

A Study on Problems and Prospects of Pattamadai Handloom Mat Industries in Ambasamudram Taluk

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Abstract: *This study investigates the challenges and potential prospects faced by the Pathamadi handloom industries in Ambasamuthuram district. Handloom industries have a rich cultural heritage and provide livelihoods to many artisans. However, they encounter several impediments that hinder their growth and sustainability. The research explores the key problems, such as lack of modernization, declining demand, skilled labor shortage, and financial constraints. Additionally, the study identifies potential solutions to address these issues, including product diversification, design innovation, government support, market expansion, and infrastructure development. Emphasizing sustainable practices and eco-friendly branding may also enhance the industry's appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. Through in-depth analysis and engagement with local stakeholders, this study provides valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities of the Pathamadi handloom industries in Ambasamuthuram district.*

Keywords: Market expansion, Sustainable practices, Handloom industries, opportunities.

I. INTRODUCTION

Handloom industries have been an integral part of India's rich cultural heritage, weaving a tapestry of tradition and craftsmanship. In the picturesque region of Ambasamuthuram district, the Pathamadi handloom industries have been a longstanding source of livelihood for skilled artisans and a symbol of the local cultural identity. These industries have not only sustained generations but have also preserved traditional weaving techniques that have withstood the test of time. While the Pathamadi handloom industries have contributed significantly to the social and economic fabric of the region, they are not immune to the challenges posed by a rapidly changing world. In the face of globalization, technological advancements, and shifting consumer preferences, these industries have encountered various obstacles that have threatened their existence and growth. The handloom sector in the state plays a crucial role in uplifting the economic conditions of the rural poor, providing them with employment opportunities and sustenance. However, the Handloom mat weavers in Pattamadai, Tirunelveli district, are currently facing significant challenges related to production and marketing, causing distress and hardships. The primary objective of this study is to investigate the socio-economic conditions of handloom mat weavers in the region and identify the specific problems they encounter. This study seeks to delve into the problems faced by the Pathamadi handloom industries in Ambasamuthuram district and identify potential prospects for their revitalization. By understanding the root causes of these challenges and exploring viable solutions, the goal is to shed light on ways to safeguard the future of these invaluable crafts and the communities that depend on them.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The handloom sector plays a crucial role in uplifting the rural poor's economic status in the state. It contributes significantly by creating employment opportunities and sustaining the livelihoods of many rural individuals. However, the current situation of Handloom mat weavers in Tirunelveli District is dire, as they face severe challenges in production and marketing. The weavers are struggling with unemployment and underemployment, leading to a low standard of living and a distressing life. This concerning situation is prevalent throughout the chosen study area,

warranting a detailed research study to investigate the problems and find effective solutions to address the issues faced by handloom mat weavers in Tirunelveli District.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

- The study on demographic profile of respondents.
- To assess the marketing problems faced by the mat weavers.

2.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The primary focus of this study revolves around the challenges and opportunities experienced by mat weavers in Pattamadai. The researcher aims to investigate the socio-economic context of these mat weavers, exploring the difficulties they encounter in securing financial support from banks and co-operative societies. Additionally, the study aims to understand the issues related to accessing materials for their products faced by the mat weavers in Pattamadai.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nikhil Kaushik and Madhur Raj Jain conducted a study titled "Impact of Government Schemes on Handloom Weavers at Maheshwar, M.P." The study focused on assessing the impact of various government welfare schemes on handloom weavers in Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh. A sample of 106 weavers was surveyed, and the research found that a significant portion of them were not aware of the available government schemes. The study recommended immediate awareness campaigns by the government to ensure better utilization of these schemes and to improve the livelihoods of the weavers.

Muhammad Amjad Bashir, Muhammad Irfan and Muhammad Farhat Hayyat, In their study "Role of Handlooms in Cholistan's Socio-Economic Conditions" examines the importance of handloom activities in the vast desert region of Cholistan, Pakistan. The Cholistan desert covers a significant area, with extreme climatic conditions making it challenging for both humans and animals. Nomadic pastoralists rely primarily on livestock rearing for income, but handloom weaving also plays a vital role in their livelihoods. The weavers in Cholistan believe that their involvement in the handloom industry positively impacts their socio-economic conditions, leading to improved health and better educational opportunities for their families. Overall, handloom weaving serves as a crucial means of livelihood and socio-economic advancement for the weavers in Cholistan.

Shiney and Premlet in their study entitled, "Comparative study of Acoustic properties of Weaved Coir Mats", in this paper they report a study on acoustic properties of coir mats - a bio fibre mat of various weaving patterns. In this study coir mat has been introduced as one of the sound absorbing materials. The study reveals the effectiveness of coir mats as sound absorber and its applications in building acoustics and automotive applications. Coir mats of different weaving were selected for the study viz; Panama, Herringbone, Boucle weaving, mesh matting, Diamond weave matting, PVC tufted mat, Lovers Knot, VC2 mat etc. The experiment is performed on an impedance tube apparatus as per ASTM E 1050/ISO 10534-2. The experimental analysis is made for the frequency range 100Hz-6300 Hz. The results reveal that the mats show good sound absorption coefficient at high frequencies and also the mats with latex backing and increased thickness exhibit appreciable absorption of coir mats.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: The study on demographic profile of respondents.

