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GROWTH AND PERFORMANCE OF KASHMIR HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY DURING LAST DECADE (2005-2014)

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ABSTRACT

Handicraft activities occupy an important position in the economic structure of J&K State. Being environment friendly, these activities are best suited to the state as they are more labour intensive and less capital intensive in nature, therefore having scope for employment generation at a large scale. The Kashmir handicraft products have earned worldwide fame for their attractive designs, functional utility and high quality craftsmanship. In absence of other manufacturing industries in the state, handicrafts remained a key economic activity from time immemorial. The artistic imagination and craftsmanship of the Artisans reflected through a wide range of products, has delighted the connoisseurs world over for centuries. Crafts like Shawls, Crewel, Namdha, Chain Stitch, Wood Carving, Paper Machie, Costume Jewellery, Kani Shawls and the Carpets hold a significant share in the overall production and export of the State. Silken carpets in particular constitute a specialty having no parallel in quality and design at national level and, therefore, occupy an important position in the international market. The handicraft sector of the state has great contribution towards foreign exchange earnings to the state and country in particular.

KEYWORDS

Handicrafts, Craftsmanship, Growth, Production, Employment and Exports.

INTRODUCTION

According to Export Promotion Council of Handicrafts (EPCH) "handicraft may be defined as "items or products produced through skills that are manual, with or without mechanical or electrical or other processes, which appeals to the eye, due to characteristics of being artistic or aesthetic or creative or ethnic or being representative of cultural or religious or social symbols or practices, whether traditional or contemporary. These items or products may or may not have a functional utility or can be used as a decorative item or gift (EPCH Circular). The handicraft sector provides livelihood to over 130 lakhs weavers and artisans, a large percentage coming from the marginalized sections of the society. The industry is largely environment friendly and low on energy consumption, and consciousness on these issues, as also on fair trade practices is growing fast. All this makes the sector a potentially powerful player in the country's economy and an important tool for the empowerment of crafts persons. There are several issues that need attention both, in form of policy intervention and ground level implementation. (George 2011)

HANDICRAFTS SECTOR IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

The Indian handicrafts industry is highly labour intensive cottage based industry and decentralized, being spread all over the country in rural and urban areas. Numerous artisans are engaged in crafts work on part-time basis. Handicrafts industry plays a substantial role in building up of country in terms of its share in employment, output production and prosperity creation (Syed Khalid-2012). The handicrafts of a society often become the dominant means of livelihood. It also satisfies their daily requirements of the people and provides employment to the members of the households of the society which in turn leads towards socio-economic development. The industry provides employment to over six million artisans who include a large number of women and people belonging to the weaker sections of the society. The Handicrafts Sector plays a significant & important role in the country's economy. It provides employment to a vast segment of craft persons in rural & semi urban areas and generates substantial foreign exchange for the country, while preserving its cultural heritage. Handicrafts have great potential, as they hold the key for sustaining not only the existing set of millions of artisans spread over length and breadth of the country, but also for the increasingly large number of new entrants in the crafts activity. Presently, handicrafts contribute substantially to employment generation and exports. In addition to the high potential for employment, the sector is economically important from the point of low capital investment, high ratio of value addition, and high potential for export and foreign exchange earnings for the country.

Kashmir Handicraft is unique in its richness and beauty. Daring all 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 woollen shawls, papier-mâché goods, and wood-carvings, have all survived the onslaughts of many centuries of socio-economic evolutions only because the craft objects of Kashmir are ingrained in the socio-economic ethos of the people.

Handicraft activities occupy an important position in the economic structure of J&K economy. Being environment friendly, these activities are best suited to the state as they are more labour intensive and less capital intensive in nature, having scope for employment generation at a large scale. Handicraft also contributes a lot towards state's foreign exchange earnings and its vibrant handmade articles provide cultural identity to the State. Jammu & Kashmir Handicrafts is a combination of vibrant hand-made articles that have become a cultural identity for the state. Having an exclusive mastery over the special items like the carpets, baskets, wall hangings and others, the handicrafts industry of Jammu & Kashmir is a flourishing sector which employees sizeable tribal and general folks of the valley. The importance of this sector also lies in the fact that it has enormous employment potential; it does not consume scarce resources, does not cause pollution and is environment friendly. The social cost benefit ratio is very small therefore both private and public sector should make investment in this sector so that it will grow up manifold. J&K is famous for the weaving of specialized fabrics like Pashmina and kani shawls, silken, woollen and cotton fabrics. The three regions of the state – Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh – specialize in different crafts. The main crafts of the three regions are:

