

**Marketing Orientation of Tribal Handicrafts with Special Reference to K-B-K Districts**

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**Abstract**

The beauty and charm of tribal handicrafts products has always been a source of attraction to many Indians and foreigners customers. It can be said as; the tribal handicrafts are the visible symbol of tribal culture. Likewise the Undivided K-B-K Districts of Odisha, is famous for its tribal people, tribal handicrafts which reflects the aboriginal culture of these areas. The tribal of these areas posses specialized skills in the form of handicraft, which pass from one generation. The tribal artisans of this area are very sensitive to their typical culture and less prone to change. With the passage of social and economic transformation, the tribal artisans have to struggle for their sustainability. The tribal artisans who are the true propagators and harbingers of growth of tribal culture, has forced to left their profession and migrated to urban areas for earning their livelihood. Several government endeavours to upscale handicraft sector has not resulted desirably. In this juncture a marketing orientation in a piecemeal basis could be a solution to the problem faced by the tribal artisans.

The present study is a sincere attempt to find out various problems and prospects of tribal handicraft sector in the undivided K-B-K Districts of Odisha by reviewing the available literature comprehensively, and to conceive for a marketing orientation programme in a piecemeal basis, which could be an approach for sustainability for the tribal artisans.

**Keywords:** Tribal Handicrafts, Aboriginal Culture, Marketing Orientation.

**Introduction**

The culturally rich land of Odisha has earned a unique image for its tribal handicrafts across the world. The handicrafts of odisha specifically undivided Koraput-Bolangir-Kalahandi (K-B-K) reflects the deep-rooted aboriginal culture of this locality. Handicrafts are mostly defined as "Items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools, and are generally artistic and/or traditional in nature. They are also objects of utility and objects. Traditional handicrafts of the tribe of India are generally prepared out of resources available in their immediate ecology, where they inhabit. (Jayant S, 2007), "Traditional knowledge applied in the entire process of preparation of most of the handicrafts, as per the needs of these people, is inherited from their forefathers." The tribal handicraft products not only have great potential for growth both in production and export, but can also direct to make bigger generation of employment opportunities in the rural areas of the country.

According to the Constitution "Any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community as deemed under article 342 are Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of the Constitution". Thus, the groups which are in the Scheduled list of the President of India are defined as Scheduled Tribes. (Harikrishnan U, Suryakrishna, 2015), "Article 46 of the Constitution of India lays down that the state shall help with special care the educational and economic welfare of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of the scheduled tribes and shall keep them from social injustice and all forms of misuse. In pursuance to the above section, the rapid socio-economic development of

schedules tribes (STs) has been a subject of concern of the government since Independence. ”

There are approx 64 tribes in the state of Odisha. Especially tribes of KBK (Undivided Koraput, Bolangir and Kalahandi) district of Odisha have got unique identity for its tribal population and lifestyle. They are very sensitive to their typical culture and less prone to change. The KBK districts account for 19.79 per cent population and 30.59 per cent geographical area of the state. Ninety percent population of this region still lives in villages. This region is one of the poorest regions in the country. As per an estimate (based on 1999-2000 NSS data), 87.14 percent people in this region are Below Poverty Line (BPL). In KBK districts Handicrafts is known for its heritage of Art and Craft, which contribute a lot for development of the rural economy.

In Orissa in general and KBK districts in particular, Popular handicrafts such as stone carving, wood carving, silver filigree, applique, patta painting, coir, dokra casting bell metal works, dari weaving, iron casting etc. Provided livelihood and gainful employment to the rural poor. Next to agriculture, handloom and handicraft provided employment to the people of the state.

These localized handicraft sector can be transformed into livelihood opportunities and the products can be commercially marketed. The development of tribal handicraft sector would have been an initiative for holistic sustainable business model, which not only ensures fair and equitable remuneration to the artisans for their products but also propagate their cultural knowledge and traditional skills in the contemporary milieu.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To find out the problems faced by the tribal handicraft sector in the K-B-K District of Odisha.
2. To identify the prospects for growth of tribal handicraft sector and to suggest marketing orientation approach for its sustainability.

### **Review of Literature**

In our review work special emphasis has been given on problems and prospects lies in the tribal handicraft sector with special reference to K-B-K regions. For this various reports and literature has been reviewed, however scholastic contribution to address the problem, specifically to K-B-K districts is limited, hence it need for a fresh look from all corner.

