

## **Problems of Weavers Cooperative Societies in Odisha - A Critical Analysis**

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### **ABSTRACT**

India is a land of handicrafts and handlooms. At the end of the Tenth five year plan the handicraft sector employed 67.70 lakh persons. Again with about 35 lakh handlooms, the handloom sector provided employment to 65 lakh persons, of which, 61 per cent were women. Thus handlooms and handicrafts sectors are not only employment intensive, being second only to agriculture, but also have huge social importance, in view of the fact that they cater to the economically as well as socially weaker sections. India is estimated to have around 2682 handicrafts and 491 handlooms clusters where Orissa covers 272 numbers. of handicrafts and 30 numbers of handloom clusters. The total handloom weavers and allied worker in India is 43.31(2009-10, handloom census) against the 65.50 lakh(1995-96, handloom census). In India nearly 27.83 lakh handloom households are engaged in weaving and allied activities, out of which 87 per cent are located in rural areas and remaining 13 per cent in urban areas. The majority (82 %) of handloom working households are weaver households, which means that at least one member of every such household is engaged in weaving activities. Nearly 14 per cent are allied worker households, three percent are ideal loom household and about one percent are other handloom households having no adult handloom workers.

**Key words:** Weavers co-operatives, handloom clusters.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The handloom co-operative societies and production centers, which have played pivotal role in the development and growth of handloom industries in the odisha are currently passing through operational, administrative and financial crisis. In the light of growing composition caused by the modern textile industries and spinning mills, it is imperative to suitably restructure and rehabilitate the ailing societies and production centers through provision of liberal package of measures, aids and facilities.

The services of the co-operative societies and production centers have not been effective in delivery of necessary training and guidance, facilitating modernization and - of technology and providing marketing support to the weaver beneficiaries. The major weakness of these societies and centers mainly pertain to their irregularity in supplying raw materials, inefficient administration, irregular and low wage payment, lack of professional approach in marketing and as a results these organization were not functioning

Modernisation of the looms and allied accessories is the most important step in operational management. It is, therefore, essential to remove these impediments to increase the productivity of weaving of operation and ensuring high quality handloom products. It is highly essential to expand the modernization activities in view of its direct impact on efficiency in production, productivity

and quality. In the light of growing competition in textile sector, it is important to take appropriate measures like:

- To suitably upgrade the modern skill and technical capacity of the traditional weavers especially the women regarding weaving, dying and design,
- To guide the weavers community to adopt profitable product-mix, improved design and methods,
- To extend necessary modernization services,
- To guide/train the weavers especially the women to upgrade their skill and upgrade the technology of weaving activities.

Publicity is one of the essential factors, which influence the sale of consumer products. Since the weavers co-operative societies/production centers are unable to bear the expenses of publicity, the state Govt. should launch special publicity drive to promote handloom products.

### **Review of Literature:**

Dev(2005) suggested that Capital shortage is the most important problem faced by Indian economy in introducing latest technology in production. In modern times cottage industries are facing severe competition from large scale industries due to increased quantum of production.

M-Mary & L.Kokila Devi (2005) expressed that cottage & small scale industries play a significant role in the development of the economy, it contributes significantly to the materials income & produces employment opportunity to a large number of people in rural areas.

Dev (2008) stated that the problems for the cooperative sector in AP begin with the apex society, or APCO, which has the sole responsibility of promoting and assisting the handloom weaving societies in the state, especially in marketing the cloth produced by the primary societies. In the initial years APCO functioned quite well, with sales reaching ₹ 128.41 crore during 1992-93. But there has been a steady decline since then, and in 2000-01 the total sales of APCO amounted to only Rs.20.38 crore (data supplied by APCO). Internal factors, especially relating to management are clearly the main factors in the poor performance of APCO. He also found that cooperative sector is a performance indicator for handloom industry. But the sector in the state declines in textile production gradually. The problem of the cooperative society is mainly by some external and internal factors. Internal factors is especially relating to mismanagement of co-operative societies. External factor is non availability of inputs like yarn, dyes & fluctuation of price in inputs. Low wages & middlemen is also facing problem.

