



SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN ARTISANS IN BIDAR DISTRICT



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ABSTRACT

Earlier, the Indian economy is dominated by caste based occupations, handicrafts and artistic works. Women were and even now are playing significant role in artistic occupations and handicrafts especially in rural areas. After globalization, the demands for such handicrafts and artistic works were considerably reduced as there is competition from large scale industries. Consequently, these women are facing many of the socio-economic problems. Hence to study the problems of women working in artistic occupations and handicrafts the present study is made. Totally 400 women engaged in different handicrafts and artistic occupations in Bidar district were surveyed. It is found that, due to the impact of globalization, there is decreased demand for the goods and services of women artisans and handicrafts. It is suggested to provide financial assistance to these artisans so as to renovate their occupations.

KEYWORDS : Socio-economic Conditions , Indian economy , Women Artisans .

INTRODUCTION

In many of the caste based occupations, artistic occupations and handicrafts, women are actively involved. After globalization, due to the establishment of big industrial organizations, their occupations are in danger, as these industries manufactures the products in bulk and sell it cheaper compared to handicrafts or artisans, who were played an important role in the same earlier. As such, the people engaged in caste based handicrafts and artistic work are now unemployed or under-

employed. Consequently majority of these people are poor. A particular characteristic of these people is they are living in rural areas, as the big industrial organizations become popular in urban areas. In caste based occupations, women are playing an important role in manufacturing the artistic works and services. Due to the globalization, their economic status is under threat.

Basically, the handicrafts include weaving, pottery, black smithy, tattooing, preparation of forest products, rope making, knitting baskets, etc. In urban areas, demands for their products and services have been considerably reduced due to the establishments of industrial organizations and such traditional occupations were now become limited to rural areas.

Women are in general keepers of cultural traditions and knowledge. They build strong communities through supporting religious functions, producing handicrafts, using natural medicines, wearing indigenous traditional dress and performing indigenous songs and dances. Roles of women in maintaining intangible heritage are of particular significance, and encompass what may be described as fundamental domains and expressions of cultural heritage, which are very often. Their skills in this sector are sources of cultural and ecotourism. Policy is beginning to reflect the potential positive outputs of well-managed eco-tourism that can bring in the context of conservation in several developing countries. The other promising source of development potential may be found in what is known as cultural tourism (Lanjouw et al, 2001) which links tourist attractions to the cultural practices of the indigenous peoples such as colorful ceremonial celebrations; exotic dances and music; and fascinating ethnic arts and crafts. Cultural and ecotourism involve the survival of threatened cultures, and the conservation of rapidly disappearing wild lands. Hence artisan women who are blamed of environment degradation are stewards and custodians of indigenous knowledge which is source of healthy environment. They are sources of alternative livelihood options like craft sector. Crafts development can represent a constructive, positive contribution to the development of alternative to resource-destructive agricultural practices, based on the provision of gainful employment (Bula Sirika, 2008).

With the spread of education and awareness, women have shifted from the kitchen, handicrafts and traditional cottage industries to non-traditional higher levels of activities. During the 1970s the decade of the International Women's efforts to promote self-employment among women received greater attention from the government and private agencies. The new industrial policy of the Government of India has laid special emphasis on the need for conducting special entrepreneurial training programmes for women to enable them to start their own ventures. Financial institutions and banks have also set up special cells to assist women entrepreneurs. The result has been the emergence of women entrepreneurs on the economic scene in recent years, though the number of enterprises initiated by women is still quite low (Bose, 2006).

In the globalized/ liberalized market, the traditional crafts need to be beautiful and cost effective and maintain quality to face competition. Unfortunately the home consumers are under the influence of liberal imports of cheap mill-made products and no longer use the handmade items. Since Handicrafts come under the state list, each state has set up its own handicrafts policy. The Central government through various developmental schemes plays the role by supplementing their efforts. But unfortunately most of the governmental schemes have failed to produce visible results. The states assist those crafts and artisans who have viable market and high export potential. The languishing crafts in turn suffer a lot. Hence, a study is made to look into the socio-economic conditions of female artisans and females working in handicrafts in Bidar district.

