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THE PROBLEMS AND PERFORMANCE OF HANDLOOM COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES WITH REFERENCE TO ANDHRA PRADESH INDIA

DR. R. EMMANIEL

PROFESSOR & HEAD

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

ST. ANN'S COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY

NAYUNIPALLI

ABSTRACT

Andhra Pradesh of India has much economic importance and fabrics are being exported to various countries. The cooperative societies in Andhra Pradesh are facing multiple problems in Production and Marketing of their fabrics. A majority of them are struggling hard to survive Competition of Mill or Power loom products, Unfavorable climatic conditions, lack of finance and other management problems also has enhanced the problems of cooperative societies. The principal objective of this paper is to analyze the profile of the sample Primary handloom Cooperative Societies in Andhra Pradesh, with a view to identify their problems and performance of Primary Handloom Cooperative societies in three selected districts of Andhra Pradesh.

KEYWORDS

share capital, cooperatives.

INTRODUCTION

On attaining Independence Government of India rightly recognized the important role that the industry can play and a number of policies were formulated and executed to bring the industry on a sound footing. Development of industry on cooperative lines was the cardinal idea in all these plans. Cooperation has the advantage of bringing freedom and opportunity for people with profits of large scale management and organization. Cooperative societies are expected to perform functions of bulk purchase of raw material, raise capital by the issue of shares, procure finished goods from members and market them.

In the earlier days, the weavers were organized into purchase and sale societies leading to malpractice of purchasing cloth from others and arranging its disposal through the Apex society. Thus the very purpose of organizing weavers co-operatives for providing work to weavers was defeated as the members of the societies did not receive employment from the societies. At that stage, to ensure the cloth produced for sale by the apex society in its selling units, the "purchase and sale societies" were converted into "Production and sale societies". These were made obligatory to distribute yarn to the members, get cloth produced on their looms and take it back for sale either in their selling units or in the selling units of apex society.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In spite of the rich heritage of handloom sector in India, in Andhra Pradesh is not in fair and encouraging due to multifarious reasons. Despite several measures taken by the government by the way of support and direct financial assistance to the handloom weavers, they are suffering miserably due to myriad problems and are sustaining continuous losses. These problems include improper supply of raw material, lack of proper marketing facilities, lack of proper financial resources, competition from mill and power loom products, lack of modern technology, lack of prompt timely support from the government and other allied agencies and so on. The standard of living of the weavers is significantly low and they suffer from unemployment and underemployment. This situation prevails everywhere in our country. Andhra Pradesh, which is chosen for detailed research study, is no exception to this situation. This pathetic condition of handloom industry in Andhra Pradesh demands a thorough investigation into the problems confronting handloom weavers and suitable measures to plug the loop holes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to appraise the profile and general working conditions and assess the problems and performance of the Primary Handloom Weavers Cooperative Societies in Andhra Pradesh with reference to the Prakasam Guntur and Nellore districts of Andhra Pradesh.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Andhra Pradesh in India has much economic importance and the fabrics are being exported to various countries. But Present handloom cooperative societies in Andhra Pradesh are facing lack of management, acute production and marketing problems, unfavorable climate conditions, and their poverty and under employment also has enhanced the problems of weavers. A majority of them are struggling hard to survive and labour weavers have become bonded labourers, So far as the researcher's knowledge is concerned no organized study has been made in three districts where handloom weaving is popular.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The following methodology is adopted to achieve the above objectives. Both primary and secondary data sources of information are used to carry out the present study. The Primary data are collected by interacting with the Board of Directors and member Weavers of various Primary Handloom Cooperative Societies. Proper care was taken to explain to the cooperative societies all the aspects in the schedule to elicit truthful and unexaggerated feedback from them. A questionnaire was prepared and administered to the handloom weavers and the Board of Directors to ascertain their perceptions. The schedules were pre tested before conducting the field survey. The stratified survey method has been used while drawing the samples. Three districts were selected basing on concentration of weaving households. These are Prakasam, Guntur, and Nellore districts. In each district 24 cooperative societies were selected by stratified random sampling. The samples are drawn in such a way as to reflect the characteristics of the total cooperative societies.

