

Challenges And Growth Opportunities of Handloom Enterprises in Nadia District West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

The handloom is an example of our country's rich heritage as it is one of the oldest techniques of handcrafting textiles. In the United States, it helps millions of Americans find work in the suburbs and rural areas. The quality and pricing of the handloom goods satisfy customers, but they have higher expectations when it comes to the designs. This research looks at the characteristics, difficulties, and possibilities faced by handloom entrepreneurs in Nadia District from a socioeconomic perspective. Using a standardised questionnaire and in-person interviews, 350 proprietors of handlooms provided primary data for a quantitative study. Improving sustainability and competitiveness requires financial aid, technology modernisation, talent development, and institutional support, according to the report. The handloom weavers need the government's assistance in the form of subsidies and incentives.

KEYWORDS: Work environment, Handloom, Transport, Environment, Capital

I. INTRODUCTION

The process of weaving cloth by hand is known as handloom. Simply put, a handloom is a type of loom that allows weavers to work manually, rather than using an electric or automated equipment. Typically found in the homes of weavers, pit, frame, and stand looms are utilised for hand weaving. The warp (length) and the woof (width) are the two sets of yarn that are most commonly interlaced in weaving. The handloom is the tool that makes this interlacing possible. It should be noted that a "power loom" is distinct from a "handloom" as the latter uses human power to weave thread into cloth while the former uses mechanical power generated by electricity.

One of the first cottage industries in India, the handloom sector is pervasive across the nation. Because it directly employs ten million people in India's decentralised sector, the handloom industry is receiving a lot of attention. Additionally, it has the potential to indirectly employ 1.5 people for every weaver involved in the production process. Loom makers, dyers, twistors, printers, processors, and many more are also finding work in this sector. Notably, the handloom industry accounts for 5.5% of all jobs in the decentralised sector, and its contribution to this total is crucial. There are 40 lakhs operational handlooms in India, with 22.1% of those being commercial looms located in various states including Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, Manipur, and Tamil Nadu. The commercial looms' high-quality textiles are well-known and loved all over the world, but the handloom sector is unable to capitalise on their products due to a lack of effective marketing strategies and regulations. Spinning and hand dyeing are two of India's most renowned crafts, and the goods made by craftsmen from the country's overall fabric demand demonstrate the industry's significance in providing jobs and satisfying consumer demand.

Even though it has been declining, the handicraft industry is still the largest in the state, and its wares are world-renowned for their intricate patterns and artistic refinement. Weaving is a traditional skill for them, passed down through generations of their family. While professions can be passed down across generations. Andhra Pradesh is well-known for its skilled weavers, who create one-of-a-kind sarees with elaborate patterns. In many cases, each braided piece is unique. The artisan's labour is intimately represented in each item. About 3.50 lakhs people are involved in weaving and associated activities. Half of the area is occupied by the 1,282 weavers' cooperative groups in the state.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dey, Pranai & Pal, Binay (2023) The creation of jobs has mostly been pursued by governments and authorities through small and medium-sized firms. Over the years, Santipur Handloom has grown into one of the most prominent and storied little businesses in Bengal. This industry has provided stable incomes to many people for many decades. There is a lot of pressure on the power loom business, which has lately become more important than this sector. In light of the above, this essay will examine the causes of the reduction in handloom textile production in Santipur and make some observations on possible remedies to the problem. Combining primary and

secondary sources, in-depth interviews, narrative analysis, participant observation, and focus groups are some of the methods used to obtain information for this project. Policy paralysis, according to the main findings, has an effect on the industry, resulting in low wages, subpar fibre quality, and a failure to adopt new technology.

Risna, U. & Banu, M.N. Nuska (2022) The handloom business is among the most ancient in the world. For as long as anybody can remember, it has been seen as a calling intrinsic to being human. Capital is not as important as human resources in the handloom industry. Because of this, countries with big populations and plenty of available workers have seen the sector expand. Weavers make up the bulk of Sri Lanka's rural workforce. However, weavers nowadays confront a lot of challenges. The handloom industry in Maruthamunai has been chosen to investigate these issues and worries. By examining the existing situation, this research aims to improve this sector. Another secondary objective is to identify and resolve the problems that are preventing the weaving or handloom enterprise from advancing. Research data was mostly gathered through questionnaires, interviews, observations, and field trips. The secondary objective of this study was to collect data from 638 small-scale weavers who worked with handlooms. The participants were randomly allocated to one of eight Grama Niladhari Divisions in Maruthamunai. Papers, books, statistical reports, and the annual reports of DSD and GND were among the many secondary materials used in the research. In addition, the gathered primary and secondary data is analysed using ArcGIS 10.3, and the resulting visual representations include tables, graphs, and diagrams. Maruthamunai has identified several issues across various domains, including raw material items, and proposed appropriate solutions.

