

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF PATTU WEAVERS IN WESTERN RAJASTHAN

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### ABSTRACT

*Handloom sector is an ancient cottage industry with a decentralized setup scattered in every parts of the country. Usually in handloom industry every member of the family is involved in their ancestral craft. Pattu weaving is another type of household weaving units practised in the arid region of western Rajasthan i.e. Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer districts. Pattu weaving is monopolized by Meghwal community. Present research focuses on the study of socio-economic condition of pattu weavers in Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer districts of western Rajasthan. Sample sizes of 200 weavers were approached to gather the data. Proportionate stratified sampling method was used for the selection of weavers from each district. Comparative analysis was done to understand the regional and cultural differences between the living conditions of weavers in all three districts. During the analysis of data it was found that a non-governmental organisation has a huge impact on the socio-economic condition of weavers in different regions. It was found by the researcher that the socio-economic condition of the weavers in Barmer district is low as compared to Jaisalmer and Jodhpur districts. As the weavers of Barmer are getting very low wages from middlemen while weavers of Jaisalmer and Jodhpur are getting sufficient wages to improve their living condition. Also the weavers of Jodhpur and Jaisalmer are more aware about the governmental schemes than the weavers of Barmer.*

**Keywords:** Background Information, Extra Weft, Family Information, Handloom, Problems of Weavers.

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### Introduction

Terrain of western Rajasthan is known for their traditional wear which is shawls and blankets. These shawls and blankets are termed as *pattu*. *Pattu* weaving is a hereditary craft of western Rajasthan which is practised in the surrounding villages of Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur districts. *Pattu* is derived from the word *patti* which means a narrow strip. *Pattu* was earlier categorized under the woollen textile items which are crafted by the menfolk of *Meghwal* community (Saar, 2015).

Traditional handloom sector of India has a huge demand in domestic as well as international market with a surpassing reputation. Many families in villages are depending upon handloom for their livelihood. Therefore, the weaver faces number of challenges from mill textiles which affect their overall wellbeing, as the socio-economic conditions of these employed weavers are very poor. Present research study in detail about the socio-economic conditions of *pattu* weavers. Also a single research was found related to *pattu* textiles of western Rajasthan which describe the production and products in *pattu* weaving. Therefore, the research had planned to do a comparative analysis between the socio-economic profiles of *pattu* weavers in three districts i.e. Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer.

### Objectives

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To study and compare the socio economic status of *pattu* weavers in three districts of western Rajasthan i.e., Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer.

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### Methodology

Former research literature revealed that *pattu* weaving is practiced at three districts of western Rajasthan i.e. Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer. Survey method was selected for the collection of data as the research is descriptive in nature. For the collection of primary information artisans were approached from the villages using purposive sampling method. Gomat, That, Chacha and Indranagar villages were chosen from Jaisalmer, Bhojasar, Ranisar and Bheeyasar from Jodhpur and Bhooniya, MeethiBeri, Serwa, Dhanau selected from Barmer. All the relevant information was collected from the weavers belong to these villages. The selection of weaving units from each district was done using proportionate stratified sampling method and one weaver was selected from each unit. One hundred and fourteen weavers were approached from Barmer, fifty seven from Jaisalmer and twenty nine from Jodhpur. Thus, a total number of 200 units were surveyed. The data was collected with the help of interview schedule. The data collected from interview schedule is qualitative in nature. Responses from interview schedule was coded and tabulated systematically. Frequency and percentage was calculated for each question, as most of the data is descriptive in nature. A comparative analysis is done between the socio-economic status of the weavers of Barmer, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur districts.

### Results

The data regarding socio-economic profile of weavers is studied in terms of their age, caste, educational qualification, type of family, family size, type of house, earning member engaged in *pattu* weaving, inherited occupation of family and age at which weave starts practising *pattu*.

**Table 1: Distribution of Weavers According to AgeN=200**

Age (in years)	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>20 or below</b>	5	8.8	0	0	5	4.4
<b>21-30</b>	9	15.8	5	17.24	53	46.5
<b>31-40</b>	17	29.8	15	51.72	26	22.8
<b>41-50</b>	14	24.6	5	17.24	18	15.8
<b>51-60</b>	9	15.8	4	13.8	7	6.1
<b>61 and above</b>	3	5.2	0	0	5	4.4
<b>Total</b>	57	100	29	100	114	100

Data in Table 1 depicts that in Jaisalmer majority of the *pattu* weavers (29.8%) are practising between 31 to 40 years of age and only 5.2% fall in 61 and above age group. Majority of the weavers in Jodhpur (51.72%) lie between the age bracket of 31-40 years and no weaver was found below 20 and above 61 years while only 13.8% are between 51-60 years. Data of Barmer differs Jaisalmer and Jodhpur where maximum number of weavers (46.5%) belong to the age group of 21-30 years followed by 31-40 years (22.8%) and the percentages of weavers below 20 and above 61 is 4.4%.

