



Role of handicraft sector as a source of employment for rural women: A case study of district Anantnag

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Abstract

J&K is known throughout the world as much for its arts and crafts as for its scenic beauty and bracing climate. The diverse articles ranging from woolen textiles of fleecy soft texture of matchless excellence in weaving, hand-woven carpets of finest warp and weft, to the exquisite designs worked on papier-mache, wood work, silverware, etc. are the products of unique craftsmanship. Over the centuries specifically from the middle ages this sector in diverse forms has been the source of employment for Kashmir's, introduced in 15th century by Sultan Zainul Abidin or Badshah, the carpet weaving, shawl work etc has been an occupation in which Kashmir's kept engaged with on large scale and won much acclamation from different quarters of the world. This sector succeeded in carving out a significant space in Kashmir society also because of the typical cold weather suitable for keeping, people indoors which added to bringing more and more people in its fold. This research is an attempt to see how much this traditional sector contributes to the employment of women in rural Kashmir.

Keywords: handicraft, employment, rural women, Kashmir

Introduction

J&K is known throughout the world as much for its arts and crafts as for its scenic beauty and bracing climate. The diverse articles ranging from woolen textiles of fleecy soft texture of matchless excellence in weaving, hand-woven carpets of finest warp and weft, to the exquisite designs worked on papier-mache, wood work, silverware, etc. are the products of unique craftsmanship. Over the centuries specifically from the middle ages this sector in diverse forms has been the source of employment for Kashmir's, introduced in 15th century by Sultan Zainul Abidin or Badshah, the carpet weaving, shawl work etc. has been an occupation in which Kashmir's kept engaged with on large scale and won much acclamation from different quarters of the world. This sector succeeded in carving out a significant space in Kashmir society also because of the typical cold weather suitable for keeping, people indoors which added to bringing more and more people in its fold. This research is an attempt to see how much this traditional sector contributes to the employment of women in rural Kashmir.

The general notion of employment of a women in a relatively backward society especially in the rural areas is absolutely unacceptable to the larger people here as the women is primarily associated with the child rearing Even if she contributed to the Familial income in certain ways that is not really counted in the long run. Yet it is the fact that women are to large extent associated with the handicraft sector in the rural Kashmir. The trend which has yet to get acclimatized.

The word 'Handicraft' originated from clubbing of two words - "Hand" and "Craft". It connotes any hand-made object, in which an artesian directly controls its product. The term is used to denote such units in which work with hand or simple

tools is predominant and the investment requirement, in general, is not very high. Sometimes the term cottage industries are also used in place of handicraft industries in view of the fact that mostly the units are run within the cottage or residential houses of the artisans. Handicraft industry group includes all those units which provide part time or whole time employment to families in rural, urban and semi urban areas and generally do not use motive power but use hand driven tools; local or traditional technique of production is their chief characteristics. Their production is normally meant for local use, though the products of some units are marketed in national as well as international markets. Gradually, handicrafts are practiced in the average size of the units in terms homes of artisans on a bigger scale in urban areas. However, the average size of the units in terms of investments, production and employment is smaller as compared to modern small-scale units. The handicrafts do not rule out the possibility of using small machinery in performing some of the process involved in the production of handicraft products. However, the use of manual labour is the main criterion to judge whether a unit is a handicraft or not (Sheikh, 1931) [5]. In order to understand the position of handicrafts, it won't be out of place to provide a brief description of various crafts popular in J&K.

Objectives of the Study

The research was conducted in Handicraft Sector in the district of Anantnag. The study was based on the premise that lots of women are involved in this organized sector in rural side and whereas lot of attention needs to be paid to this sector in the state. No significant study has been conducted so far in rural areas of district Anantnag to ascertain the benefits of

Handicraft Sector to rural women. This research was guided by certain objectives which are as under

1. To assess the level of satisfaction among the female workers in Handicraft Sector in the rural areas of district Anantnag.
2. To examine the role and contribution of women in handicraft sector especially in the rural areas.
3. To access and analyze the contribution of Handicraft Sector in household incomes with a major objective of making a comparative study between the women engaged with the handicraft sector and their male counter parts in the families.
4. To ascertain the reasons and the motivation that leads the women to get engaged with this Sector.

Methodology

The questionnaire was the main tool used in eliciting the

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Workers planning’s for Enhancement of Production

S. No.	Reasons	Type of Contribution					
		Carpet Weaving		Chain Stitch		Needle Work	
		No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
01.	I will work hard in future for Enhancing production	1	14.28	1	10	3	30
02.	I will open own centre for Increasing income	4	57.14	6	60	6	60
03.	I will train the younger ones for Gainful employment	2	28.57	2	20	1	10
04.	Innovation of new products and decision	-	-	1	10	-	-

Table 2: Assistance Provided to Working Women by the Centre

Type of Craft	Assistance Provided			
	Financial		Raw Material	
	No.	%age	No.	%age
Carpet Weaving	13	76.47	4	23.52
Chain Stitch	21	72.41	8	27.58
Needle Work	14	100	-	-

The present study was carried out to analyze the contribution of Handicraft Sector as a source of employment among rural women. A sample of 60 respondents was taken from 8 different Handicraft centers of District Anantnag (Table 4.1). Thus the data gathered was presented in the tabular and diagrammatic to arrive at dependable conclusions.

