



Short Review Paper

A theoretical paper on research studies about conventional toy industry

Anuroop P. Jayan

CMR University, Bangalore, India
anurooppj@gmail.com

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Abstract

The imported toys made by using modern technologies, plays over the conventional industries and affecting the smooth running of the craftsmanship. This Research article tries to depict the current scenario of conventional toy industry through available literatures. Between 2001 and 2012, Toy imports increased at a level of Twenty five percentage (ASSOCHAM, 2013). In India, many wooden toy makers give up their job like any other conventional profession due to lack of adequate earning and livelihood. These toy industries face a financial crisis for some year's results from changing trends and inadequate placing. Awareness of the benefits and value of eco-friendly toys are essential for the goodness of child development and boosting of the conventional industries.

Keywords: Conventional toy industry, wooden toys, placing, trends, eco-friendly.

Introduction

Play with a toy the thing that is used for play and imagination is one of the most important lines up in the childhood days. The origin of the word "toy" is unknown, but it existing from the prehistoric period. The first discovered toy doll aging up to 4,000 years back¹. Childhood play with toys that helps to discover their identity, and also been helping their physical, social, educational and psychological development². The toy industry of India has a great historic value, and that has been nurtured and enriched from its diversified cultural and intellectual background. Manufactures use a wide range of raw materials like, wood, rubber, metal, textiles and plastic to make the play items. In India, toy industry existing as a conventional type Small scale industries.

Significance of the Study

Indian traditional toy industry is an un-organized sector (90%) and sixty percentages of the toys in the market are imported mainly from China, and from other countries like Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, US and UK³. This heavy import makes tough competition in the local market and sometimes this may lead to shut down of the traditional manufacturing units. In last 4 years, up to forty percentages of the traditional manufacturing units are been closed. Another twenty per cent are in the verge of closure. The 200 years old traditional toy manufacturing industry in India faces major issues in recent years. There are serious efforts required to save this industry by identifying the importance of Organic wooden toys, avoiding the unhealthy manufacturing practices in the manufacturing and commercialized industry, waste control by reducing plastic and electronic toys imports, improvisation of Art and Design of traditional toy industry and ensuring the financial independence

of the women workers in this industry. This industry required support to sustain and grow further⁴.

Literature review

Various literatures had been reviewed about the Indian toy industry, traditional wooden toy industry, history of the industry, challenges and the recent trends. The data are collected from the available sources including: theses, text books, project reports by the departments of state and central governments, published Articles, online articles, and documentaries on YouTube. This information's leads to further studies and new research topics under various headings.

Conventional Toys: Conventional toys are from 17th Century. Conventional toys are manufactured locally by traditional artisans using the most commonly available materials. The major types of conventional toys are wooden Toys, soft toys (cotton, cloth), Dolls, Construction toys, puzzle sets, educational and activity Toys, mechanical Toys, miniature art/figures, paper crafts, showcase items, metal toys, cardboard/pulp toys, recreational toys and plastic toys. Majority of conventional toys manufacturing units in India are located in states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Bihar, Assam, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu⁵. There are approximately three million people occupy directly and indirectly in the field of toy manufacturing and marketing, in which 10% constitute of organized sector and 90% is constitute of un-organized sector⁶. One of the noticeable sub segments in this industry is of traditional wooden toys manufactures. Traditional wooden toy manufactures are majorly situated in Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow and Varanasi), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kashmir⁷. Among the overall wooden toy industry, the shares of organic toys manufactures are very nominal.

Conventional type Small Scale Industries (SSI) use the skills of master craftsmanship with creative designing and intensive labor in a nationwide manner. Recently, the stimulating factor is turned to global perspective from the domestic demands. Skilled workforces, diverse range, focus on innovation and creativity, and emphasis on learning and education are some of the market assurance factors of Indian toy industry.

Indian scenario: The Indian toy industry has probable revenue at around 13000 crores in 2015, growing at a composite growth rate of 20%, which is said to be a sound situation and it is further expected to grow for the next five or six years⁸. Traditional toy industry share is only approximately fifteen percent. Approximately eighty five per cent toys are imported from countries like China, Korea, Malasia, UK and US. Fifty per cent of the toy units are in Delhi-NCR, Thirty five per cent are in Maharashtra, and the remaining Fifteen per cent are scattered across the country and approximately 4,000 manufacturers in Small and cottage sectors.

