



Impact of Handicraft Promotion Measures on Rural Handicraft Artisans

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☞ Abstract

Indian handicrafts are famous worldwide since centuries and Gujarat, especially, has a tremendous treasure of distinctive handicrafts. Surendranagar district of Gujarat witnesses a wide range of vivid handicrafts which are deep rooted in this region from years together. There are many handicraft artisans working in small or micro scale in Surendranagar district who are less focused, not much recognized and under privileged in terms of economic and social benefits resulting in to occupational shift. Governments have continuously been trying through a numerous schemes and programmes to develop this sector and to promote the artisans. Various efforts are being done by NGOs, private ventures and individuals too. But the reality is not satisfactory in this region. Therefore, the present study concentrates on various government and non government measures for the promotion, revival and preservation of handicrafts and their impact at the grass root level.

☞ Keywords:

Handicrafts, Rural Artisans, Handicraft Promotion, Rural Development, Sustainable Entrepreneurship

☞ Introduction

When we imagine about handicrafts, the word 'HANDICRAFT' itself produces a beautiful picture- full of aesthetic complexion, artistic delicacy and attractive appearance. Handicraft reflects the peculiarities of any civilization and expresses the psychological vibrations of the creators. Hence, handicraft artists are the silent spokespersons of cultural treasures of any community or nation, who nurtures the cultural wealth by pouring the manure of excellence with using hands (skills), head (creative logic) and heart (involving sensations). Thus, handicraft sector is not only an economic indicator, employment generating activity or export oriented endeavor but it is far beyond all such narrow bound concepts.

This poetic-ornamental description, philosophical explanation and historical relevance of handicrafts indeed portray a delightful and gorgeous picture; but when we glance at the rural handicraft artisans of India starving in some dark corners of country, we come across the pathetic and harsh reality of grass-root level. The reality is not so glamorous or graceful as it can be depicted in verbal-fabulous world of imagination, philosophy and spirituality. At the age of heavy industrialization, globalization, technological advancements and fast changing socio-economic

scenario, the concept of handicrafts requires a serious attempt to be rethought and redesigned keeping in focus the dreams and desires of the 'Heirs of Handicrafts', i.e. handicraft artisans. Otherwise, their sustainability is in question today...

Gujarat is a land of art and craft. A great range of ethnic communities live in this region who have been maintaining traditional culture in the form of handicrafts. Similarly Surendranagar district also witnesses a wide range of vivid handicrafts which are deep rooted in this region from years together. Such handicraft activities have a great potential of providing rural employment and such handicrafts can be a robust source of supplement income even for those who are engaged in agriculture, as 71.71% population of Surendranagar district is rural according to census 2011.

In the villages of Surendranagar district, hand-embroidery, bead-work, Tangaliya, woven handicrafts, Patola, pottery-work, wood-work, imitation jewellery making, tie-dye, etc. handicrafts are in practice. But it is observed that there are two extremes in the artisanal communities; a few have become recognized artists, while remaining mass is starving poors just left as labourers. There are many handicraft artisans struggling for their sustainability in rural region of the district, who are less explored or not identified, and now are languishing due to various reasons.

Government at central as well as state level have been making constant efforts through various schemes and programmes to promote handicrafts by providing technological, marketing, training and financial assistance to artisans and entrepreneurs. But still the outcomes have not been observed as they are set in the objectives of policies. Despite various government and non-government efforts, the reality is not satisfactory in Surendranagar district of Gujarat. Therefore, the present study concentrates on various government and non government measures for the promotion, revival and preservation of handicrafts and their impact at the grass root level.

Objective of the Research Study

The main objective of this research work is to study various government and non government measures for the promotion, revival and preservation of handicrafts and their impact at the grass root level.

☞ Research Methodology

The research work has been carried out in the Surendranagar district of Gujarat state. The study covers the rural artisans engaged in handicraft sector in this district. For this work, eight handicraft categories were identified at the first stage from various handicraft activities carried on in the villages of Surendranagar district. They are (1) Weaving and Tangaliya (2) Patola (3) Stone Carving (4) Mud-work and Wood-work (5) Tie and Dye (6) Embroidery and Crochet-work (7) Bead-work (8) Other Handicrafts.

