



Case study

Critical evaluation of Government policies in Handicraft sector in India with special reference to Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

The handicraft sector is known as the second largest rural employment sector after agriculture in India. The production of crafts is usually done in the unorganized sector. There was a lack of assessment of the potential of the handicraft industry, which can play a major role in the economy. Artisans are part of the low wages, job inconsistencies, technological knowledge and design lack. Even though, several government and non-governmental programs are in operation, either ineffective or not reaching the majority of the craftsmen. In the present study, the researcher has examined the schemes implemented by the Government of India in the handicraft sector and analyze the growth trend of various handicraft schemes under 12th five-year plan implemented by the government in Jammu and Kashmir. The present study is useful for policymakers to make proper schemes to develop the craft industry and artisans and change the current schemes.

Keywords: Handicraft sector; 12th five-year plan; Government Policies; Trend.

Introduction

Handicrafts are an important part of our economy's unorganized sector. As we know, the majority of Indians live in rural regions, and the majority of craftsmen lives and does their work in the countryside. The value of the handicraft sector is growing in most of the workforce, who work as part-time employees. Handicrafts have a huge potential that offers skilled and non-skilled employees work opportunities. In terms of cultural heritage and ethnic cultures, India is a rich nation and also the center of handicraft. After agriculture, the handicraft sector constitutes the largest single source of livelihood and forms a significant part of the export industry and plays an essential part in economic growth.

When we imagine this, the words "Handicraft" itself create a beautiful picture in our minds. Handicrafts can be described as items manufactured fully or using tools, but mechanical tools can be employed so long as the artisan's direct manual contribution remains the most important component of the finished product¹. The handicraft items are the representative of culture, social symbols and religious practices that are predominantly carried out in the unorganized/informal households. According to the "Office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts", Handicrafts are manual worked items with minimum, or no input from machines, a significant level of skill or knowledge, an integral element of tradition and survival history. However, the working definition of handicrafts prescribed, by the Task Force on Handicrafts in 1989, defines it as 'Handicraft items are made by hand, often with the use of

simple tools, and are generally artistic and or traditional in nature. They include objects of utility and objects of decoration². The Handicraft sector has been described by the International Labor Organization (ILO) as a part of the economic sector characterized by certain features like reliance on locally available resources and skills, family-owned, small-scale operations, labor-intensive, traditional technology-based, skills generally acquired outside the formal school system, unregulated and competitive markets³. The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India's 2017-18 Annual report suggests that 68.86 lakhs are worked in the handicraft industry. Of whom 30.25 lakhs are men and 38.61 lakhs are women. In India, production is Rs. 46930 crores, and export Rs. 34394.30 crores in 2016-17⁴.

Emphasizing upon the importance of arts and crafts, Abraham wrote that, 'the world of art and craft is as valuable as the world of science, philosophy or ethics. Like art, crafts reflect the state of human society through the individual. Craft treasures like arts; give us a glimpse into the core and kernel of the collective mind and societies through the mirror of the individual mind that created them'⁵. Upadhyay in his book "Handicrafts of India" argued that 'to write about Indian handicrafts is almost like writing about the country itself. So vast, complex and colorful, and yet with a simplicity and charm, difficult to attain under comparable conditions'⁶. The handicrafts are a part of our culture and play a vital role in bringing the material culture uniqueness of our culture to others. The handicraft sector has enriched Indian heritage while combining beauty with the utility of the crafts⁷.

The handicraft industry is extremely potential-oriented because it retains the interests of millions of craftspeople, not just those present but also new entrants in the handicraft industry⁸. The craft sector has increased national income and become a major export resource and has significantly grown as a source of employment⁹.

Handicraft Sector in Jammu and Kashmir

The handicraft activities of Kashmir are known worldwide for its design, quality and art. It is an extremely labour-intensive industry, requires less capital and is environmentally friendly. Embroidery, crewels, namda, shawls, woodwork, paper mache, carpets etc. are the leading crafts in the manufacture and export of the state¹⁰. The traditional handicraft goods are famous throughout the world and many Kashmiri people, directly or indirectly are related to these handicraft occupations for their livelihood. The climate of the valley is vital as in winters most people find these traditional handicraft occupations quite suitable to generate their income.

