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Preservation of Cultural Heritage Embodied in Traditional Crafts in the Developing Countries. A Case Study of Pakistani Handicraft Industry

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Abstract: Cultural heritage embodied in traditional crafts is an integral part of any nation which reflects the culture and tradition of a particular region. Although the importance of handicraft has been widely recognized, the literature regarding preservation of traditional craft is scarce. The present paper aimed to explore and identify issues faced by traditional craftsmanship in developing countries and to address those issues in order to contribute to the sustainability of traditional craft heritage and ensure continuous transmission of craft skills and knowledge from generation to generation. Our study identified several key issues which poses substantial challenges to the preservation of traditional craft heritage in developing countries. In order to add empirical evidence, we examined the case of Pakistani handicraft industry that provided further understanding of highlighted issues which traditional craft heritage face. We have suggested some policies to promote, develop and preserve the traditional craft heritage. The significance of these policy suggestions is underlined with the case study of Pakistan.

Keywords: preservation; cultural heritage; handicrafts; challenges

1. Introduction

The handicraft sector plays a vital role in income and employment generation and has also been recognized worldwide as a tool for poverty reduction [1–5]. It is a means of preserving and promoting cultural and artistic traditions, such as various techniques and skills of traditional crafts are transmitted from generation to generation. For many countries, the significant unique cultural heritage is retained in their handicrafts.

Although, the importance of handicraft industry has been understood long before, this sector has undergone several challenges such as industrialization and globalization [6,7], consequently, the artisans were incapable to compete with well-organized industrial unit and had to sell their products at lower prices [8,9]. The industrialization changed the lifestyle and customer's needs, and as a result, handicraft products lose the market slowly.

Consumers of handicraft products decreases as industrial products become more sophisticated, which forces the artisans to abandon their business and move to the cities for earning income. As a result, several traditional crafting skills and techniques have disappeared as fewer younger generation are interested in learning the tradition [9–13]. Consequently, the handicrafts faded away and lost its place in society while industrial products flourished, due to their superiority in durability of materials and their economical values [12,14]. In an era of globalization and rapid economic change, this heritage needs to be identified and protected or it may disappear forever. Thus, several cultural heritage experts

have highlighted the need for safeguarding this cultural heritage [15] not only to keep community's identity but also to give economic advantage and other values [16,17].

The literature on preservation of handicraft industry is very scarce, most of the studies have focused on preservation of tangible heritage such as built heritage such as monuments etc. [18–21]. However, the intangible cultural heritage embodied in traditional crafts is of different nature from built heritage, as the techniques and skills cannot be simply interacted or touched with or without use of other means. Because of untouchable feature of ICH (Intangible Cultural Heritage), it is hard to demonstrate in real life, which is one of big challenge to prevent it from disappearing. Moreover, as highlighted by Barrere [14] that no organization is responsible for the preservation of handicraft heritage, consequently, many traditional crafting techniques become susceptible. Thus, the handicraft heritage is endangered and this sector needs attention to safeguard the inherited skills and knowledge. Nonetheless, it is very necessary to categorize, deeply understand and address the challenges faced by the handicraft heritage in order to preserve the old traditions, failing which this heritage may disappear in near future.

The objective of this study was to identify and characterize the challenges faced by the traditional craft heritage and suggest the relevant policies and practices to overcome the identified challenges in order to promote, develop and preserve the sector. Our study is confined to the context of cultural heritage embodied in crafts in developing countries with a case study of Pakistani handicraft industry. The methodology used for this research was exploratory in nature while extensively reviewing the available literature. After the critical literature review to understand the challenges faced by this heritage, we suggested some policies to promote and preserve the craft heritage. The findings to support this research were carried out by reviewing literature from various published articles, reports, policy documents in the relevant field. In this paper, we have also presented secondary data about employment, import/export related to Pakistani handicraft sector in order to provide empirical evidence regarding challenges identified as well as underline the significance of policy suggestions. The evidence regarding decline in employment and high increase in imports flowing to Pakistan has also been discussed in detail.

The structure of paper is as follows: The Section 2 represents the definition and classification of handicrafts and cultural heritage. Section 3 presents some challenges and constraints related to this heritage. In Section 4 we suggest some policies recommendation in order to promote and develop this industry and preserve the craft traditions. The Section 5 describes the case study of Pakistani handicraft industry which is facing challenges with decline in handicraft employment and export, and import competition despite of efforts made by the Government and NGOs to promote and revive handicrafts. The purpose of this section is to provide empirical evidence regarding challenges identified in general as well as underline the significance of policy suggestions. The last section provides some conclusions in order to promote and develop the handicraft heritage along with limitation and suggestions for further studies.

2. Definition and Classification

2.1. Handicrafts

In spite of extensive production around the world, there is no consensus on common definition of handicrafts [22,23]. Such as Fabeil et al. [24] describes that Handicraft refers to handmade products that have artistic and cultural attraction based on their material, design and workmanship. Whereas, Rogerson [17] attests that craft products should be eighty percent (80%) made by hands that may include various raw materials such as natural fibers, textiles, beads clay and recyclable materials. However, Thompson [25] and Abryareh [26] defines handicraft as a skill, specifically involving practical arts. Most of the debate about definition is on how product is made (handmade versus machine-made, simple versus artistic qualities etc.).

Furthermore, due to the diverse nature of craft, the European Union has not defined the craft. Each country (In Europe) has its own definition depending on historical development. For example,

in Romania and Italy craft is mainly characterized by a “living creativity” and its decorative aspect [27]. However, the following definition is very helpful due to capturing the complexity and diversity of this sector:

“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” [28]

2.2. Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)

In recent decades, the contents of term ‘cultural heritage’ has been changed considerably, it does not end at built heritage such as monuments and collections of objects. It also includes knowledge, traditions or living expressions inherited from the ancestors and passed to next generation. In 1990s, the concept of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) was emerged as a counterpart to the World Heritage focusing primarily on physical nature of culture. Intangible culture is the counterpart of culture which is touchable or tangible, while intangible culture cannot be touched and interacted with or without a vehicle or the culture, it includes songs, music, drama and crafts etc.

