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Vocational Opportunities In Clothing & Textiles

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“The life so short, the craft so long to learn” – Hippocrates

Abstract

Clothing is one of the basic needs of mankind. Clothing and Textiles pay attention in developing skills and to enable them to produce suitable clothing to meet demanding needs of the society. The wearing of clothing is a human characteristic and features most of human societies. The amount and type of clothing worn, depends on functional consideration such as need for covering of one's nakedness, warmth, safety, modesty and to reflect cultural and social meaning of clothing. On the other hand, a textile has traditionally meant “a woven fabric”. The term comes from a Latin word “textere” meaning to weave. A textile is therefore a cloth which is either woven by hand or machine. Fibres are the raw material for all fabrics into which cloths are sewn. Some fibres occur in nature as fine strands that can be twisted into yarns. These natural fibres come from plants, animals and minerals. Functionality is the primary purpose of clothing. Cloth enhances safety during hazardous activities, provides a barrier between the skin and the environment by keeping toxins away from the body and limiting the transmission of germs. Furthermore, clothing performs a range of occupational and social functions. A uniform for example may identify civil authority figures such as police and military personnel or it may identify team group or political affiliation. Learning clothing construction skills was an important part of preparing young students particularly women for occupations related to Clothing and Textiles as well as for home making roles.

Introduction

Textile and Clothing Industry is the second largest employer after agriculture and a large percentage of work place for rural people. Fashion plays an important role in the growth of any society. It can help peoples' economic independence and improve their social status. A self-employed person especially women gains better status as it enables it to take part in decision making in her family affairs. Women are ideal to contribute to the Textile, Clothing and Fashion Industry because of their strong aesthetic sense, sheer will power, hardworking nature and inclination towards art. Employment opportunities for women are increasing in the Textile, Clothing and Fashion industry. There is an increase in female workforce participation particularly in home Based Craft Sector. There are a large number of women artisans in Embroidery, Lace Making, Dyeing, Coir Work, Printing, Weaving, Leather Work, Mat Making, Macramé work, Braiding, Tatting etc. With the impact of Women in public life, Society is undergoing a definite change. When a woman is empowered, she empowers her family and determines the pace at which the country will advance socially.

Handloom industry acts as the backbone of Indian culture and tradition with a huge variety of designs, printing techniques, weaving, art and materials used. Indian Handloom has created magic all over the world. Phulkari from Punjab, Chanderi from Madhya Pradesh, Ikats from Andhra Pradesh,

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Tie and Die from Rajasthan and Gujarat, Daccai from West Bengal, Brocade from Banaras and Jacquard from Uttar Pradesh are some of the jewels that have been dazzling all over the world. Indian handloom has been the pride of Indian Traditions and a representative of its cultural brilliance.

The word Handloom derives its meaning from the process of operation by hand of a country- made wooden structure called loom. Handlooms are an important craft product and comprise the largest cottage industry of the country. In the entire country, there are more than 38, 00,000 handlooms. In a world increasingly inclined to mechanization and standardization, the handloom sector provides a refreshing change of unique richness of manual skill and diversity. It represents a tradition of skills and aesthetics which is an integral part of our cultural heritage. The sector is also recognized as the second largest employment provider after agriculture. The socio-economic significance of handloom weaving and its impact upon the life and economy of the people of India can better be gauged that “the loom was in fact the centre of domestic economy, the only hope of salvation in an hour of distress or despair.”

Handloom have a great potential in this regard as they hold the key not only for sustaining the existing craft persons but for providing gainful employment, both fulltime and part-time, to increasingly larger sections of the economically poor and dispossessed weavers. This industry occupies a place of importance in our country's economy chiefly by virtue of its employment potential, production and export orientation. The significance of the handloom activity also lies in the fact that it is a home based activity providing self-employment to skilled workers. Members of a household like women and children engage themselves in preparatory work like winding of yarn for the purpose of warp, winding of pins (for weft), sizing etc. Similarly, members could be engaged in dying, post loom operations, made ups, etc. which are considered allied activities in the handloom sector. Handloom sector has its inherent strength, which has perhaps kept it alive in spite of lawful competition from other textile sectors like mill and power loom.

Even Craft sector has also increased employment opportunities for rural people.

