

HANDLOOM AND HANDICRAFT SECTOR IN INDIA: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON ITS DEMAND IN THE MARKET AND AVAILABILITY OF ORIGINAL PRODUCT

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the studies of the revival and availability of traditional textiles, handloom, and handicrafts to the customers. The reviewed publications provide strong support for claims that although there are so many artifacts that have been a revival and almost all the textiles are being registered for GIs but still the craft and the traditional process of creating the craft is dying. Handlooms and handicrafts have lost their significance slowly in India with the onset of low-cost and eye-catching synthetic or machine-made materials. Unfortunately, despite the adaptability of the material, technique, and environment-friendly production process, many Indian crafts and artifacts are fading and becoming dying arts. These techniques add allure to any fabric and any craft. The studies also revealed that customers are willing to buy handloom and handcrafted products but they do not have this knowledge whether they are spending money on the original or the imitated product. Studies showed that awareness campaigns on a large scale for its sustenance are essential. An assured relationship between the artisan and consumer community will be improved with the digital streaming between buyers and producers exercise facilitates and this will also help in availability of the better quality of products. The visibility of handloom and handicrafts in the fashion and textile market had increased with the mobile applications and the handcraft will develop into a brand in itself with improved customer experience.

Keywords: Handloom & Handicraft, Traditional Textiles, Customer, Fabric, Craftsmen.

Introduction

The artisans/craftsmen are a salient section of our society. By providing us beautifully crafted products, they enhance our life's aesthetics. Besides, they are a significant contributor to our national economy. People who work with ordinary or simple tools to make things of basic need are known as 'Artisan'. They mainly use the locally available resources and make treasured products without the help of a machine. Thus artisans may be called skilled manual workers who imagine, plan and build things with their = hands as per the demands of most of the local people. The artisans hear to the people's traditions and weave them into their craft making it into an art.

Review of Literature

Since times immemorial India is known for its vivid cultural heritage. Almost every region has its traditional art forms that include paintings, embroideries, printing, carvings, handicrafts, hand-loom, etc. This manifoldness makes our country idiosyncratic. Due to the growing popularity of western art, traditional Indian handicraft, handloom, and mastery are often ignored these days. In a country with rich textile traditions, some of our ancient traditional techniques had almost disappeared. "Preserving and saving the skills and knowledge of traditional crafts is an evolving need. So, it is high time to revive art forms and spread awareness about them in urban space"(Jain, 2016).

An artisan is a skilled manual worker who crafts items that may be functional or decorative. The use of hands and hand tools impart individuality and uniqueness to each item. The artisans are an important section of our society.

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"Crafts like the beautiful Mithila paintings, Roghan painting of Rajasthan, Parsi & Toda embroidery, puppetry and handicrafts of Assam and Nagaland, Dhokra craft, and many more are at risk. Even traditional art is dying out slowly. As the future generation isn't patient and hardworking enough to carry the craft forward, the practitioners of these crafts are now in the fear that this may be the last surviving generation for these crafts have been doing them for several generations. Also, they are paid much lesser than they actually should for their hard work and skills" (Mahapatra, 2019).

There are researches which reveal that "if the original quality of the product is ensured for GI registered products like Pochampally Ikat than 65 percent of the consumers have expressed their willingness to pay more. The expression on consumers' readiness to pay more for the originality and unique quality is an indication that the product may bring in a higher premium price in future leading to better income and employment to the craftsman" (Rout, 2012).

Various studies are done to investigate the customer awareness and satisfaction with the craft and textile sector which reveals that strong awareness campaigns are needed, there is a downfall in the craft and handloom sector with the evolution of the power loom "the handloom industry has been adequately facing huge competition from power loom and miller-made sector. Apart from that lacking infrastructure, below-par marketing support, and a weakening distribution network has exhausted an already flimsy supply chain system. Also, customers are not completely or perfectly aware of the handloom industry. In many cases, consumers do not even know the industry. Hence, a first step of bringing in a huge awareness needs to be performed among the public, followed by design steps for an efficient penetration in the defined market sector" (Anumala, 2015).

Kumudha and Rizwana (2012) analysed the promotion mix of handloom products with special emphasis on Handloom weavers cooperative Society. This study falls under empirical research. The study findings revealed that Handloom is a traditional cottage industry offering millions of employment opportunities to millions of weavers in India but lately the industry is facing a lot of problems and going towards the decline stage. Promotion of Handloom Sector is one of the main areas and hence the substantial efforts has to be put for the improvement of the handloom products.

