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**INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT LEVELS OF RURAL ARTISANS BEFORE AND AFTER ECONOMIC LIBERALIZATION: A STUDY OF NALGONDA DISTRICT**



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**Short Profile**

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**ABSTRACT:**

The present study deals with the analysis of rural economic transformation that has taken place primarily across artisan categories of rural households in a selected backward region, namely, Nalgonda district in Karnataka. The study has seven broad objectives: firstly, to trace the origin and growth of artisan class and their role in rural society of India. Secondly, to critically examine the developmental of artisans under different Five Year Plans. Thirdly, to study the socio-economic profile of sample area and sample respondent artisans. Fourthly, to

analyze the income and employment levels of sample rural artisans before and after economic liberalization. Fifthly, to study the expenditure pattern of sample artisans before and after economic liberalization. Sixthly to find out the major problems confronting by rural artisans in sample area, and seventhly to give suitable solutions for the betterment of the Artisans in India in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular. For the purpose of this study, both macro level data (district) gathered through secondary sources and micro data (sample households in selected villages) collected through the field survey have been made use of.

**KEYWORDS**

*Employment Levels, Economic Liberalization, economic transformation.*

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## INTRODUCTION :

Most of the artisan occupations which the Shudras and Dalits performed were appropriated once the occupation or skill gained significance and economic return. Similarly several traditional occupations were slowly transformed into secular professions after interaction with the western world. Some of the occupations have been modernised with the use of modern technology and are considered advanced. The OBCs and Dalits who were denied access to education have failed to modernise their occupations and they have failed to enter modern sectors of the economy. Therefore, once these occupations were appropriated by upper castes with the use of modern technology (for example, fishermen were displaced by upper castes using trawlers and mechanised boats), lower caste artisans lapsed into much lower positions than they previously held; such as the agriculture sector or menial occupations in the urban areas. Thus, they fail to participate in the process of modernisation with" dignity owing to the legacy of their past. Access to education and the reservation of positions of power in civil society appear to be the solutions to this malady in the immediate future.

## CONCEPT OF RURAL ARTISANS

The concept of artisans, which is the old alternative term for the industry, occupies an important place in industrialisation. Artisan, in general, means a skilled worker in traditional village-crafts who worked on his own account.

There is no option to produce by human hand or power machine, production is based on availability of inputs in the locality and demand feature of distinct good. Normally, head of the family maintains the manufacturing activity and the other family members help him. For example, Handloom weaving, Rope-making, Pottery, Bamboo works etc. There is a close association between artisans and handicrafts-men. The precise connotation and denotation of these terms are discussed in the following paragraphs.

## MEANING OF RURAL ARTISAN

A person deriving more than 50 per cent of his income from village crafts like carpentry, black smithing, handloom, leather works etc. is called rural artisan. As an independent occupation, rural artisans represent that class of rural households whose main function is to provide services ancillary to agriculture and farming. They also include households primarily engaged in such handicrafts as are needed largely to meet the local needs. In a sense, rural artisans the peculiars features of a subsistence village economy which has since undergone a process of fast disintegration-carpentry, blacksmith, goldsmith, masoning, weaving, dyeing etc. are some of the important trades of rural artisans.

The rural artisans conduct their activities at their own residence and mostly the family labour is employed and their market does not extend beyond the locality. They also utilize local raw materials, local skills and produce articles to meet local demand.

## ARTISANS AND RURAL SOCIETY

The artisans are an essential link in the traditional village economy of India. It was the artisan

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who contributed considerably to the development of techniques for making bullock carts, chaff cutters, ploughs, agricultural tools and equipment, houses, clay pottery, wells, etc. Such techniques, emanating from indigenous skills, were duly accepted by the rural masses, because the artisans in the development of traditional encouragement from the fellow villagers who had confidence in them and in their ability to execute the required jobs.

Almost every evening, the users of the artisans' technologies ' used to visit the artisans' work place and discuss with them their experiences and the modifications they needed in particular technologies. On the basis of experience and realization of the needs of users, the artisan would make the needed modification. This was a regular feature of the rural society in the past. For the successful adoption of new technologies in the rural areas, it is necessary not only to provide financial support for S&T, activities but also to establish strong links among various segments of the society. The basic lacuna has been that' in almost all rural artisans are not given their due place. They are considered as a routine and unimportant component of the production systems. R&D institutions and Central and State government agencies responsible for the generation of modern technologies and their transfer to the rural > masses for their socio-economic development have the normal tendency to liaise with only resourceful and wealthy persons in (he village society for the purpose of transferring modern technology.

