

An analysis of problems faced by handicraft sector in Jodhpur, Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

Rajasthan is called as land of various tradition and culture. Handicraft is a part of expressing particular culture. When talking about handicrafts it again categorised into hand-made, semi-hand made and machine made. On the economic front handicraft exports contributed Rs. 3,343 crore to the export basket of Rajasthan in financial year 2018, accounting for 9% of the State's exports. Total exports of handicrafts from the country was Rs. 29,347 crore in 2016, and Rajasthan was one of leading contributors with a share of 11.4%. Share of Rajasthan in India's handicraft exports has been traditionally high. From times immemorial handicrafts have been an integral part of Jodhpur city's culture and tradition. The objective of this research paper is to analyse the comprehensive problems faced by the artisans of Jodhpur at the on the ground there are many challenges like weak infrastructure, limited access to raw material, broken supply chains, poor marketing and an absence of consensus on what constitutes 'handicraft'. Moreover the, artisans walk a tightrope between preserving traditional skills and innovating for the contemporary marketplace. The present study focuses on the problems being faced by the small scale handicraft industry and gives some suggestions for improvement. The secondary sources for collecting the data mainly observation method and various online journals, articles were used.

1. Introduction

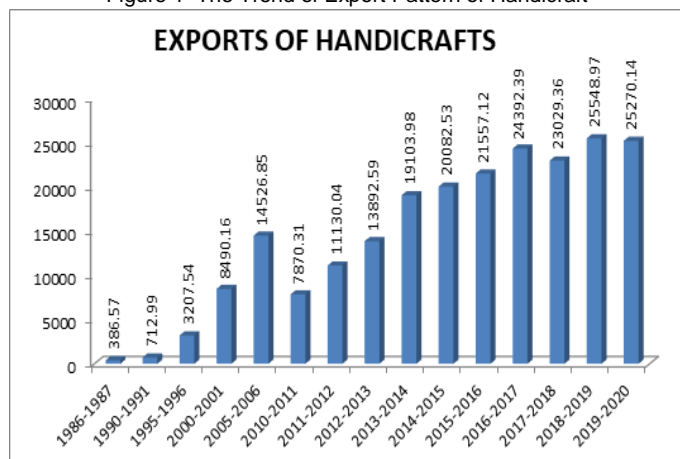
The term 'handicrafts' encompasses a wide range of artefacts. The informal sector, which includes handicrafts, has been described by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as a part of economic activity characterised by a certain features like reliance on local available resources and skills, family ownership, small scale operations, labour intensity traditional technology, skills generally acquired outside the formal school system, unregulated competitive markets.

Jodhpur, has a long tradition of a variety of handicrafts, and over the years has emerged as a major hub for the exports of handcrafted hardwood & metal furniture, home decoration accessories and textile based furnishings and made-ups. The cluster provides livelihoods to more than 30,000 artisans and contributes more than 10% of the total handicrafts from the country. There are over 300 small and medium exporters in the area, who are engaged in the production of wooden & iron handicraft products, and have been exporting to major world markets in the US, UK, Germany, Canada, Italy, France etc.

The Handicraft Megacluster covers the entire Jodhpur district, and is spread over an area covering 22,850 sq. kms., and the major craft productions in the adjoining district of Barmer. The exporters from the cluster have carved out a niche for themselves in the hardwood category of antique reproductions, furniture and household accessories in traditional markets like US and Europe. While some exporters have diversified their product portfolios to cater to emerging markets like the LAC, Russia, Middle East, Eastern Europe, there were still a large number of exporters, who were keen to diversify their existing marketing networks and explore these opportunities offered by these emerging markets Major Crafts in Jodhpur are Hand block printing (Dabu printing) Leather work (mojari) Dhurrie weaving and Tie & Dye.

