

A Study on Consumer Awareness about Handloom Products with Special Reference to Erode District.

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Abstract

Handloom Industry is the integral part of textile industry in our country. This industry is placed in the second position in terms of provision of livelihood and comes next to agriculture. It is the largest cottage industries which produce Cotton, Silk, Jute and Khadi in large quantities. The demand and popularity of Indian handloom has been growing not only in our country, but also around the world. Handloom fabric has a unique character which other mill made or powerloom fabric doesn't have. The distinctiveness of handloom products compared with other mill made cloths is not known to the customer. Hence the present study is an attempt to understand the customer awareness about handloom products. The present study is descriptive in nature. The data required for the present study is collected mainly from primary sources. Stratified Random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 600 customers from five different taluks in Erode District, Tamil Nadu.

Keywords: Handloom, customer, awareness, handloom mark

INTRODUCTION

Consumers are individuals who buy products for household consumption or for themselves. Consumer awareness refers to a buyer's knowledge of a particular product or services which he/she is going to consume. The consumer may or may not be conscious about the originality and quality of the products which he is going to consume. In the present study on customer awareness about handloom products an effort has been made by the researcher to understand how far consumers are aware about the handloom products in the existence of other mill made cloths and powerloom cloths. Though the handloom products are available in many places whether the consumers can able to buy the genuine handloom cloths is a query .Hence the present study is to understand the consumer awareness about the handloom products.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the level of consumer awareness about different types of handloom products.
2. To understand the level of consumer awareness about rebates offered for handloom products.
3. To identify the most powerful source of information which influence the consumers to buy handloom products.
4. To identify the important occasion that induces customers to buy Handloomk Products.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Malmaraugan (2008) in his study analyzed how word of mouth has control in making purchase decisions of the product saree. He has taken 128 sample size from various classes of parties and collected the data through Questionnaire and analyzed the result through chi-square method. It is stated that word of mouth is the most influential power as compared to magazine, banner, TV, newspaper. It is two times efficient as radio advertising, four times as efficient as personal selling, and seven times as efficient as newspapers and magazines.

Vaddi and Balakrishnaiah (2009) in their study aimed to analyze the consumer awareness and consumer behaviour towards khadi and Handloom products as one of their objectives. It was found from the study that in Andhra Pradesh 65 % of consumers were aware about Khadi and Handloom fabrics .Irrespective of the religion, communication and education levels most of the exhibition, melas and rebate seasons were popularly utilized by all classes of consumers who get attracted by publicity and advertisements, interestd by new designs and bright colors.

Agarwal and Luniya (2009) in their study made an attempt to identify the buying behaviour of women consumer regarding hand woven kota doria saris. The study was conducted with 65 women respondent of age group 30 to 45 years, having family income not less than Rs. 15000 per month. It was found in the study that consumers are very much aware about the originality of hand woven doria pattern and the knowledge of Geographical Indications patent is very less. Floral mode of design, all over woven pattern, multicolor combination, and hand embroidery was most preferred. Most preferred buying venues were shops .Kota doria

and Banarasi saris are equally preferred among hand woven saris.

Jeyakodi (2009) studied the working of rebate scheme schemes in handloom cooperatives in Tamilnadu. It is stated in the study that the rebate on sales of handloom products falls in the class of subsidies. The handloom goods are costlier than the mill made cloth and this is for the reason handloom Industry's productivity is low and wage rate is high. It is also said in the study that due to stiff competition the efficiency of the handloom weavers societies are coming down in turn it led the planners to think about the evaluation of performance of such cooperatives in the best interest of the weaver members. This is the reason the government has been supporting this industry through assistance called rebate subsidy.