Mishra, Amrita et al., (2022) A major unorganised sector in India is the handloom industry. Some estimates put the number of persons employed in the handloom industry at forty lakh. Modern technology, the unscrupulous practices of multinational textile corporations, and fierce global competition have put traditional handloom weavers in jeopardy of extinction. For these reasons, the Indian handloom faces the constant threat of starvation. Traditional knowledge and human talent are the bedrock of the handloom industry. Traditional knowledge is not adequately protected by current intellectual property rules. Even so, GI has developed into a valid tool for preserving and promoting traditional knowledge. When thinking about the Indian GI Act, which covers a wide range of handloom items made only by humans and unaffected by things like typical local weather, this becomes very clear. To ensure that our esteemed cultural legacy is preserved for the benefit of future generations, it is essential to safeguard traditional techniques, knowledge, and handloom items. Handloom weavers may benefit from the present global framework's protection of intellectual property rights. Some of the current problems confronting the handloom business include the following: the financial situation of the weavers, the profitability of the industry as a whole, the difficulties faced by the weavers themselves, the accessibility of financial aid, and innovative marketing strategies. In light of these challenges, we need to think of ways to aid the handloom sector and its weavers in improving their current situation. Thus, to safeguard the rights of handloom weavers and the art form overall, this essay investigates the current status of intellectual property legislation.

P, Balakrishnan (2022) India is home to one of the world's oldest handloom industries, which produces unique handloom items with a clear regional indicator and sells them locally and worldwide. The sector, which is mostly unorganised, provides more work opportunities than any other in the country, second only in agriculture. One of the world's leading manufacturers of handloom items is the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Many problems have recently emerged in the handloom industry; this study seeks to isolate the most critical ones, which include concerns with inputs, outputs, marketing, and health.

Dwivedi, Divya et al., (2019) Traditional handloom weaving continues to be an important economic driver in rural India. They serve different functions within the Indian economy. The ability to introduce new patterns is what makes the handloom sector better than the power loom industry. Numerous creative traditions have made the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh famous. The distinctive handloom products are a trademark of the four districts of Uttar Pradesh: Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Mau, and Azamgarh. With this study, the researchers hoped to better understand the difficulties encountered by handloom weavers in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi area. In comparison to other sectors, the handloom industry in the Varanasi region is currently experiencing a great deal of trouble. This motivated the present study to look at the difficulties faced by handloom weavers. The samples utilised in this study were chosen using a purposeful random sampling approach. The study's sample size was fifty handloom weavers, whose ages ranged from sixteen to sixty-eight, recruited from all throughout the Varanasi region. The survey included both closed- and open-ended questions to help researchers understand the difficulties faced by handloom weavers at various stages of the weaving process. In the Varanasi area, the handloom industry has been declining for a while now, according to the data. Because their traditional handloom had not undergone any technological advancements, the weavers were compelled to labour with it despite the fact that it presented major obstacles, such as yarn breakage. Not only did they struggle with finances, but they also had problems advertising their products and obtaining necessary raw materials. Because there were no godowns in the Varanasi region, the weavers also faced problems with storage. It was a sad state of affairs for the weavers who persisted in the craft due to their low social and economic conditions. The weavers' problems would go away if the state and federal governments had better policies. It would be really appreciated if the government could provide the

weavers with financing choices that have reduced interest rates.

Singh, Bharat (2014) Many people in India relied on the handloom industry for their livelihood during the Mughal Empire, when the concept of flexible production was widely used. The sector fell during the British era due to the government's unfavourable policies. This sector has recently been in the news due to our respected Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' initiative. Improving the handloom sector to accommodate those seeking higher-quality and more respectable work opportunities might significantly influence our economy's output, employment rates, and export earnings. Using secondary sources of data, this research will offer an industry overview, examine the challenges it confronts, and talk about the many government initiatives and policies that try to help it.