Deshmukh (2013) concentrated on the analysis of the target customers buying behavior for handicrafts and handlooms products of CIDCO's (City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra) Urban Haat project which has been the policy of the Government of India's in setting up permanent marketing functions at primal locations in the nation to discard middle agencies. Determining Consumer Buying Behavior provides higher content to consumers. They conclude that the project has embraced the purchase decision process Marketing Concept, and is consumer targeted. The objective of this analysis is to determine target consumers, aspects that influence purchase decision mode, and to evaluate if the product meets the targeted consumer's needs. The results indicated that young males and females professionals from middle-class families have been the targeted consumers who have a higher influence in the purchasing decision process of handicraft and handloom products. Yet their requirements are not compelling due to cost and various reasons.

Goswami and Jain (2014) conducted a study to identify the inadequacy faced by the weaving industry today. The research was used two government organizations Rajasthan Rajya Bunkar Sahkari Sangh (RRBSS), and Rajasthan Handloom Development Corporation (RHDC). This study was conducted based on a semi-structured interview schedule, observation method, and many other secondary sources. However, it was found that the handloom industry did not pursue any specialized strategies for procuring raw materials, product planning, and especially for marketing their fabrics. A clear strategy was derived to bring in more profit for the handloom sector on finding out the problems".

Rani and Bains (2014) analyzed the consumer behavior towards handloom products in the state of Haryana and Punjab. This study further analyzed the allied workers and handloom weaver's position. From the analysis, the study perceived several factors that affect consumer behavior and the study found out this industry gives employment opportunities to poor people.

Tanusree (2015) aims to understand the various problems of Handloom Weavers of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The problems are the evolution of new technology (power-loom), capitalist control, a drop-off in wages, increased price of yarn, and so on. The present study is descriptive in nature. The data have been collected through in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, case studies, and focused group discussions. The study findings revealed that the handloom weavers of Varanasi have lost their prestigious traditional industry. It has occurred due to industrialization all over India. The capitalist production, an invention of the power loom, increasing price of yarn, low wages, and labour problems are pushed to handloom to margin. The production system is mostly under the control of a particular

entrepreneurial class Gaddidar or master weaver. The Gaddidar possesses capital and power that they can control over the production unit and labour. The weavers do not sustain their life with the handloom. The handloom industry is one of the major industries that need immediate care and attention. The problems of unemployment will increase with this declining trend in the handloom sector. So, the policymaker should realize the need of the handloom sector and award the required funds for the improvement of handloom weavers to avoid the decline in the handloom industry.

The relative picture of the pre and post GI period on production specifies that the IPR protection and the subsequent activities by the weavers have brought about a significant increase in the production of the units (Fig. 1). However, from the policy perspective, many empirical studies need to be taken up to quantify the direct and indirect implication of geographical indication particularly about the developing countries (Rout, 2012).

Parameters	Pre-GI Period		Post-GI Period			CAGR (2004-09)
	2004	Growth (2004-05)	2006	2009	CAGR (2006-09)	
Production (Rs.)	473439	8%	524799	906852	20%	14.09
Employment (No)	1.79	1%	1.83	2.48	11%	8.46
Productivity (mtr)	0.75	11%	0.86	1.14	10%	8.47
Sales Turnover (Rs.)	379870	19%	461857	859448	23%	17.33

Fig. 1. Explains the trends of some of the key variables during the Pre and Post GI period on per unit annual production, productivity per day, employment per unit, and annual sales turnover

Source: <https://textilevaluechain.in/2012/05/28/economic-impact-of-gi-registration-of-unique-textiles-of-india/>

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Although there has been GI, Das (2012) revealed that there is an immediate requirement to improve the inter-departmental linkages and coordination to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize returns. Such a coordinated approach could immensely facilitate the process of exploiting the commercial and socioeconomic potential of GIs in India and simultaneously help in securing various surplus benefits from this collective IPR". Unless an appropriate institutional mechanism is set in place towards the supply chain, it is very difficult to ensure that a fair share of the benefits accruing from the GI status of a product reaches the actual producers/artisans downstream.

Raju & Choudhary (2013) give a comparative state profile of Odisha as a leading example within the items of textile products registered for Geographical Indications till January 2013. Issues and challenges of GI infringement in India (Nanda, 2013) talk about the legal framework of GI in India, India's experience with GI protection, and some case studies to see the impact of GI registration like Muga silk of Assam, Banaras brocades, and saris, Malabar Pepper and Vazhkulam Pineapple.

The study of the legal protection of GI in India and the study of international agreements of TRIPS, WTO, and IPR to see if enough international standards for GI protection are in place in most of the countries are studied (Nair, 2011). The international trade laws like GATT, WTO, IPRs, TRIPS and Geographical Indications (GI) in Indian perspective are also reviewed (Desai, 2008).

Bagade & Mehta (2014) studied the challenges of GI in India and the study of the functions of GI, historical development, prominence of GI, challenges, and problems of GI act, infringement, and protection of GI.

