

Socio-economic Study of Camel Leather Handicraft Artisans of Marwar Region in Rajasthan

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Abstract

Rajasthan is one of the most important suppliers of various handicrafts to the world market. With a growth of more than 33%, handicrafts have a great potential to provide employment opportunities to millions of artisans. The present study is an attempt to assess the potential of camel leather handicraft along with the socio economic condition of the artisans involved. Since antiquity Jodhpur and Barmer area of Marwar region contains a rich cultural heritage and prolonged tradition of leather craft. Though the present pandemic (*covid19*) restricted and limited the survey, nonetheless three camel craft dominated areas wherein ten sampled respondents were selected from each aforementioned district purposively. Hence the paper reads the outlook of sixty stakeholders involved in the camel leather craft directly and indirectly. The study of the two districts revealed the deplorable socio economic conditions of the respondents. It is concluded that proper incentives, trainings and facilities should be provided for mitigating the problems of artisans. Moreover the reported pathetic health scenario calls for an urgent government intervention for the survival, sustenance and smooth functioning of a heritage which has been inherited from ancestors.

Keywords: Handicraft, Artisan, Culture, Market, Infrastructure, Stakeholders.

Introduction

Known as "Land of Maharajas" or "Land of Kings", the state Rajasthan has been rightly called as the 'Treasure Trove' of Indian handicrafts. The harshness of the climate in this part of the world is met with exuberant smiles and vibrant colours all around. The state manifests the diverse social and cultural heritage through the fairs and innumerable festivals. A state of glorious history, ethnic traditions vibrant culture and rich heritage where more than ninety percent of artisan's incomes come from the tourist related activities. Tourism has emerged as a dynamic instrument for the generation of employment opportunities, poverty alleviation and bringing about sustainable development. Sustainable tourism encourages and supports the local craftsmen and cultural activities. With the impact of tourism, promotion and marketing of the products and enhancement of culture is brought into being (John, 2014). In this manner, individuals from foreign countries are able to acquire knowledge and information regarding Indian artworks and handicrafts. Since antiquity it's being one of the major producer and supplier of handicraft products. Apart from being the source of livelihood, handicraft depicts our community and culture. It plays a significant role for economic growth and upliftment of the rural economy through generation of employment and foreign exchange earnings.

The sustenance of the sector in the present time is debatable. The arrival of new merchandized articles as a substitute for the traditional crafts incur the risk on Indian handicraft products in general and state handicraft in particular.

Over the years enormous pressure has been observed by the Indian handicraft due to the manifold obstacles faced by the handicraft industry i.e. right from the procurement of the raw material due to non-availability of required standard input, unavailability of skilled artisans, unawareness about the technical supports and lack of customer awareness

towards the craft products. Information dissemination is one of key issues faced by this sector (Kumar, 2014).

The study highlights the pathetic condition of the artisans involved in camel leather handicraft directly or indirectly in Jodhpur and Barmer area of Marwar region. The socio economic condition of the bearer of this fragile craft has been documented. Moreover under the grim situation of covid 19 the artisans were interviewed individually at their own place and local language was used where needed.

Further it is imperative to understand the growth and decline of craft, not only from economic outlook but from a broader livelihood perspective. In order to have the optimum study of this handmade industry, government should take steps to provide both incentives and assistance. Besides political will, increase in the wages and improvement of working conditions of the artisans can be some immediate panacea to the suffering artisans of this industry. Along with this, state and central government must be directly involved in these industries (Mohi-ud-din *et al.*, 2014).

The purpose of the study was made clear to the respondents to gather clear and correct information. The collected data obtained from the survey was coded, tabulated and expression has been demonstrated in graphs and charts to arrive at meaningful and relevant interferences.

Review of Literature

Jaitly, (2005) There is a world of industry without industrialization in the traditional sense and there is both ample scope and need for it to come out of the disorganized, diminishing, and low-end profile that it has been carrying for long.

Barber & Krivoslykova (2006), the home accessory market is strongly influenced by fashion trends, consumer purchasing patterns, and economic conditions in end markets. In many cases, artisans are out of touch with those end markets, which presents a challenge to those seeking to export their products.

Richard (2007) in his paper is intended to illustrate the relevance of developing and reinforcing handicraft production as a way to promote employment and development for the most marginalized populations, especially the poorest youth and women.

