

## STUDY OF INTRODUCING HOME FURNISHING PRODUCTS AND MARKETING STRATEGY IN VARANASI BROCADE

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### ABSTRACT

*The brocade of Varanasi is the distinctive workmanship of the craftsmen or weavers of Varanasi where gold and silver thread is sewn on a fine silk. The chief features of brocade saree are aesthetic, creative, cultural, decorative, utilitarian, functional, traditional, religious and socially symbolic. Today the Banarasi saree has accumulated fame not only in India but in abroad places too. The Banarasi silk products are having a stronghold in ready-made market both in India and abroad, there are a large number of areas demanding acute attention to sustain and improve this traditional craft and to help the Banarasi weavers to achieve new heights of revival and excellence. In the recent years, an effort has been made to dig out and analyze the weavers' socio-economic condition, marketing practices and difficulties faced by them. This paper tried to explore to introduce new product range i.e. home furnishing product which such as: cushions and cushion covers, curtains and draperies, table covers, upholstery fabrics etc. produced by artisans with the help of hand, tools, and machines without losing the essence of the brocade and which will also make their socio-economic condition stable and marketing strategy for the same in order to get more recognition in this new age of the world. The other reason for doing this is that the Brocade Sarees are costly not everyone can afford it, so by introducing the home furnishing products these artisan could also hit the lower price market.*

**Keywords:** Banarasi silk; Handloom weavers; Varanasi silk, Brocade; Saree; Craft; Varanasi ; Home furnishing; Market; Promotion.

### INTRODUCTION

India has a rich cultural as well as social lineage of the handloom industry and handicrafts. Indian artisans are world famous for their eminent workmanship and produced the most beautiful and exquisite handspun and hand-woven textiles. The artistic skills of the traditional handloom weavers are top notch worldwide. In fact, the processing and manufacturing of textiles was the second largest occupation of India after agriculture. This handloom industry survived mainly on its aesthetics, uniqueness and craftsmanship. Fascinating motifs and super design of the fabric assigned special importance to the sector. Despite strong competition from mill made textiles, the handmade fabrics are still in demand to a great extent, thus fetching a premium price in the modern and industrialized market.

Banaras (now Varanasi), the temple town of Uttar Pradesh is known for world famous brocades and sarees. Ethnic Banarasi brocades are the finest example of superb craftsmanship of Indian artisans. Brocade has a long tradition in our cultural history. Varanasi is believed to have a rich history in the field of textiles. Back when it was the capital of Kashi kingdom and Siddhartha (later known as Gautam Buddha) was its Prince, this place flourished as a textile center. According to the Buddhist Sutra, when Prince Siddhartha decided to renounce worldly luxuries, he took off his silk clothes, which were mentioned to be woven by the weavers of Kashi. Kashi kingdom was a crucial center for silk and cotton fabrics. In 5th and 6th century BC, exquisitely woven fabrics from Kashi became the most sought-after commodity all over the world.

Brocade and Zari textiles are a specialty of the city. The earliest mention of these regal fabrics can be found in the 19th century literature. Silk weavers from Gujarat migrated to Kashi in 17th century after a famine in 1603. A new environment for weavers gave a way to various innovations and by 19th century, the city had flourished as the Textile capital of the region. Development of Brocade and Zari work in the city saw new heights during Mughal period, especially in the reign of emperors such as Akbar. Over these centuries of handmade textile tradition, the city has seen many changes in preferences of colors, patterns, motifs, borders and styles.

Between 350 AD to 500 AD floral patterns, animal and bird depictions gained popularity. With the advent of Mughals & following cultural concoction in 16th century, Islamic patterns came in vogue, giving a new flavor to Indian fashion trends. Soon in 19th century, Indian designs started showing a close resemblance to Victorian style wall papers and Geometrical patterns (a carry forward of the Mughal Lattice work). Nowadays, the trends are based on revival of the traditional patterns and mixing them with modern color and style sensibilities.

Banarasi brocade boasts of the traditional values and the narration of rich Indian textiles, which is true. It has been a center of admiration for all of us. From the times of Kingdoms and Palaces to today's modern ethnicity.

Banarasi Brocade is said to have its origin from the very older times like the Buddhist period. There is also another speculation that it has its origins from Mughal Empire during 14th Century. During this period women were too fascinated towards these fabrics, who have been attiring cottons since long time.

Banaras is the center of silk weaving in India since time immemorial. The work is highly practiced in this region by the large number of communities in that area.

