

Problems and Challenges of Artisans after Globalization: An Overview

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ARTICLE DETAILS

Article History

Published Online: 10 October 2018

Keywords

Handicrafts, occupations, ancestral

ABSTRACT

The artistic works and handicrafts are playing significant role in supporting main occupations such as agriculture and industries, especially in rural areas and majority of these works are caste based ancestral occupations. These works include carpentry, weaving, gold smithy, pottery, etc. On the other hand, globalization policies have encouraged the technology transfer, trade and commerce across the world and as an impact of globalization, there is increase in large scale industrial organizations, which produce the goods, which were earlier manufactured by artisans manually. After globalization, the increase in industries has become threat to artisans causing poverty and unemployment. Consequently, the artisans are facing many of the problems and challenges now. The paper focused on the problems and challenges faced by artisans after globalization.

1. Introduction

The handicrafts and artistic works of India are having a very long and rich history in spreading cultural heritage across India. Due to its unique cultural heritage, the Indian handicrafts are most popular and have greater demand in foreign market. Each state of India has a specialized handicraft and artistic works. The Major product of Indian handicrafts is based on wood wares, metal wares, hand printed textiles, pottery, paintings embroideries, etc. The handicrafts and artistic works are skill based and generally, these skills are ancestral. That is, these occupations are succeeded by elders to young in family. Even majority of these occupations are caste based. For instance, weaver belongs to weaver community in society, pottery is done by potter's community people, and so on. Most of these artisans support and plays important role in supporting major commercial activities such as agriculture, industry, etc. Artisans from different areas producing their products with a small level production unit which has represents their tradition, skills. Crafts are playing a major role in generating revenue to the government, employment generation which leads to the improvement of living standards of rural artisans (Abirami, et al, 2017). The producers of arts and crafts are to a greater extent, located in rural areas or backward areas. The sector provides livelihood to over 130 lakh weavers and artisans, a large percentage coming from the marginalized sections of the society. The industry is largely environment friendly and low on energy consumption, and consciousness on these issues, as also on fair trade practices is growing fast. India is estimated to have around 2682 handicrafts and 491 handlooms clusters. In both cases around 10 states cover around two-third of these clusters...The 2682 handicraft clusters belong to 24 product groups, covering 292 products. These include 548 textiles, 418 basketry, 298 woodwork, 251 metal ware and 203 earthenware related handicrafts products (Tamal Sarkar, 2011). When the socio-economic conditions of these artistic and crafts people are analyzed, it is found that, they are poor. Still, it was assumed that globalization modernize the artistic works and handicrafts and thereby bring progress in these occupations.

2. Globalization

Globalization simply refers to increasing connectivity, integration and interdependence in the socio-economic, technological, cultural, political and ecological spheres. The very concept has many sub-processes which includes, enhanced economic interdependence, increased cultural influence, rapid advancement of information and communication technology, and novel governance and geopolitical challenges that are increasingly binding people and culture of the world more tightly making a global village (Jena, 2010).

Globalization is the integration of economic, political, and cultural systems across the world. It has become modern way of life which reveals the access to all the resources that are available at different parts of the world. Through globalization, it has become possible to share the resources of different countries each other across the globe. As such, it made the growing socio-economic and political interdependence of each country with the other. It also enabled technology transfer and capital investment to poor countries. By its role across the world, globalization has encouraged cooperation among all the countries. Consequently, as stated by experts, globalization has brought equal economic status for all the people at the global level.

3. Impact of Globalization on Artistic People:

As discussed above, it was assumed that globalization will bring progress and prosperity of artistic occupations and handicrafts. But, the trends after globalization to a major extent are affected adversely on the livelihood and occupations of artisans and handicrafts people. Of course, sharing of foreign technology helps artisans to improve their work as stated by experts, but only in rare cases, it has become true.

The works of Indian artisans are manual and may take more time for their artistic products. But the rewards for the artistic works are meager. Instead of supporting the artisans, the globalization supported large scale industries, which produce artistic works and handicrafts at cheaper prices on

large scale, which have become greatest competitors for poor artisans. As such, after globalization the demand for artisans' works has been considerably decreased. Due to cheaper prices and durability of machine made products, the artistic works and handicrafts produced by large scale industrial organizations have spread the market. As such, unemployment is major threat faced by artisans in India after globalization.

There are also other challenges such as scarcity of raw materials, which has decreased artistic works. For instance, due to decrease in forests, there is scarcity of wood, which has become problem for artisans engaged in wood work. Due to competition from textile mills, there is decrease in demand for manual weavers. In this way, there is scarcity of raw materials for artisans. Fixing of prices of artistic works after globalization has become challenges for manual artisans as the artistic works produced by industries are cheaper and production is large.

Most of the artisans are not well educated and they are from rural areas. They are not much aware of the bank loans, interest rates for these loans, government schemes and initiatives. So they are suffering and looking for financial support to improve their production and yield income out of it. Though the Government has been taken some necessary action for artisans upliftment, artisans are not aware about the schemes and also some of them are afraid to lend money and repayment with interest even the interest rate is low. Market promotion is also greater challenge for artisans as their products are not with fixed prices and the prices usually determined by bargaining by final consumers.

On the socio-economic conditions of artisans after globalization as stated by Sruthi and Ramesh (2015) revealed that, a large section of Artisan population, in India in-general and Southern Indian in particular, is illiterate and is devoid of formal education. Poverty again makes them become more vulnerable. As a result, most of the artisans choosing to shift to other professions rather than stick into their hereditary

occupation. Even it is observed from many of the studies that, artisans and crafts people due to lower demand for their works, unemployment has increased. Consequently, many of these families are migrated to cities and towns in search of alternate employment. As the artisans are illiterates and low-educated, they are forced to work in unorganized sector in cities and towns. Due to their poverty and migration, they are living in slum areas and it has also turned another problem for cities and towns as the slum areas and slum population has increased considerably due to such migration. Hence, it is essential to solve the problems and challenges of artisans and handicrafts people and assure their secured livelihood.

4. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, majority of the studies were already revealed that there is economic development as an impact of globalization as industrial progress has been increased considerably. On the other hand, for developing countries like India, where there are illiterate and low-educated artisans who are depending caste based ancestral artistic occupations are facing threats on their livelihood. Consequently, there is increase in unemployment among artisans leading to poverty. Hence, it is suggested to solve the problems and challenges faced by artisans. For this purpose, it is suggested to the Government to formulate welfare schemes to enable self-employment training to these artisans in alternative occupations based on their existing skills and also to provide them financial assistance to start new occupations. It is also suggested to the artisans to form associations and unions, so as to produce their artistic works on large scale and also fix the prices, so that they can compete with large scale industrial organizations by uniting themselves. It is also essential on the part of artisans to get education, so as to improve their artistic works, so as to popularize their products in society. It is also essentially needed to restrict large scale industrial organizations by taxation. A comprehensive development national policy for the empowerment and development of artisans is essential on the part of the Government.

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