Dilip Kumar and Rajeev P.V (2009) found in their research that India is the country in which millions of people possessing traditional skill and knowledge of producing handicraft goods. The Indian handicraft industry is highly labour intensive, cottage based industry and decentralized. This industry provides maximum employment after agriculture sectors and it provides employment over six million artisans in which maximum population of weaker section of society and women are involved.

Dak (2010) has been listed out reasons for the failure of village crafts such as poor designs, low quality materials and inefficient market approaches; consequently, these weaknesses are exploited by machine made urban craft units, who apparently lockout village crafts from global markets.

Mathew P.M (2011) stated, Employment in Handloom and Handicrafts sectors, despite its vast potential and the initiatives by the government, the achievements of the unorganized sector of the industry, including the handloom and handicrafts sectors leave much to be desired. Poor working conditions are a key area of concern.

Amir. W.A, (2013) in his article has stated that at present the rural producers/suppliers are struggling to market their products and services due to various reasons. The performance of the manufacturer and artisans both for financing and marketing of handicrafts is far from satisfaction.

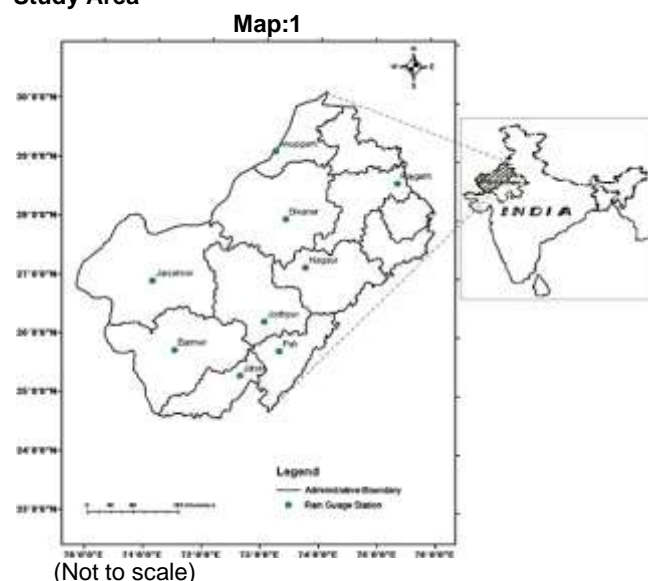
Jaishankar C (2014) in the Hindu Daily stated that the former Railway Minister,

Shri, Laloo Prasad Yadav ordered to use earthen cup (kuvalai) for railway purposes, has raised the hope of the potter (kuyavar) community that the order could revive the ailing traditional industry.

Datta, D.B and Bhattacharya S. (2016) examined Indian handicraft for their perfection, excellent design and varieties and matchless sagacity of colour.

Singh A.D. and Kaur J. (2018) Ergonomic Evaluation of Female Working in small scale Handicraft Industries of Patiala District of Punjab.

Study Area



Location Map of the Studied Area (Source: Scholar)

The area of Great Indian desert lies in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent ($23^{\circ} 30'$ and $30^{\circ} 11'$ North latitude and $69^{\circ} 29'$ and $78^{\circ} 17'$ East longitude), Rajasthan is bordered on the west and northwest by Pakistan, on the north and northeast by the Indian states of Haryana Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh, on the east and southeast by Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and on the southwest by the state of Gujarat. The Thar Desert is characterised by shifting sand dunes and high summer temperatures of more than 50°C during summer and sub-zero in winter and high summer winds ($>30\text{ km/h}$ during sandstorms in summer). Western Rajasthan is

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one of the major parts of the Rajasthan in terms of Ecotourism

The study region includes the present-day districts of Barmer, Jalore, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Pali and parts of Sikar. It is bounded on the north by Jangladesh region, on the northeast by Dhundhar, on the east by Ajmer, on the southeast by Mewar, on the

south by Godwar, on the southwest by Sindh, and on the west by region. The locations are depicted in the given figure. As the region hasn't been untouched by the prevalent pandemic owing to the covid 19, the study was limited to the Barmer and Jodhpur parts of the Marwar region.

