
Branding tribal's handicrafts with reference to Bastar: Issues & Challenges

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Abstract:

Baster, socially and economically backward tribal district of Chhatisgarha has rich heritage of tribal arts and manufacturing skills of exquisite metal textile and wood crafts. The crafts developed over the centuries in the natural environment integrated with tribal life style.

They make utilitarian and ritualistic objects that are used during festivals and religious ceremonies.

Baster handicraft has been suffering from a number of constraints. Though most of them are developmental issues such as lack of infrastructure, transportation, logistics and electricity, market development of Baster handicraft needs branding. Otherwise such exquisite artifacts is not getting due recognition. This research the research aims at helping Bastar's tribal community's revitalize & promote their craft using new techniques to make and market their famous works of art. It could also act as a social intrusion in the Naxalite-affected

region. The idea is to bring this backward region on the handicrafts exports map and make it an engine for development, so that the benefit goes to the artisan's families directly instead of the middlemen. This paper after general overview of Baster, economic backwardness has emphasized the need of developing Baster artifact brand identity so that this age old art craft gets due recognition and market share.

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Introduction:

The glorious history of Indian Handicrafts comes from one of the oldest Indus valley civilizations of the world. The vast cultural and ethnic diversity has enabled a variety of motifs, techniques and crafts to flourish on this land. Indian handicraft is just another precious gem in the festooned crown of Indian culture and heritage. Be it intricately decorated metal craft or some exquisite paintings, Indian handicrafts have always an extra edge for their ethnic designs and flourishing textures. The various forms of art and crafts in India include Paintings, Sculptures, Pottery, Metal work, Textiles, Ivory work, Glass products, Leather works, Stone works, Wooden work, Cane work, Toys, and Terracotta and many more.

Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to make a report on Issue & Challenges of branding tribal's handicrafts'. The specific objectives are following;

- To explore the various issues & challenges involved in the branding tribal's handicraft of Bastar.
- To prepare suggestions for promoting the handicraft market in and around Bastar since this will help the society too.

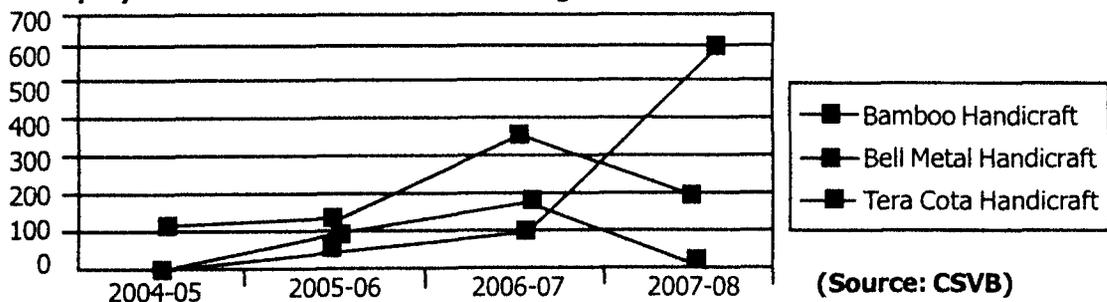
Area of Study

The area selected for this study is Bastar situated in the southern part of Chhattisgarh at a height of 2000 ft plateau from sea level

Significance of Study

As an emerging Handicraft destination in the state of chhattisgarh, Bastar has a great potential for further

Status of employment in handicrafts in following manner



(Source: CSVB)

development which require proper planning and management system. In this context, there is a need for studying the issues & challenges of branding of handicraft of Bastar, since this may help the entire society living in and around the Bastar.

Methodology

The role of Handicraft Industries in Rural India is very important and its contribution towards the rural The main products that are manufactured by the rural handicrafts industry of India are as follows -

- Wood wares
- Hand printed & textiles & scarves
- Embroidered & crocheted goods
- Imitation jewelry
- Miscellaneous handicrafts etc.

Presently, the global market of handicraft is valued at US\$ 400 billion and India's share in the global market stands at 2% only. However, the handicraft industries in rural India registered an annual growth rate of 15% consistently over the last decade and it is estimated to grow at the rate of 42% over the next five years annually.

