Fading Colours of a Glorious Past: A Discourse on the Socio-economic dimensions of marginalized Banarasi sari weaving community

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Abstract

‘Banarasi sari’ symbolising with the grandeur, aesthetics and richness of this age old, vibrant city, is the pride product of Varanasi, which the city has been boasting of from ages. This unique and intrinsic weaving industry is rapidly climbing down the stairs of glory, has recorded a downfall in the recent past and is literally on the verge of virtual extinction! The deteriorating living condition of weavers and the downfall of the weaving industry coupled with ill the effects of globalization, modernization, stiff competition and unsympathetic environment are some of the factors responsible for the pathetic condition of weavers in particular and the weaving industry community, in general. The weavers in the study area are facing both economic and non-economic problems in terms of social exclusion. Economic problems are directly linked to their exploitation and harassment by middle men and non-economic problems are mainly related to their health and anxiety about future. The ruthless and discouraging policies of the government have undoubtedly played a vital role in disillusionment of the industry and the weaving community. The present study explores about the social, economic and health condition of the Banarasi sari weaving community. The study is based on primary sources of data collected through an interview schedule and focused group discussion with the weaving community.