MARKETING OF BAMBOO HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS IN DIMAPUR,
NAGALAND – TRADER’S PERCEPTION

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Abstract
This research paper finds out the existing marketing system of bamboo handicraft products in Nagaland and Dimapur district in particular. To understand the bamboo handicraft marketing in Dimapur district, Nagaland a study was carried out among the bamboo handicraft entrepreneurs working under Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency (NBDA) in the month June-July 2012 with the objective to study the different marketing strategies and to identify and understand the critical factors faced while marketing bamboo handicraft products. Bamboo handicraft is an important source of livelihood especially in the rural areas where most of the artisans are neither educated nor employed, their skills passed on from generation to generation through practice. These artisans are skilled manual workers faced with poor working environment, inadequate tools and machines.

Key words: Marketing. Bamboo Handicraft Products, Nagaland, Traders Perception.

Introduction
In India, handicraft sector occupies a prime sector in building up the economy. It is learned to be the largest employer next to the agriculture. India. Handicrafts industry is highly labour intensive cottage based industry and decentralized, being spread all over the country in rural and urban areas. The handicrafts sector plays a significant and important role in the country’s economy. It provides employment to a vast segment of crafts persons in rural and semi urban areas and generates substantial foreign exchange for the country, while preserving its cultural heritage. Handicrafts have great potential, as they hold the key for sustaining not only the existing set of millions of artisans spread over length and breadth of the country but also for the increasingly large number of new entrants in the crafts activity.

Study Objectives
General objective:
To conduct the existing marketing system of the bamboo handicraft products in Dimapur, Nagaland state
Specific objective:

a) To study the different marketing strategies adopted by the entrepreneurs.

b) To study the market potential of the bamboo handicraft product in the state.

c) To identify and to understand the critical factors/problems faced by the traders in marketing of bamboo handicraft product.

**Materials and Methods**

It is a product based empirical research conducted at Dimapur. The researcher has adopted survey method to elicit the views of the bamboo traders. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. A pilot study was conducted before finalizing the interview schedule. The size of the sample is 39. The total entrepreneur undertaken by the Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency (NBDA) was only 44 in the state, out of which 39 entrepreneurs were based on Dimapur District. The survey was carried out in the month of June and July; 2012. Primary data’s were collected using standard questionnaires-schedules, key informant interviews and photography. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data from the respondents. Friedman Test and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test were used to identify the major problems faced by the entrepreneurs. Secondary data was sourced through relevant articles, reports and documents.

Handicrafts are classified in Two Main Categories:

1. Articles of everyday uses
2. Decorative items

The artisans use different means to express their innovation through the crafts on metals, textiles, wood & bamboo, ceramic, glass etc.

a) Clay, Metal and Jewelry:

b) Textile based handicrafts:

c) Woods and Bamboo work:

d) Stone crafts:

e) Glass and Ceramic:

**Bamboo Based Industries in India**

Abundant of natural bamboo stock in the country has played an integral part in our culture for many eras. Bamboo is the backbone to the rural Indian economy in many ways. Bamboo resources have dropped so much that at present the resources is limited to few regions in
the country. Many years ago, bamboos were not considered as an economic value and were used mostly by the rural people. Large areas of bamboo occurred in many part of the country but very few had a little knowledge about its economic value and were used mostly by the rural people for making crafts and housing materials. It was then after the discovery of bamboo as a source of long-fibre by the Forest Research Institute in Dehradun that started the multiple uses of bamboo in many industrial application by setting up several paper mills and rayon mills. Two-thirds of the bamboo in the country is restricted to the North-Eastern Region (NER) while the remaining one-third is spread across the country. The new revolution of bamboo can hold the potential of reversing economic growth and expanding bamboo sector can bring prosperity, profits and sustainable livelihoods especially among the rural people.

**Demand driven scenarios**

As per the statistics available from the FAO, approximately 678,000 cubic meters of round wood logs were imported into India in 1997. The import quantity has gone up since then. Raw bamboo, semi-processed bamboo poles and other bamboo handicrafts are imported into India every year. The data on import of bamboo is shown below.