The UNESCO passed a convention in 2003 to protect ICH which aimed to raise awareness regarding the importance of ICH and ensure its respect and mutual appreciation. The convention provided definition of ICH as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith—that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” [29].

In the context of Malaysia, intangible heritage includes any form of expression, languages, performance, dance, song, music, and martial arts, which may have existed or exist in relation to the heritage of Malaysia [30]. In the context of China, the Folk Cultural Heritage Rescue Committee of China defines it as culture or cultural products people adopt from their forefathers [31]. While, in the context of Korea, the ICH is considered as intangible cultural works of outstanding historic, artistic, or academic value, such as a drama, music, dance, game, ritual, craft skills, etc. [32]. However, various countries such as Pakistan, Thailand, Iran etc. [33–35] have adopted the above definition of UNESCO Convention 2003.

The Convention also divided ICH into five categories including traditional craftsmanship. The handicraft products reflect the culture, inherited skills, knowledge and shows the beauty of heritage. One way to understand the intangible culture exemplified in crafts is to look at the tangible handicrafts. Thus, the skills, techniques and knowledge are very important for ongoing production from one generation to the next. The Convention also required its member states to prepare the inventory of ICH with the participation of the concerned communities; adopt policies and establish institutions to monitor and promote it; and take other appropriate safeguarding measures. Although the Convention was held in 2003, it was ratified by several countries on different dates such as Japan on 15 June 2004, Korea on 9 February 2005, Pakistan on 7 October 2005, Italy on 30 October 2007, Indonesia on 15 October 2007, Bangladesh on 11 June 2009 and Sweden on 26 January 2011 [36].

Since then the UNESCO has declared several heritages as “intangible cultural heritage for humanity” of different countries such as “Baul Songs” (traditional music) and “Traditional skills of Jamdani weaving,” of Bangladesh, “Mak Yong theatre” of Malaysia, “Saman dance” and “Indonesian Angklung” of Indonesia, “Skills of Chinese seal engraving”, “Sericulture and silk craftsmanship of China” and “Kun Qu opera” of China, and Iran’s “Traditional skills of carpet weaving in Fars” etc. [37]. Furthermore, several intangible cultural heritages in need of urgent safeguarding have also been identified by UNESCO such as “Ala-kiyiz and Shyrdak (Skills of Kyrgyz traditional felt carpets)” of Kyrgyzstan, “Earthenware pottery-making skills” of Botswana, “Noken multifunctional knotted or

woven bag (Handicraft of the people of Papua)” of Indonesia, “Al Sadu (Traditional weaving skills)” of United Arab Emirates, “Traditional Li textile techniques: spinning, dyeing, weaving and embroidering” of China, “Black pottery manufacturing process” of Portugal etc. [37].

3. Challenges and Constraints to Handicraft Industry

Although, the importance of handicraft industry is very well documented in the literature, there are certain challenges and constraints contributing to the setback suffered by this traditional heritage [17,38].

3.1. Lack of Availability of Sufficient Data

In many developing countries, the handicraft industry is the second most key source of income, after the agriculture sector [39]. However, this sector has been disadvantaged due to lack of availability of sufficient facts and figures [2,7,17]. As Grobar [40] points out that a key weakness to use of the safeguard measure for handicrafts is non-availability of data. Moreover, generally the industry codes to measure import, export and employment in handicraft sector does not separate handicrafts as a separate entity. Without sufficient data, it is hard to take appropriate measures, when a country is struggling with import and/or export competition. There should be some statistical evidences to take safeguarding measures. Moreover, in many developing countries handicraft activities are informal, however, there should be some numerical evidence about the job losses so that necessary measures can be taken to enhance employment opportunities. Consequently, policy makers are unable to draft policies accordingly to promote and revive this sector.

There are several reasons for non-availability of handicraft related data such as lack of consensus on defining handicrafts, it is difficult to gather the exact data related to handicrafts. Moreover, various rural workers are mainly engaged in agriculture sector, which is seasonal, leaving them unemployed for certain period and during that period many workers engage themselves in artisanal activity to meet their daily expenses. Hence, it is difficult to get data of employment in handicraft. Also, most of the handicraft business carried out in developing countries in rural areas is informal creating problems to gather exact data. Therefore, due to non-availability of sufficient data, it is difficult to take necessary appropriate measures.

3.2. Industrialization and Mass Production Challenge

Due to industrialization, the products are becoming commoditized and the traditional handicrafts are replaced by machine made products and as a result of increased competition at global level the handicrafts are competing with other similar substitute products [7]. Besides, the transition of the modern way of life, the production diversity, the spread diversity and the sales diversity results in the decrease of the desire for traditional handicraft industry [41]. For instance, as highlighted by Scrase [6] the plastic sandals are replacing leather ones and displacing leather shoemakers in countries such as Pakistan and India. Similarly, the aluminum or plastic plates, bowls, jugs and cups are replacing pottery items. There are various other examples where the handicrafts are replaced by mass-produced items. Consequently, the handmade products are diminishing very fast and the traditional crafts face stiff competition in the markets, as mass-produced items are cheaper and the sellers have higher production capacity with strong logistical support. Moreover, the traditional crafts face competition from countries such as China and India.

