

Understanding The Nexus Between Unemployment And Capitalism: A Study Of Local Handicraft Industry In Jammu And Kashmir

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Abstract

Capitalism as a system seems to be incapable of solving its unemployment problem in the contemporary era. It keeps generating long-term joblessness, punctuated by spikes of recurring short-term extreme joblessness. It has been stated that capitalism has had a significant impact on the local handicrafts industry because local handicrafts goods are very expensive and require more labour while machine-made goods are cheaper, require less labour, and are more economical. Moreover, the paper attempts to determine how far local handicraft industries have been impacted by capitalism, specifically in Jammu and Kashmir state, and as well as how far it has resulted in unemployment for local handicrafts. The proposed outcome of this article while examining the viewpoint from various stakeholders especially, handicrafts, entrepreneurs, other experts in the field, would be a comprehensive policy paper encompassing the aforementioned research objectives. To achieve these objectives the analysis will be conducted within the broad parameters of survey research by using two of the most convenient research techniques of data collection, namely questionnaire, and interview. Moreover, owing to the limitations effectuated by the Covid-19 pandemic, mailed questionnaires, and telephonic interviews would become a preferred choice to get the information about this research work

Keywords: capitalism, unemployment, technology, Handicrafts, Industry.

Introduction

Global policymakers, researchers, academics, politicians, and social activists have given capitalism, and particularly its effects, a lot of attention. This notion underwent significant expansion following the Industrial Revolution. Economic, social, and cultural development benefit from capitalism as a result of industrialization and urbanisation [Kautsky, Karl 2018]. More recently, and perhaps more clearly, the focus has been on the detrimental effects of capitalism, which undoubtedly destroyed local and indigenous cultures, indigenous and traditional knowledge and skills, local traditional occupations, local social capitals, and a local management system, all of which pose a threat to local identities. Capitalism has a wide range of impacts on Jammu and Kashmir also. Numerous observers noted that while capitalism often benefits wealthy nations, it often has significant detrimental effects on emerging and undeveloped nations. Impacts of Capitalism on Local Handicraft Industries, these wealthy nations frequently export their technologies, productions (both material and non-material),

culture (such as customs, values, education, meals, music, etc.), and communication technology to the emerging and impoverished nations. As a result, these developing and underprivileged nations had no choice but to import those goods, in order to advance their culture. The undeveloped and developing nations' dependence on the developed nations grew as a result of this trend. The overabundance of goods and products created in industrialised nations and made available to local populations with the use of mass communication tools has significantly impacted the local cultures, which are heavily founded on tradition, religion, folk art, and peculiar local identity. [Islam and Burmester 2020].

According to a UN assessment, the number of artisans in India has decreased by at least 30% over the previous three to four decades, with many joining the ranks of casual workers and the informal sector. [Scrase, T.J 2003]. However, a report prepared by N. Biswas report, the Imphal, Manipur, "Keithel," a traditional market operated and managed by women, is under siege. The Manipuri ladies offer their numerous hues of hand-woven clothing here. According to the report, indigenous women's markets and production hubs are being driven out of the Northeast by forces of globalisation and privatisation that are supported by the hegemony of the state apparatus.[Biswas, 2006]. Both capitalism and globalisation encouraged mergers and acquisitions of regional and local enterprises, compelling large regional and local companies to merge with multinational organisations in the nations that are already at a greater level of technological and economic development. The local identity has finally been undermined by this process. It appears that these companies' internationalisation has opened doors for locally qualified workers who have gained international status but are still somehow unique to their own local culture due to their ability to adapt, allowing them to access a global market, even if they do so under the guise of a multinational brand. Numerous studies have shown that developing and underdeveloped nations struggle to benefit from capitalism and globalisation because of a lack of public awareness, low levels of education and skill, a lack of investments, mass poverty and overpopulation, an unequal distribution of resources, political influence, the effects of climate change, and natural disasters. In addition, this leads to hegemony, cultural diffusion, and dependency. [Allen, T and Skelton, T 2005].