In the currently prevalent approach, no permanent linkages are established between the taker of the technology and its developer, once the technology is handed over to the user. As a result, today most of India's artisans are struggling for survival. Many have given up, and moved away from their traditional occupations. Others cling on desperately, not knowing what else to do or whom to turn to. Their skills, evolved over thousands of years, are getting dissipated and blunted. Their progeny are neither willing nor able to carry on the family tradition, and a rich culture is on the verge of extinction.

There is ample scope for improving the traditional skills of artisans through the application of modern technologies. There is woeful lack of application of new technologies in rural areas, which reduces the effectiveness of science and technology in tackling the economic, cultural and social problems that stalk rural India.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study are as follows.

- 1.To trace the origin and growth of artisan class and their role in rural society of India.
- 2.To analyze the income and employment levels of sample rural artisans before and after economic liberalization.
- 3.To give suitable solutions for the betterment of the Artisans in India in general and Andhra Pradesh in particular.

## SAMPLING

The universe of the study is Nalgonda District. For selecting the universe for the study, a multistage and purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting the Mandals and the artisans. In the first stage four divisions were selected. In the second stage one mandal from each Revenue

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Division was selected. In third stage, from each mandal 2 Villages were selected. In the fourth stage, artisans were selected. Three categories of rural artisans namely weavers, potters and carpenters were selected from each sample village. From each category of artisans 15 respondents were selected from each village. Finally, altogether four revenue divisions, four Mandals, 8 Villages and 360 artisans were selected. Thus, the total universe of the sample for the study constitutes 360 respondents.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Respondents Annual Income from Artisan Work**

The percentage of the respondents’ annual income from artisan work before and after liberalization is given in table 1. The data in table 1 reveals that nearly 58.33 per cent of respondents reported that the income from artisan work is between Rs.50, 001 to Rs.75, 000 before liberalization. In this income group carpenters top the list with 45 per cent (74.17-29.17) variation before and after liberalization. About 7.22 per cent of sample artisans’ annual income from artisan work is less than Rs.25, 000 and this percentage increased to 16.11 per cent after liberalization. The income of 42.50 per cent of respondents’ annual income from artisan work is Rs.25, 000 to Rs.50,000 after liberalization. The corresponding percentage before liberalization is 20.83 per cent. But with an increase in income levels the percentage of respondents after liberalization is decreasing. Around 8.06 per cent of respondents’ income before liberalization Rs.75, 001 to Rs.1 lakh but the percentage reduced to 7.22 per cent after liberalization. In the same way nearly 4.44 per cent of respondents annual income from artisan work is Rs.10, 0001 to Rs.150, 000 before economic liberalization and the percentage of reduced to 2.22 per cent after economic liberalization. About 1.11 per cent of sample artisans’ annual income from artisan work before liberalization above Rs.150, 000 and the percentage reduced to 0.28 per cent after liberalization. It can be concluded from the above table that the economic liberalization has negative impact on the artisan income of sample artisans in the study area.

Table-1

Annual Income from Artisan Work to Sample Artisan Households before and after Liberalization

Value in Rs.	Weavers		Carpenters		Potters		Total	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
<25000	11 (09.17)	14 (11.67)	6 (05.00)	23 (19.17)	9 (07.50)	21 (17.50)	26 (7.22)	58 (16.11)
25000-50000	39 (32.50)	72 (60.00)	15 (12.50)	46 (38.33)	21 (17.50)	35 (29.17)	75 (20.83)	153 (42.50)
50001 - 75000	61 (50.83)	31 (25.83)	89 (74.17)	35 (29.17)	60 (50.00)	48 (40.00)	210 (58.33)	114 (31.67)

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75001 - 100000	4 (03.33)	2 (01.67)	6 (05.00)	13 (10.83)	19 (15.83)	11 (09.17)	29 (8.06)	26 (7.22)
100001 - 150000	3 (02.50)	1 (00.83)	4 (03.33)	3 (02.50)	9 (07.50)	4 (03.33)	16 (4.44)	8 (2.22)
150001 and above	2 (01.67)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	2 (01.67)	1 (00.83)	4 (1.11)	1 (0.28)
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Data

