

A STUDY ON PROBLEMS FACED BY POWERLOOM WEAVERS IN VELLORE DISTRICT

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Abstract: 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. Also they do not get any support from the Government. This results in low productivity and their economic conditions is very pathetic. Present study is concerned with only the problems of workers engaged in small-scale powerloom sector of Vellore District. The study is based on primary data collected from 50 weavers from Kangeyanellur area of Vellore District. The study reveals that the weavers have problems on finance and health. This results in dwindling wages and poverty. 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: powerloom industry, problems, weavers, government support, Vellore Distirct.

1. INTRODUCTION

The powerloom Sector plays a pivotal role in meeting the clothing needs of the country. The powerloom industry produces a wide variety of cloth, both greys as well as processed. Production of cloth as well as generation of employment has been rapidly increasing in the powerloom sector. There are 22.69 lakh powerlooms in the country as on 31.10.2010 distributed over approximately 5.11 lakh units. The powerloom sector contributes about 61% of the total cloth production of the country, and provides employment to about 56.64 lakh persons. More than 60% of the cloth meant for export comes from the powerloom sector.

Power loom 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 power loom product in Kangeyanallur of Vellore District. The power loom 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 power loom weavers in Kangeyanallur of Vellore District.

2. POWERLOOM INDUSTRY

Power loom is a machine used to produce cloth in plain or tubler form. Power loom is operated without the aid of human beings and run by steam, electricity and water power.

Problems faced by the Powerloom sector in India:

The following problems were observed in decentralised powerloom sector.

- i. Technological obsolescence and small size of units with fragmentation
- ii. High power tariffs with uncertain power supply
- iii. Lack of credit availability and poor marketability
- iv Low HRD skill levels and poor quality consciousness
- v. Globalization of the textile trade and threat of import penetration

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is no authentic and huge number of literatures about this area but some literature is there, which are helpful for the study and research purposes.

Uttam Paul (2013), 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.

Airi Rehman, et.al (2014) they remarked the social status of the weavers and their economic development. They used random sampling method. Sandhya Rani Das (2015), analysed the socio economic condition of the weavers and suggest possible suggestion to solve their problems. The study is based on primary data through interviewed 100 weavers of Bargarh district of Odisha. They found the conclusion that the weavers are facing a number of problems like financial, social, that's why they unable to purchase up to date machineries. They don't have any support through government.

Arif Anjum, D.V Thakor (2011) analysed the functioning of the power loom industry and problem faced by the industry workers in Malegaon Maharashtra & their socio economic development. They recommend the appropriate measure for the industry, weavers and traders, consumers and their modernisation in respect to technology up gradation and marketing. They used primary as well as secondary data for this study.

Dr. B.Sadanandam (2016) presented the socio economic condition of the handloom weavers in order to identify the reason, and find out their economic condition and status in society. They select study area is Warangal district of Telangna State. Their study is based on Primary data and they used Qualitative and quantitative technique. 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 monthly income of Rs. 2000-3000. This is such a very low income. These people are not satisfied with their profession. Women are also engaged in the production of sarees and carpet. They require meeting the emerging challenges of the socio economic life.

Roselin Basumatary (2013) wanted to highlights the socio economic status of women weavers in the informal sector in Kokrajhar Town. They collect data through questionnaire and used simple percentage method to find out the reality of women weavers in informal sector. The result presented that women in informal sector is the most disadvantaged category.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

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

- To find out the personal details of power loom weavers in Vellore
- To know the working status of power loom workers
- To analyse the economic conditions of the power loom weavers
- To study the problems faced by power loom weavers

COLLECTION OF DATA:

Primary data from 50 respondents by supplying the questionnaire and through direct interview method. Secondary data are those data which are already collected by some 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.

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 the study 50 respondents were selected. The researcher personally questioned all these respondents.

