

Problems and constraints faced by machine embroidery workers of Ludhiana city

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ABSTRACT: The study revealed that respondents belonged to 20-30 years of age, were matric, and had training in embroidery for two years. The majority of respondents had a monthly personal income up to Rs. 4000-6000 and family income Rs. 4000- 10,000. The average personal and family income was Rs. 4940 and Rs. 6555 with a range from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 8000 and Rs. 30000 to Rs. 16,000 respectively. The different problems faced by the workers were related to nonavailability of raw material, financial problems, marketing problems, and personal problems. Problems related to raw material were inferior quality material, non-availability of raw material in desired colour etc. Major financial problems were less profit and irregular income. They used to face marketing problems due to fast changing trends and no fixed place for selling embroidered articles. Respondents faced various personal problems like busy schedule, effect on general health, mentally challenging work etc.

Key words: Machine embroidery, constraints, marketing problems, financial problems

“Embroidery” came from an Indo-Saxon word “(em + broider)” broider meaning border (Goel, 1995). It is a decorative expression of aesthetics rendered with patience and artistic taste rather than strength. Embroidery began with the prehistoric man who joined leaves together with flowers for decorating human body, walls and gates of his habitation and surroundings. Therefore, it would not be improper to say that embroidery is as old as the civilization of India. Embroidery can be done by hand or by machine. An embroidery sewing machine is a sewing machine with embroidery and monogramming capabilities. Machine embroidery is especially more appropriate in countries like India, where opportunities to get jobs in government and organized sectors are shrinking with increasing population. The demand of embroidered goods and money involved in the trade promoted embroidery work on vast scale. Professional embroiders have become acutely conscious of labour, time and connection between them. In the workplace, they have learned to value time over aesthetics and to analyse their own work in order to maximize their own efforts and are working independently or with shops, boutiques etc. and earning with the skill they have in machine embroidery. It is very important to study the workers engaged in machine embroidery as it will provide an insight into type and amount of work done, the work force, work pattern and infrastructure used. It will also help to find out the day to day constraints faced by them in carrying out their work as backaches, aches in waist and shoulder, stiffness in joints and extreme fatigue were reported by workers in a number

of informal sector occupations in India. Therefore, this study has been planned to determine the constraints faced by the workers and suggest remedial measures to overcome these.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A sample of 120 machine embroidery workers was selected from different localities of Ludhiana city. Snowball sampling technique was employed to select the machine embroidery workers and was identified using personal contact method. An interview schedule was framed and pretested on twelve machine embroidery workers from Ludhiana city and was suitably modified. The modified interview schedule was then personally administered. The data collected were coded, tabulated and analyzed. The information collected on three-point scale, was given scores, three to the highest point and one to the lowest point on three-point scale. Scores were computed and weighted scores were obtained and the ranks were given to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondents belonged to 20-30 years of age, were matric, and received training in machine embroidery for two years. About 86 per cent worked under some person, got wage on number of articles embroidered and spent 8-10 hrs on machine embroidery per day. The problems encountered by the respondents have been categorized as personal or related to availability of raw materials, marketing and financial problems.

Financial problems faced by the respondents

Due to inflation and other related factors, the respondents faced some problems regarding the finances. It is observed from Table 1 that their main problems were less profit and irregular income. The top most problem faced frequently by 11.67 per cent and occasionally by 42.50 per cent respondents was of less profit in machine embroidery work. The problem got first rank (Weighted score(s) =199). The problem of irregular income got the second rank. Since 9.17 per cent respondents frequently and 28.33 per cent, occasionally found their income irregular (Weighted score =176). The problem of extra incidental charges was usually faced by 8.33 per cent respondents frequently and 14.17 per cent, occasionally and got third rank (Weighted score =157). The problem of lack of money for further investment and high rent of shop/ house got fourth and fifth ranks respectively (Weighted scores =129 and 127).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to financial problems faced by them (n= 120)

Financial problems	Frequently		Occasionally		Never		Weighted score	Rank
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
High rent of shop/house	2	1.67	3	2.50	115	95.83	127	V
Extra incidental charges	10	8.33	17	14.17	93	77.50	157	III
Less profit	14	11.67	51	42.50	55	45.83	199	I
Irregular income	11	9.17	34	28.33	75	62.50	176	II
Lack of money-for further investment	-	-	9	7.50	111	92.50	129	IV

F = Frequency, % = per centage, Multiple response

Marketing problems faced by the respondents

As the trends keep on changing frequently, therefore it is becoming a concerning problem for the workers to market their products. The respondents were asked to specify the problems faced by them during marketing their products. Fig 1 shows that the problem of fast changing trends in designing was placed at first place as 87 per cent of respondents faced this problem. Thirteen per cent of the respondent faced the problems of not having fixed place for selling their embroidered articles.