Map: 2



Location map of the Marwar area (Source: Scholar)
Demography of the studied area

Table:1

City	Area (km ²)	Population	Increase (%)	Sex Ratio	Literacy (%)	Density of Population
Jodhpur	22850	3687165	27.74	916	65.94	161
Barmer	28,387	2603751	35.52	902	56.53	92

Source: Census, 2011 Govt. of India

Geography of the Studied Area:

Table: 2

City	Elevation (msl)	Latitude	Longitude	Average annual rainfall (mm)	Drainage
Jodhpur	231 m	26.23 ⁰ N	73.02 ⁰ E	362	Luni & Mithadi
Barmer	227 m	25.75 ⁰ N	71.39 ⁰ E	277	Luni ,Sukri,Mithadi

Jodhpur

Jodhpur is the second-largest city in the Indian state of and officially the second metropolitan city of the state. It is a popular tourist destination, popularly known as Blue city and Sun City all over India. It lies on the edge of the arid tract and is the link

between the desert on the west and the semi-arid but cultivable regions to the East (Sharma & Bisht, 2018). As per census population of Jodhpur is more than 10 lac which is the largest city in the western region. It is also the second largest city in the state.

Table: 3

City	Major tourist spots	Major events
Jodhpur	Mehrangarh fort, Umaid Bhavan palace, Jasvant Thada, Mandore, Osayan, Jain and Brahmanical temples.	Marwar festival

Barmer

The city is a major part of Thar Desert located 153 km from Jaisalmer. Though the land is barren and contains a very harsh climate with tough

terrain historical sites, motif decorated mud houses along with some architectural buildings are tourist worthy. Barmer is known for its rich crafts, dance and music.

Table:4

City	Major tourist spots	Major events
Barmer	Famous for its carved wooden furniture and hand block printing ruins of Juna Barmer and the Kiradu temples, Khed and Jasol are also known for their temple architecture	The Barmer Thar Festival and Cattle Fair

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Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of writing this paper are:

1. To figure out the socio-economic conditions of the camel leather craftsmen
2. To come up with recommendations in order to help the stakeholders for the sustainable growth of their craft.

Data and Methodology

The study on the socio-economic condition of the artisans of the Barmer and Jodhpur area of the Marwar region has been carried out on primary and secondary data.

Table: 5

S No	Data	Source	Uses
Primary Data			
1	Primary Questionnaire & Schedule survey	Telephonic Interview and Field Survey	Socio-economic report of Stake holders
Secondary Information / data			
1	Published data of Govt. of India & Govt. of Rajasthan.	The Statistical Abstract (GOI & GOR)1981-2011	Spatial distribution of sites
2	Handicraft and Tourist Survey Report(GOI),2001,2011,2018	Govt. of Rajasthan	For analysis of Variety of Camel leather Handicraft
3.	Data records of the two destinations. (Jodhpur,Barmer)	Official Tourist Reception Centres.	For Biannual Quantification of Camel Leather Sale and Significance.
	Structured no probability sampling method applied.		

A well structured survey in which no probability sampling method was incorporated. Moreover was incorporated that involves the sample being drawn from the part of the population that is close to hand, and willing to cooperate the cause of research. The covid -19 pandemic has been taken care of in the collection of information. The study was carried out in the selected area of Marwar region. The artisans were observed randomly from the two camel leather concentrated districts. The survey was structured having a sample of sixty respondents from Jodhpur and Barmer at the backdrop of reported pathetic and vulnerable socioeconomic condition of the directly or indirectly people involved therein. A thorough review of accomplished work in this domain was done prior to the fabrication of an exploratory research design. To procure the qualitative outcome the multifarious respondents having attachments in camel leather craft was taken care of.

The telephonic conversation with the handpicked respondents and the questionnaire fabricated was with a sole aim to elicit the present condition of the artisans. The use of indigenous language to come up with information related to the varied aspects of their work was highly productive and acclaimed viz. Health hazard, market trend, precautions etc.

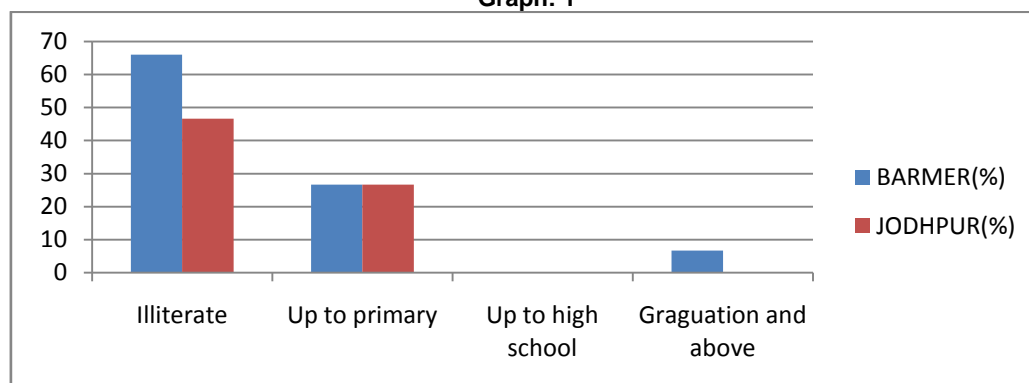
Demographic information of the respondents:

