

Socio-economic analysis of women working in Chikankari enterprises

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ABSTRACT

This research systematically explores the lives and experiences of women working in the Chikankari industry in Lucknow, utilizing a descriptive research design with a sample size of 20. The study focuses on understanding various socio-economic conditions, including educational attainment, generational involvement, income levels, transportation preferences, compensation satisfaction, financial aid sources, living conditions, awareness of facilities, loan experiences, interest in entrepreneurship, and net banking usage among female Chikankari workers.

KEYWORDS

Chikankari Industry, Women Empowerment, Social Status, Economic Status, Income Levels, Compensation Satisfaction, Financial Keywords: Independence, Social Enterprises,

INTRODUCTION

Women's empowerment is not confined to economic self-sufficiency alone. It is a comprehensive process in which women should receive freedom and equality in every area of their lives. While social enterprises focus on the overall development of women, commercial enterprises play a significant role in economic empowerment. In the process of women's empowerment, women working in the Chikankari industry face several challenges. Socially, they are still bound by traditional roles and beliefs that hinder their freedom and development. Economically, they do not receive proper value for their labor, and their skills are exploited. Moreover, the lack of education and healthcare services also disrupts their overall empowerment. However, social and commercial enterprises are taking significant steps to address these challenges.

Women's Empowerment - Women's empowerment can be simply defined as enabling women to become powerful so that they can make decisions regarding their lives independently and live well in their families and society. Empowering women to claim their real rights in society is what "women's empowerment" is all about. "Women are gentle, not weak; the very name of power is woman. She who gives life to the world, even death, is defeated by her." Before understanding women's empowerment, we must first understand what "empowerment" means. Empowerment refers to an individual's capacity to make decisions regarding all aspects of their life. Women's empowerment speaks of the same capacity, where women free themselves from the shackles of family and society, becoming the decision-makers of their own lives.

Social Enterprise Definition - "Social enterprises solve social problems, improve communities, enhance people's opportunities in life, or improve the environment through business. They earn money by selling goods and services in the open market but reinvest their profits into the business or local community, and society benefits when they earn profits." A social enterprise is an organization that applies commercial strategies to improve financial, social, and environmental well-being. This may involve maximizing social impact along with profits for external stakeholders. Social enterprises can be structured for-profit or non-profit and may take the form of cooperatives, mutual organizations, social businesses, profit corporations, community interest groups, etc. Social enterprises have both business and social goals. As a result, their social goals are embedded in their objectives, which distinguish them from other organizations and corporations. The main purpose of a social enterprise is to promote, encourage, and bring about social change. In India, a social enterprise can be a non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO), which is often registered as a society under the Indian Society Registration Act, 1860, a trust registered under various state trust acts, or a Section 25 company under the Indian Companies Act, 1956. India has about 3 million NGOs, many of which include religious organizations and religious trusts, such as temples, mosques, and gurdwara associations, which are not considered social enterprises

History of Lucknow and Chikankari - India's Awadhi culture showcases a rich blend of Mughal culture, restoration, literature, art, and music. India is a country that is full of diversities, and one of such forms is the city of Lucknow, known as the capital of the state of Uttar Pradesh. Lucknow rose during the late Mughal period and again came into its full blossom with the onset of 18th century under the reign of the Nawabs of Awadh. Historical accounts suggest that poetry, classical music, and through endless patrons, the craft of artisans encouraged society to thrive in cultural and intellectual dominance. The greatness of the city's past can be traced in its magnificent architectural places such as Bara Imambara, Chota Imambara, and the Rumi Darwaza. Chikan embroidery is one of the notable features of the culture of the city of Lucknow. It is said that Chikan Kari found its way to the city of Lucknow during the era of the Mughal Empire, possibly emerging under the patronage of Mughal Empress Noor Jahan, the empress of Jahangir. She is popularly associated with this fine craft of hand embroidery work done on fine fabrics such as Muslin, Silk, Chiffon, and georgette. Primarily, only white embroidery threads were used in the designs however it was noted that a variety of coloring started to emerge. The embroidery includes art of deserts, floral motifs, paisleys, and geometry, which produce cooling and warmth to the Market of Chikankari. In Lucknow, the chicken embroidery industry is the largest female-based cluster in India. Around 50,000 women workers are associated with this cluster. Chicken work is not a leisure activity; it is a livelihood for women workers and one of the prosperous industries in Lucknow. Many women, ranging from low-skilled to highly skilled, are involved in this