400 rural handicraft artisans were selected as respondents through stratified random sampling method, who were either self-employed or wage earners. Here, all the eight

handicraft categories include 50 artisans in each. Besides, 40 experts such as Government officials, NGO workers, designers, handicraft experts and representatives of village/Taluka/district level institutions were also contacted and interviewed to have authenticated qualitative as well as quantitative data and guidance for designing data collection tool in the form of Interview Schedule. The received data were processed through SPSS software.

☞ **Government Efforts for Handicrafts Development**

There are numerous schemes and programmes planned and implemented by Central and State Government bodies for the promotion, revival and preservation of handicrafts by assisting and empowering artisans engaged in them.

➤ **All India Handicrafts Board**

Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and Development Commissioner (Handloom) are the two wings of the Board; which come under the control of Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.

The Office of Development Commissioner Handicrafts (D.C.H.) is the nodal agency for implementation of all the handicrafts schemes of Central Government. It assists the Government in the formulation and implementation of policies for handicraft promotion and development. It identifies new/lesser known or languishing handicrafts and the problems related to craftspeople; provides marketing, financial and technological assistance to the artisans to enable them empowered by supporting them through different developmental schemes.

➤ **The Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India Ltd.**

The Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India Limited runs Central Cottage Industries Emporium (popularly known as "Cottage", "CCIC", "CCIE" and "Cottage Emporium") in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai to sell the handicrafts products of India. The emporium provides the direct market to the handicraft artisans and thrives to help the craftspersons to regain pride of their art and to recognize own potentials. It tries to exhibit traditional and cultural heritage of India in its showrooms. It has started online marketing through its e-marketing link (www.cottageemporium.in).

➤ **The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**

The KVIC has been set up with the economic objective of producing saleable articles; the social objective of providing employment; and the wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up of a strong rural community spirit. The KVIC is engaged in planning, organizing, promoting and implementing various programmes for the development of khadi and village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies working for rural development.

➤ **The Handicrafts and Handloom Export Corporation of India Ltd. (HHEC)**

The Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India is engaged in

promoting exports and developing potential. HHEC has established a close link with Craft Cooperative Societies and Weavers Association of many states of India and hence offers a wide spectrum of handicraft - handloom products. It has been constantly trying to connect more and more rural entrepreneurs and craftspeople so that all can be benefited by the opportunities of the world market.

➤ **National Center for Design and Product Development (NCDPD)**

National Center for Design and Product Development works with many national/international organizations, exporters and manufacturers to fulfill the gaps in handicraft sector in the areas of design/product development and technology. NCDPD is involved in the areas of development such as product design & development, design research & dissemination, design promotion, image building & branding, product standards & excellence, package design, graphic design, technology up-gradation, exhibitions design, showroom & store development, industry linkages, tie-ups & networking, etc.

➤ **Council of Handicrafts Development Corporations (COHANDS)**

Council of Handicrafts Development Corporations is an apex body representing state government handicrafts development corporations and assists the organizations working at grass-root level in the field of handicrafts such as small entrepreneurs, Self Help Groups, NGOs, etc. engaged in handicrafts. COHANDS makes concerted efforts for promotion of handicrafts in the domestic as well as in global markets.

➤ **Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)**

Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) is an apex body of handicrafts exporters which objectives are to support, maintain, promote and increase the export of handicrafts. The Council provides useful information, advice and assistance to members regarding quality & design improvements, technological up-gradation, innovations and standardized production, etc. It organizes handicraft fairs and exhibitions in India and arranges workshops and facilitate participation at international trade fairs too. Thus, it tries to build trustworthy image and reputation of Indian handicraft exporters at global market.

