

## **Production and Marketing Challenges of Handicraft Products with Special Reference to Wood Craft**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Handicrafts sector means those sectors producing products in hands with lower use of technologies and machines. The Indian handicraft sector is majorly labour intensive part of small scale business. The industry is spread all over the country from east to west and from north to south most of the manufacturing units are located in rural and in small towns. The handicraft statistically forms the second largest source of unorganised sector employment in India. Handicraft sector got boost since the new Economic Philosophy of Inclusive Growth has been initiated as a route to success towards sustainability by the government of India. The concept of inclusive growth says for the firmness of Indian economy all sectors of economy including handicraft must be given equal magnitude and for the inclusive growth both rural and urban sector must be given proper attention. While in India rural economy is the backbone as well as the vital of growth of the economy at all so it must be given most priority*

**Keywords:** production and Marketing challenges, supports of Government and non Government institutions, export facilities and infrastructure, etc.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Handicraft are a traditional sector industry and products that are producing with in hand made and lower use of machines. They are commonly produced with lower initial capital investment from raw materials available with the country; the designs evince heritage and skills. The labours in this industry are not ionized. Handicrafts are vital productive sector in India and exports variety of products with different abroad countries. The growth of abroad markets for domestic products and increased interest in foreign goods has open up to a variety of business opportunities for artisans. In spite of extensive production, however, there is a lack of common definition of handicrafts, although various attempts have been made to characterize this broad and rather unorganised sector. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/Information Technology Community (UNESCO /ITC) International Symposium on “*Crafts and the International Market: Trade and Customs Codification*”, Manila, Philippines, October 1997: Handicrafts can be defined as products which are produced either completely by hand or with the help of tools. Mechanical tools may be used as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. Such products can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religious and socially symbolic and significant’

The most common base on handicraft product is how the product is developed, specially Machine-made vs. Hand-made production; the importance of artistic virtues of the product vs. Simple crafts; and the stimulus for production, which may be entrenched in culture and convention or due to financial reasons.. The global deal in handicraft items occurs typically from the developing countries. The two main reasons could be endorsed to this occurrence:

- If labour costs in the developed nations increase more rapidly than in the developing nations, latter could raise their market share.
- The demand for traditional type products is stirred as incomes in the developed countries rise because of their handmade, heterogeneous qualities.

For the intention of achieving comprehensive growth, India needs to better focus on the farming and agribusiness industries at first as they are main source of employment for the poor who subsist in hopeless poverty. Handicraft sector is one of the indirectly farming linked sectors of rural economy which provides income for the livelihood with the motive to reduce poverty and make India as self-sufficient in handicraft needs.. The industry is of crucial importance to Indian economy and is considered as the second largest employment generating sector after agriculture, i.e., approximately 6 million artisans are linked with the industry who are basically from the backward sections of the humanity and is one of major foreign exchange earners for the country. The estimated value of production also plays a key role in the economy. According to the Export promotion Councils published report 2016, the world handicraft market is worth US\$ 235 billion, with India's share only 2 per cent as compared to the strong position of China with 18per cent share.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The Govt. of India started different marketing scheme to increase the awareness among the people like exhibition, Handicraft emporia, publicity through painting and electronic mode, market and products assessment tour for artisans (Annual Report 2010-11, Ministry of Textile).

Kamala Devi Chathopdhyay (1985), *The Glory of Indian Handicrafts*, she was described that Art and Artisans are gift of God. So their products are very heritage and most valuable products. These products not compare to other commercial products. Handicraft products express countries culture, status and myths. It is not only a effort of producers but include whole Indians heritages and status. In India handicraft sector not only a business form, also a family heritage. Lot of families engaged in handicraft sector but they forced to rely on other sources of income for their day to day survival, as a traditional family business in handicrafts has failed to generate the necessary income. Indian handicraft sector face lot of problems specially marketing areas.

