

Employment Through Handicraft Sector in Jammu & Kashmir State: A Comparative Study of Kathua and Anantnag District

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Abstract

India has witnessed an impressive GDP growth rate past three decades; its growth has been rapid since the post reform period of the 1990's. To this high growth rate, it increases per capita income, decline in absolute poverty rate, as well as improvement in standard of living. In India the economic growth which started after 1947 took momentum after economic reforms were introduced. Today, India is recognized as second fastest growing economy after China and is emerging as a superpower in the years to come. No doubt, India's GDP and per capita income is growing continuously but employment is not growing as compare to its GDP. Currently with one of the highest youth population in the world, India faces its greatest opportunity as well as challenge. To tackle this high rate of population, it needs employment opportunities as well as skill. Present study focused on employment generation through handicraft sector, their types of employment in handicraft sector and the level of poverty among handicraft artisans. The study was carried out from Kathua and Anantnag District of Jammu and Kashmir State.

Keywords: Employment, Income, Poverty, Handicraft, Artisan

INTRODUCTION

Handicraft is generally referred to those goods which are made by hand using simple tools and technology which are usually artistic in appearance and traditional in nature. A craftsperson/craftsman mainly uses the locally available resources and makes valuable products without the aid of modern machines. These artisans are mostly work in traditional and unorganized sector in which mostly the artisans are vulnerable to exploitation and low level of wages. Handicraft artisans fall, both socially and economically, in the lower strata of society. These peoples are mostly engaged in household industries in which they work hard and for long time but do not get enough to maintain a minimum standard of living. A major reason for this state of affairs is the agents/middleman, who take out a substantial share of profit, leaving very little for the artisans and machine makes hurdles and competition in the life of handicraft artisans.

At micro level, it might be considered that handicraft sector constitutes a substantial segment of the decentralized part of its economy and it offers employment to millions of artisan distributed particularly in the weaker sections of societies such as SCs, STs, Muslims, and the women as well as other castes which are economically weak and making goods worth thousands of Cr. of Indian rupees every year. The Annual report of various years of the Ministry of textiles, Government of India suggests that the employment in handicraft and handloom sector in 1997-1998 was 52.92 lakh which becomes 58.41 lakh in 2001-2002 and 60.16 lakh in 2002-2003. In 2005-2006, 65.72 lakh people were employed in this sector. According to the report of NCAER survey of 1995-1996, of the overall workers engaged in handicrafts, 47.42 percent are women of which 37.11 percent are coming under the backward communities like SCs/STs. Indian handicraft sector forms the second largest employment sector subsequent only to agriculture. The skilled hand of the craftsmen is its most significant and yet most imperceptible resource. It is to be perceived with concern and with a detailed thoughtful of its value. If it once vanished it cannot be replaced (Amir, 2016). Artisans are the important player in rural economy, as they produce goods by using local raw material, and mostly dispose them off in the local markets. It is also said that handicraft artisans with their excellent artistic skills and workman have played and are playing crucial role in our economy (Ishtyaq, 2011). Artisans also provide different kinds of services by their traditional skills and primitive technical knowledge.

It is Adam Smith who is widely regarded as the father of modern economics. Similarly Sultan Zain-Ul-Aabideen is widely considered as the father of Kashmir handicraft, and it is because of all his endeavor and humbleness that handicraft sector is still alive and prosperous in Jammu and Kashmir even claim familiarity worldwide in terms of its antique craft. Sultan invited craftsman from Iran, Turan, and offered them good prospect and concession to settle down in Kashmir. During his period (1420-1470 AD), the handicraft products that gained popularity are pashmina shawls, crapet, zari, kani, crewel typestry, wood craft, steel and copper craft, stone craft, papier machie, etc (Warikoo, 1987).

During Shah Hamadan's visit in Kashmir, the unemployment reaches in its peak and the condition of the people are misery. At the same time Shah Hamadan brings seven hundred skilled craftsman in Kashmir and these

craftsman are highly skilled in various crafts and they trained the local persons of Kashmir for their artisanary skill and till that period, the pace of handicraft sector cannot stop and acclaim worldwide fame (Naseem 2003). The handicraft sector is ranked second in terms of employment next to agriculture where millions get employment through this sector. With low level of income and low level of demand of the handicraft product, gradually artisans are shifting to other sector such as agricultural sector, horticulture sector, rickshaw puller, drivers, other type of business, etc. and the resulting handicraft sector (which shows cultural heritage of our country) is diminishing. The present condition of the sector, if ignored, will create problems in future.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mansoor Ahmad Dar, (2013) the Jammu and Kashmir handicraft sector is an important sector contributing to overall development of current and other allied sectors in terms of income and employment creation, this occupying an important place in the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. It is basically a cottage industry and provides direct and gainful employment to more than 3 lakh people and has the potential to facilitate the path of raising the standard of living of citizens residing within and outside the boundary of State.

