

## **Role of Marketing in the Decline of Handlooms Profession in Cholistan**

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### **Abstract**

Cholistan is a vast desolate sandy desert, stretching over two third area of former Bahawalpur Division. The climatic conditions of Cholistan desert are highly unfavorable to human and animals life. The main source of income of nomad pastoralists of Cholistan desert is livestock rearing including sheep, goats, camels and cows. Along with livestock rearing, their cottage industry such as making woolen “Shawls”, camel and goat’s hair bedding called “Phalacies”, carpet weaving and “Khaddi’ cloth. Handloom is an important rural household activity in several parts (mostly lesser Cholistan) of the Cholistan desert. These handlooms are simple in construction and raw material used in this industry is locally available. There are many factors due to which this industry in Cholistan is at backward but now this time mostly weavers want to remain in this profession because it is their forefather’s profession and their identity in the society. They have no problems of the raw material but they are not aware with new and challenging market situation. There is no proper direct marketing system due to which role of the middle men is very high. Because of uncertainty and less income, weavers are discouraged by this profession.

**Keywords:** Weavers, Handlooms & Cholistan Desert

## 1. Introduction

Cholistan is a vast desolate sandy desert, stretching over two third area of former Bahawalpur Division (Tehsil Yazman, Liaquat pur , Khanpur & Tehsil Fort Abass). It includes 2.6 million hectares in three districts i.e. Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar and Rahimyar Khan. Cholistan desert is about 480 km long and its width varies from 32 to 192 Km (Akbar et al., 1996, Chaudhary 1992).

Cholistan desert can be divided into two geomorphic regions. North western part comprising nearly 7,770 Km<sup>2</sup> areas is called "Lesser Cholistan". It borders the canal-irrigated areas consisting of a series of saline alluvial flats, alternating with low sandy ridges. The south eastern part of this desert covering an area of 18,130 Km<sup>2</sup> with wind resorted high sand dunes is called "Greater Cholistan" (Akbar and Arshad 2000, Arshad and Rao 1994).

About 4000 B.C., when the mighty river "Hakra"\* also known as river \*Saraswati or \*Ghagra used to flow through this region. Cholistan desert was once a flourishing center of "Hakra" Civilization. The area was under perennial regular irrigated agriculture till 1200 B.C and under seasonal regular irrigated cultivation until 600 B.C. When "Hakra" River dried up, once fertile area turned into a desolate sandy monster over a period of centuries and was given the names of "Rohi"\* or "Cholistan".

The climatic conditions of Cholistan desert are highly unfavorable to human and animals life. Annual mean rainfall varies from less than 100 mm in the west to 200 mm in the east. Rainfall usually occurs in monsoon (July, August & September) and in winter and spring (January, February & March). The temperature gains unbearable heights in summer and sometimes it rises up to 51 °C. (Akbar et al., 1996; Akhtar and Arshad 2006).

The total population of the Cholistan desert is around 1.2 million. Most of the Cholistani pastoralists experience two production systems (i) nomadic, and (ii) agro-pastoral. The people involved in nomadic production system lived in Greater Cholistan generally landless and their entire activities are centered on livestock rearing. Rangelands serve as the source of animal feed, while the water requirements are met either from "tobas" (rain water reservoir) or from wells. In agro- pastoral system of production, people own livestock as well as farmlands in irrigated area along with the periphery of the Lesser Cholistan. Agriculture production of these lands is very low due to shortage of the irrigation water. Split family system is observed in agro- pastoral production system, whereby women and children reside at farmlands with one or two milking cows, while the adults with their livestock move to the rangelands of the lesser as well as Greater Cholistan. Such movements and their destinations are pre-determined and properly decided. Generally, pastoralists move towards those areas where their own clans possess "tobas\*", wells or "kunds\*". During this movement, one or two women also company to facilitate cooking and milking of cows during their stay in the desert.

The main source of income of nomad pastoralists of Cholistan desert is livestock rearing including sheep's, goats' camels and cows. Along with livestock rearing their cottage industry includes such as making woolen "Shawls", camel and goat's hair bedding called "Phalacies"\*\*\*\*, carpet weaving and "Khaddi"\*\*\*\* cloth. Handloom is an important rural household activity in several parts (mostly lesser Cholistan) of the Cholistan desert. These handlooms are simple in construction and raw material used in this industry is locally available. Historically, handloom weaving has long been a low cost cottage industry and a complementary source of income for agricultural and other rural workers in Cholistan desert. Weaving is one among other livelihood choices available to the Cholistani people. Even though they consider weaving as one of their traditional activities but now a days the choice to weave depends upon consumption patterns, household resources, personal preferences and larger market forces.

Majority of the products of handlooms in Cholistan desert is prepared by using cotton thread or thread prepared by camel, goat and sheep hairs. Higher quality handlooms are finer in texture and give a look just like silk. To make such handlooms the cotton thread and the hairs of different animal species are dyed with different colors of market choice. These different colored threads are put on "KHADDI" (an instrument used to wave handlooms) and handlooms of different types having beautiful patterns are prepared. Major handlooms prepared in Cholistan are "Phalasi", Carpet, "Chadar\*", "Dari"\* , "Khais"\*\*\*, "Shalwar" and "Kameez"\*\*\*\*\*etc.

Socio-economic condition of the handloom workers directly depends upon the income through weaving of the handloom products when they got more orders for the weaving of handloom products by the customers, they got enough money through weaving then they think about for the better facilities of health, education, access to sweet and clean drinking

water, and also they have the power in decision making process of their society. In some areas of the Cholistan, people like to weave the dresses of their bride & grooms from the handloom workers. They are respected in the families of bride & grooms and also they have special status in these families of that area.

In summer when there is a hot they have less orders of weaving. In summer season, they have less work, less money, they minimize their social activities like wedding ceremony, culture events etc. All cultural events in Cholistan are celebrated in the spring; they celebrate their cultural events after fulfilling the orders of local peoples and especially of master weavers (Middlemen) in the moony nights of spring. The philosophy of the moony nights is because in Cholistan there is no electricity in Cholistan, they intentionally want to celebrate their cultural activities in moony nights. They have a lot of work in late summer & in winter. They earn more money in winter due to heavy orders of weaving especially “Dari”, “Khais”, and “Shawals” from local Peoples as well as supplier.

## **2. Methodology**

This study was designed to estimate the impact of handlooms on the socio-economic conditions of the handloom workers in Cholistan desert. This study was mainly based on primary data collected from different types of handloom weavers. The proposed research procedure is given below.