![Figure 1 Composition of Bamboo Industry in India](image-url)
From the year 2010 to 2015, the growth in the bamboo industry should be starting to acquire a definite contour. Each of the value-added industries that have been identified in the figure above would pursue a growth rate based on the demand for the products. The demand, in turn, would be based on the increased acceptability of the products in the international and domestic markets. The demand will be a function of:

1. Increase in the cost of substitute materials such as wood, steel and other building materials
2. Recognition of the high durability of bamboo-based materials
3. Community appreciation of bamboo as a sustainable livelihood crop and their increased acceptance of the same
4. Mass usage of bamboo in government projects like housing and roads
5. Acceptance of bamboo as a material for flooring and furniture making as well as a food item among the higher income groups

**Lookout of Bamboo Handicraft in Nagaland**

There is a saying that life in Nagaland begins from bamboo and ends with bamboo. In Nagaland, bamboo is extensively grown and available and richly endowed with bamboo forest. Its abundance and multiple uses have led bamboo to play a pivotal role in the socio-economic and cultural life of the people of the state. The livelihood of significant population of the state is dependent on the handicrafts made of bamboo. They are extremely useful...
and are used for variable purposes such as construction of huts, baskets, fences, mats and many other useful households’ articles and farm implements. Till date approximately 1500 commercial applications have been identified.

Bamboos handicrafts are eco-friendly and lighter in weight where it has their own look of style and elegance. The handicrafts that are made from bamboo tend to have longer life with minimum maintenance. Strips that come from various types of bamboo are used to manufacture different utility and decorative items. Bamboos can make very stylish and strong furniture due to its unique look and flexibility. The Naga’s are excellent with bamboo in making different types of handicraft and furniture. People are creative in bamboo both mentally and putting them into something innovation product and uses. Many villagers in Nagaland use bamboo as their primary tools such as product ranging from home appliance till construction. Bamboo and its handicraft has been an integral part of the Naga community for centuries. It continues to play a dominant role in the life of the people, its uses ranging from agricultural tools and implements to shelter, food and livelihood.

**Results and Discussions**

**The Benefits of Working with the Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency**

Working under NBDA gave them more confident in their business. Not everyone have the same talent or not everyone is from financially sound background. The opportunity for being involved and working with the NBDA boosted them with more support and encouragement. All the entrepreneurs were so content of themselves that they can make their name in the local as well as domestic market through exposure. The NBDA gave them more opportunity and support by financing them and exposing their business by supporting to participate in trade fairs and exhibitions like the North East Trade Fair in Guwahati, International trade fair in New Delhi and the annual Hornbill Festival of Nagaland. Their products are also presented in exhibition both domestic and international expo such as the North East Agri Expo in Dimapur and Flanders Expo in Belgium etc. Some entrepreneur have even visited places like Thailand, China, South Korea, Nepal, Malaysia, Russia, Bangladesh, Morocco, London and USA for exposure, survey, training etc.

**Number of Products they Deal with**

Most of the artisans and entrepreneurs have been dealing with more than 10-15 handicraft products. Ten was just a minimum number of products for some entrepreneur while most of
them had a much closed scale in comparison with product they deal. Dealing with different
numerous of product was not a problem to them rather the more products they introduce
in their business, the more scope they seems to enjoy in the market. When asked if they can
easily bring or change or replace their product in their business, it was the problem for them
which they have been undergoing in their business. Crafting new design of handicraft was
not a problem for them because most of the entrepreneur had tools and machinery which
can craft things easily without manual work. The only problematic work they faced was
designing a new product, person with creative mind and ideas were more important in this
case. Product should be adopted according to the socio-economic and culture of the people.
The entrepreneur needed to have a good knowledge about the market before they can
adopt new handicraft.

Reason for Being Successful in the Business and How?
Bamboo has been used traditionally in over many applications and therefore what we have
known from them is that being engaged in the bamboo business is more convincing to
become successful. Due to its variety of uses both in scientific and industrial application, it
enhances resources for economic development both as a farm produce and as an industry.
More interestingly not even a bit of bamboo can be waste, every layer and every little part
of the bamboo is very useful in generating income. Offering better quality product to their
loyal customer was the major reason behind their successful reputation. Being a very small
market and small business it was difficult for them to go for a reasonable price or discount.
The solution they found where they could satisfy their customers were by offering quality
product. At the same time using different mode of sale such both cash and credit was
difficult to the entire entrepreneur since they could neither produce in bulk nor could they
fulfil the market demand. Very few entrepreneurs has used credit mode just once or twice
specially when the order are placed in bulk and this seems to be very rare experience to
them. More conveniently cash was the only mode of sale they have adopted while
marketing with the bamboo handicraft.
The above figure shows the traders views for the most effective media for bamboo product advertisement. 45% chosen print media as the most effective advertisement for bamboo handicraft where 33% believe that outdoor would be more effective. 22% believed on other advertisement.

