

# Evaluating Intangible Cultural Heritage Policy of Balinese Handwoven Textiles

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Several key factors drive contemporary concerns about the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage. Cultural policy has given meaning and importance to the cultural diversity of society. However, the efforts to preserve intangible cultural heritage by providing a way to community welfare are facing new challenges. The article aims to present an analysis of local cultural policy from Bali Governance to sustain the intangible heritage of handwoven textiles by increasing the economy demand. Using a focus group approach, qualitative data were collected and using Nvivo12 to analyze the data from 15 interviews of weavers and practices of Balinese handwoven textiles living in Bali. This approach is used as a means to represent the complex diversity of opinions among members of the weaving group in a dynamic interaction that is provided so that a diversity of views emerges from the participants and direct clarification of the issues that influence the diversity of arguments on the reality of the impact on policy. The result found that the cultural policy is increasing the sense of identity by using Balinese handwoven textiles and significantly has the direct impact for the demand of handwoven textiles. Furthermore, the research revealed that cultural policy plays important role in shaping and reviving the traditional practices by evaluating the challenges of cultural industries such as industrialization, regeneration knowledge, environmental sustainability by reducing chemical dyes, the welfare of women weavers, market access and strong representation between communities.

*Keywords: handwoven textiles, policy, sustainability, cultural economic, intangible cultural heritage.*

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## BACKGROUND

In 2003, UNESCO passed a convention to protect intangible cultural heritage (ICH) with the aim of increasing awareness of the importance of ICH and ensuring its appreciation by the global community (Yang et al., 2018). The convention explains the definition of ICH means “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. However, ICH in the craft sector faces sustainability challenges and obstacles. For example, lack of availability of adequate data, industrialization, mass production, unwillingness of the younger generation to inherit knowledge, techniques, and skills due to long and complicated production processes, lack of availability of basic infrastructure, lack of innovation and technology, lack of education, training facilities, and financial resources (Yang et al., 2018). Challenges are also faced by Balinese handwoven textiles, as one of the local cultural products whose sustainability is threatened and whose popularity is overshadowed by non-traditional textile products and industrial ready-made clothing. A number of reports from print and electronic media reveal that a significant threat to the sustainability of the weaving textiles comes from the invasion of imitation mass-produced textiles from Central Java Province at very cheap prices (N. Bali, 2019; Balipost, 2019, 2020; Kompas, 2019). Furthermore, the lack of regeneration leads to the gradual disappearance of the best weavers, the migration of young people to cities in search of work, and the lack of appreciation for textiles due to cheaper substitute options as a result of technological sophistication, resulting in a lack of appreciation for textile cultural products (NusaBali, 2020; RadarBali, 2019; Balipost, 2019; Balipost, 2020). Parameswara (2022) reveals the challenges faced regarding the sustainability of the Balinese handwoven cultural industry such as natural capital related to the increasingly limited availability of materials and human capital related to the existence of skilled workers. Even though faces many challenges, Balinese handwoven textiles have a unique positioning as authentic cultural products, not just as a handy craft of art which made by the community to meet their needs, however to have a significant roles of people's lives, such as cloth as a complement or means of religious ceremonies, to fulfill daily needs, and as an indication of a person's social status (Dedy Prayatna et al., 2021).

The challenges have a concern regarding the ICH convention "given the need to build greater awareness, especially among the younger generation, of the importance of ICH and its protection" (UNESCO, 2020). Therefore, the sustainability of the Balinese handwoven textiles is important as means the economic welfare of traditional communities, as well as maintaining cultural values amidst the currents of globalization and modernization.

Response the phenomenon, the Bali Provincial Government then issued two important policies as an effort to maintain the sustainability of the Balinese handwoven textiles cultural industry (BHTCI) and increase community participation in preserving Balinese handwoven textiles (BHT), namely Bali Governor Regulation No. 99 of 2018 concerning Marketing and Utilization of Balinese Agricultural, Fishery, and Local Industrial Products and Bali Governor Regulation No. 04 of 2021 concerning the use of Balinese Endek handwoven textiles and the others of BHT. Bali Governor Regulation No. 99 of 2018 aims to encourage the marketing and utilization of local Balinese industries, one of which is traditional handwoven industry products. Meanwhile, Bali Governor Circular No. 04 of 2021 concerning the use of clothing or attire made from Balinese handwoven textiles od Endek or other of BHT every Tuesday for all agencies, private companies, and community organizations and institutions throughout Bali.