The handicraft occupations act as both primary and secondary source of income for the Kashmiri people. These crafts are a part of our culture and play a significant in bringing the material wealth of our culture to others. As a cultural heritage, these occupations are essential. The handicrafts sector offers jobs to nearly about 3.50 lakh persons. The total production of handicraft goods in Jammu and Kashmir in 2012-2013 is 1843.2 (Rs in crore), in 2013-2014 is 2017.82, in 2014-2015 is 2175.00 and in 2015 -2016 is 2234.15. The total export of handicrafts in Jammu and Kashmir is 1695.65 in 2013-2014, in 2014-2015 are 1287.04 and in 2015 -2016 are 1059.4¹¹.

Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the schemes implemented by the Government of India in the handicraft sector. ii. To analyze the growth trend of various handicraft schemes under 12th five-year plan implemented by the government in Jammu and Kashmir.

Methodology

The trend evaluation of handicrafts scheme is being analyzed using secondary data. For the purpose of the study secondary data of handicrafts scheme were collected from the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Report of Planning Commission and Digest of Statistics Jammu and Kashmir.

Introduction Schemes for the Handicraft Sector under 12th Five-Year Plan

The Central and State Governments identified that handicrafts are a vital financial activity, with their labor-intensive character and broad dispersal across the nation, constitute a crucial economic activity. 'All India Handicraft Board' in 1952 which come under the control of Ministry of Textiles, Government of

India. *Indian Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd* (IHDC) established in 1958 which was later retitled as 'The Handicrafts and Handlooms Exports Corporation of India Limited' (HHEC) in 1962. In the early 1970's Government focused on preserving craftsmanship, upgrading skills and the welfare of artisans, but the Government changed its focus to improve export market potential in 1980's and 1990's. In order to take suitable approaches to encourage the export of handicrafts, the 'Carpet Export Promotion Council' and the 'Export Promotion Council of Handicrafts' were established in 1984 and 1986 respectively. Special focus is given to ensure that a sufficient number of craftsmen get benefit from all development plans. The Twelfth Five Year Plan aimed to improve the design and productivity of Indian craft industries in the manufacturing services market. Initiatives such as training and seminars for design development have been endorsed. In the previous years, too, many of these initiatives were organized. However, previously designed products/designs for the end product were not used effectively.

The office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts is the main agency implementing all Central Governments' handicraft schemes. It assists the Government in formulating and implementing policies for the promotion and development of handicrafts. It identifies new/lesser known or weakening handicrafts and issues related to artisans, offers marketing, economic and technological assistance to craftsmen to allow them to be empowered by promoting them with the help of their regional offices and field units through various development schemes. Development Commissioner of Handicrafts has launched the various schemes during the 12th five-year plan under the one umbrella scheme-National Handicraft Development Programme to highlight a holistic approach to the development of handicraft sector. The 12th five-year plan seeks to create a competitive global environment that provides sustainable livelihoods for craftsmen to achieve balanced socio-economic progress and inclusive growth. In accordance with its 12th five-year plan, the office of the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts has adopted the following initiatives.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY): The key goals of this scheme are the sustainable development of craftsmanship through the involvement and empowerment of craftspeople, including women. The main aspects of this scheme are; i. Mobilization of craftsmen into self-help groups (SHGs), ii. Full Support for Growth.

Design and Technology Up-Gradation: The aim of the scheme is to provide financial support for the central government-sponsored institutions, improve skills through training, recording, protection and revival of rare and deteriorating crafts, provide financial help for state-built institutions, including design centres, design banks and museums.

Table-1: Funds released in J and K for the production and promotion of the Handicraft Sector under Handicraft Schemes 2015-2016 (In Lakhs)¹². Welfare Scheme state-wise funds not released.

State	Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana	Design and Technology Upgradation	Research and Development	Human Resource Development	Marketing support and Services	Comprehensive Welfare
J&K	56.84	19.05	17.99	89.80	9.00	-
India	1883.04	1687.16	602.24	1948.10	2638.85	*244.93

Table-2: Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY) and Artisans Benefited in Jammu and Kashmir¹².

State	Artisans Covered under AHVY			
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
J&K	14688	4900	-	410
India	90547	88996	-	13080

Table-3: Design and Technology Upgradation Scheme (DTUS) and Artisans Benefited in Jammu and Kashmir¹².