SECONDARY DATA:

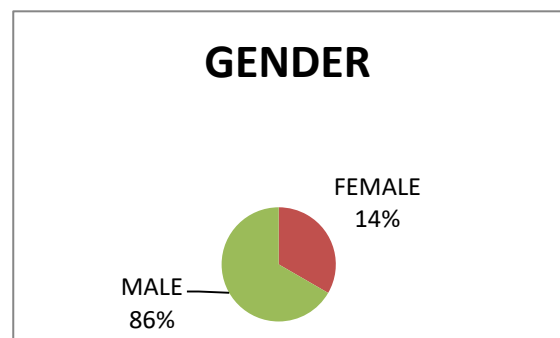
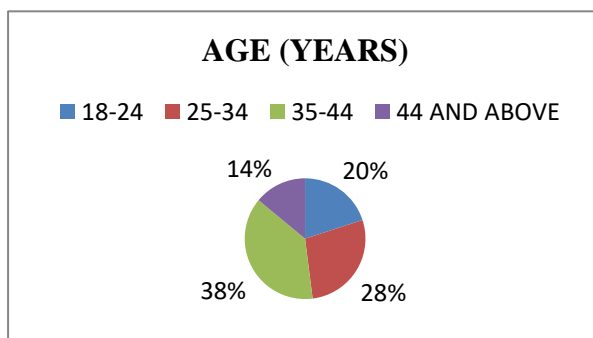
Secondary data for the study collected from the published and unpublished sources annual reports, research, journals and various related website

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES:

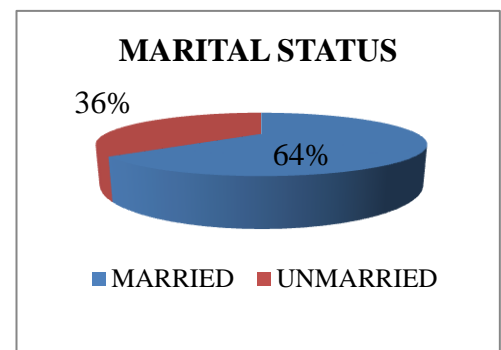
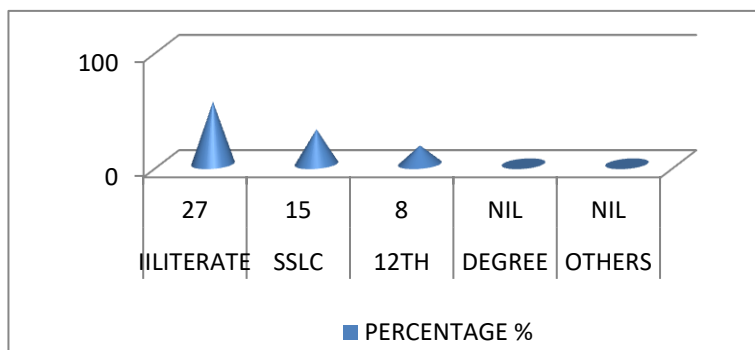
There are several areas in the district that is home to powerloom owners and labourers. This includes Kangeyanallur, Ponnai, Rendadi, Kodaikal, Panapakkam, Thiruparkadal, Gudiyatham and Pudur. Simple random sampling was used in the research. Power loom weavers of Kankeyanallur Village of Vellore district is the sample where approximately 150 power looms weaving families are found.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

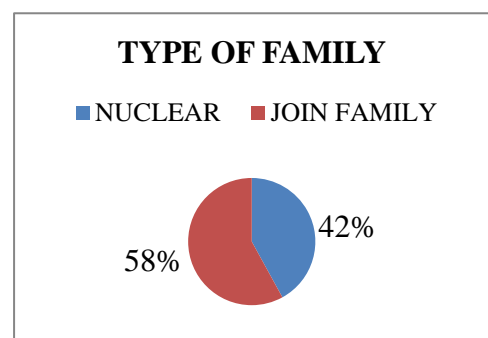
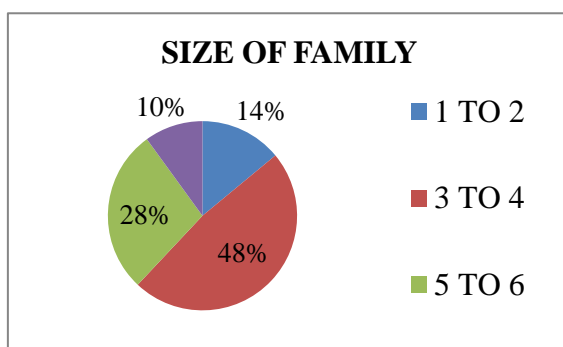
The data are collected from 50 sample respondents by supplying the questionnaires, the data are analyzed by using simple bar diagrams, pie diagram on the basis of age wise, gender, marital status, type of family, size of family, experience (years), educational qualifications, monthly income (Rs), working status, working hours, assets owned, main source of finance, main source of procurement, major health ailments, aware of health insurance scheme.

