



## **STUDY OF CHALLENGES POSED BY POWER LOOMS TO WEAVERS IN PUTLAMMA CHENETHA BLOCK CLUSTER IN DHARMAVARAM, ANANTAPUR DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA**

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### **Abstract**

*The study was conducted in Putlamma Chenetha block cluster Dharmavaram, Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh. The focus of the study is to examine the impact of power looms on weavers working in the putlamma chenetha block level cluster. Objectives of the study are, to examine challenges posed by power looms to weavers in putlamma chenetha block level cluster in Dharmavaram, Andhra Pradesh. To give suitable suggestions to overcome challenges posed by power looms to weavers in Putlamma Chenetha block level cluster in Dharmavaram, Andhra Pradesh. The study is based on an exploratory qualitative study of 20 weavers working in the putlamma chenetha block level cluster in Dharmavaram, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, India. Research has been conducted by interacting with weavers and allied workers in two ways- personal and group interviews. By thoroughly assessing the responses of weavers, came up with suitable suggestions to solve the problems of weavers, which will help in the betterment of livelihoods of weavers, guard the craft of weaving dharmavaram saree in coming years and will not let the looms lie lifeless and scale up the ability of weavers to cater to the changing tastes and preference of customers and ensure the sustenance of availability of handloom pure silk products of putlamma chenetha cluster in national and international markets.*

**Keywords:** *Weavers, Man-Made Silk Products, Block Cluster, Power Looms, Handlooms.*

### **Introduction**

Clothes are a fundamental human necessity. It is just as important as food and housing. In the past, the handloom industry served as the only source for the global population's clothing needs. The manual operation of a rural wooden structure known as the loom is the source of the name "handloom." The handloom industry has a rich history that dates back hundreds of years, during which the Indus Valley civilisation flourished. It employs millions of craftspeople around the nation, either directly or indirectly. Only agriculture provides a better standard of living for around 43 lakh individuals in terms of jobs (3rd Handloom Census 2009–2010, textile commissioner office HEPC). The industry has accurately been referred to as the "art and craft" industry. More than 40% of the fabric produced in the nation is handloomed. The important products made on handlooms include the sari, dhoti, gamchalam, bed sheet, lungi, shirting, and towel, despite the fact that a huge variety of cloth types are created there. Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh are the three states where the majority of handloom cloth is produced. Tamil Nadu has the most number of handlooms and handloom weavers in the nation among these three states. Even with the state and federal governments' persistent efforts to improve the handloom industry's productivity and advertising, power looms continue to pose a threat to weavers throughout the country.

### **Need for the study**

It is impossible to pinpoint the precise place of handlooms in the political and social context or the annual economic impact of this industry. The handloom sector has been marginalized and its growth has been impacted by these key causes. One of the reasons the handloom industry is dying is the expansion of the power loom business, which, according to textile ministry statistics, currently supplies over 70 percent of Indian textiles. Years of fieldwork have demonstrated that this included



power loom users claiming the subsidies designated for handlooms in the initial decades following independence.

Accurate replicas of handloom goods were being used to illegally enter handloom markets. The power loom and mill industries saw a major increase from the liberalization of import barriers and industry liberalization.

Primarily found in rural regions, handloom weaving is a vital source of income and a household chore. The fact that weavers are autonomous entrepreneurs is unaffected, nevertheless. Working weavers, in organizations that are cooperative, they possess shares. Weavers turn to their local master weavers, who produce and trade handlooms, when these groups are unable to supply work. The weavers often receive their yarn and colors from the cooperative group or the master weaver. The skilled weaver or the leader of a cooperative controls access to the market. A small third group of weavers operates in enclosures that are arranged by the senior weaver; they do not possess looms. Although handloom weaving is still practiced in certain states, it has significantly decreased in others. Handlooms become weaker as power looms grow concurrently.

The production of hand-spun yarn and handloom cloth underwent major modifications in the nineteenth century due to the influence of British mill-spun yarn and cloth. Because they had to compete with a faster, previously unheard-of method of production that was independent of individual agency, weavers eliminated marketplaces for their yarn and cloth. Weavers became more indebted to yarn dealers and moneylenders as a result. To safeguard the interests of the weavers, committees appointed by the colonial authorities suggested establishing cooperatives as Committees were formed in greater numbers as the problems facing the handloom sector persisted.

Following autonomy, the sector was viewed as a means of preserving cultural heritage and a source of employment in many rural regions of India. But that didn't stop it from being called a dying industry that needed government support and shielding. Although the industry was thought to employ a sizable number of individuals, it was not thought to be a major driver of the expansion of the economy.