RESPONDENTS VALUE OF HOUSEHOLD DURABLES

The percentage of the respondents value of household durables before and liberalization is presented in table 2. It is quite astonishing to note that the value of household durables of 27.22 per cent respondents before liberalization is Rs.10, 001 to Rs.20, 000. But the percentage of respondents, in this case reduced to 3.61 per cent after liberalization. With regard to Rs.10, 001 to Rs.20, 000 value of household durable the difference is high 42.50 per cent in case of weavers and low (0.84 per cent) in case of potters. The household durables value before liberalization is less than Rs.5, 000 in case of 61.39 per cent of respondents. But it increased to 93.06 per cent after liberalization. Nearly 4.17 per cent of sample artisans' household durables value is Rs.5,001 to Rs.10,000 before liberalization and it reduced to 2.22 per cent after liberalization. Equal per cent i.e. 0.28 of respondents' household durable value before and after liberalization is same. Only one out of 360 respondents reported that their household durables are Rs.30, 001 to Rs.40,000 before liberalization. However, after liberalization none of the respondents' household durables value is in this value group of Rs.30, 001 to Rs.40, 000. The household durables value before liberalization is Rs.40, 001 and above as reported by 6.67 per cent of sample artisans. But it declined to 0.83 per cent after liberalization.

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Table-2  
Value of Household Durables of Sample Artisans before and after Liberalization

Value in Rs.	Weavers		Carpenters		Potters		Total	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
< 5000	48 (40.00)	109 (90.83)	65 (54.17)	108 (90.00)	108 (90.00)	118 (98.33)	221 (61.39)	335 (93.06)
5001-10000	3 (2.5)	2 (1.67)	7 (5.83)	6 (5.00)	5 (4.17)	0 0	15 (4.17)	8 (2.22)
10001 - 20000	59 (49.17)	8 (6.67)	37 (30.83)	4 (3.33)	2 (1.67)	1 (0.8)	98 (27.22)	13 (3.61)
20001-30000	0 0	0 0	1 (0.83)	1 (0.83)	0 0	0 0	1 (0.28)	1 (0.28)
30001-40000	1 (0.28)	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 (0.28)	0 0
400001 and above	9 (7.5)	1 (0.83)	10 (8.33)	1 (0.28)	5 (4.17)	1 (0.83)	24 (6.67)	3 (0.83)
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100)</b>

Source: Field Data

## FOOD EXPENDITURE

The annual of sample respondents' families expenditure on food items is given in table 3. It is evident from table 3 that the expenditure on food items is increased after liberalization. Before liberalization the expenditure on food items is less than Rs.10,000 as per the reports of 3.33 per cent sample respondent families. It increased to 3.61 per cent families after liberalization. The health expenditure of 83.89 per cent of respondents after liberalization is Rs.10,001 to Rs.15,000 expenditure group the percentage of families before and after liberalization is 19.17 per cent and 6.67 per cent respectively. About 5.56 per cent of artisan families are spending Rs.20,001 to Rs.25,000 on food items after economic liberalization. Those who are spending Rs.25,001 and above on food items are constant (0.28 per cent) before and after liberalization.



**Table-3**  
**Food Expenditure of Sample Artisan Households before and after Liberalization**

Value in Rs.	Weavers		Carpenters		Potters		Total	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
<10000	9 (07.50)	9 (07.50)	1 (00.83)	1 (00.83)	2 (01.67)	3 (02.50)	12 (3.33)	13 (3.61)
10001 - 15000	14 (11.67)	8 (06.67)	19 (15.83)	5 (04.17)	36 (30.00)	11 (09.17)	69 (19.17)	24 (6.67)
15001-20000	95 (79.17)	95 (79.17)	87 (72.50)	101 (84.17)	82 (68.33)	106 (88.33)	264 (73.33)	302 (83.89)
20001-25000	2 (01.67)	8 (06.67)	12 (10.00)	12 (10.00)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	14 (3.89)	20 (5.56)
25001 and above	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	1 (00.83)	1 (00.83)	0 (00.00)	0 (00.00)	1 (0.28)	1 (0.28)
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100.00)</b>

