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Government Initiatives and Development of The Handloom Industry in India

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ABSTRACT

The Indian handloom business is an old cottage industry in India that doesn't have a central office. This industry provides jobs for millions of people and is a key source of employment. One of the most colourful and rich parts of Indian culture is the custom of crafting handicrafts and weaving by hand. This industry is one of the major unorganised sectors after agriculture. It has the benefits of being eco-friendly, using less capital, using less electricity, and being able to adjust to market needs. The industry has some good things going for it, such minimal capital needs, the ability to adapt output, and a strong cultural identity. However, it also has some big problems, such as mechanised power looms, poor infrastructure, restricted access to new technologies, and marketing problems. Government programs for cluster growth, skill improvement, credit, welfare, branding, and marketing have all helped keep the sector going and improve the socio-economic conditions of weavers.

Keywords: Government, Cluster, Marketing, Development, Weavers.

I. INTRODUCTION

The handloom industry is an old cottage business in India that goes back to ancient times. The first piece of Indian handlooms was found in Egypt. After then, elaborately woven and coloured cotton cloths were discovered in Mohenjo-Daro (Indus Valley Civilisation). The Vedic text also talks about how India weaves. The handloom business is the backbone of Indian culture and heritage. Indian handloom has made enchantment all over the world with its wide range of patterns, printing methods, weaving art, and materials. Phulkar from Punjab, Chanderi from Madhya Pradesh, Ikats from Andhra Pradesh, Tie and Die from Rajasthan and Gujarat, Daccai from West Bengal, Brocade from Banaras, and Jacquard from Uttar Pradesh are just a few of the beautiful things that have been seen all over the world. Indian handloom has been a source of pride for Indian traditions and a symbol of their cultural richness.

The textile and garment sector in India is very important to the country's economy. It is also one of the biggest parts of India's exports, making up over 13.25% of the country's total exports. The textiles business is one of the biggest employers and makes a lot of money from exports. In 2013–14, it made \$41.57 billion. The textile industry is divided into two main parts: the unorganised sector, which includes handloom, handicrafts, sericulture, and powerlooms, and the organised sector, which includes spinning, clothing, garmenting, and made-ups.



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The new government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has taken many steps to improve the textiles sector. He has stressed an economic vision based on increasing production, exports, and job creation, with a focus on creating productive job opportunities for young people. Other goals include inclusive and participatory growth, skill, scale, and speed; the "Make in India" brand; zero defects and zero effects on the environment; and Adarsh Gram.

Handloom weaving is one of the biggest economic activity after farming, and it directly and indirectly employs more than 43 lakh weavers and other people. The handloom industry is a distinctive and important part of the Indian economy. It is also the biggest source of non-farm jobs in rural areas. Most of the work in the handloom business is done at home, with the whole family pitching in. It is spread out throughout thousands of villages and municipalities in the country. This industry makes around 11% of the textile in the country and also helps the country gain money from exports. India also makes 95% of the world's hand-woven fabric.

Passing on expertise from one generation to the next has kept the handloom industry going. The sector is strong because it is distinctive, can change its manufacturing methods, is open to new ideas, can meet the needs of suppliers, and has a lot of tradition. Since India became independent, the government has been working to promote and support the handloom industry through a number of programs and plans. The handloom sector has grown in a good way, and the income level of weavers has gone up because of many policy efforts and scheme interventions including the cluster method, aggressive marketing initiative, and social welfare measures.

Handloom production is the second largest job sector after agriculture today, and it makes up around 14% of the entire production of the textile industry. The 3rd Handloom Census, done in 2009-10, found that more than 43 lakh individuals were weaving and doing related work. The 2nd Handloom Census, done in 1995-95, found that 65.5 lakh people were doing the same work. The handloom industry is not only a source of pride for us in the past, but it is also very important to the Indian economy today. India presently sells handloom goods to more than 125 nations. The handloom industry had to deal with a lot of competition from power looms during the Ninth Five Year Plan. This is when new programs were started.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Singh, Vishal & Gautam, Amit. (2022) This study's major focus is the program that helps the handloom sector export. The present government export support program is divided into four parts based on their traits. These four export support factors were found after a thorough assessment of the literature and an examination of government initiatives that help the handloom sector. The financial assistance system has a huge effect on export aid since it gives out a lot of tax refunds and other reductions. The major goal of this research is to find the common thread that runs across all of the different writings on the handloom business.

