
Eco-Friendly Production and Marketing of Handicrafts- A Study to prospects the Artisans to the Global scenario at Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract:

At present, people are living in a polluted world, everything is artificial and toxic. But this scenario is changing slowly, people are concerned about the environment and they are changing their behavior towards purchasing eco-friendly products. Moreover, the consumers all over the world are interested in protecting the environment. The artisans are not aware of needs and wants of the customers, and give importance to present scenario and ready to produce eco-friendly products. The Governments has developed platforms for the artisans towards producing eco-friendly products and enriching on technicality. So, Green Production and Green Marketing is emerging (Eco-Friendly) and attracting the attention of the public, government and the artisans. India is one of the important suppliers of handicrafts to the world market. The handicrafts industry is labour concentrated and cottage based industry. It provides employment to more than six million artisans. They are working at home on part-time basis. But artisans still in pathetic condition. This paper attempt to study what is the present scenario of the handicraft industry in Dindigul District. Will Green Production and Marketing (Eco-Friendly) give sustainable growth to the artisans? So a study was conducted with artisans of Dindigul, ten families for bamboo craft from Dindigul, 20 families for pottery craft from Mettupatti and 20 families for textile craft from Chinnalapatti The entire family members of all the artisans' family were contacted to know their knowledge about the global trends on green production and marketing were analyzed by focused group discussion and interview.

Key Words: *Artisans, Eco-Friendly, Green Production, Green Marketing.*

Introduction:

At present, people are living in a polluted world, everything is artificial and toxic. But this scenario is changing slowly, people are concerned about the environment and they are changing their behavior towards purchasing eco-friendly products. Moreover, the consumers all over the world are interested in protecting the environment. So, Green Production and Green Marketing is emerging and attracting the attention of the public, government and the artisans. India is known throughout the world for its beauty with rich heritage and tradition handicrafts like pottery, stone craft, brass work, textile handwork, glass work, jute and cane crafts etc. Indian handicrafts are in numerous shapes, designs and colours are integral to the magnificence and spectacle of festive occasions as well as the daily usage of the people. Handicraft industry in India has helped the artisans to reduce poverty. Artisans can work in all seasons. It is important to utilize the resources efficiently without waste and these wastages are utilized by the handicraft artisans effectively and make wonders out of it in the form of handicraft products. This industry earns from both the domestic and international market. As the capital

investment for this industry is less, people start their own business on small scale (Radhankrishnan, L. 2009). But, particularly, after the New Economic Policy, the expectations of the consumers from the handicrafts industry have changed. So handicraft industry has to change according to the changing scenario (http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/upsdr/vol-Chap_b4.pdf. last accessed on 06.02.2015.)

Objective of the Study:

There is a huge demand for handicraft product in world market, but general opinion is that these artisans are not making upto the expectations of the world market and standard. Though it generator major revenue (<http://www.epch.in/moreDetails.htm>, last accessed on 19.01.2015.). The main objectives of the study

- i) To know the socio-economic conditions of the artisans in Dindigul District.
- ii) To study the production and marketing scenario of artisans in tune with the green production and marketing.
- iii) To suggest a strategy for the artisans on production and marketing the eco-friendly products.

Research Methodology:

The Primary data was collected directly from the handicraft artisans by an interview with well structured schedule and group discussions. In Dindigul District traditional artisans those who practice pottery, bamboo, textile embroidery and handwork craft for more than three generations were chosen for the study. There were 50 families in and around Dindigul were taken as sample. Ten families for bamboo craft from Dindigul, 20 families for pottery craft from Mettupatti and 20 families for textile craft from Chinnalapatti were taken for study by stratified sampling method. The entire family members of all the artisans' family were contacted to know their knowledge about the global trends on green production and marketing were analyzed by focused group discussion and interview.

The data collected through schedules was edited, coded, classified and analyzed with percentage for interpretation.

Findings from the Survey and Focused Group Discussion:

I- Demographic and Socio-Economic features of the Artisans:

It is identified from 50 families the artisan's, from the age 11 to the age of 75 perform these craft. All the families were identified as Nuclear Family. The male or head of the family procure the raw material and process it with simple tools with hands and leave it to dry. And female member of the family start doing the craft. Other children in the family help them finishing the craft.

All the 10 families of Bamboo craft belongs to MahendraMathra Naidu, community, All 20 families of pottery workers belong to Kuyavar and the 20 families of textile artisans belong to Chettiyar. The bamboo and pottery, artisans come under MBC and textile artisans come under BC community and all belong to Hindu Religion.

The first two generation people are performing the crafts have done the primary level of education and others are illiterate. The young people are first generation graduates from their family. Among the families there were 10 Engineering students, 2 MSc, 5 Diploma Engineering, 10 B.Com and more than 5 Children were doing secondary grade schooling.

All these craft are being practiced traditionally i.e., from father to son and it is known as Kuzatholil or family craft. But it is observed that the younger generation after graduation is not interested to continue this craft and search for a new job within the city or go to nearby cities. Total family earns Rs 10,000 approximately as monthly income. According to the family size, the income too changes. If there are more members in a family, they all work and the family income too increases. Nearly, 89 per cent of artisan's live in rented house. Only, eleven per cent live in their own house. All the respondents have amenities like television, mixi, grinder, refrigerator, jewels, mobile, two-wheelers etc.

