



SINDH HANDICRAFTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN

“A Case Study from District Tando Allahyar Sindh Pakistan”

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Abstract.

This study aimed at evaluating the socio-economic status of women; working to produce handicrafts products in comparison with other fields. The study has also examined the role of middle man and value of handicrafts in local and regional markets. It has adopted the quantitative research approach. Primary and Secondary both data sources are taken in this study. The study has found that mostly the women among the ages of 31 to 40 years are engaged in the handicrafts production work and about 97% respondents earn 3000 to 5000 as monthly income. The study has also found that about 72% of the respondent women are not educated and remaining is mostly primary passed. This study has not found any formal setup for handicrafts training for rural women in the research area.

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This study suggests educating the handicrafts producer for formal training about new techniques of handicrafts products, providing handsome value of their products, minimizing the role of middle man and to increase the access of producers to the handicrafts markets.

Key Words. Socio-Economic, Handicrafts, Women, Middle Man, Earning

Introduction.

Handicrafts are mainly understood as artisanal work and sometimes also called as artisan work. It is type of work through which various beautiful things are made by hand, using simple tools only. According to a definition by (UNESCO, October 1997)

“Artisanal products are those produced by artisans, either completely by hand, or with the help of hand tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. These are produced without restriction in terms of quantity and using raw materials from sustainable resources. The special nature of artisanal products derives from their distinctive features, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant.”

Handicrafts represent a key component of socio-economic life of any nation or ethnic group and also are part of culture but on other side handicrafts are not included in national accounts fully. Handicrafts present different socio-economic characteristic not only cultural dimensions. Socio-economic characteristics defines handicrafts sector as home-based industry with minimum resources and infrastructure to establish and it also cannot create large number of jobs. It uses available skills and raw material and product is less expensive than invested energy and required inputs. Income is also generated through handicrafts mainly in rural societies

either home or community based production which is mainly an essential source in agricultural communities in critical economic conditions (Richard, 2007). Handicrafts express a particular community, group or culture through unique expressions and local craftsmanship. Handicrafts possess artistic values though it is not necessary to use handicrafts for physical purposes (Silver & Kundu, 2012). The hallmark of the craftsmanship actually attracts masses by ensuring the functionality and beauty of objects. It is defined further by Indian Task Force on Handicrafts that handicrafts are the items mainly made by hand sometimes with use of simple tools, generally are traditional and artistic in nature. Handicrafts items include objects of utility and decoration objects (Jena, 2008). As per explanations by various mentioned studies above it can be understood that handicrafts are the products which are made by hand and also by help of simple tools. Those products are used in our daily life mainly for decoration purposes like the rug for decorating either drawing room floor or bed room floor, dolls for the little kids, wall mat hanged on the wall for presenting drawing room more beautifully etc. Handicrafts products are always unique in nature and design. The material used in handicrafts also reflects the artistic view and create feeling of attraction by appearance.

In Pakistan mainly women are engaged in handicrafts and in Pakistan's culture it is one of the customs to teach girls some craftworks. It is common practice in both educated and uneducated families (Makhdoom, Shah, & Bhatti, 2016). But uneducated families not only teach girls for customary purpose but also for earning purposes. As per current census data women population in Pakistan is 48.76% (Statistics, March 2017) and the study by (Makhdoom, Shah, & Bhatti, 2016) expresses that most of the women are good at handicrafts in Pakistan but their talent remains unrecognized and unproductive mainly because most of such women reside in rural and underdeveloped areas. Now a day the response of consumers is very unpredictable to

handicrafts but in many cases the producers and artisans are out of producing the market demand because they are out of touch to end market. However handicrafts products are becoming more globalized and commoditized with increased globalization and competition among producers has increased. In rural and semi-rural areas this sector produces a vast number of employments to craft persons and plays important role in country's economy too (Hashmi, 2012).

According to (Khan & Amir, February 2013) work and contribution of traditional artisan communities and value of their products cannot be denied in global market and their products cannot be isolated from global market trends also. Now handicrafts has become part of larger industry to influence economic contribution,

Pakistan has extremely divers in crafts products and those crafts are a potent expression of the skill and creativity of the artisans belonging to various regions of the country. Sindh is one of the province of Pakistan is known in the world for its different handicrafts and arts. Sindh is rich in heritage of traditional handicrafts and possesses a vast history over centuries. Sindhi rich heritage of traditional handicrafts has evolved over the centuries (Khan F. D., 2011).

Though handicrafts have been a source of pride and livelihood for Sindhi people over the centuries, the current study has taken District Tando Allahyar of Sindh a case study to evaluate the socio-economic status of women; working to produce handicrafts products in comparison with other fields and also to examine the role of middle man and value of handicrafts in local and regional markets.