Sanjay Mahapatra (2011), states that there is need of improvement in the marketing process of the craft of famous craftsmen work. In organized market, craftsmen's are paid better wages, quality of the products under control but in unorganized market have lack of this facility. Government should facilitate and promote the craftsmen to take participation in different mela, craft bazaar, involvement of NGO and Exhibition of Handicraft Products etc. Manjusmita Dash, (2011), said that handicraft occupies a unique place in India but handicraft has not received as much attention as they deserve. The performance of institutional infrastructure for both financing & marketing of handicraft is far from satisfaction. It is largest employment generation sector after Agriculture, low per capita investment & highly involvement of women and weaker section people & produces the product which is eco-friendly. Neha Nagori (2012), states that The Indian rural sector play very important role in the Economy. The production of Handicraft produce is maximum in the area which gave numerous varieties but due lack of technical and market knowledge, this sector is far away from the main competition. They have also lack of modern marketing knowledge like quality delivery, schedule, and packaging and after sales services etc. The marketing of the rural products through organized retail format is an important concept to explore the hidden market in the rural sectors. GEMET (2012) stated that handicraft business is the profession, commercial firm or trade involving the production and distribution of articles that are made through the skilled use of one's hands. Collins English Dictionary 5th Edition published in 2000 9 defined handicraft business as a particular skill or art performed with the hands, such as weaving, pottery, etc. It also identified that handicraft business can be defined as skill or dexterity in working with the hands.

P N Sankaran (2012) in his finding discussed that India should explore and target on new sizable markets such as Britain, china, Italy, Switzerland, brazil, Japan and Hong Kong where our exports are negligible. The study concluded that formerly middlemen (chain of circle) exploited the artisans leaving them underpaid. The Government initiative to give the artisans their due and to stimulate certain dying arts and crafts. Day to day increase the markets of handicraft products on abroad than India.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

In India, hand craft sector is a major source of earning for rural peoples employing over five million artisans specially a large number of women and weaker sections of the society .Even though the handicraft industry is expected to be the largest contributor of India's revenues in the non-farm sector, it faces a lot of problems and

struggles in the current scenario; especially in the area of production and marketing. The majority of the artisans are forced to rely on other sources of income for their day to day survival, as a traditional family business in handicrafts has failed to generate the necessary income. The study addresses the production and marketing problems faced by artisans as well as marketers in the handicraft industry and attempts to identify opportunities for its development.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

Handicraft sector occupies a prime face in the Indian economy. It is the largest employer, next to agriculture sector. The sector, while providing livelihood for lot of artisans, provides avenues for achievement of social and cultural dormant of millions of people. The handicraft sector not only provides employment opportunities for the economy but also acts as a sensible artistic approach for artisans' self-expression and development. Handicraft sector is directly related to the economy of the rural India. It means that growth, and downfall is the mirror image of rural economy as well as the economy as a whole. Handicrafts, especially wood craft are a vital part of Kerala's traditional and cultural heritage. The wooden accessories used in the Kathakali dances are a popular form of souvenirs. The ancient and historic landmarks of Kerala, like temples and palaces are a testament to the exquisite woodcraft, in the forms of their carved pillars, doors and ceilings. One such pillar is in the Padmanabhapuram palace, in the form of a tree – it has a base with intricate carved mouldings' and as it rises it becomes slender and branches out at the ceiling. These historic artistic creations are credits of exceptional Kerala artisans. Today well known artisans still exist in Kerala who are rich in artistic talents and have earned well deserved reputation. But in their personal life, they are financially very back word and lead a poor family life. The study aims in identifying major problems in handicraft sector like production problems, marketing problems, as well as financial problems of artisans. The study also tries to come up with strategies and solutions to improve the standard of living of these artisans.

### **SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The handicraft industry consists of a wide variety of products, because handicraft means hand-plus-craft. Handmade products consisting in this group are clay, cane, wooden ,stone , metal, ivory, glass, bamboo and textiles. The most popular items in Indian handicrafts are carpets, bamboo items, candles, handlooms, clay products, ivory and other products of paper. This study investigates the problems and prospects of production and marketing field of wood craft artisans and marketers in Trivandrum District. The period of the study is 2016-17.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

#### **Primary objectives:**

- 1 To identify production challenges faced by handicraft producers
- 2 To identify Marketing challenges of handicraft products

#### **Secondary objectives:**

- 3 To examine the role of institutions in handicraft product sector
- 4 To identify the different schemes and initiatives introduced by the Government for promoting handicraft products
- 5 To provide practical suggestions for the development of handicraft sector