(NABCONS, 2007), “Rural Handicraft in K-B-K region will continue to be a combination of household economy with other traditional economies like crop production, dairy etc. the system make them better insulated from the likely risk under both the sectors. As agriculture is more seasonal, Handicraft make the household better employed during off-season. The production system makes them tied down to the villages and therefore fewer opportunities to probe into the market with their smaller volume of Handicraft. However, the emerging concepts of Cooperative societies, SHGs and their Federations and the concept of Clusters, perhaps bring in better institutionalization process.”

(SEEDS, 2006), “The tribal handicrafts are specialized skills which are passed on from one generation to another and these handicrafts are means of livelihood of the artisans. However, in absence of any organized activity in this sector and the products not being adequately remunerative, there is a possible likelihood of the artisans taking up alternate livelihood options (which may involve migration as well). In such a case this age-old activity will die its own death. At this stage it is very imperative to understand the problems faced by this sector and suggest the strategies for development of tribal handicraft based on which certain policy level interventions need to be taken by the government to sustain the traditional tribal handicrafts.”

(Bharati, 2005) express that the satisfactory performance in marketing of handicrafts could

be possible due to the special interest taken by central as well as State Government to boost up the export of handicraft article and the qualitative performance of the artisans.

(Shetty, 2009) has mentioned about business to business directories were created in order to meet the demand of the consumers and outline presences of handicrafts, is required to make

easier for consumers to buy their gift items and for manufacturers and artisans to reach out to them.

(Arindam, 2010) has expressed though Tunisia online news about the importance of handicraft sector in the economic development as well as its role in strengthening the cultural identity, heritage preservation which contributes to the overall development , creating job, opportunities ,demand creation for the artisans and promoting exports.

(NABCONS, 2007), “KBK region is heterogeneous; and culturally as well as linguistically they are more or less homogenous. Tribes like Khondas, Paroja, Koyas and Saoras dominate it. The long tradition, created its own impressions in KBK with Tribal Arts and Culture on locally available materials. As livelihood was smooth, with less wants, the people engaged in Handicraft did not look into the marketing part. This role they left to the traders who operated through the middlemen for the collection of their choice item from the Weekly Mandis and occasional festival-cum-trade fairs.”

(Planning Commission Report, 2009), “Due to poor marketing knowledge and bargaining power of Kutia Kandha, they are not able to get a remunerative price of the Siali leaves.

On the other hand Dongria Kandha are frequently cheated in selling of fruits and NTFPs when they come down to the plain area. It is difficult for Dongria Kandha to take these items back as a result they sell same at a lower price.”

(NABCONS, 2007), “Elected Governments and their Development Departments also could not address the subject in required size and spirits as they too had limitations in their resources, manpower, skill, aptitude and the reach.”

(Planning Commission Report, 2009), “Despite State Government’s continued efforts for the development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups right from Fifth Five Year Plan, there are villages among the Kutia Kandha, Lanjia Saora and Dongria Kandha that have not been covered under micro project. The conditions of such villages are worse even as on date.”

(Planning Commission Report, 2009), “The inadequate participation of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in the activities/programmes is low due to factors like; rigidity of social and cultural values prevailing among them, low level of literacy and educational status is very low among the selected Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in general and Dongria Kandha and Kutia Kandha in particular. As a result variation is found between planning and implementation of the project.”

(Mohapatra S, 2011), “Marketing is very essential for a business, which is the main and growing problem in this business. Govt. should take necessary action regarding this problem. An artist individually can also solve this problem by opening websites and through advertisement and for that he should.”

### **Major Problems at a Glance in K-B-K Region relating to Tribal Handicraft**

1. Craftsmen looked at their profession with less confidence and commitments.
2. The youth migrated in search of employment and other opportunity especially to urban area.

