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Assessment of Shelter Conditions and Basic Amenities Among Handloom Weaver Households in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT:

This study examines the assessment of shelter conditions and basic amenities concerns among handloom household units, naturally positioned in rural or semi-urban regions throughout five leading handloom centers in Tamil nadu. The research specifically focuses on identifying the challenges they are confronting and their difficulties in basic facilities. By surveying 1000 weavers from the districts of Salem, Bhavani, Kancheepuram, Thirubuvanam, and Coimbatore, the research highlights significant variances in living conditions based on demographic variables. Involving access to the handloom weavers' current living conditions, basic facilities requirements, and improving their deficiencies through supporting government policy. The findings of the association between government policy support and the overall condition of all residential facilities were found to be at a measured moderate level. Interestingly, educational level enhances their ability to find opportunities and leverage government interventions for improving infrastructure both at home and at the workplace. This study suggests to emphasizes government Interventions need to focus on reliable housing and infrastructure improvements to boost both younger educators ' interests and certainty in government initiatives.

Keywords: Handloom Weavers, Housing Conditions, Basic Amenities, Quality of Life, Weaving Communities, Tamil Nadu

1. INTRODUCTION

In essence, handloom weaving is an important part of cultural heritage. As a significant source of rural employment, workers in this sector often experience economic hardship and poor living conditions, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions and support systems. Handloom weavers repeatedly struggle with precarious, vital living standards, primarily low wages, stiff competition from machine-made textiles, and unorganized working conditions. Despite the cultural importance of the handloom sector and high employment opportunities, especially in rural areas, many weavers face challenges in meeting their basic needs. A significant portion of weaver households live in semi-pucca or kucha (temporary) houses with reduced basic amenities like proper sanitation and water supply, further affecting their quality of life.

This study aims to expand upon earlier work by analysing the housing conditions and basic amenity facilities of handloom weavers. Specifically, in the previous research, measures necessary for the amelioration of the socio-economic condition of the handloom weavers were related to housing. The housing condition of the weavers was inadequate, and sometimes they had insignificant huts. It was very complicated to accommodate the weaving materials within the limited space. Hence, the weavers required spacious rooms to keep their weaving materials and equipment. The process of handloom weaving involves separate stages, and thus it requires the support of several people, who should work together. Therefore, a spacious work spot is needed to continue the weaving works. The profession of weaving requires a clean and pollution-free atmosphere. In many houses, there was no electricity. They required powerful lights to continue the work even at night. A handloom weaver who had his own loom could continue the profession in his own house, which was not only his living place but also his work spot. According to a survey conducted by J.C Ryan, the then Registrar of Co-operative Societies of Madras State in the year 1950, the condition of the weavers found under the Co-operative sector was very poor. A large number

of handloom weavers were living in houses or huts under conditions that were not hygienic. The weaver should therefore be assured of proper housing –cum-work-spot facilities. So that they would increase production and improve the socio-economic conditions. Therefore, the Government has formulated schemes for the provision of housing and working facilities to the weavers. In spite of the government's initiative in the construction of the weavers' colonies, it could not provide houses to all the weavers under the cooperative society fold who required the same. Though the government had initiated and built several houses due to the decline of the handloom industry, the very purpose of creating colonies could not yield permanent results (Lenin , 2018). Previous survey highlighted the five leading handloom hubs in Tamil Nadu, namely Kancheepuram, Erode-Bhavani, Madurai, Coimbatore, and Salem (Koiri, 2020). The objective of this study is to furnish policymakers and industry stakeholders with the necessary data to inform policy on the key determinants of both individual well-being and sectoral sustainability.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An information-based approach provides a more accurate picture before policy formulation. The handloom weavers' workplace in Tamil Nadu is an underexplored sector. These studies highlight that communities dependent on this occupation often face significant socio-economic challenges, which directly affect their household living conditions.

Handloom weaving involves various operations like warping, weaving design on warp yarn, tying and drawing the warp yarn, weft making, and final weaving. The study recommended the need to improve the workstation design in all sophisticated environments. It helps to enrich their work performance, and weavers' health can be improved. (Velivelli & et al, 2018).

