



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

**Economics**

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS IN KADAPA AND CHITTOOR DISTRICTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

**KEY WORDS:**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Handloom Sector is one of the largest unorganized economic activities after agriculture and constitutes an integral part of the rural and semi rural livelihood. Handloom weaving constitutes one of the richest and most vibrant aspects of the Indian cultural heritage. The sector has an advantage of being less capital intensive, minimal use of power, eco-friendly, flexibility of small production, openness to innovations and adaptability to market requirements. It is a natural productive asset and tradition at cottage level, which has sustained and grown by transfer of skill from one generation to other. The present paper examines the socio-economic conditions of handloom weavers in Kadapa and Chittoor Districts of Andhra Pradesh.

**INTRODUCTION**

Handloom industry occupies an eminent place in preserving country's heritage and culture, and hence plays a vital role in the economy of the country. Handloom industry in India is an ancient cottage industry with a decentralized setup and provides employment to nearly 65 lakh of people with 35 lakh looms, of people are depending upon the ancillary occupations connected with this Industry. The handloom sector plays a very important role in the country's economy. Tracing the importance of the textile sector in the Indian economy also brings us face to face with the different components such as the mill segment, the handloom segment and the power loom segment that make up this whole. All these three sectors are making three types of clothes, i.e. cotton, blended fabrics and non-cotton fabrics. In handloom sector weavers are classified into independent weavers, weavers working under master weavers, weavers working for cooperative societies, weavers for Non Government Organizations and shed (wage) weavers. There are totally 46 lakh handlooms in the whole world, 85 percent of handlooms represented to 38,90,576 located in India. Out of this, 32,80,087 looms are in the rural areas, while 6,10,489 looms are in the urban areas. In case of employment, handloom industry provides direct employment to about 106 lakh people with 3.9 million handlooms. In the present socio-economic climate where dependency on foreign capital and know-how is increasing in all round, the handloom industry presents a sustainable model of socio-economic activity, which is not energy-intensive and has low capital costs, as well as an extensive skill base.

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Status of any section of population in a society is closely connected with its economic dependence in the social deprivation. Most of the welfare programmes are linked with socio-economic status of the beneficiary families. Hence it is essential to make a study of socioeconomic status of families of the respondents. Socio-economic status is generally considered an important variable in the research of weaver community development.

**Age**

Age is one of the important social factors which influences social, economic and demographic situation of any country. Age is an achieved characteristic in the life cycle of a human being. The age of the respondents of the study area has been shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1 Age of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Age (Years)	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayanavanam	Varadaiahpalem	
1	15-25	8 (7 %)	5 (8 %)	10 (9 %)	12 (22 %)	35 (10 %)
2	25-35	26 (21 %)	14 (21 %)	18 (17 %)	11 (20 %)	69 (20 %)

3	35-45	44 (36 %)	27 (41 %)	37 (35 %)	12 (22 %)	120 (34 %)
4	45-55	34 (28 %)	12 (18 %)	28 (26 %)	14 (25 %)	88 (25 %)
5	Above 55	10 (8 %)	8 (12 %)	14 (13 %)	6 (11 %)	38 (11 %)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122 (100 %)</b>	<b>66 (100 %)</b>	<b>107 (100 %)</b>	<b>55 (100 %)</b>	<b>350</b>

The table shows that 35 respondents (10 %) are in the age group of 15-25 years, 69 respondents (20 %) are in the age group of 25 – 35 years, 120 respondents (32 %) are in the age group of 35 – 45 years, 58 respondents (25 %) are in the age group of 45-55 years and 38 respondents (11 %) are in the age group of above 55 years. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (34 %) are in the age group of 35-45 years. This age is highly productive and matured one in problem solving.

**GENDER**

Gender is another important social dimension among handloom weavers. Distribution pattern of population between males and females affects their relative and economic relations. Weaving is one of the activities which have scope for women participation. Sex composition of respondents has been furnished in the Table 2.

**Table 2 Gender of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Gender	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayanavanam	Varadaiahpalem	
1	Male	62 (52 %)	44 (67 %)	78 (73 %)	35 (64 %)	219 (63 %)
2	Female	58 (48 %)	22 (32 %)	29 (27 %)	20 (36 %)	131 (37 %)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122 (100 %)</b>	<b>66 (100 %)</b>	<b>107 (100 %)</b>	<b>55 (100 %)</b>	<b>350 (100 %)</b>

The table shows that 219 respondents (63 %) are males and 131 respondents (37 %) are females. Males outnumber females.

