



Impact of Handloom Sector Towards Sustainable Development Goals

Dr. Sumitra Pujari

**Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce
St. Joseph's Degree & PG College, Hyderabad, India
Project Director, Major Research Project (ICSSR)**

In 2015, the United Nations set 17 Sustainable Goals to transform our world in the next 15 years. It laid a roadmap on how to transform our planet where everyone can live in peace, prosperity, and with dignity. Initially the term sustainability was mostly used as an environmental aspect, but today, all its dimensions are taken into account. It is time to integrate the sustainable development concept with the handloom sector a very broad sector in which sustainable development is very effective. The handloom sector embodies the vision of Sustainable Development Goals as it involves minimal use of capital and power, environment-friendly production processes and allows flexibility to innovate and offer products as per market requirements. The handloom sector has been a silent contributor- the traditional and ancient industry addresses several issues and has been achieving many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Paper comprehensively reveals the key role and importance of Handloom Industry in achieving major sustainable goals of 17 SDG's which involves minimal use of capital and power, environment-friendly production processes and allows flexibility to innovate and offer products as per market requirements and to generate standard employment opportunities .

Key Words: Sustainability, Development, Goals, Environment, Handlooms.

Introduction: The handloom sector has a unique place in Indian economy and plays a vital role in the economic development of the rural poor. The importance of cottage industries cannot be over-emphasized in developing and underdeveloped countries. In these countries, a significant population is rural and dependent on the informal economy to generate income.

According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census (2019-20), the total number of households in India engaged in handloom activities (weaving and allied activities) is 31.45 lakhs. This is an increase over the Third census where the count was 27.83 lakhs. The principal reason behind this increase may be attributed to the success of various initiatives undertaken by the Government of India. The traditional handloom industry has withstood changing industrial environments like neo-liberalization and globalization. Even in the new market economy, appreciation for the art and demand for handloom products is ever-growing. Workers in the informal economy are usually not recognized, licensed, regulated or otherwise protected under labour legislation and social protection systems.

The Textile industry occupies a unique place in our country. One of the earliest to come into existence in India, it accounts for 14% of the total Industrial production, 3% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), contributes to nearly 17% to its export earnings and is a source of direct employment to over 35 million people which makes it the second largest of the total exports and is the second largest generator of employment after Agriculture. India's Textiles industry has around 4.5 crore employed workers including 35.22 lakh handloom workers across the country. The Indian textile and apparel industry is expected to grow at 10% CAGR from 2019-20 to reach US \$190 billion by 2025-26.

Literature Review:

Dr. Rachana Goswami & Dr. Ruby Jain(2014): Explored the problems of the handloom industry and further suggest a suitable strategy for Sustainable Development

Sanjay Shrivastava (2020): Identified several examples of crafts from Kutch which are made from recycled materials or are in some way sustainable and a path towards sustainability. The study also emphasized how craft is a very important way forward towards sustainable development and how the crossing points among the crafts of Kutch play an important role in sustainable development for a better future in India.

S. Jothi Subramaniyabharathy (2021): It has been concluded that the handloom industry generates significant benefits to the economy in terms of micro and large economic impacts. It plays an important role in reducing poverty in the country, increasing employment and increasing household income and consumption particularly in the post pandemic situation. The post COVID-19 situation the introduction of sustainable growth assumption is essential for weavers. But, for the rapidly changing reality and conditions in handloom industry.

Prof. M. Usha & S. Ramakrishna Chary (2021): Observed that the handloom industry has been steadily declining over the years, and handloom weavers are facing serious difficulties as a result of a severe labour shortage. Unsystematic government policies, globalization, competition from power looms and mills, ineffective scheme implementation, and changes in social and economic conditions are the main causes

Research Gap:

The handloom sector has been a silent contributor as an unorganized sector is a traditional and ancient industry. An integral part of the informal economy in many countries including India, the handloom sector embodies the vision of Sustainable Development Goals because it involves minimal use of capital and power, environment-friendly production processes and allows flexibility to innovate and offer products as per market requirements. The Handloom Sector addresses several issues and hence need to know the impact and role of the Handloom sector towards sustainable approaches adopted towards the Handloom Industry in India.

Objective of the study:

To know the Sustainable approaches adopted by the Handloom sector in India in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Research Methodology:

The study is descriptive and is based on the data collected from secondary sources from Published Research articles, Published Reports, and Listed websites related to the area.

Sustainable approaches adopted by the Handloom sector in India

The Handloom sector embodies the vision of sustainable goals. Handloom is one such sustainable process of weaving without using electric machinery. Handloom woven fabrics are gentle and soft, as they are woven directly by human hands, making them highly comfortable and durable. Establishing a central network to disseminate vital information to weavers, improving weavers' awareness of the finance and sales processes, and setting up handloom institutes in every handloom town are among the steps that will help rejuvenate the sector.

The handloom sector has been a silent contributor to the economic development of the nation. The Handloom sector addresses several issues and has been achieving many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, such as **Goal 5: Gender Equality**, **Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**, **Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities**, **Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production** and **Goal 13: Climate Action**.