The challenges faced by the handicraft industry has been many despite of the market potential of the products was found to be positive, in view of the unique offering, in terms of utility and aesthetics. The challenges faced by the industry may be summed up as poor infrastructure, out-dated technology constraining the scale and productivity, fragmentation of operations, raw material scarcity, lack of skills amongst the local populace, limited market access, etc. The following table shows the trend of export pattern of handicraft

Figure 1 The Trend of Export Pattern of Handicraft



Source: Rajasthan Tourism Department 2019

2. Review of Literature

(G., 2019): Conducted survey in Kerala, using structured questionnaire, with sample size of 100, using purposive sampling method. The numerical tool used for data investigation was Percentage and weighted average. The

conclusion of the study was, widely held of the artisans were not have higher education, handicraft is conceded out as a part of heritage rather a business, low quality deliver of raw materials, depending on middlemen, only few artisans were got an opportunities to export their products. Suggestions were reduce export formalities, R&D in handicraft sector, suggest government to take more initiative to provide fund, raw materials, technology, warehouse facilities, loan facilities and concluded with majority of them interested to enter this sector as business all need is support from one central organization.

(Reddy, 2018) Conducted study in Andhra Pradesh, specially crochet lace industry its growth and development. Objective of the revision was to examine the export of handicraft and its contribution for Indian economy. Majorly secondary data collected through various sources like Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, circulars and magazines. Author spoke about export of lace industry in global market, problems of industry, initiation of government to develop handicraft industry.

(Bhat & Yadav, 2016): In this article author identified employment opportunities created in handicraft sector and what are the major problem faced. The major problems identified why this sector not inefficiently can be a part of employment generation are this sector not cover under employment law, lack of professional training programs, technology and design problems. All these problems to be rectified by the particular boards for better creation of employment opportunities in this sector.

Ahmed, (1980) in his book entitled "Problem and Management of Small Scale and Cottage Industries" expresses that the satisfactory performance in marketing of handicrafts could be possible due to the special interest taken by central as

well as state governments to boost up the export of handicraft articles.

Rao, (1978) had made several studies on rural industries especially in Andhra Pradesh. He in his book "Rural industrialization in India" observes that handicraft is one among a few cottage industries, which have a capacity to grow, if appropriate technology is used. He endorses the application of "intermediate technology" of E.F. Schumacher in this context. This great economist was always an exponent of the principle "Small is beautiful"

Upadhyay (1973) in the book "Economics of handicraft industry" feels that without design development, technology advancement and quality improvement, we cannot think of healthy growth of such industry. It has been agreed in responsible quarters that even in the field of handicrafts a certain amount of mechanization ought to be introduced in order to obtain the twofold objective of better finish and rationalization.

3. Study Area

Jodhpur district is centrally located in western part of the State. It is divisional headquarter of western districts of the State, i.e., Pali, Jodhpur, Sirohi, Barmer, Jalore and Jaisalmer. It stretches between 26°37' north latitudes and 72° 55' to 73°52' east longitudes. It is bounded by Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts in the north, Barmer and Pali districts in south, Pali Nagaur districts in east and Jaisalmer district in the west. Jodhpur district is in the arid zone of the State and it covers 11.6% of the total arid zone of the State. The area of the district is 22,850 sq.kms. which is 6.59% of the total area of the State.

Demography

City	Area (km ²)	Population	Increase (%)	Sex Ratio	Literacy (%)	Density of Population
Jodhpur	22850	3687165	27.74	916	65.94	161

Tourist destinations

CITY	Major tourist spot	Major events
Jodhpur	Mehrangarh fort, Umaid Bhavan palace, Jasvant Thada, Mandore, Osian, Jain and Brahmanical temples.	Marwar festival

4. Statement of the problem

The main purpose of this study is to explore the problems faced by the people involved in handicraft sector and search for the suggestions for improvement.

5. Hypothesis

There will be many problems faced by the handicraft sector of Jodhpur. On the basis of secondary data i.e. articles, studies and reviews done on this topic the current problems faced by the people involved in making of the handicrafts in Jodhpur was analyzed.

6. Research Methodology

The present study is the review based study in which the impact of urbanization and westernization over the traditional handicraft market in Jodhpur city is observed. The handicraft industry is distinguished in terms of infrastructure, policy

scenario, government support, trade strategy and the way industry is defined. The Indian handicrafts are the products of tiny and cottage sector, which are largely unorganized and the products are handmade, while other competing countries have organized and large scale manufacturing oriented industry. This can have both advantages and disadvantages for India. Advantage are in terms of employment creation, while disadvantages in terms of low cost production. For Indian Handicraft it can be surely concluded that handicraft products has a very bright future in global market, but it is also facing negative consequences of globalization. Today, handicrafts exports are showing positive growth we should not forget that the challenges artisans are facing. These challenges will slowly take the industry towards mode from where we have to start again. Although government is taking several measures to make the thing well, but there is a need to do more & provide the strategic direction and action plans to evolve systems, so

that the Craft persons and their industry can grow & survive this competitive era of globalization.

