

## **Participation And The Socio-Economical Status of Women Artisan: Special Reference To Hand Block Printing of Bagru, Rajasthan.**

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**Abstract:-** Rajasthan is the largest state of India, expanding up to an area of 342,239 km. The state is blessed with a variety of Cultural heritage like, Art, Craft, Dance, Festivals, Religion, Caste, tribe along with conditioned as well as natural Wealth that has provided the state a unique form. It is famous for its War, Story of warriors, Craft, festivals and its hospitality. HandCraft plays a vital role in the advancement of the dignity of this Cultural and Colourful state. It has got more than 50 Handcrafts. These Handcrafts are related to a particular caste and religion of people, this art was passed on to them by their ancestors and it strictly remained in their family only, and they constructed things with the help of natural resources and special hand equipment and tools. In India, this process of construction is called Handcraft and this strategy of family partnership and hereditary beauty has helped in the growth of Handcrafts. But in today's context, due to immense progress in Modernity and Technology, fast production has affected the livelihood of craftsmen due to their slow productivity. Studies have been conducted on Handcrafts with reference to all this. India has always been a Male dominant and a patriarchal country where the gender ratio of is 928 according to 2011 censuses and female literacy is 52.12% where the involvement of women in the field of education, social and economic decision is deficient. The objective of the researchers is to understand the social and economic condition of women artisans of Bagru Rajasthan who is involved in the field of hand block printing textile craft. The result of which will be stated later in this research.

**Keywords:-** Hand block printing, Master Craftsmen, Artisans, Craft labours, Dabu printing.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Traditionally, every district of Rajasthan had a village who used to do Printing on traditional clothes. It can be said, that wherever there was a natural source of water like well, lake or river, there used to be a colony of Printer, who used to print for the connected folk. In this way, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kishangarh, Barmer, Pali, Kota, Tonk, and Sawai Madhopur Districts of Rajasthan has traditionally been a major center for hand block Printing. Many villages of these districts were involved in Printing. In this way, Jaipur has traditionally been famous for Hand Block printing in Rajasthan. In Jaipur, there were five major villages and towns who were famous for Textile work. They are as follows: Sanganer, Bagru, Kaladera, Jairampura, and Jahauta, who used to print on traditional costumes of men and women apart from the costumes clothes they also used to print on bed sheets and quilt covers. Due to globalization and modernization, the demand for traditional clothes have decreased and fashion has evolved which has replaced 'Ghagra' (skirt), Ordhna (wrap) and Safa (male scarf) into some new pattern of Saree, Shirts, and Kurta and with a twist in Quilt cover, Cushion cover, Curtains, and running fabric are being printed on a large scale. In order to understand the social and economic status of women artisan, the researcher has conducted this research on Bagru, Kaladera, Jairampura, and Jahauta the four villages of Jaipur (Rajasthan). In Bagru, Jaipur only Hindu 'Chhipa' community\* is involved in printing.

(\*Note: India is a caste driven society where particular caste is defined by their meticulous skill set drove work.)

Traditionally, in Jaipur, people of 'Chhipa' caste were only involved in hand block Printing. Hand block Printing which is done with the help of beautifully carved blocks and natural dyes is a result of immense hard work. The process of hand block printing is not only the art of 'Chhipa' caste but it is a result of the regular help of people from different castes residing together in the village. The major part of printing start with the fabric which is being made by 'weavers' (Bunkar) then comes the wooden block, which is crafted by woodblock maker (Kharawaadi). After this, the printer along with washerman (Dhobi) and last but not least is the dyer

(Rangrez). The internal collaboration, coordination, interdependency, and hard work of these people give us the result of beautiful hand block printed cloths. Over a span tradition changed, which resulted in the downfall of printing. In this hard time of sustainability, some artisans didn't let this traditional art form die which was a means of their livelihood and continued this traditional art form with a group of people. Nowadays the caste system seems to be disappearing since the printer community is hiring labours for all of these tasks. Male and female both are contributing as a labour.

Apart from this five castes, printing is done with the continuous involvement and partnership of both men and women of Chhipa family.

