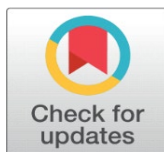
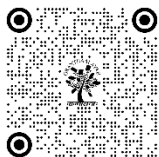


STUDY OF SUSTAINABLE ODOP HANDLOOM AND HANDICRAFTS PRODUCTS IN VARANASI

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ABSTRACT

One of the few decades-old civilizations that are still in existence where craftsmen and weavers have vital roles in India in creating exquisite unique arts, crafts, and products that are indigenous to its artisans and karigars. The innovative charm, application, demand, philosophy, relevance, and character of this industry are what make it extraordinary.

One District One Product (ODOP), the state government's vision, is regarded as a groundbreaking attempt towards acknowledging the genuine potential of a district based on the strengths of a district and national priorities. Indigenous knowledge of its crafts person, rural entrepreneurship, employability for their livelihood, and showcasing each district on a global platform to fuel economic growth and preserve their sustainable textiles and crafts forms. This initiative would also help in preserving and developing local crafts and skills in terms of artistic packaging and branding. The production of exclusive gifts and souvenirs would get a direct connection with boosting tourism.

We have attempted to highlight the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) that rural craftsmen must contend with in this essay. Researchers, organizations, and the government sector may utilize this SWOT to help this region grow to support and promote weavers and other craftspeople. The insight of this paper focuses on the commercial and ecological tools equipment and other resources used by the aboriginal artisans. The ambition of this paper aims to provide an understanding of the potential handloom and crafts commercial sectors in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, where an increasing number of ODOP producers and craftsmen have affiliated themselves with e-commerce platforms and benefit from it as they can sell their products directly to the consumers thus eliminating the role of middlemen. This paper will help the preservation of craft people's resources and its move towards sustainability and revival through modernization and publicity. The sector holds great potential and can generate numerous jobs for weavers and artisans.

Keywords: Handloom, Handicrafts, Varanasi



1. INTRODUCTION

India is renowned for being a country of artisans and craftspeople India's crafts go beyond the apparent limits of ability, craftsmanship, and other material characteristics. Indian craft reflects the enormous creative potential of common people seeking fulfilment and self-expression. Items categorized as handicrafts are products that originate by hand with basic tools and are often innovative while remaining traditional. In this process, skilled artists and craftsmen create different

design products for their functional and decorative purposes using their hands. The Indian handloom and handicraft industry has been an unorganized, decentralized, and labor- driven cottage industry. Pre-pandemic, UP's handloom industry was facing several challenges and needed a great level of revamp. The weavers of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh faced great challenges, viz a viz from machine-made and electronic products, technology, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). This has resulted in the unemployment and growth of jobless youth in the rural sectors due to a lack of education, technical guidance, want of money, and cultural differences. [Chattopadhyay \(1980\)](#)

This paper will cover the role of various government schemes introduced by the UP government that has helped in strengthening the handloom and handicrafts business, improved weavers-related jobs, sustainable livelihood, and overall economic growth of the said state and thus country. [Chauhan \(2019\)](#)

2. ODOP VARANASI UTTAR PRADESH IS CRAFTING DREAMS INTO REALITY

Incited by Oita in Japan's government in 1979 (OVOP – One Village One Product), On January 24, 2018, on UP Diwas, the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh inaugurated the One District One Product (ODOP) program, which aspires to choose one unique product from each of the 75 UP districts.

To encourage sustainable indigenous crafts, skills, and art promotion, the ultimate goal was to establish a traditional industrial cluster in Uttar Pradesh that would concentrate on a particular product. Furthermore, through the GI (Geographical Indication) tag that was awarded to "Banaras Brocade and Sarees" on September 4, 2009, and was registered under Application No. 99 in classes 23, 24, 25, and 26, the government's intervention encouraged the weaved magic of Varanasi's zari brocade. [Frost \(2000\)](#)

Figure 1



Figure 1 Purple Banarasi Brocade Fabric with Flowers and Zari Weave
Picture Courtesy exoticindiaart.com

