

Present Scenario of Handloom Industry in Arunachal Pradesh: A Case Study of Siang District

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Abstract

Arunachal Pradesh takes great pride in its vibrant, traditional, and indigenous handloom goods. The ancient handloom was meant to be revived and revitalised in previous years, according to the Arunachal Pradesh Industries Department. Weaving was a common household activity that was practiced to some degree by almost all of the major tribes of west siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The creation of small-scale industrial units, manufacturing hubs in board regions, handloom facilities are among the noteworthy initiatives. These sectors depend on light machine tools and other technology to manufacture high-quality products.

Arunachal Pradesh's tribal handlooms are highly renowned and appreciated both inside and outside of the nation. The usefulness of ancient art is eroding as living patterns shift. Modernization has led to the replacement of traditional clothing and handicrafts with new ones. The government agent should be responsible for providing full financial support and ensuring that it is used appropriately in any likely selected unit. Weavers of local products ought to be supported and involved.

Keywords: Arunachal Pradesh, Weaving, handlooms, West siang

INTRODUCTION

The Handloom holds a distinct place in the state's rural economy due to its major contribution to bolstering the economic foundation and its efficient use of a substantial labour force. With particular attention to the many indigenous populations residing in the State, the research aims to give syntheses, scientific investigation, and assessment of its situations in a frontier state such as Arunachal Pradesh, especially in a traditional rural context. In the state, modernization is largely a post-independent phenomenon. While the process of development in Arunachal Pradesh is recent it has made some visible progress. The average income per people has increased is higher than the national average. The State has witnessed many changes in the last 3 decades than it has seen for centuries. Arunachal is poised at a critical juncture and is in a position to choose a crucial choice, regarding development path it wants to pursue. The cornerstone of the people's economic advancement and the greatest and most promising economic source in Arunachal Pradesh was the handloom sector. Weaving was a common household activity that was practiced to some degree by almost all of the major tribes of west siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is the exclusive concern of women everywhere. Arunachal Pradesh takes great

pride in its vibrant, traditional, and indigenous handloom goods. The ancient handloom was meant to be revived and revitalised in previous years, according to the Arunachal Pradesh Industries Department. The creation of small-scale industrial units, manufacturing hubs in board regions, sericulture programme extensions, and handloom facilities are among the noteworthy initiatives.

The inhabitants in this state have a keen sense of aesthetics and are endowed with delicate hands and fingers. They come from a long line of artists and craftspeople. For example, handloom and handicraft provide a great deal of flexibility in producing a range of exquisitely crafted and creatively combined garments. One of the most popular crafts in Arunachal Pradesh is weaving. Beautiful rugs are produced in the galo in siang region, whilst magnificent carpets are woven in West Kameng, Tawang, and Siang. The galos are superb at creating functional, eye-catching handicrafts, and their textiles provide abundant evidence of their long history. Their dexterous fingers skillfully weave exquisite patterns into the fabrics and carpets. on addition to other products, they grow cotton on their jhum farms. The distinctive features of the wool, cotton, and silk weaving seen all across the region are the brilliant colours and wonderful designs, which can be floral or abstract at times. In addition to wool and cotton, certain tribes make use of bark fibres that are taken from trees such as Rhea Nivea, Pudu, and Udal. Various tribal societies utilise different kinds of natural dyes to print on their clothing. In Arunachal Pradesh's surrounding regions, textile design is influenced by Assamese, Bhutanese, Tibetan, and Burmese styles. The Monpa ladies weave a vast range of purses, caps, jackets, shawls, and sashes. The Sherdukpen women, in contrast to the Monpas, solely utilise cotton and plant fibre in their craft. The women of Galo ,Adi, Nishi weave blankets, skirts, lion cloths, and waist bands using both cotton and Pudu Plant fibre. They cultivate a lot of cotton, particularly in the Palin and Panior valleys. To colour their yarn used for borders, they employ natural dyes that are taken from jungle creepers and certain plants, such as black from Kukhi, scarlet from Tamin creeper, and green from Ungu plant. The Apa Tani women also make ceremonial shawls, jackets, and embellish cotton fabrics with wool. Typically, they extract black dye from yango leaves and red dye from manjeet. In the field of weaving, the Mishmis women are well regarded. They have a small-scale cotton farm in the Roing neighbourhood. They create a wide range of clothing items, such as waist and lion cloths, aprons, sleeveless coats, jackets, skirts, scarves, embroidered bodies, shawls, sashes, bands, belts, and bags, by weaving in cotton and wool plant fibres, particularly Rhea Nivea. Almost all of the clothing required for men and themselves is made by the Khamptis and Singpho women. The Tangsa ladies are mostly known for their multipatterned lungis, skirts, and handbags. The ladies of Singpho and Tangsa are both skilled weavers who excel in creating ceremonial robes that showcase their artistic abilities. Each of them cultivates cotton on a modest basis. Arunachal Pradesh's tribal handlooms are highly renowned and appreciated both inside and outside of the nation. The usefulness of ancient art is eroding as living patterns shift. Modernization has led to the replacement of traditional clothing and handicrafts with new ones. The Industry Department must take action to prevent the traditional arts and crafts from going extinct; else, they will eventually disappear.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this paper is to investigate the present scenario of handloom industries of West Siang districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Selected Geographical Area under Study: The West Siang Districts in the Siang Valley in Arunachal