**Hand block printer of Bagru, Rajasthan:-** Once there were more than 250 families involved in hand block printing especially in Bagru, Kaladera and nearby villages in Jaipur district but nowadays there are only fifty to sixty families who involved in hand block printing and out of these only four to five families following traditional method of printing which involves using natural dyes for colouring. Those who are not following the traditional process of hand block printing are using pigments colour for dyeing & printing but for dabu\* printing there is no changed. All of the work of dabu printing is being done in natural & traditional methods. Hand block printing is a traditional craft which runs as a family business and usually all members of the family involved in this craft. Male and female both are equally contributing to the production of hand block printing. There is a certain process for this printing method which requires sharp skills, traditional understanding, family participation, and support.

The process of hand block printing

Bagru is known for its own method of printing. It is being processed through different stages and these are:

1. Preparation of fabrics
2. Preparation of natural colours for printing
3. Preparation of printing paste.
4. Hand block printing.
5. Dying of printed fabrics.
6. Fixing of dyes.
7. Washing of clothes.
8. Final finishing.

**The objective of the Research:-**

In the past at all of these stages women were equally involved but through this research, the researcher wanted to know the contemporary participation of women as well as their socio-economical status. During this research, the researcher found out that women were majorly responsible for preparation of materials and hand block printing. The researcher also observed that there were no contributions of women in sales and marketing in old times and this particular sector was totally dominated by males.

**Limitation of Research:-**

This research is completely based on women artisans of hand block printing of Bagru, Rajasthan. All of the respondents were also women.

**Participation of Women artisans in traditional hand block printing Bagru Rajasthan:-**

To know the participation of women in hand block printing in the present scenario the researcher limited its sample size to 20 due to limited family involvement and after over this sample size, there was saturation in answers. For this, the researcher has drafted a set of questions in the questionnaire for the interview schedule and collected data on the basis of the printing process and their socio-economical status. this information is as followed

No.	various stages of printing	Percentage of women who know how to work on various stages.	Participation in percent	Analysis of Data
1.	Preparation of fabrics	60 %	10%	This stage demands muscular efforts and due to caste responsibility, only Dhobi and Rangrej community women were involved.
2.	Preparation of natural	20%	0%	Only Chhipa community old women know how to prepare colour but they

	colours for printing			don't work.
3.	Preparation of (dabu) printing paste.	40%	0%	Only Chhipa community women know about the preparation of dabu. This stage is carried by male only
4.	Hand block printing.	80%	80%	Maximum participation of women artisans in this area but in comparison with a male, its only 45%.
5.	Dying of printed fabrics.	20%	0%	This stage also carried by male only.
6.	Washing of clothes.	40%	10%	This stage also demands muscular efforts and tough to maintain the accuracy of washing because at this stage various dyes make a stain on cloth. This the reason of involvement of muscular male and sometimes physically strong women (Dhobi caste) were involved
7.	Fixing of dyes	20%	0%	This stage also occupied by a male
8.	Final finishing.	20%	0%	Male belonged to market and sale that is why most of the time male check the accuracy of the final product.

*Source: field survey; Table 1.1: participation of women artisan at various stages of hand block printing.*

As per table 1.1, there were only 20% women artisans who know all the stages of the hand block printing process and interestingly all belongs to Chhipa community and their parent's livelihood were also dependent on hand block printing only and they all were traditionally involved in this craft production from generations. Through this research, the researcher found out that majority of respondents belonged to the Chhipa family but most of the women do not know about the working details at all the stages of hand block printing and the reason for that was lack of interest or else parents were not involved in this sector. Most of Chhipa community migrated for other occupation as they were unable to continue this craft because of the risk factor, lack of infrastructure, and money to invest but among all these problems some master craftsmen sustained this craft by their immense hard work, precise skills, and enormous devotion. For continuing this craft production they established workshop and hired labor from different regions especially Uttarpradesh, Bihar and other districts of Rajasthan. Those women who came from other caste and community don't know the traditional methods of printing. Through this research, the researcher found out that in present scenario only 25% of women from the family of master craftsmen were doing printing work rest having no interest in printing or having cipher knowledge of the same.

