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PROBLEMS AND MARKETING STRATEGY OF HANDLOOM SECTOR**R. VINAYAGAMOORTHY****RESEARCH SCHOLAR****P.G. & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****DHARMAPURAM ADINAM COLLEGE****MAYILADUTHURAI****DR. B. BASKARAN****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****P.G. & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE****DHARMAPURAM ADINAM COLLEGE****MAYILADUTHURAI****ABSTRACT**

Marketing is a major constraint for the handloom sector. The middlemen play a major role in selling the cloth to the consumer. If the family is very poor, any delay in marketing of the cloth, creates harm to the weavers. The power loom dominates textile production in India and have encroached upon the handloom sector traditional market because of lack of proper marketing. Still the appropriate marketing strategy has not been evolved as a whole by the handloom sector. In this paper, need for market assessment, problems, marketing strategy & marketing mix and suggestions for the development of handloom sector and its market are discussed.

KEYWORDS

marketing strategy, handloom sector.

INTRODUCTION

The market for handloom products in the country is included the self-consumption sector, rural market (where weavers do the marketing themselves), the distant domestic market (largely urban and which is beyond the reach of weavers) and export markets. Master weavers and private traders are both together marketed 90 percent of handloom products in the country. The traders either retail these products through their own outlets or act as intermediaries supplying wholesalers or retailers. The bulk of exports are handled through merchant exporters and manufacturer exporters-the former getting their supplies from manufacturers and master weavers while the later having their own production facilities.

NEED FOR MARKET ASSESSMENT

Whole textile industry also can be classified into two different segments, organized (mill) and unorganized (handlooms and power looms). Specific analysis of handlooms and textile market is important because there are different players in the market like handloom, power looms and mills. If we look into the handloom sector there are different channels and number of players at various levels. Due to the complexity of its nature there is a need of market assessment, which would enable us to know the position of other competitors that would help us in preparing a competitive marketing strategy.

In textile industry, roles of different government agencies are not well defined. Within handloom also there are various agencies, which deal with different issues without any coordination with others. This increases the repetition of job as well as creates confusion about roles and responsibilities. NHPC, HEPC, HHEC, NIFT and Ministry of textiles and commissioner of handloom etc., are some of the organizations/agencies working at the national level and various co-operative societies are also working in the same region with same focus. Due to lack of coordination and communication among agencies and institutions the efficiency of these are deteriorating. To have the proper coordination and to know where the gaps are we need to assess the handloom sector.

Handloom sector is a peculiar sector with the complex trading practices. The trading practices vary from place to place and the structure of the business also differs from one weaving center to another. Whatever may be the business model and the practice of the trade, it helps the traders or master weavers but not the weavers who put their efforts in production. When the weavers produce value added and specialized products then they will have higher benefits.

PROBLEMS IN MARKETING OF HANDLOOM PRODUCTS

The problems in the field of marketing of handloom products, which are mostly existing because of current system's drawbacks. There are few challenges for handloom because of changing market environment like globalization, industrialization and mechanization. Timely intervention from government is required for a bright future in the handloom sector.

Lack of availability of market information: There is no reliable information available regarding the marketing of handloom products. This creates hurdles at the market end resulting in unsatisfied customers. The weavers are unaware of the market demand and new designs & colours because of the lack of customer feedback. This hampers their creativity and innovation.

Insufficient Promotion and Advertisement of Handloom: Handloom sector is far lagging behind in promotion and advertising of its product as compared to the textile sector. Generally, the promotion is only through exhibitions and fairs with limited outlets. Hence the customer purchases only when available and switches to the other competing product when it is unavailable. Therefore, this sector needs a continuous promotion and regular advertising campaign to have a durable and effective impact of the handloom products on the customer.

Lack of Quality Standardization: The handloom is famous for the production of the finest quality of cloth. It uses the unique selling proposition in many cases like carpets, furnishings and fine designs. But the quality and standardization of the product is not regularly mentioned. Hence a procedure is needed for checking the quality standards of the products like durability, shrinking etc., So that the customer is assured about this. Also the government should take initiative and conduct research on the related issues.

MARKETING STRATEGY AND MARKETING MIX FOR HANDLOOMS

To improve the current situation of handloom sector and to make the sector more competitive in current scenario, where market situation is changing very fast it is very necessary to design appropriate marketing strategies. Marketing is all about creating customer value and profitable customer relationships. To get a success in today's competitive market place, handloom sector need to be a customer centered. It must capture customers from competitors, then keep and grow them by delivering greater value. The handloom sector first understand the customer needs and wants before satisfying them. Thus, sound marketing requires a careful customer analysis. Marketing strategy for handlooms involves two key decisions: which customers it will serve (segmentation and targeting) And how it will create a value for them (differentiation and positioning). It defines the total market, then divides it into smaller segments, select the most promising segments and

focuses on serving and satisfying the customers in these segments. Then, the handloom sector should design a marketing program – the four Ps – that delivers the intended value to targeted consumers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HANDLOOM SECTOR AND ITS MARKET

Product quality does not alone serve the customer's purpose. The business should understand who is his customer, where the customer wants the product or service, in what form, at what price. To sustain in the competitive business environment every industry is trying to understand these aspects and practice it in reality.

The major activities such as manufacturing, supplying and marketing should be properly organized through the implementation of suitable strategies.

The sector has great market opportunities if it is ready to take them. Products made by using organic cotton yarn and natural dyes in high demand in the developed nations and upper segment that are health conscious. For these kinds of products research and development, training and knowledge sharing are crucial things. These R&D, training, information centers and mini spinning mills to be come up at weaving center level so that the weaver can have easy access to primary business needs.

To bring superior quality in handloom products the pre and post loom process development should take place. Innovative and faster weaving processes and techniques to increase efficiency of weavers as well as loom will make handloom more competitive and profitable.

CONCLUSION

Merchandising and marketing have been recognized as being central to the growth and development of handloom sector in India. Domestic marketing is important for providing a link between the producer and consumer. The marketing and export promotion scheme is needed to promote the marketing of handlooms in the country and to improve the levels of awareness among handloom weavers and the general public in the interest of overall development of the handloom sector and to give assistance to handloom agencies for building up, developing and marketing of export – worthy handloom products and helps in international marketing by way of participation in international exhibitions and buyer – seller meets.

Reduce the prices, increase availability, improve the quality/ colour durability, innovative design, more varieties, latest fashion and trends, more organized, more advertising, increase awareness, special market survey for handloom products, customization, suitable to weather conditions and reduce intermediaries etc. are needed to improve the satisfaction level of handloom customer. Promotion/advertisement, availability/increase number of outlet, exhibitions, develop new designs, awareness, price to be reduced, proper marketing, more customization of products, link it with brand India, improve the quality, customer friendly services, improve durability, provide machines to weavers, remove middleman from chain and fashion orientation etc. are needed to make handloom more popular. Government should help in opening more outlet, exhibition and trade fair, loans to setup a shop Subsidized the products, relaxation on duties and taxes, improve the marketing strategy, encourage the mechanization, special outlets, implementation of the rules strictly, outlets at village level/ Taluk, better technology for weavers at cheaper rates, discount, competitive customer service, compulsory selling of handloom products at all textile outlets, compulsory for school uniform, helps in generating in more designs and Government should see overseas opportunities to make the handloom sector survive.

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