




# 10th National Handloom Day






# Introduction



The handloom industry in India is a vital part of the country's cultural and economic heritage, providing employment to over 4.3 million people, many of whom are women. With its roots tracing back thousands of years, the sector showcases India's diverse textile traditions, such as Banarasi silk, Pochampally ikat, and Kanchipuram silk. The Swadeshi Movement, initiated in 1905, significantly revived the handloom industry by promoting economic self-reliance and national pride, encouraging the boycott of British goods, and revitalizing traditional crafts. Today, the handloom sector remains integral to India's rural development and cultural preservation, blending traditional craftsmanship with modern innovations to sustain its legacy.





# Handloom Products

Handloom products in India are celebrated for their diversity, craftsmanship, and cultural significance. They encompass a wide range of textiles, each with its own unique characteristics, techniques, and regional influences. These products include exquisite sarees, luxurious fabrics, and elegant shawls and scarves.

Sarees are a quintessential part of Indian attire, with each region offering distinctive styles such as the opulent Kanchipuram, the intricate Banarasi, the delicate Jamdani, and the vibrant Paithani.

Fabrics showcase India's rich textile tradition through materials like Chanderi, known for its light and airy texture, Maheshwari, appreciated for its blend of silk and cotton, Muga silk from Assam with its natural golden sheen, and Eri silk, valued for its warmth and softness.

Shawls and scarves add a touch of elegance and warmth, with renowned types like the luxurious Pashmina from Kashmir, the vibrant Kullu shawls from Himachal Pradesh, and the intricately patterned Kani shawls, also from Kashmir.

Each type of handloom product reflects the artistry and heritage of its region, making them cherished items both domestically and globally.







Kanchipuram  
Silk Saree



Banarsi Saree



Paithni Saree



Jamdani Saree



Kullu Shawls



Pashmina  
Shawls



Bandhani



Chanderi



# Economic Significance

The handloom industry is the second-largest employment provider in India after agriculture, engaging over 4.3 million people, with a significant proportion being women. This sector contributes approximately 15% to the country's total textile production and accounts for around 95% of the world's handwoven fabric. In terms of economic contribution, the handloom industry adds to India's GDP and generates substantial export earnings, with exports valued at around USD 353 million in the 2020-2021 fiscal year (Ministry of Textiles, Government of India). By providing livelihoods for millions of weavers and allied workers, the handloom industry supports rural economies and promotes sustainable development, all while preserving India's rich cultural heritage.







