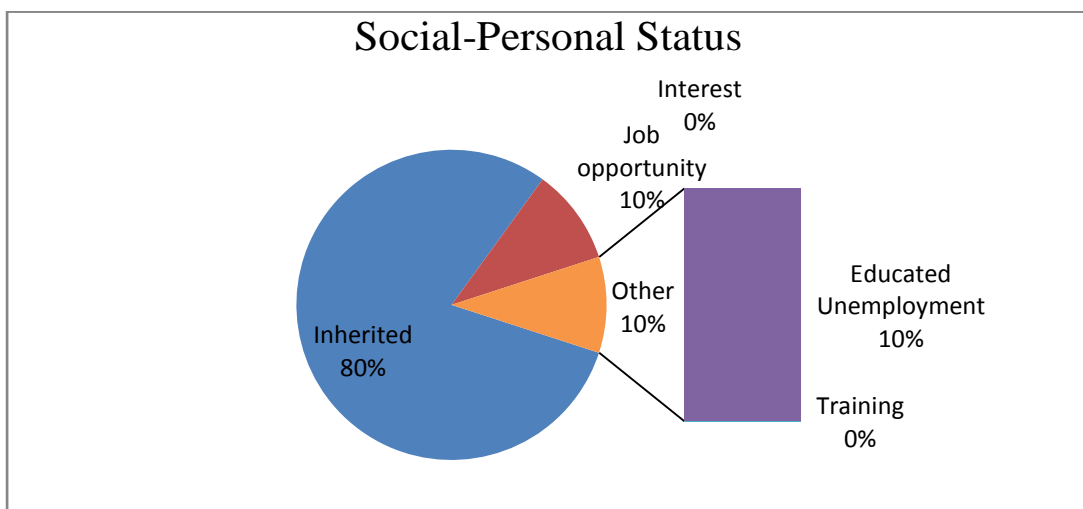


FIGURE 2.8

TABLE 2.9 ASSETS OWNED

| S.No | Category of assets | No. of respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Motor cycle | 6 | 15 |
| 2 | Bicycle | 8 | 20 |
| 3 | Television | 22 | 55 |
| 4 | Mixi /grinder | 4 | 10 |
| 5 | Refrigerator | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

The above table shows that the 55% percentage of the weavers using television, 20% percentage of the weavers are using the assets bicycle, 15% of the weavers using motorcycle, and 10% of the weavers using Mixi and grinder. The weavers are not used Refrigerator. The majority of the weavers are using television 55%.

TABLE 2.10 SOURCE OF PROCUREMENT

| S.No | Source of procurement | No. of Respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|--------------|----------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Local Raw material dealers | 2 | 5 |
| 2 | Direct purchased | 3 | 7.5 |
| 3 | Co-operative society | 35 | 87.5 |
| Total | | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

Raw material plays a vital role in the production of any product. It is found that 87.5% of the Handloom weavers purchased raw handloom material from Co-operative Society dealers, 7.5% of the Raw material purchased from direct purchased and, 5% of the weavers purchase local raw material dealer. The majority of the handloom weavers purchase co-operative society 87.5%.

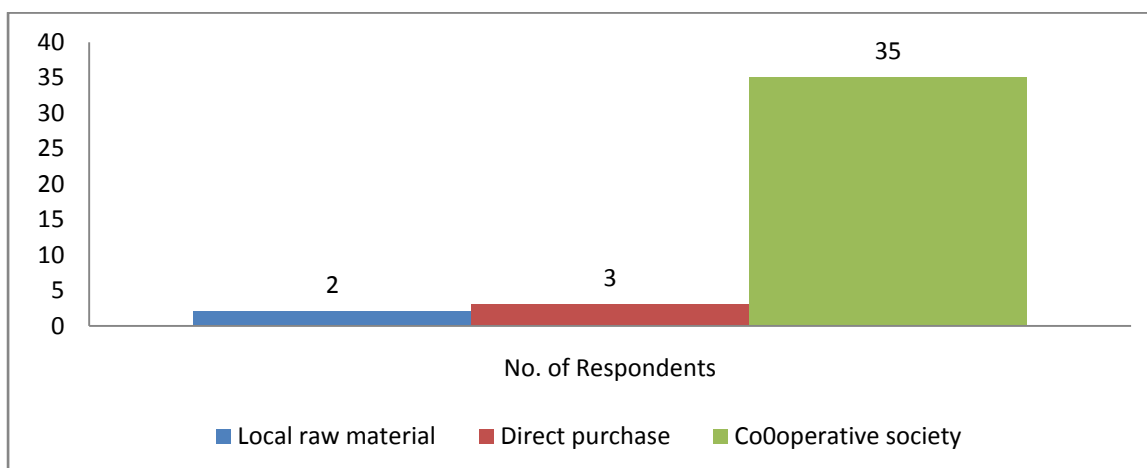


FIGURE 2.9 SOURCE OF PROCUREMENT

TABLE 2.11 MODE OF PAYMENT

| S.No | Mode of Payment | No of Respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Cash | 2 | 05 |
| 2 | Credit | 32 | 80 |
| 3 | Cash & Credit | 6 | 15 |
| Total | | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

The above table shows that the weavers made of payment was 80% of the respondents were credit purchase, 15% of the respondents were purchase of row material payment was made on cash credit, and 5% of the weavers are purchase of row material payment was made on cash.