State	Artisans Covered under DTUS			
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
J&K	300	310	60	-
India	13040	9080	11200	4520

Table-4: Human Resource Development Scheme (HRDS) and Artisans Benefited in Jammu and Kashmir¹².

State	Number of Artisans Benefited Under HRDS			
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
J&K	360	110	-	200
India	11090	8650	9895	8940

The following components of this scheme are: i. Workshop design and development of technology and integrated project design and development of technology, ii. Support for exporter and manufacturer for the design prototype. iii. Current market intelligence by design, trend and technological colour forecasting. iv. Financial help to the supply of instruments, protective devices, looms, etc. v. Award for excellent contribution in the crafts sector: Shilp Guru Award, National Award and National Certificate of Merit and Product Innovation award.

Human Resource Development Scheme: The Human Resource Development programme aims to provide a strong manufacturing base, high quality product and the required methods, processes and creative designs for the professional and

skilled work force in the handicraft industry to meet consumer needs. There is also a provision for the imparting the soft skill that craftsmen think is important to enable them to successfully conduct their own business.

The principal components of the scheme are: i. Training through existing institutions to develop and impart skills in various crafts. ii. Trainings in hard and soft skills for workers to fill the void. iii. Guru Shishya Parampara training aims to transition or transfer traditional skills from master craftsmen to the new generation. iv. Training trainers in the fields of design technologies and manufacturing processes with the latest innovations. v. The final year / graduate / postgraduate student design mentorship and apprenticeship program from recognized institutions.

Marketing Support and Service Scheme (MSSS): The Marketing Support and Service Scheme (MSSS) scheme aims to increase the access of artisans to various markets through proper channels and also to create awareness among consumers and the public at large about handicrafts both in domestic and international markets. The following interventions will be provided in the marketing support scheme:

Domestic Marketing Events: To promote market handicrafts financial assistance will be provided to different eligible organizations to organize Gandhi Shilp Bazaars (GSB)/ Craft Bazars, exhibitions, Urban Hats, Emporia and organizing the workshop.

National Handicraft Fair: The goal of this programme is to organize a large-scale exclusive handicraft fair in India to increase exposure of domestic products. The programme, in quality, design and variety, will highlight the best quality of Indian handicrafts products.

International marketing events: Financial assistance to eligible organizations for participation in international fairs, roadshows, reverse buyer-sellers, market surveys abroad, cultural exchange programs. An international craft exhibition programme for artisans/master craftsmen/designers/technologists abroad on the subject of designs, product innovations, techniques, processing, finishing etc.

Marketing workshops: National / state / local marketing workshops will be held to address different problems facing craftspeople and skills in related fields such as designers, technologists, exporters, purchasers and financial bodies, etc. Workshops, seminars and symposiums held abroad to raise

awareness amongst international designers, consumers, opinion makers and the general public and also to interact with Govt. Official, business representatives and buyers for improving goods, designs and strategies.

Growth trend analysis of handicraft schemes in 12th five-year plan in Jammu and Kashmir

The Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana is showing a better growth trend in Jammu and Kashmir except 2015-2016, where it shows negative growth. The Design and Technology Upgradation also shows a good growth rate in all years except in 2014-2015. The Human Resource Development Scheme shows a poor growth rate in all years. While the Marketing Support and service Scheme show a better growth rate in all years except 2013-2014 (Table-6). The Performance of the Jammu and Kashmir handicrafts scheme in the year 2012-2013 is showing a better growth trend in all the schemes (Figure-1).

Growth Trend Analysis of Handicraft Schemes in the 12th Five Year Plan in India

In India, only the Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana and Marketing Support Service Scheme show a better growth rate in 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 respectively. While other schemes show a negative growth rate in all years of the 12th five-year plan (Table-7). When comparing the growth trend of schemes throughout the country with Jammu and Kashmir only Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana and Market Support and Service Scheme shows somehow better trend while rest of schemes in all years at both levels shows poor performance.

Table-5: Marketing Support and Service Scheme (MSS) and Artisan Benefited in Jammu and Kashmir¹².

State	Number Artisans Benefited under MSS			
	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
J&K	632	473	650	-
India	38862	39653	24536	14357

Table-6: Growth trend analysis of Handicraft Schemes in 12th five-year Plan in Jammu and Kashmir¹².