Source: Field Data

### CLOTHING EXPENDITURE

The details of cloth expenditure of sample respondents are given in table 4. The table 4 reveals that 37.50 per cent of respondent families spending Rs.4,001 to Rs.6,000 on clothing annually after liberalization by registered a growth of 26.67 (37.50-10.83) per cent families. The annual expenditure before and after liberalization on clothing is less than Rs.2, 000 with regard to 16.11 per cent and 9.17 per cent of families sample artisan families. About 69.17 per cent of sample respondent families spent Rs.2,001 to Rs.4,000 on clothing before liberalization and the percentage of respondents reduced to 44.17 per cent after liberalisation as most of them spending more money on clothing after liberalization. About 5.28 per cent of respondents spending Rs.6,001 to Rs.8,000 on clothing after liberalisation and the corresponding percentage of families before liberalization are only 2.78 per cent. Before liberalization 0.28 per cent of respondent families spent Rs.8,001 to Rs.10,000 and after liberalization the percentage of families increased to 1.67 per cent. Around 2.78 per cent of families spending Rs.10, 001 and above on clothing after economic liberalization.

**Table- 4**  
Annual Clothing Expenditure of Sample Artisan Households before and after Liberalization

Value in Rs.	Weavers		Carpenters		Potters		Total	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
<2000	11 (09.17)	8 (06.67)	14 (11.67)	4 (03.33)	33 (27.50)	21 (17.50)	58 (16.11)	33 (9.17)
2001-4000	82 (68.33)	51 (42.50)	89 (74.17)	63 (52.50)	78 (65.00)	45 (37.50)	249 (69.17)	159 (44.17)
4001-6000	20 (16.67)	50 (41.67)	12 (10.00)	42 (35.00)	7 (05.83)	43 (35.83)	39 (10.83)	135 (37.50)
6001-8000	5 (04.17)	4 (03.33)	4 (03.33)	7 (05.83)	1 (00.83)	8 (06.67)	10 (2.78)	19 (5.28)
8001-10000	1 (00.28)	4 (03.33)	0 (00.00)	1 (00.83)	0 (00.00)	1 (00.28)	1 (0.28)	6 (1.67)
10001 and above	1 (00.83)	5 (04.17)	1 (00.83)	3 (02.50)	1 (00.83)	2 (01.67)	3 (0.83)	10 (2.78)
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(101.60)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>362</b> <b>(100.56)</b>

Source: Field Data

#### EXTENT OF INDEBTEDNESS:

The extent of indebtedness of the respondents before and after economic liberalization is presented in Table 5. The table 5 reveals that, 22.24 per cent of the respondents do not have any debts after economic liberalization. Even, before economic liberalization also, 22.77 percentages of the respondents do not have debts. Around 33.88 per cent of the respondents have debts ranging from Rs.10, 001 to 20,000 after DWCR economic liberalization. The per cent of the respondents are more in this category before economic liberalization i.e. 36.38 per cent. Nearly, 23.61 per cent of the respondents have debts between Rs.20, 001 and 40,000 after economic liberalization. However, only 10.00 per cent of the respondents have debts more than Rs.40, 000 after economic liberalization. The average indebtedness of the respondents is found to be Rs.12, 338 and Rs.19, 844 before and after economic liberalization respectively.

**Table 5**  
**Percentage of the Respondents by the Extent of their Indebtedness before and After Economic Liberalization**

Extent of Indebtedness (in Rs.)	Weavers		Carpenters		Potters		Total	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
< 10,000	46 (38.33)	15 (12.50)	40 (33.33)	16 (13.33)	21 (17.50)	6 (5.00)	107 (29.72)	37 (10.28)
10,00-120, 000	36 (30.00)	51 (42.50)	41 (34.17)	49 (40.83)	54 (45.00)	22 (18.33)	131 (36.39)	122 (33.89)
20, 001-40,000	8 (6.67)	25 (20.83)	8 (6.67)	18 (15.00)	20 (0.00)	42 (35.00)	36 (10.00)	85 (23.61)
<40,001	1 (0.83)	2 (1.67)	2 (1.67)	8 (6.67)	1 (0.83)	26 (21.67)	4 (1.11)	36 (10.00)
Nil	29 (24.17)	27 (22.50)	29 (24.17)	29 (24.17)	24 (20.00)	24 (20.00)	82 (22.78)	80 (22.22)
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>120</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100.00)</b>	<b>360</b> <b>(100.00)</b>
Average Indebtedness in Rs.	10,925	16,117	11,250	16,317	14,842	27,100	12,338	19,844

Source: Field Data

Value of the Permanent Assets: The value of the permanent assets of the respondents is presented in Table 6. The table reveals that as many as 74.82 per cent (column 4 to6) of the respondents possess more than Rs. 60, 000 worth of the permanent assets after economic liberalization. The per cent of the respondents who have more than Rs.60, 000 worth of agricultural assets are less before economic liberalization i.e. 29.16 per cent only. However, around 35.86 per cent of the respondents possess more than Rs. 1, 00,000 of the agricultural assets after economic liberalization. The per cent of the respondents in this category are more among weavers and less among carpenters.i.e.50 per cent and 28.33 per cent respectively. Important to mention here is that some of the members do not have agricultural land, but all the respondents have permanent assets. The average value of the permanent assets of the respondents before and after economic liberalization is found to be Rs.57,833 and Rs.89,556 respectively. There is no much variation between the artisan classes.

