

A Study on the Sustainability of Handicraft Artisans in Telangana State: A Case Study of Karimnagar District

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ABSTRACT

Although it is a common misconception that Indian handicrafts have a long history of international fame or recognition all over the world, the reality is different because the starving and impoverished handicraft artisans who produce them do not receive any fame or recognition. This priceless cultural treasure is under attack from both internal and external forces for several reasons. The study investigates a variety of issues affecting artisans who work on handmade goods. Many Indian and foreign tourists have long been drawn to the beauty and charm of its handicrafts. The talented artisans may create beautiful items of crafts from basic materials. To improve their quality of life, however, the artisan community must be helped with several issues. The issues related to various problems of handicraft artisans such as financial, production, labor, technical, marketing problems etc. Finding the strengths, eliminating the flaws, seizing the possibilities, and being well-prepared to face the problems by turning them into new opportunities are all important for the sustainability of handicrafts. The opinions of respondents regarding the strengths, problems, prospects (opportunities), and challenges have been gathered so that their perceptions can be thoroughly studied, with the help of consultation with various experts working in this field and references of secondary data. Here, the main goal of this paper is to look at the problems and difficulties that handicraft artisans face as well as the future of the handicraft industry. This will help with strategic planning and decision-making as well as help identify the best course of action for strengthening the position of handicraft artisans who work in the handicraft industry.

Keywords: Handicrafts, Artisans, Various Problems, Strengths, Opportunities, Sustainability, Challenges and strategic planning.

1. Introduction

The Handicrafts Sector plays a significant & important role in the country's economy. It provides employment to a vast segment of crafts person 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 as per census of Handicrafts conducted in the 11th Plan Total artisans were 68.86 Lakh in which 38.61 Lakh female and 30.25 lakh male were included practicing more than 500 types of crafts. Out of these, 35 crafts have been

recognized as “endangered and 92 crafts have been registered under Geographical indication (GI) act. The exports of handicrafts (other than hand knotted carpets) were merely Rs. 386.57 crores during the year of establishment of the Council i.e., 1986-87 rose to level of Rs. 25270.14 Crores in year 2019-20. There is a rise in the membership of handicraft firms with EPCH rose from 35 in year 1985-86 to Rs. 9594 in 2019-20.

2. Review of Literature

1. Ms. Meeta Siddhu, (June,2023)

The research highlights the evolution of traditional Indian textiles and handicrafts from functional items to designer products. It also challenges the prevailing notion that handlooms and handicrafts have been sidelined in the fashion industry.

2. Arunava Dalal et al (June-2022)

This study aimed to identify and address the challenges faced by this sector. Employing qualitative content analysis, the research examined factors affecting both artisans and the industry, utilizing empirical observations. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews with forty-five artisans from diverse Bengal regions. The study's findings led to the creation of a model that employs internet technology as a tool to address the identified constraints. This model aims to enhance artisans' socio-economic conditions, promoting sustainable livelihoods within the sector.

3. Uma Shankar Yadav et al (Dec-2021)

made a study titled, “Artisans in India to Boost Indian Economy: A Way to Developing Global Handicraft Index” explained that India and more than 130 countries are suffering from COVID-19 Pandemic disease and has become a large challenge for the current world. In this paper, they have tried to provide the important Strategies for starting a new Innovative Entrepreneurship or stand the Communities, weaker section. The main aim of this paper is to develop entrepreneurial capacity in artisans.

4. Amisha Shah (2019)

made a study titled, “Suggestive Measures to Empowerthe ‘Heirs of Handicrafts”, the main objective of this research is to study the problems of rural handicraft artisans working in an unorganized sector in Surendra Nagar District and to explore the potentialities towards them if they organize themselves in a collective form like cooperative association. Therefore, this paper focuses on the socio-economic condition of rural handicraft artisans and suggests appropriate measures to promote, revive and preserve various handicrafts of Surendra Nagar district.

5. Majeed (2018)

made a study titled, “Indian Handicraft Industry and Globalization: An Analysis of Issues and Challenges’, explained that India is a rich country in terms of cultural heritage and ethnic traditions and also the hub of handicraft products. The purpose of the present paper is to study the impact of globalization on the handicraft industry and artisans, challenges affecting the handicraft industry and artisan, and government policies and programs for the promotion of handicraft industry and artisan in India.

3. Research Gap: Most of the studies are conducted from different parts of the country but very less found in the geographical area of Telangana State. So, the present study is under taken to mitigate the gap.

