



EXPLORING THE PERCEPTION OF ARTISANS TOWARDS PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF SUSTAINABILITY OF HANDICRAFT INDUSTRIES OF KACHCHH DISTRICT.

¹Namrata Thakkar , ²Dr. Hemal Pandya

¹Ph.D Research Scholar, ² Professor
Commerce

Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, India

Abstract: Kachchh the biggest District of Gujarat has a unique identity in Handicrafts Industry. Quality handicrafts produced in Kachchh is not only symbol of their colorful way of life as well as it has been a source of livelihood for people. This research is done in order to understand the problems and challenges faced by the artisans for the sustainability of handicraft industry with special reference to Kachchh district. The study helps to understand the potential of Handicraft Industries in the development of Kachchh, current status of sustainability and inclusive growth in Kachchh district, various issues and challenges faced by the small artisans.

Index Terms - Problems, Challenges, Employment, Sustainability, Cluster Analysis

1. Introduction:

Handicraft is defined as unique expression of any culture and community of a region created by the local craftsman with available materials. It is a type of craft where people make products, items or articles by using hand or some basic hand-used tools. The products are either used for decoration purpose or do have some definite use. The word handicraft is related to traditional method of making products. These products majorly have cultural or religious values. Handicraft is said to be an intellectual property which stimulates the creativity of an artisan through art, enhancing a person's thinking power. It has helped protecting our culture in various ways and shall further help to preserve the culture in future by practicing it. With increasing globalization, products are becoming more commoditized and artisans find their products competing with goods from all over the world. Today it is not possible to look at traditional artisan communities and their products in isolation from global market trends and competition. India is rich with diverse crafts which are connected to history, culture and religion. The Industry is playing a major role in the development of Indian economy. Handicraft production is a major form of employment in many developing countries and often a significant part of the export economy. Each and every district of Gujarat specializes in a different art form. Kachchh the biggest District of Gujarat has a unique identity in Handicrafts Industry. Quality handicrafts produced in Kachchh is not only symbol of their colorful way of life as well as it has been a source of livelihood for people. Some of the villages and communities have specialized for generations in

certain crafts and have created masterpieces. 21 different types of Handicrafts are practiced in Kachchh, making it a hub of handicrafts. Handicraft industry in Kachchh is highly unorganized. Approximately 32000 artisans are engaged in the industry. Handicraft is free of domination and exploitation. It is an industry without industrialization. There is an ample scope and requirement for it to come out of unorganized, diminishing and low-end profile prevailing since years. Several studies have been conducted to analyze the problems and challenges of faced by the artisans, market scenario, employment generation, process of making and others. In developing countries like India, many government policies are framed for the development of handicraft industries and many NGO's work to enhance the skill of the artisans.

2. Objectives:

To identify the problems and challenges of artisans.

To identify the strengths, opportunities and weaknesses of the artisans.

3. Research Methodology:

The present paper collected necessary primary data of 445 handicraft artisans by Purposive Sampling Method practicing different crafts which include textile as well as non-textile and secondary data from various published articles, magazines, government websites and research papers.

4. Review Literature:

Ghouse (2012) studying "Problems and Strategies of Indian Handicraft Industry" for the phenomena used primary as well as secondary data. They concluded that handicraft is a productive sector which adds to Indian economy, the artisans come from weaker section, the products are having increasing demand in global market, the researcher recommended that government should take steps like collaboration for new technology, raw material at reasonable price, improving infrastructure, technology updating, training programs and boosting exports to uplift the sector.

Pandya and Dholakia (2013) in their research on "Historical Overview of Kutch Embroideries" with an objective to study the linkage between past and present needle work of Kutch for which the major source of information was primary data. They founded that the artisans of Kutch do not have exact but an approximate idea of origin and age of the embroideries they practiced. The art has changed with change in time due to various affecting factors like religious, cultural, social, economic, and commercial. Commercialization and Industrialization has affected the life of artisans. The past practices serve the guidelines to the next generation.