Tripathy (2009) expressed that in a decentralized sector like handloom, there are many problem due to illiteracy of weavers, inadequate finance and vested interests. There are hindrances and difficulties in measuring the effectiveness of our planning and controlling activities like procurement of raw materials, product developments, quality and control. The main problem that often confronts us is the dyes and chemicals at the right time and in right quantities. Violent fluctuation in the yarn price is also a great problem for weavers to stricken a definite price for the end products.

D.N.Reddy (2010) expressed that lack of organization amongst weavers is a major problem due to poor functioning of co-operatives, many depend on master weavers, women to a large extent have no membership in primary weavers' co-operative. Women weavers are keener to innovate in new designs and products in response to market need and demands, but lack proper information about both.

Reddy (2010) expressed that there is no recognition to women's work as weavers, even though women play a major role in all pre-loom operations and take on labor-intensive activities. Women do not have access to

government identity cards, except in cases where they are widowed or are members of the cooperatives.

Shyama Sundari (2011) expressed a major lack of marketing & design innovative problems. He also stated that handloom can offer a hope to our villages, if it can be established as a viable livelihood for the next generation which faces threat of large scale migration into urban slums.

He noted that one of the measures taken up by the Govt. to encourage the handloom industry is the "Handloom Reservation Act, 1985". Under this Act, 22 (Later reduced to 11) textile items have been reserved for the exclusive production by handlooms. However, the Act has never been implemented effectively. Thus he described that so there is urgent need to strengthen the co-operative societies/institutions in the handloom sector. There is great potential in this sector to absorb new weavers as the current demand for handloom products is not being met by one existing weave base.

George (2011) described that both the central and state Governments are currently active in the handloom sector, providing a number of incentives for handloom production and marketing. The schemes that the Ministry of Textile currently, implement rightly focus on cluster development, Health and life insurance coverage of the handloom workers and input with marketing support Mega clusters of handlooms are also being developed.

## METHODOLOGY

### Selection of Block

For the purpose of the study, the blocks of Athagarh and Khurda were selected. Data presented in table 1 explains district, block and selection of sample.

**Table 1: Sample of the study**

Name of the textile zones	Name of the blocks	Weavers population	Sample selected
Athagarh	Tigiria	4183	45
	Baramba	2923	78
	Narasinghpur	526	12
	Banki – II	540	15
Khurda	Bolagarh	1515	10
	Begunia	921	15
	Khurda	784	25
	Total	11392	200

The respondents for the study were randomly selected and interviewed personally with the help of interview schedule developed and pretested on the basis of the objectives.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Weaver co-operative society in Operation

There is no denying fact that India woe a lot of its cultural identity to its rich handloom and handicraft heritage. The country is proud of its handloom sector. Our handloom and handicraft products are becoming major life style and have secured a place for India in the lives of millions across the world. The sector provides livelihood to over 130 lakh weavers and a large percentage coming from the marginal sections of the societies. The industry is largely environment friendly and low in energy consumption. The government, NGOs and weavers working together to work out and put into practice the best ways to unleash this potential.

In last two decades there has been positive activities in organization of weaver co-operative society (WCS). At the end of the tenth five year plan the handicrafts sector employed 67.74 lakh persons with about 35 lakh handlooms. The handloom sector provide employment to 65 lakh persons of whom 61 per cent are women, 35 per cent belong to SC & ST. At present the Govt. has made 491 handloom clusters in India.

### Status of Membership

Determination of status of the sample respondents with respect to WCS reveals that 98.5 per cent were simple members where as 1.5 per cent were office bearers of their respective WCS. Altogether 33 weavers co-operative societies (WCS) were included in the study with male members of 153(76.5%) and female members of 47 (23.5%).

**Table 2: Membership Status of weavers in WCS**

Membership status	Mentions (f)	n=200
		%
Members	197	98.50
Office bearer	3	1.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The WCS grow over time and encompasses more and more members. Membership is a status of WCS. It was observed from table 2 that all randomized samples were members of WCS, out of them 98.5 per cent were simple members and 1.5 per cent office bearers. Altogether 33 WCS were covered with 153 male (76.5%) and 47 (23.5%) female members.

### Selection of members

WCS is a formal organization and regulated by Govt. rule. Every WCS follows by-laws prescribed by the Govt.

with regard to size, membership, objectives and procedure. The study attempted to find out the method of becoming member of the society in respective study areas. The data collected in this regard are presented in table 3.

