



# A STUDY ON THE HEALTH ISSUES FACED BY THE HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN TENKASI DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

As handloom weaving stands at a critical juncture amidst globalization and technological advancements, the insights from this research serve as a foundation for informed decision-making. The study advocates for a balanced approach that respects the cultural significance of handloom weaving while adapting to the evolving demands of the modern world. Ultimately, our collective responsibility lies in weaving a future where handloom weavers thrive, cultural heritage endures, and the intricate tapestry of their lives remains an integral part of our shared human narrative. The researcher has adopted simple random sampling to select the sample respondents. The sample size identified for the study is 50. Statistical tools such as Percentage analysis and Garret ranking have been applied by the researcher for analysing the data.

**Key Words:** Handloom weaving, Globalisation, Technological advancement, Weavers, Cultural heritage, etc.,

**DOI Number:** 10.48047/nq.2022.20.19.nq99493

**Neuroquantology 2022; 20(19):5225-5229**

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## INTRODUCTION

In the unique tapestry of global commerce, traditional crafts hold a unique position, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship of communities. One such craft that has stood the test of time is handloom weaving, an ancient art form that weaves stories of skill, tradition, and economic sustenance. This study delves into the socio-economic condition of handloom weavers, aiming to unravel the complexities that shape their livelihoods and impact their communities.

Handloom weaving, a practice deeply embedded in the social fabric of many societies, goes beyond the creation of textiles. It encapsulates the essence of cultural identity, providing a tangible link to the past while also contributing significantly to

eISSN1303-5150

contemporary economies. However, despite its cultural significance, the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers often remain obscured, overshadowed by the rapid transformations in the textile industry.

As globalization and technological advancements continue to reshape industries, handloom weaving stands at a crucial juncture. The insights gleaned from this study will not only contribute to the academic understanding of the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers but also serve as a foundation for informed policy decisions aimed at preserving and sustaining this invaluable cultural heritage.

Through a comprehensive examination of the intricate threads that make up the socio-economic fabric of handloom weaving, this study endeavours to

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offer a nuanced perspective that goes beyond the surface, appreciating the intricate interplay of tradition, economics, and social dynamics within this ancient craft.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Panda and Bhuwania (2022)** in their study stated that in recent years the socio-economic condition of weavers has been degraded in terms of loss of jobs, loss of income, high production costs, several health issues. Thus, this paper aims to conduct a systematic literature review (SLR) based on a survey of 30 papers published between 2015 and 2021 on the subject of socioeconomic issues, health hazards and business problems of handloom weavers to acquire an updated picture of these domains. The Google Scholar search engine was used, and SLR produced intriguing results documented in this review paper. The government has adopted several welfare laws and projects. Despite several plans, the handloom business has numerous challenges, including worldwide marketing rivalry, low income, and low market pricing. As a result, weaver's social and economic situations have been deteriorating. Weak organizational structure, low pay, inadequate infrastructure, dispersed looms, poor marketing, and other factors made them more vulnerable.

**Sivakkolundhu and Sheeba (2021)** in their research paper explained that in India the handloom industry is one of the major cottage industries. It is one of the labour concentrated industry and the second largest employment generator after agriculture in the rural sectors of the economy. It is generating employment opportunities and supporting livelihood to the weavers. This work is conducted on the weavers is weak due to financial constraints health problem and poor in economic condition. The Handloom weavers have many loom other than power loom and includes any hybrid loom on which at least one process for production. The reduction in number of handloom weavers has been a cause of concern for government. In this paper aims to measure the socio-economic condition of handloom weavers in

Vellore District. The data is collected with the help of interview method.

**Prathap and Naidu (2015)** in this study opined that the handloom sector plays a pivotal role in the country's economy. It is one of the largest economic activities next to agriculture. At present like sector with about 35 lakh looms, at present provides employment to 65 lakh persons. The traditional handloom weaving in India has been kept alive by those efficiently skilled household weavers, which inextricably is linked with the age-old The Government of India's policy for the handloom sector had twin objectives of social and economic. The business objectives anchored in the thrust for growth, were to update old technology, innovativeness, increase productivity, introduce new colors, new designs and to export the handloom fabrics. 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, overall stagnation of production and sales and above all, competition from power looms and mill sector. There is no doubt that India's textiles constitute one of the costly sources of textile designs in the world, drawn upon increasingly by textile designers, product designers and craze designers from all nationalities. Most of the handloom weavers are willing to live in a joint family system. The income and living standards of the handloom weavers are very poor

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the socio-economic conditions of the handloom weavers in Tenkasi district.
- To identify the expenditure pattern of the respondents in the study area.
- To health problems faced by the handloom weavers in the study area.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study has adopted both Primary and Secondary data. The primary data has been collected from a sample group of 50 respondents. The sample respondents have been selected using simple random sampling

method and the data has been collected using questionnaire. The secondary data has been gathered using various sources such as journals, magazines, books and various websites.

