



# Handicrafts of Kashmir and Its Role in State Economy

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to analyze the crafts economy and its leading role in development of state. Handicrafts sector in Kashmir is since immemorial and how it enhanced the livelihood of people and save the economy of the state from its decline.

The handicraft activities carried out in Kashmir Valley are famous throughout the world because of their fine quality, unique art and inquisitiveness in design. The Handicraft sector has proved to be a source of income and created vast employment opportunities in the state and outside the state. Craft production is a labour intensive sector, needs less capital and is eco-friendly. Therefore, the social cost of handicrafts is less compared to other small and medium scale industries. Being a labour intensive sector, handicrafts can be established both in rural and urban areas and can be taken off as a subsidiary occupation in the valley. In this paper an attempt has been made to evaluate the growth, performance and problems faced by the handicraft industries.

**KEY WORDS:** Globalization, Economy, Handicraft, inquisitiveness, disturbance, panorama, unique, vibrancy, Embroidery, cultural Heritage, Creativeness

## Introduction:

Kashmiri handicrafts are known as unique in its richness and beauty. In spite of the increasing influence of modernity and mechanization, the artistry and skill of hand-made artifacts of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) continue to receive world-wide acclaim. The traditional woolen shawls, papier-mâché goods, wood-carvings and carpets have all survived the onslaughts of many centuries of socio-economic evolution only because the craft objects of Kashmir are ingrained in the socio-economic ethos of the people. The crafts and cultural traditions of J&K are deeply rooted. The handicraft of Kashmir is unique in its richness and beauty. The skill of the Kashmiri craftsman, along with their capacity for intricate workmanship is one of the most important yet most invisible resources. It is to be perceived with concern and with a precise understanding of its values. Handicrafts have a special socio-economic significance in J&K. Keeping in view the vast potential in handicrafts for economic activities like generation of

employment and revenue, the State Government has launched various measures to encourage the growth of the handicrafts industry.

### **PRODUCTION, EMPLOYMENT AND EXPORTS OF HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY (1990-91 TO 2009-10):**

The handicraft sector makes immense contribution in sustaining export trade of the state. The handicraft activities are especially carried out in Kashmir Valley which is called the home of handicraft goods and has earned a unique place in the world of handicraft scenario. This sector provides employment opportunities and great potential to generate gainful employment within and outside the state. The production of handicraft has increased to Rs.1614.59 crores during 2007-08 as against Rs.200 crores during 1990-91; employment of Production and Export of Handicrafts Goods in Jammu and Kashmir

### **Source: - Jammu and Kashmir, Economic survey, 2014-15, Department of Economics and Statistic.**

After surveying “the importance of Kashmiri art and craft.” that Kashmir is a heaven on earth. Kashmir is rich not only in its beauty but it is also the homeland of various decorative renowned art and craft products. The handicraft products of Kashmir are known throughout the world for its exquisite designs and unique craftsmanship. The art and crafts of Kashmir are the major contributions to the economy of the state. There is the dearth of professional workers who are always alive to produce the handmade products. He expresses his response to the beauty around him in the creation of a large variety of chasing or embossing by the Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin who himself was a great lover of art and craft.

### **Literature Review:**

Handicrafts are a form of industry and products that are, for the greater part made by hand. A lot of studies have been conducted on the handicrafts sector of Jammu and Kashmir since before. The brief account of Literature Review is given below:-

**Sunita Sharma:** in her study revealed the structure of industries in J&K state. She suggests that the state leans heavily towards the small-scale sector and to a little growth in number from 2203 in 1973-74 to 49,426 in 2006-07. The little extent on medium industries. Heavy industry is completely absent in the state. However, the small scale industry has shown a continuous author further says that among the small scale industries, the handicraft industry occupies an important place in the economy of J&K state.

**Suhail M. Ghose:** argues that the Indian handicrafts industry is highly labor intensive, cottage based and decentralized industry spread over rural as well as in urban areas of the country. Handicrafts are made from raw materials and can be produced in unlimited numbers. Such products can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant. Handicrafts sector has a great contribution towards employment generation and export thereby has a direct impact on the economic development of the economy.