Towseef Mohi Ud Din (2014) in the research on "Handicraft Production and Employment in Indian: An Economic Analysis" with an aim to estimate production of various handicraft products and role of the sector in generating employment on the basis of the secondary data. The researcher concluded that Indian handicraft reflects the culture of past and ancient India. Numerous designs, complicated and beautiful handmade products have the essence of the culture. Handicraft plays a major role in creating employment directly or indirectly, government should take care of this eco friendly and low investment sector.

Haleja (2015) tried to study the "Emerging Trends in Industry of Kutchi Handicrafts and Culture" on basis of direct study from artisans. The researcher concluded that hand embroidery of each Kutchi culture vary from each other in form of designs, colours and styles. The researcher concluded that by commercializing and reviving the products but retaining their traditional essence by NGO's, these crafts are able to find the place in global markets

Sharan and Arya (2016) made an attempt evaluate “Present Scenario in Namada Craft Segment in Gujarat” for which primary data was gathered by field survey and case study method. The study revealed that Namada craft in Gujarat had been drastically fallen due to lack of awareness about craft among people and customers.

Bhat and Yadav (2017) in their study on “Handicraft Sector: The Comforting Sector of Employment Review” with an objective to explain the employment importance of the sector and the economy value of handicrafts for the individual and for economy of the country on the basis of secondary data. The researcher concluded that the artisans are facing health issues; they are being exploited, they have debts. It was found that the sector generates more employment and thus becomes the major source of income for the country. The aesthetic value and uncontaminated form of the art can become famous worldwide with the help of Government Intervention.

Shah and Patel (2017) in the study on “Problems and Challenges faced by Handicraft Artisans” with the help of primary data. They found that handicraft industry has ample scope of employment since the inherent art has been practiced as occupation by numerous people. Earlier women in Gujarat did handicraft for domestic purpose only but, recently it has high demand in market globally. Finally, concluded that Government and non government policies had lifted the market but still the handicraft artisans suffer due to low education, low capital and poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence and poor institutional framework.

5. Data and Sources of Data:

This study is based on primary data collected from the artisans of Kachchh District, through well structured Questionnaire, circulated personally.

Questionnaire was distributed to 445 respondents from various rural and urban areas of Kachchh District practicing different crafts due to lack of literacy the questionnaires were filled by taking personal interviews of the artisans.

6. Data Analysis Technique:

The filled questionnaires were scrutinized in detail, edited for final analysis and coding system was applied for all the questions to quantify the qualitative data. After processing the questionnaire the information was entered in to a master data, from which various tables, charts and graphs were incorporated in the study as the requirement, for further statistical analysis.

- The major statistical techniques that were applied for data analysis are:
 - ❖ Descriptive Statistics
 - ❖ Cluster Analysis

7. Results and Discussion:

- To understand the problems and challenges faced by the artisans of Handicraft Industries of Kachchh SWOC analysis was done by taking opinion of the respondents on various statements. The mean score of the result of the statements was taken which is as follows:

Table – 7.1

Strenghts	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Ancestral features play important role in handicraft skill	445	0	0	0	0
Handicraft have low investment and greater use of insight	19	57	369	0	0
Practising the art is an appropriate use of leisure	0	0	24	355	66
Practising this art gives pleasure of creating, feeling of pride and satisfaction	124	268	53	0	0
Handicrafts do promote and preserves cultural values	129	263	53	0	0
Average	143.4	117.6	99.8	71	13.2
Opportunities					
Handicrafts provides employment even to rural illiterate	441	4	0	0	0
Government has introduced various schemes to promote handicrafts	80	277	44	23	21
Artisans easily avail of financial assistance	0	58	38	235	124
Various NGOs are working for promoting in your handicraft segment	5	0	15	301	124
Marketing opportunities have increased due to mobiles and internet	0	8	24	277	140
Average	87.67	58.67	23.5	189.33	88.17
Weakness	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Handicraft lack in using modern managerial skills	94	321	25	5	0
Artisans face problems due to less education	426	5	13	1	0
Artisans face financial problems	103	300	32	10	0
Artisans lack in knowledge about latest designs/current market demands	193	44	80	114	14
Artisans hardly knows how to use advanced machines and equipment	105	74	118	126	22
No proper information about exports is available	27	141	250	18	9
Average	158	147.5	86.33	45.67	7.5
Threats/Challenges	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Decreasing demand due to change in the taste & interest	6	10	16	262	151