METHODOLOGY:

The present study has been conducted in Erode District which is one of the most important handloom center in Tamilnadu. The present study is descriptive in nature and is mainly based on primary data. Structured questionnaire method was used as a main tool for collecting the primary data. The questionnaire was designed in a methodical way of covering adequate information in all facets of the study. The data pertaining to demographic profile of the consumers, level of awareness of the handloom products, source of information of handloom products, awareness about rebates and handloom mark are collected through structured questionnaire. The required secondary data for the study was collected from books, magazines, journals, newspapers and websites. For the present study Stratified Random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 600 customers from 5 different taluks in Erode District

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION **SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

TABLE NO.1 AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

S. No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Upto 20 years	53	8.8
2.	21-30 years	175	29.2
3.	31-40 years	92	15.3
4.	Above 40 years	280	46.7

The above table indicates that majority of the respondents falls under the age group above 40 years (46.7 %) followed by 21-30 years (29.2%)

TABLE NO.2 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

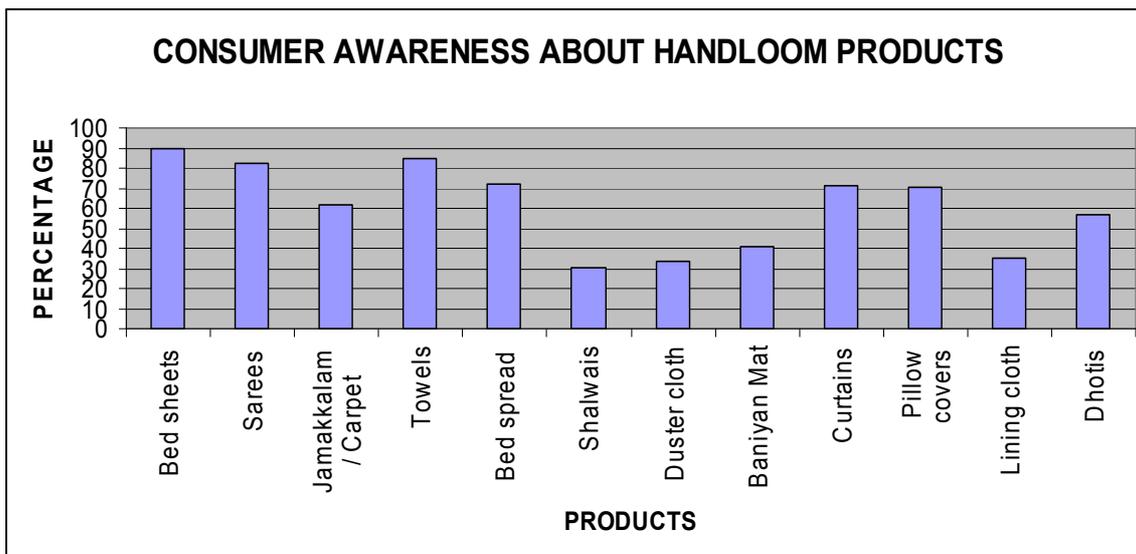
S. No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	328	54.7
2.	Female	272	45.3

The above table indicates that majority of the respondents are male.

TABLE NO.3 AWARENESS ABOUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

S. No.	Products	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Bed sheets	540	90.0
2.	Sarees	497	82.8
3.	Jamakkalam / Carpet	368	61.3
4.	Towels	507	84.5
5.	Bed spread	430	71.7
6.	Shalwais	184	30.7
7.	Duster cloth	200	33.3
8.	Baniyan Mat	246	41.0
9.	Curtains	426	71.0
10.	Pillow covers	424	70.7
11.	Lining cloth	211	35.2
12.	Dhotis	341	56.8