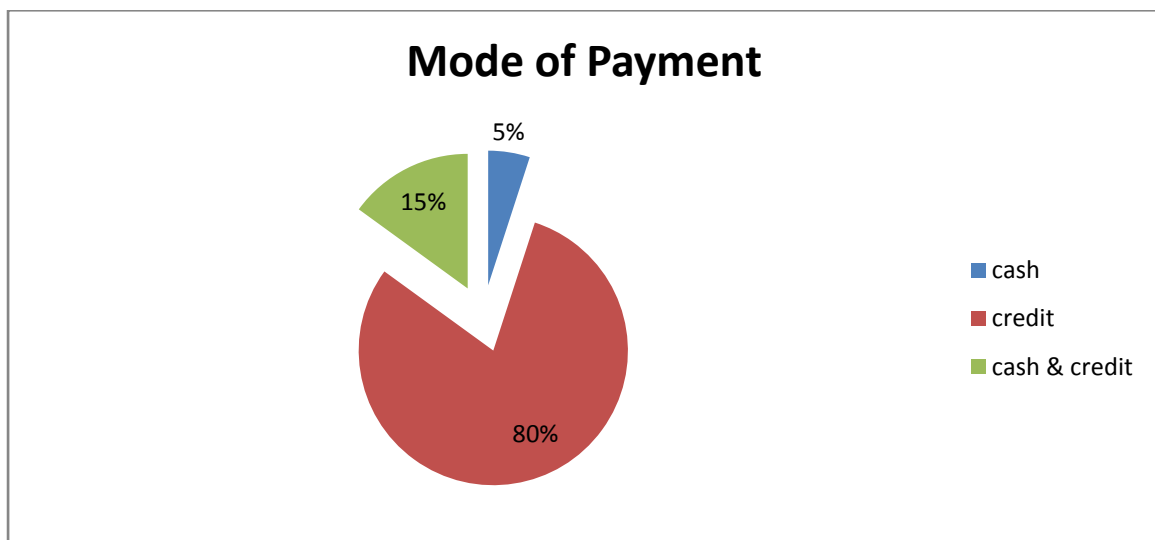


FIGURE-2.10

TABLE 2.12 MAJOR HEALTH AILMENTS

| S.No | Name of Ailments | No. of Respondents | Percentage of respondents |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Eye Sight Weakness | 2 | 5 |
| 2 | Back Pain | 18 | 45 |
| 3 | Knee Pain | 14 | 35 |
| 4 | Joint Pain | 6 | 15 |
| Total | | 40 | 100 |

Source: primary data

Handloom weaving requires long and patient hours of work in various harmful positions on traditional looms and instruments of Handloom weaving. In addition, most of the looms on which weavers work are situated next to windows of

the room in a very small space. Work is done in the natural light and unhygienic rooms or places, considering the strain which eyes, joints or the whole body go through during Handloom weaving. Overtime people engaged in Handloom weaving start facing health ailments due to the hard working conditions. The major health ailments which people face are muscular-skeletal in nature and they suffer mainly from knee pain, joint pain, back ache and weakening eyesight. It shows the major ailments which people are prone to in Handloom weaving. The major ailments were back ache and knee pains 35% of the respondents were suffered.