Objectives of Study:

Main objectives of the study are as below

- To evaluate the socio-economic conditions of women handicrafts worker and level of earning.
- To know the role of middle man at local level and compare the average profit of producers and middle men.
- To find out the status of education, technical skills among the women and their access to local and regional market.

Review of Literature.

Handicrafts possess traditional values which express ethnic and cultural identities of a particular region. It goes from generation to generation to produce handicrafts products. In this modern and globalized age there are various factory products but still handicrafts have sustained own identity and value (Silver & Kundu, 2012). Handicrafts are one of the important production sector and export commodity of various developing countries. Now many opportunities have increased for artisans after increased interest of global goods in global market with rapid growth of international market. Handicrafts is yet a very wide sector where a clear and common definition of handicrafts still lacks but various attempts have made common characterization of handicrafts regarding its broad and general understanding (Mikkelsen & Hagen-Wood, 1998).

Handicrafts are only source of cultural identity or ecotourism but also open job opportunities for the people. Including other various challenges one of challenge is lack of easy access and

presence of artisan or produce in main and central market (Sirika, 2008). But according to study by (Jaitely, 2005) if the handicrafts production can be linked with central market and industrialization tools can be used than it can be part of main production industry and low-end profiting can be decreased.

As per study by (Khan & Amir, February 2013) another challenge is strong role of middle man which stop the craftsman and producers to earn more profit and to access to market. The reasons behind this include illiteracy, ignorance and poverty among craftsman. Mainly craftsman does not have direct access to get raw material, it also strengthen the role of middle man or agents. The study has found out that now a day craftsmen are trying to link them directly to main market, this approach can benefit both craftsman and market. Handicrafts in Sindh have been a major source of livelihood for millions of people which include women in majority. Handicrafts are mainly made by rural women inside their homes to contribute overall family income, mainly they contribute 50% of overall income. But the increased input cost, lack of easy access to raw material or credit and poor marketing networks have decreased the handicraft industry towards weaker positions (Shaikh, 2010).

In societies like Pakistan men are considered as bread earner so mainly the efforts of women are not counted and remain unrecognized. In the case of Pakistan a large number about 50% are women, engaged in informal job sector (Azhar, 2010). Handicrafts workers are ignored and discriminated mainly. There is need of serious attention towards artisans because they are symbol of cultural identities and also a profitable community (Wilkinson-Weber, 2004). According to a study at Badin of Sindh by (Makhdoom, Shah, & Bhatti, 2016) it is found that mainly handicrafts products are produced at home and sold locally, main markets are

approached only by middlemen. Handicrafts products are made by women in the province mainly but they don't get proper amount of earning as well as recognition.

Research Methodology.

The study is exploratory type of study and qualitative methods of study are used. There are various studies on the topic but this study has taken a village Tando Soomro of Tando Allahyar District of Sindh as a case study to find out the socio-economic conditions of women handicrafts worker, their level of education and technical skills and access to market. This paper is based on primary and secondary data source. For primary data sources 50 closed ended questionnaires were collected in the study which engaged women handicrafts workers. In secondary data sources previous related literature including research articles, reports, newspaper articles and books were studied as part of this research.

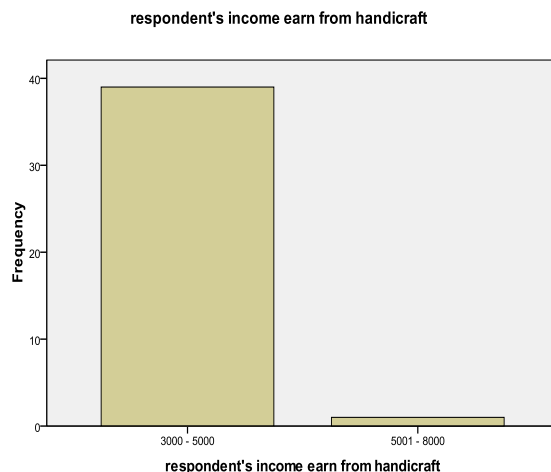
Results.

