

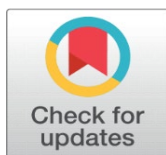
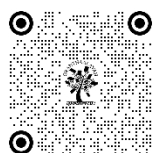
IMPACT OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN HANDICRAFT ARTISANS OF MANIPUR

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DOI

[10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.3827](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v5.i1.2024.3827)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

Handicraft is a labour-intensive sub-sector with high potential of employment for poor section of society in rural areas. It is economically important because of the low capital investment, high value addition and negotiable import content and high potential for export earnings. Skills development and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth as well as social development for a nation. Traditionally, the artisans have been backbone of the Economy of the Indian rural society. It is fact that young people are the innovators, creators, leaders, and builders of the future. But they can transform the future only if they have innovative skills, health standard, decision-making, financial aid as well as real choices in life. Over the past few years, we have repeatedly placed excessive faith in India's demographic dividend. Some even take it too far, and predict how this will lead us to economic super dome. Current study mainly, focusing on skill development among handicraft artisans and its impact on employment generation especially in Manipur State. It throws the light on impact of government training centres on artisans, income of skilled artisans and unskilled artisans and younger generations concerns whether they are inclined towards handicraft sector or not. The sample artisans are taken from the two districts of Manipur.

Keywords: Handicraft, Skill development, Handicraft artisans, Income, Economy

1. INTRODUCTION

India is the only country in the world with an unbroken, living vibrant tradition of crafts. While agriculture employs the largest number of people in India, the crafts sector is next and sustains over 20 million practitioners. The wide geographic spread embraces all of India and covers a huge gamut of widely differing work structure and cultures. Crafts communities, using similar materials that range from clay to precious metals, work with widely differing techniques and technologies to create a rich variety of forms. There are people of different castes, cultures, norms, traditions, values, ethics and religions all over the country. They practice different occupations and are involved in the production of handicrafts and artworks. The individuals, who are engaged in the production of crafts, though may be making use of similar materials such as paints, clay, precious metals and so forth. They use different techniques and procedures to produce a variety of artistic crafts. Learning how to make crafts generates a wide range of skills and abilities amongst

the individuals. The individuals residing in rural communities, when learning to make artworks and handicrafts create a path towards attaining self-sufficiency (Indian Crafts, n.d.).

During the early nineties, India opened up its economy and adjusted to the changes and transformations that took place. The major changes that were initiated as a part of liberalization and globalization strategy included, writing of the industrial licensing regime, decline in the number of areas reserved for the public sector, modification of the monopolies and the restrictive trade practices act, beginning of the privatisation programme, decrease in the tariff rates etc. Since the advent of globalization during the 1990s, the country has experienced numerous areas that have largely contributed in bringing about changes within the society in various spheres. The impact of globalization within the Indian society has been positive on a large scale in most of the sectors of the economy and society. The poverty stricken, deprived, marginalized communities and the individuals belonging to the socio-economically backward sections of the society have experienced various kinds of impediments in the production of handicrafts and artworks.

Handicraft has aesthetic value. it isn't necessarily required that handicrafts must be used for a physical purpose. There is no clear separation exist where artistic value and utility depart. One general problem, we face in studying the handicraft sector is the term 'Handicraft' has no universally accepted definition and there is no separate product classification for handicrafts. Handicrafts refer to a wide range of items, including 'gift items', houseware, home furnishings, products of craft industries, and fashion accessories. According to UNESCO/ITC (1997) Artisanal products are those produced by artisans, either completely by hand, or with the help of hand tools or even by mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. The special nature of the finished products derives from their distinctive features, such as utilitarian, aesthetic, creative, culturally attached, decorative functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant."

Handicraft is an income-generating and production-oriented activity. It reflects the pleasure and skill of the person who carries the folkloric tradition and customs of the community, without the need for machine power but simple tools and hand. It is usually based on the knowledge and skill of the individual. It is a product made with purpose to decorate and benefit people to meet daily necessities. It reflects the character of the society with the creative ability of the individual and reveals the taste of national art. It is an art form that emerges from the known needs of people against external factors and is characterized by the structures, traditions, and cultures of the society that they are gradually creating.

