

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WEAVERS AND SPATIO-TEMPORAL ANALYSIS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN TANGAIL DISTRICT, BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The spatio-temporal analysis of handloom industry in Tangail district, Bangladesh was conducted during January to June 2018. A total of 126 weavers were selected randomly and interviewed. The primary data was collected from 9 villages of Tangail Sadar, Kalihati and Delduar upazila and the secondary data from journals, articles, books, official documents, thesis papers, daily newspapers etc. The study revealed that monthly per capita income of weavers was about (8000-14000) tk. though they had to perform a hard work (8-15 hours per day). Subsequently they were unable to save from their earned money. An interesting observation was remarked in that location that the economic crises were not impacted the expansion of handloom industry rather increasing. Entrepreneur's interest and good marketing system were the main causes for that business. Moreover, Spatio-Temporal factor is one of the considerable components for establishing the handloom in Tangail. The study exposed that the income of the waivers was unremarkable. And they hardly can make savings. But they could not switch to other profession because they were not experienced in other work. It was also affirmed that the handloom industry is running with old technology, poor marketing, poor advertising, limited showroom, import based raw materials, inadequate capitals, insufficient government facilities, low wages of weavers. So, it is perquisite to make effective plan to get back the glorious position of our handloom as well as to help economic development of our country.

Key words: Handloom, weaver, spatio-temporal.

Introduction

Handloom industry in Tangail has a glorious history. The "Tangail Sharee" of Bangladesh has a great popularity and reputation in home and abroad. This traditional Sharee is only produced in Tangail district and has been named after the name of the district. Each year, this industry produces significant amount of Sharee and supplies all over the world. Each week Bangladeshi government exports around 50,000 pieces Sharee to our neighboring country India (Banarjee *et al.*, 2014). The weavers sell the Sharee in the nearest "hut" of Bazitpur and Korotia twice in a week. The consumers of this "hut" are mainly retailers who buy products from the weavers and suppliers. Although the Tangail Sharee has a huge demand in India, Europe, America, Japan and Middle East, the industry has no longer its old heritage due to various factors. Firstly, the price rate of raw materials and machines of handloom industries has recently increased significantly. Secondly, due to the availability and low price of raw materials, governments interfere; India has already spread her business all over the world. Thirdly, the Sharee industry of Tangail is controlled by retailers rather than the small weavers. Communal violence and lack of security in business compelled a lot of hindu weavers to migrate in India since independence. Recent political unrest has also made huge loss of the business. Finally, lack of loan support and other supports from the government paved the way to expand the industry (Banarjee *et al.*, 2014). The handloom industry in Tangail is a cottage industry and the looms are mostly established in households. 72% of the total installed looms have a unit size of five looms. Units with six to ten looms are 11% and units with eleven to twenty looms are 6% of the total. Units with 21 looms occupy 11% of the total and are considered as small factories. However, a study done by the Ministry of Industries in 1982, shows that small factories have 20% of handlooms. In the year 1992, there were over 1 lakh handlooms and 150000 weavers in Tangail Sadar, Kalihati, Nagarpur and Basail upazilas (The daily

star, 2008). Handloom industry of Tangail district can be a milestone of economic development. There was no adequate research on this emerging industry. Fruitful studies about handloom industry can be a stepping stone for spreading and increasing this sector. So, more researches should be carried out regarding this sector. This study helps to assess the current status of the handloom industry and it also focuses on the drawbacks of this sector. The objectives of the study are: i) to depict the present socio-economic status of the weavers and ii) to sort out the spatio-temporal factors of handloom industry.

Materials and Methods

Study Area: Tangail district is situated in central region of Bangladesh. It is a part of the Dhaka division. The population of Tangail zilla is about 3508556 and its surface area is 3,375 km². The main town of Tangail District is the district town Tangail. In Tangail district, handloom industries are traditionally developed in different region. The study was conducted in three regions of Tangail district. These regions cover 8 villages. Bazitpur in Tangail Sadar; Chondi, Puraton Pathrail, Nolshodha, Bistopur, Abadpur in Delduar upazila; and Tenguria, Balla, Tezpur in Kalihati upazila under Tangail district (Fig. 1).

