

**KALIMPONG THROUGH THE LENS OF IT'S INDIGENOUS PRODUCTS: A  
MICRO STUDY**

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**Abstract**

The need of the hour is to revamp the face of the Indian local products and help it build it's global presence in the coming years. Kalimpong a small district in the Indian state of West Bengal situated at an altitude of 1300 metres on the eastern part of Darjeeling Himalayas is well known for the mighty Kanchanjanga, pristine natural beauty, dense flora and fauna, enchanting valleys, meadows, suitable weather and of course its indigeneous handicraft items. It's high time to showcase the local products ok Kalimpong and to offer respect and recognition to the artisans in this field. An attempt has however been made through this paper to bring the indigeneous products of Kalimpong into limelight and help the people involved in this sector.

**Keywords:** local products, Kalimpong , financial inclusion of local people

**Introduction**

The handicraft industry has proven to be the backbone of India's rural economy for decades. The handicraft sector is unorganized and it is the second-largest employment generating sector in India after agriculture. The majority of the artisans belong to the socially and economically backward sections of the society. Preserving and protecting the skills and knowledge of traditional crafts is a growing challenge. So, it is high time that art forms are revived and awareness spread about them around the globe. In India, the people who are involved in handicraft sector majorly belong to scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and other religious minorities with over 50 percent being women. The handicraft industry is primarily an unorganized sector, providing livelihood to over 7 million people, the majority of whom lead a life of hardship and struggle and belong to the economically and socially underprivileged sections of the society. Artisans, from different locations, across India, despite their hardships, ensure that each of their creation is unique to their place and culture. So, in India, each state has its share of unique products, showcasing their aesthetics to the world. Though the creations of the Indian artisans are beautiful and are also being accepted across the world it has its share of problems preventing it to grow further. The producers of

the handicrafts and the potential customers are not in contact with each other leading to a situation where the producers are unaware of the preferences of their customers. Another major hurdle is the existence of middlemen in this sector which prevents the craftspeople from earning to their full potential though the customers are paying handsomely for their creation

Kalimpong has many things that are unique to the town and its culture. A variety of local products are manufactured in Kalimpong cottage industries. Some of the products include:

- Kalimpong cheese and lollipops- they are the authentic cheese found in Kalimpong. These swiss dairy products were first introduced by Swiss catholic priests and since then the recipe has stayed with the locals. The rich cheese is considered a traditional item of the town and can be found in several shops.
- Fing (local name)/ glass noodles- are prepared locally and stored in packets. They taste different from other noodles.
- Khada- Khada symbolises purity and compassion and is worn or presented at many ceremonial occasions and is common in cultures and countries where Buddhism is practiced.
- Handmade paper products – from shopping bags to wrapping papers and stationaries, there are many handmade products crafted with love by the people of Kalimpong.
- Tibetan art and crafts – Kalimpong is famous for its Tibetan culture and this culture of course, finds its way to the crafts sold there. Owing to the burgeoning of the Tibetan art and handicraft industry, there are lot of things one can shop for such as Thangas (intricately made religious scroll paintings),woollengarments, wood crafted items, tapestry, bags and purses.

**Other local products include:**

- a) Thanka
- b) Lungdar
- c) Koonamza
- d) Khorlo
- e) Bhutti

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

- Julia Wojciechowska, solisNov2018, determined the relationship between the promotion of local products and regional development. It was shown that “curiosity and uncommonness” of local products is one of the main reason for purchasing them at regional fairs.
- Arphon et al (2008), examined the production of pottery handicraft sculpture workstation in which the author found that the artisans were using traditional methods and suggested that workstations work on adjusted height of seat, storage of carving the equipment, etc .
- “Preserving and saving the skills and knowledge of traditional crafts is an evolving need. So, it is high time to revive art forms and spread awareness about them in urban space” (Jain, 2016)
- “Crafts like the beautiful Mithila paintings, Roghan painting of Rajasthan, Parsi & Toda embroidery, puppetry and handicrafts of Assam and Nagaland, Dhokra craft, and many more are at risk. Even traditional art is dying out slowly. As the future generation isn’t patient and hardworking enough to carry the craft forward, the practitioners of these crafts are now in the fear that this may be the last surviving generation for these crafts have been doing them for several generations. Also, they are paid much lesser than they actually should for their hard work and skills” (Mahapatra, 2019).