Handicrafts

Handicrafts are a one-of-a-kind manifestation of our culture and community. A considerable portion of the population relies on handicrafts for a living, either directly or indirectly. It creates employment and foreign exchange profits, both of which are critical for rural economic growth and development. The dynamic variables that affect the rise and fall of craft must be understood from the perspective of a comprehensive lifestyle, not just an economic one. The government should give both incentives and help in order to maximise the discovery of this handcrafted business. Both the state and the federal governments must take steps to raise pay and improve working conditions for artisans.

History of Handicraft

Handicraft has made from two words: Hand + Craft. The Cambridge Dictionary defines hand as "The part of your body at the end of your arms that has a finger and a thumb". The Cambridge dictionary defines craft as to make something using a lot of skill." The simple meaning of handicraft is something made of hand skill. The Cambridge dictionary defines Handicraft An activity that involves making things with your hands and that needs skill and artistic ability. The handicraft industry has a history of several centuries and artisan were known worldwide for their skill and craftsmanship. This fact has been testified by carvings on the temples. Handicraft sector utilizes the traditional skill of artisans in various crafts such as woodenware, metalware, textile weaving and printing, marble and stone crafts, leather works, jewellery etc. Skills were handed down from generation to generation in the form of family tradition. The handicraft industry does not require extensive capital investment to start up a business, and therefore it gives both women and other marginalized groups an opportunity to engage easily in the informal handicraft industry, and for them to gain an income that will sustain their livelihoods.

Most of the handicraft business is done by a single person of the family. That one person handles handicraft business in a lot of roles like designs, production, marketing, and finance. Above all the will to grow, small handicraft enterprise is dependent on the personality and personal goals of the entrepreneurs themselves, meaning that the expansion of activities may not be one of the entrepreneur's goals. They are satisfied with being independent, providing for

themselves and their family. These businesses products have to compete with products that are a result of mass and serial production. Purchase decisions are affected by the price-quality ratio, the nature of the handicraft and originality. Handicraft or artisanry skill is also called craftsmanship. Craftsman is a skilled manual worker who decorate/crafts items that maybe functional or strictly decorated either only skilled hand or partially with hands and partially with the help of machines. The decorated items include furniture, clothing, jewellers, ivory products, etc. Traditionally, the artisans have been backbone of the Economy of the Indian rural society. Yet today, artisans are the most mysterious character for rural development, particularly in the face of changing economy and have a great contribution in terms of large number of employments in India. The artisans have been serving both urban and rural societies in the country with their specialized and traditional transferred skills. They are involved in all works requiring their labour and professional skills like crafting on stones, crafting on shawls with zari and kani work, using different skills for making various types of hand-knotted carpet, painting and making different items of ivory products with the skill of hands and techniques. Artisans are the important player in rural economy, as they produce goods by using local raw material, and mostly dispose them off in the local; markets. They also provide different kinds of services by their traditional skills and primitive technical knowledge. Some of them also produce artistic pieces of different varieties to cater the fashionable taste of the people. Thus, i said that artisans with their excellent artistic skills and craftsmen have played and are playing a significant role in our economy. Handicraft sector or artisan work which is done all over India has different type of craftsmanship in different States, e.g., in Rajasthan, it is famous for its stone crafts, which provided Shang E Mar for iconic Taj Mahal.

Major problems faced by the artisans in the Handicraft Industry:

The period of prosperity ended with the arrival of British. The stock of goods began to accumulate with the guilds. The British government turned a blind eye towards the miserable state of handicrafts and craft artisans. Efforts were made by national leaders like Mahatma Gandhi to protect cottage industries. On attainment of Independence in 1947, the national Government stressed the need for developing the traditional occupations.

The Industries Conference in 1947 identified the following problems faced by cottage and small-scale industries including handicrafts:

1. Lack of finance,
2. Outdated techniques of manufacturing,
3. Defective Marketing,
4. Non-availability of raw materials and
5. Competition from mechanized goods whether imported or locally made.

Government Initiatives:

The major regulatory bodies & government departments involved in the development & promotion of this sector include Ministry of Culture, Ministry of textiles, Ministry of Small & Medium enterprises, Khadi & Village Industries Corporation, Development Commissioner for Handlooms etc. Various schemes launched by the government for handicrafts include Babasaheb Ambedkar Hastashilpa Yojna, Export Promotion Scheme, Bima Yojna for Handicraft Artisans, Gandhi Shilpa Bazaar Scheme, Design & Technical Upgradation Scheme, etc. These schemes mainly focus on providing financial assistance, support in acquiring raw material, health & insurance benefits & technological know-how.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to **Subrahmanian, (2006)**, stated that the artisans earning from handicraft products are appallingly low and housing conditions are not modern. These illustrate artisan's poor economic conditions. And on the social side, majority of the artisans have not acquired even a reasonable education level and lack of leadership qualities that are necessary to move up in status. Rural artisans especially indoor artisans' production skill still remains traditional and caste bound and hence slow in picking up technological dynamism leading to low production and low level of earning.

