

Narratives of Empowerment: The Role of Fashion in Advancing Women's Social Status in Rural India

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ABSTRACT

Fashion plays a vital role in globalization, influencing cultural exchange, economic development, and social identity (Tiwari, 2023). Globalization has a substantial influence on the merger of identities across diverse cultures. Designers are increasingly inclined to adopt a multicultural perspective and investigate a larger array of cultural influences in order to develop a continuous stream of innovative and fresh styles, as new trends are rapidly disseminated from high-fashion to fast-fashion. The fashion industry is frequently criticized for its cultural appropriation, often appropriating traditional clothing, symbols, or designs from marginalized cultures for commercial gain without consent or recognition (Chumo, 2023). To curb cultural appropriation and encourage unique styles, some mindful Indian designers are collaborating with indigenous communities to produce ethically sourced fashion that acknowledges the makers.

This research is set against the rich cultural legacy of India, where traditional crafts not only function as art forms but also have a profound connection with the identities of the communities that create them. It's interesting to note that in some craft and handloom clusters, where cultural norms have historically oppressed women, fashion serves as a vehicle for both self-expression and empowerment for them.

The lack of focused research on how fashion impacts women's social standing in rural India is a significant gap in existing literature. While there are studies on women's empowerment and fashion, few have delved into the direct correlation between these elements in rural settings. This research aims to fill this gap by documenting the narratives of women who are part of the fashion ecosystem from marginalized areas. This study is a result of the author's six-year personal experience participating in several design-led co-creation workshops in two distinct rural settings in India. It investigates two craft forms practiced exclusively by women. On one end of the spectrum are Muslim women in Nanoor, West Bengal, known for Kantha embroidery, while on the other are the Christian women in Dimapur, who weave Nagaland textiles on backstrap looms.

This exploratory research employs participatory methods grounded in qualitative

study to ensure an inclusive and empathetic approach. The primary data is collected through unstructured personal interviews (with artisans, designers, and brands) and observation. The paper discusses the impact of brands like Biswa Bangla and Swadesh that connect to rural women as part of their fashion expression. It further tries to understand the prospects of the younger generation and their role in taking their mother's legacy ahead.

In conclusion, this study suggests that fashion goes beyond its superficial constraints to become an inspiring story of empowerment, particularly for rural Indian women. It provides them with a source of income, a sense of identity, and a platform for social engagement. The study highlights the necessity for an ecosystem that fosters these narratives of empowerment, balancing the advantages of commercialization with the preservation of traditional crafts.

Keywords: Handicraft, women-empowerment, inclusive, co-creation, indigenous-fashion, cultural-appropriation.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The progression of fashion in India over thousands of years has been profoundly shaped by the contributions of women. The ancient sculptures and painting of India predominantly shows women as fashionable in their jewellery and fine draped textiles which were initially unstitched. Adorning the body and grooming was an import art that women used to control men in the society, be it the queen or the courtesans. The Ministry of Culture, Government of India, documents that during the Vedic period (1500-600 BCE), women wore clothing like the *vasa* (lower garment) and *adhivasa* (top garment), usually made from locally obtained cotton and silk. The ecosystem of fashion was self-sustained and local. Historically, the Vedic women were empowered to weave their own textile and were called *vayitri*, while male weavers were referred to as *vaya* in the Rigveda. The early styles demonstrated simplicity and elegance, reflecting the societal norms and cultural values of a period characterised by greater tolerance towards women displaying bare breasts adorned with jewellery. The standard of modesty was significantly more liberal and subsequently deemed indecent during the Colonial period.

During the mediaeval period, women's fashion evolved to become increasingly elaborate. The Mughal era (1526-1857) was characterised by the exquisite embroidery and luxurious fabrics worn by women, who adorned their saris with gold and silver threads. This period witnessed the emergence of influential women such as Rani Padmini and Rani Lakshmibai, who not only governed their kingdoms but also established fashion trends through their royal attire. Fashion for women however was more conservative during this era where the 'purda' system was prevalent, expecting

both Hindu and Mughal women to cover their head and face with a draped fabric, which later popularised as the *ghunghat* for Hindu women and *hijab* for Muslim women.