When the entrepreneurs were asked which media they think would be more effective in advertising their handicraft product, 45% of them suggested that print media would be more effective compared to electronic media or outdoor. Others very few have believed in outdoor like exposing their product in trade expo. Due to the limited opportunity for the entrepreneurs in exposing their handicraft, many believed that print media can be the fastest and cheaper way for the advertisement of bamboo product comparing to participation in trade expo where they need sufficient time and money.

**Problem and Prospects in Dealing with the Bamboo**

Every entrepreneur had a huge potential on expanding and improving bamboo industry and handicraft. Their positive thought, believe and experience working with the NBDA, the entrepreneur showed optimistic interest that bamboo handicraft can be improved by conducting frequent promotional activities such as adopting innovative and creative ideas to the product, focusing on upgrading of tools and machinery. Since bamboo is an eco-friendly resources and economically safe, the future prospects of bamboo industry seems to be very favourable. Not many of them had a problem in dealing with the bamboo product, while few of them had a common problem regarding the utilization of bamboo. Though bamboo
plant can be available everywhere in the state, for quality utilization it has only one season to harvest the plant. It was learned that for the purpose for making decorative product or show peace, any available bamboo seems to be more enough to utilized them but in comparison with the quality product like households goods, furniture and construction. The winter season of November and December were considered to be the favourable time for harvesting the bamboo which gives long lasting quality product.

Another major problem faced by the entrepreneur while dealing with the bamboo was due to its vast variety of species and different size, their application need to be carefully analysis before proceeding to the production of handicraft. Producing handicraft with innovative design required different variety and size of bamboo.

People assume that bamboos are cheap and abundant where they consider the product to be cheap. The problem comes when the processing of crafting and grading arises. The raw bamboo itself can be cheap but when a particular product is made, the cost of production increases gradually due to its numerous uses of tools, grading, processing, labour charges etc. More interestingly there was no problem in selling bamboo product rather than dealing with the bamboo. There is a huge potential that bamboo market can grow faster in the next few year due to its flexible market possibility.

**Adaptation and Uses of Different Sale Promotional Strategies with Regard to the New Product They Introduce in the Market**

Giving discount to the customer was the only sale strategy they have adopted in marketing with the bamboo product in regard to the condition that they are selling in bulk. As we have already discussed earlier, selling single or fewer products never constitute giving discount since the production is less and business is small. Their only commonly used strategy was focusing on better quality. With regard to the new product they introduce, there was no specific time period for adopting or introducing in the market. Induction of new product depends on the market demand and festive season but majority of the entrepreneur had the minimum introduction of at least one new product in a period of 3 months. In regard to the promotional strategy they adopt, offering better quality and innovative product was the main focus on their business. It was learned that sale has drastically increased by more than 10% to 20% after every successive years.
Exporting Bamboo Handicraft Product

Export of bamboo handicraft was never done directly by the entrepreneur since it needs strong financial support, bulk production and different variety of items as well as high recognition in the market. But through the support of the NBDA, many of the handicrafts have been exhibited abroad for several times.

Channel of Distribution Used by the Bamboo Handicraft Traders in Dimapur

Channel I = Traders – Nagaland Bamboo Handicraft Emporium – Customer

Here the traders send their handicraft to the Nagaland bamboo handicraft emporium which is assist by the NBDA located at Nagaland bamboo resource center. In this channel, the bamboo handicraft emporium plays a vital role with the traders and customers by displaying and advertising the different handicraft products to the random visitors and essential buyers. This channel relieves the traders from burden of selling to the customers. Through this channel, the traders have better scope in marketing of handicraft because it is initiated by the agency in a way that their products can be mobilized quickly and promoted easily in the market through certain advertisements and necessary assistance.

Channel II = Traders – Local Retailer – Customer

This channel involves only one middleman as retailer. Under this channel, the traders sell his product in more quantity to the retailers who in turn sell to the ultimate customers. This channel relieves the handicraft traders from burden of selling the products himself and at the same time gives him control over the distribution. Once the products are be made finished, they are been shifted to the retail shop making the retailer to sell their products and in return paying them commission or the products are purchased by the retailer in bulk directly from the traders and sell them in the local market. Another good advantage of this
Channel is that there is normally no fixed price, price can be bargain between the trader and customer who is not possible if the retailer or any middleman is involved.