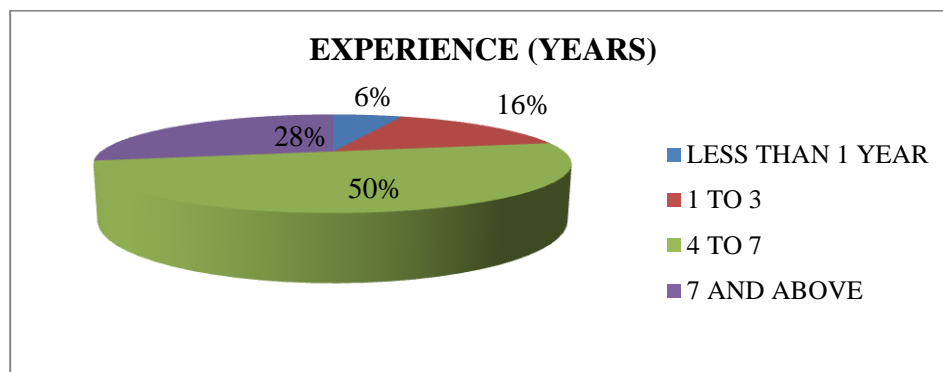


In this survey, out of 50 participants, nobody is under the age of 18 years, and 86% males and 14% females in this survey.

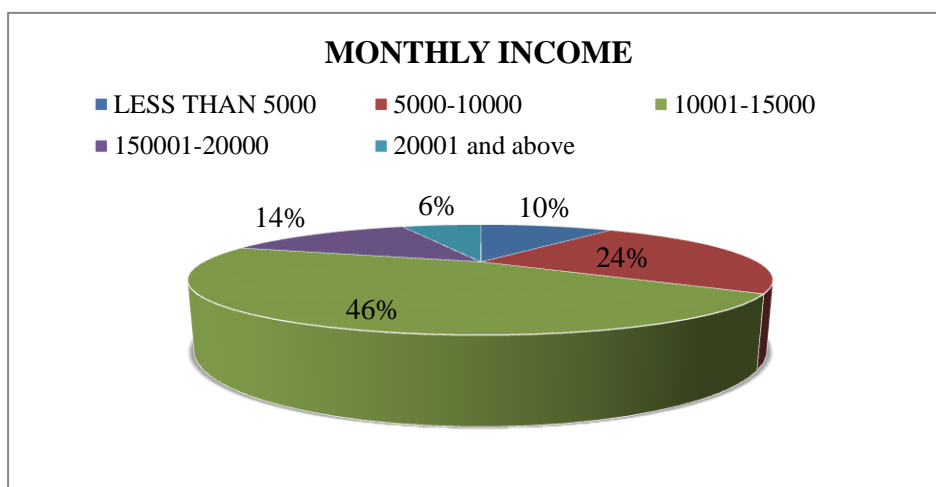


In this survey out of 50 participants, 54% are not educated and it is found that both married and unmarried are involved in the industry. 58% of them live as a joint family and 48% of their family size is from 3-4.





In this survey out of 50 participants, 6% person less than 1 year in experience, 16% person 1-3 years of experience, 50% person 4-7 years of experience and 28% person 7 and above years of experience in this profession.



It is found that 10% of the weavers earn less than Rs. 5000, 24% earn between Rs. 5000-10000 of income, 46% person 10001-15000, 14% person 15001-20000 and 6% person in 20001 and above of income.

WORKING STATUS OF PERSONS:

WORKING STATUS	NO.	%
INDEPENDENT	10	20
WORKING UNDER WEAVING AGENT	12	24
CO-OPERATIVE WEAVERS SOCIETY	28	56
TOTAL	50	100

Source: Primary Data

In this survey out of 50 participants, 20% person independent, 24% person working under weaving agent, and 56% person co-operative society.

