

Promoting Arts and Crafts of the Country through Use of Indigenous Products

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Abstract

Recent years have seen a precipitous fall in the demand and market for India's traditional handicrafts, arts, and textiles. Genericide in the arts and crafts industry is harmful to indigenous and traditional handicraft enterprises because to the rising popularity of machine-made items via internet shopping and a lack of oversight for product quality. Indian artists and craftspeople face decreasing income and customer demand as a result of the country's poor performance in competitiveness criteria such basic infrastructure, intellectual property rights, education, and broadband adoption. This report analyzes problems encountered by indigenous art and craft vendors and suggests solutions to help the industry thrive. In addition to having a negative effect on the sector's economy, the report concludes that Genericide is also damaging the reputation of Indian Indigenous Arts and Crafts as a whole. As a means of combating "Genericide" and stemming the tide of escalating hyper-competition, the use of Geographical Indications has been recommended.

Keywords: Intellectual property rights, indigenous art, craft and handloom products, indigenous arts and crafts, Geographical indication

Introduction

The creative industry has been struggling long before the epidemic hit (India Today, 2016). The industry has been suffering from falling demand, excessive competition, a lack of available markets, and the exploitation of middlemen for over a decade. There has been a shortage of demand, funding, technical penetration, market intelligence, and the institutional structure of artisan groups. The poor ratings for broadband adoption (62) in the Technical Framework section make this quite obvious. India ranks #1 in Telecommunications Investments, but only 55th in Adaptive Attitudes, suggesting that the country's problem is one of adoption rather than coverage). When taken together, these variables create a situation in which it is almost impossible for owners of traditional arts and crafts businesses to compete with the marketing expenditures of even small firms with greater profit margins.

Indigenous arts and crafts serve a crucial role in promoting a region's history and customs via the dissemination of informal knowledge. The Indian handicrafts market has remained stagnant for some time (Chamikutty, 2013). Thin margins, inability to compete in market, exploitation by intermediaries, lack of infrastructure, and faulty execution of government plans and regulations have all been identified as major contributors to the collapse (Shah & Patel, 2017). The difficulties now faced by indigenous craftspeople may become considerably more severe.

To help goods with Geographical Indication stand out and earn consumers' confidence, a quality management system is proposed. When competing with mobile-first and cookie-cutter arts and crafts companies, this is frequently your only option for survival. That's not to suggest the government of India or other ecosystem participants haven't helped out. How will we deal with the falling demand for handmade goods, especially indigenous products? How will we deal with the competition arising from Genericide and better finished goods coming out of factories at breakneck pace and dirt cheap prices? What specific areas of competitive nature need to be improved to provide a process of assisting for the sector to be self sustaining? These are all questions that will hopefully be answered by this research.

Indigenous Markets of the Indigenous People

Craftspeople in the region still contribute significantly to the growth of the rural economy. Yet, many of the craftspeople, seeking better prospects and more exposure, go to the cities (Papola, 1984). There has not been a lot of research done on the difficulties experienced by the migrating craftspeople.

Most Indian craftsmen may avoid intermediaries by selling directly to their consumers, leading many to relocate to metropolitan regions where the cost of living and retail space can be prohibitive.

This is one of the main reasons why the Indian arts and crafts sector has been declining in recent decades. Without proper quality certificates, it is hard to know whether or not an artisan's goods are fit for export, which might reduce profits.

State governments have traditionally led marketing efforts for arts and crafts, particularly indigenous items, in an attempt to boost tourism in their own states, while the federal government has traditionally led such activities in an effort to boost exports (Bharati, 2005). Yet, it has become more difficult for home-based businesses to generate sufficient profits to support the workers engaged due to rising prices and inflation (Setty, 1963). There has also been a dearth of transformational revolutions like the nineteenth-century Green Revolution.

But, the new markets are relentless and need cutting-edge brand and marketing strategies to succeed in. Historically, craftsmen were able to establish good impressions by using their creative reputation. The loss of indigenous identity might result from a lack of knowledge about the creative traditions and the goods. The loss of cultural and emotional value that results when consumers mistake handicrafts for machine-made items is a major factor in the failure to both maintain and profit on the genuine potential of art (Nair, 2012).

'Made in India' Branding

The low-profile business has not gotten enough attention to realize its potential, despite the fact that its 3000 craft forms might have become the face of significant government programmes like the 'Made in India' campaign. Nevertheless, the government's efforts have not been sufficient to support or preserve the industry (Shah & Patel, 2017). Indigenous art is losing ground in urban art marketplaces to knockoffs that are more affordable, of higher quality, and more expertly made because of a lack of affirmative action.

An award-winning Madhubhani artist said that the uniqueness of her work was attracting more and more consumers. One of the unique qualities of Madhubhani art is that it is difficult to copy.

Individuals who are well-versed in this art form may quickly spot a copy. Some of the tourists who purchase Madhubani paintings amaze me with their knowledge, she said. One person who specialized in camel bone art disagreed, saying that his family had been utilizing the practice for generations to earn a livelihood by creating and selling camel bone art. He didn't envision a future for himself in the field and had no intention of passing on his knowledge to future generations.

While Chanderi originated in Madhya Pradesh and is the result of painstaking effort, a craftsman who specialized in creating Chanderi handloom items found that consumers had trouble accepting the high price tag and accepting that the fabric was really original. He addressed his worries by explaining that chanderi knitting is a classic method in which the whole thing is constructed with a single thread. It requires a significant time commitment and training over a period of years. How can we provide for our family if we can't even earn a few thousand rupees (around \$100) every piece? When asked how he planned to address the issue, he said, "If my items could be clearly marked as authentic Chanderi products, I may be able to charge a little bit more.

