

# Compare the socio economic conditions of handloom weavers and occupational shifted persons in Palakkad district of Kerala

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## Abstract

*Traditional hand weaving has been a part of India's cultural heritage. This sector occupies a position next to agriculture as it provides livelihood opportunities to millions of people. The handloom industry is expanding both nationally and internationally because of the demand for hand crafted artifacts and unique traditional design. Handloom is a way of life for many people in India. At present the socio economic condition of the weaving community is continuously deteriorating. Hence handloom weavers are changing their traditional occupation and trying to new opportunities. Due to job changed, standard of living of people has been increased in all spheres. But the health conditions of job shifted declined and victims of life style disease. Even though they can afford the modern health practices and is high cost.*

## I. INRODUCTION

Weaving practiced in India has been in existence for more than 5000 years. It is also found in Ramayana and Mahabharata that speak about length of craft. India has a rich cultural heritage of Handloom Industry having the largest Handloom Industry in the world. Handloom products from India have a good demand in the global market and enjoyed internationally. This sector, with about 35 lakh looms, at present provides employment to 65 lakh persons. This is a source of livelihood for the millions directly or

indirectly. The Indian cotton fabrics enjoyed worldwide patronage especially in Eastern and European markets in the world. The Indian textile industry contributes about one-fifth of total industrial production, nearly one-third of total exports and provides oodles of employment to 20 millions of people. Mahatma Gandhi recognized this significance of textile handicrafts during the struggle for independence. A notable aspect of Gandhi's views on this issue is that he emphasized not only handloom weaving but also spinning by hand. Now weavers are facing a number of challenges like financial constraint, inability to purchase up-to-date machineries, poor working condition, meager remuneration and the absence of government support. Therefore handloom weavers are shifting their past and traditional occupation. The younger generations are hesitating to enter into handloom weaving.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The sector is beset with various problems such as obsolete technology, haphazard production system, low productivity, inadequate working capital, conventional product range, weak marketing links, competition from power looms and mill sector, stagnations in the production and sales. Most of the handloom activities are engaging in the rural areas where basic necessities like education, proper housing and hygienic conditions of living are not available. This will harmfully affect them to mobilize limited resources, provide avenues for collective action, bring out product innovation, promote technological innovations and enhance their ability to compete in the local and global markets. Because of these problems, weavers only receive low wage and low standard of living. But people engaged other jobs enjoy a lot of facilities like social prestige, influence of trade unions, job securities and satisfaction and so on. Due to these offers, weavers are changing handloom and try to new areas.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Compare the social status of handloom weavers and occupational shifted persons in the study areas.
2. Compare the economic status of handloom weavers and occupational shifted persons in the study areas.
3. Compare the health status of handloom weavers and occupational shifted persons in the study areas.

## IV. PROFILE OF STUDY

Palakkad district is one of 14<sup>th</sup> districts of Kerala. It is situated in the South West Coast of India. The total area of Palakkad is 4482 Sq.km which is 1<sup>st</sup> rank among 14 district of Kerala in term of size. The total area of Palakkad is 4482 Sq.km which is 1<sup>st</sup> rank among 14 district of Kerala in term of size. The total population of Kerala is 28.1 crore of male is 13.6 lakh and female constitute 14.5, the density of population is 627. Handloom industry are concentrated in 6 Taluks viz. Ottappalam, Mannarkad, Palakkad, Pattambi,

Alathur and Chittur. In Palakkad handloom industry is run by two important castes viz. Muthaliyar and Chettiyar. But in other districts of Kerala all religions and castes are engaging the handloom industry. Muthaliyars weaving less specialized products like dhotis, lungies, and vesheties. But Chettiyars weavings high specialized products like churitars, sarees and its varieties. Presently 16 cooperative societies are working in Palakkad district constituting 2516 as total members. But actual weavers are only 667. The occupational shifted persons cover 1849. New generations are like to occupational changes from handloom weaving. Therefore handloom weaving is slowly disappearing in Palakkad district.