Pradesh is the study's location. The East Siang, West Siang, and Upper Siang districts currently make up the Siang valley, which was once known as Siang District.

Nature and Data Sources: The suggested study is mostly empirical in nature, drawing on both primary and secondary sources.

Secondary Sources: Secondary data is used to analyse changes in production and its performance over time in the research region, providing a background for an in-depth analysis based on investigation. The publications of the District Statistical Office, District Industries Centre, Textile and Handicraft Industries, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Itanagar, and Directorate of Textile and Handicraft Industry, Itanagar are where the data from the secondary sources are gathered.

Methods and Instruments for Data Analysis: To analyse the data, straightforward numerical computations and graphical displays have been employed. As a result, the study is written up after the various data and information are processed, evaluated, and assessed.

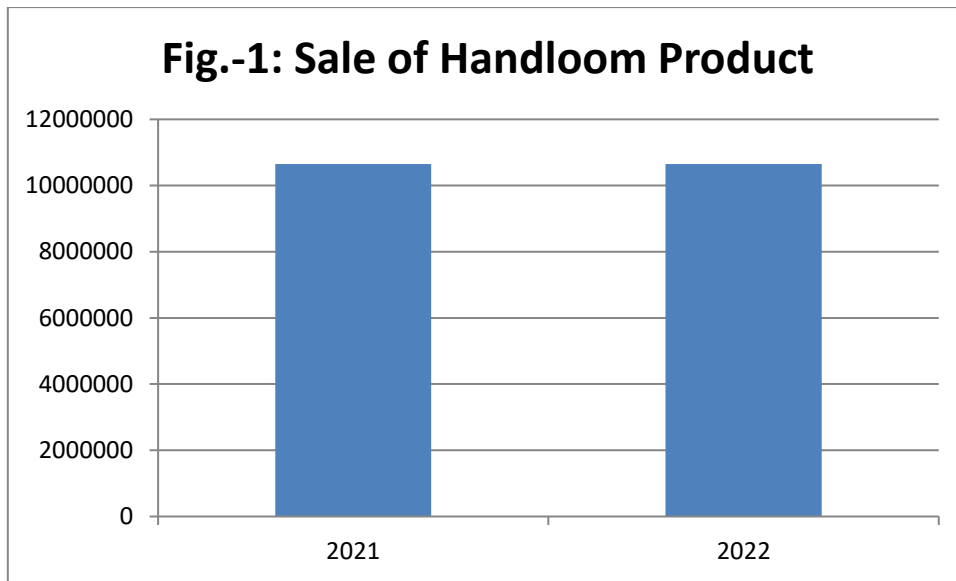
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Present Scenario: The state government now provides the business with a great deal of assistance in the form of funding, upgraded looms, accessories, and raw materials at competitive prices. The Directorate of Textiles and Handicraft operates 58 weaving and craft facilities and 1 Handloom Development and Quality Dyeing facility around the state to encourage the production of handloom and handicraft goods and create self-employment. In an effort to raise awareness of the handloom and handicraft items produced by the state's industrial units, the department has been taking part in a number of fairs, festivals and exhibitions. In addition to operating 19 Emporia and 14 Show Rooms/Sales Counters around the state, 3 Emporia and 3 Show Rooms/Sales Counters are operational in New Delhi, Kolkata, and Guwahati. In order to promote the rich heritage of Arunachal Pradesh's handloom and handicraft products, the department has also purchased a plot of land in New Mumbai for the construction of an emporia and guest house. Additionally, the department has organised exhibitions to raise awareness among the state's local business owners and artisans. The contribution of Craft/ Weaving Centres during 2021-2022 is depicted below in Table-1 and Fig-1.