Tirthankar Roy presented a thorough history of the handloom weaving business in India to refute and reevaluate the historical argument that the competition from machine-produced textiles led to the demise of the nation's handicrafts. It demonstrates how handcrafted items and labour of the highest calibre contributed to the development of modern India and how highly skilled, handcrafted textiles outlasted the competition on a big scale. But in the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the creativity and skill of hand-crafted items from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) are not competing with those manufactured elsewhere in the globe due to capitalism and globalization's growing influence. There is evidence that the majority of these regional traditional vocations are disappearing from society as a result of industrial production, and this creates one of the difficulties for the local handicrafts. [Dar Mudasir 2020]. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir handicraft industries do not get any kind of benefits from Capitalism and in many cases the people rather lose their indigenous skills-based occupations like, Embroidery, Shawls, Crewels, Namda, Chain stitch, wood Carving, Paper-machie, Costume, Jewelry, Kanishwals and carpets.

Dependence and Problems of Artisans

The representation of a nation's or region's culture and traditions through handicrafts is crucial. In a very simple way, they also explain puzzles and queries about a certain region's history. The rich traditional art, heritage, and culture, as well as the skills and talents related to people's history and way of life, are all greatly preserved by handicrafts. In terms of economic growth, handicrafts are crucial. They offer an abundance of employment opportunities, sometimes at minimal cost, and they have the potential to be a significant source of foreign income. Jammu and Kashmir are known around the world for their exquisite craftsmanship, beautiful aesthetics, and graceful designs. Handicraft industry is also good source of income [M.R Shah 2016]. According to the website for the Directorate of Handicrafts, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, the handicraft industry today employs roughly 3.50 lakh people both directly and indirectly, of whom 2.50 lakh artisans are directly reliant on handicraft for a living. According to the department, handicrafts currently generate about 1700 crores in foreign exchange each year. [Jandkhandicraft 2023]. But gradually people are lifting this profession because low money returns. The most important crafts of handicraft industry of Kashmir that hold a significant share in overall production and export are embroidery, Shawls, Crewels, Namda, Chain stitch, Papier Machie, Costume, Jewelry, Kanishwals, and Carpets. The department's statistics may look encouraging, but the majority of the artists, craftspeople, and weavers really come from socioeconomically disadvantaged classes and live-in poverty. The infrastructure problem is the main issue the J&K handicrafts sector is facing, and the lack of financial literacy is the other major issue the entrepreneurs in the J&K handicrafts sector are facing. Financial literacy refers to the ability and knowledge to understand personal finance and it encompasses an understanding of how to use savings, credit, and other forms of financing. unable to reach enough international investors, the primary factor in luring clients is the packaging. The product's packaging has a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, and low pay is the aggravating element behind the handicrafts industry's underwhelming performance. These are the elements that have caused the handicraft business in Jammu and Kashmir to collapse. In addition, capitalism is now giving individuals these facilities in order to market their goods, which has had a significant negative influence on the local handicraft sector.

Common people view on Handicraft industries

the common people's perception in general with the onset of industrialization in India had brought about a great deal of positive changes, such as the introduction of the railway, which allows us to commute between locations, the introduction of machines that reduce the workload of humans, etc. However, the impact of industries has also had a negative effect on our handicraft workers because they were forced to leave their homes in order to work in industries, they are exploited by industrialists, and they are subject to other forms of abuse. In Jammu and Kashmir, the handicraft industry does not profit from capitalism, and many times, people lose their traditional skill-based jobs as a result. Some people believed that the Industrial Revolution resulted in the loss of thousands of jobs for labourers. Due to the high demand for industrial goods due to their low cost and easy availability, the demand for handmade goods started to decline, which resulted in the loss of many jobs for handicraft workers. Additionally, as the demand for handmade goods started to decline, people who made a living through these items

were forced to move from rural to urban areas in order to provide for their families. To work in the industries, they were forced to leave their homes and native countries. [Jain Aarjav2020]. According to some experts, the market is seeing intense rivalry on the international scene as a result of the onset of globalisation and the availability of more diverse and reasonably priced items. These goods are frequently seen as conventional, outmoded, and contrary to contemporary trends. Less has been done to change the perception of Jammu and Kashmir's handicrafts and to increase consumer understanding of the history and cultural identity connected to these products. Some people also believed that one problem facing exporters is that their inventory is gradually becoming out of style.

