

BARRIERS OF WOMEN HANDLOOM WEAVERS TO ACHIEVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN TAMIL NADU

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Received: 05 May 2025

Accepted: 28 May 2025

Published: 31 May 2025

ABSTRACT

Purpose- The purpose of this study is to investigate the obstacles that women handloom weavers in Tamil Nadu experience in creating a work-life balance. It seeks to uncover economic, social, and health challenges that impact their dual duties at work and home. The study aims to better understand how working practices and family duties overlap. It also wants to look into the current support structures and policies for these women. Finally, the research seeks to make concrete suggestions for people to improve people's standard of life and employment. *Designs/methodology/approach:* The research takes a mixed-methods approach collecting data using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Structured interviews and questionnaires were used to collect primary data from women weavers across Tamil Nadu's districts. Secondary data was gathered from available literature and government records. The data was interpreted using analytical procedures such as weighted average ranking and Chi-squared tests. *Findings:* According to the report women handloom weavers confront numerous challenges, including poor earnings, long working hours, health difficulties, a lack of access to quality raw materials, insufficient finance and restricted marketing options. Social obstacles include delayed salaries, control by senior weavers and a lack of incentives intensify their struggle to reconcile work and domestic commitments.

KEYWORDS: *Women Handloom Weavers, Work-Life Balance, Challenges, Socio-economic Conditions, Occupational Stress, Rural Women Workforce*

INTRODUCTION

The handloom sector in Tamil Nadu is an important part of the state's economy and cultural legacy employing a large proportion of the rural population. Women make up a sizable portion of this employment frequently mixing weaving obligations with home duties. Despite their efforts these women face several challenges that prevent them from achieving a suitable work-life balance. Understanding these problems is critical for developing policies and actions to promote their well-being and productivity.

Women Handloom Weavers

Women handloom weavers are skilled artisans who engage in traditional weaving processes, particularly in rural areas such as Tamil Nadu. They play an important role in maintaining the handloom industry and conserving cultural heritage. Most of these women also bear the weight of domestic responsibilities. Their multiple jobs make their work environment highly challenging. This study focuses on their specific challenges and contributions.

Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is the ability to efficiently manage one's employment commitments while also prioritizing family and personal time. Because of long working hours and domestic responsibilities, women handloom weavers find it challenging to strike this balance. The lack of professional or familial support exacerbates the situation. Achieving balance is critical to both their physical and mental well-being. The study looks at how this equilibrium might be improved.

Barriers and Challenges

Women weavers encounter a variety of challenges, including poor earnings, limited access to financing, delayed payments, and health concerns. These obstacles keep them from doing well in the workplace and at home. They also face social restraints such as restricted authority and gender discrimination. Identifying these issues is critical to determining supportive treatments. The study focuses on these issues in depth.

Occupational Stress

Female handloom weavers frequently experience occupational stress as a result of repeated work, physical exertion, and economic uncertainty. Hours of labour on the loom cause back ache and exhaustion. Balancing weaving and domestic obligations might cause emotional tension. Chronic stress has an impact on their productivity and health. The study aims to evaluate and address this stress.

Scope of the Study

The aim of this research is to better understand the challenges that women handloom weavers experience in attaining a work-life balance in selected areas of Tamil Nadu. It investigates a variety of dimensions, including economic obstacles, occupational stress, family responsibilities, working circumstances and social limitations. The study focuses on the lived experiences of rural women weavers and examines how these barriers impair their physical, emotional and financial well-being. It is limited to handloom weaving communities where women generate primary or secondary income. The findings aim to advise policy makers, and local governments on developing targeted interventions for improving the quality of life and working circumstances of women in the handloom sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature provides a comprehensive understanding of previous studies and research findings related to the socio-economic conditions, challenges, and policy interventions in the handloom weaving sector.

Jago, L., et., al., (2015) By specialization, there were notable variations in burnout and work-life balance satisfaction rates. Between 2011 and 2014, probability-based specimens from employed US adults showed little change in burnout or work-life balance satisfaction, in contrast to what was happening in physicians. This led to a growing gap between physicians and the general US employed population in terms of burnout and work-life balance satisfaction.