*Effat Yasmin and F. A. Bhat:* revealed in their study that handicrafts sector has an important role to play in the development of country in general and J&K in particular. In the absence of large scale industries in the State, handicrafts have remained a key economic activity from times immemorial. They showed that the Production and sales of handicrafts have increased significantly during the last two decades. The major chunk of foreign exchange earnings to the State come from this sector. Crafts like Shawls, Crewels, Numdha, Chain Stitch, Wood Carving, Costume Jewelry, Kani Shawls, Paper Mashie, and Carpets hold a significant share in the overall production and export of the state.

*Showkat and Shard Tiwari:* suggests in their study that the skill development and training programs have a far reaching impact on employment generation, production and economic growth, and provide very large amounts of sales and exports to our country, as well as the state's economy. Handicraft is one of the biggest employment providers next to agriculture sector.

### **Research methodology:**

Research methodology is a systematic process to collect relevant data for any research work under careful process and it plays an important role in investigation. Unless the methodology is correct, the data collection, surveys, observation, or descriptive analysis and conclusion could not be considered scientific. The study of this work is based upon descriptive research, observation and historical methods applied upon after critical analysis. The present research comprises both primary as well as secondary data for analysis purpose. The secondary data like sources collect by different Historians, philosophers and scholars. As per the sources, the crafts importance in state economy is augmented with increasing global demand of these handmade products.

### **Objectives:**

The study has been undertaken with the following objectives in view:

- (1) To assess the production of Handicraft sector in the economy of the state.
- (2) To analyze the growth and performance of crafts industry in increasing employment of state.
- (3) To examine the policies and schemes initiated by Government for the growth and development of handicraft industries.
- (4) To saw the economic potential of the crafts in enhancing the slow going economy of the region.

## Hypothesis:

Contribution of Handicraft industry to the state has increased economy over the period of time

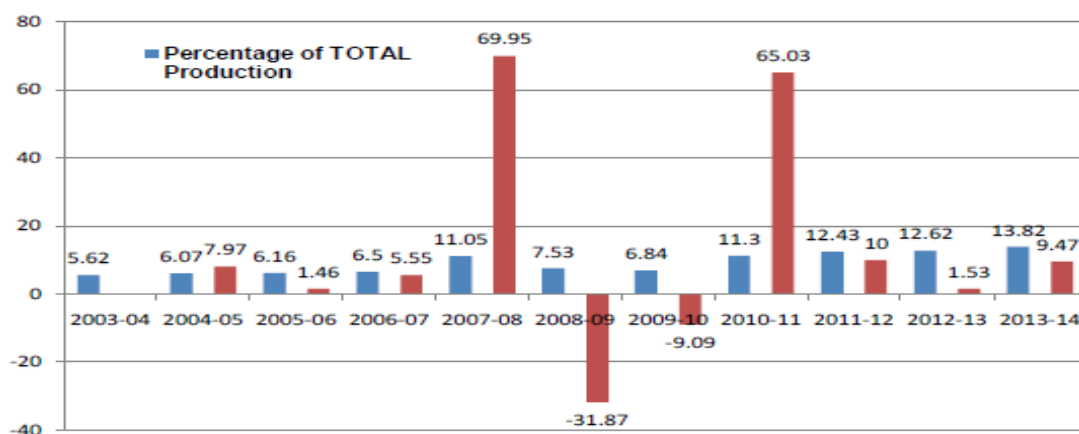
Contribution of handicrafts to the states employment sector has increased after 1990 till 2015.

