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FEMALE WORK PARTICIPATION AND HEALTH STATUS IN HANDLOOM SECTOR

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(RESEARCH PAPER IN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CONSUMER SCIENCES)

Abstract

This research study is about female work participation and health status in handloom sector of Warangal (urban). Random sampling method was used to select the respondents. Data on scoio-economic, working details, physical and health problems were collected by using interview schedule. A major finding of the study was the female workers were having low socio economic status and mostly uneducated. High prevalence of musculoskeletal discomfort/pain was reported by the respondents. Visual prolems like eye pain and feeling foreign body in the eye experienced by the female workers. Thus, the constraints of female workers can be overcome by qualitative modification in tools structure and guidance by the government in handloom industry.
Key words: Pre-loom activity, Female, Socio-economic status, Musculoskeletal disorders, Visual strains.

Introduction

Handloom sector is principally pastoral work and one of the largest generators next to agricultural sector in India. Around 23.77 Lakh handlooms units provide direct and indirect employment to over 43.32 lakh weavers and allied workers, of which 36.33 lakh workers stay in rural areas and 6.98 workers stay in urban areas and 38.47 lakh adult persons are engaged in weaving and allied activities in the country, out of which, 77.90% are women (Handloom Census, 2009-2010).

Durrie weaving is one of the oldest industries in India and unorganized in nature. A durrie is a smooth, hard, pileless, woven cotton fabric. Durries are produced in almost every state in India. The durries of Warangal are known for their beauty throughout the world because of their fine weaving and pleasing and harmonious color combinations (Shrilakshmi and Padma, 2002).

Women are the major work force in the handloom sector but there is no recognition to woman's work as weaver. Women play a main role in all pre loom activities like yarn winding and sizing etc. The present study is about women work participation in durrie weaving. Durrie weaving has two main pre loom activities i.e. yarn dying and yarn winding. Yarn dying will be done by outsourcing and yarn winding operation is carried out by women at weaving location.

This present study is aimed at studying the socio economic conditions, musculoskeletal symptoms and other health problems among women workers who were engaged in yarn winding operation.

In yarn winding: the dyed/ plain thread bundle is un-winded and wrapped around a bamboo frame; then it is transferred to small iron rod with help of chakra. Based on requirements these little reals of threads called pirns are used in shuttle for weaving as a weft yarn. For this operation traditionally designed tools were used.

Materials and Methods

For the present study 30 women those who engaged in durrie weaving pre loom activities were randomly selected as respondents. Data was collected by using interview schedule. Interview schedule has questions related to socio economic profile (i.e. age, income, education, family type, type of house and ownership.), working details, physical parameters (i.e. BMI, Body types) and health problems (i.e. pain in different body parts, dust allergy, head ache etc.).

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic profile

Age: Among thirty selected respondents around forty seven per cent of respondents were from the age group of 29 to 51 years; Forty per cent of respondents were more than 51 years old and only four respondents belonged to less than 29 years age group. The data shows that only middle and old-aged people were highly involved in this activity. In contrast with the present study, a study was conducted by Pandia and Thoutam (2010) found that twenty nine per cent of the respondents belonged to the below 30 years age group, thirty one per cent of respondents were in the age group of 30-45 years, twenty two per cent of respondents belonged to the age group of 46-60 and eighteen per cent of the weavers were above the age of 60. This indicates that the majority of people engaged in handloom sector are belongs to the middle age group.

Education:

The data revealed that three fourth of the respondents were illiterates. Only thirteen per cent of respondents were having education up to high school. While three percent each of respondents were having education up to middle, intermediate and graduate level. A similar study was conducted by Shazli and Munir (2014) which indicated the similar results where fifty one per cent of respondents were having primary level education, twenty five percent of respondents were having education up to middle school level; fifteen per cent of respondents were having secondary level education and only nine per cent of respondents were graduated. Das (2015) indicated that, the level of education is the deciding factor of the employee in which he is engaged in, as low education has low employment opportunity and high education has high employment and higher income occupations.

Family size: Around 57 per cent of the respondents belonged to the small size family group and the remaining 43 per cent of respondents belonged to the medium size family group. A similar result was found that fifty six per cent of weavers belonged to joint family and thirty three per cent of weavers belonged to nuclear family (Prathap and Chinnaswamy, 2015).

Type of house and ownership

In order to assess the living condition of respondents, it is highly important to understand the type of house where they are living. Majority of the respondents had kachcha houses. Thirty per cent of respondents had pucca houses and twenty per cent respondents were living in semi pucca houses. A similar study was conducted by Shazli and Munir (2014) who found that fifteen per cent of females are had kuchcha dwellings, thirty two per cent of them with pucca dwellings, seventeen per cent of them lived in semi kuchcha dwellings and around thirty six per cent of them were having semi pucca dwellings. In terms of ownership of house, around 57 per cent of the respondents reside in own houses and the remaining respondents reside in rented houses

Table .1 Socio economic profile n = 30

S.No.	Attributes	Frequency (%)
1.	**Age**	
	• Less than 29 years	04(13.3)
	• 29 to 51 years	14(46.7)

