



# Challenges And Revival Strategies Of The Traditional Indian Textile Industry- A Review

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## ABSTRACT

The need of the study was to identify the vulnerability profile of the traditional textile sectors as to why certain reasons deter the handicraft units to grow multi-dimensionally and address the causes of those problems. Traditional Indian Textile Clusters studied are- I. Chanderi Madhya Pradesh, II. Chamba Rumal – Himanchal Pradesh, III. Phulkari – Punjab, IV. Banarasi Brocade – Uttar Pradesh, V. Block Printing – Rajasthan, VI. Madhubani – Bihar Profile of Indian Textile industry is plagued by obsolescence, unhealthy, ineffective regulations, problems of labour, presence of distorting domestic measures, sickness and inter-sector contradictions. Globalisation demands innovative products, materials, and processes with new standards of quality and creativity. Innovative Capacity Building would strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of individuals and improve institutional structures. Vulnerabilities were studied through previous case studies, status reports and organizations throughout time. Primary data were obtained through Field Scan, Interviews, Schedules, Demographic Survey and Ethnography. Questionnaires and schedules were designed separately for different categories of respondents.

**KEYWORDS:** Traditional textile clusters, handicraft units, Indian Textile Clusters, Globalisation, Innovative Capacity Building

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The following is an abstract of the thesis submitted on “A Systemic approach to vulnerability analysis for innovative capacity building in traditional textile clusters of India” The traditional textile clusters are one of the most vulnerable sectors of our country. In most clusters, the major problems reiterate. This industry has played a significant role in the creation of the world’s most precious masterpieces. This industry has drawn attention of many buyers and researchers across the globe and lot of research is being done in this sector for its revival, restoration, preservation and sustainable promotion. The current chapter on review of literature presents the past researches done on the significant issues of this industry.

## 1.1 NEED OF THE STUDY:

The need of the study was to identify the vulnerability profile of the traditional textile sectors as to why certain reasons deter the handloom / handicraft units to grow multi dimensionally; address the causes of those problems / factors and not the symptoms even though the handloom and handicraft sector have enough cause to flourish despite the government claims to be implementing various plans and schemes for the well being of the industry.

Thinking (Systemic Analysis):

Systems' thinking is the process of understanding how things influence one another within a whole. Systems' thinking has been defined as an approach to problem solving, by viewing "problems" as parts of an overall system, rather than reacting to specific part, outcomes or events and potentially contributing to further development of unintended consequences. It proposes to view systems in a holistic manner. Consistent with systems philosophy, system thinking concerns an understanding of a system by examining the linkages and interactions between the elements that compose the entirety of the system.

Tools of System Analysis:

Causal Loop Diagrams (CLD) Graphic tools of Systems methodology, namely causal loops and flow diagrams offer powerful communicability between modeller and decision maker. Its characteristics as a learning tool find favour with the policy planners. The following model broadly illustrates some of the macro industrial dynamics of Textile industry using CLD architecture.

Vulnerability Analysis: A vulnerability analysis is the process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing (or ranking) the vulnerability in a system. It may be conducted in the political, social, economic or environmental fields. Vulnerability assessment has many things in common with risk assessment.

## 1.2. Vulnerability Profile of Indian Textile:

Against all the merits mentioned earlier, it is difficult to find such a large-scale industry in the country that is so disorganized as the Indian textile industry. The industry is often plagued by obsolescence, unhealthy and ineffective regulations and problems of labour. This emphasizes the need for 5 strengthening the management mechanism in the industry to build competitive capacities and to face the emerging international challenges.

The textile industry in India is facing intensified competition in both their export and domestic markets. However, the migration of textile capacity will be influenced by objective competitive factors and will be hampered by the presence of distorting domestic measures and weak domestic infrastructure in developing countries like India. Sickness and inter-sector contradictions that are a bane of the industry have to be solved through a wise approach and well-calibrated steps, to ensure healthy growth. Traditionally, crafts were produced and managed by the craftsmen themselves. However, globalisation demands innovative products, materials, and processes with new standards of quality and creativity.

