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Indian Handicrafts and its Challenges Faced by Artisan Community

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ABSTRACT

In the current scenario retail sector has transformed tremendous change in the last few years and which is becoming the next booming industry. Due to rapid growth and heavy competition, employees are facing several problems of stress. This study explores the impact of enhancing the employee's participation in retail sector and to know the stress barriers faced by them. It is significant for knowing stress awareness among the employees and the strategies for coping the stress for achieving their goals; this is a methodical study based on primary data which is collected during questionnaire. Thus the present study is initiated with the stress awareness among the employees at retail sector it was carried out among 200 employees from different retail stores in Kanchipuram district. Analysis like Percentage, Chi-Square and ANOVA analysis are used for knowing the various factors affecting job stress.

Keywords: Stress awareness, Stress coping techniques and Retail Sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

The handicrafts of India are having a very depth history and tradition. They are producing a huge variety of handcrafted products with various unique raw materials. The level of popularity and demand for Indian handicrafts in foreign countries is very high. Each state of India is having a specialized handicraft and art craft products. The Major product of Indian handicrafts is based on wood wares, metal wares, hand printed textiles, pottery, paintings embroideries, etc. Most of the handicraft product comes under the

category of Gift articles. Though India has a rich heritage and values in Handicrafts Industry, the product, which is in the form of appearance, production methods are changing from generation to generation. The Indian Handicrafts Industry (IHI) also contributes a lot to the Indian economy and generates employment opportunities for rural artisans and their family too.

Indian Handicrafts – General Outlook

Indian handicrafts are usually defined as “Items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools and are generally artistic and/or traditional in nature. They are also objects of utility and objects of decoration.”

“Handicraft can be defined, which is made by hand; should have some artistic value; they may or may not have functional utility.”
– **Government of India**

“Handicraft is the second largest source of employment in the country, after agriculture. Yet India’s hand industries are in a crisis of misunderstanding.”

– **Crafts Council of India-2011**

India is a well-known country for its rich culture, heritage as well as its unique handicrafts. Different handicrafts are produced all over the country. Artisans from different areas producing their products with a small level production unit which represents their tradition, skills. Crafts are playing a major role in generating revenue to the government, employment generation which leads to the improvement of living standards of rural artisans. Handicraft industry is one of the salient divisions of decentralized sectors in India.

Since Handicrafts Industry has played a notable role in the Indian economy, the government has developed some policies and regulations for better monitoring. As IHI is coming under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India and it framed the regulatory activities. Some of them are as follows:

- To set up a production or manufacturing unit for handicrafts, location is not restricted as per government rules.
- The handicraft producers are free from getting Industrial License to manufacture.

The demand for Indian Handicrafts in foreign countries like Germany, France, Italy, etc., are growing day by day. They are importing these products in most of the cases for gifting purpose.

Objectives

- To understand the current scenario of Handicraft Industry in India.
- To study the challenges faced by the artisans and provide suggestions for their enhancement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Dilip Kumar, 2013 attempts to understand the soul of the art in the Indian handicrafts which are having an extreme demand in international market. They focused on the opportunities and impact of the global recession on the industry, recession and its causes, challenges faced by the Indian artisan community. To improve the revenue of the industry, they tried to deliver some suggestions mainly in marketing techniques to be followed by artisans.

Din, 2014 focal point of this paper is the estimation of handicraft production and employment opportunities for artisans who are especially from rural India. The detail information given by the author regarding the types and varieties available such as jute, paper, bell metal, cane, rock, brass, shell, etc. He discussed persons involved in doing handicrafts who are spread all over India and their employment status with the comparison of rural and urban areas.

Hashmi, 2012 performed a study with the focus on exploring the various destinations other India having more demand, lack of availability of labor, better quality products or substitutes from other countries. Also, he didn't fail to discuss the classification and varieties of handicraft, SWOT analysis of the industry, competitive situation spread over the nation commonly.

Jain pivots on selling the handicraft products with the help of E-Commerce websites. It contains the details of product division and price range which are available in those websites with the sales of the products. As per the rate of sales of handicraft thorough E-Commerce sites in other countries like U.K, Germany, U.S.A, Australia, Canada, France etc shows that the great demand for Indian Handicrafts.