Besides, Carpet Export Promotion Council- (CEPC), The Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), Metal Handicraft Service Center, Bamboo & Cane Development Institute (BCDI), The Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), etc. are other important initiatives of Government of India in the field of handicraft development. Furthermore the handicraft artisans can avail benefits of various schemes/programmes of other departments/ministry of government of India. Some are as follows:

Table-I Schemes/Programmes of Government of India

Ministry of Government	Schemes/Programmes
Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises	Schemes of Development Commissioner (DC-MSME) such as Credit Guarantee Scheme, Credit Linked Capital Subsidy for Technology Upgradation, Micro Finance Programme, National Manufacturing Competitiveness Programme; National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) Schemes; and ARI Division Schemes such as Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Janshree Bima Yojana for Khadi Artisans, Coir Vikas Yojana, etc.
Ministry of Rural Development	Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Aajeevika-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Deendayal Antoyday Yojana, Schemes of Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), etc.
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	National Skill Certification & Monetary Reward (STAR Scheme), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
Ministry of Labour and Employment	Apprenticeship Training, Craftsmen Training, etc.
Ministry of Minority Affairs	Nai Roshni (Leadership Development Programme) for minority women, Nalanda Project, Seekho aur Kamao (Skill Development Programme)
Ministry of Minority Human Resource Development	National Scheme of Apprenticeship Training, Technology Development Mission
Niti Aayog	Self-Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) Scheme
Ministry of Finance	Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Schemes of SIDBI and NABARD
Ministry of Textiles	Schemes of Development Commissioner (Handlooms) and Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	National Scheduled Tribes Finance & Development Corporation Schemes

(Source: MSME Schemes, Published by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India- 2015)

State Level Initiatives of Government:

The major portion of the population of Gujarat state lives in rural areas. Hence, State Government focuses on generating employment in large scale to the underemployed or unemployed artisans by various means and measures. At state level, Department of

Cottage and Rural Industries implements various schemes and programmes through its boards & corporations in coordination with other departments and implementing agencies.

➤ **Commissionerate of Cottage and Rural Industries**

Cottage and Rural Industries department is headed by “Commissionerate of Cottage and Rural Industries” and monitored by Government’s Industries and Mines department. It is implementing various schemes through its subordinate offices. The Cottage and Rural Industries Policy 2016 aims at preserving, strengthening and promoting the traditional and eco-friendly cottage and rural industries of Gujarat for the socio-economic upliftment of the people associated with the sector and for inclusive economic growth and development.

Its main initiatives are - Preservation and Revival of Languishing Crafts; Skill Development and Up-gradation; Marketing Support and Crafts Tourism; Credit Support; Infrastructure Development; Technology and Innovation; Equipment, Tools and Production Support; Social Security; Special Incentives for Women; Environment friendly Products; and Awards and Recognition.

Under the structure of Cottage and Rural Industries, following organizations are working for the implementation of various schemes and programmes.

➤ **Gujarat Matikam Kalakari & Rural Technology Institute (GMKRTI)**

GMKRTI coordinates the efforts to promote the concept of appropriate Technology for the Rural Development in general and for the benefit of rural artisans and cottage Industries in particular. The main objective of the Institute is to examine the technology being used by the artisans of Cottage & Rural Industries; to identify and to develop appropriate technology and to get it accepted and adopted by the rural artisans with the help of spreading the information, propaganda and extension work.

➤ **Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd.**

Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd., (GSHHDC) was established with the objective of identification, revival and development of handicrafts and handlooms of the state. GSHHDC has covered thousands of artisans inhabited in urban, rural and even at remote area of Gujarat under its various schemes of training, design development and marketing.

The Corporation’s initiative- GARVI-GURJARI is a chain of emporia across the country which provide ample of marketing opportunities to artisans/weavers. The Chief Minister of Gujarat at that time Smt. Anandiben Patel had launched the e-store of Garvi-Gurjari (www.estoregurjari.com) on 24th June, 2015 to boost online marketing practices.

➤ **Gujarat State Rural Industrial Marketing Corporation (GRIMCO)**

GRIMCO (Gujarat Rural Industries Marketing Corporation Ltd.) works for providing employment to the artisans of cottage & village industry; provides training and marketing assistance; distributes tools-kits; and executes various schemes introduced by various departments of the Government.