Petrova (2011) argue that the cultural policy has broadened its scope from just the current creative arts towards creative-cultural industries, reflecting 'new' fields, such as cultural industries, creative classes, and cultural cities, that can ultimately invite academics and policy holders to rethink the argument: we now need to embed an economic perspective in decision-making processes to support cultural policy strategies. Policy initiatives to support the growth of these industries can yield significant long-term economic, social, cultural, and environmental benefits (UNESCO, 2015). Furthermore UNESCO (2015) explained that cultural expression as a means of promotion and strengthen principles and values such as freedom of expression, livelihoods for vulnerable group, community empowerment, tolerance, social justice, and mutual respect. Various studies on handwoven textiles have been carried out by academics from an anthropological perspective, looking at the relationship between variables that influence sustainability and their impact on the welfare of weavers (Parameswara et al., 2021). However, there is still further analyses to explore the impact of

policies on the sustainability of the cultural industry in the context of regional economic development. In fact, as an effort to maintain the sustainability of cultural products, public policy is an important instrument in protecting both tangible and intangible cultural heritage assets. Therefore, this paper aims to explore the impacts of the cultural policy on sustainability, the economy and their effectiveness in preserving cultural products.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a research design that utilizes the focus group discussion (FGD) method approach. This approach enables the exploration of a comprehensive, individual-oriented viewpoint to discern diverse perceptions among participants regarding the sustainability and the influence of government policy of BHT. This method allows researchers to explore the perspectives of participants in a non-constraining manner, avoiding the imposition of consensus and providing a platform for the expression of their own thoughts. Interviews using the FGD approach were chosen rather than individual interviews based on arguments Hollis et al., (2002) that the use of focus groups facilitates a dynamic interaction that enables the formation of many perspectives from participants. This interactive setting also allows for direct explanation of concerns that contribute to the variety of arguments against the prevailing reality put forward by participants. This design includes a series of four essential processes that need execution, namely the identification of the research design, implementation of data collecting techniques, analysis of gathered data, and presentation of research findings (O.Nyumba et al., 2018).

The members of the focus group discussions (FGDs) were recruited using various methods, including referrals based on academic recommendations, the formation of groups via networking, personal contacts, and snowball sampling. These individuals were chosen based on their expertise in producing several forms of handwoven textiles in Bali, including *cepuk*, *geringsing*, *endek*, *songket*, and *wastra bebal*. During the duration of the four hours session, 13 participants, consisting of four males and nine females, actively engaged in a purposeful dialogue. In addition, at the completion of the focused discussion, the participants were awarded certificate and provided with transportation allowances amounting to IDR 500,000 by the Warmadewa Research Centre, the organizing institution.

To explore the impact of government policy on the sustainability of the BHT of cultural industry, researchers and research assistants helped facilitate discussions between participants. In the group discussion session participants were free to add information. Two research assistants were tasked with audio-visual recording and transcribing focus group data word for word in Indonesian and Balinese to maintain nuances in the meaning of participants information and expressions of Balinese culture. This study employs thematic analysis and the constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to analyze the data, and qualitative data analysis software of Nvivo12 to conduct some form of constant comparison analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). In this analysis, all comments were contrasted and categorized, with categories being redefined as the study progressed. Two approaches that complement one another were used to analyze the focus group data. First, the researcher reads the text multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Second, using an open-coding technique, all policy impact-related concepts and themes were identified. As the coding progressed, categories were created, continuously contrasted, and then recategorized. Thirdly, axial coding was used to identify relationships between the categories developed in the open-coding phase and to reorganize the data using categories and subcategories. Peer debriefing with another researcher trained in qualitative methods and familiar with the cultural policy was conducted after data analysis to corroborate the validity of the findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sustainability Challenges in Balinese Handwoven Textiles