Menon, 2010 focused mainly on village artisans in Kerala who totally depends on local traders as intermediaries to sell their crafts. In order to make money quickly, they follow the same pattern of work without considering the market situation and customer expectation. The author also tried to inspect the prevailing product mix, limitation of the village crafts industry, gaps seems in the industry like lack of coordination, infrastructure, and understanding.

Towseef Mohi-ud-din, 2014 reveals about the present scenario of the Handicraft industry, which includes the rate of exports, demand in foreign markets, and existing varieties of crafts around the nation and recommendations for the continual development of the industry as well as the standards of artisan livelihood. In particular, their focus is on the challenges of artisans due to globalization with huge competition with the arrival of low-cost machine made substitutes. Because of this artisan economy goes down and Government is in the position to uplift the artisan community.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive method of research is adopted and it is based on the secondary source of data which has been collected from various literature, journals, books, reports, newspaper articles, websites and governmental data understand the nature and significance of Indian Handicrafts Industry.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The variants of Indian Handicrafts include Metal wares, Wooden wares, Bamboo crafts, Jute crafts, Paper crafts, Rock/Stone crafts, Shell crafts, Pottery/Clay works, Embroidery works, Paintings, Zari works, Pith works, Imitation Jewelry, Ivory Painting, Glass art, Fiber/Coir crafts, Handcrafted Shawls etc. **Source:** www.india-crafts.com

Region Wise Handicrafts Products

As per India's concern, the nation having a wide variety of handicrafts made by different kinds of materials. Each zone has different handicrafts and it may differ in the material used, techniques followed, finishing, looks etc.

In the Eastern regions like Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam, Manipur hand crafted products such as Teracotta, Clay, Carpet weaving, Conch Shell, Glass work, Jute, Leather, Carpet weaving, stone, wood, metals etc. are available.

In Western regions of India such as Rajasthan, Gujarat has many handicrafts varieties like Goya, Pichwai, Nathdwara, metal embossing, crochet, embroidery, Saurashtra Pottery crafts, wood craft, brass work, fiber craft, batik prints, metalwork, bamboo craft etc.

In the Northern part of the country, Jammu& Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh crafts like metal crafts, furniture making, wood carving, Carpet-weaving, Shawls of Chamba, textiles, Pottery, Phulkar crafts etc., are popular in above-mentioned regions.

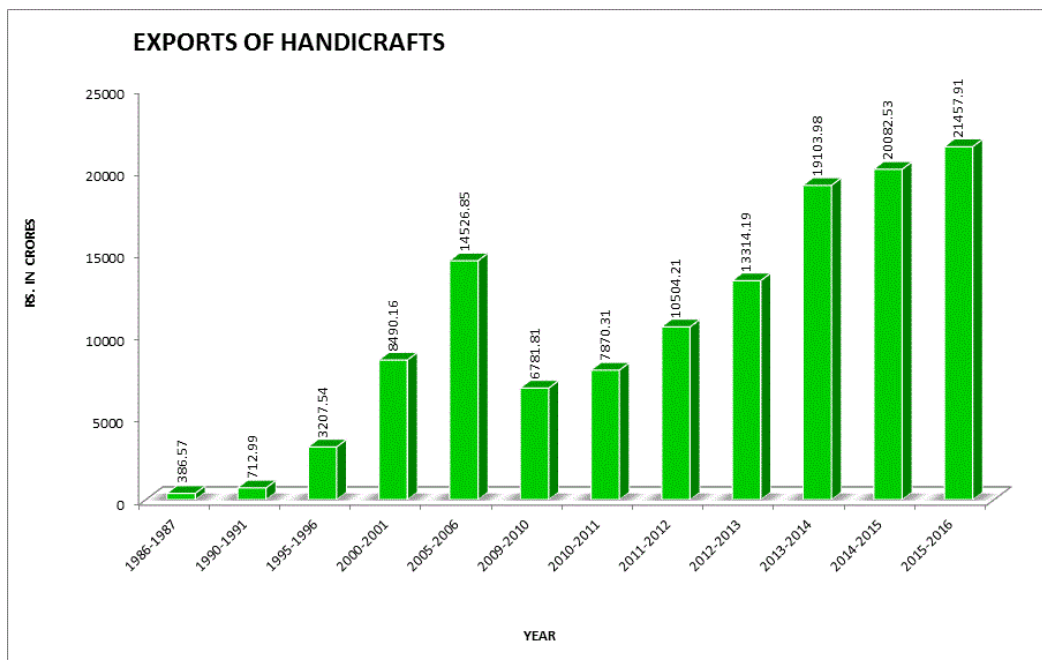
Southern regions like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telungana Wood, Ivory carving, stone craft, wood craft, bidri craft, Pottery, stone craft, Kasuti embroidery, Paper mache, Banjara needle craft, bamboo crafts are so familiar.

