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### A review on socio-economic status of textile weavers in India

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#### Abstract

Textile industry has been a symbol of India's cultural heritage, which contributes a lot to the growth of Indian economy. It plays an important role in providing the employment to the rural and urban population in India and has worked to connect the people and played an important role in their economic interests. This sector is mainly divided into several disciplines at the unorganized level. It has made its identity as a cottage industry in every state of India. However, the weavers face a number of challenges which affect their livelihood and overall wellbeing like financial constraint, inability to purchase up-to-date machineries, poor working condition, meagre remuneration, health problem and the ignorance of government support. This results in dwindling wages and poverty, low productivity and pathetic economic conditions. Most of the workers are illiterate and do not know that what protective measures should be adopted for their jobs. Hence there is an urgent need of government support, electricity supply at low cost, and proper wage system to improve the conditions of the powerloom weavers.

**Keywords:** Weavers, Powerloom, cottage industry, health problem, economic conditions.

#### Introduction

The powerloom industry is an important segment of the cotton textile industry in India. The powerloom industry mainly depends on weavers but they are always facing problems on finance, electricity, health etc. The socio-economic life of the workers is miserable, who are important actors in tremendous growth of textile. Major causes of this trifling situation of the workers are; poor family backgrounds, lack of proper education, low wages, harass working conditions, lack of employer's concerns and negligible government interventions etc.

This article is aimed at reviewing the past studies of socio-economic conditions of weavers conducted in various areas of India like Andhra Pradesh, Mau City of U.P., Banaras, Haryana, Karnataka, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Solapur and many more places.

#### The key aspects on which the studies were conducted were such

Location, age, gender, religion, social group, educational qualifications, type and size of family, employment status, type and ownership of dwelling units, ration card, source of loan and purpose of the loan, monthly household income, Working hours, Secondary Occupation, Assets owned, Health Ailments, Physical Amenities, Awareness and implementation of Government Schemes, etc.

The previous studies made in this area of research are limited in number and few of them are not directly related to this study. A list of some of the studies made previously has been given in the following paragraphs.

#### Indirectly related studies

1. Imam, Shahid (2021) <sup>[7]</sup> "Socio-Economic status of the street vendors: A Study with Reference to Bodh Gaya (Gaya District)". The study reveals that there is a poor working condition for street vendors in Bodh Gaya in terms of unhygienic and unhealthy atmosphere with long working hours. The demographic and the socio - economic conditions of the street vendors in Bodh Gaya reveals that most of them are illiterate or having low level of education. Finally the present research paper advocates that street vendors in Bodh Gaya should be provided social security; better occupational environment in terms of health and hygiene and economic and social security.

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2. Singhal, Parul (1986), in his study titled, "Socio - Economic Conditions of Labour in Agra Shoe Industry", indicates that the Agra shoe industry workers are working and living under the most deplorable conditions, without any superannuation and welfare benefits. To improve the conditions he has suggested that the industry has to be organized into viable units and such units are to be brought within the scope of various labour laws.
3. In a study by Ramanamma, A. and Bambawale, Usha (1980) <sup>[8]</sup> titled "Socio - Economic Backgrounds of Nurses", it is stated that greater number of women from homes with lower income, education and occupation and status are attracted towards this profession and also because of the provisions of stipends provided during the training periods. In spite of strenuous repetitive work, this profession has a low status and income which is in keeping with women's role in the family.
4. In an Empirical study titled "Industrial Labour in Bombay: A Socio-Economic Analysis" by Dr. Chirde, SB (1949) <sup>[9]</sup>, has stated that regarding the social conditions, the agricultural and economic background determines the heavy exodus of agricultural workers from the farm to the factory. The researcher has indicated that the wages are the long time source of the livelihood for a large class of wage earners, if economic status is considered. The manner and the extent to which an industrial labor is able to feed, house and clothe himself and his family, is closely linked to the payment which he receives in return for his services. He found that the existing factory legislations are very inadequate in various aspects and most of the employers are indifferent and merely content themselves by satisfying the letters of law, rather than the spirit of it.