Figure 2



Figure 2 Banarasi Brocade Silk Saree Fabric
Picture Courtesy harshitacrafts.com

3. HISTORY AND TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES, DESIGNS USED FOR WEAVING BROCADE HANDLOOM SILK FABRIC

To meet the demand for luxurious supplies by the royal families or temples, India's centers for brocade weaving emerged around the capitals of kingdoms or sacred places. The provinces of eastern and southern Persia, Turkey, Central Asia, and Afghanistan known for their brocade weaving exerted an immense impact on the design and technique of northern weavers. Varanasi city, from Uttar Pradesh state, India is synonymous with aesthetically beautiful handicrafts and handloom weaving brocade sarees, dress material for their dazzling appearance and hues. The diversified designs in sarees are time-honored pieces that celebrate the rich, vivid heritage of Varanasi and are treasures for every woman. Uttar Pradesh Government's One District One Product Scheme has helped the weavers of Varanasi loom magic with tana-bana and live their lives gracefully blending with sustainability and practicing traditional woven designs and techniques, such as –

- 1) **Zarkashi:** Zari, Kalabattu, Kasab – The many names of the palatial real silver wire (zari) woven in the make of opulent textiles, synonymous with the regal touch of Banaras.
- 2) **Kadhua:** An iconic work of art, the Banarasi bootidaar kadhua saree, is a handloom masterpiece that seems embroidered, or "kadhahua," since each design must be woven as distinct entities.
- 3) **Tanchoi:** These subtle and rhythmic fine sarees, illustrate the beauty of resham threads and irresistible patterns.
- 4) **Shikargah:** The patterns include the intricacy of weaves through zari vines, birds, animals, flora and fauna, and scrolling jungle scenes.
- 5) **Kadiyal:** The borders and aanchal are woven in vibrant hues distinct from the body adopting the traditional Kadiyal process, which includes adjustments to the warp and weft.

- 6) **Vasket:** Meticulously woven using a supplemental zari weft throughout the body in the most endearing of palettes, generates shimmering silken drapes.
- 7) **Banarasi Bandhej:** A lyrical rendition of Banarasi weaves and traditional Kutchi Bandhej with pinch-sized tied portions of fabrics, hand-dyed in mesmerizing tones.
- 8) **Jamdani:** Jamdani is hand-spun and hand-woven in fine cotton yarn (muslin). Loom embroidery in which discontinuous extra weft yarn is woven into the threads of the warp.

Designs and Motifs: Distinctive qualities embrace pallus, jaal (a pattern simulating a net), mina work, small ornamentation in figures, compact weaving, gold work, and metallic visual effects. [Gillow & Barnard \(1993\)](#)

4. E-COMMERCE – PORTAL OF OPPORTUNITIES



Picture Courtesy Hindustan Times, Saturday, May 13, 2023

The Uttar Pradesh government has developed the e-commerce platform 'ODOP Mart.' This platform would enable the crafts persons and artisans to enlist their products directly for selling online. Also, they can sell their products directly to the consumers, hence no middlemen are involved. Through this resourcefulness, the government also provides handholding to the artisans and craftsmen to develop a digital catalogue of their products. Through stronger marketing, the Marketing Development Assistance Scheme seeks to provide equitable pricing for ODOP product exporters, weavers, artisans, and owners of enterprises. The program guarantees the participation of labourers, craftspeople, weavers, entrepreneurs, and manufacturing units in regional, national, and international exhibition events. It additionally facilitates the onboarding of artists across numerous online stores. Google SEO (search engine optimization) has also helped Varanasi handloom sarees and handicrafts products available for selling, services provided along with the complete information on ODOP products. Social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, kooApp, bulk email, bulk WhatsApp, voice SMS, and promotion through government sites, such as Invest India have played a pivotal role in expanding the business avenues of ODOP handloom products in Varanasi. GeM portal (Government e-

Market) and ONDC (Open Network for Digital Commerce) have helped open market opportunities for artisans and give them a sustainable livelihood. [HT Correspondent. \(2021\)](#)