A Jodhpuri designer artisan remarked, "I can earn more sales if my items have a stamp or a label recognizing it as an authentic Jodhpuri product. Because mass-produced reproductions can be offered at a lower price, our industry is no longer viable, despite the fact that our products are of higher quality. One camel bone craftsman said, "My family has been in this profession for many decades now, and the expertise is transmitted from one generation to the next. We've made it thus far thanks to the steady income from our business, but the last five or six years have been tough. We are slowly but surely closing down for good because of the plastic and silicone items offered under the guise of camel bone art," he stated.

Initializing of Innovations in the Crafts

The low levels of 'Adaptive Attitudes,' 'Wireless Broadband,' 'Online Retailing,' 'Smartphone Possession,' and 'IT Integration' that plague India's digital economy nearly prevented these employees from becoming digital and keeping their firms afloat. Unless there are major, noticeable improvements made in the industry, it will be difficult to entice many former artisans and craftsmen back to their previous professions. The lack of business and marketing knowledge has also been a problem for India's craftspeople. Brick-and-mortar shops and pop-up displays at festivals and trade shows have long been mainstays of the arts and crafts industry. Several local companies failed during the pandemic due to a lack of omnichannel shopping and the inability to convert to online media, and a large number of artists and crafters abandoned their trade in favor of more secure employment.

Emerging Challenges

Generic competition is now the most pressing issue in the creative industry, and it's just getting worse. In keeping with India's ranking of 44 out of 64 nations in 'Intellectual Property Rights' in terms of competitiveness, this is the case. As a consequence, the market for arts and crafts has become very competitive, with many low-quality imitations and copies being marketed at low costs. Generic items masquerading as indigenous products have been driven by power looms and other modern gear, undercutting the market for genuine indigenous products and forcing their sellers to lower their prices to compete. Profit margins need to be sufficient to support the craftsmen and the merchants because of the time-consuming nature of making handicrafts and handlooms.

Customers have begun to question the quality and originality of items sold in brick-and-mortar stores as a result of the trust gap. The proliferation of e-commerce hasn't helped matters, as many buyers have reported being displeased with the quality of goods they've purchased from online retailers.

Quality Assurance for Handmade Crafts

A certification of minimum acceptable quality would solve the problem of low export quality. It is possible to create and disseminate nationwide standards for minimum quality. Certification would be handled by a quality inspector who might be hired at the regional level. Not only would this guarantee the highest quality, but it will also help build confidence in traditional indigenous handicrafts throughout time.

The public's view of indigenous items has been damaged by issues like generational loss and low-quality handiwork; quality control is an important first step in reversing this trend. Unfortunately, this action requires additional policy changes to be implemented simultaneously.

Policy Reforms for Handicrafts

To ensure the long-term viability of the industry, widespread policy changes are necessary. Artisans will be able to maintain making at least enough money to feed their family if they are given financial aid during tough times like the recent years of the epidemic. The country's farmers benefited from a persistent effort, like the Green Revolution, and so did the arts and crafts industry.

A national government effort, such as "Made in India," might serve as a public face for indigenous art and craft, providing much-needed exposure for the industry.

Policy Implications and Expected Results

The proposed solutions are expected to address the various challenges faced by the artisans in India through:

- a) Improved demand: Demand for locally produced goods may be boosted via effective branding strategies, as well as through quality enhancements and strategic marketing. The exclusivity that GI may provide items makes them more appealing, particularly to customers in metropolitan areas.
- b) Improved sales: The craftsmen may see an increase in sales as a result of better demand and marketing, as well as better production thanks to the use of technology. Craftspeople now have several government-supported channels through which to connect with buyers.
- c) Improved margins: Profit margins may be increased significantly via the use of technology to reduce product costs, and through better pricing as a result of branding and quality efforts. This will ensure the transaction is profitable and provide extra capital for development.
- d) Improved trust: Consumers will have more faith in a product with a GI label or quality seal. The merchants may gain customers' trust by proving that their wares are authentic regional specialties and of high quality.
- e) Financial security: A feeling of safety for the craftsmen may be achieved by the proper application of national supporting policies.

India's artisan market is as volatile as it is significant. There has been a paucity of new developments, improvements, governmental interventions, and investments in the industry, despite the fact that it is the second largest employer in India.

Artisans and crafters trying to market indigenous items encounter a wide range of obstacles that have slowed the industry for decades. As a system that can identify indigenous items may aid in separating them from generic or mass-produced products, GI seems to be the appropriate solution for present and upcoming difficulties that affect the individuals working in the industry.

This may be useful in developing a reputation for such brands, which in turn can boost sales and profit margins. India as a whole has to boost its digital competitiveness in the long term so that natural disasters like the recent epidemic won't devastate too many people.

Conclusion

Reforms at the policy level and increased training for personnel are both necessary for the industry to survive and grow in today's global economy.

The absence of awareness campaigns for indigenous art has only made matters worse. These arts, which are inextricably linked to the tourist industry, enjoy widespread acclaim among foreign visitors but are steadily losing their local fan base.

To kick off the resurgence of the arts and crafts industry in India, information and promotional initiatives, like those used to promote tourism in different states, are urgently needed. Although the industry's deep roots in the country's heritage and culture, it risks being watered down as skilled workers seek more stable employment elsewhere if its problems aren't addressed.

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