7. Result and discussion

Present study was aimed to find problems and hindrances faced by artisans of handicrafts in Jodhpur city, Rajasthan. There are many studies which indicate the problems faced by this sector. In our study it was found that people engaged in handicraft production are facing following challenges in maintaining their livelihood and economic status: Globalization .A throat cutting competition is faced by the artisans who are engaged in handicraft market. The process of globalization has created opportunities for the developing world to compete with the developed and make a dent in selected domains. For example, in earning foreign exchange through exports in the handicraft sector. On the other hand it has also posed a large number of problems and challenges. The globalization process has made its impact on the choices of the products, and therefore many of these requirements cannot be ignored by the manufactures. These demands of globalization when comes home to the tradition

bound manufacturers who are very resistant to accept changes in their traditional modes of functioning, cause problem. Also, these new demands tend to alter with the royalty and originality of handicrafts. Low educated mostly tribes are involved in this profession and literacy percentage is low in these people. This is the root of all problems faced by artisans of handicraft. In recent report of DASRA (2013), it is clearly stated that nearly all problems faced by craftsman is outcome of low literacy level in them.

Lack of skilled labour

The development and popularity of handicraft industry in Jodhpur has led to lack in availability of skilled labour. Youngsters entering this field experience low accessibility to the programs run by government due to lack of education among them. AIACA in its successive reports in the years 2009, 2010, 2011 and in the year 2006 has investigated the root problems of handicraft sector and reported that handloom, hand-woven sectors are more penalised because of lack of skilled labour.

Lack of financial support

Most of the people engaged in handicraft work are facing lack of capital and credit of loans and other funding. In country like India mostly tribal communities have opted handicraft as their occupation and are depending on it completely for income and development. In the past decade government has introduced new schemes for this community but these are not completely accessible by these people. Economic Review (2003-2004) has also published an analytical article pointing problems of small scale industries.

Lack of information

Being uneducated these people are not linked with the information channel properly and remain unaware of the recent advancements and techniques in their field. Though government has introduced some easy loan plans and financial schemes for this group in its recent five year plan but because of improper information channel and linkage they are unaware of these plans to avail them.

Government negligence

Available records clearly indicate that in the past century artisans are neglected by central and state government due to unavailability of proper records regarding their numbers, social and economic status. The schemes designed for artisans are providing low priority to the skilled labourers in terms of execution and assessment. The Governments have given priorities to the development of export market, with 70% of its crafts budget going towards development of schemes to enable the export of handicrafts.

Lack of interest of youth

Second generation or youngsters of artisans are not taking interest in their profession because of less availability of financial growth and declination in this sector. As they have seen their parents fighting to find markets and realistic prices for their products, they are inclined to pursue other trades. Crafts Council of India (2011) in their survey on Craft Economics and Impact Study also concluded that youth is losing interest in their paternal profession and its existence is being abolished day by day¹³. AIACA (2011) has re-counted same conclusions in their penetrating study that youth of this community is picking other professions instead of being in the same¹⁴. As per the present study and results it is recommended to enhance literacy level in handicraftsman and upraise information channel between government and beneficiaries of its scheme.

8. Findings

Small-scale and handicraft industries of India contribute to approximately 5% of the total GDP. This sector is the important and age old sector and needs to be conserved. The major problems associated with the handicraft industry are as follows:

1. The profits of small scale industry are limited which are mostly spent on the daily expense of the raw material. No extra capital for further development of the industry is left with the owner.
2. The quantity of the handicrafts is less because the cost of production is higher. If goods are to be manufactured on a large scale to meet with the competition of the open market, the traditional touch of the handicrafts is lost.
3. The local labourers and owners of the small scale handicraft industry are exploited by the middlemen and whole sellers, who takes most of the profits. In some cases goods are sold to wholesalers at cost price, which discourages the owners and they reduce the quality and quantity the produced.
4. In rural areas, due to lack of infrastructure, availability of raw materials and non-availabilities of the supply of water, electricity etc, it becomes difficult to set up a handicraft industry.
5. The local rural craftsman and artists learns their skills and production methods from their elders. Therefore, the provision of technical advice and further training is limited.
6. The impact of urbanization, westernization and introduction of computerized machinery has led to the deterioration in the quality of handicrafts as

most of the labourers are in favour of producing more quantity of goods in lesser times.