## **OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

- ✓ To highlight the importance of local products manufactured at Kalimpong.
- ✓ To promote the cottage industries of kalimpong .
- ✓ To identify the challenges faced by local producers.
- ✓ To provide recommendations for increasing turnover.
- ✓ To find out the profitability of the local producers.
- ✓ To identify SWOT analysis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Both primary and secondary data were used for analysis purpose. Personal interviews and observations were used to collect primary data. Secondary data too has been used for the study and for its collection articles, journals, newspapers and internet have been referred to.

## LIMITATION OF STUDY

- ✓ The area of study is confined to Kalimpong only.
- ✓ Small sample size i.e., 15 producers of local products have been taken into consideration for the purpose of the study.
- ✓ Interviewees were hesitant in providing true information in nexus to their business.

## Discussion and Analysis

**Table1: Tabulation of age**

AGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
20-30	3	20%
30-40	5	33%
40-50	4	27%
50-60	3	20%
TOTAL	15	100%

Maximum of the respondents producing local products in Kalimpong fall in the age bracket of 30-40 years and 40-50 years. Young people in the age group of 20-30 years seem to be less involved in the manufacturing of local products and hence some measures should be undertaken to make the young people of Kalimpong find interest in such type of start-ups.

**Table 2: Tabulation of monthly sales**

LOCAL PRODUCTS	MONTHLY SALES (Pkt)	PERCENT SOLD
KHADA	200	23%
INCENSE STICKS	300	34%
NOODLES	250	29%
FING	100	12%
INDUSRIAL	20	2%
HANDKERCHIEF		
TOTAL	870	100%

Amongst the local products of Kalimpong incense sticks are in high demand followed by noodles, khada, fing and industrial handkerchief.

**Table 3: Forms of business**

<b>BASIS OF BUSINESS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>SOLE PROPRIETERSHIP</b>	4	27%
<b>PARTNERSHIP</b>	3	20%
<b>FAMILY BUSINESS</b>	8	53%
<b>TOTAL</b>	15	100%

The information obtained from the respondents showed that those who are engaged in the production of indigenous items in Kalimpong are mostly into family business compared to partnership or sole proprietorship form of business.

### **SWOT ANALYSIS**

#### **STRENGTHS**

- Abundant and cheap labour
- Low capital investment
- Variety of products which are unique
- Rich tradition
- Acceptable social standard
- Employees skill

#### **WEAKNESSES**

- Inconsistent quality
- Inadequate market study
- Lack of proper infrastructure and communication facility
- Untimely delivery schedule
- Unorganized market
- Low technique guidance

#### **OPPORTUNITY**

- Rising appreciation for handicrafts by consumers
- Investment facility
- Large trained skill
- Skilled manpower

### **THREATS**

- High price of hand made products
- Low quality
- Production export
- Large number of competitors

### **SUGGESTIONS**

- Control the fluctuation in the supply of products.
- Provide copy right on local products
- Export local products to earn more revenues.
- Old methods of techniques to be replaced by new technologies.
- Promote the products through online marketing.
- Adopt e-commerce to tap the markets and attract consumers from other regions.
- Organize marketing network with the help of supply chain.
- Generate employment opportunities for the youth, handicapped, economically weaker sections and women in the handicraft sector by imparting necessary training to them.
- Organize fairs and exhibitions to popularize the local products.
- Conduct workshops in both rural and urban areas to enhance the skills and knowledge of the people. Skill showcase, design education, creative and product development workshops should be followed up with pricing, marketing, branding and micro-finance.

### **CONCLUSION**

The share of Indian handicrafts in the global market is still considerably low, but the overall scope of increasing exports is quite enormous due to the ever-increasing global demand. Research has revealed that the world handicraft market is expected to be worth \$1091.2 billion by 2024, growing at the rate of 11 percent. Indian handicrafts are majorly exported to more than a hundred countries and US alone constitutes about a third of India's handicrafts exports. Till a few years back, India lacked a consolidated platform to showcase the Indian handicraft to the global audience. This scenario is fast changing. Few platforms like Craftezy, have emerged that lend the much-needed support to Indian artisans in finding visibility in domestic

and global markets. It is high time that the crafts industry receives the attention it deserves. With the current push for local products, this sector is indeed in a rich position. Right resources and investment can push this industry towards a thriving sector driving millions to prosperity. To enhance the demand further, the Indian Government has introduced various schemes to boost local production. Since the Indian economy is recovering swiftly after being dented by the Covid-19 Pandemic, it is certainly a good time for start-ups to engage with this sector in the form of an exporter.

Kalimpong a small district in the Indian state of West Bengal no doubt can bring about financial inclusion of its local masses by giving new shape to its old age locally manufactured products and by adopting proper marketing strategies.

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