4. Research Methodology:

Research Methodology helps in conducting a study with a systematic and scientific approach. It also provides a structured inquiry along with acceptable scientific methods which in return helps in the creation of new knowledge and finding answers to a problem. It includes several steps that enable us to find answers to the research questions. With the help of a proper research methodology, a researcher can understand the functioning of the society, can evaluate social problems, the effects of the problem on the community, and to find out some possible solutions to tackle those issues. A good research methodology would also help in exploring the social realities and the social life of the population being studied.

- 1. Objective:** To examine the Perceptions of Handicraft Artisans Sustainability in the Study Area.
- 2. Hypothesis:** there is no significant difference between Handicraft Categories and Perceptions about their respective crafts problems.
- 3. Sample Design:** The Karimnagar district in Telangana specializes in silver filigree and stone carving handicrafts, as stated by the Telangana Handicrafts Development Corporation. However, discrepancies were found during field visits, revealing shifts, migrations, or non-availability of artisans. Out of 800 artisans, 400 directly involved in handicrafts were selected through convenience sampling for data collection. The 4 selected respondents, 200 from each category, were interviewed to understand the ground reality.
- 4. Period of the Study:** The data was collected from Handicraft Artisan household for the period 2022 September to December 2022 was obtained by canvassing a structured Interview schedule.
- 5. Sources of Data:** Primary data are collected directly by the researcher from first hand experiences for a specific purpose.
- 6. Tools of data collection:** The primary data were collected with the help of the following tools and techniques: An interview schedule, is a list of questions arranged in a sequence pertaining to the investigation, which is used to collect the data from the field.
- 7. Statistical tools:** For analysis of data descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation is applied and cross tabulation is used. Independent sample t-test is used test the compare the means of two independent groups to determine if they significantly different from each other. For conducting the analysis statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) is used.

5.Data analysis and interpretation

5.1 Various Problems related to Handicraft Artisans: Handicraft artisans in India faces various problems and challenges that affects their livelihood and sustainability of the handicrafts. Some of the common problems faced by handicraft artisans in India includes: financial, production, labor, technical, marketing problems and health etc.

Problems		No Problem			Minor Problem			Moderate Problem			Serious Problem		
		S F	S C	T	S F	S C	T	S F	S C	T	S F	S C	T
Financial Problems	N	90	50	140	70	50	120	40	100	140	0	0	0
	(%)	45	25	30	35	25	30	20	50	30	0	0	0
Production Problems	N	0	0	0	90	50	140	70	50	140	40	100	140
	(%)	0	0	0	45	25	30	35	25	30	20	50	30
Labour Problems	N	0	0	0	50	50	100	100	80	100	50	70	120
	(%)	0	0	0	25	25	20	50	40	40	25	35	30
Marketing Problems	N	50	50	100	70	50	120	80	100	100	0	0	0
	(%)	25	25	25	35	25	30	40	50	40	0	0	0

Table: 1 Various Problems Faced by Handicraft Artisans

Source: Compiled from Primary Data (SF Silver Filigree, SC Stone Carving, T -Total)

- the above table shows that out of 400 (100%) respondents, 140 (35%) respondents feel that they faced **moderate problems** in financial matters; among these 140 respondents, 100 (50%) from stone carving and 40 (20%) from silver filigree. 120 (30%) respondents feel that they faced **minor problems**, among these respondents 70 (35%) from silver filigree and 50(25%) from stone carving respondents. And 120 (32%) respondents feel that they have **not faced any financial** problems, among these respondents 90 (45%) from silver filigree and 50(25%) from stone carving respondents.
- out of 400 (100%) respondents 140 (35%) respondents feel that they faced **serious problems** in production matters; among these 140 respondents, 100 (50%) from stone carving and 40 (20%) from silver filigree. 140 (35%) respondents feel that they faced **minor problems**, among these respondents 90 (45%) from silver filigree and 50 (25%) from stone carving respondents. And 120 (32%) respondents feel that they faced **moderate problems**, among these respondents 70 (35%) from silver filigree and 50 (25%) from stone carving respondents.

