

Banjara Community Seizing Opportunity to Escalate Their Business: A Study of Banjara Market at Gurugram, Haryana

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Abstract

Gurugram is known well for its thriving IT sector and corporate presence, it's another special highlight is the local flea market that sells a wide variety of home decorative items at reasonable prices. Named after the nomadic tribe "Banjara", the market stands as a center of attraction for both the locals as well as tourists. Banjaras are the largest ethnic group in India with a population accounted to nearby 10 crores in year 2013. These artisan sells their handmade products and have seen customers coming to them from different parts of India purchasing in bulk. But apart from their brighter side, they have to face a lot of challenges the local governing body from time to time comes and asks them to shift to another area because of this constant shifting these artisan faces huge losses. Lack of permanent address proofs even deprive their children from getting admission in the local schools and they can't take benefits out of many government policies. Further, there are no proper sanitation facilities, permanent homes and health facilities for them.

Introduction

The Banjara market is a local flea market in Gurugram, Haryana which is run by the nomadic "Banjara" tribe. It is popular for selling home artifacts and decorative items at a very reasonable price¹ (see Chatterjee, 2021). The market stands as a center of attraction for both the locals as well as tourists. The Banjara tribe that started this work here in Gurugram from early 1990's, gained popularity with social media influencers posting market content online.² Initially started with a handful of shops, the market has now emerged as a popular shopping hub. Numerous shops in the market sell quirky and exclusive items which are otherwise hard to find. The variety of products sold in this market includes handicrafts products, handloom items, handcrafted jewellery, pots, accessories, crockery, furniture and trendy show pieces.³



Figure 1: Sellers sell a variety of goods including furniture, home decoration items and crockery at Banjara Market. Photograph by authors.⁴

¹ Tupur Chatterjee, "Architectures of Happiness: Designing the Malltplex in India," in *Designing (Post)Colonial Knowledge*, ed. Priya Jha and Rajinder Dudrah (Routledge, 2021).

² Kankana Roy Jain, "A Treasure Trove to Jazz up Your Home at Modest Rates," *Hindustan Times*, June 15, 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/gurgaon/a-treasure-trove-to-jazz-up-your-home-at-modest-rates/story-CSc6HR6R84YLEtN2RKVwDL.html>.

³ Tricky Travellers, "Uncover the Secrets of Banjara Market Gurgaon," *Trickytravellers.com*, 2024, <https://www.trickytravellers.com/post/uncover-the-secrets-of-banjara-market-gurgaon-trickytravellers>.

⁴ Photograph by authors during data collection

In Gurugram and nearby areas, there are many small flea markets run by the Banjaras and the largest among them is currently located at Gurugram Sector 70A. This nomadic tribe belongs to the Gadiya Lohar community.⁵ The market was earlier located in an illegal encroachment area in sector 52A and 53 but it is now located in a private land area where the Banjaras pay rents for their shops. Most of the products they are being sold in the market are not prepared by Banjaras, they in fact resell these products and try to earn profits.⁶



Figure 2: Different varieties of home artefacts are brought for reselling purposes at Banjara Market in Gurugram. Photograph by authors.⁷

The Banjara market at present is not centered in one sector, smaller markets have been set up in various sectors of Gurugram including sector 70, 58, 68 and few others. The shops are temporary and the occupant had to pay rent ranging from 1200 - 5000 rupees. The Banjara sellers run their shops with the help of their family members, including their wives, old parents and children. The sales are recorded more on weekends than on weekdays as most people prefer to shop and visit these markets on Saturdays and Sundays. The Diwali festival, which falls in October or November, is a suitable time when they are able to earn good amounts of profits.⁸ In the evening hours usually, the rush is more in comparison to the mornings or afternoons.

During the COVID times, the shopkeepers had to go through a tough time for their survival. And in the post pandemic era the frequent demolition drives has made it difficult for these people to run a smooth business.⁹ Some of the Banjara community sellers shared that before the set-up of Banjara market they use to sell diyas during the Diwali and in the rest of the time, selling mud pots and gardening pots on the footpaths were their main source of survival. They were motivated to set up their business along with their relatives in a particular location based on their relative consensus. There is a huge unity among the Banjara community. They say that they work as a community and they sell as a community.

