CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY &

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To overcome some of the constraints in the quality and quantity of Woodcraft exports it is necessary to equip each center with at least one seasoning and preservation unit for improving the quality of wood products and a common facility center to increase the productivity of the artisans.

The most important problem of the craft is the irregular supply of raw materials. The following points are required to be attended to in this connection:

(i). Arrangements for a continuous and regular supply of minimum quota of raw materials per head per month should be arranged through the co-operative societies.
(ii). The concessional rate for the wood carvers should be maintained below a ceiling, although wood prices may rise.

(iii). Attempts to find out substitute varieties of wood may continue. But it must be remembered that the idea should not be of a complete change-over. A minimum quantity of raw material must be supplied.

CREDIT

Credit may be made available for purchase of costly equipment such as lathes. This could be done by the co-operative societies as well as by the Government Department of Industries.

DESIGNS

Catalogues containing new designs may be kept in the offices of the co-operative societies. The design center may also consider how best it could popularise new designs. Artisans tours to centers of ancient and modern art may be arranged and help may be given for the same.
QUALITY OF WORKMANSHIP

It is most essential to maintain the quality of workmanship at a high level. This point needs to be impressed upon the minds of artisans. The co-operative society should insist on the maintenance of quality when it purchases articles. Efforts should be made by Arts and Crafts Emporia and Khadi Bhavans to procure orders for costlier pieces of work from internal as well as external markets. If feasible, while maintaining a high quality of workmanship, size of articles may be made smaller if that reduces the cost of production and work, so that a reduced price could be charged.

Also a system of individual recognition may be tried to induce the artisans to maintain a high standard of quality.

TRAINING IN CO-OPERATION

A short term training course in principles and practice of international business may be arranged for some leading members of co-operative societies and self-help groups. That would ensure a better co-operation of members in management of the societies in general and in repayment of liabilities and sale of good articles to the society in particular.
THE NEED FOR COMMON WORKSHED

A common workshed for the workers may be of great help. Many of the present work places are very small rooms. The provision of a workshed may, therefore, be considered.

IMPROVED PROCESSING METHODS

Many of the problems encountered by the wood based Handicraft industry which are related to dimensionally stabilizing the wood components. However, the cost of treating a large volume of wood involved in many instances would be prohibitive. The greatest benefit at the current stage of development of wood stabilization techniques might be derived from surface treatment wherever applicable.

Treatment of wood or even bamboo with Polyethylene glycol (PEG) before drying, eliminates the problem of splitting and cracking to a great extent. Treatment with PEG is very useful for wood used for the manufacture of statues where generally thick section of timber is used which are more prone to surface cracking & splitting.
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Self Help Groups can be formed in each Crafts for better integration and improving the critical mass of business.

SEASONING

Freshly felled wood contains a high percentage of moisture ranging from 50 to 100 per cent and going even up to 200 per cent in case of low density wood. A well seasoned piece of wood should contain about 10-12 per cent moisture. The wood shrinks if the process of drying is not properly carried out in a controlled manner. This shrinkage is liable to give rise to defects such as surface cracking, splitting, warping, etc. Therefore, seasoning i.e. drying of timber under controlled condition is the first step towards realizing maximum attainable dimensional stability.
of any wood. Timber of all species, whether of the primary or secondary class or of durable or nondurable class needs to be seasoned to appropriate moisture level, (depending upon different end uses and localities of use) to ensure stability and size. The moisture content to which the wood should be seasoned depends upon the type of use and localities. Timber intended to be used for precision jobs such as handicraft purposes should conform to the moisture content as per IS 287 - 1993 i.e., in the range of 10 - 20 per cent on the oven dry weight basis. To ensure that the wood has the requisite content of moisture, it is desirable to create seasoning facility at wood handicraft centers. The seasoned wood has the following properties:
Greater dimensional stability and retention of shape, greater strength, easier to machine and glue joining, no shrinkage ability, Higher resistance to fungal and insect growth, Better durability, and enhances the finish of varnish point and treatment.

Creation of seasoning facility will help craftsmen in improving the quality of product and ensure sustained supply of seasonal wood in future.
Wood being of organic origin falls an easy prey to various organisms, which consume it as a source of food. While some of these organisms like fungi and insects attack all the major components of wood, viz., lignin, cellulose and semi-celluloses, there are certain bacteria and fungi, which attack wood superficially and spoil its physical appearance and looks. Heartwood of some of the wood species contain certain extracts which render the wood unpalatable to insects and fungi. Such species of wood are more durable. However, the sapwood of even these wood species is easily degraded by the organisms. Presence of blue or other stains although does not affect performance in most cases but it is likely to reduce the value of finished wood products because of its ugly look. Presence of stains has been very much resented specially in Handicraft items, which are considered to be the value added speciality items. To get economic and long term service life from wood and its products, prone to biodegradation it is necessary to impregnate them with toxic chemicals commonly called “wood preservatives”. For wood preservatives to be effective they should contain sufficient dosage of preservatives. The treatment would adequately penetrate the timber so as to ward off any
attack by organisms during the life of the timber products. Wood preservatives are therefore thoroughly screened by laboratory and field-testing and doses are fixed according to the hazards involved.

Toxic chemicals, which are hazardous to human beings, should be avoided for treatment of wood meant for handicrafts. A mixture of sodium pentachlorophenate and boric acid and borax provide a good protection against all organisation, viz, stain, fungi, rotting fungi and insects and are not harmful to human beings. Based on the laboratory trials on handicap timbers, the composition recommended should contain 0.5% Na PCP. (1% boric acid and 1% borax 2.5% sol.). Since it is a water soluble bleachable type of wood preservative, it is recommended only for inside locations. Treatment of wood with such preservation is generally given to partially dried wood through dip treatment of solution over semi-finished handicraft products.
PROSPECTS FOR EXPORTS

Ideally the Handicrafts that should be focused for exports should be Bell metal Crafts, Wood Crafts, Cane and Bamboo products and Fibre products.

In addition to traditional Export Markets, new markets like Japan, South Asia and the Middle East should be explored.

Catalogues containing new designs may be kept in the offices of the co-operative societies, Arts and Crafts Emporia, Khadi Bhavans and tourist centers. Artisans tours to centers of ancient and modern art may be arranged and help given for the same.
Exhibitions should be conducted, co-sponsored by Tourism Industry of Kerala.

AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study was more or less concentrated on the export of Handicrafts from Kerala. There is a lot of scope for doing future research on similar crafts in the neighbouring states also. The impact of globalisation has made the industry realize the strength and weakness of standing alone in a huge market place. There is scope for doing further research work in areas like manufacturing, product development, labor management, working conditions etc.