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Threads of Change: Women Empowered Through Handloom

Abstract-This poster highlights how handloom weaving empowers women in India. It discusses the challenges they face, like poverty and gender discrimination, and suggests solutions such as education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship programs. The abstract calls for collaborative efforts between government, NGOs, and businesses to create a brighter future where handloom weaving enriches lives and preserves cultural heritage.



Introduction

The rhythmic dance of looms and the intricate patterns woven with skilled hands—handloom weaving is more than just an age-old tradition; it is a powerful catalyst for women's empowerment.

Women Handloom Weavers in India:

- Rural areas are still the primary locations for handloom weaving, with 88.7% of weaver households located in villages.
- The Handloom Census 2019-20 found that female handloom weavers make up around 72% of all handloom weavers in India. Additionally, the census showed that there are approximately 35,22,512 handloom workers employed across the country, with women workers accounting for 25,46,285, or 72.29% of the total handloom workers
- The majority of the women weavers- are located in the following four states:
- Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Bihar, and are from traditional handloom weaving backgrounds.
- Women play a significant role in handloom weaving directly or indirectly. At least three allied workers are required to assist the main weaver, with women often being part of the team.
- From a very young age, these women weavers have been responsible for most of the pre-weaving work, including preparing the yarn and looms, dyeing and /or tying and dyeing yarn.



Suggestions for Social and Economic Empowerment of Women Handloom Workers:

- Empowering artisans for education and healthcare through literacy programs, free medical camps, and mobile health centers.
- Entrepreneurship and Skill development programs should be implemented in remote corners of India
- Women handloom weavers should have growth and development programs in the national budget.
- Handloom women workers should be brought under the national employment guarantee scheme. The Minimum Wages Act should be amended to enable women to get appropriate wages.
- To establish exclusive co-ops for women workers, The government should take concerted steps to facilitate easier access to credit for women weavers.
- Universities, the corporate sector, and government departments should contribute to innovative technology research and should encourage women weavers to participate.
- The government should provide alternative sources of raw materials and training facilities with special incentives to women weavers. Also, financial support should be provided for unit expansion and alternative marketing sources.

conclusion

- The handloom weaving industry has the power to transform women's lives, creating a tapestry of empowerment.
- By recognizing and supporting the invaluable contributions of women artisans, we inspire a future where dreams are woven into reality and lives are empowered.
- Government initiatives and private NGOs play crucial roles in supporting women in the handloom industry. By collaborating with these entities, we can amplify our impact, providing essential resources, training, and advocacy to empower women artisans and ensure the sustainability of this ancient craft.
- Together, we can create a brighter future where the threads of empowerment are woven into the fabric of society, enriching lives and preserving cultural heritage for generations to come.

Problems faced by women Weavers in India.

1. Many weavers' families live in extreme poverty as middlemen and retailers pocket most of the profits
2. Unfortunately, women handloom workers are excluded from the national foreign trade policy and value-addition roles
3. Over 50% of women are illiterate and dependent on men.
4. Women weavers in India face gender discrimination and are often discouraged from weaving independently or having a say in sales or design.
5. Handloom women workers face significant physiological issues during menstruation and due to long working hours. They often remain in poverty and deprivation due to constant debts, illness, and other factors.

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