Table 1
Significant Markets for Indian Handicrafts

Art metal products, wooden crafts	U.S.A, Germany, France, Italy and U.K
Hand Printed, Embroidery shawls and other Textiles	U.S.A, U.K, Saudi Arabia, Germany
Zari works and ImmitationJewellery	U.S.A, U.K, Japan,Saudi Arabia, Germany
Hand Knotted Woolen Carpets	Germany, USA, Switzerland, U.K, Italy, Canada, Holland etc.

The above Table 1.1 shows that the Indian major crafts and its international markets.

Generally, Indian Handicrafts are having a greater demand in foreign markets. Foreigners are like Indian crafts because of its traditional value, uniqueness, colour. They want to buy these products for home décor. Handcrafted items such as shawls, metal and wood wares, craft with precious stones are having a much demand international market.



Source: Official website of Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)

STATEMENT SHOWING PROVISIONAL EXPORT FIGURE OF HANDICRAFTS DURING THE PERIOD APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2016-2017 COMPARED TO THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD OF APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2015-2016.						
ITEMS	IN CR.		INCREASE IN % OVER 2015-16	US\$ IN MILLIONS		INCREASE IN %
	2015-16 (April-September)	2016-17 (April-September)		2015-16 (April-September)	2016-17 (April-September)	
				64.2232	66.9263	
ARTMETAL WARES	1940.29	2592.68	33.62	302.12	387.39	28.23
WOODWARES	1916.95	2187.82	14.13	298.48	326.9	9.52
HANDPRINTED TEXTILES & SCARAVES	1424.67	1611.36	13.1	221.83	240.77	8.54
EMBROIDERED & CROCHETTED GOODS	1430.08	1654.22	15.67	222.67	247.17	11
SHAWLS AS ARTWARES	2.7	2.93	8.52	0.42	0.44	4.76
ZARI & ZARI GOODS	62.47	56.54	-9.49	9.73	8.45	-13.15
IMMITATION JEWELLERY	1074.58	1102.78	2.62	167.32	164.78	-1.52
MISC. HANDICRAFTS	3143.68	3797.02	20.78	489.49	567.34	15.9
TOTAL	10995.42	13005.35	18.28	1712.06	1943.23	13.50

Source: EPCH. The data are based on 167 HS Codes.

4.1. Challenges faced by Artisan

4.1.1. Raw Material

The availability of raw materials with a good quality is very important for the production of handicrafts. But the present situation is not favorable for the artisan. They are facing problems to collect all those materials so they sometimes go for recycled raw materials for some possible handicrafts like paper made handicrafts. Pith is a kind of plant which is generally grown near the river bed. Due to the scarcity of pith plant, pith art is moving towards endangered context.

4.1.2. Skilled Labour

Though the level demand is high for the hand crafted products, even in foreign countries, there is a lack skilled labor to produce handicrafts. Because of less income from it, people from artisan family are not showing interest on the road the production of Handicrafts. In order to produce the crafts without missing the traditional look, finishing and originality and to match the customer expectations, there is a vast need for high-skilled labor.