Indian toys are only 0.51 per cent of the global market. It is observed that the usage of toys in the age group of 0-4 years will increase more than the other groups by the year 2020. Toys market is expanding globally due to the increase of kids population in the world especially toddlers, giving great opportunity to the toy Industry to sell the various toys globally. The Toy industry is reserved in the Small Sector Industries (SSI) sector, which the government is considering to de-reserve. This will allow the larger companies to make capital investments of over Rs. 100 million in the toys industry with or without collaboration with foreign companies⁹. In addition, the formation of a task force by the Department of SSI has proved to be a positive development. Toy Associations of India in association with others have started the programs for providing good Infrastructure, which at present is very poor compared to China.

Indian manufacturers are catering to both large and small volume requirements and are exporting to a few of the most developed nations in the world. The main markets for Indian toys are USA, U.K. and Germany. The Indian market is largely unorganized and the market is very small compared to the population and per capita income. Small Scale nature of business has resulted into low product innovation and low investments in new equipments and technology, which has over all resulted into small market size. The survival of toy business depends on constant innovation. Another reason for the small size market may be the large number of small players and low advertising and marketing efforts due to limited resources.

Factors influencing the toy selection: Toy selection is influenced by so many factors, which are categorized into two major headings, preliminary and secondary. Preliminary factors are the factors which are noted by consumer in a bird's eye view. The secondary factors are noticed after the primary ones. Preliminary factors are Attraction, color, pleasant in nature,

relatability, Diversity, uniqueness, and durability. Secondary factors are Quality, Packaging, Advertising, Size, Price, and shopping atmosphere¹⁰⁻¹⁴.

Major issues of toy industry: As per the study reports of the toys association of India, nearly 40% of Indian toy manufactures are closed down due to heavy competition from foreign toy manufactures. Due to lack of support from government and lack of direction, they are unable to compete in the market. This causes the loss of traditional industry which is ongoing from 18th century. Even though some GI toy industry has owned the market and popularity, but the future growth of the industry and ability to win over the foreign competition is still under apprehension. This business is the livelihood of around 5000 craftsmen and their families⁶.

Lack of business knowledge and communication is the major barriers of Indian traditional artisans. Lack of attention to new toys and focus on traditional toys, the unavailability of toy designing as a professional course in the country's educational system, Lack of proper distribution channels to take toys to nationwide, Low production scale and Low profit margin, Low purchasing power for most buyers, Lack of good quality materials, Lack of adequate knowledge about manufacturing, are causing to increase the global competition in the market.

Small scale industry is facing various problems in the operational side as well as market side. The major Operational issues of conventional toy industry are; Availability of raw materials, Electricity problems, Training and development and Lack of government attention/support. And the Market related issues are; Large imports, Diversity Factors, Marketing and Distribution Channels, Marketing Strategies, Communication barriers, inadequate expense-profit ratio¹⁵.

Findings

Soft toys and electronic toy categories are the major importing toy category in Indian market and Chinese imports negatively influence the conventional industries. Both branded and non-branded segment of toys are being sold in the market shows retailers dependence on non-branded Chinese toys. The use of low quality and toxic materials in certain toy brands in the past few years, in turn leads to parents stress on the quality of conventional toys. The areas of problems faced in Indian toy industry are product range and diversification, price and profit margin, customer demand and availability, design improvements, changing needs of the market, outdated technology and infrastructural support. This problem weakens the sale of Indian toy brands and gives China an advantage to control over the Indian toy market.

Recommendations: First recommendation for traditional toy industry is to have organized operations under units like co-operative society or rural communities. This will help in collective bargaining and to avoid hierarchy of middlemen.

Small scales industries also need to implement the marketing strategies such as Branding, Positioning and advertising. Under organized operations there should be consistent participation in promotional programs such as trade shows and handicraft exhibitions. Societies should be build association with state handicrafts corporation and other promotional organizations for collaborated operations. Geographical identifications (G.I) can play a major role in building the trust and the goodwill for the industry. Also there should be extended arm operations to online marketing. The share of internet retailing in sales grew from 1 % in 2007 up to 18 % in 2012¹⁶. I also look forward for some extended support from central government such as new regulations in import policies to control the large import of cheap and hazardous products. Government authorities also to help in create awareness in common people by creating national campaign on traditional organic toys.

Conclusion

Indian toy manufacturing industry is the livelihood of around 5000 craftsmen and their families. Many families are into this traditional art and craft from centuries. Last few years brought significant changes in the Indian toy industry. 40% of the artisans lost their traditional employment due unconventional developments in the market, and it continues to be severe in the coming years. It is high time for conventional toy manufactures to be organized for their sustainability and government to pilot on the promotion and growth of this industry or else we may lose the traditional industry which helped to nurture the Indian childhood from 18th century.

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