The BHT plays a vital role and is intertwined with Balinese local wisdom – *Tri Hita Karana* – the relationship between humans and God as seen from its role in religious ceremony activities, the relationship between humans and the environment as seen from one of the stages of making textiles, and the relationship between humans as seen from the economic side as a source of well-being (Parameswara et al., 2022). Sustainability of BHT is tied to the indigenous knowledge of the Balinese, who use the textiles in religious and cultural activities known as *Panca Yadnya* – five categories of ceremonies to be performed by the Balinese Hinduism community: *Dewa Yadnya*, *Manusa Yadnya*, *Pitra Yadnya*, *Bhuta Yadnya*, and *Rsi Yadnya*. The persistence of the Balinese people's indigenous knowledge will result in the continuation and expansion of culturally-based economic

activities. The spiritual function of the character and symbolic value of culturally produced goods is utilized by the current generation to generate income through economic community activities.

From the results of the focus group, the research found various patterns of challenges to the sustainability of the Balinese weaving cultural industry as shown in Figure 1

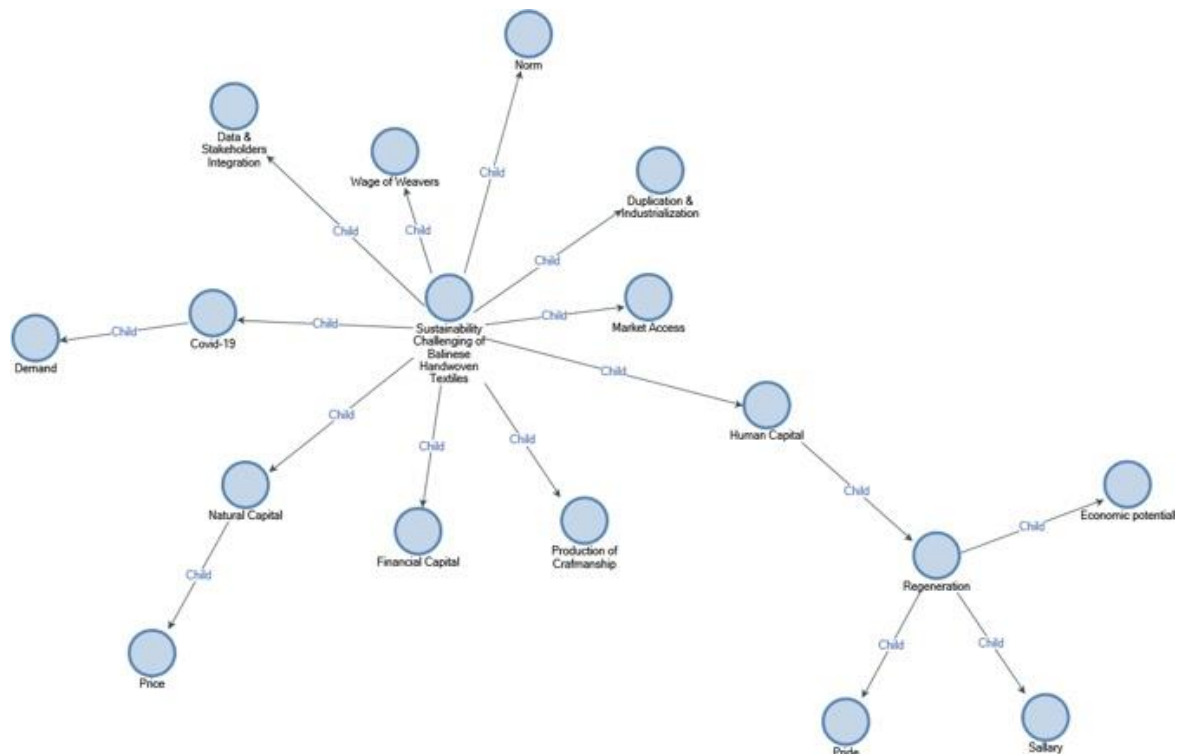


Figure 1. Project Maps Nvivo12 Analysis of Sustainability Challenging of Balinese Handwoven Textiles.

The significance of human capital is the process of regeneration poses a significant obstacle to the long-term viability of Balinese handwoven intangible knowledge. The way to produce BHT relies heavily on the expertise of experienced human resources, since the use of machinery plays a relatively minor role in this context. Furthermore, the primary obstacle hindering the development of BHT is that welfare and prestige of young people such as viable career path and salaries in tend to be comparatively lower when compared to other areas of work, such as tourism sector, working as a telephone counter guard, or within other segments of the hospitality industry.

