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A socio-economic study of Work culture and Productivity in Powerloom Workers of Textile Clusters in Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the researcher analyzes the socio-economic profile of powerloom workers in the state of Maharashtra. In this regard, the researcher in the present paper considers the powerloom clusters in the state of Maharashtra – Malegaon and Bhiwandi. Maharashtra's powerloom industry is spread across diverse geographical locations within the state which includes - Ichalkaranji cluster, Bhiwandi cluster, Malegaon cluster, and Solapur cluster. In all these clusters, there are a considerable number of employees working in the powerloom industry. The researcher in the present paper considers the powerloom clusters in the state of Maharashtra – Malegaon and Bhiwandi. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed which collected data regarding work place culture, income of the employees, organizational decisions, teamwork, job factor, physical work conditions and so on. A total of 500 participants who are powerloom employees were selected for the study. For this study, the researcher considered organizational decisions, team work, physical work conditions and job operations. The researcher performed statistical analysis to analyze the collected data. The results revealed the existence of the relationship between the different variables considered in the study. The researcher recommends the need to improve the socio-economic status of powerloom employees which will further improve the economic benefits that the powerloom sector can bring to the nation. There is also a need to steer the research factors considered in this paper which can improve the job operations of employees in the powerloom sector.

Keywords: Powerloom workers, socio-economic analysis, job operations

INTRODUCTION:

The Indian textile industry is known for its diverse and rich spectrum of activities which includes both the capital intensive mill sector and the hand-woven sector. In addition, there are other activities such as the decentralized power looms, knitting and hosiery sectors, and the handicraft segments. A wide range of fibers such as cotton, jute, and wool, silk and man-made fiber are used for the production of textile goods. When compared with other nations, the Indian textile sector is known for its uniqueness; its distinctive feature is associated with its close linkage to the agricultural sector which is also linked with the nation's culture and tradition. India is known as the largest jute producer in the world and it contributes significantly to the textile industry. The textile industry is known as a significant contributor to the nation's economy and supports even small scale cottage companies as well (Pankaj, 2019).

The power loom segment of the Indian textile industry uses massive raw material and its operations are work-intensive. The growth of the Indian powerloom industry dates back to the 20th century when the first powerlooms were introduced in the nations during the early 1900s. The great depression era during 1929-1933, the textile industry of the nation began to convert handlooms into powerlooms. In the year 1954, the government of India

initiated schemes for the economic development of handloom weavers by providing provisions for the conversion of handlooms to powerlooms wherein the conversion was deemed a great success during the trade liberalization period which occurred after the late 1980s (Senthilkumar & Rajendran, 2013).

The power loom industry is known to meet the growing clothing needs of the nation as well as for the needs of other nations. This makes the power loom industry a considerable contributor to export businesses. In India, there are more than 1.3 million power looms operating in the nation. A majority of the power looms are concentrated in the state of Maharashtra in regions such as Solapur, IchalKaranji, Malegaon and so on. Unlike other textile producing nations in the world, the Indian power loom industry mostly comprises of small scale companies segregated to perform operations such as spinning, weaving and apparel making (Mohammed, 2016). However, the powerloom sector is known to be the major contributor to export earnings as nations such as the United States, China, Vietnam, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, Bangladesh, Brazil, and Pakistan, serve as the major markets and importers of powerloom based textile goods in the world (Textile Value Chain, 2012). The powerloom industry of India is deemed to perform well; however, there are several challenges faced by the industry owing to various reasons which include – globalization which leads to increased competition and mechanization (Senthilkumar & Rajendran, 2013).

Maharashtra's powerloom industry is spread across diverse geographical locations within the state which includes - Ichalkaranji cluster, Bhiwandi cluster, Malegaon cluster, and Solapur cluster (Suryawanshi, 2014). In all these clusters, there are a considerable number of employees working in the powerloom industry. For instance, the Bhiwandi textile cluster was known to house more than 0.8 million employees living with their families. In the Malegaon cluster, there are more than 0.25 million employees with around 0.5 million family members (Mehra et al., 2016). The Government of India is providing schemes for the socio-economic development of powerloom workers. Group insurance schemes are available for powerloom workers of the nation (National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, n.d) . In addition, there are comprehensive legislations for workers, especially in the unorganized powerloom sector wherein the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 enables life insurance cover, provident fund, adequate representation for employees belonging to the Scheduled castes and so on (Dipali, 2016). Despite these schemes, there are several factors which affect the livelihood of employees working in Maharashtra's powerloom industry.

