Fusion of Fibre-Optic Threads with Traditional Handloom Fabrics for Interior Applications: An Innovation in Craft–Tech Integration

[1]Dimple R, [2]Nischay N Gowda
[1]Department of Interior Design,
[2]Associate, Department of Interior Design,
[1,2] JD School of Design, Bengaluru, Karnataka, India
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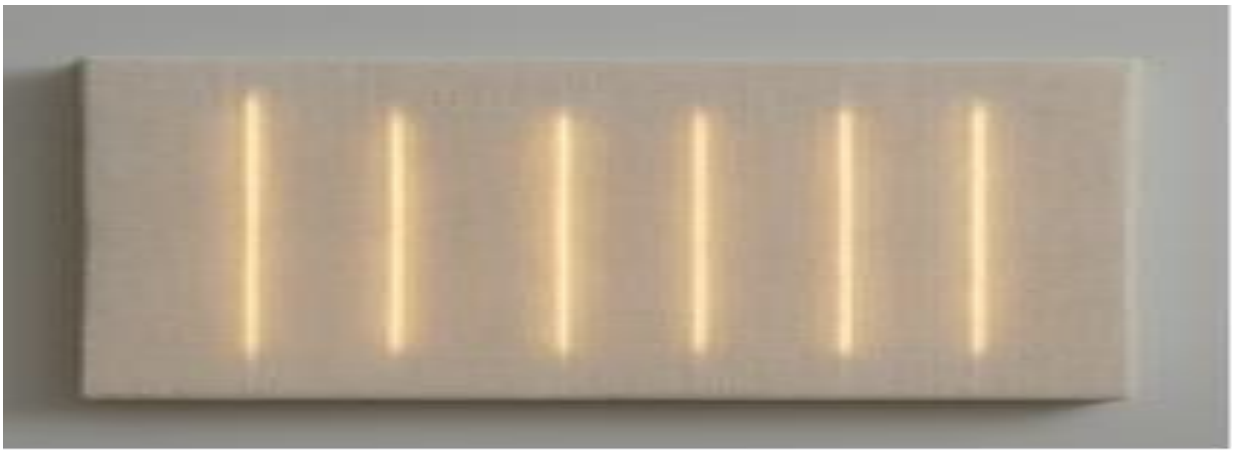
Abstract- Traditional Handloom Fabrics Fuses Fibre Optic Threads, Traditional Indian handloom fabrics embody cultural heritage and craftsmanship, yet their presence in modern interiors is gradually declining due to changing aesthetic preferences and technological advancements. This research explores an innovative approach to revitalizing handloom textiles by integrating fibre-optic threads—a smart, light-emitting material—into woven structures. The study investigates the feasibility, visual impact, functionality, and user acceptance of such hybrid illuminated textiles for interior spaces. A mixed-methods approach was followed, including literature review, material experimentation, and a user perception survey with 30 respondents. Findings suggest strong consumer interest in ambient lighting, craft–technology fusion, and unique décor products. The research demonstrates that fibre-optic–infused handloom fabrics offer potential for mood lighting, wall décor, soft illumination panels, and accent furnishings while preserving cultural craft value. The paper concludes that this innovation can modernize heritage textiles, introduce new interior product categories, and provide a sustainable pathway for craft revival.

Index-Terms: Fibre optic textiles, Handloom fabrics, Smart materials in interiors, Craft and technology fusion, Ambient lighting, Interior product innovation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian handloom textiles are globally celebrated for their craftsmanship, weaving diversity, and cultural significance. However, with increasing urbanization and demand for modern aesthetics, traditional fabrics are losing relevance in contemporary interiors. This creates an urgent need to reinterpret handloom in new, innovative forms suited to present-day lifestyles.

Parallelly, smart materials—particularly fibre-optic threads—are becoming increasingly prominent in performance textiles, interior lighting systems, and experiential design. These threads emit soft diffused light when connected to an LED source, offering possibilities for illuminated fabric panels, ambient lighting surfaces, and functional-décor products.



This research investigates how traditional handloom weaving can be combined with fibre-optic technology to create a contemporary interior textile product. The aim is to merge cultural authenticity with modern innovation, providing new pathways for craft livelihood, interior design applications, and sustainable creative industries.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Fibre-Optic Textiles

Research shows that fibre-optic threads are widely used in smart clothing, technical textiles, and ambient lighting applications. Studies such as *Parthiban et al. (2022)* and *SciTechnol (2021)* highlight weaving adaptability, illumination potential, and functional advantages of fibre-lit fabrics.