Channel III = Traders – Customer

This channel is the simplest and shortest channel in which no middleman is involved and the traders directly sell their products to the customer. In terms of bamboo handicraft, the products are been sold on the basis of the order placed by the customer. The customer sometimes approach the trader directly when their requirements are quick or in hurry. In this channel the customer directly approach the traders and sells are been made within the door. During certain occasion like festivals, conference, party etc. Naga people use handicraft product as a token of warm welcoming gift and therefore the customer place order in bulk to be used in certain occasion.

Pricing and Promotion of Bamboo Handicraft Product in the State

No pricing method or policy on bamboo handicraft products has been adopted by the local government or institution so far and therefore, the price of bamboo handicraft products varies from one trader to another. Every trader has their own price in their own different products depending on the quality and consumption of time, labour and money they put. The trader decides the price of the handicraft according to the different cost of marketing such as transportation charges, packing and grading of the product, staffing and communication charges etc. Eventually there is no tax, license fees or commission and brokerage charges involved in marketing of bamboo handicraft in the state. The price of a particular handicraft varies from trader to trader because the fees paid for communication and staffing differ among every entrepreneurs.

In regard to the promotion of bamboo handicraft product, the NBDA plays its major role where they promote the handicraft in different trade fairs and exhibitions like the North East Trade Fairs, national Trade Fairs, International Trade Fairs and the annual Hornbill Festival of Nagaland. The products are also promoted by allowing artisans to participate in different events and expos.

Special Marketing Efforts

When asked about if the bamboo handicraft can be sold through internet and courier, the answers was positive. The entire entrepreneur was aware that the handicraft can be sold through internet and shipped through courier. Selling through internet was never done
directly by the entrepreneur since none of them had official web to advertise their business and product. It was learned that since the entrepreneurs and artisans were engaged or undertaken by the NBDA, it was the responsible of the NBDA to take further steps in advertising, selling and promoting their handicraft through their official website.

With regard to the shipment of handicraft through courier, it was very rare though no damage or total assurance can be given while packing the product. Shipping a single or fewer numbers of product never encourage the entrepreneur unless and until the orders are placed in bulk quantity from different market and traders.

Many of the entrepreneurs have been storing bamboo in their own storage facilities or entrepreneur market i.e. Nagaland Bamboo Resource Centre (NBRC). The intention of storing bamboo was not because of expecting price hike rather to make them more convenient when required. There seems to be not a major problem in the bamboo price because the price remains stable for a longer period of time which they need not worry regarding price hike and if do so the price gets hike in a rupee or two.

![Storage of raw and treated bamboo](image)

Storage of raw and treated bamboo

More interestingly preserving and storing of bamboo did not result in effect of quality or waste. It is learned that the bamboo they used in making of handicraft and furniture are received from the NBRC after giving special treatment to the bamboo. Special treatment given to the bamboo was the main reason behind the quality handicraft. Bamboo treatment is important because it make them stronger, longer life with minimum attack by insect and borer.

With the advancement in technology, chemical treatments have been introduced so as to enhance the durability of bamboo by many folds. Bamboo treatment was important due to its versatile application from construction of houses, granaries, tools and implements, handicrafts and so on, however the durability appears to be less in comparison to timber
because bamboo contains high amount of carbon hydrates thereby it is prone to attacks by termites, borer, insects and fungi, though bamboo are cut during the season and traditional post-harvest management or treatment like smoking and dipping under the water is being carried out which is non-chemical in nature.

It was learned that for handicrafts, boric acid, borax solution is used. This solution along with the bamboo is heated at a temperature from 600-700 Celsius for about ½ an hour.

The mode of transport used by the entrepreneur is mostly road since it is the most commonly and conveniently used transport while shifting raw bamboo. After the cultivators harvest the bamboo they are directly shifted to the market or to the NBRC from where the raw bamboo will be given treatment in a heated temperature. After the process is done at Resource Centre the bamboo will be distributed among the entrepreneur where the transportation mode used is only road.

There seem to be no problem in transporting of raw bamboos or handicrafts such as late dispatches or lack of adequate lorry services.

