



A Study On The Status Of Rural Handicraft Artisans In Mandwi R.D Block, West Tripura District, Tripura

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Abstract

Handicrafts have the ability to create a lot of job opportunities the rural people including a large number of women and people belonging to the weakened areas of the society. In spite of all the opportunities, people in the rural areas still face the socio economic problems. The handicraft Due to their disorganization, lack of knowledge, finance, exposure to new technology, lack of market information, and inadequate institutional framework, handicraft artists endure significant hardships. The economic conditions of the sector are adversely affected in the rural areas by the challenging progress of technology. Thus the current research is about the socio-economic condition of handicraft artisans in Tripura. The paper also focuses on the problems and challenges faced by the handicraft artisans in Tripura. The Indian handicrafts industries are mainly working in rural areas. The second largest jobs in India are generated by these Industries. One of the most crucial things is that, these are giving the most employment opportunities to that rural resident from the weaker section of the society. The Indian handicraft industries are mainly labour intensive industry, which playing an important role to the huge population to provide jobs and financial security. Low capital investment handicrafts are manufactured by hands or with the aid of basic instruments in Indian handicraft industries. Handicraft was created as a separate rural activity that involved member of particular class or community entirely or mostly or as a supplementary activity of agricultural household when they are not engaged in their main activity to supplement their income.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Handicrafts are a valuable and indeed a proud heritage of India. For ages, their exquisite beauty has fashioned people throughout the world and has brought fame and respect for Indian skill and imagination. What is the real significance of handicrafts? It lies in the newness and surprise of each object. No two are alike, for each is a fresh creation. Standardization is alien; in fact a negation of all that handicrafts stand for. In an age of, the handicrafts stand as emblems of an endless flow of creativity rather than a necessary repetition, in contrast to machine-tooled monotony. There were many options, and the

choosing depends on the individual, a source of genuine pride. Handicrafts add a finer dimension to our being. It is difficult to give a precise definition of handicrafts. However, it is important to provide a broad understanding of what handicrafts are. Handcrafted goods are manufactured by hand, frequently using basic tools, and are typically of an artistic or traditional nature. They include both useful and decorative items of decoration, household items, ornaments and jewellery etc". The export and import policy of the Government of India defines handicrafts as made by hand have some artistic or decorative value they may or may not have functional utility. The

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handicraft goods can also be understood from their basic characteristics. They are invariably produced by highly labour intensive processes which provide low income, low wage economies with a strong sense of comparative advantage in producing them. The value placed on handwork for its own sake and the emphasis on distinct rational and ethnic talent provides artisans a competitive advantage in the face of process and product innovation. Thus it can be seen that handicrafts provide an opportunity for relatively rapidly growing export activity, while also creating employment opportunities through abundant use of labour and local skills. In many developing countries handicrafts create an opportunity for employment among disadvantaged social groups

Handicraft in India

Handicraft Products that are entirely made by hand or with the aid of tools are referred to as handicrafts. In India's craft industry, the term "handicrafts" refers to things made entirely by hand or with the aid of tools. Artisans already existing, spread over length, and breadth of the country, but also for the increasingly large number of new entrants in the crafts activity. The handicraft raw materials used by the artisans are easily available. The handicraft artisans are significant part for the Indian economy. The product of handicraft has multiple uses. Most handmade items are artistic, imaginative, culturally significant, and attractive, traditional, religiously attached and socially symbolic, for which handicraft has become important to everybody's life. The sector's crafts and craftsmen play a vital role in the economy and are helping to establish India's presence on the international stage. India's crafts have long been well-known around the world. The people of the Indus Valley were renowned for their creativity, culture, and skill. Moreover, the great designing and carvings of temples testify the fact that art and craftsmanship are not new to India it is the skill which India got from its inherent culture, and rituals. Due to the high employment intensity of these industries, the Indian government has given them the highest priority for expansion through five-year plans and industrial strategies. Indian handicrafts include wooden, stone, metal, glass, and bamboo products, cane, clay, terracotta

