

Marketing problems and prospects of handloom and handicrafts industry in B.T.A.D.

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Abstract:

This paper is a study to find out the marketing problems and prospects of the handlooms and handicrafts industry in B.T.A.D area. The sample size of the study comprised of 200 respondents who are the producers and retailers of the handloom and handicrafts products. The findings of the study show the different marketing problems faced by the producers and retailers in the area. In these efforts, we have been supported by weavers, traders, retailers, customers of handlooms, Experts and cooperative society elected personnel as well as officials of government in getting required information.

Introduction:

Handloom and handicrafts industry is a traditional and also a cottage industry in India. It provides employment to the large section of poor people. However, the role and significance of the industry to the national development is declining. In fact, the industry is facing lot of problems such as men, material, methods, machines, money, marketing and management. In this study, the problems faced by the industry and the solutions to solve the problems are discussed.

The Emergence of Spinning and Weaving started with the rearing of eri and muga as another tradition of economic activity of the Boros. The Boros produced muga and eri cloths for their own use as well as for business purpose. But now-a days they have almost given up rearing muga or silk worms, as it is more laborious than the market place. At present they only produce eri cloths, which can be reared indoor. Spinning and weaving is women activity among the Boros. The Boro women are expert weavers. The Boro women weaves on the frame loom and produce their own requirement of fabrics in their spare time. These hand woven fabrics are used by women, men and children in religious occasion or festivals and can also be used as a bed-sheet, furnished cover etc. They can depict different floral and geometrical design on the fabrics. The Boro women still wear the hand woven traditional Dokhana and sadri of different colour and design. Nowadays the governments have various schemes to provide free grants, loans to tribal weaver in cash or kinds, to open weaving

center or industry, through, the Tribal Development Corporation, District Rural Development Agency, Bank etc. Taking such assistance from the government some Boro women have opened weaving industry in various places of the district and supply their product to the markets. Thus, quite a few Boro women have become economically independent in the present Boro society.

Methodology:

To accomplish the aims of the study undertaken and to arrive at a desirable conclusion, the method of survey and observation has been adopted. Besides, a pre-designed questionnaire has been distributed to the respondents who are the producers, retailers and also the consumers of the handloom and handicrafts products for collection, sampling and analysis of data.

Analysis:

Existing Handloom Unit Registered under different Institutions at Kokrajhar:

1. Registered under Small Scale Industry/District Industry & Commercial Centre	23 Nos
2. Registered under Directorate of Handloom, BTC	114 Nos.
3. Registered under District Rural Development Agency	131 Nos.
4. Registered under the Titaguri Block Handloom Unit	79 Nos.
5. Registered under the Dotma Block Handloom Unit	81 Nos.
6. Registered under the Kachugaon Block Handloom Unit	69 Nos.
7. Registered under the Hatidura Block Handloom Unit	69 Nos.
8. Registered under the Co-operative Society Handloom Unit	23 Nos.
9. Non-Register Individual Weaving Unit Kokrajhar	55 Nos.

Total	= 644 Nos.

Kokrajhar existing handloom random mapping/survey:

Name of the Place	Number of Looms	
TITAGURI BLOCK		
Balajan	95	
Bashbari-II	112	
Holtugaon	93	
Salakati	123	
Choraikhola	124	
Bhatarmari	128	
Tengapara	102	
Baganshali	119	
Choto Gendrabili	105	
DOTMA BLOCK		
Serfanguri	76	
Dotma	84	
Fakiragram	59	
Gossainichina	33	
Shaktiashram	41	
KOCHUGAON BLOCK		
Kochugaon	03	
Gambaribil	02	
Bajugaon	06	
Goladangi	05	
Kumalsingh	03	
Shialmari	05	
GOSSAIGAON S.D BLOCK		
Bhowraguri	36	
Bhumka	41	
W/Gossaigaon	38	
Tulsibil	39	
E/Gossaigaon	35	

Total =1507

Problems in Marketing of Handloom Products:

After analyzing the customers' survey and response from retailers, traders, wholesalers and discussion with the weavers, traders, the problems in the field of marketing of handloom products, which are mostly existing because of current system's drawbacks. With these there are few challenges for handloom because of changing market environment

like globalization, industrialization/ mechanization etc. Though, because of characteristics of high adaptability that is in-built in handloom sector, changing market scenario provides lot of new opportunities for sector, but it also raises the challenges in front of sectors growth. Problems of the handloom sector are of various types specifically in area of marketing only, which requires timely intervention from various partners for betterment of sector's future in ever-changing market conditions.

➤ **Lack of Accessibility of market information:**

There is great potential for handloom products in domestic market as well as for export. But the availability of organized information, formal documentation of market change, timely market research and customer surveys for market feed-back are still not common practices for the handloom sector. Unavailability of this information creates barriers at market end in terms of unsatisfied customers, unavailability of required products etc. but at the production end also, where new product development, new design and colour and innovation is required, lack of customer feedback and absences of customer preference hamper the weavers creativity. Long existing information channel also create roadblocks in feedback accessibility for the weavers from market.

