

AUTHORS

Ms. Nikita Parmar
 Prof. Dr. Anjali Karolia
 Ms. Vandana Chauhan

Department of Clothing and Textiles
 Faculty of Family and Community
 Sciences

UNRAVELLING KANCHIPURAM SILK SAREE: HISTORY, WEAVERS AND SUSTAINABILITY



ABSTRACT

This abstract delves into the intricate narrative of Kanchipuram sarees, tracing their historical roots and socio-economic impact on the weaving. It illuminates the intricate dance between tradition and market dynamics. It illuminates the symbiotic relationship between tradition and market forces, emphasizing the crucial role of consumer demand in sustaining the craft.

OBJECTIVE

- To study the origin and history of Kanchipuram silk saree.
- To study the socio-economic status of the weavers of Kanchipuram silk sarees.

METHODOLOGY

- The data collected for the study was obtained from both primary and secondary sources.
- The sample selection of weavers was done by purposive random sampling method from 3 local areas of Kanchipuram town.
- Total thirty weavers were selected from Kanchipuram town who were interviewed during several field visits.

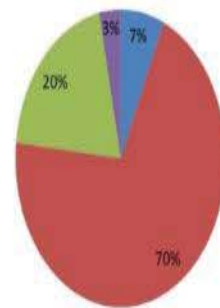
RESULTS

HISTORY:- The ancient Tamil epic "Silappadhikaram" alludes to skilled weavers crafting fine fabrics from cotton, silk, and wool. Commentary by Venkataswami Nattar suggests these weavers were likely the Pattu Saliyars, who possibly migrated to Kanchipuram from Kaveripoompattinam. With a significant presence in Kanchipuram's loom ownership, the Pattu Saliyars might have introduced silk weaving to the region, catering to the demands of royal patrons during the Pallava and Chola periods.

The Kanchi Silk-weaving tradition reportedly originated in the late 18th century, marking a revival after the city's devastation by the French in 1757.

Temple weavers in South India, residing within temple towns, were allocated land and homes. They specialized in crafting temple flags, chariot decorations, furnishing fabrics, and wall hangings depicting Hindu epics. This exclusive class of weavers intricately wove nine-yard saris in vibrant hues like red, purple, orange, yellow, green, and blue, reserved for deities and royal ceremonies.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS



- The distribution of weavers' ages reveals that 40% fall within the 41-50 year range, with 20% aged 31-40, 16.7% aged 51-60, 10% aged 21-30, and 3.3% aged 61-70, while 3.3% fall within the 71-80 age group.
- Gender distribution indicates that 90% of weavers were male, while 10% were female, showcasing both genders' involvement in the weaving process of Kanchipuram silk sarees
- The educational attainment of weavers, with 73.4% having primary education, 10% completing secondary education, and 16.6% being illiterate.

WEAVER'S MONTHLY INCOME FROM WEAVING

- The living standards of weavers, with 63.4% residing in their own houses and 36.6% in rented accommodations.
- The housing conditions of weavers reveal that 16.7% reside in cramped quarters, while 83.3% have adequate living space.

SUSTAINABILITY ASPECTS

- In this study, sustainability would involve ensuring the continued practice of Kanchipuram silk saree weaving while addressing various challenges faced by weavers.
- This includes preserving the craft's traditional knowledge and techniques through intergenerational transmission within families. Additionally, sustainability would encompass economic stability for weavers, achieved through fair wages, access to markets, and diversification of income sources.
- Environmental sustainability would involve responsible resource management and minimizing the ecological footprint of the weaving process. Lastly, social sustainability would entail addressing issues such as language barriers and ensuring opportunities for education and empowerment among future generations of weavers.

CONCLUSION

From the study conducted, it can be conclude that the craft is still demanded but the number of weavers were decreasing. The present study was an earnest attempt towards the sustainability of craft. It is the identity of culture hence requires to be sustained at least through knowing the history of the craft and its knowledge.

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