Table 3: Sample of the study

S. No.	Name of the centre	No. of Respondents
1	Manigam	12
2	Bumthan (Mirbazar)	8
3	Chandan Panjan	9
4	Checki Manigam	7
5	Shirpora	5
6	Chee	8
7	Lazibal	6
8	Malaknag	5
	Total	60

Distribution of Sample according to Qualification

Table 1 reveals the qualification of the sample under study in

information in the field. The questions framed were both open and closed i.e. opinion based and otherwise. The questionnaire was meticulously framed and the expert's opinion was sought from various experts and academicians in the field. It was handed over to the respondents in such a way so that the information carried therein was the representation of the entire area of Anantnag and was proportionate to the existence of handicraft units in various villages of district Anantnag. In case of illiterates the investigator filled the questionnaires herself.

Among the important materials consulted for the research are a list of books on Kashmir handicrafts and journals published by government and other agencies. One of the major sources of material was various websites at the internet.

The data thus collected from both primary and secondary data was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted for- drawing valid inferences for the study.

the 4 different age - groups and depicts that majority of the sample (44.44%) were matriculates with an age of 25-30 years while as very few (7.14%) were illiterate in the age group of 30-35 years. However, an equal number of sample i.e. 25% of each age group had qualification of 10+2.

Distribution of Sample as per Family Income per Month

Table 2 gives the distribution of sample as per their family income and depicts that majority of respondents i.e. 41.37% middle pass, 27.59% matric pass, 20.67% illiterate and 10.34% 10+2 have the monthly family income between Rs 1000-5000. 44% middle pass, 28% illiterate and 28% matriculates have their monthly family income between Rs 5000-10000. Whereas 8%, matric pass, 4% illiterate, 25% 10+2 have the monthly family income of Rs 10,000- 15000 and very few have income between Rs 15000-25000 (1 middle pass having the monthly family income of Rs. 15,000-20,000 and one matric pass having the monthly family income between the Rs. 20,000-25,000).

Reasons of workers for working in the Handicraft Center

Table 3 reveals the reasons of the workers for working in the handicraft centre. In the table, it is evident that majority of the sample (68.33%) work in the centre for having their own earnings in order to live an independent life. 15% of the total sample mentioned that they want to supplement their family income while as 10% of the total sample gave reasons for working in the centre that this improves their standard of, living, which leads to better social status.

Table 4: Distribution of s ample according to Qualification

Age in years	Qualification							
	Illiterate		Middle		Matric		10+2	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
15-20	4	28.57	10	41.67	2	11.11	1	25
20-25	6	42.86	10	41.67	6	33.33	1	25
25-30	3	21.433	4	16.66	8	44.44	1	25
30-35	1.	7.14	—	—	2	11.12	1	25

Table 5: Distribution of Sample as per Family Income per month

Family Income (Rs)	Qualification							
	Illiterate		Middle		Matric		10+2	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
1000-50000	6	20.67	12	41.37	8	27.59	3	10.34
5000-10000	7	28	11	44	7	28	—	—
10,000-15000	1	4	—	—	1	8	1	25
15000-20000			1	100	—	—	—	
20000-25000			—	1	100	—		

Table 6: Reasons of Workers for Working in the Handicraft Center

Reasons	No. of Respondents	%age
Supplement family income	9	15
Better standard of living	4	6.66
Independent Income	41	68.33
Better social life	6	10

Type of Family and their Marital Status

Figure 4.1 shows the type of family and the marital status of the respondents. In the Figure, it is clear that people living in rural areas also prefer to have a nuclear family structure than joint family, since the majority of the sample i.e. 45 out of 60 (75%) belonged to nuclear families while as only 15 out of 60 (25%) prefer to live in a joint family. Further the Figure also reveals that most of the rural women engaged in handicraft center were unmarried (55 out of 60) while as very few were married.

Training Provided by Worker

Figure 4.2 reveals the training provided by the workers to others in their homes. It is clear in Figure that only (25%) provide training to others i.e., (1 in carpet weaving, 12 in chain stitch and 2 in needle work) while as majority of the sample i.e.,(75%) don't provide training to anyone.

