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Opportunity of Women Employment in Handicraft Sector: An Empirical Study of Jamalpur, Bangladesh

Md. Tareq Hasan

Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib University,
Jamalpur, Bangladesh

Touhidul Islam

Assistant Director, Research Department, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Motijheel,
Bangladesh

Abstract:

This paper considers how handicrafts industry is making a work group self-dependent. This research was emphasized on women entrepreneurs, whole sellers, retailers, employees and workers with handicrafts in Jamalpur district of Bangladesh. Now, "Handicraft" is a brand for Jamalpur which is growing with name and fame rapidly. The local people are designing, producing and distributing handicraft products over the country. These handicrafts are traditionally associated with the creation of artifacts as a source of experience and emotion while research is devoted to the production of knowledge.

The paper sets out the context of handicrafts as a field of opportunity for women of Jamalpur district of Bangladesh which is bound to the sensibilities of educated generation, better life and well establishment as well as to the production of emotional values. It introduces the need for further creative research in the handicrafts, which proposes experiential knowledge of economic development of this territory as the unifying way.

The outcome and contribution of the paper is a better understanding of the relationship between handicrafts and job or business opportunity for women in Jamalpur district. This sector has included more than 85 thousand women which is 91% of total involved people.

Keywords: Handicraft, opportunity, women employment, Jamalpur, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Handicrafts are mostly defined as "items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools, and are generally artistic and for traditional in nature. They are also object of utility and object of decoration. Some common types of handicrafts are textile-based handicrafts, clay, metal, jewelers, woodwork, stone craft, glass and ceramic. This study specially considered textile-based handicraft production in the *Jamalpur* district of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, handicraft sector comprises with small manufacturing units and mostly located in rural areas, operated either by the owner themselves or with the assistance of a small work force of 10-12 people. Most enterprises use traditional techniques with or without the use of tools or simple instruments.

Today, handicrafts represent less than 1 percent of exports from Bangladesh. In contrast, the global market for handicrafts is estimated to be close to \$100 billion (Morshed, 2009). Certainly, this represents a huge opportunity for this country in terms of rural employment creation and poverty alleviation. The rural areas of Bangladesh are filled with women eager to show their fine handicraft skills, being naturally proficient with stitches passed down from mother to daughter and all having a genuine interest in crafts. For many years textile handicrafts have been seen as an opportunity for the creation of rural employment and the alleviation of poverty and many NGOs have diversified into production of all sorts of fabric items. In order to expand the rural production of handicrafts specifically for export we need to combine the craft skills of the artisans with the business skills of SMEs, who could provide all the centralized services along with bulk purchasing of raw materials, sampling, marketing and communication. Without a doubt, expansion of the textile handicraft industry in Bangladesh would bring enormous direct benefits to the rural population, who are waiting for an opportunity to work and become adept at textile handicraft production. Currently Bangladeshi handicraft exports represent only a tiny fraction of the global market, maybe with some slight changes in emphasis, Bangladesh has a real opportunity to become a significant global player in a thriving and expanding industry. This study attempts to find out the opportunity of women employment creation in the handicraft sector in Jamalpur district of Bangladesh.

2. Review of Literature

An existing literature review on the area of handicraft production and opportunity of women employment creation are briefly discussed in this section.

Sing and Fatima, (2015) found that the handicrafts sectors of Uttar Pradesh in India has made a great employment opportunity and economic growth. They also mentioned that India is known for its great contribution towards exports from the handicrafts sector towards the foreign world.

Agasty and Senapati, (2015) tried to find out the particular problems of overall handicrafts sector as well as the potential bright future on growth of this sector of Odisha in India.

Kumar, (2015) noted that handloom contributes nearby 11% of the cloth production in India and also contributes to export earning of the country. The study included that, during 2013-14, production in the handloom sector is recorded to be 7116 million square meters and export of handloom further increased to US \$554million, recording a growth of 60%.

Din, (2014) stated that handicrafts sector of India has got a great significance to generate employment and a strong economy. The Indian handicrafts industry is highly labor-intensive cottage-based industry and decentralized, being spread all over the country in rural and urban areas, he added.

Ghosh, (2014) focused on terracotta and pottery industry which are going to extinction because of inadequate capital as well as indifference of the governments and due to shrinkage of the market, presence of market middleman or some important constraints, the income of the households are not regular and economic conditions are very low in the present economic perspective.

Jadav, (2013) found in his study that Indian handicrafts have got its own great history and it's a growing up sector which making better opportunity for economical as well as employment growth of the country. He also focused on a big amount of workers of this sector those who are illiterate and unskilled.

Dar and Parrey, (2013) stated that the role of handicrafts in terms of revenue generation, foreign exchange, raising standard of labors and employment generation of the society. They also mentioned the incredible feature of the handicrafts sector to contribute towards sustainable development has attached the attention of the sector satisfies not only the existing set of millions of artisans but also has a concern for the large number of new entrants in the handicrafts sector.

Ghouse, (2012) tried to reveal the problems or constrains that affect Indian handicrafts industry and recommended some strategies for development of this sector. In India, handicrafts industry is a major source of income for rural communities employing over six million artisans including to the weaker sections of the society, he also added in his study.

There have been several studies focusing on the handicraft production and opportunity of women employment creation, but no exclusive studies on this area have been studied in Bangladesh. So, under this study researchers attempt to focus opportunity of women employment creation in the handicraft sector of Jamalapur district in Bangladesh.