Some studies highlight the evaluation of the level of technical inefficiency in handloom weaving units in Tangail Sadar and examine the socioeconomic conditions of handloom entrepreneurs in Tangail Sadar. The government should come forward to take action against this technical inefficiency (Rakibul & et al, 2020). So, entrepreneurs eliminate this technical inefficiency, and they can generate a profit. Encouraged that reducing GST and increasing awareness about the greatness and individuality of the handloom produce helps the handloom industry to sustain in Salem District (Subramaniya & Jothi, 2020).

Handloom industry remains the scope for enhancement of the quality of life of the weavers by way of initiating more appropriate development schemes and a lack of government support (Jothi & Subramaniya, A situational assessment of socio-monetary circumstances of handloom weaving community in Salem District, 2021). Revealed sustainable development strategies that can make a positive contribution to generating standard employment opportunities, and the handloom industry will continue to thrive (Jothi & Subramaniya, Sustainable Development Strategies for Handloom Industry Post Covid-19 Era in Salem District, 2021).

Highlighted the research need for extra research concerning the postural strain of weavers and also suggests the implementation of yoga meditation and a plan into weaver workstations to advise minimising the current working problems (Bharathy & Jothi, 2017).

Results also emphasised the role of multiple income sources and gender-sensitive policies for improving weavers' socio-economic outcomes (Anjani & Raja, 2025). The mean 16 years of experience inferred from the above suggests that respondents are not happy with the quality of life, and are not fully satisfied (Katta & et al, 2018)

Previous studies on the status of weaving communities have provided much information about their socio-economic challenges and living environments. This study aims to bridge that gap by offering a nuanced, field-based understanding of their conditions, like Poor housing conditions, Economic crises, Health problems, the Effectiveness of government schemes, and the Disappearance of tradition, and by recommending sustainable pathways for revival and empowerment.

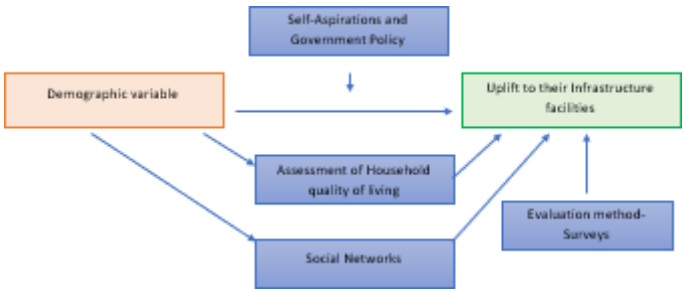
2.1 Research Gap

Few studies have been conducted on the status of workstation conditions of handloom weavers. The following areas require further attention, focusing on basic facilities, direct link between housing and livelihood,

Planning and architectural solutions, and policy impact assessment. This study seeks to fill specific gaps in the basic living facilities of the weavers and propose targeted solutions to recover their workstations.

Figure 1.1 Theoretical Framework on "Assessment of shelter conditions and basic amenities among handloom weaver households"

Handloom Weaving Communities Household Unit



This theoretical framework outlines the study's highlights that the assessment begins with understanding the demographic profile of weavers, and an assessment of household quality of living and social networks, through access to improve their workstation conditions.

2.6 Statement of the problem:

This research incorporates the five prominent centers in Tamil Nadu famous for handloom products and product weaving, such as the Thanjavur Thirubuvanam silk sarees, Salem silk dhoties, Erode (Bhavani) Jamakkalams, Coimbatore Kovai Kora silk, and Kancheepuram silk sarees.

The study identifies that handloom weavers in the study area face many challenges deficiency of adequate housing and infrastructure. Especially those living in rural and urban poor areas, living in squalid, overcrowded houses without sufficient natural light, ventilation, and sanitary conditions. Many weaving houses lack essential living facilities, including clean drinking water, toilet facilities, and electricity. While the government has pioneered several housing schemes for the welfare of the handloom weavers, they have not fully supported the real needs of the community or dove out to all. Therefore, owing to the beyond influences, the conventional way of living of the handloom weavers is vastly behind. This study's consideration of the absence of basic living facilities seeks to realize the serious government interventions required to improve housing facilities.

