PREFACE

Handicrafts play a vital role in the economic life of any country. Indian Handicrafts are custodians of a rich cultural heritage. Handicrafts offer solution to India which is characterised by unemployment and foreign exchange crunch.

Handicrafts are labour-intensive and are more suitable to the country like India where the crying need is for rapid increase in employment and production of goods which need the least amount of capital. Thus, the Handicrafts industry which is essentially a small scale cottage industry is not only helping to solve social and economic problems of the artisans but also becoming a large earner of valuable foreign exchange for the country.

The industry is currently providing employment to more than three million artisans. Hardly is there a village or a city of any importance without artisans and craftsmen. The industry is both rural and urban. It transcends sectarian, linguistic and communal barriers. Therefore, the problem of the handicrafts industry is that of the premier home industry national in its significance, cosmopolitan in its range and heterogeneous in its character.
However, handicrafts have not received as much attention as they deserve. The Government agencies are not giving financial filip to Handicrafts industry to the required extent. The performance of the existing institutional infrastructure both for financing and marketing of handicrafts is far from satisfaction. Artisans are depending on the middlemen for raw materials, finance and market for the finished products because of their illiteracy, ignorance and poverty.

Marketing determines the survival and success of any business unit. Marketing organisation is necessary for the realisation of organisational objectives. However, it is not possible for all the business units to have a well-structured marketing network. The large scale industries with abundant financial and other resources may be able to establish an efficient marketing organisation of their own; but to the small scale and cottage industries, it is not possible to have such an organisation owing to resource crunch. Handicraft units, which are mostly run by individuals with sole proprietary form of organisation can ill-afford to have separate and well-organised marketing system. Usually, the artisans have little market intelligence and market information relating to their products. The artisans in handicraft industry
give little importance to the vital marketing function. Thus, marketing is a neglected function in handicrafts.

The emphasis in marketing today is on the consumer needs. The artisans in handicrafts adopt production oriented selling concept rather than marketing concept. Consumer research in handicrafts is conspicuous by its absence. The success of handicrafts depends on how well the artisans can produce the articles in keeping with the tastes and preferences of consumers.

Hence, a study on handicrafts covering such aspects as socio-economic conditions, organisation, human resource, production, finance, marketing and consumer behaviour will go a long way in helping the formulation of policies and strategies for the development of handicrafts taking into consideration its potentiality in employment generation and foreign exchange earnings.

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