**Problems While Marketing With Bamboo Handicraft Products**

The entrepreneurs seem to have some common problems among them with regard to marketing of bamboo handicraft. During the pilot study it was encountered that different entrepreneur had different problem in particular but when comprising it there seem to be some common problem which was faced by each and every NBDA entrepreneur. Some had a problem related to market information, while some with price fluctuation and market finance. In order to highlight and pinpoint the major problem faced by them, a part of questionnaire was mainly focused on the questions related to their problems. To evaluate whether there is a difference in the problem faced by the handicraft traders the following hypothesis was formulated and examined.

**H₁:** Lack of market information, inadequate finance and price fluctuation are the main problem faced by the handicraft traders

**H₀:** There is no significant difference in the problem among the handicraft traders.
Analysis of Friedman Test

Table 1 Problems Faced by the Handicraft Traders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentiles</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>25th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate storage facilities</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of transportation</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of market information</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price fluctuation</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of grading &amp; processing</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delay in payment</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate market finance</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indebtedness to traders</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Primary data*

Table 1 describes the median values of the given problems as 5 (.0 to 7), 5 (0. to 6), 1 (.0 to 2), 1 (.0 to 3.5), 1 (.0 to 4), 6 (.0 to 7), 1 (.0 to 2), 5 (.0 to 8) respectively. Mean rank indicates Lack of market information, price fluctuation, and absences of grading & processing and inadequate market finance are the major problems faced by the entrepreneurs while marketing with the bamboo handicraft product. Where, lack of market information as the major problem faced followed by the inadequate marketing finance.

Table 2 Test Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>28.267</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>.000</td>
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</table>

The above tables provides the test statistic ($\chi^2$) value (chi-square), degree of freedom (df) and the significance level (Asymp. sig), we can see, from the above table that there is an overall statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the related group. But the above analysis also shows that there is a statistical difference between inadequate storage facilities, lack of transportation, and delay in payment, indebtedness to traders as compared to lack of market information, price fluctuation, absence of grading & processing and inadequate market finance where the median rank is 5 (.0 to 7), 5 (.0 to 6), 6 (.0 to 7), 5 (.0 to 8) as compared to 1 (.0 to 2), 1 (.0 to 3), 1 (.0 to 4), 1 (.0 to 2)
Friedman Test (Without post-hoc tests)

There seems to be statistically significant difference in problems of lack of market information, price fluctuation, absence of grading & processing and inadequate market finance depending on which type of factors affects the entrepreneurs, $\chi^2 (2) = 28.267, P = .000$

However, at this stage, we do not know if there are differences somewhere between the related problems.

Therefore, to examine where the difference actually occur or not, we need separate Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests on the different combination of related problems. So i compared the following combinations:

1. Lack of market information to price fluctuation
2. Lack of market information to absence of grading and processing
3. Lack of market information to inadequate market finance
4. Price fluctuation to absence of grading and processing
5. Price fluctuation to inadequate market finance
6. Absence of grading and processing to inadequate market finance

Here we need to use a Bonferroni adjustment on the results we get from the Wilcoxon tests since we are making multiple comparisons. Therefore, in Bonferroni adjustment we would divide the initial significance level by the number of tests we are running. In this case we have new significance level of $0.05/6 = 0.0083$. This means that if the P value is larger than 0.0083 then we do not have a statistically different significant result.

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Tests.

**Table 3 Test Statistics**

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-1.342a</td>
<td>-1.518a</td>
<td>-.447a</td>
<td>-.276a</td>
<td>-1.414b</td>
<td>-1.342b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>.655</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Based on negative ranks.
b. Based on positive ranks.

c. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

This table shows the output of the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test on each of our combinations. It is important that since significance values have not been adjusted, we should manually compare the significance values to the Bonferroni-adjusted significance level we have calculated. Now we see that none of the P value is smaller than new calculated significant level i.e. $P > 0.0083$. Therefore, none of the four (4) calculated problem was statistically significantly different. They are pretty much higher than the calculated value.