WORKING HOURS OF PERSONS:

WORKING HOURS	NO.	%
UP TO 8 HOURS	23	46
8 TO 10 HOURS	21	42
11-15 HOURS	6	12
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

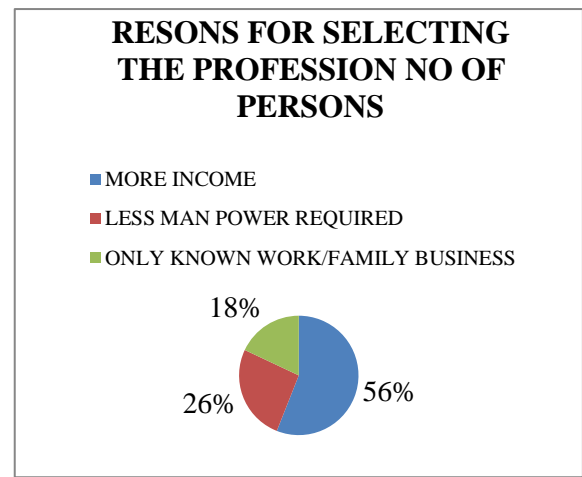
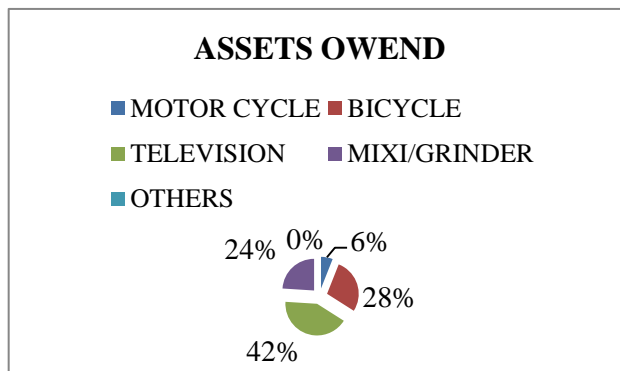
In this survey out of 50 participants work up to 8 hours and more in a day

MOTIVATED BY:

MOTIVATED By	NO.	%
FAMILY MEMBERS	13	26
FRIENDS/RELATIVES	9	18
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY	28	56
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

In this survey, 56% of them agreed that they were encouraged by the co-operative societies to enter into the profession. They also accepted and took this as their profession because of the reason that they earn more as revealed in the following figure.



Because they could earn well the weavers could own the above mentioned assets.

Borrowing is a common phenomenon to the weavers and almost all the workers (56 % of the sampled workers) borrow money from different sources to meet various purposes and casual contingencies.

MAIN SOURCE OF FINANCE:

MAIN SOURCE OF FINANCE	NO.	%
OWN	15	30
BORROWED	28	56
LOCAL PEOPLE	7	14
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

In this survey it is found that the main source of finance for their work is borrowed funds as revealed by 56% of the sample.

Monthly expenses:

The monthly expenses are education, rent, household, interest on loans, etc.,

Expenses	%
Education	15
Rent	9
Household	10
Electricity	11
Interest on loan	55

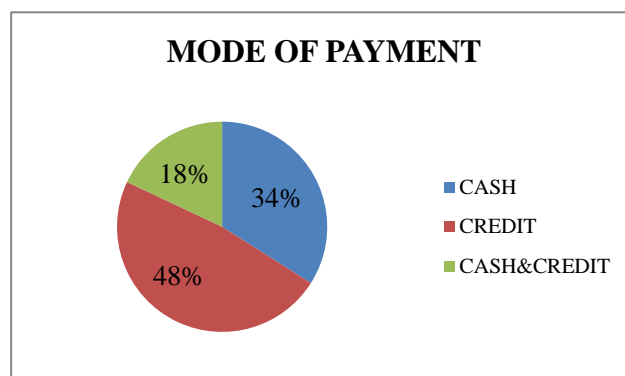
The maximum amount of their earning goes to pay the interest on loan borrowed from the money lenders, societies, etc. Not only this, they also have to meet the casual contingencies with the borrowed money. The present indebtedness distribution of workers can be better understood from the above table.

SOURCE OF PROCUREMENT OF RAW MATERIALS:

SOURCE OF PROCUREMENT	NO.	%
LOCAL RAW MATERIAL DEALERS	8	16
WHOLE SALE DEALERS	13	26
CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY	29	58
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

They procure the raw materials from the co-operative society as told by the 58% no of responds.



The mode of payment to the raw materials is both cash and credit.

The economic conditions and illiteracy of the workers engaged in the powerloom industry in Vellore District, found to be relevant in this context. There are some common diseases they and their family members suffer from and a major portion of their earnings is spent for their medical treatment.

