



Original Article

# The Folk craft and its role in Economic Development: A Case Study of Charida Village, Purulia

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## Abstract

*This study intended to focus on the economic contribution of folk crafts on regional development of rural areas in selected craft village regions. The overall performance of folk crafts and its allied activities also studied very carefully in respect of Jangalmahal region. The Charida village of Purulia district is taken to consideration for our research work. The analysis of the role of folk crafts on Chhau artisan's (Sutradhar's) livelihoods earning and lifestyle is analyzed in this context. There were 50 samples selected randomly from each village to complete present study and analysis.*

**Keywords:** Chhau, folk craft, Sutradhar, Jangalmahal, Livelihood

## Introduction

The holistic development and prosperity in rural economy is very crucial for integrated development in Indian economy. Rural Industrialization is a key factor for transforming a backward rural economy to developed economy so it is treated as a key ingredient of development process of the nation. This small and cottage sector industries in rural India helps to eradicate the poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, pseudo-unemployment and mitigation of economic inequalities. This ecofriendly handicraft and cottage sectors absorbs the human resources from all its segment of training to give an impetus to economic benefit by employment and earning opportunity in round the year. Rural folk craft is one of the feasible substitutes of agriculture based economic practices, which gives an impetus to drive for sustainable development in craft villages of India (Bushati, 2017).

The folk art and craft are the micro enterprises which are a business of rural artisans and engage poor and needy people to earn their livelihood based on family oriented economic practices. This small-scale production system helps to earn their earning to sustain their lifestyles in a eco-friendly way. It is a man power based economic activities which are based on less financial assistance and technological support which is ideal for this village environment. It is a powerful weapon to minimize the regional rural economic imbalances through harmonious economic practices. The forest encircled *Jangalmahal region* of west Bengal consists numerous folk crafts and ethnic practices. These lucrative folk crafts are treated by planner and economists as a logical means and method to instrument rural economic growth as it is an economically viable and feasible rural practices just after agricultural sector in rural India.

In recent five years plan, the developers and planners introduced various developmental strategies to strengthen the production and marketing of traditional handmade folk crafts in sake of development of rural economy as well as rural area. It provides a golden opportunity to earn their livelihood in a feasible way so it becomes a strong weapon to mitigate the drastic rural urban migration and growth of urban slums. It also motivates the rural artisans to upgrade their skills and expertise in craft making creativity and sustain micro level economy. This handicraft was very important sector for making self-dependent rural economy before independence so the government must take effective role in promoting the folk and ethnic crafts making sector operated in rural backward provinces of this Jangalmahal region for a holistic development purpose. Jangalmahal are the westernize part of west Bengal state which is covered by deep and dense forestry contains a wide range of lucrative craft items. The Terracotta pottery, brass metal work of Dokra, stone crafts of Susunia and Chhau-mask craft of Charida village are such important crafts taken into consideration in our research work.

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The raw materials are collected from nearby market regions. Most of the craftsman produced their craft article in an unorganized way. In recent days the penetration of cooperatives, self-help groups, NGOs are found in a satisfactory rate in terms of their financial assistance. This crafts villages are producing their craft articles in an optimal level of excellence, innovations and fashionable nature in their quality (Singh and Lahane, 2011).

#### **Location of Charida village:**

Charida is a village in Bagmundi CD block, Jhalda subdivision, Purulia district, West Bengal. It is situated at the lowest step of Chotonagpur Plateau, with scattered hills and the river Subarnarekha. It is surrounded by the Bagmundi GP, Ajodhya GP, Ghorabandha GP, Dhaba mouza, and Sindri GP.

#### **Analysis of research findings in Charida:**

The questionnaire survey was administered over 50 respondents to collect opinion survey data. Though the basic source of primary data is field survey and interview schedule and the source of secondary data were various publications, journals, research reports, periodicals and other web resources.

#### **The role of Chhau mask sector for the development of regional rural economy:**

This rural cottage and craft sector contributes significantly in its socio-economic and cultural development of this craft villages. It acts as a growth engine and plays a crucial role in sake of rural development in terms of employment, financial assistance, economic liberty, enhanced and better quality of livings, poverty alleviation and regional development, promotion of entrepreneurship activities in these areas.

It can undoubtedly be said that this Chhau mask plays a pivotal role in income generation of this craft village regions (Chatterjee, 2019). As the agricultural activities in this region not become self-sufficient to meet their needs so the craftsman engaged in craft making activities rest of his daily work life as a vital source of income generation. Around 75% artisans supports that the Chhau mask plays a significant role to enhance regional rural economy.