Objectives:**The present study is made:**

- + To look into the educational background and marital status of women artisans in Bidar district;
- + To study the demand for the products and services produced by female artisans; To study the economic conditions in terms of income from handicrafts and family income, etc of the artisan women in Bidar district; and
- + To analyze the socio-economic problems faced by women artisans in Bidar district.

Methodology and Limitations:

The problems and socio-economic conditions of craftsmen and artisans in general and women artisans in particular are studied theoretically by referring research papers, journal articles, books, etc. Based on the background, the primary data was collected from the women artisans and women engaged in handicrafts in Bidar district. Bidar district is located in North Karnataka, has five talukas and totally 400 women artisans were surveyed through interview schedule. The collected primary data is analyzed and interpreted as under.

Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion:**1. Age of the Respondents:**

Age plays significant role in assessing the knowledge and expertise in artistic works of the women artisans. If there is higher age, then there is more experience and expertise in their work and vice versa. As such, the information was collected from the respondents on the age and presented in the following table.

Table No. 1. Age of the Respondents

Age	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Below 18 Years	04	2.0	11	5.5	15	3.7
18 to 25 Years	21	10.5	25	12.5	46	11.5
26 to 40 Years	40	20.0	51	25.5	91	22.7
41 to 50 Years	52	26.0	43	21.5	95	23.7
51 to 60 Years	45	22.5	39	19.5	84	21.0
More than 60 Years	38	19.0	31	15.5	69	17.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

The age of all the respondents revealed that, 15 (3.7%) are of below 18 years, 46 (11.5%) are between 18 to 25 years, 91 (22.7%) are between 26 to 40 years, 95 (23.7%) are between 41 to 50 years, 84 (21.0%) are between 51 to 60 years and the remaining 69 (17.2%) of the respondents are of more than 60 years. It is generalized from the information collected on the age group of the respondents that few of the women artisans are minors and working in their family occupation and considerable number of respondents even though reached more than 60 years, still they are working in their occupations.

2. Education:

Education is an important aspect as it influences the new trends and developments in the artistic works. Many of the women artisans have even completed Graduation and engaged in their artistic

works. Hence, the collected responses of the women artisans on their educational background are tabulated as under.

Table No. 2. Education

Education	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Illiterate	13	6.5	44	22.0	57	14.2
Up to 10 th Standard	122	61.0	130	65.0	252	63.0
Under-Graduate/ PU 2 nd Year	48	24.0	21	10.5	69	17.2
Graduate	17	8.5	05	2.5	22	5.5
Post-Graduate	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

As expressed by all the respondents, a great majority that is, 252 (63.0%) have completed primary or secondary education (up to 10th Standard) followed by, 69 (17.2%) have completed under graduation or pre-university level, 57 (14.2%) are illiterates and 22 (5.5%) of all the respondents have completed graduation respectively. It is surprising to note that none of the respondents have completed their post-graduation. Further, considerable numbers of respondents are illiterates. Compared to urban respondents, there are more illiterate respondents in rural areas.

3. Marital Status:

Marriage is basis for beginning of truly social life especially for women. The marital status of the respondents determines the social life as married women. The information collected on marital status of women artisans is shown as under.

Table No. 3. Marital Status

Marital Status	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Unmarried/ Single	06	3.0	12	6.0	18	4.5
Married	168	84.0	153	76.5	321	80.2
Widows	21	10.5	28	14.0	49	12.2
Divorcee/ Separated	05	2.5	07	3.5	12	3.0
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Marital status of all the respondents shows that a great majority, that is 321 (80.2%) are married and living with their husbands followed by, 49 (12.2%) are widows, 18 (4.5%) are unmarried and living single and 12 (3.0%) of the respondents includes divorcees or separated women respectively.

4. Main Occupation of Family:

Of course, main occupation of family is artistic works or handicrafts. But it is noted that many of the respondents are engaged in agriculture and during the off seasons, they may engage themselves in

other caste based occupations such as artistic works or handicrafts. As such, information on the main occupation of family was collected from the respondents and presented in the following table.