Schemes (J&K)	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana	2800	14688	4900	-	410
	-	(425%)	(75%)	(0%)	(-85%)
Design and Technology Upgradation Scheme	280	300	310	60	-
	-	(7%)	(11%)	(-79%)	(0%)
Human Resource Development Scheme	500	360	110	-	200
	-	(-28%)	(-78%)	(0%)	(-60%)
Marketing Support and Service Scheme	480	632	473	650	-
	-	(32%)	(-1%)	(35%)	(0%)

Note: Taking 2011-2012 as the base year. Growth rate= Current year-base year/ base year* 100.

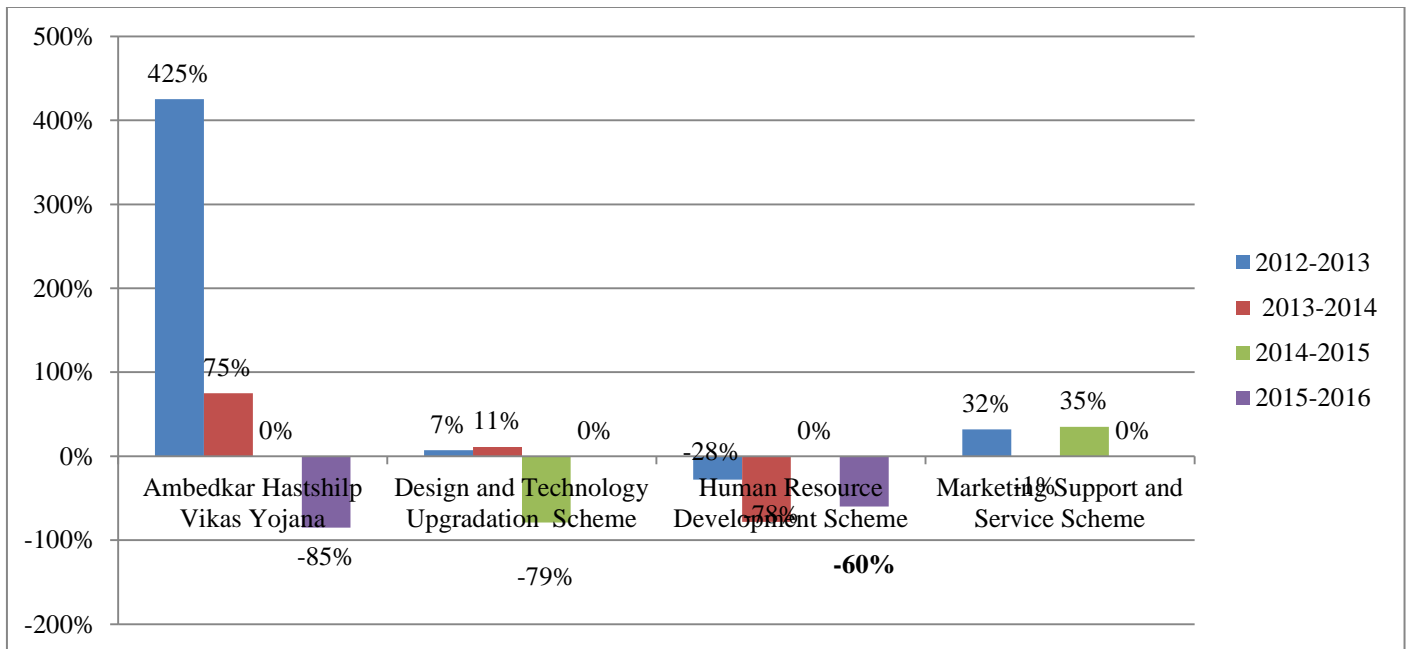


Figure-1: Trend Analysis of Handicraft Schemes in Jammu and Kashmir.

Table-7: Growth trend analysis of Handicraft Schemes in 12th five-year Plan in India¹².

Schemes (India)	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana	72741	90547	88996	-	13080
	-	(24%)	(22%)	(0%)	(-82%)
Design and Technology Upgradation Scheme	13250	13040	9080	11200	4520
	-	(-2%)	(-31%)	(-15%)	(-66%)
Human Resource Development Scheme	19180	11090	8650	9895	8940
	-	(-42%)	(-55%)	(-48%)	(-53%)
Marketing Support and Service Scheme	34677	38862	39653	24536	14357
	-	(12%)	(14%)	(-29%)	(-59%)

Note: Taking 2011-2012 as base year. Growth rate= Current year-base year/ base year* 100.