#### Directly related studies

1. Sivasubramanian & Rajendran (2020) <sup>[10]</sup> in their study evolves the poor working, living and health status of the home-based workers in Chennai city. They have found that the hand loom workers are also termed as home-based workers in the urban areas. Because all works related to hand loom cloth making were carried out in the home premises of the worker.
2. Kolgiri, Somnath (2018) <sup>[11]</sup>. This ergonomic study focuses on identifying and understanding the occupational health and safety risk aspects of power-loom industry workers from Solapur City, Maharashtra, India.
3. Mala P (2016) <sup>[12]</sup> revealed in the study titled "Socio-Economic profile of women working in textile units of Tiruppur district in Tamil Nadu". The violations of human rights of female textile workers in Tamil Nadu occur at different stages in different forms. They are usually underpaid without any contract. The lump sum amount binds them to the job and has taken the form of bonded labor. They face discrimination, abuse and violations due to their socio economic and cultural conditions. Their poverty, caste and socio economic status makes them vulnerable to exploitation. Some have recognized the problems and taken action. There is still a lot that corporations can do and should do.
4. Sadanandam B. (2016) <sup>[13]</sup> presented the socio economic condition of the handloom weavers in Warangal district of Telangana State to identify the reason, and find out their economic condition and status in society. The weavers facing problems in marketing, finance, and

supply of thread. They found that most of the weavers assisted by their family members. They earn a very low monthly income of rupees 2000-3000. These people are not satisfied with their profession. They require meeting the emerging challenges of the socio economic life.

5. Das, Sandhya Rani (2015) <sup>[14]</sup>, the objective of this study is to analyse the socio economic condition of the weavers of Bargarh district of Odisha and suggest possible solution to their problems. Around 100 weavers were interviewed. They found the conclusion that the weavers are facing a number of problems like financial, social, due to which they are unable to purchase up to date machineries. They don't have any support through government.
6. Paul, Uttam (2013) <sup>[15]</sup>, this study is concerned with the socio economic development of workers engaged in small scale power loom sector of West Bengal. They discussed the nature of employment of power loom industries. They selected randomly 500 workers for surveyed and to know their condition. They used primary data as well as secondary data analysed with some statistical tools. They found that most of the workers who are engaged in power loom work are illiterate and they don't have any idea to know about the various schemes of the government. That's the reason of their poor condition
7. MP Makharia (1959) <sup>[16]</sup> in his study titled "Social Conditions of Textile Labour in Bombay with special reference to productivity" revealed that the forces that have shaped the Bombay textile employees are their rural origin and background, the location of the industry, the conditions of their life, labor, leisure, their education and health and climate of the industrial relations. Regarding their economic condition, the average Bombay mill employee has no extra income outside the mill, he is in considerable debt, has a large family and some earning members besides himself in his family and his living quarters are deplorable and deficient in the basic amenities necessary for a healthy life. The researcher has suggested that proper education, incentive schemes, adequate welfare measures, proper housing, rapprochement between labour and the management and introduction of increased productivity schemes will improve the social life and productivity of the textile employees.

There is no authentic and huge number of literatures about this area but some literature are there, which are helpful for the study and research purposes, some such references are Book India 2006 a reference annual compiled and edited by research, reference and training division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India. West Bengal Human Development Report, Development and Planning Dept; Govt. of India, first published in May 2004, India Year Book 2004, Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Textile Souvenir-1981-82, Textile Souvenir 1984, 1986, Yojana-Dhanadhanye - June & July-2007, Tex Vision-2008, The Kolkata Gazette-2008, Govt. of West Bengal.

#### Conclusion

Despite of various programmes and schemes for the workers, they face plenty of problems. It is observed that effective intervention of government, proper implementation of the labour legislations by employer and self-awareness and educational development of the textile workers would be

accommodating to ensure improvement in the life of textile workers. Like, on seeing the results of the study of workforce in Solapur, various schemes are being framed by both Central and State Government and there is no dissemination of the schemes to the ground level workers. As a result many of the respondents in the study revealed that they are not aware of the schemes. Even if they are aware, they are far from their reach. Improper maintenance of equipment demands high strained energy and long hours for completing the work. The younger generation was not interested in entering this weaving industry. Thus when an entrepreneur has better facilities, he will be able to concentrate on his enterprise and he may strive to become a successful entrepreneur and until and unless these problems are solved, the overall improvement of the industry as well as the workers' living conditions cannot be achieved.

### Suggestions

1. Government should make sure that the schemes/ facilities run by them are availed properly by the weaver and should take suitable step to improve weaver's socio economic condition and their livelihood.
2. Providing welfare measures to weavers – health and life insurance
3. Providing infrastructure facility for cluster development.

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