Kundu, Mintu (2012) In terms of industrialisation, the Alipurduar block-II of West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district was well behind the rest of the state even before independence. The industrial sector does not play a significant role in Alipurduar Block-II's economy. The Block's economy has not progressed much and is based primarily on farming. Indices of backwardness include a large surplus of labour, inadequate infrastructure, low yields per acre, inadequate capital, and a sluggish rate of industrialisation. Unemployment is at an all-time high because of the ongoing emigration. Alipurduar Block-II is home to certain communities that have stuck to traditional ways of life for generations. Alipurduar Block-II was the birthplace of the handloom industry long ago. The emigrants from Bangladesh took up weaving as a profession since it was a traditional skill they had retained. This research aims to propose policy suggestions to promote the handloom sector in Alipurduar Block-II and examines the existing situation of the industry. Looking ahead, the paper explores the industry's growth and development prospects, offering a glimpse into how the sector may tackle present issues.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The present study adopted a quantitative research design.

Study area

The Nadia district was selected as a purposive sample.

Sources of data collection

Respondents' own words and experiences formed the backbone of the study's core data set. Supporting our contextual understanding, we also investigated secondary data from sources such as government papers, handloom board publications, research articles, and institutional records.

Sample and Sampling technique

After that, a multistage random sampling approach was used to select the relevant information from 350 respondents handloom industries of Nadia district, West bengal.

Data collection tool

The data was collected via a standardized questionnaire administered to the handloom owner during the face to face interview.

Statistical techniques

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. The following techniques were applied:

- **Percentage analysis** – to describe demographic and occupational characteristics
- **Frequency distribution** – to summarize respondent profiles
- **Ranking analysis** – to identify major problems and opportunities perceived by respondents

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Age Distribution of respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
21–30	88	25.1
31–40	102	29.1
41–50	84	24.0
51–60	76	21.8
Total	350	100.0

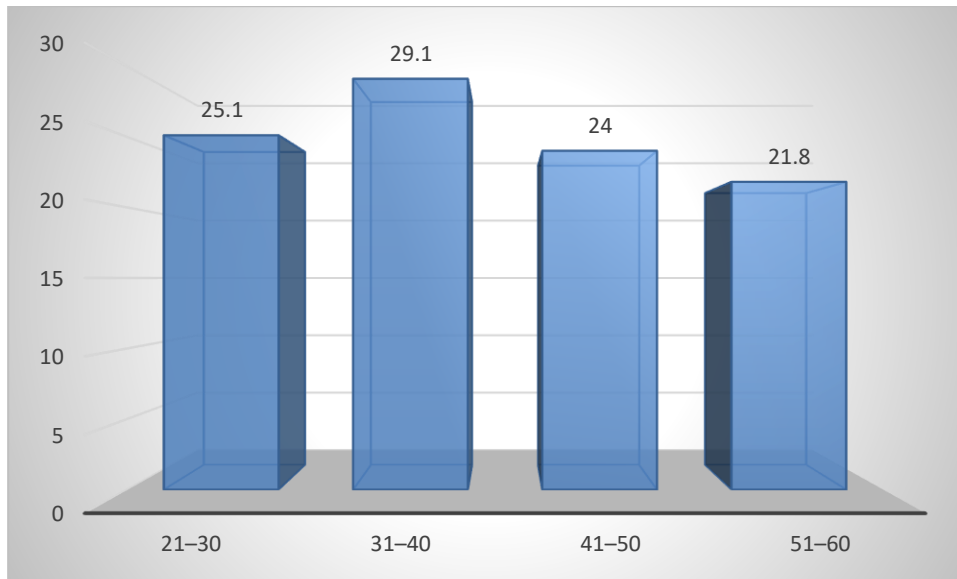


Figure 1: Age Distribution of respondents

According to the data shown above, the age bracket of 31–40 comprises the vast majority of responders (29.1%). Respondents in the 21–30 age bracket make up 25.1% of the total. The age group of 41–50 years old comprises 24.0 percent of the total respondents. The age bracket of 51–60 years has the lowest percentage of responders (21.8 percent).

