

Culture and Handicraft Tourism in India: Tourism supporting sustainable development goals

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Abstract

With the aim of becoming more of a self-reliant nation and lessening the dependency on other nations, the Prime Minister of India proposed a new agenda called “vocal for local”. The aim of the agenda was to motivate locals and citizens to buy more local products and products made in India to increase the demand and sales. The agenda and its aim applied to all the sectors in the country. One such sector was the handloom, which was one of the oldest sectors in the country. This new “vocal for local” agenda of India gave a new platform for its weavers and allied workers to showcase their talent and unique products for purchase. “Vocal for local” cannot be achieved by the government alone, as locals also have to contribute to this, through domestic tourism and pledge to buy local and authentic products at tourist destinations. Domestic tourism in India contributes a major share of the overall tourism activities undertaken in the country.

The purpose of this study was to analyse the current situation of the handloom sector in Assam (Sivasagar) and Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi) regions, and also the development made by the government for the weavers and their community. The aim of doing this research was to check the development at the grass-root level, which in the future will decide the country’s ability to achieve the aim of a self-reliant India. This research also analyses domestic tourism’s ability to contribute to the development of the handloom industry. In addition, this research determines whether tourism can contribute to the United Nations’ sustainable development goals (SDGs). The study adopted three SDGs for investigation: 1) No poverty, 2) Quality education, and 3) Gender equality.

This research used qualitative data collected from Indian Government reports. After analysing the reports, four themes were identified and discussed focused on the overall development of the handloom industry. The themes are as follows: 1) Cluster Development, 2) Awareness of Welfare Schemes, 3) Marketing and Promotion Scheme Impact, 4) Domestic Tourism and Sustainable Development Goals.

The outcome of this study showed that, for achieving the “vocal for local” agenda, the Government of India needs to lay a strong foundation at the ground level. It

highlights that these schemes are making positive impacts on the development of the handloom industry and its weavers. The Government's cluster-wise development seems to be working for the overall development of the handloom sector. However, the lack of awareness of various schemes (whether business-related or to personal welfare) amongst weavers seems to create a hindrance to achieving fast-paced development. This means the Government still needs to work towards the awareness programmes. On the other hand, the contribution of tourism and its relation to the United Nation's (UN) sustainable development goals towards achieving the new agenda is crucial and beneficial for both industries. It can be observed from the findings of the study, that the second-highest expenditure by tourists is on shopping, which means if tourism activity takes place at any destination, then the demand for local products increases. Additionally, it was found that, tourism's niche market product offerings add more to its capacity and ability to attract more tourists to a place or destination.

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Attestation of Authorship

I, Shubham Saad, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the Acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or another institution of higher learning.

Signed:

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Significance of this study

With the aim of helping India become a self-reliant nation, the Prime Minister of India recently launched the new agenda for the nation called “vocal for local,” which simply means, he was asking the citizens of the country to demand more local products. The agenda applies to every sector of India, and one such sector is that of the handloom. The handloom industry of India is one of the oldest industries of India, and provides the most employment.

With this new agenda, there is a new opportunity for the handloom industry and its weavers to strengthen their position. For the handloom industry and its weavers, it can be a new angle for economic development. However, it becomes important to analyse the current situations of weavers and their related developments through various schemes.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter firstly discusses the culture and various artworks famous in the northern region of India. It also provides information about the handicraft sector of India. Secondly, the chapter moves on to overviewing the handloom industry highlighting handloom statistics, as the handloom industry is a focus of this study. To understand the development in the region, this study uses the cluster study approach. This means, thirdly, the introduction chapter explains concept development and provides information on selected clusters of this study, that is, Sivasagar (Assam) and Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh). Fourthly, the section on movements gives information on the earlier agendas of India which had a role in building the foundation for the “vocal for local” agenda. Fifthly, three United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are described which are considered in this study. Lastly, the research aims and questions of the study are mentioned, followed by the structure of the dissertation.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 *Culture in India*

The culture of India is vast due to the heterogeneity of thousands of religions and communities that live in there. Each community and religion has its own languages, dance, music, architecture, cuisines, and costumes. The history of India starts with the birth of the Indus Valley Civilisation, more accurately called the “Harappan Civilisation”. The Indus valley civilisation was the first to introduce urban civilisation in the country. Under this civilisation people introduced household articles, weapons of war, gold and silver ornaments, seals, toys, and pottery wares, etc. The next important civilisation was the Vedic civilisation, which flourished along the river Saraswati, in a region that now consists of the modern Indian states of Haryana and Punjab. “Vedic” is synonymous with Hinduism, which is another name for the religious and spiritual thought that has evolved from the Vedas. Vedic civilisation is believed to be the main reason behind the higher percentage of Hindus in India. In the same way, the country went through various other periods, which introduced their own religions and languages in the

country either softly, or forcefully: the Buddhist era, Alexander's invasion, the Gupta Dynasty and many others.

North India region has embraced various changes over time in its costumes and traditions and finally found its identity in Aryan traditions and customs where it impacted the lives of locals in terms of clothing, cuisine, music, dance, literature, and art. There is an enormous variety of handicraft products found in the North Indian region, and each product is unique in its own way due to its art of making and the raw materials used in the process. Presently, there are eight states that come under the region of North India and almost every state has its own unique handicraft products to offer.

The state of Uttarakhand is famous for its artworks and crafts which are strongly influenced by the Mughals and can be seen in the paintings made by locals. Jammu and Kashmir, a state in the Northern region also known as “paradise on Earth” is known for its Kashmiri embroidery. Crafted by locals it is well known around the world. Similar to in Uttarakhand, wood carving is also practised in the region but on a different sort of wood walnut wood, which can only be found in the Kashmir. Basket making is another work practised in the state. Himachal Pradesh one of the states of North India, shares the borders with Uttarakhand, and is well-known for its metal and stone sculptures and handmade wooden dolls. Carpets, rugs, crafts of leather, antiques, and paintings are the popular handicrafts that one can find in this state. Uttar Pradesh Banarasi saree is a well-known handicraft in the state and it employs a major share of locals in the handloom industry. Uttar Pradesh is also known for its largest carpet weaving industries in the country.

1.2.2 Handicraft sector of India

The handicrafts sector is one of the most important contributors to the Indian economy as it generates a large share of employment with significant contributions to India's exports. This sector provides employment to more than seven million artists and craftsmen. The Indian export market has expanded over the years to include the United States of America (US), the United Kingdom (UK), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Germany, and France.

1.2.3 Handloom industry statistics

Handlooms are an ancient art and serve well in terms of employment generation, generating around 4.4 million direct and indirect jobs across India. The total handloom product exported in 2018 was valued at US\$355.91 (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2020). The handloom industry in India has a long tradition of excellent craftsmanship, representing and preserving the vibrant Indian culture. Hand spinning, weaving, and printing elegance makes the Indian artisans stand out from other known artisans. The operations of this industry are primarily household based, where each member of the family takes part in production process. This process has continued through the generations and involves the transfer of skills from generation to generation. The major share of artisans comes from the rural and semi-urban areas, and most are women and economically deprived people. The handloom sector is one of the largest unrecognised employment providers, directly and indirectly, in the country. According to The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) report of 2019, there are 4,331,000 weavers in the handloom industry (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and industry, 2020). In total, 3,633,000 workers come from a rural background, whereas 698,000 are from urban areas. It is interesting to note that the female workforce is three times greater than that of the male workforce, with 3,847,000 out of the total population of the weavers (77% female, 23% male). The basic requirement for handlooms is the looms themselves. According to the Third Handloom Census, the total count of looms in household and non-household units is 2,377,000, most of which are in the rural areas. In the North Eastern states, Assam has the most, 46.8% of total handlooms in the country followed by West Bengal with 12.9%, Manipur, 8%, Tamil Nadu, 6.5%, and Tripura with 5.8%.

Different parts of India have different and unique things to offer under handloom products. Within the regions, cities are divided into clusters. For example, the North India region is sub-divided into three states which includes clusters like Srinagar, Varanasi, Panipat, Jodhpur and many others. Similarly, the North East Region comprises of three states and each has one, or more than one city-based clusters. Following the same sequence, West region, South region, and the

Central region of India contain states and look after the development of those regions through cluster-based development (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2020).

1.2.4 Concept of cluster development

The concept of a development cluster is derived from the concept of the Industrial District, which owes its genesis to the successful functioning of Italian industrial districts (Rao & Kumar, 2018). Economist Alfred Marshall noted that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) can experience economic gain when clustered by geographical concentration and industrial activity. The cluster approach helps a government to closely look into problems such as the inadequate capacity to learn and innovate, lack of modernisation to the appropriate level of technology, low productivity and quality, awareness about markets (particularly international markets), a lack of human resource development (HRD) policies leading to low labour productivity, and inaccessibility of required information.

1.2.5 Cluster profile in India

Sivasagar

Sivasagar is the city and district in the state of Assam. The city has rich traditions of crafts, which include cane and bamboo crafts, silk and cotton weaving, woodcraft, jewellery making, and musical instrument making. The majority of the population in the region is involved in agriculture. However, the city has been identified as a mega-cluster by the handloom Industry, because it is also home to a variety of silks, which include prestigious silk such as *muga*, a natural golden silk, *pat*, a creamy bright silver coloured silk, and *eri*, a variety used for manufacturing warm clothes for winter. The state has a great textile tradition. Through the textile industry, Assamese women have employment irrespective of their caste and social status. Weaving in handloom has long been a respectable day-to-day job for women. This tradition of weaving has been passed from generation to generation in the state and they have excelled in quality production with beautiful designs over the years. The women involved in the weaving, produce shawls, blankets, *durries*, *gamochas*, *mekhelas*, *chaddars*, and many other items. Earlier, women used to produce these products to meet family needs,

but now, some for their exquisite work is finding its way to the urban markets and international exhibitions. According to the Handloom Census Report (2019-2020), there are 109,000 households involved in weaving and related activities; gender-wise there are 10,31,717 female weavers in the state, whereas male weavers account for just 75,587 (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

The state is also famous for its tourism, as Assam is endowed with plentiful cultural and natural resources which have the potential to become a lucrative tourism industry, creating employment, and generating income not only for urban tourism spots but also for rural areas. The main tourism attractions are:

- a) Wildlife tourism: The state is rich in forests, and the home of various exclusive species, in particular, the one-horned rhinoceros.
- b) Spiritual tourism: This attracts tourists to undertake pilgrimage activities and is the home of some famous Hindu temples.
- c) Ethnic tourism: The state is the home for various ethnic tribes and groups, which have their own culture and traditions - customs, religious belief, language, culture, dress, food, and festivals, etc.
- d) Medical tourism: India is becoming a major destination for medical tourism; international and domestic tourists visit Guwahati for medical purposes. The state's high-speciality healthcare facilities in government and the private sector makes the destination attractive for international and domestic patients (Department of Tourism, 2017).

There are other emerging tourism products in the state such as golf tourism, river tourism, adventure tourism, and film tourism.

Varanasi

Varanasi, also known as Benares, is a city in Uttar Pradesh on the banks of the river Ganges. The city is famous as an industrial centre for its muslin and silk fabrics, perfumes, ivory works, and sculpture. The city is also famous for its Banarasi sari. These sarees are counted among the finest arts in the country. The uniqueness comes with the use of gold and silver brocade or Zari, fine silk, and opulent embroidery. The product found its identity in the 19th century where the Banarasi sarees mentioned zari and barcode. Over the years the handloom

industry of Varanasi incurred losses due to the introduction of mechanised units producing the Varanasi silk saris at a faster rate and at a cheaper cost than hand-made, and because of the availability of synthetic materials that are a cheaper alternative to silk. Varanasi is not only famous for its handloom and other handicraft products but also famous for its cultural and historical values. Tourism is the city's second most important sector in terms of the economy. Domestic tourists arrive in the city mainly for the purpose of pilgrimage and come from nearby states as well as from India.

1.2.6 Movements

Swadeshi movement

The Swadeshi movement was the first movement started along with the Independence movement. Swadeshi was the key focus of Mahatma Gandhi to become self-ruling and self-reliant. India was required to compete with the industrialised economies of the West. While rapid industrialisation under the umbrella of "Five-year Plans" was planned for empowering a self-sufficient India, the need to offset it with a prevalently agrarian economy was of great importance. This need to protect the old texture of an agrarian nation, while at the same time modernising, required a resurgence of a somewhat recast "Swadeshi movement."

Make in India

"Make in India" was launched by the Government of India in 2014 with the aim of motivating companies to manufacture their products in India. This policy was implemented to create a conducive environment for investment, developing modern infrastructure, opening up the sectors to foreign direct investment, and creating new jobs. The main agenda was to make India a global manufacturing hub. For the handicraft and textile industry, the total number of looms installed in the jute industry was 48,322, as of 1st January 2018 (Make in India, 2020). Under the Make in India scheme, the Government of India is implementing the Scheme for Integrated Textile Parks (SITPS) which aims to provide world class infrastructure facilities for setting up textile units with a grant of up to 40% of the project cost subject to a ceiling of US\$5.33 million. A total of 59 textile parks have

been sanctioned under SITP by the Ministry of Textiles, out of which 22 textile parks have been completed and the rest are in various stages of construction (Make in India, 2020).

Vocal for local

The “vocal for local” agenda of India found its root in the Swadeshi movement which was popularised during the independence of India. The Prime Minister of India strongly supported this agenda amidst the global pandemic of 2020. Due to COV-19, many countries had to push themselves into a full lockdown situation, including India. As a result, the cross-border exchange of goods came to a virtual standstill. India struggled to meet its basic requirement and substitute for products usually imported from other countries, the full dependency on imported products can sometimes lead to a panic country if the global supply chain breaks down, so it needed to take action to cope with the emergency. Another reason for the “vocal for local” campaign was to promote the local products in the domestic market. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the industries were affected and many people lost their jobs. The “Vocal for local” agenda therefore had to capacity to have a saving role and by the people of India. Three advantages were offered :1) this would reduce dependency on foreign products, 2) it would give a financial boost to domestic companies to fight the crisis, and 3) it would help India becoming the hub of manufacturing for the global market and provide a healthy substitute for the previously dominant export markets, for global companies.

From the perspective of the handloom industry, the agenda was very important because it would help weavers to raise the demand for handloom products. Due to COVID19, the industry was affected severely and many of the looms shut down due to the reduced demand for handloom products which led them to run out of working capital. However, even before the pandemic, the demand for handloom products had been steadily falling, because consumers were shifting their demand to Western products. So, for the handloom industry, the “vocal for local” agenda was very important.

1.2.7 Role of Sustainable Development Goals

1) No poverty

Once handlooms were an indication of the joy, culture, and income for the local people of a region but by mid-2020, handlooms were unable to fulfil the livelihood of people due to social imbalances, low earnings, economic instability, gender gaps, and poor education. Both men and women from the family participate in handloom weaving, but imbalances were created at four distinct levels.

1) There are three major groups of the weavers: those who provide the raw materials and controls marketing, the entrepreneurs who trade, and the weavers' community. The weaver communities share the revenue, as producing the product costs far less than the actual market price, which ultimately creates an economic imbalance in a family.

2) Weaver communities lack the resources to upgrade machinery and techniques to compete with the power looms and mills.

3) There is a lack of empowerment and education among women.

4) A gender gap exists.

The study by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) showed many ways to eradicate the problem of poverty by introducing Social Help Groups (SHGs) to share the knowledge among themselves and uplift each other, thereby reducing the gender gap. Any efforts to reduce this imbalance would help reduce poverty (Singh et al., 2015).

2) Quality education

Quality education can be the useful tool in solving the problems faced by the handloom industry. Artisans of the handloom industry are talented people with skills passed on from their ancestors, so to secure the heritage and culture, quality education is urgently needed in the Indian weaver community. Quality education for their children would help them understand the importance of the art and skills of their ancestors, giving them decision-making capabilities to carry forward the heritage. Nominal school fees, libraries, and interactions with youths

from school and colleges by leading the handloom and textile manufacturing units, are all support mechanisms that could help weaver communities.

Proper training for the artisans of the weaver communities would impact the industry positively, and introducing new machineries and innovative technology to the industry would uplift the communities. Female-oriented programmes and design studios should also be incorporated into the handloom industry.

3) Gender equality

Empowerment to women is crucial for reducing the gap between men and women and improve gender equality, contributing to India's development. Women face many challenges in their lives within the existing norms, in terms of cultural differences. By promoting their rights and empowerment, education would give women confidence to participate on an equal basis, awareness of their surroundings, and the capability to contribute and take transformative actions. In the handloom industry women are heavily involved in weaving and related activities. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the welfare of community, society, and the nation, to design suitable programmes and take necessary action to achieve gender equality in all forms (Superuser, 2017)

1.3 Research aims and questions

The aim of this research is to investigate the "vocal for local" agenda by analysing the current situation of weavers in the selected clusters of the study. This research examines domestic tourism and the SDGs to gain knowledge of potential combinations of the tourism and handloom industries. This will help in determining if domestic tourism can help India in achieving its new agenda.

The afore-mentioned aims are achieved by seeking answers to the following research questions:

Q 1. Does the "vocal for local" agenda of India offer new opportunities for development for handloom weavers?

Q 2. Can domestic tourism contribute to this process?

Q 3. To what extent can tourism support the UN sustainable goals for the handloom weavers?

1.4 Structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter introduced the research background, the research aims, the research questions, and the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter 2: Literature review. This chapter reviews literature on the handloom industry and its weavers. It also reviews studies of domestic tourism and tourists.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter explains the methodology and the reasons for choosing an interpretive approach for the research. The data collection and data analysis methods and processes are also explained.