2.7 Importance of the study:

This study primarily aims to explore the importance of documenting the current housing conditions of weavers, using the data to focus on the real issues faced by the weaving community. This information is intended to assist in making informed policy decisions to effectively reach the community, thereby refining their immediate needs, including housing, sanitation, drinking water, and improving their overall infrastructural facilities.

2.8 Main objectives of the study:

1. To analyse the socio-economic status of handloom weavers, considering various demographic factors (Gender, Age, Education Qualification).
2. To evaluate the problems of the handloom weavers and the shortcomings in their household units' basic amenities.
3. To assess how government assistance programs contribute to the improvement of their infrastructure.

2.9 Research Hypotheses:

H_o. There is no association between gender and the level of support system in government policy.

H_1. There is a significant association between gender and the level of support system in government policy.

H_o. There is no association between education and the assessment of the basic household facilities

H_1. There is a significant association between education and the assessment of the basic household facilities

H1: Clearly identify the measured variables of the household quality of living index (Household Characteristics and Housing Quality, Household Amenities and Infrastructure, Household Assets & Housing Quality, Sanitation & Drinking Water).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive in nature, cross-sectional research approach. The study examined the living conditions and challenges related to basic amenities for the families of handloom weavers in five major handloom centers in Tamil Nadu. An arrangement of approaches was used to provide a thorough outline of the difficulties faced by these weavers.

3.2 Sampling framework:

The study was carried out in five districts of Tamil Nadu, namely, Salem, Bhavani, Kanchipuram, Thirubuvanam, and Coimbatore, which are known for handloom products with Geographical Index (GI) tags. The study followed convenience and snowball sampling techniques to collect 200 samples from 1,000 handloom weavers from each district. The sample size was calculated based on the estimated population of weavers in each area to ensure representation across various demographics, living conditions, and challenges related to weaving households for both government-owned societies and others. The sample size was calculated on the basis of the estimated population of weavers in each area, which included different demographics and household challenges related to weaving families for government-owned cooperative societies, and confirmed representation in the interweaving of family-related challenges.

3.3 Data Collection

Data was collected using a standardized questionnaire that gathered demographic information, details about living conditions, and challenges faced by the respondents. The survey also included Likert-scale questions regarding living status and the problems encountered.

3.4 Limitations of the Study

The investigation is limited to a small sample of weavers, which may not fully represent the entire weaver community.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the statistical analysis results related to the research aims and hypotheses. Employed Descriptive statistics, specifically the Chi-square test, will be applied to the quantitative data to pinpoint relationships among the living conditions of households and challenge variables.

4.1 **Demographic profile of respondents:**

Table 1: Socio-economic factors of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	480	60.0%
	Female	318	39.8%
Age	Below 25	45	5.6%
	26-35	24	3.0%
	36-45	143	17.9%
	46-55	272	34%
	Above 55	316	39.5%
Education	No formal education	271	33.9%
	Primary	263	32.9%
	Secondary	189	23.6%
	Higher secondary	63	7.9%
	Graduate	13	1.6%

The table shows the respondents ' demographic variables of gender, age, and education. The significant ratio indicates that 39.5% of people were above 55 years old, which only encourages this profession. The gender ratio suggests that most of the weaver population is male (60%) while the others are female (39.8%). The education ratio of the majority of the weaver population is no formal education (33.9%), while others are primary (33.9%) and secondary (23.6%). These findings align with prior studies that highlight significant socio-economic variations among handloom weavers based on age and gender (Anjani & Raja, 2025). These results, inferred from H0 and H1, indicate a demographic engaged in this profession that includes aged individuals and people who are illiterate.

4.2 Gender and The Level of Support System in Government Policy

Table 2: Chi-square test- Gender and the Level of Support System in Government Policy

Variable	Pearson chi-square	df	p-Value
Gender * the level of support system in the Government policy	66.345[a]	2	0.001

Pearson chi-square value is 66.345[a] at the level of significance, p-value 0.001 is less than 0.005, hence the null hypothesis is accepted. The alternative hypothesis is rejected. Concludes that gender is not dependent on the government support system. The computed Cramer's V coefficient value is .079. This indicates a weak relationship between gender and the level of the government support system.