Kumar, Vivek et al., (2022) The handloom industry is one of India's oldest, with origins in the Saraswati-Indus Civilisation. This is evidenced by several archaeological finds and ancient texts. The handloom sector is the second largest employment in India, behind agriculture. It makes around 15% of the country's fabric. The unique and adaptable weaves and patterns of textiles from different areas of India reflect how rich the country's history is. Indian textiles were popular in the past, but the handloom business and



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weavers were hurt badly during the colonial period. The British hurt the Indian economy by exporting raw materials from India and then selling finished textile goods back there. This hurt the handloom sector on purpose. The Swadeshi fight began in 1905 to bring back the Indian handloom, which was later seen as important and played a big part in the freedom fight. This article talks about the history of Indian handlooms, the current state of the business, the problems it faces, and the laws that have been passed to help it grow again.

Bhowmik, Manas. (2021) This research seeks to establish linkages among social responsibility, sustainable development objectives, institutions, and cooperatives through a theoretical and empirical comparison between cooperatives and non-cooperatives. Post-Williamsonian transaction cost economics (TCE) has served as the theoretical basis for establishing the foundational principles. An initial survey including two districts in West Bengal has been conducted in two of the state's principal handloom hubs for empirical analysis. The data collected from weavers belonging to two different institutions—a cooperative institution and a master weaver institution—has been evaluated by binomial logistic regression. The post-Williamsonian TCE framework has proved in theory that the cooperative institution is better at carrying out the government's welfare initiatives. The results of the empirical study show that education and being close to the cooperative institution are two crucial things that help the government run its welfare programs efficiently.

Singh, Sushmita. (2018) Handloom weaving, akin to a familial enterprise, is transmitted through generations; however, the deficiency in effective management skills, such as entrepreneurship, is leading to the near extinction of this craft. The next generation is disinterested in perpetuating this family firm due to insufficient recognition, inadequate compensation, poor working conditions, and challenges in acquiring raw materials and marketing finished products. They also contend with power looms, which can replicate patterns rapidly. Weavers must possess the ability to understand designs and technological advancements while delivering items punctually. Entrepreneurial competencies are significant. The handloom market depends on individual weavers, Master Weavers (Grihastha), and Gaddidars. Individual weavers work under master weavers who possess the weaving equipment and market the goods through Gaddidars. As middlemen, gaddidars increase the price by 50%, followed by big merchants who impose an additional 50% markup, resulting in a total price escalation of roughly 100% from the initial cost. It examines the operational framework of Varanasi's handloom enterprises, specifically master weavers. Notwithstanding a low-tech sector, these weavers maintain relevance and create a market. The entrepreneurial ethos in this sector is captivating. The government is developing this business by establishing incentives for weavers. Handloom products have unique, sophisticated designs. Expert weavers gain advantages from minimal transaction expenses and social capital. This study will elucidate the operational framework of entrepreneurs/master weavers and the government's measures to promote entrepreneurship among individual weavers.

Sree Vyshnavi, P.V. & Nair, Suja. (2017) The emergence of affordable and aesthetically pleasing synthetic textiles has led to a steady decline in the importance of handlooms, a traditional garment in India. However, it is regaining its distinct identity due to the 'Make in India' initiative and the planning commission's determination to assign it a significant role in the economy across other essential sectors.



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Among the ten leading countries receiving Indian handloom products are the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. The Indian government developed the Handloom brand to ensure its originality, industrial flexibility, openness to innovation, and adaptability. Compared to the second handloom census, the third census recorded a reduced number of households with handloom weavers. The Indian government established programs, exhibitions, a crafts museum, a trade facilitation center, and e-commerce initiatives to assist weavers. Market studies on handlooms indicate that extensive awareness campaigns, accessibility, and visibility are essential for the industry's sustainability.

