

A Study on Migrated Silk Entrepreneurs for Economic Impact with Special Reference to Kancheepuram

S. Sivakavitha¹ and K. Selvasundaram²

Abstract

This research paper delves into the economic impacts of migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram, a region synonymous with silk production in India. The study's primary objective is to uncover the contributions, challenges, and opportunities that migrated entrepreneurs bring to the traditional silk industry and to assess their role in the economic development of Kancheepuram. Employing a qualitative research design, the methodology hinges on semi-structured interviews with 30 migrated silk entrepreneurs, analysed through thematic analysis using NVivo 12 to identify recurring themes. Key findings reveal that migrated entrepreneurs significantly contribute to job creation, innovation, and market expansion in Kancheepuram's silk industry. They face considerable challenges, including market competition, access to capital, and regulatory hurdles, yet identify notable opportunities in technological advancements, sustainability, and global market integration. The study fills a crucial gap in the literature by offering detailed insights into the complex dynamics between migration, entrepreneurship, and economic development in a traditional industry context. The implications of this research are manifold, highlighting the need for supportive policy frameworks that recognize the unique needs and potential of entrepreneurs in traditional sectors. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of fostering an environment conducive to innovation and sustainability, thereby enhancing the global competitiveness of traditional industries like silk production.

Keywords: Migrated Entrepreneurs, Silk Industry, Economic Impact, Kancheepuram, Innovation, Employment

INTRODUCTION

The silk industry, often termed the "Queen of Textiles," is renowned for its luxurious texture, sheen, and durability, making it a highly valued commodity across cultures and centuries. Historically, silk production was not only an art but also a cornerstone of economic and social development in many regions, including Kancheepuram in India (Bukhari & Kour, 2019). This industry's influence extends beyond the realms of fashion and commerce, intertwining with cultural identity, tradition, and the sustenance of local economies.

In recent decades, the dynamics of silk production and trade have undergone significant transformations, partly due to globalization and the migration of entrepreneurs within and across borders. Migrated silk entrepreneurs, in particular, have played a pivotal role in revitalizing and innovating within this sector, thus impacting the economic landscapes of their host communities (Roy, 2018). The migration of entrepreneurs, often driven by the search for better opportunities or the need to overcome economic challenges, introduces new skills, techniques, and business models to traditional industries, potentially leading to economic growth and diversification.

The significance of studying the economic impact of migrated silk entrepreneurs, especially in a historically rich silk-producing region like Kancheepuram, lies in understanding the broader implications of migration and entrepreneurship on traditional industries. These impacts encompass a spectrum of outcomes, including employment generation, technological innovation, and the global expansion of local markets (Ricciardi et al., 2020; Giacomini et al., 2017). Furthermore, examining this topic sheds light on the challenges and opportunities faced by migrant entrepreneurs, contributing valuable insights into policies and practices that can support sustainable industry growth and economic development.

¹ Department of Commerce (CS & AF), Faculty of Science and Humanities, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur - 603203, Tamil Nadu, India; E-mail: sivakavs@srmist.edu.in

² Department of Commerce (CS & AF), Faculty of Science and Humanities, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur - 603203, Tamil Nadu, India

The resilience and adaptability of the silk industry, particularly in response to global economic shifts and environmental sustainability concerns, highlight the critical role of innovation and entrepreneurship in traditional sectors (Tracy et al., 2017; Li et al., 2015). Migrated entrepreneurs, by bridging diverse cultures and markets, contribute to a dynamic exchange of knowledge and practices, enriching the silk industry's heritage and driving its evolution in the contemporary economic context.

Exploring the economic impact of migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram not only enriches our understanding of the silk industry's current state but also illuminates the pathways through which traditional industries can navigate the complexities of modern economies. This research underscores the interplay between tradition and innovation, highlighting the potential of migrated entrepreneurs to contribute to economic resilience and sustainability in a globalized world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of the silk industry, deeply intertwined with migration and entrepreneurship, offers a fertile ground for examining economic impacts and innovation drivers. This literature review encapsulates findings from pivotal studies, exploring the confluence of migration, entrepreneurship, and the silk industry's economic dynamics.

Roy (2018) delves into the artisanal silk industry of West Bengal, highlighting the sector's labor and land-intensive nature. Roy's analysis underscores the historical significance of silk as a livelihood in India, tracing its evolution from medieval patronage to its commercial boom in the European market. The study employs a comprehensive historical analysis coupled with primary data from Malda district, revealing the nuanced interplay between labor dynamics and income generation within artisanal silk production. The decline in employment juxtaposed with the increase in raw silk production raises critical discussions on technological interventions and market dynamics' roles in shaping the artisanal silk sector.