### **Failure story of protecting handlooms identity**

Following India's independence in 1950, the government of India proclaimed the handloom sector's exclusive right to produce a number of handloom goods. Exclusively for handlooms were traditional goods like bedsheets, dhotis, and border saris. In an effort to maintain the distinctive qualities of handloom creation while making it a mass-market fabric, the reservation order combined these features with labor-intensive manufacturing. Regrettably, the decentralized sector's power loom industry began to proliferate due to the order's ineffective execution, producing exact replicas of handlooms.

In the meantime, the state continued to act responsibly by appointing multiple committees to investigate the problems facing the handloom industry. The central the government's 1964 appointment of the Ashok Mehta Committee recommended that the handloom industry should continue to be the sole producer of saris. Ten years later, the influential Sivaraman Committee noted in its report that every new power loom eliminated six handlooms, resulting in widespread unemployment in the countryside. It was made very evident that producing handloom items is a cottage industry because only a portion of the process can be completed by one person. According to the committee, a large portion of the rural populace depends on the handloom industry for their



livelihood because it is a rural industry. The cases for specific laws to safeguard handlooms were reinforced by the committees' rulings. In 1985, the Handloom Reservation Act was finally passed.

It may seem strange that reservations for specific handloom varieties are central to the regulations framework's essential narrative. This could be because handlooms are meant to preserve their unique identities, to keep produced by machines imitations from taking their place, or even to gauge the handloom industry's growth. This should be considered against the context of the extraordinary rise in power looms in the handloom strongholds and their direct effect on the industry's ability to survive. The two industries were in an advantageous position from the start of policymaking in independent India. The intriguing thing to note is that power looms expanded while handlooms were protected. The development was facilitated by multiple variables. For example, the power loom was eligible for duty exemption under this Act until 1955 because it was included in the identical excise act as the handloom. The Act stated that units with fewer than five looms were exempt. Power loom units scattered their units to avoid duty, making use of this clause. Power loom units had to register, but there should have been more efficiency in power loom regulation. For example, the Hank Yarn Obligation Act requires that 60% (now 40%) of all production from spinning mills be produced as hank yarn, which is the form that handlooms require the yarn in. The power loom industry used the government subsidy for hank yarn after mills lobbied for it. Because power loom owners had established solid ties with both local and state governing bodies, this violation was made possible.

Power looms had completely supplanted handlooms by 1974, when the exemption granted to components with fewer than five looms was lifted. A third of all textile needs in the nation were met by power looms by the beginning of the 1980s. It is evident from the textile policy of 1985 that the focus shifted from creating more jobs in rural areas to modernizing technology to increase productivity.

In a way, the textile legislation of 1985 is a watershed. It brought about radical shifts in perceptions of cottage industries, the unorganized sector, and industries reliant on conventional technologies. Growing textile production became the declared goal, with the creation of jobs serving only as a means to achieve this main goal. Because of this policy, weavers were no longer classified as cooperative or independent; instead, they were classified as either fine or coarse cloth weavers, who were paid more, or coarse cloth weavers, who were paid less. It was suggested that the weaver of coarse cloth switch to a power loom or leave the weaving industry in light of this division. This policy's composition, which presumes that a weaver with higher wages will survive while others would have to migrate, clearly demonstrates the power of the market. This policy aimed to de-regulate textile mills with a focus on productivity growth.

By the year 1840, the introduction of uniform mill yarn permanently changed the distinctive character of handlooms. Natural resource depletion also compelled certain adjustments. The regions identities have been severely impacted by the use of power looms to produce well-known handloom goods and the substitution of synthetic yarn for natural fiber. Cheap imitations have stolen the identities of handlooms, from the well-known Benares silks to Kanjeevarams in the South.

Power looms in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are producing kancheevaram sarees and patanjali sarees from Maharashtra, proving that the product identity associated with a specific location is no longer unbreakable. In this case, the state is proposing new protections in the form of the Geographic Indication Act (GI) and handloom mark without properly evaluating the effectiveness of the previous



laws. As an extra incentive, the theory that the weaver left at the bottom of the value chain will profit from GI is also put forth, however it is not backed by any compelling evidence.

The task of weaving is left to the weaver by the very structure of decentralized production, while advertising and trading are left outside of their purview. It doesn't seem probable in this case that the weaver will reap any GI-related rewards.