Chapter 4: Findings. This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative study. For this study, the data were mainly collected from government reports.

Chapter 5: Discussion. This chapter explains the key findings, combining the literature with the research.

Chapter 6: Conclusion. This chapter summarises the research objectives, overviews the limitations, and provides recommendation for the further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed background on handicraft and cultural tourism. It also provides information on studies conducted on cultural tourists and their motivations for undertaking cultural tourism related activities. The chapter also discusses these studies in relation to cultural tourism and its impacts on the local economy. This study is focused on one particular type of handicraft product, the handloom; previous studies related to the handloom industry are therefore discussed. Points collected from the previous literature review were: availability of raw material, credit facilities, role of marketing and promotion, emergence of e-commerce, role of government schemes, and cluster development.

Cultural tourism

The link between culture and tourism and the complex nature of culture makes it difficult to find an exact definition of cultural tourism in the literature (Seyfi et al., 2020). The motivational factor of an individual can define *cultural tourism* as the movement of person motivated by cultural aspects such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other events, visits to sites and monuments, and travel to study nature, folklore or art, and make pilgrimages. Sir Edward Taylor defined *culture* in his book *Primitive culture* (1871) as a knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom or any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Dan, 2020). Delbaere (1994) tried to define cultural tourism as serious leisure, pointing out that a cultural tourist shows a desire and interest in a particular geographical area they visit to express that interest.

It is important to understand the pattern of cultural tourism, and in the same vein, comes cultural consumption. *Cultural consumption* is the usage or experiencing of cultural products by tourists in certain geographical conditions (Richards, 2018). In relation to cultural consumption, a debate arises around the stratification of types of cultural tourists, as broadly they can be divided into general tourists, and specific. *General cultural tourists* consume a culture as part of their general

holiday experience, whereas the latter take the holiday and decide on their destination with the purpose of learning.

McKercher (2002) divided five cultural tourists into sub-classes.

- 1) Purposeful cultural tourists – these tourists have deep knowledge and experience, and the main purpose of their visit is to learn about another's culture and heritage. These types of tourists already have prior knowledge of culture.
- 2) Sightseeing cultural tourists – these types of tourists visit with the purpose of gaining knowledge of another's culture and heritage, but prefer an entertainment oriented experience.
- 3) Casual cultural tourists – for these, cultural tourism plays a modest role while deciding the destination of their holiday, as they are less likely to engage with the culture of a destination.
- 4) Incidental cultural tourists – cultural tourism has no role while deciding on a destination, however, they will participate in cultural tourism activities with shallow experience.
- 5) Serendipitous cultural tourists – cultural tourism plays little or no role while deciding the destination, but they visit cultural sites and attractions and ultimately have a meaningful experience (McKercher, 2002).

Since cultural tourism encompasses components like arts, music, traditions and history, it is difficult to segment the group of people inclined towards a particular component in the cultural tourist audience.

2.2 Understanding tourist motivations

Motivation is another component of decision-making. The conceptual frameworks of travel motivation studies are established in sociology and social psychology fields. Many tourism scholars have conducted studies based on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory (Huang & Hsu, 2009) an influential motivation theory. According to Maslow (1970), the basic needs of human include food, water, warmth, rest, security, and safety. Above the basic needs come psychological needs, which include belongingness and love, esteem, and ultimately, self-

actualisation. Typically people can fulfil their higher order needs only after their lower level needs are satisfied. Pearce (2013) suggested that travel motivation follows the properties of the approach-avoidance paradigm. He insisted that tourists are attracted to a particular destination because of needs such as self-actualisation, love and belongingness, and physiological needs, according to their importance. Moreover, when discussing the avoidance aspects of motivational paradigms, tourists value safety as their highest priority, followed by their physiological, love and belongingness, and self-esteem needs in that order.

Based on Maslow's hierarchy, there are two conceptual work to emerge: the travel career ladder (TCL) and travel career pattern (TCP). The concept travel career ladder is based upon Maslow's hierarchy of needs and includes attainment of psychological maturation and moving towards a goal of self-actualisation (Ryan, 1998). According to TCL, relaxation comes first, followed by safety and security, relationships, self-esteem and development, and fulfilment needs last. Changes come with the travel experience of the tourists. This concept suggests that the trip of an individual tourist changes according to experience gained in the past. As tourists become more experienced with every trip, their level of satisfaction rises. The level of motivation varies from person to person, as some move systematically upwards towards attaining various stages, while others remain at particular levels. The reason for moving upwards or remaining at a particular stage can be the result of contingency factors such as health and financial position, two factors affecting the motivation of an individual.

Travel career pattern (TCP) models are adaptations of the travel career ladder (TCL) model designed by Pearce and Caltabiano, (1983). The emergence of the TCP model is due to the difficulty of the common misinterpretation of the Maslow's needs hierarchy in the TCL model, where an individual needs to fulfil or satisfy their current need or stage before moving on to the next one. On the other hand, Pearce also highlighted that in the TCL model, travellers tend to have more than one level of travel motivation. However, he pointed out that one set of needs in the ladder could dominate the others. In the TCP model, authors have found 14 motivational factors from 74 items in a study analysing various motivational factors and ranking them accordingly. The data came from surveys

in Western Australia, the United Kingdom (UK) and other Western countries, as well as from the Eastern context of Korea. Results showed that respondents with more travelling experience place more emphasis on externally-oriented motivation factors such as self-development through host-site involvement and seeking nature. On the other hand, respondents with less travelling experience, place more focus on internally-oriented motivations such as self-enhancement, romance, kinship (belonging), and autonomy. Lee and Pearce (2003) modified this into three layers of travel motivation, where each layer consists of different motivations. The core layer consists of the most common motives such as novelty, escape/relaxing, and enhancing relationships, and the second layer consists of moderately important travel motives internally-oriented, such as self-actualisation, and externally-oriented, such as nature and host-site involvement. The third layer includes motives that are less important in nature such as nostalgia, isolation and social status.

Another widely recognised concept in tourism research related to tourist motivation was proposed by Dann (1977), and known as the “push and pull factor theory.” According to Dann, (1977) there are various factors that motivate tourists to visit a particular place, and these can be internal or external factors. Generally, *push factors* can be understood at the basic level as the internal or intrinsic factors that force an individual to travel. These types of factors include longings for rest, fun, adventure, and escape, and wanting to leave daily work behind, which leads to a transition to an holistic lifestyle. *Pull factors* are elements that ignite individuals to have a particular experience or service, and are mostly related to the destination, such as quality of service, price, infrastructure, climate, and so forth. In the context of tourism, push factors come from within an individual, so it becomes important for tourism managers or destination planners to understand the needs of individuals and cater to these. As a result, these push factors can become pull factors, which are mostly external in nature.

On the other hand, pull factors can be broadly termed as a “tourist choice.” Pull factors are related to destination features, attractions, or attributes that are tangible features of a destination (Chan & Baum, 2007). This means pull factors tend to be more external, situational, and of cognitive in nature. Destination

features should be able to match customers' criteria in terms of pricing, facilities, and accommodation standards, along with quality of service provided. As these aspects become depleted over time due to wear and tear, it becomes the duty of managers to keep up standards meet customer demands or expectations.

2.3 Cultural tourism and the local economy

Cultural tourism plays a crucial role in economic development and can be categorised into macroeconomic and microeconomic development (Ivanov & Webster, 2007). On the microeconomic level, the economic advantage of cultural tourism is gained by specific societies, whereas, on a macroeconomic level, the advantages of cultural tourism are shared by other economic branches through direct, indirect, and induced effects. Therefore, it can be understood that cultural tourism induces economic development which leads to overall economic growth. Cultural tourism economic impacts are classified as direct, indirect, and induced.

Whenever tourists spend money in restaurants, hotels, on transport and communication, and in local retail outlets, this creates direct income for the service providers along with direct employment in the services (Dwyer et al., 2020). Induced effects occur when there is an increase in tourism consumption due to the changes in direct and indirect effects. Tourism helps a country to create jobs for local people but may be marginal and seasonal in nature, and often poorly remunerated (Stobart & Ball, 1998). These jobs are good for those who often want them, but as a whole they have little impact on the overall economy of a country. There is no doubt local tourism creates jobs in the economy but there is rising demand amongst locals for having their own businesses. The concept of tourism ventures offers the opportunity for local people and indigenous communities to become involved in the economic process of development, fully owning enterprises or having partial rights in them (Kessy, 2017). Examples of tourism enterprises are domestic owned Tourism enterprises (DOTEs), cultural tourism enterprises (CTEs) and destination management organisations (DMOs). The main aim of these types of enterprises is to create workable partnerships between the tourism industry and indigenous communities Ashley et al.(2000) pointed out that in the tourism sector, government, donors, and national agencies

focus on private sector investment, macro-economic growth, and foreign exchange earnings, without taking the poor into consideration. The problem faced by these kinds of organisations is their limited capacity to reap the maximum outcomes from the available opportunities, mainly due to a lack of training and technical skills and a limited knowledge of the market.

The reason for this shortcoming is the dominance of large firms who have a larger share of the market, especially in the context of a developing world where the economic objectives of increasing earnings, foreign exchange, and investment and job opportunities are mainly dominated by large scale enterprises. Instead, the advantages of harnessing small, medium and micro-enterprise (SMME) tourism businesses are stressed (Kirsten & Rogerson, 2002). Below these, exist the informal enterprises. The informal enterprises occupy the bottom position of entrepreneurship rankings, and include sellers or suppliers of handicraft goods, street guides, and the providers of petty transport services (e.g., rickshaws and small boats), but are dependent on larger enterprises. The Indian Government needs to take care of this informal type business in order to achieve its poverty alleviation programme. The Government can set up tourism enterprises programmes (TEP) to achieve certain goals. The objectives of TEPs are: To foster job creation through proper marketing channels, promote damaged SMMEs and make connections with the domestic and international market, build the capacity and quality of a country's tourism enterprises, make smooth connections to national databanks that are inter-related amongst interested tourism parties, and to collaborate with other public and private tourism related programmes, projects, and initiatives (Rogerson, 2007).

2.4 Sustainable development goals

Aligning with tourism sustainable development, tourism can help India at various levels. Not only does tourism contribute towards the gross domestic production (GDP) of the country, but it also helps other industries. Tourism's "no poverty" goal can help the nation reduce overall poverty. Poverty is considered to be as a dimensional phenomenon raging from inadequate income and human development, along with socio-political, environmental, and cultural forces. So,

for the development of people and alleviating poverty; vulnerability, lack of voice, power, and representation should be taken into consideration (Llorca-Rodríguez et al., 2017).

As said, poverty is related to the multidimensional development. Following questions need to address 1) What is poverty and who are the poor? 2) What are the root reasons for the poverty? 3) How to measure poverty level? (Zhao & Ritchie, 2007). Due to tourism's multiple segments, advantages trickle down to other sectors. For example, the concept of pro-poor tourism or rural tourism can help small-scale businesses in rural areas. *Pro-poor tourism* is broadly defined as tourism that generates net benefits for the poor, where *net benefit* means benefits that outweigh their cost (Chok et al., 2007). These benefits can help people improve their lifestyles and enable them to provide a quality education for their children.

The concept of quality education is based on the premise that educational aims are met and purposes fulfilled (Laurie et al., 2016). Quality education makes the direct impact on reducing poverty. Education fosters self-understanding, improves quality of lives and raises people's productivity and creativity thus promoting entrepreneurship and technological advances (Edokpolor & Egbri, 2017). The continuing growth of this sector has a significant impact on labour markets, since tourism is a significant source of employment, due to its high labour intensive nature (Daniel et al., 2017). Although, tourism workforce is often associated with low levels of education and limited entrepreneurial and managerial skills, this scenario has been changing. There has been a massive increase in the number of educational programs offered by schools and higher education institutions in this field. Key international bodies such as the World Tourism Organization (WTO), American Express, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) have all begun to recognise publicly the fundamental necessity of training and education to ensure a professional and productive tourism industry (Cooper & Shepherd, 1997).

However, there are continuing inequalities of educational outcomes in many developing countries, particularly for the students from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, because they need to leave schools early to work, or are unable to start school at all (Webb et al., 2017). Tourism can help underprivileged people by giving them a new means of earning.

The main cause for unfair earning in the industry is gender equality, where women and lower section of people forced to earn less irrespective of their skills. However, in terms of imparting knowledge and make people aware, gender and tourism studies have grown considerably over the past 20 years (Alarcón & Cole, 2019). As widely recognised in literatures, without gender equality there can be no sustainability. The most significant structural barriers to gender equality are: eliminating all forms of violence against women and addressing unpaid care and domestic work. Tourism employment is highly gendered, and – as with many other industries – draws on gender inequalities that provide a large global supply of highly flexibilised and low-paid female workers and potential tourism entrepreneurs (Ferguson, 2011). Employment conditions in both global hotel chains and smaller, locally owned enterprises have been extensively criticised in the tourism studies literature.

Because women earn less than do men, gender equality is affected, and families may send their boys to school, but not the girls. Gender inequality is manifest in many domains, as women face economic challenges in the formal, casual, and informal sectors, as well as in the unpaid care economy (Koehler, 2016). There is also a significant wage-gap between men and women. The gap between the average pay of men and women in all industrialized countries is perhaps the clearest indication of the inequality that is a universal feature of female employment (Muñoz-Bullón, 2009). Many of these low-paid occupations in tourism are conspicuously populated by women and intra-occupational differentials often favour men. Gender-based differences caused by occupational segregation and the concentration of low pay in tourism industries are evidence of structural factors beyond the control of the individual (Song et al., 2012).

2.5 Problems of the handloom Industry

Rural retailers face disadvantages because of their geographical location, unsettled prices for their products, and low customer base (Paddison & Calderwood, 2007). A number of studies have noted restrictions on village handicraft products reaching urban tourist centres, so they cannot reach global markets or urban retailers (Vadakepat, 2013). In rural retailing, marketing plays an important role in showcasing local talent. Current trends show the value of handicraft products in the domestic as well as the international market. The urban population of India uses more handicraft product in gifting, whereas Westerners buy handicraft products out of a curiosity to know India more closely (Sharma et al., 2012). Positioning of products is an important factor in successful marketing of local products. Local or handicraft products should be promoted as a high priced quality product (Benjamin, 1994). The second important factor prevailing in rural retailing is that there should be fair distribution strategies for the local vendors and the elimination of biased cooperatives that act as bridge between weavers and urban markets. In studies of small enterprises, the biggest issue to emerge was that of the lack of infrastructure. Many regions are both physically and socially deprived and state governments are heavily dependent on central government for funds. Transport systems are also inadequate, which hampers the growth of businesses (Maisnam & Sapna, 2015).

2.5.1 Raw material availability

The availability of raw material is the main concern of the handloom industry. The raw material used in producing a handloom product include cotton yarn, *zari* (fine thread, often of silver or gold), silk yarns, and chemicals and dyes. Although India is the largest cotton producer in the world, fair distribution of raw material is lacking. The production of fabrics and clothing is one of the prime activities in rural India. Earlier, weavers were well integrated into the system when they used the locally produced cotton, spun the yarn in their house, and sold their fabrics in the market. But after independence, the decision to create cooperatives came into existence, which included handloom weavers' cooperatives. These cooperatives are member owned and members controlled powered by the state

in order to strengthen the position of weavers. Joining cooperatives was voluntary and aimed to empower individuals socially, economically and culturally. However, the outcomes and success of these cooperatives turned sour for the country's weavers. Upon joining a cooperative, weavers could obtain raw material from the cooperatives or master weavers only, as they were bound by an agreement. This inserted one more player into the value chain, denying the weavers the opportunity to create the best value from their primary production input.

Due to liberalisation and globalisation, the gap between weavers and customers has become wider because of large dispersion of the customer base. To fill this gap, weavers have to accept help from large traders acting as a bridge between them and their customers, stretching the value chain. In the Indian value chain of producing, making, and delivering, there are multiple players, such as cotton farmers, ginneries, public and private cotton traders, spinning mills, and power loom and handloom weavers. The problem lies in the power distribution amongst them. Cotton producers and weavers are low in the hierarchy, whereas power looms and spinning have better status and support. The role of middlemen and traders is therefore very active due to the unorganised status of weavers. The weavers are heavily dependent on middlemen and traders for getting the yarn they need. The traders and middlemen purchase cotton yarn from small farmers at a very cheap rate or from mills and sell it on to decentralised mills and weavers at higher rates, and whatever the value adds into the product until it reaches its final users is paid by them. The place of traders and middlemen is very controversial in the value chain system. They are the ones who cause price fluctuations of raw products, and sometimes form partnerships with mills to push the prices up, hoarding stocks, and monopolising the trading areas (Dillow, 2008).

The main reason local people work for master weavers, is the failure of these Government run handloom cooperatives. The cooperatives account for the most weavers, after those working with master weavers (Varghese & Salim, 2015). The failures occur due to political interference that moves handloom cooperatives away from their true purposes. The involvement of politics and the development of bureaucratic control increases the chances and levels of corruption. As a result, the overall the process is affected, causing the irregular supply of raw

material and most importantly, delays in paying wages, which forces weavers to work for the master weavers.