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is-

- To find out different types of handicraft products those are producing in Jamalpur district of Bangladesh.
- To examine the creation of women employment opportunity in the handicraft of Jamalpur district of Bangladesh.
- To give some possible solution and recommendation to increase handicraft production and create opportunity of women employment in Jamalpur district of Bangladesh.

4. Methodology of the Study

This study is based on primary as well as secondary data. Required primary data has been collected from entrepreneurs, whole sellers, retailers, employees and workers of handicraft sector through the questionnaire. Secondary data also has been collected from internet, articles, newspapers and magazines as well as current scenarios of the handicrafts sector. In this study data are analyzed in descriptive method.

5. Findings of the study

There were 200 respondents during primary data collection for the study and most of the respondents were entrepreneurs, whole sellers, retailers, employees or workers as well as 80% of respondents were women.

Theoretical and practical knowledge is fully different for handicrafts. Most of the entrepreneurs, whole sellers, retailers and employees are completed school level only. But large number of the workers are illiterate and don't have any theoretical knowledge about handicrafts. Yet, with some practical knowledge they are working properly round the year in this sector.

The manufacturers are using twist, needle, whole cloth, kerosene, sickle, frame etc. as raw materials of handicrafts which are bought from local or outside market. The raw materials with specific designs are given to the workers through a supervisor to make one piece, two-piece, three piece, ladies and gents kurta, dopatta, sharee, quilt (Nokshi Katha), bed sheet, pillow cover, cushion cover, hand bag, mobile bag etc.

There are approximate 94,987 people of Jamalpur as well as other districts directly and indirectly involved with handicrafts sector of Jamalpur. The study found that women of Jamalpur district become more self-dependent comparatively others for this sector and they are keeping significant participation in their families like; child education, savings for future, better food or shelter, higher education for next generation and so on. This study also found that 91% of total involved people are women and only 9% are men, that shown in below by a pie chart.

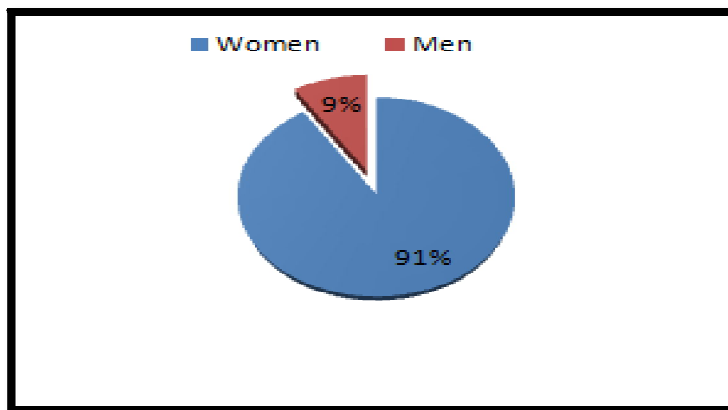


Figure-1: Percentage of Entrepreneurs, Whole Sellers, Retailers, Employees and Workers

Due to inadequate capital most of the entrepreneurs, whole sellers or retailers are using rental lands or showrooms for producing or selling the products. There were 84 rentals and 66 owned lands or showrooms within 150 respondents that is shown in below in a tabular form.

Total Respondent Enterprises	150
Rental Lands or Showrooms	84
Own Lands or Showrooms	66
Rental Lands or Showrooms	56%

Table1: Ownership of Land or Showroom
Source: Field Survey and Author's Calculation

All the enterprises are interested to get bank loan to increase capital of business. Bank loan is getting only large enterprises, but small and medium enterprise facing lot of problem to get bank loan. For this reason, some enterprises are taking loan from NGOs with higher interest rate and less installments. But yet they are satisfied with their yearly income and savings. They would like to extend their business with labor cordially.

In the finding of this study it has been observed that there is a huge opportunity of women employment creation by increasing handicraft production in the Jamalpur district of Bangladesh that helps to reduce poverty, increase export earning of Bangladesh.

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

Handicrafts industry of Jamalpur is growing rapidly with improving women employment opportunity and social conditions of Jamalpur district of Bangladesh. It makes women of rural, urban or city area more productive with confidence and also enhances their standard of living style as well as helps them to meet their social and psychological requirements of a sustainable life. Women entrepreneurs, whole-sellers, retailers, employees or workers are doing better than men in this sector and they are contributing to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Handicrafts industry would be pivotal brand of Jamalpur district, if it could be revealed to private and public sectors for investment and distribution of products. This sector also can get more international market by ensuring quality and design of products that will be increased foreign exchange of the country.

On the basis of overall study some marked recommendations are given below for development and growth of handicrafts industry as well as women employment opportunity of Jamalpur district;

- To expand the market of handicraft products, the exact demand of handicraft products should be determined nationally and internationally.
- New markets of handicraft products should be created through sales and promotion activities.
- Training and development workshop should be arranged for ensuring quality production with new design.
- To increase handicraft production, latest technology should be adopted in the process of production and distribution of products.
- Participation in trade fairs and exhibitions should be arranged at all over the country as well as some other countries.
- To increase production, safe and healthy working environment for women must be ensured.
- Employees or workers satisfaction through remuneration and motivation must be ensured for growth of this sector.
- Cost of production should be minimized by ensuring availability of new materials in local markets.
- Brand promotion, product development, assessment and existing customer as well as their preferred fashion trend of the handicrafts of Jamalpur district should be focused.

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