Table 01

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their *Income earned from Handicrafts*

Respondent's Income earned from handicrafts	Frequency	Percent
3000 - 5000	39	97.5
5001 - 8000	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: This data table has been used before by (Ali, Chandio , & Panhwar , 2013)

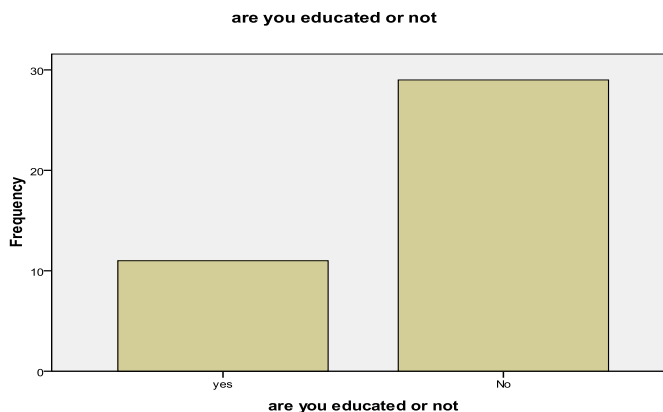


The distribution of respondents according to their income earned from handicrafts, 3000-5000 is 97.5% and 5001 to 8000 is 2.5%

Table 02

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their *Education*

Are you educated or not	Frequency	Percent
yes	11	27.5
No	29	72.5
Total	40	100.0



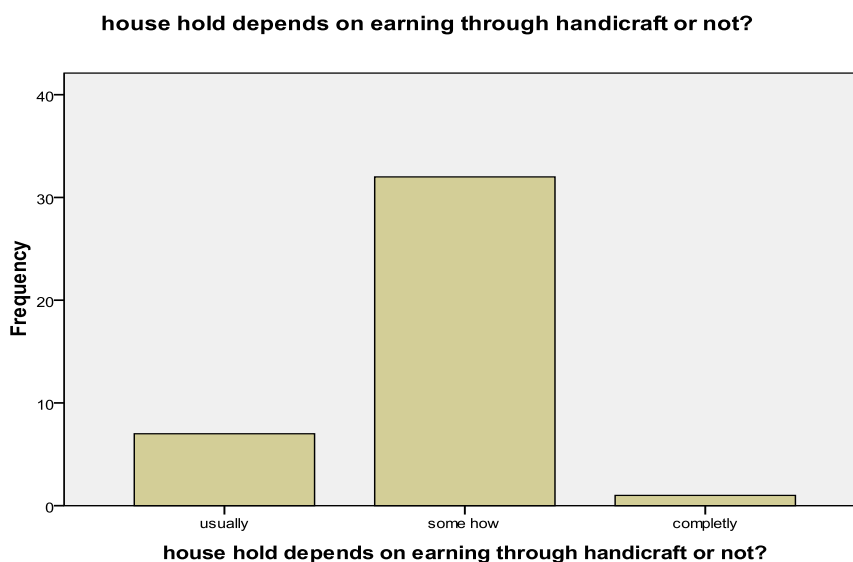
The distribution of the respondents according to their education that they are educated or not; yes is 27.5% and no is 72.5%.

Table 03

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their **Earning through Handicrafts**

House hold depends on earning through handicraft or not	Frequency	Percent
Usually	7	17.5
Some How	32	80.0
Completely	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Source. This data table has been used before by (Ali, Chandio , & Panhwar , 2013)



The distribution of respondents according to their earning through handicrafts; usually is 17.5%, somehow is 80% and completely is 2.5%.

Table 04

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their *Access to Market*

Have your access to market	Frequency	Percent
Never	40	100.0



The distribution of respondents according to their access to market is never. 100% have not access to market.

Table 05

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their *Profit can be earned by selling products directly to Market*

How much profit you earn, if you sell production direct to market	Frequency	Percent
20%	24	60.0
30%	14	35.0
50%	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

