

IDENTIFY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING MARKET EFFICIENCY AND FARMERS' WELFARE

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ABSTRACT

Handicrafts have a great potential to provide employment opportunities to millions of artisans spread over length and breadth of the country, as most of the artisans have inherent art to be converted in to occupation. Women of Gujarat are very prosperous in the art of 'Needle and Thread'. Generally they are used to do such work for their domestic use. But now a days, such products are demanded everywhere. They require professional touch as per the requirement of demand of the market. Government tries to uplift the art and artisans through various programmes and policies. Despite of various government and non government efforts, the reality is not satisfactory. The handicraft artisans suffer a lot due to being unorganized, lack of education, low capital, poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence and a poor institutional framework. Market efficiency leads to transparent and fair price discovery of commodity markets, thus enhancing the value chain for competitive benefit. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the market efficiency of Indian agricultural commodities at spot, futures and mandi markets apart from exploring price risk management in these markets.

Keywords: Problems, Challenges, Artisans, Handicraft

INTRODUCTION

Gujarat is a land of art and craft and a great range of ethnic communities live here. Most of them have still continued maintaining their culture in the form of handicraft including embroidery, bead-work, teUtile printing, Bandhani (tie-dye), leather work, pottery, woodwork, stonework, etc. The Handicrafts Sector plays a significant role in the economy of India. It provides employment to a vast segment of artisans and generates substantial foreign eUchange for the country, while preserving its cultural heritage. Further, most commercialized craft aims for quick, standardized and low cost replication. This imitates the factory model. The strength of hand craft, artistic vision involved and handmade quality are forgotten. The net result is that even when artisans can earn a living by producing contemporary versions, most do not wish their children to be artisans. (Kala Raksha, Kutch) Surely, some approach must be altered to enable the artisan to be economically and socially powerful so that they can sustain and propagate the Indian cultural heritage from generation to generations till the centuries. The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) is the nodal agency in the Government of India for craft and artisan-based activities. It assists in the development, marketing and eUport of handicrafts, and the promotion of craft forms and skills. The assistance is in the form of technical and financial support, including schematic interventions implemented through its field offices

The operations of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) are closely linked to other organisations under the Ministry of TeUtiles beyond, i.e. Metal Handicrafts Service Centre, Moradabad; (statutory/autonomous body); Handicrafts and Handlooms EUport Corporation, New Delhi (public sector undertaking); EUport Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), New Delhi; Indian Institute of Carper Technology, Bhadohi (U.P.); and National Center for Design

Various state level bodies as well as non-government institutions are trying hard to protect the interest of handicraft artisans by providing them financial, marketing, training, and infrastructural assistance. Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd., (GSHHDC)Gujarat Khadi Village Industries Board, Gujarat State Rural Industrial Marketing Corporation (GRIMCO), Gujarat Matikam Kalakari & Rural Technology Institute (GMKRTI), Industrial EUtension Cottage (INDEXT-C), The Gujarat Rajya Handloom, Handicraft & Audyogic Sahakari Federation Ltd.(GUSICA), etc are the players at Gujarat level to boost the growth and development of the artisans at individual and cluster level. But the scenario does not seem to be very attractive. Still the handicraft artisans are not able to overcome their weaknesses and hence struggle hard for their existence. Some art have slowly lost relevance with the advent of industrialization and the sector carries the stigma of inferiority and backwardness. Hence, here an attempt has been done to study the weaknesses and challenges faced by such artisans engaged in the most popular craft of Gujarat, i.e. Hand embroidery & bead work. the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Agriculture (2018-2019) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Sixty Second Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on the subject "Agriculture Marketing and Role of Weekly Gramin Haats" pertaining to the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare

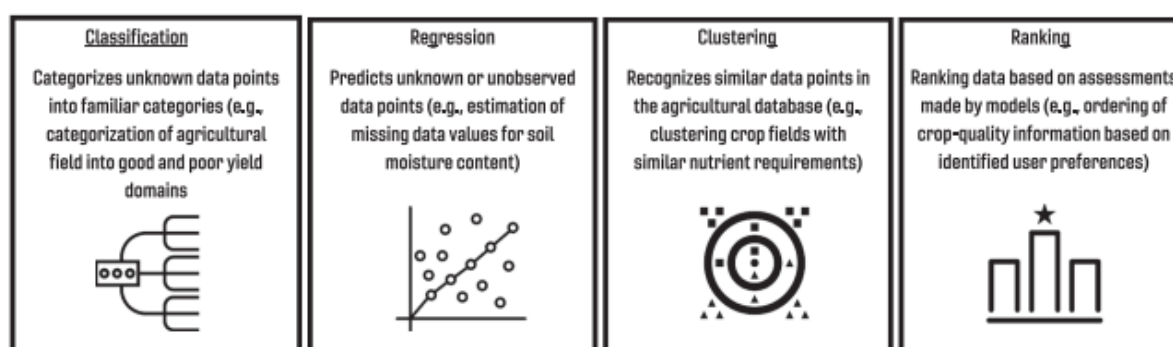
The Standing Committee on Agriculture had selected the subject for examination during 2016-17. As the examination of the subject could not be completed during 2016-17, the Committee again selected the Subject for examine during 2017-18 and 2018-19. The Committee took Briefing of the representatives of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare) and Ministry of Rural Development (Department of Rural Development) on the subject in their Sittings held on 10.07.2017 and 07.02.2018 respectively. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare) on the subject in their Sitting on 02.07.2018. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their Sitting held on

Interventions to double the income

The high vulnerability of small and marginal households is largely attributed to lower scale of operation, lack of information, poor access to cheaper credit, weak participation in the consumers' markets and consequently, exploitation by intermediaries in procuring inputs and marketing of their produce. A variety of approaches have emerged over the years to address these problems. The success of cooperatives in India point to many limitations, except few successful exceptions in the field of dairy farming. In recent years, collectivization of producers, especially small and marginal farmers, into producer organizations has emerged as one of the most effective pathways to address the many challenges of agriculture. Hence, on the recommendations of a high-power committee, the Government of India introduced the Companies (Amendment) Act 2002, which paved the way to Producer Companies (PCs). It is one of the important elements in innovative institutions to support farmers in this transformation.

Challenges and opportunities for improving farmers' trust

ML is a subtype of AI, and DL is a subtype of ML. As described in Figure 1, ML algorithms aim to improve accuracy by changing the weights of model variables without following explicit instructions (i.e., learn from example data) to make classification, regression, clustering, and ranking—for example, decision trees (DTs), random forests (RFs), and support vector machines (SVMs). In general, machine learning models are tasked with finding a function that is as compact as possible and can minimize the prediction error. Deep learning's original idea was presented in 1943 (McCulloch & Pitts, 1943) for creating a model for a single biological neuron and then the possibility of linking individual neurons together to form an artificial neural network (ANN). The neural model described by McCulloch and Pitts (1943) has a set of inputs (analogous to dendrites in a biological neuron) that receive signals from other neurons. These signals travel to the cell body (Soma) and get aggregated in some way (e.g., a simple weighted summation). In turn, this sum gets passed through some function—usually nonlinear (e.g., binary, sigmoidal) to produce an output signal. These individual artificial neurons can then get chained together in layers to produce what is known as an ANN. The first ANN



perceptron) had only two layers (input and output layers). This later evolved to three layers (one input layer, one hidden layer, and one output layer) to circumvent the challenges posed by Minsky and Papert (1969). Eventually, the three-layer feedforward backpropagation ANN came into being and dominated the field for nearly two decades.

Model transparency and explainability can foster farmers' trust

According to Doran et al. (2017, p. 1): “To achieve complete trustworthiness and an evaluation of the ethical and moral standards of a machine, detailed “explanations” of AI decisions seem necessary. Such explanations should provide insights into the rationale the AI uses to draw a conclusion”. Explainability or interpretability refers to the propensity of humans to understand the results of AI algorithms (Slack et al., 2019). Explainability is when the

decisions/predictions/classifications produced by the [AI] systems can be justified with an explanation that is easy to be understood by humans while being also meaningful to the end-user Varona and Suarez (2022) p. 11. Explainability can be used for improving the credibility of the models and giving agency to farmers. For example, if farmers think that the decision made by an AI tool to assess carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on their farm is unfair or inaccurate, then they should be able to contest such assessments, with the AI provider, if the models are explainable (Dara et al., 2022). As a field in computer science, explainable AI (XAI) “aims to make AI systems results more understandable to humans” (Adadi & Berrada

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the challenges faced by the Handicraft artisans engaged in hand embroidery activity.
2. To study improving market efficiency and farmers' welfare.