### **Present story**

The government of India introduced handloom marks in 2000, the Geographical Indicator Act in 2003, and, most recently, an All India Handloom Brand in 2015 to encourage handlooms as a supplement to the Handloom Reservation Act. By giving handloom products a distinctive identity and shielding them from physical imitations, the development goal is met. By promoting its unique character and giving handloom a collective identity, the different markers aim to increase handloom's marketability. The majority of handloom programs are designed to help with marketing support needs by developing brands or making reservations. The only exception is the cluster scheme, which was developed ten years ago and aims to stimulate business development through infrastructural improvements, instruction in creative designs, and the use of novel technologies.

These days, the handloom itself poses a threat rather than any particular product identity. In the name of economies of scale, present-day policies clearly favor highly centralized mills that control each step under one roof. To shape the inputs in accordance with the producer's needs, the decentralized production units should not be destroyed as a result of this. We have to be receptive to novel ideas. Everyone can only be a worker in a centrally located mechanical production unit; they can never hope to own a product. Conventional production methods, on the other hand, have an organic structure where the manufacturer is inextricably linked to both the process and the final product.

To undo these procedures and give handloom weavers their ownership back, my goal as an investigator is to concentrate on the difficulties that power loom weavers encounter and to make recommendations for appropriate action or corrective measures that will help to develop this industry into a proud national industry rather than destroying this rich legacy.

### **Review of literature**

In this study, weavers in the Putlamma Chenetha Block Cluster in Dharmavaram, Andhra Pradesh, India, discuss the difficulties that power looms present to them. A thorough review of pertinent literature in the field is necessary because it puts the research study in context by highlighting the volume of prior work in the study's associated area. This section of the research study aims to provide a concise overview of previous studies conducted on the subject of the current research project.

**Anu Varghese and Dr. M.H. Salim:** Kerala's Handloom Sector: A persistent issue is rivalry from power looms, according to a study titled "With problems and challenges." Because of the structure of their production, the power looms are able to provide goods at a reduced cost. Because of these technological distinctions, it is feasible. Production on power looms takes less time and fewer laborers. Because power loom products are less expensive, most people favor them, which reduces the demand for handloom goods.

**Somappa.M:** The way the government views the handloom industry, khadi gramodyog The investigator noted that the industry was disregarded by the government. The government prioritizes



the growth of the agricultural industry. The government is focusing on building mills and power looms, which has caused a serious crisis in the handloom sector. The government should invest a lot of money in the handloom industry in order to grow it.

**Rajula Devi A.k:** Handloom weavers' plight An analysis The absence of sufficient support has led to a deeper crisis in the handloom industry in recent years. Most weavers' socioeconomic circumstances are not improving, and many are attempting to leave the industry in search of other employment opportunities. The government ought to support the handloom sector by providing significant funding for its growth.

**V.B. Angadi:** The economics of Karnataka's handloom and powerloom industries, with a focus on the Bijapur district The researcher's groundbreaking study looked at the state of the power and handloom industries in the Bijapur district. The primary issues facing the handloom and power loom industries have been identified by the study, and they include a lack of working capital, a lack of modernization, and a lack of training facilities.

**L.C. Jain:** The researcher has voiced serious concerns about the economic downturn affecting the handloom industry in his paper "Handlooms Face Liquidation, Power Looms Mock at Yojana Bhavan". Nowadays, a sizable amount of the output is sold as handloom goods.

#### **Objectives of the study are**

- To examine challenges posed by power looms to weavers in putlamma chenetha block level cluster in Dharmavaram, Andhra Pradesh.
- To give suitable suggestions to overcome challenges posed by power looms to weavers in Putlamma Chenetha block level cluster in Dharmavaram, Andhra Pradesh.

#### **Methodology**

The study is based on an exploratory qualitative study of 20 weavers working in the putlamma chenetha block level cluster in Dharmavaram, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, India. Research has been conducted by interacting with weavers and allied workers in two ways- personal and group interviews.

**Type of research:** The study is an exploratory qualitative research based on individual interviews with ten weavers and one group interview with ten weavers.

#### **Sources of data**

**Primary data:** Primary data is face-to-face, unstructured individual interviews and group interviews.

#### **Secondary data**

Secondary data has been adopted from published reports by the government, departments and societies of the handloom sector and also from books, periodic journals and various websites related to the present research study and Assistant Director Office of Handlooms and Textiles of Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh.

#### **Sampling technique**

Simple random sampling was used in the present research. Handloom weavers in the Putlamma chenetha block cluster in Dharmavaram, Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh is a sample, and Andhra Pradesh state is population.



### **Area of the study**

This study was limited to the Putlamma Chenetha block cluster in Dharmavaram, Anantapur district, Andhra Pradesh.