Table 2: Type of Handloom Activity of Respondents

Particular	Frequency	Percentage
Weaving	120	34.3
Dyeing	61	17.5
Designing	52	14.8
Marketing	45	12.9
Multiple activities	72	20.5
Total	350	100.0

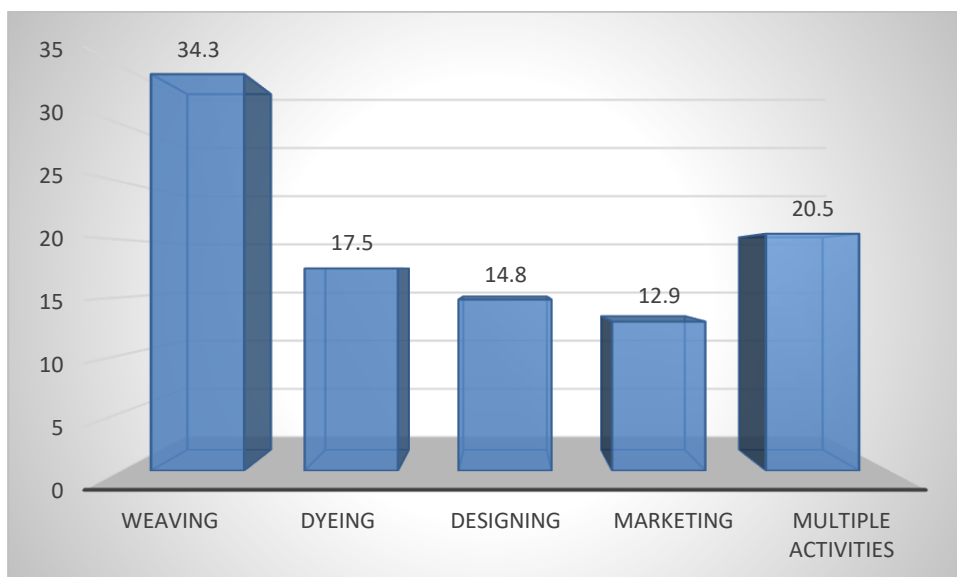


Figure 2: Type of Handloom Activity of Respondents

Based on the distribution of handloom activities among respondents, the majority of people are involved in weaving, which accounts for 34.3% of the total. Nearly one-fifth of those who took the survey said they were involved in more than one activity. Of those that participated, 17.5% are dyers. A comparable proportion, 14.8%, are active in the design process. Marketing accounts for the smallest percentage, at 12.9%.

Table 3: Experience of Respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
0–5 years	52	14.9
5–10 years	68	19.4
10–15 years	74	21.1
15–20 years	69	19.7
Above 20 years	87	24.9
Total	350	100.0

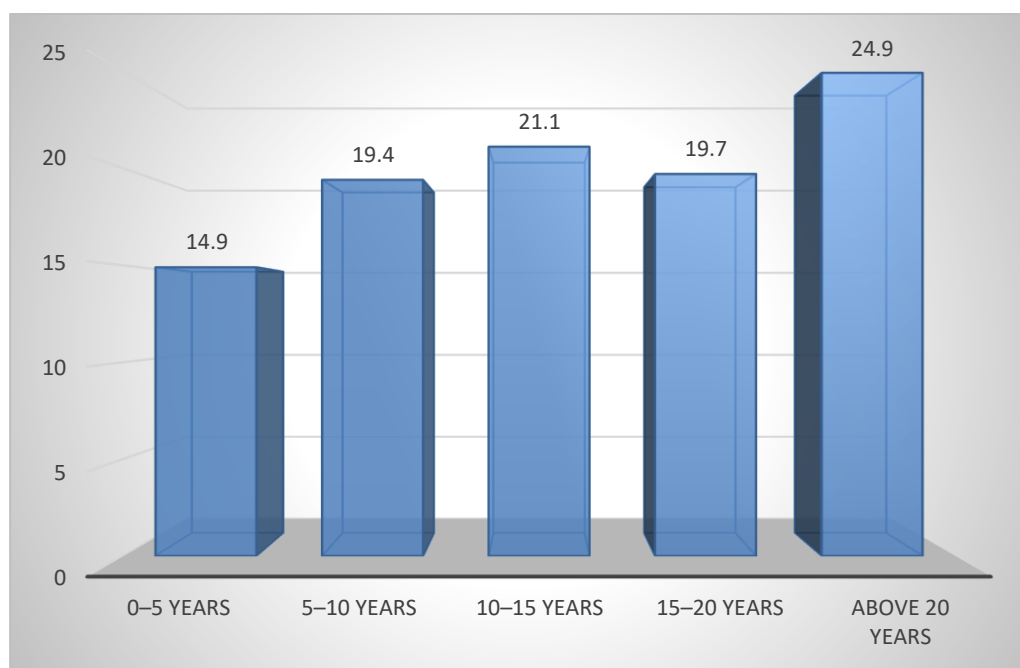


Figure 3: Experience of Respondents

According to the data in the table above, a sizeable percentage of respondents (24.9%) had more than 20 years of experience. About 21.1% of those who took the survey had worked in the field for between five and ten years. Also, 19.7% of those who took the survey have worked in the field for 15–20 years, and 19.4% have worked for 5–10 years. Respondents with 0-5 years of experience make up the lowest number, at 14.9%.