## Interpretation of Data and Fulfillment of Objectives

Year	Carpets	Woolen shawls	Paper Machie	Other items	Total	Year wise Percentage Of Total production	Percentage change in production (Growth rate) Increase/Decrease
2003-04	450.53	275	13.5	82.5	821.53	5.62	5.43
2004-05	425	315	24	123	887	6.07	7.97
2005-06	425	310	30	135	900	6.16	1.46
2006-07	450.5	320	35	144.5	950	6.50	5.55
2007-08	761.27	420.58	37.92	394.82	1614.59	11.05	69.95
2008-09	457.6	303.45	35.49	303.46	1100	7.53	-31.87
2009-10	638.17	201.03	10.15	151.15	1000	6.84	-9.09
2010-11	735.1	343.1	38.32	533.78	1650.3	11.30	65.03
2011-12	624.7	702.2	102.7	385.73	1815.33	12.43	10
2012-13	643	656.3	145	398.91	1843.21	12.62	1.53
2013-14	684.05	631.2	141.24	559.33	2017.82	13.82	9.47
Total	6294.92	4477.86	613.32	3212.32	14599.78	100	

Source: - Economic Survey J&K, 2014-15

**Table 1:** Production of handicrafts goods in J&K (Rs.in crores).



**Figure 1:** Percentage of total production.

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**Percentage of total production**=Production of the current year/ Total production \* 100

**Percentage change in production**=Current year production- Previous year production/Previous year production \* 100

The above **Figure 1** indicates percentage of total production.

As is evident from **Table 1** above, the Handicraft sector has shown a significant rising trend throughout the years. From 2003-2004 there is a continuous rise in the production of handicraft goods up to 2007-2008. In 2003-04 the production is Rs. 821.53 crores which has increased in 2004-05 (Rs. 887 crores), 2005-06 (Rs. 900 crores) and accordingly in 2006-07 (Rs. 950 crores). In 2007-2008 there is an abrupt increase in the production which is Rs. 1614.59 crores which is about 69.95% in comparison to previous year. The total percentage increase in 2007- 2008 is 11.05% which is more than previous year where it was only Rs. 950 Crore. In 2008-2009 a sudden fall in production is being noticed. In 2008-2009 the production is Rs. 1100 crores (-31.87) and in 2009- 2010 it has again decreased and reached up to Rs. 1000 crores (-9.09). This sudden fall in these two years is because of turmoil in Kashmir in these two years, political instability, lower incentives etc. thus created huge loss to this sector. But in-order to recover the losses and because of huge demand in the market a significant rise was marked in productivity which is recorded as Rs. 1650.3 crores and total percentage of production is 11.30%. And finally the production of 2013-2014 is Rs. 2017.82 crores which is about 9.47% in comparison to the previous year.

### **Conclusion and Main Findings:**

The handicrafts of J&K had achieved a worldwide fame because of its unique designs and utility. The state of J&K is dominated by small-scale and cottage industries which give handicraft sector a key importance in the state economy. As such handicraft sector is significantly contributing to the State economy and acts as a strong support to the state economy. Accordingly, state government is making continuous efforts to encourage the performance of this sector. With the inclusion of new schemes and policies the State government is trying to uplift this sector to face the growing competition at National as well as at global level. Also, this sector plays a great role in providing employment to the unemployed youth of the State. Being labor intensive handicraft sector can go a long way in solving the unemployment problem of the State. Besides, this sector plays a major role in enhancing the foreign exchange earnings of the State. Keeping in view the environmental and the industrial set up of the State and the importance of handicraft sector, it is required this sector should be encouraged by way more and more investments, setting up of additional training centre's, skill up-gradation of the local artisans, better marketing facilities and innovations in order to let this sector flourish.

**MAIN FINDINGS:**

The main findings of the study are:

- Huge Market potential
- Flexible Production & design
- Cheap labour
- Suitable to Climatic conditions
- Huge employment opportunities
- Foreign revenue generation
- Eco-friendly.
- Needs less investment.
- Export oriented
- Huge demand in both domestic as well as foreign markets
- Develops Tourism industry of J&K.

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- For instance the art of paper-making and book-binding of which Kashmiris were totally ignorant were introduced in Kashmir for the first time by Zainu'l Abidin. (Haidar Malik Chadura, Tarikh-- Kashmir.p.74.(Baharistan-i-Shahi (anonymous)ff.22 a22b.Hasan,op cit. II, pp.1917-1918)
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