Author and year	Authors: Parthiban M., Srikrishnan R., Viju S. Year: *Likely between 2018–2021* (ResearchGate database range; paper focuses on smart textiles era)
Purpose of the study	The study aims to: 1. Review the role of optical fibers in smart clothing and technical textile applications. 2. Understand how polymer optical fibers (POF) can be integrated into textile structures. 3. Highlight their capabilities in illumination, sensing, communication, and safety applications. Relevance to the research: It provides a technical foundation for understanding how fibre-optic threads

	behave in woven fabric — something essential when adapting them to hand loom.
Method used	The methodology involves: 1. Collecting previously published scientific articles, industrial reports and case studies on optical fibers. 2. Analyzing: • types of optical fibers • methods of textile integration • performance behaviors • challenges in weaving/ knitting optical fibres 3. Comparing applications across smart textiles, protective clothing, medical textiles and fashion technology. Relevance to your research: It gives insights into weaving compatibility, bend radius, heat resistance, and mechanical strength — factors important when fusing optical fibers with traditional looms.
Key findings	The paper highlights several important points: 1. Polymer Optical Fibers (POF) are more suitable than glass fibers for textiles due to flexibility. 2. Optical fibers can be integrated through weaving, knitting, embroidery, or lamination. 3. POF-based textiles can create: • illuminated fabric • colour-changing surfaces • communication textiles • sensing/pressure-responsive textiles 4. Maintaining minimum bending radius is important for fibre performance. 5. Mechanical abrasion and repeated folding reduce the light-transmitting efficiency. 6. Heat sensitivity must be considered — fibres soften/melt compared to cotton/silk. Relevance to the research: This helps you define material handling protocols and teaches how optical fibers must be adapted to hand loom weaving tension, beat-up force, and shuttle type.
Limitations and gaps	Limitations • Difficulties in maintaining flexibility when integrating rigid fibers. • Durability issues in everyday use due to bending fatigue. • Limited wash ability and cleaning options. • Higher cost than conventional yarns.

	• Limited applications beyond fashion and protective textiles — not much focus on interiors. Gaps • Research focuses heavily on wearable smart clothing, not interior textiles. • No exploration of traditional crafts or hand loom weaving. • Lack of studies on cultural integration, sustainability or artisan-based textile innovation. • No discussion of aesthetic applications such as ambience lighting, interior artifacts or architectural textiles.

2.2 Traditional Handloom Fabrics

Handloom weaving in India involves manual techniques, natural fibers, and region-specific motifs. *Mamatha Hegde (2024)* emphasizes modernization strategies for heritage textiles, such as innovative weaving structures and material blends.

Author and year	Author: Mamatha Hegde Year: 2024
Purpose of the study	The paper aims to: 1. Examine the declining state of heritage handloom textiles in India. 2. Explore ways to modernize traditional weaving, dyeing, and printing techniques. 3. Suggest technological interventions that can preserve craft traditions while making them relevant to contemporary markets. Relevance to the research: It provides the conceptual foundation for introducing innovations such as fibre-optic integration without compromising cultural value.
Method used	This study follows a qualitative research methodology, including: • Review of literature on Indian heritage textiles. • Comparative analysis of traditional and modern weaving and dyeing methods. • Examination of case studies where modernization was implemented. • Observations on socio-economic and cultural implications for weavers. Relevance: Helps you understand how new materials and processes can be introduced into existing handloom workflows.
Key findings	1. Hand loom textiles are declining due to mechanization, low wages, and lack of contemporary appeal. 2. Modernizations through new weaving technologies, improved dyes, and contemporary motifs can revive craft industries. 3. Consumers are increasingly attracted to textiles that combine tradition + innovation.

	4. The study emphasizes the importance of maintaining craft identity while introducing functional or aesthetic enhancements. 5. Technological infusion (eco-friendly dyes, digital printing, modified looms) has been successful in: • improving productivity • expanding design possibilities • attracting new markets Relevance: Shows that optical fibre integration aligns with this modernization trend and can help reposition hand loom textiles in high-value interior design markets.
Limitation and gaps	**1.** The study focuses mainly on dyeing, printing, and weaving advancements, but not on material innovation such as smart fibres. **2.** No discussion on integrating non-traditional materials (e.g., optical fibres, metallic yarns, conductive yarns). **3.** Does not explore interior design applications, focusing only on apparel/home textiles. **4.** Limited experimental data—primarily conceptual and review-based. **5.** Does not address craft-technology fusion models for artisan communities.