Handicrafts Market in Chhattisgarh:

A state of India called Chhattisgarh's also called "Bowl of Rice" where tribal communities have been engaged in making terracotta objects and figures for hundreds of years. Though they make utilitarian and ritualistic objects that are used during festivals and religious ceremonies but getting no heed to it since longer time. After decades of neglect, traditional handicrafts such as those made of wood, terracotta, Cotton Fabrics, Wrought Iron and bell metal will now be globally marketed by the central government.

Contribution of Bastar Handicraft:

Famous for its exotic handicrafts, Bastar makes for an exciting holiday destination as well as an excellent place to shop for some exquisite Indian handicraft items. The tribal society of Bastar in the district forms 26% of the state population is skilled in making metal handicrafts and wood crafts. Bastar in particular is popular for its bell metal work or dhokara art. The artifacts are crafted using the vanishing wax technique. Some of the bell metal items that one can buy include elephants, horses and beautiful figurines of deities. Wood craft is another famous art of Bastar. These wooden crafts are made out of the finest teak wood and white wood. The woodcraft items include models, Idols, wall panels, furniture items etc. Wrought iron handicraft is also an important craft of tribals in Bastar. Wrought iron art is an indigenous Bastar tribal craft made by black smiths of the region. Craftsmen in Bastar sell their handicrafts to various co-operatives, which have their outlets in Parchan Pal, Kondagaon and Kumharpara villages. Close to Kondagaon is the Bastar Aadi Shilpa craft centre in Bheivapadar. Kumharpara, 74 km away, 1 km from NH43 on Narainpur Road has beautiful terracotta items at Saathi Samaj Sewa Sanstha where one can also see artisans at work. At Chilkuti, 20 km from Jagdalpur, one can pick up bell-metal craft items. Of a total of Rs. 12,000-crores non-carpet handicrafts exported from the country in 2008, the contribution of Bastar handicrafts was only Rs. 30-40 crores & likely to push handicraft sales from Bastar to Rs 300 crores in next five years (CII Report).

Tailbacks on branding Bastar Handicraft:

Although, the Handicraft Industries of Rural Indian Economy, are witnessing steady growth over the last five years but its growth is plagued by certain bottlenecks, like the following -

- The manufacturing process does not compliments with orders of such products
 - Use of primitive techniques
 - High manufacturing cost
 - Poor quality of products
 - Poor standard of raw materials
- Lack of standardized vendor and suppliers
 - Lack of standardized raw materials
 - Improper pricing of finished products
 - Lack of ability to produce in large scale and create economies of scale.
 - Inadequate material testing and performance measurement.
 - Inappropriate energy supplies to rural and sub-urban areas.
 - Absence of proper incentives and schemes by the Government of India
 - Unorganized investment patterns and lack of regular investors
 - Lack of proper marketing channels
 - Poor access to urban markets
 - Lack of branding handicrafts

Hassel Faced by Bastar Artesian

- **Naxalites:** . Due to naxalites the handicraft industries are not getting space to grow.. The former Chhattisgarh Governor E.S.L. Narsimhan has launched a tribal group called "Salwa Judum" to counter attack the naxalites. But still the govt. has not taken any concrete steps to resolve the problem. That's why the tribal people think that if we have to live here they should not fight with the naxalites.
- **Illiteracy:** It is the one of the biggest issue in Bastar's backwardness. The tribal people do not know about their right. So whatever they are getting they are happy with it. They can be molded in any direction by showing some fake dreams.
- **Geographical condition:** Bastar touches the boundaries of three states so it is easy for the naxalites to escape from there. It is the natural benefit which can be used for good purpose but due to politics and the naxalites its condition is getting worse.

- **Lack of Infrastructure:** The Bastar is also lacking in infrastructure due not getting proper care from the government. Numerous schemes have been launched by the government but they never reach to the tribal people. All schemes just vanished in file or paper & correspondingly money of that scheme goes to the pocket of politician or other government employee. Bastar is the gift given by the nature it can be used as the tourist spot but situation is quite terrible.

Lack of promotion of products: The rural people does not promote their product like others or they do not know how to promote their product. The handicraft industry of Bastar is also fond of skilled artisan.

Pragmatic Recommendations to Chhattisgarh Government:

- **Should improve electricity supply:**

We observed that weak electricity supply in Bastar region is the biggest obstacle for artisan in using electric machine & tools result in making uniform product hence loosing export orders.