ceramics, and textiles. The most popular items in Indian products are pottery pots, carpets, other paper and wood products, brassware, pen holders, bamboo and cane things, candles, and Christmas items. Various states of India such as Manipur, Tripura, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kashmir, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala are popular for its handicraft collection. Each States offers a wide range of handicrafts, with its own identity. The handicrafts of its state are unique and it represents different culture and traditions. Though the sector has huge market potential in all Indian states, and abroad, but the growing demand for the artificial product has negatively impacted many skilled artisans' livelihoods directly, as well as others indirectly involved in this field. The main cause of this is the handicrafts industry's stagnation, which is brought on by the virtually complete lack of new technological advancements and innovative approaches. The primary cause of this is that the handicrafts industry has not adopted many novel techniques or technological advancements, which has resulted in the sector's stagnation.

Handicrafts of Tripura

Handlooms and handicrafts of Tripura reflect the inborn art of workmanship, and uniqueness of the people. Due to its significant tribal population, Tripura has a long history of producing a variety of crafts. The primary craft in Tripura is handloom. The primary form of the art and craft industries are intricately woven handlooms, as well as silk, cane, and bamboo products. Vertical and horizontal stripes with dispersed needlework in various colours are the hallmark of Tripura handloom. Shopping here is a joy because to the furniture, games, and useful items like lamp shades, baskets, calendars, ivory carvings, and tribal jewellery from Tripura. Tripura's artisans are exceptionally proficient at producing top-quality handicrafts. The state's various ethnic groups are masters at bamboo and cane work. Some of the attractive handicrafts of the state are room divider, decorated wall panels, silver jewellery, lamps, and furniture of cane, ornamental articles, bamboo dining table mats and floor mats. The artisans of Tripura weave wonderful fabrics with great designs. A typical handloom has horizontal and vertical stripes with vibrant embroidery. Tripura's primary



crafts are made of cane and bamboo. In Tripura, ethnic groups use cane and bamboo to create a diverse range of handicrafts. Table mats, floor mats, room dividers, decorative wall panels, elegant cane furniture, and numerous gift items are a few of the state's well-known handmade products. The State's oldest industry is the handloom sector, where craftspeople create clothes with sophisticated patterns, distinctive colour schemes, and robust textures. Bamboo and cane play a unique role in Tripura culture. The cane and bamboo are used to create a wide range of beautiful items. A range of items are produced, including Furniture, and Table Mats & other Mat products, Lamp Shades etc. These products are also exported to various countries as they are in great demand. Ceilings, paneling, plaques, pot containers (planters), and other interior design items made of cane and bamboo include gossamer-thin bamboo mattresses used for panelling and ceilings furniture made of cane, lamp shades made of thin strips of bamboo, some of the well-known handmade products from the region are baskets woven from cane and bamboo strips which are always on demand.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

P. Avirami et.al (2017) has tried to understand the current scenario of the Handicraft Industry and the challenges faced by the artisans in India. The study is also for the technological upgradation to capture more market values, to emphasis interest among the youth and to adopt the internet technology for the purpose of selling the products through E-Commerce sites.

Jain (2016) has studied the impact of government policies on marketing strategy of handicrafts with special reference to 220 artisans who had participated in 12 trade fairs held in Madhya Pradesh during the span of the study at different point of time. The study has concentrated on the role and performance of the Government in relation to the upliftment of handicrafts and their respective policies and regulations. The researcher has analyzed the awareness of artisan on various Government schemes and policies for handicrafts and their perception on existing marketing strategy for promotion. The research study has revealed the fact that Design Scheme, Marketing Support Scheme, Export Scheme,

Publicity Scheme, Planning & Research Scheme and Marketing Scheme were hardly recognized by the artisans. The researcher has also focused on the growing challenges and opportunities for Indian handicrafts.