2.5.2 Availability of credit

The availability of credit for the weavers is one of the greatest challenges in the handloom sector; the handloom industry is facing a financial crisis in coping with working capital. Weavers find it hard even to buy their raw material, even though it is available on subsidised rates (Shankar & Manimaran, 2013). Weavers are not able to stay financially secure because of their limited earnings; most weavers' cooperatives run at a loss, so very few weavers benefit from them. The traditional handloom weavers are wage earners, and are fully dependent on the master weavers. From the starting of their business, which includes the purchase of raw materials and maintenance, through to selling their products, all are totally dependent on the master weavers. The reluctance of banks to give them credit just adds to the financial problems of weavers. This forces them to form self-help groups (SHGs), which they use to borrow money from private sources at high lending rates. The availability of financial institutions is a prime factor influencing the growth and development of the handloom industry (Kundu, 1980). Funds allocated by the state and central government need to be channelled appropriately to meet different developmental needs for the overall growth and promotion of the industry. The intervention of government in the process of development is crucial in terms of providing credit facilities at lower interest rates. The Government should offer short term loans on a seasonal basis for this, as it would reduce the stress of obtaining large loans at once. Proper awareness and education about the scheme is necessary for the weavers to be able to take full advantage out of it (Kaushik & Jain, 2015). With full awareness of schemes, studies have found notable changes in the situations of weavers.

2.5.3 Marketing and promotion

Marketing is an important tool for placing a product in the market and can be viewed from two angles: a managerial perspective and a social perspective. In terms of a managerial perspective, *marketing* can be defined as the process of planning and execution of concepts, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas,

goods, and services in exchange of mutual benefits (Dubicki, 2007). Marketing from a social perspective takes managerial aspects into consideration, but also includes entrepreneurship management (Hisrich, 1992). In the handloom industry, the marketing of handloom products is undertaken by weavers and middlemen. Additionally, there are various organisations providing assistance for marketing products, for example, weavers' cooperative societies, fabric marketing cooperatives, and the National Handloom Development Corporation. The main aim of these societies and cooperatives is to reduce middlemen and provide a non-corrupt platform from which to sell their products at competitive prices.

Social media is a strong medium for the marketing of products; small businesses can market their products and services on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Google+, etc. (Humbe, 2012). With the help of social media, small businesses in the handloom sector can create their own identity and market their products and services. They can also connect with large populations who would be otherwise unaware of their industry. This strengthens the supply chain of handloom products by eliminating middlemen and creating a direct connection between weavers and customers. With the help of social media platforms, small entrepreneurs can pass along benefits, through which friends and other contacts can become interested in a particular product or service. Through this form of communication it is easy to create, initiate, and circulate consumer intended content which is easier for them to understand, educating each other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social media includes a wide range of word-of-mouth platforms, blogs, consumer-to-consumer emails, chat rooms, and internet discussion forums. Story marketing is an effective communication tool in marketing, discussed in the tourism and wine literature (Trivedi et al., 2020). Story marketing pushes consumers to return to particular services or products. In the context of the handloom industry, this type of marketing can create positive impacts on handloom products as there are ancient stories related to each product.

The role of e-commerce becomes significant when talking about cost effective and precise marketing and promotion (Pogorelova et al., 2016). In promotion, each tool is effective in its own way:

- 1) Advertising includes display advertising, contextual advertising, social networks advertising, mobile advertising, and native advertising.
- 2) In e-commerce, personal selling is replaced by smart bots.
- 3) Sales promotion can be through email marketing, webinar, and live chats, etc.
- 4) Search engine optimisation for higher presence in search results can increase search traffic.

With the use of e-commerce platforms in the handloom industry, the pressure of stock holding would ease, weavers would get a fair price for their product, the market reach of the handloom products would be greater, and weavers would not need to think about wear and tear of the product.

The role of government schemes in the promotion of product and entrepreneurship is crucial. Government intervention through various schemes would help educate weavers about technology and management and enable the younger generation to enhance their computer skills, quality checking, and packaging skills. Moreover, the objectives of government marketing schemes are to promote and develop marketing channels in domestic and international markets.

The sub components of marketing assistance programmes are domestic marketing promotion, marketing infrastructure development, market access initiatives, and handloom export promotion. Domestic marketing promotions include organisations of events, expos, and craft *melas* (fairs), development of e-marketing portals, publicity and awareness, and promotion of handloom marks. In marketing infrastructure development, setting up urban fairs, retail stores, and setting up quality testing are taken into consideration. Market access initiatives empower the designers' contributions to marketing support. Handloom export promotions deal with international affairs and exporting and importing.

Before focusing on the international market, the Government needs to take care of domestic market linkages. Due to poor infrastructure, overall growth can be hampered. Poor infrastructure includes bad roads, old buildings, outdated equipment, and a lack of training centres. To improve on this, cluster level development needs to be taken care of. Clustering is the main form of industrialisation in the non-farm sector (Zhang et al., 2011). Clusters play an important role in the absence of financial institutions, especially in rural areas. Moreover, in infrastructural development in the handloom sector, basic facilities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, and proper electricity supply are still lacking at handloom production centres. The connectivity to urban cities is also poor in rural areas, which hinders weavers from getting their best price for their products. Cluster development strengthens local economies, as it creates greater availability of specialised input suppliers and business services, a large pool of trained and specialised workers, focus on public infrastructure development (energy, water, roads, and other basic amenities), financial market support familiar with product market and production process, and enhanced networks of similar companies exchanging marketing information, research and development, and production methods (Barkley & Henry, 1997).

2.5.4 Cluster development strategy

Cluster development provides strong support in regional and artisans' development (Das & Das, 2011), and creates a healthy relationship with state and central government bodies, along with various other agencies such as the UN Development Programme, (UNDP), UNIDO, etc. Related issues are: labour pool techniques minimise unemployment in under-developed regions, setting up clusters encourages more businesses to set up nearby; clustered firms benefit from the innovation and infusion of new ideas as they all bind up in cooperative agreement; when the demand for labour rises, so do wages; through clusters, small firms have the advantage of access to specific areas or specialised work force; with cooperation amongst the weavers and small enterprises clusters can take full advantage of a market on a cost sharing basis; and the free flow of goods, capital, people, and ideas across a cluster can help locals access a global market - as a result, their income level rises.

Previous studies noted that although there are various government schemes available for small businesses and weavers, very few enterprises know about these, or understand how to profit from them (Awasthi & Mathur, 2017). Government has also pointed out, that although there are various public welfare schemes available, a lack of awareness, especially amongst rural populations, restricts them from taking advantage of these (Need platform to spread awareness on govt schemes at grass roots: Javadekar, 2018). Various schemes exist for individuals and businesses, but in reality, few take advantage of them.

2.6 Summary

The aim of this section was to examine the theories related to cultural tourism and handlooms. There is potential for cultural tourism and handloom weaving to work together for positive impact on the handloom industry and local communities. However, it is important to segregate the types of cultural tourists and their motivations for undertaking cultural tourism. Cultural tourism can have a positive impact on the local economy, as tourists are motivated to buy local products. In this way, domestic tourists can have a major role in promoting and increasing the sale of local products. It is therefore important to understand the types of tourists as well, as not every tourist generates sales or has the intention of buying products. So, in order to develop in synchronisation with tourism, the right type of tourist identification is important.

From a tourism perspective, there are various factors an individual considers in the decision-making process. As discussed in the literature review, based on Maslow's hierarchy theory, two relevant concepts emerge: travel career ladders (TCL) and travel career patterns (TCP). Both concepts point to two different approaches to understanding motivations behind tourists' decision-making. Another widely recognised concept is the push and pull theory, also discussed in the literature review.

For this study, domestic tourism is considered an influencing factor on the 'vocal for local' agenda, and prior studies have investigated the possible impacts of tourism on the local economy.

In order to achieve the “vocal for local” agenda in the context of the handloom industry, it is necessary to look at the work done for the development of the handloom industry and its weaver communities. The literature shows that weavers face many challenges, and work still needs to be done at grass-roots level. As mentioned, there is a problem with availability of raw material for the weavers, a lack of credit facilities, little awareness of government schemes, old machinery, and the emerging role of e-commerce.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A *methodology* includes a series of steps by which a researcher predicts, describes, and explains particular phenomena (Sada & Maldonado, 2007). It helps a researcher to choose methods, materials, scientific tools, and training related to techniques relevant to the research problem. This chapter outlines the research aim and objectives, followed by an outline of the research paradigm and the rationale for choosing it. This study used a qualitative interpretivist approach to analyse the government reports. The qualitative research strategy was used to analyse reliable documents and other similar secondary data sources. The sampling and data collection method are explained in this chapter, as well as the thematic analysis method used, and the limitations of using an interpretivist approach and thematic analysis.

3.2 Research objective and questions

The main aim of this study was to analyse the current situation in Indian weaver communities and their progress towards achieving their lost identities through the “vocal for local” agenda of India. The main aim of the agenda was to create the demand for local products and help locals to sustain themselves their traditional crafts. There are various handicrafts in India, but most are losing recognition and in urgent need of action. This study considers handloom products from central-Northern and eastern parts of India. Most of the selected local communities or people were handloom workers or weavers. The Government of India is working rigorously towards the development of weavers and increasing demand for local produces domestically and globally through various welfare and business related schemes. As it is necessary to analyse these schemes to check the progress at ground level, this study analysed government reports to understand the current situation in India for the handloom industry. In addition, the research explored the potential for domestic tourism to contribute towards the “vocal for local” agenda through the sale of local products to tourists. This helped understand if tourism could contribute to achieving the UN sustainable development goals.

Therefore, this research proposed three questions:

Q 1. Does the “vocal for local” agenda of India offer new opportunities for development for handloom weavers?

Q 2. Can domestic tourism contribute to this process?

Q 3. To what extent can tourism support the UN sustainable goals for the handloom weavers?”

3.3 Explanatory research

Social research is a purposive and rigorous investigation that aims to generate new knowledge (Sarantakos, 2012). Social research allows the investigators to enter into a personal context or public interest to find the facts that are unknown to them, and search for answers to their research questions. Research is diverse and pluralistic, and most is conducted in a qualitative or quantitative research context. The following section outlines some common research approaches.

- 1) Applied research: This places a strong emphasis on application and problem solving. When it involves the personal connections of the researcher, and elements of change and enlightenment, it is referred to as *emancipatory research*. Examples of applied research are social impact studies, action research, and evaluation research.
- 2) Descriptive research: This type of research aims to describe social systems, relations or social events.
- 3) Exploratory research: This aims at laying down a foundation for future research, and set the basic criteria for further studies.
- 4) Explanatory research: This aims to explain social relations or events.

This study applied an explanatory research investigation for analysing government reports on various policies and programmes. This particular type of research helped in reviewing and analysing existing information in the public domain such as government annual reports and publications, and helped in understanding the ground situation or reality through critical assessment of these reports and publications.

The first objective of this study was to analyse the current situation of the local weaver community using government annual reports and publications. This would help in understanding the way to achieve India's "vocal for local" agenda.

The second objective of this study was to find out how domestic tourism and sustainable development goals could contribute to achieving the first objective of the study. This also required analysis of annual tourism reports, as through analysis of tourism annual reports and domestic tourism expenditure reports, knowledge about new tourism products and expenditures of domestic tourists was gained. The reports also revealed government efforts for development and promotion of tourism amongst domestic and international tourists.

3.4 Research paradigm

3.4.1 Interpretivist paradigm

Paradigms can be defined as different ways of viewing the world and often build the foundation for the purpose of undertaking research (Davies & Fisher, 2018). Paradigms consists a set of assumptions about reality, how the knowledge is created and what is valuable to learn from it. Simply put, a *paradigm* is a kind of belief system through which we see the world around us. In research, paradigms consist of various components: the nature of reality or truth (ontology) which produces the question of "what is reality?", the nature of knowledge (epistemology) ask "what does it mean to know?", the nature of values (axiology) ask "what is valuable to know?", and the strategy to be used (methodology) relates to "how do we find out?" (Creswell, 2009).

These four components generate four different paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory. *Positivism* relies on hypothetical deduction methods to verify a priori hypotheses, where functional relationships can be derived between causes (independent variables) and outcomes (dependent variables) (Park et al., 2020). From the perspective of philosophical foundations, (ontology) the positivism paradigm is based on the assumption that a single tangible reality exists – one that can be understood, identified, and measured. Epistemologically, positivists contend that knowledge can and must

be developed objectively without the values of researchers or participants influencing its developments. The post-positivism paradigm is related to critical realism, and assumes that reality exists but is imperfectly apprehendable because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of phenomena. In post-positivism, epistemology is modified and objectivist, dualism is largely ignored as it is not possible to maintain, whereas objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, and special emphasis is placed on external guidance of objectivity such as with critical traditions and a critical community (Lincoln & Guba, 2013).

The critical theory paradigm seeks human free movements from confined or enslaved circumstances. *Critical theory* is in contrast to traditional theories that confirm the status quo, as critical theory challenges the status quo and strives for a balanced and democratic society. It is particularly related to the issue of power relations in society and interactions of race, class, gender, and other social institutions that contribute to a social system. From an ontological view point, critical theory aims at critiquing and analysing social, political, cultural, economic, and gender issues (Healy & Perry, 2000). The second component of critical theory, i.e., epistemology, is based on subjective assumptions, which means knowledge already exists in society and history and because of that, values are dependent and not free.

The interpretivist paradigm allows researchers to record the perceptions and experiences of participants and allows researchers to view the world through participants' eyes (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). In seeking answers, researchers who follow the interpretivist paradigm use the experiences of participants to construct and interpret understandings from collected data. From the viewpoints of ontology and epistemology, the interpretivist paradigm adopts an internalist-idealist relative ontology; that is, that reality is based on perception, and a subjective epistemology, that is, that knowledge is based on individual experience and social assumptions (Nelson et al., 2014). Interpretivist approaches are based upon the individual case. Researchers believe that interpretivist approaches share a strong relationship with qualitative methods and indeed it is the first choice for collecting data (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The reason

behind choosing a qualitative approach for this study, was based on the availability of sufficient data on the handloom industry, though government annual reports. These helped in understanding the current situation of the weavers and the handloom industry as a whole. Qualitative methods are usually supported by an interpretivist paradigm, because the interpretivist paradigm provides the image that reality is socially constructed, multiplexed, and dynamic (Thomas, 2003).

This study is based on the interpretative paradigm wherein the objective of the study was to analyse the “vocal for local” agenda and its status on through government reports. There are various opinions of people regarding the agenda, both negative and positive. Through government reports it was possible to analyse these opinions using proof and evidence. From an ontological view point, this paradigm helped in understanding the perceptions of people and the reality of the agenda. In terms of the epistemological component of the interpretative paradigm, the theoretical framework for most qualitative research sees the world as constructed, interpreted, and experienced by people in their interactions and wider social systems (Tuli, 2010). This study analysed reports on various schemes run by the Indian Government to understand the current situation of society.

3.5 Qualitative methodology

Within the interpretivist paradigm, a qualitative research method is the preferred way for researchers to justify or deal with problems. Qualitative research is

an umbrella term covering an array of interpretative techniques which seeks to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise comes to term with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p.15)

The key characteristics of qualitative research are: the focus is on understanding the process and its meaning; the researcher plays a key role in collecting and analyses of data; the process is inductive; and the product is richly descriptive. The use of qualitative research comes when there is a need to understand behaviours, beliefs, opinions, and emotions from the perspective of participants

of a study; understand and explain the views of people; interpret the findings of quantitative research; uncover the meaning that people give to their experience; and provide depth, details, nuance, and context to a research issue (Hennink et al., 2020).

Research needs a systematic and rigorous approach for the design and implementation of the study, collection and analyses of data, and reporting the findings (Fossey et al., 2002). A quantitative research method can be insufficient in terms of ensuring the quality of research, therefore evaluation criteria need to be consistent with the paradigm and aim in order to make the correct choice with research method. The interpretivist approach seeks methods that enables researchers to understand the in-depth relationships of human beings with their environment and with those people who create the social fabric they are part of. Hence, an interpretivist approach prefers to use a qualitative research method because of its flexibility and wide and in-depth convergence of reality (Thanh & Thanh, 2015).

Documents and artifacts are ready-made sources of data and easily available for investigators or researchers. Documents are written, visual, digital, and physical materials relevant for the study, whereas artifacts are three dimensional objects such as trophies, art pieces, school symbols, awards, and so on (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Most documents in this study existed prior to the study: government official documents, reports, blogs, newspaper articles, historical documents, and so on.

From this study's point of view, various government reports in the public domain were analysed. These reports contained data regarding the schemes run by the government along with the number of people who were availing themselves of the benefits. These reports were based on the handloom industry and weavers' current situation and its related activity budget, allocated capacity, and outcome. It is also important to note the perception of audiences on "vocal for local," through which the impact of the agenda could be understood from other's perspectives, and how it would contribute towards the development of local communities or weavers.

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Secondary data collection method

Social research has become increasingly reliant on large available secondary data sets. These data sets are generally collected from government websites, research institutions, universities, and agencies (Vartanian, 2010). The use of secondary data helps researchers to access to more information than would be available from primary data sets. From the view point of advantages of using secondary data in the study, secondary data is less costly and take less time to organise (i.e. to combine for data analysis in comparison with primary data sets). It can take a large amount of time to design methods, collect, and organise data for primary data collection, whereas in secondary data collection there are no costs involved as data are available from the internet, or by making arrangements with government data available in public domain. Using existing data can allow a quick examination of current policy issues, because these existing data sets have already been designed to capture policy related outcomes such as food, income, security, and well-being (Vartanian, 2010).