1. Jammu – Basholi Painting, Calico Painting, Phoolkari.
2. Kashmir – Carpets, Kashmiri Shawls, Wood Carving, Papier-mâché, Crewel, Nada.
3. Ladakh – Wood carving & Painting, Clay Moulding, Ladakh Pashmina Weaving, Ladakh Carpet, Thanka and Fresha Painting.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective is "To evaluate the growth of handicraft industry during last decade (2005-2014) and the performance of the sector".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ghulam Nabi (1975) in his study made an analysis into the growth of carpet industry in the state since its inception. In the pre-independence period, industry has not grown at a steady rate, however after independence, the industry made considerable progress. The author has thrown some light on the cost structure of carpet industry. He says the major constituents of costs are raw material costs (wool, silk & cotton), script charges, and complexity charges, washing and dyeing expenses and overhead costs. The author also points to the marketing of the carpet industry terming it insignificant.

Dr. Darakhshan (2011) stated that in the absence of large scale industries in the State, handicrafts remained a key economic activity from times immemorial and they contribute towards foreign exchange earnings of the State in particular and country in general.

METHADODOLOGY

Research methodology plays an important part in any investigation. For the present study, data was obtained from secondary sources. Secondary data is the second hand information, which is already collected by others, and that information is available in printed form.

The main sources of secondary data are:

1. Books and Journals.
2. Directorate of Handicrafts, J&K (official records).
3. Directorate of Handloom Development, J&K (official records).
4. Directorate of Craft Registration, Srinagar (official records).
5. J&K Handicrafts (S & E) Corporation Limited (official records).
6. Digest of Statistics, Statistics and Planning Department, 2013-14.
7. Economic Review of J&K, 2013-14(Statistics and Planning Department).
8. Economic Survey of J&K, 20013-14 (Statistics and Planning Department).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Kashmir Handicraft industry is so widely scattered all over the state with a dominance of small and tiny units, apart from this Kashmir handicrafts showing the trend of growth in its export. This sector is important for the economy due to its employment generation, foreign exchange earnings and vast untapped export potential. A recent study by the EXIM Bank recommends that the handicraft sector needs to be given an industry status so that a mechanized, modern segment will emerge to face the global competition. This is the most fundamental step which boosts Indian handicrafts in international market. Once India recognizes the potential of handicrafts it can lead the whole market. For that we have to improve our technology and tools to make handicraft more popular in the whole world.

TABLE 1: YEAR WISE PRODUCTION, EMPLOYMENT AND EXPORTS OF HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY

Year	Production (Rs in crores)	Employment (No. in lakhs)	Exports (Rs in crores)	Growth (%)		
				Production	Employment	Export
2005-06	900.00	3.483	705.00	01.46	03.45	9.81
2006-07	950.00	3.496	785.00	05.55	0.37	11.34
2007-08	1614.59	3.505	1200.47	69.95	0.25	52.92
2008-09	1100.00	Na	705.50	.-)31.87	--	(-)41.23
2009-10	1000.00	Na	661.27	(-)9.09	--	(-)6.26
2010-11	1650.30	Na	1004.10	65.03	--	51.84
2011-12	1815.33	3.740	1643.37	10.00	--	63.66
2012-13	1843.21	4.110	1538.28	01.53	9.89	(-)6.39
2013-14	1885	4.250	1695	02.26	3.40	10.18

