

PRODUCTION AND MARKETING OF CONCH SHELL GOODS: A STUDY OF THREE DISTRICTS IN WEST BENGAL

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Abstract

Handicrafts in West Bengal have a unique characteristics and beauty from the ancient time to till date. West Bengal is famous for its art form, and handicraft is one of the prominent arts of such artistic forms. One of them is handicrafts made from conch-shell and oyster. Conch-shell is used as an ornament for married hindu women, as a trumpet, as a musical instrument, a wind chime. The artisans of North 24-parganas, Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, and Bankura are used to make such crafts. Large number of people are involved in this sector. There exists a wide market for the products of this sector. But the production and marketing of the products in this sector are basically controlled by few numbers of people. Production techniques are primitive and the craftsmen are basically unskilled and the markets are unorganized. The present study addresses the issues relating to production and marketing of conch shell goods in West Bengal on the basis of primary data collected from the three districts of West Bengal.

Keywords: Handicrafts, Production, Marketing, Primitive. Primary Data.

Introduction: Handicrafts, also called artisanal handicrafts or handmade crafts is any of a wide variety of types of work where useful and decorative objects are made completely by hands or by using only simple tools. It is a traditional main sector of craft, and applies to a wide range of creative and design activities related to making things with one's hand and skills, including work with textiles, moldable and rigid materials, paper, plant fibers, etc. Usually the term is applied to traditional techniques of creating items (whether for personal use or as products) that are both practical and aesthetic. In other sense, handicraft industries are those that produce things with hands to meet the needs of the people in their locality.

India is known globally for her rich heritage of art and culture. India is one of the important suppliers of handicrafts to the world markets. The history of Indian handicrafts goes back to around five thousand years ago. There are numerous examples of handicrafts from the Indus Valley Civilization. The tradition of crafts in India has grown around religious values, needs of the common people and also needs of the ruling elites. In addition to this, foreign and domestic trades have also played an important role in the evolution of different crafts in India.

Handicrafts in West Bengal have a unique characteristics and beauty from the ancient time to till date. West Bengal is famous for its art form, and handicraft is one of the prominent arts of such artistic forms. In the time of British rule handicrafts of West Bengal had a huge demand over the European market as the manufacturing cost is less but the value is more. The finest handicrafts of Bengal are terracotta, clay dolls and pottery, brass and bell metal, cane and bamboo crafts, dokra, horn-bone crafts, mat, sitalpati, mask, kantha, wood carving, patachitra, stone carving, jute handicrafts, conch-shell products, lac crafts, lather crafts etc. West Bengal is well known all over the world for its rich resource of handicrafts. One of them is handicrafts made from conch-shell and oyster. Conch-shell is used as an ornament for married hindu

women, as a trumpet, as a musical instrument, a wind chime. The artisans of North 24-parganas, Purba Medinipur, Paschim Medinipur, and Bankura are used to make such crafts.

Objective of the Study: The specific objectives of the present study are:

- i) To analyse the production and marketing structure of conch shell goods in West Bengal;
- ii) To assess the cost and profits of the conch-shell production units;
- iii) To examine the existing problems of this industry and highlight the way to remove the problems; and
- iv) To review the socio-economic conditions of artisans of conch-shell industry.

Database and Methodology: A study on production organization and their dynamics requires adequate quantitative qualitative data relating to production organizations of rural industries especially to production and marketing of traditional handicrafts in West Bengal are not available adequately. Thus, on account of the limitations of secondary data to fulfill the above objectives we are to focus on primary data. In the present study we have selected three conch-shell industry dominated districts of West Bengal, namely, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur districts. The basic reason for selecting these three districts is their dominance of conch-shell industry. Few other districts like North and South 24-parganas, Kolkata have some conch-shell industries. The basis of selection of sample is the multi-stage stratified random sampling. The sample comprises 240 households from six blocks, 40 households from each block, two blocks from each district.