Table No. 4. Occupation of Family

Occupation of Family	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Agriculture	26	13.0	14	7.0	40	10.0
Weaving	17	8.5	16	8.0	33	8.2
Pottery	32	16.0	26	13.0	58	14.5
Black Smithy	10	5.0	14	7.0	24	6.0
Matt/ Rope/ Basket Makers	11	5.5	22	11.0	33	8.2
Sculptors	04	2.0	07	3.5	11	2.7
Knitting, Stitching, Embroidery	13	6.5	17	8.5	30	7.5
Carpenter/ Agri. Implements Makers	12	6.0	16	8.0	28	7.0
Cobblers/ Leather Workers	41	20.5	33	16.5	74	18.5
Traditional Jewelry Makers	11	5.5	15	7.5	26	6.5
Painters, Dramatists, Folk Artists, etc.	06	3.0	14	7.0	20	5.0
Any Other	17	8.5	06	3.0	23	5.7
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Of all the respondents, family occupation of 40 (10.0%) of the respondents is agriculture, that of 33 (8.2%) of the respondents is weaving, family occupation of 58 (14.5%) of the respondents is pottery, that of 24 (6.0%) of the respondents is black smithy, family occupation of 33 (8.2%) of the respondents is matt or rope or basket making, that of 11 (2.7%) of the respondents is sculpture, family occupation of 30 (7.5%) of the respondents is stitching, knitting and embroidery, that of 28 (7.0%) is carpentry or agricultural implements making, family occupation of 74 (18.5%) of the respondents is cobbling or leather works, that of 26 (6.5%) of the respondents is traditional jewelry making, family occupations of 20 (5.0%) of all the respondents is painting, playing drama, folk art, etc and that of 23 (5.7%) of all the respondents other than above. It is observed that the family occupations of almost all the respondents are similar to their caste based occupation. Further, it is noted that few of the respondents have owned land and as such, they are engaged in agriculture and in off-seasons, they are engaged in their family occupation or caste based occupations.

5. Worth of Capital Investment:

Worth of capital investment reveals the quantity of business and rewards from such business. If the investment is low, then return should be lower, vice versa. As such, information on the worth of capital amount invested in arts or crafts business by the family members of the respondents initially

was collected and tabulated as under.

Table No. 5. Worth of Capital Investment

Worth of Capital Investment	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Hereditary Occupation/ Don't Know	107	53.5	130	65.0	237	59.2
Below Rs. 25000	12	6.0	20	10.0	32	8.0
Rs. 25001 to Rs. 50000	58	29.0	36	18.0	94	23.5
Rs. 50001 to Rs. 1 lakh	23	11.5	14	7.0	37	9.2
More than Rs. 1 lakh	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

As stated by all the respondents, 237 (59.2%) have no knowledge about capital investment of the business as it is hereditary, only 32 (8.0%) have disclosed capital investment as below Rs. 25000, as stated by 94 (23.5%) of the respondents, the capital investment is between Rs. 25001 to Rs. 50000 and the capital investment of 37 (9.2%) of the respondents is between Rs. 50001 to Rs. 1 lakh. It is highlighted from the collected data that the main occupation of majority of the respondents is artistic based handicrafts or occupation. As such, it was carried by the elders in the families and as such a great majority of the respondents are not aware about the initial investment made by their elders for the occupation and it is also noted that none of the respondents have invested more than Rs. 1 lakh capital investment.

6. Demand and Supply for Products:

Many of the artistic works are season based. For example, pottery products are high in demand during summer season in Gulbarga district. In this way, many of the products even though produced all over the year, they are most demanded in particular seasons. Further, a few products are produced only in particular seasons, but are in demand for the whole year. In this way, the information on demand and supply for artistic products produced by the respondents is collected and presented in the following table.

Table No. 6. Demand and Supply for Products

Demand & Supply for Products	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Regular Production & Supply, Seasonal Demand	22	11.0	17	8.5	39	9.7
Regular Demand, but Seasonal Production & Supply	06	3.0	15	7.5	21	5.2
Regular Demand, Production & Supply in all Seasons	172	86.0	168	84.0	340	85.0
Any Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Of all the respondents covered under the present study, a greater majority that is, 340 (85.0%) of the respondents remarked that their products are regularly demanded, produced and supplied throughout the year in all seasons, followed by 39 (9.7%) of the respondents stated that their products are regularly produced and supplied, but their demand is in particular seasons and 21 (5.2%) of all the respondents have expressed that their products are regularly demanded in market, but they have seasonal production and supply respectively. It is highlighted that only few of the artistic works have seasonal production, supply and demand.