- **Should develop infrastructure:**

The road conditions are very poor especially in interiors of Bastar & other tribal district result in taking more time to transport the goods. This may lead to unsatisfaction & some times loosing customer too. Government may under take in priority to enhance telecom & rail transport facilities.

- **Developing well-organized logistics:**

Due to poor infrastructure the transportation is huge problem small exporters need to share transporting space with others as they alone cannot effort the price. Due to fear of naxalites and lack transporting facilities of this the transporters charge high price then the market prices which results in high cost.

- **Providing Storage Facilities:**

Inland Container Depots (ICD) Container Freight Stations/Dry port facilities at the export centers should be provided so that there are no difficulties in cargo storage, customs clearance and container

availability as per the provision of ASIDE in FTP.

- **Availing Hospitality & Education facility:** Voyage of artisans have been noticed from these region to cities due to two reasons: First, serious law and order problems. Second lack of good schools, hospitals, even there is no good hotel where foreign buyers can stay during their purchases. So CHVB with help of government should take initiative to avail these facilities in tribal region of the state.

- **Setting up Export hub & Parks:**

There is provision in FTP to promote the exports and avail export oriented facilities and incentives via S.E.Z./E.P.Z to the residents of the states, so similar state government should take initiative to setup for an handicraft. The establishment of these zones should be expedited endowing with world class infrastructure facilities at one place and regular monitoring is possible. Also FTP promotes Export through Exhibitions/Export Promotion Tours/Export through showrooms abroad/ Duty Free Shops, through these zones.

- **Creation of conducive business environment:**

It has been observed that inspite of having artisans cards the artisans don't get support for loan facility. Lack of resources to send international couriers. Proper business environment is missing due to lack of infrastructure and law and order problems.

- **Increasing the training facilities:**

As there are around 25,000 artisans involved in producing handicrafts in the state, the training facility provided by CHVB is generally for new entrant. The training sessions needs to be increased in numbers of both sessions and participants.

- **Categorization of products:**

The metals used by artisans for creating metal crafts are generally purchased out of scrap. They need to pay the market price for these metals. CHVB should take steps to reduce the price of raw materials, by categorizing them under promoting handicrafts.

- **Lowering prices of raw materials:**

The teak wood required in wood craft is of higher cost in legal market, which raises the cost of products. So artisans opt wood from illegal market through which they procure wood at low cost. This helps them to make handicrafts in comparatively cheaper price but due to this they cannot export these crafts as documentation of purchased wood is absent. As a result they sell these crafts in local market at low cost.

- **Lessening in transaction cost:**

According to SIDBI it is estimated in their studies that the transaction cost for export from India is about 15% to 20% higher than the cost of transaction in our competing countries. Since the handicrafts industry is small and cottage based, it is not able to sustain with the high transaction cost.

- **Availing loan facilities:**

The small players have been found to remain deprived of loan facilities, as the banks provide facility of loan to large players for manufacturing export oriented goods. So, CHVB should provide loans to these players to have their own start-ups.

- **Reduction in Reimbursement time:**

The time taken for reimbursement by CHVB for market development assistance and travelling subsidy takes long time. So CHVB can make scheme, policies, procedure, incentives are very less or nil. With the help of Panchayat CSVH can have meeting time to time to make aware all artisan.

- **Setting up a Handicraft Marketing Society:**

For having knowledge in the field of exports, it is important to obtain comprehensive and up-to-date information about international markets. Illiteracy is the primary factor of lack of awareness. It would be difficult for each individual exporter to obtain this information. Hence a special marketing society should be provided for this purpose.

- **MDA for small scale industry :**

The state Govt. should initiate a similar Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme (similar under

export trading houses and star trading houses are assisted for the conduct of market surveys, product development and participation in international trade fairs) for small scale exporters on the lines of the Government of India scheme. Assistance will be provided for exporter's participation in fairs for exploring new markets. At present the Government of India has a Market Development Assistance (M.D.A.) scheme.

- **Reframing Policy timely:**

The board members who are into policy making should be regularly updated with trade policy of export / import of India and other countries to utilize best the opportunities for trade.

- **Arranging session from various Institute:**

The artisans and traders are not fully aware of various process involved in exporting the goods due to which they sell their crafts to the traders at low cost and trader earns profit by exporting them. They can be made ever of better export market with the help of educating session organised by the promotional institutes for such artisans sessions with help of institutes to knowledge how exports is beneficial for them. This will help them to cut off the middleman involved in the exports of their goods resulting is increase profits of these artisans.