➤ **Lack of awareness among the customer about product features:**

Maximum respondents in their feedback for customer survey replied that they go for handloom because of comfort that it gives to the body and its touch and feeling. But there are long lists of benefits a consumer can get by using the handloom products as various traders and retailers explained. The consumers are not fully aware of the qualities of handloom and are not able to distinguish the handloom product from general products on above given criteria. There is need to generate awareness in customer's mind about all the advantages that can be got from handloom uses.

➤ **Promotion and Advertising of Handloom:**

Handloom sector is way behind in area of promotion and advertising of its products comparison to other competing textile sectors like mills and knitted wear. General practice that is followed for promotion is through exhibitions and fairs, the impact of these events remain for very less time on customer's mind and again they start purchasing the other competing products, which are reminded them very frequently. There is another complain that availability of handloom products is at very less outlets that restricts the customer from

purchasing the handloom in their vicinity and comfortably. For these purpose sector has to emphasise on the regular and continuous promotional and advertising campaign with focus on its effectiveness in comparison with other competing products as well as duration of impact and persistence.

➤ **Quality Control:**

Handloom is known for the finest quality of cloth that can be produced anywhere and this is the property, which also used as Unique Selling Proposition (USP) in various cases by handloom sector like carpet and fine designs. But the persistence in product quality and standardization of quality for different handloom products are absent. There should be some procedure in place for checking the minimum quality standards of the products **so that** customer can be assured about this. Some specific quality concerns that expressed by the customers are durability of colour, shrinking of the cloth and durability of products etc. Focused research on these issues can be taken up for improving the quality of products wherever the customers feel some quality related issues.

➤ **Lack of Logistics Management:**

The extra large supply chain is one case which reduces the efficiency of product supply and increases the cost, but other than this also there are various factors which reduce the efficiency of logistic management. Handloom logistic is not managed in scientific way where calculation of stock keeping period and cost incurred because of maintaining huge stock; money blocked for this purpose and interest burden on overall sector should be done. Orders for raw yarn are placed on past experience instead of using proper forecasting techniques and tool for optimizing the resources.

Raw Material Supply:

Ensuring adequate supply for the handloom sector is prime responsibility of National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC). NHDC supply the yarn to the weavers through co-operatives at subsidized rates. But the co-operative coverage is limited to only 30 percent of the total weavers that makes the yarn supply system through co-operative very less relevant for the whole handloom sector where maximum weavers are out of this fold. Subsidies and other beneficial schemes from state and central governments are also implemented through co-operatives only and that make maximum weavers away from getting these benefit.

- **Increasing Competition:**

Increasing competition in market place from various players is big challenge for handloom sector. This competition is becoming furious for both domestic as well for export market. This competition can be categorized into two, one which handloom sector is facing because of aggressive power loom and hosiery wear sector and second from international handloom products.

Conclusions and recommendations:

- The logistics management, innovative promotional and advertising campaign, continuous feedback from customers, availability, accessibility and visibility of the product are factors from marketing point of view. Pricing strategy must be formulated on the basis of the market demand, the segment that is targeted, cost of the production, value added to the product and brand image of the product.
- Establishment of Quality and Tradition in customer's mind, generating loyalty through long-term customer relationship and high quality service to increase in sale's volume of Handloom Products are required.
- To bring superior quality in handloom products the pre and post loom process development should take place. Innovative and faster weaving processes and techniques to increase efficiency of weavers as well as loom will make handloom more competitive and profitable.
- To identify high growth areas, new product categories and potential marketing avenues on continuous basis will direct the handloom sector towards profitable business model by setting up the tailoring units and readymade garment making units in the handloom cluster to produce readymade handloom garments. Finding opportunities to export customized products according to the external market needs.
- To keep logistic cost and cost of raw material low, decentralized spinning mills can be established in the handloom cluster level.
- To maximize the productivity and quality the weavers, they should be given incentives for their skills and efforts they put in. Incentives motivate any worker to give his best.
- Traders should change their attitude towards weavers and market. They should not become obstacles between market and weaver. They should maintain conducive

relations with weavers in promoting their products and they should help in establishing proper market information channel, which is of free flow in nature.

- Government should encourage new investments and entrepreneurs in handloom sector by providing better sops like any other new economy industry. The sops can be loans with low interests, cluster development, training and information. Priority can be given to the members of the weaver's families.
- Last but not least, training and development to enhance the skills of weavers in manufacturing and marketing aspects in changing business environment. Effective implementation of various policies and programs could be successful when there would be proper integration, cooperation and coordination from all government agencies, cooperative societies, NGOs, weavers, traders and retailers of handloom products.

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