- out of 400 (100%) respondents, 180 (45%) respondents feel that they faced **moderate problems** in labors matters; among these 180 respondents 100 (50%) from stone carving and 80 (40%) from silver filigree. 120 (30%) respondents feel that they faced **serious problems**, among these respondents 70 (35%) from stone carving and 50 (25%) from silver filigree respondents. And 100 (25%) respondents feel that they faced **minor problems**, among these respondents 50 (25%) from silver filigree and 50 (25%) from stone carving respondents.
- out of 400 (100%) respondents, 180 (45%) respondents feel that they faced **moderate problems** in marketing matters; among these 180 respondents 100 (50%) from stone carving and 80 (40%) from silver filigree. 120 (30%) respondents feel that they faced **minor problems**, among these respondents 70 (35%) from silver filigree and 50 (25%) from stone carving respondents. And 100 (25%) respondents feel that they have **not faced any financial** problems, among these respondents 50 (25%) from silver filigree and 50 (25%) from stone carving respondents.

5.2 Prospects of Handicraft Artisans:

Handicraft artisans have a rich history and cultural significance in many parts of the world. While the rise of indoctrination and mass production may have reduced the demand for traditional crafts, there is still a market for handmade, unique, and artisanal products. Here the below table exhibits the perception of handicraft artisans about various statements representing the prospects of the handicraft artisans.

Table 2: Prospects of Handicraft Artisans in the study area

Prospects of Handicraft Artisans		Strong Agree			Agree			Neutral			Disagree			Strong disagree		
		SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T
Provides Employment to Even Illiterates	No .	196	200	396	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(%)	98	100	99	2	0	1	0	0	.0	.0	.0	0	.0	.0	0
Increasing Demand at Domestic and International Markets	No .	158	4	162	42	61	103	0	0	0	0	135	135	0	0	0
	(%)	79	2	40.5	21	30.5	25.75	.0	.0	0	.0	67.5	33.75	.0	.0	0
Government has Introduced Various Schemes to Promote Handicrafts	No .	0	0	0	143	120	263	57	80	137	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(%)	.0	.0	0	71.5	60	65.8	28.5	40	34.3	.0	.0	0	.0	.0	0

Easy Availability of Finance Assistance	No .	0	0	0	144	8	152	56	192	248	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(%)	.0	.0	.0	72	4	38	28	96	62.0	.0	.0	0	.0	.0	0

Source: Compiled from Primary Data (SF Silver Filigree, SC Stone Carving, T -Total)

The above table-2 shows the opinion of the respondents about various statements related to the opportunities (prospects) available to the handicraft artisans in the study area.

- 99% (396) of artisans gave their opinion strongly agreed in the favour of the statement “**Handicraft provides employment to even illiterate**”, among them stone carving and silver filigree with 100% (200) and 98% (196). while 2% (4) agree with the statement. However, most of the respondents in the field survey said that it is not necessary to be highly educated to learn these crafts, it requires only skill and dedication towards work.
- 33.75% (135) of the respondents disagreed with the statement “**Increasing Demand at Domestic and International Markets**” among them all the respondents are from only Stone carving artisans. 100% (200) of all the silver filigree respondents and 32.5% (65) of the respondents of stone carving either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
- 65.8% (263) of the respondents agreed with the statement “**Government has Introduced Various Schemes to Promote Handicrafts**” Among them silver filigree artisans led with 71.5% (143) artisans followed by Stone carving artisans with 60% (120). 34.3% (137) of the respondents were neutral with this statement, among them 28.5% (57) from silver filigree and 40.0% (80) from stone carving artisans.
- 38% (152) of the respondents agreed with the statement “**Easy Availability of Finance Assistance**” Among them silver filigree artisans led with 72% (144) artisans followed by Stone carving artisans with 4% (8). 62% (248) of the respondents were neutral with this statement, among them 28% (56) from silver filigree and 96% (192) from stone carving artisans.

5.3 Strengths of Handicraft Artisans:

Handicraft artisans in India possess several strengths that contribute to the richness and diversity of their crafts. some of the strengths of handicraft artisans in India include a rich cultural heritage, artistic creativity, skill and expertise, sustainable and eco-friendly practices etc.

Table-3: Strengths of Handicraft Artisans

Strengths of Handicraft Artisans	No .	Strong Disagree			Disagree			Neutral			agree			Strong agree		
		SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T
Hereditary features play an important role in handicraft skills	No .	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	196	200	396
	(%)	.0	.0	0	.0	.0	0	0	0	.0	2	0	1	98	100	99

Low investment and use of insight	No .	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	80	137	143	120	263	0	0	0
	(%)	.0	.0	0	.0	.0	0	28.5	40	34.3	35.75	60	65.8	.0	.0	0
Good profit as compared to investment	No .	0	13	13	55	161	216	0	5	5	41	1	42	104	20	124
	(%)	0	6.5	6.5	27.5	80.5	54.0	0	2.5	1.25	20.5	0.5	10.5	52	10	31.0
Utilization of available raw material and resources	No .	0	0	0	3	99	102	196	97	293	1	4	5	0	0	0
	(%)	.0	.0	0	1.5	49.5	25.5	98	48.5	73.3	0.5	2	1.25	.0	.0	0

Source: Compiled from Primary Data (SF Silver Filigree, SC Stone Carving, T -Total)

The above table-3 shows the opinion of the respondents about various statements related to the strengths of handicraft artisans in the study area.