		• More than 51 years	12(40)
		Minimum age: 25, **maximum age**: 70, **mean age**: 45.8 and **SD**± 12.62	
2.	**Education**		
		1. Illiterate	23(76.66)
		2. Primary school certificate	--
		3. Middle school certificate	1(3.3)
		4. High school certificate	4(13.3)
		5. Intermediate or post high school diploma	1(3.3)
		6. Graduate or post graduate	1(3.3)
		7. Profession or honors	--
3.	**Family type**		
		1. Small(less than 4 members)	17(56.7)
		2. Medium (4-8 members)	13(43.3)
		3. Larger (more than 8)	--
4.	**Income**		
		1. <3000	03(10)
		2. 3000- 6000	27(90)
		3. 6000-10000	--
		4. 10000-15000	--
		5. 15000-20000	--
		6. > 20000	--
		Minimum income:70 Rs, **Maximum income:**224 Rs, **Mean income:** 119.5 and **SD** ± 30.7	
5.	**Type of House**		
		1. Kuchcha	15(50)
		2. Semi pucca	06(20)
		3. Pucca	09(30)
6.	**Type of ownership**		
		1. Own	13(43.3)
		2. Rented	17(56.7)

Working details
Working hours
Generally there is no scheduled working hour in weaving industry. Depending upon the work load and situation it may vary. Motivation towards earning more money tends to work for longer. About fifty three per cent of the respondents work for 6-8 hours/day, 37 per cent of the respondents work for less than 6 hours/day and only 10 per cent of the respondents work for more than 8 hours/day. Similar results revealed in the study conducted by Sharma *et al.,* 2017, where forty six per cent of female weavers work for 6-7 hours/day while thirty two per cent of them work for 4-5 hours/day and the remaining twenty two per cent of them work only for 3 hours a day.

Table .2 Working details

S.No.	Attributes	Frequency (%)
1.	**Working hours/Day**	
	1. Less than 6hrs	11(36.7)
	2. 6-8 hrs	16(53.3)
	3. More than 8 hrs	03(10.0)
2.	**Experience**	
	1. 5-10 years	04(13.3)
	2. 10-15 years	01(3.3)
	3. 15-20 years	05(16.7)
	4. 20- 25 years	03(10.0)
	5. 25 years and above	17(56.7)

Experience :
Most of the respondents were having 25 years and above work experience in pre loom activities such as yarn winding for weft and preparation of warp threads for durrie weaving. About 17 per cent of respondents were having work experience of 15-20 years; 13 per cent of the respondents were having work experience between 5-10 years; 10 per cent of respondents were having experience between 20 -25 years and only 3 per cent of the respondents were having experience between 10-15 years.

Table .3 Physical parameters

S.No.	Attributes	Frequency (%)
1.	**BMI**	
	1. Under weight (18.5 or less)	09(30.0)
	2. Normal weight (18.5 to 24.99)	16(53.3)
	3. Over weight(25 to 29.99)	05(16.7)
	4. Obesity (class 1) (30 to 34.99)	--
	5. Obesity (class 2) (35 to 39.99)	--
	6. 40 or greater (Morbid obesity)	--

	Minimum BMI:15.3, **Maximum BMI:**28.4, **Mean BMI:** 21.4 and **SD**± 3.7	
2.	**Body types**	
	1. Ectomorph	09(30.0)
	2. Mesomorph	16(53.3)
	3. Endomorph	05(16.7)

BMI and Body Types:

BMI is used universally to measure obesity, shows an association with physical fitness and body composition. Body shape is correlated to body composition and physical fitness (Ko and You, 2015). Most of the respondents were having normal body weight and mesomorph body type; 30 per cent of respondents were having underweight and ectomorph body type. Only 17 per cent of the respondents were having over weight and endomorph body type. According to World Health Organization (2010) if BMI is less than 18.5 under weight, it indicates that malnutrition and health problem.

Table .4 Distribution of Pain in body parts and other health problems

S.No	Attributes	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Neck	30	100.0
2.	Chest	30	100.0
3.	Shoulder	30	100.0
4.	Wrist	29	96.7
5.	Elbow	12	40.0
6.	Low back	23	76.7
7.	Knee	12	40.0
8.	Ankle	02	6.7
9.	Feeling foreign body in the eye	08	26.7
10.	Head ache	30	100.0
11.	Eye pain	13	43.3
12.	Sneezing	21	70.0
13.	Dust allergy	24	80.0

Pain in body parts and other health problems

Regarding pain body in parts and other health problems, cent per cent of the respondents experienced pain in neck, chest and shoulder and head ache due to work. Majority of the respondents had experienced pain in the wrist (96.7%), low back (76.7%). Forty per cent of the respondents had experienced elbow and knee pain. A negligible per cent of the respondents experienced pain in ankles. During the yarn winding operation most of the respondents preferred to use wooden plank to sit without back rest and adopted sitting posture like cross legged, folded knees and squatting. Some respondents increased seat height which provides comfortable posture to shoulder and lower arm but it increase the inclination at the lower back and pressure at neck. The tools which used in yarn winding are traditionally designed and no ergonomics principle is applied in their structure. For winding operation respondents used both hands simultaneously and it caused pain in shoulder, wrist and elbow. Inappropriate materials used in tools structures increased bear contact stress on palms and finger's which caused hands soft tissue injury.

Three forth of the respondents were allergic to dust. While 70 per cent of the respondents were experienced frequent sneezing problem when they were working. Eye pain was experienced by 43 per cent of the respondents and one third of respondents felt foreign body in the eye during work.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that female workers of handloom sector of Warangal urabn had poor socio economic status and mostly uneducated. A high prevalence of musculoskeletal discomforts/pain was reported by the respondents. Little less than majority of the respondents stated visual strains like eye pain and feeling foreign body in the eye. Thus the constraints of female workers can be overcome by qualitative modification in tools structure and guidance by the government in handloom industry.

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