Shah & Patel (2015) in their paper 'E-commerce and Rural Handicraft Artisans', have focused on various opportunities of e-marketing available to handicraft artisans, as today is the age of mobile and technology. Evaluating the data of internet users in the country as well as in the world; and the mobile internet users in urban and rural India, the authors have tried to show an ample of opportunities open to these artists, if proper awareness and efficient system is developed in this sector. Besides, researchers suggested the E-commerce as one of the most promising channels in the marketing scenario today for selling handicrafts.

Umamaheswari (2014) has studied the Quality of Work Life (QWL) issues of handicraft workers in and around Thanjavur with sample size of 160. The variables included in the study were Adequate and fair compensation; Safe and healthy working conditions; Immediate opportunity to use and develop human capacities; Opportunity for career growth; and Employees problems and grievances. Artisans' perceptions about motivation to work and quality of work life have been studied. The results showed that the respondents perceived themselves as having a medium level of quality of work life and medium-to-low levels of job motivation. Further the study revealed that there was a significant positive correlation between the categories of the quality of work life and career motivation.

Mohi-ud-din et al (2014) Handicrafts are the unique expression of our community and culture. A large group of population is directly or indirectly depends upon handicrafts for their livelihood. It generates employment and foreign exchange earnings which are vital for economic growth and upliftment of the rural economy. The dynamic factors which determine the growth and decline of craft need to be understood from a total livelihood perspective and not a narrow economic perspective alone. In order to optimal exploration of this handmade industry Government should provide both incentives and assistance. Both state and central



Government must take step to increase the wages and improve the working conditions of the artisans and others who are involved in this handmade industry.

Sharma (2014) study that handicrafts sector plays a significant role in the economy of the Sikkim state. It provides employment to a vast segment of craft persons in rural and semi urban areas and generates plenty income. The handicraft sector had suffered due to poor infrastructure, transport facilities, low capital and poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence and a poor institutional framework. However handicraft has great growth potential in the changing scenario with its basic strength being the abundant and cheap manpower.

Karpagavalli (2013) has highlighted the government guidelines towards handicrafts exports and the role of the government in promoting the crafts and protecting the artists. Various export promotion efforts of Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (Product Development, publicity and marketing) have been discussed here. Further, the author has explained various schemes of the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India such as Babasaheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana, Bima Yojana for Handicrafts Artisans, Credit Guarantee Scheme, Training & Extension Scheme, Design & Technology Up-gradation Scheme as well as Marketing Support & Services Scheme. The author has explained the role of All India Handicrafts Board, The Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India, Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster development Scheme (CHCDS).

3. METHODOLOGY

The present study tries to understand the status of the rural handicraft artisans in Mandwi RD Block, West Tripura District, Tripura and the problems faced by the artisans. The study is based on primary as well as secondary data for analyzing the issues as per the objectives.

Objectives

1. To study the socio-economic status of the handicraft artisan
2. To study the problems of the artisans

Source of data collection

The data has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been collected from the respondent through a structured interview schedule. The data is collected from the villages under the Mandwi RD Block, West Tripura District, Tripura. Secondary data was collected from different sources like journals, articles, books, reports, sites etc. A sample of 270 respondents is selected among the rural handicraft artisans. It is to analyze the socio economic status and the problems of the artisans. Tools of data collection are a structured interview schedule with forty one question has been framed for the collection of data among the respondents.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

a. **Table 4.1** Age-wise Distribution of the Respondent

Sl. No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Less than 20	19	7.03
2	20-30	49	18.14
3	30-40	60	22.22
4	40-50	80	30
5	Above 50	62	23
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

Table 4.1 which explain the age of respondents. Age is a determining factor in an individual, physical growth, mental maturity, decision making, physical and confidence level differs on the basis of age. The distribution of respondents shows the age wise distribution of the respondents. There are 270 respondents, of which 19 respondents belongs to the age group of less than 20 years of age, 49 respondents belongs to the age group of 20-30 years of age, 60 respondents belongs to the age group of 30-40 years of age, 80 respondent to the age group of 40-50 years and 62 respondents above the age of 50 years. In this table it is found that 270 respondents 80(30%) respondents are at the age of 40-50 years followed by the age group of above 50 years of age that comprises 23% of the total respondents. So, it is concluded that the age group of 40-50 years is more engaged to the handicraft work.