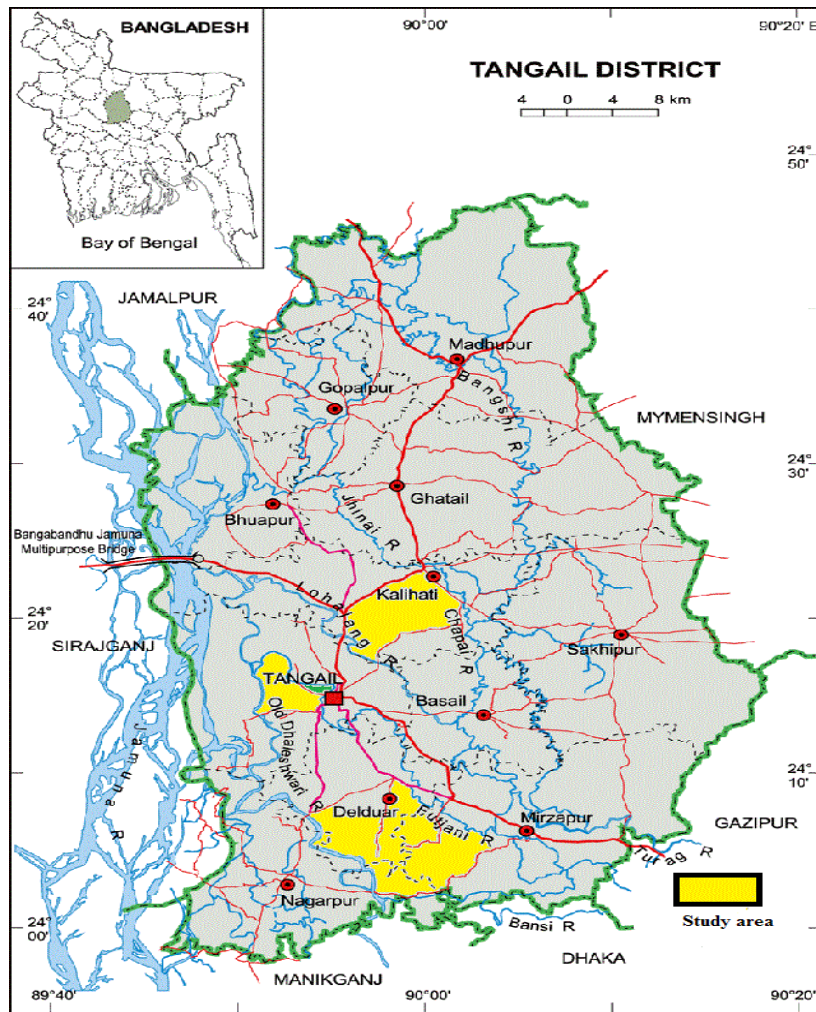


Fig. 1. Map of the study area (Banglapedia, 2011)

Data Collection: Both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection were used for this study. The research was carried out on the basis of primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected by direct interview, using a structured and semi structured questionnaire. Among the weavers, a total of 126 respondents were selected from Tangail Sadar upazila, Delduar upazila and Kalihati upazila in Tangail District. The sample size was calculated by the following equation (Kothari, 1990) as follows (i) the desired precision/error, (e) is 10%, (ii) the desired confidence level, (z) is 90%, (iii) determined the z value associated with the confidence level, (iv) the value of Z at 90% confidence level is 1.29, (v) In the absence of the target population (p) I assume it to be 50% i.e. $p=.50$ and the number of peoples actively engaged in Tangail Sadar, $N=4116$, Delduar upazila, $N=24402$ and Kalihati upazila, $N=4551$.

On the bases of the above, sample size $(n) = z^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N / e^2 (N-1) + z^2 \cdot p \cdot q$ (Kothari, 1990). The sample size in Tangail Sadar upazila = 42, Delduar upazila = 42 and Kalihati upazila

On the other hand, three weavers of three upazila were interviewed as case in detail in order to understand the in-depth viewpoints of respondents.