China is one of a major competitor in terms of production and export of handicrafts and related substitute products around the world. The Global Market Assessment Report of USAID [7] indicates that “China can produce anything, better than anyone else and at a better price”. The Chinese handicraft industry has acquired an advanced level of competitiveness related to price, quality and production capacity, moreover, buyers who import directly from China to domestic markets can also earn good profit margin which hardly very few importers of other countries can compete. The mass-production retailers, who import directly, creates obstacles for small businesses, moreover, their purchase order

requires strict delivery dates, high capacity and particular packing and labelling along with advance deposits. Similarly, barriers occur for wholesale importers as well, several orders in small quantities, offer advance payment with payment on delivery. Furthermore, all types of buyers prefer to choose trustworthy partners with multiple product choices and flexibility. It is quite challenging for small businesses to meet with such strict requirements.

3.3. Unwillingness of Young Generation to Continue to This Profession

The young generation finds it difficult to undergo complex and time-consuming process of handicraft production, hence they generally do not intend to choose this profession, instead, they prefer to work in factories with less demanding work with higher salary. The study of Yan Wu et al. [42] indicates that the inheritance of traditional knowledge, techniques and skills to manufacture lacquer basket is a serious issue. Most of the young people are unwilling to inherit the traditional lacquer basket craftsmanship due to the complexity and lengthy production process. The authors further highlighted the aging of traditional craftsmen as a very serious problem. Moreover, it is difficult to find a good teacher/master who is willing to teach as many traditional crafts contains “trade secrets” and various artisans are unwilling to pass such secrets to strangers, and in case the members of family are not willing to learn, such knowledge may vanish [43]. This has led traditional heritage to vulnerable.

3.4. Lack of Availability of Basic Infrastructure

The one of main obstacle for handicraft entrepreneurs in rural areas is the lack of availability of basic infrastructure. Most of the artisan belongs to rural areas with least availability of infrastructure. In many developing countries, the inadequate power supply makes it difficult for the artisan to accomplish the required tasks in time and get optimum output. Consequently, increase in the production cost leads to uncompetitive in the domestic as well as international markets [7,44].

It is necessary to obtain good quality raw materials to produce high quality handicrafts [45]. However, the rural artisans find difficulties in accessing various types of raw materials as most of the raw materials for handicrafts come from larger cities. Due to worst condition of roads not only artisan face difficulties to obtain raw materials, but it also increases the cost of production. Furthermore, the price of some raw materials is increasing day by day, such as the price of brass has increased tremendously which has also increased the cost of production [44].

3.5. Lack of Innovation and Technology

The handicraft industry is considered as a low technology sector which involves traditional methods of production and designs. According to prior studies, the handicraft producers lacked the capability to design and develop new products, therefore they are unable to create the marketable product [46–48]. On the other hand, handicraft entrepreneurs who introduce a new design face the issue of risk, patent and copyright since the majority of them are unable to afford the costs [49]. The study of Yan Wu et al. [42], indicates that the traditional lacquer product (basket), having 500 year’s history, is facing the unprecedented challenges due to rapid development of science and technology and change in modern lifestyles, consequently the demand dramatically decreases.

The artisans need to be criticized, to some extent, for adherence to the traditional designs. Nowadays, customers have rapidly changing demand for new designs; in order to compete in market, the crafts worker should understand the changing needs of customers and should introduce modern designs, however, the traditional design motif should be preserved. Due to lack of innovation and technology the artisans are unable to meet the demands of the customers.

3.6. Lack of Education and Training Facilities

Several studies indicate that handicraft producers have a low level of education [7,49–51]. One of the major reason of low education is that various products require complex and lengthy process and often involves whole family including children which means children quit or miss the school.

This is one of a challenging constraint in preserving craft tradition as low level of education makes it difficult for artisan to access various government schemes, obtain market information, bargain with middlemen/traders and manage business properly, thus making them uncompetitive. Moreover, the number of vocational institutes providing training in handicraft skills is very small in various countries such as the case of Laos, there is only one vocational training school [52].

3.7. Lack of Financial Resources

Many craftsmen belong to poor families and due to lack of financial resources, they face problems continuously. Although several artisans could succeed to manage their shops, in order to meet the market demands, they cannot expand business and their hands are tied due to financial constraints. Moreover, it is difficult for artisans to get loans from local banks as they cannot guarantee repayment. Even, if the artisans managed to get loans, their profit margin is very low to cover the interest rates.

4. Policies to Promote, Strengthen and Preserve the Cultural Heritage (Handicraft)

As described above, the handicraft sector is a means of income as well as employment generation in many developing countries, and a means of preserving and promoting cultural and artistic traditions. However, many categories of crafts are vulnerable and this sector is endangered and needs attention to safeguard the inherited skills and knowledge. Moreover, various authors identified key issues and emphasized the need to draft appropriate policies [17]. For instance, as identified by Citalli and Shanley [53], in many countries there is still a lack of awareness on the part of the policymakers regarding the importance of craft. The literature also indicates that the various local crafts “remains undervalued by most governmental policy makers” and institutional support for these activities is lacking” [54]. Thus, considering the above arguments and need to protect, promote and to keep community’s identity alive, the following policies are recommended.

4.1. Differentiation between Machine Made and Handmade Products

Nowadays there are several substitutes available in the market as described above, hence, it is necessary to differentiate the handicraft products as the competition is quite stiff. The handicrafts can be divided into two categories, one for local consumer market another for elite consumer market [6]. In this way, the artisan who produce elite crafts can earn better wages and the handicraft heritage can also be promoted. However, the artisans who produce lower level crafts can modify the designs according to the requirements and needs of the customers to earn better wages and compete with machine made products. Therefore, suitable policy actions can promote handicrafts.

