

The contribution of unpaid family workers in the handloom sector of textile industry.

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Title of the Project: The contribution of unpaid family workers in the handloom sector of textile industry.

Brief Objective: A large section of workers concealed within the aggregate figures of self employment, are unpaid family workers/helpers that are mostly female. They don't receive any independent payment/ income but contribute their labour to the production.

The main objectives of this project are,

- a) To find out proportion of unpaid workers among total workers in weaving and allied works. b) To find out the share of income of the unpaid workers in the total income of the household from weaving and allied works.
- c) Time spent on different unpaid activities viz., handloom related works, domestic and extra domestic works and also on other activities and leisure-time in a day.
- d) To find out the association, if any, between unpaid work and factors like house hold size, number of children, number of female, amount of debt and some other socio-economic factors.

Date of commencement: 1st April 2015.

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Name of the other associate scientist with their affiliation: Dr. Diganta Mukherjee, Associate Professor, SOSU, Dr. Suparna Shome , Associate scientist 'c', SRU

Justification and scope of the project and proposed work: Labour market segmentation, un-employment, wage differentials, labour force participation all are well investigated subjects but the unpaid family work has received less attention. A large number of unpaid female labour force participation has been subcategorized within the broad category of self-employment and accounted for 72 per cent during the year 2004-05 and 68 per cent in the year 2009-10 (Ray and Mukherjee 2013). The rural self employment consists of three fourth of female unpaid workers while in urban the percentage is about 43 in the 2007-08 as obtained from NSS data (Majumdar, 2011). Women's participation in labour force are overwhelmingly concentrated in household-based manufacturing, where they often serve as unpaid family worker, such as dairying, fisheries, small animal husbandry, handlooms, handicrafts, sericulture etc. Handloom industry is the largest cottage industry in West Bengal and it provides employments in a large number (7.8 lakhs handloom Census 2009-10) next to agriculture (Directorate of Textile, Government of West Bengal, 2009-10). Handloom work largely depends on the

unpaid family workers who are mainly female. The existence and role of unpaid family workers especially the active participation of female in pre-loom and post-loom activities is undoubtedly prevalent and they are the economic asset of weaver households (Reddy, 2010). The whole industry is running with the great support of the female members of their family. Though their income is included in the aggregate income of the family they are not paid individually. This situation undermines their role as an earner in the family, curbing economic independence and social status. As a result of unpaid work, they suffer from gender discrimination in the allocation of resources within the household, in spite of their considerable labour. This certainly goes against the government issues and policies for the development of women's economic independence, individual savings and empowerment.

Hence, it is important to assess the full extent of their contribution in the productivity sector. In this context it is very much relevant to get the share of income of these unpaid female workers to the aggregate income of their respective families. Unpaid household-workers may be grouped into following groups.

a) Children (of age ≤ 14 years) – Some amount of Child labour is involved in handloom industry in the form of unpaid worker. It will be worth to study whether the extent of child labour in handloom industry is nominal or significant.

b) Elderly members (aged ≥ 60 years) – It is also a matter of socio-economic interest to study the extent of involvement of aged persons in economic activity, what proportion of their engagement is as unpaid household-workers, the share they contribute in family earning etc.

c) Household-members mainly involved in other activities other than domestic works, doing nominal unpaid works.

d) House-wives and other members doing substantial amount of unpaid works of handloom industry - It is important from sociological view point to estimate the (imputed) earning of these unpaid household workers. If the contribution is found to be substantial then this aspect is required to be studies on a larger scale.

The secondary source of data regarding unpaid workers is available from the various rounds of Employment and Unemployment surveys conducted by NSSO. But these surveys do not provide any information of an individual's earning and time spent of those who are falling under the activity status of self employment. Neither the Hand loom census (2009-10) conducted by the ministry of Textile, GOI nor the Directorate of Textile of the state government provides data on unpaid family workers. In this backdrop a pilot survey will be done to study the above said objectives.

The pre-loom and post-loom activities of main weaving process are mainly done by unpaid female, children and aged family members.

Methodology: The entire weaving process involves mainly the following steps.

- i) Pre-loom activities include sizing of yarns, bobbin (pirn/spool)-winding, warping and beaming, drafting and denting and setting up of Jacquard.

- ii) Weaving
- iii) Post-loom activities include calendaring and wrapping.

To compute the earnings (imputed) of unpaid workers, mainly market rates will be considered. All most all the activities that will be covered in this survey have prevailing local market rates which are accessible to the women workers also. Payment is made on piece-rate basis and not on the basis of time. However, if it happens during the survey that prevailing market rate is not available for any of the activities then, in that case, shadow pricing will be done.

Sampling procedure: The population for this study will be the people who are engaged in weaving and allied work in the main handloom hubs of Nadia district of West Bengal namely Shantipur and Fulia. It will be a multistage stratified sampling procedure. A sample of around 200 weaver households will be selected from this population. In this survey, weaver households will mean the households who are carrying out any of the activities mentioned above.

Allocation of the sample. The sample will be allocated in each of the localities proportionately according to the number of the weaver households they have. The number of the weaver households can be obtained from two major sources. One is unit level data of Economic Census conducted by Central Statistical organisation. Village wise weaver households in the rural sector and ward/UFS block wise weaver households in the urban sector can be obtained from this source. Another source is the office of additional secretary of handloom section, to the Govt. of W.B , Directorate of Textiles, (Handlooms, Spinning Mills, Silk weaving & Handloom Based Handicrafts Division).

