



International Journal of Home Science

ISSN: 2395-7476
IJHS 2019; 5(2): 228-231
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www.homesciencejournal.com
Received: 22-03-2018
Accepted: 24-04-2018

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Assessing socio economic conditions of embroidery artisans in Barmer

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Abstract

India is known as a treasure of crafts; one of them is traditional embroideries, which mainly resides in rural areas. Every region in India has its own specialty in terms of crafts. Barmer located in Rajasthan is lesser explored area where beautiful and intricate embroideries are practiced by women artisans. These women mainly work in unorganized and informal sector where the nature of employment is temporary. There were many factors which are responsible for their poor living standards. Therefore researcher felt the need to study and record the socio economic status of women artisans in Barmer region, who are engaged in traditional embroidery craft. The study was carried out in villages such as Binjasar, Dhanau, Goronka Tala, Lohira, Mithrau and Premka Tala. The data was collected from 300 women artisans falling under the age group of 21-50yrs through purposive random sampling. Interview schedule was tool used to collect the data about the socio- economic status of women artisans. Result of the study revealed that majority of women artisans are living under very poor and vulnerable condition. Their monthly income was less due to which they had to borrow loans for fulfillment of their basic needs. They are being exploited due the presence of middle men in the marketing chain. Hence it is suggested that government need to provide financial support and awareness to the women artisans.

Keywords: Women artisans, socio economic status, Barmer, embroidery, traditional craft

Introduction

India is the place that is known for rich culture and different conventions. Almost every region of India has a distinct style of embroidery based on cultural history of the region. The ethnic hand embroidery is no longer the choice of occupation for the poor Indian artisans alone but is the weakness of the elite both in India and foreign markets. All the Indian regional embroideries have not made it to the international market due to lack of exposure to technology, marketing skills and competition.

Barmer in Rajasthan, is one such region which is needed to be explored for its beautiful and intricate embroidery craft. Barmer is the second largest district of Rajasthan and specialized in its production of beautiful embroidered products. The Barmer region is the home of very talented artisans live in scattered desert villages specializing in hand embroidery craft. There are more than 10000 skilled and semi-skilled artisans involved in the craft of hand embroidery and applique work.

The women folks of backward classes and Refugee Muslim Families have adopted embroidery as their main source of livelihood. At present they are dependent on job work provided to them by traders and exporters. Woman on an average earns Rs. 5 to 7 per day after working 5 to 7 hours daily. Except this there are lots of rejections because artisans have not been supervised properly at the time of production.

The Embroidery work of Barmer can be classified into 4 different types namely: Simple Thread Embroidery, Mirror Embroidery, Aari Work, and Applique Embroidery. Each category mentioned has its own specialty and the production process of each category is different from the other.

These women artisans are not getting regular employment, meaningful wages and experience social discrimination. Therefore this research was conducted to assess the socio economic status of omen artisans of embroidery craft in Barmer Rajasthan.

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Objective of the study

In general, this study is an attempt to assess the socio economic status of the women artisans of embroidery craft in Barmer, Rajasthan. Particularly it tries to know the family background, educational qualification, employment status of the women artisans involved in the embroidery work.

Review of Literature

Samanta (2015) conducted a study to record the socio economic status of dokra artisans in West Bengal. A sample size of 200 respondents were selected for the survey. Primary data was collected through the exhaustive field survey and secondary data was collected from published literature. The tools used for the data collection was structured interview schedule. The results revealed that majority of artisans were illiterate, living in nuclear family system, belong to poor section of the society as they were earning Rs. 4001-7000 per month which is very less amount to survive with family nowadays. Majority of artisans facing financial and indebtedness problems.

Socio economic condition of chikan workers of Kakori block in Lucknow was studied by Awasthi & Bisht (2017). Qualitative and quantitative research was conducted. The tool used for data collection was questionnaire was personal interview schedule. For selection of sample stratified random sampling method was used and 200 strata were interviewed to collect the data. The results indicated that Muslim community were engaged in this embroidery craft. The living conditions of artisans is poor and majority of them belongs to the age group of 30-40 years. The basis of payment was daily wages. Study also revealed that chikan embroidery workers were facing health issues in their eyes, back and legs because of their working style as well as working environment. Majority of artisans were illiterate and monthly income was less because of this they had to take loans from money lenders or banks for fulfilments of needle.