Nevertheless, according to the feedback provided by focus group participants consisting of Balinese *endek* weaving businesses, it was observed that the salaries earned by *endek* weaving workers in Bali are relatively higher compared to their counterparts in Java. The significant issue arises in relation to the productivity as the result of weaving served as an alternative job:

*In the local context, weaving is mostly pursued as a part-time occupation or supplementary source of income. In addition, some regions, such as Karangasem, engage in the practice of weaving*

*during their leisure time, which occurs outside of their primary occupation as farmers.*

The situation of Tenganan Pegriingsingan Village has distinct characteristics. The weaving is plays significant roles in cultural and social practice, while also yielding economic benefits for the community. This practice plays a crucial role in facilitating community regeneration, particularly since it is mostly undertaken by young women.

The concept of authenticity in cultural items is predicated upon the symbolic values that are representative of the area cultural values. However, industrialization characterized by a primary focus on meeting market demands while neglecting the preservation of established cultural values and practices as the biggest challenges in BHT. The efficacy of policy that issuance strategy in stimulating demand has been acknowledged, with a clear correlation seen between the supply and the resultant rise in demand:

*"... there is an increase in demand in general, in particular I think with the government policy the reality is that a lot of handoven textiles are circulating from outside the island of Bali, mostly produced from Java..."*

"...an important phenomenon exists in *endek* handwoven textiles, like in schools on Tuesdays they wear *endek* clothes, like my child at school has *endek* printed, the important thing is that he wears *endek*, no matter where the *endek* handwoven is made... identity is more important than sustainability...."

The focus group members contended that government policies should be based on precise facts pertaining to Balinese weaving crafts people in order to enhance their effectiveness and specificity. Policies that aim to increase demand and culturally sustaining the BHT become more industrialized. High demand leads to a strategy by the market of addressing economic demands by seeking ways to boost supply by manufacturing BHT which concentrated in Java, and the market is saturated with printed duplications of BHT. In the event of a substantial influx of requests from various institutions, fulfilling those demands within a limited timeframe may prove to be challenging. The Balinese weaving cultural business faces a predicament owing to the traditional characteristics of its manufacturing method, which necessitates a significant amount of time for processing. Additionally, the sector relies heavily on a substantial workforce that has specialized skills and training, since it places great emphasis on cultural values and conventions. Furthermore, the participants also highlight the difficulty access of thread, which may be attributed to the constrained availability of natural capital for raw material extraction. In the event of a rise in the cost of raw yarn materials, weavers encounter limitations in their ability to directly raise the selling price of BHT to customers. This is mostly due to a range of business factors associated with competition and marketing techniques.

The capacity of weavers to enhance their weaving practices is contingent upon their level of financial resources. Balinese handwoven is a cultural product that has high of cultural value with inherent economic significance since it serves as a means of generating cash for skilled artisans. The availability of financial resources plays a crucial role in facilitating the operations of a firm, enabling essential activities such as the procurement of raw materials for yarn production and the timely compensation of craftsmen involved in the manufacturing process. The participants expressed the need for financial institution assistance in order to ensure cheap accessibility and the long-term viability of the weaving cultural business. However, the Balinese weaver community have thought about this problem ahead of time. They have set up

cooperative organizations called *koperasi* to help each other get financial access, network, get into new markets, and get the materials they need to make their crafts.

### **Effect of Policy on Balinese Handwoven Textiles**

Culture is an inherent and integral element of our global civilization, permeating all regions around the globe. Hence, it is imperative for cultural policy to align with the desires of a progressively heterogeneous populace and facilitate unrestricted expression of cultural identity. Generally UNESCO (2019) states that cultural policy acts as a forum for answering fundamental questions facing society, combining various public policy objectives, including: i) contributing to social cohesion and nation building, while ensuring respect and recognition of cultural diversity; ii) contribute to the formation of citizenship at the national level, while ensuring openness to global citizenship; iii) support the development of the cultural economy, while maintaining the status of culture as a common good; and iv) supporting the institutionalization of culture, its involvement in various fields of public policy, development of infrastructure and supporting mechanisms, as well as continuity of public funding,