work. Over 10,000 traders are connected to the chicken embroidery industry, most of whom are located in the old city area of Chowk. More than 160,000 families from around 70 villages are connected to this business, of which about 80% are women. Chicken embroidery workers are spread over a 125 km radius from Lucknow and its surrounding areas. Most women are housewives, and in many cases, this work is their only source of personal income.

OBJECTIVE

1. To study the social status of women employed in Chikankari enterprises.
2. To study the Economic status of women employed in Chikankari enterprises.

Universe - The population of this study consists of female Chikankari workers in the Lucknow district. Nearly 83 social Chikankari enterprises are working in Lucknow District.

Sample Size & Sampling: The sample size is 20 women artisans. This number is large enough to ensure statistical significance and provide diverse perspectives. Equal representation from both types of enterprises (20 from social enterprises) allows a balanced comparative analysis. The selection of 20 women artisans from each enterprise was done using a purposive random sampling technique from different areas of Lucknow.

PRIMARY DATA

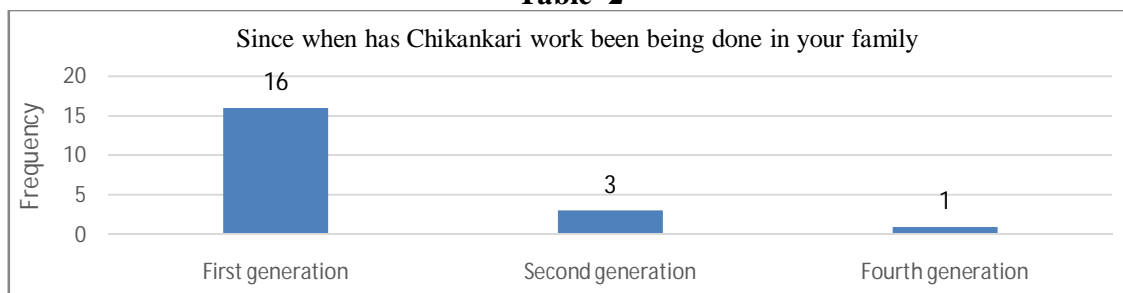
Table -1

<p style="text-align: center;">Age of respondent</p> <table><caption>Data for Age of respondent chart</caption><tr><th>Age Group</th><th>Frequency</th></tr><tr><td>Below 20</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>20-35</td><td>10</td></tr><tr><td>35-45</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Above 45</td><td>5</td></tr></table>		Age Group	Frequency	Below 20	1	20-35	10	35-45	4	Above 45	5	<p style="text-align: center;">Education</p> <table><caption>Data for Education chart</caption><tr><th>Education Level</th><th>Frequency</th></tr><tr><td>Fifth</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Tenth</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Inter...</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Grad...</td><td>7</td></tr></table>		Education Level	Frequency	Fifth	5	Tenth	3	Inter...	5	Grad...	7				
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Comparative Analysis - Graduate Level Education: Largest group: 7 individuals (35%), Indicates a higher level of education among respondents, Age 20-35 Group: Largest age group: 10 individuals (50%), Shows that half of the respondents are young adults, Education

