



AN ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS FACED BY HANDICRAFT SECTOR IN JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

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Abstract

From times immemorial handicrafts have been an integral part of Jaipur city's culture and tradition. These handicrafts have always gained appreciation from kings and emperors to foreign tourists. The highly skilled laborers of Jaipur have shown their art in by making many fabulous products. Major crafts of Jaipur include block printing, bandhani, sculptures and stone carving. Zari work, tarkashi, zardozi work and gotapatti work is done on clothes. Jewellery and gems include the work of silver, kundan and meenakari. In the items of art and craft, blue pottery, ivory carving, patwa craft, miniature paintings, leather wares, shellac work etc. are made. This important sector is now facing many problems in the area of production, management and marketing. The local labours are not given proper scope and big markets having latest technologies have started taking over the industry. The handicrafts of Jaipur which were once the symbol of Jaipur's glorious tradition have now become full artificial and mechanized. The present study focuses on the problems being faced by the small scale handicraft industry and gives some suggestions for improvement.

Introduction

Handicrafts are defined as the products (craft) made by hand or using simple tools used by hands. It is the unique expression of art that represents a culture, tradition and the heritage of a country or a particular city. So technically, handicrafts were in existence from Stone Age where man used to make tools by carving stones. Therefore, since the ancient era of Indian history, people of India have been using handmade products. In ancient India people used to live in small settlements where they used to make the items made by them for their daily needs. Later, they started selling those things in the local markets. That is where the handicraft products came into existence. The trading of the handicraft products increased according to the increasing demand and population. The history of handicrafts goes back to almost 5000 years ago. The story of handicrafts starts with the story of evolution of mankind. The history of handicraft is as old as Stone Age. We all know in that at the time when man didn't know anything and even ate raw food, at that time also for protection of him by wild animals he produced simple handmade tools, which were pointed in shape. That was the first creation by men as a handicraft which was very useful thing at that time. Even in today's life, tools are essential components of this art. This is the modernization of the age long tradition of handicraft. In Indus valley civilization the first references to handicraft found from the Mohan-Jo-Daro, Sindh. The Indus valley civilization which was present in approx. 3000 B.C. -1700 B.C. had a rich craft tradition as well as a high degree of technical excellence in the art of pottery making, metal and terracotta, jewellery weaving etc. the craftsmen not only created all the local needs items but surplus item also.

Nearly all the rulers of Jaipur have been the admirers of arts, literature and crafts. The famous artists, artisan, craftsmen and sculptures were invited from India and out of India. Many communities were invited to get settled in and make Jaipur city their home. This made Jaipur a major centre for art and craft. Major crafts of Jaipur included block printing, bandhani, sculptures and stone carving. Zari work, tarkashi, zardozi work and gotapatti work was done on clothes. Jewellery and gems included the work of silver, kundan and meenakari. In the items of art and craft, blue pottery, ivory carving, patwa craft, miniature paintings, leather wares, shellac work etc. were made.

For the people who love handicraft shopping, Jaipur (the capital city of Rajasthan) is the perfect place for them. On mostly all traveling guides, shopping portals, touring websites, online catalogues and blogs you may see this title awarded to Jaipur. This is also called as the Treasure Trove of India as no one ever goes empty handed from here.

But today, the temple's suggestive art and symbolic architecture is largely disregarded by the pious crowds. The artistic heritage is over painted with multi-colored white-wash tints.

Technology and its gadgets have captured the imagination of all. Art has become a consumer good. The beauty of art as the beauty of nature patiently awaits a re-discovery.

Before the advent of British the century, the Indian villages functioned as self-sufficient units. The artisans produced various kinds of clothes, implements, furniture, jewelers and vessels that fulfilled the daily needs of villagers. The unique feature of the village economy was the union of the agriculture and handicrafts industry.

At present the art-forms cling either desperately to the past glorious traditions or they are in open rebellion and contest. Today the mood of all art-expressions favors show and performance. Today the art-form that is most in need of discipline and austere taste. Painting drew fresh life from the regional, rural folk-art, but today it caters mainly to fashion and commerce. The painting of icons continues in the style of the local traditions.



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The modern painting that one encounters in art-exhibitions tends to imitate Western trends and styles. It is not easy to harmonize Eastern and Western elements in any art-form.

This globalization has made the survival of the traditional form of art difficult. Besides this, many other problems such as lack of skilled labourers, raw materials, handmade machines, proper funds and marketing channel.

Therefore, it may be seen that there are lot of changes taking place in the market of traditional handicrafts in Jaipur and the labourers are facing problems in perpetuating the traditional heritage.

Importance of the study

The handicraft sector of Jaipur is a cultural heritage of the pink city. This sector requires conservation in the same way as the certain species of plants and animals whose survival is in danger. Urbanization and westernization have made a disastrous impact over the continuation of the traditional art and craft and this is gradually leading to change in the quality of traditional fabulous works done by the artisans, artists and craftsmen of older era. This sector is facing the lack of recognition which is slowly leading to extinction of its identity. This study is giving an insight about the challenges faced by these small scale industries needs to be recognized and proper measures should be taken for its upliftment.

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.

Hypothesis

There will be many problems faced by the handicraft sector of Jaipur.

Procedure

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 Jaipur was analyzed.

Research Methodology

The present study is the review based study in which the impact of urbanization and westernization over the traditional handicraft market in Jaipur city is observed.

Result and discussion

Present study was aimed to find problems and hindrances faced by artisans of handicrafts in Jaipur 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. Bhatnagar and Rai have also reported (2008-09) that globalization is an important factor affecting handicraft development in Rajasthan in their study¹.Vaijayanti (2011) has also pointed out that globalization is creating a difficult competitive environment for craftsman to cope with the global demands².

Low education

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 them³. Mahesh Prasad. (2002), has also found that uneducated craftsman have suffered more of all things in handicraft industry⁴.

Lack of skilled labour

The development and popularity of handicraft industry in Jaipur 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^{5,6,7,8}.

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 industries⁹.

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. Indian Design and Interiors (2005), Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts (2011), Nathuramka (2005) and World Bank report (2003) has also reported same status of government support to people involved in handicrafts^{10,11,12,13}.

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.

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.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that the traditional society of artisans and craftsmen of Jaipur are facing identity crisis. Government of India is running certain promotional programs and arranging funds for these small scale handicraft industries, but support in other aspects is also needed for their existence.

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.



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.

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