5. ODOP SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HANDLOOM BROCADE INDUSTRY IN VARANASI

The handloom occupation has tremendously boosted Varanasi's flourishing economy. One of the most significant economic sectors in India, after agriculture, it directly employs about 43 lakh weavers and indirectly engages one crore people through 23 lakh looms. The Office of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms has been at the forefront of numerous initiatives to assist handloom weavers since it officially began operations in 1976 and grew the handloom sector. [Ministry of Textiles \(2019\)](#)

The office has undertaken several more ambitious projects with a focus around:

- National Centre for Textile Design (NCTD)
 - 1) Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana (DDHPY)
 - 2) Mill Gate Price Scheme
 - 3) Weavers' Service Centre (WSCS)
 - 4) Indian Institutes of Handloom Technology (IIHT)
 - 5) Design Exhibition-cum-Dyeing Workshops
 - 6) Integrated Handloom Training Project (IHTP)
 - 7) Work Shed-Cum-Housing Scheme for Handloom Weavers
 - 8) Weavers' Welfare Scheme
 - 9) Handloom Export Scheme
 - 10) The Handloom Export Promotion Council
 - 11) Shilp Guru Prohotsahan Yojna
 - 12) Implementation of Handlooms Act, 1985 (Reservation of Articles for Production)
 - 13) All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Cooperative Society Ltd. (AIHFMCS)
 - 14) Financial Assistance schemes (Margin Money Scheme) - would pay each application a maximum of Rs. 20 lakhs, contingent on the project's cost.
 - 15) Skill Development and Toolkit Distribution Scheme will provide free advanced toolkit training to both professional and unskilled artisans, targeting them for training under various modules and certificates for authentication.
 - 16) Weaver's Service Centre – weavers have been provided with improved looms, skill upgradation training, working sheds, light units, and other allied accessories.
 - 17) The establishment of CFC (Common Facility Centre), and CSC (Common Service Centre) in the Varanasi Mega Handloom Cluster would aid block-level handloom weaver groups with infrastructure and additional kinds of support under the Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme.

18) The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana's highlights include handlooms available to each weaver, godowns for storing finished products and unprocessed materials, space for lodging for designers and bulk buyers from urban areas, places of work with internet connectivity, and financial inclusion for each handloom weaver under the scheme.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pioneering "Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" and "Make in India" initiatives, designed to foster domestic industries and strengthen India's self-reliance, ODOP gains even greater significance and relevance. [Ministry of Textiles. \(2019\)](#)

6. DEMOGRAPHIC POSITION OF ODOP PRODUCTS IN VARANASI, A GUIDING FRAMEWORK

Approximately INR 30,000 million is generated by the textile industry in Banaras, which employs over 2,000 thousand people in weaving and related operations. Banaras Sarees are the industry's speciality.

Table 1

Table 1 Shows State-Wise Number of Weavers and Allied Weavers in the Country as per the 4th All India Handloom Census (2019-20)

S.NO	NO. OF ALLIED WORKERS	NO. OF WEAVERS
1.	60179	130778

Source All India Handloom Census (2019-20)

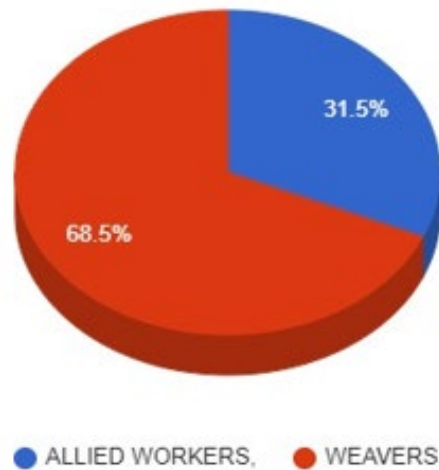


Table 2

Table 2 Shows the State-Wise and Scheme-Wise Number of Handloom Weavers Who Benefited Under Various Schemes in the Last Three Years (2016-17 to 2018-19) and the Current Year (2019- 20 till 30-9-2019)

S. No.	NHDP & CHCDS		HWCWS		
	No. of beneficiaries of Block Level Clusters	No. of beneficiaries of Marketing events	No. of concessional loans (MUDRA Scheme)	No. of weavers enrolled under PMJJY/ PMSBY	No. of weavers enrolled under MGBBY/ converged MGBBY
	13424	80500	3529	11146	13504