➤ **Industrial Extension Cottage (INDEXT-C)**

The INDEXT-C (Industrial Extension Cottage) has been created to provide information and guidance & for organizing Cottage & Rural Industrial sector in Gujarat. It takes up various activities to increase employment opportunity in the cottage and rural industries sector in co-operation with its all other boards and organization. The main objectives of INDEXT-C are to organize awareness programmes regarding the Cottage and Rural Industries Policy; to co-ordinate the activities and efforts of Board/Corporations, District Industries Centers and Voluntary agencies; to organize exhibition cum sale, open house programmes; and to make publicity with the help of various media to boost the sale of products of cottage and rural industries.

On the official website www.craftsofgujarat.gujarat.gov.in, 2229 handicraft products of various categories are available for sale online; whereas 602 artisans are also registered. Such initiative provides a self-identity and platform to artisans.

➤ **Gujarat Rajya Khadi Gramodyog Board**

Gujarat Rajya Khadi Gramodyog Board helps rural people by providing employment at their door steps with the motive of publicizing khadi and its activities and to let people live with proud by self-employment. The main objective of the Board is to enhance popularity of Khadi and Gramodyog and to sustain Gandhian philosophy. The board provides financial help, training, marketing assistance and technical support to individual artisans and registered organizations/cooperatives through its centers in Gujarat.

Non-Government Efforts:

Besides, the efforts of Central as well as State Government, there are many other ventures, who are involved in the work of handicraft development in the form of NGOs, private companies, individual traders or E-stores. In Gujarat, NGOs such as Kala Raksha, SAATH, Manthan, Craftroots, Khamir, Manthan, SEWA, Srujan, etc. and prominent fashion institutions like National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) & National Institute of Design (NID) have been working to provide rural artisans an effective and efficient platform to manage their business. Besides, Shri Vardhman Gruh Udyog Mahila Mandal, Wadhwan; Jagat Bharti Charitable Trust, Chotila; Limdi Gram Vikas Vanatkam Trust, Karol; Darshak Gramin Vikas Trust, Patdi, Aashirvad Vikalang Trust, Sayla; Khadi Gramodyog Seva Mandal, Chotila, Mahila Samakhya, Surendranagar, etc. are working for handicrafts and handloom artisans of Surendrangar district of Gujarat.

☞ Impact of Government and Non-Government Efforts for Handicraft Promotion

1) Awareness and Satisfaction about Role of Government in Promoting Handicrafts

Government formulates various policies and implements different types of programmes for improving technological knowledge, socio-economic conditions and wellbeing of artisans. But the prospective beneficiaries must have proper and adequate information about such efforts so that they can avail benefits. In the present research work, an attempt has been made to know whether the respondents have awareness and satisfaction about the role of government in promoting handicrafts or not.

Table- II Awareness and Satisfaction about Role of Government in Promoting Handicrafts

Satisfaction about the Role of Government in Promoting Handicrafts		Awareness about the Role of Government in Promoting Handicrafts		Total
		NO	YES	
NO	No.	250	131	381
	% Column-wise	100.0%	87.3%	95.2%
YES	No.	0	19	19
	% Column-wise	0.0%	12.7%	4.8%
Total	No.	250	150	400
	% Column-wise	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

(Source: Primary data collected by researcher)

Table-II reveals that 62.5% artisans are totally not aware about the role of government in promoting handicrafts, while only 37.5% artisans have been found informed about various schemes and programmes of government. But it has been come out of the discussion that the most of the artisans have just basic information about some of the schemes only. They denied about witnessing government awareness programmes and campaigns ever.

On asking about the satisfaction about the role of government in promoting handicrafts, only 19 (4.8%) replied affirmatively; while majority (95.2%) showed their dissatisfaction towards it. However, it is a surprising fact that among all the artisans having knowledge about government initiatives, 87.3% (131) are not satisfied with the role of government in promoting handicrafts. They further opined that formulation of policies and programmes do not bring expected outcomes, but there must be an effective system of monitoring and ensuring efficient implementation of the same.