4.3 Education and Assessment of the Basic Household Facilities

Table 3: Chi-square test- Education and Assessment of the Basic Household facility

Variable	Pearson chi-square	df	p-Value
Education and Assessment of the Basic Household Facilities	101.267[a]	24	0.001

Pearson chi-square value is 101.267[a] at the level of significance, p-value 0.001 is less than 0.005, hence the null hypothesis is accepted. The alternative hypothesis is rejected. Concludes that education is not dependent on fulfilling basic household facilities. The computed Cramer's V coefficient value is .112. This indicates a weak relationship between the level of education and the assessment of basic household facilities.

4.4 Factor analysis for household quality of living index

Factor analysis assists the researcher in reducing the number of variables to be evaluated, making the analysis more manageable.

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser -Meyer- Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.755
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5091.660
	Df	153
	Sig.	.000

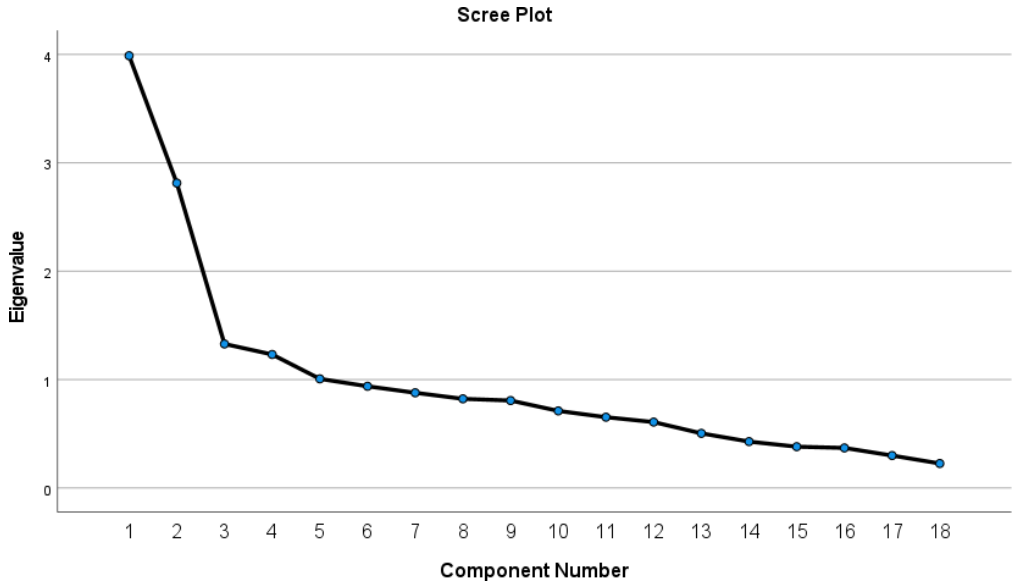
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure is an index that defines sampling Adequacy. The KMO test value is .755, which is more than 0.5, and can be considered Good and valid to conduct the data reduction technique.

The Bartlett's test of sphericity helps a researcher to decide whether the results of factor analysis are worth considering and whether we should continue analysing the research work. The Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at a level of significance is <0.001, which shows that there is a high level of correlation between variables, making it adequate to apply factor analysis.

	Rotated Component Matrix				
Factors	Components	Item Description	Rotated Loading	% of Variance	Eigen Value
I	Household Characteristics and Housing Quality	HHs living in a permanent house	.569	1.82	1.839
		Married couples have an exclusive room	.770		
		HHs with own houses	.667		
		HHs having at least two dwelling rooms	.819		
		LPG/PNG for cooking	.409		
		Bicycle for mobility	.498		
II		With an adequate electricity facility	.466		