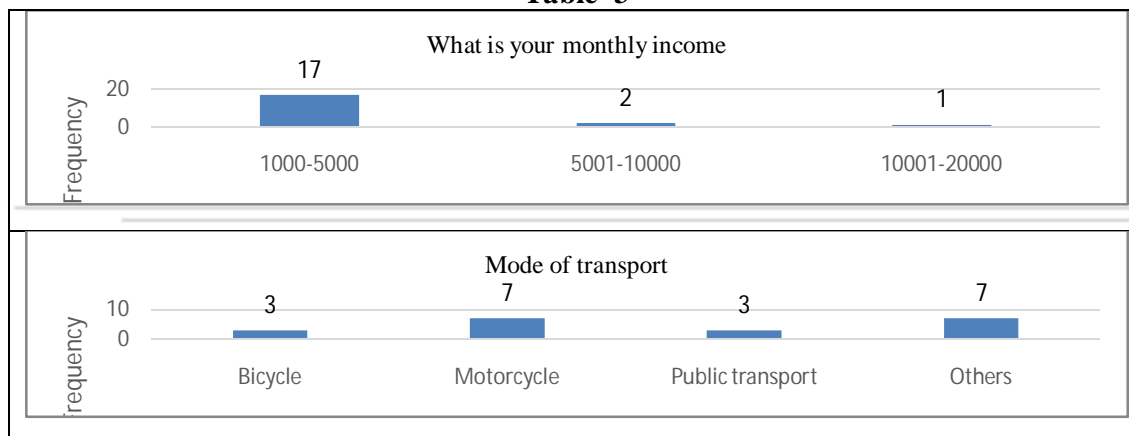
vs. Age: It would be interesting to explore the correlation between age groups and education levels. Those in the 20-35 age group might form the majority in the Graduate level, Overall Trends: A significant number of respondents have attained a Graduate level education, The largest age group being 20-35 might suggest that the younger demographic is more educated, This correlation is statistically significant, suggesting that as age increases, the education level also tends to increase.

Table -2



First Generation: 80.0% of respondents have been engaged in Chikankari work since the first generation, **Second Generation:** 15.0% began in the second generation, **Fourth Generation:** 5.0% have continued since the fourth generation. The majority of families have a long-standing tradition of Chikankari work, indicating a strong cultural heritage, A smaller percentage have continued Chikankari work into the second and fourth generations, showing some decline over generations.

Table -3



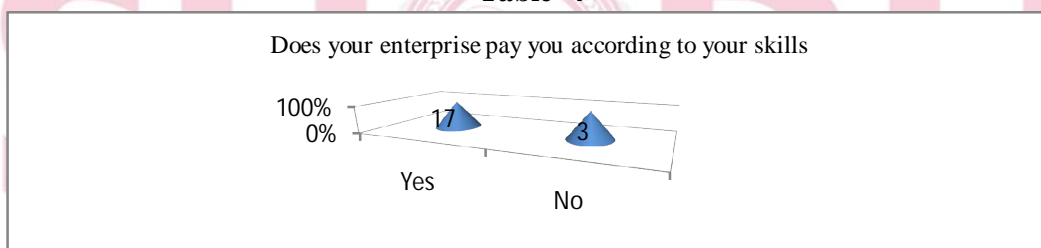
1. **Monthly Income: 1000-5000 INR:** Most respondents (85.0%) fall in this income range, indicating a lower-income group, **5001-10000 INR:** 10.0% of respondents, representing a moderate income level, **10001-20000 INR:** Only 5.0% fall in this higher-income category, showing a smaller proportion of higher earners.

2. **Mode of Transport: Motorcycle and Others:** 35.0% of respondents used each, indicating a preference for these modes. **Bicycle and Public Transport:** Both used by 15.0%, showing less reliance on these modes compared to motorcycles and other means.

