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Research Paper Economics

Impact of Carpet Weaving Activity on Rural Poor: (A case study on migrated weavers' households in West Bengal)

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ABSTRACT

The carpet weaving industry in India is highly labour intensive and it forms a considerable part of the handicraft industry. The industry provides livelihood to approximately 2.5 million artisans and earns significant foreign exchange for the country. This paper tries to examine the socio-economic status of the migrated carpet weavers and to study the impact of the carpet industry on poverty reduction in sample households in sample villages. The carpet weavers increase their monthly income more than two and half times in respect of their previous (before joining carpet weaving) monthly income. So the carpet weavers reduce their poverty by increasing their income. Carpet weaving activity helps to reduce poverty to the weavers' households and also helps to the rural poor to improve their socio-economic conditions.

Keywords : Carpet industry, poverty, employment

1. Introduction

Carpet Industry is one of the oldest industries in India. The carpet weaving industry in India is highly labour intensive and forms a considerable part of the handicraft industry. It is an almost 100 per cent export oriented industry. The industry provides livelihood to approximately 2.5 million artisans and earns significant foreign exchange for the country. Export earnings from carpet industry have been increasing over the years especially from 1996 onwards and over USD 621 mn were earned by the industry during 2005-06. India has around 29% share of the world market for handmade carpets and floor coverings US is the largest importer accounting for about 50% of the total exports.

2. Objectives of the Study

i) To examine the socio-economic status of the weavers' household engaged in the carpet industry
ii) To study the impact of the carpet industry on poverty reduction in sample households of sample villages.

3. Methodology

To serve our purpose, we resort to primary data. Stratified random sampling has been used to collect primary data on characteristics of the weavers' households, earnings of the weavers etc. Purposively chosen Moyna Block of Purba Medinipur district in West Bengal for our in-depth study. Four villages have been selected randomly among the villages from where the weavers are migrated to Uttar Pradesh or other place of carpet weaving in sample block and twenty (20) weavers' households from each sample village have been randomly selected. Thus our sample comprises 4(four) villages and 80 households for our in-depth study on carpet Industry in relation to poverty reduction. Simple statistical tools like percentage, mean have been used to analyze the data.

4. Findings of the Study

Employment

Total number of workers employed in 80 sample weavers' households of four sample villages is 118. Largest number of workers is employed in sample weavers' households in the village Harduachak (32) followed by Ramchandrapur (31), Hajarichak (29) and Radhaballavchak village (26). Ramchandrapur village (35 percent) registered highest percentage of households employed two weavers per household followed by Harduachak (30 percent), Hajarichak (25 percent) and Radhaballavchak (20 percent). 15 percent households of harduachak village employed three weavers per household where as Radhaballavchak employed only 5 percent households employed three weavers per household and this percentage for other two villages is 10 percent (Table 1).

Table 1 Distribution of Sample Migrated Weavers Household by Number of Weavers per Household and total Number of Weavers per Sample Village

Village	Only one weaver per household	Two weavers per household	Three weavers per household	Total number of families	Total number of weavers
Harduachak	11(55.00)	6(30.00)	3(15.00)	20(100)	32
Hajarichak	13(65.00)	5(25.00)	2(10.00)	20(100)	29
Radhaballavchak	15(75.00)	4(20.00)	1(5.00)	20(100)	26
Ramchandrapur	11(55.00)	7(35.00)	2(10.00)	20(100)	31
Total	50(62.50)	22(27.50)	8(10.00)	80(100)	118

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Poverty

Table 2 shows the percentage of poor households (BPL families) out of the total sample weavers' households at sample villages. 45 percent weavers' households of Hajarichak and Radhaballavchak are poor and they belong to below poverty line (BPL) whereas in Ramchandrapur and Harduachak the percentage of BPL households are 40 percent and 35 percent respectively.