During the 20th century, Indian fashion integrated traditional elements with Western influences. Amrita Sher-Gil significantly influenced Indian fashion by introducing sleeveless blouses and integrating bohemian elements with traditional Indian styles. Maharani Gayatri Devi styled the Coco Chanel famed pearl necklace effortlessly with her elegant silk chiffon sarees. The post-independence period witnessed the rise of Indian handicrafts and handloom where Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay championed the cause of handcrafted as an approach of rural economic revival. Designers such as Ritu Kumar, Sabyasachi Mukherjee, Sanjay Garg and Anita Dongre, who advocated for the utilisation of handloom and handicrafts, thereby empowering rural women artisans.

The fashion industry has the capacity to considerably boost the empowerment of women. With its worldwide reach, impact, and creative power, the industry has the potential to foster an unparalleled atmosphere that values women's uniqueness, challenges traditional conventions, and promotes diversity. The fashion business therefore can empower women economically, socially, and culturally through a variety of channels, including design, representation, entrepreneurship, and activism.

Problem Statement

Academic literature on fashion and rural Indian women's social status is scarce, despite its importance for gender equality and socio-economic development (Kaur, 2019). Traditional conventions and socio-cultural expectations influence the dress choices of rural Indian women, impacting their social interactions (Ahmed and Singh, 2020). Existing research on rural women's empowerment focuses on economic or educational criteria, ignoring fashion's multifaceted role in identity, agency, and social mobility (Sharma and Bose, 2018). Insufficient research ignores how affordable, available, and culturally suitable clothing affects women's confidence, community acceptability, and social involvement (Patel, 2021). Without such studies, it is unclear how global or metropolitan fashion trends affect rural communities, which may change femininity and empowerment (Chatterjee, 2022). This disparity may reveal fashion's subtle role in breaking gender norms and encouraging women's social inclusion in certain areas.

Objectives of the Study

This study explores the narratives of women in rural India, who contribute to India's fashion industry, focusing on their unique challenges and opportunities. It examines their roles in traditional crafts production, contributions to local and global markets, and cultural influences on their work. The study also aims to document the empowerment derived from fashion, as it serves as a source of income, self-

expression, and cultural preservation. Through qualitative methods like interviews and participatory observation, the research aims to understand how fashion empowers women in rural India and the transformative impact of their involvement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Globalization and Fashion

Fashion serves as a medium for individuals to convey their cultural identity, and with globalisation, it has evolved into a mechanism for cultural exchange. Fashion designers, retailers, and consumers globally are increasingly exposed to diverse cultural influences. This has resulted in the emergence of novel styles and trends that integrate diverse cultural elements, yielding distinctive designs (Tiwari, 2023).

Influence on cultural identities and fashion trends

As a testament to world's growing interconnectedness, Nirbhay Rana (2024) opines that "garments, accessories, and designs serve as silent ambassadors bridging cultural divides. This transformation is far from superficial; it penetrates deep into the realms of culture and international relations".

Multinational fashion businesses have undoubtedly influenced the global fashion landscape, despite the appeal and significance of local fashion. These global giants have not only revolutionised style but also left an indelible impact on economies, sustainability, and consumer behaviour (Textile Industry, 2023). Fashion labels such as H&M and Zara have influenced the fashion choices of Indian youth. The availability of a wide range of style options at reasonable prices, along with the accessibility of big brands online, has allowed them to acquire a large global market. This has given rise to two aspects – blurring of cultural identities and cultural appropriation.

Controversies surrounding cultural appropriation in fashion

Cultural appropriation plagues the global fashion industry, often involving prominent figures. India, known for its rich cultural tapestry and artisanal traditions, often fails to acknowledge the act of drawing upon its diverse resources. However, the current governmental acknowledgement of the significance of geographical identification marks a pivotal shift in this narrative. The renowned Indian designer Sabyasachi Mukherjee, celebrated for his mastery of traditional textiles and genuine embroidery techniques, encountered allegations of cultural appropriation during his recent collaboration with H&M. In this partnership, he employed Sangneri prints, digitally produced outside India, without recognizing or obtaining consent from the authentic artisans who practice this traditional hand block printing technique in Sangner, Rajasthan. Indian craft enthusiasts have expressed significant disapproval, particularly considering Sabyasachi's reputation for honouring India's artisanal heritage in his collections. Should this trend persist, Young (2010) contends, it fosters cultural insensitivity and solidifies stereotypes, thereby obscuring the distinctions of

cultural identities.

