

Development Alternatives participates in the launch of “State of India’s Handloom Sector Report”

Development Alternatives participated in the launch of the first “**State of India’s Handloom Sector Report**” on 28th March 2024. The launch-event was organised under "Living Looms of India", a pan-India handloom initiative of ACCESS Development Services.

This comprehensive report will serve as a valuable resource, a reference book offering insights into the diversity of handloom traditions, entrepreneurial endeavours, challenges, and opportunities that exist within this sector. The report is a culmination of efforts to capture the essence of India's handloom industry, shedding light on the following aspects:

- The history of weaving tradition in India
- A brief of various handloom clusters of India: weaving technique, products, weavers' demography, etc.
- Issues and concerns of the handloom sub-sector
- Policy landscape, trends, and desired changes therein
- Major stakeholders including government agencies
- Entrepreneurial landscape in handlooms
- Organisations promoting the cause of the handloom sector
- Marketing scenario including export trends
- Stories from the field; case studies, etc.



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The launch event shared the insights from the report with major stakeholders of the handloom sector viz. government, civil society organisations, CSRs, social enterprises, entrepreneurs, marketing & business organisations, and academia.

Living Looms of India is a pan-India initiative of ACCESS to revitalise the Handloom Sector in India. The initiative aims to enhance the livelihoods of weavers of 20 major clusters of India by providing them all the need-based support at different fronts viz. design development, process innovation and market interventions positioning them in the highest value markets.

Col Raman Thapar from DA participated in the launch event and shared with the participants about DA and its special purpose vehicle - IMEDF's contribution in establishing clusters in the Handloom sector through the SFURTI initiative.

Among the major highlights in the report – Handloom industry is the largest cottage industry in the country. It is still the second largest economic activity after agriculture and provides employment to 90 million people. There are about 3.5 million looms in India contributing about 7% to the country's GDP.



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The three critical challenges that the handloom clusters face across the board are:

- Need to adopt and integrate modern technology
- Infusion of modern designs and product diversification
- High value market Linkages.

The Report edited by Dr Madhura Dutta shares data from the **Fourth All India Handloom Census Report published in 2019-2020**. The Fourth Census report was executed by the office of the Development Commissioner Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, Govt of India.

The total number of weavers enumerated is 26,73,891. The total number of households in India engaged in handloom activities (weaving and allied) is 31.45 lakhs. Four states account for 18 Lakh of all weaver households in the country- Assam, West Bengal, Manipur & Tamil Nadu. 89% of Weaver households are rural and 11% are urban. About 72 % of weavers are women and 82 % of weavers in rural areas work independently i.e. are self-employed. At the all-India level, Co-operative Societies (70.3%) dominate in the type of units.

Income Data – The Majority (66.3%) of households earn less than Rs 5,000 per month while only 7% have a monthly income of more than Rs 10,000 per month

Raw material source – The census report data shows that the “Open Market” is the dominant source for purchase of raw materials (yarns, dyes, and chemicals). The local market is also the dominant source of sales for 64.1 % of households enumerated.

Awareness about schemes – Insurance penetration (life or health) is exceptionally low (3.8%) among the weaver households. Only 3% were aware of Weaver’s health insurance scheme, only 7.6% were aware of Margin money for working capital, only 10.8 % were aware of yarn supply through National Handloom Development Corporation, and only 22.4 % were aware of Handloom mark.

Budget allocations – In 1997-98 budget allocation for handloom sector was 27.54% of the total Textile Budget but reduced to 7.83% in 2019-2020.

The Report gives an insight into the Handloom sector and the condition of its weavers as also the imminent challenges facing the sector.



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