



A study of the challenges encountered by the handicraft business in Jodhpur, Rajasthan

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Abstract

Rajasthan is often said to be a place with diverse customs and civilizations. The production of handicrafts is often a part of a culture's expression. Handmade, semi-handmade, and machine-made are the three separate categories that are used to categorise handicrafts. On the economic front, Rajasthan's exports of handicrafts totaled Rs. 3,343 crore in the fiscal year 2018, or 9% of the State's overall exports. This was, in other words, Rajasthan's economic contribution to the export sector. In 2016, the country's handicraft exports totaled Rs. 29,347 crore, with Rajasthan serving as one of the major providers and making up 11.4% of the total. Rajasthan has always held a significant portion of the market for Indian handicrafts that are exported. Since the beginning of recorded history, handicrafts have been a significant part of the culture and legacy of the city of Jodhpur. This study paper's goal is to undertake a thorough examination of the many difficulties that local handicraft manufacturers in Jodhpur are now experiencing. There is a lack of consensus over what constitutes a "handicraft," poor infrastructure, limited access to raw materials, interrupted supply chains, inefficient marketing, and other issues. Additionally, in order to compete in the modern market, craftspeople must strike a balance between the necessity to preserve their ancient skills and the need for innovation. This study focuses on the problems that the small-scale handicraft industry is now having and makes some suggestions for solutions. The main secondary sources that were utilised in the data collecting procedure included the observation approach as well as several internet publications and papers.

Keyword: - handicraft, Export, skills

Introduction

The term "handicrafts" may be used to describe a wide range of various kinds of objects. The informal sector is a subset of economic activity that is differentiated by a few traits, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO). These traits include a dependence on locally accessible resources and skills, family ownership, small-scale businesses, labor-intensive conventional technologies, skills that are often obtained outside of the formal education system, and uncontrolled competitive marketplaces. Handicrafts are one of the subgroups of the unorganised sector.

Jodhpur, which has a long history of producing a wide range of handicrafts, has developed into an important hub for the export of handcrafted hardwood and metal furniture, things for the house, and make-ups and furnishings made of textiles. In Jodhpur, many handicrafts have been produced for a long time. More than 30,000 artists are supported by the cluster, which also contributes more than 10% of the country's total handicraft output. Handmade wooden and iron handicrafts are produced in this region by about 300 small and

medium-sized exporters. The items have been transported to many prominent overseas markets, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Germany, Canada, Italy, and France.

The Jodhpur region is entirely included in the Handicraft Mega cluster, which also includes the significant craft industries in the neighboring Barmer district. The Handicraft Mega cluster spans an area of 22,850 square kilometers. The exporters from this cluster have created a distinct niche for themselves in the traditional markets of the United States and Europe by specializing in the manufacturing of hardwood furniture, home items, and antique replicas. Many exporters were nevertheless eager to broaden their existing marketing networks and look into the opportunities offered by these emerging markets. While some exporters have previously done so, there are others who have expanded their product lines to focus on growing markets including the LAC, Russia, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe.

One of the primary classifications of crafts produced in Jodhpur include hand block printing, often referred to as Dabu printing, leather craftsmanship, also known as mojari, dhurrie weaving, and tie and dye techniques. The handicraft industry has faced a variety of issues in recent years, despite the fact that the objects' economic potential was thought to be favorable given their unique offering in terms of both practicality and beauty. Some of the challenges the industry must overcome include inadequate infrastructure, out-of-date technology that restricts scale and production, fragmented operations, a lack of raw materials, a skills gap in the local population, limited market access, and other issues. The trend of handicraft exports during the last several years is shown in the following table.

Figure 1 The Handicraft Export Trend Pattern



Source: Rajasthan Tourism Department 2020

Review of Literature

According to Craft Buck Team (2020), crafts are a nation's cultural and traditional expression. The preservation of our history, culture, and way of life depends on crafts. The labor-intensive, dispersed, artisanal Indian craft industry. The industry is mostly urban and rural. There is a sizable market potential in all Indian cities and beyond, however the bulk of production facilities are found in rural and small villages. More than six million artisans work in rural regions, many of them women and individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Das (2019) asserts that indigenous artisans who engage in a range of artistic pursuits based on local folklore have The development of rural life in a nation has been greatly aided by local craftsmen, and indigenous artisans are a crucial component of the equation describing the Indian society and culture that sparked the expansion of the country's handicrafts industry.