	VARIABLES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	NUMBER OF PERCENTAGE
AGE	Below 30 years	10	13.3
	31-40 years	14	18.7
	41-50 years	35	46.7
	Above 50 Years	16	21.3

	Total	75	100
GENDER	Male	45	60
	Female	25	33.3
	Other	5	6.7
	Total	75	100
YEAR OF EXPERIENCE	Less than 5 years	15	20
	5-10 years	20	26.7
	10-20 years	30	40
	Over 20 years	10	13.3
	Total	75	100
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	Illiterate	5	6.7
	Primary	30	40
	Secondary	20	26.7
	Higher secondary	20	26.7
	Total	75	100
MARITAL STATUS	Single	15	20
	Married	40	53.3
	Divorced	8	10.7
	Widowed	12	16
	Total	75	100
MONTHLY INCOME	Below 3000	25	33.3
	3000-10000	40	53.3
	Above 10000	10	13.3
	Total	75	100

The data presented in the Table-1 shows the classification of age, gender, year of experience, educational level, marital status, monthly income of Handloom Mat Weavers in Ambasamudram Taluk, with a total of 75 respondents. To the distribution of the age the highest percent is 46.7 for the age group 41-50 years and the lowest percent is 13.3 the age group is below 30 years. For Gender the highest percent is 60.0 for female and the lowest percent is 6.7. Year of experience the highest percent is 40.0 for the group of 10-20 years and the lowest percent is 13.3 for the group of over 20 years. Educational level highest in primary 40% and the lowest is illiterate 6.7%. Marital status the highest is married 53.3% and the lowest is divorced 10.7%. Monthly income the highest is 3000-10000 with 53.3% and lowest is 13.3%.

Table 2: Marketing Problems Faced By The Mat Weavers.

SI NO	PRODUCTION PROBLEM	SA	A	NO	DA	SDA	TOTAL
1	Lack of raw material	18(36.0)	17(34.0)	2(4.0)	7(14.0)	6(12.0)	50(100)
2	Lack of workers	17(34.0)	19(38.0)	2(4.0)	5(10.0)	7(14.0)	50(100)
3	Lack of demand	22(44.0)	17(34.0)	1(2.0)	9(18.0)	1(2.0)	50(100)
4	Lack of rainy season	34(68.0)	10(20.0)	1(2.0)	4(8.0)	2(4.0)	50(100)
5	Lack of finance	18(36.0)	13(26.0)	1(2.0)	10(20.0)	9(16.0)	50(100)
6	Competition by plastic made	22(44.0)	12(24.0)	2(4.0)	12(24.0)	6(14.0)	50(100)
7	Lack of motivation	15(30.0)	15(30.0)	2(4.0)	10(20.0)	8(16)	50(100)

The above table reveals that most of the mat weavers either strongly agree or agree with the statements of production problems. Among the mat weaver, majority of 68.0 per cent are strongly agree with the statement 'Lack of finance' and next majority of 38.0 per cent are agree with the statement 'Lack of motivation'. It is inferred that majority of the mat weavers face the production problems of finance.

V. FINDINGS

- Lack of access to advanced technology and machinery, hindering production efficiency and product diversification.
- Competition from modern synthetic materials, leading to a decline in demand for traditional handloom mats.
- Difficulty in marketing and reaching a wider customer base due to limited exposure to digital platforms and e-commerce.
- Lack of financial support and credit for small-scale weavers.
- Promote cultural significance through marketing and awareness campaigns.

VI. SUGGESTIONS

The government should offer promotion subsidies to well-established mat weavers to support their marketing efforts. Subsidies can help weavers participate in trade fairs, exhibitions, and online platforms, expanding their market reach. The government should provide financial assistance to help weavers purchase modern mat looms and equipment. Upgrading to modern machines can enhance productivity, product quality, and diversification. Provide training sessions on the use of modern technology and digital marketing.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study provides valuable insights into the socio-economic conditions of the mat weavers in Pattamadai. The hope is that the suggestions presented in this study will serve as effective solutions to address the challenges faced by these marginalized weavers. In the coming millennium, scientists, researchers, extension workers, and farmers must find appropriate ways to utilize the earth's resources to feed the growing human population while improving living standards in rural areas. The handloom mat industry directly offers substantial employment opportunities to mat weavers, and indirectly, it provides livelihood options for many rural communities engaged in marketing mat-based products. However, due to modernization in various sectors, the mat weavers encounter numerous issues, including low wages, poor working conditions, and seasonal temporary employment. Consequently, it is essential for the government to take necessary steps to overcome these challenges and enhance the socio-economic condition of the weavers. By implementing the recommendations from this study, the government can positively impact the lives of these poor and downtrodden weavers, enabling them to thrive and contribute to their families and communities' well-being.

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