



The Influence Of Cultural Identity On The Purchase Of Handloom And Handcrafted Textiles In Delhi

Ruchi Makhija Sharma¹, Dr. Mohit Maurya²

Research Scholar¹, Associate Professor²

School of Business Studies, Sharda University, Noida

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of cultural identity on the demand for handloom and handcrafted textiles in the Delhi market. With the growing emphasis on preserving traditional crafts and promoting sustainability within the Indian fashion industry, this study explores how cultural values shape consumer preferences and buying behaviours. By applying behavioural models, the report investigates the motivations behind consumer choices, as well as the challenges, opportunities, and emerging trends in the sector. Additionally, it highlights how policy changes, consumer education, and technological innovations can support the growth of the handloom industry.

Key words:

Present consumer trends, handloom, handmade materials, sustainable fashion, and purchasing habits.

1. Introduction

The textile industry, especially handloom and handcrafted textiles made by Indians, has long been an essential component of Indian culture. These fabrics are popular with fans since they are distinctive, excellent, and long-lasting. These textiles have become more and more popular among Delhi's stylish populace in recent years. This essay investigates the causes of Delhi inhabitants' inclination toward handloom and artisanal textiles. It specifically looks at how consumer behaviour and new environmental trends interact on a global level.

Fast fashion's negative effects on the environment are causing modern customers increasing concern. Indigenous textiles are becoming more and more popular as a replacement because of their favourable effects on local craftspeople and environmentally beneficial production methods (Venkatraman et al. 2020). In Delhi, a highly diversified city, taking into account aspects such as demography, stylistic trends, and theories of

consumer behaviour calls for a more complex approach. This essay goes into great detail about the aspects that consumers take into account while making purchases as well as the difficulties that the handloom business faces. It will also look into possible advancements and expansions in this market in the future.

2. Background of the Study

India is home to one of the biggest handloom industries in the world. Millions of skilled artisans produce exquisite textiles like Ikat, Pashmina, Khadi, and Banarasi silk. Notwithstanding this, the industry has had a number of difficulties, such as inadequate compensation for artisans, problems with product distribution, and competition from fast fashion and machine-made textiles. However, interest in indigenous crafts has surged recently along with awareness of eco-friendly and socially conscious fashion (Ojukwu and TARIQ 2019). Exhibitions and local markets have always helped the Delhi handloom sector. However, the introduction of online shopping has made it easier for more people to obtain these items. Legislation and government initiatives like the Handloom Mark Scheme, which attempts to protect this significant cultural heritage, have promoted real handloom goods. For this reason, it is essential to understand the thinking of contemporary consumers in cities such as Delhi, where the old and the new coexist. The aim of this study is to investigate the potential relationship between the development of the local handloom textile market and consumer preferences.

3. Objectives of the Study

This study essentially seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- Find out which are the most important variables in Delhi for buying clothes made by handlooms.
- To find out more about how consumer behaviour is impacted by national identity, sustainability, and ethical fashion.
- Finding out more about the racial and socioeconomic characteristics of customers of handloom goods is the aim.
- To examine consumer patterns and the challenges faced by companies and artists trying to promote locally made textiles.
- Including how future developments in government policy and new technologies could support the growth of the handloom sector.

4. Overview of Indigenous Handloom and Handcrafted Textiles

Indian handloom and handwoven textiles are highly valued because they are distinctive, diverse, and steeped in history. These textiles showcase a wide variety of weaving styles, materials, and processes that are closely linked to regional customs.

The following are some of the most well-known native textiles:

- **Banarasi Silk:** Banarasi silk, a representation of wealth and heritage, is prized for its ornate gold and silver brocade and plush texture.

- **Chanderi:** A combination of cotton and silk is used to create the Chanderi cloth. As because it is lightweight and has beautiful patterns, it is a perfect alternative for traditional wear (Kane et al. 2020).
- **Khadi:** Growing numbers of environmentally concerned people are drawn to khadi, a hand-spun and -woven cloth that represents India's freedom movement.
- **Ikat:** Applying ikat, a resist dyeing process, to cotton and silk fabrics allows for the creation of detailed motifs.
- **Phulkari:** The use of vivid colours and clean lines define Punjabi phulkari, a traditional stitching method.