Zhou and Huang (2023) provide an empirical exploration into how R&D investments influence innovation outputs within high-tech industries along the Silk Road Economic Belt. Leveraging panel data and fixed-effect regression analysis, the study elucidates the positive correlation between government and enterprise R&D spending and innovation outcomes. This research provides a lens through which to view the silk industry's innovation ecosystem, suggesting a paradigm where R&D investment is pivotal for technological advancement and market competitiveness.

Ricciardi et al. (2020) tackle the environmental sustainability of expanding silk demand in India. Through a dynamic spatially distributed crop water balance model, the study evaluates the environmental sustainability of mulberry silk production's horizontal expansion. The findings highlight the critical balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability, emphasizing the potential exacerbation of water scarcity and malnutrition in silk-producing regions. This research underscores the imperative of integrating environmental considerations into the economic strategies of the silk industry.

Franceschi (2020) provides a historical account of silk manufacturing in Renaissance Italy, emphasizing silk's role in fostering economic wealth and state strategy. The study's narrative review method brings to light the intricate relationship between silk production, artisanal skill, and entrepreneurial ventures in pre-modern Europe. By contextualizing silk manufacturing within broader economic and social frameworks, Franceschi's work enriches the understanding of silk entrepreneurship's long-term economic impacts.

Solà Parera et al. (2020) compare the economic resilience of the silk industry in Barcelona and Manresa during the economic crisis of 1787–1832. Through historical analysis, the study unveils the adaptive strategies employed by silk producers, from diversifying into emerging sectors to innovating within the silk industry itself. This research illuminates the capacity for innovation and adaptability within the silk sector, offering parallels to contemporary challenges faced by migrated silk entrepreneurs.

Bukhari and Kour (2019) present an extensive overview of the Indian silk industry's status quo and prospective challenges. The study's use of secondary data and trend analysis paints a comprehensive picture of the silk industry's production, consumption, and employment landscapes. It delineates the strategic importance of the

silk industry in India's socio-economic fabric, highlighting the potential for future growth amidst global competition.

Lin and Yang (2017) revisit the migration-trade linkage through the lens of entrepreneurial aspirations, applying a sociological perspective to understand how migration influences trade creation activities. Their empirical study, focusing on China, utilizes census data to analyze the impact of migration experiences on entrepreneurship within the trade sector, including silk. The findings suggest that lower-skilled immigrants have a pronounced pro-trade effect, contributing nuanced insights into the dynamics of migrant entrepreneurship in the silk industry.

The scholarly works reviewed herein collectively shed light on the multifaceted economic impacts of migration and entrepreneurship within the silk industry. From historical economic foundations to contemporary challenges of sustainability and innovation, the literature underscores the silk industry's enduring significance and the pivotal role of migrated entrepreneurs in its evolution. As the silk industry navigates the complexities of global markets and environmental concerns, these studies offer valuable perspectives on fostering sustainable growth and leveraging entrepreneurial dynamism for economic development.

However, the existing literature predominantly explores the economic impact of the silk industry and migrated entrepreneurs in a broad sense, often overlooking the nuanced effects of migration within specific traditional industries like silk production in culturally and historically rich regions such as Kancheepuram. This gap signifies the need for a focused investigation into how migrated silk entrepreneurs specifically influence the economic dynamics, innovation, and sustainability of the silk industry in Kancheepuram. Addressing this gap is vital for developing targeted policies and support mechanisms that leverage the unique contributions of migrated entrepreneurs to revitalize traditional industries and promote regional economic development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-method research design, focusing on qualitative data to explore the economic impacts of migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram. Below is a detailed breakdown of the data source and the analytical method employed to derive insights.