**Table No.1:** The role of Chhau crafts in regional development of Charida village:

| Sl. No. | Opinions                      | Opinion frequency | Percentage |
|---------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1.      | Plays a very significant role | 37                | 74         |
| 2.      | Plays moderate role           | 11                | 22         |
| 3.      | Plays Less significant role   | 2                 | 4          |

#### **Level of self-dependency of economy in study area**

During field study we discussed about the role of folk crafts in delivering financial liberty in the study area. In Jangalmahal region, the backward rural economy can be strengthened through practicing folk art and craft which is providing employment opportunities, decentralizing the earning options, enhancing capabilities of purchasing etc. The author has made an opinion survey of selected participants of this village to gather information regarding the role of traditional folk crafts in sustaining their livelihood and financial liberty. Around 80% of sample respondents supported that the Chhau mask sector is the primary sector economy of this village and provides a golden opportunity to earn livelihood in a sustainable way.

**Table No.2:** Level of self-dependency of economy in study area:

| Opinion                                                                                                    | Yes | No | Don't know |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Do you agree that the folk art and craft provide a golden opportunity to generate a self dependent economy | 39  | 8  | 3          |
| Percentage                                                                                                 | 78  | 16 | 6          |

#### **Role in increase of income level**

In the harsh climate and inhospitable forest encroached terrain of Jangalmahal region the rural economy is not sufficiently dependent on its concurrent agricultural system to meet their needs and requirements. As the agro products cannot be kept for long time without having proper infrastructure of conservations. Hence the craft villages in this geographical regions where transport and communication system is not very much sound, so practicing agriculture is limited to meet their subsistence and for barter purposes. This agricultural products are consumed by family member of farmer itself and it is sold in local and adjoining villages in a commercial way. Therefore the income range generated from agricultural system is very limited to cope up the entire need of the family member of villagers and they need to join additional economic activities to manage their needs and satisfactions. The scholars tried to find out the role of traditional folk crafts in increasing the income level of artisans by administering a opinion survey regarding this issue. Around 85% of sample respondents supported its positive role in enriching their per capita income and livelihood earning capabilities.

**Table No.3:** Role in increase of income level:

| Total number of respondent sample_____50_____                                                                                                           | Yes | No | Don't know |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Do you admit that the contribution of ethnic folk art and crafts in this province is significant for enhancing per capita income and livelihood earning | 42  | 5  | 3          |
| Percentage                                                                                                                                              | 84  | 10 | 6          |

**Impact of folk crafts in reducing social tensions:**

Now a day of volatile socio-economic situations a large number of educated and non-educated youth have been suffering from the acute crisis of social tensions. When the person doesn't get a proper employment opportunity and become unable to provide a financial security for him social tension arises and the possibilities of occurring criminal or offensive activities have increased in a large extent. Hence economic development is the only weapon to settle this issue. In village level economy this folk craft practices develop entrepreneurship activities and enhance the opportunity of sustainable livelihoods for rural artisans. In our studied research around 86% of respondent artisans have supported that it is a family-oriented production system which runs in low capital assistance and provides a large opportunity of self-employment and job guarantee which reduces this social tension and other vulnerable situation in craft villages.

**Table No.4:** Role in reduction of social tensions:

| Total number of respondent sample_____50_____                                                                                    | Yes | No | Don't know |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Do you admit that the contribution of ethnic folk art and crafts in this province is significant for reduction of social tension | 43  | 4  | 3          |
| Percentage                                                                                                                       | 86  | 8  | 6          |

**Role of Folk crafts in development of entrepreneurship activities**

The folk crafts development in any region promotes the entrepreneurship development and accelerates economic development of concerned region. It helps to build up infrastructure for development of micro and small-scale cottage (handicrafts) sector in that region. When a large number of rural artisans are engaged themselves in crafts production and enhance its appearance according to customers need it will automatically be developing the socio-economic situation of the very craft village region. This entrepreneurial development enhances the opportunities to make comprehensive and sustainable economic development of this region. Likewise, the development of traditional folk art and crafts sector in this selected craft villages of Jangalmahal region will definitely contribute positively in its economic and holistic development. 96% of studied respondents have supported that the Chhau craft is major entrepreneurship activities to make the village economy self-sufficient.

**Table No.5:** Role of Folk crafts in development of entrepreneurship activities:

| Total number of respondent sample_____50_____                                                                                                          | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Do you admit that the contribution of ethnic folk art and crafts in this province is significant for entrepreneurship development in this study region | 49  | 1  | 0          |
| Percentage (%)                                                                                                                                         | 98  | 2  | 0          |

**Conclusion**

Throughout the field study and data analysis it can be concluded that practising folk art and crafts playing a very significant role for developing its socio-cultural and economic development in this craft villages of Jangalmahal region. The craft production and allied activities in selected craft villages of the study region provides employment opportunity, (such as seller, distributor, money lender etc) self-employment, enrichment in income and earnings levels, utilization of natural and cultural resources, reducing social tension and delinquency. Through these traditional folk practices, the artisans of concerned villages getting opportunities to opt an alternative option of earning livelihood after agricultural activities to meet their essential requirements. At present the local administration, developers and planners proposed to develop folk crafts in its new design and upgraded quality as per customary demand in this study region craft villages so that it could help to develop entrepreneurial activities and channelized its economic progress in a progressive flow.

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**Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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