Within the realm of cultural policy, the Bali government has implemented policy S.E No. 04 of 2021, with the aim of fostering the growth of the cultural economy while upholding the notion of culture as a shared resource. This is achieved by encouraging government employees, universities, regional governments, state-owned enterprises (BUMN/BUMD), and private companies to don attire crafted from Balinese *endek* handwoven textile or traditional Balinese woven cloth every Tuesday. According to the policy, the use and economic empowerment of Balinese *endek* handwoven textiles, a traditional kind of textile in Bali, is deemed necessary to enhance the well-being of the local people. The policy also includes a request to the government to promote and support the creative and innovative endeavors in the growth of Small and Medium Industries (SMEs) among the Balinese population, specifically in the production of *Balinese Endek* handwoven. Pebryani et al., (2022) state that the policy prompts woven *endek* weavers to reconsider their approach and consistently strive for innovation and creativity in the design of *endek* handwoven textiles. The current manual design process imposes limitations that hinder the weavers' ability to explore new possibilities. Consequently, many weavers merely replicate popular motifs available in the market. Therefore, Pebryani, Ratna, C.S., et al., (2022) state that digitalization is one of the strategies to expose the creativity and innovation

also preserve cultures is by documenting the work in a digital form.

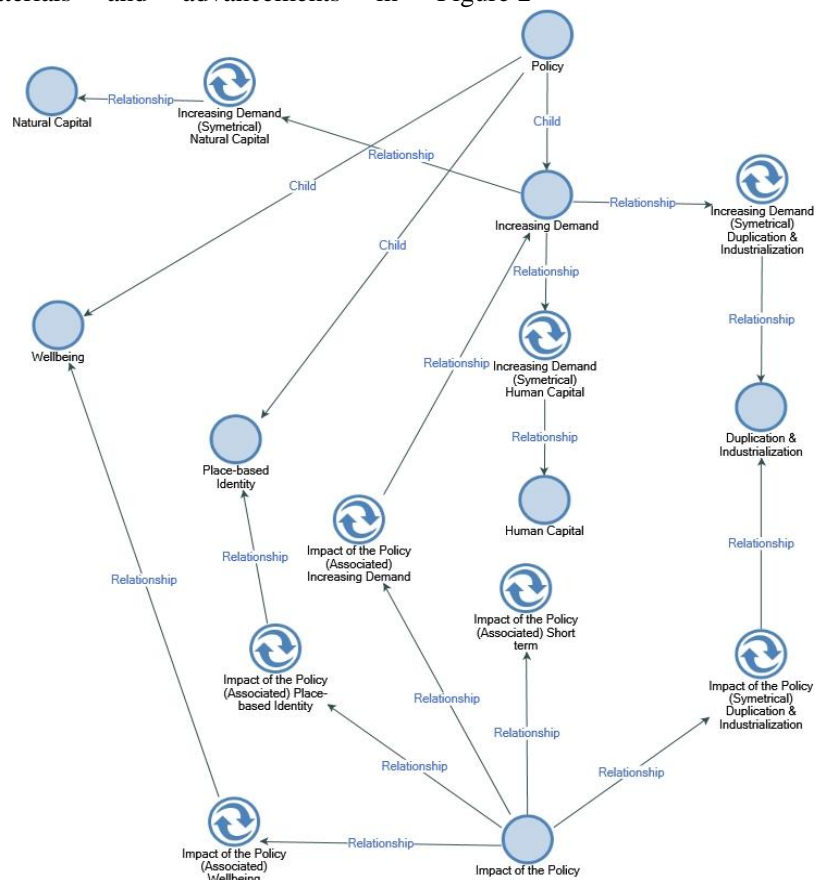
The implementation of this government policy was undertaken in response to the prevailing economic uncertainties, while also addressing the potential risks to the long-term viability of the cultural sector, which is particularly susceptible to volatile conditions. The findings derived from the research conducted on the focus group data indicate that public policy has shown a somewhat successful outcome in stimulating the demand for Balinese weaving in the near term. This effect is particularly notable among the recipients of the policy, namely private and governmental offices located in Bali.