As we know there are two types of production organization in conch-shell industry – tied units and independent units. The tied units are linked up with independent units either through the purchase of raw materials or for the sale of produced goods. We have collected information from both the tied units and independent units as a proportionate basis. The sampling design of the study area is shown below:

Table 1 Sampling Design of Study Areas:

District	Block	GP/ Municipality	Villages / Wards	Households
Bankura	Bishnupur	Bishnupur	Ward - 4 & Ward - 5	40 Households from each Block
	Indpur	Indpur	Hatgram	
Paschim Medinipur	Daspur-I	Daspur - I	Kadilpur, Basudevpur, Kolmijhore	
	Medinipur Sadar	Medinipur	Ward -12	
Purba Medinipur	Ramnagar-I	Badhia	Badhia, Nayapat	
	Ramnagar -II	Ramnagar -II	Dulalpur, Kalindi	
Total Sample size				240 Households

Brief Profile of the Study Area: The present study makes an attempt to analyze the production and marketing of conch-shell goods in West Bengal. The artisans of this industry basically concentrated in five or six districts, namely, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur, and Purba Medinipur, North 24-Parganas, South 24-Parganas and Kolkata. We have selected three districts, namely, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur districts for our study because of their high concentration of conch-shell artisans. In this chapter we mainly focused on the socio-economic characters of the sample villages of the three districts. Table 1 shows these characteristics.

Conch shell craft may be considered as mark of ethnic and cultural identity of Bengali families in West Bengal. Conch shell craft manufacturing is a family profession in which all the family members including female and children. The craftsmen of conch shell products, known as *Sankhari* and *Sankhakar* belong the

ancient *Nabasakha* which is one of the so called nine craft communities. Long ago, a large number of people in rural areas were involved in these activities and most of them took these as primary activities.

Table 2 Profile of the Sample Villages

Villages/ Wards	Block	Population (2011)	Literacy Rate (%)	Female literacy	BPL Populatio n (%)	Tribal Populatio n	Percentage of Total Workers to Population
Ward-4	Bishnupur	2145	89.50	76.80	34.20	359	42.50
Ward-5		2452	88.25	81.25	32.55	462	39.63
Hatgram	Indpur	3080	64.90	52.64	47.20	1178	40.25
Hatgram							
Kolmijhore	Daspur-I	3288	85.19	78.53	42.07	1435	35.55
Basudevpur		3160	77.98	70.33	31.78	1471	39.02
Kadirpur		1288	91.23	84.88	28.44	138	33.15
Ward-12	Medinipur Sadar				11.01		
Badhia	Ramnagar- I	5979	75.26	65.22	33.52	1158	39.54
Nilkantapur		1125	79.98	72.00	27.59	0	35.11
Deuli	Ramnagar- II	2357	91.64	87.03	38.52	879	31.65
Kalindi		4893	84.11	78.69	31.85	668	34.64

Source: Offices of the respective Gram Panchayats & Municipalities.

Table 3 Production Stages of Conch shell works

Types of production	Type of unit	Nature of works	Types of labour	Machines and tools used	Mode of payment
Cutting of raw conch shell	Independent	Cutting of raw conch shell	Unskilled / Skilled	Power operated cutting machine / traditional system	Weekly / daily rate
Rubbing	Independent / Tied	Rubbing the outer layer of conch shell	Skilled, male / female hired and household labour	Power operated grinding machine or traditional tools	Per piece
Pasting	Independent / Tied	Pasting the rubbed conch shell	Skilled, male / female hired and household labour	Resin, hardener, zinc oxide	Per piece
Rubbing or Polishing	Independent / Tied	Polishing the pasted areas	Skilled, male / female hired and household labour	Power operated grinding machine or traditional tools	Per piece
Designing	Independent / Tied	Designing the conch shell in various artistic look	Skilled, male / female hired and household labour	Grinding machine / traditional system	Per piece

We divide this chapter in three parts – collection of raw conch shells, processing of raw conch shells and marketing of processed conch shell goods. In West Bengal raw conch shell are basically purchased from Chennai which are basically collected from the beach of Tuticorin. The empty and dry shells are come to Kolkata and then to craftsmen.

The production of conch shell goods are divided into five parts- cutting of raw conch shell, rubbing, pasting, again rubbing and polishing and then designing the processed conch shell. Two types of production units are basically involved in production of conch shell goods in this region. They are tied and independent. Tied units have been linked up with big independent units either by raw materials purchasing or by sale of their products. They have no bargaining power for purchase of raw materials.

Labourers involved in these activities are basically unskilled. These are their traditional activities. Their earlier generations were involved in these activities. They are categorized as household industry workers. Most of the workers are seasonally employed. In lean agricultural season they involved in the production of conch shell goods. The other took these activities as part time job.