The artisans work in front of their house and store the raw material and finished crafts in the same place. Pottery and bamboo artisans produce and sell the craft in their house itself. Where as in the case of textiles, the respondents opined that they sent it to different places like Madurai, Thirupur, Chennai. The crafts sent are considered as finished product and sold directly to the customers and in few cases it is taken as raw material to make some embroidery work and sell it in the market.

All the artisan respondents use their own fund for the business, with that they buy the raw material and other tools. Sometimes, they get money for interest from the money lenders for their personal purposes.

Eco-Friendly Products (Green) Production and Marketing:

In the case of pottery artisans, 30 percent of the respondents aware of the green production. Whereas, 40 percent of the respondents of the textile are aware of the eco-friendly products. Unfortunately, very meager, say only one person is familiar with the green production and marketing. These respondents mentioned that they are aware of the eco friendly products, that are so called green production and marketing. The remaining artisans, who are not aware of the green production, said that they produce the craft in the traditional approach. They don't know the policies and procedure regarding the production of craft for the environmental protection.

For painting the pottery and its related articles like terracotta wall hangings, jewels, statues, gifts the artisans use chemical paintings which are hazards to health. Jewels cannot be used by children. For bamboo articles they use eco friendly products for crafting and they don't use artificial colorings for the essentials articles. But for decorative articles like window slides, mats they use colorings. In Textile, artificial dyeing was used and the wastes were poured in land as well as water source, so land and water is polluted.

All the artisans know where they buy their raw material and as well as know their customer as they were doing direct marketing and sell the remaining crafts in the local bazaar. Then don't plan before producing or marketing their craft. They produce according to their convenient and availability of the raw material, so they produce in mass and market it. This applies particularly to the pottery and bamboo artisans.

Ninety percent of artisans don't want to increase their marketing channel as they are self content, but ten percent said if governments helps for finance and arranges to market their finished craft then they are ready to increase the channel.

II- Schemes of the Government:

Government has implemented many schemes for the environmental and eco friendly production and marketing of crafts. But the artisans are not producing their crafts according to present trend. It is observed that 90 percent of artisans were not aware of the schemes of the Government and also not aware about the handicraft commission or corporation. Eighty per cent of the artisans and their family members have heard about the Self Help Group, Cluster, Cooperatives, Trusts, Society etc, All these respondents mentioned that the artisans may be brought under an organized community based organization that will naturally bring community development. They fear that by grouping, they may lose the present job and their orders may be taken away by some other member and vested interests may start to play a role etc.

They fear that they need huge investment, marketing will be problem, and application of modern technology is remote and very difficult to change the mindset of the artisans from tradition to modern.

Business Management Skills:

Only 2 percent of artisans said they have tried for new craft, that too when models is shown and given order. 98 percent of Artisans use mobile phone for their orders and marketing. Personal contact with the customer is enough for the remaining 2 percent of artisans.

They maintain the same cost because they buy the raw material locally and sell it to the local intermediaries and local customer. It is observed that if they sell directly, they earn more profit.

Strategies for the problems of Artisans:

Customer Preference and Global Style Products:

The government and the development agents should come out with strategies to make the artisans aware of the importance of green products and it should also plan for the training the artisans on green product. Now the trend through the entire world is towards green products. The customers started looking for green products or eco-friendly products as they have understood the hazards and pollution. Hence, the preference of the customers is eco-friendly or green products though it's expensive

Use of Information and Communication Technology in Handicraft Industry

Application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and implementation of ICT can be done in the process of handicraft marketing. As the e-commerce is on the increasing trend and in the supply chain, the situation demands the adoption of the technology into marketing. With the help of ICT, artisans can produce as many designs which can be customized as per the buyers' requirements. Also, get information related to the sample like sample designs, revised sample designs, etc can be unexpectedly exchanged through the technology (Kama Raju, 2010).

The right channel of distribution

The artisans depend mostly upon master craftsmen, dealers and co-operative societies for disposal of their finished products. Some producers sell directly to the consumers, whereas some sell through dealers, master craftsmen and sales emporia. Sometimes, the dealers and master craftsmen sell the handicraft products through sales emporia, which directly contact the thousands of consumers through its various outlets located at various important towns. So, the artisans have to be channelized through Co-operatives, Clusters, Registered NGO's and Self Help Groups (Benzborah. P. 2003).

Branding of handicrafts products

In today's competitive world, it is necessary to create an image of the product in the minds of the customer that our product is different from other competitor's which can be done by branding the product. Handicrafts need to be branded as "Indian crafts" have ethnic and traditional value and it is most wanted in East Asian crafts. The western customers give value to the hand made products like Indian crafts. The brand Indian handicrafts will be promoted to the global customer in a fashionable way.

Training Centers and Programs for Artisans:

The agencies or the Government should arrange for training in National and International level with stipend and interchange of Cultural and Craft Exchange Programme for the artisans and make them participate in fairs, melas and exhibition. Creating Awareness among the younger generation and train them for the global scenario (Sanjay Mohapatra, 2011). Creating Awareness about the schemes through advertisement and publicity in Radio or Television. Organizing the artisans in the form of SHGs, Co-operatives, and Craft cluster. The Export Guarantee Corporation and Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) should support the artisans in exporting eco-friendly or green crafts to the global scenario.

Conclusion:

The artisans should understand the importance of the eco-friendly products and should learn the technology. The Governments should think on developing the artisans towards producing eco-friendly products and create a platform for enriching on technicality. Only, such types of awareness on the eco-friendly products by the artisans will help them to survive and sustain in the business for long.

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