Singh, Bharat. (2014) The handloom business in India has historically served as a crucial source of revenue for several individuals, peaking during the Mughal Empire due to the employment of adaptable manufacturing methods of that period. The industry's decline occurred due to their detrimental policies throughout the British era. The "Make in India" program, launched by our esteemed Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, re-establishes the importance of this industry in contemporary times. Reforming the handloom business to accommodate those seeking improved and dignified work opportunities is believed to significantly enhance output, employment, and export revenues within the sector. This research aims to offer a comprehensive picture of the sector, examine the myriad challenges it encounters, and evaluate the diverse government initiatives and policies that endorse and facilitate its development, utilising secondary data sources.

Goswami, Rachana & Jain, Ruby. (2014) India's handloom industry plays a significant role in both the nation's sociocultural traditions and economics. By passing down talents from one generation to the next, it has been maintained. After agriculture, handloom production is now the second-largest employer in the nation. India has 43.31 lakh weavers, according to the Third National Handloom Census (2009–10). The handloom sector is now dealing with a number of issues that other industries do not face. It is evident that weavers are experiencing a serious crisis of livelihood despite the Indian government's constant efforts to increase the handloom industry's output and marketing. It is necessary to identify the issues and appraise the industry's strengths and limitations in order to make it profitable. Thus, this paper's goal is to examine the issues facing the handloom sector and provide a workable solution. Senior executives (50) from the two government organisations, the Rajasthan Rajya Bunkar Sahkari Sangh (RRBSS) and the Rajasthan Handloom Development Corporation (RHDC), were involved in the research in order to achieve these goals. Secondary sources, the observation technique, and a semi-structured interview schedule were used to gather the data. The findings showed that the handloom organisations were not using any appropriate strategies for product planning, raw material procurement, or promotional efforts. A profitable strategy plan that takes advantage of every market opportunity is proposed based on the difficulties.

Niranjana, Seemanthini. (2001) The challenges and concerns facing this predominantly rural sector were emphasised during an event for the handloom industry in Hyderabad. It highlighted many issues, including the lack of a reliable database on the handloom sector and its implications for policy formulation. Field-based research and analysis may provide a vital basis for the development of theoretical models and action plans in the Indian handloom sector.



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III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HANDLOOM TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN INDIA

People from all across the globe worked to create textiles of all kinds. Development of linen, a fabric made from the linseed tree's fibre, occurred in coastal Europe. Wool likely originated in planets with lower average temperatures. It is thought that the Middle East, Afghanistan, and the Kashmir valley were the original locations for the development of wool felt. In the same time, India and Peru were the most adept in producing cotton fibres. The Indus Valley metropolis of Mohenjo-Daro, which fell into disrepair about 3000 B.C., is where archaeologists uncovered one of the first examples of naturally spun cotton yarn. Even if the Arabic words "Qutun" or "Kutun" are the roots of the English term "cotton," the fact remains that cotton did not originate in Arabia. Maybe it's because Arab was a stop along the trade route that brought cotton fabrics made in India to Europe.

Manufacturing silk began in and around China about 5,000 years ago, and now it is regarded as the most valuable cloth in the world. Yet this is about Mulberry silk. But it appears that India is the birthplace of all the other types. All of the textiles were made in or near the Asian continent. Regarding quality, style, diversity, etc., India's textile business is the most significant contributor. From fishing nets to muslin, baluchuri, benarasi, ikat, jamdani, and beyond, Indian handloom weaving has progressed to a great degree. Maybe it's because of this growth method that traditionally renowned handloom textiles tend to thrive around coastal belts or on banks of large rivers.

Need to define handloom before we can talk about how the handloom textile business in India has grown over the years. Craftspeople use looms called handlooms to weave fabric by hand. Put simply, a handloom is a type of loom that allows weavers to avoid the use of electric or mechanical machines. Woven goods are traditionally hand-woven using looms found in the homes of weavers. These looms can be either pit, frame, or stand based. In weaving, the warp (length) and the weft (width) yarns are mostly interlaced. An implement that makes this interlacing possible is the loom.