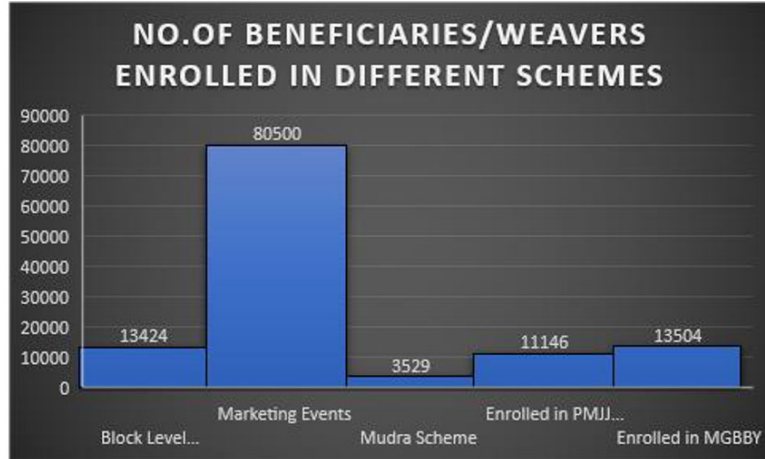
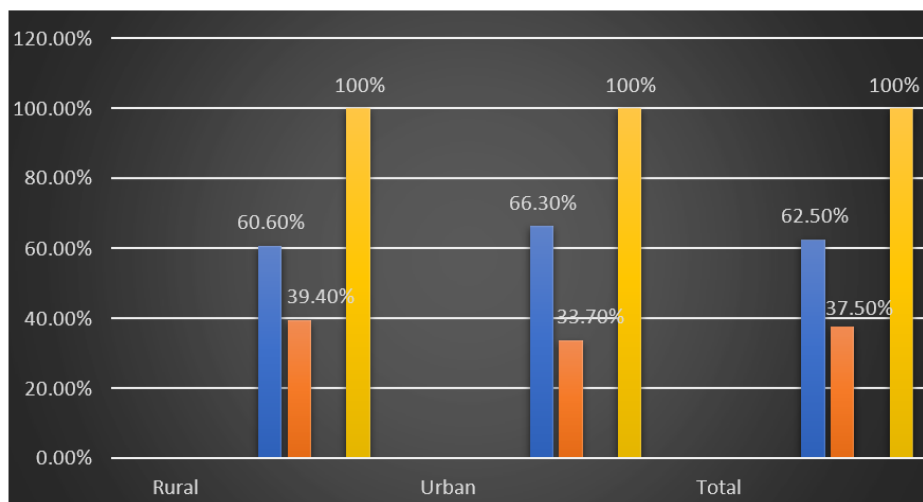


Table 3

Table 3 The All-India Census (2019-20) shows the gender-wise (male, female, and transgenders) location of the handloom weavers

	Gender of handloom weavers			Total
	Male	Female	Transgender	
Rural	53,174	34,517	1	87,692
	60.6%	39.4%	0%	100%
Urban	28,570	14,515	1	43,086
	66.3%	33.7%	0%	100%
Total	81,805	49,071	2	1,30,878
	62.5%	37.5%	0%	100%

Source All India Census (2019-20)



7. GIFTING HERITAGE – NOVEL DESIGNS OF DIVERSITY

Fortunately, there are countless ways to strengthen handloom and handmade items, the artisan's skill in creating the material and its historical and traditional

value make it an ideal foundation for luxury goods marketplaces. [One District One Product: UP'S Masterstroke. \(2023\)](#)

Heritage art forms when presented to foreign delegates and diplomats by large companies, play a key role in adding to the prestige of the state's local handicrafts and ethnic products. UP's ODOP products are winning the hearts of investors, country leaders, and state heads to gift exclusive souvenirs during domestic and international tours. Weavers and craftspeople can contribute to the survival of numerous age-old customs that preserve their means of subsistence by purchasing artwork and craft items from socially conscious businesses. The novel designs of brocaded handlooms and handicrafts have transformed the articles in an artistic way in packaging and branding. Additionally, the production of souvenirs and gifts has boasted live demonstrations and sales outlets hosted by government agencies, like Weavers Services Centre, Central Cottage Industries Exposition under the Ministry of Textiles, State Emporia's, and Dastkari Haat Samiti. [Press Information Bureau, Government of India, \(2023\)](#)

