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Constraints faced by handloom weavers related to production and marketing of weaved products of Raigarh district from the Bilaspur division of Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

The handloom sector represents a vital cottage industry and the second-largest generator of rural employment in India after agriculture, playing a critical role in cultural preservation and socio-economic development. Handloom weaving is a traditional occupation in the Raigarh districts of the Bilaspur division in Chhattisgarh. However, the weavers' contribution to the sector remains underrecognized due to various systemic challenges. This study investigates the major production and marketing constraints faced by handloom weavers in these two districts, utilizing empirical data gathered from a sample of 91 respondents during the period 2024–2025. The findings reveal that the primary production constraints include the high cost of production, an insufficient number of looms, low productivity, poor quality of raw materials, and inadequacy in the supply of yarn. On the marketing constraints, increased competition between handlooms and powerlooms, inadequate attractive promotions, a heavy dependence on middlemen, inadequate quality control, and a lack of essential marketing skills.

Keywords: Handloom weavers, production constraints, marketing constraints, Bilaspur division, Chhattisgarh.

1. Introduction

The Indian textile industry is a complex, multi-tiered ecosystem stratified into three distinct domains: the traditional sector comprising Khadi, wool, and silk handlooms utilizing conventional methodologies; the technologically upgraded and decentralized powerloom sector; and the highly advanced composite mill sector (Mazumdar, 1984; Misra, 1993) ^[3, 5]. automated textile industries, the handloom sector relies heavily on traditional craftsmanship, eco-friendly manufacturing processes, and highly specialized skill sets passed down through generations. However, despite its vital contribution to the rural economy and cultural preservation, the industry is currently trapped in structural stagnation. In an era dominated by rapid globalization and industrial automation, traditional handloom weavers are finding it increasingly difficult to sustain their livelihoods due to a complex web of systemic challenges that threaten the very survival of their craft.

The handloom industry are primarily split into intersecting production and marketing constraints. On the production front, artisans are crippled by an volatile supply chain characterized by the costs of genuine raw materials, such as

silk yarn and cotton.

This issue is compounded by a lack of accessible working capital and reliance on obsolete, un-ergonomic looms that result in low daily productivity and severe physical strain on the weavers. On the marketing front, the crisis deepens due to an unorganized market structure.

2. Research Methodology

The present study analytical research design based on primary data collected during the period 2024–2025. To a representative selection of the population, a multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for data collection. In Bilaspur division of Chhattisgarh was purposively selected due to its concentration of traditional weaving clusters, Raigarh district were selected as the core study areas. In handloom units and individual weavers within these districts were selected using a simple random sampling method.

A total sample size of 91 handloom weavers was selected as respondents for the study. Primary data was gathered through field surveys using a comprehensive, well-structured, and pre-tested interview schedule for both production and marketing attributes. To analyze the collected data and

interpret the results effectively, specific statistical and analytical tools were utilized. the Henry Garrett Ranking Technique was applied to prioritize and rank the specific production and marketing constraints based on their severity as reported by the respondents. The order of merit given by the respondents was converted into ranks by using the following formula.

$$\text{Percent position} = \frac{100(R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where,

R_{ij} = Rank given to the i th attribute by the j th individual N_j

= Number of attributes ranked by the j th individual

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Constraints Faced by Weavers during Production of Weaved Products

It is implied from Table 1 that of all the constraints faced by the weavers related to production, the main constraint is the High cost of production, which achieved the 1st rank with a Garrett mean score of 61.61, indicating a major financial burden that directly limits the profit margins of the weavers. The 2nd rank is given to Low productivity with a Garrett mean score of 54.16, which acts as a heavy operational hurdle that restricts the daily output of finished goods.

The 3rd rank is occupied by the Poor quality of raw material with a Garrett mean score of 47.52, reflecting the technical challenges faced by artisans in obtaining premium yarn for weaving. Following this, the 4th rank is given to the Inadequacy in supply of yarn with a Garrett mean score of 44.34, representing a pressing issue in supply chain consistency. Lastly, the 5th rank is assigned to the Insufficient no. of looms with a Garrett mean score of 40.37, indicating that basic infrastructure shortages are comparatively less restrictive to the overall weaving operations.