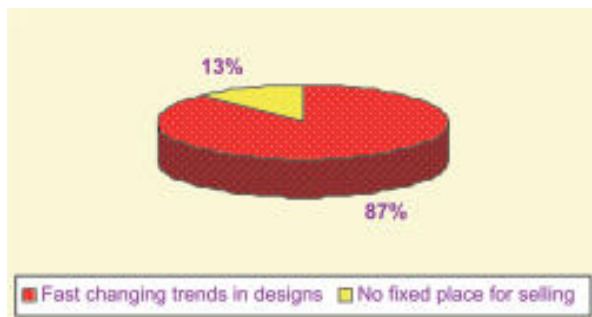


Fig 1: Distribution of respondents according to marketing problems faced by them

Kumari (2005) also stated that fast changing trends and lack of proper set up and market for stitched household articles were the major problems faced by the women entrepreneurs of Ludhiana city.

Problems related to availability of raw materials

It is observed from Table 2 that the problem of inferior quality material got first rank (Weighted Score (s) =205) as 16.67 per cent respondents frequently and 37.50 per cent, occasionally found the material inferior. 9.17 per cent respondents frequently and 32.50 per cent, occasionally felt the problem of raw material not available in desired colour (Weighted score =170). The problem of expensive raw material and not easily available got third and fourth ranks with weighted scores 128 and 127 respectively. Hence, it can be stated that they mainly faced the problems by getting inferior quality raw materials and being not available in desired colours.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to problems related to availability of raw materials

Problems related to availability of raw materials	Frequently		Occasionally		Never		Weighted score	Rank
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Expensive	2	1.67	4	3.33	114	95.00	128	III
Not easily available	1	0.83	5	4.17	114	95.00	127	IV
Inferior quality	20	16.67	45	37.50	55	45.83	205	I
Not available in desired colour	11	9.17	39	32.50	70	58.33	170	II

F = Frequency, % = per centage, Multiple response

Personal problems faced by the respondents

Workers have to face a lot of personal problems such as responsibility of looking after family and home, and occasionally the problem of non cooperation of family members. Majority of the respondents (50.84%) frequently and 35.83 per cent of them occasionally faced the problem of busy schedule that was assigned the first rank (Weighted Score(s) =285). The problems affecting general health of respondents by embroidery work was also found to be more prevalent and got second rank (Weighted score =156) as 2.50 per cent respondents frequently and 25.00 per cent, occasionally faced this problem whereas 3.33 per cent respondents frequently and 21.67 per cent occasionally faced the problem of mentally challenging work (Weighted score =154). The other personal problems faced by the respondents in descending order were lack of social contacts (Weighted score =144), lack of cooperation from family members (Weighted score =142), misbehavior of employees (Weighted score =133) and getting no free health treatment (Weighted score =123) (Table 3). It is clear from the collected data that majority of the respondents felt that they had busy schedule, affecting their general health, work being mentally

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to personal problems faced by them (n=120)

Personal problems	Frequently		Occasionally		Never		Weighted score	Rank
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Busy schedule	61	50.84	43	35.83	16	13.33	285	I
Mentally work	4	3.33	26	21.67	90	75.00	154	III
Effecting general health	3	2.50	30	25.00	87	72.50	156	II
Getting no free health treatment	-	-	3	2.50	117	97.50	123	VII
Lack of cooperation from family members	3	2.50	16	13.33	101	84.17	142	V
Lack of social contacts	4	3.33	27	22.50	89	74.17	144	IV
Misbehaviour of employees	-	-	13	10.83	107	89.17	133	VI

F = Frequency, % = per centage, Multiple responses

challenging and had lack of social contacts. Simmi (1992) and Parimalam (1996) stated that reasons for dissatisfaction among working homemakers were high job demands, physical and mental fatigue and insufficient time for rest and relaxation.

CONCLUSION

Problems related to raw material felt by the respondents were inferior quality material, non-availability of raw material in desired colour, expensive raw material and not easily available raw material. Major financial problems were less profit and irregular income. Other financial problems faced were extra incidental charges, lack of money for further investment and high rent of shop/house. They used to face marketing problems due to fast changing trends and no fixed place for selling embroidered articles Respondents faced various personal problems like busy schedule, effect on general health, mentally challenging work, lack of social contacts and lack of cooperation from family members.

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