Table 6  
Percentage of the Respondents by the Value of their Permanent Assets before and After Economic Liberalization

Permanent Assets (in Rs.).	Weavers		Carpenters		Potters		Total	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
< 20,000	17 (14.17)	0 (0.00)	16 (13.33)	0 (0.00)	9 (7.50)	0 (0.00)	42 (11.67)	0 (0.00)
20,001-40,000	40 (33.33)	15 (12.50)	32 (26.67)	16 (13.33)	30 (25.00)	10 (8.33)	102 (28.33)	41 (11.39)
40,001 - 60,000	47 (39.17)	8 (6.67)	30 (25.00)	21 (17.50)	34 (0.00)	21 (17.50)	111 (30.83)	50 (13.89)
60,001-80,000	10 (8.33)	20 (16.67)	18 (15.00)	24 (20.00)	15 (12.50)	28 (23.33)	43 (11.94)	72 (20.00)
80,001-1,00,000	5 (4.17)	17 (14.17)	14 (11.67)	25 (20.83)	24 (20.00)	26 (21.67)	43 (11.94)	68 (18.89)
1,00,001 and above	1 (0.83)	60 (50.00)	10 (8.33)	34 (28.33)	8 (6.67)	35 (29.17)	19 (5.28)	129 (35.83)
<b>Total</b>	<b>120 (100.00)</b>	<b>120 (100.00)</b>	<b>120 (100.00)</b>	<b>120 (100.00)</b>	<b>120 (100.00)</b>	<b>360 (100.00)</b>	<b>360 (100.00)</b>	<b>120 (100.00)</b>
Average Assets in Rs.	48,833	91,833	59,667	81,500	65,000	86,333	57,833	89,556

Source: Field Data

## CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the widespread of modernity in rural areas, through the effective satellite programmes, the demand for the traditional goods manufactured by rural artisans has not been on the rapid declining note. This only means that the rural artisans' products are not being sold like hot-cakes in the markets. The reasons are many. The rural artisans face many a problem day-in and day-out. The specific problems are singled out and are mentioned below. The survey results revealed that nearly 97 per cent of the selected artisans were in need of additional financial assistance from the banks. Thus, it is, clear that the artisans were suffering for want of additional finances either to improve the productivity levels or to provide additional jobs to the rural youths. Regular supply of raw materials at reasonable prices is not being made available in the region. This has adversely affected the prospects of the artisans of all kinds. Both Cotton and Silk handloom weavers were faced with ever-increasing prices of yarn and Silk respectively. In the recent past, Cotton-yarn prices have gone up by 100 per cent and Silk prices, are widely fluctuating every day. This has caused a lot of uncertainty on the part of the weaving communities. High percentage of idle capacity in the Cotton handlooms is attributed to non-availability of yarn even at the going prices. The position has not become worse in the case of Silk handlooms - Silk is being made available at going prices, but the prices are subjected to frequent fluctuations. Obsolete

techniques of production methods were adopted by the artisans in the selected artisan complexes in the region. As such, the goods produced in these units could not face the competition in the urban markets. Marketing of goods manufactured by the artisan complexes is a serious problem which needs to be tackled to strengthen the artisans. The study revealed that the 46.66 per cent of the selected artisans found it very difficult and difficult to sell their goods directly to the customers. Since most of the artisans are drawn from rural background with low level of educational standards, they could not keep track of the institutions that render professional assistance. For example, artisans engaged in Pottery, Leather tanning did not seem to have more knowledge about the availability of the institutional assistance i.e., the service from Industrial Co-operative Societies. Low level of educational standards has seriously restricted the development of the artisans in the district. The artisans can fully exploit the natural resources provided they are better trained with the required skills in the concerned fields. Industrial Training Institutes ought to be setup at mandal levels to improve the skills of the artisans.

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