Goal 5 Gender Equality: One of India's oldest industries, the handloom sector contributes to 6% of India's GDP and accounts for 13% of exports. The handloom sector directly addresses women's empowerment by making women self-reliant and financially independent. While the sector still has a long way to go in terms of the full-time employment of women, in both urban and rural areas, the female workforce participation rate in allied activities in this sector is twice as much higher than their male counterparts. As per the present Fourth All India Handloom census, the sector engages over 23 lakhs female weavers and allied workers. Only 36.5 % of the women are engaged in full-time weaving activities, while it a part-time Endeavour for the rest. Weaving and allied activities release women from unpaid household jobs and help them join and remain in the paid labour force. Growth in women's employment prospects depends upon the growth in employment opportunities in such sectors where male domination survives. Since women are limited to seeking work only in few areas, extension and value addition in these sectors is very crucial. (Mehrotra and Sinha, 2019). Thus, promoting the growth of the handloom sector, and providing and strengthening incentives for women's employment and participation in the sector is essential. Trade liberalization and international supply chains and exchange networks have increased the global trade of textiles, including Indian handloom products. The World Trade Organization's Agreement on Textiles and Clothing has led to an increase in international trade and the development of value chains. For all it contributes to sustainable rural development and achieving Sustainable Development Goals, it only seems fair that the products of this sector receive concessions on the duty and cess levied against their exports. Boosting the handloom sector is not an end in itself, but a critical means to achieving broader Sustainable Development Goals, since the principles of handloom weaving and due to the nature of the handloom sector, it has been meeting the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals for decades. According to the 2019 UNESCAP report, India needs to spend 10% of its GDP to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. This financial estimate will be much lesser if sectors that produce SDG targets on their own are developed and uplifted. India needs to leverage its handloom sector, which uplifts the rural economy to work towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal targets.



Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth : The handloom sector empowers and promotes the social and economic inclusion of all, irrespective of caste, sex, religion or another status. The handloom sector promotes sustained economic growth and encourages entrepreneurship and job creation. The entire handloom value chain from the production of raw material to the finishing touches of the end product is labour-intensive and employs a large chunk of the population. In the case of India, as per the Fourth All India Handloom Census 2019-2020, India has 35 lakh handloom workers and 31 lakh handloom worker households. The ideals of the handloom sector are very much aligned with the sustainable development goals, which promote sustained economic growth and encourage entrepreneurship and job creation in order to achieve the targets of Goal 8: decent work and productive

employment for all men and women, by 2030. A home-based micro-enterprise, handloom weaving helps sustain the members of a handloom household. The handloom sector plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of the rural population by promoting entrepreneurship through self-employment opportunities to generate income and increasing the standard of living. By bolstering the rural economy, it also reduced migration from rural to urban regions.



Goal 10 Reduced Inequalities: According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census, 14.3% of handloom worker households comprise of Scheduled Caste members, 19.1% are Scheduled Tribes members, and 33.6% are people from Other Backward Classes. Further, Handloom cooperatives facilitate political inclusion through collective action. Handloom and Khadi act as tools for social change by breaking the caste barriers and bringing people from different backgrounds on the same platform and giving them a dignified way of life



Goal 12 Responsible Consumption and Production: Handloom products encourage sustainable fashion and inspire conscious consumerism. They provide an eco-conscious alternative to machine-made and mass-manufactured fast fashion products that thrive on careless consumerism. Handloom products are often more durable and last longer; they are passed down in families over generations and thus do not end up in landfills frequently. Since weaving is a meticulous and time-consuming activity, reasonable quantities of fabric are produced, and textile wastage is limited. Thus, handloom sector has been helping the country achieve the aims of Goal 12



Goal 13 Climate Action: Handlooms do not depend on fossil fuels or other energy sources as it is operated manually. Handloom products encourage sustainable fashion and inspire conscious consumerism. They provide an eco-conscious alternative to machine-made and mass-manufactured fast fashion products that thrive on careless consumerism. Handloom products are often more durable and last longer; they are passed down in families over generations and thus do not end up in landfills frequently. Since weaving is a meticulous and time-consuming activity, reasonable quantities of fabric are produced, and textile wastage is limited. Thus, the sector has been helping the country achieve the aims of Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production that are a prerequisite for sustainable development and a green economy. The handloom sector has a low carbon footprint and can help achieve the objectives of sustainable Goal 13.

Conclusion: 95% of the world's hand-woven fabrics are found in India, which is one of the very few countries produce them. The handloom industry is considered the economy's second driving segment is playing a major role for achieving sustainable development goals and the elimination of harmful impacts on the environment and biodiversity, Encouraging female entrepreneurship as well as the provision of sustainable jobs for rural India, are quality-based by the industry that provides small-scale businesses with greater sustainability and growth. . India needs to leverage its handloom sector, which uplifts the rural economy to work towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal targets.

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