Today, due to changes in social set ups, culture and economy, the crafts and the crafts persons are increasingly becoming vulnerable to new realities. Strengths of Indian handicrafts is increasingly being recognised both in export as well as domestic urban markets, but the qualitative market intelligence flow between market-place and the crafts persons is not up to the desired level.

Besides, quality of production, approaches for further market development, protection of traditional wisdom and practices through Intellectual Property Rights, sustainability, crafts promotion, etc. are the other aspects that need to be addressed for effective growth of Indian handicrafts. Design plays a major role in empowering the crafts and crafts persons, both as an enabler and a value adder.

### 1.3. Innovative Capacity Building:

The World Customs Organisation defines capacity building as activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way. In the context of the Traditional Indian Textile Sector, there are many aspects that need to be catered to for which an implementation of a strategy is required that may encompass the vulnerability aspect and innovation prospecting in this sector.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vulnerabilities were studied through previous case studies, status reports and organizations throughout time. Gaining a historical context for current organizational problems and procedures was indispensable for the research. The researcher consulted a variety of literature for understanding where the traditional textile industry currently is and where it ought to be. The main limitation was that a Holistic Non-Traditional Approach towards Capacity Building was not done before. There were no established standards or defined processes or a model that recommended an overall 'holistic' approach to capacity building. There was thus the need to fully immerse in research and design, and ultimately, create a systemic approach to vulnerability analysis for innovative capacity building for traditional textile clusters of India without being confined to a pre-existing format.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Type of Research:

This research relies on reviewing available literature and/or data, or qualitative approaches such as informal discussions with consumers, employees, management or competitors, and more formal approaches through in-depth interviews, focus groups, projective methods, case studies or pilot studies. In the present research, a primary pilot survey was conducted in a few selected traditional textile clusters. Primary data were collected through personal interviews and surveys of the textile artisans, suppliers, entrepreneurs, government officials, NGO's and experts.

Secondary data were obtained from the internet sources and past records. This facilitated a field survey on the prevalence / identification of the vulnerabilities of the traditional Indian textile sector especially at the grass root level. At the next stage, it maps the process of encouraging and materializing the adoption of best innovative practices in the textile clusters by a systems approach to capacity building based on the Blue Ocean Strategic framework.

### 3.2. Research Objectives:

1. To Identify and evaluate critical vulnerability factors (Cause-Effect variables) of selected traditional textile clusters of India.
2. To examine the prospect and areas for Innovative Capacity Building in the Unorganized Traditional textile clusters of India.
3. To identify the critical 'competitive gap' existing between the organized and the unorganized textile sectors for their mutual enrichment.
4. To recommend a holistic systems model (Decision-Framework) of Policy Initiatives and Value Innovation for selected Clusters under the study based on value-inputs from various stakeholders.

### 3.3. Sampling Technique –

Cluster sampling:

Deliberate sampling is also known as purposive or non-probability sampling. This sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe.

Cluster sampling: In the present study, a multi-stage sampling process as an extension of cluster sampling has been followed in order to inquire a considerably large geographical area. Under multi-stage sampling the first stage was to select large primary sampling units such as states, then districts and finally the clusters of textile units at the village/ town level. For the present study, six states were selected for a vulnerability analysis in the traditional textile clusters where then cities / towns / villages were identified comprising maximum number of artisans / weavers / respondents appropriate for data collection through a schedule in which fifty-three vulnerabilities were mentioned.

### 3.4. Sources of Data

#### 3.4.1. PRIMARY DATA:

A range of tools used in the present study were:

- Field Scan
- Interviews
- Schedules
- Demographic Survey
- Ethnography

Questionnaire and Schedule Design:

Questionnaires were designed separately for different categories of respondents. · Questionnaire - Designed for Government Officials and NGOs.