**Table 3: Selection of Membership for weaver cooperative societies n=200**

Methods	Members		Total	Percentage
	Male	Female		
Subscription	148	43	191	95.50
Nomination	3	3	6	3.00
Election	2	1	3	1.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The sample consisted of 153 male and 47 female who are member of Weaver cooperative society. It is revealed that subscription is a major way of becoming members of Weaver cooperative society. Nomination & election is limited to 4.5 per cent only.

### Conducting of Meeting

The Weaver cooperative societies as per law have to conduct regular meetings of the members to explain to progress & achievement of the cooperative society. It is also a forum to explain problems faced by Weaver cooperative societies. In finding out meeting status of the Weaver cooperative society under study, the results obtained, are presented in table 4.

**Table 4 Frequency of meetings conducted**

Frequency of meeting/year	No of WCS	Percentage
10-12	21	63.63
13-14	5	15.15
16-18	7	21.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Out of the total Weaver cooperative societies under study, 63.63 per cent conduct 10-12 meetings per year, 15.15 per cent 13 to 14 meetings where as 21.22 per cent conduct 16-18 meetings in a year. It is assumed that higher the number of meetings better the understanding between the members in clarification of doubts, achievements and smooth operation.

### Satisfaction about working system in WCS

Satisfaction is the ultimate goal of members in society. The satisfaction is outcome of working climate, benefit sharing, mutual trust and efficient management. Keeping all this factors in view the respondents reacted to

the statements of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction as indicated in table 5.

**Table 5 : Satisfaction level of the Members**

n=200		
Level of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
High	28	14.00
Medium	97	48.50
Low	75	37.50
Total	200	100.00

The level of satisfaction was decided on the basis of scores obtained by respondents on statements of satisfaction. The respondents securing more than 66 per cent of the scores were kept in high level, 33 per cent and less under low category, where as medium category respondents were distributed in between 34-65 per cent of total scores. The analysis reveals that 14 per cent were highly satisfied, 48.50 per cent were satisfied up to medium extent where as 37.50 per cent were in less satisfaction level.

#### Reasons of dissatisfaction

The members of WCS feel dissatisfied when their investment is neither safe guarded nor do they find actualization of expectations. In finding out the reasons of dissatisfaction, the reasons which were cited are listed in table 6

**Table 6: Reasons of dissatisfaction**

n=200		
Reasons of dissatisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
Improper maintenance of account	78	39.00
Irregular of meeting	68	34.00
Improper of election procedure	39	19.50
Non sharing of equal benefits	52	26.00
Fluctuation of rules	95	47.50
Influence of important members	112	56.00
Political Interference	66	33.00

A look at the table indicates that influence of some important members, fluctuation of rule, improper account keeping, irregular meeting, political interference, non-sharing of equal benefits and improper election procedures are the reasons of dissatisfaction in order.

#### Perceived usefulness of WCS

It is general observation that many of the WCSs are not able to satisfy their members. Members expect a number of benefits from the WCS. Table 7 summarises the result regarding usefulness of WCS.

**Table 7 : Perceived usefulness of WCS**

n=200		
Usefulness WCS	Frequency	Percentage
Meeting full quantities of required raw materials	120	60.00
Provide help in total production process	80	40.00
Storage of produce	130	65.00
Full extent of financial requirements	150	75.00
Inform demands of customers	80	40.00
Provide up to date information marketing	60	30.00

Analysis reveals that financial help, storage of produce, supply of raw materials are mentioned by 75 per cent, 65 per cent, and 60 per cent of sample respectively on usefulness of WCS. The other usefulness is mentioned as it provide help to total production process (40%) and equally inform the demands of customers. In the other word WCSs are not able to meet many of requirements of their members. This may be also cause for their poverty or poor living condition.

#### Effectiveness of marketing system

Weavers of the state are the victims of poor marketing system. So far markets have not full filled the aspiration of weavers in the state. In measuring the effectiveness of marketing system of WCS, the results obtained, so shown in table 8.

**Table 8: Reaction about marketing system of WCS**

n=200		
Reaction about marketing system of WCS	No. of weavers	Percentage
Very much effective	28	14.00
Effective	91	45.50
Not effective	81	40.50
Total	200	100.00

As per the opinion of the sample, the market system is very much effective to 14 per cent of them while simply effective to 45.5 per cent. However, 40.5 per cent feel marketing system adopted by the WCS is not effective to meet the requirement.