Results: Impacts of Capitalism on Handicraft Industries

The manufacturing and production of commodities have seen tremendous transformation in the last three decades. Capitalism has expanded markets throughout Asia and the rest of the world, making traditional products made by labour-intensive local craftspeople fiercely competitive. Additionally, mass-produced goods satisfy the shifting consumer needs. For the underprivileged and marginalised craftspeople, this has led to a variety of issues. The majority of handicrafts are made locally in households and villages. These goods' intricate design is the result of painstaking handwork. These crafts are the main source of income for highly skilled artists, who labour on them for the majority of their waking hours. However, as a result of globalisation and liberalisation, low-quality manufactured goods are replacing handcrafted ones. India's artisans confront many challenges because to labourer exploitation, hybridization, and duplication of handicrafts. The loss of client-patron rights compels them to investigate the new professional setting and find new means of subsisting. The global market surpasses the conventional method of generating such things as more consumers desire instantaneous finished goods. To cater to the shifting tastes of consumers, one craft is frequently converted into numerous distinctive items. Globalization and capitalism harm the local market. The commercialization of intricate handicrafts must result in them becoming a global product, resulting in large corporations gaining market control. [J. Lavya and S. Archana 2013].

Getting back to the paper's main theme, Kashmiri handicrafts are recognised for being exceptional in both their beauty and riches. Due to the growing influence of capitalism and globalisation, handcrafted goods from Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) cannot compete with those produced elsewhere in the world in terms of artistry and technical prowess. There is evidence to support the idea that the bulk of these traditional regional occupations are vanishing from society as a result of industrial manufacturing, which puts pressure on local handicrafts. In Jammu and Kashmir, the handicraft industry reaps no economic rewards from capitalism, and many people would prefer to give up their craft-based jobs altogether.

As a result, a sizable portion of Jammu and Kashmir's population of artisans lacks formal education and is illiterate. Again, poverty increases their vulnerability. As a result, the majority of artists these days opt to change careers rather than continue with their inherited job. Many people who were weavers in Srinagar, particularly women weavers, are switching to other professions, according to interviews I recently conducted with them. It has been noted that nowadays, many everyday crafts are being displaced by low-cost finished products created by

machines. Plastic plates, jugs, and other objects made of clay are being replaced with leather-made chappals and sandals. According to a local newspaper article, many small-scale industries in Jammu and Kashmir are currently experiencing severe difficulties and are unable to compete with Chinese firms that have flooded the region's market with their affordable goods.

Results from interviews

A person who was skilled at weaving Kani shawls recently gave it up to become a full-time three-wheeler driver, according to a research interview with an unnamed subject. He didn't much enjoy his decision. But he claims that there was no other choice. Low returns were the primary factor in my decision to leave this field, he claims. I worked as a weaver for more than 13 hours every day, but I only made about Rs 250. Driving a three-wheeler and working half those hours now earns me Rs 1100–1600.

There were 410 families in the lovely village of Kanihama, which is near the Srinagar-Gulmarg route, and was the site of another interview the researcher did. The community produces 450 to 750 shawls annually with handicrafts accounting for 95% of its workforce. On a loom, small needles are used to weave Pashmina yarn into kani shawls. Depending on the fabric and the complexity of the pattern, each shawl might cost anywhere from Rs 65, 000 to Rs 3.5 lakh or more. Many young people from Kanihama and nearby villages have recently left the handcraft industry because of alternatives provided by the private sector, in this they said minimum hours work and maximum returns as compared to handcraft work.

Another interview the researcher conducted was with a 29-year-old man who is still working as a kani shawl weaver, a job he really wishes to leave. He claims that my father also worked in this field. The returns were good back then. I therefore made the decision to earn a life from it. All I have left now are regrets, he claims.