4.1.3. Fixing Price

Price is a monetary expression value where fixing a price for each craft item is different by influencing some factors like cost of production, labour cost, competitor price, demand, etc. Artisans are not aware of the pricing strategy, so price fixing is totally in the hands of retailers based on the customer perception towards the crafts. Generally, there is an assumption among customers that handcrafted products are expensive because of labor cost and other factors, but it's not applicable to all sorts of crafts. Some customers imagine that handcrafted products are with poor quality, it is up to the customers. For example, customer reception of power loomed carpets has demand than hand loomed carpets whereas hand made paintings, shell crafts are having more reception from the customer than mechanized products.

4.1.4. Financial Support

Most of the artisans are not well educated and they are from rural areas. They are not much aware of the bank loans, interest rates for these loans, government schemes and initiatives. So they are suffering and looking for financial support to improve their production and yield income out of it. Though the Government has been taken some necessary action for artisans upliftment, artisans are not aware about the schemes and also some of them are afraid to lend money and repayment with interest even the interest rate is low.

4.1.5. Promotion

This is one of the important segments to concentrate more on the improvement sales. The component of promotion comprises the advertisement, direct marketing techniques, personal selling techniques and public relations. If previously mentioned are followed, consequently, the sales volume gets increased. Though the Government arranges some events, trade fair region wise exclusively for hand crafted products only least count of artisans are participating rest of them are not coming forward to expose their talents by their own crafts and not willing to travel even within a region. In some cases, they assume that language would be a problem for travel, stay, communication.

4.1.6. Quality

The wide ranges of Indian handicrafts are comprised of many different from various regions of the country. There is no similar quality of products are produced throughout the country. Because of differences in similar products, customer gets confused while the time of purchase of handicrafts. There is no uniformity in standards of quality for similar products. Being an unorganized sector, there is a complexity in framing quality policies which are to be suitable for all and quality management by inspection that would be done by the government.

4.1.7. Lack of interest among “Y” Generation

The present Younger generations are not showing their interest towards the production of handicrafts because they know the challenges in the industry and of low income and other employment opportunities available for them with better income. Another reason for this disinterest among this generation is our education system that is not trying to inculcate thought about our esteemed art, culture and tradition. They are pushed to reach their destination as jobs with a fair salary. Thoughts in some class of people are not coming out of the caste system, caste based occupation is not adopted by any other community in India in most of the cases. This will lead to the reduction of a count of artisans in the country.

4.1.8. Branding

Due to less investment, less working capital, less profit and in some cases ignorance artisans, especially who are from a rural background are not having adequate potential to brand their products with the specialized category in the market and in the minds of customers. They unable to compete with large-scale, machine made producers and existing brand even their quality and finishing is matching the basic standards expects by the customers.

4.1.9. Packaging

Artisans are not much aware of market research to know the present trend in marketing and customer expectation towards Handicraft industry. Because of inadequate knowledge, they are facing various kinds of problems while marketing their products to customer, wholesalers or retailers. Though their product quality is good with a reasonable price, in some cases the customers refuse to buy the product due to its poor packaging.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

5.1. Recommendations

- For continues improvement and growth of this industry, there is a need of publicity among all classes of people in the society. So the Government should conduct trade fairs, exhibitions etc.
- Government should provide the proper training program to artisans for market study as well as the value added for a better production.
- Uniformity in standards of quality and in price is required.
- Technology up gradation is required to capture more foreign markets.
- Government should support artisans financially by giving adequate money as a loan through nationalized banks with low rate of interest.
- To inculcate interest among youngsters, the Government should provide proper awareness and training in making of crafts by the existing artisans in the region, which is also helps to increase the employment rate of the nation.
- Artisans should adopt the Internet technology to sell the products through E-Commerce sites which are existing in the market like fabfurnish, camelcraft, vedique, craftsvilla, above etc.

5.2. Conclusion

Indian Handicrafts are representing their tradition, culture and skills of artisans. It generates employment opportunities, especially for rural artisans including women artisans. The uniqueness of the products are one of the special factors for higher demand, which leads to the better exports. The government should take necessary steps to educate and create awareness among the artisan community about the artisan welfare schemes and other schemes which provide financial support for them also the government should step in conducting programs on Training, skill development, value addition, market research, promotion and pricing strategy.

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