TABLE-1: TEXTILE AND HANDICRAFTS IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Year	Crafts / Weaving Centre (in nos.)	Trainee in Craft & Weaving Centre (in nos.)	No. of Hand - loom Devel opment Cen tre & Quality Dyeing unit	Value of Production of cloth /craft (₹)	No. of Emporiu m	No. of Showroo m / Sale Counters	Sale proceed of emporia/ showroom/ sale counters (credit & cash in ₹)
2021	40	42	9018362	9454879	137504	22	10648433
2022	-	756	-	8869541	22	17	10648433

Source: Statistical Abstract of A. P., Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of A.P., Itanagar, compiled from various years.



District-wise crafts/weaving centres and other activities as on 31st March, 2022 are shown in Table 2, where we can see Crafts/ Weaving Centres’ numbers, the number of Trainees in Craft & Weaving Centres, the number of Handloom Development centre & quality dyeing unit, Value of production of cloth/ craft during the year, Number of Emporium, Number of Show- rooms cum sale counter and Annual sale proceed of emporia and show room cum sale counters during the year 2021-2022.

TABLE-2: DISTRICT-WISE CRAFTS / WEAVING CENTRES AND OTHER ACTIVITIES IN AS ON 31.03.2022

District	Crafts/ Weaving Centres (in Nos.)	Trainees in Craft & Weaving Centres (in Nos.)	Handloom Development centre & quality dyeing unit (in Nos.)	Value of production of cloth/ craft during the year (in ₹)	No. of emporium	No. of show-rooms cum sale counter	Annual sale proceed of emporia and show room cum sale counters during the year 2021-2022 (in ₹)
Tawang	3	35	-	8,81,500	1	-	10,88,331
West Kameng	2	35	1	14,51,480	1	-	19,10,487
East Kameng	1	35	-	8,2,090	1	-	3,9,940
Papum Pare	4	25	-	1,78,700	1	-	1,90,150
Lower Subansiri	2	58	-	5,17,638	1	1	12,95,932
Kra.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Daadi							
Si-Yomi	2	40	-	3,76,180	1	-	3,25,640
Leparada	1	22	-	1,25,000	-	-	83,400
Kurung Kumey	2	12	-	45,000	-	-	45,000
Upper Subansiri	1	35	-	95,100	1	1	51,630
West Siang	2	53	-	7,37,440	1	-	5,47,670
Siang	3	18	-	-	-	-	30,00
East Siang	2	50	-	2,34,000	1	1	1,53,020
Upper Siang	5	46	-	2,98,162	1	5	4,67,402
L/Siang	2	25	-	1,18,000	-	-	61,620
Dibang Valley	1	20	-	94,771	1	-	3,08,322
Lower Dibang Valley	2	40	-	2,14,272	1	-	2,45,534
Lohit	2	35	-	4,32,729	1	-	3,76,042
Anjaw	1	10	-	2,75,505	1	-	1,26,910
Namsai	1	22	-	1,82,040	-	1	1,79,330
Changlang	6-	50	-	16,16,500	3	3	Cash sale-Rs 1289433 Credit sale-Rs 26900 Total-Rs 1316333
Tirap	9	50	-	7,03,046	1	-	6,46,568
Longding	3	40	-	2,10,388	-	1	1,14,235
RDC Doimukh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Itanagar (HQ)	-	-	-	-	1	1	8,47,804
New Delhi	-	-	-	-	1	1	62,614
Kolkata	-	-	-	-	1	1	68,400
Guwahati	-	-	-	-	1	1	8,47,804

Total	-	-	756	8869541	22	17	1,06,48,433
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Source: Directorate of Textile and Handicraft, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar

Field Study

A survey was conducted in the District Head Quarter, Aalo of West Siang District throughout the month of February, 2024 considering 100 respondents and 10 handloom shop’s owners and 10 women weavers regarding to pre-structured questionnaires. They were interviewed in free frank and friendly manner. Some questions were opened while some closed. We have divided the 100 respondents into equal 4 categories viz: (1) Below Primary generally aged people, (2) From Primary to School Final Passed, (3) From School Final to B.A. Passed, and (4) Above B.A. Passed. Again some questions were open category. They could answer what they felt. 25 handloom shop’s owners and 25 women weavers were interviewed where questions were opened. Their answers are depicted in the Table-3 shown below.

TABLE-3: ANSWERS OF THE GENERAL RESPONDENTS (CUSTOMERS OF HANDLOOM PRODUCTS OF WEST SIANG DISTRICT))

Question	Below Primary Passed people		From Primary to School Final Passed		From School Final to B.A. Passed		Above B.A. Passed	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Traditional Dress must be used always, your opinion:	3	2	4	2	2	3	5	1
Traditional Dress should be used occasionally, your opinion:	5	4	3	2	4	2	4	1
Traditional Dress should be used during festival, your opinion:	3	2	5	1	5	2	5	1
If you will be elected as an M LA, will you use the traditional dress in Assembly?	3	1	3	1	2	2	2	2
If you will be elected as an M P, will you use the traditional dress in Parliament?	1	1	3	1	2	1	3	1
	25		25		25		25	

Source: Field Study, February 2024

Interpretation in view of Table-3: Below Primary Passed people. In responses of below Primary Passed people agreed that Traditional Dress must be used always because it reflects our rich cultural identity connecting us with our own state and regions.

From Primary to School Final Passed: Most of the population support that Traditional Dress should be used occasionally as it reflects the country's rich history, cultural diversity, and regional variations.

Traditional Dress should be used during festival: Maximum population believes that each dresses in region has its unique style, fabrics, and designs, which make them distinct from one another. The regional dresses not only reflect the cultural and regional influences but also have a deep cultural significance attached to them.

If you will be elected as an MLA/MP will you use the traditional dress in Assembly and parliament?

Wearing traditional attire reflects the respect, love, cultural identity and traditional values of own region and state. So wearing traditional dress especially in assembly and parliament is important both culturally and socially.

TABLE-4: RESPONSES OF THE GENERAL 25 HANDLOOM SHOP’S OWNERS OF WEST SIANG DISTRICT

Question	View of handloom shop’s owners		
	Yes	No	Can’t say
Do you feel the competition of cheap machine made product in the market?	YES		
Is there preference of local traditional product in the market?	YES		
Have you participated in any Exhibition?		NO	
Should Government open training in each district?	YES		
Should Government open purchasing centre in each district?	YES		
Should Govt. sanction special stipend to the traditional artisans?	YES		

Source: Field Study, February 2024

Interpretation in view of Table-4: The following answers of the respondents in the questions shown in above Table are discussed below.

Do you feel the competition of cheap machine made product in the market? The above table shows that most of the shop owners do not have access to a ready market. They generally sell their products to their relatives, neighbours etc. who get a product directly from the household units or from the workshop occasionally or at the time of festival. These units do not have any established marketing channel. There is no sale cum showroom and the quantum of production is very small. are threats on sale for some of the products due to availability of cheap and handy products in the market like machine made goods (plastic molded furniture, foreign dress materials, Chinese products, etc.).

Is there preference of local traditional product in the market? Yes, though the price of local product is higher buyers realize its features of qualitatively different and distinct having aesthetic value, worthiness of eco-friendly, organic, handmade products, people demand for local products in the market increases.

Have you participated in any Exhibition? 90 % of the respondents never participate to exhibitions while the rest 10% participate within and outside the State like at Delhi, Guwahati or other places organize by KVIC and APKVIB.

Should Government open training in each district? In order to improve skills and capabilities and to promote collective business enterprises of traditional artisians and producers there is a need to open training centre in every district.

Should Government open purchasing centre in each district? Yes, because the finished products have no organized market due to which the seller sometimes pushes to sell their product to the dignitaries or produce on occasional demand and sell during the festival time. To boost this sector it is necessary to open 'Purchase Centers' by the Government to procure these products. These items may be sold through the state run emporia both within and outside the State.