The Secondary data were mainly collected from Bangladesh handloom census 1991, 2001 from BHB. Upazila base census data 2011 from BBS, Various published and unpublished reports, books, journals, articles, research paper, other relevant website on this topics, various photograph had been collected from field survey. Microsoft office Excel 2007, Microsoft Office Word was used for analyzing data. For visualization and understanding the analyzed data have been integrated and presented with the Graphs, Tables, Pie-Chart and Bar-Chart.

Results and Discussion

Demographic and socio-economic status of the respondents: The study revealed that majority of the weavers (58.73%) belonged to the middle age group whereas (32.53%) were younger group and rest of them was from old people. Out of 126 respondents (82.54%) were married while (17.46%) were unmarried. More than half (57.93%) of the weavers belong to joint family system and (41.26%) nuclear family system. The result depicted that nearly half of the weaver (42.06%) had small family with 1-4 family members, (19.84%) weavers had medium family with 5-6 family members. 38.09% of the respondents belonged to large family with more than 6. According to the study, the number of large families was relatively high in Tangail Sadar upazila. From the field survey, it was clear that the weavers' literacy rate of Tangail Sadar upazila was very poor in comparison with other study areas. The highest numbers (47.61%) of illiterate weavers live in this upazila. Among the weavers of three upazilas the educational status of the weavers of Delduar was comparatively good (Fig. 2). House type of the weavers was dominated by katcha structure (46.82%) and semi pucca were (42.06%). The main income source of the respondents was handloom. Income of Kalihati upazila's weavers was relatively high compare to the other study areas. 9.52% respondents of Kalihati earned more than 10000+ taka per month while 7.14% weavers of Delduar and 7.14% weavers of Tangail Sadar earned that amount (Fig. 3). 76.20% respondents of both Kalihati and Delduar upazilas spent money 4000-7000 for their family and 30.95% of the respondents of Tangail Sadar spent money 8000-10000. Only 7.14% weavers of Tangail Sadar upazila spent highest amount of money (Fig. 4). The monthly income of handloom weavers was not enough for their daily livelihoods. As a result, in spite of illness most of them could not make monthly savings. From the field survey it was observed that (44.44%) of the weavers had no monthly savings. Rest of the weavers saved a portion of income for future. (42.06%) of the respondents could save up to 500 taka per month. Only (13.49%) respondents had monthly saving of 10000 tk. From the field data, it was revealed that more than half (51.59%) of the respondents had inherited weaving skill from their forefathers and thus continued the profession. The number of these congenial weavers was comparatively more in Delduar and Bazitpur upazila. About (39.68%) of the respondents were selected this profession due to no other professional option for them. Rest of weavers selected this profession because of their personal choice (Table 1). In spite of having poverty (21.43%) of the respondents were satisfied with their current profession. They had taken it as their fate. 26.98% weavers were totally unsatisfied with this profession. On the other hand, (80.95%) respondents did not want to

engage their next generation in weaving profession. Majority of the respondents (34.12%) had 21-30 years of work experience on different areas of handloom production. About (13.49%) weavers had experience of 1-10 years. Only (8.37%) respondents had long time more than 40 years of work experience. It was known from the field observation that Majority (57.93%) of the respondents worked 7-10 hours, (27.78%) weavers worked up to 8 hours and rest of them worked more than 14 hours daily.

Table 1. Reasons of choosing handloom profession (Field survey, 2018)

Reasons	Percentage (%)
No scope of other professions	39.68%
Family tradition	51.59%
Personal Choice	8.73%
Total	100%