of people					
Competition with latest machine made products of large industries	5	0	5	316	119
Problems of quality and durability due to handmade	3	4	6	265	167
Profit earned is less as compared to hard work required	152	264	28	1	0
Middlemen earn huge profit	0	18	8	295	124
New generation is not interested in handicrafts	0	115	218	13	99
Improper implementation of government schemes/programmes	0	115	189	26	109
Heavy irregularities is seen in employment	0	120	200	21	104
Average	20.75	80.75	83.75	149.875	109.125

The weighted average of all the averages was found as follows:

$$\bar{X}_w = \frac{\bar{x}_1w_1 + \bar{x}_2w_2 + \bar{x}_3w_3 + \dots + \bar{x}_nw_n}{\sum w}$$

where,

\bar{X}_w = weighted average of the observations

\bar{x}_k = average of each

w_1 = weights of each

$\sum w$ = Sum of weights.

The weighted average of strengths was 58.97, Weaknesses was 62.14, Opportunities was 98.23 and that of challenges was 105.24.

Ancestral features play important role in handicraft skills and Practising this art gives pleasure of creation, feeling of pride and satisfaction were found to be the main strengths. Handicrafts provide employment even to rural illiterate and Demand of handicraft has increased at domestic and international markets were found to be the main opportunities. Handicraft lack in using modern managerial skills and Artisans face problems due to less education were found to be the major weaknesses. Lack of infrastructural facilities and profit earned is less as comparative to hard work done were the two major challenges found.

From the above analysis the study found that the artisans of Kachchh sustain their ancestral features and skills of handicrafts. Practicing the art gives them the pleasure of creation, feeling of pride and satisfaction. They even feel that handicrafts preserve and promote their culture and are happy that their next generation is proudly sustaining it. They find opportunity as handicrafts provide employment to rural illiterate. The major challenges of this sector are lack of proper knowledge of exports and managerial skills; even the profit earned is less as compared to hard work required. Further it was found that hardly artisans are aware of government schemes and its benefits which show that awareness is required in this area.

- When various factors are to be analyzed in the data it becomes necessary to group them on the basis of the attributes or characteristics which make them similar. The distance between the clusters is more but within the group is less. Here, cluster analysis has been done to understand the perception of the respondents. On the basis of the Agglomeration Schedule, that begins with each observation in a separate cluster, subsequently combining the most similar to build a new aggregate cluster, repeating till all the observations are finally combined together. Following two clusters are formed which are represented in following chart.

Two major clusters are derived out of it

Table – 7.2

Clusters	Strenghts	Opportunities	Weakness	Challenges
1	Strongly agreed that Ancestral features play important role in handicraft skill, Practicing this art gives pleasure of creating, feeling of pride and satisfaction and Handicrafts do promote and preserves cultural values.	Strongly agreed that Handicrafts provides employment even to rural illiterate, Government has introduced various schemes to promote handicrafts	Strongly agreed that Handicraft lack in using modern managerial skills, Artisans face problems due to less education, Artisans face financial problems, Artisans lack in knowledge about latest designs/current market demands, Artisans hardly knows how to use advanced machines and equipments	Strongly agreed that Profit earned is less as compared to hard work required
2	Strongly agreed that Ancestral features play important role in handicraft skill	Strongly agreed that Handicraft lack in using modern managerial skills	Strongly agreed that Artisans face problems due to less education	Agreed that Profit earned is less as compared to hard work required, New generation is not interested in handicrafts, Improper implementation of government schemes/programmes, Heavy irregularities is seen in employment