Yassir M. Mahgoub (2015) The researcher analyses the impact of handicrafts on the promotion of cultural and economic development for art education students in higher education through handicrafts based on local customs and traditions is investigated. This researcher uses descriptive, analytical, and experimental methodologies. The study's findings are likely to aid planners in the Ministry of Education, who will be able to give handicrafts. An effective technique

can have an impact on the teaching and learning of handicrafts, as well as the preservation of their characteristics, as well as their existence and identity.

Mohammed Arif, Abhishekh Rai and Babita Balodi (2018) The study focuses on skill development among handicraft artists and its impact on job creation, particularly in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It discusses the impact of government training facilities on artisans, the income of skilled and unskilled artisans, and whether newer generations are interested in the handicraft industry or organizations. The artisans in the sample are from Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua and Anantnag districts, respectively.

Dar and Parrey, (2013), The research was conducted in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The handicraft sector provides chances for its craftsmen to improve their standard of living while also assisting them in meeting their social and psychological needs. It adds to State Gross Domestic Product in particular and National Income in general by assisting in the creation of aggregate employment and improving per-capita income. Through foreign exchange, the handicraft sector in Jammu and Kashmir allows the transfer of technical know-how between state qualified workforce and international market players. Indian artisans, who are largely backward, poor, and illiterate, are unable to purchase modern tools and equipment. if they buy the machine, they do not have the skill to operate and run the machinery.

Razia Bano (2016) The study aims to examine the handicraft industry's potential in India. The Indian handmade carpet and handicrafts industry is possibly the only sector in rural India that is nearly entirely export oriented, providing direct employment to millions of people and creating chances for unemployed artisans. The carpet and handicraft industry contributes US\$ 847 million in export revenue to the government coffers, in addition to creating jobs for a million weavers and artisans. Handmade carpets from India are known around the world for their exquisite design and bright colour artistry.

Objectives:

In this paper, an attempt is made to focus mainly on the following objectives

1. Study the socio – economic conditions of the Handicraft Artisans.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the training program.
3. To study the challenges faced by the Handicraft artisans engaged in hand embroidery activity.
4. To study need of skill development among handicraft artisans and its impact on employment generation in Imphal west District of Manipur.

Methodology

The nature of the analysis was based on descriptive study. The primary data are collected through the structured questionnaire by interview schedule method. Secondary data was collected through books, journals and other Publications. A self-made questioner has used to collect data from the artisans. The interview did not merely confine to procuring the questionnaires, but also Scheduled open interviews. We visited these respondents and took interviews in person. We also enquired about their present problems they were facing. The interview did not merely confine to procuring the structured questionnaires, but also involved open interviews. We distributed 60 questioners to the trainers but collected 45. This simple questioner was used in order to get the required data from the trainees. However, this was closely followed by informal, open, interview.

Sample of the Study

The study sample consists of 45 trainees Handicraft artisans.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table no .1: Total respondent of Artisan.

Total no of respondent	Yes	No
45	45	Nil
Percentage (%)	100	Nil

Sources: Field data/Report.

In Table no. 1 clearly revealed that 100 percent of respondents agreed that handloom and handicraft sector contribute economic development for many rural artisans and craftsmen in the study area. This is a major contribution of handloom and handicraft sector for growth of rural economy in Manipur in general and study area in particular.

Table no 1.2: Aspect of outcome of the course.

45 Samples	Agree a little	Agree	Strongly
Do you agree the outcome of the course	10	10	25
Percentage (%)	22.22%	22.22%	55.56%

Sources: Field data/ Report.

