



Survey on Impact of Traditional Handlooms Schemes: A Case Study at Madhya Pradesh, India

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Abstract

India is a developing country with majority of its masses living in rural areas. Agriculture is the main source of employment providing work to 70 percent of the rural population. Next to agriculture handloom industry plays a dominant role in the economic development of the rural mass. Handlooms are scattered in the rural and semi-urban areas. The handloom industry is an important sector in providing large-scale employment and result in the upliftment of the rural mass development. Handloom is perhaps one of the oldest industries. Even the tribal people scattered throughout the country, produce their own cloths with the elegant designs, unique color combinations and lasting texture. This study indicates a review of literature relating to the handloom industry at Madhya Pradesh. Since in recent years the industry fell into deep crisis, few conference papers, research articles journals and some standard hypothetical management and maintenance thesis are published current problems of the industry and also the researcher tries to know the problems of the industry in brief through several studies done by Indian Universities with great support of primary data as well as secondary data.

Keywords: Traditional handlooms, Craft and Art, Fashion, Designing handlooms.

Introduction

The Indian handloom products have a distinct place in the world of fabrics. This is not just a cloth material or traditional wear; it is symbolic to the Indian civilization, which is one of the oldest on the planet. We had long tradition of excellence in making high quality of handloom products with extraordinary skills and craftsmanship when there were no such skills available anywhere in the world. The art and craft tradition since almost the dawn of civilization has been kept alive despite sweeping changes due to continuous efforts of generations of artists and craftsmen who weave their dreams and visions into exquisite handloom products (handlooms was first mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashastra)¹.

The handloom sector is not only our past glory but also it plays a vital role even in the contest of present Indian economy. It is the largest economic activity after agriculture providing direct and indirect employment to more than 73 lakh weaver's households consisting of about 198 lakh weavers which include 60.29 % women, 18.15 % SC, 23.02 % ST weavers there are 28,321 weaver's cooperative societies and 46.90 lakhs looms in the country. It provides livelihood to over 78 lakhs people in the country and contributing over 27 percent of the total clothe production. It continues to be craft oriented, even though it was circumscribed by a limited choice of processing. During 20th century there was very little effort to develop the handloom sector and handloom weavers were pitted against modern textile mills². Most of the handlooms are still loomed by regional

groups of traditional weavers who have their generations weaving a particular type of saree or textiles for the same regional market. The industry has not only survived but also grown over the decades due to its inherent strengths like flexibility of production in small quantities, openness to innovation, low level of capital investment and immense possibility of designing fabrics. By the early fifties, the government discovered the potential in the handloom sector³. It also realized that a number of handloom varieties were just dyeing out. Government set itself in the process of revival of the handloom industry and has been continuing to accord priority to this sector. First priority was given to Handloom Corporation of India (2011), second priority was given to Thyagaraj- the Hindu (20th June 1999)⁴, third priority was given to a feature-Press Information Bureau, Govt of India and final priority was held to an article in economy watch.com⁵.

Madhya Pradesh landlocked in the central part of the country, it is bounded by exquisite cultural states like Rajasthan to the north west, Uttar Pradesh to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east, Maharashtra to the south and Gujarat to the west. The geographical area of the state is 308,000sq kms, with the population of 66,181,000 (according to the census of 2001). Agriculture is the basis of Madhya Pradesh's economy⁶. The major industries of the state are about 656 mainly comprising of electronics, textiles, telecommunication, petrochemicals, food processing and automobiles. The state is very famous for its traditional handlooms with its main manufacturing centers at: i. Chanderi for its muslin saree in sheer texture with borders and

figures, pallavs and dress materials. ii. Maheshwar in Khargone district cluster famous for its sarees in sheer textures with traditional borders, iii. Figures, pallavs, mixed fabric fine dress materials and chunnaries. iv. Gwalior cluster which is famous for cotton cloth and carpet manufacturing units.

Review of Literature

The survey of literature plays an important role in establishing the backdrop for any research work. It is always felt that reviewing the available literature on the subject could do the justification of the present study.