- 100 % (400) artisans gave their opinion in favour of the statement “**Hereditary features play an important role in handicraft skills**”, among them 99% (396) strongly agreed respondents 100% (200) from stone carving and 98% (196) respondents are from silver filigree and 1% (4) agree with the statement, among these all are from silver filigree only.
- 66% (264) artisans are neutral with the statement “**Low investment and use of insight**”. Among them 66.5% (133) from silver filigree and 65.5% (131) from stone carving. While 26.8% (107) of the respondents disagree among these 28% (56) from silver filigree and 25.5% (51) from stone carving. 7.3% (29) of the respondents followed by agreed respondents with 9% (18) from stone carving and 5.5% (11) from silver filigree.
- 96.5% (386) of artisans agree with the statement “**Good profit as compared to investment**” Among these 97% (194) and 96% (192) from silver filigree and stone carving categories and 3.5% (14) of the respondents disagreed with the statement among them 4% (8) from stone carving and 3% (6) from silver filigree respondents.
- 96.5% (386) of artisans agree with the statement “**Utilization of available raw material and resources**” Among these 97.5% (195) from silver filigree and 95.5% (191) from stone carving respondents. 3.5% (14) of the remaining respondents are strongly agreed with this statement, among these 4.5% (9) from stone carving and 2.5% (5) from silver filigree.

5.4 Challenges faced by Handicraft Artisans:

Indian handicraft artisans face challenges such as Lack of Infrastructure facilities, Gain is less as compared to hard work, new generation is not interested in handicrafts, Irregularity in employment, Improper implementation of govt schemes, decreasing demand due to change in the taste and interest of the

customers. These obstacles hinder their ability to sustain a livelihood, preserve cultural heritage, and adapt to evolving market dynamics. The below table-4 shows the opinion of the respondents about various statements related to the Challenges of handicraft artisans in the study area.

Challenges faced by Handicraft Artisans		Strong Disagree			Disagree			Neutral			agree			Strong agree		
		SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T	SF	SC	T
Lack of Infrastructure facilities	No.	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	50	150	100	150	250	0	0	0
	(%)	.0	.0	0	.0	.0	0	50	25	37.5	50	75	62.5	0	0	0
New generation is not interested in handicrafts	No.	0	0	0	0	0	0	143	80	143	57	120	177	0	0	0
	(%)	.0	.0	0	.0	.0	0	71.5	40	35.75	28.5	60	44.25	.0	0	0
Irregularity in employment	No.	100	0	100	0	0	0	50	100	150	50	100	150	0	0	0
	(%)	50	.0	25	.0	.0	0	25	50	37.5	25	50	37.5	.0	.0	.0
Decreasing demand due to change in the taste and interest of the customers	No.	0	0	0	0	0	0	150	100	250	50	100	150	0	0	0
	(%)	.0	.0	0	0	0	0	75	50	62.5	25	50	37.5	.0	.0	.0

Table: 4 Challenges faced by Handicraft Artisans

Source: Compiled from Primary Data (SF Silver Filigree, SC Stone Carving, T -Total)

- 37.5 % (150) artisans are neutral with the statement “**Lack of Infrastructure facilities**”. Among them 50% (100) from silver filigree and 25% (50) from stone carving and 62.5% (250) of the respondents followed by agreed respondents with 75% (150) from stone carving and 50% (100) from silver filigree.
- 73.25 % (293) artisans are neutral with the statement “**New generation is not interested in handicrafts**”. Among them 79% (158) from silver filigree and 67.5% (135) from stone carving and 26.75% (107) of the respondents followed by agreed respondents with 32.5% (65) from stone carving and 21% (42) from silver filigree.
- 75% (300) artisans are agreeing and neutral with the statement “**Irregularity in employment**”, among these 50% (100) are from stone carving and 25% (50) from silver filigree and 25% (100) of the respondents strongly disagreed among these all are from stone carving.
- 37.5% (150) of artisans agree with the statement “**Decreasing demand due to change in the taste and interest of the customers**” Among these 50% (100) from stone carving and 25% (50) from silver

filigree respondents. 75% (250) of the remaining respondents are neutral with this statement, among these 75% (150) from silver filigree and 50% (100) from stone carving respondents.