#### 3.4.2 SECONDARY DATA:

It included gathering of information on cluster actors and contacts with a range of institutions such as:

- Crafts Council India
- Dastkar- A Society for Crafts and Craftspeople
- Crafts Revival Trust
- National Institute of Design-NID
- National Institute of Fashion Technology-NIFT

- Asian Heritage Foundation
- Ministry of Textiles
- Textile Committee, Mumbai
- The Nabha Foundation
- TRIFED (The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited)
- Weavers' Service Centers 10
- DC Handicrafts Analysis of data:

Statistical techniques for data analysis used in this study are Descriptive Statistics, Likert Scaling assessing magnitude of responses, Frequency / Ranking, Weighted Average, Factor Analysis, Two Sample Z Test, ANOVA, Causal Loop Diagrams.

#### 4.HISTORY OF TEXTILES INDUSTRY IN INDIA

The archaeological surveys and studies have found that the people of Harappan culture knew the weaving and the spinning of cotton four thousand years ago. Indication to weaving and spinning materials is also found in the Vedic Literature. There was textile trade in India since ancient times.

A block printed and resist-dyed fabric, whose origin is from Gujarat, is found in tombs of Fostat, Egypt. This proves that Indian export of cotton textiles to the Egypt or the Nile Civilization in medieval times was prevalent to a large extent. Large quantity of north Indian silk was traded through the silk route in China to the western countries. <sup>5</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textile\\_industry\\_in\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textile_industry_in_India) <sup>6</sup> [www.clusterpulse.org](http://www.clusterpulse.org) <sup>4</sup> The Indian silk was often exchanged with the western countries for their spices in the barter system. During the late 17th and 18th century, there were large exports of the Indian cotton to the western countries to meet the needs of the European industries during industrial revolution. Consequently there was development of nationalist movement like the famous Swadeshi movement which was headed by Aurobindo Ghosh (Nordas, H.K. 2004). There was also export of Indian silk, Muslin cloth of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to other countries by the East Indian Company. India is the second largest producer of fibre in the world and the major fibre produced is cotton. Other fibres produced in India include silk, jute, wool, and man-made fibres. Approximately 60% of the Indian textile Industry is cotton-based. The strong domestic demand and the revival of the Economic markets by 2009 have led to huge growth of the Indian textile industry. In December 2010, the domestic cotton price was up by 50% as compared to the December 2009 prices. The causes behind high cotton price are due to the floods in Pakistan and China. India projected a high production of textile (325 lakh bales for 2010-11).

There has been increase in India's share of global textile trading to seven percent in five years. The rising prices are the major concern of the domestic producers of the country. Some of the various aspects of the textile industry are enunciated below. Man-made fibres predominantly include manufacturing of clothes using fibre or filament synthetic yarns. It is produced in the large power loom factories. They account for the largest sector of the textile production in India. This sector has a share of 62% of India's total production and provides employment to about 4.8 million people. The Cotton Sector is the second most developed sector in the Indian <sup>5</sup> Textile industries. It provides employment to a large number of people but its production and employment is seasonal depending upon the seasonal nature of the production

## 5. TEXTILES INDUSTRY IN INDIA: A BRIEF PROFILE

The textile industry is one of the leading sectors in the Indian economy as it contributes nearly 14% to the total industrial production<sup>1</sup>. It is claimed to be the biggest revenue earners in terms of foreign exchange among all other industrial sectors in India.

The textile industry is the second largest employer, after agriculture, with a total workforce of around 35 million.<sup>2</sup> India is next only to China among the world's largest producers of textiles and garments<sup>3</sup>. The industry is easily the largest foreign exchange earner on a percentage basis of the ratio of import inputs to export outputs, as the import content is insignificant compared with those of other major export products.