**CASTE**

Indian society is broadly divided into different communities such as OCs, BCs, SCs and STs. The caste composition of the respondents is presented in the Table 3.

**Table 3 Caste of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Caste	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayana vanam	Varadaiahpalem	
1	Padmasali	46 (38 %)	14 (21 %)	37 (35 %)	14 (25 %)	111 (32 %)
2	Devangula	22 (18 %)	5 (8 %)	10 (9 %)	12 (22 %)	49 (14 %)

3	Idiga	30 (25%)	27 (41%)	18 (17%)	11 (20%)	86 (24%)
4	B.C (Dasari)	10 (8%)	14 (21%)	22 (21%)	12 (21%)	58 (17%)
5	Kaikala (Telugu)	14 (10%)	6 (9%)	20 (18%)	6 (11%)	38 (13%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b> (100)	<b>66</b> (100%)	<b>107</b> (100%)	<b>55</b> (100%)	<b>350</b> (100%)

The weaving population is fairly large. Running into millions, it is confined to a limited number of castes. Weaving is the hereditary occupation of certain communities. There are four major communities, namely Padmasali (32%), Devangula (14%), Idiga (24%), Dasri (17%) and Kaikala (13%) have taken a large number of weavers in Andhra Pradesh. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (32%) are Padmasalis.

**3.2.5 Educational Qualifications**

Education is the most important factor in improving the technical skills of weavers. It throws light on the impact of mechanization on mass production. It is only through awareness, the weavers can protect themselves from the clutches of master weavers and money lenders. The education status of heads of the weaver's family in study area is presented in the Table 4.

**Table 4 Educational Qualification of the Sample Respondents**

Sl. No.	Education	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayana vanam	Varadaiah palem	
1	Illiterate	33 (27%)	3 (5%)	38 (36%)	12 (22%)	86 (25%)
2	Primary	33 (27%)	19 (29%)	23 (21%)	20 (36%)	95 (27%)
3	Secondary	26 (22%)	20 (30%)	25 (23%)	6 (11%)	77 (21%)
4	High School	20 (16%)	16 (24%)	10 (9%)	12 (22%)	58 (17%)
5	Graduate and above	10 (8%)	8 (12%)	11 (10%)	5 (9%)	38 (10%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b> (100%)	<b>66</b> (100%)	<b>107</b> (100%)	<b>55</b> (100%)	<b>350</b> (100%)

The table shows that 95 respondents (27%) have primary education, 77 respondents (21%) have secondary education, 58 respondents (17%) have high school education and 38 respondents (10%) are graduates. On the contrary, it is also observed that 86 respondents (25%) are illiterates. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (27%) have primary education.

**MARITAL STATUS**

The marital status of the respondents has been shown in the Table 5.

**Table 5 Marital Status of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Marital Status	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayana vanam	Varadaiah palem	
1	Married	48 (39%)	29 (44%)	82 (77%)	22 (40%)	181 (52%)
2	Unmarried	12 (10%)	08 (12%)	10 (9%)	8 (15%)	38 (11%)
3	Widowed	48 (37%)	17 (26%)	5 (5%)	18 (33%)	88 (25%)
4	Separated	14 (13%)	12 (18%)	10 (9%)	7 (12%)	43 (12%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b> (100%)	<b>66</b> (100%)	<b>107</b> (100%)	<b>55</b> (100%)	<b>350</b> (100%)

The table shows that 181 respondents (52%) are married, 88 respondents (25%) are widowed, 43 respondents (12%) are separated and 38 respondents (11%) are unmarried. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (52%) are married.

**Type of House**

The type of house indicates wealth, taste and environment. The type of house of the respondents has been shown in the Table 6.

**Table 6 Type of house of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Type of House	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayana vanam	Varadaiah palem	
1	Katcha/Thatched	60 (49%)	19 (29%)	45 (42%)	9 (17%)	133 (38%)
2	Semi-pucca	27 (2%)	22 (33%)	28 (26%)	10 (18%)	87 (25%)
3	Colony/Indiramma House	21 (17%)	13 (20%)	11 (10%)	16 (29%)	61 (17%)
4	RCC Pucca	14 (12%)	12 (18%)	23 (22%)	20 (36%)	69 (20%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b> (100%)	<b>66</b> (100%)	<b>107</b> (100%)	<b>55</b> (100%)	<b>350</b> (100%)

Out of the sample 350 respondents, 133 respondents (38%) have thatched house, 87 respondents (25%) have semi-pucca house, 69 respondents (20%) have RCC pucca house and 61 respondents (17%) are living in Indiramma house. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (38%) are living in thatched house.