The instruments they basically used are power operated cutting machines, grinding machines. Long ago, workers used hand grinders; cutters etc for cutting of raw conch shell, grinding polishing. They were not in a position to use electric operated machines. But, now they use power operated grinding machine for smooth functioning of the production process. Packing and sealing activities are done by the big merchants.

Classification of Sample Crafts Workers: Conch shell being unorganized manufacturing production units carried out mostly in the household premises. Initially it was mainly a household industry use in highly labour intensive technology. Gradually modern technology has been adopted to survive. The kinds of labour involved in this industry fall under than three categories-full time labour, part time labour and contractual labour. Several distinct stages in the production process are adopted for creation of use value as aesthetic value of the products that varied across units/enterprises, and products. Both skilled and unskilled labourers are accustomed to distinct stages of production. The large independent units generally perform through hired workers at their own house premises factory shades.

In this sector skilled workers are those who are engaged in these activities at least last ten years and those who are trend by some government agencies or otherwise for these works. Table 3.2 shows the classification of conch shell craftsmen into skilled and unskilled workers. In Bankura district 56 percent sample craftsmen are skilled and 44 percent are unskilled. In Paschim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur districts the percentage of skilled craftsmen are 61 percent and 66 percent. Overall, around 40 percent craftsmen are unskilled and 60 percent are skilled in this sector.

Table 4 Classification of Crafts Workers: Skilled and Unskilled

District	Skilled	Unskilled	Total
Bankura	45 (56)	35 (44)	80 (100)
Paschim Medinipur	49 (61)	31 (39)	80 (100)
Purba Medinipur	54 (68)	26 (32)	80 (100)
Total	148 (62)	92 (38)	240 (100)

Source: Field Survey, Figures in parentheses are in percentage

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage values.

We now divide the craftsmen workers according to their time of involvement in the production process. We classify the workers into full-time workers and part-time workers. According to INWORK (Inclusive Labour markets, Labour Relations and Working Condition Branch) of International Labour Organisation (ILO), 'Workers are considered to be part-time if they commonly work fewer than 30 hours per week.' Labours who works more than 30 hours of work in a week are called full-time workers. In our study it is observed that out of 240 craftsmen 92 (38 percent) are part time workers and 148 are full time workers in all the three sample districts. In Bankura district, 34 percent are part time workers and the rest are full time workers. In Paschim Medinipur and Purba Medinipur districts the part time workers are around 40 percent and the rest are full time workers.

Table 5 Classification of Crafts Workers: Full-time and Part-time

District	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Bankura	53 (66)	27 (34)	80 (100)

Paschim Medinipur	48 (60)	32 (40)	80 (100)
Purba Medinipur	47 (60)	33 (40)	80 (100)
Total	148 (62)	92 (38)	240 (100)

Source: Field Survey,

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage values.

We now classified the sample craftsmen (workers) into household labour and contractual labours. Household labours are generally unpaid labour i.e., labour that does not receive any direct remuneration. The larger proportion of workers in the household industry consists of members of the household. The industry is not run on the scale of a registered factory which would qualify or has to be registered under the Indian Factories Act. Household Industry relates to production, processing, servicing, repairing or making and selling (but not merely selling) of goods. It does not include professions such as a Pleader, Doctor, Musician, Dancer, Astrologer, Dhobi, Barber, etc., or merely trade or business, even if such professions trade or services are run at home by members of the household. Contractual workers are those who are appointed for certain time. When the demand of the products are high both tied units and independent units arrange some labours locally to fulfill the immediate needs.

In our sample survey it is seen that out of 240 sample craftsmen 176 (73 percent) are household workers and 64 (27 percent) are contractual workers. Contractual workers are relatively high in production units of Purba Medinipur districts and low in Bankura district. In Bankura district only 17 percent.

Table 6 Classification of Crafts Workers: Household and Contractual

District	Household	Contractual	Total
Bankura	66 (83)	14 (17)	80 (100)
Paschim Medinipur	59 (74)	21 (26)	80 (100)
Purba Medinipur	51 (64)	29 (36)	80 (100)
Total	176 (73)	64 (27)	240 (100)

Source: Field Survey,

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage values.

Collection of Raw Materials: In West Bengal, the raw conch shells are purchased from Chennai, which are collected from the beach of Tuticorin. A significant part of raw conch shells are also found in coastal areas of Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. The empty and dry shells are purchased by big merchants of Kolkata. The conch carvers in rural areas of Purba and Paschim Medinipur districts, Bankura, North and South 24-Parganas buy the empty and dry shells in bulk and sent these to the tied units. Few independent units run by some household units directly purchased these from the merchants.