Table 4.2: Sex Wise Distribution of Respondent

Sl. no	Sex	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Male	194	71.86
2	Female	76	28.14
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

The distribution of respondents by gender is seen in the above table. Out of 270 respondents, 194 respondents in the table are male and 76 respondents are female. Men are more involved in handicraft activities than women are, with 71.86 percent of men participating in handicraft activities, out of 270 respondents in this context, 28.14 percent of them are female and who are handloom weavers. Therefore, it may be inferred from the data above that more men participate in handicraft activities.

Table 4.3: Educational Status Wise Distribution of the Respondents

Sl. no	Educational status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Illiterate	21	7.78
2	Primary	79	29.25
3	High school	129	47.78
4	Higher secondary	32	11.86
5	College/ university	09	3.33
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

In table 4.3, it explains the respondent's level of education in the rural areas. It indicates that 21 respondents or 7.78 per cent of the 270 respondents are illiterate. 29.25 percent 79 respondents are at the primary level. 32 respondents 11.86 percent have completed the higher secondary level, while 129 respondents or 47.78 percent have completed high school. There are 9 respondents 3.33 percent, who have completed colleges or universities. Thus, it can be concluded that just 3.33 percent of the respondents in the research area had completed college or university level of education.

Table 4.4: Marital Status Wise Distribution of the Respondent

Sl. no	Marital status	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Married	234	86.67
2	Unmarried	21	7.78
3	Widow	11	4.07
4	Divorced	4	1.48
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

The marital status of the respondents in the study areas is shown in table 4.4. According to the data in this table, out of 270 respondents, 234 are married (representing 86.67 percent of the total), whereas 21 are single (7.78 percent). It also demonstrates that there are 11 respondents (4.07 percent) who are widows in the research areas. 4, or 1.48 percent, of the 270 respondents are divorced. Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that married respondents are more involved in handicraft activities than any other group.

Table 4.5: Caste Wise Distribution of the Respondents

Sl. no	Caste	No. of respondent	Percentage
1	ST	213	78.90
2	SC	38	14.07
3	OBC	19	7.03
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

In the above table 4.5 it demonstrates how respondents from various communities participate in handicraft in the research area. 38 respondents out of 270 belong to the Schedule Caste (SC) community, which makes up just 14.07 percent of the local population. Of the 270 respondents, 213 belong to the Schedule Tribe (ST) community, which makes up 78.90 percent of the total respondents. Additionally, 19 respondents who live in the research areas belong to the Other Backward Community (OBC). As a result, it makes sense that the Schedule Tribe community, which predominates the area, is more interested in handicraft activities than the Schedule Caste community or any other backward population. It further clarifies that there is no involvement.

Table 4.6 Distribution of Respondents According to Types of Family

Sl. no	Family type	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Nuclear	263	97.40
2	Joint	7	2.60
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

The table 4.6 which explains the type of family the study's respondents came from. It explains that out of 270 respondents, 263 respondents, or 97.40 percent are living in nuclear families.