Along with advantages there are disadvantages of secondary data collection; with the use of secondary data, the researcher lacks control over the wording and framing of survey items; sometimes secondary data lacks precision, as the data can be broader and not closely related to the research question; with secondary data, questions may not be answered by the data's population (Vartanian, 2010). The confidentiality of individual can be ignored when data are available in public domain, however publicly available database delete information that informs the identities of respondents, such as post codes, ethnicities, race, and specific ages of respondents. Furthermore, sometimes there are many documents, especially in the case of large-scale surveys conducted by government agencies, so it can be possible to miss the useful information unless it is highlighted in the documents (Cheng & Phillips, 2014).

Data available on the internet is massive in volume, so it is important for the researcher to seek useful data that fits the research questions. After finding a data set that looks useful for the study, the researcher needs to look into detailed

descriptions of it (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Well-documented data come with detailed descriptions of the methods and procedures used to collect the data. On the internet, a lot of disorganised information is available, so in order to get the exact data needed, the researcher needs to formulate search strategies with key words related to the research.

This study collected data from secondary resources such as websites like that of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Indian state governments, the handloom and textile industry, the Ministry of Tourism website, and economic welfare schemes for weavers and local communities. The data from these websites helped in examining the schemes run by the Government for the welfare of local communities, infrastructure development, training centre facilities, and the volume of production.

Table 1:

Secondary Data Sources

	Reports and Documents	Websites
1	Domestic Tourism	
	a) Ministry of Tourism India, Annual Report 2018-19	https://tourism.gov.in/annual-reports/annual-report-2018-19 https://tourism.gov.in/annual-reports/annual-report-2019-20 https://tourism.gov.in/media/annual-reports/annual-reports-archive
	b) Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation	http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/nss_rep_580.pdf
	c) Regional Tourism Satellite Account	https://tourism.gov.in/regional-tourism-satellite-account-year-2015-16-assam https://tourism.gov.in/search/node?keys=regional+uttar+pradesh
	d) Sustainable Development Goals	https://www.mospi.gov.in/reports-publications
	e) Assam Tourism	https://tourism.assam.gov.in/
	f) Uttar Pradesh Tourism	https://upstdc.co.in/

	Reports and Documents	Websites
2	Handloom Statistics	
	a) Ministry of Textiles	http://texmin.nic.in/documents/annual-report https://texmin.dashboard.nic.in/DashboardF.aspx
	b) Office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms)	http://handlooms.nic.in/writereaddata/1202.pdf http://handlooms.nic.in/writereaddata/1203.pdf http://handlooms.nic.in/writereaddata/1195.pdf http://handlooms.nic.in/writereaddata/1230.pdf http://handlooms.nic.in/writereaddata/1233.pdf http://handlooms.nic.in/writereaddata/1234.pdf
	c) Directorate of Handloom and Textiles (Assam)	https://dht.assam.gov.in/

3.7 Data analysis

This study used a thematic analysis method to analyse the data. *Thematic analysis* is a process of encoding qualitative information; encoding requires an explicit code. This can be a list of themes, or a complex model with themes, indicators, and qualifications that are causally related (Boyatzis, 1998). Due its flexibility and its status, thematic analysis can be used within a wide variety of approaches to qualitative research. The hall mark of thematic analysis its flexibility; thematic analysis can be used for analyses of various types of qualitative data, form interviews and focus groups, to qualitative surveys, diaries, story completing tasks, and secondary sources such as newspaper articles and official documents (Smith, 2015).

There are six steps for carrying out systematic and successful thematic analysis (Smith, 2015):

- 1) Familiarisation: This first steps deals with in-depth knowledge and engagement with the data set. Familiarisation includes reading and rereading transcripts, listening to audio-recordings, and making notes of analytical observations, which helps the researcher to move the analysis beyond the focus on the most obvious meanings.

- 2) Coding: This is a systematic process of identifying and labelling relevant features of the data (in relation to the research question) and is the first step in the process of identifying patterns in the data because it groups together similar data segments.
- 3) Searching for themes: At this stage it is the job of the researcher to cluster together the codes to create a plausible mapping of key patterns in the data. Themes are not simply hidden in the data and waiting to be uncovered.
- 4) Reviewing themes: *Reviewing* means the researcher checks the process of theme generation in order to know whether created themes fit the coded data and entire data set. Through this process the researcher learns whether there is a need or no need, to change the themes.
- 5) Defining and naming themes: At this stage, the researcher writes a brief summary of each theme in order to decide the theme name that will clearly define the concept clarity of each theme included. This also provides a road map towards writing the final report.
- 6) Writing the report: This is the final stage, when the researcher starts writing the findings from the various selected themes. Themes provide the organising framework for the analysis, but analytical conclusions are drawn across themes.

Themes found when analysing the data were: 1) availability of raw material, 2) credit facility, 3) role of marketing and promotion, 4) cluster development, 5) poor infrastructure, 6) weavers' welfare, 7) cultural tourism, and 8) sustainable development goals.

These generalised themes were filtered into four main themes to address the questions of this study. These were as follows: 1) cluster development, 2) awareness of welfare schemes, 3) marketing and promotion scheme impact, and 4) domestic tourism and sustainable development goals (SDGs).

3.8 Ethical considerations

This study is based on secondary data available through the public domain with no copyright issues. Hence, ethical approval was not required. However, this

study complied with standard research ethics such as honesty, transparency, and respect for public data.

3.9 Summary

This chapter explained the methodology and methods used in this chapter. The interpretivist paradigm was applied to gain exploratory knowledge and impacts created by the agenda on the local communities. This study used a constructivist epistemology to understand the reality of the topic. Thematic analysis was used to identify various themes to gain in-depth knowledge related to the questions asked in the research. As this study used secondary data collection, so there was no need to seek ethical approval. This study only used data available in the public domain.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section of the study reveals the findings from the analysis of data. Data were collected from government annual reports and publications. The findings include data on the handloom industry and weavers from the recent Handloom Census survey, 2019-2020. In order to understand the current status of various schemes related to the development of the handloom industry and its weavers, the findings chapter analyses schemes using data from government circulars and reports available on the Ministry of Textile websites and states' handloom department websites.

This chapter reveals data on domestic tourism in the selected states or clusters for this study, through annual reports available from the Ministry of Tourism website. Domestic tourists' expenditures are also provided to understand the expenditure of tourists.

4.2 Domestic tourism

Indian domestic tourism contributes a major share of the GDP. According to an India tourism statistics report (2018), 165,249 million people took part in domestic tourism activity in 2019, which was 12.8% more than in 2017. The most domestic tourism was in the states of Tamil Nadu (20.9%), Uttar Pradesh (14.2%), Karnataka (10.9%), Andhra Pradesh (10%), and Maharashtra (7.2%). Domestic tourism generated revenue of US\$215.38 billion in 2018 and was forecast to increase to US\$405.8 billion by 2028. In terms of expenditure, domestic tourism expenditure has grown significantly to US\$186.03 billion, and is expected to reach US\$405.84 billion with an annual growth rate of 7.29% between 2012 and 2028 (Ministry of Tourism, 2020a).

In the new tourism policy (2015), seven emerging tourism segments were identified:

- 1) Rural tourism – The aim of this segment is to develop interest in heritage and culture, and promote visitation to village settings to experience and live a healthy lifestyle.
- 2) Adventure Tourism – In this segment a wide range of adventure activities are covered and include mountaineering, trekking, bungee jumping, mountain biking, river rafting & rock climbing.
- 3) Medical Tourism – Tourists seek medical treatment mainly inclusive of ayurvedic, spa and other therapies, especially in local settings.
- 4) Heritage Tourism – There are many heritage sites in India, most concentrated in rural areas, and include temples, forts, pleasure gardens, monuments, museums, and urban and rural sites.
- 5) Luxury tourism – The luxury tourism market in India recorded a growth of 12% in 2015, the highest in comparison of the BRIC nations (Brazil, Russia, India and China).
- 6) Eco Tourism – The vast flora and fauna in various states, attracts domestic and international tourists, and as a result, this segment is gaining popularity at a fast rate.
- 7) Pilgrimage Tourism – This is one of the biggest contributors to the tourism industry, as India has varied religious cultures across states and is identified as a religious hub (India Brand Equity Foundation, 2019)

In terms of local products, tourists play a crucial role, as they buy local products. Therefore, it is important to understand the spending patterns of domestic tourists. In the National Sample Survey report (2014-2015), health and medical expenditure were the highest, followed by shopping, with an average expenditure of US\$219 and US\$222 respectively. In terms of overnight trips by leading purpose, rural household spends were an average of US\$136.96, whereas urban household spends were US\$313.95 for shopping. For one day trips, rural tourists spent on average US\$13.01 on shopping, and US\$11.01 on religious and pilgrimage activities, whereas urban same-day trip tourists spent around US\$200 on shopping, and US\$15.50 for religious and pilgrimage activities. For same day trips undertaken by rural households, shopping constituted around 60% of total expenditure, whereas for urban households making same day trips, shopping

constituted around 50% of total expenditure (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020a).

Assam tourism

The state of Assam is famous for its natural beauty and tea plantations. The state has many heritage buildings and monuments such as the Sri Suryapahar ruins, Rangamati mosque, Ahom Raja's palace, Sivadol, the Rang Ghar pavilions, and the Mauryan stupas. The state is culturally rich and diverse. There are many religious sites such as the Kamakhya temple, Durga temple, Nabagraha temple, Umananda temple, and the Rudreswar temple. It also has many colourful festivals that show the spirit of Assam and its rich tradition and culture. This vibrant state has many tribal and traditional dances, music, drama, fine arts, and crafts.

The Regional Tourism Satellite report of Assam (2015-2016), had a sample number of households of 4645, comprising 3346 from rural areas and 1299 from urban areas. The number of sample household visitors reporting overnight visitors was 3579. This means 77% of households reported on an overnight trip. The urban-rural division showed that 84.3% of visitors' households were in rural areas. The main purposes noted in the 80% of overnight visitors for 365 days were medical, holidaying, and shopping. The distribution of overnight trips by leading purposes (i.e., medical, holidaying, and shopping) revealed that the Assam overnight visitors travelled mostly for medical purposes. The proportion of medical travel was 73.8% for Assam, whereas for the rest of India it was 65% (Ministry of Tourism, 2020b).

A reference period of 30 days was analysed for trips undertaken in the state. The greatest number of people were in the category of social travel (98%), followed by business related purposes (96.5%), education purposes (86.4%), and religious purposes (83.1%) (Ministry of Tourism, 2020b).

In terms of domestic tourism expenditure in the state, 921,000 residents of other states were estimated to have travelled as inbound tourists to Assam in 2015-16. Out of these, 42.12% travelled for the social purposes, followed by the 17.16%

who travelled for the business purposes. During this period, the average expenditure was estimated at US\$332.96. The highest expenditure for domestic tourism was on holiday and leisure purposes, which accounted for US\$556.12, followed by business and shopping purposes of US\$121.30 and US\$222.63 respectively. In terms of internal tourism consumption from the domestic tourists' viewpoint, about 28% of the expenditure was on buying ready-made garments (ignoring travel-related expenditure), followed by healthcare and medical expenditure of 22.5% (Ministry of Tourism, 2020b).

International tourism is also prevalent in Assam. A total of 14,331 residents from other countries were estimated to have travelled to Assam as inbound international tourists in 2015-16. The average expenditure incurred by tourists was estimated at US\$1102.31. The main expenditure by international tourists was on tourism connected products, which accounted for 42.9% of the total expenditure, followed by 40.9% on hotels, restaurants, 8.9%, health and medical, 1.8%, and cultural, sports and recreation, 1.1% (Ministry of Tourism, 2020b).

Uttar Pradesh tourism

Uttar Pradesh is in the Northern part of India and shares its international border with Nepal, and state borders with Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, and Delhi (the capital of India). The state is famous for its artists and intellects. The arts and crafts products of different cities in Uttar Pradesh are famous all over India. These products include *banarasi* sarees by the weavers of Varanasi, leather products from Kanpur, glass and bangle products, *zari* work, carpets, and wooden crafts. The state is also well known for educational tourism because of its enormous knowledge base.

According to the Regional Tourism Satellite report of Uttar Pradesh (2015-2016), 13,631 households were surveyed as overnight visitors. Of the total number of households, 7,773 belonged to rural areas, and 5,858 were from urban areas. Of total households, 10,658 reported as overnight visitors. In other words, 78.2% of households reported overnight visitors. The urban-rural division indicated that 77.6% of overnight visitor households were from rural area, out of the total reported households (Ministry of Tourism, 2020c).

In terms of the purpose of visits, 76.1% of overnight trips among rural and urban overnight visitors over 365 days, were for medical, holidaying, and shopping purposes. However, for the last 30 day period analysed, 79.8% of overnight trips were taken for other purposes, and all came from rural areas. The distribution of overnights trips by these leading purposes revealed that people living in Uttar Pradesh mainly travelled for medical purposes. For the rest of India, the medical travel purpose was 65.1% of the total, whereas in Uttar Pradesh it was 72.3%, followed by the holidaying purpose at 27.1% (Ministry of Tourism, 2020c).

The 30 day reference period for the trips undertaken in the state showed that the highest number of people were in the category of social travel (92.7%), followed by other purposes (89.3%), and education purposes (80.2%). In this state, the religious travel (62.8%) was the least mentioned purpose. However, in comparison to the rest of India religious purpose travel in the state accounted for 75.0% (Ministry of Tourism, 2020c).

In terms of domestic tourism expenditure in this state, 15,674,342 residents of other states were estimated to have travelled as inbound tourists in 2015-16. Out of these, some visited for social purposes (70%), followed by 12.02% who visited for religious purposes. The average expenditure incurred by these tourists was estimated at US\$659.30. The highest average expenditure of inbound tourists was estimated at US\$750.36 for business purposes, followed by the health and medical expenditure estimated at US\$365.23, holiday, leisure and recreation expenditure estimated at US\$126.32, and shopping expenditure estimated at US\$185.36. Data on domestic tourism within the state showed that the majority of tourists (87.29%) travelled for social purposes, followed by 3.23% who travelled for other purposes. The average expenditure of domestic tourists was estimated at US\$27.32. The highest average expenditure by domestic tourists in the state was for health and medical purpose (US\$352.23) followed by shopping-related expenditure estimated at US\$165.12 (Ministry of Tourism, 2020c).

In terms of international tourism expenditure in Uttar Pradesh, 1,799,510 residents from other countries were estimated to have travelled to the state as inbound international tourists in 2015-16. The average expenditure incurred by

these international tourists estimated at US\$1365.23. The highest average expenditure incurred by international tourists was on other purposes with an estimated amount of US\$1362.23. About 63.68% of expenditure was incurred on hotels, followed by tourism connected products, which accounted for 18.44%. Apart from tourism-related expenditure, the highest share (3.70%) of expenditure was on cultural and religious services, followed by 0.31% for health and medical purposes (Ministry of Tourism, 2020c).

4.3 Sustainable development goals

The Government of India is continuously working towards achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals. The Ministry of Statistics' SDGs indicator (2019-2020) on "no poverty," showed that the Government has given health insurance cover to 28.70% households in the country and provided bank credit linkages to 2,698 thousand self-help groups in 2018-2019. To reduce poverty, generating employment opportunities became the main agenda for the Government, so it introduced various employment schemes. According to the Ministry of Statistics, 85.25% of the population were offered an employment opportunity, of all those who applied under the scheme in 2018-2019 (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020b). In order to reduce poverty in all forms, the Government is providing social protection for the citizens under Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana (PMMVY). The Ministry of Statistics SDGs indicator (2019-2020), showed that 91.66% of the total eligible population received advantages from the scheme in 2017-2018. In 2018-2019, the proportion changed to 92.17%. To educate the population of the country along with enhancing health facilities for its citizens, the Indian Government has increased its spending budget on essential services such as education, health, and social protection. In the current year, 2018-2019, the Government spent 29.47% of its budget on the essential services (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020b).

The second indicator for sustainable development is quality education. For quality education, the net enrolment ratio for India was 82.53 (primary education) and 72.62 (upper primary education) in 2017-2018. However, in the case of higher

secondary education the gross enrolment ratio remained at 56.50 for 2017-2018 and in the case of tertiary education, the gross enrolment was down to 25.8 for 2017-2018 (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020b).

The third indicator is gender equality, as the Indian Government is striving towards reducing gender inequalities. In terms of the wage gap, a large gap still exists despite various government efforts. According to the Ministry of Statistics report (2019-2020), in 2017-2018 casual male worker received US\$4.10 per day, whereas casual female workers got US\$3.69 per day. Similarly, in the year 2018-2019, casual male workers got US\$4.37 per day, whereas casual female workers got US\$2.73 per day. This shows, although income has increased for both genders, the gap remains the same (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020a). Even in the agriculture sector, the average daily earnings of men and women show quite a difference. In 2017, the average male worker received US\$2.23 per day, whereas a female worker received US\$2.05 per day. In 2018, although the income for both genders was increased, the wage gap remained at US\$2.02 per day for male workers and US\$2.06 per day for female workers (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2020a).

4.4 Handloom statistics

According to the Ministry of Textiles' annual report of 2019-2020, handloom weaving is one of the largest economic activities in India after agriculture, providing direct and indirect employment to 3,523 thousand weavers and allied workers (Ministry of Textiles, 2020e). The handloom sector contributes nearly 15% of the cloth production of India, as well as in export earnings; 95% of the world's handwoven fabrics come from India.