Table 2 Distribution of Sample Migrated Weavers Household by Number of BPL Households (Five Years Back)

Village	Number of BPL families (Three Years Back)	Number of APL families	Total number of families
Harduachak	7(35.00)	13(65.00)	20(100)
Hajarichak	9(45.00)	11(55.00)	20(100)
Radhaballavchak	9(45.00)	11(55.00)	20(100)
Ramchandrapur	8(40.00)	12(60.00)	20(100)

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Level of Education
From the view point of educational qualification out of all the persons involved in carpet weaving activity in the sample villages 24 percent have primary education, 64 percent have above primary and below secondary education and only 12 percent have secondary & above education. So most of the weavers involved in carpet industry are semi literate (Table 3).

Table 3 Distribution of Number of Sample Migrated weavers by Level of Education

Village	Primary	Class V -- IX	Secondary & above	Total number of weavers
Harduachak	4(12.50)	22(68.75)	6(18.75)	32(100)
Hajarichak	9(31.03)	18(62.07)	2(6.90)	29 (100)
Radhaballavchak	7(26.92)	17(65.38)	2(7.69)	26(100)
Ramchandrapur	8(25.81)	19(61.29)	4(12.90)	31(100)
Total	28(23.73)	76(64.41)	14(11.86)	118(100)

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Distribution of Age
Overall distribution of age of migrated carpet weavers shows that 35 percent weavers are below 18 years old, and age of 42 percent weavers are 18 yrs to 25 yrs and the rest 23 percent of weavers are above 25 years old. So most of the weavers are below 26 years of old (Table 4).

Table 4 Distribution of Number of Sample Migrated weavers by Age

Village	Below 18	18 yrs to 25 yrs	Above 25 yrs	Total number of weavers
Harduachak	13(40.63)	12(37.50)	7(21.88)	32(100)
Hajarichak	8(27.59)	13(44.83)	8(27.59)	29(100)
Radhaballavchak	9(34.62)	11(42.31)	6(23.08)	26(100)
Ramchandrapur	11(35.48)	14(45.16)	6(19.35)	31(100)
Total	41(34.75)	50(42.37)	27(22.88)	118(100)

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Land Holdings
Ramchandrapur registered the highest percentage (50 percent) of weavers' households posses below 25 decimal of land followed by Harduachak (45 percent), Hajarichak(40 percent) and Radhaballavchak(40 percent). Hajarichak village shows the highest percentage (55 percent) of weavers' household's posses the slab of land holdings are above 25 decimal and upto 1 acre followed by Radhaballavchak (50 percent), Harduachak (45 percent) and Ramchandrapur (35 percent). Most of the weavers' households possess least quantity of landholdings (Table 5).

Table 5 Distribution of Sample Migrated Weavers Household by Land Holdings

Village	Below 25 decimal.	26dec.to 1 acre	Above 1 acre	Total no. of weavers household
Harduachak	9(45.00)	8(40.00)	3(15.00)	20(100)
Hajarichak	8(40.00)	11(55.00)	1(5.00)	20(100)
Radhaballavchak	8(40.00)	10(50.00)	2(10.00)	20(100)
Ramchandrapur	10(50.00)	7(35.00)	3(15.00)	20(100)
Total	35(43.75)	36(45.00)	9(11.25)	80(100)

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Income
Average monthly income per weaver before joining carpet weaving activity is highest in the sample village Harduachak (Rs 2319) followed by Radhaballavchak (Rs 2285), Ramchandrapur (Rs 2239) and Hajarichak (Rs 2207). Only 10 percent weavers' monthly income was above Rs 3000 before joining the carpet weaving (Table 6) industry.