This is because respondents in the research area opted to live in nuclear families; they involved less responsibility than joint families. Out of 270 respondents, only 7 (2.6%) chose to live in a mixed family. Therefore, it can be inferred that the majority of survey participants (263 respondents), or 97.40 percent, prefer to live in nuclear families over joint families.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents according to Types of Houses

Sl. no	Types of Houses	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Bricks	133	49.25
2	Bamboo	15	5.56
3	Mud	84	31.11
4	Tin	31	11.48
5	Other	07	2.60
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

The above table 4.7 describes the kind of homes the respondents in the research area lived in. Out of 270 respondents in the research region, 133 respondents or 49.25 percent have brick homes. 15 respondents, or 5.56%, reported having bamboo-built homes. In the research areas, 84 respondents or 31.11 percent of the total have mud homes, 31 respondents or 11.48 percent have tin homes, and 7 respondents or 2.60 percent—are having their homes constructed out of various other materials. The majority of respondents, 49.25 percent, have brick homes, followed by mud homes, which are owned by 31.11 percent of respondents, it can therefore be deduced. Tin dwellings are owned by 11.48 percent of respondents, and bamboo homes are owned by 5.56 percent. Only 2.60 percent of those surveyed have homes made of different materials.

Table 4.8: Family Income Annually

Sl. no	Income (Rs)	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Below 50,000	32	11.86
2	50,000-70,000	49	18.14
3	70,000-90,000	66	24.44
4	90,000-1 lakh Above	123	45.56
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

The above table 4.8 demonstrates the household income of the research area's respondents. Of the 270 respondents, 32, (or 11.86%), reported having an annual income of less than 50,000. 49 respondents out of 270

respondents in the area make up the (18.14%) of respondents, who had an annual income of between 50,000 and 70,000. 66 respondents (24.44%) reported having an annual income between 70,000 and 90,000. 123 respondents, (or 45.56%), reported having an annual income in the region between 90,000 and 1 lakh. The data can be used to deduce that only a maximum of 123 respondents (45.56%) of the respondents generate an annual income of Rs. 90,000 to 1 lakh based on the work they perform or the goods they sell as craftsmen.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Respondent According to Sources of Savings

Sl. no	Sources of Savings	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Public sector Banks	118	43.70
2	Private sector Banks	09	3.33
3	Chit funds	04	1.48
4	LIC	37	13.71
5	Post-office	54	20
6	Cash	48	17.78
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

The table 4.9, The respondents' sources of savings are displayed here. In order to save money for a better future, artisans chose from a variety of savings options. According to the survey, 118 out of 270 respondents have funds in public sector banks because they are widely available to them. The Post Office comes in second with 54 respondents. Of the 270 respondents, 48 reported having their savings on hand. Four respondents have chit money, whereas 37 respondents have LIC policies. Therefore, it can be concluded that public sector banks were selected by 43.70% of respondents as their source of savings, followed by the post office with 20% of respondents. 17.78% of the participants reported having monetary savings. Additionally, it reveals that 1.48 percent of respondents had chit funds, while 13.71 percent of respondents have LIC policies.

Table 4.10: Distribution of Respondents as per Size of Land Holdings

Sl. no	Size of Land Holdings	No of Respondent	Percentage
1	Less than 1 acre	77	28.52
2	1-2 acre	113	41.86
3	2-3 acre	54	20
4	3-4 acre	20	7.40
5	Above 4 acre	6	2.22
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed



In the table 4.10, demonstrates how responders were distributed based on how much land the handicraft producers owned. The data in this table reveals that 113 respondents had land holdings between 1 and 2 acres, while 77 respondents have less than 1 acre of land. 54 participants 20% of the respondents reported owning land in the area that is 2-3 acres in size. 20 responders, 7.40% of whom owned parcels of land between 3 and 4 acres. In the research area, only 6 respondents, or 2.22 percent of respondents, have land holdings of 4 acres or more.