### **Universe**

This study was planned to conduct in Cholistan desert (Seven Cholistani union councils of districts Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagr & Rahimyar Khan). This area was selected; firstly the researcher was serving in an organization (National Rural Support Programme Pakistan) and posted in whole of Cholistan desert. Secondly, the researcher was familiar with the whole area and local language (Saraiklee) so it was easy to collect the data. Thirdly, in this area livestock especially goat, sheep and camel population is very high. Wool and hairs of these animals used as raw material for handloom. Weaving is found in huge and people prefer handloom products made by animal hairs.

### **Sampling**

A simple ball method was used for the selection of respondent. This is the method in which one respondent is selected on the information other respondent was selected. There are seven union councils in three districts of former Bahawalpur Division. Weavers are basically nomads, they can move from one place to other according to the availability of water. Three hundred respondents (from the seven Union Councils of Cholistan) of different types of weavers were selected according to the simple ball method. The respondents were personally interviewed with the help of comprehensive interview schedule.

## **3. Data Collection**

### **a) Interview Schedule:**

An interviewing schedule was used for the collection of data. The interview schedule was comprehensive comprising of all necessary details of the respondents. It was prepared in English to seek the required information from the respondents local language Saraiklee or Urdu language was used.

### **b) Pre-Testing and finalization of Interview Schedule:**

Pre-Testing is necessary to check the validity and accuracy of interview schedule. It was helpful to detect the mistakes and deficiencies in the tools of data collection. To judge the validity of the interview schedule, pre-testing was made on a group of 25 handloom workers from non-selected villages but representing socio-economic situation before going to the field for data collection. It was necessary, in order to collect reliable and valid information from the respondents. The interview schedule was modified by making necessary corrections in the light of suggestions given by the weavers during pre-testing. The unnecessary questions were deleted to make the interview schedule more comprehensive. After pre-testing questionnaire was improved and finalized.

### **c) Interview Procedure**

The aim and objective of the study or data collection was explained in detail to respondents before starting the actual interview. All possible efforts were made to obtain correct information. Personal interview method was used for the collection of data. The selected 300 weavers were personally interviewed in local languages i.e. Saraiklee or Punjabi. Since the interview schedule was in English, it had to be translated into Saraiklee or Punjabi when ask the question to the respondents .and back again to English by the researcher. The respondents were interviewed mostly at their homes or weaving place, and data were collected in an informal and friendly atmosphere. During the process of interviewing, every effort was made to explain the questions where needed to the respondents, so that correct and reliable information could be gathered.

#### **Difficulties Confronted**

Some difficulties were faced by the researcher during the course of investigation. A few respondents were reluctant to give correct answers about personal information's. Therefore, a lot of time had to be spent to explain to them the purpose of the study to motivate them to give exact /correct information. Besides, means of transport and communication in rural areas retarded the progress of the research work and it took a lot of time and efforts of the researcher to reach the farmers. Metals roads did not connect most of the villages; therefore the researcher had to approach the villages mostly on foot.

### **Statistical Techniques & Methods**

Data collected was tabulated systematically and analyzed statistically to bring it into comparable form. The data was analyzed through simple percentage test using the following formula

$$\text{Percentage} = F/N * 100$$

Where, F= Total Frequencies

N= No. of observations

## **4. Results & Discussions**

Keeping in view the specific objectives of the research, an interview schedule was developed to collect the data. The data collected from 300 respondents have been tabulated, analyzed and discussed in this chapter.

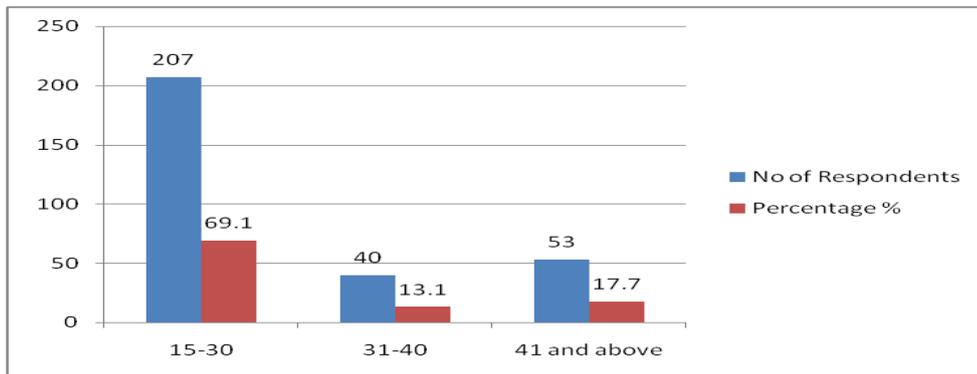
The respondents were asked personal questions regarding their age and education. These questions are also helpful to know the efficiency of workers. Working in this profession because younger weavers are more efficient and enthusiastic also their small and thin figures which are helpful for speedy weaving .Educated workers are better in adopting new technologies in this profession .Higher the education higher will be the rate of adopting new ideas in this profession.

### **Personal Information about the Respondents**

#### **Age of the Respondents:**

Age of the respondents play an important role in handloom weaving because of the reason , younger are more efficient workers and their small & thin figures were helpful for speedy weaving .Older weavers are helpful for the designs, color scheme selection and better marketing. It was therefore considered to collect data about age of respondents .The data collected in this regards are given in graph-1

**Graph-1:** Distribution of the Respondents According to Age (years) group (300)

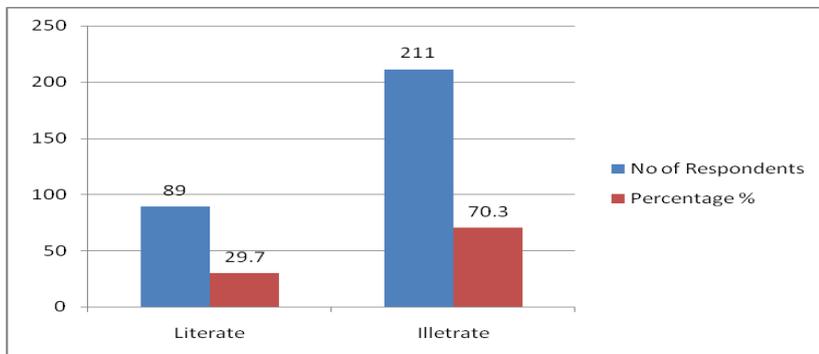


Graph-1 shows that the majority of the respondents (69%) were of the age of 15-30 years. In this age group majority are carpet weavers, because younger are efficient workers with their thin and small fingers which are helpful for speedy weaving. 13% were in up to the age of 31-40 years, out of which majority are cloth weavers and 18% of the respondents were up to the age of 41 & above, out of which majority are phalasi weavers.