Sharma.B & Sezhiyan (2013) analysed the socio economic status of handicraft workers in Sikkim. This was an empherical study and data was analysed by statistical tools like simple percentage method. Major findings were that respondents were belonging to the age group of 26-25 years and half of the respondents have completed their study till secondary level of education. They were living in kachcha house and in joint family. The monthly income noted was Rs. 3000-4000 which was very low to survive in present scenario and to fulfil the basic needs of livelihood.

Selvan.T (2016), examined the socio economic status of bamboo handicraft workers. This study was descriptive. The data was collected from two hundred respondents and the tool used for the data collection was an interview schedule. Locale of the study selected was Kodium village in Tripura. Statistical package for social science (SPSS) package was used to analyse the data. The results concluded that artisans are working in un-organised sector are neglected by governmental organisations. Majority of artisans were facing issues related to education, health and working environment. They are living their life below poverty line due to various causes. They have to struggle for betterment of life on daily basis. There is a need for workable solution from government through government and NGOs.

Methodology

Methodology is an important part of research. This study is both qualitative and quantitative and therefore it has been

used primary and secondary data. The data for the study was collected through an interview schedule prepared on the basis of objective of research. Data was obtained from three hundred women artisans. Locale of the study was *dhanies* in Barmer Rajasthan namely *Mithadau*, *Bijrad*, *Navatala*, *Goharkatala*, *Chouthan*. Direct personal interview technique was used to collect the data from the respondents.

Result and Discussions

Education level

Table 1: Distribution of artisans according to education N= 300

S. No.	Qualification	Frequency (n)	Percentage
1	Graduation	0	0
2	Till 12 th Standard	0	0
3	Till 8 th Standard	13	4
4	Till 5 th Standard	17	6
5	Illiterate	270	90

The above table reveals, the education status of women artisans is very low. 90% of embroidery artisans were illiterate followed by 6% artisans who had completed their studies till 5th grade and 4% who had studied till 8th grade. The main causes behind the low literacy is poor financial condition and ignorance of parents towards the education of female child.

It was also noted that many women artisans learned to write their name with the help and support from NGOs to sign their documents related to embroidery craft.

Marital status of artisans

Table 2: Distribution of artisans according to Marital Status N= 300

S. No.	Marital Status	Frequency (n)	Percentage
1	Married	285	95
2	Un- Married	4	3.33
3	Widow	11	5

Marriage is one of the most important event in the human life, especially in Indian villages. It is believed that marriage makes the person more responsible towards family.

Table 2, shows that majority of women artisans (95%) were married and remaining (3.33%) were unmarried, whereas few (5%) women artisans were found to be widow.

However no cases of separation were found. In Barmer, there is a tradition of early marriage, usually a girl gets married at the age of 12-15 years.

Family composition of the artisans

Table 3: Distribution of artisans according to family composition, N= 300

S. No.	Type of Family	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Joint	16	5.3
2	Nuclear	284	94.6

It is evident from the Table 3 that majority of women artisans were living in nuclear family and remaining (5.3%) of total women artisans were living in joint family. However, these artisans live in *mauhalla* in which all the close relatives live nearby areas resulting the sense of security and can be with each other at the time of emergency.

Occupational status of family members of the women artisans

Table 4: Distribution of artisans according to Occupational Status N= 300

S. No.	Sources of income other than embroidery	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Carpenter	14	4.6
2	Agriculture & Animal Husbandry	89	29.6
3	Driver/ Transportation	21	7
4	Labour work	166	55.3
5	Tailor	10	3.3

Table 4 revealed that male members in the family of women artisans were engaged in various occupations. 55.3% of male members in the artisan's family are working as labor in Barmer, followed by 29.6% respondents who are associated with agriculture and cattle breeding for earning, 7% respondents were working as driver of trucks, tractor or auto

rickshaw in the city, 4.6% were working as carpenter and 3.3% as tailor.

Income of women artisans

Income through primary occupation

Table 5: Distribution of artisans according income sources, N= 300

Income through other sources			
S. No.	Monthly Income	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Rs.2001-3000	188	62
2	Rs.3001-4000	108	36
3	Rs.4001-5000	4	1.33
4	Rs.5001-6000	0	0

Table 5 indicates that, approximate monthly income was noted as Rs. 2000-3000 of 62% respondents through the primary source followed by 36% earning under the bracket of Rs. 3001- 4000. Only 1% of respondents were earning Rs. 4001-5000 per month which is insignificant in number.

From the total number of the respondents, 93.3% are doing job work for NGOs, followed 4.6%, and only 1% are employed as master artisans which is not a big number and 0.6% are practicing embroidery for domestic use. Though these artisans were not satisfied by the amount paid to them through NGOs.