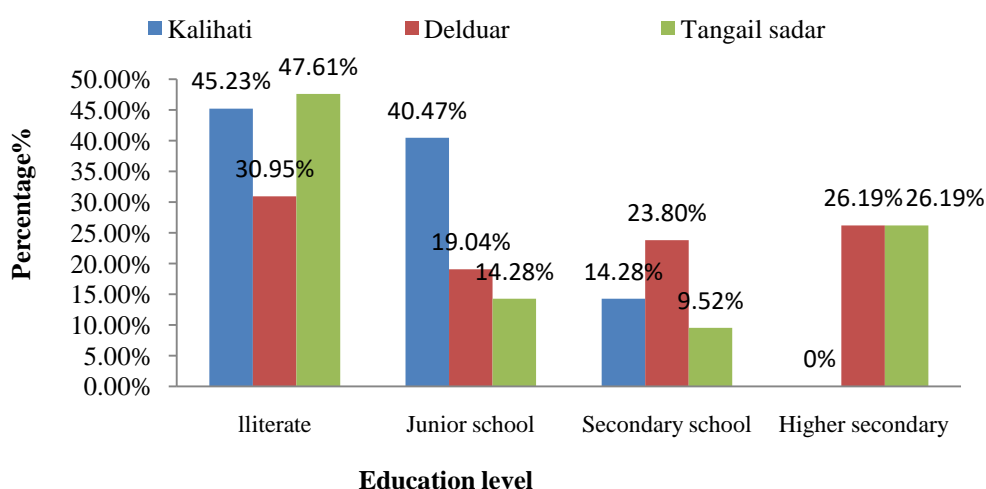


Fig. 2. Educational status of weavers

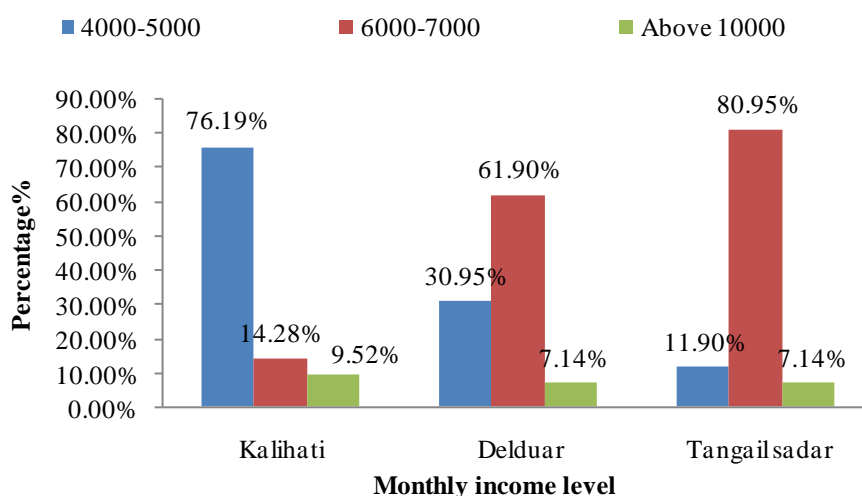


Fig. 3. Monthly income of weavers in the study area

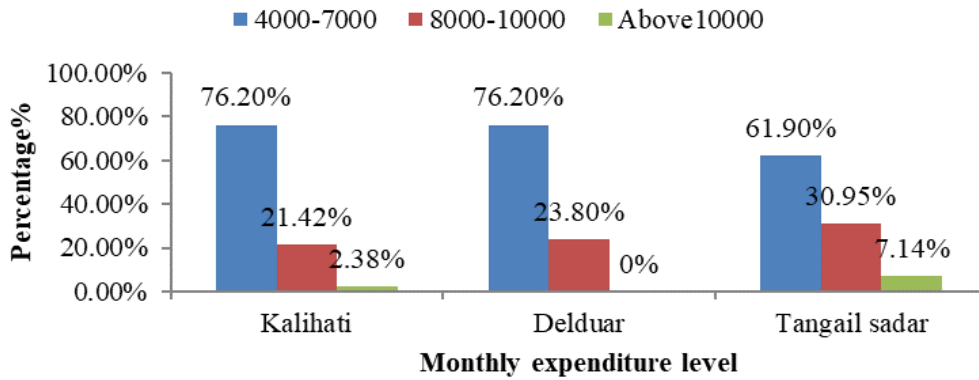


Fig. 4. Monthly expenditures of weavers

Spatio-temporal factors and characteristics: According to history, in Tangail districts original weavers were from Basak communities. From the field survey it was observed that entrepreneur’s interest (37.30%) was the main cause to the establishment of handloom industry. The weather was in their favor (25.4%), so they introduce themselves whole heartedly into weaving. Moreover, Bazitpur hut in Tangail Sadar upazila was very famous and hundred years old (Table 2). The Fig 5. represents the periods of establishment of the handloom industry. It had been revealed that most of the industrial unit (29.40%) established in the last two decades. Only (16.70%) industries were established within 1921-40 Census years in study area. Maximum old factories were located in Tangail Sadar upazila.

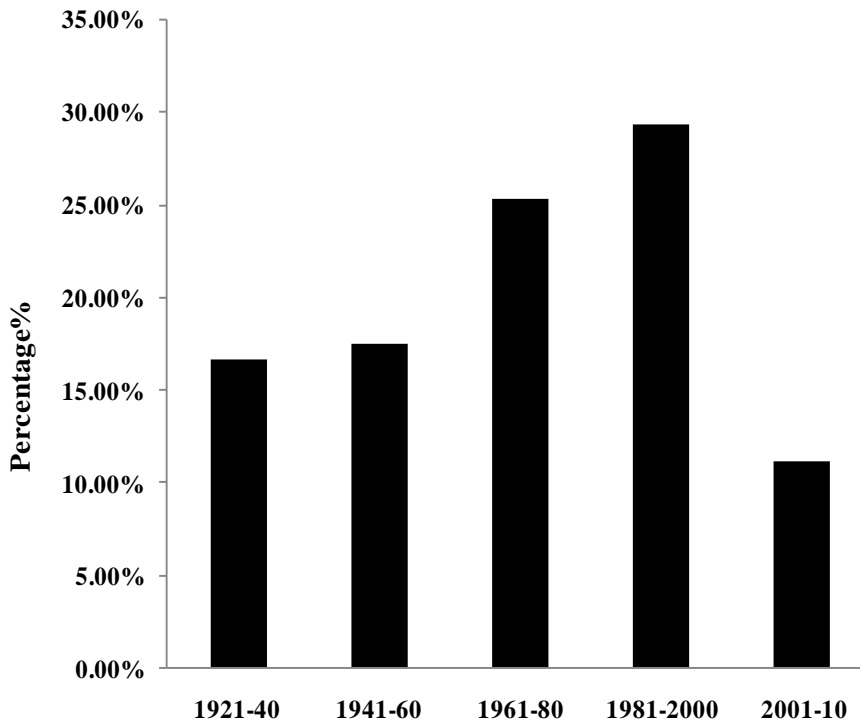


Fig. 5. Periods of establishment of the handloom industry in the study area

Table 2. Causes of the establishment of handloom industry in Tangail district (Field survey, 2018)

Reasons	Percentage (%)
Favorable weather	25.4%
Entrepreneur's interest	37.3%
Availability of raw materials	5.56%
Good marketing system	31.74%
Total	100%

According to handloom industry census, 2003 the number of hand looms increased although the number of industrial units was decreased in comparison with 1991 census. Because maximum industrial owners were close their industry for migration or others purposes. In 2011 the number of industrial unit and the number of looms both were decreased. According to the field survey (37.30%) of the handloom industry was very small in size. Only (8.37%) industries were developed on an area of more than 10 decimals (Table 3). From the field data it was known that most (73.01%) of the industries were owned by single owner. Maximum jointly owned industries in Delduar upazila which were about (33.33%) and maximum single owned industry in Tangail Sadar upazila which were (83.33%).

Table 3. Area of surveyed industry (Field survey, 2018)

Land size in decimal	Percentage%
Up to 3	37.30
4-6	50
7-9	3.96
10+	8.37
Total	100%

Types of yarn used and produced commodity: From the field survey it was observed that silk and nylon thread were used (41.26%) of the industrial units for weaving. Only cotton thread was used for weaving sharee in (16.67%) industry. Approximately (21.42%) weaver used cotton and silk and (20.63%) weaver used cotton and nylon for weaving sharees. From the field observation, it was found that only sharee was major commodity in most of the industrial units. Different item such as shawl, Panjabi, three pieces were made there.