Brahmananda et al., (1987) in their book "Dimensions of Rural Development of India" shows the defects of the handicraft sector especially the societies as traditional skills, inaccessibility to institutions and markets, inadequate information on market and marketing channels, resistance to change, inadequacies of credit, technology and lack of proper entrepreneurship training.

Tahroi and Singh (1993) rural industrialization has been vital issue for the country to ensure socio economic development of the nation. The experience gained all over the world has shown that industrialization is essential for development as it ensure the supply of goods and services required for improving quality of life and provide opportunity for the employment.

Fayaz and Effat (2012) states that, 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.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the employment generation through handicraft sector in study area
2. To find out the type of employment in the study area
3. To assess the level of poverty among handicraft artisans in the study area

STUDY AREA

The present study is conducted in two district of Jammu and Kashmir State namely Kathua and Anantnag district. Kathua district is situated in Jammu region and Anantnag district situated in Kashmir region as both of the district's population are lived in rural areas and engaged in handicraft sector in terms of its regions.

METHODOLOGY

The present study aims at studying the employment in handicraft sector and the level of poverty among artisans in the study area. The present research work is both descriptive and analytical in nature. There are purposive and multi-stage sampling which are used in sampling design. Data was collected from two districts of Jammu and Kashmir State namely district Kathua and District Anantnag with sample size of 300 respondents. There are primary and secondary data through which the data was collected.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Handicraft sector constitute an important segment of the decentralized sector of our economy and is the largest unorganized sector. Originally started as a part time activity in rural areas, it has now transferred into flourishing economic activity due to significant market demand over the year. The present study is helpful to identify the employment of people through handicraft sector. It is fact that in Jammu and Kashmir State, in winter season the employment in that sector increased and that is why it is also called as part time sector. Moreover, the present study is an effort to narrow down the gap in the direction to analyze the employment status, type of employment and poverty status among handicraft artisans.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Unemployment is one of the major problems which exist still in India as well as in Jammu and Kashmir. Central and well as State Government takes various types of strategies to tackle this problem but cannot succeed. This is happening because of over population in our country and unutilized resources. The resources which are still unutilized are because lack of skill, Government policies and huge brain drain in India. Unemployment causes poverty, low level of standard of living, illiteracy and much more. It is agriculture and handicraft sector in which huge population engaged in this sector and fulfills their necessities. In handicraft sector, which is also a preferred

sector by the weaker section of the society, through that sector they can earn their bread and butter.

As a rural industry, the handicraft industry of India alone could generate employment with low capital investment. The performance of this industry is measured in terms of their potential to create large number of employment opportunities. Being labour intensive in character, handicraft industries are capable of absorbing more labour per unit of output as well as investment.

For the study area, it is seen that in handicraft sector there are various types of employment. The role of women, children and age old persons is also prominent in handicraft sector. In the study area there are five different patterns of employment, i.e. (1) All Family member, (2) Only Male members, (3) Only Female Members, (4) Hired Labour or (5) Spouse only. In the below table, it indicates the total employment in the study area in terms of handicraft artisans.

Table 1: Distribution of artisan household in terms of total employment

District		Total employment in handicraft					Total
		All family	Male	Female	Hired labour	Spouse	
Kathua	Numbers	8	84	27	13	18	150
	Percentage	5.3	56	18	8.7	12	100
Anantnag	Numbers	11	41	53	15	30	150
	Percentage	7.3	27.3	35.3	10	20	100
Total	Numbers	19	125	80	28	48	300
	Percentage	6.3	41.7	26.7	9.3	16	100

Source: Primary Data (2015-2016)

Above table 1 reveals that, there are many variations in terms of employment between Kathua and Anantnag district. In Kathua district, there is male domination in handicraft sector as compare to Anantnag district where there is female dominance. There are 56 percent male members who are engaged in handicraft sector and remaining 44 percent includes women, children, old age persons, hired persons as well as all family members. In Anantnag district, there are 53 percent of females which are directly employed in handicraft sector and remaining 47 percent are children, old age persons, hired persons as well as all family members.