Classification of Production Units: Conch shell production sectors in India are mostly unorganized manufacturing sectors. The production is carried out mostly in the household premises. We divide our production units into types- independent units and tied units according to their nature of activities. Independent production units are those where every stages of production process are controlled and managed by themselves. Raw conch is collected by themselves from the distant places of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh. They are free to take decision regarding their production. They marketed their products by themselves. In some cases businessmen came to their home to collect their products. Others types is tied units. Here craftsmen are tied with some big independent units or some businessmen in various aspects like collection of raw materials, purchase and use of machines types of production and their selling activities etc.

In our 240 sample households in the three districts 124 sample craftsmen are engaged in tied type production units which is around 52 percent of total sample households and the rest are involved in independent type of production units. In Bankura district, out of 80 sample craftsmen 56 sample craftsmen are engaged in independent type production units which is 70 percent of total sample craftsmen and only 30

percent sample craftsmen are involved in tied type production units. But the reverse is seen Paschim and Purba Medinipur districts. In Paschim Medinipur district out of 80 sample craftsmen 29 sample craftsmen are engaged in independent type production units which is 36 percent of total sample craftsmen and around 64 percent sample craftsmen are involved in tied type production units. In Purba Medinipur district out of 80 sample craftsmen 31 sample craftsmen are engaged in independent type production units which is 39 percent of total sample craftsmen and around 61 percent sample craftsmen are involved in tied type production units.

Table 7 Types of Production Units in Sample Districts

District	Block	Village/ Ward	Types & Number of Sample Crafts Units		
			Independent	Tied	Total
Bankura	Bishnupur	Ward-4	12	8	20
		Ward-5	16	4	20
	Indpur	Hatgram	28	12	40
Paschim Medinipur	Daspur-I	Kolmijhore	6	14	20
		Basudevpur	8	12	20
	Midnapore Sadar	Kadirpur	9	11	20
		Ward-12	6	14	20
Purba Medinipur	Ramnagar-I	Badhia	7	13	20
		Nilkantapur	12	8	20
	Ramnagar-II	Deuli	5	15	20
		Kalindi	7	13	20
Total			116 (48%)	124 (52%)	240 (100%)

Source: Field Survey

Indigenous Production process: The entire manufacturing process is indigenous and traditional and this has been followed down through generation. The process involved in traditional conch shell craft manufacturing can be divided into certain well defined steps according to the nature of the operations. a) Collection of raw materials; b) Processing of the conch shell (washing and primarily shape); c) Final shaping of the objects with the help of power operated tools; d) Engraving or embossing various designing shape; Final polishing and finishing the product; e) Packing and sealing and f) Marketing. Generally the articles manufactured in a unit are polished and finished by other groups of artisans in different phases. Thus there is a continuous relationship and mutual cooperation among the fellow workers of this community.

Physical Involvement of Artisans: Estimated Average no. of Conch Shell Workers, Working Hours, Working days, person Days generated of each Conch Shell production Unit across sample Districts of West Bengal

Table 8 Profile of Sample Production Units

Category	Bankura	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur	Average
Average Family Members (Total)	5	6	6	6
Average Male Family Members	3	3	4	3
Average Female Family Members	2	3	2	3
Average Male Family Conch Workers	2	2	2	2
Average Female Family Conch Workers	2	1	1	1
Total No of Family Workers per Household Unit	3	3	3	3
Male Hired Conch Worker per Household Unit	2	1	2	2
Total no of Workers (family + hired) per Household Unit	4	4	3	4
Per Day Working Hour by per Male Worker	10	11	12	11
Per Day Working Hour by per Female Worker	6	5	7	6

Working Day per Month per Household Unit	24	26	25	25
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Source: Estimation based on Field Survey data

Estimated Production Cost of Conch Shell Goods: In this section we examine the production cost of conch shell goods in the three sample districts of West Bengal during the study period. We estimate the production cost after interacting with the sample craftsmen. This is shown in diagram below. Total paid out cost per pair sankha includes cost of raw materials (cost of collecting raw conch shell), other material cost, wages of hire labours, and interest on loan. Total imputed cost includes wage of household workers, house rent, interest on working capital, and interest of own fixed capital. Depreciation cost includes cost of consumption cost of fixed capital and other costs.