Due to a decrease in the number of weavers there is a decline in the handloom sector production. However, the Government's persistent efforts have enabled them to slow down the decline, as they have introduced various development and welfare schemes. Since 2005 (except for the recession of 2008-2009) there has been considerable growth in the production of handloom products. Production recorded a figure of 7990 million sq. meters in 2017-18. The export of handloom

items in 2018-19 was US\$323.3 million and during 2019-20 (to Oct 2019) was US\$1951.58 million (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

The Government of India has divided weavers into five major employment types: independent, under co-operative society, under a *khadi* (a natural hand-woven cloth) and village industry commission/ board, under master weavers, and under the state Handloom Development Corporation. According to the fourth Indian Handloom Census 2019-2020, 2,577,044 people work as an independents; 223,414 workers under a co-operative society; 15,144 under khadi and village industries commission/ boards; 684,060 for master weavers; and 22,850 workers under a state handloom development corporation (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Among the weavers, 2,673,000 were included in the survey. The average number of person days of engagement in the weaving activity was 208 days in 2019. Engagement in weaving activity is more (262 days) for urban workers than for those in rural areas (201 days). The top five states with the highest number of average work days are Maharashtra (310), Andhra Pradesh (302), Delhi (292), Chhattisgarh (290) and Puducherry (286) (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c). Although, the days of engagement have increased in comparison with the previous year, the majority of weavers (66.3%) earned less than US\$68.23 per month. According to the third Handloom Census, 99% of weavers earn less than US\$68.23 a month. However, as the fourth census showed, this came down to 66.3%, and the proportion earning between US\$68.23 to US\$120.21 had increased to 26.3%.

The main reason for the increased earnings is the initiatives taken by the Government of India for the welfare of community, which includes providence of financial assistance under flagship schemes such as the National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP), the Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS), the Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme (HWCWS) and the Yarn Supply Scheme (YSS). This was also supported with the setting up of common facility centres (CFCs) at block/ municipality level, availability of concessional credit under the weavers' Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Ltd (MUDRA) scheme, and the

introduction of the Indian Handloom Brand in order to enhance, promote, and increase the demand of handloom products in the local market (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

To keep up with development, the Government has made crucial changes through various developmental, promotion, and welfare schemes. The objectives of these schemes are to promote production and marketing of handloom products, to increase the income of weavers and other workers indirectly associated with the handloom sector. Skill upgrading, new technology contemporary and new designed, product diversification, availability of raw material with easy access to it, low interest rate credit, infrastructural development, e-commerce channels, marketing and promotion assistance, and platforms for handloom products to access new fashion.

Block level cluster schemes included implementing integrated and holistic development of handlooms through various interventions such as skill upgrading, Hathkharga Samvardhan Sahayata (HSS) scheme for providing financial assistance for technological up-gradation, construction individual work sheds, product development, creation of common facility centres etc. For the development of clusters, the Government has given US\$0.28 million per cluster. In addition, it has set up a fund of US\$0.069 million for setting up one dye house per district to ensure quality dyed yarn for weavers. These cluster projects were taken into consideration after recommendations from the state government.

Skill upgrading is given to weavers with the aim of teaching them new techniques related to weaving, adaption of new technology, learning and understanding of new colours, exposure to basic accounting and management, and familiarisation with e-commerce channels for doing business (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

The *Hatkharga Samvardhan Sahayata* (looms and accessories) scheme aimed to improve the production and fabric quality through adoption of upgraded looms. Under this scheme, government bore 90% of the cost of looms and accessories. However the implementation of looms was fully done by state governments (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Work shed construction allows individuals to work in their own space close to their home. The installation cost for these working sheds comes to US\$8.64 million per unit. However, marginalised households and women weavers are eligible for 100% financial assistance (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Engagement of designer schemes work towards engagement among professional designers under block level clusters and beyond, to design new innovative products. This scheme pays the fees of designers and reimburses designers if they make successful market linkages (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Yarn supply schemes aim to provide the right price for weavers. Under this scheme, yarn is supplied at mill gate price to weavers as this reduces the price because of transportation from the mill to their work place. Moreover, this scheme benefits weavers by giving them a 10% subsidy on the price of cotton, domestic silk, woollen, and linen yarn, in order to make them competitive against power-loom pricing. In order to maintain regular yarn supply, yarn depots have been opened in handloom concentrated areas. To reduce the delivery time and increase storage facility, warehouses have been opened in states with higher numbers of handlooms (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

The MUDRA loan scheme offers loans to weavers at a 6% interest rate through banks. To leverage these loans, funds up to US\$ 137 are also provided. Government bears the cost of credit guarantee fees to the banks in order to promote the loan scheme among weavers. The online handloom weavers' MUDRA portal has been developed to make direct transfer of margin money into weavers' accounts (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Creating learning opportunities has been the prime focus of the government, to help the weavers as well youth have a good career progression. To make this happen, memoranda of understand (MOU) have been signed between Ministry of Textiles, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). Under these agreements, both universities have designed distance learning courses relevant to the handloom sector. The Ministry also provides a 75% subsidy of courses fees for female weavers (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Welfare measures for weavers and their families are covered under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (Scheme) (PMJJBY), Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (Scheme) (PMSBY), and Mahatma Gandhi Bunker Bima Yojana (Scheme) (MGBBY). Weavers are required to just pay US\$1.09 to enrol in the scheme with the rest of the premium borne by the Government (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Certification is a handloom mark launched in 2006 with the objective of giving a distinct identity to handloom products. The Indian Handloom Brand (IHB) is another mark for branding high quality handloom product, and was launched in 2015. The IHB acts as a bridge between weavers and customers, as it aims to provide higher earnings to weavers and a standard quality of products to consumers. All products under IHB are benchmarked to ensure the quality of raw material used, the processing, and the place of origin (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Marketing assistance is provided to handloom weavers through expos and district level events to help them gain and exchange market information on a single platform. Weavers are also facilitated by various craft fairs (*melas*) organised across the country. Marketing incentives have been provided to the handloom agencies, and as a new initiative, 23 e-commerce companies have been involved promoting e-marketing channels for handloom products (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

4.5 Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS)

The Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme was implemented by the Government of India in 2013-2015 for the development of mega handloom clusters, including the Sivasagar and Varanasi as mega clusters. With a view to keeping up with the development of these clusters, the Government introduced new guidelines for the period of April 2017 to March 2020. The aim of this scheme was to develop mega handloom clusters in identifiable locations with specific products, with close linkages and interdependencies amongst the key players in the cluster by strengthening infrastructure facilities, better storage facilities, technology upgrading, weaving sheds, skill upgrading, design inputs, and healthcare facilities etc. (Ministry of Textiles, 2020b).

Due to a lack of education, inadequate working capital, and a lack of market facilities and knowledge, weavers are vulnerable from the perspective of meeting dynamic market demand. Along with this poor infrastructure facility, a lack of common facility centres, and low levels of technology compound the problem. In order to overcome these problems, the Government decided to collaborate with private prominent stakeholders in order to make a Public Private Partnership module (PPP). For the development of each mega cluster around the country, the PPP model will be implemented with a view to holistic and comprehensive development. Each mega cluster will cover more than 15,000 handlooms with contributions of up to US\$5.56 million per cluster from the Government (Ministry of Textiles, 2020b).

Availability of raw material is one of the main issues in the production and development of handloom products. The handloom industry consumes various types of yarns such as cotton, wool, jute, silk, and artificial yarn such as cellulous, synthetic, and various other types. However, the major problem faced by weavers is the lack of availability of raw material at an affordable price and quality. In consideration of these facts, it has become important for the Government to take action to maintaining quality. It has therefore decided to open yarn depot(s) in mega clusters to ensure a timely supply of quality yarn and other essential raw materials. A corpus fund of US\$0.69 million will be created for maintaining a regular supply of yarn through the National Handloom Development Corporation, Lucknow, in the mega handloom clusters (Ministry of Textiles, 2020b).

Marketing has been identified as an important tool in terms of the overall growth of handloom products by the Government. Good and healthy communication in the domestic market is the first step towards creating demand for local products. Taking this into consideration, the Government scheme is aimed at achieving two objectives - creating brand and awareness amongst the local people, towards handloom products. This can be done through the organisation of various marketing events at prime locations throughout the country, and provide space to craft artisans to make direct sales to customers at a subsidised price. These marketing events will include buyer and seller meetings, craft fairs, exhibitions, the development of hosting websites, and e-commerce etc. In this, the

Government will bear 80% of the cost, and the remaining 20% will be borne by the state government, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. However, the state government cost will not exceed more than 10% of the total (Ministry of Textiles, 2020b).

Basic infrastructure development is the urgent need of the handloom industry. Under this scheme, common facility centres CFC(s) will be set up in order to carry out wrapping, dyeing, pre-post handloom operations, water treatment plants, testing labs, exhibition halls, display showrooms, conference halls, and warehouses. The state government will provide land free of cost for these purposes. Assistance will also be provided for improving the quality of life of weavers, which will be the 10% of the total assistance released by the Office of the Development Commissioner for the handlooms. This will indirectly contribute to the overall production and working conditions as well. The basic infrastructure development that will come under this scheme are: 1) road connectivity to the clusters, where there are no roads, 2) repairs of roads, 3) street lightning, 4) bore wells, and 5) renovation of primary schools and primary health units. In these, the share of the Government of India will be up to 80%, excluding the land cost, and the remaining 20% will be borne by the stakeholders, state governments, and beneficiaries. However, the share of state government will not be more than 10% (Ministry of Textiles, 2020b).

Publicity of handloom products in the domestic market has been found to be a crucial factor for raising the awareness of products. Hence, government has decided to invest in internal publicity such as the production of video films, print and electronic media, hoardings on prime locations, banners, websites, catalogues, fashion shows, and making CDs and DVDs through the cluster development scheme. In addition, government is also investing in advertising of national and international events taking place in India related to the handloom cultural exchange programmes on the recommendation of the Indian embassy. To support this financially, the Government of India is investing up to 80% into this particular project (excluding the land cost); the remaining 20% will be met by stakeholders, state government, and beneficiaries. However, the share of state

government will not be more than 10%. The government has allotted up to US\$0.14 million for publicity (Ministry of Textiles, 2020b).

4.6.1 Sivasagar (Assam) mega-cluster status

Sivasagar is a mega-cluster in Assam. This mega cluster was announced in the budget of 2008-2009, covering the entire district of Sivasagar. The project was revised in 2016 with the total value of project coming to US\$6.71 million. The share of the Government of India was US\$5.88 million, and beneficiary share was US\$0.83 million. As of 2019, the amount released was US\$3.02 million. In terms of physical progress, a common facility centre was developed with facilities for reeling and spinning, an office, yarn depot, show room, business information centre, quality control area, and weaving. The CFC is fully operational and 2891 people have used the various facilities in the common facility centre. Another CFC centre was set up in Simaluguri in the Sivasagar mega cluster, with facilities for a yarn depot, show room, and office. Since the set up, around 7652 people have used the various facilities. In the intervention by Shristi Handloom Limited, a goal was to create three common facility centres and dye houses at a cost of US\$1.44 million. However, the results shows that only one common facility centre is operational and another two still under construction with 513 people trained so far (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020b).

In the intervention by Rangpur Wild Silk Fabric Co Ltd, of a total budget of US\$0.59 million, US\$0.39 million has been released so far. One common facility centre was set up with a dye house, and both are operational in the Sivasagar block. Five common worksheds have been constructed with another four worksheds in the final phase of completion. In these running CFCs, 494 people have been trained (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020b).

Corpus fund interventions for raw material with a budget amount of US\$0.21 million have been allotted. With this, yarn banks are operational from two CFCs, and yarn from US\$0.12 million (0.21kg) has been supplied (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020b).

For the development of the Assam cluster, the Government of India introduced the North Eastern Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS) in 2014 with the objective of increasing employment and the value of handloom products by improvements in design capability, labour productivity, formation of self help groups, and cluster development. Clusters with 51-200 handlooms will receive US\$0.03-0.04 million for a period of three years; clusters with 201-500 handlooms will be eligible for US\$0.07-0.11 million for a period of four years, and clusters with 501-2000 handlooms will receive US\$0.11- 0.21 million for a period of four years (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020b).

Awareness of these schemes is essential for the weavers. Hence, government has decided to organise awareness programmes which are restricted to five times only, and should occur in the first three months of sanctioning the cluster. Schemes that come under this are weavers' credit cards, yarn pass books, and various other handloom schemes. The Government of India has given total financial assistance of up to US\$2022.64 per cluster with handloom capacity of 51-200 and 201-500, and US\$2696.86 per cluster with handloom capacity of 501-2000 (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020b).

To keep up with product development and diversification, government has decided to bear the cost of purchasing stationary for paper design, raw material for developing prototypes, and the cost of transferring designs to the fabric. For this purpose, government has set aside US\$2022.64 per cluster with handlooms capacity of 51-200 and 201-500, and US\$2696.86 per cluster with handloom capacity of 501-2000. To make it stronger, government has decided to re-infuse the revenue earned from sales of products and development of samples back for product development and diversification (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020b).

Setting up corpus funds for yarn depots is needed in order to ensure timely availability of raw materials to the weavers. Weavers and agencies are required to pay in advance to the National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC) in order to purchase yarn. It takes around three to four weeks to make the raw material available at the required place. Therefore, with the help of this new

policy, one-time financial assistance up to US\$2696.86 per cluster (51-200 handlooms) US\$4045.29 per cluster (201-500 handlooms) and up to US\$6742.14 per cluster (501-200 handlooms) will be given to NHDC as a corpus fund, to ensure the regular supply of yarns to weavers. These yarns will be distributed to weavers through yarn depots against payment .

Credit support to the handloom weavers in terms of margin money, subsidised interest rates, and guarantee covers will be provide under concessional credit for “Revival, Reform and Re-structuring Package for the handloom Sector” .

Construction of work sheds for weavers is an important task for the government, as many weavers do not have their own space for work. Under this scheme, financial assistance will be provided for weavers who do not have their own working space and are working for master weavers/co-operative societies. Full financial assistance will be given to weavers below the poverty line, however for those above the poverty line, 75% will be given by the Government of India and the remaining 25% will be by the state government .

4.6.2 Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) mega-cluster status

The Varanasi mega handloom cluster was established in 2008-2009 with the objective of integrated and holistic development of the Varanasi cluster in order to improve its competencies with sustainable growth and increase overall production. At present, 259,000 handloom weavers are engaged in weaving on approximately 65,000 handlooms. The total cost of the project comes to US\$11.08 million, out of which US\$6.94 million has been released so far (Ministry of Textiles, 2020g).

It is important to highlight the progress of clusters through various interventions so far. First was the Value Addition Centre (Garment Unit) with a total project cost US\$1.92 million, out of which US\$1.5 million has been released so far; under this intervention, 4481 samples were developed worth US\$0.13 million, fabric worth US\$1.78 million procured from weavers, and 142 people received employment opportunities. In the second intervention of the Value Addition Centre and Common Facility Centres, US\$1.75 million was invested in the development

process, out of which US\$1.4 million has been released so far; this enabled 213,000 metres of fabric to be dyed, 38,000 metres of fabric to be printed, 66,000 sarees to be processed, 222 associated weavers to be benefited, business worth US\$0.43 million generated, and 18 people receiving employment opportunities. The third and fourth interventions were related to improving the working conditions of the weavers. Under the third intervention, 4000 Battery Linked Inverter Lightning units (BLILUs) were distributed amongst the weavers, and in the fourth intervention, loom upgrading was taken into consideration. Under this intervention, 45,253 handloom parts were distributed. The project for the third intervention was US\$0.75 million, out of which US\$0.6 million has been released so far, and US\$0.58 million for the fourth intervention, out of which US\$0.43 million has been released. The fifth intervention was related to the availability of raw material. Under this intervention 1,770 thousand kg. pf yarn worth US\$38.11 million were supplied to the year 2019 (Ministry of Textiles, 2020g).

The sixth intervention was related to a marketing development centre with a total project cost of US\$1.39 million. Under this intervention, 220 new designs were introduced, and US\$82672.18 orders placed, benefitting 226 weavers. In the seventh intervention, provision for credit support took place under the mentorship of the Union Bank of India, Varanasi. This has an allocated budget of US\$0.17 million, out of which US\$0.14 million has been allotted so far; 2336 weavers took advantage of bank loans, and the bank has disbursed loans of US\$0.79 million as a result (Ministry of Textiles, 2020g).

Publicity of handloom products is needed frequently, and with this in mind, the government in its seventh intervention, focused on the provision of publicity with an allocated amount of US\$0.14 million, out of which US\$0.05 million has been released so far. Under this intervention, local weavers had the chance to showcase their product at LAKME fashion week (Ministry of Textiles, 2020g).

Government also invested in training and skill development to make weavers competitive against ever changing marketing demands. Therefore, for its eighth intervention, the Government decided to invest in training and development with project budget of US\$0.08 million, out of which US\$0.06 million has been

released so far. This resulted in 21 trainings and seven training programmes being completed, covering 520 handloom weavers. Moreover, nine information technology (IT) based skill upgrades and one design, development, and pattern making training programme were sanctioned (Ministry of Textiles, 2020g).

4.6 Revival, reform, and restructuring scheme

Financial distress is faced by handloom weavers and the cooperatives due to their inability to repay debts. The Government of India therefore introduced a new scheme, the Revival, Reform and Restructuring package with a budget of US\$416.67 million. Under this scheme, apex societies, primary weaver cooperative (PWC) societies, and individual weavers are covered. This scheme is focused on the loan waver and recapitalisation of handloom weavers' societies. The funds required for those will be shared by the state and central governments (Ministry of Textiles, 2020f).