Cluster 1 which comprises of the 115 (25%) artisans doing Family Business, Male respondents from age group of 20-29 having annual family income from handicrafts Rs. 50,000 who are unaware of the benefits of government schemes and programs which in major strongly agreed on the strengths that ancestral features plays an important role in handicraft skills, majority of them strongly agreed on the fact that handicraft provides employment to rural illiterate, they strongly agreed on the weaknesses that artisans face problems due to less education, lack of modern managerial skills, financial problems, majority of artisans strongly agreed that the major challenge is profit earning which is comparatively low to the hard work required. These artisans are unaware of the benefits of government schemes and programs which in major strongly agreed on the strengths that ancestral features plays an important role in handicraft skills, practicing the art gives pleasure of creation, feeling of pride and satisfaction and it promotes and preserves cultural values and strongly disagreed at the fact that they practice the art is just an appropriate use of their leisure time. Majority of them strongly agreed on the fact that handicraft provides employment to rural illiterate where as strongly disagreed that participating in fairs and exhibitions, working of NGOs for promoting the segment, marketing through mobiles and internet creates opportunity for them. They strongly agreed on the weaknesses that artisans face problems due to less education, lack of modern managerial skills, financial problems where as there is a neutral view on having information regarding exports. Majority of artisans strongly agreed that the major challenge is profit earning which is comparatively low to the hard work required whereas they strongly disagreed that they face competition with latest machine made products made by large industries.

Cluster 2 which comprises of the 330 (75%) artisans doing Family Business, Male respondents from age group of 20-29 having annual family income from handicrafts Rs. 1,50,000 who are aware of the benefits of government schemes and availed benefit of the same which in major strongly agreed on the strengths that ancestral features plays an important role in handicraft skills. Majority of them strongly agreed on the fact that handicraft provides employment to rural illiterate and agreed that government has introduced various schemes to promote handicraft. They strongly agreed that artisans face financial problems agreed on the weaknesses that artisans face problems due to less education, lack of modern managerial skills and knowledge about latest designs Majority of artisans agreed that the major challenge is profit earning which is comparatively low to the hard work required. These artisans are aware of the benefits of government schemes and availed benefit of the same which in major strongly agreed on the strengths that ancestral features plays an important role in handicraft skills whereas agreed that practicing the art gives pleasure of creation, feeling of pride and satisfaction and it promotes and preserves cultural values and disagreed at the fact that they practice the art is just an appropriate use of their leisure time. Majority of them strongly agreed on the fact that handicraft provides employment to rural illiterate and agreed that government has introduced various schemes to promote handicraft where as disagreed that participating in fairs and exhibitions, working of NGOs for promoting the segment, marketing through mobiles and internet creates opportunity for them. They strongly agreed that artisans face financial problems agreed on the weaknesses that artisans face problems due to less education, lack of modern managerial skills and knowledge about latest designs where as there is a neutral view on having information regarding exports. Majority of artisans agreed that the major challenge is profit earning which is comparatively low to the hard work required whereas they disagreed decrease in demand due to change of taste and interest of people, had a neutral opinion for new generation interest, improper implementation of government schemes and heavy irregularities in employment.

Table – 7.3
Number of Cases in each Cluster

Cluster	1	115.000
	2	330.000
Valid		445.000
Missing		.000

8. Findings and Conclusion:

The study found that the artisans of Kachchh sustain their ancestral features and skills of handicrafts. Practicing the art gives them the pleasure of creation, feeling of pride and satisfaction. They even feel that handicrafts preserve and promote their culture and are happy that their next generation is proudly sustaining it. They find opportunity as handicrafts provide employment to rural illiterate. The major challenges of this sector are lack of proper knowledge of exports and managerial skills; even the profit earned is less as compared to hard work required. Further it was found that hardly artisans are aware of government schemes and its benefits which show that awareness is required in this area.

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