Women's Empowerment through Fashion

The fashion industry has increasingly emphasized women empowerment, celebrating urban women's achievements and contributions (Gill, 2007). However, this narrative glosses over the experiences and contributions of marginalized rural women, who have been instrumental in preserving and promoting India's traditional textiles and crafts (Nag, 2016). Rural women's participation in the fashion industry is often limited to their roles as artisans, craftswomen, or laborers (Bhattacharya, 2018). Their agency, creativity, and labor are frequently overlooked, and their contributions are relegated to the periphery (Dasgupta, 2017).

The fashion industry's narratives of women empowerment often focus on urban women, neglecting the contributions and experiences of marginalized rural women (Kaplan, 1997). This oversight perpetuates the existing power imbalance, rendering rural women invisible in the fashion discourse (McRobbie, 2009). This paper argues that the dominant urban-centric approach to women empowerment in fashion eclipses the agency, creativity, and labor of rural women, who have been integral to India's rich textile heritage (Banerjee, 2014).

The industry of fashion has the capacity to considerably boost the empowerment of women. With its worldwide reach, impact, and creative power, the industry has the potential to foster an unparalleled atmosphere that values women's uniqueness, challenges traditional conventions, and promotes diversity. The fashion business may empower women economically, socially, and culturally through a variety of channels, including design, representation, entrepreneurship, and activism (Deeba, 2023). Further, the Indian fashion industry has the potential to be a catalyst for positive change by promoting body positivity, supporting women-led businesses, advocating for gender equality, nurturing mentorship and collaboration, and thereby providing opportunities for self-expression.

Traditional Crafts and Economic Impact

Overview of traditional crafts in India

Traditional crafts in India play a key part in the engagement of rural women by providing them with a means of subsistence and a method of preserving their cultural heritage. There is a vast range of textile and non-textile arts that fall under this category. Some examples of these crafts are Sanjhi paper cutting, Madhubani painting, and Kantha embroidery.

The Indian fashion industry has greatly benefitted from the use of traditional artisans, with designers like Ritu Kumar and Anita Dongre incorporating these handicrafts into their designs. This not only makes traditional Indian crafts accessible globally but also provides sustainable income for artists. By promoting handlooms and handicrafts,

these designers contribute to the preservation of these art forms and ensure a steady income for women craftsmen, thereby promoting women's empowerment through fashion.

Economic implications for women involved in these crafts

The economic implications for women engaged in Indian crafts are significant and complex. Participating in traditional crafts like embroidery, weaving, and pottery offers women an opportunity for additional income, thereby improving their bargaining power and socio-economic standing (Chattopadhyay, 1985). The Crafts Council of India (CCI) indicates that the artisanal sector ranks as the second-largest provider of livelihood in India, presenting considerable employment prospects, particularly for women in rural regions. This sector offers economic advantages while simultaneously aiding in the preservation of cultural heritage and the promotion of sustainable livelihoods (Sharma, 2014).

Furthermore, programs such as the One District, One Product (ODOP) initiative have played a crucial role in enhancing the economic opportunities for women artisans. This initiative emphasizes the enhancement of particular crafts in each district, consequently offering women improved market access and greater financial independence (Yadav et al., 2024). Investigations indicate that financial resources, digital technologies, and developmental approaches significantly contribute to improving the entrepreneurial performance of women artisans. Through the removal of intermediaries and the provision of equitable compensation, initiatives such as The India Craft Project (TICP) have empowered female artisans, allowing them to achieve recognition and financial autonomy (The India Craft Project, n.d.).

Supporting women artisans can greatly stimulate economic growth in India. As highlighted by the McKinsey Global Institute, enhancing the involvement of women in the workforce has the potential to contribute an additional \$770 billion to India's GDP by 2025 (Impact Entrepreneur, 2022). This highlights the significance of empowering women in the craft sector, as it plays a crucial role in driving economic development while also promoting social equity and preserving cultural heritage (ANU Press, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study addresses a gap in the literature on fashion's impact on rural Indian women's social standing. There are numerous studies on the relationship between women's empowerment and fashion, but few focus on this relationship in rural areas. This study chronicles marginalised women in the fashion sector to remedy the inequity. A six-year personal experience in design-led co-creation workshops in two unique rural contexts in India inspired this inquiry into two craft traditions that women exclusively practice. This study features Muslim women in Nanoor, West Bengal, known for their Kantha needlework, and Christian women in Dimapur, who make