Income through Embroidery craft

Table 6: Distribution of artisans according to income through embroidery, N= 300

Income through Embroidery			
S. No.	Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
1	Rs.1001-2000	64	21.3
2	Rs.2001-3000	215	71.6
3	Rs.3001-4000	17	5.6
4	Rs.4001-5000	4	1.33

The above table reveals 71% of women artisans fall under the bracket of Rs. 2001-3000 per month through the embroidery work given to them by NGOs. Followed by 21% artisans who are earning Rs. 1001-2000, 5.6 artisans earning Rs. 3001-4000 per month. Only 1% artisans are earning under Rs. 4001- 5000 per month who were noted as master artisans.

It was also noticed that, earning through the embroidery craft in villages of Barmer had become necessity for women artisans because of unavailability of suitable occupation for them and uncertain income was earned through primary source of income.

Nature of Employment

Table 7: Distribution of artisans according to nature of employment, N= 300

S. No.	Nature of Employment	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Employed as Master Artisan	4	1.33
2	Working for Master Artisan	14	4.6
3	Job Work for NGO	280	93.3
4	Other	2	0.6

Basis of Payment

Table 8: Distribution of artisans according to basis of payment, N= 300

S. No.	Basis of Payment	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Per Piece	246	82
2	Per Day	0	0
3	Weekly	54	18
4	Monthly	0	0

From the given table, it can be observed that majority of respondents that is 82% are being paid on per piece basis by the NGOs or middle men followed by 18% who gets payment on weekly basis.

It was reported by the artisans that they did not get justified amount of payment for their hard work they do, irrespective it is per piece or weekly basis payment. Also if the assignment is provided by NGOs is of completed due to some reason on time and up to the mark, they are charged fine as deduction in payment amount. It was also observed that the embroidery work provided to the artisans is not on permanent basis. Therefore, the income generated through embroidery as secondary source is also temporary in nature.

Description of embroidery artisans according to their debtness

Table 9: Distribution of artisans according to loan, N= 300

S. No.	Family under Loan	Frequency (n)	Percentage
1	Under Loan	154	51.33
2	Free from Loan	146	48.66

From the above table, it can be concluded that 51.33% of artisan's families are under the loan followed by 48.66% families who are free from loan.

The artisans were living in poor conditions. The level of income earned from both the primary and secondary sources was not satisfactory to run daily life with the family of minimum six members.

Lack of savings and financial crises forced them to take loan from bank, money lender and NGOs. They sometimes take advance payments from parties for fulfilling their need.

Type of house

Table 10: Distribution of artisans according to the type of house, N= 300

S. No.	Type of House	Frequency (n)	Percentage
1	Kachcha	200	67
2	Semi- Pucca	64	21
3	Pucca	36	12

From all the respondents 290 artisans have their own house, which was allotted to them after the India and Pakistan war in 1971. The type of house is divided into three categories: *kachcha* house, *semi pakka* house and *pakka* house. From the given figure it can be noted that 67% of the total respondents are living in *kachcha* house, followed by 21% living in semi *pakka* house. It was found that only 12% percent of the respondents are having *pakka* house.

Assets owned by embroidery artisans

Table 11: Distribution of artisans according to assets, N= 300

S. No.	Assets Owned by Artisans	Frequency
1	Own House	290
2	Cattle	38
3	Vehicle	18
4	Television	0
5	CD Player	0
6	Telephone/ Mobile	300

Of total respondents, 38 were having cattle which includes cow, buffalo and goats. They use them either for breeding occupation or dairy products. Followed by 18 artisans who own motorbike and bicycle for mobility from one place to another in the land of sand. Electronic gadgets- all the artisans were having mobile phones for communication (minimum one mobile in each family). None of them were having television, cd player etc. but few of them were having refrigerator of smallest size available to keep the this cool in the warm temperature of Thar desert.

Conclusion

It was found that all the women artisans of embroidery craft belong to *Meghwal* by cast. Socio economic status of the embroidery artisans showed that they belong to poor strata of the population. Average artisans belong to the age group of 41-50 years. Majority of them earn on per piece basis which make situation very difficult to live their livelihood. It was noted that Majority of women artisans were illiterate that is 90%. Their monthly household income was less due to which they have to borrow loans from banks and money lenders in order to fulfill their needs.

Government need to provide awareness among the artisans about the schemes and programmes to support financially which are established for these rural women artisans.

Government should organize training programmes for the rural women to understand and prepare the products according to the trends in the handicraft market. NGOs must also step forward in order to support and uplift the embroidery artisans of Barmer Rajasthan.

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