Another way to distinguish handicraft products is to put story behind the unique features, the way it is made, origin of product’s design or the artisans and their culture. Such stories can be attached through marketing materials such as hangtags or attach labels/cards [7,55]. This will not only help to distinguish, improve sales but will also help to increase the value of product due to its uniqueness from other substitute products. In addition, it is also one of best way to educate customers about the crafts.

4.2. Emphasize the Collection and Compilation of Statistics

The data is one of necessary ingredient to formulate policies, however, the handicraft sector has been disadvantaged due to lack of sufficient data, the facts and figures regarding employment, income generation, export and import of different handicraft products are rarely available in developing countries which is one of the major constraint to develop and promote the craft traditions. One of reason for non-availability of sufficient data is the lack of consensus on defining handicrafts. However, the above-mentioned definition of handicrafts is very helpful due to capturing the complexity and diversity of this sector.

Most of the available data on national as well as international level do not break out handicrafts as a separate entity. For instance, the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS)

does not identify Handicraft products separately. Which makes it difficult to collect and compile data related to handicrafts. Thus, proper industry codes should be established in order to ensure the collection and compilation of data related to handicrafts. However, the suggestion of Grobar [40] to measure handicraft data at international level using the United Nations COMTRADE database is quite helpful, the problem with this data is that it does not separate the mass-produced and handicraft items. Yet, it can be used to analyze the import competition as most of the mass-produced items compete with the handicrafts in domestic market and as a substitute. The Table 1 indicates the United Nations COMTRADE database HS codes (Harmonized commodity coding system).

Table 1. HS Codes.

Sr#	Code	Description
1	4420	Wood marquetry and inlaid wood, statuettes, other wooden ornaments
2	4602	Basketwork, wickerwork and other articles made to shape from plaiting materials
3	5805	Hand-woven tapestries
4	6505	Hats: knitted or crocheted
5	6912	Ceramic tableware, kitchenware, other household and toilet articles, other than of porcelain or China
6	6913	Statuettes and other ornamental ceramic articles
7	7113	Articles of jewelry and parts, of precious metal or metal clad with precious metal
8	7117	Imitation jewelry
9	9601	Worked ivory, tortoise-shell, horn, antlers, coral, mother-of-pearl and other animal carving material
10	9701	Paintings, drawings and pastels, executed entirely by hand
11	9702	Original engravings, prints and lithographs
12	9703	Original sculptures and statuary, in any material

Source: Lisa M. Grobar [40].

In addition, the handicraft related data can also be collected by classifying products by market segments as the key market to crafts is home accessories. However, it is very difficult to differentiate between the share of handmade and machine-made products. Therefore, several authors have used the market data for home accessories as a proxy for handicraft sector (such as the study of Smith [56]) due to limited existence of data. Furthermore, the International Trade Centre (ITC) categorized crafts in following market segments under the umbrella of creative industries: decoration (interior and exterior), household items, clothing and accessories, gifts, toys, and stationery [57]. Eventually, product categorization by market segments seems appropriate because this is how most buyers view the market, how consumers think about their purchases and how large retailers assign buying responsibilities [7].

Additionally, the relevant government agencies must take appropriate measures to ensure the timely collection and compilation of relevant data in order to take appropriate actions and to draft policies accordingly.

4.3. Recognition of Artisans and Their Creativity

Although the handicrafts play a vital role in the society of developing countries, the status of the artisan in society is low. Whereas, they deserve recognition for their creative work and continuing the heritage in the shape of rewards and appreciation for their valuable practices. It will not only motivate artisans to continue their profession but also creates a good impression over community for paying attention to this sector.

The UNESCO had started “Living Human Treasure” Program to grant official recognition to the talented tradition bearers and practitioners including artisans and emphasized its member state countries for adoption of this program [58]. In this regard, various UNESCO Member State countries have adopted this program and granted such recognition with different monetary benefits such as South Korea is providing 850 USD/per month, Japan provides 16,200 euros/year and France provides 16,000 euros/year, on the contrary, various countries does not provide financial benefits to artisans such as Romania [59], which may create unrest and demotivate artisans. The financial support is also necessary besides recognition, especially when the artisans becomes old and unable to continue to

work. Hence, such financial support will not only motivate artisans to continue this profession but also attract young generation to pursue this career.

Furthermore, such recognition is based on highly competitive basis and only very limited number of artisans are granted official recognition due to limited seats. Therefore, it would be better to formulate policy regarding recognition of artisans at different levels in accordance with performance level. Besides, conferment of honorary degrees can also enhance the social status of artisans [60].

4.4. Emphasize the Role of Technology and Innovation to Promote and Preserve Craft Traditions

The nature of ICH is very hard to demonstrate in real life since it is untouchable. However, the study of Alivizatou et al. [61] indicates that 3D visualization and interaction technology can be used in this regard. For instance, the motion capture technology can be applied for the detailed documentation of hand and finger movement during the production for example in pottery. Even though the human interaction cannot be simply replaced by the technology, there is significant scope to develop activities that not only document and preserve the knowledge of craftsmanship but also ensure the transmission of this knowledge to younger generations.

Moreover, in order to enhance the productivity and efficiency of craft production, technology can be used. Not only this, but the craftsperson can also show 3D handicraft or pre-designed products to get pre-orders before even its production, besides, necessary changes required in the design, shape, color etc. can be done very easily to fit the demands of the customers. Which not only will improve efficiency and effectiveness but also save the cost of product. Furthermore, in order to respond high quantity orders, high technology and engineering skills can help to design machines to enhance production capacity and speed up the production process which can also save the time to meet the customer demands within shortest time. The artisan not only can produce products in higher quantity to compete with mass production in the market but also can ease and simplify their production methods.