- **Participation Frequency in trade fairs and exhibition should be more:**

CHVB provides assistant to artisan once in a year which should be increased. I increasing participation will increase. the export & will provide more exposure to them.

Branding perspective- Possibilities for branding Bastar handicraft

1. Identify products via Brand Recognition

A brand makes its visuals different from other product on the same line of the product and it can be done through logo, trade mark or packing design, copy right. The visual and verbal aspects of brand serve important functions of identification and differentiation. Symbols enhance brand recognition and brand recall, while visual images leave imprints in the visual memory of the prospects even at the pre-processing level. So

the Bastar handicraft needs to be put some kind of visuals in which they can differentiate their product from others.

2. Shopping efficiency is facilitated :

Search time- The Bastar people don't have visuals recognition for their handicraft although it satisfies the need of the customer but people are not able to recognize their products & place where it has been manufacturing and because of this they are loosing in the sales.

3. Association of quality level :

The problem with Bastar handicraft is about trademark. They don't have any trade mark which ultimately signifies the quality & standard of the product. Without standard it would be vary difficult for common man to judge the quality of the product. So govt. should work on it.

4. Perceived risk decrease :

All kind of products have some or the other risk associated with themselves here means in Bastar handicrafts also having risk with them. The main risk is that they are generally not getting money according to their effort which they have put for making handicraft and the only reason is absence of visual sign because people giving money on the basis of quality of product they are getting. For Bastar handicraft we don't have any quality measures. Another risk is associated with their product is imitation as they don't have any patent for which their products and their arts are generally copied.

5. Facilitates repeat purchasing :

The objective of making any product for an organisation is to satisfy the needs and wants of the customer so that the product can be sold in the market continuously. Similarly if the Bastar products have some visual recognition through trademark or logo then the customer will easily recognize it and if the product had satisfied the need of the customer then customer will purchase again and the handicraft maker can carry out their business as long as they can.

6. Some more points to ponder like:

i. Higher and more consistent quality

If they can prove their quality or they can set some standard for their quality it would be better for them

because on the basis of this they can produce same quality of product. Right now their product quality for one unit to another is widely different. Using standard tool & machine will help them to produce standardized product. For this govt. should give some subsidy or offer loan at nominal interest rate.

ii. Increases the rate of innovation

If they set the standard for their product quality and they can also raise the innovation in their product by raising the quality and features, they can target towards more customer.

iii. Increases shopping efficiency

If the people know what they are getting they are ready to expense more money. Generally in handicraft people don't know which type of quality product they are getting. Hence to make them aware we should work on the visuals as well as quality standards.

iv. Higher price

The marketer wants higher price for their offering and they can only take it when their brand are recognized by the major chunk of the people. That's why we are suggesting complete marketing of the Bastar handicraft.

Conclusion:

The above study proposes various points to government for giving a new verve to handicrafts of Chhattisgarh. It is really a sorry state of affairs that despite availability of skills, knowledge & raw material base to produce handicrafts & to develop new product lines, India still has a lot to do to explore. What surprises us most is that despite it being an industry that supports not less than 6.3 million people, the country's share in the world market is just 2% in comparison to our neighboring China which has a 30% share in the world.

We have reasons to believe that the foremost challenge faced by the handicraft organizations and artisans is the challenge of accessing markets. Market information is primary and market access is the pivotal element for a sustainable future. We need to also understand that handicrafts as an activity is too large and too diverse to fit into household attitude and planning. We need to think big. When we look at the Chinese handicrafts industry as a whole, we see that the success story lies in mechanization of the industry.

This has led to low priced and high volumes of products.

We strongly believe that if India also undertakes mechanization of its handicrafts industry, it can perhaps achieve a much larger share of the world market. We also need to educate ourselves on the markets both domestic and international. We have no doubts that the handicrafts sector can emerge as the prime exporter and foreign exchange earner. For this we need to grab the opportunities, we need to work towards self-dependence and development.

Above all that we need to return to the vision of Mahatma Gandhi for whom handicrafts meant linking economic empowerment to freedom and identity. These are qualities still essential for survival and well-being of not only the citizens but its economy as well.

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