**Education of the Respondents**

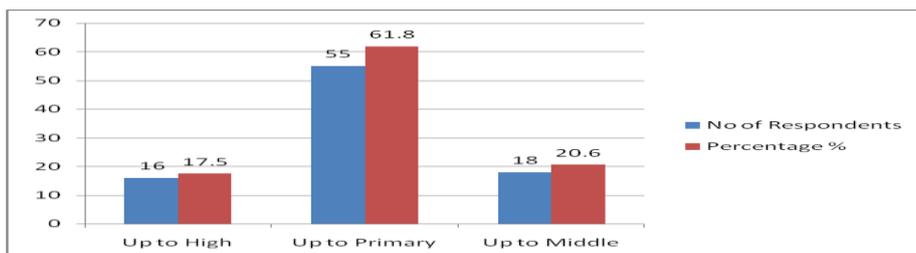
Education may be defined as the process of developing knowledge, wisdom, character, general competence & other desirable qualities of mind in the human being. It is considered as the formal stage of schooling. Education plays an important role in business management like handlooms and marketing of their products. Educated weavers are more receptive to adopt new technologies of modern designs, color schemes and effective marketing of handloom products. Mostly weavers/respondents of the research study are not living in the settled areas. They are living in far flung areas of Cholistan desert where there are no basic necessities of life available. Data regarding education & classification of literate respondents are given in graph-2 & 3

**Graph-2:** Distribution of the Respondents According to Education (300)



Graph -2 indicates that 70% of the respondents are illiterate and only 30% are literate. The data regarding classification of literate respondents are given in graph-3

**Graph-3:** Distribution of the Respondents According to Education Level (90)



Graph-3 indicates that majority 62% of the respondents have primary education while 21% are up to middle and only 17% are educated and literate up to matriculation and no one was above matriculation.

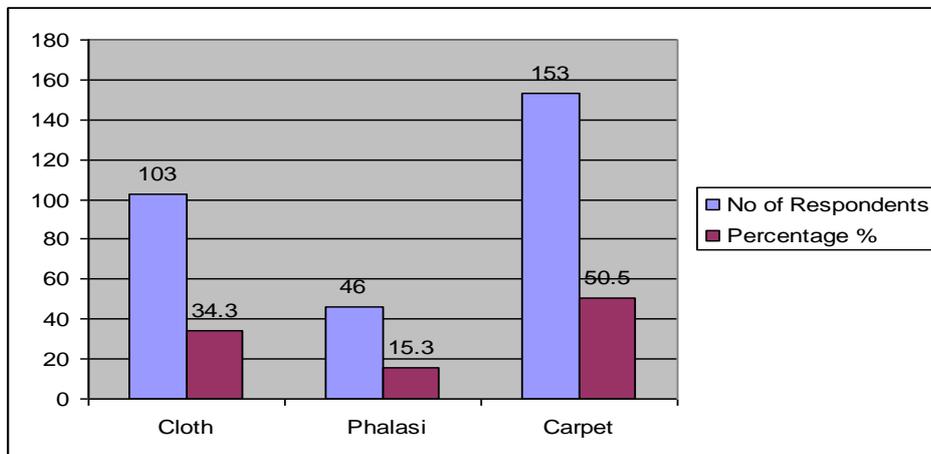
The respondents were asked the relevant question to obtain their response how they had adopted this profession, about the members of the family who help in this profession, question regarding from where you have arranged the Handloom, about the arrangement of Handloom, purchase of raw material, information regarding raw material, regarding help when there is shortage of raw material, help when there is a problem in weaving information regarding marketing of handloom products, etc. The responses thus obtained are given in graph 4-13

**Role of Handlooms according to their type in Socio-Economic condition of workers**

The respondents were asked the relevant questions to obtain their responses, handloom you weave, do you think this profession play any positive role in socio-economic improvement, how much you invests on raw material, at which price you sell your product, how much profit you gain on your product, etc. The responses thus obtained are given in graph-23-29

**Handloom You Weave**

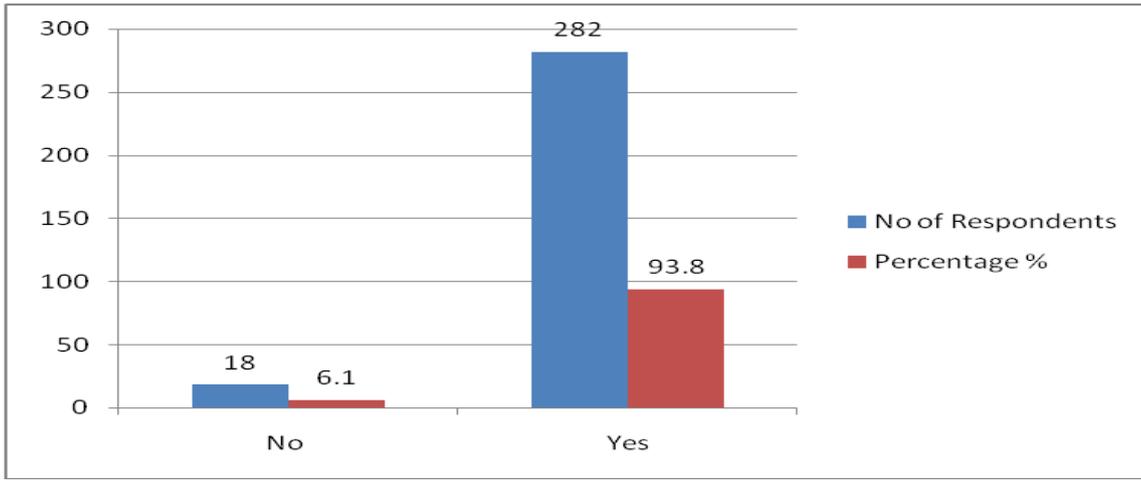
**Graph-4:** Distribution of the Respondents According to handloom they Weave (300)



Graph -4 shows that nearly to 50% weavers are engaged with Carpet weaving while 35% with Cloth weaving and only 15% are of the phalasi weaving. The reason behind is that the marketing facilities, raw material ,design are given in carpet weaving by the master weavers so they have nothing to invest but in other cases they have to invest on raw material and other expenses also.