The innovation is a transformation of ideas and knowledge into new products or services which involve technology and the organization, and can be in terms of production, services, processes or management [62]. Culture can also be preserved through innovation in small businesses [63]. As a result, entrepreneurs play a crucial role to ensure that the handicraft industry and its cultural identity are preserved for future generations. One way to ensure successful business entrepreneurship according to contemporary management strategy is a miracle innovation [63,64]. This has prompted the majority of entrepreneurs to develop and grow based on innovation and modernization to meet market demands [24].

The handicraft trade at global level is focused on customer's needs and tastes instead of trade in culture. The production of handmade products in bulk quantities, requires mechanical support for finishing and processing. Moreover, the artisan needs to produce innovative designs, shapes, color etc. to match the needs of customers and such innovation may not contain traditional flavor. Yan Wu et al. [42] suggested that implementation of Service Design (user-centered design) can help in development of traditional handicraft through innovation. Furthermore, the availability of information, communications and technology (ICT) could broaden marketing opportunities for local entrepreneurs [65]. Those countries that have taken over the major portion of the world market, have adopted the modern approaches, techniques, tools and technology to respond to customer needs more effectively and efficiently than their counterparts. Thus, in order to compete in the market, the technology and innovation becomes necessary part of the business.

4.5. Emphasize Provision of Education and Training

The education and training are means of capacity building, preserve, promote and transmit the traditional craft production knowledge from generation to generation [2,66]. The one of key policy issue for development of crafts is thus the provision of education and training in order to enhance their ability to "learn and compete" [17]. Hence, it is very important to educate young generation about importance of handicrafts.

In many European countries the craft had been included into the curriculum since long. For example, in Finland it was included in the national curriculum in 1866 [67]. In various countries it is the part of Arts and cultural education curricular, however, the conception of arts curricula differs significantly between European countries. Around two-thirds of European countries includes craft as a compulsory subject in their arts curriculum [68]. Furthermore, in UK there is an “Artist Teacher Scheme”, which is a program of continuing professional development courses for specialist teachers of crafts, design and visual arts. In many European countries, Craft is part of Arts, Home Economics or Design such as Denmark, Estonia etc. Moreover, exhibitions of craftwork and artistic creations produced by children are also organized.

Abisuga and Fillis [5] suggested that the handicraft education curriculum can be introduced in the formal education system in order to address the issue of preservation and sustainability of cultural heritage. Moreover, the school children, who quit their education at early stages, can be accommodated in craft education programs which can help to develop creativity, self-fulfillment and sense of belongings.

In addition, as suggested by Norasingh and Southammavong [52], the establishment of vocational training schools to train young generation is very necessary, especially those that offer middle to high level skills training. The training will also help artisans to improve their skills and produce good quality products [40,54]. Moreover, there is a need to teach young generation about the modern product designs [66]. In this way students can acquire necessary skills to produce handicrafts and will know how to develop new ideas for product design and development. The vocational training schools are also very important for transmission of craft heritage [69], and the establishment of such schools will also help to protect and preserve the craft heritage from disappearing.

The government should pay attention to start courses/degree programs and strengthen the handicraft industry. This will not only help to preserve the techniques, skills of cultural traditions but also promote this industry. Attention should also be paid to the training of artisan to get necessary skills and techniques of teaching so that the inherited skills and techniques can be passed to others in its true letter and spirit.

The new technologies are very helpful for valorization of traditional culture and provide new methods to protect the precious tradition. Nevertheless, the craft tradition knowledge is difficult to digitize, some technologies are helpful for its preservation. Nowadays the haptic devices and Virtual Reality are already under use for educating complex techniques/skills such as surgery. These new technologies are also very helpful to digitally preserve the handicraft heritage as these technologies are very useful in transferring data to manual skills and related abilities besides storing, coding etc. [70] and it can be used as teaching tools. Hence, the policy makers should also focus to implement new technologies in educating and training of young generation to promote and preserve this valuable cultural heritage.

4.6. Provision of Microcredit Facilities and Emphasize the Role of Crowd Funding

Access to credit facilities is one of assured path to empower artisans leading to income and employment generation, it has also been largely acknowledged in the literature [2]. For instance, Abisuga and Fillis [5] emphasized the need to provide microfinance to artisans as it is one of the best way to empower youth and generate employment and income opportunities. Similarly, Norasingh and Southammavong [52] highlighted that the micro/small handicraft firms do not have much financial resources to take part in the international trade shows and exhibitions to present their cultural heritage resulting in loss of competitiveness. Therefore, the financial institutions should support cultural heritage by providing easy and interest free credit facilities, it will also help the artisan to expand their business.

Crowd funding is also one of the sources to get funds and is also helpful to organize a craft fair to present the artistic work of artisans where public support will help the project to thrive. There are several examples where peoples have convinced a large number of public to invest a smaller amount

in their projects/new products such as the case of Palpyaya [71]. It is an Indian based handicraft seller that has raised their funds through crowd funding on Wishberry [72]. Another case is Craft Wallet, a handicraft startup that raised funds up to 30,000 USD to support their project [73].

4.7. Improvement of Basic Infrastructure and Emphasis on Advertisement and Promotion of Tourist Places

The basic infrastructure is necessary for every business. The potential tourist and customers are unwilling to visit the less developed areas, having little or no road network, due to non-availability of basic necessities and difficulty in transportation. It also severely affects the access to raw materials as well as export/import of handicrafts. In line with this issue, Abisuga and Fillis [5] suggested that relevant government agencies must pay attention to provide basic infrastructure such as roads, water and electricity facilities to support handicraft business activities particularly in the rural area in order to help artisans to do business smoothly and open the doors for sustainable development of traditional heritage.