There are mainly two categories of goods that are being sold in the market, one which is made by Banjaras and the other which is brought from outside. The seller had to make a lot of effort in transportation of these goods, some of them come from different states of India such as decorative items from Jodhpur, crockery from Khurja¹⁰. The seller purchases 10 to 15 lakhs of goods in bulk in cash from other vendors or manufacturers and pays GST

⁵ Sara Siddiqui, "After Demolition, Banjara Market Gets New Home in Gurgaon's Sector 70," *The Indian Express*, August 11, 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/home-decor-banjara-market-gets-new-home-in-gurgaons-sector-70-8085339/>.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Photograph clicked by authors

⁸ Shruti Mishra and Sujata Shahi, "Myths and Mythology Regarding Money, Wealth and Acquisition," *International Journal of Indian Culture and Business Management* 29, no. 3 (January 1, 2023): 403–16, <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijicbm.2023.132450>.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Suraj Bhan Bharadwaj, "Myth and Reality of the Khap Panchayats: A Historical Analysis of the Panchayat and Khap Panchayat*," *Studies in History* 28, no. 1 (February 2012): 43–67, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0257643013477250>.

tax for such purchases. The profit margins in the goods sell is not very high. Customers often bargain a lot with them, leading them to earn a small percentage of profits. In this era of competition, they are competing against the brands sold in malls and online platforms, and their sole unique selling point is their affordable pricing¹¹. They also run social media page with the name of Banjara Market to keep pace with current times. There is a courier service facility that is in place, with the help of which buyers can directly buy goods from the sellers of Banjara Market¹². Looking at the contemporary times the Banjara sellers are trying to level up themselves technologically too.



Figure 3: A typical shop set up under a high voltage electricity tower at Banjara Market in Sector 58.
Photograph by authors¹³

In the year, 2021 the Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) along with the police demolished the Banjara market with JCB which was spread at 8.5 acres of land in sector 56, Gurugram.¹⁴The reasons the authorities gave, was illegal encroachment of land and the creation of a cluster of slums. The community people say that the officials came with JCB and tractors and gave them no time to save their goods. These people didn't have enough money to store their valuables in godowns.¹⁵ Moreover, shifting leads to damage of delicate goods, many of which are even purchased by them and kept for reselling purposes.¹⁶

The demolition drive is not new to the sellers, there has been a recurring eviction drive that took place in the Banjara Market in the past as well. Many of them have small children, it becomes difficult for them to sleep on

¹¹ Sara Siddiqui, "After Demolition, Banjara Market Gets New Home in Gurgaon's Sector 70," The Indian Express, August 11, 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/home-decor-banjara-market-gets-new-home-in-gurgaon-sector-70-8085339/>

¹² Kankana Roy Jain, "A Treasure Trove to Jazz up Your Home at Modest Rates," Hindustan Times, June 15, 2019, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/gurgaon/a-treasure-trove-to-jazz-up-your-home-at-modest-rates/story-CSc6HR6R84YLEtN2RKVwDL.html>

¹³ Photograph clicked by authors

¹⁴ Sanjana Chawla, "Devastated and Demolished: Living in the Constant Fear of Being Homeless," The Patriot, November 24, 2021, https://thepatriot.in/lifestyle/devastated-and-demolished-living-in-the-constant-fear-of-being-homeless-23683#google_vignette.

¹⁵ Toolika Gupta, Bhargav Mistry, and Barun Shankar Gupta, eds., *A Treatise on Recent Trends and Sustainability in Crafts & Design* (New Delhi: Excel India Publishers, 2017).

¹⁶ Sanjana Chawla, "Devastated and Demolished."

the roads as they have no other means of shelter.¹⁷ The constant shifting affects their children's future. Eventually, children stop going to school and remain uneducated throughout their lives become miserable.¹⁸ These problems constantly put pressure and effects the customer footfall, fluctuation in their incomes and affects them emotionally too.

There is no proper sanitation and hygiene facility provided to them by the authorities. Their temporary shelters are not cleaned and they are living an unhygienic condition. They have no choice but live in unhygienic conditions. The situation even worsens during the monsoon season as water fills everywhere, they are under constant threat of getting affected by mosquito breeding diseases such as malaria, dengue, chikungunya and others.¹⁹ There is no assistance given to them from the police or the local authorities.