The secondary data were collected from 2006-11. The relevant data are collected from the offices of the Development commissioner for Handloom Government of Andhra Pradesh, the Director of Handlooms and Textiles Hyderabad, Assistant Director of Handlooms of various districts.

PERFORMANCE OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH

The government of India encouraged the weavers to form themselves into co-operative organizations and has undertaken many programs to assist such societies. The share of cooperatives in handloom industry is only 60 percent. By 1977 and 1978 this had increased to 1690, and to 1933 in 1980-81. By 1982-83 there were 2115 cooperatives, an increase of 106% in seven years. Whereas by the year of 2009-2010 the total number of cooperative societies are decreased to 755 in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Since many societies were defectors running at losses the Government of Andhra Pradesh decided to recognize the cooperative societies and liquidate the one making loss. Others considered to be potentially viable (though only marginal at that time) were merged. In this process 240 cooperatives or roughly one third of the total were liquidated. 212 societies were merged with 102 societies and only 165 (less than one fourth) were considered to be independently viable and retained. Percentage of cooperatives closed down is as follow in Prakasam District (83%), followed by Nellore (75.6%) and Guntur district (69%).

AGE OF PRIMARY HANDLOOM COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Table I.1 exhibits the age of sample primary handloom weaver's cooperative societies in three selected districts of Andhra Pradesh. The table reveals that the age of the handloom cooperative societies varies from 5 to 16 years in the area of study. It is also noted that majority of the cooperative societies in the study area have come into existence during the 1960's. Out of the total 72 cooperative societies, 24 societies representing about 33 percent of which 12 cooperative societies at Prakasam district 6 societies each at Guntur and Nellore districts were established 16 years ago, 21 cooperative societies about 30 percent of which 9 societies at Guntur district and 6 cooperative societies each at Prakasam.

TABLE I.1: AGE OF SAMPLE PRIMARY WEAVERS COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

District	5 (years)	6-10 (years)	11-15 (years)	16 above (years)	Total
PRAKASAM	--	6	6	12	24
	--	(8.33)	(8.33)	(16.66)	(33.33)
GUNTUR	--	9	9	6	24
	--	(12.5)	(12.5)	(8.33)	(33.33)
NELLORE	--	12	6	6	24
	--	(16.66)	(8.33)	(8.33)	(33.33)
Total	--	27	21	24	72
	--	(37.5)	(29.16)	(33.33)	(100.00)

Source: Primary Data through Questionnaire

Note: Figures in Parenthesis Indicate Percentage to the Total

Nellore districts were established between 11-15 years ago. Whereas of the remaining 27 cooperative societies, 12 societies at Nellore, 9 societies at Guntur district and remaining 6 societies at Prakasam district were established between 6-10 years ago.

From the above analysis, it can be inferred that the cooperative movement in three districts of Andhra Pradesh was started in the initial days of independence. However the cooperative movement gained momentum during the last decade and also it can observe from the above analysis that very old societies which were established 50 years ago are located at Prakasam district compared to other districts in Andhra Pradesh.

DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP IN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Table I.2 shows the distribution of membership in sample primary weaver's cooperative societies in Andhra Pradesh. The membership has varied from 100 to 1319 in the area of study. Table 1.2 reveals that only two cooperative societies at Prakasam district representing about 8.33 percent of the total have membership of above 800, 11 cooperative societies representing about 46 of which 5 societies each at Guntur and Nellore districts and one society at Prakasam district have the membership between 101-200.

Eighteen cooperative societies account for 25 percent of which 9 cooperative societies at Prakasam district 6 societies at Nellore and 3 societies at Guntur district have membership between 501- 800. However, only four cooperative societies which represents about 16.6 got the membership between 201-500. Whereas three cooperative societies which are located at Guntur district got the membership of only below 100.

It can be inferred from the above analysis that majority of the cooperative societies at Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh have recorded the highest membership and also it is to note that the cooperative societies which are placed at Nellore and Guntur districts have recorded the lowest membership compared to other societies of Prakasam district in the area of study.