Through this scheme, handloom weavers and cooperative societies are eligible for term loans and working capital loan. Term loans cover the making of fixed assets such as looms, accessories such as jacquard, computer aided design systems, card punching machines, sizing machines, test equipment, and worksheds. For all these, weavers receive up to US\$20226.43, although the limit for a term loan is up to US\$33710.72. These loans are provided at the subsidised interest rate of 6% for three years, and the interest subsidy is borne by the Government of India for three years. To make it more convenient for handloom weavers, the Government has given margin money assistance to a maximum of US\$ 138 per weaver to leverage loan borrowing from the banks (Ministry of Textiles, 2020f).

In order to strengthen the RRR scheme, the Government of India introduced the Weavers' Mudra Scheme under the Revival, Reform, and Restructuring Scheme (RRR). The objective of this scheme was to ensure credit availability to handloom weavers at a subsidised interest rate. MUDRA loans are available up to US\$13484.29 at a preferential interest rate. Under this scheme, weavers are also eligible for a larger loan of up to US\$0.14 million. Under this scheme, in the first quarter of 2019-20, US\$55285.59 of loan amounts were disbursed to 82,097

beneficiaries; in quarter two of the same year, US\$63376 loan amounts were disbursed, benefiting 92,263 beneficiaries, in quarter three, US\$67421.45 loan amounts were disbursed, benefitting 95,400 beneficiaries, and in the last quarter, US\$68769.88 loan amounts were disbursed, benefitting 99,696 beneficiaries. In Quarter one of 2020-21, US\$70118.31 loan amounts were disbursed benefitting 1,02,384 beneficiaries (Ministry of Textiles, 2020f).

Under this scheme, the Government also invested in information, education, and communication, with the purpose of making beneficiaries aware of the scheme. To make it more convenient for handloom weavers, the Government decided to set up a facilitator to collect and complete loan applications in the preliminary process, with submission of applications to the correct bank branch and post sanction monitoring taken until disbursement of the loans. For this, the Government of India will pay an incentive of 0.5% of the loan amount disbursed, subject to a minimum of US\$2.73 and maximum of US\$27.3 per Weavers Credit Card to the bank, for onward payment to the facilitator (Ministry of Textiles, 2020f).

4.7 Yarn supply scheme (raw material scheme)

A yarn supply scheme was implemented in the 12th five year plan with two main components: 1) supply of yarn at mill gate price, and 2) 10% price subsidy on cotton, domestic silk and woollen yarn in hank form. The purpose of the first component was to maintain the regular supply of all types of yarns at mill gate price to all the beneficiaries of handloom products. The mill gate price is the price at which yarn is procured from the registered licence holder of the silk exchange. In order to eliminate middlemen and monopolistic situations, the Government has taken steps through this scheme, to give advantages to weavers in terms of lower prices. In addition, the Government also covers transport charges under this scheme (Ministry of Textiles, 2020h).

For transport, the Government will only use GPS enabled vehicles directly connected to e-Dhaga application, which enable weavers to locate the exact location of vehicle carrying will yarn for them. This will also enable them to locate the activity of the vehicle. In order to maintain a regular supply of yarn, yarn

depots will be opened in handloom concentrated areas which will include both mega and block level clusters (Ministry of Textiles, 2020h).

In order to ensure timely availability and reduce the delivery time period of yarn, the Government will open one warehouse in each state. This will also enable them to store the raw material for future demand and regular supply in small quantities (Ministry of Textiles, 2020h).

The second component of the scheme focuses on the availability of yarn in hank form at a subsidised rate in order to help the handloom sector weavers compete against the mill sector. The types of yarn that come under this 10% subsidy are cotton, domestic silk, woollen, and linen. For fair distribution among the weavers, the Government has put a cap on weavers' capacity; for example, cotton requirements of 40 counts are allowed 30kgs per month, and silk yarn, 4kgs per month, per weaver (Ministry of Textiles, 2020h).

The benefits of yarn supply schemes are also available for individual weavers, self help groups, Joint Liability Groups, and cooperative societies. In order to reach every single beneficiary, the Government will issue a Yarn Pass Book under this scheme, to carry all the details of an individual along with total numbers of looms and the unique number of each loom (Ministry of Textiles, 2020h).

4.8 Handloom weavers' comprehensive welfare scheme

The Government of India introduced Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana (MGBBY) for the welfare of weavers with the objective of providing enhanced insurance cover to handloom weavers in the case of natural as well as accidental death along with cases of total and partial disability. Through this scheme, 2,619,000 weavers are covered. Weavers having 50% of their income from handloom activity are eligible for this scheme. Along with weavers, this scheme also covers state handloom corporations, apex handloom weavers, and primary handloom weavers. Through this scheme, weavers who suffer natural death will benefit US\$891.01, whereas in case of accidental death the coverage amount would be US\$2047.52. If a weaver is totally or partially disabled, he and she will

receive US\$2047.52 or US\$1074.25 respectively (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020a).

The second scheme introduced under the handloom weavers' comprehensive welfare scheme was the Health Insurance Scheme for handloom weavers. The objective of this scheme was to make weavers and their community financially stronger in order to access the best of healthcare facilities in India. This scheme not only covers a weaver, but also the spouse and two children to cover all pre-existing diseases and new diseases. In order to be eligible for the scheme, a weaver of up to 80 years old should have at least 50% of his or her income from handloom activity; weavers belonging to the State Handloom Department Corporation, Apex, and Primary Handloom Weavers Cooperative Societies are also covered under this scheme (Directorate of Handloom & Textiles, 2020a).

4.9 Marketing and promotion scheme

The Government of India has also focused on the marketing and promotion of handloom products. In order to market handloom products, the Government organises Domestic Marketing expos and events such as the National Handloom Expos (NHEs), Special Handloom Expos (National/State), District level Events (DLEs), and Craft melas (fairs). In order to strengthen the existing marketing infrastructure, and to strengthen Urban Haats (exhibitions), 174 marketing events are organised at Urban Haats. These 174 marketing events include 76 Special Handloom Expos (32 at National Level and 44 State Level). For these events, the cost will be borne by the Government of India. According to Government of India statistics, in Quarter one (2019-20) 808,643 beneficiaries benefitted from the current marketing scheme, in Quarter two (2019-20) 877,643 beneficiaries took advantage of various marketing activities, in Quarter three (2019-20) 1,054,643 beneficiaries took advantage of the marketing scheme, and in Quarter four (2019-20) 1,119,643 beneficiaries received the advantage of the marketing scheme (Ministry of Textiles, 2020d).

Through these marketing schemes, the government also covers the development of MSMEs (entrepreneurship and development programmes). This scheme of marketing aims at promoting new market access initiatives like organising,

participating in national and international trade fairs, and MSME expos; through this scheme awareness is generated regarding MSMEs' importance, methods, new ways of packaging, MSME conclaves, education about recent development in national and international markets and topics related to marketing access, and more awareness of trade fairs, digital marketing, e-marketing, GST, and other related topics. Government has invested in the development of Marketing Haats (exhibitions), for which government will give a maximum assistance of US\$0.14 million towards implementation of the project. It will also cover the cost of renovation and upgrading of the existing Marketing Haats, for which government will provide maximum assistance of US\$53937.16 .

In order to raise awareness for all trade fairs, digital advertising, e-marketing platforms, GST, and other related topics, the Government of India will provide financial support of US\$955.11 per programme with a cap of 30 MSME participants in a programme. The duration of these awareness programmes is one day only .

4.10 Summary

This chapter provided data on various aspects related to the development of weavers and the handloom industry overall. Findings showed that the Government has taken initiatives for development through a cluster development approach. In addition to that, the Government has also focused on easing the availability of raw material and credit facilities for weavers under the yarn supply scheme and Revival Reform and Restructure (RRR) policy. Through data collected from these policies it can be seen that the Government has focused on marketing and promotion schemes as well, aiming to raise awareness of handloom products. The other motive is to give new platforms for the weavers to direct sell to the market and lessen the involvement of master weavers in the process.

From the findings, it was evident that for India, domestic tourism contributes a major share of the overall tourism contribution to the gross domestic product (GDP). Whenever a domestic tourist, whether urban or rural, undertakes any sort of travelling activity, the second highest spending is on shopping. This indicates

the role of domestic tourism and tourists in increasing the demand and sale of the local products. Domestic tourism also helps increase employment in the country, and the Government of India has identified this aspect clearly, by introducing new tourism products such as river tourism, golf tourism, medical tourism, and rural tourism.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The discussion chapter firstly discusses the role of domestic tourism and sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the growth and development of the handloom industry and its weavers. Secondly, it discusses about the cluster development policies in the selected regions of this study. Thirdly, there is a discussion on the awareness of Government schemes related to the development of weavers. Lastly, the chapter discusses about the impact of marketing and promotion policies on the handloom industry and the weavers.

5.2 Domestic tourism and sustainable development goals

According to the Ministry of Tourism's annual report (2019-2020), domestic tourism continues to be the major contributor to the tourism sector. In 2018, there were 1854.93 million domestic trips made around India. In terms of GDP contribution in 2016-2017, tourism contributed 2.63% (directly) and 2.43% (indirectly) towards the GDP. In 2018-2019, 87.50 million people were employed through direct and indirect means. The Ministry of Tourism awareness programme regarding domestic tourism seems to be positive for local traders, as this study showed that weavers accrued advantages from it. In order to promote awareness of local domestic tourism products amongst citizens, the Ministry of Tourism organised events such as *Paryatan Parv*, and *Bharat Parv* during 2019 and 2020. The objective of these was to promote and spread the message of *Dekho Apna Desh (See our own Country)*, *Ek Bharat - Shreshth Bharat* (*One India - Great India*) and "tourism for all". As a major event organised by the Ministry of Tourism, *Bharat Parv* was organised along with *Ek Bharat - Shreshth Bharat* on Republic Day. These types of events also had spaces for handlooms and other handicraft products to promote awareness amongst visitors.

To promote domestic tourism, the Government sponsored travel fairs, with the objective of giving a single platform for the tour operators and state government to come together and share their knowledge and understanding to increase tourism. According to the Ministry of Tourism's annual report (2019-2020) a

positive response was received from participants and initiatives taken by the Government of India to promote tourism were appreciated. Continuing with the objective of strengthening domestic tourism, the Ministry of Tourism organised *Paryatan Parv* at a national level using the themes of “*Dekho Apna Desh*,” “Tourism for All,” and “Tourism and Governance,” during which domestic tourism was widely promoted. Again, this fair was themed with handloom and other handicraft products, cultural programmes, and yoga demonstrations. This showed the Government’s well developed plan to show local products and traditions to domestic tourists.

The findings of this study show that in the new tourism policy (2015), the Ministry of Tourism identified seven new niche tourism products to promote India as a year round tourism destination; the new policy aimed to attract tourists with specific interests. A few of the new products which were impacting the lives of locals are discussed as follows:

5.2.1 Rural tourism

Rural tourism takes place in the countryside; in a broader sense, *rural tourism* is a complex and multi-faceted activity which not only includes farm-based activities and tourism, but also comprises special interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and, in some areas, ethnic tourism (Lane, 1994). As the definition suggests, rural tourism is not just farm related activities but includes other aspects of tourism that are non-farm related. From this point of view, the concept of rural tourism development can be very beneficial for weavers as they can make a direct connection with the tourists.

Findings from a case study on Assam’s Tipam Phakey Village provide evidence of the potential of rural tourism (Mili, 2012). The findings identify various advantages of rural tourism:

- a) It provides employment for youth and increases their level of income. As a result, it discourages them from migrating to the cities for work. Additionally, it helps them to keep alive their traditional work.

- b) Rural tourism provides a boost for the handloom industry as tourists like to buy the original products at the place of origin. This desire generates emotional feelings toward the weavers or artisans, and as a result, tourists sometimes buy extra products for themselves.
- c) It helps preserve natural resources, as it forms a base for the tourism sector. Government investment in the development of rural infrastructure can be used for preserving existing forests.
- d) Exposure of local religions to tourists gives new life and identity to old cultures and traditions.

To add more to rural tourism, the concept of village tourism provides a new way for tourists to experience village-based tourism. This is a type of tourism that gives the opportunity for visitors to observe and participate in daily activities, customs and traditions; village tourism includes activities from locally organised tours of cultural sites, to sightseeing within the village (Saarinen, 2009). In the context of the handloom industry, the Government was planning to set up handloom theme based village tourism. For example, in Odisha state, the Government was establishing a project based on handloom village tourism: “with an aim to revive the handloom industry, Department of Textiles in collaboration with district administration decided to open handloom village tourism at Jaipur” (Village Tourism to Revive the Handloom Sector, 2018). Another example the Union Minister of Textiles and Women and Child Development announced, was “Sharan village in Kullu will be developed into a craft handloom village it is among the 10 villages selected as craft handloom villages. This will not only promote the handloom industry but also boost rural tourism.”

This type of development not only boosted rural tourism, but also provided a platform for weavers to sell their products directly. The Government focus was on infrastructure development (road connectivity, rail connectivity, and electricity) in order to attract more tourists to a destination. This indirectly benefited the local people, by improving their access to basic facilities. Also, it allowed the weavers to sell their products directly to the cities, which resulted in increases in their earnings and therefore, better lifestyles.

However, for attracting tourists to the rural environment. The government needs to understand or know the travel motivation factors of rural tourism tourists. It will help the government in laying down suitable marketing strategies. For example, the travel career ladder (TCL) concept focuses on gaining experiences which leads to a change in preferences of the tourists. Each tourist has their own experience with rural tourism, as some go for self-fulfillment, and others go for thrill and excitement, but these personal motivations can change over time. An individual tourist can include its family or close friends for experiencing the rural lifestyle more closely with loved ones.

5.5.2 Medical tourism

Medical tourism, whereby patients travel domestically or internationally for the enhancement or restoration of their health, is a world-wide multibillion dollar industry (Hudson & Li, 2012). In the context of India, the concept of medical tourism has received lot of attention globally. With a lot to offer in India, from yoga to inexpensive medical facilities for tourists, developed countries are looking towards India as a medical tourism destination. The findings of this study show that spending on medical and health programmes was the highest of all tourism spending. The study findings on impacts of medical tourism reveal that local communities perceived that medical tourism would enhance community well-being; likewise it also created positive impacts on local economic conditions in terms of job opportunities and increases in the earnings of locals (Suess et al., 2018).

With regards to medical tourism domestically, most treatment happens in the local villages or towns. Most Indian citizens believe in Ayurvedic treatment and travel thousands of kilometres for this. This is helpful for the locals in terms of an additional opportunity to sell their products in the market.

In the context of medical tourism, push factors can include sociodemographic (e.g., age, gender, income, education) and health-related (e.g., insurance status, health status), whereas pull factors are mainly related to the medical tourism destination which can include factors like country environment (e.g. country image, stable economy) and the quality of medical healthcare along with the

reputation of the doctors. In the context of India, medical tourism is emerging as a wealthy segment for the government of India. These medical expenditures do not just happen on modernised healthcare services, but also on traditional medical services. From the international market point of view, many developed countries' tourists are looking at India as a substitute for expensive healthcare services. Currently, India is providing competition to countries like Singapore, China, and Thailand. The main reason is the current low exchange rate against the developed nations. The other reason is the traditional Ayurveda and the Yoga treatments offered in the country.

5.2.3 Pilgrimage tourism

Pilgrimage tourism has crucial socio-economic impacts (Vijayanand, 2012), particularly in the context of India, where there are four major religions (Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity). Most international tourists travel to India to experience and know the rich history behind these religions. Domestically, the market for pilgrimage tourism is very large, as almost every citizen considers a once in a life-time pilgrimage visit in their travel Itinerary.

A visit to a pilgrimage site helps the locals to grow their businesses. Every holy site in India is surrounded by local souvenir shops, religiously oriented businesses and facilities such as travel agencies, hotels, and local food stalls. The area chosen for this study, Varanasi, is famous for its various niche tourism products offering; amongst those, pilgrimage tourism is one of the biggest factors attracting tourists to the state (Mishra, 2019). This tourism product brings immense business to the locals. Tourists demand local handloom products, particularly sarees, suits, and curtains. Due to the high demand, these products can be easily made available from local shops in the market.

Pilgrimage tourism in India is emotionally driven. The main motive of the pilgrimage tourists is to strengthen their relationship with their god. There can be various push factors in pilgrimage tourism such as confirming religious beliefs, respect for religion, praying for family and career, and mental relaxation. For some tourists, pull factors can be cultural enjoyment, enjoying the religious art, the experience of local customs, and peace of mind.

5.2.4 Ecotourism

Ecotourism may be defined as:

...travel to the fragile, pristine and usually protected areas that strives to be low impact and (often) small scale. It helps in educating the traveller, provides funds for conservation, directly benefits the economic development and political empowerment of communities, and fosters respects for different cultures and for human rights. (Montes & Kafley, 2019).

The Sivasagar cluster chosen for this study is in Assam, which is rich in nature and beauty, and famous for historical monuments and places that attract tourists to the state.

Findings on the Assam's cluster show that the majority of handloom weavers lived and operated their work from the rural areas. This means if ecotourism took place in the cluster, indirect advantages would be received by locals who engage in activities other than weaving. According to the findings, the handloom weavers were selling their product in the local market, suggesting that more tourist arrivals would provide more selling opportunities for them. However, there are challenges with eco-tourism in Assam. A study conducted on the scope and challenges of ecotourism (Mazumdar & Sultana, 2020) discussed some challenges as follows:

- 1) There is no eco-tourism policy in the state, and the state has only initiated two eco-tourism projects.
- 2) There are restrictions on visiting wildlife and conservation areas. Those who intend to visit restricted places, have to go through a long process of approval.
- 3) Lack of basic infrastructure facilities is prevalent in most parts of the state, such as limited cottages, resorts, home-stays, rest rooms, hotels and restaurants.
- 4) There is a lack of transport facilities in remote areas. Some destinations are not very well connected with railway stations or airports. Affordable taxi services are the biggest challenge for domestic and International tourists.