Table 9 Estimated Cost per Pair Sankha Production in Three Sample Districts

	Items	Bankura	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur
1. Total Paid out Cost (Rs. per Pair)	Cost of raw material (raw conch)	136.50	141.00	142.50
	Other material cost	19.50	24.20	26.70
	Total material cost	156.00	165.20	169.20
	Wage of hired workers	12.60	16.50	19.50
	Interest on loan	0.50	0.65	0.55
	Total paid out cost	169.10	182.35	189.25
2. Total Imputed Cost (Rs. per Pair)	Wages Cost of Household Artisans	10.10	12.50	17.50
	House Rent	0.35	0.45	0.65
	Interest on Working Capital	0.15	0.35	0.41
	Interest on Own Fixed Capital	11.50	12.5	12.5
	Total Imputed Cost	22.10	25.80	31.06
3. Depreciation Cost (Rs. per Pair)	For Consumption of Fixed Capital	0.11	0.15	0.20
	Other Depreciation Cost	0.35	0.42	0.55
	Total	0.46	0.57	0.75
Total Production Cost (1 + 2 + 3)		191.66	208.72	221.06

Source: Estimation based on Field Survey data

It is observed from the table that the costs of raw materials (raw conch) which are basically collected from the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andhra Pradesh through middlemen/traders are the same in all the craftsmen of the three sample districts. It is Rs.136.50 (per pair) in Bankura district, Rs.140.00 in Paschim Medinipur district and Rs.142.50 in Purba Medinipur district during the period under study. Total material cost is higher in Purba Medinipur district (Rs.189.25), followed by Paschim Medinipur (Rs.182.35) and Bankura (Rs.169.10). Total paid out cost in production of per pair sankha in Bankura district is Rs.169.10, in Paschim Medinipur it is Rs.182.35 and in Purba Medinipur district it is Rs.189.25.

Estimated Profit Per Pair Sankha: Table 10 shows the estimated value of sales of per pair sankha, estimated total costs which includes estimated production cost, estimated cost of packing and sealing, transportation cost etc., estimated gross and net profits, gross profit-fixed capital ratio, gross profit-working capital ratio, gross profit-value of output ratio. It is seen that the estimated average value of sales per pair sankha was Rs.380 in sample production units of Bankura Districts whereas it was Rs. 410 in sample production units of Paschim Medinipur district and it was Rs. 417 in sample production units of Purba Medinipur district. This is estimated on the basis of field survey data. Estimated production cost for similar type of sankha production is differed significantly across the sample three districts. It was Rs.207.16 in Bankura district, Rs.227.22 in Paschim Medinipur district and Rs.245.06 in Purba Medinipur district.

Table 10 Estimation of profit (Average) per pair Sankha Production in Sample Districts

	Bankura	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur
Estimated value of sales	380.00	410.00	417.00
Estimated production cost	191.66	208.72	221.06
Estimated cost of packing, sealing etc.	13.50	16.50	22.00
Transportation cost	2.00	2.00	2.00
Estimated total cost	207.16	227.22	245.06
Estimated gross profit	172.84	182.78	171.94
Estimated net profit	123.25	154.50	141.00
gross profit / fixed capital	62.22	67.57	59.80
gross profit / working capital	0.55	0.51	0.49
gross profit / value of output	0.42	0.45	0.43
Net profit / value of output	0.41	0.44	0.42

Source: Estimation based on Field Survey data

Output of Conch-shell Industry: Our sample conch shell industries in the three districts produce various types of goods like Sonabandhanosankha, Hangurmukhsankha, Mantasasankha, Chursankha, Brasletsankha, Minichursankha, Surusankha, and others low quality Sankha. They also produce fabulous images of deities like Durga, Laxmi, Srikrishna, Lord Shiva etc. on each and every shell. In addition to that, they produce hair clips, bangles, brooches, earrings, necklaces, pendants, paperweights, boxes, agarbati stands, buttons, vermilion containers, cups, spoons, forks, door hangings etc. The market prices of their major products in the three districts are shown in table 3.10 below.

It is observed that the products like Sonabandhanosankha, Hangurmukhsankha, Mantasasankha, and Chursankha have the larger market demand over the products like Brasletsankha, Minichursankha, and Surusankha. Their market prices are higher than the others. For example, in Bankura district Sonabandhanosankha has the expected market price of Rs.490.00, while in Paschim Medinipur district the price is Rs.455.00 and in Purba Medinipur district it is Rs.520.00 with the average expected market price of Rs.488.00.