Source: Government of Jammu & Kashmir Economic Survey

Growth Rate is calculated by using following formula

$$PR = \frac{(V_{Present} - V_{Past})}{V_{Past}} \times 100$$

Where PR = Percent Rate

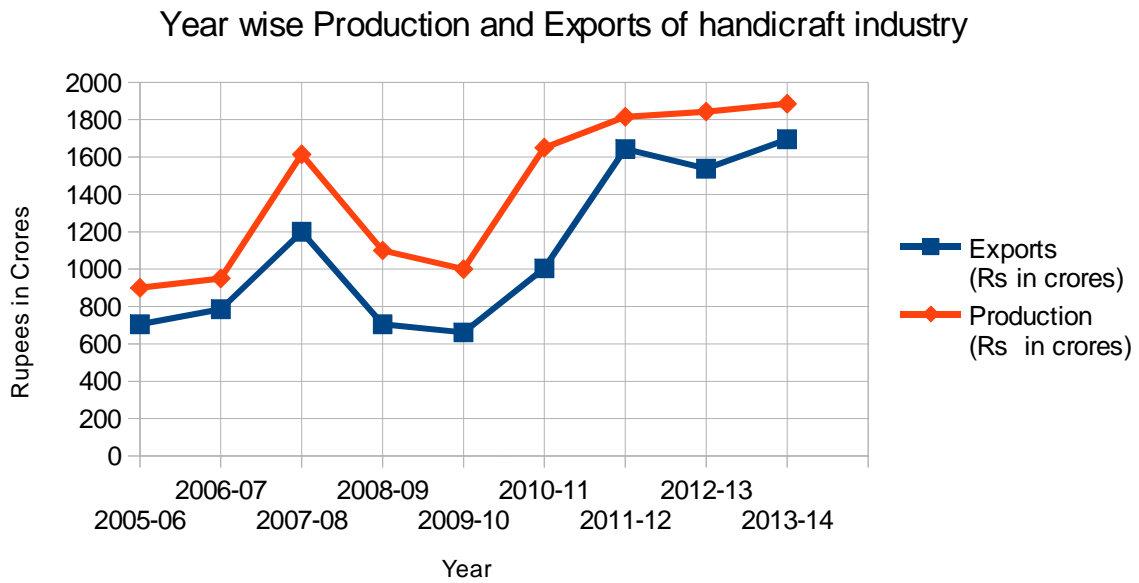
$V_{present}$ = Present or Future Value

V_{past} = Past or Present Value

The sector makes conspicuous 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 handicrafts. 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.1885 crores during 2013-14 as against Rs.900 crores during 2005-06; employment of handicraft has increased to 4.2500 lacs during 2013-14 as against Rs.3.483 lacs during 2005-06; the exports in the handicraft sector have increased to Rs1695 crores during 2013-14 as against Rs.705 crores during 2005-06 and their growth rate is also at a satisfactory level.

Table 1 reveals that the growth rate of production has changed from 1.46 percent to 2.26 percent during 2005-2014, the growth rate of employment has changed from 3.45 percent to 3.40 percent and the growth rate of exports has changed from 9.81 percent to 10.18 percent during the reference period.

FIG. 1



In the above graph we see that in 2007-08 the Jammu and Kashmir handicraft exports touching the 1200.47 corers and suddenly shows the decline trend in 2008-10. There are many reasons for that such as global meltdown, turmoil, and political instability. And after 2010 the Jammu and Kashmir handicrafts shows again an increasing path.

TABLE 2: EXPORTS OF VARIOUS HANDICRAFTS (IN CRORES)

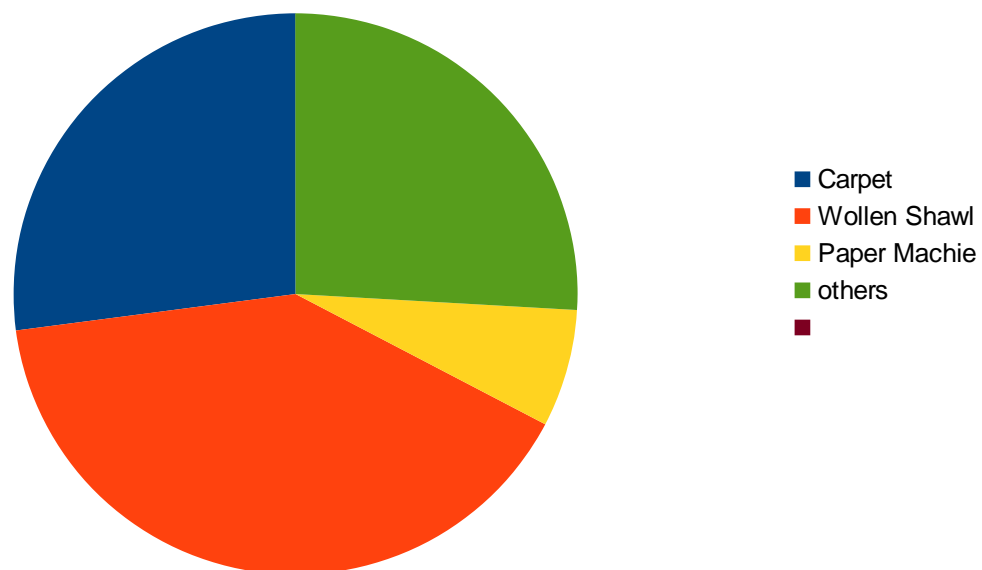
Year	carpet	Woollen shawls	Paper machine	Other items	Total
2005-06	325.00	220.00	27.50	132.50	705.00
2006-07	351.50	275.00	31.50	127.00	785.00
2007-08	649.02	310.29	33.65	207.51	1200.47
2008-09	326.00	226.50	41.00	112.00	705.50
2009-10	407.73	137.13	30.27	86.14	661.27
2010-11	412.45	302.00	66.50	223.15	1004.10
2011-12	567.13	607.03	98.24	370.97	1643.37
2012-13	455.86	620.02	104.11	358.29	1538.28
2013-14	488.00	665.86	112.31	428.83	1695

Source: Government of Jammu & Kashmir Economic Survey

The exports of carpets has increased to Rs.448 crores during 2013-14 as against Rs 325 crores during 2005-06; exports of woollen shawls has increased to 665.86 crores during 2013-14 as against Rs.220 during 2005-06; the exports paper machie has increased to 112.31 crores during 2013-14 as against Rs.27.50 crores during 2005-06 and exports of the other handicraft items have also increased to 428.83 crores during 2013-14 as against 132.50 crores during 2005-06.