2) Membership with Formal Association or Group

Unity is strength. Organized identity of artisans can offer a better future to them, as it opens the doors of success through collective efforts. On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee Year celebration of Gujarat State, Hon. Chief Minister Shri. Narendra Modi launched an ambitious campaign by the name ‘Mission Mangalam’ with an objective to organize the poor into Self Help Groups / Sakhi Mandals, link them with banks, build capacities in them and lead them towards sustainable livelihoods. Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Company Limited (GLPC) was formed in the month of April 2010 to implement this Mission. Role of Co-operative societies as well as of various NGOs is also very considerable in providing organized identity to rural handicraft artisans in Gujarat. Various programmes and schemes of DC Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles (GOI) encourage cluster initiatives and formation of groups for providing collective assistance.

Table- III Membership with Formal Association or Group

S. No.	Variables	Particulars	No.	Percentage
1	Having Membership	YES	114	28.50%
		NO	286	71.50%
		Total	400	100.00%

2	Formal Association or Group	Self Help Group	82	71.93%
		Co-operative Society	13	11.40%
		Non-Government Organization	52	45.61%
		Total	114	100.00%
Note: Multiple answers were found.				

3	Assistance Received from the Association or Group	Financial Assistance	40	35.09%
		Marketing/Selling Assistance	46	40.35%
		Training Assistance	42	36.84%
		Other	18	15.79%
		No Assistance	25	21.93%
		Total	114	100.00%
Note: Multiple answers were found.				

(Source: Primary data collected by researcher)

Table-III illustrates that only 114 (28.5%) artisans are associated with some of the formal organizations such as Self-Help Groups, Co-operative Societies or NGOs working in this area. While majority of the artisans, i.e. 286 (71.5%) have never experienced any type of formal membership with any group or association. Among 114 artisans, 82 are the member of Self-Help-Groups formed under Mission Mangalam Project of Government of Gujarat. Among them 20 told that they were not active any more, as their SHGs were dispersed or they have left the membership.

13 artisans have membership with co-operative society operating at village level, whereas 52 are directly or indirectly in the contact with some NGOs or institutions.

Moreover it has been revealed that among 114 artisans having such membership, 25 (21.93%) artisans have never availed any type of benefit or assistance; 35.09% (40) artisans have received financial assistance; 40.35% (46) artisans have been benefited with marketing/selling assistance; 36.84% (42) artisans have attended training programmes; and 15.79% (18) have received other type of assistance from such group or association. Hence, out of total 400 respondents covered under present research study maximum 11.5% respondents have received marketing/selling assistance; while 10.5% and 10% artisans have taken advantage of training and financial assistance respectively.

3) Status of Artisan Identity Card of Respondents

Artisan Identity Card is a photo ID card, denoting the craft practiced by an artisan, issued by the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. All the handicraft artisans and craft workers practicing handicraft are eligible to avail such card which helps access a variety of handloom and handicraft schemes at national level for marketing, credit, insurance, etc. Artisan Identity Card provides true recognition to the artisan and makes him/her eligible to avail benefits of various government schemes. These ID cards are recognized throughout India and holders can have benefits of direct beneficiary transfer, Mudra scheme, welfare schemes and national awards too.

Nation-wide Artisans Identity Card camp named ‘Pehchan’ has been launched on 7th October, 2016 to provide identity cards to handicraft artisans. This has been initiated by all the 52 marketing centers of handicrafts spread over all around the country. These Identity Cards will be Aadhar linked to avoid duplications of benefits. Total I-Card forms collected as on 28-10-2016 are 1,47,354 according to the annual report 2016-17 of Ministry of Textiles.

The Commissioner of Cottage and Rural Industries, Government of Gujarat also issues the similar type of Artisan Identity Card to the artisans for the schemes of the department at state level.