This section presents a review of literature relating to the handloom industry. Since in recent years the industry fell into deep crisis, few newspapers and journals published current problems of the industry and also the researcher tries to know the problems of the industry in brief through several studies done by Indian Universities. Therefore an attempt has been made to find out the gaps in research before finally presenting this topic for study. i. Roshan Kalapesi believes that people in the government who formulate policies for the handloom industry have no clue about India's weaving traditions. She even says that if only one weaver is to be involved in the policy making process, he would be able to give right direction⁷. ii. David Anterro Atoysms in his study - 2011 identified various aspects of the industry. The main aspect of the industry was problems relating to the production 'side and marketing aide'. We observed that the cost of production was the cause of increase for finished products. The producer fixed very high rates to the handloom products. Hence the researcher felt that the Government should supply the raw material to the weavers at subsidized rates⁸. iii. Abdul Zahir in his study in 2013 enquired into the problems of handloom industry in Varanasi. His work was mainly focused on the operational problems of the industry. He observed in his study that the handlooms have been suffering from lack of raw material so they can be supplied necessary raw material and open supply centers with Government intervention and provide raw material directly to the weavers at subsidized rates⁹. iv. Somappa M. in 2014 observed that the Government neglected the industry so far. The Government gave priority to develop the agriculture sector. The concentration of the Government is to develop the mill and power looms, as a result of this, the handloom industry has fallen into deep crisis. To develop the industry the Government should spend huge resources on handloom sector¹⁰. v. Angadi V.B. in 2006 expressed that the handloom cloth was facing the problem of proper marketing. The power loom cloth was cheaper than the handloom cloth. The ordinary consumer prefers power loom cloth to handloom cloth because of this; it has become very difficult for marketing the handloom products. It was therefore, necessary that the Government should allot certain exclusive items for handloom sector and implement the reservations of handloom items¹¹. vi. The national Institute of Rural Development made a critical study on handloom industry in 2007 and concluded that the new development plan for

handloom sector was in the preliminary stages of implementation. It also opined; that by concerning the magnitude of the problems encountering the handloom sector, the organization of the commissioner for handlooms requires to be expanded with Regional offices in the states where the industry was concentrated¹².

Proposed Research Methodology: Overall Survey

The methodology of research is descriptive with a standard sample size of 10 percent among the population like weaving unit owners and their employees, traditional weavers, government officials, consumers etc. With the simple of random sampling technique, the data source would be both primary as well as secondary. The handloom industry is largely household-based, carried out with labor contributed by the entire family. It is dispersed, spread across thousands of villages and towns in the country. The industry also exhibits considerable diversity in terms of products, organizational base, as well as in relations between actors within the production structure. There can be an alternative to this dismal prospect, based on the recognition and encouragement of the handloom industry. Today we have the only substantial household-based cotton textile industry in the world, and as part of that we have a huge skill-bank in the millions of people capable of weaving and of making the looms and accessories. We grow our own cotton and make our own yarn. These circumstances can be the foundation of a large and sustainable textile industry in the 21st century, an industry that can supply both domestic and foreign markets, without depending on imports of knowledge, machinery or raw material.

The handloom industry is dispersed in villages and towns, avoiding the pollution and ghettoization of concentrated production that we see in power loom centers. Many of the producer regions are closely linked to their local markets, others such as Chirala in Andhra Pradesh supply distant but specific markets through complex trade and credit linkages. If this combination of factors can be seen as the tremendous asset and if policies can be framed to encourage and support the strengths of the handloom industry, we have an unparalleled opportunity to develop a textile industry of which we can justifiably be proud.

Censuses estimate the 'actual workers'. There was a handloom census in 1921, which did not cover several major states and provinces. In 1940 estimation was more comprehensive, it multiplies the 1940 loom age with the 1920:1940 ratios of looms in region covered by both years, to derive an estimate for 1920 and finally in 1943 it was referred. Source: India, Fact-Finding Committee (Handlooms and Mills), (Delhi),

Government Interventions in the Handloom Sector In order to facilitate the handloom sector to achieve faster, inclusive and sustainable growth during the 12th plan, a Working Group was constituted for the Handloom Sector⁴. Major recommendations of the working group were included in Twelfth Five Year Plan.