Table 4.11: Reason for choosing Handicraft

Sl. no	Reason of Handicraft Activities	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	Self Employment	108	40
2	Family Business	06	2.22
3	Low Investment	31	11.48
4	Profitable Prospects	53	19.63
5	Hobbies	72	26.67
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

From the table 4.11, explains why the study area's handicraft activities were chosen. It was discovered that 108 respondents or 40% of the 270 respondents decided to use it for self-employment. 2.22 percent of the respondents 6 respondents have a family company. 31 respondents, or 11.48 percent of the total, selected handicraft because they believed it required little capital to begin a business in the field. In the study area, 72 respondents, or 26.67 percent of the total, have participated in handicraft activities as a hobby, making up 53 respondents, or 19.63 percent of the total. Therefore, it can be inferred from the table that the majority of respondents, or 40%, have chosen handicraft as their self-employment activity in order to make money and rely on themselves for financial needs. This is followed by 19.63% of respondents for the profitable features. 11.48 percent also selected it because it needs less investment in the industry. only 2.22 percent for the family business, and 26.67 percent for their hobbies

Table 4.12: Distribution of Respondents according to Types of Product Produce

Sl. no	Product type	No of respondents	Percentage
1	Decorative items	46	17.03
2	Household products	77	28.52
3	Ornaments/jewelry	15	5.56
4	Handloom/Embroideries	121	44.82
5	Other	11	4.07
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

The above table 4.12 demonstrates the range of goods made by the local craftspeople in the research region. Out of 270 respondents in the area, 46 are involved in making ornamental objects for various celebrations and occasions. 77 respondents manufacture household goods like mats, baskets, and numerous other items. Only 11 respondents are involved in creating other items, while 121 respondents are working on handcrafted and embroidered goods that are primarily used by women in the state, while 15 respondents are producing decorations and jewellery. According to the data, the majority of respondents 44.82 percent are involved in making handloom and embroidered goods in the research region. This is followed by the production of home goods, which accounts for 28.52 percent of the 270 respondents. 17.03 percent of those surveyed work on creating decorations for various events and holidays. Only 5.56 percent and 4.07 percent of respondents, respectively, work as manufacturers of ornaments, jewellery, and other things.

Table 4.13: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Marketing

Sl. no	Marketing of Products	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Village market	164	60.74
2	Retail Sales	24	8.89
3	Handicraft Fair	7	2.60
4	Whole sale	9	3.33
5	Town Stalls	17	6.30
6	Relatives/ Neighbour's	49	18.14
	Total	270	100

Source: Computed

Above table demonstrates the handmade products' marketing in the research area. Of the 270 respondents, 164 chose to sell their goods in the village market, which includes 60.74 percent of the respondents in the study region. 24 respondents, or 8.9%, said they would sell to consumers. 7 respondents, or 2.60 percent, indicated that they would like to participate in the handicrafts expo put on by various groups. 3.33 percent of respondents 9 sell to the local or whole sale market. Of the total 270 respondents, 17 respondents (6.30%) sell their goods in local market stalls, while 49 respondents 18.14% sell to friends, family, and neighbours. As a result, we may infer from this table that individuals find it



more convenient to purchase finished goods in village markets than they do through other state-wide marketing channels.

Conclusion

The majority of artisans operate in the old, unorganised economy, where they face exploitation and inadequate pay. Both socially and economically, they are at the bottom of the ladder. Most of these people work hard in domestic or cottage enterprises, yet they just make enough money to maintain a subsistence level of life. The phrase "Handicraft" refers to a diverse range of objects. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has defined the informal sector, which includes handicrafts, as a subset of economic activity that is characterised by a number of characteristics, including reliance on locally available resources and skills, family ownership, small-scale operations, labour intensity, traditional technology, skills that are typically learned outside of the formal educational system, and unregulated and competitive markets. It is discovered that the craftsmen are uninformed of the programmes and that the absence of training facilities prevented the quality of the products from being up to the standards of the townspeople and urban consumers. The study also reveals that young people are less interested in handicrafts. Due of their limited exposure to towns and cities, rural craftsmen depend heavily on rural marketing in these locations. Therefore, it is essential to hold an awareness programme for the rural handicraft makers. The modern tools and technology of their urban counterpart present hurdles for craftsmen as well, which they must overcome in order to sell their handcrafted goods. As a result, it meets the requirement for technology transfer and also gives craftspeople access to training facilities.

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