Table- IV Status of Artisan Identity Card of Respondents

Having Artisan Identity Card		Handicraft Categories								Total
		Weaving/Tangaliya	Patola	Stone Carving	Mud-work/Wood-work	Tie and Dye	Embroidery/Crochet work	Bead-work	Other Handicrafts	
YES	No.	14	11	8	6	6	1	0	10	56
	% C	28.0%	22.0%	16.0%	12.0%	12.0%	2.0%	0.0%	20.0%	14.0%
NO	No.	36	39	42	44	44	49	50	40	344
	% C	72.0%	78.0%	84.0%	88.0%	88.0%	98.0%	100.0%	80.0%	86.0%
Total	No.	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	400
	% C	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

%C=Column-wise Percentage (Source: Primary data collected by researcher)

Table-IV illustrates that out of total 400 respondents involved in rural handicraft activities, only 56 (14%) have Artisan Identity Card either issued by Ministry of Textiles, Government of India or Office of Commissioner of Cottage and Rural Industries, Government of Gujarat. Among them Weaving/Tangaliya artisans have been found more, as they are 14 followed by 11 Patola artisans. 10 artisans who fall under 'Other Handicrafts' category have such Identity Card too. 8 Stone Carving artisans and 6 artisans of Mud/Wood work and Tie & Dye categories each have Artisan Identity Card too. While no Bead-work artisan and only one Embroidery/Crochet artisan has been found in this class. Hence, it is surprising that 86% of total respondents do not have Artisan Identity Card. However 17 artisans told that they have applied for such card but not received yet.

However, one thing must be noticed that according to the data available from the Ahmedabad regional office of The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, there are more than 1750 Artisan Identity Card holders in Surendranagar district. And the number is expected to be significantly increased, as the Government has now targeted to register more and more artisans in India. On the official website of the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), database of 71,603 artisans all over India is maintained which includes 4,146 artisans of Gujarat. On 19th January 2017, Union Textile minister and member of Rajya Sabha representing Gujarat, Smriti Irani visited the Tangalia weavers of Surendranagar district. And according to the opinion of the officers in the office of DC (Handicrafts) there seems a ray of hope in this field.

4) Participation in Fairs and Exhibitions for Handicrafts

The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, offers various important schemes for the development of handicrafts. Under Marketing and Service Scheme, the artisans get opportunities to participate in the events such as Crafts Bazar, Gandhi Shilp Bazar, Exhibitions, National Handicraft Fairs & Buyers-Sellers meet, Workshop/Seminars, etc. at domestic as well as at international level. SARAS Mela at the national level is one of the very effective initiatives of the Ministry of Rural Development to provide a platform to the rural artisan to market their products through which they get an exposure to the market dynamics in a national forum.

Besides, Department of Cottage and Rural Industries implements various marketing assistance schemes at state level through Industrial Extension Cottage (Indext-C) and Gujarat State Handicraft & Hand-loom Development Corporation Ltd. (GSHHDC). The Corporation encourages sales promotion through exhibitions organized within and outside Gujarat to create awareness of the Gujarat handicrafts and to spread its reach to the elite clients of contemporary living. The products manufactured by the artisans are sold as well as live demonstrations are also organized to make visitors realize the value of such handicrafts.

Further, Gujarat Tourism department organizes various fairs and exhibitions for handicraft artisans such as Kutch Rannotsav, Tarnetar Fair, Bhavnath fair, Ravechi fair, Shamlaji fair, Vautha fair, etc. Here, handicraft artisans get opportunities of selling their products. Besides these all, private level fairs are also getting momentum now a days. But the reality is quite surprising, as the data collected from the research field produces very pessimistic results as follows.

Table- V Participation in Fairs and Exhibitions for Handicrafts

Particulars	Total	Percentage
YES	35	8.75%
NO	365	91.25%
Total	400	100.00%

(Source: Primary data collected by researcher)

It is shown that only 35 (8.75%) artisans have participated in fairs and exhibitions organized for promoting handicrafts; among them artisans of 'Other Handicrafts' categories are found the highest in number (14) followed by Weaving/Tangaliya artisans (8) whereas no artisan from Stone carving category has been found in this class and the number of artisans covered under all other craft categories is ranging between 1 to 4.

365 (91.25%) artisans out of total 400 respondents have never participated in any kind of fairs or exhibitions at all. Despite the efforts from government side, the result found from the research study area is quite dis-satisfactory indicating indifferent attitude of both the ends which requires awakening campaigns from government side and severe attention and consideration from artisan side.

