

# PREVAILING STATUS OF HANDLOOM INDUSTRY IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

The handloom industry in India is one of the largest unorganized sectors of economic activity in the country providing direct and indirect employment to above 40 lakh people. Handloom sector contributes nearly 15 per cent of the cloth production in the country and also contributes the exporting earning of the country. According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census, the total number of households in India engaged in handloom activities is 31.45 lakhs. In a developing country like India, handloom industry mainly provide employment opportunities to the village peoples, especially it empowers the rural women. It is the main income source of thousands of rural people and part of their livelihood. The handloom industry occupies a distinct place in the Indian Economy due to its various features like traditional heritage. It promotes the regional development in the country. But during this period, handloom industry faces many problems because of the factors like lack of technology, shortage of workers, financial crisis and competition from substitute products. In order to identify the prevailing status of the handloom industry in India, a descriptive analysis is conducted based on the secondary data from the government sources. Government of India published the fourth All India Handloom census during the current year 2020. For the purpose of this study, data is mainly used from the handloom census of government. This study mainly describes the prevailing status of handloom industry in India and compares the current status of handloom industry with previous decades.

**Key words:** Handloom, Weaver, Looms, Production, Export, India.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The handloom industry in India is one of the largest unorganized sectors of economic activity in the country providing direct and indirect employment to 43.31 lakh people. Size of the Sector According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census, the total number of households in India engaged in handloom activities is 31.45 lakhs. In a developing country like India, handloom industry mainly provide employment opportunities to the village peoples, especially it empowers the rural women. It is the main income source of thousands of rural people and part of their livelihood. The handloom industry occupies a distinct place in the Indian Economy due to its various features like traditional heritage. It promotes the regional development in the country. Handloom products have high demand in domestic market and also over the international market because of its high quality, uniqueness and eco-friendly nature. But during this period, handloom industry faces many problems because of the factors like lack of technology, shortage of workers, financial crisis and competition from substitute products. In order to identify the prevailing status of the handloom industry in India, a descriptive analysis is conducted based on the secondary data from the government sources. Government of India published the fourth All India Handloom census during the current year 2020. For the purpose of this study, data is mainly used from the handloom census of government. Reliable data could be obtained from this survey and a comparison of current and previous conditions of the handloom sector could be analysed.

## 2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Handloom industry is the important income earning source of the Indian rural population. And their products are highly demanded by all over the world due to its traditional heritage and eco-friendly nature. Handloom sector faces many crises during this period. It is important to identify the prevailing conditions of the handloom industry for to tide over the crisis and it will be definitely help for to implement more initiatives for the development of handloom industry. New initiatives will be leads to improve the living standard of handloom workers and enhance the contribution of this sector into our economy.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study mainly focused to describe the prevailing status of handloom industry in India and compares the current status with previous status of handloom industry in two decades regarding main indicators like number of Workers, Looms and Production.

### 4. METHODOLOGY

In view of the objectives of the study, this research is a descriptive study by which largely interpret the information from secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from different reliable government sources like publications, websites and government reports.

### 5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Handloom weaving is largely decentralized and the weavers are mainly from the vulnerable and weaker sections of the society, who weave for their household needs and also contribute to the production in the textile sector. According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census, the total number of households in India engaged in handloom activities (weaving and allied activities) is 31.45 lakhs. An allied worker is someone who undertakes only pre-loom and/ or post-loom activities. In India, 2.65 lakhs handloom workers have been engaged in non-household units, out of which 65.9% were engaged in non-household units located in rural areas. In Fourth All India Handloom Census, a total of 848621 allied workers have been covered, out of which 637870 allied workers are working in 599527 allied households, and 210751 allied workers are working in 172911 weaver households.

An analysis is made to describe the current status of handloom industry between the data of 4<sup>th</sup> handloom census in 2019-20 and the previous handloom census. The following table shows the number of handloom household workers in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> census period.