Marketing of produced commodities: Maximum entrepreneurs had no their own show room. Their produced commodities were mainly sold in local market. It was revealed from the present study that maximum (29.36%) weavers sold their product in Bazitpur hut as it was the oldest wholesale market of handloom products in Tangail Sadar upazila (26.60%) sold their products in Korotia hut and (26.19%) to wholesaler directly. Only (19.84%) weavers sold their product in Arong and other fashion houses.

Problems of working environment: According to the field survey, (40.00%) respondent's environment of their working place was congested. Approximately (21.81%) weavers worked in insufficient light while 20.00% worked in unhygienic environment.

Table 4. Problems of working environment (Field survey, 2017)

Problems	Percentage%
Congested place	40
Aeration problem	18.18
Shortage of light	21.81
Unhygienic environment	20
Total	100%

Problems of weavers in handloom industry: Handloom industry is an ancient cottage industry of Bangladesh. This industry has a bright future. But now this industry is affected by different problems.

Risk to the development of handloom industry: There were different types of risks, which prohibit the development of handloom industry. It was observed that maximum number (26.19%) weavers said low wages was the risk to develop handloom industry, (23.91%) weavers said lack of publicity was another risk. Other risks like low prices of the products, high cost of imported thread and lack of the proper marketing system were prevailing in the handloom industry in the study area.

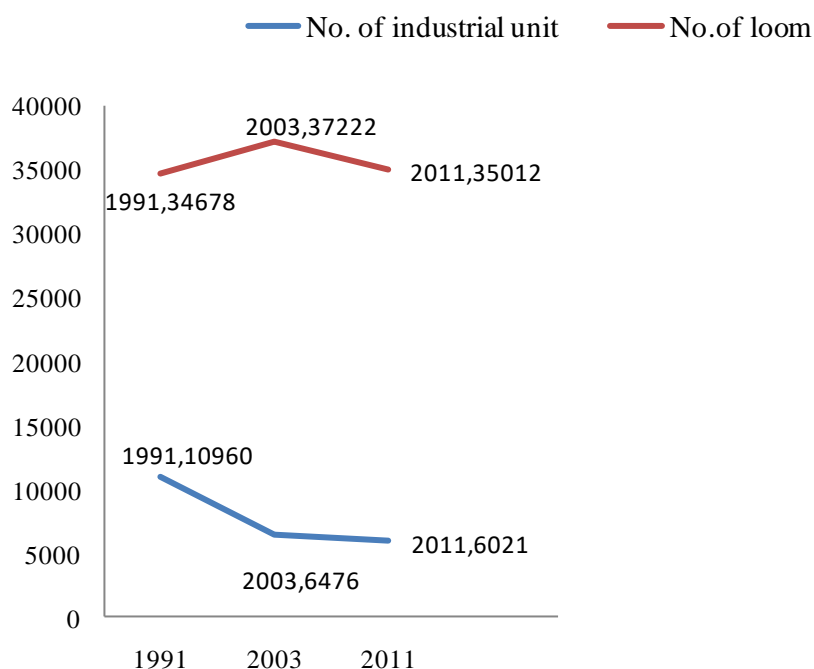


Fig. 6. The changing pattern of handloom industry by year

Analysis of the Case Study: From the case study, it was found that the range of their income was about (6000-14000). Among three respondents, one saved money after their expenditure. They worked 7-12 hours daily. They did not satisfy their work but they have no way because they were not experienced in other work. According to the interview, they did not get any facility from government and they want government's support to expand their factory.

Conclusion

The Handloom industry is the ancient, the biggest and the most important cottage industry of Bangladesh. About more than 1.5 million people are directly and indirectly involved for their livelihood. But this sector is now facing some difficulties. So, proper effort can be taken jointly. (Bangladesh government, BHB, and BISCIC) for recognizing the handloom industry as one of the most marvelous industries in near future.

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