## **V. METHODOLOGY**

The present study uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected from the sample of handloom weavers through a structured interview schedule. In addition to this, the secondary data are collected from discussion with officials of Primary Handloom Weavers Societies; the Apex Handloom Weavers' Cooperative Societies, 'HANTEX', 'HANVEEV' of Kerala, and the Directorate of Handlooms and Textiles of Kerala. Handloom industry in Palakkad district is concentrated in 6 Taluks viz. Ottappalam, Mannarkad, Palakkad, Pattambi, Alathur and Chittur. There are 16 Primary Handloom Weavers Co-operative Societies (PHWCS) are functioning in the district of Palakkad (District Industries Centre, Palakkad, 2016). Among the 6 taluks, 10 weavers and 10 occupational changed persons in each taluks are collected at randomly. Therefore total sample size under study is 120 (60 weavers +60 job shifted persons).

## **VI. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

- Srinivasa Rao Kasisomayajula (2012) examines the financial performance of weavers' cooperative societies on uplifting the Socio-economic conditions on weavers. He illustrates the structure of handloom industry, production and marketing trends prevailing in this sector. Due to lack of financial strength, most of weavers not repay the loans taken money lenders. They are in the edge of suicide. Most of societies are in loss and coming to close.
- Lakshmy Devi C.S (2014) observed the socio economic conditions by portraying the weavers' house construction status, average daily income and number persons engaged in weaving type of ration card possessed etc. the study revealed that social and economic conditions are very weak compared to other jobs.
- In Kerala also a number of study were conducted about handloom industry and its problem. But no one of them compared the socio economic conditions handloom weavers and occupational shifted persons in Palakkad district of Kerala.

## VII. DATA ANALYSIS

The study is only uses primary data by using simple random survey of 120 respondents by taking 60 weavers and 60 job shifted persons. The socio economic conditions between them are considered by analyzing their education, house type, and health and income conditions. The table shows the education standard of weavers and occupational shifted (other) persons in different taluks of Palakkad district.

**Table 1: Education status of respondents**

Taluks	Below SSLC		SSLC		Above SSLC		Total
	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	
Chittur	8	Nil	2	2	Nil	8	20
Alathur	7	Nil	3	2	Nil	8	20
Palakkad	6	Nil	4	3	Nil	7	20
Mannarkad	9	Nil	1	3	Nil	7	20
Ottappalam	5	Nil	5	4	Nil	6	20
Pattambi	6	Nil	4	3	Nil	7	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>41</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>17</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: primary data

The table shows that 34% of weavers are in below SSLC and only 16% passed it. But on one is below SSLC under the occupational shifted persons. But 50% of occupational changed persons are passed SSLC and 14% of them go to higher education. This led to them to achieve job opportunities and high standard of living.

The house types are important measure of social factor. In the study areas, there is no thatched house prevailed. So houses are classified into 3 as tiled, concreted and flat residential buildings. The following table shows the features of them.

**Table 2: House type of respondents**

Taluks	Tiled		Concrete		Flat		Total
	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	
Chittur	8	2	2	7	Nil	1	20
Alathur	7	5	3	3	Nil	2	20
Palakkad	6	2	4	4	Nil	4	20
Mannarkad	9	3	1	5	Nil	2	20
Ottappalam	8	1	2	6	Nil	3	20
Pattambi	10	3	Nil	7	Nil	Nil	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>Nil</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: primary data

The table reveals that 40% of weavers live in tiled, only 1% in concrete (RC) and none of them in flat houses. But 27% of job changed persons are live in R.C. and 1% on flat houses due to easy access to work places. In measuring the economic standard, the income of respondents is most important to be considered. The following table illustrates the daily income of the respondents which are classified the ranges of below Rs. 200, Rs. 200-300 and above Rs. 300/-.