5.3 Sustainability development goals (SDGs)

5.3.1 No poverty

Tourism continues to be a strong and constant force behind economic growth and overall development; indeed, tourism is considered a tool for poverty alleviation, poverty reduction, and poverty elimination (Chok et al., 2007). There is no doubt about tourism's potential to contribute to national sustainable development goals achievement. As per the Ministry of Tourism (2019-2020) report, the tourism sector generated 12.5% employment in the country, of which 5.56% directly and 7.19% indirectly was through tourism sector (Ministry of Tourism, 2020a). Whenever tourists visit, an inflow of money occurs in the economy, demand for local products raises, and the local product of the country receives publicity and marketing. Whenever these sales occur, lower income groups receive benefits.

A positive aspect of tourism is the various products on offer for almost every segment (i.e. niche markets), such as ecotourism, rural tourism, heritage tourism, cultural tourism, etc. The development of rural tourism or village tourism can be crucial for the development of handloom weavers. The concept of pro-poor tourism is well fitted to the development of weaver communities. Whenever a tourist visits a particular place there is an additional opportunity for selling products and services; remote areas usually attracts tourists, as these areas are rich in culture and traditions. This provides small-scale opportunities after agriculture, and values natural resources and traditions which may feature a few assets belonging to the poor (Ashley et al., 2000). As shown in the findings of this study, the majority of weavers lived and operated in rural areas and sold their products in the local markets.

With the development of village tourism or pro-poor tourism, direct advantages would reach the weavers. The findings of this study also show the limited basic infrastructure in rural areas directly hindered the growth and development of the weavers. With limited access to the cities, the small weavers had to sell their products to the master weavers at a very cheap price, as they had access to and knowledge of the big cities. This restricted weavers' ability to get the true prices

for their products. The concepts of village tourism and pro-poor tourism can play an important role in the development of weavers. With the development of these concepts in rural areas, there would be direct interactions between weavers and customers, and as a result, the full value of the product would be directly received by the weavers with the removal of middlemen. In addition to this, these concepts would also bring infrastructural development to rural areas, as the Government would develop new infrastructure to attract more customers to the state. Infrastructure development would also give employment opportunities in the construction or other infrastructure related activities. In this way, progress towards the overall “no poverty” goal could be made.

5.3.2 Quality education

The quality education indicator of sustainable development goals calls to ensure inclusive and equitable quality of education and promote lifelong opportunities for all (Unterhalter, 2019). This component comprises seven different targets related to quality and equality across different phases of education. The first three are related to ensure children’s and adults’ access to quality education from early years through primary and secondary school, to technical and university level. The other four relate to enhancing skills for adults and youth related to work, distribution of education across various demographics, literacy and numeracy for all youth and substantially reducing adult literacy, and the content of education aiming to develop knowledge, sustainable growth, human rights, gender equality, and culture of peace and non-violence (Unterhalter, 2019).

As per the Handloom Census Report (2019-2020), 342,249 weavers attended only middle school in the Assam (Sivasagar) cluster, and 286,895 weavers did not attend school at all; similarly, in Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi) cluster, 95,637 weavers did not attend school, and 33,343 weavers received only a primary level of education (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c). These figures clearly indicate that the weavers had minimal levels of education. Due to this, master weavers or middlemen may take advantage of them by allocating them less shares of the profits given to the ultimate weavers, giving raw material at a higher price to weavers due to their lack of knowledge about other markets, and giving credit at

higher rates. In order to combat these issues, the Government had various schemes for the development of weavers personally and commercially. However, the main problem lies in the poor awareness of these schemes amongst weavers, and their poor literacy levels.

Tourism has the potential to raise the standards of weavers' and local communities' lives. As the Government planned to invest in rural tourism to attract more tourists in the state, advantages would accrue to the lower sections of society. Investment in rural tourism infrastructure increases the purchasing power of the lower classes and often also adds to their savings. This would also allow their children to have a basic level or even higher education. The handloom work in India is passed on from generation to generation but at the time of the study, weavers were too deprived to pass on this business to their children; rather, they forced their children to study and choose other professions. The outcome of this was a loss of tradition and local-ethnic product identity. However, the Government was making an effort to save the culture and product by introducing various schemes for the handloom industry. Notably, the Government had introduced stipends and scholarship benefits for the weavers' children under the welfare schemes of weavers with the aim of promoting and increasing the levels of education in the weaver community.

New tourism product such as rural tourism raises the demand for local products. For example, the concept of handloom tourism would raise demand for the product and also encourage product diversification, to meet tourists' dynamic preferences. This would produce a need for weavers' training and skill development to meet customer demand. As a result, it would become necessary for the Government to set up training and development institutes for imparting knowledge to weavers. These centres are not only for handloom related work, but also for the overall development of the weavers, such as IT related skills, basic level education, short-courses on design, and other handloom related work.

Tourism could stimulate education for aspiring students, but to improve literacy rates and move towards quality education, state and central governments need to take some crucial and strict measures.

5.3.3 Gender equality

Gender equality is one a popular topic in various industries. Mostly, *gender equality* refers to women's empowerment. *Women's empowerment* refers to the capability of women to have effective participation in economic, social, and political activities, which enables them to make, express, and transform their choices into desired actions and achievements (Hazarika & Goswami, 2016). In the handloom industry, the participation of women is greater than is men's. As per the Handloom Census Report (2019-2020), in Assam, the number of female weavers was 1,031,717, whereas the number of male weavers was just 75,587. This clearly shows the women's domination in Assam. However, in Uttar Pradesh, there were more male weavers (81,744) than there were female weavers (49,032) (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c). This shows that the concept of gender equality was partly applied in the handloom industry, wherein Assam women exceeded men by a large margin and in Uttar Pradesh the number of women was nearly half that of the male weavers.

Women typically earn less than men for the same job (Bortamuly & Goswami, 2012). This trend also exists in the handloom industry, where women receive less money for the same work. In terms of education, men have preference over women, widening the literacy rate gap between men and women. Tourism would provide the opportunity for women to open up their own small businesses or enterprises. However, Indian female micro-entrepreneurs, especially in the rural areas, are often constrained by low valued business, low scales of operation, credit and market constraints, and low adoption of technology (Hazarika, 2020). Therefore government intervention is needed to empower women in society. Government funded training programmes with reserved places for women could lessen the gender gap and empower women.

Tourists could help in empowering women by deciding where to purchase products; they could choose to buy from female entrepreneurs rather than from male entrepreneurs when they buy products.

5.4 Cluster development

As noted in the findings related to the handloom cluster policy, cluster development helps handloom weavers in their overall development. Porter's theory of cluster development focuses on economic development and national advantage with the main concern being competitiveness of industries or companies and the analysis of its compositions (Raines, 2017). These compositions can be analysed on the basis of four attributes:

- 1) Factor condition – the nation's position in terms of factor production such as skilled labour or infrastructure necessary to compete in the given industry;
- 2) Demand condition – home-market demand for local products or services;
- 3) Related and supportive industries – the presence or absence of other supplier and related industries in the nation that are internationally competitive; and
- 4) Firm strategy, structure, and rivalry – the conditions governing, how companies are created, organised, and managed, as well as domestic rivalry.

Cluster projects are specifically linked with sector-specific entities, and are often supporting strong regional entities (Njøs & Jakobsen, 2016). Targeting the sectoral and industrial development provides outputs in terms of regional economic and local development more than those associated with industrialisation efforts (Barkley & Henry, 1997). The advantages of these cluster and sectoral developments comes with potential cost savings which include:

- 1) Availability of large pool of specialised input suppliers and business services;
- 2) Large pools of trained and specialised workers;
- 3) Investment in public infrastructure (energy, water, waste treatment, transportation, road connectivity) which is the basic need of any sector;
- 4) Access to financial markets familiar with product and production processes;
- 5) Exchange of knowledge and technical know-how amongst the firms; and
- 6) Exchange of marketing and promotion techniques and information.

In India, implementing cluster-based development resulted in changes in the situations of the local people . This can be seen through the example of the cane and bamboo cluster in Assam (Das & Das, 2011). Just after the implementation

of the cluster scheme, more than 650 artisans were directly engaged as full time workers in the cane and bamboo industry. Their level of income was raised from US\$9.56 per month to US\$54.56 per month. With the introduction of a CFC in the district, new technology and machinery helped the artisans achieve improved production levels matching international standards. Beside this, 100 artisans received help to set up their own working area in the same village. With marketing and promotion assistance, a number of exhibitions were organised at the state and district level. A showroom was also established to facilitate and maintain the regular sale of cane and bamboo products. In order to promote social security amongst the artisans, an insurance scheme was introduced and the associated identity cards issued.

The second example is of the Chanderi handloom cluster, in which it was found that due to the implementation of a cluster-based development scheme, a wide section of handloom weavers benefited, as the overall level of income increased. Ownership of looms has also increased for the majority of weavers. With the help of government subsidies, weavers were able to buy looms and take bulk orders from more than one source, thus diversifying their product range and market linkages. Due to the implementation of the scheme, weavers were able to make linkages with some prominent brands in India such as Pantaloons and FabIndia, which helped the weavers reach a large customer base. Through these schemes, weavers were able to develop new designs and new products (Mukherjee Basu et al., 2011).

In the context of Sivasagar, a mega cluster in this study, there were notable changes since the implementation of the policy in the state. According to the statistics from 2019-2020, 1,269,506 handloom household weavers were engaged in the handloom activity in the state of Assam, whereas statistics of 2009-2010 showed 1,241,000 weavers. Clearly, more weavers were taking part in handloom activities. According to one study, women had the greatest employment opportunities in the handloom industry (Boruah & Kaur, 2015). According to the handloom census survey (2019-2020) for all of India, 759,149 male weavers were currently involved in handloom activity, and 1,914,499 female

weavers, which was almost 300% more than that of males (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

The number of working dwelling units had also increased. Dwelling units basically consist of three different types of structure:

- 1) *Kuchha* house – This is a type of house with walls of unburnt bricks, bamboos, mud, grass, leaves, reeds, etc.
- 2) Semi-*pucca* house – in this type of house, one of its walls or structure is made up of *pucca* material
- 3) *Pucca* house – In this type of house the wall or roof is made up of *pucca* materials which includes cement, concrete, bricks, iron, timber, tiles, plywood, and other artificial wood materials (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Various factors influence a worker's health, safety and performance; for example, if lighting is not adequate, or there is not cooling and heating system, or people work continuous without break, this may lead to physical disorders (Nazari et al., 2012). Although working units had been increased in the clusters, the majority of them were in *kuchha* houses. According to the figures of 2019-2020, 915,658 households were in *kuchha* houses; 166,567 households were in semi-*pucca* houses, and only 187,281 household units were in *pucca* houses. This clearly shows that a larger share of weavers were receiving the advantages of the cluster scheme. However, in terms of working conditions, the majority of weavers were still operating from *kuchha* units (almost eight times as many as those in *pucca* houses) which had limited working facilities and infrastructure. The scheme still needs to fill the wide gap that exists between those who have good working conditions and those who do not. This gap needs to be closed, because around 1,251,128 weavers owned their dwelling unit in the cluster, whereas only 10,437 weavers worked in rented dwelling units. As the figures show, more than 100 times people worked in their own working units rather than in rented working places (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

The availability of raw material is one of the main issues affecting handloom production. Hank yarn is the basic raw material used for the production of handloom products. A major problem faced by handloom weavers was the

fluctuation of yarn prices; the final price of the product constitutes 50% to 80% of the raw material cost of the final product, indicating the importance of finding the right quality of yarn at a reasonable price (Narasaiah, 1999). As noted in the handloom census report of 2019-2020, 1,122,902 household weavers bought hank yarn from the open market, and 12,116, from master weavers. It is interesting to note that from the Government unit, only 2,085 household weavers bought hank yarn. Although the Government introduced a cluster development scheme in the region which included raw material at cheaper price, the main source of procurement of raw material was still dominated by the master weavers. This highlights the intensity of awareness needed regarding the scheme, amongst the weavers.

Weavers' choice for procurement of raw material fluctuates or depends on the availability of money. Many handloom weavers have only small amounts of working capital, so to continue working, they need funds or loan sources. With the new Government cluster development scheme, a major focus was given to providing credit concessions to handloom weavers. Under this scheme, the Government provided loans to weavers at a subsidised six percent interest rate. Most handloom units had limited sources of finances, which restricted them from investing in even simple marketing tactics (Varghese & Salim, 2015). If sincere efforts were made to develop a marketing culture among handloom weavers, these could enable the handloom market to increase its market demand and overall production. In terms of household sources for loans, around 1,241 handloom weavers' households procured loans from the government, followed by procurement of loans from by self-help groups and commercial banks at 623 and 453 households respectively. The role of master weavers as credit facilitators is very small - only 25 household weavers sourced loans from master weavers. The Government's subsidised interest policy seemed to benefit weavers, as the role of master weavers was declining. Also, the increased role of SHGs, under the cluster policy, helped create more SHGs, reducing the dominance of master weavers and other private lenders who were lending money at higher interest rates. The results according to the recent census, showed positive signs (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

The second mega cluster chosen for this study was in Uttar Pradesh, where Varanasi was identified as a mega cluster. According to the handloom census (2019-2020) there were 131,120 handloom household weavers and 190,957 weavers involved in handloom activity.

With the various interventions through cluster policies, various developments occurred. In terms of dwelling units owned by handloom workers' households, around 38,716 handloom worker households were in *kuchha* houses, 57,663 in semi-*pucca* houses, and 34,741 in *pucca* houses. The figures clearly show that a large share of people were in semi-*pucca* houses, because of the state's government housing scheme for the low income group (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

In this mega cluster, the Government had invested money into the development of handloom weavers through various interventions. During the first and second interventions, the Government invested around US\$1.92 million in first intervention and US\$1.75 million in the second intervention. These resulted in 213,000 metres of fabric dyed, 38,000 metres of fabric printed, and 66,000 sarees processed. These interventions not only increased the production capacity, but also increased employment in the state.

As per the Handloom Census of 2019-2020, 147,260 weavers worked as full-time employees in handloom activity, and 43,697 worked part-time. The reason for the large number of full-time employment was due to the CFCs in the state. International agencies' and Government's introduction of CFCs in cluster development was identified as a hard intervention with the objective of improving overall competitiveness of selected clusters in a specific region. A CFC is a support initiative that involves a physical infrastructure for the development of small and medium enterprises and individuals belonging to one or more clusters, by providing them access to facilities which would not otherwise be available to either individuals or MSMEs (Shahzad, 2015).

The Handloom Census (2019-2020) showed that 99,997 weavers worked as independent employees, followed by 79,540 employees who worked under the master weavers, and 10,802 weavers working in a co-operative society. Notably,

the second highest number of weavers worked under the master weavers (in comparison to the number of weavers working in co-operative societies) (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c). There are three main reasons for this. First, weavers can be elected as a president of a co-operative society, which enables them to unethically access funds received from various government schemes for their own benefit. Secondly, co-operatives are not able to provide enough money for the weavers, and thirdly, the most important needs from a weaver's perspective is the ease of getting a loan, but master weavers lend to weavers without following the procedures used by commercial institutions (Mukund & Syamasundari, 1998).

The third and fourth interventions in the cluster policy were related to improvements in the working conditions and loom upgrades for handloom weavers. As the findings show, US\$0.75 million was budgeted for the third intervention, while US\$0.58 million was budgeted for the fourth intervention. Some 4000 batteries were distributed amongst the weavers in the third intervention, and in the fourth intervention, 45,253 handloom parts were distributed. According to the Handloom Census (2019-2020) 79,585 weavers were recorded as having looms, whereas 28,758 weavers did not have looms. All those who had looms used them for commercial purposes (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

Government interventions have helped handloom weavers to reduce problems associated with powered looms. The handloom industry is an old industry with equipment that needs upgrades and technological innovation, to face fierce competition from the power-loom and mill sector (Mishra & Mohapatra, 2019). There were 75,000 power looms in Varanasi in 2012 (Power Loom Wants Same Status as Handloom, 2012). This is nearly equal to the number of weavers having looms at the time of this study, so it can be predicted that the number of power-looms in the region will surpass the number of looms with the weavers.

The fifth intervention in the cluster policy was related to the availability of raw material to handloom weavers. As the findings show, 1,770,000 kg. of yarn was supplied to the cluster. As discussed in relation to the Assam cluster, weavers

had different sources of procuring raw material. In terms of sources of procurement of raw material in this cluster, 51,978 weavers got raw material from the open market, 27,059 from master weavers, and 9,418 from a co-operative society (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c). This reveals the same dominance of master weavers over co-operative societies as found in the Assam clusters. More weavers were getting raw materials from masters rather than from co-operative societies, indicating a lack of awareness of the yarn scheme amongst the handloom weavers. Just 97 handloom weavers purchased raw material from the National/ State Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC/SHDC), the agency for supplying and deciding the price of yarn.