7. Alternative Employment:

Many of the women engaged in artistic occupations or handicrafts have alternative employment especially during off seasons and a few of these women also engaged in alternative employment throughout the year. Hence, information was collected from the respondents on the alternative employment and presented in the following table.

Table No. 7. Alternative Employment

Alternative Employment	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Animal Husbandry/ Agri. Labour	19	9.5	33	16.5	52	13.0
Petty Business/ Self-employment/ Entrepreneurship	52	26.0	21	10.5	73	18.2
Trading of Vegetables/ Grocery	30	15.0	17	8.5	47	11.7
Any Other	12	6.0	15	7.5	27	6.7
None	87	43.5	114	57.0	201	50.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Among all the respondents, 201 (50.2%) are depending only on their main occupation based on artistic or handicrafts, followed by 73 (18.2%) are engaged in petty business or self-employment or entrepreneurship, 52 (13.0%) are engaged in animal husbandry or agricultural labour, 47 (11.7%) are engaged in trading of vegetables and selling of grocery and 27 (6.7%) are engaged in other types of business or occupations respectively.

8. Reasons for Choice of Occupation:

Many of the people choose their occupations based on their education and expertise, similarly the occupations are also based on family and a few just choose occupations for their livelihood. Hence, it was asked to the respondents to give details that how they have chosen the present artistic occupation or handicrafts and the collected responses are shown as under.

Table No. 8. Reasons for Choice of Occupation

Reasons for Choice of Occupation	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Caste based/ Family Business	166	83.0	172	86.0	338	84.5
Special Expertise in Crafts/ Arts	12	6.0	23	11.5	35	8.7
Got Special Training in Crafts/ Arts	04	2.0	05	2.5	09	2.2
Indispensable for Livelihood	43	21.5	72	36.0	115	28.7
Special interest in Arts/ Crafts	--	--	--	--	--	--
Any Other	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

On the reasons for choice of occupations, few of the respondents have chosen more than one reason. Of all the respondents covered under the study, an overwhelming majority that is 338 (84.5%) have chosen the occupation as it is caste based and family business followed by, 115 (8.7%) have chosen the business as it was indispensable for their livelihood, 35 (8.7%) have chosen the occupation as they have special expertise in crafts and arts and 09 (2.2%) have chosen the occupation as they have got special training in crafts and arts respectively.

9. Monthly Income from Artistic Work/ Handicrafts:

Monthly income shows the economic status of women and they also measure standard of living of the respondents. Hence, the primary data was collected on monthly income of the respondents from their artistic works or handicrafts and tabulated as under.

Table No. 9. Monthly Income from Artistic Work/ Handicrafts

Monthly Income of Respondents	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Below Rs. 3000	121	60.5	168	84.0	289	72.2
Rs. 3001 to Rs. 6000	72	36.0	32	16.0	104	26.0
Rs. 6001 to 12000	07	3.5	--	--	07	1.7
Rs. 12001 to Rs. 25000	--	--	--	--	--	--
More than Rs. 25000	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

The monthly income of all the respondents from artistic works and handicrafts revealed that, 289 (72.2%) of the respondents have monthly income of less than Rs. 3000, that of 104 (26.0%) of the respondents is between Rs. 3001 to Rs. 6000 and monthly income of 07 (1.7%) of the respondents is between Rs. 6001 to Rs. 12000 respectively. It shows that none of the respondents are getting monthly income of more than Rs. 12000 and as such, majority of the respondents are living below poverty line.

10. Annual Household Income:

In many cases, the parents-in-law or parents of the respondents are also working in other business and husbands of the respondents may also be working in other occupations. Hence, in such cases, economic status of artistic women can't be measured only in terms of their individual income or their husband's income. There is need to gather information on the annual household income from all the sources and of all the family members. In this respect, the collected information on annual household income is shown as under.