Data Collection

Aspect	Details
Source	Semi-structured interviews with migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram
Sampling Method	Purposive sampling
Sample Size	30 entrepreneurs
Data Collection Tool	Interview guide comprising open-ended questions to explore economic impacts and experiences
Period	Data were collected over three months, from January to March 2023
Data Type	Qualitative
Consent Process	Verbal and written informed consent obtained from all participants
Ethical Considerations	Approval obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB)
Data Storage	Digitally recorded and transcribed interviews stored in encrypted, password-protected files

Data Analysis

Aspect	Details
Analytical Tool	NVivo 12
Analysis Type	Thematic Analysis
Coding Process	Initial coding followed by focused coding to identify recurring themes
Verification	Cross-validation of themes by independent reviewers
Report Writing	Themes were synthesized into a narrative aligning with the study's objectives

Methodological Justification

The choice of semi-structured interviews was predicated on the need to understand the depth and complexity of the economic impacts of migrated silk entrepreneurs from their perspective. Thematic analysis facilitated the identification of patterns within the data, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the economic contributions, challenges, and opportunities faced by these entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram. The use of NVivo 12 as a data analysis tool enabled the efficient organization, coding, and analysis of qualitative data, ensuring a systematic and reproducible approach to theme identification.

This methodology was pivotal in uncovering the intricate dynamics at play in the silk industry in Kancheepuram, shaped significantly by the influx of migrated entrepreneurs. The findings derived from this approach are anticipated to contribute valuable insights into the economic revitalization of traditional industries through migration and entrepreneurship.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The thematic analysis of interviews with 30 migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram yielded significant insights into the economic impacts, challenges, and opportunities within the local silk industry. Using NVivo 12 for data analysis, several key themes were identified. Below are the synthesized tables representing these themes and their interpretations:

Table 1: Economic Contributions of Migrated Entrepreneurs

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Job Creation	25	83.33%
Innovation in Silk Production	20	66.67%
Expansion of Market Access	18	60%

Interpretation: A significant majority of participants highlighted their role in creating job opportunities within the local community. Furthermore, innovation in silk production techniques and the expansion of market access were also noted as critical economic contributions.

Table 2: Challenges Faced by Migrated Entrepreneurs

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Market Competition	22	73.33%
Access to Capital	20	66.67%
Regulatory Hurdles	15	50%

Interpretation: Entrepreneurs frequently cited intense market competition, difficulties in accessing capital, and navigating regulatory hurdles as significant challenges impacting their operations and growth.

Table 3: Opportunities Identified by Entrepreneurs

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Technological Advancement	24	80%
Global Market Access	23	76.67%
Sustainable Practices	18	60%

Interpretation: The majority of respondents see technological advancement as a key opportunity for the silk industry, alongside expanding into global markets and adopting sustainable practices.

Table 4: Impact on Local Economy

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Increase in Local Employment	28	93.33%
Skill Development	26	86.67%
Economic Diversification	20	66.67%

Interpretation: Nearly all entrepreneurs reported a positive impact on local employment due to their activities, with significant contributions towards skill development and economic diversification in Kancheepuram.

Table 5: Role of Innovation

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Product Innovation	27	90%
Process Innovation	25	83.33%
Marketing Innovation	22	73.33%

Interpretation: Innovation emerged as a central theme, with a focus on product, process, and marketing innovations driving the silk industry forward.

Table 6: Perspectives on Sustainability

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Environmental Concerns	20	66.67%
Social Responsibility	18	60%
Economic Viability	25	83.33%

Interpretation: While environmental concerns and social responsibility are recognized, economic viability remains a primary focus for ensuring the sustainability of their ventures.

Table 7: Future Outlook

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Optimism about Industry Growth	26	86.67%
Need for Policy Support	24	80%
Interest in Collaboration	22	73.33%

Interpretation: Entrepreneurs express optimism about the industry's growth potential, highlighting the need for supportive policies and interest in collaborative efforts to overcome challenges.

The thematic analysis revealed a nuanced understanding of the migrated silk entrepreneurs' impact on Kancheepuram's economy. While facing challenges such as competition and access to capital, these entrepreneurs contribute significantly to local employment, innovation, and market expansion. There's a clear indication that fostering a supportive ecosystem, emphasizing technological advancements, and leveraging global market access could amplify the positive economic impacts. The findings underscore the potential of migrated entrepreneurs as pivotal to revitalizing traditional industries and fostering sustainable economic development.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram has unveiled substantial insights into their economic impact, challenges, and opportunities. This section compares the findings with existing literature to delineate how this study addresses the literature gap and discusses the implications and significance of these findings.

