

A Study on the Socio-Economic Condition of The Moonj Craft Maker At Mahewa in Prayagraj, District of Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

The study presents findings from research focused on Moonj craft maker activities at Mahewa, District of Prayagraj. The village is well recognized for its indigenous eco-friendly Moonj handicrafts, the artisans learn this traditional craft skill to their ancestors and pass it generation to generation, they usually made this for their personal use or gifting, but with the time of modernity and on the demand of this handicraft products because of eco-friendly this turns into source of income and with the help of this craft artisans hencing their livelihoods, economy and empowering. Because of the distinct techniques, designs, and functional utility of Moonj products this craft has been selected under Government scheme for Prayagraj to preserving their handicraft skill what signifying its importance to the district identity and economic. 87 respondent 28-56 were surveyed via structured questionnaires and informal interviews. The research provides support for detailed systematic plan of investigation and structural configuration of the study for conducting research within the frame work of the objectives Research, this is the path through which researchers need to conduct their research.

KEYWORDS: Moonj Grass, Moonj Craft, Eco-friendly Crafts, Rural Artisans, Indigenous Knowledge, Craft Preservation, Handicrafts.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional crafts are not only a reflection of cultural heritage, also serve as a sustainable livelihood for many rural communities in India. Moonj craft, based on the natural fiber obtained from the grass *Saccharum munja*, holds significant socio-economic value, especially among women artisans, who have preserved and passed down the knowledge of this complex weaving technique thereon generations. despite its cultural richness and ecological relevance, Moonj craft faces multiple socio-economic constraints in terms of low and irregular earnings, dependence on middlemen, poverty, lack of education, and poor and limited market accessibility. Younger generations show declining interest in continuing the craft because of its low economic returns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was carried out in villages Mahewa, Tignauta, and Indalpur, sectors of Prayagraj by purposive sampling. The researcher collected both primary and secondary data. The research was descriptive in nature. The researcher distributed structured questionnaires to 87 respondents aged 28-56.

The researcher also observed participants and used informal interviews with participants as methods to obtain deeper insights. The data were analysed by using percentages and average.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Age wise Distribution of the Respondents

Sr. No.	Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
1.	28–35years	35	40.23
2.	36–55years	39	44.83
3.	Above 56 years	13	14.94
Total		87	100%

Table 2: Distribution of respondents on the basis of types of family

Sr. No.	Types of Family	Respondents			
		Before Engaging		After Engaging	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Nuclear/Single family	39	44.83	49	56.32
2.	Joint family	48	55.17	38	43.68
Total		87	100%	87	100%

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Marital Status

Sr. No.	Marital Status	Respondents			
		Before Engaging		After Engaging	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Married	59	67.82	64	73.56
2.	Unmarried	18	20.69	15	17.24
3.	Divorced	4	4.60	4	4.60
4.	Widow	6	6.90	6	6.90
Total		87	100%	87	100%

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Education

Sr. No.	Education Level	Respondents			
		Before Engaging		After Engaging	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	16	18.39	16	18.39
2.	Primary (Class I–V)	28	32.18	28	32.18
3.	Middle (VI–VIII)	21	24.14	21	24.14
4.	High School	11	12.64	11	12.64
5.	Intermediate	10	11.49	8	9.20
6.	Graduate	1	1.15	3	3.45
Total		87	100	87	100

Table 5: Monthly Income Levels Respondents

Sr. No.	Monthly Income	Respondents			
		Before Engaging		After Engaging	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below 2,000	21	24.14	7	8.05
2.	2,000–6,000	41	47.13	39	44.83
3.	6,000–8,000	20	22.99	32	36.78
4.	Above 8,000	5	5.75	9	10.34
Total		87	100%	87	100%

Table 6: Distribution of respondents on the basis of housing pattern

Sr. No.	Category	Respondents			
		Before Engaging		Before Engaging	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Thatched/Mud	0	0	0	0
2.	Semi cemented/ mixed	59	67.82	56	64.37
3.	cemented	28	32.18	31	35.63
Total		87	100%	87	100%

Table: 7 Health care of Respondents

Sr. No.	Healthcare	Respondents			
		Before Engaging		After Engaging	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Allopathy	47	54	49	56
2.	Allopathy+ Ayurveda	17	19.5	15	17
3.	Allopathy+ Homeopathy	18	21.5	19	22
4.	Allopathy+ Visiting religious guru and getting his advice	5	6	4	5
Total		87	100%	87	100%

Based on the data, the study reveals that Moonj craft continues to be a vital source of livelihood in Mahewa, Prayagraj, providing income and employment, especially for women. However, artisans face challenges such as low income, lack of direct market access, inadequate institutional support, and exploitation by middlemen. Despite these difficulties, Moonj craft holds immense potential for economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and sustainable rural development. With proper training, market linkages, and government support, the craft can be transformed into a profitable and sustainable enterprise.

CONCLUSION

Moonj craft plays a significant role in improving the socio-economic conditions of its makers, particularly women in rural areas. It has the potential to act as a tool for rural development, cultural preservation, and

gender empowerment. However, to fully realize its benefits, there is a need for a structured approach that includes capacity building, innovation in design, better marketing strategies, and stronger institutional support.

By addressing these challenges and leveraging the craft's unique eco-friendly appeal, Moonj craft can become a more sustainable and profitable livelihood option. Strengthening this traditional art form not only supports the artisans economically but also contributes to preserving India's rich cultural heritage.

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