Nagaland textiles on backstrap looms. Participatory qualitative analyses ensure an open and compassionate approach in this exploratory investigation. Unstructured personal interviews with four craftsmen (Tajkira Bibi, Lovely Bibi, Anitoli, and Vekulovu Dozo), three designers (Achira Basu, Mayukhi Basak, and Raja Gope), and an artisanal NGO representative (Shreya Sarkar) provide the primary data. These methods enable in-depth analysis of participants' experiences and their professional sociocultural context. This study examines the impact of Biswa Bangla and Swadesh on rural women's fashion expression and power imbalances.

CASE STUDIES-NARRATIVES OF RURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Narratives of Muslim Women Artisans from Nanoor, West Bengal - Kantha Embroidery

Tajkira Bibi

Tajkira, a 49 years old woman from Agortor village in Birbhum, started her embroidery journey at six years old, inspired by her mother's quilt-making skills. After her marriage and the birth of three daughters and a son, she faced financial challenges and limited opportunities for her embroidery business. Tajkira received training from National Awardee Alima Khatun, who assigned her tasks with minimal wages. She established a self-help group in 2001 and later met trainers at Bangla Natok.com in 2003, who guided her in obtaining government loans and enhancing product development. Tajkira started her own enterprise in 2007 and distributed fabric and threads to artisans in her village. She participated in local handicraft fairs and travelled to Paris, Sweden, Lithuania, Japan, and Germany, receiving district-level accolades and recognition. Tajkira collaborated with fashion brands and designers to enhance her social standing and provide financial support to her family. She now owns large amounts of agricultural land and has established a Common Facility Centre (CFC). Tajkira emphasizes that genuine empowerment for rural women involves stepping outside their homes to carve out their own space in the world.

Lovely Bibi

Lovely Bibi, a rural woman from Muslimpara village in Nanoor, transformed her life through Kantha embroidery—a skill she learned from her mother. Despite facing challenges like her husband's mental health issues and in-law's rejection, she found refuge with her mother and started a business in 2007. She showcased her work at a craft fair in Goa, leading to increased sales and independence. She credits her exposure to the fashion industry to Banglanatok.com, an NGO working with Kantha artisans in Nanoor. Her daughter, Rini, has also been involved in the business, showcasing her products in Oman and receiving recognition. At the age of 48, Lovely considers herself fortunate to have visited Denmark to present her work.

Previously, they earned nearly Rs. 30,000 to 35,000 per month. However, due to the

pandemic, their income has decreased to between 10,000 and 15,000 a month. Despite this, Lovely finds joy in the success of other women entrepreneurs, who are also gaining respect and financial independence. She received an invitation from NIFT to train young students in Kolkata and participated in national affairs, advocating for women's skills in the industry. Her story is one of resilience, empowerment, and the ongoing struggle for recognition and inclusivity in the fashion industry.

Stories from Christian women loom weavers from Dimapur, Nagaland:

Anitoli

Anitoli, 40 years of age, from Sunito, Nagaland, began her journey as a child witnessing her mother's traditional method of weaving on a loom. Her mother's struggles to earn a livelihood through weaving and limited market opportunities impacted her. In 2021, Anitoli participated in several CSR marketing programs, enabling her to pursue her aspiration of becoming an artisan entrepreneur. She in turn, trained women in several villages and participated in exhibitions throughout India. Anitoli's expertise and passion for weaving led her to participate in the USTTAD Project, where she collaborated with 15 artisans and received guidance from supervisors. The program has helped her achieve financial independence and fostered a sense of pride in her professional contributions. In 2022, Anitoli established her brand, Anitoli Weaves, and employs 17 associate artisans. Anitoli's journey exemplifies women's empowerment through artisanal entrepreneurship, showcasing the potential for economic empowerment and creative expression among women through traditional crafts.

