Chapter 9

Indian Handicraft and Globalization: The Export Context

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ABSTRACT

Globalization has made the whole world one compartment and makes a single village a global village. Indian handicraft products have great opportunities both in the domestic and international markets. Main products of handicrafts consist of art metal wares, embroidered and crocheted goods, shawls and art wares, and Zari goods, woods wares, hand printed textiles and imitation jewelry. Indian Handicrafts, which constitutes a significant segment of the decentralized sector of the economy, its export has reached at a commendable height. Indian folk art and crafts which are the integral parts of the Indian culture and tradition are in high demand among the western consumers. A lot of manufacturing units are established in rural and small towns, which generate employment for a million of artisans. Indian exports are showing a growing trend. Like every coin has two sides, globalization is not separate from this point it also not only have positive impact on artisans industry but there are some negative consequences too on which this chapter is trying to put some light.

INTRODUCTION

Through the ages, The Handicrafts of India is popular around the world for its creativity, aesthetics and exquisite craftsmanship. It represents a rich cultural heritage and distinguishes skills that are transferred from generation to generation. Containing infinite variety India’s handicrafts has been refined during course of changing history. Main products of handicrafts consist of art metal wares, embroidered and crocheted goods, shawls and art wares, and zari goods, woods wares, hand printed textiles and imitation jewelry.

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Today, Handicrafts of India are playing a significant role in the developing country’s economy by providing employment to a large section of society in villages and towns. It not only preserving the cultural heritage of India, but also generating foreign exchange. One of the distinguish feature of this sector is that it uses indigenous raw material for manufacturing of products. Chattopadhyaya (1970) in book “Indian handicrafts” says that Indian handicrafts thrived through ages stimulated by a vigorous folk tradition, a benign culture, and in an age when individualism was cherished and precision valued.

It has huge potential as it holds the key for sustaining not only millions of artisans spread all over the country, but also for increasingly large number of new entrants in crafts works. Handicraft sector presently has substantial contribution in employment generation and export. Gopalrao (1994) in his book “Marketing of Handicrafts” observed that handicrafts offer solution to India, which is characterized by unemployment and foreign exchange shortage.

BACKGROUND

Indian Handicraft

Handicrafts is an important sector in our economy and society, various aspects of handicrafts, such as, sociological, economic, technical, cultural, artistic and aesthetic aspects have been studied by a number of scholars. Indian handicrafts reached the almost height of perfection and glory during the Mughal period. But, with arrival of British, the growth of the factory system of mass production was the direct, immediate and most important cause for the decline of Indian handicrafts. Post-independence role and importance of handicrafts in the economic, social and political scene were strongly felt and the industry started to revive again.

Upadhyay (1973) in the book “Economics of handicraft industry” feels that without design development, technology advancement and quality improvement, we cannot think of healthy growth of such industry. It has been agreed in responsible quarters that even in the field of handicrafts a certain amount of mechanization ought to be introduced in order to obtain the two-fold objective of better finish and rationalization.

Rao, (1978) had made several studies on rural industries especially in Andhra Pradesh. He in his book “Rural industrialization in India” observes that handicraft is one among a few cottage industries, which have a capacity to grow, if appropriate technology is used. He endorses the application of “intermediate technology” of E.F. Schumachar in this context. This great economist was always an exponent of the principle “Small is beautiful”.

Ahmed, (1980) in his book entitled “Problem and Management of Small Scale and Cottage Industries” expresses that the satisfactory performance in marketing of handicrafts could be possible due to the special interest taken by central as well as state governments to boost up the export of handicraft articles.

Globalization

Globalization simply refers to increasing connectivity, integration and interdependence in the socio-economic, technological, cultural, political and ecological spheres. The very concept has many sub-processes which includes, enhanced economic interdependence, increased cultural influence, rapid advancement of
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