A majority of the employees in this region are illiterate; lack of education has made them accept their work as handloom employees as no education is a mandate to work in the powerloom industry. This means the livelihood of these employees is a question. However, these workers need to be skilled in their work which impacts the productivity of the powerloom industry. The influence of various socio-economic aspects such as education, marital status, health, living standards, income and social status of these employees tend to impact the powerloom industry. Several researchers in the past have examined the factors influencing the socio-economic factors and productivity of powerloom employees. Shaikh and Dulange (2013) examined the factors influencing the productivity of powerloom employees working in the powerloom clusters of Solapur, Maharashtra. The findings of the study revealed that motivational schemes and training can improve productivity in the powerloom workers. A report by Dalvi (2016) revealed that a considerable number of powerloom organizations have closed their operations over the last couple of years. It is claimed that even a smallest powerloom unit tends to provide employment to 15 or more people including suppliers and transporters. This decline in the numbers of the powerloom units across the state of Maharashtra has led to many employees changing their occupations. In addition, there are instances where the working conditions of the employees are found to be dismal. Labors tend to work for more than 12 hours but are paid meager wages. This results in lack of funds to lead a decent life. Employees of powerloom sector also face high stress at work as some employees are made to take care of many looms which are generally managed by a considerable number of employees. Though the work was found to be high, their wages remained meager. Considering the aforementioned inferences, there is a need to analyze the socio-economic profile of powerloom workers in the state of Maharashtra. In this regard, the researcher in the present paper considers the powerloom clusters in the state of Maharashtra – Malegaon and Bhiwandi.

METHODOLOGY:

For this paper, the researcher collected primary data. The researcher considered the region of Maharashtra as the study area. The researcher considered powerloom employees as the research population wherein the employees are selected from the regions of Malegaon and Bhiwandi. The researcher adopted the deductive research approach so as to deduce hypothesis for the study. Questionnaire is used as the instrument for the collection of data. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed which collected data regarding work place culture, income of the employees, organizational decisions, teamwork, job factor, physical work conditions and so on.

For the present paper, the researcher selected the samples (powerloom employees) based on simple random sampling. This sampling is performed to provide equal chances for all employees in the select region of the study. The collected data is analyzed using statistical analysis techniques such as descriptive analysis, correlation and regression analysis. All employees were explained regarding the study motives wherein their consent was acquired prior data collection. The participants were informed that their personal information such as name, age and other details will not be revealed anywhere and will be stored in the personal computer of the researcher. Once the research paper is published, the researcher assures the collected data is deleted.

Hypothesis:

Based on the inferences collected from previous researches, the following hypotheses are framed:
H1: Organizational Decisions have no significant impact on the job operations of powerloom employees.
H2: Teamwork has no significant impact on the job operations of powerloom workers.
H3: Physical work conditions have no significant influence towards job operations of powerloom workers.

RESULTS:

A total of 500 participants who are powerloom employees were selected for the study. Among the 500 participants, a total of 350 participants were selected from the Bhiwandi powerloom cluster whereas the rest (n=150 participants) were selected from the Malegaon powerloom cluster. This selection on the number of participants from the Bhiwandi and Malegaon regions is based on the total number of powerloom employees (Office of The Development Commissioner for Handlooms, 2019) in the considered regions of study. Among the total number of participants, a majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 25-40 years (n=323 participants) followed by employees of more than 40 years of age. When the gender of the respondents was analyzed, it was revealed that more than 87 per cent of the respondents (n=439) are males and rest females. Furthermore, when the marital status of the employees was analyzed, it was revealed that a maximum of 85 per cent of employees are married and the rest unmarried. All the aforementioned findings are listed in Table 01.

Table 01: Demographic profile of participants

Location of the respondents		
	Frequency	**Per cent**
Bhiwandi	350	70
Malegaon	150	30.0
Total	500	100.0
Age group of the respondents		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Less than 25 years	15	3.0
25 – 40 years	323	64.6
More than 40 years	162	32.4
Total	500	100.0
Gender of the respondents		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Male	439	87.8
Female	61	12.2
Total	500	100.0
Marital Status of the respondents		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Married	429	85.8
Unmarried	71	14.2
Total	500	100.0

Source: Data collected by Author (2020).

When the educational qualification of the participants was analyzed, it was revealed that a majority of participants have completed secondary school (n=266) followed by participants who have no formal education (n=170). When the length of service of the participants was considered, the findings revealed that the maximum number of

participants have experience between 6-12 months (n=176) followed by employees with 1-2 years of experience. This finding revealed that the powerloom industry is quite volatile (Ansari, 2006). When the monthly income of the powerloom employees' family was analyzed, it was revealed that more than 350 participants stating that their family earns less than 10000 Indian National Rupees (equivalent to 132.7 USD dated 3rd June, 2020). When the type of work by the select participants was analyzed, the findings revealed that most of the respondents are loom operators (n=336) followed by technicians, helpers, cloth folders and so on (Table 02).