5.5 Hypothesis Testing:

Independent sample t-test used to test the compare the means of two independent groups (Silver Filigree and Stone Carving Handicraft Artisans) to determine if they are significantly different from each other.

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between handicraft categories artisans and their perception of their respective crafts problems.

Table: 5 Handicraft categories artisans and perceptions about their respective crafts problems

S.no	Handicraft Problems	Mean Score		Sig.	Decision
		Silver Filigree	Stone Carving		
1	Financial Problems	1.2400	2.5520	.001	H ₀ is rejected
2	Production Problems	3.0036	3.4343	.001	H ₀ is rejected
3	Labour Problems	3.0170	3.0450	.464	H₀ is accepted
4	Marketing Problems	2.8222	3.0633	.001	H ₀ is rejected

Note: The level of significance is 0.05

The mean score of stone carving is greater than that of silver filigree therefore, it can be concluded that the stone carving artisans faced more problems as compared to those silver filigree handicraft in financial, production and marketing problems. Hence, the above hypotheses are rejected, except Labour Problems.

The mean score of the Stone Carving artisans (M= 3.0450) was not significantly higher than the mean score for Silver Filigree artisans (M=3.0170), $t (.734)$, $p > 0.05$. (.464) Consequently, null hypothesis is Accepted. These results suggest that the both Stone Carving and Silver Filigree artisans are significantly facing more or less similar kind of Labour problems. Hence, above hypothesis is accepted in labour problems.

6. Findings.

1. out of 400 (100%) respondents 140 (35%) respondents feel that they were faced **moderate problem** in financial matters, among these 140 respondents 100 (50%) from stone carving and 40 (20%) from silver filigree.
2. out of 400 (100%) respondents 140 (35%) respondents feel that they were faced **serious problems** in production matters, among these 140 respondents 100 (50%) from stone carving and 40 (20%) from silver filigree.
3. 120 (30%) respondents feel that they were faced **serious problems**, among these respondents 70 (35%) from stone carving and 50 (25%) from silver filigree respondents.
4. 140 (35%) respondents feel that they were faced **moderate problems** in marketing matters, among these 140 respondents 100 (50%) from stone carving and 40 (20%) from silver filigree.
5. 100 % (400) artisans gave their opinion in favour of the statement “**Hereditary features play an important role in handicraft skills**”, among them 99% (396) strongly agreed respondents 100% (200) from stone carving and 98% (196) respondents are from silver filigree.

6. 99% (396) of artisans gave their opinion strongly agreed in the favour of the statement “**Handicraft provides employment to even illiterate**”, among them stone carving and silver filigree with 100% (200) and 98% (196). while 2% (4) agree with the statement.

7. Conclusion

In this paper share the opinions of the handicraft artisans related to their problems while encountered their handicraft business or creation of the product and also potential advices from renowned artisans who have decided their entire lives to the pursuit of all artistic crafts. In terms of Karimnagar silver filigree and Stone carving of Ramadugu, the craft will soon become extinct unless the artisans are paid better pay, the market is organized and product quality is managed. Many silver filigree master artisans reluctant to create any new designs concern for plagiarism. Thus, the government should take action to stop design copying. The market for stone carving not organized. Stone carving has a marketing issue, that has to be addressed. The government should encourage the handicraft artisans in participation of fairs, exhibition and other events.

8. Suggestions

1. Setting up of educated youth friendly small scale handicraft units at village, block and district level to generate employment.
2. Seed capital should be provided to small artisans at subsidized rate, for the establishment of their own units.
3. Brand promotion and product marketing can be increased by way of holding exhibitions in local, national and international markets and by regular quality control checks.
4. Modern show-rooms of Telangana handicrafts should be established across country for the promotion of handicraft products.
5. Provide insurance to all handicraft artisans who are actively involved in handicraft occupations and provide pension who are above the age of 60 years on more.
6. Work sheds and Modern tools should be provided to handicraft artisans who are taking this occupation as a primary source of livelihood.
7. Government of Telangana should announce Karimnagar city as a Silver City of Telangana (Silver Park at LMD) with adequate infrastructure facilities.

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