#### Channels of marketing

Weavers are the producers and purchasers are the customers and both are to be connected by channels of marketing. The channels of marketing are many and diversified. In finding out the channels of marketing of the sample respondents, the following results were obtained.



**Table 9: Channels of marketing**

Channels of marketing	No to weavers	Per centage
Sale at own shop	88	44.00
Supply to wholesaler	114	57.00
Supply to state co-operative	80	40.50
Others	48	24.00

The channels of marketing as found to be mostly wholesale dealers (57%), followed by own shop (44%), supply to co-operative societies (40.50%) and others means of sales (24%) including exhibition and special occasions while weavers find it suitable to sale their produce

### Membership status of WCS

Study investigated total number of looms and the members of the WCS with regards to membership status of the sample WCS drawn from Athagarh and Khurda. Result are shown in table 10.

**Table 10: Status of membership in WCS (2010-11)**

Block	No of WCS	Membership	Average
Banki-II	4	541	135.25
Baramba	10	2023	202.30
Narsingh pur	2	407	203.50
Tigiria	5	571	114.20
Khurda	5	9.2	180.40
Begunia	2	396	198.00
Bolagarh	5	657	131.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5497</b>	<b>166.57</b>

A look at the table 10 indicates that sample was selected from 33 WCS covering Athagarh and Khurda zones. The average membership position is found to be as high as 203 in case of Narasinghpur, 202 in Baramba, 198 in Begunia & 180 in Khurda. Taking all 33 WCSs into account the total members is found to be 5497 with average member of 167 per society. Further in determining the ratio of male & female membership in different co-operative societies the following results were obtained.

**Table 11: Ratio of male & female members in selected WCS**

Block	No of WCS	Male	Female	Total	Ratio
Banki-II	4	408	133	541	0.32
Baramba	10	1528	519	2047	0.33
Narsingh pur	2	309	98	407	0.31
Tigiria	5	386	185	571	0.47
Khurda	5	664	238	902	0.35
Begunia	2	338	58	396	0.17
Bolagarh	5	439	218	657	0.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4072</b>	<b>1449</b>	<b>5721</b>	<b>0.35</b>

The analysis reveals that on an average the female and male ratio varies from 0.17 to as high as 0.49. In case of Bolagarh and Tigiria the women participation is highest while Begunia is the lowest. It is therefore concluded that women participation in WCS need to be increased to provide a good livelihood system to the women of weaver's community.

### Looms

Further the study attempted to find out the loom position of WCS in the area under study. The looms are found to be in active and inactive positions. The survey found out the loom status of societies located in different blocks of Athagarh & Khurda.

**Table 12: Loom status in WCS**

Block	No of WCS	Total looms	Active looms	Percentage
Banki-II	4	526	367	44.43
Baramba	10	1836	1374	74.83
Narsingh pur	2	229	224	97.81
Tigiria	5	553	407	73.59
Khurda	5	447	432	96.64
Begunia	2	362	140	38.67
Bolagarh	5	455	260	57.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4408</b>	<b>3204</b>	<b>72.68</b>

A look at the table 12 reveals the status of active looms of the WCS under study. It is observed that on the whole 72.68 per cent of the looms are in active stage indicating operational activities. Of the sample 33 WCS, Begunia, Banki-II and Bolagarh have active looms to the extent of 38.67, 44.43 and 57.14 percent respectively. It is an observation that in Banki II and Begunia even the 50 percent of the total looms are not active to support livelihood of the weavers.

### CONCLUSION

The study 'Problems of weavers Cooperative Societies in Odisha: A critical Analysis' was conducted in Odisha taking 200 randomly selected weavers to study operation pattern of weaver cooperative societies. The conclusion of the study is that sample consisted of majority of members and few office bearers. The selection of membership is based on subscription besides few nominees. About 10-12 times meetings are held in WCS. Most members are not happy in the management system of WCS. The reasons of dissatisfaction among members are influence of important members, fluctuation in rules and mismanagement accounts. But majority of them feel that WCS solves their problems in terms of financial help, supply of raw materials in credit still the societies require substantial improvement. Average

membership per WCS varies but quite good in number. Women membership in societies is satisfactory still less than their counterparts. Of the total looms in operation per society, active looms count up to 72 per cent only.

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