Through the above data, we can say that maximum women were earning through hand block printing stage and very few were involved in washing and drying of the cloths.



Picture 1.1 an artisan involved in hand block printing. Source of the picture:-clicked by researcher

**The social status of women artisans of Bagru, Rajasthan**

To know about the participation and socio-economical status of women in hand block printing, the researcher had done the interview schedule. Based on the collected data the researcher has prepared the table along with the analysis of collected data.

Variable	Category	Percent of respondents	Analysis of Data
Age group of artisans	20- 30 years	5%	Maximum participation of aged women because young women were busy in their household and most of them were looking after their family and children.
	31-40 years	45%	
	41-55 years	30%	
	<55 years	20%	
Marriage status	Married	100%	For the purpose of supporting their family economically, women have to work on the craft sector because a single person can not effort all expenses of the full family.
	Unmarried	0%	
	Widow	0%	
	Divorced	0%	
Age of marriage	1-9 years	5%	Rajasthan has a history of child marriage. So only 35% of women were married at the age of 16-20 years.
	10-15 years	55%	
	16-20 years	35%	
	<20 years	5%	
Literacy	Literate	60%	Rajasthan overall literacy rate is 52.12% as per 2011 Census but as per this data 60%, Women know how to read and write, rest 40 % women do not know how to read and write but they all can count their daily earning through experience.
	Illiterate	40%	
Qualification	5th standard	25%	Only 30% of women did schooling till 8 to 10 standard after interaction they opened up and mentioned that in their community higher education is not popular among the women.
	8 <sup>th</sup> standard	30%	
	High school	20%	
	Intermediate	5%	
	Never attended school	20%	
Castes	Chhipa community	60%	Upon interaction, the researcher found that maximum participation of the Chhipa community in the production of hand block printing which is 60%, because it is a traditional occupation of Chhipa community. Other local women those who belongs to Suthar, Sen and Lohar community they were also working in hand block printing but migrated labors from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar also joined this craft sector and this migrated labor belongs to different caste who had no connection with craft at all.
	Other backward class	25%	
	General	15%	

Source field survey table 1.2

**Economical condition of women artisan**

Variables	Category	Percentage of respondent	Analysis of Data
Residential status	Own	65%	In this handcraft sector 65% of women have their own house because they were localities and belong to the same Chhipa community but those who migrated from another district of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar had only option to rent a house.
	Rented	25%	
	Other	10%	
basis of income	Per product / per meter	85%	85% of women were getting money on the basis of printing per meter and rest 15 % women getting money on a daily basis because they were
	Daily Basis	15%	

			serving for more than 20 years and having good skills in printing. But there is no difference in wages based on artisan's experience.
Credit salary	Per day	10%	30% of women artisans getting paid every working day or else in a week because artisans don't rely on the workshop owner's calculation.
	Per week	20%	
	Per month	70%	
Structure of family	Joint	60%	60% artisans having joint family structure.
	Nuclear	40%	
Family size	4-5 People	20%	Only 20% artisans had 5 members in the family.
	5-8 People	45%	
	9-12 People	25%	
	<12 People	10%	
Monthly income	3000-5000 Rs	15%	As per data, there is a vast range of income because of artisans are getting paid on the basis of per meter printing which cost around 4-5 rs per meter for novice and if women artisans working for 6 hours their printing cost increase to 6-7 rs per meter. And women can earn to 400-500 rs per day. Another important factor researcher noticed that due to family responsibility, festival, function, and health factor don't let them work for a full month.
	6000-8000 Rs	35%	
	8000-10000 Rs	25%	
	10000-15000 Rs	25%	
Employed members in the family	One	0%	Through this data, the researcher found out that each artisan's family having more than two people working.
	Two	50%	
	More then two	40%	
	All	10%	
Another source of income	Shops	15%	65 % of women artisans are fully dependent on hand block printing. In Bagru, Chhipa community has no agricultural land and those who had land they extended their workshop to increasing the production of hand block printing.
	Agriculture land	5%	
	House Rent	15%	
	Only hand block printing	65%	