2.3 Craft–Technology Fusion in Interiors

Existing research acknowledges a rising consumer interest in hybrid craft-tech interior products that offer visual uniqueness, emotional connection, and soft functional lighting.

III. AIM, OBJECTIVES & SCOPE

3.1. AIM

To explore and develop a fibre-optic–infused handloom fabric suitable for ambient interior applications and evaluate user acceptance toward this innovation.

3.2. OBJECTIVES (SMART Format)

- To analyze traditional handloom weaving techniques adaptable for integrating fibre-optic threads (Specific, Relevant).
- To develop a small-scale prototype of fibre-optic–woven handloom fabric within a 3–4 week timeline (Measurable, Time-bound).
- To assess user perception regarding illuminated handloom textiles using a structured survey (Achievable, Measurable).
- To evaluate the potential interior applications of the fused fabric through visual tests and user feedback (Relevant, Achievable).

3.3. SCOPE

- Focus on Indian handloom weaving practices compatible with fibre-optic insertion.
- Application limited to interior décor: wall panels, ambient lighting surfaces, soft furnishings.
- Survey includes 30 respondents primarily from design-aware urban backgrounds.

3.4. LIMITATIONS

- Limited access to advanced loom modifications.
- Prototype restricted to small sample size.
- No long-term durability or market testing included.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study followed a mixed-methods research approach, consisting of:

4.1 Literature Review

Reviewed academic journals (Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Sci/Scopus), government reports, and smart-textile research papers.

4.2 Material Exploration

- Study of fibre-optic thread properties
- Compatibility testing with handloom cotton
- Weaving trials using simple over-under structures
- Light transmission and diffuser tests

4.3 User Perception Survey

A structured questionnaire with 15 questions was administered to 30 respondents to analyze familiarity, preferences, lighting habits, décor choices, and consumer acceptance.

4.4 Visual Assessment

Prototype illumination was evaluated by respondents based on aesthetic appeal and possible interior use.

V. SURVEY ANALYSIS

Survey responses reveal a highly positive perception of fibre-optic integrated handloom fabrics. Participants showed interest in both aesthetic and functional potential of glowing textiles. Charts below represent key insights.

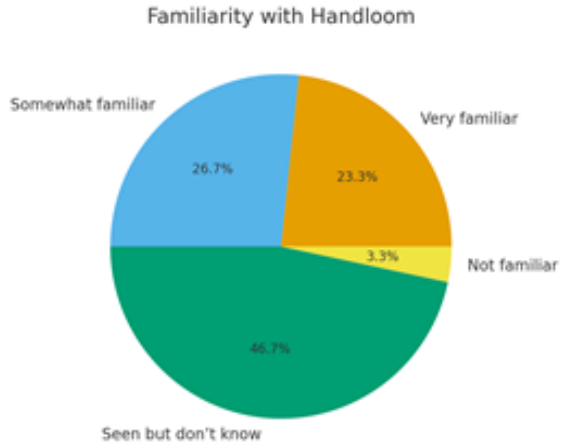


Fig. 1. Familiarity with Indian handloom textiles.

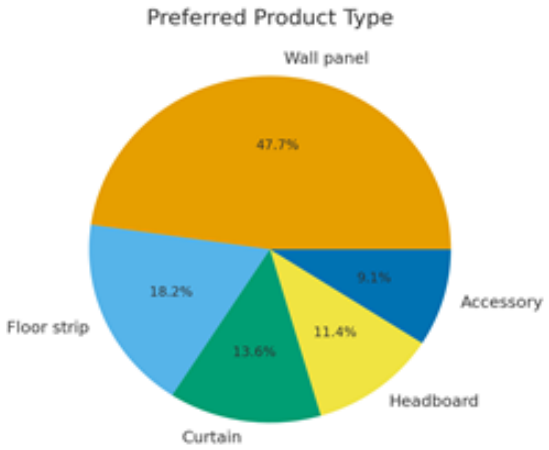


Fig. 2. Preferred product type for illuminated handloom textiles.

The results demonstrate a strong inclination toward innovative décor products, particularly those that combine cultural relevance with modern lighting features. Ambient lighting emerged as a major priority for respondents, aligning well with the soft glow produced by fibre-optic threads. Wall panels received the highest preference, indicating a market need for statement pieces. Users also identified illuminated handloom textiles as a medium to preserve traditional crafts while making them appealing to contemporary interiors. However, concerns related to maintenance, durability, and practicality highlight the need for further material testing and prototyping.

