

A Study on Kerala State Handicrafts Apex Co-Operative Society

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Abstract — Handicraft industry is one of the traditional industries in India as well as in Kerala. In India, the handicrafts sector creates the employment generation of 68.86 lakh artisans. The handicraft industry gives direct and indirect employment opportunities in Kerala, especially for rural peoples. Major income earners from this sector are mainly from economically backward societies. Central and State government gives incentives and support to the artisans mainly through the Handicrafts Apex Co-operative Society (SURABHI) in Kerala. In recent years handicrafts industry faces some problems regarding marketing and production of their products. Efficient working of the Handicrafts Co-operative Society is essential for the development of the artisan. This study is taken to identify the performance of SURABHI in Kerala mainly regarding employment, assistance provided by the government, Turnover and Profit.

Keywords — SURABHI; Handicraft; Employment; Turnover; Assistance; Profit.

1. Introduction

Handicraft industry is one of the traditional industries in India as well as in Kerala. In Kerala, about 1.7 lakh handicrafts artisans actively engaged in the sector and 32 different crafts in Kerala of which ivory carving, wood and horn carving, bell metal casting hand embroidery, coconut shell carving are important among them:(Economic review,2019). The handicrafts industry gives direct and indirect employment opportunities in Kerala, especially for rural peoples. During the early days, the handicraft industry in India was organized on Guild system, which was a union of artisans formed for an economic purpose.

It enjoyed absolute freedom from governmental interference. After some years, the Cottage Industries Board soon reached a new conclusion. In 1952, this board diversified into All India Handloom Board, All India Handicrafts Board and All India Khadi and Village Industries Board: (Balasubramanian, 2017). Indian handicrafts have potentially vast growth in the current scenario with its basic strength. But it faces imminent threat from the growing clout of Chinese economy coupled with their cheap yet disciplined labour as also from superior quality products manufactured by developed countries:(Hashmi, 2012).

Central and State government gives incentives and support to the artisans mainly through the different promotional institutions in Kerala. The Handicrafts Apex Co-operative Society (SURABHI) is an important promotional handicrafts institution among them. SURABHI is the apex organization of primary handicrafts co-operatives established with a view to uplift the artisans by marketing their products and supporting them through the welfare schemes of Government of Kerala and

Government of India. There are 46 co-operative societies under SURABHI: (Economic Review, 2018).

2. Literature Survey

Murthy (1998), conducted a study on handicrafts industry, which analyzed the importance of industrialization in small scale sectors with special reference to handicrafts. The researcher explored that the handicrafts industry can uplift the living standard of artisans and through this can improve the livelihood of rural peoples. By using local resources productively the handicrafts industry provide a minimum income for the artisans.

Jaya (2007), analysed the impact of the Kerala State Handicraft Apex Co-operative society, working of Handicraft Co-operatives in Kerala. The study explored the factors affecting the growth of the Apex society as a successful commercial organization. It found that before 1999 the societies provided all kinds of assistance to the artisans, but from 1999 onwards it is confined only to marketing of their products.

3. Significance of the Study

Handicrafts industry is the important income earning source of the Indian rural population. Their products are highly demanded due to its traditional heritage. Handicrafts sector faces many crises during this period. It is important to identify the prevailing condition of the handicrafts industry regarding the prominent supporting institution named SURABHI for to tide over the crisis. New initiatives will be leads to improve the living standard of artisans and enhance the contribution of this sector into our economy.

4. Objectives of the Study

This study mainly focused to describe the prevailing status of handicrafts regarding main indicators like employment, turnover, assistance, and profit.

5. Methodology

In view of the objectives of the study, this research is a descriptive and analytical study by which largely interprets the information from secondary data.

6. Secondary Data

The secondary data has been mainly drawn from various records and publications of state planning board and Annual reports and Economic reviews of industrial department and websites of Government organizations.

7. Results and Discussion

The following table shows the status of handicrafts industry in Kerala regarding number of societies, employment generation, and assistance by government, turnover and profit under the working of SURABHI.

Table 1: Status of Handicrafts industry in Kerala

Year	No. of Societies	Total employment (Nos.)	Assistance by Govt. (Lakh)	Turnover (Lakh)	Profit/Loss (Lakh)
2009-2010	103	13000	25.00	250.52	-62.34
2010-2011	46	13000	30.98	272.53	-51.52
2011-2012	46	12000	25.00	274.11	-34.70
2012-2013	46	30000	93.35	293.74	-33.86
2013-2014	46	30000	100.00	337.17	-6.12
2014-2015	47	30000	100.00	337.33	-20.24
2015-2016	48	30000	170.62	280.84	-82.33
2016-2017	46	30000	255.5	280.83	-6.83
2017-2018	46	30000	92.00	288.70	-81.35
2018-2019	46	30000	50.00	208.58	54.84

Source: State Planning Board, Govt. of Kerala

The above table clearly indicates the status of handicrafts industry under the apex-co-operative societies from 2009 to 2018 periods. Number of societies under SURABHI was 103 in 2009-10 and it sharply decreased to 46 in the next 2010-11 year. From that point over the 9 years the number of society remains constant up to 2018-19 except 2014-15 and 2015-16. In the case of employment generation in handicrafts industry, during the year 2009-10 it was 13000. In 2011-12 it declined to 12000 and during 2012-13 it sharply increased to 30000. But from that year the employment generation is constant over the period of 7

years. Over the ten years, the assistance provided by the government indicates that there was an increasing trend in assistance from 2012-13. And the assistance was highest in the period of 2016-17 (255.5 lakh), but in the next year of 2017-18 it suddenly decreased to 92 lakh. During the 2018-19 the assistance again declined to 50 lakh only. The turnover of handicrafts products shows that there was a slight increase from the year 2009 to 2014-15 and it declined except 2017-18. The overall growth rate of turnover over the year is -16.74, that is 16.74% declined in turnover during the periods. An important factor is that from the year 2009-10 to 2017-18, the handicrafts societies not gained any amount of profit but they only have loss. Over the 10 year they gained profit only during the year of 2018-19.

The above analysis clearly shows that the status of handicrafts industry under apex co-operative societies not have much better performance. There was not better development in the handicrafts industry during the last 10 years. The factor of employment, turnover and assistance shows an inefficient development in handicrafts industry under the co-operative societies.

8. Conclusion

Handicraft industry is a major traditional industry which promotes high employment opportunities to rural people. Through the analysis of current status of the industry, it is proven that there is not much improvement in this industry under SURABHI in last ten years. More steps should be taken for the future development of handicrafts industry in Kerala through this type of promotional institutions. Necessary actions should be taken by the government for the development of SURABHI as well as the handicrafts industry, otherwise it will be adversely affected the whole industry.

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