The establishment of the most stringent criteria for silk and cotton handloom products, as well as their premium positioning in both local and foreign markets, has been made plausible by quality labels such as Silk Mark, Handloom Mark, GI Tag, and India Handloom Brand. [Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Commerce & Industry. \(2022\)](#)

Products from UP's ODOP program were used for diplomatic gifting by PM Narendra Modi during the 48th G7 summit in Germany in 2022. Exclusive handicrafts, like Gulabi meenakari cufflinks, matching brooch, zari zardozi embroidery boxes, marble inlay table tops, and handmade tea sets were gifted by PM to foreign emissaries. This assisted a multitude of social enterprises in incorporating the custom of giving gifts culture to ensure the longevity of our customs while continually balancing the quality of their handcrafted goods to match global standards. This has aided numerous social enterprises in adopting the gift-giving culture to ensure the longevity of our customs and consistently balancing the quality of their handcrafted goods to match global standards. International celebrities will be made aware of the extensive selection of products offered by the ODOP initiative the Varanasi ODOP program, which could boost a company's visibility and promote the international marketing of local products This enhances the visibility of a company and the international marketing of local products. The June 21, 2022, International Day of Yoga (IDY) ceremony in Times Square, New York, was further promoted and sponsored by ODOP through its partnership with the Indian Consulate General of India in New York. Throughout the World Economic Forum, hosted from January 22–26, 2023, in the Indian Pavilion at Davos, Switzerland, several ODOP merchandise were on exhibition.

Figure 3



Figure 3 Labels Showing Product Authentication

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Studies of the "SWOT" factors—Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats—of the Indian handloom industry underline the key components necessary for the sector's long-term sustainability. This analysis works like a tool that helps an organization/sector gain benefits to increase the economy and enhances a business's chances of surviving in the dynamic, international marketplace. [UP Becomes First State to Integrate ODOP Mart with ONDC Platform \(2022\)](#)

The researchers went through a SWOT analysis of the Indian handloom industry as part of their present investigation, Sustainable ODOP Handloom and Handicrafts Products in Varanasi.

- **Strength:**

- 1) Affording a lot of people (artisans, associated laborers, and weavers) the opportunity to secure subsistence and the dignity and reverence that handloom specialists in Varanasi deserve through the ODOP plan.
- 2) Availability of traditionally experienced weavers, who additionally in India are the second- biggest engine of economic growth after agriculture.
- 3) Sustainable and eco-friendly indigenous raw materials and products are available and can be sourced out through the government's subsidized schemes.
- 4) Considering most weavers in this owned and operated by families business have a great deal of experience, this sector utilizes very little power, leaves a small footprint on the environment, and offers a great deal of room for innovation.
- 5) The household is the basic unit of production, and each member of the family contributes to the brocade weaving technique at various phases of the value chain.
- 6) Strong Branding and promotion strategy through ODOP portals. This would generate interest among buyers and give pride to consumers when buying genuine handloom products and handicraft items.
- 7) E-commerce platforms such as ODOP Mart serves as a one-stop marketplace for consumers thus eliminating the role of middlemen and buying products at reasonable prices.
- 8) Prominent fashion and textile designers are extensively approaching weavers, executing customized designs, and offering them transparent pricing.
- 9) Through handloom and handicraft fairs and melas, as well as excursions to art galleries by both domestic and foreign tourists, it would fuel local tourism.

- **Weakness:**

- 1) Weaving had been adopted and passed on from forefathers to children and is no more a choice of the young generation. Due to exploitation, weavers and artisans did not get their actual wages and migrated to other states, such as Surat, Gujarat, and Bangalore.