### **METHODOLOGY:**

- **Research design:** descriptive and analytical nature.
- **Sources of Data:** The study is conducted using both primary data and secondary data. The primary data were collected from 100 sample respondent from Trivandrum district through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected as per the requirements of the theoretical framework from the journal, previous articles, magazines, official website of ministry of textiles, Government of India
- **Sample Design:** The population consists of wood craft artisans and marketers in Trivandrum city. A total of 100 samples were selected of which 50 samples were selected from woodcraft artisans and remaining 50 from marketers. The Purposive sampling method is used to collect the data.
- **Tools for data collection:** structured questionnaire is used for collecting information from artisans.
- **Tools used for data analysis:** Various statistical tools are used for analysing the data collected. The tools used for the study are: Tables, Percentage and Weighted average

The primary data so collected are appropriately condensed in the form of tables so as to render comprehensible and facilitates easy comparison and were analysed arithmetically and statically.

To find out the production challenges of handicraft products, 7 factors were given and the respondents were asked to rank the reasons 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 according to their priority. Two analyses the hence collected data, each rank was assigned weights.

Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Weight	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

After that, each factor was taken and the different ranks obtained for the factors were multiplied with respective weight and the aggregate of their products were taken. To analyses the data, hence collected the scores for each factor obtained are compared and then the highest was ranked 1 and next 2 and so on.

### **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:**

#### **Marketers:**

- In this study Marketers are defined as ‘personnel who are engaged in the marketing of Handicraft products

#### **Wood Craft of Kerala:**

Woodworking is one of the ancient crafts of Kerala. The natural wealth of various types of wood is evident in the prolific woodcrafts of Kerala. Crafted wooden sculptures abound in much historic architecture and skilled carpenters of Kerala create magnificent art in tables, chairs, cabinets, and sofas, apart from the traditional figurines depicting popular animals, designs and gods. The wooden accessories used in the Kathakali dances are a popular form of souvenirs in addition to the dolls. The ancient and historic structures of Kerala, like temples and palaces are a testament to the exquisite woodcraft, in the forms of their carved pillars, doors and ceilings. One such pillar is in the Padmanabhapuram palace, with the form of a tree – it has a base with intricately carved mouldings and as it raises it becomes slender and branches out at the ceiling. Each branch ends with the form of a lotus and equally decorative designs are carved within them. This pillar is over four hundred years old and modeled over the monolithic pillar at Fatehpur Sikri. Wavelike patterns in the carved ceiling of this Palace resemble the foliage of a great tree and it is simply a masterpiece of woodcraft. The heavy wooden doors in the Palace appear to be delicate with their life-like floral designs. Many aspects of architecture of the middle ages have provided excellent opportunities where medieval artisans have immortalized their art in wood, which is also present in the colonial Christian and Jacobin churches in Kerala. These old churches have classical Catholic motifs displaying much religious symbolism, like the naturalist vines to abstract geometric designs in their pulpits. These masterpieces have sadly remained unnoticed by the outside world. Several wooden miniatures are a part of the altar, which are a delicate and intricate accompaniment to the traditional stained glass windows of churches.

In the inquiry of wooden furniture, the royal cot of Padmanabhapuram palace is a perfect epitome of traditional design, both functionally as well as decoratively. The four legs, as they continue to form the canopy are again themed on the natural image of a delicate plant. The slender posts with their flowing decorations seem as if they have grown out of the bulk of the cot and are deservedly a masterpiece. Delicate screens made entirely out of wood, employ complex symmetric patterns carved with great skill into a delicate layer of wood. Much wonderful timber is indigenous to Kerala, like chrome yellow to deep dark blackish browns of Teak or the dark to light purple complexion of Rosewood or perhaps the gradual ageing of White Cedar from a light dirty grey to a dark lustrous gray. Rosewood and teak hardwoods have been Indian favorites for ages and continue to do so today. The lost art of Marquetry that creates many articles like trays, ashtrays, bowls, plates and vases from numerous pieces of veneer, has indeed received a second wind in the recent decades. Its primary appeal comes from the special visual effect from the different blocks of different woods and the variety of Flora in Kerala makes it easier to accomplish.