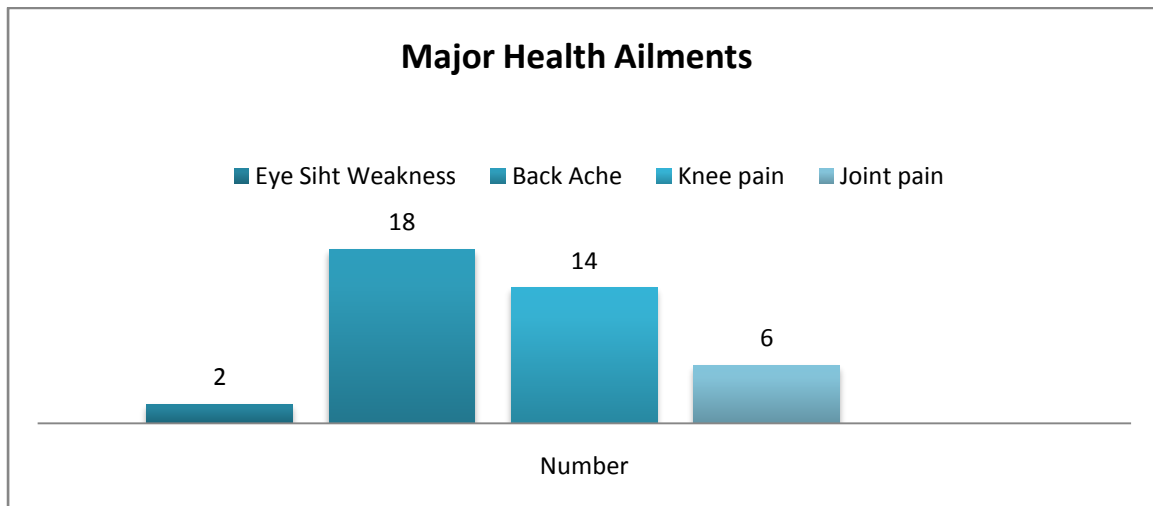


FIGURE 2.11

III. MAJOR FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY

This chapter contains the important findings of the study and suggestions. For improving the socio-economic condition of Handloom weaver’s in kallidaikurichi.

However various unfavorable factors, in course of time, led to its decline. The decline of native entrepreneurship, the non-availability of raw materials and competition from mill-made textile products were among the other important factors that brought about the decline of the industry.

The study presents a historical account of the industry with a view to identifying the factors leading to its decline. It also attempts to focus on aspects of the socio economic conditions of handloom weaver households. In addition, the organizational issues of the industry have also been dealt with. The present study also gives broad indications of the likely consequence of different policies implemented by the successive Governments. The findings of this study have considerable relevance to run the industry on modern techniques at all levels and improve the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weaver households.

5.1 FINDINGS

- ❖ 50% of respondents come under the age between 21-30yrs.
- ❖ Most of the respondents reside 5-10th STD (50%).
- ❖ Maximum number of respondents reside (70%) in nuclear family.
- ❖ (75%) of the respondent’s size of the family reside 4-6.
- ❖ (55%) of the respondents monthly income below 1500.
- ❖ Most of the respondents reside working status in co-operative weavers (62.5%).
- ❖ Majority of the respondents (65%) work 8 hours a day.
- ❖ Most of the respondents reside social personal status inherited (80%).
- ❖ Most of the respondents reside on assets owned by television (55%).
- ❖ Majority of the respondents reside on source of procurement, co-operative (87.50).
- ❖ Most of the respondents reside on mode of payment credit (80%).
- ❖ Majority of the respondents reside on major health ailments back pain (45%).

IV. SUGGESTIONS

Handloom is an age-old traditional industry beset with multi-farious problems. The industry, thus, requires a multi-pronged approach to infuse life and sustain its development. Handloom industry is providing one of the most basic needs of people and holds importance maintaining sustained growth for improving living standards of the weavers. Having studied the socio-economic conditions of the weavers, an attempt has been made in this section to offer a few suggestions for improving the plight of handloom weavers.

- For protecting handloom weavers from the encroachment on their livelihood by the power looms and mill sector, the Government of India shall strictly implement the Handloom Reservation Act 1985 by placing the reserved items of handloom sector in the IX Schedule of Indian Constitution. Moreover, to avoid the competition from power looms, the Government shall innovate some new product ranges which are so far untouched by power looms. The Government also shall regulate the production of hank yarn by the spinning mills meant to be supplied to handloom sector.
- Competition from powerlooms and mill sectors is obviously a major threat. This can be countered if the handloom sector produces high value, and distinctive products for foreign market.
- The Government shall take necessary measures to reorganize the defunct co operative societies. If necessary, it has to initiate criminal proceedings against those responsible for mis-management.
- The industry is facing the problem of lack of both fixed and working capital. The industry till now depended mainly on private sources or moneylenders for its credit requirements. A beginning was made to make available credit facility to the industry on an institutional basis through the introduction of the RBI schemes for financing the weavers. Co-operative societies this should be pursued vigorously
- There is a need for a comprehensive legislation on occupational health and safety for the handloom sector. Key remedial measures need to focus on creating norms, raising awareness and providing capacity building services to help weavers to meet safety standards.

V. CONCLUSIONS

From the present study it is concluded that the Handloom weavers in Tirunelveli, mainly those who have inherited this occupation, are in a pitiable condition owing to the poor socio-economic conditions. The majority of them are wage weavers who earn minimal wages in spite of working for more than ten hours a day. It is interesting to note that the educational status among the weavers community was not discouraging. Almost sixty five per cent of the community belonged to Low income group, engaged with working under middlemen. The basic raw handloomerial required for the production of Handloom products was Handloom purchased largely from the local market but sometimes co-operative society or local dealers, on credit.

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