Table 02: Education, Length of Service and Monthly income of participants

Education		
	Frequency	**Per cent**
Secondary school	266	53.2
Degree/ Diploma	31	6.2
Post-Graduation	33	6.6
No formal qualification	170	34.0
Total	500	100.0
Length of service		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Less than 6 months	69	13.8
6 -12 months	176	35.2
1-2 years	130	26.0
More than 2 years	125	25.0
Total	500	100.0
Experience of the respondents		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Less than 3 years	75	15.0
3 years to 5 Years	102	20.4
6 years to 10 Years	71	14.2
11 years to 15 years	213	42.6
More than 15 years	39	7.8
Total	500	100.0
Type of workers		
	Frequency	**Percent**
Loom operator	336	67.2
Technician (Mukadam)	33	6.6
Helper (Hammal)	33	6.6
Tarashan operator	36	7.2
Cloth Folder (Metha)	31	6.2
Others	31	6.2
Total	500	100.0

Source: Data collected by Author (2020)

The researcher collected data on the organizational decisions made by powerloom units, teamwork, physical work conditions and job operations of employees. Correlation and regression analyses are performed to understand the association and relationship between the variables considered in the research. The findings of the regression analysis revealed the existence of significant relationship between organizational decisions and job operations, teamwork and job operations, and physical work conditions and job operations of the powerloom employees. The asymptotic significance value was found to be 0.000 which means there exists a significant relationship between the variables considered, thereby approving the hypotheses set by the researcher. The findings are listed in Table 03, Table 04 and Table 05.

Table 03: Between Organizational Decisions and Job Factor

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1267.178a	220	.000
Likelihood Ratio	774.474	220	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	254.078	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	500		
a. 231 cells (91.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .00.			

Table 04: Between Teamwork and Job Factor

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	414.759a	44	.000
Likelihood Ratio	333.895	44	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	48.943	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	500		
a. 38 cells (63.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .00.			

Table 05: Between Physical work condition and Job Factor

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1697.571a	374	.000
Likelihood Ratio	795.220	374	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	41.840	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	500		
a. 397 cells (94.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .00.			

Correlation analysis revealed that there is a significant association between the different variables considered in the study. The findings of the regression analysis are revealed in Table 6.

Table 06: Correlation analysis of Organizational Decisions and Job Factor

	Organizational Decisions	Teamwork	Job Factor	Physical work conditions
Organizational Decisions	1	.527**	.714**	.511**
Teamwork	.527**	1	.313**	.419**
Job Factor	.714**	.313**	1	.290**
Physical work conditions	.511**	.419**	.290**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

DISCUSSION:

The powerloom sector in the state of Maharashtra, India is one of the important sectors that is mostly confined in the rural regions of the state. The powerloom sector is known to operate with its full capability. Despite the

economic benefits that the powerloom sector is contributing to the nation, the employees of this sector is deemed to suffer to make their livelihood. Considering the premises from previous researches and reports which state that there are several factors influencing the socio-economic status of these employees and their job operations in the select region of the study, this study attempted to examine whether factors such as organizational decisions, team work and physical work conditions tend to impact the job operations of powerloom workers in powerloom clusters in the state of Maharashtra, India.

Furthermore, when the demographic profile of the participants was analyzed, it was revealed that most employees had least education, followed by least experience, with the least income earned. Many employees of the powerloom sector do not have formal education which becomes one of the criteria for their employment in the powerloom units. However, this also affects the well-being of these employees as their wages tend to be low. With low wages, these employees do not hold the potential to manage their family thereby leading to other problems. This necessitates the need to analyze the ways to improve their wages; however, this needs recommending power unit owners which is not the purview of the present paper.

There exists a relationship between organizational decisions and job operations of the powerloom workers. Organizational decisions are imperative for the development of organizations; however, it should positively impact the job operations of employees. According to Saeed (2011) , it is important that decisions made by powerloom units should be coordinated with the employees which is the only way to manage powerloom production appropriately. Furthermore, when the decisions made by organizations are in line with the notion to support the welfare and job operations of employees, productivity improves. Furthermore, the researcher revealed the existence of relationship between team work and job operations. Many researches in the past claim the existence of such relationship. For instance, Emmanuel (2015) revealed that team work tends to improve team performance which in turn affects organizational performance. Furthermore, the relationship between physical work condition and job operations revealed the existence of work conditions which will impact job operations of the powerloom employees in the select study.

CONCLUSION:

The present study unfolds several important issues faced by employees in the powerloom clusters of the select regions in the state of Maharashtra, India. Like many other researches that revealed the existence of socio-economic problems influencing the livelihood of employees in Maharashtra powerloom sector. The findings revealed that these employees get low wages which is a reason for many employees migrating to other occupations. To ensure that there is low turnover in this sector, the researcher recommends power units to provide proper wages to the employees working in the powerloom sector.

The researcher also recommends that employees are given appropriate government benefits such as provident fund, insurance and so on which are not being given by powerloom units operating as non-format businesses. Secondly, government schemes to the powerloom units should be provided to the employees which is also a need to improve their socio-economic status. In this research paper, the researcher also found the existence of relationship between organizational decisions, team work, physical work conditions and job operations. This means that there is a need to steer these factors which can improve the job operations of employees in the powerloom sector. Furthermore, the researcher recommends training which will improve the productivity of powerloom employees. However, as training needs quite an investment, entrepreneurs should consider the ways to allocate budgets for training.

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