Table 6 Distribution of Sample Migrated Weavers Household by Earnings per Weaver per Month (before Joining this Activity))

Village	Up to Rs 2000	Rs 2001 to 3000	Above Rs 3000	Total number of weavers	Average monthly income
Harduachak	11(34.38)	16(50.00)	5(15.63)	32(100)	2319
Hajarichak	12(41.38)	15(51.72)	2(6.90)	29(100)	2207
Radhaballavchak	9(34.62)	14(53.85)	3(11.54)	26(100)	2285
Ramchandrapur	11(35.48)	18(58.06)	2(6.45)	31(100)	2239
Total	43(36.44)	63(53.39)	12(10.17)	118(100)	2263

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Average monthly income per weaver from carpet weaving activity is highest in the sample village Harduachak (Rs 5922) followed by Radhaballavchak (Rs 5785), Ramchandrapur (Rs 5710) and Hajarichak (Rs 5648). The sample village Harduachak registered the highest percentage (72 percent) of weavers earns above Rs 5000 per month followed by Radhaballavchak (69 percent), Ramchandrapur (61 percent) and Hajarichak (59 percent).

Comparing the data Table of 6 and 7 it would be clear to us that the weavers increase their monthly income more than two and half times of their previous monthly income. So the carpet weavers reduce their poverty by increasing their income by joining this industry. Therefore it is clear that the carpet weaving activity helps to reduce poverty to the weavers' households (Table 7).

Table 7 Distribution of Sample Migrated Weavers by Earnings per Weaver per Month from Carpet Weaving

Village	Up to Rs 4000	Rs 4001 to 5000	Rs 5001 to 6500	Above Rs 6500	Total number of weavers	Average monthly income
Harduachak	2(6.25)	7(21.88)	18(56.25)	5(15.63)	32(100)	5922
Hajarichak	3(10.34)	9(31.03)	15(51.72)	2(6.90)	29(100)	5648
Radhaballavchak	2(7.69)	6(23.08)	17(65.38)	1(3.85)	26(100)	5785
Ramchandrapur	4(12.90)	8(25.81)	16(51.61)	3(9.68)	31(100)	5710
Total	11(9.32)	30(25.42)	66(55.93)	11(9.32)	118(100)	5769

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Percentage share of different sources of income to total income reveals that 88 percent to 92 percent incomes are generated from the carpet weaving activities. Only 7 percent income is generated from agricultural and allied activities and rest 1 percent to 5 percent income is earned from other sources like trade or business activities. So the principal sources of income of weavers' households are carpet weaving (Table 8).

Table 8 Percentage Share of Different Sources of Annual Income (Rs.) of Sample Households in Sample Villages

Village	Income from Carpet industry	Agricultural and allied income	Trade & Business	Total
Harduachak	75802(89.86)	5750(6.82)	2800(3.32)	84352
Hajarichak	60998(88.02)	4800(6.93)	3500(5.05)	69298
Radhaballavchak	50908(88.40)	3780(6.56)	2900(5.04)	57588
Ramchandrapur	70804(92.50)	4675(6.11)	1070(1.40)	76549

Source: Field survey, 2012
Note: Parentheses represent the percentage of total

Per capita monthly income of carpet weavers' household is highest (Rs. 1212) in the sample village Harduachak followed by Ramchandrapur (Rs 1063), Hajarichak (Rs 1050) and Radhaballavchak (Rs 889). Similarly per capita monthly income from carpet weaving activities is highest (Rs. 1089) in Harduachak followed by Ramchandrapur (Rs 983), Hajarichak (Rs 924) and Radhaballavchak (Rs 786).

Table 9 per Capita Income (Rs.) (Monthly) from Different Sources of Sample Households in Sample Villages (in Rs.)

Village	Income from Carpet industry	Agricultural and allied income	Trade & Business	Total
Harduachak	1089	83	40	1212
Hajarichak	924	73	53	1050
Radhaballavchak	786	58	45	889
Ramchandrapur	983	65	15	1063

Source: Field survey, 2012

5. Conclusion

The weavers increase their monthly income more than two and half times of their previous (before joining carpet weaving) monthly income. So the carpet weavers reduce their poverty by increasing their income and wealth. Therefore it is clear that the carpet weaving activity helps to reduce poverty to the weavers' households. As a result their socio-economic conditions will be improved and better afterwards.

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