It was found that with the upsurge in age there is a gradual decline in practising *pattu* weaving. Thus it can be concluded that *pattucraft* is predominantly practised by middle age group (31-40 years) followed by young age group (21-30). The working capacity of weavers to practise this craft in old age group for prolonged duration is less and due to weak eye-sight.

### Religion and Caste of the weavers

Data explicates that *pattu* craft is completely monopolized by Hindu religion. All the weavers belong to Meghwal community which is also referred as Bunker communities of Rajasthan.

**Table 2: Distribution of Weavers according to Educational QualificationN=200**

Education qualification	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Illiterate</b>	6	10.5	15	51.7	30	26.3
<b>Primary</b>	20	35.1	3	10.3	55	48.2
<b>Middle school</b>	15	26.3	8	27.6	21	18.4
<b>High school</b>	10	17.5	3	10.3	3	2.6
<b>Senior secondary</b>	5	8.8	0	0	1	0.9
<b>Other</b>	1	1.8	0	0	4	3.5
<b>Total</b>	57	100	29	100	114	100

It is evident from Table 2 that in Jaisalmer, majority of the weavers (35.1%) studied up to primary level followed by middle school (26.3%). Very few number of weavers (10.5%) are illiterate and only 1.8% are graduate. While in Jodhpur, 51.7% weavers are illiterate and rest studied till high school (10.3%) which shows low literacy rate. In Barmer, maximum numbers of weavers (48.2%) are educated till primary level, 3.5% of the weavers studied above senior secondary level and 26.3% weavers were illiterate. One weaver had attained B.Ed. degree and other three were graduates.

Educational profile of weavers indicates that literacy rate in Jaisalmer is high because the location of villages are adjacent to the city as compared to Jodhpur and Barmer. Literacy rate in Barmer was found low due to the remote location of villages from city.

**Table 3: Distribution of Weavers according to Type of Family N=200**

Type of family	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Joint	29	50.9	23	79.3	73	64
Nuclear	28	49.1	6	20.7	41	36
Total	57	100	29	100	114	100

Table 3 explicates that similar trend was found in the distribution of data in all three districts regarding type of family where majority of the weavers are living in joint family. However, the percentage of weavers residing in joint family is found less in Jaisalmer. Data reflects that in Jaisalmer, the percentage of weavers living in joint and nuclear family is 50.9% and 49.1% respectively. In Jodhpur 20.7% of the weavers have nuclear type family and majority of the weavers are living in joint family system (79.3%). While in Barmer, 64% weavers are living in joint family. Due to poor economic status, the family members of weavers prefer to live together so that they could be financially depend on each other and uplift their economic condition.

**Table 4: Distribution of Weavers According to Family Size N=200**

Family size	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1-2	13	22.8	3	10.3	17	15
3-4	14	24.6	7	24.1	20	17.5
5-6	21	36.8	11	38.1	49	43
7-8	6	10.5	7	24.1	22	19.3
9 or above	3	5.3	1	3.4	6	5.2
Total	57	100	29	100	114	100

It is apparent from Table 4 that equivalent distribution of data was found in Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer, where maximum percentage of weaver's family size constitute 5-6 members per family i.e. 36.8%, 38.1% and 43% respectively and minimum percentage of weaver's family extend up to 9 or above members in a family i.e. 5.3% in Jaisalmer, 3.4% in Jodhpur and 5.2% in Barmer. Data illuminates that economic condition of weavers is directly proportional to family size.

**Table 5: Distribution of Weavers According to the Type of House N=200**

Type of house	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Kaccha	2	3.5	8	27.6	69	60.5
Semikaccha	44	77.2	18	62.1	37	32.5
Pakka	11	19.3	3	10.3	8	7
Total	57	100	29	100	114	100

Table 5 depicts that in Jaisalmer and Jodhpur majority of the weaver's dwelling is semi *kaccha* house i.e. 77.2% and 62.1% respectively. Whereas, majority of the weaver's in Barmer are living in *kaccha* house (60.5%) and only 7% in *pakka* houses. However, the percentage of weavers residing in *pakka* house found more in Jaisalmer (19.3%) due to better financial condition as compared to other two districts where only 10.3% of weavers in Jodhpur and 7% in Barmer have *pakka* house. Results infer that majority of the weavers in Barmer have to live in *kaccha* houses due to poor economic condition as they get low wages for *pattu* weaving from middlemen.

Weavers living in semi *kaccha* house stated that they are gradually building their house as they accumulate enough money for construction. Weavers living in semi *kaccha* and *pakka* house are benefited from governmental schemes for house building i.e., Pradhanmantri AwasYojna (PMAY). In Jaisalmer and Jodhpur weavers are more aware about governmental schemes and they are registered in governmental and non-governmental organisations. While weavers of Barmer have lack of knowledge about governmental schemes.