The ceilings are generally divided into panels, each bearing a relief carved motif of a lotus, deity or dikpala, guardians of the cardinal directions. The heavy rainfall, harsh sunlight and intense humidity of the local climate have given rise to an architectural vocabulary of tiled sloping roofs with decorated garbles’ that rise in two or more super imposed tielrs to create steep pyramidal profiles, latticed shutters and slatted panels of te exterior porches in order to

1. The outer wooden structure, or malaika, of the Taikottaram at the Padmanahapuram Palace; the slats diffuse the intensity of he light and allow air to flow into the inner spaces.
2. Detail of wooden Yali brackets in the Ambari Mukhappu, Padmanabhapuram Palace.

3. Decorative wood carving is incorporated into this entrance porch to the Navaratri Mandapam, Padmanabhapuram Palace.
4. The latticed west wall of the queen's dressing room, Padmanabhapuram Palace.
5. A teak wood bench with curved headrests at the porch of the Kuthiramalika Palace; common features of the exterior halls in most traditional upper caste homes, such casual yet austere seating arrangements are usually intended for the use of the male members of the family and their visitors. ensure the drainage of rainwater and the passage of air through the rooms as well as prevent heat from getting trapped. The interiors of the koothambalam, the theatres located within precincts of temples and palaces, have latticed screen like walls on three sided that grant ventilation and diffuse light; specially designed roofs provide excellent acoustics. The fine carving may be seen in many temples and churches of the region - the Mahadeva Temple near Thiruvananthapuram feature and ornate ceiling with a central image of Brahma seated on a lotus and numerous depictions of warriors wielding swords. Similarly, intricate detailing is present in the local churches where the altar, pulpit and the ceiling above the chancel usually sport carved and glided vines, grapes and wheat.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION:**

### **FINDINGS:**

#### **Production Challenges:**

- Majority of the artisans have no higher education. Most of the artisans are uneducated people. Both men and women are equally skilled in handicraft sector.
- Artisans have more than ten years of experiences in the handicraft industry. The main reason for this is that handicraft is not seen as a business, but is carried out as a part of their heritage or family business.
- The traditional pattern of skill transformation and continuity of employment is getting weak in the case of wood carving artisans as revealed by the low percentage of sons of artisans following the profession by tradition.
- The level of unemployment is also found to be very high in artisan households.
- Majority of the artisans buy raw materials on credit and the amount to meet this credit is raised from financial institutions.
- Income earned from handicraft businesses is not enough to meet expenses, because of high raw material cost, equipment cost, market cost, transportation costs etc.
- Expenditure change time to time due to inflation, shortage of materials etc.
- There is not uniformity on the fixation of selling price as it depends on market demand, intermediaries, cost of production etc
- Majority of the artisans are dissatisfied over supply of raw materials. for which they formalities of buying craft wood in forests, fixation of quota and priority to registered artisans. Artisans buy materials from Handicraft Development of Kerala ( HDCK), TICCA, local markets and middle men etc. HDCK provide raw materials only to registered artisans and also get subsidies and loans for procurements of materials. But non registered artisans don't get these facilities. They commonly depend upon local markets and other dealers.
- The artisans have reported interventions of middlemen in the industry and their nexus with vested interests. It is indeed shocking to find that majority of the artisans have reported underselling of art goodies for want of either money or alternative income supporting schemes.
- Artistic quality of craft goods continues to be the dominant marketing criteria in the wood crafts industry.
- Most of the artisans are still interested in traditional designs even though they are aware of modern designs and process.
- Tourism plays vital role in handicraft sector.
- In Kerala, for the past two years no exports have been carried out by SMSEs and government. Only some individual artisans were able to accept orders from foreign customers and send the finished goods directly.
- Recently Export promotion council plays a silent role in handicraft sector, the main reason being red-tapeism, delay on procedures, formalities etc.
- Central as well as State Governments have launched and initiated fund based and non fund based policies for development of registered artisan's life, (*Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana by Central government and Entrepreneur Assistance Scheme in Handicrafts by State government*) but majority of artisans are not aware about it.
- HDCK provide maximum two lakhs of financial loans to artisans, only on the basis of mortgage securities like salary certificates, documents of house property, consignment of production and sales etc. So these loan facilities cannot be utilized by artisans due to lack of collateral securities and procedural bottlenecks.