Table 1: constraints in production of handloom products

Production constraint		Garretts ranking	
S. No.	Constraints	Mean	Rank
1	High cost of production	61.61	1st
2	Insufficient no. of looms	40.37	5th
3	Low productivity	54.16	2nd
4	Poor quality of raw material	47.52	3rd
5	Inadequacy in supply of yarn	44.34	4th

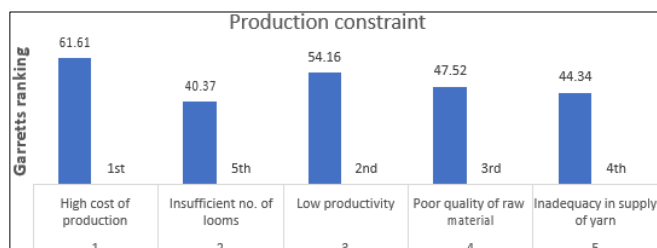


Fig 1: Constraints in production of handloom products.

3.2 Constraints Faced by Weavers during Marketing of Weaved Products

The main constraints encountered during the marketing of weaved products were evaluated and arranged by their

severity using Garrett's ranking technique. The prominent problem is given the 1st rank, which is Increase competition (Handloom and Powerloom), scoring a Garrett mean of 55.46, indicating that cheap, mass-produced machine fabrics create an intense and unequal market environment for traditional weavers. This is followed by the 2nd rank given to the Dependence on middleman with a Garrett mean score of 55.05, which highlights a rigid exploitative structure occurring on a frequent basis where intermediaries absorb the core profits.

Inadequate marketing skills is a 3rd rank with a Garrett mean score of 49.83, showcasing the lack of exposure to modern digital commerce and direct selling strategies among the weavers. The 4th rank is given to Inadequate quality control with a Garrett mean score of 46.82, indicating a structural limitation that affects fabric standardization and market valuation. Finally, the 5th rank is assigned to Inadequate attractive promotions with a Garrett mean score of 40.85, acting as a promotional hurdle that prevents these unique handloom products from building a distinct identity and reaching a wider consumer market.

Table 2: constraints in marketing of handloom products

Production constraint		Garretts ranking	
S. No.	Constraints	Mean	Rank
1	Increase competition (Handloom and Powerloom)	55.46	1st
2	Inadequate attractive promotions	40.85	5th
3	Dependence on middleman	55.05	2nd
4	Inadequate quality control	46.82	4th
5	Inadequate marketing skills	49.83	3rd

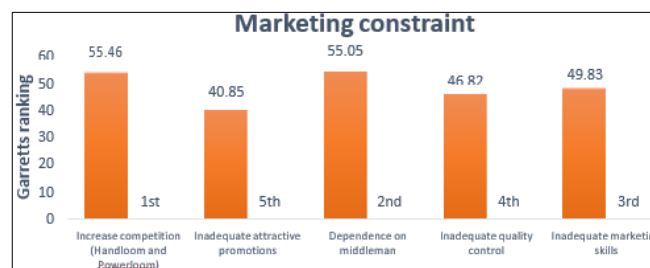


Fig 2: Constraints in marketing of handloom products.

Suggestion

Production can be resolved by establishing state-subsidized raw material banks and quality-testing laboratories to counter the high cost and poor quality of yarn, alongside provisioning subsidized credit under the PM Mudra scheme to introduce modern ergonomic looms that overcome low productivity. On the marketing front, the severe threat of powerloom competition and exploitative dependence on middlemen must be checked through the strict enforcement of the Handlooms Reservation Act, mandatory branding using "Handloom Mark" and "Silk Mark" tags, and direct procurement by the Chhattisgarh Handloom Federation. Furthermore, expanding rural infrastructure with local storage facilities and conducting digital literacy drives to onboard weavers onto e-commerce platforms will effectively eliminate gaps in marketing skills and promotional outreach, thereby connecting local artisans directly to lucrative urban and global markets.

Conclusion

The findings of the present study reveal that the major constraints in the production and marketing of weaved products are high production costs, low productivity, and poor quality of raw material. Raw materials are high in cost and inadequate in supply, which severely limits production, and some structural constraints are also there like an insufficient number of looms affecting weaving activity of the study area in an adverse way. The market infrastructure is present only in the name but not actually serving the need of weavers. The increased competition from powerlooms and mills also affects the study area weavers enforcing them to take loan at a very high rate.

Through market sustainability study, it was seen that due to heavy dependence on middlemen, many weaver's next generation are not able to get education and job opportunities properly. Many of them did not have proper marketing skills and adequate quality control knowledge which can help them in their time of product selling. This affects the technology upgradation and attractive promotions of weavers. Thus, they are unable to get reasonable price in the market.

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