

## A STUDY ON SURVIVAL OF HANDICRAFT ARTISANS – WITH REFERENCE TO MORADABAD

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### Abstract

*Days are gone when Moradabad was known for its specialty in brassware and well known as Pital Nagri, which was not only the feeder of many exporters and manufacturers but also a helpful hand for the artisans too. The artisans had a good runaway for their survival in past years due to their work which was the instinct of their creative imagination. The beauty of their work always attracted many local and foreign tourists, the gifted artisans would prepare something rare and attractive form simple inputs of materials. Their rare artistic work has been streamlined in manufacturing sector. The artisan also faces number of problems and need a big and drastic change for their survival or else this rare artistic world of brassware will be lost once and for all and inspiration will turn into their graveyards. This paper therefore studies the various problems faced by these artisan and suggests some remedial steps to cope up with the problems and let them in survival.*

**Keywords:** Artisans, Handicrafts, Creative, Survival, Graveyard

### Introduction

There has been a regular argument about Moradabad, that whether it is moving on the traditional part or on modern values. The road transforms from double lane tarred modernity to a snake-like alley in the blink of an eye. No doubt that industrialization is taking place by leaps and bound in Moradabad city but it also badly effecting the traditional handicrafts. Today when the pressure of runaway inflation and input costs make survival of artisans difficult, the world famous 'Pital Nagri' (brassware city), Moradabad, which doesn't need any viva-voce report, is also looking for a small concavity for its very survival, the study is to find out what's turning this district, once an inspiration to thousands of craftsmen, into an artisans' graveyard.

Fascinatingly, the brassware industry in Moradabad saw the flourishing era in early 19<sup>th</sup> century and Britishers took the art to foreign markets. It is believed that the brassware industry originated from Moradabad and spread to the rest of the country. But today it's a different story altogether. Once a flourishing city, bustling with activity, now resembles a ghost town with rusted locks and chains hanging from the shutters of many workshops which once were centres of art, innovation and business.

Hike the prices of raw materials, which are now-a-day hitting the desk on top, nearly 60% prices of raw materials have increased and with the increase in price of fuel the margins of the traders and manufacturers are showing downfall in the brass Industry in Moradabad.

It is estimated that about eight lakh people attached with metal industry are facing the same problems and the 250 listed exporters and 25,000 listed artisans are in actuality out of business or struggling for survival\*. (\*SME Times)

### Literature Review

Abraham (1964) in his book entitled "Handicrafts of India" highlighted the cultural importance of handicraft. He mentioned the association of Men with art and craft way dates back to when human civilization started. Men created stone weapons for safeguarding himself against wild and furious animals in forests for their survival which shows their creative imagination from that time period.

Pathy (1990) in his book "Traditional Paintings of Orissa" explains famous painting of Puri district. He says that these painters were the thinkers of nature and its beauty who are the descendants of people who have painted for Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists and now paints for vaishnavas for the devotees of Jagannath.

Ahmed (1980) in his book entitled "Problems and Management of Small Scale and Cottage Industries" and Bharati (2005) express that the satisfactory performance in marketing of handicrafts could be possible due to the special interest taken by central as well as State Government to boost up the export of handicraft article and the qualitative performance of the artisans.

Papola (1984) in his book "Rural industrialization" and Das (1980) had made an extensive study on 14 Categories of rural industries. Most rural industries especially traditional in nature have a limited capacity to generate even the subsistence income to the members engaged in it.

A project work was undertaken by Indian Census (1981) to study the different aspects of bellmetal industries. It discusses the present status of the industry, the various problems it faces all around and the reasons for its gradual decay. The report reveals that during the last two decades the craft men witnessed disintegration and has to survive against new rivals.

Samal (1994) in his thesis has also explained in his article that the Tribal co-operative marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (Trifed) has started the process of branding some of the tribal handicraft that it buys from artisans and sell them at its 36 'Tribes India' outlets in the country and two overseas which can provide marketing support to the artisans.

### Objective of the Study:

The main objective of the study was to find out the problems faced by the artisans for their survival in this phase of world and to suggest remedial measures to overcome them.