**Table 6: Distribution of Units According to Earning Members in Family Engaged in *Pattu* Weaving N=200**

Members engaged in this craft	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
One	45	78.9	27	93.1	93	81.6
Two	12	21.1	2	6.9	17	14.9
Three or above	0	0	0	0	4	3.5
Total	57	100	29	100	114	100

Table 6 shows that in Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, majority of the weaver's families have only one earning member engaged in *pattu* weaving i.e. 78.9% and 93.1% respectively and not more than two members are engaged in this craft. While in Barmer, 3.5% families have three or above members per family practising *pattu* and majority (81.6%) has only one member involved in weaving. During the survey the researcher had noticed that families having three or above earning members are able to construct *pakka* houses.

**Table 7: Distribution of Units According to Inherited Occupation N=200**

Inherited occupation	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Agriculture	24	42.1	17	58.6	63	55.3
Weaving	33	57.9	12	41.4	51	44.7
Total	57	100	29	100	114	100

Table 7 indicates that majority of the weavers (57.9%) in Jaisalmer stated that their inherited occupation is weaving. However in Jodhpur and Barmer, weavers reported that their inherited occupation is agriculture i.e. 58.6% and 55.3% respectively. The reason is having adequate land for agriculture in Jodhpur and Barmer compared to Jaisalmer. Weavers of Jodhpur and Barmer are engaged in the farming of *bajara* (pearl millet), *jeera* (cumin), *gwar* (guar beans) and *arandi* (castor bean). In some areas of Jodhpur, the weavers also sow *makka* (maize) where immense ground water is available. Weavers of Jaisalmer mentioned that they could not depend on agriculture for their livelihood as they do not have sufficient land and therefore they practise weaving.

#### Distribution of Weavers According to the Type of Employment

Data collected from interview schedule revealed that in Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, all the weavers are working under NGO. Branches of Urmul Marushthali Bunker Vikas Samiti, NGO are setup in both Jaisalmer and Jodhpur. In Barmer, majority of the weavers (84.2%) are working under middlemen and only 15.8% weavers are working for both middlemen and NGO. In Barmer six weavers of Serwa village is working for URMUL trust and other weavers belong to Bhunia and Koda Pura village are working for URMUL, Jai Bheem Hathkargha and Malani Hathkargha centre. The weavers in Barmer only work for NGO when they get orders; otherwise they work under the middle men. Middlemen have shops in the Barmer city and are called *sethji* by weavers.

**Table 8: Distribution According to the Age at Which Weaver Starts Practising *Pattu* N=200**

Age at work started (in years)	Jaisalmer		Jodhpur		Barmer	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
15 years or below	16	28.1	7	24.1	55	48.2
16-30	40	70.2	21	72.4	59	51.8
31-45	1	1.7	1	3.5	0	0
Total	57	100	29	100	114	100

Table 8 indicates that in all three districts, weavers start practising *pattu* between 16-30 years of age i.e. 70.2% in Jaisalmer, 72.4% in Jodhpur and 51.8% in Barmer. Majority of the weavers started practising weaving at a very young age and did not put emphasis to complete their primary education.

Weavers of Jodhpur (1.7%) and Barmer (3.5%), started weaving between 31-45 years of age and no weavers was found in Barmer to start practising *pattu* above 30 years of age. Majority of the weavers (48.2%) in Barmer started weaving *pattu* below 15 years and quit education after primary school. However, today weavers want to educate their children and simultaneously practice weaving for the sustainability of their ancestral tradition.

### Conclusion

From the present study it was concluded that the socio economic condition of the weavers in Jaisalmer and Jodhpur is better than the weavers of Barmer. However in all three districts weavers get low wages according to their work. Weavers of Jaisalmer and Jodhpur work under Urmul, Marushthali Bunkarvikassamiti, NGO that is working for the promotion of this craft and welfare of weavers whereas the weavers of Barmer work under middlemen. Middlemen give very low wages to the weavers which directly impact their economic conditions. Therefore, majority of the weavers in Barmer are living in *kaccha* houses whereas the maximum numbers of weavers in Jaisalmer are living in *semikaccha* houses followed by *pakka* houses. The weavers in all three districts prefer to live in joint family as they could financially depend on each other. It was found that weavers of Barmer were less educated and starting working quite early in age. During the field survey, the weavers mentioned that they want their children to complete their education and simultaneously follow their ancestral craft to continue their family tradition. From the present study it was concluded that non-governmental organisations has a huge impact on improving the socio-economic condition of weavers. By working in NGO the weavers also get to know about the market and various schemes which help them to improve their livelihood.

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