Garg and Walia (2019) described the obstacles that the craftsmen who work in the handicraft sector via urban haats experience in order to highlight the issues that the handicraft industry confronts. They also made an effort to comprehend Indian handicrafts from both an ethnic and an urban perspective. It was shown that decisions about participation in haats were significantly influenced by the regular supply chain, hands-on labour activity, a lack of skill, a licence, and other requirements.

Reddy, 2018 conducted research, particularly on the emergence and development of the crochet lace business in Andhra Pradesh. Examining handicraft exports and their impact on the Indian economy was the revision's main goal. Mostly secondary information gathered from publications, periodicals, and the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts. The author discussed the lace industry's exports to other countries, industry issues, and government initiatives to promote the handicraft sector. Bhat & Yadav, (2016) The author of this post recognized job prospects produced in the handicraft industry as well as the most significant problems that are now being experienced. The fact that this sector is not covered by employment legislation, the absence of professional training programmers, and issues with technology and design are the primary reasons why it is not possible for this sector to effectively contribute to the development of new jobs. The relevant bodies need to find solutions to all of these issues in order to improve the rate at which job opportunities are generated in this area.

Rao (1978) conducted a number of research on rural industries, particularly those found in the state of Andhra Pradesh. In his work titled "Rural Industrialization in India," he makes the observation that the handicraft industry is one of a handful of cottage businesses that have the potential to expand if the proper technology is used. In this particular setting, he is in favour of using what E.F. Schumacher refers to as "intermediate technology." This brilliant economist has been a strong proponent of the "little is beautiful" notion for as long as I can remember.

According to Upadhyay (1973), author of the book "Economics of the handicraft business," we cannot even conceive of the possibility of a healthy expansion of such a sector in the absence of design development, technological innovation, and quality improvement. Responsible people have come to the conclusion that even in the realm of handicrafts, a certain degree of automation has to be applied in order to achieve the double goal of superior finish and rationalization.

Study Area

Geographically speaking, the westernmost district of the state is where Jodhpur is located. It serves as the divisional hub for the state's western districts, which are home to the cities of Pali, Jodhpur, Sirohi, Barmer, Jalore, and Jaisalmer. The area that faces the most west is Jaisalmer. It covers the area between 26 degrees and 37 minutes north latitude and 72 degrees and 73 degrees and 52 minutes east longitude. It is encircled by the districts of Jaisalmer district to the west, Barmer district to the south, Pali Nagaur district to the east, and Bikaner and Jaisalmer districts to the north. The Jodhpur district, which comprises 11.6% of the state's total territory in the dry zone, is included in the desert region. With a total size of 22,850 square kilometres, the district makes up 6.59 percent of the state's total land area.

Statement of the problem

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the challenges that those working in the handicraft industry are up against and to look for potential solutions to these issues.

Hypothesis

The section of Jodhpur's economy that deals in handicrafts is going to run into a great deal of difficulty. Analysis of the issues that are now being encountered by those who are engaged in the production of handicrafts in Jodhpur was carried out using secondary sources of information, such as publications, research, and reviews that were conducted on the subject.

Research Methodology

The current research is a review-based investigation on the effect that urbanization and westernization have had on Jodhpur's traditional handicraft market. This investigation was carried out in the city of Jodhpur. The infrastructure, policy environment, trade strategy, and government backing for the handicraft business are what set it apart from other industries. Additionally, the way the sector is characterized sets it apart. The Indian handicrafts are the products of a small and cottage sector, which is mainly disorganized, and the items

are handcrafted, while the handicraft industries of other nations that compete with India are structured and focused toward large-scale manufacture. This may work out better or worse for India depending on how it's handled. The gains come in the form of more job opportunities, while the negatives manifest themselves as lower manufacturing costs. It is possible to draw the conclusion that handicraft items have a very bright future in the worldwide market; yet, they are also experiencing certain negative repercussions as a result of globalization. This is the case with Indian handcraft. Despite the fact that exports of handicrafts are now seeing excellent development, we must not overlook the difficulties that craftsmen are currently experiencing. These difficulties will gradually bring the industry closer to the mode from where we will need to begin anew. Even though the government is taking a number of steps to make things better, there is still a need to do more and provide the strategic direction and action plans to evolve systems. This will ensure that craft persons and their industry are able to flourish and survive in this increasingly competitive era brought on by globalization.