TABLE I.2: DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP IN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

District	100	101-200	201-500	501-800	800 above	Total
PRAKASAM	--	3	6	9	6	24
	--	(4.16)	(8.33)	(12.5)	(8.33)	(33.33)
GUNTUR	3	15	3	3	--	24
	(4.16)	(20.83)	(4.16)	(4.16)	--	(33.33)
NELLORE	--	15	3	6	--	24
	--	(20.83)	(4.16)	(8.33)	--	(33.33)
Total	3	33	12	18	6	72
	(4.16)	(45.83)	(16.66)	(25.00)	(8.33)	(100.00)

Source: Primary Data through Questionnaire

Note: Figures in Parenthesis Indicate Percentage to the Total

DETAILS OF SHARE CAPITAL

Table I.3 throws light on the share capital position of the primary handloom weavers cooperative societies in 3 selected areas of Andhra Pradesh. The share capital of the cooperative societies comprises of members' contribution and the contribution by the Government. It can be revealed from the above analysis that out of the total 72 cooperative societies surveyed in three districts of Andhra Pradesh 33 cooperative societies representing about 45.83 percent of which 15 cooperative societies at Nellore 12 at Guntur and remaining 6 cooperative societies at Prakasam district maintain the share capital only between Rs. 1-2 lakhs, 24 cooperative societies representing about 33.33 percent of which 9 societies each at Prakasam and Nellore districts, remaining 6 cooperative societies at Guntur district maintain the share capital between Rs. 2-3 lakhs. Whereas only 15 cooperative societies of which 9 societies at Prakasam district and 6 at Guntur district are maintained the share capital between Rs. 3-4 lakhs.

It can be concluded from the above analysis that majority of cooperative societies in three selected areas of Andhra Pradesh are maintain the share capital below Rs. 2 lakhs only. It is note that cooperative societies which are maintained share capital between Rs.3-4 are very less and these societies are recorded only at Guntur and Prakasam districts. It is distressing to observe that no one single society could maintain the share capital above Rs. 4 lakhs in the area of study.

TABLE I.3: DETAILS OF SHARE CAPITAL IN COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES (Rs. Lakhs)

District	below 1 lakh	1-2	2-3	3-4	above 4	Total
PRAKASAM	--	6	9	9	--	24
	--	(8.33)	(12.50)	(12.50)	--	(33.33)
GUNTUR	--	12	6	6	--	24
	--	(16.66)	(8.33)	(8.33)	--	(33.33)
NELLORE	--	15	9	--	--	24
	--	(20.83)	(12.5)	--	--	(33.33)
Total	--	33	24	15	--	72
	--	(45.83)	(33.33)	(20.83)	--	(100.00)

Source: Primary Data through Questionnaire

Note: Figures in Parenthesis Indicate Percentage to the Total

NATURE OF PROBLEMS FACED BY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

Like any other organizations the primary weavers cooperative societies in the Andhra Pradesh also facing many problems. At present the handloom cooperative societies in the area of study are facing multi-dimensional problems which not only hamper the productivity but also put the societies in measurable conditions. The details of problems faced by the primary handloom cooperative societies in three selected areas of Andhra Pradesh are presented in the table I.4. out of the total 72 cooperative societies surveyed in 3 districts of Andhra Pradesh 27 societies representing about 37 percent of which 12 societies at Prakasam district 9 societies at Nellore district and remaining 6 cooperative societies at Guntur district expressed that supply of raw yarn constitutes the major problem, 18 cooperative.

TABLE I.4: NATURE OF PROBLEMS FACED BY COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

District	Lack of Mktg.	Supply of Yarn	Financial	Inability of Management	Total
PRAKASAM	9	12	3	--	24
	(12.50)	(16.66)	(4.16)	--	(33.33)
GUNTUR	3	6	9	6	24
	(4.16)	(8.33)	(12.50)	(8.33)	(33.33)
NELLORE	6	9	6	3	24
	(8.33)	(12.50)	(8.33)	(4.16)	(33.33)
Total	18	27	18	9	72
	(25.00)	(37.50)	(25.00)	(12.50)	(100.00)

Source: Primary Data through Questionnaire

Note: Figures in Parenthesis Indicate Percentage to the Total

Societies accounting for 25 percent expressed that lack of financial support as their problem. 18 cooperative societies, which 9 societies at Prakasam district 6 cooperative societies at Nellore district and remaining 3 societies at Guntur district view that lack of marketing facilities is their major problem. Whereas only 9 cooperative societies representing about 12.5 percent of the total for which 6 societies at Guntur and 3 societies at Nellore district expressed that inability of management is the major problem.