Lee, D. J., et, al., (2018) Based on this paradigm, we examine a large portion of the data about the effects of work-life balance on outcomes that are related to work, nonwork, and stress. Next, we list a number of organizational and human factors that contribute to work-life balance and discuss how they affect it. Next, we outline a number of theoretical processes that connect total life happiness with work-life balance. Lastly, we talk about the consequences for policy and future research initiatives

Adnan Bataineh, K., et., al., (2019) The study hypotheses were investigated using multiple regression. The findings showed that employee performance is favorably and significantly impacted by work-life balance and happiness. However, employees' work happiness has little effect on performance. The findings have significant ramifications for Jordan's pharmaceutical industry. Responses in the form of behaviors that demonstrate what the employee has learnt or the type of training they have received can be characterized as employee performance to improve the validity of future research findings, it is necessary to draw attention to a number of limitations in this study.

Prasanth, V. S., et., al., (2018) This study is essentially for analyzing the frequency of work life amongst married working women. The objective is to present and talk about specific concerns. Married women encounter challenges in balancing career and family responsibilities. Working women's roles have evolved over time to meet changing economic and social needs. Working women face significant pressure to compete with their male counterparts in terms of career success. Promoting active involvement in one's personal life. Working women face rising workloads, resulting in less time for self-care. Advancements in technology, such as mobile phones and notepads, have led to increased personal and professional duties, causing stress. This includes the individual's physical, emotional, and social well-being.

Teh P et., al., (2020) Researchers and practitioners are becoming increasingly concerned about the effects of work-life balance arrangements on organisational success. This study conducted a meta-analysis on 202 data from 58 published studies to assess the association between work-life balance arrangements and organisational success. Six viewpoints were used to assess organizational performance: career motivation, employee attendance, employee recruiting, employee retention, organizational commitment, and productivity. The findings revealed a positive association between work-life balance arrangements and organizational success. The findings include theoretical recommendations on the efficiency of the work-life balance design with regard of the six aspects of organizational performance.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women handloom weavers in Tamil Nadu confront tremendous hurdles in balancing work and family commitments. Despite their contribution to the economic and cultural legacy they face low compensation, hard hours and sporadic payments. Limited access to capital, raw resources and markets reduces their production. Strenuous physical labour is frequently associated with occupational stress and health problems. Social impediments like gender discrimination and a lack of autonomy exacerbate their burden. Many people lack assistance from their families and workplaces. These issues have a negative influence on their physical, emotional and financial well-being. Current policies and support mechanisms are inadequate. There is an urgent need to identify and address these impediments. This study seeks to uncover practical methods to improve their quality of life.

Objective

To study the barriers of women handloom weavers to achieve work-life balance

Hypothesis

- $H_{01(a)}$: There is no significant difference between Emotional Status at Work Spot and Working Conditions of women weavers.
- $H_{01(b)}$: There is no significant difference between the Working Hours of Weavers and the Working Conditions of Women Weavers

Methodology

The research was conducted by collecting primary data from 200 women weavers through a structured interview schedule. The methodology adopted for this study is outlined below

Study Area and Population

The study examined the barriers of women handloom weavers to achieve work life balance. The target population consisted of women weavers families actively engaged in the management.

Data Collection Tools

- **Primary Data:** A structured interview schedule was used to gather information on demographic details, economic status, working conditions, challenges and awareness of government schemes.
- **Secondary Data:** Policy documents, reports, and previous studies on handloom weaving and welfare schemes were reviewed to complement the primary data

Hypothesis

- $H_{01(a)}$ There is no significant difference between working hours and working conditions of weavers
- $H_{01(b)}$ There is no significant difference between spend at work spot and working conditions of weavers.

The present analysis has been carried out on study objective oriented variables such working hours, spot, working condition and so on

Table 1: Working Hours of Weavers

Hours of Working	No. of Weavers	Percentage
6-8	95	47.5
8-10	85	42.5
10-12	20	10
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 1 presents the distribution of working hours among the 200 employers. The majority of respondents 95 employers (47.5 per cent) work between 6–8 hours per day. This is followed by 85 employers (42.5 per cent) who work between 8–10 hours. A smaller group 20 employers (10 per cent) report working between 10–12 hours daily. This indicates that most employers work within the 6–10-hours range with only a minority working beyond 10 hours per day. The data suggests a relatively moderate working hour trend among the majority with extended hours being less common.