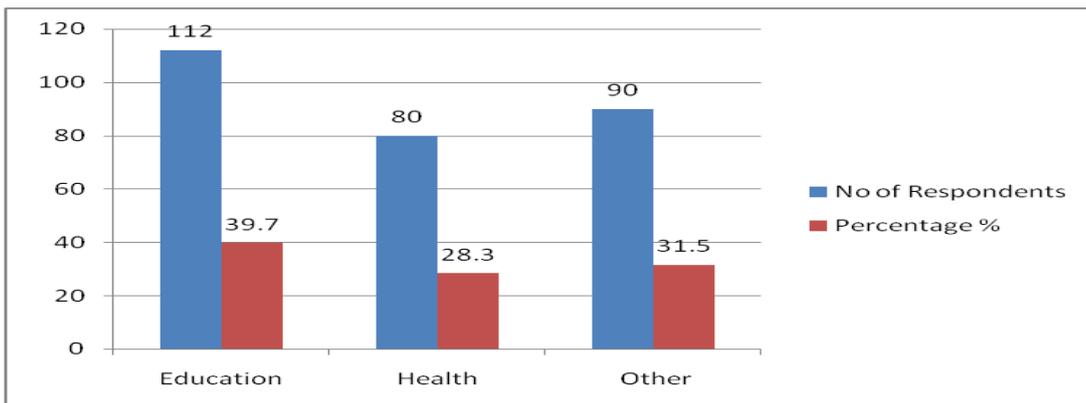
**Do you think This Profession Play Any Positive Role in Socio-Economic Improvement?**

**Graph-5:** Distribution of the Respondents According to Do they think this Profession Play Any Positive Role in Socio-Economic Improvement (300)



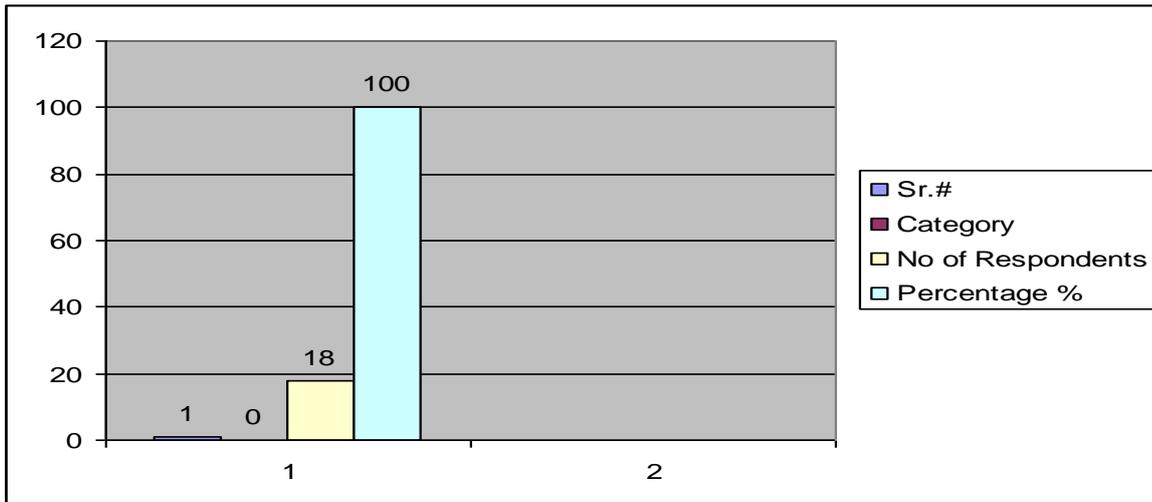
From graph-5 it is clear that a vast majority (94%) of the weavers think that this profession plays positive role in socio-economic condition of the weavers and only 6% of the respondents replied negatively. The respondents, who replied in Yes that this profession plays a positive role in their socio-economic condition they are further asked in what way, these results are shown in graph-6.

**Graph-6:** Distribution of the Respondents According to Yes this Profession Play Any Positive Role in Socio-Economic Improvement (282)



Graph-6 shows that 40% of the weavers told that by getting education they can improve their socio-economic condition because they get education if the govt. provides schools at accessible areas, while 28% says that their work is not burden on their health. And about 32% of the weaver’s claim that they enjoy a special status in the community. People can order them the sots of bride and grows of their wedding ceremony so that have special status in the social events. The only 6%, who replied that this profession couldn’t play a positive role in their socio-economic condition they are further asked in what way, these results are shown in graph-7.

**Graph-7:** Distribution of the Respondents According to Yes this Profession Play Any Positive Role in Socio-Economic Improvement (18)

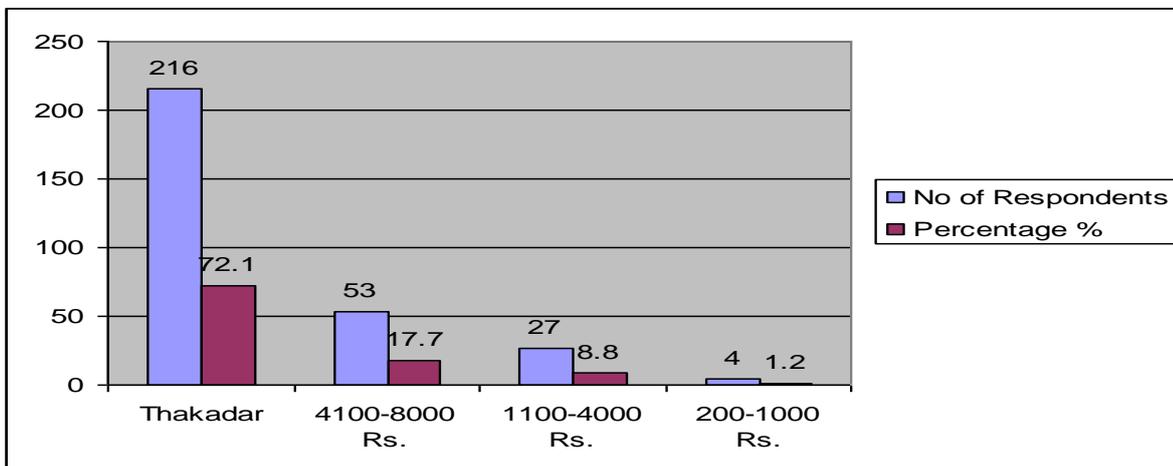


Graph-26 reveals that all the respondents replied that when they can get money more than enough then there is no change, never they get education not improve their health and there is no status of the poor in the society. These results are supported by the results of Ali & Sikandar who concluded that almost all the surveyed weavers’ families reported facing financial difficulties in giving primary education, health facilities to their children due to decline in family base weaving activities and have reduced their participation in various community activities.