Table 4: Challenges Faced by Respondents (Multiple Responses Allowed)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
High rate of input cost	350	100	I
Problems in getting loan on time	336	96	II
Capital problem / Insufficient capital	329	94	III
Non-cooperation of loan board	329	94	III
Inadequate research and development	315	90	IV
Old technology	308	88	V
Lack of incentives during downturn	266	76	VI
Bad weather	203	58	VII
Transportation problem	168	48	VIII
Insufficient labour supply	147	42	IX
Lack of industrial education	140	40	X

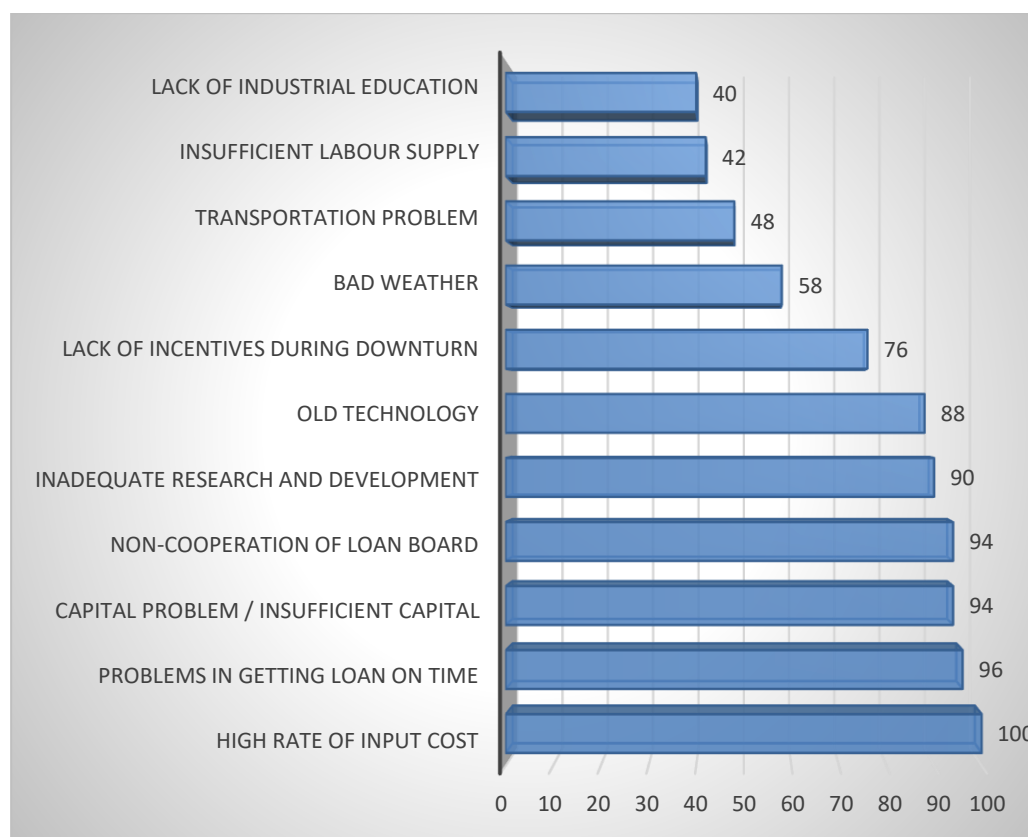


Figure 4: Challenges Faced by Respondents

Among the challenges encountered, the study shows that the highest rate of input cost is the most pressing issue, as mentioned by every single responder. Obtaining loans on time is a second-ranked issue that impacts 96% of respondents. Similarly, 94% of those who took the survey had experienced either inadequate funds or non-cooperation with lending boards. One major issue that a large number of respondents (90 percent) pointed out is the lack of sufficient research and development. An overwhelming majority of responders (88%), bringing up the issue of outdated technology. Also, when times are tough, 76% of people feel like they have no motivation. Not only do environmental and infrastructural issues affect manufacturing and market access, but they also affect transportation issues (58 percent) and severe weather (48 percent). Moreover, there is a dearth of industrial education and a manpower shortage that accounts for 42% of the problem.