The use of GI and other IPs as a strong determinant of economic growth and the impact of a strong IP regime on the economic development of a nation have been emphasized and with the growing recognition of IPR, instances of infringements of IPR in developing nations are visible and hence the importance of worldwide forum on IPR has been realized (Rai, Singh & Sharma, 2009).

Similarly Gautam & Bahl, 2010 gave the historical development, the socio-economic implication of GI in developing countries, and the issues and concerns of GI. The significance of GI is studied in various studies. The Indian Ministry of Commerce (2001) has stated that 'by protecting the cultural diversity of a country, GIs also play role in the protection of its national identity against the fear of its dilution by the internationalization of the culture.' A consumer survey done in Europe (WTO, 1999) revealed that 40 percent of consumers surveyed were ready to pay a premium of 10 percent for origin-guaranteed products (Londhe, 2020).

There are so many online websites available on which traditional textiles and crafts are available such as handsofindia.com, Shopclues.com, handsofindia.com, Jaypore.com, itokri.com, Fabindia.com, craftisan.in, kraftbuy.com gangesindia.com exoticiindiaart.com, madhubani.com engrave.in, craftsandlooms.com and many more still the originality and customer awareness is the biggest question (Fig.2). And the artisans making them are not recognized and not even given acknowledgment for their work. There is a basic element missing from the global luxury narrative, which does not give praise or acknowledgment to people in countries like India whose skills are employed generation after generation. It is required to develop the real stakeholders of 'hand-made' more visible. And every brand has a significant role to play in making the luxury sector's link to these craftspeople visible. This will perhaps be able to address other challenges, like measuring their testing methods and the environmental impact of sustainable growth (Tewari, 2015).

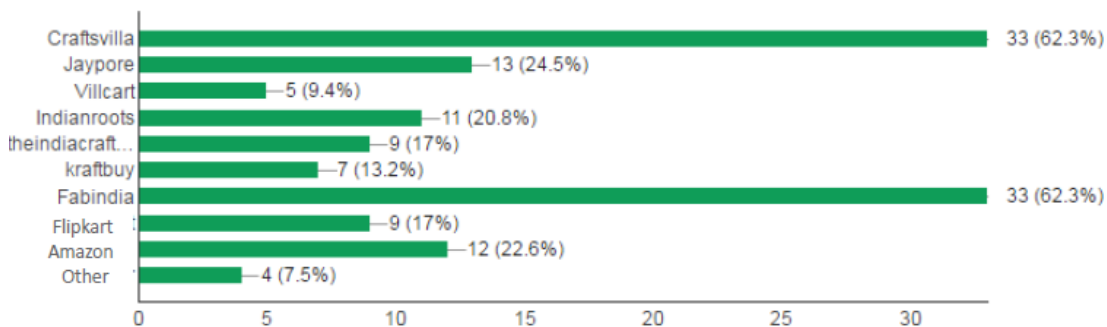


Fig. 2. Craftsvilla and Fab India are the most popular handicraft/handloom online retailers

Source: <http://brlp.in/>

The handloom production should be increased. The government schemes and initiatives should be properly executed. In marketing strategies, technological upgrades, handloom brand promotions, and E-commerce should be used. In addition to these, there is a prompt need for the accessibility of handloom products across different types of retail channels backed up with relevant advertisements. Another strategy is publicity-promoting superior fabric quality and its airy feature best suited to the Indian climate. Most importantly, quality maintenance in terms of raw materials, processing, embellishments, weaving design, and ensuring social and environmental compliances in their production ensures customer loyalty for the handlooms (Vyshnavi & Nair, 2017).

Conclusion

From the literature review, it was found that the Indian handicraft and handloom sector requires providing more awareness amongst the consumers and easily availability of the original product to the consumer directly from the artisans and craftsperson. There is a necessity to provide recognition to these

skillful artisans and craftsperson so that the art remains alive and gets appreciated. People are ready to spend more money if the original product is available to them but the involvement of the middleman and production of imitation are making it difficult for the consumers to differentiate between the original and the imitated product. Revival of almost all the traditional craft as well as textile is getting being done by various designers but still, the handicraft and handloom sector is unorganized and the craftsmanship is dying. The craft and handloom sector are facing troubles due to the prevalence of fakes which was decimating the original which need to be catered by providing a platform to these artisans where they are in direct contact with the customers and customers could easily trace the origin, craftsmanship, the process involved in making, etc., which can help the artisans making them earn better for their work and get an appreciation for their skills. It is evident from the literature review that customers are preferring and looking for handcraft and traditional textiles on e-commerce sites for buying but at the same time awareness and the traceability of the originality need to be there.

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