Result and discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the challenges that handicraft makers in Jodhpur city, Rajasthan confront in order to better serve their customers. There are a number of studies that point to the challenges that are experienced by this industry. According to the findings of our research, people who are engaged in the production of handicrafts face the following challenges in order to preserve their means of subsistence and their economic status: Globalization. Artisans who are engaged in the handicraft market face a competition that is so fierce that it could sever their throats. The trend of globalisation has presented the developing world with opportunity to compete with the developed world and make an impact in a number of different spheres of endeavour. For instance, in the handicraft industry, one might earn foreign currency via the export of one's wares. On the other side, it has also resulted in a significant number of difficulties and obstacles. The process of globalisation has had an effect on the product selections, and as a result, many of these needs are now impossible for manufacturers to disregard. When these demands of globalisation are brought home to manufacturers that are tied by tradition and are particularly reluctant to accepting changes in their conventional means of working, problems arise. Additionally, these new requirements have a tendency to shift with regard to the nobility and uniqueness of handicrafts. Low educated individuals, mostly members of tribes, are employed in this field, and the literacy rate among these people is rather low. This is the fundamental cause of every issue that craftsmen and women have to deal with. According to a research that was just released by DASRA (2013), it has been stated unequivocally that the majority of the challenges that craftsmen confront are the direct result of their poor literacy levels.

Insufficiency of Skilled Labor

The growth and success of the handicraft industry in Jodhpur have contributed to a shortage of available skilled labourers in the city. As a result of a widespread lack of knowledge among youths joining this area, they have limited access to the programmes that are sponsored by the government. The Artisanal and Artisanal Crafts Association of the Caribbean (AIACA) conducted research into the fundamental issues plaguing the handicraft industry and reported, in a series of reports covering the years 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2006, that the handloom and hand-woven sectors suffer a disproportionate amount of hardship as a result of a scarcity of skilled labour.

Insufficient available financial resources

The majority of individuals who are employed in the handicraft industry are struggling with inadequate access to finance, credit for loans, and other forms of financing. In a nation like India, the majority of members of tribal tribes have chosen handicrafts as their employment, and they are wholly dependent on these activities for both income and advancement. Over the course of the last decade, the government has implemented a number of new programmes intended for this population; nevertheless, these programmes are not entirely accessible to these individuals. An analytical piece pointing out the issues faced by small scale enterprises was also published in the 2003-2004 edition of Economic Review.

Insufficiency of information

Due to the fact that these individuals have not received sufficient education, they are not properly connected with the information channel and hence are uninformed of the most current innovations and approaches in their profession. Even though the government has included certain simple loan plans and financial schemes for this group in its most recent five-year plan, the people in this group are unable to take advantage of these plans because the information channels and linkages that are available to them are inadequate.

Government indifference

According to the records that are currently available, it is abundantly clear that over the course of the last century, artisans have been neglected by both the central and state governments due to the lack of availability of appropriate records regarding their numbers, social status, and economic standing. When it comes to implementation and evaluation, the plans that were developed for craftsmen give competent labourers a low priority. The development of export markets has been prioritised by the government, which is shown in the allocation of 70 percent of its budget for handicrafts to the research and development of programmes that facilitate export of handicrafts.

Youngsters' lack of interest

The second generation of craftsmen, as well as younger artisans, do not have an interest in continuing their work since there are less opportunities for financial advancement and this industry is declining. Because they have watched their parents struggle to find markets and prices that are reasonable for their goods, they are motivated to seek other trades instead. In its study on Craft Economics and Impact Study, the Crafts Council of India (2011) came to the conclusion that young people are losing interest in the professions of their ancestors and that these professions are on the verge of extinction 13.

According to the findings of the current research, it is suggested that the literacy rate of handicraftsmen be raised, and that better communication channels be established between the government and the people who benefit from its programmes.