Fig 1: Well-known native textiles

(Source: Self Made)

These textiles are not only beautiful to look at but also environmentally friendly. Handloom textiles are more environmentally friendly than those produced by machines because they require less energy and produce colours that are true to nature. Buying handloom goods not only supports regional artists but also contributes to the preservation of age-old methods that have been passed down through the centuries (Shamim and Hossain 2020). Residents of Delhi are increasingly realizing the aesthetic worth and the ethical and ecologically sound production processes of these traditional fabrics. Retailers and artisans continue to confront obstacles like scarce supplies, rising costs, and competition from mass-produced textiles.

5. Consumer Behaviour Theories and Models

In order to fully comprehend market behaviour, a variety of viewpoints are required, including psychological, cultural, and social ones. Several models and hypotheses can help explain why Delhi people are drawn to Indian handloom and handmade textiles.

- **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB):**

In terms of TPB, attitude, subjective standards, and perceived behavioural control are the three main variables affecting consumer behaviour. If people support the idea, know a lot of people who support the idea, and are confident in their ability to find genuine handloom textiles, they are more likely to buy sustainable and ethically produced textiles.

- **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:**

Using handloom textiles, especially those that are linked to cultural history, might help people reach higher-order objectives like self-actualization and esteem. Some people may have a deeper connection to indigenous textiles, and they may feel good about supporting traditional arts and crafts by buying these goods (Ramkumar and Dias 2023).

- **Consumer Decision-Making Process:**

Generally, the process of selecting a decision involves the following steps:

1. Realization of the client: They understand that they need or want new clothes.
2. Information Search: The consumer looks for alternatives and, by investigation, finds locally made handloom textiles.
3. Evaluation of Alternatives: The customer weighs aspects like cost, quality, and environmental effect when choosing between handloom and machine-made textiles.
4. Purchase Decision: The purchaser chooses to acquire the handloom item.
5. Post-Purchase Behaviour: The buyer's subsequent buying patterns are influenced by their post-purchase feelings.

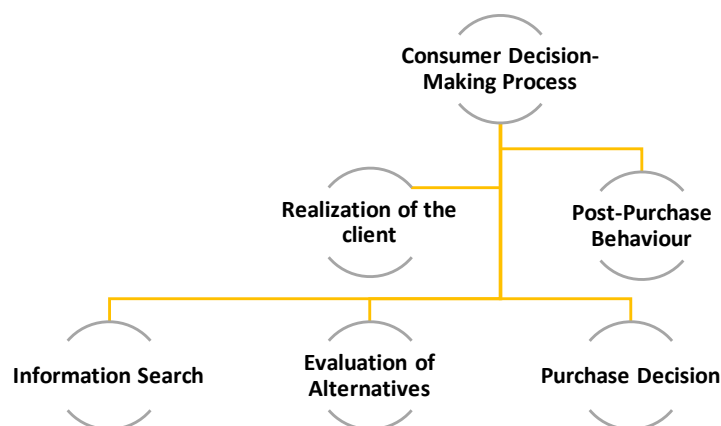


Fig 2: Decision making process of consumers

(Source: Self Developed)

- **Ethical Consumerism:**

Ethical shoppers consider how their decisions will affect the environment and society as a whole. This group is drawn to indigenous handloom fabrics because of their attention to detail and longevity (Memon et al. 2022). As per the social identity hypothesis, customers exhibit their values and views by means of their buying behaviours. Integrity in purchasing is related to this idea.

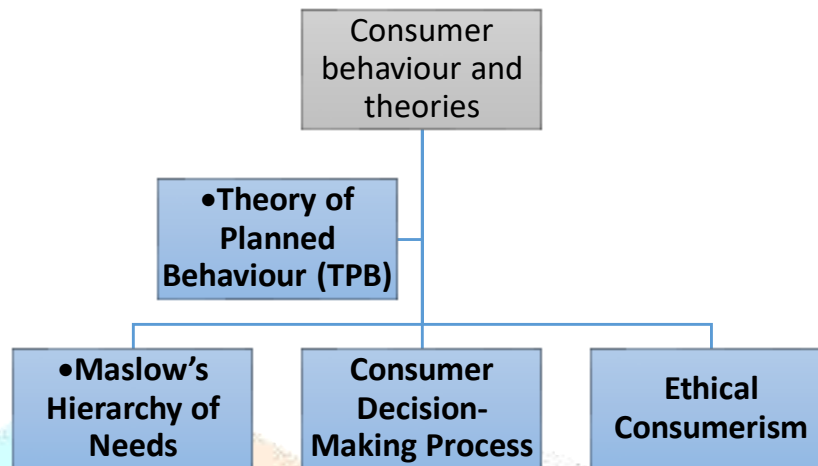


Fig 3: Behaviour Theories and Models of Consumers

(Source: Self Feveloped)