Figure 4: Banjara Market located in sector 58 Gurugram in a chaotic and unsanitary conditions with overflowing garbage and scattered debris affecting both vendors and shoppers. Photograph by authors.²⁰

Belonging to a tribal community, the members of this community has faced discrimination and their condition has not improved much in the present times too. A major section of this community is below the poverty line only a handful of people are placed in government jobs, the rest of them are working as hawkers or other temporary jobs.²¹ They are certainly a social excluded tribe in our country. The nomadic community wishes to live a peaceful and happy life and wants a stable place to live and earn with their family. They also wish to see a brighter future for their children.

The aim of the present study is to understand the entrepreneurial side and the challenges faced by the Banjara Community members selling their products at Banjara market in Gurugram.

¹⁷Sakshi Dayal, "Demolition Threat Looms Large over Banjara Market but Shopkeepers Stay Put: 'Nowhere Else to Go,'" *The Times of India* (Times Of India, September 16, 2021), <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/gurgaon/demolition-threat-looms-large-over-banjara-market-but-shopkeepers-stay-put-nowhere-else-to-go/articleshow/86247050.cms>.

¹⁸ ANI, "Gurugram's Banjara Market Demolished; Residents Allege Action Taken without Prior Notice," ANI News, October 6, 2021, <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/gurugrams-banjara-market-demolished-residents-allege-action-taken-without-prior-notice20211006115711/>.

¹⁹Laveena D'Mello, "Community Development," (Srinivas University, Karnataka, India, 2018),

²⁰ Photographs clicked by authors

²¹ Manish Choudhary, "Migrating Banjaras and Settling Tandas: An Un-Noticed Contribution," *International Journal of History and Cultural Studies* 3, no. 4 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.20431/2454-7654.0304003>.

This study is based on the **objectives** given below:

1. To understand the socio-economic background of the Banjara community that migrated to Gurugram.
2. To analyse the factors contributing to the success of the Banjara market and its popularity among customers from different parts of India.
3. To find out the challenges faced by the craftsmen working in the market.
4. To understand the potential strategies and resilient plans that the local authorities or government may have taken to escalate their business.
5. To examine the living conditions, future prospects and economic aspirations of artisans working in Banjara market

Review of Literature

Banjara Community Background

The members of the Banjara community usually exhibit nomadic lifestyle. The word Banjara is derived from a Sanskrit word 'Vana Chara' which means "forest wanderers". The primitive work of this tribe was to collect and distribute woods from the forest.²² Banjara community is specifically nomadic tribe and constitute largest community of nomadic tribes in India. The word 'nomad' is derived from a Greek word which means to pasture. It can be taken groups of people that usually move in groups from one place to another in search of their livelihoods across a region, nation or country or as an existence characterized by without any permanent address²³. In earlier times the main occupation of the Banjara community was cattle herding, agriculture, trade and invading armies. They raise these animals and move with them from one place to another. On the other hand, they can entirely rely on foraging their food and survive as hunters mostly dependent on collecting, and hunting activity.²⁴

The Banjara community is a semi-nomadic and Indigenous group from Orrisa, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and Maharashtra.²⁵ They move around in different parts of the country, especially during fairs and festivals. They claim that they belong to the clan of Agnivanshi Rajputs and are known by different names Banjari, Lamadi, Goola, Tanda and others²⁶. They are majorly divided into three tribes the Labana, Charan and Maturia. With time they have shifted to several states in India such as Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Karnataka and a few other states. A survey was conducted in 1968 by the All-India Banjara Seva Sangh which found that 27 synonyms and 17 sub-groups of this community are currently present in this country.²⁷

The common language spoken and used within this tribe is Lambadi which is a Rajasthani dialect while the other prominent languages among them are Hindi, Telugu and other native languages²⁸. However, they don't have a written script. This community is given the status of scheduled tribe in some states such as Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Orissa, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh. In Karnataka, Delhi and Punjab the Banjara Community is given the status of scheduled caste and Other Backward Caste.²⁹

²² Mahanthy Dhanavath, "Banjara Lifestyle and Community," *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope* 1, no. 4 (October 30, 2020): 38–44, <https://doi.org/10.47857/irjms.2020.v01i04.020>.

²³ Philip Carl Salzman, "Pastoral Nomads: Some General Observations Based on Research in Iran," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 58, no. 2 (July 2002): 245–64, <https://doi.org/10.1086/jar.58.2.3631038>.

²⁴ Mahanthy Dhanavath, "Banjara Lifestyle and Community"

²⁵ Ghanshyam Shah and Joseph Bara, *Social Inclusion and Education in India* (Taylor & Francis, 2020).

