

Solapur Handloom Industry

Why in News?

Weavers have been urging **the Maharashtra government** to recognize their <u>'Solapuri silk saree'</u> as a traditional textile under <u>the 2023 textile policy.</u>

Key Points

- Inclusion of Solapuri Silk Saree:
 - This inclusion would grant access to <u>old-age pension schemes</u>, <u>employment as</u> master trainers in government handloom institutes, and an annual festival allowance of Rs 15,000 for female weavers and Rs 10,000 for male weavers.
 - They argue that other textiles, like <u>Himru</u>, are included despite limited production in the state, while their sarees remain unrecognized.
- Challenges in Government Schemes and Weaver ID Cards:
 - Weaver's Pehchan Card is essential to avail benefits under the National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP), including MUDRA loans and workshed support.
 - Many applicants face delays in receiving their cards, with some waiting for years before gaining access to central government benefits.
 - Weavers struggle to secure loans under the Weavers Mudra Scheme, as banks often reject applications due to high default rates.
 - The Pehchan Card also offers financial aid for weavers' children, covering Rs 2 lakh annually for textile education and a monthly stipend of Rs 5,000.
- Financial Struggles and Seasonal Market Demand:
 - Each handloom produces one to two sarees per month, which sell for Rs 12,000 to Rs 15,000 during festive seasons but see minimal demand in off-seasons.
 - The community relies on markets in Pune, but buyers frequently reject or undervalue their products, reducing profitability.
- Collective Workshed and Yarn Bank:
 - They demand a collective workshed, where multiple handlooms can operate in a shared facility, improving efficiency and working conditions.
 - A yarn bank with a 15% subsidy under the Raw Material Supply Scheme (RMSS) is also sought, as middlemen currently exploit subsidies, leaving weavers without direct benefits.
- Lack of Effective Government Marketing Support:
 - The government proposed <u>Urban Haat</u>, a dedicated marketplace for handloom products, but its feasibility is questioned due to low financial aid and high infrastructure costs.
 - Weavers seek better marketing opportunities and government support to expand their reach and ensure fair pricing for their sarees.
- Future Concerns:
 - Many young generations are reluctant to enter weaving, citing unstable income and lack of social security.
 - Weavers express concerns over financial insecurity, with no government assistance during medical emergencies or crises.
 - They urge policy improvements to protect traditional handloom artisans and sustain their craft for future generations.

National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP)

Objective:

NHDP aims to promote the sustainable development of handloom weavers, both
within and outside identified handloom clusters, by transforming them into self-managed
and competitive socio-economic units.

Implementation Period:

The scheme is designed for the 2021-22 to 2025-26 financial years.

Approach:

• It **follows a need-based strategy** for the integrated and holistic development of handlooms and the welfare of handloom weavers.

Target Beneficiaries:

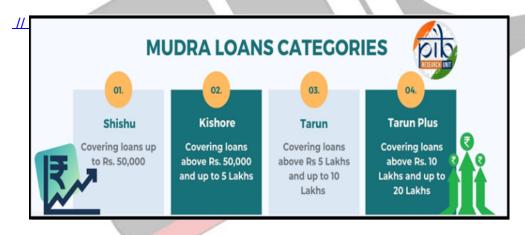
 The scheme benefits individual weavers, cooperatives, and <u>Self-Help Groups (SHGs)</u>, both within and outside the cooperative system.

Key Support Areas:

- Raw material assistance for production sustainability.
- Design inputs to **enhance product quality** and market appeal.
- **Technology upgradation** for improved efficiency and competitiveness.
- Marketing support through exhibitions and trade events.
- Permanent infrastructure creation, including Urban Haats and marketing complexes, to provide direct market access to weavers.

PM MUDRA Yojana

- The aim of PMMY is to facilitate easy collateral-free micro credit to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro entrepreneurs for income generating activities.
- MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency) was launched in 2015, to provide refinance support to financial institutions like banks, micro-finance institutions (MFIs), and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).
- It provides refinance, credit guarantee, and development support to financial institutions, helping them extend financial services to micro-enterprises in manufacturing, trading, and services.



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