6. Previous Studies on Consumer Preferences for Handloom and Handcrafted Textiles

A lot of research has been done on the appeal of handlooms and textiles that are made by hand, especially when it comes to issues of sustainability, national identity, and customer behavior. According to a study by Ghosh and Mukherjee (2020) that was released in the book "Sustainable Fashion: Handloom Textiles in India," handloom fabrics are becoming more popular in India's cities. These fabrics are known for being clear and being made in an eco-friendly way. The authors say that handloom textiles are better for the earth because they are made with natural colors and traditional methods. More and more people are buying them. But they also say that price awareness is a big issue because goods that are made by hand tend to cost more than goods that are mass-produced.

Because Sinha and Mishra (2019) wrote a piece called "Contemporary Trends in Indian Fashion," they did other research that looked at how new fashion trends affect people's choices for handloom materials. The poll found that young people who care about fashion are buying more and more handloom fabrics because modern designers and skilled workers are working together. Handloom goods are no longer just for a small group of people; these relationships have helped bring them into mainstream fashion, where more people can enjoy them.

In their 2018 study called "Handloom Sector in India: Issues and Prospects," Ravindran and Das looked into what makes Delhi buyers think a product is real and of good quality. People really like the quality and dependability of handloom textiles, but their study shows that there is a lot of doubt about the realness of

some products. This doubt comes from the fact that many people don't know where to find real handloom goods, which keeps them from being widely used.

These studies use well-known theories about buyer behavior, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the Theory of Planned Behavior, to help us understand what makes people in Delhi want to buy handloom and handcrafted textiles. There are many psychological, social, and financial factors that affect people's choices to buy handloom textiles. For example, the focus on quality, national identity, and sustainability shows how these factors work together.

7. Methods of Research

This mixed-methods study aims to determine what kinds of handloom and handicraft textiles are popular in Delhi by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

Quantitative Research:

In order to learn more about the buying patterns, tastes, and opinions of 300 Delhi residents, we conducted a survey. The research investigated the demographics of the participants, the frequency of handloom item purchases, the motivations behind the purchases, and the decision-making procedures. We were able to determine people's opinions about price sensitivity, ethnic identity, and sustainability by using Likert scale questions.

Qualitative Research:

Twenty buyers of handloom textiles on a regular basis were questioned in-depth. These discussions shed further light on the cultural and emotional factors that shaped their decisions. Furthermore, a survey was conducted with two artisans and five enterprises to gain a deeper comprehension of the obstacles facing Delhi's handloom sector.

Sampling:

In order to choose the survey respondents, a combination of purposeful and random selection was employed. To get a more comprehensive view of the needs and wants of consumers, the sample population should include individuals of diverse ages, economic levels, and educational attainment.

Data Analysis:

Statistical software like SPSS was used to look for trends and correlations in the quantitative data gathered from the survey. Thematic analysis was used to examine data from qualitative interviews. As a result, the researcher may be able to spot recurrent trends in consumer behaviour.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18-25	50	25
	26-35	70	35
	36-45	40	20
	46-55	20	10
	56 and above	20	10
Gender	Male	100	50
	Female	100	50
Education Level	High School	30	15
	Undergraduate	80	40
	Postgraduate	90	45
Monthly Income (INR)	Less than 25,000	30	15
	25,000 - 50,000	50	25
	50,001 - 75,000	60	30
	Above 75,000	60	30

Table 1 illustrates the demographic breakdown of respondents who participated in the study on consumer preferences for indigenous handloom and handcrafted textiles in Delhi. The table is divided into various categories, such as age group, gender, education level, and monthly income. The age group distribution shows a balanced mix, with the majority being in the 26-35 age bracket (35%), followed by the 18-25 (25%) and 36-45 (20%) groups. Gender distribution is evenly split, with 50% male and 50% female respondents, ensuring diverse gender representation. Regarding education levels, most respondents are postgraduates (45%), indicating a well-educated sample, followed by undergraduates (40%) and those with high school education (15%). The monthly income section reveals that respondents are spread across various income levels, with the largest groups earning between 50,001-75,000 INR (30%) and above 75,000 INR (30%), suggesting a financially diverse group. This demographic data is crucial for understanding the background of the respondents, which can influence their preferences and purchasing behavior. The diverse representation ensures that the findings are reflective of a broad consumer base in Delhi.