The term "power-loom" refers to a specific kind of loom that uses mechanical power from electricity to weave thread into cloth, as opposed to the more common "handloom," which is distinguishable from the latter. One device that facilitates the weaving process is the power loom. The power looms are housed in the mill's weaving shed and are powered by an electric motor through belts that extend from vertical shafting. The power loom replaces the older, less efficient handloom.

Indus Valley Civilization

During the course of excavations at Mohenjo-Daro, it was discovered that the area circa 3000 B.C. was home to an urban civilisation called the Indus Valley Civilisation. Spindles and spindle whorls discovered during excavations show that spinning cotton and wool was prevalent throughout the Indus period, however there is no definite evidence of their clothing. We may infer from the available evidence that the Indus people were skilled spinners of cotton and wool. The skill of dyeing yarn was also known to this civilisation, as evidenced by the discovery of dyeing pots in their artefacts.



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Vedic Period

The Rig-vedic people were very skilled weavers and spinners. They had people who dyed and embroidered cloths in addition to weavers who worked with wool and cotton. The names "Vayitris" and "Siris" were given to female weavers. The later Samhita and Brahmanas describe woollen thread called "Verna Sutra," and the terms "Vasas," "Vasana," and "Vastra" relate to Gangetic Cotton makers. Both sexes employ the same reference materials, which include sandals crafted from boarskin, cotton, wool, and silk, as well as garments that are coloured and embroidered.

Mauryan Period

From his death in Babylon in 323 B.C. until his subsequent travels across the Indian Plains, Alexander the Great traversed the Indus River in 326 B.C. Encompassing the whole northern region of India, the Maurya Empire stretched from the Indus River to the Hindu Kush Mountains and beyond. It was about 445 B.C. when the Greek historian Herodotus described India. To make wool that is finer and of higher quality than sheep's, the Indians processed a type of wild plant that instead yields fruit. Clearly, he meant cotton; another Greek writer from the same century praised the printed materials' vivid colours and how popular they were among ladies in the eastern Mediterranean. It is said that at this time, clothing design in India stabilises. During this time, there was a shift toward more regional or zonal styles of dress; certain occupations, such as priests, warriors, and monarchs, even had their own unique garments.

Greek Influence

Coins from the time show that the Bactrian, Greek, Parthian, Kushan, and Shakesperian dynasties all had an impact on Indian fashion. Pants with a form-fitting, long-sleeved tunic or bodice make up one of their goddesses' outfits. Pictures of Greco-Buddhist and Heritage sites in the northwest and Mathura show a typical shari layout. Our progress pleased Alexander, who invaded India in 327 B.C. He brought back a few of our printed cottons and a plethora of our exquisitely woven silks, which were reminiscent of the works of Chinese master weavers but decorated in a Persian style. Printed and painted cotton garments from India piqued the interest of the Mohammedans who conquered the country in 711 A.D. Among the well-known textiles from ancient India are mulmulhas, jamdani, banarasi brocade, chand-tara, dhupchhaon, mapcher, morgala, manikar, jamaiwar, amilkar (all shawals), kashida, phulkar, bagh, and makmal.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HANDLOOM INDUSTRY

Essential characteristics of the handloom industry are described below:

Extremely Diversified

When considering the nature of the product and the relations of production, it is incredibly diverse. Woven on handlooms are an incredible variety of cloth types, from coarse cloth for local use to medium and fine fabrics for a wider (often metropolitan) market. The distinctive style and design of a certain product is what makes each location famous. The product, however, cannot be considered apart from the weaving process or location. The latter does not allude to technological advancements but rather to the fundamental organization of production.



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Similarly varied are these linkages of production and modalities of production. These include both self-employed weavers and those who are part of cooperatives or apprentice programs run by more experienced craftspeople. A variety of kinds and a plurality of relations of production are often present elsewhere, but in a few regions there may be a clear-cut mode of production. Processes, goods, and locations may all be easily adapted to its flexible nature. Improvements to the product and changes to the manufacturing process are not hard to do. A weaver's abilities are his sole constraint; unlike land resources, which bind a person to a certain location, a weaver's mobility allows him to move from one production base to another.