In the study area of Kathua and Anantnag District, there are three types of employment in handicraft sector, which are; seasonal employment, permanent employment and part-time employment. In the winter season especially Snowfall time, the rate of employment increases as compare to summer season, because most of the people are free from all work are they preferred to indulge in craft sector. In the below table, it distributes the type of employment in the study area.

Table 2: Distribution of handicraft artisans in terms of type of employment

District		Type of Employment			Total
		Regular	Seasonal	Part time	
Kathua	Numbers	83	39	28	150
	Percentage	55.3	26.0	18.7	100
Anantnag	Numbers	98	48	4	150
	Percentage	65.3	32.0	2.7	100
Total	Numbers	181	87	32	300
	Percentage	60.3	29.0	10.7	100

Source: Primary Data (2015-2016)

Above table 2 reveals that majority (60.3 percent) of artisans which are regular employed in handicraft sector. There are 29.0 percent are seasonal artisans which are enter in handicraft sector during winter season and 28 are those artisans which entered when they free from agricultural activities, domestic activities as well as horticultural activities or in simple, they doing craft activities in morning and evening time. The part time artisans which are engaged in handicraft sector in the study area are 10.7 percent in both the district.

Poverty is one of the negative elements in our society where poor persons is unable to maintain a minimum socially accepted level of living standard. It is regarded as the evil cause for low levels of health, educational outcomes, poor hygiene, poor drinking water sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice and opportunity for mobility. In the study area, majority (52.7 percent) of sample artisans are BPL categories.

Table 3 Distribution of handicraft artisan by level of poverty

District		Level of Poverty				Total
		APL	BPL	AAY	None	
Kathua	Numbers	33	92	10	15	150
	Percentage	22.0	61.3	6.7	10.0	100
Anantnag	Numbers	56	66	20	08	150
	Percentage	37.3	44.0	13.3	5.3	100
Total	Numbers	89	158	30	23	300
	Percentage	29.7	52.7	10.0	7.0	100

Source: Primary Data (2015-2016)

According to the above table, it showed that the BPL card holder's artisans are higher as compare to other card holders. There are 52.7 percent of the artisans which are fall in below poverty line. Study also reveals that in Kathua district, there are 61.3 percent of artisans who are living below poverty line, 22 percent of artisans living above poverty line, 6.7 percent of artisans living in extremely below poverty line and remaining 10 percent of artisans have no ration card. On the other hand, Anantnag district, there are 37.3 percent of artisan who have APL card holder, 44 percent are BPL card holder, 13.3 percent have AAY card holder and remaining 5.3 percent artisans have not any ration card.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the data that handicraft sector is the most acceptable sector by a large number of people in a society especially for women, disabled and age old persons. Handicraft bears large number of employment and makes their life satisfactorily. It is handicraft sector where part timer and seasonal employment are exist and these artisans earn their livelihood in free time too. But in handicraft sector there are majority of artisans which are poor because of less demand of their products. Skill development and modern technology is in questioned for the poor artisans as they cannot afford to buy modern tools and techniques. Modern machines which are indulge in handicraft sector and they make products in very less time, cheap and low level of raw material and these demand in the market are higher than that of skilled hands and the result is most of the artisans are divert to other sector.

SUGGESTIONS

It is certainly true that the artisans all over the country are economically backward and socially deprived. There are few government programmers exclusively meant for the socio-economic benefit and uplifting of the artisans. The industry requires a multi-pronged approach to infuse life and sustains its development. An attempt has been made in this section to offer few suggestions for improving the plight of handicraft artisans.

- ✓ For promoting the craft and craftsperson, the Government shall thrust through training and capacity building by integrating new technologies with craft which will lead to value addition.
- ✓ The government should introduce separate 'women welfare schemes' in the Centre and State level for women handicraft artisans, since more women are engaged in the handicraft sector.
- ✓ Marketing centers should available in every areas so that the artisans can sell their finished products and buy their required raw material in these centers.
- ✓ Awareness about government policies and financial assessment is also a need for the handicraft artisans so that they can survive their livelihood.

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