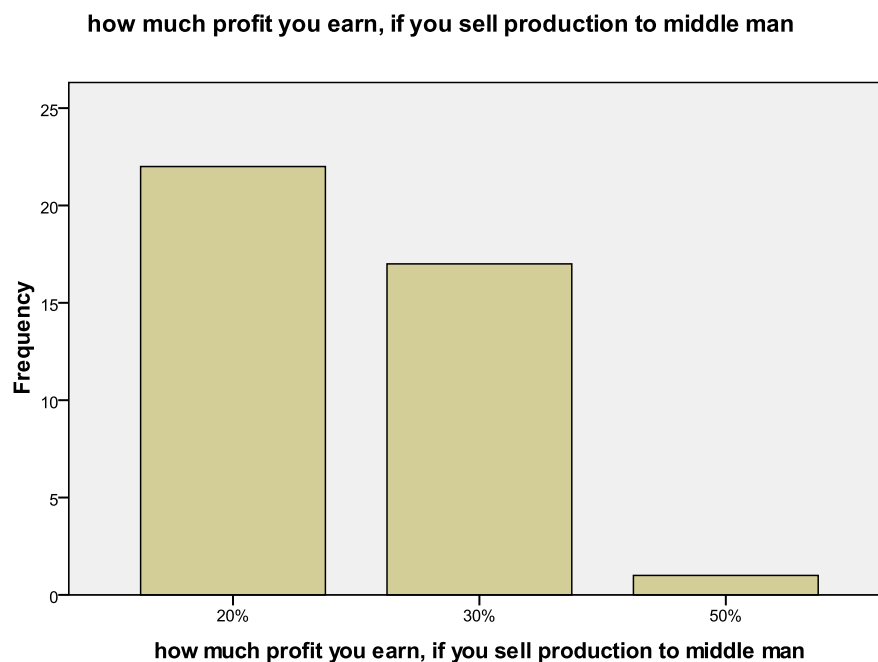


The distribution of respondents according to their earning of profit by selling production directly to market is 20% is 60%, 30% is 35% and 50% is 5%.

Table 06

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their *Profit can be earned by selling products to middle men*

How much profit you earn, if you sell production to middle man	Frequency	Percent
20%	22	55.0
30%	17	42.5
50%	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

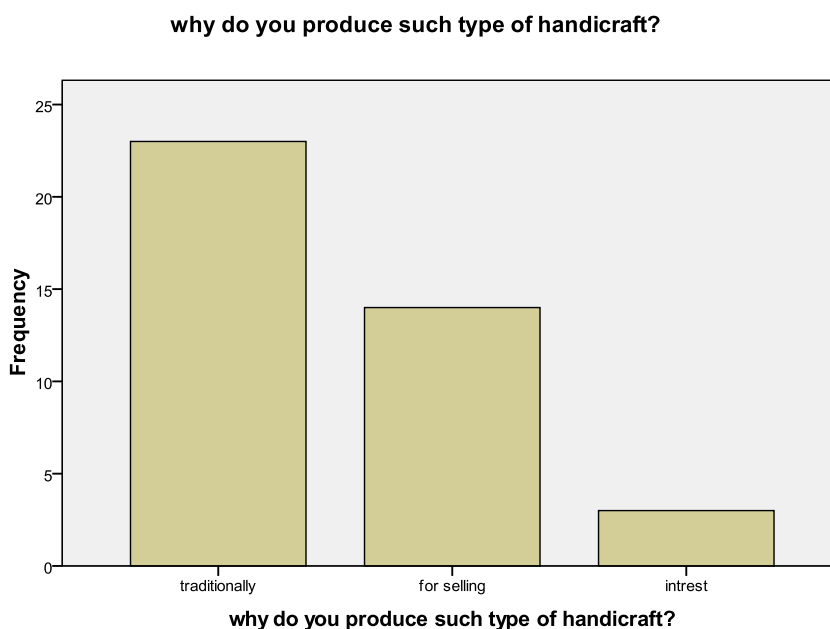


The distribution of respondents according to their earning of profit by selling production through middle man to market is 20% is 55%, 30% is 42% and 50% is 2.5%.

Table 07

Frequency and percentage distribution of respondents according to their *production of such type of handicraft*

Why do you produce such type of handicraft	Frequency	Percent
Traditionally	23	57.5
For selling	14	35.0
Interest	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0



The distribution of respondents according to their reason and type of producing such products is traditionally is 57.5%, for selling 35% and due to interest is 7.5%.

Conclusion and Recommendations.

Sindh is rich in heritage of traditional handicrafts and have a vast history over centuries. Sindhi heritage of traditional handicrafts has evolved and transferred from generation to generation. In Sindh mainly women are engaged in handicrafts production but their contribution is not recognized a formal because in societies like Pakistan women still fight for their equal access to resource and opportunities. This study has found that the women who are engaged in handicrafts production are not educated mainly; only 27.5 percent women were found educated. It is found by the study that the main purpose behind handicrafts production is not more economic; it is more traditional to continue the tradition, only 35 percent women

produce handicrafts products for selling purpose but on other hand a large number 57.5 percent only produce for traditional purpose. It is also found by the study that women who sell handicrafts products sometimes earn somehow, 97.5 percent of the respondents of study only earn 3000–5000 PKR per month. The study has found that women handicrafts producers have not easy access to market so strong role of middle is there.

The study recommends educating women handicrafts producers with formal and technical education and to aware them with innovative designs and today's market demands. It is also suggested to link handicrafts producer directly regional and national markets as well as to international market. It is suggested to organize healthy competitions among producers by organizing regional and local exhibitions or festivals. Study also suggests policy initiative for regarding wages or salaries and rates of various products as producers can earn their actual and uniform earning. It is also recommended by study vocational training institutions for women handicrafts producers for their education, awareness and engagement to mainstream markets.

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