Vekuvolu Dozo

Vekuvolu Dozo, a 42 years old weaver, from the Chakhesang tribe and Naga United village began her journey at 18 years old from her aunt just before she got married. For 9 years she could not practice weaving due to her husband's transferrable job. But later she decided to adopt weaving as a profession. In July 2019, she connected with Antaran, a unit of Tata Trust, which opened up new market opportunities. Veku's entrepreneurial spirit inspired her to launch her own brand, Viko Ethnic Production, and sell her products on Instagram. She designs home fashion and accessories, including bags, scarves, and shawls. The USTTAD Project at NIFT introduced her to new designs, colour schemes, and techniques, enabling her to start her own yarn centre in Dimapur.

Today, Veku is a proud entrepreneur, supporting her three daughters while her husband is away on a teaching job. She travels extensively and participates in exhibitions across the country. Her hard work has earned her numerous state and national awards for her contribution to the preservation and promotion of the traditional backstrap loom of Nagaland. Veku's story demonstrates the power of empowerment through entrepreneurship and skill development. She has been weaving for last 15 years.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Fashion on Social Status

Economic independence and empowerment

Achira Basu, a designer who has worked with rural women for over a decade, believes fashion empowers and motivates women. In her personal interview, NIFT fashion design graduate Basu says that post-independence empowerment certainly occurred on multiple dimensions in India. Starting with Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, who played a significant role in popularizing India's rich craft heritage in the early 1950s, we can also consider Padmasree Laila Taib Ji and Ruby Pal Choudhury, who revived crafts, established craft councils nationwide, and continue to empower women through fashion. Craft renaissance gave many women a career and trade, empowering them. Ritu Kumar popularized fashion during the early days of the Indian fashion industry. Achira admired women like Ritu Beri, a pioneering Indian fashion designer who presented a fashion show in France and became the head of a French label in the 1990s.

Shreya Sarkar worked with Banglanatok.com for a decade, an NGO that promoted artisan skills and benefitted rural women. Shreya feels empowerment is about choosing and living life on one's own terms, not fashion trends. She saw Adivasi ladies wearing bright saris over collared shirts, which urban fashionistas adopted. Empowerment lets women combine fashion and function. The fashion industry has helped women use their bodies to their best potential by fostering this balance. Empowerment goes beyond fashion trends to give women freedom to express themselves.

Anitoli and Tajkira, both from distinct villages and religious communities, see their profession as the most important factor in determining their social position. Initially, both of them faced ridicule and alienation for defying the norm, but eventually, their hand skills earned them widespread acclaim in their respective communities. Anitoli highlights her particular position at the Church's Sunday mass and how delighted she is to have other women working for her.

Identity formation and cultural preservation

The artisan interviews illuminate their endeavours to preserve traditions and establish a distinct identity. After her husband's mental illness banished her from her in-law's residence, Lovely Bibi faced significant challenges in supporting her three girls. The superstitious rural family attributed their son's destiny to her and held her accountable. Moreover, the absence of a son made her a liability. Transitioning from homelessness to constructing a concrete residence with the assistance of her youngest daughter, her efforts in collaborating with designers have provided her with a meaningful identity. Rini, her youngest daughter, regards her mother as an inspiration and endorses her entrepreneurial pursuits. Rini launched her own business concurrently with her

marriage three years ago.

Anitoli and Vekuvolu learned the art of loom weaving from their family members, and they believe that Nagamese women are naturally skilled at it. They learned about urban design from Antaran, a TATA project, and Usttad, an NIFT project. They introduced a sophisticated color palette of monochromes, pastels, and earthy tones—a departure from their customary red, black, blue, white, green, and yellow. Anitoli says each color has rank and purpose. Historically, tribes identified themselves with specific colours and adhered to specific application rules. All weavers must adhere to these strict regulations. Vekuvolu believes that using new color stories for byproducts for non-community consumers is not a violation of traditions. It may be possible to develop and increase the tribe's cultural importance by adopting color stories for consumer products. This strategy blends tradition with contemporary, enriching the community's heritage and appealing to more people.

The women in Sunito village, belonging to the Sima tribe, appear to exhibit a greater willingness to embrace new designs and colour schemes compared to their counterparts in other villages. However, it is felt that focusing on external markets may dilute the authenticity of traditional craftsmanship, risking the loss of cultural identity in pursuit of commercial gain. Additionally, the emphasis on modern aesthetics could overshadow the deep-rooted meanings and stories behind the original art forms, leading to a homogenisation of cultural expressions.