Decentralized

It is dispersed over both rural and urban areas. Industrialisation did not exist while handloom weaving was a viable economic activity. Weavers were a service caste that provided mostly for the needs of their communities within the former village economy. This means that there are a lot of weaving families in every town or collection of towns. Master traders organised weaving for export in weaving centers in port towns, which ran parallel to this market-oriented production. While there were karkhanaws, or weaving "factories," in the past, modern-day handloom weaving is still rather scattered and decentralised, in contrast to the highly centralised mill industry.

Largely Home Based

The entire family pitches in to help out at home. Secondly, the handloom sector is mostly rooted in households, which contributes to its decentralised nature. Although weaving sheds do pop up every once in a while, the more common practice is for weavers to accomplish it all at home, utilising the help of everyone in the family. Everyone in the household plays an important part in the production process, from pre-loom preparation to weaving and finishing. This home-based business has tremendous economic potential because to its cheap energy and capital requirements and its capacity to employ many people. To address these concerns, it is necessary to systematically identify the diverse nature of its demands and problems and then create inputs that are sufficiently adaptable. The business is naturally decentralised, and most efforts to address needs like loans, raw materials, and marketing have a centralised structure that has failed to reach out to this fact.

Working People in the Handlooms

The art of handloom weaving is passed down through generations, and it takes a village to complete the task. Every step of the process, from preparing the material for weaving to finishing it, is done by various family members, including children and women. Males, women, and children all had different roles in each step of the weaving process, but in the end, it was the males who did the bulk of the work. Women and children typically handle the pre-weaving tasks. When youngsters assist their parents at work, they often pick up useful tips and tricks along the way. Formal training is not provided to the weavers. This means that the weaver's talent is mostly of a traditional nature, and that they employ rudimentary technology.

Location of Industries

Weavers often do their handloom weaving in the comfort of their own homes. Frequently, the available facilities are insufficient to handle all the tasks associated with weaving. Furthermore, the vast majority



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of handloom businesses are located in semi-urban and rural regions. Sometimes, the location affects the weaver's physical capacity to work. Since they are weaving in the house, any noise or chatter from the family will interrupt their flow.

V. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE HANDLOOM SECTOR

Sustainable growth of the handloom industry is a priority for the Ministry of Textiles, which is why they are implementing a number of developmental, promotional, and welfare projects through the Office of the growth Commissioner for Handlooms. The main goal of these programs is to raise the incomes of those involved in the handloom industry, such as weavers, by encouraging the creation and sale of high-quality, high-value handloom goods. Among the many initiatives launched by the current administration are initiatives to improve skills, diversify products, upgrade technology, increase access to subsidised raw materials, establish common infrastructure, build brands, promote eCommerce platforms, assist with marketing, and link handloom with high-end fashion. What follows is a more detailed examination of a few of the flagship programs that have improved the lives of those involved in the handloom textile production process.

Cluster Development Programme (CDP)

The CDP's primary goal is to help weavers' groups grow into autonomous entities by fostering their growth as a distinct organization. We grant need-based support up to 2.00 crore rupees per intervention for things like building worksheds, lighting units, looms and accessories, a solar lighting system for the shared workshed, a textile designer, product development and more.

Skill Up-Gradation

Weavers and allied workers receive skill-upgrading training and exposure to new things like e-commerce, basic accounting and management practices, new kinds of eco-friendly dyes, new designs, and colours. They also learn how to adapt new technologies.

Hatkhargha Samvardhan Sahayata (Looms and Accessories)

By using more advanced looms, jacquard, dobby, etc., HSS hopes to raise the bar for fabric quality and production efficiency. While the central government of India pays for 90% of the looms and accessories under this programme, the individual state governments are responsible for carrying it out.

Workshed

The idea behind building work sheds is to provide the whole weaving family a place to work near to their house. These huts cost Rs.1.2 lakhs each, and all of the money will go toward helping out disadvantaged families and female weavers.

Engagement of Designers

In order to come up with fresh, original goods and ideas, there's a way to hire expert designers from the clusters and beyond. Not only does the plan cover their rates, but there is also money to pay designers more for creating marketing links.