# Challenges Faced

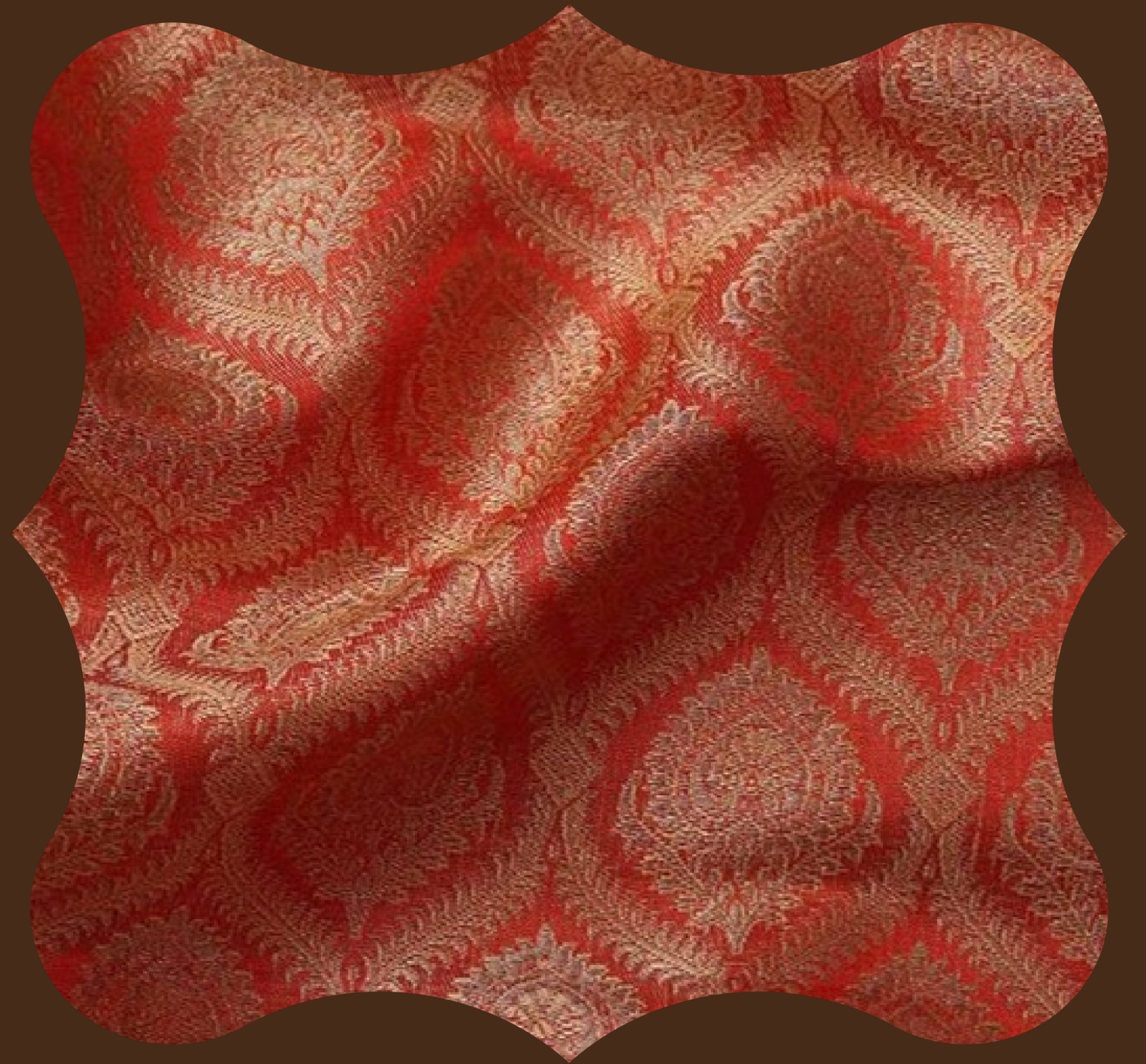


- **Competition from Machine-Made Textiles:** Machine-made textiles, being cheaper and faster to produce, pose a major threat to the traditional handloom sector. The powerloom sector produces around 63% of the total cloth in India, whereas the handloom sector accounts for about 15% .
- **Declining Interest Among Younger Generations:** Younger generations are increasingly disinterested in traditional weaving, seeking more lucrative modern employment, leading to a shortage of skilled weavers. A study by the Ministry of Textiles revealed that the average age of handloom weavers is around 43 years, indicating a lack of younger entrants into the field .
- **Lack of Access to Raw Materials and Credit:** Weavers often struggle to obtain high-quality raw materials at reasonable prices and face limited access to credit, hindering investment in better equipment and expansion. According to the Fourth All India Handloom Census (2019-2020), only about 10% of weavers have access to institutional credit .
- **Inadequate Infrastructure and Marketing Support:** The sector suffers from poor infrastructure, insufficient working capital, and limited access to modern technology, along with inadequate marketing support, affecting the market reach and profitability of handloom products. The census also highlights that 67% of handloom households lack working capital, which significantly impacts their productivity and market engagement .



# Government Initiatives

- **Handloom Reservation Act (1985):** This Act aims to protect the handloom sector by reserving certain textile articles exclusively for production by handlooms, preventing competition from powerlooms and mills in these segments.
- **Integrated Handloom Development Scheme (IHDS):** Introduced to provide financial assistance for the modernization of looms, skill upgradation of weavers, and improvement of marketing infrastructure. This scheme focuses on enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the handloom sector.
- **Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme:** This scheme includes various sub-schemes aimed at the welfare of handloom weavers, such as health insurance, life insurance, and work-shed housing. It addresses the social and economic needs of weavers and their families.
- **India Handloom Brand (IHB):** Launched to promote high-quality handloom products with a distinct identity in the domestic and international markets. The IHB certification ensures that products meet certain quality standards, helping to build consumer trust and increase marketability.







# Growth Prospects



- **Growing Demand for Sustainable and Eco-Friendly Textiles:** The global market for sustainable textiles is expanding, with the sustainable fashion industry projected to reach USD 8.25 billion by 2023, growing at a CAGR of 9.7% from 2018 to 2023 . Handloom textiles, which use eco-friendly processes and natural fibers, align well with this trend.
- **Increasing Popularity of Indian Handloom Products Globally:** Indian handloom exports were valued at approximately USD 353 million in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, showing strong international demand for these products . The global interest in unique and artisanal textiles is driving growth in this sector.
- **Potential for Product Diversification and Value Addition:** There is significant potential for diversification and value addition. For instance, the home textiles market, including handloom products, is expected to grow from USD 123.8 billion in 2022 to USD 165.6 billion by 2028, driven by innovation and demand for unique designs .
- **Scope for Technological Upgradation and Skill Development:** The Indian government's initiatives include upgrading technology and training programs. For example, the Integrated Handloom Development Scheme (IHDS) provides support for modernizing looms and enhancing skills . These efforts aim to boost productivity and adapt to market trends.



# Conclusion

The handloom industry stands as a powerful symbol of India's rich cultural diversity, reflecting the nation's heritage and craftsmanship. To ensure its survival and growth, there is a critical need for collaborative efforts among government bodies, industry stakeholders, and the community. Reviving and sustaining the sector involves addressing challenges such as competition, declining interest, and inadequate infrastructure while capitalizing on opportunities like growing demand for sustainable textiles and global market expansion. Preserving and promoting the handloom heritage is essential not only for maintaining traditional skills but also for continuing to offer unique, high-quality products that resonate with both domestic and international audiences. By fostering innovation and support, the handloom industry can thrive and remain a vibrant part of India's cultural and economic landscape.







# Sources

- Allied Market Research (Sustainable Fashion Market Report)
- Ministry of Textiles, Government of India (Export Data)
- Grand View Research (Home Textiles Market Report)
- Ministry of Textiles, Government of India (IHDS Information)
- Fourth All India Handloom Census (2019-2020)
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