Table 2: Emotional Status at Work Spot

Particulars	No. of Weavers	Percentage
Stressful	125	62.5
Depressed	55	27.5
Happy	20	10
Total	200	100

(Source: Primary data)

The Table 2 shows the emotional state of 200 respondents. A majority of 125 respondents (62.5%) reported feeling stressed indicating that stress is the most common emotional experience among them. Meanwhile, 55 respondents (27.5%) feel depressed which is a significant portion but less than those feeling stressed. Only a small minority of 20 respondents (10%) reported feeling happy. This suggests that the overall emotional well-being of the group is low with most experiencing negative feelings such as stress and depression. The findings highlight the need for interventions to improve mental health and reduce stress among the respondents.

Table 3: Working Conditions of Women Weavers

S. No	Factors	Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Moderately Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Total
1	Income from women weavers.	25	40	30	70	35	200
		12	20	15	35	18	100
2	Satisfaction with working conditions	22	33	45	55	45	200
		11	16	23	27	23	100
3	Access to women weavers support work	20	32	70	50	28	200
		10	16	35	25	14	100
4	Perceived effectiveness and challenges of work	28	45	65	50	12	200
		14	22	33	25	6	100
5	Quality of production to the women weavers	15	35	75	50	25	200
		8	17	45	75	15	100
6	Availability of opportunities to work	25	50	45	75	15	200
		12	25	23	38	7	100

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 3 present the effectiveness of various employment related factors affecting women handloom weavers. Income is viewed as effective by 35% and very effective by 17.5%, though 32.5% find it less satisfactory. Satisfaction with working conditions is split with 50% rating it effective or very effective while 27.5% express dissatisfaction. Access to employer support is moderately effective for 35% of respondents but only 14% find it very effective highlighting gaps in consistent assistance. The effectiveness and challenges of work are rated moderately effective by 32.5%, though 36.5% find them lacking. Quality of production is mostly positive, with 37.5% rating it moderately effective and 25% effective. Only 7.5% consider it not effective. Availability of work opportunities is seen as effective by 37.5%, yet 37.5% also rate it moderate or below. These findings suggest a mixed experience where some employment aspects are appreciated while others need improvement. Key issues include inconsistent income, limited employer support and inadequate working conditions. Although many weavers maintain good quality production, they still face challenges balancing work and home life. Opportunities exist but accessibility and consistency remain concerns. Overall, the results indicate partial satisfaction and the need for targeted support.

Table 4: ANOVA Test of Emotional Status at Work Spot and Working Conditions of Women Weavers

Variables	Emotional Status	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
Income from women weavers.	Stressful	125	1.28	0.23	.658	0.75
	Depressed	55	1.52	0.53		
	Happy	20	2.25	0.23		
	Total	200	3.56	1.52		
Satisfaction with working conditions	Stressful	125	1.63	0.56	.775	0.70
	Depressed	55	1.56	0.46		
	Happy	20	1.27	0.26		
	Total	200	2.69	0.13		
Access to women weavers support work	Stressful	125	1.36	0.36	.449	0.55
	Depressed	55	1.05	0.89		
	Happy	20	1.36	1.00		
	Total	200	2.24	1.03		
Perceived effectiveness and challenges of work	Stressful	125	1.36	1.06	.558	0.154
	Depressed	55	2.66	1.05		
	Happy	20	2.79	1.22		
	Total	200	1.05	0.50		
Quality of production to the women weavers	Stressful	125	1.19	0.49	.780	0.154
	Depressed	55	1.96	1.63		
	Happy	20	2.73	1.23		
	Total	200	2.74	1.11		
Availability of opportunities to work	Stressful	125	2.89	0.19	.698	0.147
	Depressed	55	1.26	0.13		
	Happy	20	1.23	0.23		
	Total	200	2.24	0.11		

Based on Primary Data * Sig.@5%

The calculated data F values are (.0.658, 0.775, 0.449, 0.558, 0.780, 0.780 0.698) Therefore, the stated null hypothesis is accepted. However, this clearly shows Income from women weavers, Satisfaction with working conditions, Access to women weavers support work, Perceived effectiveness and challenges of work, Quality of production to the women weavers, Availability of opportunities to work other spend at work spot and Working Conditions of women weavers.