**Type of the family**

Family structure of the selected households was examined keeping in view the type and size of the family. By tradition, joint family and extended joint families are more popular in the society. The type of the family of the respondents is shown in the Table 7.

**Table 7 Type of the family**

Sl. No.	Type of Family	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayana vanam	Varadaiah palem	
1	Nuclear	118 (97%)	45 (68%)	55 (51%)	34 (62%)	252 (72%)
2	Joint	4 (3%)	21 (32%)	52 (49%)	21 (38%)	98 (28%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b> (100%)	<b>66</b> (100%)	<b>107</b> (100%)	<b>55</b> (100%)	<b>350</b> (100%)

The table shows that 252 respondents (72%) are in nuclear family and 98 respondents (28%) are in joint family. By and large, it is concluded that majority of the respondents (72%) are in nuclear family.

**Size of the family**

The size of the family of the respondents is shown in the Table 8.

**Table 8 Family size of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Size of the Family	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayana vanam	Varadaiah palem	
1	2-3	42 (34%)	19 (29%)	82 (78%)	18 (33%)	161 (46%)
2	4-5	35 (29%)	22 (33%)	15 (14%)	22 (40%)	94 (27%)
3	6-7	30 (25%)	13 (20%)	5 (4%)	8 (15%)	56 (16%)
4	Above 7	15 (12%)	12 (18%)	5 (4%)	7 (12%)	39 (11%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>350</b>

The table shows that 161 respondents (46%) have 2 to 3 family members, 94 respondents (27%) have 4 to 5 family members, 56 respondents (16%) have 6 to 7 family members and 39 respondents (11%) have family members of above 7. Above all, it is concluded that majority of the respondents (46%) have 2 to 3 family members.

**Annual Income**

Income is dire essential for the sustenance of life. The income of the respondents has been presented in the Table 10.

**Table 9 Income of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Annual Income (Rs.)	Kadapa		Chittoor		Total
		Ontimitta	Pullampet	Narayanavanam	Varadai ahpalem	
1	Up to 25,000	40 (33 %)	22 (33 %)	38 (36 %)	18 (32 %)	118 (33 %)
2	25,001 to 50,000	26 (21 %)	08 (12 %)	33 (31 %)	13 (24 %)	80 (23 %)
3	50,001 to 75,000	25 (20 %)	13 (20 %)	17 (16 %)	11 (20 %)	66 (19 %)
4	75,001 to 1,00,000	18 (15 %)	12 (18 %)	14 (13 %)	7 (13 %)	51 (15 %)
5	1,00,000 and above	13 (11 %)	11 (17 %)	5 (4 %)	6 (11 %)	35 (10 %)
<b>Total</b>		<b>122</b> (100 %)	<b>66</b> (100 %)	<b>107</b> (100 %)	<b>55</b> (100 %)	<b>350</b> (100 %)

The table shows that 118 respondents (33 %) have the annual income of less than Rs.25,000, 80 respondents (23 %) have annual income of Rs.25001 to 50000, 66 respondents (19 %) have an annual income of Rs.50001 to Rs.75000, 51 respondents (15 %) have the annual income of Rs.75001 to Rs.100000 and 35 respondents (10 %) have more than Rs.100000 of annual income. By and large, it is concluded that majority of the respondents (33 %) have the annual income of less than Rs.25,000.

**CONCLUSION**

Handloom weaving is largely decentralized and the weavers are mainly from the vulnerable and weaker sections of the society, who weave for their household needs and also contribute to the production in the textile sector. Majority of the respondents (34 %) are in the age group of 35-45 years. This age is highly productive and matured one in problem solving.

63 % are males and 37 % are females. Majority of the respondents (89 %) are Hindus and 32 % are Padmasalis. Moreover, majority of the respondents (27 %) have primary education and 52 % are married. But majority of the respondents (38 %) are living in thatched house and 72 per cent of the respondents are in nuclear family. Besides, majority of the respondents (46 %) have 2 to 3 family members and one third of the respondents have the annual income of less than Rs.25,000.

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