

## **PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH LOCAL ARTISANS INVOLVED IN CANE AND BAMBOO CRAFT IN DIBRUGARH DISTRICT OF ASSAM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The local artisan has played an active role in the promoting of their lives in a rural area. The application of indigenous knowledge has been acting as an alternative way of development of poor in rural communities in every part of the nation. Assam has a name for itself in the field of cane and bamboo crafts. The artisans could produce different wonderful objects of craft from simple materials. This sector of Assam economy directly or indirectly provides employment to people in the rural area of the state. Indigenous artisans involved in cane and bamboo craft based on local informal knowledge has been practiced for many years and play a vital role in meeting their day to day need. However, these artisans' community faces various problems and need intervention to improve their quality of life. This research paper based on primary data and finds out various problems faced by the local artisans involved in cane and bamboo craft in the rural area of Assam with a special reference to Dibrugarh district and also trying to suggest a number of measures to alleviate the problems.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Local Artisans, Indigenous Knowledge, Bamboo and Cane Crafts, Problems Etc*

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### **Article History**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Indigenous artisans are an important factor in the equation of the Indian society and culture that actually developed the handicrafts section of the nation. These local artisans have been played a significant role in the development of rural lives in a country. In Assam, the bamboo and cane craft is predominant in nature and mostly carried out in rural areas livelihood and playing a significant role in rural economy. These traditional artisans especially involved in bamboo and cane craft has been functioning in an unorganized manner and faced various problems in the application of their informal local knowledge. They produced various items from bamboo and cane through using traditional technique, especially hand made goods relative to house utility goods like Dola, Saloni, Khorahi, Dhari Paati, Doon, also various types of chair, bed and Jakoi, Khaloi and Polo (fishing instruments) and various weaving accessories and produced Jappi (traditional sunshade) etc.. From the choice of raw materials to the final product, at every stage, the artisans have been faced various problems in relation to supply raw materials, provision of finance, availability of orders and marketing problems etc.

## OBJECTIVES

The specific objective of the present study is to identify and evaluate the problems faced by the local artisan's involved in bamboo and cane craft in the rural area.

## METHODOLOGY

The present paper is descriptive in nature and based on both primary and secondary data. This study reveals the local artisans involved in bamboo and cane crafts and the artisans belong to Dibrugarh District of Assam constitute as the population of the study. The primary data are collected from the sample respondent by employing the unstructured interview method with self-structured questionnaires. Purposive random sampling technique is followed while selecting the respondent from the population. The data sought to be artisan's personal data and basically various problems as they faced through engagement in bamboo and cane crafts. A total of 40 nos. of local artisans were selected to collect necessary information in the study area. And a simple percentage system has been used to analyze the data.

Study area: To achieve the objective of the study, conduct personal interview and focus group discussions with the local artisans in four villages- Japihojia Gaon, Bebejia Gaon, and Rahmaria Gaon under Lahowal Block Development and Changmai Gaon under Panitola Block Development of Dibrugarh District, Assam.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

### Problems Faced by Indigenous Artisans Involved in Bamboo and Cane Craft in the Rural Area

The major problems faced by local artisans involved in this craft are categorized into different ways which are discussed below as.

#### Fundamental Problems Faced by Artisans

- Most of the local artisans are found below poverty line (BPL), illiterate, poor and resides in village areas and make them depend on dadals for the promotion of their craft and to earn a livelihood.
- Majority of artisans stated due to low and uncertain income from their crafts, most of the artisans are shifting over to other professions.
- It is found that about 20% of the final price goes to the artisans and rest is got by the middlemen.
- It is observed that older traditional artisans are not being protected by the government and most of the younger generation is not interested in this sector.
- No government grants are provided to the artisans, still there is no any developmental scheme for this crafts by the government. And no direct link with the artisans and government and NGO.

### **Input Related Problems**

- Artisans belongs to Changmai Gaon (Chabua) stated that there is a lack of capital in hands of the artisans to modernize the craft which stands as a great hindrance in the progress of artisans.
- About 80% of the respondents have stated that they are facing the problem of irregular supply of raw materials. Also, the cost of supply per bamboo and cane are increased day by day, which is because of deforestation of bamboo and cane mostly in the rural area of Assam.
- Majority of sample artisans felt that the societies are not giving them regular orders.
- Most of the respondents are stated that still no credit facility was provided sufficiently to upgrade this industry and the artisans did not get tax concession for the sale of the cane and bamboo products.
- Artisans stated that there exist vast formalities and complex procedures (delay sanction of loans, the inadequacy of amount of loan, an absence of cash loans) to take a loan from the bank. So they have been taken the loan at high-interest rates from the Mahajan (local money lenders).