**Reporting the output of Friedman’s Test (with post-hoc tests)**

There was no statistically significant difference in the problem relating to marketing of bamboo handicrafts $\chi^2 (2) = 28.267, P = .000$. Post-hoc analysis with Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests was conducted with a Bonferroni correction applied, resulting in a significance level set at $P < 0.0083$. Median perceived efforts levels for the problems were 5 (.0 to 7), 5 (.0 to 6), 1 (.0 to 2), 1 (.0 to 3.5), 1 (.0 to 4), 6 (.0 to 7), 1 (.0 to 2), 5 (.0 to 8) respectively. Therefore, there were no significant differences between the problems ($Z = -1.342, P = .180$), ($Z = -1.518, P = .129$), ($Z = -447, P = 655$), ($Z = -276, P = 783$), ($Z = -1.414, P = 157$), ($Z = -1.342, P = 180$).

Therefore, we reject null hypothesis and conclude that the calculated problems such as lack of market information, price fluctuation, and absence of grading & processing and inadequate market finance are the main problems faced by the NBDA entrepreneur while marketing the bamboo handicraft products. The artisans in India face many different problems such as rapid changes in consumer preference and taste, inadequate advantage and publicity, unremunerated pricing and exploitation by middlemen (Mohapatra and Dash, 2011). This sector provide employment to lakhs of people in the country directly or indirectly but however due to the numerous problem face the artisans a quick look of concern and suggestion is required to help artisans improve their quality life.

**Different Source of Funds Used by the Entrepreneur in Setting up the Business**

It is clearly learned from the given chart that majority of the entrepreneur (56%) used their own fund while establishing their unit, remaining they took financial assistance from the NBDA. Interestingly, none of them set up their unit with borrowed fund.
However, with regard to the marketing assistance provided by the bank and local government to the entrepreneur, it was assumed that trade credit provided by the bank to the entrepreneurs was not satisfactory or unavailable to some of the traders. Bank overdraft facilities provided to the traders was also nil which was quite disappointing but when further studies was conducted it was noted that most of the entrepreneur did not had an bank account opened in the name of their own respective business unit. A tax incentive was available among them and this was so obvious because the state government does not charge tax to any of the individual irrespective of their income and property.

Market development assistance provided by the banks and financial institution were also agreeable. It was also learned that some of the entrepreneurs did not approached for market assistance neither from the bank or financial institution but when asked if they can rely on them, it was positive. In terms of district industries centre whether they can encourage banker and traders and SISI facilitates in marketing of bamboo product, their so far experience and expectation were having been fulfilled.

**Suggestions**

1) The product should advertise frequently in any types of media to give awareness to the interested customer form different region and country.

2) The agency should undertake further more responsibilities in selling and promotional strategies for bamboo handicraft products.

3) The artisans need to find a way to meet the increased demand of the customers, giving the fact that most of the products should be handmade and with very little inputs from machines.
4) Import of bamboo handicraft products should be discouraged by adopting innovative and quality product at the reasonable price by satisfying the domestic customer.

5) Bamboo products are economically safe to customer rather than wood products.

6) Frequent training and financial support should be given by the government to the entrepreneurs for upgrading machinery.

7) Customer should be aware that bamboo products have more durability than other woods products.

8) Work culture should be enhancing more among the artisans to improve marketing of bamboo handicraft products.

9) Banker should also provide trade credit as well as market assistance to the entrepreneurs.

10) District industry centres should encourage bankers and traders.

11) Local government should also provide capital subsidy to the entrepreneur.

**Conclusion**

The training and other capacity building programs undertaken by NBDA have paid off and there has been a remarkable increase in the income of the artisans. Initially (2007) there were 10 handicraft units participating with NBDA and the number of unit gradually increased in the next subsequent years with 14 participating units earning handsomely, they now have the capacity to earn more by hiring more people and increase their production. The artisans customer based has noticeably increased both locally and nationally. The agency has trained many of the unemployed youths and they have also established their own handicraft units which now provide them good incomes. They too are on their way to acquiring recognition for their products and creativity.

Therefore, government should put more efforts to increase the economic opportunities from the uses of bamboo as an industrial raw material to raise more employment opportunities. There are still many challenges that the agency and artisans are facing. NBDA needs to reach out to more artisans. The artisans need to find a way to meet the increased demands of the customers, given the fact that most of the products are handmade and with very little inputs from machines. There is also a need for continuous quality improvement of the products to cater to the need of the customers.
However, through the agency’s initiatives a number of artisans have already built their confidence and increased their income levels. On the other hand, associating with the artisans has also been an eye opener for the NBDA. It realized how the agency’s assistance could dramatically change the lives of the artisans and their families, giving them access to better livelihood and better future.

References