It has been found that out of the 50 workers investigated; only 13 workers responded that they were suffering from eye sight weakness for a long time and the disease is widely spread in the industry. Since the inception of the industry, the workers are deprived of the ESI (Employees State Insurance) benefit. Consequently, the workers have to get the medical treatment by their own coins, which are, obviously, burdensome to them. Naturally, they have been suffering from various diseases which are listed in the following table. Gradually, they are losing not only their productive capacity, but also shortening their span of life.

PROBLEMS FACED BY THE WEAVERS IN VELLORE DISTRICT

In the last few years, hundreds of powerloom weavers across the Vellore district have been facing with dwindling wages, unaffordable electricity bills and lack of benefits such as health cover. They are explained in the following Table.

Problems	No.	Percentage
Dwindling wages	20	46
Unaffordable electricity bills	18	36
Health Issues	12	24

Source: Primary Data

The weavers are disappointed that the government had not looked into their problems. The question as to what is the major health issue is asked and the responses are given in the following table.

MAJOR HEALTH AILMENT:

MAJOR HEALTH AILMENT	NO.	%
EYE SIGHT WEAKNESS	7	14
BACK PAIN	12	24
KNEE PAIN	8	16
JOINT PAIN	10	20
HEAD ACHE DUE TO NOISE	13	26
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

Majority of them are working in the traditional methods and have to stand and work for hours together. As the weavers work for 12 hours a day weaving the cloth for lungis, the noise refuses to fade away, like their miseries. This results in the strain in the ears.

AWARENESS OF HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME:

AWARE OF SCHEMES	NO.	%
YES	0	0
NO	50	100
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

Nobody is aware of the health insurance scheme available to them.

WILLINGS TO CONTINUE THE PROFESSION:

WILLIGS TO CONTINUE	NO.	%
YES	15	30
NO	35	70
TOTAL	50	100

Source: primary data

It is found that 30% are willing to continue the same profession and 70% are not willing to continue the profession. .

4. SUGGESTIONS

Inadequate marketing facilities have become major hurdles in the way of the development of the industry since a negligible portion of the powerloom products is marketed through government channels and most of the master weavers depend inevitably on private channels to get their products disposed of in the market at unreasonable prices. The fruits of the industry are actually grabbed by greedy middlemen and as a result, a majority of powerloom owners are not showing enthusiasm in this modern industry.

Developing a marketing strategy has a vital role in the powerloom sector. So an activity for the promotion and marketing of powerloom products through different mechanisms has to be placed for the implementation and monitoring. For that the following activities can be carried out singly or jointly by the implementing agency:

1. By organizing an exhibition both for buyers and sellers
2. By conducting seminars and workshops
3. By giving effective advertisement

Government should provide free health insurance, health checkups, and education for children, training and capacity building, interest free loans etc.

The urgent need is to strengthen the co-operative institutions in this sector. There is great potential in this sector to absorb new weavers. Hence, there should be a long-term plan from the government side to develop the clusters according to the domestic and international market needs and requirements. To improve the raw material facilities the government should allocate and adequate spend resources to the weavers welfare program.

The weavers are of the view that the government should take over powerloom units. Instead of supplying for private firms, they can supply for the government and a society can be formed to cover powerloom weavers.

5. CONCLUSION

This industry generates a number of employment opportunities. Further, the industry contributes a lot of revenues to the government exchequer. Weavers are the main pillars of textile industry especially in the power loom sectors. But they are at the lowermost of economic pyramid of this sector in the country. They suffer a lot due to their poor socio economic conditions and health issues. The main problem of this industry is less knowledge about the insurance claims. It is found that most of the workers engaged in power loom industries in Vellore District are illiterate in the sense that they have no idea about the various provisions of the Legislative and Welfare Acts as well as health insurance.

The weavers live in a very poor condition. Some weavers are in a very pathetic condition. In spite of that they are happy to continue with this profession. 70% of them willing to change their profession. They may prefer jobs like running small shops, and females would like to take up other professions if they possess some educational qualification.

Besides, low productivity due to lack of automatic looms, shortage of finances, tax structures and poor organizational efficiencies are identified as other problems. If government does not take immediate step to improve their health conditions of weavers, then in future it will be a big threat to traditional power loom lungi products which is a speciality of power loom sector in Vellore District.

It is found that there are lot of problems of the power loom industry in Vellore District as well as of the workers engaged in the industry and if these problems are not solved, the overall improvement of the industry as well as the workers' living conditions cannot be achieved. Hence, it can be concluded that for the overall development of powerloom industries it is required a wholehearted support with proper encouragement from both the State and Central Government.

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