Source:- Field Survey table 1.3

According to table no.465 %, women have their own house 25 percent accommodate in rent and 10% of women live with their family in the workshop. Those who belong to Bagru their had their own house but those who were come from other state or another district of Rajasthan they paid for rent. 85% women got salary on the basis of per meter and this meter charge based on design and required efforts minimum charge of per meter printing were 4 rupees and 6 rupees one women had print 50 to 55 meter cloth on daily basis if design is simple if it can calculate almost one artisan can earn 500-600 rupees on daily basis if she gave 6 hours per day if design is simple then artisans can earn by maximum printing if design is complexed then then charged increased and its make equal but maximum women cannot earn whole 30 days due to festival marriage ceremony health issues and other family responsibility but those women came from another state like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar they earned more because they are far from their native place and their focused reasons of migration were only earning. 60 % of women belong to the joint family and 45 % family sizes is 5-8, 25% family size had 9-12 and only 10% family size is more than 12 and they live together under of one roof and there is no any artisans family where women were not earned male and female both did work and earned in 50 %women artisans respond they and their husband both were earned, 40%women said more then two members of family earned. 30% of women artisans family have shops and house for rent only 5 % of women have said there were agricultural land in her its means 60 % artisans completely dependent on hand block printing craft. In Bagru Chhipa community have not agricultural land those who had land they extended their workshop for increasing hand printing production.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

In the present scenario, there is a good amount of women participation in hand block printing craft but young generations of Chhipa community do not want to join and learn this traditional craft. The reason behind this is an inclination towards white collar job, they think there is no respect in the craft sector. Another important thing is that the awareness regarding women education is less and as per their beliefs marriage and family of inlaw's decides the future of daughter. Elderly ones have given best contribution in craft production because this is the only way for their livelihood and they also do it for the sake of engaging themselves as the other family members also contributing and supporting socially like daughter in-laws taking care of households and as per economical aspects son contributing through another source of income. Apart from elderly or old women, those young women at their thirties also work because their kids go to school for 6 hours. If Anganwadi or workshop gave support for childcare then definitely participation of women will increase which benefit the both, craft as well as artisans.

40 % women were illiterate maximum crowd qualification is eight stander only academic education is not low along with the knowledge about traditional craft methods and techniques is very low only 20% women known all about craft methods process and techniques. This situation is very difficult for craft sustainability it these women have not upgraded their knowledge they can not pass it to upcoming generation and in future, they will work as artisan and labor only in the supervision of other. Because of a male-dominated society, women were not supposed to know the art of colour preparation. When the researcher digs deep down then some women open up to reveal that male of the family don't want to spread their secret art of colour preparation and if women would know the technique because of her socialization among women and talkative nature the secret will reveal and become common and can affect their business severely. But if we see positively this craft of hand block printing depends on the collaboration of male and female as per their physical strength and availability of time. In this process, women were supposed to prepare the material for colour making and the male was supposed to do the mixing of material for getting the desired colour. Men and women both were doing the stamping of the block on cloth through wooden blocks and further drying and arranging process was controlled by women and kids of the family. Washing of clothes was under men because they needs physical strength. In the present scenario because of immense labor and hard work men and women both lost their interest in the traditional craft of hand block printing. A solution to this problem master craftsmen has distributed the job as per the labor and stages of the printing process. Women play a vital role in the stamping of the block on cloth with pigment and dabu in block printing stage. Other than above situations, lack of self-motivation and self-awareness is the major cause of unfamiliarity in the whole process of hand block printing.

This craft has given several opportunities for women not only for Bagru women but other districts and states too. This traditional hand block printing craft has changed the lives of several women artisans of Bagru, they became a pillar of their family economy and given sustainable life to family. If policy maker and common people will promote and support this textile craft against the industrialization. Anganwadi Kendra could do major help by supporting and educating kids of Bagru so that women participation will increase and help in sustainable living.

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