In the 1st stage from each urban locality UFS (Urban Frame Survey) blocks will be selected by the method of PPS sampling, size will be the number of weaver households. Listing of the weaver households will be made in selected UFS blocks to prepare the frame for selection of weaver households.

Weaver households of each selected UFS block can be divided into two second stage strata

- 1) Households having handloom and
- 2) Households not having any handloom.

In the 2nd stage from each stratum 5 households will be selected. In the village if the population size is small then listing of the households will be done in the whole village. In case of larger village the whole village will be divided into some parts and a sample of parts will be selected by PPS. The total number of parts or the sample parts will be depend on the number of weaver households size and the number of sample households to be covered in that village

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Current Status of Handloom Industry in India

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Introduction:

The third handloom census (2010) clearly indicates that the handloom industry of India is not in a very healthy state. The key indicators are alarmingly challenging for sustainability of the handloom sector. Inevitability of the challenges with the changing life styles is a big question mark! Revival back to its originality is in the critical stage, with the changing value system and perception in the modern society. With the obvious

change of mind set from traditional to modernity is becoming so evident that the handloom is likely to become a museum piece of craft of the history in the near future. Decline rate of 7% per year in number of weavers, during the past years is a clear indication of the sun-setting trend of the handloom sector.

In the positive side, the third census shows a rise in the number of handloom households, from 25 lakhs in the second census to 27.8 lakhs; an increase of about 11%. Of the total handloom households, 87 % are rural and 13 % are urban. However, in totality there is a gap and this gap will create more demand and attract more selective and passionate weavers to enjoy the genuine fruit of the looms. This situation will bring the change by itself to the handloom sector to get revolutionized.

This article aims to introspect some critical aspects of handloom sector from the point of its sustainability in relation to the current status and 5 M's (Men, Machine, Material, Market and Money)

Manpower perspective:

Current profile of the weavers:

- India's weaving fraternity is of over four million weavers including its allied production workers. It is the second largest employer next to the agricultural sector.
- Out of 89% of the adult weavers, 49% are of the age group of 18 to 35 years, 21% are of 36 to 45 years, 15% are of 46 to 60 years and 4% are of 60 years and above. This phenomenon is likely to be a big challenge unless the handloom sector attracts more young generation in to this trade.
- Out of all adult weavers male and female weavers are 22% and 78% respectively.
- As regards the educational level of the weavers are concerned there are 83% weavers who are under HSLC level and only 17% are HSLC and above. In a study done on women handloom weavers of Assam, it was found that, only 13% of the weavers had higher education and 87% were under HSLC level (Barooah and Dedhia:2012).This clearly indicates that literacy level of weavers is going to decrease drastically.
- By nature of employment, there are 61% independent weavers, 34% under master weavers / private owners and only 5% under institutional employment.
- Average earning of the weavers is Rs. 3400 per month as against all India average of Rs. 4500 per month and far below the wages as per minimum wage act for an un-skilled worker.
- The quality of life of a handloom weaver is far below, compared to an un-skilled, semi-skilled or skilled worker of an Institution.

Machinery perspective:

- There is not much technology induction in the handloom sector, due to the limited research and inherent scope. The traditional techniques are still most popular, resulting in the existing constraints remained un-resolved. This applies to pre-loom, on loom as well as the post-loom stage.
- As a result, hand weaving remains labour-intensive, low productive etc. as ever.

Material perspective:

- Raw material used in the handloom sector varies subject to quality, product, availability, place, region, market demand, price, tradition, proximity to yarn market etc. Most expensive as well as the cheapest yarns are being used including critical hand spun as well as mill-spun yarns and at times yarns are used irrespective of being compatible or feasible.
- Many a times it is found that the material used in the handloom do not have a sustainability consideration.

Market perspective:

- Handloom enjoys a special market segment for the inherent beauty in its products. Sheer love for hand-woven products, the philosophy, the economic arguments, the social impact, tradition, sentiments, exclusivity, minimum order quantity etc. are some of the attractive elements that will make handloom sustainable, without much doubt.
- Direct market linkage with the developed communication media will boost the market potential further.
- The biggest threats in the market place are the power loom products and the cheap imports, which are inevitable in the open market policy across the world.

Money perspective:

- As mentioned in the weaver's profile, weavers are generally not cash rich, as in any business is equally important for a weaver. Agents, master weavers, mediators do not always allow the weavers to get the value for money for their effort. This jeopardizes the money in terms of earning against the real effort.
- Earning an average of Rs. 3400.00 per month is not encouraging for any profession in today's scenario. Minimum earning of a weaver has to match at least the minimum wage of a skilled or semi-skilled worker if not more.

Proposed approach for sustainability of the Handloom sector:

- Use of high-valued raw material to match the input value of material and high cost of production in handloom and produce only value added products.
- Diversification of handloom products, product development to maximize the value addition
- Adaptation of Fair-trade practices
- Sensitize handloom weaving as a modern professions like fine arts, photography, music etc.
- Motivate youngsters towards handloom sector.
- Incentive schemes towards handloom research.

Conclusion:

India is considered to be the world's best handloom hub and this will continue to be so in the future. Handloom sector has high potential to grow further with focused approach while matching with the modern aspects of living hood. Weavers are gifted with craftsmanship, they are God sent, they deserve higher place in the society like any

good painter or artist. Hand woven products are vibrant; it is made with the threads potent with tenacity, strength, passion and dignity. Fabrics so produced carry special values and hence should not be deprived of its value for money. With such belief handloom will remain sustainable as ever.

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