It can be concluded that majority of cooperative societies in three districts of Andhra Pradesh opined that shortage of raw yarn is the major problem followed by lack of financial support and marketing facilities. It is clear that not a single cooperative society is free from above said problems in the area of study.

FINDINGS

- The age of primary handloom cooperative society in the Andhra Pradesh varies from 5-6 years and more than 50 percent of cooperative societies have come into existence during the 1960s. Very old societies which were established 50 years ago are located at Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.
- A large majority of cooperative societies in the area of study have the membership between 101-200 followed by 501-800. It is also note that primary handloom cooperative societies which are located at Prakasam district only recorded highest membership compare to other societies in the area of study.
- It is distressing to observe that a large number of cooperative societies in the area of study, maintained share capital only below Rs. 2 lakhs, one can therefore understand from these trends that share capital position of some cooperative societies in Andhra Pradesh is very poor and not at a satisfactory level when compare to other societies in the area of study. It is clear that the share capital of primary handloom cooperative societies compromises of member's contribution and the contribution by the Government.
- Almost all sample primary handloom cooperative societies in the area of study are facing various problems related to the society operations, majority of cooperative societies have expressed that supply of yarn constituted the major problem in addition to that, the societies are facing other problems in various dimensions like financial problems, lack of marketing support and inability of cooperative management are there in society operations. Finally it can be concluded that not a single society is free from the above said problems in the area of study.

SUGGESTIONS

- Handloom societies laying defunctional for the last 10 to 15 years may be wound up. Some societies have not yet installed the looms given by the department. Such cases may be reviewed immediately for appropriate action. Rebate claims of handloom societies remain pending for a number of years. The budgetary allocation for paying rebate should be suitably increased. The handloom weavers who are member of agricultural credit societies may be provided finance from Cooperative Banks by suitably devising a credit limit application form.
- One of the major reasons for the stagnation of cooperative societies in Andhra Pradesh is the erratic supply of yarn to societies. Frequent shortages of yarn coupled with high prices have been noticed as the factory in the under-utilisation of the looms as well as to the weavers in the societies remaining idle without job. In order to overcome this and to ensure the uninterrupted supply of yarn at more or less steady prices, a yarn bank is recommended to be established in every district.
- Only viable handloom societies may be organised covering 150 looms an average of 200 weavers in every district. All the societies will be serviced by Common Facility Centres. For the work-shed type activities, work-shed of 30 looms were recommended along with common facility centres. The society should be managed by well-trained paid managers, besides the technical staff.
- The management of weaver's cooperative societies must be made accountable to all their operations, so as to keep under check the corruption at the societies level itself.
- Training institutes are to be established in various districts of Andhra Pradesh for the purpose of imparting training to the existing weavers on weaving more on paying styles and also for giving training to new entrants.
- The contribution of Co-operative Societies help in maximizing the benefits for weavers in the entire chain of Production and Marketing, their present condition is a cause of concern. Since the Co-operative system has utterly failed in selling finished products as the handloom Cooperative system is riddled with corruption and political interference. Many handloom weavers in Andhra Pradesh though they are not members of these Cooperatives, still make better profits as they all join together forming private limited companies.
- It is essential to every Handloom cooperative society that salesmen should be given quota of sales to be accomplished in every month and keep monitoring. Incentives should be given on the over achievements than the prescribed sales quotas.
- The cooperative societies to depend on supply of dyes and chemicals from firms outside the district from whom it is not possible to obtain quality dyes and chemicals as per requirement from time to time. A dyes and chemicals bank needs to be established by the Directorate of Handloom and these facilities should be made available at every common facility centres in the district.
- The government of Andhra Pradesh should take steps to make yarn available to the weavers at the nearest place without any delay in the supply. The Directorate of Handlooms and Textiles and the Government of Andhra Pradesh should put every effort to regularize the supply of yarn during the shortage period so that the weavers are able to continue the work throughout the month or year.

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