Comparative Insights

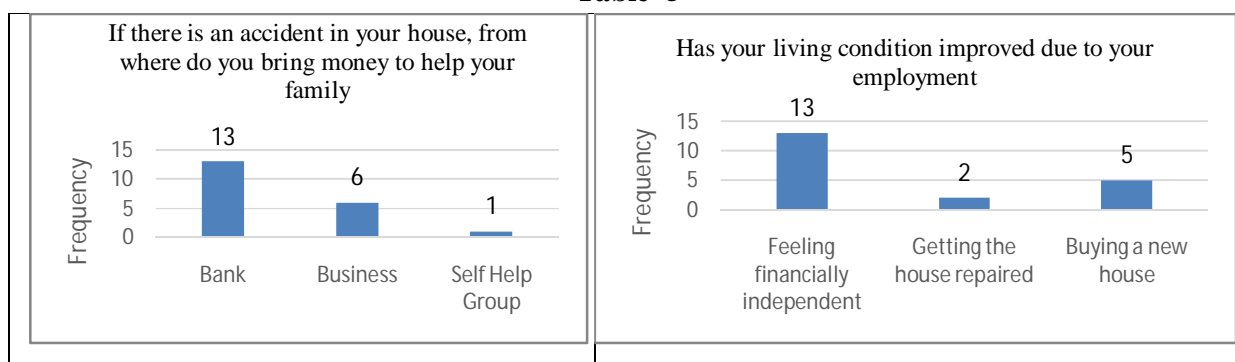
- Lower-income respondents (1000-5000 INR) are more likely to use motorcycles or other forms of transportation rather than bicycles or public transport.
- Those with slightly higher incomes (5001-10000 INR) also show a preference for motorcycles and other transport.
- Higher-income respondents (10001-20000 INR) are fewer, but their choice of transport modes might vary more, though specific data is not available.

Table -4



Yes: The majority of respondents (85.0%) believe that their enterprise pays them according to their skills, **No:** 15.0% of respondents feel they are not paid according to their skills. While the majority of employees are satisfied with their compensation, addressing the concerns of the minority who feel undercompensated is crucial. Implementing the suggested solutions and strategies can enhance overall employee satisfaction, retention, and productivity, fostering a more positive and productive workplace environment.

Table -5

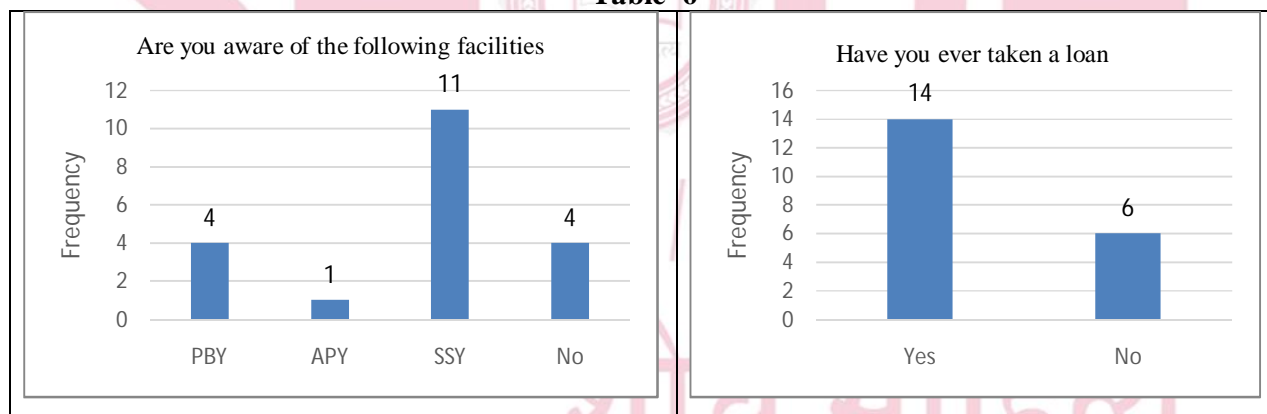


Source of Financial Aid

Bank (65.0%): The majority of respondents rely on banks for financial aid during accidents, indicating a preference for formal financial institutions, **Business (30.0%)**: A significant portion turns to their own business, showing the importance of self-employment and entrepreneurship, **Self Help Group (5.0%)**: Few respondents rely on self-help groups, highlighting the potential for expanding community-based financial support.