²⁶ Afroze Eqbal, "Themes and Perspectives in Contemporary Sociology," (K.K. Publications, 2022),

²⁷ Mahanthy Dhanavath, "Banjara Lifestyle and Community."

²⁸ Macharilla Ramesh, "Tribal Education in India," Google Books (Education Publishing, 2018), <https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=d7IUdWAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=banjara++The+common+language+spoken+and+used+within+this+tribe+is+Lambadi+which+is+a+Rajasthani+dialect+while+the+other+prominent+languages+among+them+are+Hindi>.

²⁹ Arvind Narrain and Basawa Prasad Kunale, *Caste Matters in Public Policy* (Taylor & Francis, 2022).

The traditional dishes cooked and eaten by the Banjaras community are Bati (roti), Daliya prepared with the help of cereals such as wheat and jowar. They are mostly non vegetarian and cook Saloi, a dish which is prepared from meat.³⁰ Physically Banjara community people are tall, fair in complexion and have nomadic features. The women of this community like to wear ghagra and kanchalli (long skirt and crop top).³¹ They prepare their dresses in a fancy manner and often use a lot of mirrors and coins in their dresses. They also wear heavy bangles (patli) made from ivory. This type of bangles is usually worn by them from their elbows to their shoulders although these bangles are worn by only married women. They generally prefer to get tattoos on their hands.

They complement their dressing with metal or silver jewellery too. Their typical costume with jewellery will weight somewhere around 2-5 Kgs.³² While men belonging from this community prefer to wear short kurta and dhoti, this type of clothing helps them to get protection from the scorching heat in deserts. They have their unique dance forms and singing style too. Lambadi is one such dance form in which women majorly participate wearing colorful costumes and jewelry.

Their customs, language and other things give a reflection that they are originated from Rajasthan but for doing agriculture and trade they shifted to the Southern and Central part of India.³³ They live in temporary settlements called 'zupada', 'thandas' (hut). With time many of them have shifted to cities and accordingly they are adapting changes in their lifestyles. They usually stay in small groups called 'thanda'.³⁴ The isolation factor has kept these community people less on education and away from other economic opportunities.

Like other underprivileged communities Banjaras have long faced social and economic marginalization, making their access to mainstream employment and entrepreneurship opportunities limited.³⁵ Despite their regular migration from one place to another, they have maintained their distinct cultural practices, including vibrant jewelry, decorative items, and traditional crafts³⁶ and even developed an informal business by selling these items in retail. However, like other unorganized business sectors, their nomadic lifestyle and lack of formal access to financial, social, and human capital the Banjaras face challenges in their entrepreneurship.

Past Studies on the Banjara Community

Several studies, suggested the challenges faced by entrepreneurship, in informal settings in terms of finance, marketing, infrastructure, technology is a result of lack of awareness and literacy. Historically Banjara claims that they are from the Rajput ancestry during the Mughal rule in India they retreated towards the forest area and decided that they will return back once the foreigners are gone from the country.³⁷ They were initially holding a strong status in the society economically as they were into trading, expert breeders, transporters of goods and used to own cattle such as horses, goats, oxen, donkeys, camels etc. The Banjaras were traders of goods such as tobacco, opium, salt, grain, wood and timber.³⁸

When the Britishers came to India they tagged the Banjara community as Gypsies and passed a legal law for lowering them down with "Criminal Tribe Act 1871."³⁹ Under this act all the nomadic tribes were considered

³⁰ Arvind Narrain and Basawa Prasad Kunale, *Caste Matters in Public Policy* (Taylor & Francis, 2022).

³¹ Reena Aggarwal, "A Review Study on Banjara Embroidery of Maharashtra," ~ 159 ~ *International Journal of Home Science* 7, no. 2 (2021): 159–63, <https://www.homesciencejournal.com/archives/2021/vol7issue2/PartC/7-2-14-128.pdf>.

³² Ibid

³³ Simhadri Somanaboina and Akhileshwari Ramagoud, *The Routledge Handbook of the Other Backward Classes in India* (Taylor & Francis, 2021).

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Knut A Jacobsen, *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary India* (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

³⁶ Toolika Gupta, Bhargav Mistry, and Barun Shankar Gupta, eds., *A Treatise on Recent Trends and Sustainability in Crafts & Design* (New Delhi: Excel India Publishers, 2017).