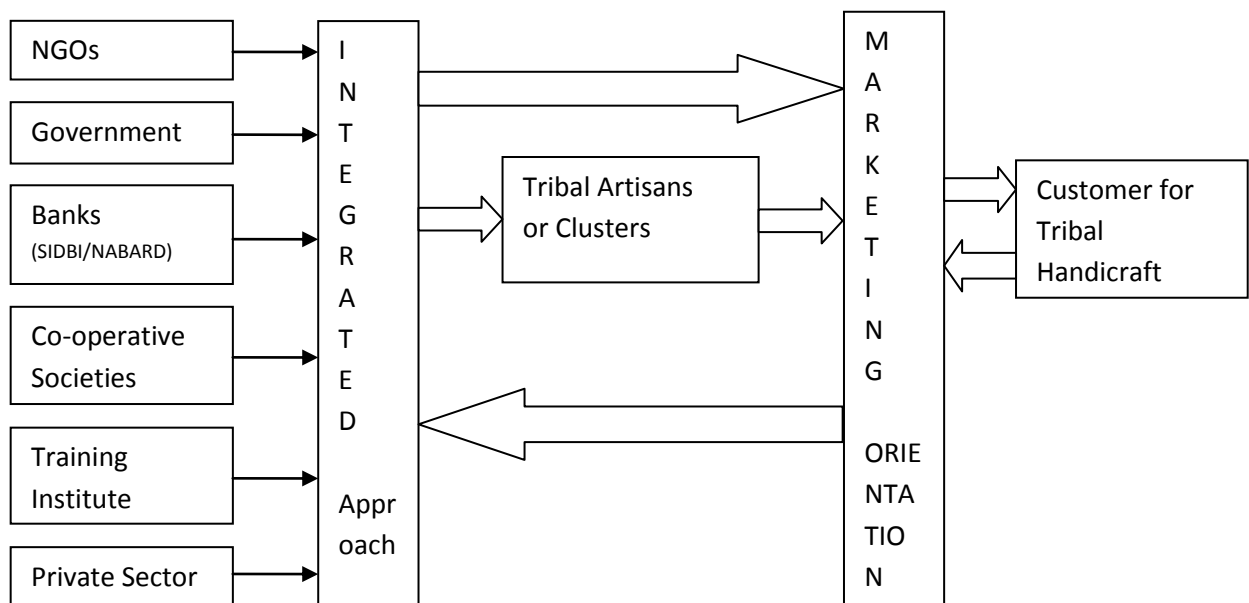
3. The use and throwaway culture is gaining more ground and therefore to capture the new market, suitable products are to be designed.
4. The Craftsmen were shy in exploring the market. This might be due to inadequate market information, capital, technology, skill and the desire.
5. The handicrafts made by the tribal of K-B-K region are not cost effective.
6. Tribal artisans never ponder on product improvisation and capacity building with the change in the taste and preference of the consumer.
7. Marketing is the main problem and stands as a barrier for the promotion of this craft.

**Prospects for Growth of Tribal Handicraft Sector in K-B-K Region**

1. Artisans in general, are yet to develop regular and direct contact with the market, especially with the emerging larger markets where the effective demands for Handicraft
2. To capture the new market, suitable products need to be designed. In addition to that eco-friendly carry bag with paper, jute, sisal fiber, coir, palm leaves, cheap variety handloom cloth etc., may have good demand in the market.
3. Countries conscious of environmental factors will continue to encourage eco-friendly products, especially from Handicraft sector. As KBK region is having a variety of products and production system spread over to hundreds of villages, the potential if properly tapped, can meet the global demand of eco-friendly products.
4. The emergence of digital economy can be a platform to tap the potential of tribal handicraft sector through e-tailing portal.
5. R&D initiatives in the form of PPP (Public-Private-Partnership) mode could be highly solicited in the form of product up-gradation and capacity building in enabling them to make use of the emerging larger markets

**Need for Marketing Orientation**

Marketing is indispensable function to be carried out for up-scaling and sustaining this sector as this sector is the only promising sector after agriculture, which foster the development of the tribal economy. Hence a marketing orientation, with a mutually benefited systematic integrated approach is the need for the hour, which could bind the integrated effort of all the stake holder involved in this sector and resulted in a win-win situation.



The entire stake holder involved in promoting the tribal handicraft sector should develop their integrated approach to solve the problem, the approach should not only help the tribal artisans in exploring the potential market but also help in developing the marketing orientation for the tribal handicrafts sector. In addition to above they should develop a good marketing information system and the information flow should be in a reciprocal basis from stake holder to consumer and from consumer to stakeholder via tribal artisans.

### **Conclusion**

In solving the prolonged problems in K-B-K region, and making tribal's self reliant marketing orientation is indispensable, however the marketing orientation should be taken as endeavour to address the issues in economic and social perspectives. In KBK region by increasing their income, sharpening their skill, addressing the product up gradation and enabling them to make use of the emerging larger markets, could all be done by involving all the stakeholders in developing integrated marketing orientation programme in a piecemeal basis.

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