The artisans mainly sell their products in local markets near to the tourist destinations. A significant amount is utilized by national and international tourists on purchase of local handicrafts that represents the specialty of the particular region as souvenir or as gift. Thus, tourists are the potential customers for handicraft businesses and the increase in the number of tourists will positively affect the craft business in terms of higher sales [74]. At most tourist destinations one can find different kinds of publications informing tourists about local culture, attractions, public events, possible excursions, etc. In this way tourists can be motivated to visit craft shops [55]. Thus, in line with this argument, Toledo-Lopez et al. [75] highlighted the need for support of government for advertisement and promotion of tourist places [76].

5. Case Study of Pakistan

In this section, we examine the case of Pakistan, a country blessed with rich history and cultural heritage which shows the traditions and culture of Pakistan. The Pakistan produces extensive variety of crafts such as textile, embroidery, beadwork, block-printing, patchwork, woodcrafts, pottery, jewelry, stone-carving, etc. [77,78] that has a long history of over at least 5000 years and migration by Persians, Greeks and Arabs have included their diverse cultures to the craft heritage. The traditional crafts are produced extensively in all provinces of Pakistan, mostly in rural areas. The handicrafts from different parts of country have their own uniqueness, the shape, color and type of handicraft very beautifully represents the specialty of the region. Such as the “Ajrak” (Block Printing) and “Topi” (Cap) of Sindh Province [77], “Embroidery” of Baluchistan Province, “Beadwork” of KPK Province and “Shadow and Phulkari” (Flower work) of Punjab Province are very famous. Moreover, the techniques used in production of various crafts are centuries old. Such as block-printing and dyeing technique, Kashi (Glazed/blue pottery making technique) [79,80] etc. that has been famous for the last many centuries [77].

The handicraft industry is significantly contributing to income and employment generation as well as economic and social sustainability of the country. The recent statistics indicates that as much as 13.54% of all employees nationally are accounted for in the crafts and related services sector alone [81]. However, most of the activity in the traditional craft heritage is still undocumented and informal [82], thus the actual contribution of this heritage is unidentified.

Challenges of Pakistani Handicraft Industry

Due to industrialization, burgeoning growth in substitute products, rapid changes in consumer tastes, paucity of raw materials [78], the handicraft industry in Pakistan has lost its place in the market because the machine-made products are very cheaper and handicraft products requires complex labor work with low profit margin. Moreover, the rising price of raw materials and low marketing network has put this industry in miserable state [83]. The study of Syed Fida Hussain Shah [84], indicates that apart from agriculture and livestock, the alternative source of income is handicraft and most of

women in rural areas (Such as Thatta and Badin in Sindh Province) can produce quality handicraft products such as embroidery but for local use with low marketing. The author also highlighted that the substitute products are replacing the handicrafts very fast.

Most of the artisans engaged in this profession in Pakistan belongs to the rural and economical weaker areas and frequently face problems due to a lack of resources. Many micro rural entrepreneurs are also facing financial resources constraints as there is a gap between earning and financial requirement. As far as the provision of credit facilities are concerned, there are several institutions/schemes which provide funding facilities but most of the rural artisans are unaware about such schemes and generally financial institutions require security to payback the loans, which is a major obstacle for artisans as they hardly can provide any security [85]. Usually craftsmen do not prefer institutional resources for funds, rather they prefer to obtain loans from moneylenders, wholesalers or suppliers. In some cases, the artisans only get the labor charges and all the raw materials are provided by wholesalers/suppliers who in turn gets the finish products. While in other cases, the raw materials are provided by the suppliers and after selling finished goods the artisan re-pay the amount with more than 15% interest rates [86].

One of major weakness of rural artisan is the low level of education, very small number of institutes available in rural areas to provide craft education and most of the artisan are unable to get benefit either due to low awareness or poor access. The study of Tayyaba et al. [85], focused on handicrafts produced by women in rural areas of Sindh, indicates that most of the craft women are uneducated. Moreover, the education and research related to traditional crafts such as handloom, weaving, pottery etc., were not added in professional institutes, which is also a major obstacle to pass cultural heritage knowledge to younger generation.

Likewise, Samreen Zahra [87] reported that one of reason behind decline in Pakistani handicraft industry is the lack of innovation in design and emphasized that artisans should adopt modern tastes of customers to compete in the market. Also, there is a wide gap of cooperation between designers and artisans, the designers have the professional knowledge and knowhow about the modern taste and artisans have cultural heritage skills and knowledge, thus their cooperation can lead to expansion of business and competitiveness. In addition, the poor infrastructure has damaged this sector, in most of the rural areas during peak summer season, there is power outages/load shedding for up to 12 h a day which hinders production process leading to uncompetitive business. Besides, the worst condition of roads is hindering in transportation of raw materials and tourist's visit.

Moreover, due to unwillingness of young generation to pursue this career, many craft tradition have disappeared and many are struggling for survival. The available data related to employment in this sector indicates decline in employment. In 2001–2002, 16.20% of all employees nationally were accounted for handicraft and related sector [88] but with the passage of time, the interest of young generation is declining and currently this sector is accounted for only 13.54% employment [70] (See Figure 1 for detail of employment).

However, the Federal Government as well as local Government in Pakistan made several efforts to promote handicraft industry and preserve this valuable cultural heritage. Such as the establishment of National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) on 1974 aimed to preserve and promote tangible and intangible heritage of the country [89].

Besides government actions, various non-governmental organizations (NGO) are also working in different parts of the country to help artisans to compete and survive in the market. For instance, AHAN (Aik Hunar Aik Nagar) is operating since 2007 in allover the Pakistan and is aimed to support rural based micro and small enterprises such as handicrafts. The objectives of AHAN includes facilitation of craft persons/artisans in accessing enterprise development services [90]. Other several attempts have been made to promote this industry such as introduction of several schemes for artisans, organizing fairs, provision of subsidy, awareness seminars etc.