Should Govt. sanction special stipend to the traditional artisans? Finances from the government are required for better design and packaging in order to increase the marketability of conventional items. The government may provide business owners with a special programme that allows them to take out short-term, interest-free loans.

SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions achieved from the respondents in the field study may be considered with a view to strengthen the small scale handloom and handicraft industries in Arunachal Pradesh.

1. To start, this industry needs to properly advertise its goods on television, radio, and even in daily newspapers published both inside and outside the state. It has to be its own webpage.
2. The state government ought to make every effort to enable local business owners to take part in all fairs and exhibits, both within and beyond the state as well as abroad.
3. Priority should be given by the state administration to expanding border trade with China, Myanmar, and Bhutan. I hope that if border commerce is implemented with complete honesty, it will help Arunachal Pradesh become a self-generating and self-sustaining economy in addition to opening up new job opportunities. The market for Arunachal products, including as handloom and handicraft items, will consequently grow on its own.
4. A variety of incentives and concessions will need to be used to entice the handloom and handicraft sectors.
5. To determine the viability of these kinds of small-scale companies, a capable organisation should conduct a thorough techno-economic survey of the entire Arunachal Pradesh region.
6. It is recommended to establish a range of technical and management establishments to provide training to both current and prospective businesses.
7. The government agent should be responsible for providing full financial support and ensuring that it is used appropriately in any likely selected unit.
8. Regular dissemination of pertinent information about these handloom sectors is necessary to provide entrepreneurs with the most recent knowledge on manpower planning, technology, and other related topics.
9. The bank needs to be more involved than just providing loan support to these kinds of small-scale businesses. The bank might provide entrepreneurs with a unique programme that allows them to take out short-term, interest-free loans. The bank is able to identify industrial units' illnesses and create a nursing plan for their recovery. During the rehabilitation process, it can establish a dedicated cell for close observation until the unit regains its independence.
10. Tourism industry must be developed on the priority basis as this state has a great potentiality regarding this so as to attract large and large number of tourist to come in Arunachal Pradesh. They will come and see the handloom and handicraft products. Certain percentage of them must purchase these products.

11. Last of all we can say that to bring small scale industrial development including handloom, the state should be self-sufficient in raw materials, technical knowledge, machine and tools, skilled labourers, technicians and overall marketing facilities.
12. The cottage Industries Department was established during 1953-54 in Arunachal Pradesh with the sole objective to revitalizing traditional handicrafts, handlooms and sericulture industries, and also to introducing efficient tools and modern techniques of production at that time. But this Department is not functioning up to the expectation. It should be functioned properly and do work for the benefit of stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The significance of cottage industries in the process of industrial growth should not be disregarded. Since the majority of this state is inaccessible, it is not as feasible to establish heavy industries in certain locations. But it's not that hard to establish small-scale companies in the state. Because a state's growth is now determined by the calibre of the items it produces, small-scale industries like handlooms and handicrafts must be given top importance. These sectors depend on light machine tools and other technology to manufacture high-quality products. Weavers of local products ought to be supported and involved.

In the context of to-day's global liberalization, the existence of inner line between Arunachal and the rest of the economy of India may be deemed irrelevant as because, the observance of inner line is obstructing the inflow of capital, other inputs and technology. In such a situation, how can Arunachal Pradesh expect to avail of the benefit of liberalization so as to boost up the state market economy? Here, precisely, the author thinks that it may be within reasonable limit while recommending the inner line whether it should function or not, if so, how much.

However, when preparing for the growth of these sectors, planners ought to take Arunachal Pradesh's characteristics into consideration. They include the remote location from the Indian mainland, the degree of isolation from the rest of the country, the underdevelopment and basic backwardness in relation to the majority of social and economic development metrics, the isolation of the few, densely populated settlements in challenging and hilly terrain, the small cultivable area, etc. From the perspective of giving the people of Arunachal Pradesh gainful work, the cottage industries are crucial since they represent the state's largest and most promising source of income and the foundation of the people's economic advancement.

Finally, the author believes that policy makers should place a greater emphasis on doing integrated research in order to promote the marketing of handloom products.

N.B.: The study is a part of my Ph. D Research.

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