Role of Brands and Organizations

Mayukhi Basak, a senior category manager at Biswa Bangla, has been managing artisanal divisions for major corporations like Aditya Birla and Reliance. Basak focuses on creating meaningful opportunities and enhancing the lives of grassroots craftsmen and weavers, demonstrating her commitment to sustainable growth and lasting impact. She identified Tajkira Bibi as an artisan with exceptional entrepreneurial skills who has developed niche collections for the brand that embody Bengal's traditional and cultural heritage.

As global awareness of the value of handcrafted products increased, brands began to highlight the contributions of artisans. Raja Gope, a designer with Swadesh, a Reliance initiative, believes that collaboration between large brands and artisans is mutually beneficial. Swadesh, initially positioned between Good Earth and FabIndia, has now surpassed Good Earth in terms of pricing. Gope asserts that sourcing fashion clothing from master artisans engaged in the authentic slow process of handmade finery has significantly enhanced Swadesh's brand value. This emphasis on authentic craftsmanship not only elevates the brand's prestige but also supports the livelihoods of skilled artisans. By promoting these unique handmade products, Swadesh differentiates itself in a competitive market while preserving traditional artistry.

Organizations such as Antaran have developed an artisan connect website to facilitate

connections between artisans and potential buyers nationwide. Vekuvolu reports that this website has facilitated multiple repeat orders from a buyer in Mumbai for a specific style of cushion. Anitoli speaks highly of her association with Antaran, which gave her opportunities to travel beyond her village, which is unthinkable for many women of her tribe.

The Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, sponsors the USTTAD project, which NIFT initiated. The same project connected all four artisans with designers and brands. For instance, the USTTAD project enabled Vekuvolu's entry into the fashion industry by providing her with the skills necessary to create market-ready products. This resulted in collaborative opportunities with designers, participation in exhibitions, and the establishment of social media outreach. Notable partnerships included collaborations with designers like Bambi and participation in prominent exhibitions such as the Dastkar Exhibit, Nila House, and Raintree. These opportunities significantly expanded her network and enhanced her understanding of current fashion trends.

Other artisans have been afforded similar opportunities; however, only a select few, such as these four women, have managed to overcome social pressures and demonstrate resilience, ultimately achieving success as entrepreneurs. Many rural artisans struggle to retain the training they receive from such programs because they don't incorporate their new knowledge into their ongoing work practices.

CONCLUSION

Achieving artisan success in rural areas is challenging; nonetheless, the experiences of four committed women provide a viable option. These artisans have transcended societal constraints and transformed their cultural heritage into entrepreneurial narratives. Numerous rural artisans neglect to include training in their daily job routines, so their achievements highlight the imperative for effective integration. These audacious women inspire others facing analogous circumstances to transcend cultural and religious obstacles and embrace innovative methodologies, demonstrating that success is attainable despite challenges.

The four women artisans whose cases were addressed have pushed their bounds beyond their villages and achieved an international platform that many young girls in their community can aspire to. They have inspired the following generation, with their daughters wanting to follow in their mother's footsteps and maintain their cultural heritage and traditional traditions. The younger generation, such as Rini, acknowledged using social media to increase her reach. Venu and Anitoli are both active Instagram users who find the platform advantageous; however, Lovely and Tajkira are still afraid of using smartphones and can only transmit photographs of things to various clients via WhatsApp. Empowering such ambitious spirits, tackling

structural hurdles, and acknowledging their voices and abilities are crucial for the future of artisanal workmanship in rural areas.

Further it may be concluded that the interplay between fashion and artisanal work in rural areas reveals a transformative landscape for younger artisans. Collaborations by designers and fashion brands offer them the platform to express their creativity without imposing urban designs which are difficult to produce using traditional methods, unless designers are sensitive to modify their designs around the essence of these crafts. Fostering an environment where traditional crafts can thrive and preserve and celebrate the rich heritage of artisanal work in the modern era requires acknowledging and amplifying these voices. Throughout this discourse, it is evident that the empowerment and inspiration fostered among women by their counterparts within the fashion industry has been profoundly impactful. This study was limited by paucity of time and inclusion of more success stories of rural women empowering themselves and others through fashion. The research further opens the scope of finding the best collaborative model where the fashion industry and artisans can strike a power balance without overshadowing the marginalised.

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