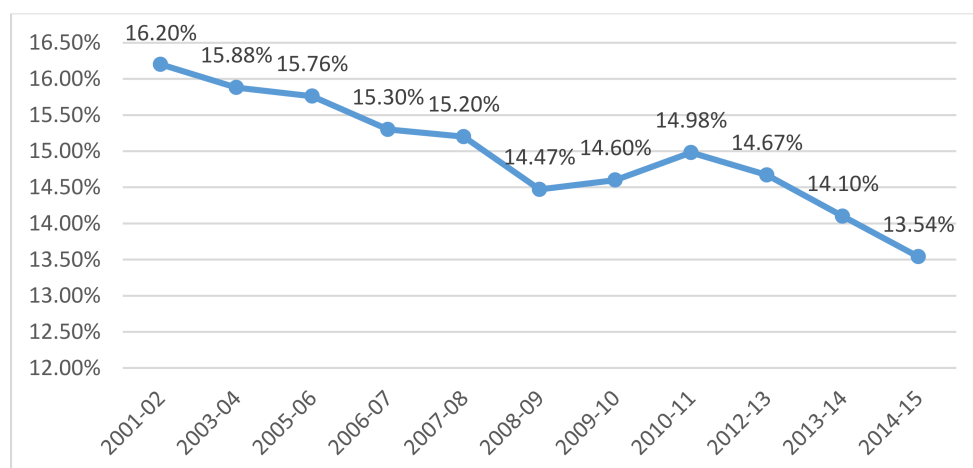


Figure 1. Percentage of Craft and related trade workers (2001–2015). Source: Pakistan Statistical Year Books 2014 and 2015 [60,68].

In order to ascertain the effectiveness of these efforts with respect to exports, we have adopted the approach of Grobar [40] to observe recent trends in handicraft trade using The United Nations COMTRADE database as mentioned above in Table 1.

The Table 2 indicates the growth in Pakistan's total exports of these goods from 2008 to 2016 along with HS codes (Harmonized commodity coding system). Although, the Pakistan has improved growth in exporting few categories such as Hats: knitted or crocheted (HS Code 6505) by 246.82% and household article (HS Code 6912) by 50.56%, overall there is a negative trend in handicraft exports ranging from −11.86% to −96.89%. This indicates that Pakistan has almost lost export in some categories such as articles of jewelry and parts of precious metal or metal clad with precious metal (−96.89%) and imitation jewelry (−86.09%).

Table 2. Growth rate of handicraft exports from 2008–2016.

Sr. No.	Code	Description	Growth Rate in %
1	4420	Wood marquetry and inlaid wood, statuettes, other wooden ornaments	−11.86%
2	6505	Hats: knitted or crocheted	246.82%
3	6912	Ceramic tableware, kitchenware, other household and toilet articles, other than of porcelain or china	50.56%
4	7113	Articles of jewelry and parts, of precious metal or metal clad with precious metal	−96.89%
5	7117	Imitation jewelry	−86.09%
6	9601	Worked ivory, tortoise-shell, horn, antlers, coral, mother-of-pearl and other animal carving material	−25.75%
7	9701	Paintings, drawings and pastels, executed entirely by hand	−27.09%

Further analysis of data indicates that a high number of imports of handicraft and related products are flowing from world in the Pakistan since 2006–2016 at the annual growth rate ranging from 21.07% to 166.06%. The imports of Paintings, drawings and pastels, executed entirely by hand (HS Code 9701), articles of jewelry and parts, of precious metal (HS Code 7113) have been increased by 166.06% and 80.24% respectively. The items that have low annual import growth rate includes basketwork, wickerwork and other articles made to shape from plaiting materials (HS Code 4602), Imitation jewelry (HS Code 7117) etc.

However, if we compare the handicraft and related products imported from World and China, we find that the share of most of the imported products from China is much higher than the share of world. The imports flowing from China are increasing at the annual growth rate ranging from 16.20%

to 494.34%. The imports of articles of jewelry and parts (HS Code 7113), worked ivory, tortoise-shell etc. (HS Code 9601), from China, have been increased by 494.34% and 467.12% respectively which is even more than six times higher than the world. The least importing category from China is the same as importing from World which is basketwork, wickerwork and other articles made to shape from plaiting materials (HS Code 4602) and Imitation jewelry (HS Code 7117). The Table 3 indicates Average Annual Growth in handicraft imports since 2006.

If we compare the data regarding imports flowing from China to Pakistan in 2006 and 2016, we find that various categories of crafts and related products have been tremendously increased since 2006. For instance, the percentage of import share of Wood marquetry and inlaid wood, statuettes, other wooden ornaments (HS Code 4420), Basketwork, wickerwork and other articles made to shape from plaiting materials (HS Code 4602), Ceramic tableware, kitchenware, other household (HS Code 4912), Statuettes and other ornamental ceramic articles (HS Code 4913) and Worked ivory, tortoise-shell, horn, antlers, coral, mother-of-pearl and other animal carving material (HS Code 9601) have been increased greatly (See Figure 2).

Table 3. Average Annual Growth in imports Handicraft sector: Imports from World and China (2006–2016).