Table-VI Frequency of Participation and Levels of Fairs/Exhibitions

S.No.	Variables	Particulars	No.	Percentage
1	Frequency of Participation	Up to 5 Times	16	45.71%
		6 to 15 Times	12	34.29%
		More than 15 Times	7	20.00%

2	Levels of Fairs/ Exhibitions	District Level Fair	34	97.14%
		State Level Fair	25	71.43%
		National Level Fair	13	37.14%
		Total:	35	100.00%
Note: Multiple answers were found.				

(Source: Primary data collected by researcher)

Table- VI illustrates that among 35 artisans who have ever participated in handicraft

fairs or exhibitions, 16 have participated for 5 times or less than that, while 12 have participated for 6 to 15 times and 7 have participated for more than 15 times in such events. It means that the experienced artisans are interested in exhibitions and fairs and keep themselves updated with the exhibition schedules from time to time.

34 artisans have participated in district level fairs; 25 artisans have experience of participation in state level fair while only 13 have participated in national level fairs of exhibitions. No artisan has been found during the study, who has ever visited abroad for such event. However one artisan has recently received an opportunity to participate in an international exhibition. So, he is planning to proceed further.

It has come to the notice during the discussion with the artisan mass that many of the artisans themselves do not participate in the fairs/exhibitions but send their products through some of the recognized artisans in their contact on mutual terms and conditions. Particularly in the case of artisans falling in to Stone carving category, there is no question to sell the products in fairs or exhibitions, as they are involved in service based work.

Many of the artisans told that the deposits and all other expenditure are not affordable for the artisans working on small scale, as they are not in the position to stock more. Additionally artisans also told that they do not get much sell during such exhibitions, but they get opportunities of making good contacts and earn fame and recognition. Hence, participation in such events is beyond the reach of small and tiny entrepreneurs.

5) Training to Artisans

Training and development programme not only helps an artisan to learn more skills only but for the overall development of an artisan as a successful artist. Today is the time of development offering a plenty of opportunities. But many versatile and talented artisans lag behind and fail to keep pace with today's world due to unawareness about various issues directly or indirectly influencing their career in handicrafts. In such a situation, training can become an effective source of strengthening and empowering the rural handicraft artisans to exhibit their talents as well as to earn a good amount of profit which is also importantly required for their sustainability.

Table- VII Training to Artisans

Particulars	Total	Percentage
Attended Training class	42	10.5%
Having Educational qualification in related field	12	3.0%
Interested in Training	375	93.75%

Note: percentage is based on 400 artisans. (Source: Primary data collected by researcher)

Only 42 (10.5%) artisans were found benefited by some training courses organized by either government or non-government efforts. Educational qualification also plays a negligible role in learning the handicrafts since only 3% (12) respondents fall in

this class. It reflects the inefficiency and lack of reach of formal education/training course in this area.

But majority of the artisans, i.e., 93.75% (375 out of 400) have been found interested in training if provided to them as handicraft promotion programme. They showed their interest in the training of new designs, new products, utilization of modern tools and techniques, marketing and selling techniques so that they can learn and earn more. Majority of artisans told that they are interested only if it improves their earning capacity and beneficial to them for uplifting their standard of living by providing regular employment.

Further, during the focus group discussion, many artisans complained that they had bitter experience of such training programmes (government or non-government). According to them they don't have trust and faith in training providing agencies or SHGs, as they run malpractices with corruptions and exploitation of rural poor illiterates. They further sighed that it is all about paper work only for utilizing allocated funds for this purpose, not resulting in to actual training programme bringing fruitful outcomes.

☞ **Conclusion:**

It is frequently said that "Indian handicrafts are famous world-wide and created global reach in the market." but the question arises is- "What about the artisans...creators...???". There are numerous government projects and programmes designed to upgrade the socio-economic condition by providing wide employment opportunities to artisans engaged in handicraft sector. But the reach, accessibility and implementation are always in question. The reality at ground level is quite shabby which opens up the loopholes from both the ends. The artisans seem quite dissatisfied towards the government programmes and policies in the research area where as the implementing agencies blames the beneficiaries with one or another reasons. This debate is endless unless proper feedback, monitoring and assessment system is put in actual practice.

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