### **Marketing Problems**

- Lack of Marketing is the basic problem and stand as a barrier to the promotion of this sector. A study reveals that majority of the respondents have faced marketing problems due to rapid change in consumer preferences.
- About 8 nos. respondents of Japihojia Gaon stated that without assessing the marketing of their product sometimes their very beautiful and rare creations get wasted.
- Majority sample respondents reveal that large scale inflow of machine-made items at relatively lower prices compete with the handmade product which makes the local artisans at a great disadvantage.
- The artisans stated that marketing of the finished product is a problem of the craftsman because of sifting the consumer choice from handmade artisan goods to factory made ones.
- Mostly respondent of Rahmaria Gaon reveals that the demand for the bamboo and cane product is reduced in the village area; so they would go urban market to get a good return from their products.
- Lack of market information is an important problem. Local artisans are usually unaware of prevailing market prices and rely upon the traders to determine their prices for them. So they sell their produce to middlemen at lower prices in village haat.

### Technological Problems

- The study revealed that the indigenous artisans are still used simple traditional tools and techniques of production which is very laborious and time-consuming. They were unaware of modern machines and techniques.
- It is observed that there is no way promotional measures to attract the consumers on a continuously.
- The production and marketing of bamboo and cane items in all sample areas are unorganized and the almost all the respondents have faced the problem of remunerative pricing.
- Lack of education among the artisans that may be a factor for the backwardness, they do not think like as modern businessmen.
- About 10 nos. of respondent stated lack of publicity and advertisement leads to lower demand for their product.
- It is found that due to good demand, many unskilled artisans are released their product to the market with lower quality by using cheapest materials. Therefore the buyers who preferred high-quality products are no more interested to purchase, so the master craftsman is not interested to make any new design of the crafts.

### SUGGESTIONS

- Most of the respondents argued that without proper institutional financial help, the artisans depend on the private financier who takes advantage of the situation and exploit the artisans, so it is suggested that the commercial banks and Regional Rural bank and government should provide necessary finance to the artisans in this crafts. And the government should provide subsidy loan or loan at low-interest rate to the local craftsman.
- A government should open a raw material shop in every village area by which the artisans can get their necessary raw materials at reasonable prices.
- The artist should be used new modern equipment which are easy to use because the traditional tools and equipment are very time-consuming.
- It is suggested that both the production and marketing of the items of this crafts should be organized by the government.
- With the changes of present consumer preference, the local artisans have to work accordingly, that can fulfill the demand for consumers. The artist should use the art of modern making work to satisfy the customers need and for the promotion of this crafts.
- Proper marketing facility is necessary for the development of the rural artisans, so the government should take action to solve this problem.
- A suggestion has given by respondents that the rural market should be organized in such a manner which restrict the inflow of outside products and free from the monopoly of outside sellers.

- It is suggested that regular exhibition and mela should be organized and advertisement should be made in media and by the opening website. In this regard, local media should play a significant role in the advertisement of the products of traditional artisans in their area. A government should provide necessary assistance to all artisans to participate in different state and national level commercial mela or exhibitions.
- Various new items and designs should be introduced by the artisans and importance should be given to using modern machines in the production of crafts as they can deliver their product in time with the right price for each item every time.
- Governments should provide old age pension to the aged artisans.
- Government and non-government organization should arrange workshop and impart proper training to the local artisans as they can make more innovative products.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study reveals that still the traditional artisans of bamboo and cane crafts are faced a lot of problems in the rural area in the Dibrugarh District of Assam. They are the masters of the handicrafts and contribute a lot to the economy of Assam but still, they are unorganized. Lack of capital in hands of artisans to modernize their products is a great hindrance in the progress of the crafts. So government should take necessary steps to all-round development of these artisans. Because of the rural economy is based on the development of these artisans who are an integral part of Assam economy

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