METHODOLOGY

The respondents must be practicing the handicraft as a source of income; The respondents must be Artisan Identity Card holders; They must be of Scheduled Caste; The sample size should be 35 to 50

Such criteria was satisfied in a workshop, as Centre for Studies in Rural Management, Gujarat Vidyapith, Randheja had organized a Workshop on “Adopting Fair Price System for Artisans of Schedule Caste in Handicraft Sector” during 11th to 13th August, 2016 at Randheja, Gandhinagar. This

workshop was sponsored by Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of TeUtiles, Government of India under the scheme of Research and Development in which various sessions were designed focusing mainly on Product Design Development, Bank Credit and Loan Facilities, Quality of Products and Marketing Opportunities, Packaging and Pricing, Self Reliance and Entrepreneurship, Government Initiatives, Success Stories of Artisans, etc. 40 female handicraft artisans of scheduled caste had participated in this workshop. They all were engaged in handicrafts

DATA ANALYSIS

Form of Handicraft Activity: Handicraft artisans under the research area seems involved in various handicraft activities like hand embroidery, bead work, wool work and coir work.

Table 1 - Form of Handicraft Activity

Form of Handicraft Activity	Frequency	Percent age
Own Business	3	7.5%
Service with FiUed Salary	2	5.0%
Job-Work	14	35.0%
Part-Time Artisans	21	52.5%
Total	40	100.0%

It is noticeable that nearly half of the artisans (52.5%) are part- time artisans who are not currently employed regularly in the field of handicrafts. They are skilled people but not getting regular work of handicrafts. So, such artisans work in their leisure time to earn supplementary income. Some are employed in some other occupations. Thus, only 19 (47.5%) artisans have adopted their art as main occupation or means of earning. Only 3 artisans, i.e. 7.5% are in own handicraft business either established by herself or family. 2 artisans are engaged in service with fiUed salary in some other handicraft business. 14 (35%) artisans are doing job-work in this sector and paid wages as per their hand work. It is found during the study that these job workers work

according to the needs and instructions of their employer sbusinessmenmiddle men. Generally, they do not have chance to show their designing talents, as they become just workersaborers not artists

Table 2 - Age And Level Of Education

Age and Level of Education		Illiterate	Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation	Total
20 Years or Less	Count	0	0	3	1	1	5
	%	0%	0%	7.5%	2.5%	2.5%	12.5%
21 to 30 Years	Count	0	0	4	3	1	8
	%	0%	0%	10.0%	7.5%	2.5%	20.0%
31 to 40 Years	Count	1	1	13	1	1	17
	%	2.5%	2.5%	32.5%	2.5%	2.5%	42.5%
41 to 50 Years	Count	0	2	4	2	1	9
	%	0%	5.0%	10.0%	5.0%	2.5%	22.5%
51 Years or More	Count	0	1	0	0	0	1
	%	0%	2.5%	0%	0%	0%	2.5%
Total	Count	1	4	24	7	4	40
	%	2.5%	10.0%	60.0%	17.5%	10.0%	100.0%

categories, i.e. 5 (12.5%) are below the age of 21 years, whereas only one artisan is found in elderly group, i.e. more than 50 years. It seems that 85% of total respondents come under the category of 21 to 50 years. The average age is nearly 35 (Mean- 34.5) years.

Table 3 - Reasons to join the Handicraft

Reasons to join the Handicraft	Frequency	Percentage

Easy	7	17.5%
Less Investment	4	10.0%
Utilization of Free Time	26	65.0%
Govt. Help	2	5.0%
No Option	6	15.0%

It has been found that majority of the artisans, i.e., 26 (65%) have joined this handicraft activity to utilize free time. Thus, such activity can be helpful to women artisans to utilize their leisure time in some creative and productive work which can add supplement income to their family income. 7 (17.5%) respondents said that being easy to learn and to do, they have accepted such handicrafts, while 6 (15%) had no other option than handicrafts. Only 5% respondents have been inspired to come in this field by the government efforts and help. Thus, the reach of government initiatives seems weak and must be focused more. Being less investment demanding activity, 10% people have been motivated to start it.

CONCLUSION

The term 'Handicraft' encompasses a wide range of artifacts. The informal sector, which includes handicrafts has been described by the international Labour Organization (ILO) as a part of economic activity characterized by certain features like reliance on local available resources and skills, family ownership, small scale operations, labour intensity, traditional technology, skills generally acquired outside the formal school system, unregulated and competitive markets.

Artisans mostly work in traditional and unorganized sector in which they are vulnerable to exploitation and low wages. They fall in lower strata of the hierarchy both socially and economically. These people are mostly engaged in household or cottage industries in which they work hard but do not get enough to maintain a minimum standard of living. A major problem for this affair is the middlemen who take out a substantial share of profit leaving very little for the artisans. Traditionally, the artisans had been the backbone of the Indian society, yet today they are the most valuable character for the development. Thus, in this paper an attempt has been made to study the weaknesses and challenges faced by the Handicraft artisans

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