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The following table 1 shows the socio-economic profile of the handloom weavers in Tenkasi district,

**TABLE 1**  
**SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Socio-Demographic Profile	Categories	Categories	Percentage
Age	Less than 30 years	3	6
	30-40 years	12	24
	40-50 years	20	40
	Above 50 years	15	30
Monthly Family income	Less than Rs.10,000	5	10
	Rs.10,000-20,000	7	14
	Rs.20,000-30,000	18	36
	Rs. 30,000-40,000	8	16
	Rs.40,000-50,000	9	18
	More than Rs. 50,000	3	6
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	2	4
	SSLC	19	38
	HSC	25	50
	Graduates	4	8
Religion	Hindu	38	76
	Muslim	10	20
	Christian	2	4
Size of the family	Less than 3	6	12
	3-5	37	74
	Above 5	7	14

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#### Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that 40% of the respondents belong to the age group of 40-50 years; 36% of the respondents monthly family income is Rs.20,000-30,000; 50% of the respondents have completed HSC; 76% of the respondents are Hindus and 74% of the respondents family size ranges from 3-5.

#### MONTHLY FAMILY EXPENDITURE

The table 2 shows the monthly family expenditure of the respondents in the study area,

**TABLE 2**  
**MONTHLY FAMILY EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure	No of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 10,000	11	22
Rs.10,000-15,000	15	30
Rs.15,000-20,000	10	20
Rs. 20,000-30,000	10	20
Above Rs. 30,000	4	8

#### Source: Primary Data

The above table 2 clearly depicts that 22% of the respondents' monthly expenditure is less than Rs.10,000; 30% of the respondents' expenditure is between Rs.10,000 and Rs.15,000; 20% of the respondents' expenditure is between Rs.20,000 and Rs.30,000 and 8% of the respondents' expenditure is more than Rs. 30,000.



## HEALTH ISSUES FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS

The following table shows the health issues faced by the handloom weavers in Tenkasi district,

**TABLE 3**  
**HEALTH ISSUES FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS- GARRET RANKING METHOD**

Health Issues	Mean Score	Rank
Back pain	41.20	II
Neck pain	35.84	IV
Low Eye sight	38.12	III
Joint Pain	31.13	VI
Knee Pain	44.38	I
Low hearing sense	32.95	V

**Source: Primary Data**

The above table 3 depicts that, among the health issues faced by the respondents, Knee pain is ranked first with a mean score of 44.38, Back pain is ranked second with a mean score of 41.20, Low eye sight is ranked third with a mean score of 38.12, Neck pain is ranked fourth (Mean score: 35.84), Low hearing sense is ranked fifth (Mean score: 32.95) and Joint pain is ranked sixth (Mean Score: 31.13).

### SUGGESTIONS

- Implement skill development programs that focus on enhancing the technical expertise of handloom weavers.
- Low-interest loans and microfinance options can empower weavers to invest in their businesses, purchase quality raw materials, and withstand economic uncertainties.
- Providing training in new techniques, designs, and product diversification can make them more competitive in the market.
- Encourage the formation of cooperatives or collectives among handloom weavers.
- Promote fair trade certification for handloom products, ensuring that weavers receive fair wages and work under ethical conditions.
- Advocate for and collaborate with government initiatives that support handloom weavers. This could include

subsidies on raw materials, infrastructure development, and welfare schemes focusing on healthcare, education, and social security.

### CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is imperative to recognize the urgent need for a balanced approach that both respects the cultural significance of handloom weaving and adapts to the demands of a rapidly changing world. Policy frameworks, informed by the insights gleaned from this study, should prioritize sustainable economic models, provide social support systems, and foster an environment that encourages the intergenerational transmission of this invaluable craft.

In unravelling the threads of livelihood for handloom weavers, we have not only shed light on their challenges but also emphasized the importance of preserving and celebrating this ancient craft. Moving forward, it is our collective responsibility to weave a future where handloom weavers thrive, their cultural heritage endures, and the intricate tapestry of their lives remains a vibrant and integral part of our shared human story.

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