**How much you invests on raw material**

The results of how much you invest on raw material are shown in graph-8

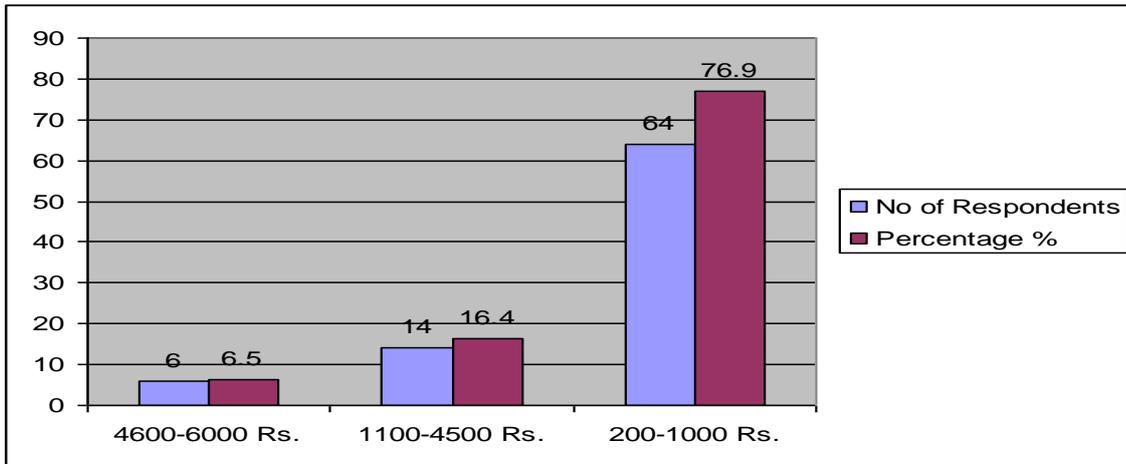
**Grpaph-8:** Distribution of the Respondents According to how (Rupees) much they invest on raw material (300)



From graph -8, it is very clear that maximum (72%) get raw material from different organizations and Thakedar (Middle men) for whom they work. They give them raw material, design and took prepared products from them and pay them wages at different scales per foot per piece, per meter. In above-mentioned case majority of them are of carpet weaving and cloth weaving. The remaining who purchases raw materials 18% weavers invest Rs. 4100-8000 while 9% invest Rs.1100-4000 and who purchases from Rs. 200-1000 are only 1%. These results are similar to those of Gandhi (2005) who reported that yarn design and other raw material is provided by master weaver. Still about 40% of the weaver community work under master weaver in Tamil Nadu.

### Which Price You Sell Your Product

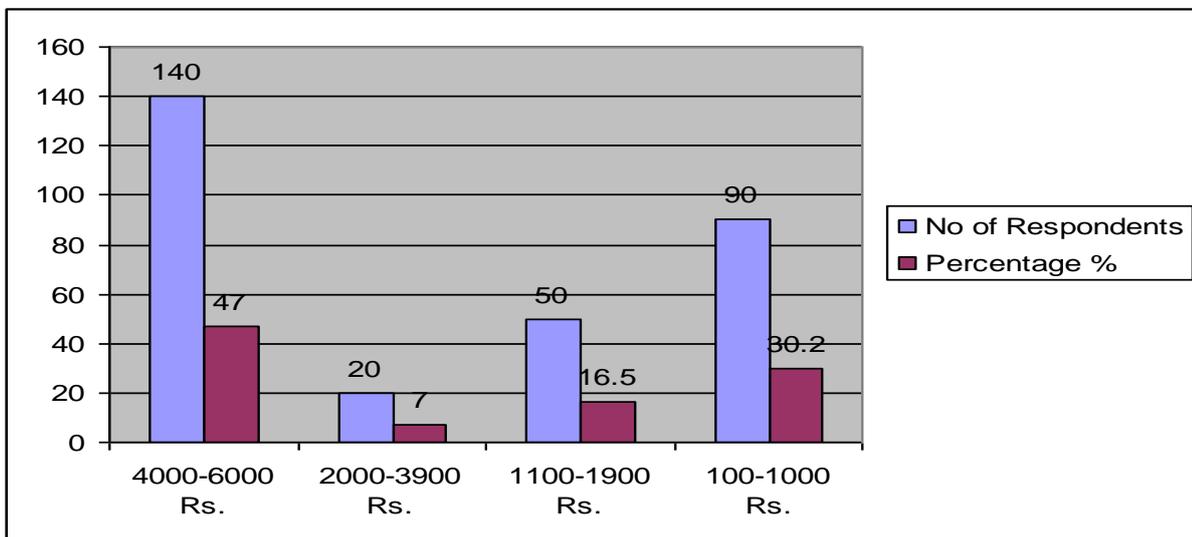
**Graph-9:** Distribution of the Respondents According to which price (Rupees) they sell their product (84)



In the study area where there is no proper marketing, weavers are working with some master weavers, or with any organization, so in our case, 236 weavers were getting material from master weaver or any organization and works on wages so they don't know sale price. The remaining who sell at Rs. 200-1000 are maximum 77%, secondly who sell at Rs. 1100-4500 are 16% and who sell at Rs. 4600-6000 are only 7%. Our results are supported by the results of Gandhi (2005) that yarn and other material are provided by the master weaver and the weavers earn the wages according to quantity produced. These results are shown in graph 9

### How Much Profit You Gain On Your Product

**Graph-10:** Distribution of the Respondents According to How Much Profit (Rupees) You Gain on Your Product (300)



Here we take the profit of piece of Phalasi, Carpet and 50-60 meter cloth. Phalasi is weaved 6-7 days. Carpet weavers weave that carpet from 7-30 days, depending on size and cloth weavers weaves a cloth from 10 to 12 days. In the data, the weavers who got profit from Rs.4000-6000 are 47%, secondly are 30% who got profit Rs.100-1000. The 17%, who got Rs.1100-1900 and in the last 7% who got profit Rs.2000-3900. Our results are supported by the findings of Gandhi who reported that weavers could earn Rs. 60-80. Per day in Tamilnadu (Per month 1800-2400) who produced bed sheets, pillow cover and screen cloth. These results slightly differ because of currency, time and cloth weaver but our results are of the all handloom products (Carpet, Phalasi & Cloth).

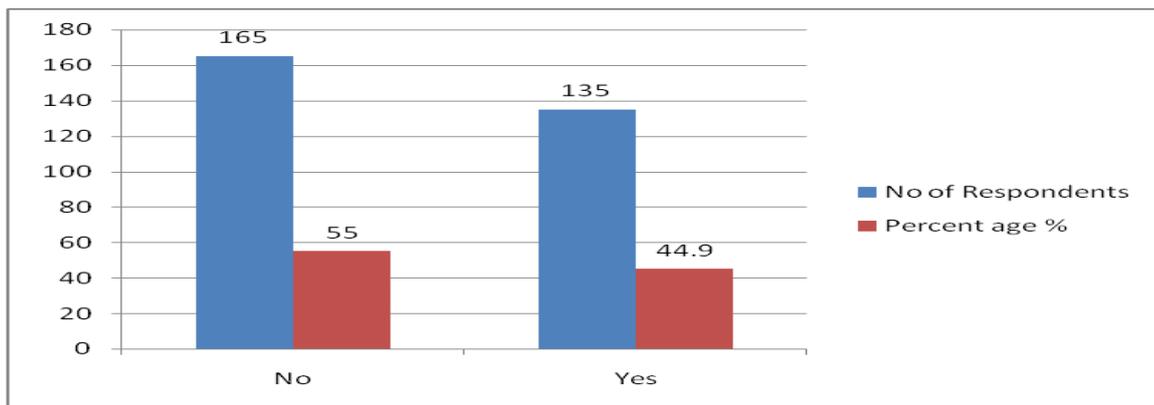
**Marketing facilities**

The respondents were asked the relevant questions to obtain their responses, do you have any market of handloom in your area, in which way you sale your product, which type of looms has market value in your area, do you think color scheme and design play any role in marketing, how do you select design & color scheme, do you think raw material play any role in improving marketing value of product, availability of raw material, etc .The responses thus obtained are given in graph-30-40