Further, another interview conducted by the researcher that is in Gadkhud, in Kashmir's Bandipore district, is around 20 kilometres from Srinagar and has become known as the carpet village. Nearly 95% of the 400 or so houses in this area have looms at home. However, in recent years, its youth have relocated to Srinagar, the country's summer capital, in quest of employment and labour in various business industries. A carpet salesman from Gadkhud claims that whereas labour employment pays him between Rs. 500 and Rs. 700 per day, including meals, a carpet weaver only makes about Rs. 100.

Conclusion

Based on several interviews with people who worked in the handcraft industry, including those who worked with needlework, shawls, crewels, namdas, chain stitches, papier machie, costumes, jewellery, and carpets. This study demonstrated how capitalism has a negative impact on traditional handcraft enterprises. Due to technological advances, rising real estate values, or social and cultural changes, Jammu and Kashmir's traditional crafts and their associated professions are increasingly vanishing or disappearing from society. We can observe that capitalism and globalisation have produced tensions in traditional handcraft businesses if we weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the interviews the researcher conducted. However, Jammu and Kashmir are developing a strong entrepreneurial culture that is

contributing to the preservation of the diversity and vitality of the local cultures. However, as society transitions from its rural roots to an urban one, the economic variety impacts this traditional handicraft, which results in the loss of cultural richness. Artisanship and small business models are widely used throughout the region. The concentration of people in big cities gives this process an entirely new dynamic. Real estate values begin to play a significant role as urbanised areas become more densely populated, pushing small businesses to the outskirts of the city and making room for brands and services supported by mass communication channels to take the place of the previously present significant diversity of small businesses. Together with technical development and changes in mass communication, these forces have recently played a crucial role in developing global values in Jammu and Kashmir. As was previously mentioned, the natural desire for entrepreneurship is emerging in Jammu and Kashmiri culture, and many traditional professions have undergone transformations as a result of cultural changes brought on by the availability of new technologies, communications advancements, and investment opportunities in businesses with dominant Western values. This situation has occurred frequently in Jammu and Kashmir, a region where the impoverished have traditionally worked in handicraft industries but are now facing significant difficulties. The effects of capitalism and globalisation on regional handicraft industries have resulted in numerous issues related to technological displacement as a result of regional shifts. In this essay, we show that all local handicraft industries have been in decline because, on the one hand, capitalism affects these sectors' output in terms of quantity and quality, and on the other, it alters people's preferences. For example, Jammu and Kashmir based handicraft profession like Shawls, Crewels, Namda, Chain stitch, wood Carving, Costume, Jewelry, Kanishwals and carpets now these handicrafts are being replaced by machine made. So, it can be said that capitalism has a significant impact on the local handicrafts industry because local handicrafts goods are very expensive and require more labour while machine-made goods are cheaper, require less labour, and are more economical. As per the some of the reports given by different authorities, we will get the clear picture of how global shifts particularly capitalism have impacted the Jammu and Kashmir local Handicraft industry like, according to the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industries, the Valley had unsold handicrafts worth Rs 600 crore in June. In 2016–17, handicrafts from Jammu and Kashmir were exported for a total of Rs 1,151.12 crore. These products included carpets, shawls, papier mache, crewel, and wood carvings. In 2017–18 and 2018–19, respectively, these expenses fell to Rs 1,090.12 crore and Rs 917.93 crore, Data from the Department of Handicrafts and Handloom show that over the last five years, exports have dropped by more than 45%. Because handicrafts cannot reach potential customers in West Asia and Europe, their rates and output have declined, the state's employment rate has been influenced by the damage to the handicraft industry. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, J&K had the highest unemployment rate among all states and union territories for October at 22.2%, which was higher than the 7.1% national average and finally, according to an estimate made by the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry on January 20, 2020, a total of 144,500 individuals have lost their jobs in Kashmir during the period of the COVID-19 in the handicraft and tourism sectors alone from August 5, 2019.

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