CHART.1

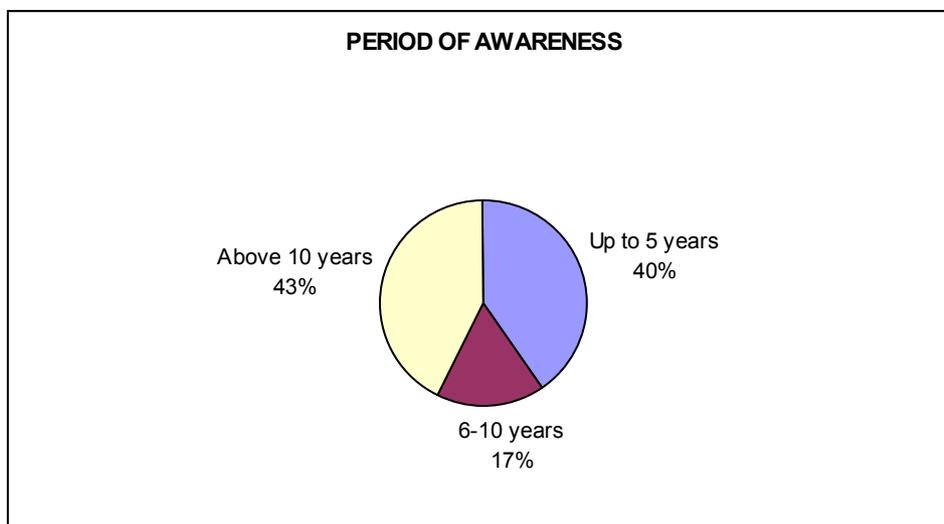


From the above analysis it can be inferred that majority of the respondents are aware about bed sheets (90 %) followed by towels (84.5%), sarees (82.8%) and bed spread (71.7 %).The respondents are not that much aware about shalwais Which is one of the integral product item in Handloom product mix.

TABLE NO.4 PERIOD OF AWARENESS ABOUT HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

S. No.	Period	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Up to 5 years	242	40.3
2.	6-10 years	100	16.7
3.	Above 10 years	258	43.0
	Total	600	100.0

CHART .2

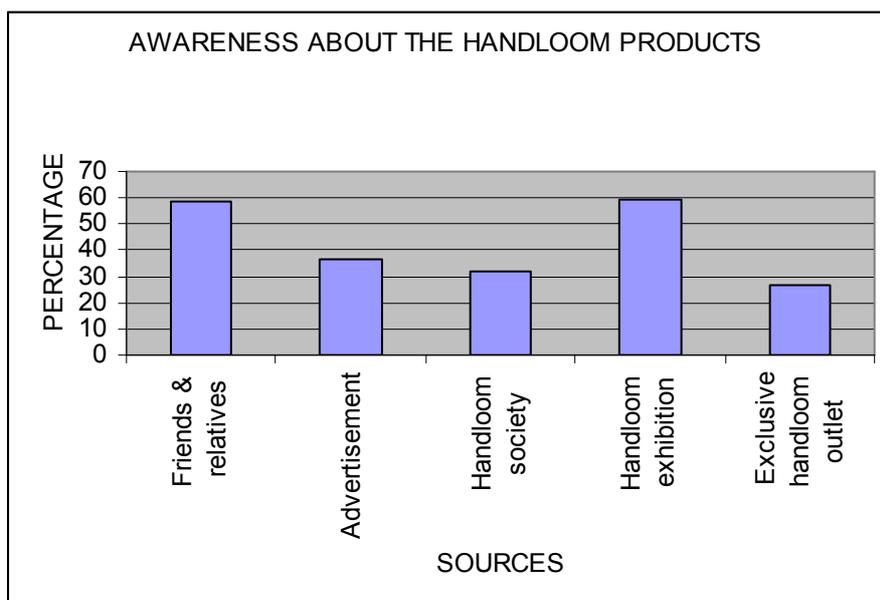


From the above analysis it can be inferred that majority of the respondents are aware about the handloom products for more than 10 years (43 %) followed by up to 5 years (40.3%) and between 6-10 years (16.7)

TABLE NO.5 SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

S.No.	Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Friends & relatives	352	58.7
2.	Advertisement	219	36.5
3.	Handloom society	194	32.3
4.	Handloom exhibition	356	59.3
5.	Exclusive handloom outlet	161	26.8

CHART.NO.3



From the above analysis it can be inferred that handloom exhibition is the main source of awareness for Handloom Products (59.3 %) followed by friends and relatives (58.7 %).