Table No. 10. Annual Household Income

Annual Household Income	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Below Rs. 24000	62	31.0	81	40.5	143	35.7
Rs. 24001 to Rs. 36000	91	45.5	89	44.5	180	45.0
Rs. 36001 to 48000	28	14.0	26	13.0	54	13.5
Rs. 48001 to Rs. 72000	10	5.0	04	2.0	14	3.5
More than Rs. 72000	09	4.5	--	--	09	2.2
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

As expressed by all the respondents, annual household income of 143 (35.7%) of the respondents is below Rs. 24000, that of 180 (45.0%) of the respondents is between Rs. 24001 to Rs. 36000, annual household income of 54 (13.5%) of the respondents is between Rs. 36001 to 48000, annual household income of 14 (3.5%) of all the respondents is between Rs. 48001 to Rs. 72000 and that of 09 (2.2%) of the respondents is more than Rs. 72000 respectively. It is highlighted that almost all

the respondents are living below poverty line as they have expressed that all of their annual income is below Rs. 36000.

11. Impact of Globalization and Modern Technology on Handicrafts and Artistic Works:

Modern technology derived from globalization has become boon to few artistic works, as raw materials can be imported and easily available for artistic works. On the other hand, establishment of large scale industries made the small industries, handicrafts and artistic works disappear as these small scale businesses or occupations can't able to compete with large scale industries. Hence, it was asked to the respondents to give the impact of globalization and modern technology on handicrafts and artistic works and the information furnished by the respondents is tabulated as under.

Table No. 11. Impact of Globalization and Modern Technology on Handicrafts and Artistic Works

Impact of Globalization & Modern Technology	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Decrease in Demand for Artistic Works/ Handicrafts	127	63.5	148	74.0	275	68.7
Increase in Demand for Artistic Works/ Handicrafts	22	11.0	16	8.0	38	9.5
No Change in Demand and Supply	38	19.0	26	13.0	64	16.0
Modernization of Handicrafts/ Artistic Works	13	6.5	10	5.0	23	5.7
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

Of all the respondents, majority that is, 275 (68.7%) have felt that there is decrease in demand for artistic works and handicrafts due to globalization and modern technology followed by, 64 (16.0%) have agreed that there is no change in demand and supply due to globalization, 38 (9.5%) have remarked that there is increase in demand for artistic works and handicrafts and 23 (5.7%) have opined that there is modernization of handicrafts and artistic works. To conclude, there is more decrease in demand for handicrafts and artistic works due to globalization and modern technology and it is applicable to majority of the artistic works, however, a few of the handicrafts and artistic works have benefitted due to such modern technology.

12. Challenges and Problems in Occupation:

Like in others' occupations and businesses, the women are also facing many problems and challenges. It may be scarcity of raw materials, lower demand, lower price, shortage of finance, competition, etc. The information collected on the challenges and problems of the women artisans are tabulated as under.

Table No. 12. Challenges and Problems in Occupation

Challenges & Problems	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Competition from Large Industries	112	56.0	97	48.5	209	52.2
Scarcity of Raw Materials	14	7.0	10	5.0	24	6.0
Inadequate Finance	43	21.5	61	30.5	104	26.0
Decreasing Demand	35	17.5	47	23.5	82	20.5
Any Other	16	8.0	23	11.5	39	9.7
Total	200	100	200	100	400	100

The challenges and problems faced by many of the women artisans are manifold. As expressed by all the respondents, 209 (52.2%) are facing competition from large scale industries, 24 (6.0%) are facing problem of scarcity of raw materials, 104 (26.0%) are facing problems of inadequate finance, 82 (20.5%) are facing the problems of decreasing demand for their products and 39 (9.7%) are facing other types of problems. It is highlighted that the establishment of large scale industries has become threat to the occupations of women artisans, as large number of respondents are facing competition and there is shortage of finance for women artisans to develop and modernize their occupations.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, the artistic women and women in handicrafts are facing the problems of lower education, lower status, poverty, etc. Economically, their occupations are under threat due to globalization and as a result, there is lower profit or rewards consequent to lower income leading to poverty. As these occupations are under threat and many of these works are disappearing due to competition from large scale industries. Hence, there is essential need to revive these occupations, so that women engaged in these occupations must be empowered. For this purpose, the government should initiate actions to provide different facilities such as working capital, raw materials, subsidy on loans, incentives to use the artistic works, etc.

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