Brocade also holds a misconception about itself that the designs on the brocade fabrics are embroidered on, but they are not. The designs are woven into the fabric. Brocade is often irreversible. Brocade is sometimes mistaken to be referred as jacquard. Jacquard does not apply to the fabrics, but to the design woven on it.

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The handloom sector is one of the largest unorganized economic activity after agriculture and very integral part of the rural and semi-rural part of India. Handloom weaving consists of the richest and most vibrant aspect of cultural heritage. This handloom sector has an advantage of being less capital requiring, eco-friendly, and also has flexibility of small production.

Government of India has setup many departments for the wellbeing of this craft and craftsmen.

Following are the services provided by Government of India:

- Handloom Design Centre
- Weavers Service Centers
- Indian Institute of Handloom Technology
- National Handloom Development Corporation
- Handloom Export Promotion Council

## Government Interventions

Government of India has been making intervention for this handloom, which are as follows:

- Access to raw materials: Supply yarn through NHDC
- Skill development Training by WSC
- Design Support through WSC and professional designers engages under NHDP and Mega Cluster Programme.
- Marketing and Export promotion: This has been done through domestic and international exhibitions.
- Welfare measures: Health and life insurance done by Government of India.

## Scheme by Government of India

Following are the schemes which have been approved by the Government of India:

- National Handloom Development Programme – two components:
  - (a) Revival, Reform and Restructuring (RRR) Package for handloom sector.
  - (b) Comprehensive Handlooms Development Scheme.
- Handloom Weavers Comprehensive Welfare Scheme – two components:
  - (a) Health Insurance Scheme for access to health care facilities

- (b) Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar BimaYojana for life insurance
- Yarn Supply Scheme.
  - Comprehensive Handloom Cluster Development Scheme (Mega Cluster Scheme).

- Too scattered and unorganized.
- Low productivity - resultant of inability to adopt skills required by market,
- Out dated tools - equipment's and inability to replace them
- Lack of capital dependence on middlemen.
- Problem of marketing of the product,
- Quality control and fair prices.

**MAJOR AREAS FOR DECLINE / WEAKNESS**

Reasons of decline of brocade are as follows:

**SWOT Analysis**



**NEW RANGE OF PRODUCTS I.E. HOME FURNISHING**

Introduction of new range of products can not only induce new ideas but will also help weavers to grow economically too. Most of the weavers, located at Bajardeeha are only producing saree using power looms and handlooms. There is no other source of income other than from making saree, which is also made on orders given by the middle men to them. Since the price of saree in market is high, these artisans get only few thousands of rupees for making them and in this

much amount of money they have to handle their big families and buy raw materials for other orders. Artisan or weaver might say that this introduction of home furnishing product can make the essence of brocade sari to fade away. In production of home furnishing products, the essence of brocade will not fade away as it will be made with the same process as they are making the sarees. The home furnishing part will include cushions and cushion covers, curtains and draperies, table covers, upholstery fabrics etc. The problem which can arise while making them is

new designs and concepts which can also be handled easily by the services provided by the Government of India, which will be able to teach the artisans about new designs and how to go about it. The other problem which may arise out is about marketing which will be the point of discussion later in this research paper. As a business man a person will eventually think when introducing new products is that how to plan and implement promoting and marketing strategies of the product. This will also help the consumers to buy brocade product at a low cost as compared to saree in which the minimum price is around ten thousand.

### **MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

Marketing and promotion are the biggest aspect for the business to be successful, be it providing services or introducing products in the market. Brocade Saree industry is already going through a lean phase because of marketing reasons. The trade related people are facing this problem of shrinking demand and need a remedy for this situation. Many marketing challenges were dug out through SWOT analysis. Their remedies were thought over. This data was analyzed by using factor analysis method through which fewer number of variables were deduced for the art. Further these sorted out variables were ranked in the order of preference as per the respondents and their analyzed result.

### **Internationalization and communication strategy**

This shows that the remedial actions mentioned under this head were the most feasible and acceptable for the industry players in the present situation. As the name suggest the industry players want to either increase or change their customer base through internationalization. Alternatively, it may mean that they want to change the adverse mind set of the target customers which is hampering the market share and future prospects of the industry through effective communication.

The Problems or the challenges that can be sorted by using the under mentioned solutions are:

- Full potential of international market is not tapped.
- Exports are less and events promoting

platform to display the product Internationally are less in number.