India is a culturally rich country having different religions, languages, traditions, art and craft. India has more than 3,000 crafts. Our country's culture is embodied in its art & crafts. The sources of Arts and craft come from everyday utility items such as wooden products, embroidered products, handbags, jute products, appliqué work, bamboo products, Clay work, metal work, house hold textiles and beaded accessories etc. All these products are useful for everyone. All these products are totally made by hand or only by using small mechanical tools known as handicrafts. These products are original and artistic in nature; its imperfection only makes it unique. They are having great utility and decoration. Handcrafted products will be more helpful to increase our Indian Economy. India has artist, weavers and embroiders, who are gifted with valuable skills. Handicrafts are sustainable medium of rich traditional art, heritage, talents which are related with peoples' lifestyle.

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There is an increase in the female workforce participation particularly in rural home-based craft sector. There are large numbers of women artisans in embroidery and lace making, coir work, earthenware and printed textiles, weaving, leather ware and mat making etc. Artisans act as the main work force behind the textile industry; they also keep the ancient and traditional forms of art alive through their diverse artistry. Weavers demonstrate the rich and diverse culture and heritage of India through their work and represent India in the true sense in front of the western countries. All the traditional handcrafted intricate designs on fabrics by the Indian artisans hold a different kind of appeal for the masses. These women also contribute in keeping alive the cottage industries that increase employment and also ensure betterment of society.

Crafts are an integral part in the life of an Indian people. Handicrafts are the main source of employment in India for majority of population, next to agriculture. The history of Indian Handicrafts goes back to almost 5000 years. There are numerous examples of handicrafts from the Indus valley civilization.

There are main three classifications of crafts: -

- Folk craft: People doing this work for their personal use or for limited client base create folk craft. Folk embroideries done by the village women. Each woman knows their own folk craft.
- Religious crafts: These craft items are connected with religious institutions and relevant ceremonies. Example - Woven Gharchola used in wedding by Gujarati people.
- Commercial crafts: Specialized craftsmen of a particular group who are specialized in a particular skill and who can completely master the craft do commercial crafts. (Block printers, dyers etc.)

Weaving is one of the crafts which date back hundreds of years. It started when primitive men first thought of interlacing the twigs of trees to form mats for its caves. Archaeologists consider basket making and weaving to be the first art and craft developed by prehistoric cultures. The first impulse to make a basket or a piece of cloth was almost inspired by spider's webs, bird's nests or the natural twisting and twinning of vines.

Conclusion:-

Craft of different state of India reflect the influence of their history and culture. Handicraft brings a great sense of grace to every home. There is usually complaint on Indian handicraft products, that these are very costly and not preferable to the middle class family. But the real cost other than money cost is more important to consider the fixing the price of any product.

The handicrafts are took more time to complete its process, it requires proper skill, which not required in machine made products and only because of that handcrafted products are more costly.

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Though these are costly but its demands in foreign countries are very high. Foreign people are believed on Indian handicraft because of its real efforts and durability. There are so many crafts which required sustaining and reviving, so that we need to promote our Indian handicraft. To sustain our tradition we try to buy handmade products, so that we will make our artisans stronger and as well their socio-economic status will also improve. Gandhiji's swadeshi movement focused on the plight of the Indian craftsmen and on the need for maintaining the ancient craft traditions. Mahatma Gandhi had emphasized that handicrafts should be taught "not merely for production work but for developing intellectual of the students".

This idea has implemented in schools as socially useful and productive work. Handicraft industry is highly labour intensive, cottage based & decentralizes all over the country, mainly in rural areas. India constitutes 77% of rural population. For rural people socio economic sector, empowerment is needed but self respect and self identity are also equally needed to stand in society. Rural people don't get opportunity to get education, due to lack of awareness, finance etc. They only know their cultural art and craft which they were observing from their childhood. The advantages of the sector include less capital intensive, use of minimal power, eco-friendly quality, flexibility of small production and adaptability to market requirements. It is a natural productive asset and tradition at cottage-level, which has sustained and grown by transfer of skill from one generation to other. Handloom weaving is largely decentralized and the weavers are mainly from the weaker sections of the society, for whom this is the primary and for some the only source of income

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