### 5.1. TEXTILE CLUSTERS

A business cluster is a geographic concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, and associated institutions in a particular field. Clusters are considered to increase the productivity with which companies can compete, nationally and globally<sup>4</sup>. The term industrial cluster, also known as a business cluster, competitive cluster or Porterian cluster, was introduced and popularized by Michael Porter in *The Competitive Advantage of Nations*<sup>5</sup>, (1990). He claimed that clusters have the potential to affect competition in three ways:

- By increasing the productivity of the companies in the cluster
- By driving innovation in the field
- By stimulating new businesses in the field

### 5.2. Traditional Indian Textile Clusters studied are-

- I. Chanderi – Madhya Pradesh,
- II. Chamba Rumal – Himanchal Pradesh,
- III. Phulkari – Punjab,
- IV. Banarasi Brocade – Uttar Pradesh,
- V. Block Printing – Rajasthan,

## 6. Traditional Indian Textile Clusters

### 6.1. Chanderi – Traditional Textile of Madhya Pradesh

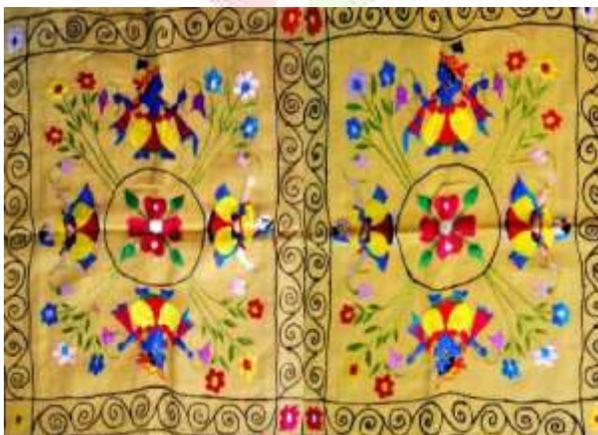
Chanderi is one of the best-known handloom clusters in India, particularly famous for its sarees, made with mix of silk and cotton. But if we look at its history, Chanderi has been adapting itself as per needs. Sari is the product of second half of twentieth century only. Then, there have been changes in the methodologies, equipments and even the compositions of yarns in the past. The heritage is attached with the skills of weaving high quality fabric products here. The weavers are actually the symbol of the heritage, as they have been the ones, who produced the kind of stuff that received appreciation even from the royals. Unlike the past, in modern time of changes in lifestyle, Chanderi tends to stick with what it has been doing for decades now. It

is because of the inability of those, who lead the decision-making about the product, to adapt as per the changes. Their ability has partly been affected by lack of patronage it used to have in past.



## 6.2. Chamba Rumal – Traditional Textile of Himanchal Pradesh

The embroidery art form of the Chamba Rumal originated in the erstwhile princely hill states of Chamba, Kangra, Basohli and nearby states which now form part of the Himachal Pradesh. Though practiced throughout the region, the craft came to be associated specifically with Chamba owing to the patronage given by the rulers of the area. Artistic styles of Pahari miniature painting was reflected in the Rumals of the 18th-19th century A.D. Chamba Rumals were embroidered by the upper class women of royalty. They had the use of the trained miniature artist who would draw the theme of the Rumal in charcoal and provide guiding color schemes. The themes were religious especially Krishna theme. Fabric was hand spun unbleached mulmul or fine Khaddar. Embroidery was done in double satin stitch called dorukha. No Rumal was in single color



6.3. Phulkari – Traditional Textile of Punjab

Phulkari literally means flower working which was one time used for word embroidery but in course of time word —Phulkari became restricted to embroidered head cloth/odini. Simple and sparsely embroidered odini and shawls made for everyday use are called Phulkaris whereas closely and all covered over are made for special and ceremonial occasions are known as Baghs (Garden). Phulkari and Baghs were worn by ladies all over Punjab during marriage festivals and other joyous occasions. They were embroidered by ladies themselves for their own use and use of other family members and not for sale in the market. Thus it was purely a domestic art which not only satisfied their inner urge for creation but brought color into day to day life. In a way it was true folk art. Custom had grown to give Phulkari and Baghs to brides at the time of marriages.