However, this policy cannot be said to have significantly improved the welfare of Balinese weaving workers as a whole because collectively it also opens up gaps for the practice of violating diversity and cultural expression in the form of duplication using machines through border or printing techniques. According to Parameswara et al., (2022) BHT is a cultural product that faces significant vulnerability as a result of insufficient appreciation and acknowledgment, mostly stemming from the use of more affordable alternative materials and advancements in

study discovers that the disparity in vulnerability arises from the assimilation of culturally rich craft items with industrial goods to cater to market and industrial demands. Cultural craft items are created using specialized skills that are passed down from one generation to another, resulting in a rich and meaningful representation of cultural values.

Weavers see the imposition of a production limit of 2-3 months as an unrealistic requirement due to the high level of demand. In addition to this, the scarcity of human resources caused by regeneration issues has led to a limited pool of skilled weavers, thereby driving up production costs. Consequently, this situation has created an opportunity for various government tender recipients to replicate the traditional Balinese weaving techniques, which are typically practiced in a village located on the island of Java. The scarcity of raw resources for yarn in Bali is not commensurate with the significant demand. The substitution of cotton production on the island of Nusa Penida with industrial yarn has resulted in a dilemma over the supply of genuine *Tunun Gringsing*, *Cepuk*, and *Wastra Bebali* handwoven textiles. The pattern of the impact of the policy can be seen from the

Figure 2



technology. Aligned with this assertion, the present

Figure 2. Results of Nvivo12 Analysis of The Policy Impact Analysis of Balinese Handwoven Textiles.

From another perspective, the policy exerts influence on individual perception of their identity when understanding Balinese weaving as a traditional textile representing genuine Balinese cultural heritage. The concept of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is discussed as a means of fostering a sense of self-identity:

*This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.*

The obligation to use Balinese woven cloth in work activities in offices fosters new habits and a new image regarding the use of Balinese woven cloth at formal and important events as an identity. Syssner (2009) argue that regional culture and regional identity are generally seen as 'rooted' and linked to historical processes specific to a place and are promoted as important assets by regional political leaders, but that 'culture' and 'identity' are conceptualized in a way that tends to be commodified as a tool. in capacity to increase economic growth. Although the role of culture in the human development paradigm focuses on alleviating poverty and other human needs, including identity, education, and health, the sustainability agenda significantly expands the possible role of these factors (Wiktor-Mach, 2020).

## CONCLUSSION

The case study on handwoven textiles in Bali demonstrates a dynamic pattern whereby culture and economics adapt to new linkages. Cultural policies are anticipated to maintain cultural values through economic endeavors, facilitating the transmission of information, skills, and meaning within novel networks. This research examines the effects of cultural policy on the formation of new connections and opportunities, as well as its influence on current relationships, with a particular focus on suggested new patterns of how cultural policy influence the sense of identity. Jones (2018) argues that understanding the origins of a cultural policy necessitates an examination of the historical context of cultural policy as well as the postcolonial strategies and goals of the Indonesian state. Additionally, it can create avenues for various groups, including practitioners and cultural communities of practice, to access opportunities, resources, and obligations. The fundamental inquiry

that emerges is the degree to which communities and practitioners get advantages from this cultural strategy. The present case study conducted in Bali demonstrates that cultural policies have a substantial influence on the reinforcement of local identity via the medium of handwoven textiles. Nevertheless, this development presents novel possibilities for engaging in activities that contravene cultural heritage. In addition to this, the integrity of woven textiles is now facing a significant challenge as a result of the scarcity of raw resources for yarn production. Regional cultural traditions, such as those seen in Bali, exhibit a notable phenomenon of early ecstatic influence, especially in cases where the number of practitioners and groups is restricted within a physically confined island. The cultural policy implemented by the province of Bali serves as a commendable mechanism for revitalizing traditional industrial practices more effectively, and an excellent tool to revive traditional industrial practices in a better way and needs to be evaluated regarding the limitations that arise such as raw materials, regeneration, environmental sustainability by reducing chemical dyes, the welfare of women weavers, opening up network access. wide distribution and strong representation between communities. At some point, initiatives aimed at preserving cultural heritage within communities possess the capacity to enhance the well-being of a significant number of individuals. These individuals not only rely on the preservation of their cultural practices and traditions but also seek to derive personal significance from cultural sustainability within the context of an increasingly globalized world.

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