The important recommendations which have been implemented by the Ministry of Textiles include those relating to marketing, exports, Geographical Indication of Goods Act, consolidation of handloom clusters taken up in 10th and 11th Plan, enhancement of health insurance cover from Rs.15,000 to Rs. 37,500/-, setting up of new Weavers Service Centers and Indian Institute of Handloom Technology, etc.

Table-1
Scale of the Indian Textile Industry, 1920, 1940

	1990	2010
Handloom Industry		
Workers	3,407,300	5,027,000
Looms	4,025,000	6,193,262
Cotton Looms	2,027,000	3,417,200
Idle Looms	1,027,000	565,464
Production (million yards of cotton cloth)	931	2704
% of Domestic cotton consumption	27	29.5
Mill Industry		
Workers	553,200	945,000 ³
Looms	217,558	399,000 ³
Production (million yards of cotton cloth)	2,529	4,738
% of total domestic cotton cloth consumption	56	73

Table-2
Handlooms from the period from 1995-96 census

Details of Handlooms	No. of Looms	No. of Weavers
Silk	13641	23310
Cotton	49384	120166
Wool	13580	47458
Total No. of families of both Looms and Weavers		53685

Objectives of the Study

In spite of Government of India has been implementing various handloom development schemes; the economic condition of handloom weavers and their units has not been improved as envisaged. Though the handloom act of 1985 had been passed by the parliament, the inadequate enforcement has rendered the law ineffective and encroachment on handloom products still continues (stays granted by several high courts to power loom operators).

This research aims to study the extent to which the developmental schemes of government of India has been beneficial to handloom weavers and their units and also to suggest suitable remedies to overcome the inherent weaknesses of handloom industry like weak organization (Management) Bureaucratic influences on handloom cooperatives, inadequate credit from financial institutions, inadequate marketing infrastructures etc. As per my literature survey, only very few studies have been conducted in this sector has prompted me to take up further research in this area.

Against this background, the objectives of the studies are as follows: i. To offer a realistic appraisal of the handloom industry particularly in M.P., and thereby to identify areas of potential growth. Such an appraisal is based primarily on field reports, which (a) document regional specificities and trends in weaving with reference to product, organization of production and markets, and (b) examine particular reasons for the expansion or contraction of weaving, as the case may be. ii. To suggest possible strategies for intervention based on field experience. iii. To study the viability of input support system in the units. iv. The strategies taken by government and NGOs to revive this sector. v. The impact of employment generation programs. vi. To analyse the role of marketing support provided by the government. vii. The fusion of tradition and technology in the industry (i.e. modernization and up gradation of technology). viii. The decisive role played by the market (consumers) in handlooms. ix. To study the effect of fashion designing. x. The role of IT driven global economic environment in the industry. xi. The benefits of welfare measures by the government. xii. To analyse the socio-economic status of weavers in the sector under the schemes of the government.

Hypothesis of the Study

The major areas which were put on test were: i. H₀. There is no significance difference between support system and units. ii. H₁. There is no valuable significance difference between fashion designing and recent technology. iii. H₂. Non Governmental organizations in the sector are more successful in comparison to governmental organizations.

Conclusion

Merchandising and marketing is a central growth and development of handloom sector in India. Domestic marketing

is important for providing a link between the producer and consumer. The marketing and export promotion scheme is needed to promote the marketing of handlooms in the country and to improve the levels of awareness among handloom weavers and the general public in the interest of overall development of the handloom sector. Reducing the prices, increasing the availability and improved quality, innovative design, more varieties, latest fashion and trends etc are needed to improve the satisfaction level of handloom customer. To make handloom more popular we can do promotion, increasing number of outlet, exhibition, develop new designs etc. Government should help consumer in opening more outlet, exhibition and trade fair, loans to setup a shop, subsidized the products, relaxation on duties and taxes, improve the marketing strategy, encourage the mechanization, implementation of the ruler strictly, outlets at village level/ Taluk, helps in generating in more designs and Government should see overseas opportunities to make the handloom sector survive.

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