Improvement in Living Conditions: Feeling Financially Independent (65.0%): Most respondents feel financially independent due to their employment, reflecting increased financial stability, **Getting the House Repaired (10.0%)**: A smaller percentage used their earnings for home repairs, indicating targeted improvements, **Buying a New House (25.0%)**: A significant portion has been able to buy a new house, showcasing substantial improvement in living conditions. These mixed interpretations provide a clear understanding of how financial aid sources and employment have impacted living conditions.

Table -6

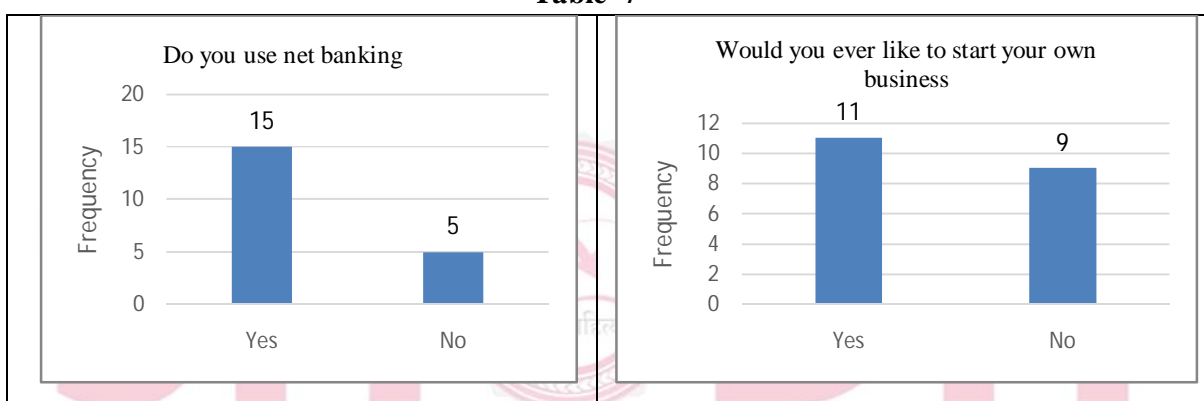


Awareness of Facilities: SSY (55.0%): The majority of respondents (55.0%) are aware of SSY, indicating its higher visibility and reach, **PBY (20.0%)**: 20.0% of respondents know about PBY, showing moderate awareness, **APY (5.0%)**: Only a small percentage (5.0%) are aware of APY, highlighting the need for better promotion and information dissemination., **No (20.0%)**: 20.0% of respondents are not aware of any of these facilities, suggesting gaps in outreach efforts.

Experience with Taking a Loan: Yes (70.0%): A significant majority (70.0%) have taken a loan at some point, reflecting the reliance on financial assistance for various needs. **No (30.0%)**: 30.0% of respondents have never taken a loan, possibly indicating either financial independence or lack of access to credit.

Enhance Awareness of Facilities: Conduct awareness campaigns and workshops to educate the public about less-known facilities like APY; use various media channels to reach a broader audience and ensure comprehensive information distribution. **Improve Access to Loans:** Simplify the loan application process to make it more accessible, and provide financial literacy programs to help individuals understand the benefits and responsibilities of taking loans.