Table 2: Consumer Awareness and Preference for Handloom and Handcrafted Textiles

Awareness and Preference	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Awareness	Aware	150	75
	Not Aware	50	25
Preference	Strongly Prefer	80	40
	Prefer	70	35
	Neutral	30	15
	Do Not Prefer	20	10
Frequency of Purchase	Regularly	60	30
	Occasionally	90	45
	Rarely	30	15
	Never	20	10

Table 2 presents data on consumer awareness and preference for handloom and handcrafted textiles. The table is segmented into categories such as awareness, preference, and frequency of purchase. A significant majority (75%) of respondents are aware of these textiles, highlighting a high level of awareness in the population. In terms of preference, 40% of respondents strongly prefer handloom and handcrafted textiles, and 35% prefer them, indicating a favorable attitude towards these products. Only a small percentage (10%) do not prefer them. Regarding the frequency of purchase, 30% of respondents buy these textiles regularly, and 45% purchase them occasionally, showing a considerable portion of the market engages with these products frequently. However, 25% rarely or never purchase them, pointing to potential areas for increasing market penetration. This table helps in understanding the market potential and consumer inclination towards handloom and handcrafted textiles. High awareness and preference levels suggest that these products are well-regarded, but there is room for increasing regular purchase habits among consumers.

Table 3: Factors Influencing Purchase Decision

Factor	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Quality	100	70	20	10	0
Price	80	50	40	20	10
Uniqueness	120	60	10	10	0
Cultural Significance	110	60	20	10	0
Availability	90	50	40	10	10
Sustainability	100	70	20	10	0

Table 3 examines the factors that influence consumers' purchase decisions regarding handloom and handcrafted textiles. The table lists several factors such as quality, price, uniqueness, cultural significance, availability, and sustainability, with respondents' levels of agreement ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Quality emerges as the most influential factor, with 100 respondents strongly agreeing and 70 agreeing, underscoring the importance of high-quality products. Uniqueness and cultural significance also play significant roles, with high levels of agreement (120 and 110 respondents strongly agree, respectively), indicating that consumers value the distinctiveness and heritage associated with these textiles. Price is a less dominant but still important factor, with 80 strongly agreeing and 50 agreeing, reflecting the need for competitive pricing. Availability and sustainability have a mixed response, but a majority still agree that these factors are crucial. This table highlights that while quality and uniqueness are paramount, other factors like cultural significance and price also significantly impact purchase decisions. Understanding these factors can help producers and marketers of handloom and handcrafted textiles tailor their strategies to meet consumer expectations and enhance market appeal.

Table 4: Consumer Perception and Satisfaction Level

Perception and Satisfaction	Strongly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Strongly Unsatisfied
Product Quality	100	70	20	10	0
Design and Aesthetics	90	60	30	10	10
Price Reasonableness	80	50	40	20	10
Customer Service	70	60	40	20	10
Overall Satisfaction	90	70	20	10	10

Table 4 details consumer perception and satisfaction levels with indigenous handloom and handcrafted textiles, focusing on aspects such as product quality, design and aesthetics, price reasonableness, customer service, and overall satisfaction. A majority of respondents are either strongly satisfied (100) or satisfied (70) with product quality, indicating high standards in the textiles offered. Design and aesthetics also receive positive feedback, with 90 strongly satisfied and 60 satisfied respondents, showing that the visual appeal of these products meets consumer expectations. Price reasonableness has more varied responses, with 80 strongly satisfied and 50 satisfied, but also a notable number of neutral and unsatisfied respondents, suggesting room for price adjustments or better communication of value. Customer service satisfaction is slightly lower, with 70 strongly satisfied and 60 satisfied, highlighting an area for potential improvement. Overall satisfaction levels are high, with 90 strongly satisfied and 70 satisfied, suggesting that despite some areas needing enhancement, consumers generally have a positive experience with these products. This table is crucial for identifying strengths and areas for improvement in consumer experience, guiding future efforts to enhance satisfaction and loyalty towards handloom and handcrafted textiles.