	Household Amenities and Infrastructure	With a bathroom facility in the house	.566	1.868	2.375
		Closed drainage system for wastewater outlet	.529		
		A separate kitchen inside the house	.649		
		Banking service	.709		
III	Household Assets and Communication	Television at home	.806	2.198	2.123
		Telephone facilities (mobile, landline, or both)	.717		
		Computer/Laptop (with or without internet)	.466		
		Scooter/Motorcycle/Moped			
IV	Household Assets & Housing Quality	HHs with good condition of residential census houses	.541	2.109	2.08
		Scooter/motorcycle/ moped	.667		
V	Sanitation & Drinking Water	Have drinking water within in premises	.589	2.423	2.433
		With a latrine within the premises	.809		

The total variance contributed by the first component is 1.82, by the second component 2.375, by the third component 2.123, by the fourth component 2.08, and by the fifth component 2.433. The eigenvalue for a given factor measures the variance in all the variables that is accounted for by the factor. It is also clear that there are a total of seven distinct components having eigenvalues greater than 1 from the given set of variables. Eigenvalue for factor 1 is 1.839, for factor 2 is 2.375, for factor 3 is 2.123, for factor 4 is 2.08, and for factor 5 is 2.433.



The scree plots show the components on the X axis and the corresponding eigenvalues on the Y axis. The first five components are considered, whose eigenvalues are 1.839, 2.375, 2.123, 2.08, and 2.433. Hence, 10.578 is the maximum eigenvalue; hence, this factor is most significant, followed by other factors. Since all these five factors have eigenvalues greater than 1 and share maximum variance; hence, they are essential in the present study.

5.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This study finds a considerable demographic profile of handloom weavers in Tamil nadu, with gender, age, and education level indicating a low strengthening of this profession. Because male dominance is highlighted, the aged category only supports this profession, and a lower education level is affirmed in this finding.

Similarly aforementioned study found the same results 32 per cent of the majority of respondents are between 51- 60 years age group, above 60 years age group respondents have 24.4 per cent and least percent 4.4 of respondents are in 20 -30 years of age group. Younger generations are not choosing this profession (Ganga , 2017).

However, crisis factors like household challenges they are confronting, difficulties in basic facilities, and the government support system statistically prove a significant (p<0.05) association between handloom weavers' household support for government policies, and the overall condition of all household deficiencies and facilities was found to be a moderate level of satisfaction.

Previous results exhibit that a minimum number of respondents realise and utilise the recent government support schemes like MGBBY (34%), PMJJBY (36%), and PMSBY (44%) (Hemasrikumar & et al, 2022).

The findings of factor analysis majority of handloom weavers' households' inadequate characteristics, insufficient amenities, and other household needs.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS

To explore the application challenges of handloom household issues, a significant association exists between unsatisfactory household conditions and seeking support from the government. The government should take necessary measures to reorganize the defunct co-operative societies and take necessary actions on them. Should provide minimum wage employment programmes to all categories of weavers. As a result, their level of income will increase and meet their basic needs. The gap between the income and the expenditure should come down (Ganga , 2017). The government should take essential steps to conduct some special programs for rural weavers to know about the welfare schemes(Hemasrikumar & et al, 2022).

This study suggests to emphasizes government Interventions need to focus on reliable housing and infrastructure improvements to boost both younger educators ' interests and certainty in government initiatives. Executing advanced and besieged housing schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), specifically designed for the handloom household units, they can be relocated from destroyed structures to permanent residences with adequate space and ventilation. Government housing schemes must collaborate to ensure regular access to clean drinking water and provide clean cooking fuel. This work highlights the need for access to digital content initiatives to significantly improve engagement with government-backed mechanisms and financial services.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

The research findings confirm that a critical lack of infrastructure is the primary reason for the extremely backward living standards among handloom weavers in the five studied districts of Tamil Nadu. The study concludes that the community's low quality of life is primarily driven by poor infrastructure, including a lack of permanent housing, adequate sanitation, and separate activity spaces. To make a real difference in the socio-economic status and livelihood of these essential weaving communities, Government interventions should shift from general policies to delivering concrete, quality-focused housing and infrastructure programs. Closing this infrastructural gap is critical to ensure the sustainability of the handloom sector and improve the quality of life of weavers.

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