**Do you have any market of handloom in your area**

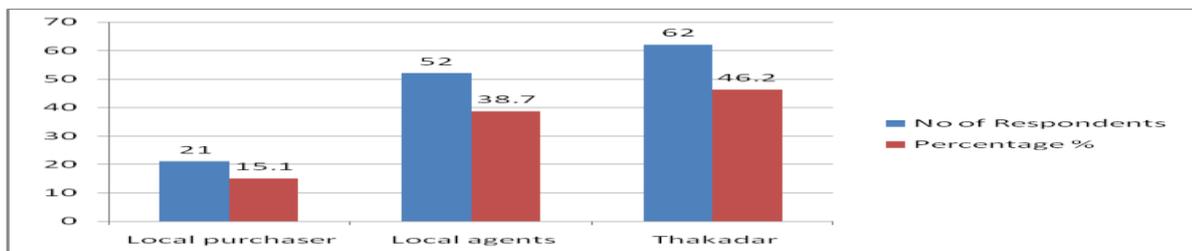
In the response that there is any market for handloom product the results are shown in graph-30

**Graph-11:** Distribution of the Respondents According to do they have any market in their area (300)



Graph-11 shows that, the majority (55%) of the weavers says that there is no market while 45% weavers say that they have channels (Market) to sale their products. The respondents who replied that they have market in their area are further face the question what type of market , in this regards their responses are shown in graph-12.

**Graph-12:** Distribution of the Respondents According to what type of market they have (135)

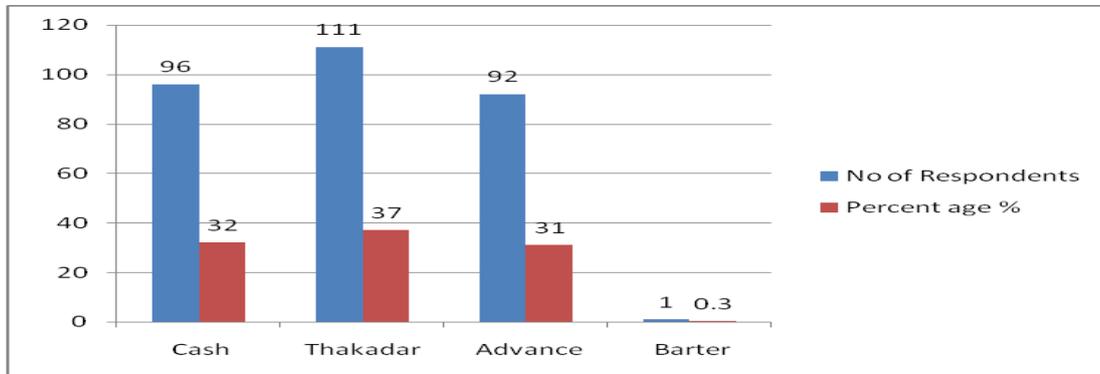


Graph-12 reveals that 46% replied that Thakedar are their market because they give them raw material and get their products, 39% said that local agents who did not give them raw material but they purchase their product and then sale in Hyderabad, and Multan. 15% said that there are enough local purchasers who order us and after preparation they purchase their products. These results are supported by the findings of Gandhi (2005) who reported that master weaver (Thakedar) own looms in private shed and hire weavers to weave for order the master weaver has in hand. Still about 40% of the weaver community work under master weaver in Tamil Nadu.

**In which way you sell your product**

When the researchers asked the respondents that in which way they sale their product are shown in graph-13.

**Graph-13:** Distribution of the Respondents According to in which way they sell their product (300)

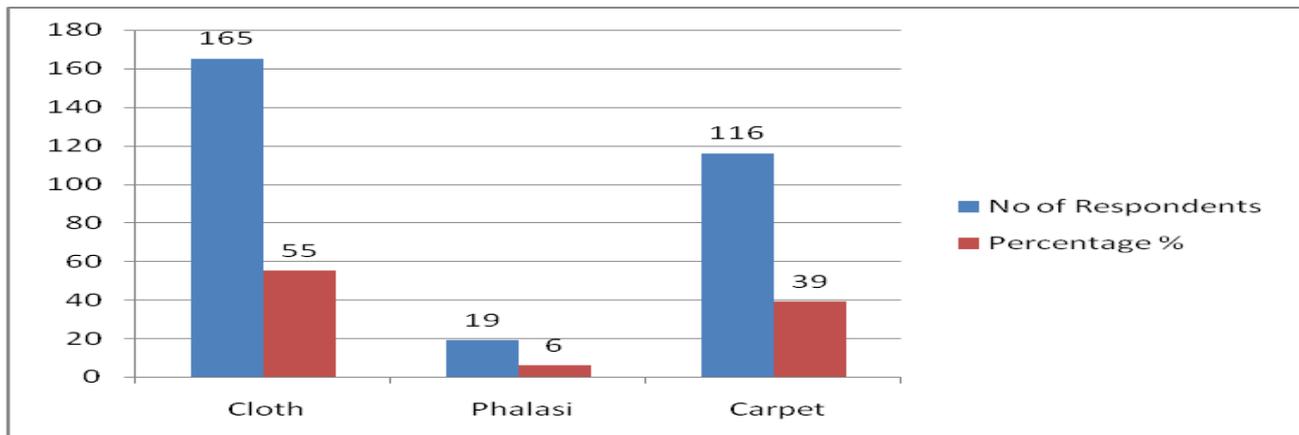


Graph-13 shows that 37% weavers said that Thakedar (middle men) can purchase their product either he pays at spot or advance and they get only wages for labor because he already provides them raw material and designs, 32% told that they sale at Cash their products while 31% weavers told that they get advance payment then they prepare their orders and only 0.3% weavers told that they locally work/sale by the barter system. They give them their products and get animal’s hairs. These findings are compared with the findings of Gandhi who reported that the master weaver (Thakedar) provides Yarn and other material and weavers earn wages according to quantity produced. Still about 40% of the weaver community work under master weavers.