Table 5: ANOVA Test of Working Hours of Weavers and Working Conditions of Women Weavers

Variables	Working Hours	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
Income from women weavers.	6-8	95	2.28	0.23	.978	0.175
	8-10	85	1.52	0.53		
	10-12	20	1.25	0.23		
	Total	200	1.56	1.52		
Satisfaction with working conditions	6-8	95	1.83	0.56	.800	0.80
	8-10	85	1.76	0.46		
	10-12	20	1.77	0.26		
	Total	200	1.99	0.13		
Access to women weavers support work	6-8	95	1.66	0.36	.871	0.155
	8-10	85	1.55	0.89		
	10-12	20	1.76	1.00		
	Total	200	1.44	1.03		
Perceived effectiveness and challenges of work	6-8	95	1.76	1.06	.458	0.104
	8-10	85	2.66	1.25		
	10-12	20	2.79	1.32		
	Total	200	1.15	0.70		
Quality of production to the women weavers	6-8	95	1.79	0.09	.699	0.74
	8-10	85	1.46	1.73		
	10-12	20	1.93	1.43		
	Total	200	3.64	1.11		
Availability of opportunities to work	6-8	95	1.29	0.17	.255	0.147
	8-10	85	1.16	0.14		
	10-12	20	1.43	0.22		
	Total	200	1.14	0.11		

Based on Primary Data * Sig.@5%

The calculated data F values are (.0978, 0.800, 0.871, 0.871, 0.458, 0.699, 0.255) Therefore, the stated null hypothesis is accepted. However, this clearly shows Income from women weavers, Satisfaction with working conditions, Access to women weavers support work, Perceived effectiveness and challenges of work, Quality of production to the women weavers, Availability of opportunities to work other Working Hours of Weavers and Working Conditions of women weavers.

FINDINGS

- Most women handloom weavers work between 6–10 hours daily indicating a moderate work duration while only a small percentage work beyond 10 hours.
- Income remains a key concern with only 17.5% finding it very effective and 32.5% expressing dissatisfaction reflecting financial instability among weavers.
- Access to employer support is inconsistent, with only 14% rating it as very effective, highlighting a gap in reliable assistance systems.
- The calculated data F values are (.0978, 0.800, 0.871, 0.871, 0.458, 0.699, 0.255) Therefore, the stated null hypothesis is accepted. However, this clearly shows Income from women weavers, Satisfaction with working conditions, Access to women weavers support work, Perceived effectiveness and challenges of work, Quality of production to the women weavers, Availability of opportunities to work other Working Hours of Weavers and Working Conditions of women weavers.

- The calculated data F values are .(0.658, 0.775, 0.449, 0.558, 0.780, 0.780 0.698) Therefore, the stated null hypothesis is accepted. However, this clearly shows Income from women weavers, Satisfaction with working conditions, Access to women weavers support work, Perceived effectiveness and challenges of work, Quality of production to the women weavers, Availability of opportunities to work other Spend At Work Spot and Working Conditions of women weavers.

SUGGESTIONS

- In the organization, stress is experienced by women but in different circumstances. The management needs to consider the women weavers circumstances and avoid assigning them extra work.
- It is suggested that the organization should provide the junior weavers with more training. This training helps the weavers to cope with their counterparts.
- The organisation can plan the shift by taking into consideration marital status, as female and married weavers have to handle their domestic duties as well.
- Researchers claim that there is stress at the workplace in each of the weavers and the management should give them the predictors of barriers to recover from stress.

CONCLUSION

The study focuses on the numerous obstacles that women handloom weavers in Tamil Nadu encounter as they try to reconcile job and family commitments. While most weavers work moderate hours, income and working conditions are uneven and frequently poor. Although their work is often of high quality a lack of company assistance and inconsistent work possibilities jeopardizes their overall well-being and job happiness. The findings show a mixed experience some work components are good, while others need immediate improvement. To increase women's quality of life and productivity in the handloom sector targeted interventions such as higher salaries better working conditions, and stronger support networks are clearly required.

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