Table 6 depicts the general information of the respondents. It reveals that about one half of the respondents (50%) were illiterate, more than one fifth (21.66%) had education up to middle school and only 3.33 per cent has attained the education up to college level and above. It shows the lack of awareness about the education among the respondents (Graph:1). Caste involved in doing camel leather work were scheduled castes i.e. 45 per cent and 30 per cent respondents belonged to Jingar and Regar community respectively.

Table: 6

Category	Barmer (%)	Jodhpur (%)
Illiterate	66	46.66
Up to primary	26.67	26.66
Up to high school	0	0
Graduation and above	6.66	0

Graph: 1



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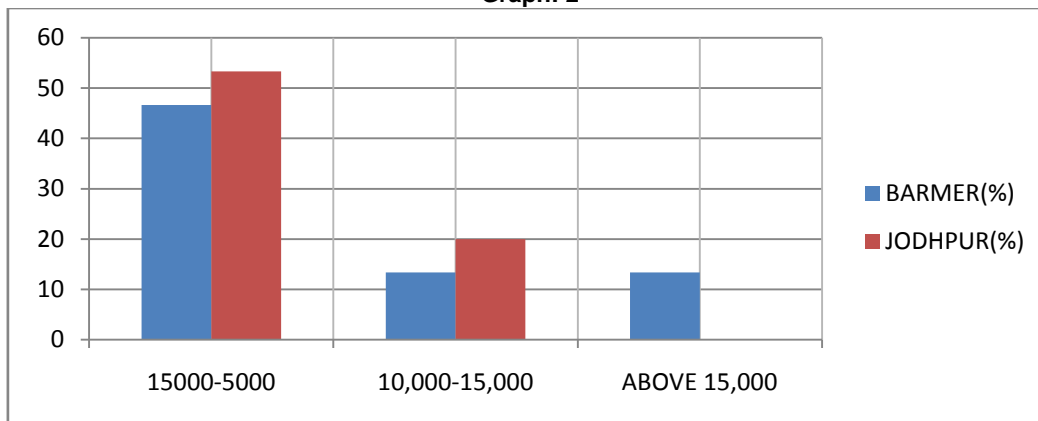
Data indicated that maximum number of respondents (43.33%) had monthly income between Rs 1,500-5,000 and 16.67 per cent of the respondents

fall between Rs 10,000-15,000 and very few (13.33%) were above Rs 15,000 per month.

Table: 7

Monthly Income (Rs In 1000)	Barmer (%)	Jodhpur (%)
15000-5000	46.66	53.33
10,000-15,000	13.33	20
ABOVE 15,000	13.33	0

Graph: 2



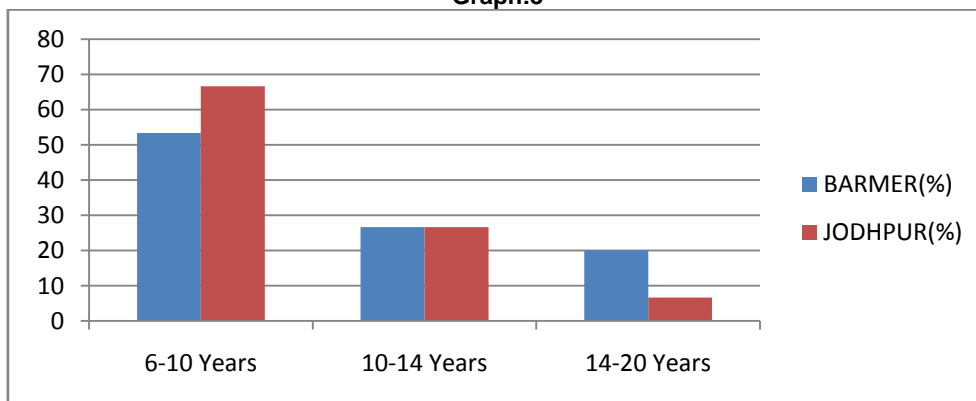
The data shows that majority of the respondents (53.33%) works from childhood (6-10 years) as follows 25 per cent respondents started

work from adolescent (14-20 years) and remaining 21.67 per cent of respondents were in teenage (10-14 years).