### **Sample size**

There are 300 weavers in the putlamma chenetha cluster. Among them, a sample of 20 weavers working under master weavers were randomly selected.

### **Limitations of the study**

The study is a micro-level study. The opinions and expressions of weavers are based on personal experiences. Hence, the information may not have covered the correct challenges faced by weavers. The secondary data is taken as reported in the records. However, the primary data is added to know the present challenges of weavers.

### **Discussion**

- We expect from the government two things- proper implementation of the Handlooms Act of 1985, which prevents power looms from producing handloom sarees, and provide funds for cooperatives to create awareness among customers regarding how to differentiate between power loom and handloom sarees.
- The government has to give an allowance of 2000 rupees for every daily wage weaver and to properly implement the 1985 act so that we will be assured with income which is sufficient for our sustenance.
- Feel that handloom weavers should get silk yarn at subsidized prices, and also, some quota of produced silk yarn has to be reserved exclusively for handloom weavers. This will - give us access to raw materials at affordable prices, lead to a better realization of the price of our product, make our product competitive in the market and reduce the threat to our livelihood.
- Workshops regarding increase in productivity have to be organized for weavers to increase their productivity and make them equally competent with power looms. Drills and competitions must be organized for weavers who can weave a saree fast on handloom without compromising the quality.

### **Findings of the study**

- The number of orders to handlooms is declining due to the higher productivity of power looms and economies of scale
- The increase in demand for raw materials from power looms is leading to a shortage of raw materials and an increase in the price of raw materials. Hence, buying raw materials is becoming a costly affair for weavers
- Due to the rise in prices of textile raw materials, weavers are resorting to buying cheap raw materials at low cost. This, in turn, affects the quality of handloom saree and price realisation for Dharmavaram silk saree
- Piling up of stock of unsold handloom sarees due to affordable prices of power loom sarees
- Due to a lack of customer awareness regarding how to differentiate between power loom and handloom saree, retailers are selling power loom sarees as handloom sarees and earning profit
- By proper implementation of the Handloom Reservation Act 1985, most of the above challenges from power looms can be overcome by weavers.



- Making customers aware of how to differentiate between power loom and handloom saree will solve the problem of less price realization, diminishing market,
- Decrease orders, insufficient wages, no work, no pay situation and dumping power loom sarees as handloom sarees into the market.
- Minimum support prices for handloom sarees will check problems of piling up unpaid debt, increase in the stock of unsold handloom sarees and less price realization.
- Workshops, drills and competitions regarding productivity will increase the productivity of handlooms.
- All challenges are interlinked with one another. Addressing one challenge will lead to the subsequent redressal of other challenges.

### Suggestions

- Proper implementation of the 1985 Handloom Reservation Act will -reduce power looms demand for raw materials and ensure availability of raw materials at affordable prices, check the menace of dumping of power loom sarees into the market as handloom sarees and provide better price realization for handloom products, which indirectly addresses problems of insufficient wages, decline in sales and threat to livelihood problems arising due to increase in investments in power looms.
- Workshops regarding increase in productivity have to be organized for weavers to increase their productivity and make them equally competent with power looms. Drills and competitions must be organized for weavers who can weave a saree fast on handloom without compromising the quality.
- Provide funds for cooperatives to create customer awareness regarding differentiating between power loom and handloom saree.
- Handloom weavers should get silk yarn at subsidized prices, and also, some quota of produced silk yarn has to be reserved exclusively for handloom weavers. This will - give them access to raw materials at affordable prices, lead to a better realization of the price of their product, make their product competitive in the market and reduce the threat to their livelihood.
- The government should provide MSP (minimum support price) to weavers in the same manner as the government provides MSP for crops.
- It would be more beneficial if we branded power loom goods, particularly the handloom types that are frequently copied. There are no reliable ways to certify handlooms, so this is the only option. Strict implementation of the power loom mark would directly benefit hundreds of handloom weavers, ranging in skill from beginner to intermediate, who produce for the middle market, which is very sensitive to price.

### Conclusion

The study is based on an exploratory qualitative study of 20 weavers working in the putlamma chenetha block level cluster in Dharmavaram, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, India. Research has been conducted by interacting with weavers and allied workers in two ways- personal and group interviews. By thoroughly assessing the responses of weavers, came up with suitable suggestions to solve the problems of weavers, which will help in the betterment of livelihoods of weavers, guard the craft of weaving dharmavaram saree in coming years and will not let the looms lie lifeless and scale up the ability of weavers to cater to the changing tastes and preference of customers and ensure the sustenance of availability of handloom pure silk products of putlamma chenetha cluster in national and international markets.



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