### Hypothesis:

**H1:** The working conditions of the artisans is good

### Research Methodology

For the purpose of study Moradabad region was taken as area of study purposively to study the creative and artistic work of the artisans and the problems faced by them for their survival in this phase of world. The data for the study was collected through primary survey and secondary data from various articles. 200 artisans were covered in this survey from various corners of the city.

The problems were scaled by using likert scale. Each item was scored as: Strongly Agree = 5; Agree = 4; Undecided = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly Disagree = 1.

The scores were than analyzed using mean and from the mean score of each item the result was interpreted as 1.00 – 2.50 = Disagree; 2.51 – 3.50 = Neutral; 3.51 – 5.00 = Agree.

### Findings and Results

The study reveals that there were lots of difficulties and problems which are being faced by the artisans of brass industry in Moradabad, but some them highlighted here are that there is lack of infrastructure, lack of education facilities and less knowledge of marketing strategies. Despite of these problems there wee also some general problems which were identified in the due course like irregular orders, irregular supply of raw material and irregular payments and sometimes rejections of orders which were also the points of worries for the artisans.

**Table 1 presents the problems of craftsmen and dealers**

**Table 1**

Problems faced by craftsmen and dealers		Mean Score	Result
1	Irregular orders	1.58	Disagree
2	Irregular supply of raw materials	3.05	Neutral
3	Irregular payments	4.07	Agree
4	Rejection of orders	1.91	Disagree
<b>Overall Result</b>		<b>2.65</b>	<b>Neutral</b>

**Table 1** above reveals that the artisans generally agreed upon problem of irregular payments but rather they were of neutral in decision overall.

**Table 2 presents the problem of loan and funding facility of craftsmen and dealers**

**Table 2**

Problem of raising loan by craftsmen and dealers		Mean Score	Result
1	Unable to provide security or mortgage	4.81	Agree
2	High interest rates	2.43	Disagree
3	Complicated and long procedures of paper work and formalities	2.22	Disagree
4	Negligent or negative behaviour of bank employees	4.53	Agree
5	Insufficient loan amount	4.12	Agree
<b>Overall Result</b>		<b>3.62</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Table 2** reveals that craftsmen and dealers face difficulties in raising funds for themselves due lack of awareness of paper work and filing procedures and mostly due to negligent behaviour of bank employees and their demanding nature.

**Table 3 presents the problem of marketing faced by the craftsmen and dealers.**

**Table 3**

Problem of Marketing faced by craftsmen and dealers			
		Mean Score	Result
1	Inadequate publicity	4.72	Agree
2	Frequent changes in consumers preferences and tastes	4.81	Agree
3	Unavailability of local markets	2.34	Disagree
4	Un-remunerative Pricing	2.23	Disagree
<b>Overall Result</b>		<b>3.53</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Table 3** reveals that there is lack of publicity of their work and also the consumers do change their tastes and preferences with changes in time whereas the artistic work is limited to the creative nature of the artisans.

The overall finding also reveals that most of the artisans have closed their ancestral work and have chosen other profession for their survival in this competitive and changing environment. The big traders hold the raw materials in their warehouse and takes over the pricing policy and don't provide for any advantages or relaxation to the artisans.

Seventy percent of Moradabad's population works in the metalwork industry, producing a variety of craft items and kitchen implements. Due to abnormal increase in the prices of raw materials, particularly brass, many workshops have been forced to close, and artisans are left with no work. Thus the hypothesis that the working conditions of artisans are good fails with the result analyzed above.

### Suggestions

Government should make necessary provisions for these artisans and encourage and promote them for their work by means of providing better wages and old age pension schemes. Easy availability of loans for fulfilling the requirements of funds should be encouraged and awareness about it should also be made possible. Time to time exhibitions and their advertisements should be done so as to provide them the local as well as inter city or inter state market.

### Conclusion

The Moradabad handicrafts cluster is home to thousands of artisans who not only form the backbone of the burgeoning metal crafts industry but also contribute to valuable foreign exchange. While most of them continue a family tradition of craftsmanship, some of them are people displaced from agriculture. However, their struggle for basic necessities amidst poor living conditions is appalling. There is an urgent need to improve their socio-economic conditions and give them what is rightfully theirs. It's time to turn our attention to these artisans who have contributed to highlight Moradabad on the world handicrafts map. It's time to take action or else the statements given many of the artisans that "in next few years Moradabad will become the graveyard of artisans".

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