Table.1.2 That 25 percent out of total samples were agreed that handloom and handicraft artisans are providing self-dependent economy to the rural artisans and craftsmen in the study area. 22.22 percent says 'agree' and another 22.22 percent say 'agree a little'. Handloom and handicraft industry is a village industries, rural industries or agro-based industries which is suitable for rural people and this sector provide supplementary income for the villages' people after agricultural products and became a source of inspire for entrepreneurship development in the countryside. In the study area, particularly in Heirangoithong under Imphal circle 90 percent of villagers are doing handloom and handicraft business, therefore, 40 percent of local products in Imphal east, west and Bishnupur market are generated from this leikai. The product is like hand bloc Printing in bed sheet saree towel etc.

Table no 1. 3: How far that enhances your chances of employment.

Impact On employability	Agree	Strongly agree
Total no of respondent	20	25
Percentage (%)	44.44	55.56

Sources: Field data/ Report.

Total no 1.4: Increase in income level

Increase in income level	Yes	No
Total no of respondent	34	11
Percentage (%)	77.78	24.44

Sources: Field data/ Report.

In the figure no. 1.4 indicates that 34 (77.78%) of artisans agreed that business of handicraft business income level of people is drastically change in the study area. 11 (24.44%) responded didn't agreed with However, majority of rural artisans and craftsmen income level is increased and got source of income to manage the family affairs in the daily basis. During the survey time they said that handicraft activity is very friendly nature and can established with small amount and low risk in comparison to other business activities. Mere agricultural income is not sufficient to meet the entire family requirement because their demands are unlimited. Moreover agricultural products are unpreserved commodities and we cannot keep it for a long period of time to sale in the market. That why agricultural products are generally consumes by family members and sale and purchase is done within the villagers and inter-villages. Therefore, income of the farmers remains below standard and resultant unable to fulfilled entire needs of the family members and they need additional economic activity to manage their needs and wants.

3. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The artisans shared their own experiences when asked for the challenges faced by them in this field. Mostly all except one told that there is less gain as compared to hard work. They feel that it is a laborious work not having social status, as gain is very less as compared to time spent and energy invested in it. The challenges 'Competition with latest machine-made products of large industries' and 'Improper implementation of government schemes/programmes' are in second position, as stated by 95% respondents. They said that they have to face competition from latest machine-made products produced on large scale in big industries, as they are cheap, identical and fast to be produced; besides such artisans feel that there is improper implementation of government schemes and programmes though such programmes seem attractive at planning and policy level. 87.5% respondents felt that middlemen earn huge profit not artisans. Artisans do

not possess knowledge about market, selling techniques, advertising, modern means of promotion, publicity, etc. Though they are very efficient artists, they have mastery in production but not in marketing. Hence, they have to rely on traders, wholesaler or businessmen who exploit the artisans being scattered, unorganized, ignorant and helpless. It is true that Indian Handicrafts have been globalized today but not artisans. 82.5% artisans opined that lack of infrastructural facilities hinders the growth of such sector and the same number of respondents has to face complaints from the customers about quality and durability of hand-crafted products. 80% artisans said that the demand of their products is decreasing due to change in the taste & interest of people. Here it should be noticed that change is the law of nature and today's era is fast changing era. Hence, those who can accept change with time can survive in market. Market demands innovations and modification today. Hence, the artisans must be trained to produce newly designed innovative products according to the demand and preferences of the customers.

4. CONCLUSION

The term 'Handicraft' encompasses a wide range of artifacts. The informal sector, which includes handicrafts has been described by the international Labour Organization (ILO) as a part of economic activity characterized by certain features like reliance on local available resources and skills, family ownership, small scale operations, labour intensity, traditional technology, skills generally acquired outside the formal school system, unregulated and competitive markets. Artisans mostly work in traditional and unorganized sector in which they are vulnerable to exploitation and low wages. They fall in lower strata of the hierarchy both socially and economically. These people are mostly engaged in household or cottage industries in which they work hard but do not get enough to maintain a minimum standard of living. A major problem for this affair is the middlemen who take out a substantial share of profit leaving very little for the artisans. Traditionally, the artisans had been the backbone of the Indian society, yet today they are the most valuable character for the development. Thus, in this paper an attempt has been made to study the weaknesses and challenges faced by the Handicraft artisans.

Craftsmen and artisans must comprehend the modern market and its promotional tactics in order to bring art and handicrafts back into the market. The workers must first determine their place in the global market before determining the price of their items. Artists must communicate with customers and teach them about their work and the reason is to motivates clients and creates a bond between the artist and the buyer. Government must take an initiative programs and schemes for the welfare of handicraft workers especially for rural area people, it will help to increase the employment generation in the handicraft sector.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

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