**Table 3: Daily income of respondents**

Taluku	Below 200		200 -300		Above 300		Total
	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	
Chittur	8	Nil	2	3	Nil	7	20
Alathur	7	Nil	3	4	Nil	6	20
Palakkad	6	Nil	4	1	Nil	9	20
Mannarkad	10	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	10	20
Ottappalam	9	Nil	1	2	Nil	8	20
Pattambi	8	Nil	2	1	Nil	9	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	Nil	<b>49</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: primary data

In the table 40% of weavers earn below Rs. 200 which is the only reason for shifting job from weaving. More than 50% of job shifted persons earn above 200 per day. Hence new generation workers hesitate to enter into weaving as a occupation. Another feature is that none of the weavers earn more than Rs. 300 per day.

The occupational shift increased income as well as life style diseases problems simultaneously. The weavers only suffered as blood pressure which is small in percentage. But the occupational shift created major diseases like attack, liver, kidney, respiratory related diseases. For sake of convenience, severe diseases are included in the category of others.

**Table 4: Life style disease of respondents**

Taluku	Nothing		Diabetics		B.P.		Others		Total
	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	Weaver	Other	
Chittur	8	Nil	Nil	7	2	Nil	Nil	3	20
Alathur	9	Nil	Nil	6	1	2	Nil	2	20
Palakkad	7	Nil	Nil	8	3	2	Nil	Nil	20
Mannarkad	8	Nil	Nil	5	2	3	Nil	2	20
Ottappalam	7	Nil	Nil	6	3	3	Nil	1	20
Pattambi	6	Nil	Nil	7	4	1	Nil	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>			<b>39</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	Nil	<b>10</b>	<b>120</b>

Source: primary data

The table portrays that diabetics/sugar is major (33%) problem suffered by occupational shifted persons which lead to severe diseases. The main reason for life style diseases is the excessive and thereby improvement standard of living. The 50% of occupational shifted persons suffer some diseases. This leads to decrease of quality of life of new generations.

### VIII. MAJOR FINDINGS

The 34% of weavers are in below SSLC and only 16% passed it. But 50% of occupational changed persons are passed SSLC and 14% of them go to higher education. This led them to enlarge their job prospects. The 27% of job changed persons are live in R.C. weavers live in R.C. houses covers only 1%. The 40% of weavers earn below Rs.



200 which is the only reason for thinking work shifting. More than 50% of job shifted persons earn above 200 per day. The diabetics/sugar is major (33%) problem suffered by occupational shifted persons which lead to severe other diseases. The 50% of occupational shifted persons suffer any one of the diseases.

## **IX. SUGGESTIONS**

1. The cooperative society must be provided financial support to weavers for implanting innovations of handloom weaving.
2. The weavers must be capable of taking challenges in changing market conditions and customers' attitudes.
3. The govt. can start Research and Development wing to provide new ideas and knowledge of research scholars.
4. The govt. may implement minimum wage policy to handloom weavers.
5. Restrict to license issue to power loom units in remote and village areas.
6. Ensure adequate supply of yarn and other raw materials in right time.
7. Enlarge the operations of HANVEEV especially in production.
8. Conduct National Handloom Day in every year through different exhibition cum sale.

## **X. CONCLUSION**

Handloom is a way of life for many people in India. It provides million of people to access employment opportunities directly or indirectly. The Indian handloom industry is expanding both nationally and internationally only due to unique traditional design. Handloom is a way of life for many people in India. At present the socio economic condition of the weaving community is continuously deteriorating. Hence handloom weavers are leaving their traditional occupation and trying to new opportunities. The educational status of weaver is very poor compared to others which create great hurdles to weavers for new job opportunities. The weavers' daily income is nearly to Rs. 200 but job shifted receive more than 300. This encourages the weavers to leave the waving. The occupational changed persons both created high income and standard of living. But they severely affected by health problems though they can afford the cost of medical practices. The diabetics and its associated health problems are created obstacle to sustainable development of high standard of living.

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