**Which type of loom has market value in your area?**

In the response of the question which type of loom has market value are shown in graph-14

**Graph-14:** Distribution of the Respondents According to which type of handloom has market value in their area (300)

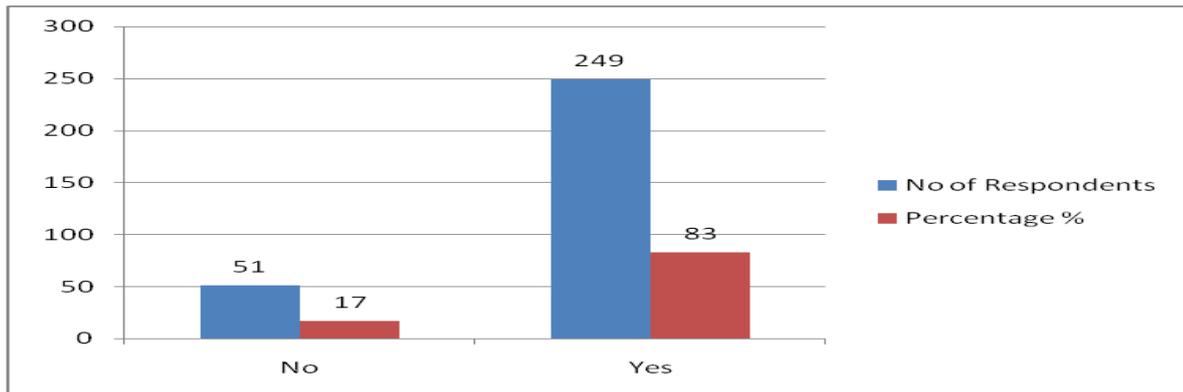


Graph-14 shows that the majority (55%) of the weavers told that Cloth weaving has value in these days because market is now establish in Bahawalpur because of National Rural Support Programme (NRSP). While 39% weavers told that Carpet value is high because material is provided at home and product were taken by the Thakedar (middle men) and only 6% weavers have Phalasi weaving has value because this is the tradition of Cholistan and its raw material (Animal Hair) are easily available.

**Do you think color scheme and design play any role in marketing?**

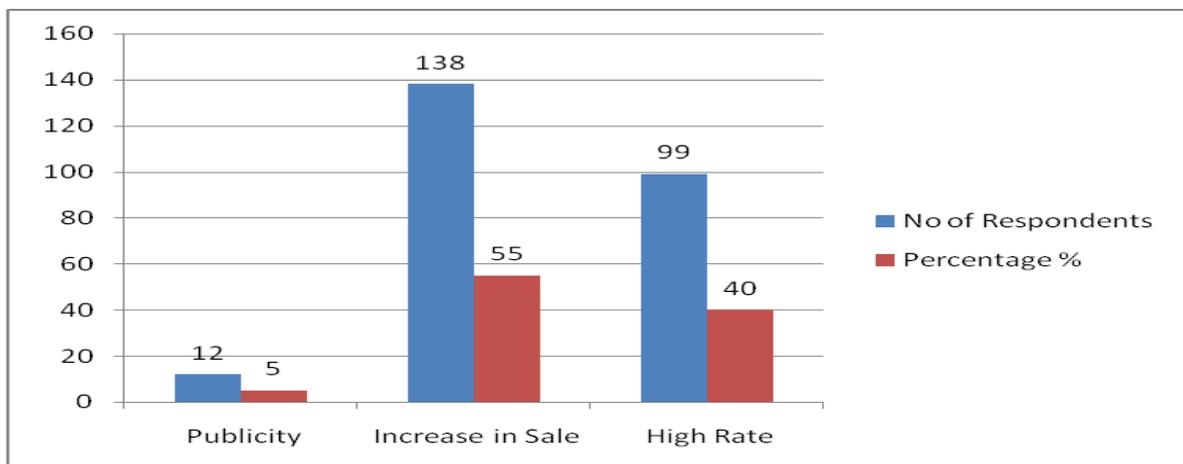
The results regarding to do you think that color scheme and design play any role in marketing is shown in graph-15.

**Graph-15:** Distribution of the Respondents According to do you think color scheme and design play any role in marketing (300)



A majority (83%) of the weavers replied that Yes color scheme and design play positive role. And only 17% weavers think that colors did not play any positive role in batter marketing because they have their customer from fore father they can understand their choices. The respondents who reply in Yes are further asked about what way the color and design play a role in better marketing .The responses of the weavers are shown in graph-16.

**Graph-16:** Distribution of the Respondents According to YES color scheme and design play any role in marketing (249)

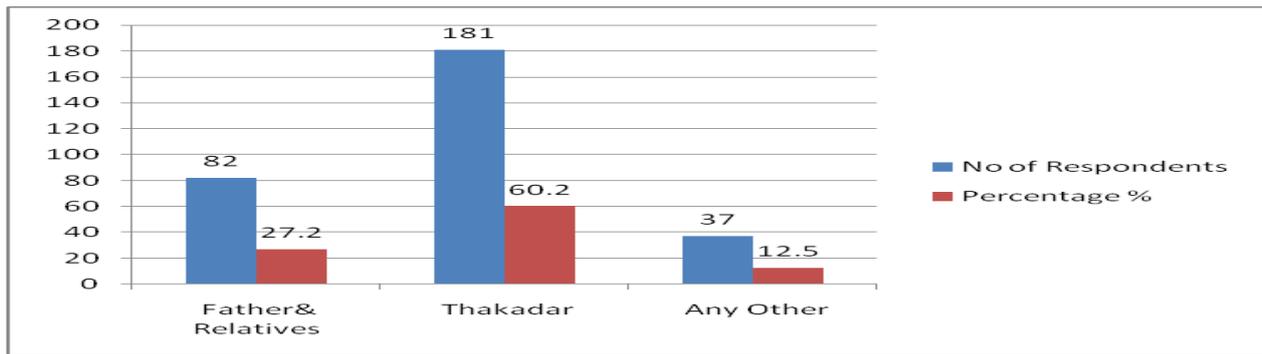


From graph-16, the maximum (55%) weavers give reason that because of good color scheme and design their sale is increased, while 40% says that because of good color schemes they can earn their publicity.