TABLE.6 DISTINGUISHING HANDLOOM MATERIALS FROM OTHER MATERIALS

S.No.	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	440	73.3
2.	No	160	26.7
	Total	600	100.0

From the above analysis it can be inferred that majority of the respondents can able to distinguish Handloom material from other material.

TABLE NO.7 AVAILABILITY OF HANDLOOM PRODUCTS WITH 'REBATE' IN THE MARKET

S.No.	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	507	84.5
2.	No	93	15.5
	Total	600	100.0

From the above analysis it can be inferred that majority of the respondents have strongly agreed for availability of Handloom products with Rebate in the market.

TABLE NO.8 AWARENESS ABOUT HANDLOOM MARK WHICH INDICATES THE QUALITY OF THE HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

S.No.	Mark	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	No	161	26.8
2.	Yes	439	73.2
	Total	600	100.0

From the above analysis it can be inferred that majority of the respondents are aware about Handloom mark a logo to identify genuine handloom goods

TABLE NO.9 AVAILABILITY OF REBATE SYSTEM

S.No.	Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Handloom society	206	40.6
2.	Handloom exhibition	306	60.4
3.	Exclusive handloom outlet	164	32.3
4.	Others	33	6.5

From the above analysis it can be inferred that rebate system is widely available in Handloom Exhibition (60.4%) followed by Handloom Society(40.6 %)

TABLE NO.10 OCCASION INDUCED TO PURCHASE THE HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

S. No.	Reasons	Total Score	Mean Score	Rank
1	During Festival	32174	53.6	II
2	Special rebate and offer	31379	52.3	III
3	When need arises	34535	57.6	I
4	During handloom Expo	28154	46.9	IV
5	When salesman approach	24348	40.6	V

It is found from the above table that need is the most important occasion which encourage the customers to buy Handloom products and the same was ranked in the first position with the total score of (34535) points, festival is ranked in the second position with the total score of (32174) points, Special rebate and offer is ranked in the third position with the total score of (31379) points, handloom Expo is ranked in the fourth position with the total score of (28154) points and salesman's approach is ranked in the fifth position with the total score of (24348) points.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. The study reveals that very limited customers are aware about shalwai as a product item in handloom product mix. Hence sufficient Point of Sale display has to be made for Shalwais to project it as a product offered by Handloom Weavers Cooperative Societies.
2. Though handloom industry is mainly in the Co-operative Sector as more than 50% of the handloom weavers have been brought under the co-operative fold Handloom societies are not acting as a preferred source of information in creating awareness about handloom products. Hence Handloom weavers cooperative Societies should take initiative in creating awareness about handloom products.
3. Though it is a well known information that all the handloom products are sold with cash rebate still the respondents are not aware about rebate schemes offered for handloom products. Hence sufficient promotion has to given by Government about the regular rebate schemes and special rebate schemes which are offered during festival times.
4. More awareness programmes has to conducted to increase the reach of handloom mark label.
5. The study reveals that majority of the customers were male and there is more scope to attract female population. Hence it is suggested that female segment of the market also has to be paid attention by offering more variety and female specific products like sarees ,dress materials etc.
6. The study reveals that next to individual need customers prefer to buy during festivals hence it is suggested to offer more promotions like special offers, rebates, free gifts etc during festival times.

CONCLUSION

The above study reveals that consumers are not very much aware about the handloom products .Hence sufficient measures have to be taken place in order to increase the awareness of handloom products. All recommendations are to increase the customer awareness about the handloom Products and in turn to make it as a sustainable Industry. The study can be further extended to understand consumer buying behaviour of handloom products, customer satisfaction about handloom products etc.

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