Code	Description	World	China
4420	Wood marquetry and inlaid wood, statuettes, other wooden ornaments	40.96%	63.32%
4602	Basketwork, wickerwork and other articles made to shape from plaiting materials	21.07%	16.20%
6505	Hats: knitted or crocheted	52.92%	70.55%
6912	Ceramic tableware, kitchenware, other household and toilet articles, other than of porcelain or china	65.27%	60.71%
6913	Statuettes and other ornamental ceramic articles	32.82%	39.60%
7113	Articles of jewelry and parts, of precious metal or metal clad with precious metal	80.24%	494.34%
7117	Imitation jewelry	25.42%	20.98%
9601	Worked ivory, tortoise-shell, horn, antlers, coral, mother-of-pearl and other animal carving material	63.31%	467.12%
9701	Paintings, drawings and pastels, executed entirely by hand	166.06%	112.96%

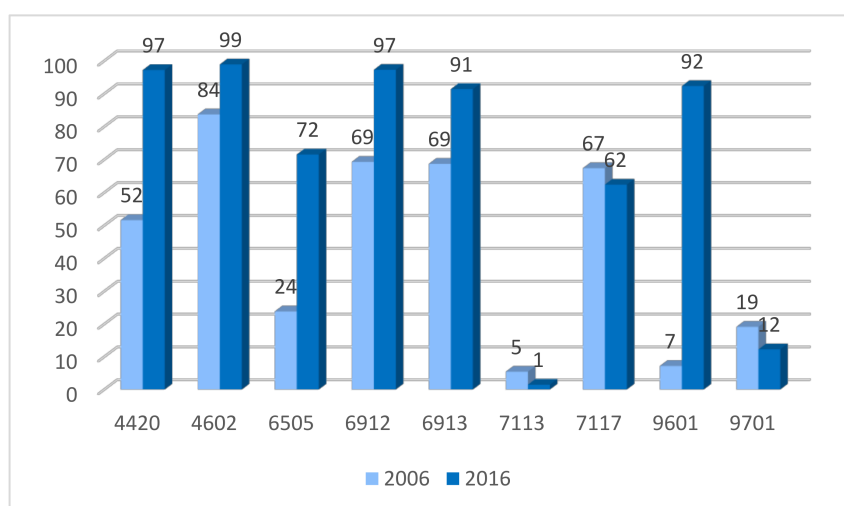


Figure 2. Comparison of share of China in Handicraft's import in Pakistan in 2006 and 2016.

Further analysis of the data indicates that the handicraft industry of Pakistan is facing problems such as decline in employment, export and is facing import competition in domestic market of handicrafts and related substitutes. Even though, Pakistan has managed to increase its export in few categories of products, the tremendous imports have increased competition in domestic market

especially from China and has affected the craft industry to a greater extent. The above proposed policy measures are very important to preserve and revive the craft tradition and the Pakistani handicraft industry needs quick response else this industry may get seriously affected by huge imports flowing into the country which will be difficult to recover.

6. Conclusions

The cultural heritage embodied in crafts is valuable cultural asset for any nation, it indicates culture and traditions of a particular region. The craft production is very vital part of economies in several developing nations [4,5]. Also, the importance of craft tradition has been widely acknowledged in the literature for development of poor nations, thus it becomes necessary and justified to pay attention in terms of appropriate policy measures to protect and preserve the craft tradition [15,16]. Most of the related literature focuses on preservation of built heritage, moreover, various organizations and governments have only focused on the preservation of the traditional products. Thus, the question of transmitting craft related skills and knowledge from generation to generation exists. The present paper explored and identified several issues faced by traditional craftsmanship in order to contribute to the sustainability of heritage-based livelihoods and to preserve the cultural heritage. The purpose of safeguarding traditional craftsmanship is to ensure the transmission of craft related skills and practices from generation to generation.

Our study highlighted various challenges and constraints that handicraft heritage in developing countries is faced with such as lack of consensus in defining and classifying handicrafts, non-availability of sufficient data, industrialization, mass production, unwilling young generation, lack of basic infrastructure, lack of innovation and technology and educational/training facilities and limited financial resources. These issues are deteriorating the significance of the craft heritage. Our analysis indicates that this heritage is gradually losing its existence and is in need of urgent attention to preserve the cultural heritage.

In order to provide empirical evidences to support the assumptions of the study, we examined the case of Pakistani handicraft industry. The case of Pakistan proved the assumptions of the study and provided evidences about the challenges faced by handicraft sector. Further in-depth analysis of the case of Pakistan indicates that the government has implemented several policies but employment and export in this sector is declining. Although various measures to strengthen this heritage were initiated, due to several challenges as highlighted above, the industry is losing its significance and consequent upon flow of a high number of imports in the country, the industry has been affected to a great extent.

Our study identified and characterized the relevant policies and practices to overcome the identified challenges in order to promote, develop and preserve the craft heritage. The policy suggestions include differentiation between machine made and handmade products, emphasize the collection and compilation of statistics, recognition of artisans and their creativity, emphasize the role of technology and innovation to promote and preserve craft traditions, emphasize provision of education and training, provision of microcredit facilities and emphasize the role of crowd funding, improvement of basic infrastructure and emphasize the advertisement and promotion of tourist places. The significance of these policy suggestions is also underlined with the case of Pakistan. These policy suggestions will not only help to preserve the skills and practices of traditional heritage but also help artisans to revive their business and generate income and employment opportunities for sustainable development.

Inevitably, there are limitations on this research such as the lack of sufficient statistical data. This did not allow very precise and more in-depth analysis of the challenges. The lack of statistical data has also been acknowledged in the literature [2,40]. However, the non-availability of data has also been identified as one of challenge that has disadvantaged this sector [2]. In order to cover this limitation, we have provided secondary empirical data related to our case study of Pakistan, however, further studies may be conducted to deeply analyze the challenges of craft heritage by taking different case studies to provide more holistic view. It would be of more interest to examine the specific kind of

intangible cultural heritage which are in need of urgent safeguarding as identified by the UNESCO such as “Al Sadu (Traditional weaving skills)” of United Arab Emirates, “Traditional Li textile techniques: spinning, dyeing, weaving and embroidering” of China, “Black pottery manufacturing process” of Portugal etc. [37]. This would also allow a better understanding of the specific challenges faced by the particular intangible cultural heritage embodied in crafts and enables a sustainable craft development.

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