Weavers' decisions about sourcing raw materials depended on the availability of working capital. The majority of handlooms weavers took loans for purchasing raw material or purchased raw material on credit. According to the Handloom Census Report (2019-2020) 358 weaver households obtained credit facilities from the Government source, 308 weaver households from commercial banks, and 249 weavers' households from the master weavers. In this cluster, the role of master weavers seemed similar to that in the first cluster, in which the Government's role was dominant. This could be attributed to the literacy of the weavers. As evident in the Handloom Census (2019-2020) 64,891 handloom weavers had not attended school, out of the 130,768 handloom weavers recorded in the survey (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

5.5 Awareness of welfare schemes

The Government of India has introduced various schemes for the welfare of weavers. Under the handloom weavers' comprehensive welfare scheme, the Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana (MGBBY) and Health Insurance Scheme are discussed in this section. The welfare programme for the weavers was based on the concept of social health insurance. Social health insurance funding occurs when it is legally mandatory to obtain health insurance from a designated third party by contribution or premium not related to risks, and kept separate from other legally mandated taxes or contributions (Gupta & Trivedi, 2005).

In terms of levels of awareness towards the scheme, the Handloom Census (2019-2020) showed that only three percent of households were aware of the scheme, showing a lack of awareness in the majority of the weaver's population. The same situation was evident with Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojan (MGBBY), as only 12% of households were aware of the scheme of the total number of households in the survey (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

For a more in-depth analysis, state and cluster data were not available. However, it is interesting to view the performance of these schemes as whole. In 2018-19, the gross enrolment recorded under this scheme was 13.48 crore, and in 2019-2020, 15.47 crore enrolments were recorded in the scheme. In 2020-2021, enrolments increased to 18.54 crore. Awareness of the scheme appeared to have increased overall year by year but specifically for the weavers' section the question on whether scheme cover more of handloom weavers remain unanswered. In terms of Government performance, in 2018-2019, 21,137 claims were received, and in 2019-2020, 40,749 claims were received. In 2020-2021, the number of claims reached 50, 328 (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

In addition, it is interesting to look at the number of disbursement s. Just 16,430 claims were disbursed in 2018-2019, and 32,716 and 39,696 in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 respectively. The schemes' performance was increasing, but the numbers of enrolments and claims revealed a significant gap, raising questions about awareness of the scheme, and knowledge of the terms and conditions of the scheme amongst weavers.

5.6 Marketing and promotion scheme impact

Study on consumer attitudes towards handloom products reveal that the dealers, manufacturers, and advertisers, should focus on creating more awareness of handloom products. This would enable easier marketing of such products (Renukadevi, 2020). However, the Government allocated a fair budget for marketing and promotion interventions. As noted earlier, in quarter one (2019-20) 808,643 beneficiaries benefitted through current marketing schemes, in quarter two (2019-20), 877,643 beneficiaries took advantage of various marketing activities, in quarter three (2019-20), 1,054,643 beneficiaries took advantage of

marketing schemes, and in quarter four (2019-20), 1,119,643 beneficiaries received the advantages of a marketing scheme. This clearly shows that the numbers of beneficiaries were rising each year. However, according to the Handloom Census (2019-2020), only nine percent of handloom households were aware of Government's marketing incentives and rebate schemes, of the 2,545,312 weaver households in the survey. In addition to this, just 9.4% of weavers' households' were aware of participation opportunities in the in fairs, Haats, and exhibitions.

It is also interesting to consider the impacts of marketing and promotion policies through handloom households reporting major sources of sales of their product . The Handloom Census showed that in Assam, 1,178,877 households sold their main products in the local market, followed by 15,357 households who used organised fairs and exhibitions for selling their products, and 14,123 households who sold their products through master weavers. Similarly, in the case of Uttar Pradesh, the second state chosen for this study, 63,737 weavers' households sold their main products through local markets, followed by 59,975 weavers' households who sold their main products through master weavers, and 11,674 weavers' households who sold their products through a co-operative society. In this state, very few weavers sold their main products through organised fairs and exhibitions – just 1,343 weavers' households. These low numbers clearly indicate a lack of awareness regarding marketing schemes.

In order to improve the marketing and selling of handloom products, the Government has used the internet to reach a wider public, and invested in websites for each product, showing the price and availability of the products, with full descriptions and places of origin. In addition to this, advertising on social media has gained a great deal of attention, especially Instagram, Facebook, and blogs. The Government has started forums, blogs, and topic discussions, urging locals to share their stories and contributions of photos, videos, and storytelling. Through this, the Government was trying to establish a brand name amongst consumers based on the concept of word-of-mouth advertising. *Word-of-mouth* refers to informal communication between private parties concerning evaluations of goods and services (Anderson, 1998). It is generally believed that loyal and

satisfied customers will engage in positive word-of-mouth, which is in favour of a firm. To maintain the maximum positive responses on handloom products, the Government of India launched the Indian Handloom Brand (IHB) initiative, focusing on giving high quality authentic handloom products for consumers looking for niche handmade products. The IHB was also generating special market place for weavers along with increased earnings for them. As the Ministry of Textiles annual report (2019-2020) shows, the sale of IHB products showed encouraging trends. A total of 1590 registrations were issued for 184 different products and sales of US\$127.6 million generated up to March 2020, since its inception (Ministry of Textiles, 2020c).

E-commerce is a new channel for marketing and selling handloom products. Through Government links with the e-commerce websites, it was becoming easier for buyers to purchase authentic handloom products through sources other than shops or master weavers (Tyagi et al., 2019). According to the Ministry of Textile's annual report (2019-2020), 23 e-commerce entities had been approved and sales of US\$15.26 million were recorded as at March 2020. Through this Government intervention, a wide consumer base of handloom products was able to find out about various products and specialities. However, due to this, new problems were arising for the small traders in terms of less people in the shops, which resulted in reduced profit and losses of income. This directly impacted low income employees in terms of reductions in salary, and sometimes, job losses.

5.7 Summary

This discussion chapter started with a discussion of the cluster development policy in relation to the points mentioned in the literature review. It showed how cluster-based development policy made an overall impact in the region. Two examples were discussed. The first was related to Assam's bamboo industry, and the second was related to Chanderi's handloom industry. As noted in relation to the availability of raw material (see Chapter 2), this was also discussed in the context of the selected regions for study. In terms of overall development, the weavers' personal development was the point of discussion, so this section also discussed the welfare schemes of weavers and related investments in the

scheme over time. Marketing and promotion were identified as key components for the development of the handloom industry in previous studies, so using this information as a base, this study examined and discussed the various marketing and promotion approaches taken by the Government along with the investments used to strengthen those approaches.

For this, the role of domestic tourism was taken into the consideration, and how it could add to the development process of the weavers and the handloom industry. Accordingly, this chapter also explored new opportunities for tourism through the introduction of new tourism products as well as the role of sustainable development goals (SDGs) from a tourism perspective.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the conclusion to this study, which was based on the culture and handicraft tourism in India. This chapter revisits the study's findings and their relationship with the research questions. Furthermore, it provides the implications of this study along with its limitations. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research.

6.2 Research questions and findings

This research collected qualitative data from secondary resources to answer the research questions. Data were collected from government annual reports and publications. The data collected in this study were related to cluster development, government schemes, domestic tourism, and sustainable development goals. To achieve the “vocal for local” agenda, it was necessary to analyse the current situation, to determine how it could be a foundation for the future. These latter points helped this study assess the current situation and predict the future of the “vocal for local” agenda. The second and third questions were related to the potential of domestic tourism and sustainable development goals to contribute to achieving the aims of the “vocal for local” agenda; tourism was found to have a positive potential impact on the process of achieving the “vocal for local” aims.

The questions asked in this study were:

- Q 1. Does the “vocal for local” agenda of India offer new opportunities for development for handloom weavers?
- Q 2. Can domestic tourism contribute to this process?
- Q 3. To what extent can tourism support the UN sustainable goals for the handloom weavers?

The Government of India has promoted “vocal for local” with the aim of India's becoming a self-reliant nation. This means if a nation is to be self-reliant then there is a need to understand and analyse the current situation, to determine if it

is the foundation for achieving this goal. The first question of this study was related to assessing the current situation in the selected states or clusters of the study. The literature review and findings show the various points that need to be covered for the overall development of the handloom industry. Firstly, the cluster development approach appears to be the best way forward for overall development. The cluster development policy covers all the needed aspects from the business perspective, such as the availability of working-capital, availability of raw material, credit facility schemes, marketing and promotion schemes, infrastructural development, and training for weavers. As mentioned in the literature review, earlier studies have pointed out the importance of cluster-based development policies. Secondly, the need for the Government's infrastructural development schemes for the weavers has become important if the Government is to look after the handloom industry from an infrastructural point of view, because many of the existing handlooms were outdated machines. As a result, power-looms were taking over the heritage of the handloom industry, and weavers were being pushed into extreme poverty. However, the data collected in the study show that the government Revival, Reform, and Restructuring scheme (RRR) was giving strength to the weavers by providing credit loan facilities to them at a marginal interest rate.

Thirdly, the availability of raw material was a significant issue amongst the weavers. This problem seems to be not new, as previous studies have also noted this issue. This problem of raw material was not just related its availability, but other problems also existed, such as procurement of raw material from master weavers at a higher price, irregular supply of raw materials, and inside trading in cooperative societies. To tackle this problem of raw material availability, the Government introduced a yarn supply scheme which provided the raw material, particularly yarn, at subsidised rates. Through this scheme, the Government also ensured its timely availability and a fair distribution policy. However, the main problem with this policy was a lack of awareness of the scheme amongst handloom weavers.

Fourthly, to improve the conditions of weavers at a personal level, the Government of India introduced the Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare

scheme, to promote the overall development of the weavers. This is necessary if India is to become a self-reliant nation. In the literature review it was pointed out that due to less development opportunities at a personal level for weavers and their families, some weavers and artisans were leaving their generational profession and looking for a better alternative. As a result, the traditional products were dying out, so India was in danger of losing its authenticity and uniqueness. In order to keep alive the original products, the Government needs to look after the welfare of the weavers and their families. Using of old machinery in the production process means weavers suffer with long-term ailments which are sometime irreparable, so it becomes the duty of the government to provide them with life-term insurance.

It was found that the Government was offering money to affected people only once, irrespective of the time taken for recovery. From the perspective of families' development, the government scheme appeared to be beneficial, as it covered a weaver's spouse and two children. The main concern with this scheme, however, was the lack of awareness amongst weavers that it existed. As mentioned in the findings, only three percent of households knew about the welfare development related schemes. The main reason for this poor awareness rate was the low literacy rate amongst the weavers. Therefore, the Government needs to work towards improving awareness amongst the weavers in a simple way.

Lastly, the role of marketing and promotion emerged as a key indicator for the development of the handloom industry. As mentioned in the literature review, marketing plays a key role in the sales of products, and promotion raises awareness of the products amongst the consumers. In the case of the handloom industry, this aspect had a key role in the marketing of the industry. From the findings it was evident that the Government understood this, and was organising various domestic marketing expos and events, such as the National Handloom Expos (NHEs), Special Handloom Expos (National/State), District level Events (DLEs), and Craft *melas* (fairs). The findings also highlighted that the number of beneficiaries of marketing schemes had increased in the period 2019-2020. The increasing numbers of marketing scheme beneficiaries indicated that, other than the local market sales, weavers were enjoying new ways to sell their products.

However, the data from the Handloom Census Report 2019-2020, revealed that only 9.4% of weavers' households were aware of the Government's marketing scheme, which suggests that many weavers' households were unaware of the Government's schemes. Additionally, it was also observed that most weavers sold their products in the local markets, in the selected states and clusters in this study. Marketing and promotion is a key element that can save a product from dying. However, the Government was not reliant on offline promotion activities, but also exploring new avenues such as social media marketing, and e-commerce retailing. It was taking full advantage of social media applications such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ to create awareness of handloom products and generate sales. In addition, the Government initiated a forum in which locals could make suggestions and share their unique stories with others through pictures or videos related to their products. The Government had also signed up with 23 e-commerce companies in partnership for the sale of handloom products. This latter step was a success, as US\$15.26 million sales were recorded up to March 2020.

In order to give support for the "vocal for local" agenda, this study asked a second question - whether domestic tourism and the sustainable development goals could contribute to the new agenda of India. The answer was positive. The findings of this study showed that domestic tourism in India contributed a major share towards the GDP. In 2018, domestic tourism generated US\$215.38 billion and was expected to reach US\$405.8 billion by 2028. The explanation for the success of domestic tourism is the country's rich and unique culture. India is also rich in heritage, which is one of the pull factors for domestic tourists. The other reason for such successful domestic tourism was in the cultural beliefs of India's citizens.

In the findings it was noted that the second highest expenditures by tourists (rural and urban) were shopping related. Rural tourists spent 60% of their trip expenditure on shopping, whereas in the case of urban tourists, this was 50%. This shows that when tourists visit a destination, irrespective of the purpose of visit, there is always a demand for local products.

From the analysis of Ministry of Tourism data, it was found that the Government had good initiatives for the promotion of domestic tourism. It had organised events such as *Paryatan Parv* at a national level with the idea of “*Dekho Apna Desh*,” “Tourism for All,” and “*Tourism and Governance*.” From these events, weavers and artisans were able to accrue direct benefits, as they provided ways to showcase their products and talents to customers. These events also helped the weavers promote and market their handloom products, although these events were primarily for strengthening domestic tourism. The Government has decided to promote and sell handloom products through this medium.

Apart from these aspects, the Government had also identified other niche tourism markets for making India a year-round tourism destination for domestic and international tourists. These niche tourism markets include rural tourism, medical tourism, pilgrimage tourism, and eco-tourism. These latter tourism markets not only open new opportunities for the tourism industry, but also for the handloom industry.

The findings of this study show that if tourism is committed to the sustainable development goals, it can help India achieve its self-reliant nation goal. This study discussed three sustainable development goals:

- 1) No poverty – The introduction of tourism in rural areas can create positive impacts on the lives of the locals, as it will create employment opportunities for them. It will also provide a direct sales platform for weavers.
- 2) Quality education – Tourism can promote inclusiveness among the local population. When tourism is introduced in a locality, it will increase the income of the locals. This can be used for quality education for their children.
- 3) Gender equality – As seen in the findings, women are more involved in handloom activity than are men. However, women face challenges in comparison to men for getting raw material, credit facilities, and exposure to other markets. The introduction of tourism would provide additional opportunities for them.

6.3 Implications of the study

The “vocal for local” agenda of India is new, so there has been little study undertaken until now. The aim of this study was to analyse the current situation of the handloom industry and its weavers, at grass-roots level. Although this study covered only two clusters, it will be helpful for understanding common problems and opportunities. The outcomes of this study will also be helpful for Government agencies and policy makers planning changes in their strategies and approaches, as it analysed each scheme for the weavers. The Government understands that merely announcing new agendas and schemes will not be sufficient for achieving the dream of the nation. A strong foundation is needed, to empower each and every weaver. This study shows a positive relationship between the growth of domestic tourism and that of the handloom industry. Domestic tourism has the potential to add to the growth of an unknown place or product. Tourism agencies and the Handloom Commission can use the results of this study for planning collaborations in the future for the betterment of all parties. This study also showed that the majority of weavers lack awareness of the various schemes. The main reason for this was the low levels of literacy. Therefore, the Government needs to find other ways to improve awareness amongst the weavers. This research showed that the Indian Government needs to work on its education system and policies to make sure there is a basic education for each child.

From the perspective of the handloom industry, this study is important, because people are forgetting their local products and asking for foreign substitutes. As a result, the weavers of the country are becoming unemployed and the ethnic and traditional products are dying. This study explored a new angle – that is the efficacy of tourism to rescue traditional but dying products. Tourism pulls a tourist to a particular destination and brings business opportunities, as tourists ask for local products. As a result, weavers have the opportunity to open their own shops and eliminate the middlemen. It also becomes the duty of the Government to open Government funded shopping complexes for the under-privileged weavers for trading.

6.4 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations that can be highlighted in this research. Firstly, as this study collected data from various government reports, it faced the problem of limited data availability in some public domains. Due to the limited availability of sector-wide reports at the time of the study, generalised data on some themes were used; accurate results and conclusions from specific or filtered data were not available. Secondly, this study addressed only two states, Assam and Uttar Pradesh (Varanasi), so the outcomes of the study might not apply to other states. States vary in geographical, environmental, and political conditions, and these factors are important from the perspective of the handloom industry. Thirdly, COVID-19 is generating impacts on the lives of weavers and artisans. It is very important to know and hear the voices of weavers, as to how COVID-19 has impacted and changed their lives and those of allied workers in the handloom industry. This study did not cover this due to the lack of data available in the public domain at the time of the study. Lastly, there is little research on the “vocal for local” concept. However, there is a lot of research on the handloom industry that discusses various issues, but no coherent study on this agenda.

6.5 Recommendations for future research

It is recommended that the topic of this study is investigated using primary data, as it is an important topic for discussion in the Indian context. To know the outcomes or impacts of the agenda, it will be necessary for researchers to understand the situation from the weavers’ perspectives, and learn more about the reasons for their situation. Moreover, for future research, the impact of COVID-19 on the weavers’ lives will be crucial to study, as this will help the Government and local agencies formulate more impactful and fruitful policies for the local people and the handloom industry as a whole. From the tourism point of view, further study can be undertaken to discover the perceptions of domestic tourists regarding local products, as this will help the tourism and the handloom department to formulate mutually beneficial policies to strengthen the potential combination explored in this study. To strengthen the combination, further research can investigate the role of tourism managers in promoting niche tourism

products such as handloom village tourism, craft tourism, and handicraft tourism. It is the tourism managers who ultimately push a new product or destination to the market, with the help of tourism managers' equal distribution of tourists can be possible between urban and rural destinations.

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