- 2) Weavers are being underpaid because of this their survival is at stake. The brokers, mahajans, and capitalist system would turn down their wages and this has become a demotivating factor.
- 3) Given that they lack the proper understanding of how, when, and where to publicize their products, weavers have been making merchandise without getting focused on their profession.
- 4) Purchasing a high cost of yarn, and buying it from creditors gives rise to higher production costs, which pinches the pocket of a humble weaver.
- 5) Weavers and artisans are unaware of how they can upskill them in creating newer, more relevant prototypes and re-cycle their dead stocks which they could not sell due to long spells of lockdown during the pandemic.
- 6) Dissemination of knowledge and skills, continuous enrolment of weavers and allied workers in government training schemes and programs adopt unconventional practices as a means of support.
- 7) Lack of technical knowledge to promote and showcase their merchandise on local, national, and global platforms, and due to this, weavers and craftspeople are unaware as to which markets and digital platforms they can sell their products. Due to the lack of this information, weavers and artisans could not generate substantial revenue for their livelihood.
- 8) Due to rapid industrialization, mushrooming growth of power looms, the monopoly of this trade is controlled by gaddidar, who controls production units and labor. This hierarchy of control required less labour at a cheaper cost which discouraged their children from choosing their traditional work practices and moving to other states for better job opportunities.
- 9) Perhaps it is the privation of media coverage, promotion by government agencies, and the limitations to orderly tourist places that have made it hard for textiles from this region to reach communities beyond.

- **Opportunities:**

- 1) The traditional handicrafts and brocade handloom industry regained consciousness which was struggling to find its marketplace before and during the pandemic through the One District One Product (ODOP) scheme.
- 2) With the creation of a Common Facility Center (CFC), common gaps in the ODOP value chain could be eliminated. The Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme would provide infrastructure and other forms of support to block-level groups of handloom weavers from the Varanasi Mega Handloom Cluster.
- 3) Government attention toward socio-economic development of weavers through various beneficiary schemes has given much relief to the weavers and allied workers to get back into the indigenous practices as now looms and yarn are available to them at subsidized rates.
- 4) Names of brands travel globally and that is apparent through the One District One Product scheme. This has enabled buyers to build trust with the brand, genuineness, and authentication of the products worldwide. Prominent Quality labels like Silk Mark, Handloom Mark, GI

Tag, Khadi India, and India Handloom Brand to name a few have helped set up matchless standards of silk, khadi, and cotton handloom and handicrafts products and secure a remarkable position for them in the western world.

- 5) The robust marketing campaign of ODOP products of Varanasi and other districts of Uttar Pradesh is gaining much popularity through various print media and digital platforms. This is a good opportunity for the weavers of Varanasi silk sarees and producing accessories, such as headwear, bags, purses, footwear, belts, wall hangings, home textiles, etc. to showcase their unique items to masses for personal usage and as souvenir gifting.
- 6) It would boost local tourism through handloom and handicrafts fairs/melas and visits to art galleries by domestic and international visitors.
- 7) The economy of India will escalate when more weavers and craftspeople from this sector of Varanasi join hands with the government schemes.

- **Threats:**

- 1) Due to the pandemic, a lot of weavers and artisans have lost their jobs, and handlooms were shut which has deterred them flinch back in their indigenous profession of weaving and allied professions in Varanasi.
- 2) Before the pandemic, the socio-economic condition of weavers was pathetic due to heavy debts, unstable livelihood, and living standards which were tormenting.
- 3) The handloom sector is a labor-intensive industry where weavers do not get satisfactory salaries. Depending on the complicated design they craft on each Banarasi brocade saree, weavers are paid much less than their daily productivity. This is not sufficient for their sustainable living and has posed a threat to them to shift to other states and professions.
- 4) Mushrooming growth of power looms has posed a threat to the weavers and artisans due to the production system and monopoly of capitalist merchants. Every household which had a handloom was forced to shut as capitalists wanted to invest in power loom for quicker productivity. This has put the handloom industry in danger.
- 5) Introduction of new competitors, capitalists, and financiers hold the market is dominant as they occupy a large share of the market in terms of loans, supply of yarn, and raw materials. The capitalist merchant wanted to produce larger quantities of merchandise by employing fewer weavers as weaving was done on power looms. This led to an increase in unemployment and weavers getting meagre wages.
- 6) Cheap quality of fabric, imitations of pure silk, mass production of inferior versions of silk, and misguiding the buyers in the name of brocade fabric have left gullible buyers confused which further leads to loss of sales to substitute products.
- 7) Shifts in customers' tastes have posed another threat to the handloom industry as today's customer is well informed through social networking sites. They can compare product quality and pricing with just one click on electronic gadgets, also, as more fancy imitations of

Varanasi handlooms are available in local markets and on other platforms.

