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Sustainable development with artisans enterprises**Indu Choudhary**Assistant Professor,
Gopichand Arya Mahila College,
Abohar**Introduction**

India's industrialization and participation in the modern world economy is decades old. Despite that, millions of Indians still depend on indigenous modes of production, traditional skills and techniques to make a living based on handmade products. Artisans are the backbone of India's non-farm rural economy, with an estimated 7 million artisans in India according to official figures (up to 200 million according to unofficial sources) engaged in craft production to earn a livelihood. However, propelled by loss of markets, declining skills and difficulty in catering to new markets, the number of Indian artisans has been rapidly decreasing, indicating the urgent need to re-invest in India's artisans to safeguard history, culture and an important source of livelihood. Hundreds of thousands of people in the developing world, largely women, participate in the artisan sector. For many, their livelihood depends on income earned from their artisan activities. Behind agriculture, artisan activity is the second largest employer in the developing world. Yet, artisan enterprise is not generally considered a key driver of economic growth, nor looked to as a major component of development assistance efforts. The depth and scope of economic development impact of artisan enterprises is often not fully appreciated. They generate income, create jobs, foster economic communities, sustain ancient techniques, and preserve culture and meaning that is an essential component of healthy and sustainable development—development that is grounded in the uniqueness of people and place. And in conflict regions, economic community through artisan work can promote reconciliation, healing, and empowerment.

AIACA

The All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA), established in 2004 as a Society, is a membership based organization for the handloom and handicrafts sector in India. It aims to develop craft based enterprises and explore new and commercially sustainable models of livelihood generation. AIACA engages in policy advocacy; crafts-based entrepreneurship development; interventions in innovative design, product development and product diversification; capacity building of enterprises and crafts organizations on various aspects of business and production management; and facilitation of direct access to markets. While these facts paint a powerful picture, the artisan sector still has a long way to go to reach its full potential as a sustainable source of income generation, employment, and economic growth for impoverished communities around the globe. One of the biggest issues in India is that our markets do not recognize the true value of craft. When this value is recognized, and people become willing to pay a higher price for craft-based products, it would translate into higher wages for weavers and craftspeople and act as a boost to millions of rural-based livelihood opportunities associated with this sector. The economics however is not as simple, as finally it comes down to the conflict between

pricing and sales. If you out-price goods, you sell only aeq limited number. If you don't give craftspeople enough work, it kills the craft. Sustainable livelihoods will ultimately depend on finding a fine balance between the two. For example: Fabindia follows an inclusive model of capitalism, placing craft at the center of the quest for profitability and growth. The key to help the world's most marginalized women build sustainable futures for themselves and their families is economic empowerment. And the way to achieve economic empowerment is with equitable commerce models.

Women empowerment

The women of India have been embroiled in a constant struggle against stigmatisation and persecution by society for centuries. All the while, countless attempts have been made to spread awareness about, and ultimately bring to an end, the charge of horrific gender-biased crimes (like *sati*, dowry harassment, and sexual assault) perpetuated in the name of a misguided notion of 'culture' and 'tradition'. Art has always been one of the most widely used mediums for expressing the plight of women in India. Indian women artists, in particular, have emphasised gender issues and discrimination in the form of paintings, sculptures, and installations since pre-independence times. And despite the decades that have transpired since, most of the same issues are still prevalent in today's society. In this article, we go through the history of Indian women artists and the issues they've addressed in their work to see what, if anything has changed in all these years. I felt very happy to meet the women who are working for her livelihood and to support her family's income. The sewing machine is Bhawana's pride and joy in her working office "Wishloom Lifestyle". It holds centre stage, positioned at the best window in the office where natural light filters in beautifully. In fact, in one and half years of involvement with this fair trade business bhavana ji has come a long way. In 2015, when MR. Harshit Choudhary started canvassing door-to-door for interested people to join the business, The main motive of Harshit was women empowerment. Bhawana ji agreed immediately. Based in the tribal settlement of business, in Udaipur Indian State of "Rajasthan" Mr. Harshit had started with very little amount of 2.5 lac. Initially he faced difficulty of getting good tailors but Bhawana ji helped him to get these two good people. Then the main difficulty was how and from where to source good fabric so that they can provide their customer's good fabric made dresses and indirectly he can help the artisans who weave fabric from there hands like Ikkat, Khadi, Block Print etc. After some market searches, internet surfing and shopkeepers he solved this. Their Aim is also to save environment, they do not use synthetic fabric, they use cotton fabric and hand made products which are made from traditional system of making fabric like Ikkat, Khadi, Hand block printed fabric etc so that artisans can get what they deserve and keep the ancient style of making fabric alive. Their main motive is to give work to widows, poor, and needy people. Firm give them training make them stand on there own feet so that they can earn there bread and butter even after leaving their workshop. They have 5 females as 1 Manager, 2 tailors, 1 quality check and 1 trainee. They have 2 male tailors and 1 part time master ji. Their income is mainly by selling in Australian local market. People in Australia respect fair trade policy, so they love to buy dresses made by artisans. They have not approached any big market yet but we are selling in remote area of Australia. They like Indian fabric.



Fair trade policy

Several converging trends indicate that demand in the artisan sector will continue to expand, including consumer and company interest in sourcing locally produced artisan goods, greater international and domestic tourism, increased global interest in home decorating, and increased willingness to pay a premium for distinctive (as opposed to mass-produced) goods. Even as global demand plummeted and international trade contracted by 12 percent in the wake of the 2008 global economic crisis, exports of art crafts actually rose to \$32 billion in 2008, a figure that is nearly double its 2002 level. Artisan production, therefore, holds great potential for developing countries that seek to expand their exports in a dynamic sector of the world economy. As noted in the Creative Economy 2010 report, "the production and international trade of art crafts are vectors for job creation and export earnings, and therefore are feasible tools for poverty alleviation, the promotion of cultural diversity, and the transfer of community-based skills." Better integrating artisans into global commerce would increase the incomes and standard of living of many individuals and their families in the developing world, yielding micro-economic benefits that, properly scaled, could collectively transform the economic landscape of certain nations as a whole. A UNESCO pilot project, "Handicrafts and Employment Generation for the Poorest Youth and Women," achieved impressive poverty reduction results by using small handicraft enterprise development to drive income generation and employment in a wide variety of cultural contexts. A report summarizing the outcomes of this project concluded that "the analysis of the project results indicates that there are vast opportunities available in promoting the crafts sector as a way to eradicate poverty and improve living standards."

Conclusion

With the recent boom, the start-up culture has been the center of the economy for quite a while now. Excellent rural artisans working with beautifully hand crafted products have been ignored to a great extent recently. In India, where the rural population sums up to nearly 70% of the total, this neglect is a major issue for concern. The traditional Indian village economy has been self-sufficient and self-providing for centuries. India has always been a country which has derived and met its needs largely from nature in the purest form. And while it is important to focus on the development of the urban, modern India, we at Vritti Designs feel that the improvement of rural

India plays an equally pivotal role on the path towards becoming a thriving nation. Textiles is one of the major pillars supporting the humongous structure of the rural economy. The weaver's and spinners of ethnic India are no less than Picassos and van Goghs when it comes to creating magic on fabric. And even with such brilliance reflecting from their work, these artisans have been overshadowed by the fast fashion producers. Vritti believes that given adequate opportunities, these rural artists can paint a magnificent picture on the canvas of the global fashion scene.

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