- The formalities of loans of HDCK are similar to other banks (Example: mortgage, payback periods, etc.) So compared to other financial institutions, nobody gets any additional benefits from HDCK.
- Employees of Government approved handicraft development authorities are PSC recruited or recruited by other Government agencies. These employees are Handicraft artisans. These employees are completely unaware about handicraft sector and the present conditions of artisans. They work according to government rules just like other government employees.
- HDCK has no proper records about artisans and follow paper filing method. Use of computer and data base is very less in this organization.

**Marketing Challenges:**

- A majority of the respondents (marketers) agree that Market trend of handicraft products is decreasing.
- Marketeers agree that higher demands are placed by foreign customers rather than domestic customers.
- Recently opportunities for exporting are very low as they don't receive any help from the government in exporting handicrafts products. Only a few marketeers collect international orders directly.
- In domestic markets, tourist destinations create more demand compared to other areas like local markets, temples and festivals. After tourism sector, temples and festivals create more demands.
- Approved institutions like HDCK, SMSM organize product promotion programs like exhibitions.
- Marketeers get standard quality products from artisans but when compared to past years output; quality of products has undergone distinguishable change.
- New comers use machines and modern technologies for production due to lack of proper knowledge and experience. Senior craftsmen use traditional technologies hence creating higher quality products
- Social media play a vital role on handicraft product promotions.
- Now online marketing and stores support handicraft product sales, but compared to other products, the role of digital marketing is very low.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

In the light of the finding from study conducted; the following suggestions may be implemented for developing the handicrafts sector.

- Organizing marketing network of Handicraft products
- Copy right of handicraft products
- Price uniformity in similar handicraft products
- Research and development in Handicraft:
- FDI with designers and artisans:.
- Development and modernisation of existing infrastructure
- Creation of Museums and Design Development Centres to build upon local crafts with a view to sustaining and popularizing them.
- Request corporate companies to support artisans belonging to handicraft sector as a part of their CSR activities.
- Government should take initiatives for encouraging Foreign Direct Investment in Handicraft sector.
- Handicraft sector designed on PPP model.
- Give Autonomous power to Handicraft Development Commission
- Increase schemes and funds for handicraft sector and artisan development.
- Provide adequate pension schemes, PF etc. to artisans.
- Reduce number of staffs in handicraft development offices and increase quality of services to artisans. Because one employee's salary and other perquisites are higher than the development cost of handicraft sector. So only sufficient employees with good knowledge on the handicraft sector maybe appointed.
- Reduce Complex Export formalities.
- Government should start production units and appoint skilled artisans. This will help in creating employment opportunities to artisans attain quality products for exporting.
- Conduct more and more national and international festivals and exhibitions for development of handicraft products.
- Create and develop more artisans' trade union, groups, community arts for protection and promotion of artisans' welfare.
- The government should take more initiatives to supply raw materials.
- The government should provide separate warehouse facilities to artisans.
- The government should give more loans facilities without mortgage, subsidies etc.

- Government should take additional efforts for registering all artisans and issuing an ID card.
- Government should try to digitalize handicraft sector; especially form a data base about artisans. Computerise offices and avoid the use of paper filing system.
- Give more amount of tax reduction for handicraft business or make investment in handicraft sector tax-free.
- Popularising Scheme of Artisan Credit Card (ACC)
- Awards/scholarships for young crafts persons should be introduced to encourage and give recognition to young generation crafts persons

## CONCLUSION:

Handicraft products create a large foreign demand and foreign reserve. But recently they face lot of problems especially in production and marketing of handicraft products. Lack of availability of, sufficient raw materials, funds, insecurity in life, poverty etc are some examples. The Government has taken a lot of initiatives to balance handicraft sector. Unfortunately these schemes end up in the wrong hands hence denying support to the needy artisans. Lot of problems are faced by artisans in this field, such as unemployment, inflated price on raw materials, exploitation from intermediaries, difficulty on raising fund etc. Majority of the artisans are not interested in bringing his children's into this field. Indian Handicraft sector is one of which can contribute to the Success of Make in India mission. India is one of the major exporters of craft products and has shown its importance for so many years. However, there are some setbacks which need to be addressed by the Government, Local Bodies, and Non Governing Organisation's. Despite of all of this, we can say that handicraft sector has potential to grow, and people willing to be the part of this sector. All they need is the help from the central organisation, which can effectively contribute to the establishment and development of business, and make more employment and stability in Indian economy especially backward areas.

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