8. Consumer Preferences and Perceptions

The data analysis reveals significant information about Delhi inhabitants' preferences for handcrafted textiles and traditional handloom products. A third of those surveyed said they buy handloom fabrics every year, while a quarter say they only buy them for special events like weddings or festivals (Tatek 2022).

Important variables that influence buying include:

- **Identity in Culture:** Almost forty percent of participants said that owning handloom products strengthened their ties to their cultural heritage (Nunoo et al. 2021). Clients who were older or had strong cultural ties to India were especially vulnerable to this.
- **Environmental friendliness:** According to one-third of respondents, this was a key consideration when choosing handloom fabrics. Particularly large percentages of customers under 30 who were worried about the environment purchased this.
- **Quality and Uniqueness:** Handloom textiles are popular because of their unique designs and excellent craftsmanship (Khare 2019). Forty-five percent of respondents stated they preferred handloom goods because they are usually unique.

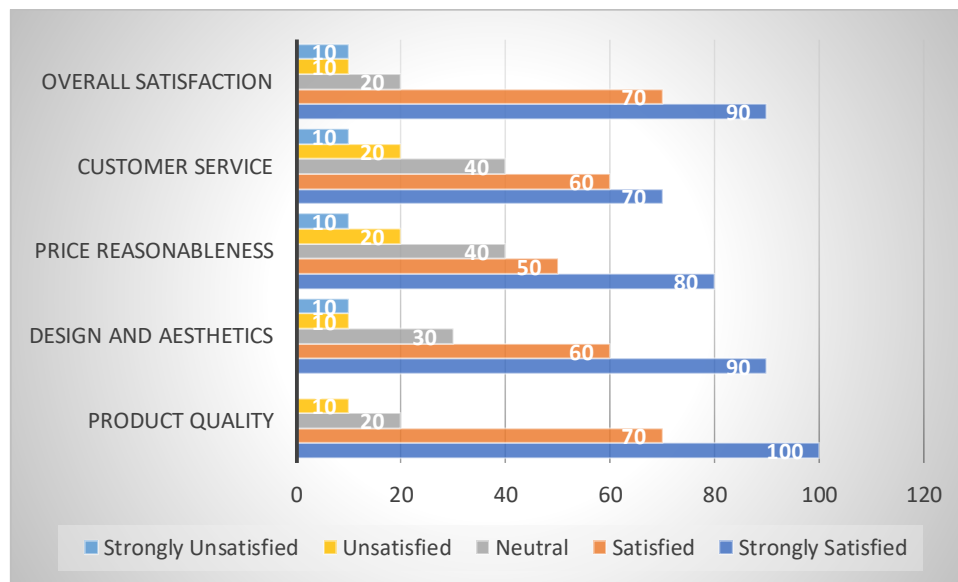


Figure: Consumer Perception and Satisfaction Level

Cons of making a purchase:

- **Price Sensitivity:** Even though handloom products are usually more expensive than their machine-made counterparts, 55% of respondents said that the cost was a big turnoff, even though they value handcrafted textiles.
- **Accessibility:** For 20% of respondents who said it was difficult to get genuine handloom products, worries about counterfeits were a significant problem.

9. Buying Behaviour and Decision-Making Process

The manner that individuals often buy handloom materials comprises cultural, social, and economic components. According to the data, consumers generally follow the consumer decision-making model.

Identification of the Problem:

Most of the time, people go for handloom fabrics so they can wear traditional attire for events like weddings and vacations (Agarwal and Sood et al. 2023). Many also do it as a way to exhibit their country identity or to show support for local musicians.

Information Search:

Word-of-mouth, social media, and visiting craft fairs and exhibitions are popular channels via which individuals discover and acquire handloom products. Internet-based markets are growing in number. One-third of those surveyed acknowledged buying handloom fabrics online.

Investigating the Alternatives:

Price, fabric quality, and style are all factors that buyers of handloom textiles take into account. According to 40% of respondents, people frequently choose to buy handloom products over those manufactured by machines because they think the former are more unique and high-quality (Varghese 2019).

Purchasing Choices:

Price and authenticity are two major deciding factors for many consumers. Despite their love of finding a cheap deal, 55% of respondents said they would pay more for genuine, high-quality handloom products.

Post-Purchase Behaviour:

When customers acquire genuine, premium handloom fabrics, they are typically happy with their purchases. Thirty percent of respondents said they have bought handloom items more than once, suggesting that happy consumers are more likely to buy from you again.

