

should be discouraged. As there is a strong market for handloom weaving we also face competition among local weavers which is good. It encourages us to develop and gives us a chance to know our strength and weaknesses.

What are the main challenges facing handloom weaving in Kutch?

Shamji: Design and marketing are the big problems. Artisans who work with designers who have a good understanding of overseas markets create better products. It is our duty to carry our weaving heritage onto the next generation. Who will do this if we don't?

Ramji: Production time is a big challenge. Hand weaving is slow, it is difficult to meet deadlines. But a bigger problem is the newer generations are less interested in weaving. There is demand for handloom weaving, but not enough to attract young people to the profession. This problem can be solved if good wages are paid to weavers.

What is the future for handloom weaving?

Shamji: Handloom weaving will remain in few households. It is becoming very costly – it will take the form of art in future.

Jenti: The future looks good. Demand is increasing, at the moment production is on a small scale, but, with education, more people will begin weaving. The freedom of a personal schedule will attract them. The younger generation don't want to be slaves to anyone and with weaving they can be in charge. ●●●

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