**How Do You Select Design & Color Scheme?**

In the response of the selection of design and colors, the results are shown in graph-17

**Graph-17:** Distribution of the Respondents According to how did you select Design and Color Scheme (300)

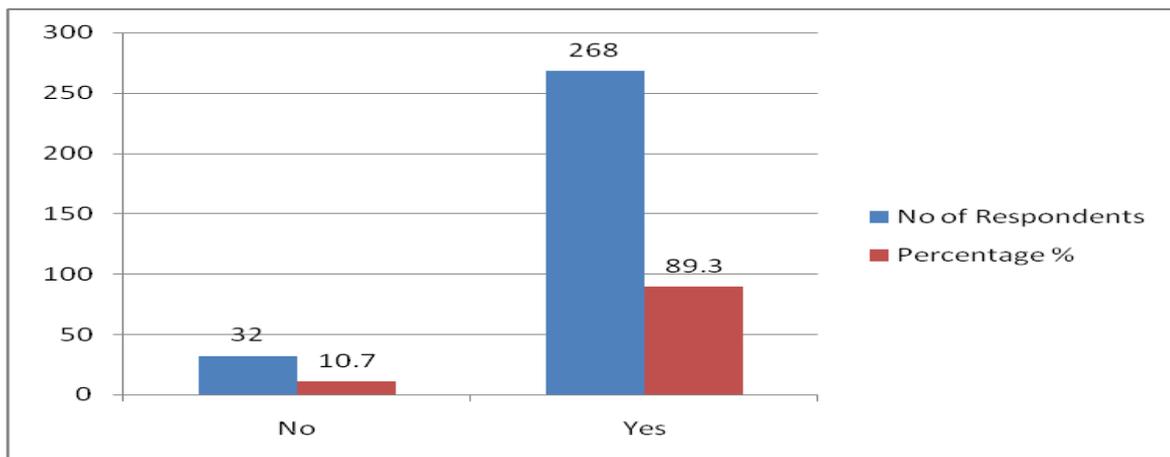


From graph-17, the majority (60%) of the respondents told that they got design from their Thakedar, while 27% told that they select design from their Parents and relatives. And only 13% told that they select design by any other way may be their Trainers, Organization or according to their own will. These results are similar to those of Gandhi (2005) who reported that yarn design and other raw material is provided by master weaver. Still about 40% of the weaver community work under master weaver in Tamil Nadu.

**Do you think raw material play any role in improving marketing value of product?**

When the researcher asked the question about their thought in importance of raw material in improving market value of the product, their answers are shown in graph-18.

**Graph-18:** Distribution of the Respondents According to do they think raw material play any role in improving marketing value of product? (300)



In the graph- 18 it is clear that, the maximum (89%) of the weavers say that yes raw material play vital role in better marketing and the only 11% replied that there is no role of the raw material in better marketing. And the respondents who replied that Yes raw material play a role in better marketing are also asked in what way, their answers are shown in graph-19

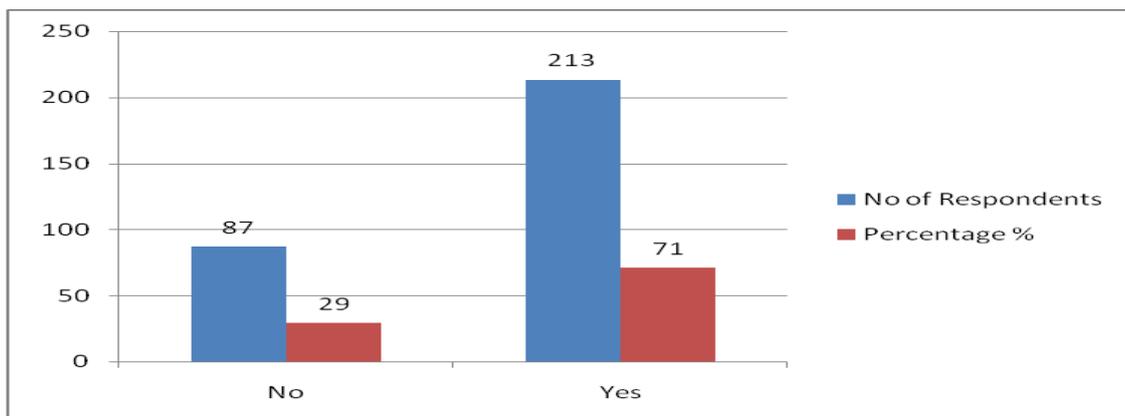
**Graph-19:** Distribution of the Respondents According to do YES raw material play any role in improving marketing value of product? (267)



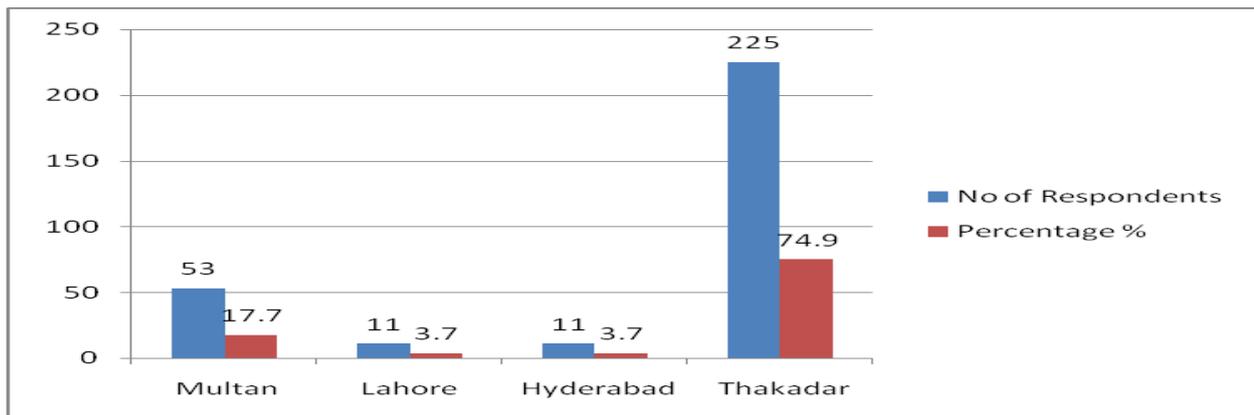
From graph-19 it is very clear that 63% of the weavers told that because of fine quality, 19% told that after good use of raw material they enjoy good price and only 18% told that because of good raw material this is trust worthy.

**Availability of Raw Material**

**Graph-20:** Distribution of the Respondents According to the availability of raw material (300)



For the availability of raw material a vast majority (71%) of the respondents claim that raw material according to their need easily available. Remaining 29% weavers told that they face problem in availability of raw material. The respondents who replied that the raw material is easily available are further asked from where they got raw material and their answers are shown in graph-21.

**Graph-21:** Distribution of the Respondents According to, from where they got raw material (213)

From graph-21 it is clear that the maximum (75%) weavers told they got the raw material from Thakedar (middlemen), 18% purchase from Multan, 4% purchase from Hyderabad, and 3% from Lahore. These results are similar to those of Gandhi (2005) who reported that yarn design and master weaver provides other raw material. Still about 40% of the weaver community work under master weaver in Tamil Nadu.

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