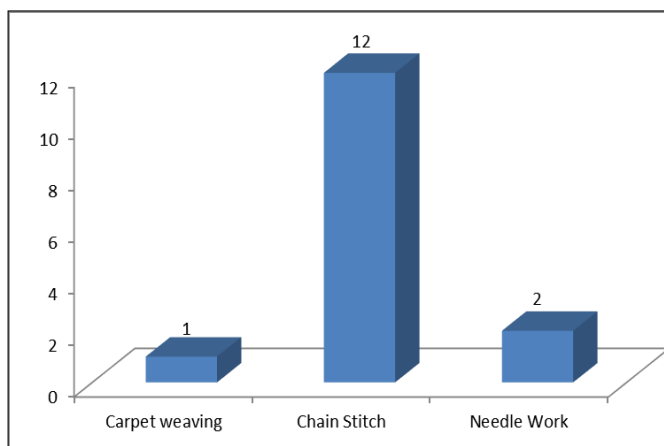


Fig 2: Training Providing by Worker to others at their homes

Type of Design Applied in Various Crafts

Table 4.5 reveals the type of design applied in various crafts. In the table, it is clear that different types of design are applied in various crafts. Majority of the craftsmen i.e. 70.58%, 75.86% and 57.14% in carpet weaving, chain stitch and needlework respectively apply floral design in their crafts. Least number of workers apply animal and traditional design i.e. 24.13% chain stitch workers apply animal design and 29.41% carpet weavers use traditional design. However, 42.99% apply other designs like geometric design in needlework.

Contribution of Sample to the Craft

Table 4.6 gives the contribution of sample to the craft. In four going findings it was found that majority of the sample i.e. 51.72% in chain stitch, 47.05% in carpet weaving and 28.57% in needle work contributed to the craft in terms of change in basic raw material. 35.71%, 27.58% and 23.52% in needle work, chain stitch and carpet weaving respectively contribute nothing to the craft. While as 28.57%, 17.24% and 11.76% contribute colour combination in needle work, chain stitch and carpet weaving respectively. In all crafts innovation of design is contributed by only 5 respondents, 17, 64% carpet weavers, 3.44% chain stitch workers and 7.14% needle workers).

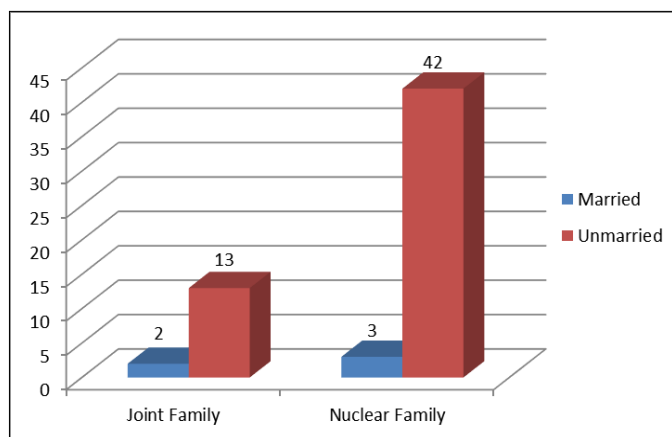


Fig 1: Type of the family and their Marital Status

Workers* Planning's for Enhancement of Production

Table 4.7 shows the future planning suggested by the workers

ill handicraft sector for enhancing the production. Most of the workers

Table 7: Type of Design Applied in Various Crafts

Type of Craft	Type of Design							
	Traditional Design		Floral Design		Animal Design		Any other	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Carpet Weaving	5	29.41	12	70.58	—	—	—	—
Chain Stitch	—	—	22	75.86	7	24.13	—	—
Needle work	—	.	8	57.14	—	—	6	42.99

Table 8: Contribution of Sample to the Craft

Type of Craft	Type of Contribution							
	Innovation of design		Colour combination		Change in basic raw material		None	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Carpet Weaving	3	17.64	2	11.76	8	47.05	23,52	23.52
Chain Stitch	1	3.44	5	17.24	15	51.72	8	27.58
Needle work	1	7.14	4	28.57	4	28.57	5	35.71

About 60% in needle work, 60% in chain stitch, 57.14% in carpet weaving replied that they will open up their own center to increase their production. Reply of about 14.28% in carpet weaving, 30% in needle work and 10% in chain stitch was to work hard in future for enhancing production. However, 28.57% of workers in carpet weaving, 20% of workers in chain stitch and 10% in needle work suggested that they should train the younger ones for gainful employment and only 10% workers engaged in chain stitch told that they will innovate new products and designs to enhance the production.

Assistance Provided to Working Women by the Centre

Table 4.8 indicates that 100% workers doing needle work, 76.47% in carpet weaving and 72-41% in chain stitch are provided with financial assistance while as only 23.52% of workers in carpet weaving and 27.58% in chain stitch are provided with assistance in terms of raw material.

Recommendations

- Workers should be paid reasonably in order satisfy and make them interested,
- In between working hours there should be a break of half an hour for refreshment.
- They should get financial support from Govt. to enhance their production.
- There should be a craft centre in each type in every village for easy access of workers.
- The working conditions in these centres in terms of lighting, ventilation, toiletries etc needs to be improved so that workers may not face any health problem.

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