Table: 8

Age Level	Barmer (%)	Jodhpur (%)
6-10 Years	53.33	66.67
10-14 Years	26.67	26.67
14-20 Years	20	6.67

Graph:3



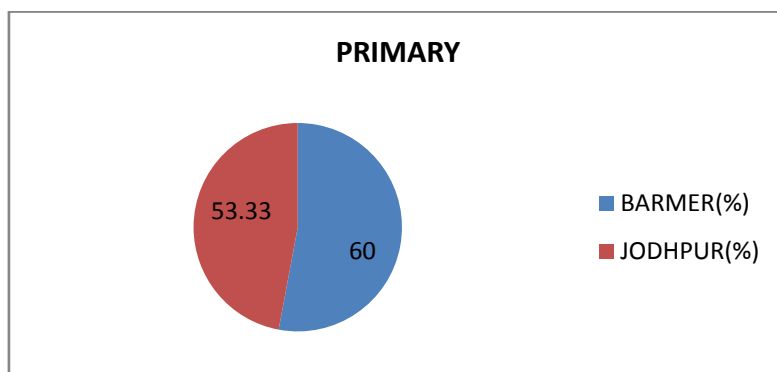
Data revealed that 58.33 per cent of the respondents considered camel leather work as their main occupation. However 4.1 per cent were involved in some other occupations. During data collection

researcher found that due to low earning of artisan's, the family members were found to be engaged in some other occupations.

Table:9

Family Occupation	Barmer (%)	Jodhpur (%)
Primary	6	53.33
Secondary	40	46.67

Graph: 4



Findings

It was observed that communities like Regar, Jingar, Khatri, Gujar and Muslim are shouldering the burden of supplying the camel leather products to the market.

The severity of economic hostilities in the form of lack of market, raw material supply, high cost of raw material, was gradually gaining momentum. The unending health issues that drew our immediate attention were in the form of orthopaedic disorders, blurred vision, eye pain and itching, breathing problems, scabies and hand pain in varying frequencies.

The harsh climate frequently poses problems in the form of intense sunlight and rainfall that out grade the quality of leather.

Hence in the light of present deplorable situation created out of, low remuneration, and increased use of chrome tanned leather, buffalo leather, rexine in place of camel leather, challenge to modify the products according to modern tastes the

cultural heritage that is something which is inherited from one's ancestors is at the verge of extinction.

Suggestions and Conclusion

Handicraft sector is one of the sectors which can contribute to the success of Make in India mission. Rajasthan accounts for about 20% of handicrafts exports in the country and has allocation of 7-8 million employments to neighbouring states. Handicrafts do not mean to rely only on the handwork rather innovation and technology can also be collaborated with the mind frame of the artisans for further enhancement in this sector.

However, there are some shortcomings which needed to be addressed by the Government, Local bodies, and NGO's. Besides, it is the motivation and inspiration that should be the key to new entries which is needed seriously.

The SWOT (Search, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat) analysis of the study can be summarised as:

❖ STRENGTH	❖ WEAKNESS	❖ OPPORTUNITIES	❖ THREATS
❖ Large, diversified and potential	❖ Lack of co-ordination between competitive price	❖ No need for macro-investment	❖ Lack of promotion of products
❖ Cheap labor	❖ Unawareness about international retail infrastructure.	❖ There is flexible production flexibility	❖ Inadequate information
❖ Products are high value added,	❖ Untapped market. because of higher export	❖ Rising demand for handcraft	❖ Lack of co-ordination between competitive price. government bodies and private Players
❖ Potential source of foreign revenue	❖ Still confined to rural areas and small cities	❖ Can materialise the make in India dream of the Country	❖ Health hazards

Finally, we can say that this sector has potential to grow, and there are people willing to be the part of this sector, all they need is the help from the government, which can effectively contribute to the establishment of business, and make this sector work as other organized sectors are working.

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