**Table 1**

**Number of Handloom Household Workers**

Gender	Rural		Urban		Total	
	2009-2010	2019-2020	2009-2010	2019-2020	2009-2010	2019-2020
Male	588171	778772	260302	196961	848473	975733
Female	2644054	2274516	354308	271769	2998362	2546285
Transgender	-	403	-	91	-	494
Total	3232225	3053691	614610	468821	3846835	3522512

Compiled from All India Handloom census 2009-2010 and 2019-2020, Govt. of India

It could be inferred from the above table that the total number of handloom workers in 2009-10 based on 3<sup>rd</sup> handloom census was 3846835 and the total number of handloom workers in India based on 4<sup>th</sup> handloom census is 3522512. It clearly shows that there is a decreasing of total number of workers in handloom industry. The contribution of female workers in handloom industry is greater than male in India. But total number of male workers in 2009-10 was 848473 and it is increased to 975733 in existing period. The number of female workers in 2009-10 was 2998362 and it is decreased to 2546285. It is notable from the 4<sup>th</sup> census that, it is the first time that the transgender category is included in the study area and the number of transgender included in handloom working are 494. It gives the scope for more employment opportunities to transgender in this industry. Based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> census, the strength of handloom workers in rural area was 3232225 and it decreased to 3053691 in prevailing period. The contribution of urban workers decreased to 468821 from 614610 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> census period and the contribution of workers from rural area is greater than the urban area. It clearly identified from this analysis that there is not much significant difference between these two decades in this sector.

## A Summary of Key Indicators

The below table shows a summary of key indicators during the periods of second, third and fourth Handloom Census.

**Table 2**

### A Summary of Key Indicators Compared between Second, Third and Fourth Handloom Census

Selected Indicators	Second Census (1995)	Third Census (2010)	Fourth Census (2020)
Handloom Weaver household (Lakh)	25.25	22.68	25.45
Handloom Worker household (Lakh)	25.2	27.83	31.44
Handloom Weaver (Lakh)	34.71	29.09	26.74
Man-days worked per weaver household during census year	197	234	238
Share of full-time weavers to total weavers	44%	64%	50.78%

Handloom census 2009-2010 and 2019-2020, Govt. of India

Number of handloom weaver household in the country is 25.45 lakh during the time of fourth handloom census and it was 22.68 in third census period and 25.25 lakh in second census period. This analysis shows that the number of weaver household in two decades not much increase or decrease in the country. But the number of handloom worker household indicates an increasing trend from the 2<sup>nd</sup> census period. And the number of handloom worker household during 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> census periods are 25.2, 27.83 and 31.44 lakh respectively. The number of handloom weavers in second census period was 34.71 and it decreased to 29.09 lakh in third census period of 2009-10 and it again decreased to 26.74 lakh in the period of 2019-20. It is revealed from the analysis that the number of handloom weavers are decreasing in our country mainly due to shortage of workers, lack of technological up gradation and low income. Younger generations are not much interested in weaving activity because of low level of income from the sector.

Man-days worked per weaver household during three census year of 1995-96, 2009-10 and 2019-2020 is 197, 234 and 238 days respectively. And share of full-time weavers to total weavers were 44% and it increased to 64% in 2009-10 and again it decreased to 50.78% in the current census year 2019-20.

### LOOMS:

According to the Fourth Handloom census, 28.2 lakhs looms are in this industry. Out of this 28.2 lakhs, 25.2 lakhs were in rural areas and 2.9 lakhs were in urban areas. The contribution of handlooms in rural areas is greater than that of urban area. Because of the household based activity of handloom, the major portion of looms (95.6%) is household handloom units. Total number of handlooms during 2009-10 was 27.83 lakhs, it is increased to 28.2 lakhs in 2019-2020.