FIG. 2

Exports of various handicrafts (in crores) during 2013-14



The pie-chart above shows that during the year 2013-14 carpet, wollen shawl, paper machie and others were 26.43%,39.28%,6.62% and 25.29% respectively.

The handicraft sector makes considerable contribution in sustaining export trade of the state. This sector engages approximately 4.25 lakh artisans in the manufacturing of handicraft products in the state. The handicraft activities are especially carried out in Kashmir valley which is called the home of handicraft goods.

TABLE 3: PRODUCTION OF VARIOUS HANDICRAFTS (IN CRORES)

Year	Carpet	Woolen shawls	Papier machie	Other items	Total
2005-06	425.00	310.00	30.00	135.00	900.00
2006-07	450.50	320.00	35.00	144.50	950.00
2007-08	761.27	420.58	37.92	394.82	1614.59
2008-09	457.60	303.45	35.49	303.46	1100.00
2009-10	638.17	201.03	10.15	151.15	1000.00
2010-11	735.10	343.10	68.82	502.28	1650.30
2011-12	624.70	702.20	102.70	385.73	1815.33
2012-13	643.00	656.30	145.00	398.91	1843.21
2013-14	658.00	668.43	152.70	405.15	1885

Source: Government of Jammu & Kashmir Economic Survey

The table 3 shows that production from 2005 was good and was gaining pace but then suddenly during the year 2008 it shows downfall the reason for the same was the summer unrest in the state during year 2008 which effected the business community badly.

MAJOR STEPS TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT FOR HANDICRAFTS

Directorates of Handicrafts working under the Industries and Commerce Department, J&K has been established for promoting handicraft activities by way of forming cooperative societies to get the artisans, gainfully absorbed. As on 31.03.2013 there were 2730 handicrafts societies registered with a membership of 15987. The department provides Managerial subsidy on tapering basis @100% first year, 66%, 2nd year 33%, 3rd year, to the pass out trainees, which is paid for formation of cooperative societies. During the year 2013-14, 58 societies have been formed with a membership of 580 by the end of Oct., 2013. The department also promotes sale of handicraft goods by organizing expos/exhibition/craft bazaars within and outside the state. It also organizes exhibition at international level annually. During the year 2013-14, the department has organized 4 craft bazaars/exhibitions within & outside the state by the end of Oct. 2013.

Another important area of activity is skill development. Around 8500 persons are trained annually through 553 training centres in the state. During 2012-13, 8132 persons were trained in various crafts like sozni, staple, crewel, papier machie, phool kari, Zari, chain stitching etc. About 9000 persons have been enrolled for training during 2013-14 and training is going on in these centres

The government has started Self employment to individual artisans which aims at providing easy and soft credit facilities to the artisans, weavers, members of cooperative societies and craftsmen engaged in different activities to start their independent venture. The scheme envisages financial assistance in the form of loan from various banks and financial institutions. The department provides interest subsidy @10% on the loan. The department has covered 7761 artisans under this scheme with interest subsidy of Rs. 156.54 lacs disbursed during 2012-13. During current financial year 2013-14, 4578 cases have been disbursed by the end of Oct. 2013 under Credit Plan/ACC. The department has enforced quality Control Act 1978 to maintain quality of Kashmiri handicrafts.

CONCLUSION

The handicraft sector has a large potential to generate a gainful employment opportunities to unemployed people and has a great potential for economic development of a country/region like Kashmir, which is known all over the world with its traditional crafts. Kashmir Handicrafts are the matchless appearance of our society and way of life. A hefty crowd of population is directly or indirectly depends upon handicrafts for their livelihood. It generates employment and foreign exchange earnings which are vital for economic growth and upliftment of the rural economy. Both state and central Government must take step to increase the wages and improve the working conditions of the artisans and others who are involved in this handmade industry. Due to absence of large industries, handicraft industry remains the key economic activity in both rural and urban areas in the Jammu and Kashmir economy after agriculture. Jammu and Kashmir handicraft has also got good fame in international markets, and earns healthy income which is much supportable for our economy. It means that government has to come forward and take immediate action for the uplift of handicraft producers if they expect more exchange earnings and employment from this sector.

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