VI. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The fusion of fibre-optic threads with traditional handloom fabrics was found to be technically feasible and aesthetically appealing. Survey results reinforce that illuminated textiles align well with modern interior trends: soft mood lighting, unique décor, and tech-infused craft products. The research confirms that such innovation can bridge traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design expectations.

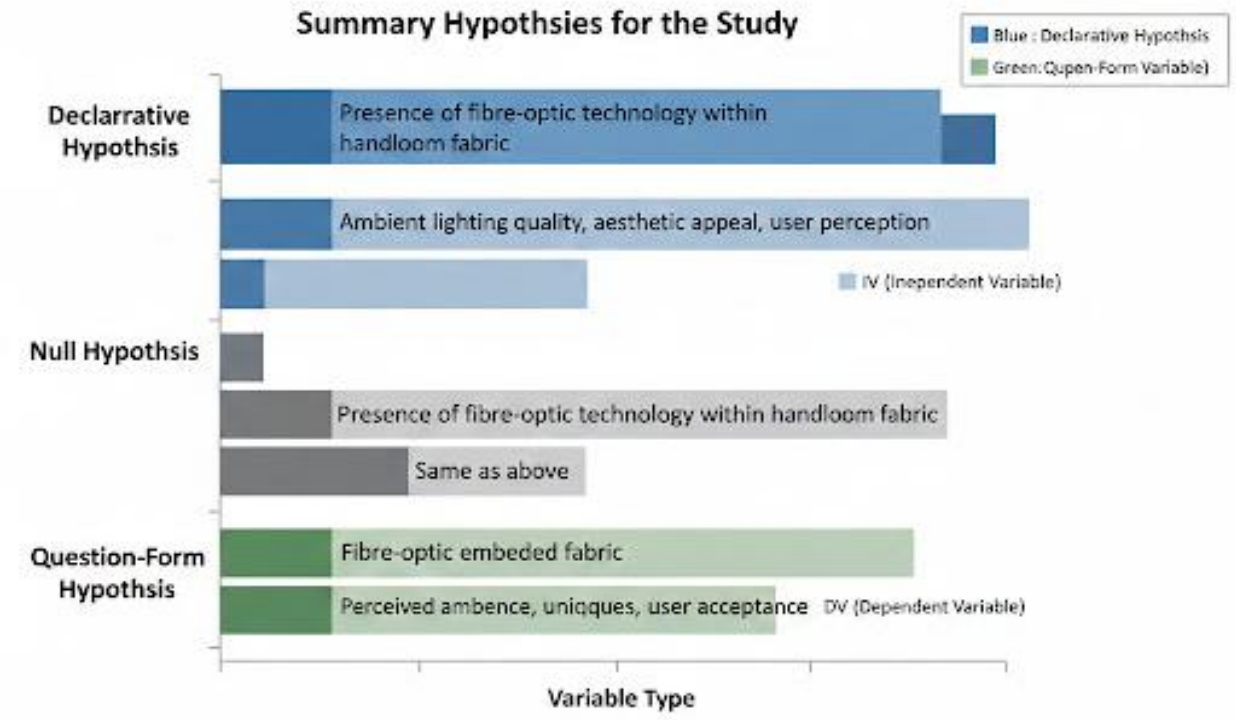
The prototype demonstrates:

- successful light diffusion through handloom cotton
- subtle glow suitable for ambient interiors
- versatility for wall panels, art pieces, and soft installations
- Consumers showed a strong inclination toward this innovation, further validating the project's relevance.

VII. HYPOTHESIS

In this study, the hypotheses were developed to examine how integrating fibre-optic technology into traditional Indian handloom fabrics can influence user perception, aesthetic value, and

functional lighting quality in interior spaces. The declarative hypothesis suggests that illuminated handloom textiles will enhance ambient lighting and increase the perceived uniqueness of interior products. The null hypothesis assumes no significant difference in user experience or aesthetic value between conventional handloom textiles and those embedded with fibre-optic threads. The question-form hypothesis further explores whether incorporating fibre-optic elements in handloom fabrics improves user engagement, emotional response, and interior ambience. These hypotheses help guide the study in assessing whether craft-technology fusion can create meaningful innovation in modern interior design while supporting cultural preservation.



VIII. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that fibre-optic–integrated handloom fabric is a viable and innovative material for contemporary interiors. The fusion offers aesthetic uniqueness, cultural significance, and functional lighting benefits. Survey responses clearly indicate high acceptance, strong curiosity, and market potential. This innovation can serve as a valuable pathway to revitalizing Indian handloom crafts while meeting modern interior design demands.

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