Findings

The contribution of India's cottage and handicraft industries to the country's gross domestic product is roughly five percent. This industry is an essential one that has been around for a very long time and should be preserved. The following is a list of the most significant challenges facing the handcraft sector today:

- The earnings of small-scale industries are often insufficient, and the majority of these gains are used to cover the day-to-day costs of the raw materials. The proprietor does not have access to any more funds that may be used to further grow the business.
- Because of the increased cost of manufacturing, there is a lower overall quantity of the handicrafts. When things are created on a huge scale to compete with the competition of the free market, the traditional feel of the handicrafts that are being produced is lost.
- Local labourers and proprietors of small-scale handicraft businesses are exploited by middlemen and entire sellers, who take the majority of the earnings for themselves. It often happens that products are sold to wholesalers at the price at which they were manufactured, which deters the owners and causes them to make fewer items of worse quality and in smaller quantities.
- It is difficult to establish a handicraft business in rural regions because there is a lack of infrastructure, availability of raw materials, and non-availability of the provision of essential utilities such as water and electricity, among other things.
- The local artists and craftspeople in rural areas get their training and production techniques from the more experienced members of their community. As a result, there is a restriction placed on the supply of technical assistance as well as further training.
- The influence of urbanisation, westernisation, and the advent of computerised technology has led to a decline in the quality of handicrafts. This is due to the fact that the majority of the workforce prefers to produce a greater number of items in a shorter amount of time.

Limitations

- It was challenging to reach the far-flung industries since the handcraft industries were situated in rural regions.
- It was unable to do more research into the sector.
- Only the main problems were addressed.
- The only research done was observational and exploratory.

Suggestions for further research

- More research into the handcraft industry might be done to learn more about it.
- To learn more about the difficulties encountered by merchants in the handcraft business, interviews with them might be conducted.
- The research may include more industries.
- Additional government initiatives pertaining to the handcraft industry may be examined.
- As a result, the current study accomplishes its goals and provides fresh perspectives for future study.

Analyzing the SWOT for Jodhpur Handicrafts:

Strengths:

- The accessibility of unique locally produced raw materials including horn, jute, leather, bamboo, cane, and natural fibres.
- Rich and diverse culture offering a wide range of unique and unusual handicrafts.
- There is already a sizable and highly qualified worker pool.
- A range of traditional manufacturing methods created using local knowledge.
- Women, young people, and individuals with impairments have excellent opportunities to gain empowerment.
- Low manufacturing costs

Opportunities:

- A stronger emphasis on product development and improving design. Growing domestic and traditional market demand.
- Increasing respect from consumers in developed countries.
- The government's support and interest in preserving the craft.
- Latin American, European, and North American emerging markets.
- Effective commercial practises.

Weaknesses:

- A dearth of innovation in both design and technology.
- A much dispersed market.
- Manufacturing procedures that are unstructured and customized.
- The lack of effective industry umbrella organizations.
- Minimal investment and capitalization.
- Inadequate market information on trends, prices, and export prospects.
- Access to credit is restricted.
- Limited resources for manufacture, distribution, and marketing.
- The absence of e-commerce knowledge inside producer organisations.
- Insufficient infrastructure and outdated technologies

Threats:

- The handicrafts sector is not given high priority by many state governments in their development objectives.
- The rising threat presented by Asian countries.
- A decline in the supply of top-notch raw materials.
- Components, outcomes, and packaging from other countries could be of superior quality.
- An absence of quality assurance practices.
- Decreased industry investment, mostly in rich countries, and more sophisticated consumer behavior.
- The absence of institutional support.
- Exorbitant shipping and aircraft freight costs.

Conclusion

It was discovered that the production of wooden goods is done on a very modest scale as a symbol of tradition and heritage. Many educated individuals help their family members in the process of creating and giving out goods and services so that they may maintain their livelihood. Due to the ritualistic nature of the manufacturing process, a significant number of master craftsmen and artisans suffer from serious health issues such as acute pain, back discomfort, dust allergies, and respiratory diseases. According to what has been seen, the majority of women who get involved in this activity do so in the hopes that they will receive some sort of benefit from the government in the form of reduced taxes, increased subsidies, or loan facilities with lower or zero interest rates. This is part of the government's efforts to empower women and encourage women to become entrepreneurs. Providing them with vocational and professional training that helps them better fit into position and gives them accurate knowledge about the market helps them better fulfil the demands of their clients and modify their goods to match those demands. The government plays a very important role in international marketing and the processes involved in exporting goods. It is necessary to take a very sombre note on the evolution of rural handicraft sectors and craftsmen in order to preserve the traditions and legacies of careful regions and religions. Because of its aesthetic value, this industry has the potential to bring about significant shifts in international commerce.

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