

Handlooms and Handicrafts in Rural areas: Potential employer

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What are Handlooms and Handicrafts sectors?

Handlooms and Handicrafts may be named among skills or occupations of non-farm sector of rural areas. Passed on from generation to generation as a legacy, these activities took an economic form and went on to become an alternative livelihood for the farmers and rural people in the off-season.

Importance

The importance of handicrafts and handlooms has grown multifold in rural areas because of our agricultural system being mainly a rain fed farming system. Following are the importance of these sectors;

- In Non-agricultural Season Handicrafts and Handlooms provide **subsidiary employment** to their practitioners.
- As per the annual report of the Ministry of Textiles the Handloom provides employment to more than 43 lakh weavers and other associated people directly and indirectly, out of this figure 77 percent are women and allied sector.
- Women's engagement in these two sectors prove the role of handloom and handicrafts as important tools of bridging about women's empowerment in rural areas
- By **addressing the economic issues**, these sectors also help in getting social **recognition** to the respective producer community and thereby in maintaining social stability and harmony in the rural society. They also

help in exhibiting the glory of their native places.

- It helps in **preventing migration of artisans**, weavers and small-marginal farmers from rural to urban areas is their contribution in the rural economy.

Problems faced by the twin sectors

Despite their potential and contribution in the rural economy, the twin sector has been facing various threats in the contemporary times. Some of them are;

- Consumers' changing preferences
- Challenges from the international market
- Availability of low-cost alternatives
- Lack of interest in the younger generation to sustain the traditional craftsmanship

Government interventions

- National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP) which consists of two major components, i.e,
 1. Overall development of the handloom sector
 2. Welfare of of the handloom weavers
- **Weaver Mudra Scheme was launched in the year 2015 as one of the major components of this umbrella**, under this scheme credit at concessional interest rate of 6% is being provided to the handloom weavers. It also provide margin money assistance to a maximum of Rs. 10,000 per weaver and credit guarantee for a period of 3 years.
- **Block Level Clusters (BLCs)** are one of the components of National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP) / Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS). Financial assistance is provided upto Rs.2.00 crore per cluster for setting up of Common Facility Centre (CFC).
- **Handloom Weaver Mudra Portal:** This portal is in operation since 2017, in association with Punjab

National Bank to cut down delays in disbursement of funds for financial assistance.

- Participating banks submit the claim for margin money, interest subvention and credit guarantee fee on the portal and the margin money is transferred directly to loan account of the weaver and interest subvention and credit guarantee fee is transferred to banks in electronic mode.
- The India Handloom Brand was launched for branding of high quality handloom products, authentic designs with zero defect and zero effect on the environment.
- **Bunkar Mitra:** A toll free helpline was set up to deal with queries of handloom weavers concerning a wide range of issues like technical, supply of raw material, quality control, credit facility, access to market.,etc.,.
- **Handlooms Promotion through eMarketing:** To promote e-marketing of handloom products, 21 e-commerce entities have been engaged for on – line marketing of handloom products.
- **Museums under Infrastructure and Technology Support Scheme:** To preserve all the antique handicrafts products of the country, the Government has established crafts Museum at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, which is popularly known as **National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum. The Government of India has also established 18 Museums throughout the country under Infrastructure and Technology Support scheme to preserve traditional art and craft products of the country including 35 endangered crafts** for which Government provides financial, technical assistance.