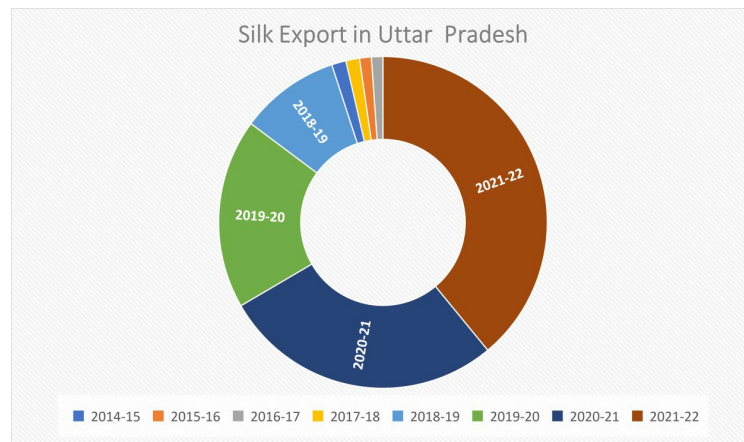
9. RESEARCH OUTCOME

ODOP’s scheme has reimaged UP’s growth story in terms of income and local employment. It helped in improving the product quality and skill development. Table 4's data clearly shows that the export of silk, the raw material needed for producing brocade, has increased from INR 9.11 Cr in 2014–15 to INR 251.65 Cr. in 2021–2022. [Widiyanti \(2018\)](#)

Table 4

Table 4 Shows the Export of Silk in Uttar Pradesh From Year 2014-2015 Till 2021-22								
Year	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Value in Rs. Cr	9.11	7.46	7.32	8.67	63.29	119.58	178.29	251.65

Source Export Promotion Bureau, Uttar Pradesh



Today, the state has the largest capital MSME base in India and its ODOP products contributed to increased exports from INR 86,000 crore in 2017-18 to INR 1.56 lakh crore in 2021-22. The percentage contribution of ODOP products is estimated to be approximately 81% of UP’s overall exports.

10. CONCLUSION

According to the study's results, the ODOP Scheme has an advantageous influence on the increasing significance of holistic growth in the Indian handloom industry. Numerous factors have directly influenced its growth, particularly social and political influence, initiatives from the government designed to encourage the handloom and handicrafts sector, and the dissemination of innovation throughout organized and unstructured handloom enterprises. Consequently, weavers and their associated workers in Varanasi's handloom operations are now enjoying a more decent and sustainable alternative to employment. The ODOP determination has helped alleviate rural poverty, increase social security, and enhance well-being. Maintaining and advancing a sustainable approach to performing and conserving Indian art has been supportive of the campaign. Production prices are increased because brocade material and Banaras Sarees must be produced using labor-intensive, traditional methods. Fortunately, an

approach to charge a premium for the products has been developed by linking a distinctive GI Tag. As a result, every time a consumer purchases a handloom commodity, they contribute to an entire network and chain that includes cotton and silk cultivators, yarn spinners, dyers, weavers, designers, and so forth. Also, a special focus of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister, of Uttar Pradesh in this area will help in increasing the income of the artisans.

However, to ensure the functioning of the ODOP system is being carried out effectively; representatives from the State and Central governments ought to assess and monitor clusters and block levels on their field inspections. Regular monitoring, evaluation, and ensuring adequate advancement and updating government policies are also imperative.

In the final analysis, the authors anticipate that the amazing achievements of the ODOP's regional economic revitalization initiative in Uttar Pradesh proved to serve as a model for the surrounding 28 states and 8 Union Territories of the entire country.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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