10. Market Trends and Consumer Segmentation

The handloom and artisanal textile market in Delhi has experienced substantial changes during the past ten years. Numerous significant consumer groups and trends are currently reshaping the market.

1. Rise of Ethical and Sustainable Fashion:

Residents of Delhi are looking for sustainable solutions more frequently as they become more aware of environmental problems and the human consequences of fast fashion. Handloom textiles, which are made from natural resources and are therefore eco-friendly, are one option to meet this need (Annaldewar et al. 2021). Because of their ethical production methods, handloom textiles are especially popular among younger buyers who are part of the "slow fashion" trend.

2. Collaboration between designers and artisans yields:

Contemporary designers and traditional artisans have worked together to create a whole new range of handloom products that appeal to both traditional and modern consumers. Handloom textiles have transitioned from specialty items to mainstream fashion as a consequence of these partnerships (Nikam 2022). These products are probably of interest to people who value unique and uncommon designs.

3. E-Commerce and Digital Platforms:

The growth of internet shopping has made handloom goods more accessible to people living in metropolitan areas. You can buy a lot of handloom products online at places like FabIndia, Jaypore, and GoCoop, so you don't even need to step outside to browse the inventory. The marketing of indigenous textiles has also been aided by fashion bloggers and influencers who post about handloom designs on social media sites like Instagram (Saad et al. 2021).

Segmenting customers:

- Traditionalist consumers are typically older and more sensitive to cultural differences; they frequently buy handloom fabrics for special events.
- The demand for handloom goods is being driven by Gen Z and Millennials who place a high importance on ethics in consumer goods. These fabrics, in their opinion, stand for the larger slow fashion movement.

- Buyers with a sense of style: This group includes people who like handloom materials' distinctive and exquisite appearance. They are prepared to pay more for exclusive partnerships with clothing brands.

11. Challenges and Opportunities in the Market

It could be difficult to sell Indian handloom and handcrafted textiles in Delhi at times. However, these difficulties also present chances for growth and novel viewpoints.

Positives and negatives:

- Price Sensitivity: The handloom industry faces significant challenges due to people's fixation with price. The higher cost of handmade textiles than machine-made ones may deter those trying to cut costs.
- Counterfeit Products: Because there are so many fake handloom products on the market, people are less likely to believe real ones. Consumers are worried about whether the handloom products they are buying are authentic.
- Lack of Awareness: Due to a lack of information, people frequently don't know much about handloom materials or the benefits of buying handcrafted goods. The market isn't getting enough attention, thus it can never grow.
- Artisan Wages and Sustainability: Although handloom fabrics are robust and long-lasting, their makers sometimes have financial difficulties as a result of inadequate pay or restricted market access.

Opportunities:

- Government Support: The government provides support through programs like the Handloom Mark Scheme and artisan fairs to promote genuine handloom goods. More government assistance to the business in the form of cash incentives for artisans and more promotion of local textiles would be advantageous.
- Technological Innovations: Blockchain and other innovations in technology can give consumers precise information about the place of origin of handloom goods. Selling their creations is another method that e-commerce platforms could assist artists in reaching a larger audience.
- Increasing Demand: Consumer education initiatives that emphasize the financial, cultural, and environmental benefits of buying handloom products are certain to be successful. Brands and retailers might be quite important in spreading the word.
- Designer Collaborations: the blending of modern and traditional methods introduces handloom textiles to new markets, so enhancing the fashion industry.

12. Conclusion

This study focused on the demand for handcrafted textiles and indigenous handloom products among Delhi customers. We examined consumer behaviour, the difficulties the sector has, and the room for growth. These results show that people in Delhi are beginning to recognize the cultural and environmental significance of handloom cloth. Many people hold these products in high regard as an eco-friendly and moral substitute for fast fashion. Nonetheless, problems like consumers who are price sensitive, fake goods, and insufficient buyer education continue to exist. To get over these problems, further proof of the genuineness and worth of handloom textiles is needed. This includes government funding, creative product verification methods, and partnerships between well-known and emerging artists. Promoting the benefits of buying handcrafted textiles is also essential to the expansion of the industry. The handloom industry in Delhi has a lot of room to grow in the future. If we take on challenges and take advantage of possibilities, the market for locally made handloom and handcrafted fabrics might keep expanding. Both the buyers and the manufacturers profit from this. Demand for handloom materials should rise as people's concerns about ethical and ecologically friendly design become more widespread. This is great news for the industry.

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