9. Limitations

1. As the handicraft industries are placed in rural areas, it was difficult to cover the industries located at distant places.
2. More insight into the industry was not able to be undertaken.
3. Only the major issues were covered.
4. Only observational and exploratory study was done.

10. Suggestions for further research

1. More insight into the handicraft sector may be done in order to know more about the sector.
2. Interviews of retailers related to handicraft industry may be done to find out more about the challenges faced by them.
3. More industries may be taken into the study.
4. More governmental programs regarding handicraft sector may be assessed.
5. Therefore, the present research fulfils its purpose and opens new vistas for further research.

11. Jodhpur Handicrafts SWOT Analysis:

Strengths:

- Availability of unique local raw materials e.g. natural fibers, bamboo, cane, horn, jute, leather, etc.
- Rich and diversified culture producing wide range of unique and exclusive handicrafts.
- Strong existing pool of skilled artisans.
- Wide range of traditional production skills derived from indigenous knowledge.
- High potential for empowerment of women, youth and people with disabilities.
- Low production costs

Opportunities:

- Increasing emphasis on product development and design up gradation.
- Rising demand in domestic and traditional market.
- Rising appreciation by consumers in the developed countries.
- Government support and interest in preserving the craft.
- Emerging markets in Latin America, North America and European countries.
- Fair trade practices.
- Increasing flow of tourists provide market for products.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of design, innovation and technology up gradation.
- Highly fragmented industry.
- Unstructured and individualized production systems.
- Lack of strong umbrella sector organizations.
- Limited capitalization and low investment.
- Insufficient market information on export trends, opportunities and prices.

- Limited access to credit.
- Limited resources for production, distribution and marketing.
- Limited e-commerce competence among producer groups.
- Lack of adequate infrastructure, absence of latest technology

Threats:

- Handicrafts sector is not mainstreamed in planning priorities of many State Governments.
- Increasing threat from Asian countries.
- Decreasing supply of good quality raw material.
- Better quality components, findings and packaging in other countries.
- Lack of quality standardization process.
- Declining investment in the sector (largely in the developed economies) and increasing consumer sophistication.
- Absence of institutional support.
- High freight costs associated with air cargo and shipment.
- High cost of production rendering Indian crafts less competitive in the markets.

12. Conclusion

It was found that wooden products are produced in small scale as a mark of convention and legacy. Many educated people support their family members in creation and giving out to run their livelihood. Because of ritual way of production many master craftsmen and artisans facing major health problems like keen pain, back pain, dust allergy and respiratory ailments. As observed most of women betrothed in this activity benefit would be provided by the government under the schemes of women empowerment, women entrepreneur by reducing taxes, giving more subsidies, less interest or zero interest loan facilities. Providing vocational and professional training fit into place more them and provide exact information about the market help them to meet and tailor their products according to the requests of the customers. Government playing very imperative role in international marketing and export procedures. It has to be taken very sombre note on progress of rural artisans and handicraft sectors in order to guard the customs and inheritance of meticulous region and religion. The sector can bring remarkable changes in foreign trade since of its visual value.

13. Further Research Orientation

Talking about the scope of further exploration in this area, we can say that as we know that there are various problems that are being faced by the Craftsman & handicraft industry. Further descriptive studies can help to design framework which can be beneficial for growth & development of the industry. True arts and crafts should reflect their culture. Recognizing that the future of Indian art cannot be found by looking backward, many artists have been leading the way in the search for new directions. Young Indian artists are learning new techniques and materials and how to adapt to their rich cultural heritage and changing lives and positive policies and frameworks can motivate them to be on this path.

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