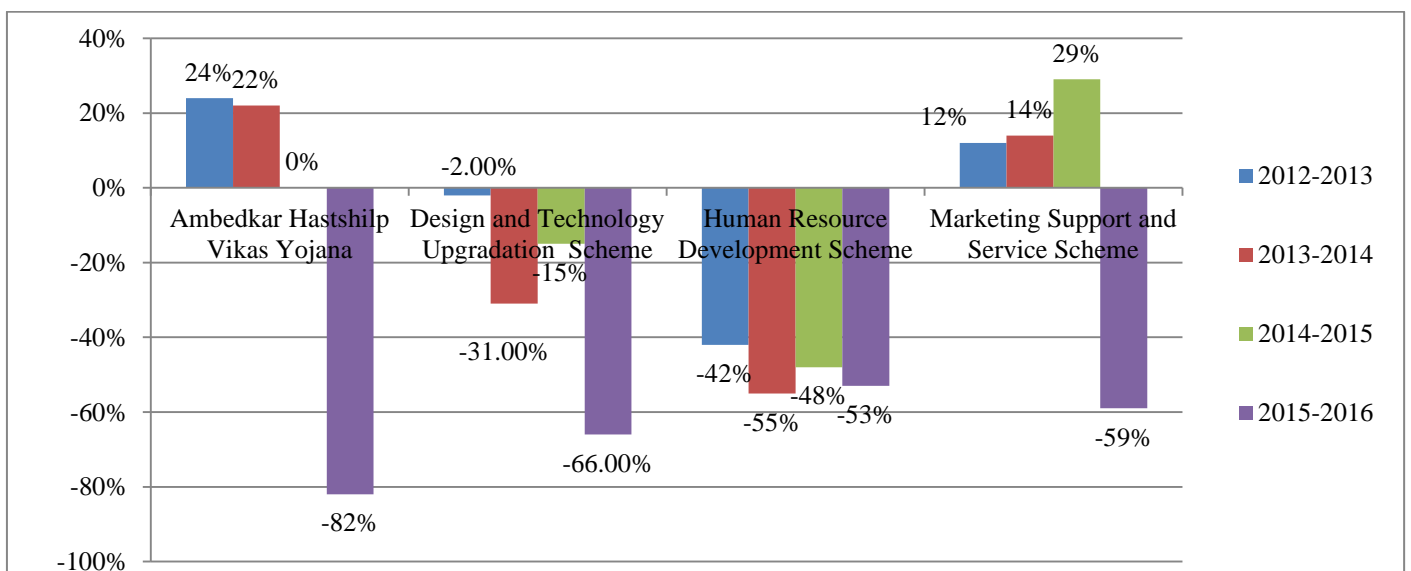


Figure-2: Trend Analysis of Handicraft Schemes in India.

The year 2012-2013 has been the best period for all the schemes in Jammu and Kashmir. Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana and Market Support and Service Scheme show a better trend in both at the country level as well as in Jammu and Kashmir while the rest of schemes show poor performance.

Conclusion

In India and also in many other parts of the world, handicrafts sector is identified as the second largest sector of rural livelihoods after agriculture. The potential of the Handicraft industry has been neglected as this sector can contribute a lot to our economy. Handicraft workers are part of the economically low-wage system and they have disadvantages such as irregular jobs, lack of technical knowledge, low wages and lack of planning. The government is unable to formulate comprehensive policies to improve the craft industry and craftsmen's conditions, leaving them with a miserable situation and bound to abandon their traditional skilled profession. Occasionally, the government develops a variety of handicraft policies and initiatives, but the majority of the policies were unfortunately not effective. The craftsmen blame the state for their misery. It has not helped the craftsman to maintain their occupation. Just 1.67 lakh craftsmen from 4 lakh in Kashmir valley were registered with the Jammu and Kashmir Handicraft department. 2.33 lakh craftsmen remain unregistered, and so no rewards are obtained from various governmental schemes¹³. The government's task earlier was to improve the condition of craftsmen, but the government's challenge at the moment is to save traditional handicrafts and craftsmen from extinction. This industry and craftsmen can only be protected by better policies and programmes.

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