Table -7

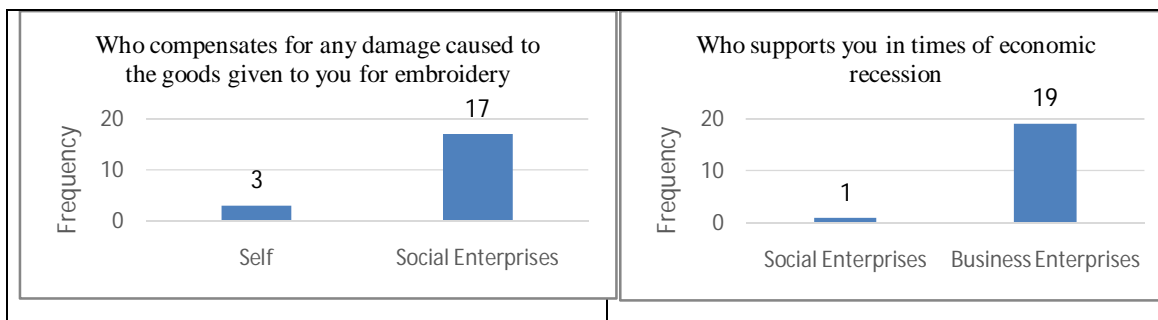


1. **Interest in Starting a Business: Yes (55.0%):** The majority of respondents express an interest in starting their own business, indicating a strong entrepreneurial spirit; **no (45.0%):** A significant portion, however, does not share this interest, possibly due to risk aversion, contentment with current employment, or other personal reasons.
2. **Net Banking Usage: Yes (75.0%):** A substantial majority of respondents use net banking, reflecting the popularity and convenience of digital banking services; **no (25.0%):** A quarter of respondents do not use net banking, potentially indicating a digital divide, lack of trust in online services, or preference for traditional banking methods.

SUGGESTIONS

Support for Aspiring Entrepreneurs: Develop programs and training to encourage and support individuals interested in starting their own businesses. Provide access to funding and investment opportunities to help new businesses get off the ground; **Increase Net Banking Awareness and Accessibility:** Promote the benefits of net banking through awareness campaigns. Provide support and training for those hesitant to adopt net banking, ensuring they understand its safety and convenience.

Table -8



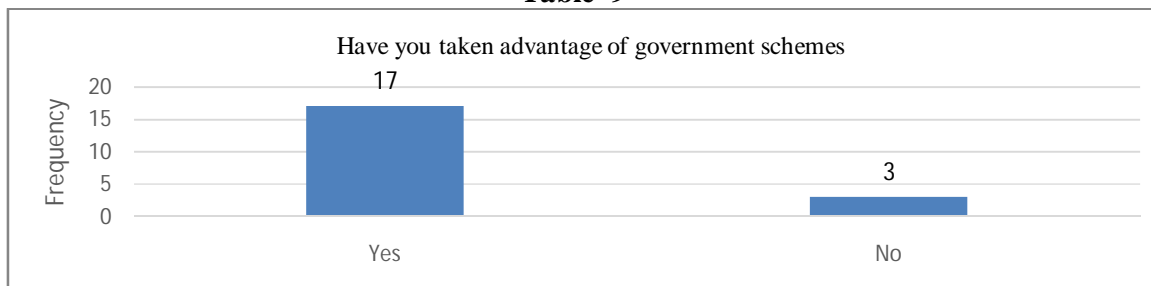
1. **Compensation for Damage to Embroidery Goods: Self (15.0%):** A small percentage of respondents compensate for any damages themselves, indicating personal responsibility for the goods. **Social Enterprises (85.0%):** The majority of respondents (85.0%) rely on social enterprises to compensate for any damage to the goods, highlighting the role of these organizations in supporting their members.
2. **Support During Economic Recession: Social Enterprises (5.0%):** Only a few respondents (5.0%) receive support from social enterprises during economic recessions. **Business Enterprises (95.0%):** Most respondents (95.0%) rely on business enterprises for support during economic downturns, indicating a strong dependency on these entities.

SUGGESTIONS

Strengthening Social Enterprise Support: Enhance the capacity and resources of social enterprises to provide more comprehensive support during economic recessions, Promote collaboration between social and business enterprises to create a more robust support network, **Encouraging Personal Responsibility:** Develop programs that educate and empower individuals to take personal responsibility for the goods they handle, Provide training on best practices for handling and caring for embroidery goods to minimize damage, **Improving Business Enterprise Support:** Ensure that business enterprises have clear policies and resources to support individuals during economic downturns, Foster partnerships with social enterprises to provide integrated support systems for those in need.