#### 6.4. Banarasi Brocade – Traditional Textile of Uttar Pradesh

Banarasi saris are saris made in Varanasi, a city which is also called ‘Benares’. These saris are historically considered to be among the finest saris in India and are known for their gold and silver brocade; fine silk and opulent embroidery, and being highly sought after. These saris are made of finely woven silk and are decorated with intricate design, and because of these engravings, these saris are relatively heavy. Their special characteristics are Mughal inspired designs such as intricate intertwining floral and foliate motifs, kalga and bel, a string of upright leaves called jhallar at the outer, edge of border is a characteristic of these sarees.



#### 6.5. Block Printing – Traditional Textile of Rajasthan

Archaeological remains from the Indus Valley civilisation in the 3rd millennium BC include cotton fragments dyed with madder, a dye commonly used for Block Printing even today. Dye vats, spindles and bronze needles found at sites like Mohenjodaro indicate highly developed fabric work. Today, Block Printing is practiced in several Indian states

## 7. Issues faced by traditional textile community

### 7.1 Branding Related Issues

Handwoven products are much in demand today. For a buyer seeking value for money, identifying a genuine handloom product is a challenge. This is where 'Handloom Mark' can help establish genuine handloom products and ensure appropriate income/returns for products made by socio-economically backward weavers.

There is need to preserve the traditional craft as well as to integrate it in contemporary context.

Branding, Production, Supply Chain Related Issues, efficiency in managing the entire supply chain is required, including for design, fabric procurement and logistical skills, in transport, quality control and property rights protection, export financing and clearing of trade formalities.

### 7.2 Revival of Art Form & Conservation Related Issues

There is emphasis on the need not only to preserve the traditional skills of weaving but also to upgrade the designs in a contemporary context to find a market both in domestic as well as international arenas (Menon, 2010).

There is need to preserve the traditional craft as well as to integrate it in contemporary context by involvement of Public Private Partnership by conserving the traditional weaves under the Geographical Indication Act

### 7.3 Economical, Financial, Cost Related Issues

Government is aware of the problems being faced by the weaving societies due to steep increase in the prices of Zari and the resultant increase in the input cost of silk.

### 7.4 Amalgamation, Public Private Partnership Related Issues

Textile Secretary stressed the need to preserve the traditional craft and to integrate it in contemporary context by involvement of Public Private Partnership and underlined the importance of conserving the traditional weaves under the Geographical Indication Act (Registration and Protection Act, 1999) to prevent these skills from languishing or being copied. The handloom sector could develop a strong linkage with Sericulture sector so as to have viable linkage right from reeling and weaving onwards.

sarees (Journal of Ministry of Textiles, 2010). The Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Government of India is implementing Mill Gate Price Scheme (MGPS) under which all types of yarn including Zari is made available at Mill Gate Price to the eligible handloom weavers throughout the country so as to facilitate regular supply of basic raw materials to the handloom sector and help utilize the full employment potential of the sector.

## Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded that by focusing on capacity building of Traditional Textiles, the socio-economic development of skilled craft persons, their number and skills development as well as transference can be facilitated. It would not only result into creating employability for present and future generations but also a system which caters to a holistic well-being of the traditional textile community and its eco-system.

Promoting education in the Traditional Textile Clusters of India could be considered as:

- A prelude to an effective communication system
- A system that promotes better employability
- A solution to eliminating poverty reducing exploitation and corruption

- Burgeoning of a long term strategic vision towards businesses/ jobs/ employment
- Balancing logically "profit making" from the perspective of management and owners
- Creation of a materials supply system from the perspective of customers and market
- A social system promoting better worldliness As a result of such thinking, new insights may be gained into how the value chain works, why it has problems, how it can be improved or how changes made to one component of the system may impact the other components.

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