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MUDRA Loan

Weavers can take advantage of interest subvention of up to 7% and credit guarantee costs on loans for three years under the Weaver MUDRA/Concessional Credit Scheme. The scheme also offers 20% margin money support, up to a maximum of Rs. 25,000/-for weaver organisations and Rs. 20 lakh for handloom organisations. To facilitate the Direct Benefit Transfer of margin funds to the weavers' accounts as well as interest subsidy and credit guarantee payments to the banks, the Online Handloom Weavers MUDRA site has been built.

Handloom Weavers' Welfare

All over the nation, handloom weavers and labourers would be eligible for a universal and reasonably priced Social Security system under this plan.

1. Coverage for life, accidental, and disability events under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY), and Converged Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana (MGBBY).
2. Each Padma Shree, Sant Kabir, National, or State Awardee weaver who is 60 or older, living in poverty, and whose yearly income is less than Rs.1.00 lakh is eligible for financial assistance at the rate of Rs.8,000/-per month, with certification from the relevant District Collector required.
3. Assistance in the form of a scholarship, up to Rs. 2.00 lakh per annum, for children of handloom weavers and workers to attend textile institutes for further education.

Bunkar Mitra Helpline

In order to give handloom weavers around the nation with a central location to go to for all of their professional questions, the "BunkarMitra" hotline has been established with a toll-free number of 1800208 9988. Assamese, Bengali, Kannada, English, Tamil, and Telegu are the seven languages that the service is offered in. You may access the services whenever you choose, day or night.

Certification

In 2006, the Handloom mark was introduced to provide handloom goods a unique identify. For the purpose of identifying premium handloom goods, the India Handloom Brand (IHB) was established in 2015. By connecting the weaver with the buyer, IHB hopes to increase the weaver's income while assuring the purchaser of high-quality goods. The raw materials and processing quality of all IHB goods are benchmarked, and they all provide proof that they originate from the handwoven industry. A number of well-known labels have previously collaborated with IHB to release a line of handloom clothing, including BIBA, Peter England, and ONAYA.

Marketing Assistance

To provide the handloom weavers a platform to sell their wares, expos and district-level events are frequently planned. Weavers are also facilitated to participate in various crafts melas held across the country. Distribution channels for handloom have also been given marketing incentives. In addition, e-commerce platforms have been enlisted to advocate for the online sale of handloom goods.



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Handloom Awards

The Sant Kabir Award, the National Award, and the National Merit Certificates are just a few of the yearly accolades bestowed by the Ministry of Textiles in recognition of outstanding work in weaving, design, and marketing. Along with the federal government's initiatives, some state governments have set aside substantial funds from their budgets to help weaving households in their respective states. These go above and beyond the officially supported plans in which they collaborate to identify and implement beneficiaries. West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Chhattisgarh are among the states that have notable schemes of their own.

Raw Material Supply

Yarn is being made available to handloom weavers through the nationwide implementation of the Raw Material Supply Scheme (RMSS). To help handloom weavers compete with powerlooms, the Scheme reimburses freight expenses for all yarn types and provides a price subsidy of 15% for cotton hank yarn, domestic silk, wool, linen and mixed yarn of natural fibres, with quantity limitations. In regions with a high concentration of handlooms, yarn depots have been set up to ensure a steady supply of yarn. In every state where handloom is widely used, warehouses have been set up to speed up delivery times and make it easier to ship smaller orders. The National Handloom Development Corporation also maintains a network of depots and warehouses where handloom weavers may access high-quality dyes and chemicals.

VI. CONCLUSION

Products made by Indian handloom artisans are in high demand both domestically and internationally. All things considered, the owners of most handloom units lack professionalism because they are either solo proprietors or conduct their businesses as partnerships. In terms of manufacturing, packaging, design, marketing, etc., the majority of weavers are woefully ignorant of current best practices. It is necessary for the economy to conduct a research on the subject in order to promote and promote the handloom sector. In addition, further research is needed to determine the production, financial, and marketing issues affecting the handloom business, as well as to provide solutions that would help the sector grow and change.

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