These mixed interpretations provide a clear understanding of the compensation and support mechanisms in place, along with actionable suggestions to improve them.

Table -9

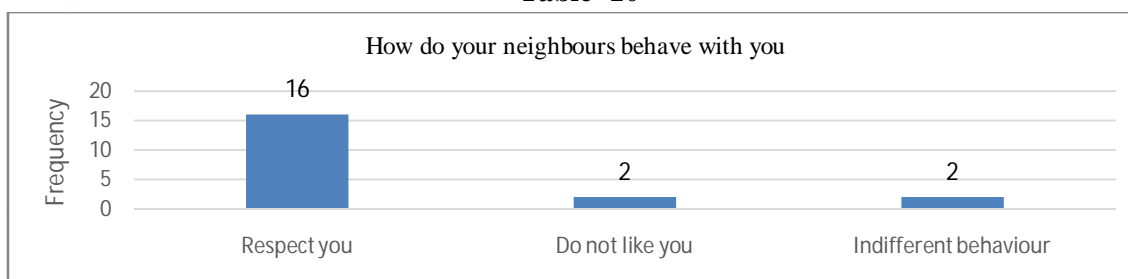


Utilization of Government Schemes: Yes (85.0%): A significant majority of respondents have taken advantage of government schemes, indicating high awareness and utilization of these benefits, **No (15.0%):** A smaller portion of respondents have not utilized government schemes, which may suggest a lack of awareness or eligibility.

SUGGESTIONS

Targeted Outreach: Conduct targeted outreach programs to ensure that the remaining 15.0% of individuals are aware of and can access government schemes. This may include informational sessions, workshops, and community meetings, **Clear Communication:** Simplify and clarify the information about eligibility and benefits of various government schemes to make it more accessible.

Table -10



Respect you (80.0%): The majority of respondents (80.0%) feel that their neighbors respect them, indicating positive and cordial relationships within the community. This suggests that there is a general sense of goodwill and respect among neighbors, fostering a strong social bond, **Do not like you (10.0%):** A smaller portion of respondents (10.0%) feel disliked by their neighbors, which could be due to personal differences or misunderstandings. Addressing these issues through open communication and conflict resolution can help reduce negative perceptions, **Indifferent behavior (10.0%):** Another 10.0% of respondents experience indifferent behavior from their neighbors, indicating a lack of strong positive or negative

interactions. Encouraging more engagement and community activities can help build stronger connections.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis provides a detailed understanding of various socio-economic aspects of women working in the Chikankari industry in Lucknow. A significant portion of respondents have attained a graduate-level education, with the largest age group being 20-35, indicating a trend of higher education among young adults. The correlation between age and education suggests that younger respondents are more likely to be educated.

The majority of respondents belong to families with a long-standing tradition in Chikankari, emphasizing a strong cultural heritage. However, the income levels remain low, with most respondents earning between 1000-5000 INR per month. Motorcycles are the preferred mode of transport, reflecting accessibility and affordability.

While 85% of respondents feel they are compensated according to their skills, addressing the concerns of the 15% who feel undercompensated is crucial. Financial aid during accidents is mainly sourced from banks, indicating a preference for formal institutions. There is also a notable reliance on social enterprises for compensation and support during economic recessions. The improvement in living conditions, such as financial independence and house repairs, highlights the positive impact of employment in the Chikankari industry.

SUGGESTION

1. Educational Initiatives: Develop scholarship and training programs to support women's education in the Chikankari industry.
2. Financial Support: Implement financial literacy programs and increase access to microfinance.
3. Fair Compensation: Conduct regular salary reviews and adjust compensation.
4. Transportation Solutions: Develop affordable public transportation options.
5. Cultural Heritage Preservation: Document and preserve traditional Chikankari techniques.
6. Community Engagement: Strengthen partnerships between social and business enterprises to provide support during economic crises.

Implementing these suggestions can improve the well-being and productivity of women in the Chikankari industry.

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