Table 5: Opportunities and Prospects Perceived by Respondents (Multiple responses allowed)

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Favorable work environment	350	100	I
Living in the weaver community in this area	350	100	I
Family business tradition	315	90	II
Available training facilities	308	88	III
Easy access to market	280	80	IV
Sufficient market to sell	245	70	V
Efficient transport facilities	182	52	VI
Perfect weather for making loom product	21	6	VII

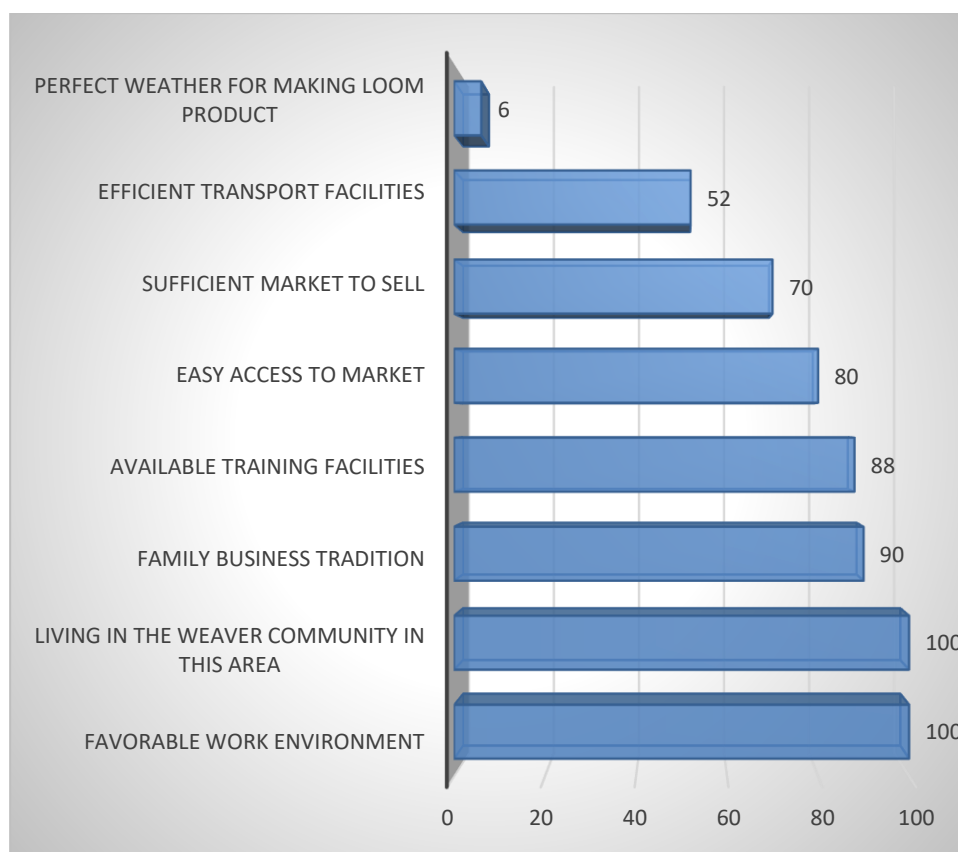


Figure 5: Opportunities and Prospects Perceived by Respondents

Of all the options and prospects that were considered, the most notable ones were a welcoming workplace and the opportunity to live in a community of weavers, which were both mentioned by every single responder. Nearly all respondents (90%) agreed that there is a strong heritage of family businesses. Also, 88% of those who took the survey saw the accessibility of training facilities as a major plus. Seventy percent of people think there is enough of a demand in the market, and eighty percent say it's easy to get to those markets. Half or more of those who took the survey saw well-functioning transit options as beneficial to company operations. Nevertheless, just 6% see ideal weather as a chance for success.

V. CONCLUSION

As a result, the handloom industry is the nation's most powerful instrument for advancing justice, developing the non-farm economy in rural areas, and absorbing resources. In order to promote and foster growth, the government should use a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach, supplying integrated supplies of various types of environmental inputs for infrastructure and industries. Affordability of finance, technical advancement, expansion of market links, and skill improvement programs are all areas that require specific governmental interventions to guarantee growth in the long run. Productivity and income stability can be enhanced through the promotion of innovation and the strengthening of cooperative institutions.

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