Table 11 Different designed sankha products made by the sample production units and their expected market prices in local markets

Products	Bankura (Rs)	Paschim Medinipur (Rs)	Purba Medinipur (Rs)	Average Market Price (in Rs)
Sonabandhanosankha	490	455	520	488
Hangurmukhsankha	430	385	400	405
Mantasasankha	370	355	390	372
Chursankha	290	260	310	287
Brasletsankha	210	200	230	213
Minichursankha	210	220	200	210
Surusankha	150	175	160	162
Others Low Quality Sankha	120	150	130	133

Source: Estimation based on Field Survey data

Table 12 Sale of Conch shell goods by the Sample Craftsmen

	Bankura	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur	Total
Local Market	09	11	06	26 (11%)
Fair (Mela)	18	14	08	40 (17%)

Local Businessmen	15	11	17	43 (18%)
Exporters	11	09	11	31 (13%)
Own Shop	07	05	08	20 (9%)
Digha Sea market	12	09	20	41 (17%)
Businessmen from other States	06	16	07	29 (13%)
others	02	05	03	10 (4%)
Total	80	80	80	240 (100)

Source: Field Survey,

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage values.

Marketing Channel of Conch shell Goods: Generally conch shell craftsmen in three sample districts are household industry workers. They sold their products to local businessmen and traders, traders coming from Kolkata, Odisha, Jharkhand and Behar. Out of 240 sample craftsmen in West Bengal 24 percent sold their products by themselves. They sold their products in various fairs/mela throughout West Bengal. 18 percent of sample craftsmen sell their products to traders coming from Kolkata. 21 percent and 23 percent sample craftsmen sold their products to the traders coming from distant places of Odisha and Jharkhand. Thus only 24 percent of their products sold by themselves and the rest products are sold by traders. So, we conclude that the craftsmen are highly dependent on traders and business coming from distant places.

Table 13 Marketing Channels of Conch Shell Goods

Chennels	Bankura	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur	Total
Self	23	18	16	57 (24 %)
Local Businessmen/ Traders	15	11	17	43 (18 %)
Traders from Kolkata	11	15	20	46 (19%)
Traders from Odisha	06	10	05	21 (9%)
Traders from Jharkhand	12	05	06	23 (9 %)
Traders from Behar	05	09	04	18 (8%)
others	08	12	12	32 (13 %)
Total	80	80	80	240 (100)

Source: Field Survey,

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentage values.

Problems Faced by the Craftsmen: A lot of problems faced by the conch shell craftsmen in the production and marketing of their products. We thoroughly discussed with the sample craftsmen and identified the following problems. This is shown in table below. It is observed that the problems are mainly shortage of capital, primitive technology, unorganized market, irregular supply of raw materials, high input cost, lack of proper training to the craftsmen, lack of central and state government initiatives and excessive control of middlemen over the marketing of conch shell goods. Most of the respondent craftsmen opined a number of reasons for their miserability. As many as 39 sample respondents argued that shortage of capital, lack of government initiatives and unorganized output market are the main problems in production and marketing of conch shell goods. 36 respondents have their opinion that presence of middlemen in both input and output markets and irregular supply of raw materials and their low quality are the main factors responsible for their survivability.

Table 14 Problems faced by the Craftsmen

Problems	Bankura	Paschim Medinipur	Purba Medinipur	Total
i. Shortage of Capital	3	2	2	7
ii. Primitive Technology	2	3	2	7

iii.	Unorganized Market	5	2	2	9
iv.	Irregular Supply of Raw Conch	8	4	1	13
v.	High Input cost	10	1	3	14
vi.	Lack of proper Training	9	2	2	13
vii.	Lack of Government Initiatives	6	2	1	09
viii.	Presence of Middlemen	4	2	2	8
ix.	(i), (iv) & (vii)	11	10	10	31
x.	(i), (iii) & (v)	14	13	12	39
xi.	(iv), (viii)	16	09	11	36
xii.	(ii),(iii),&(vii)	15	08	08	31
xiii.	(v) , (vi) & (vii)	14	11	09	34
xiv.	(vii) &(viii)	11	10	09	30

Source: Field Surv

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