

Towards a theory of innovation in handloom weaving in India

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Propositions
belonging to the PhD dissertation

Towards a theory of innovation for handloom weaving in India

Annapurna Mamidipudi

1. Traditional handloom weaving can be studied as a socio-technical ensemble with different types of expertise and a system of knowledge.
2. The suicidal weaver, the migrant weaver and the innovative weaver are equally part of the handloom socio-technical ensemble [STE].
3. Vulnerability in traditional craft livelihoods, in this case handloom weaving, is emergent and multiple, and can be ameliorated or exacerbated depending on the characteristics of the socio-technical ensemble that handloom weavers are embedded in.
4. Overlaps in discourses amongst the diverse groups in the handloom STE build coherence and facilitate actions in response to the multiple vulnerabilities.
5. Designers intending to mitigate vulnerability in livelihoods of craftspeople have to look beyond the economic into social and cultural outcomes of design interventions.
6. When craftspeople acquire cultural capital through mediating cultural markets, they themselves can take up the function of design in craft production and then become change agents and masters of their own fortunes.
7. The obduracy of the handloom STE, persisting with the hand-operated loom while adapting itself to new markets, creates stability in vulnerable livelihoods.
8. The loom or the weaver are not inherently unsustainable. Rather, sustainability is the outcome of a responsibly innovating technological culture.
9. Craft skills are an instance of embodied knowledge; embodied knowledge is indispensable for innovation in general.
10. Any imperfections in this product are due to its handcrafted nature, and should be taken as evidence of being authentically handmade.