Economic Contributions and Innovation

The reported contributions of migrated silk entrepreneurs in job creation and innovation are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the role of entrepreneurship in economic development (Roy, 2018; Zhou & Huang, 2023). This study extends the existing narrative by highlighting how migrated entrepreneurs, specifically in the silk industry of Kancheepuram, are pivotal in innovating traditional practices and expanding market access. It aligns with Ricciardi et al. (2020), who discuss the importance of innovation for sustainability in

traditional industries but delves deeper into how these innovations are implemented on the ground by migrant entrepreneurs.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges identified, such as market competition, access to capital, and regulatory hurdles, echo the broader literature on entrepreneurship in developing economies (Bukhari & Kour, 2019; Solà Parera et al., 2020). This research enriches the conversation by offering a localized perspective, illustrating how these challenges are magnified in the traditional and geographically concentrated silk industry of Kancheepuram. It also uncovers the nuanced understanding that, despite these challenges, there exist substantial opportunities through technological advancements and global market integration, which can pave the way for the silk industry's evolution and sustainability.

Impact on Local Economy and Sustainability

The findings regarding the impact on the local economy and sustainability efforts among silk entrepreneurs provide a new lens to view the intersection of migration, entrepreneurship, and regional development. While previous studies have acknowledged the economic benefits of entrepreneurship in traditional industries (Lin & Yang, 2017; Naudé, Siegel, & Marchand, 2017), this study brings forward the critical role of migrated entrepreneurs in fostering not just economic growth but also in contributing to the social and environmental dimensions of sustainability in Kancheepuram. This insight adds depth to the existing literature by illustrating how migrated entrepreneurs integrate sustainability into their business models, addressing the literature gap related to the comprehensive impact of entrepreneurship in traditional sectors.

Future Outlook and Policy Implications

The optimism expressed by entrepreneurs regarding industry growth and the articulated need for supportive policies highlight the symbiotic relationship between migrant entrepreneurs and regional economic policies. This study underscores the necessity for policy frameworks that acknowledge and leverage the unique contributions of migrated entrepreneurs to traditional industries. It resonates with the work of Gogoi (2023) on the sericulture industry but offers a more targeted analysis of the silk sector in Kancheepuram, underscoring the need for policies that support innovation, sustainability, and global market integration.

This research illuminates the multifaceted role of migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram, showcasing their contributions to economic innovation, sustainability, and the challenges they face. By comparing these findings with the literature, it is evident that while the themes of economic impact and innovation are not new, the specific contexts and mechanisms through which these are achieved in the silk industry of Kancheepuram provide fresh insights. The study fills a critical gap in the literature by offering a granular analysis of how migrated entrepreneurs catalyze change in traditional industries, emphasizing the silk industry's potential as a model for sustainable and innovative economic development in other traditional sectors globally.

The implications of this study extend beyond academic interest, offering policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders in the silk industry actionable insights into fostering an environment that supports innovation, sustainability, and global competitiveness. This research underscores the significant, yet underexplored, impact of migrated entrepreneurs on traditional industries, highlighting the need for a concerted effort to harness this potential for regional and economic development.

CONCLUSION

This study embarked on an exploration of the economic impact of migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram, drawing on qualitative insights from semi-structured interviews. The findings illuminate the substantial role these entrepreneurs play in job creation, innovation, and market expansion within the traditional silk industry. Despite facing significant challenges such as market competition, access to capital, and regulatory hurdles, migrated entrepreneurs exhibit resilience and adaptability, identifying and leveraging opportunities for technological advancement, sustainability, and global market access.

The contribution of migrated entrepreneurs extends beyond economic metrics, influencing the social and environmental sustainability of the silk industry. This study's analysis reveals that these entrepreneurs are not just business operators but also agents of change, driving the industry toward more sustainable practices and contributing to the local economy's overall health and resilience. Their optimism about the industry's future growth, coupled with a clear call for supportive policies and collaborative efforts, underscores the potential for a synergistic relationship between entrepreneurship and policy that can foster industry innovation and sustainability.

The broader implications of this research extend into the realms of economic development, policy-making, and the sustainability of traditional industries. By highlighting the specific contributions and challenges of migrated silk entrepreneurs in Kancheepuram, this study underscores the necessity for targeted policy support that acknowledges the unique needs and potential of entrepreneurs in traditional sectors. Furthermore, it contributes to the discourse on sustainable development, suggesting that the integration of economic, social, and environmental objectives is not only possible but beneficial for traditional industries navigating the complexities of modern economies.

In conclusion, this research underscores the pivotal role of migrated silk entrepreneurs in revitalizing traditional industries through innovation, sustainability, and global market integration. It calls for a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurship's economic and social dimensions, advocating for policies that support these entrepreneurs as key drivers of sustainable development. As traditional industries like silk production in Kancheepuram confront global challenges and opportunities, the insights from this study offer a roadmap for leveraging entrepreneurship towards achieving broader economic and sustainability goals.

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