### PRODUCTION:

The strength of the handloom sector lies in production of intricate woven fabric, its versatility and wide variety, diverse design base, ability to switchover to new designs quickly, availability of high skilled labour, conventional type of production technique, non-requirement of electricity and eco-friendly technology and process. Varieties of high quality handloom products are weaving in different parts of India and distinct specializations are to be given to some products in different regions.

### Production of major fabrics

Saree: 22.9% (being produced by approximately 6.83 lakhs weaver households) Shawls, Mekhla Chadder, Loi, stole, scarf, muffler: 26.7% (being produced by approximately 7.97lakhs weaver households) Angavastram, dhoti, sarong, lungi: 19.5% (being produced by approximately 5.80 lakhs weaver households). Towel, napkin, duster, gamcha: 16.5% (being produced by approximately 4.91lakhs weaver households) Durries, rugs, mats: 3.5% (being produced by approximately 1.01 lakhs weaver and allied worker households) Dress material (Salwar, kameez, etc.), suiting, shirting, long cloth: 3.2% (being produced by approximately 0.95 lakhs weaver households) Bedsheet, furnishings, blankets: 3.4% (being produced by approximately 1.01 lakhs weaver households) All others, including surgical bandage: 4.3% (being produced by approximately 1.27 lakhs weaver households)

Source: All India Handloom Census 2019-2020, Govt. of India

### Source of Raw materials

The different types of raw materials like hank yarn dyes and chemicals and dyed yarn are buying through different sources like Open market, Master Weaver, Co-operative societies, National Handloom Development Corporation, KVIV/KVIB or from other sources. Majority of household weavers including rural and urban regions buying raw material (76.6% hank yarn, 58.1% dyes and chemicals and 49.7% dyed yarn) from the Open market. Second and third priority sources of buying raw materials are from Master weavers and Co-operative societies respectively.

### Sources of Sales of Handloom products

There are many sources for the sales of varieties of handloom products. Indian handloom products have high demand over the international market and also in domestic market due to its traditional heritage and unique features of the products. The below table depicts the different sources of sales by handloom households.

**Table 3**

**Source of Sales by Handloom Households**

Sl. NO.	Source of Sales	Per cent
1	Local Market	64.1
2	Master Weaver	17.6
3	Co-operative Society	8.8
4	Organized fairs	1.0
5	Export	0.4
6	E-commerce	0.2
7	Others	8.0

Source: All India Handloom Census 2019-2020, Govt. of India

Out of 3144839 weaver and allied worker household, majority of weaver's sales their products in local market. 17.6% weavers sell their product through the master weavers and 8.8% through the Co-operative societies. The other sources of sale of products are organized fairs (1%), Export (0.4%), E-commerce (0.2%) and 8% through other sources. Majority of the sales through the different sources is mainly misused by the middleman; it will adversely affect the income of the weavers.

### EXPORT:

The Handloom Export Promotion Council (HEPC) is a statutory body constitute under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, which promote export of handloom products. Based on the year 2018-2019(Up to September 2019), the export of handloom products valued at US\$ 178.04 million. The major importer of Indian handloom products was US, which purchase of US\$ 93.94 million and UK purchase of US\$ 17.77 million and followed by them Italy and Germany at the value of US\$ 16.47 million and US\$14.65 million respectively.

## 6. CONCLUSION:

Handloom Industry plays an important role in Indian Economy. Handloom is a major traditional industry which promotes high employment opportunities to rural people; especially it gives the scope to empower the rural women in India. Being a cottage traditional industry, Handloom sector ensure the regional development in our country. Through the analysis of current status of the industry, it is proven that there is not much improvement in this industry within two decades and many constraints are to be faced by this sector. But based on Fourth All India Handloom Census, the total number of households in India engaged in weaving and allied activities is 31.45 lakhs, which is increased from 27.83 lakhs in third census. It may be due to the positive effect by the government initiatives. More steps should be taken for the future development of handloom industry. Several measures like modernization and value addition may improve the sector and it may leads to income flow to the sector, which may attract more workers to this sector.

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