- New markets are not explored
- Export norms are not known by the actual industry persons or they feel hesitated to enter this area because of complications of the norms.
- The mentality of target audience has changed towards the product because of their changing life style which needs to be reformed to a positive attitude for the product.
- Repositioning is required for the product.
- Awareness of customer about the differences between the handloom and power loom product is negligible which needs to be educated to the customer.
- Cost of genuineness of product is also needed to be made aware of for the Customers .

### **1. Visibility of the craft internationally should be increased**

This points to the fact that the visibility of the craft internationally is not satisfactory. The craft has more potential in the international markets than that it is displaying at present. Campaigns and export promoting activities can be undertaken to increase the visibility and demand of the art in the international markets. As per the survey results the craft has a demand in many foreign countries. It can be increased many folds if the efforts are made and these efforts are directed in the right direction.

The problems that can be solved through this remedy are:

- Lack of export and export promotion events.
- Untapped international market's potential.
- Price sensitivity of customers.
- Depleting demand of product.

### **2. Branding and strategic positioning is required**

The present positioning of the product is that the product is for the masses, it is costly party wear dress with heavy work and has traditional values attached to it. The present brand image associated to it includes its being

costly, compulsion, heavy in weight, old-fashioned and out dated product. The present customer segment targeted is that of the masses using it for the traditional ceremonies out of compulsion of tradition. The positioning of any successful product should be such that it makes the product useful to the target customer. It should offer a package that equates the expected worth of the product by the customers and value paid by them and only the customer buys a product. In the case of Banarasi Sarees this equation was balanced till the duplicate or substitute power loom products came to the market. Today the power looms have copied almost all the major patterns of the original Banarasi Sarees. The power loom industry currently is working on the left-over designs to find a way to copy them. Any lay man cannot differentiate between the duplicate and an original product because the difference lies in the quality of the raw material used and in the weaving method and thread directions.

### 3. **Integration of other related organizations like NIFT, UP Tourism, Govt. Emporium etc. can turn out to be good and profitable option**

A network involving production up-gradation, strategic promotional efforts and a distribution network to replicate the promises made through the promotion strategy. This statement also refers to the solution of the problem of a designing body to help the industry on regular basis with inputs. The body can provide inputs in form of new designs, graphs, color combinations and textile modifications as per the needs of the present scenario and like of the target customers. It also finds a solution for building and managing dedicated distribution channel spread all over the country. That can insure the promise of genuineness and quality product.

The problems that can be solved by this suggestion are:

- Lack of designing inputs.
- Lack of integrated communication out flow.
- Lack of dedicated and strategically

projected physical display of product in the markets.

- Lack of infrastructure problem.
- Underutilization of government facilities and lack of professional tie-ups.

### 4. **Premium Pricing for Genuineness**

Statements clubbed under this variable suggest that the remedial action can be increasing the prices at its pace as they are beyond the limits of being revertible. Instead, the target customer can be educated and morally waken to the extent they start getting self-motivated to by the genuine product. Alternatively changing the existing customer base to the segment that is willing to pay for the genuineness and is not price sensitive like the present target segment can be a good option.

The marketing challenges targeted to be solved by this variable are: -

- Problem of target customer being price sensitive.
- Competitors in form of duplicate and substitute products have a competitive advantage of being low cost and visually look-alike.
- Lack of USP to be offered to the customers to attract them.
- Duplicate products have been sold under the brand name of Banarasi Saree and are eating away the market share of the original industry.
- Mass pricing strategy is falling flat because of the raising price of production.
- Weavers fleeing away because of less pay and high difficulty level of work.
- Many people end-up buying a duplicate product on the price of genuine product due to lack of awareness of the differences between two.

### **CONCLUSION**

If these methods of marketing and introduction of home furnishing is taken into consideration, it can really prove to be a game changing part in the lives of artisan and customers. For artisan it will not only help them to learn about new designs and technique but will also help them earn more than they earn now eventually improving their socio-

economic conditions which will also help them to keep their family happy and buy more raw materials. And for customers who loves the original and real brocade but feels it is costly to buy can also seek alternative to buy home furnishing product which is less costly but will eventually have the essence of brocade in it.

As part of marketing strategy include it will solve around more than half problem of all the weavers and artisan as it will make them feel that they can still do better and keep focusing on what they are doing. The Government of India are already supporting them with schemes and services few more offering from government will help them to get economically stable, give them the position in the market which they eventually deserve, give them a proper name as a brand and visibility in

international market.

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