³⁷ Laxman D. Satya, "Colonial Sedentarisation and Subjugation: The Case of the Banjaras of Berar 1850–1900," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 24, no. 4 (July 1997): 314–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066159708438653>.

³⁸ Sakarama Somayaji, Ganesha Somayaji, and Joanna P Coelho, *The Indian Social Sphere* (Taylor & Francis, 2024).

³⁹ Ibid

criminals and can be put under surveillance. All these incidents started making their conditions miserable in the society. They had to give up all their occupations which brought them economically on the lower side. On 31st August, 2021 this law finally got repealed from our country. This day is celebrated as Vimukta Jatis Day after this denotification of Banjaras from Criminal tag they are included in Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and Other Backward Categories. The nomadic population constitutes around 10% of the total Indian population. According to a recent survey the overall Banjara population that exists in our country is close to 12 Crores.⁴⁰

After Independence in 1950's this community was identified and listed under the Habitual offenders Act 1952⁴¹. In search of work, they slowly started migrating to different parts of the country and started working as daily wage workers, farmers and other things. People belonging to this community do not have proper identity cards and do not have any permanent shelters⁴². Most of the state and central schemes formed for the welfare of these community people hardly reach them. The suggestions for improving conditions could be mass literacy campaigns.⁴³ Awakening the women of the community and introducing them with the rights they hold. In the schools the methodology for teaching the nomadic children should be different considering their cultural backgrounds. Involvement of NGO's can help in improving the status of these community people.⁴⁴

Another study undertaken by Laxman & Chalawadi⁴⁵ studied Banjara Community with special reference to Karnataka. The study revealed that even after 70 years of independence the conditions of the Banjara community have not achieved any significant change. They are deprived from many essential opportunities and there is a high existence of poverty and illiteracy among them. The women from this community had to face a lot of restrictions. They require special intervention from the government such as opening of training centers in order to train these community people in various skills so that they can improve their lifestyle. More freedom should be given to the women belonging from this community in order to empower them. Better financial assistance and health facilities should be provided for overall betterment of the community people.⁴⁶

However, with the effort of the government the younger generation from the Banjara community are going to schools⁴⁷. They are getting reservations in school, colleges and jobs. Community hostels have been opened for the Banjara community girls and boys in different parts of the city where they can avail free stay and food. A study conducted in Karnataka to understand the socio and economic conditions of Banjara community people reveal that they are deprived from the basic amenities such as infrastructure, health facilities, education, electricity and others. On the demands of the Banjara community people, the Karnataka government came up with a separate development company. This company is named as Karnataka Thanda Development Corporation Limited and is focused on improving the condition of Banjara community people. Improvement in transportation and

⁴⁰ T Nagaveni, "A Historical Transition of Banjara Community in India with Special Reference to South India," *Research Journal of Recent Sciences* 4, no. 2277-2502 (2015): 11–15, <https://www.isca.me/rjrs/archive/v4/iISC-2014/3.ISCA-ISC-2014-Oral-20SHS-14.pdf>.

⁴¹ Mahanthy Dhanavath, "Banjara Lifestyle and Community," *International Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Scope* 1, no. 4 (October 30, 2020): 38–44, <https://doi.org/10.47857/irjms.2020.v01i04.020>.

⁴² Diksha Narang, "Over a Year since CM Promise, Banjaras Still Dishoused in Rajasthan <https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/En/NewsDetail/Index/9/19835/Over-a-Year-Since-CM-Promise-Banjaras-Still-Dishoused-In-Rajasthan-->," *The Citizen*, January 5, 2021, Over a Year Since CM Promise, Banjaras Still Dishoused in Rajasthan <https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/NewsDetail/index/9/19835/Over-a-Year-Since-CM-Promise-Banjaras-Still-Dishoused-in-Rajasthan-->.

⁴³ Vijay Korra, *Forgotten Communities of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh* (Springer Nature, 2019).

⁴⁴ Ramdas Rupavath, *Education as Development* (Taylor & Francis, 2023).

⁴⁵ Naik Laxmana and Manjula Chalawadi, "THE BANJARA COMMUNITY in KARNATAKA; STATUS, PROBLEMS and PROSPECTS," *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences* 10, no. 6 (2020), https://www.ijmra.us/project%20doc/2020/IJRSS_JUNE2020/IJRSS7June20-16875.pdf.

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Kamalakar, Gedam; Kamala, Kandi, "Educational Access for Tribal Groups in Telangana State," *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 14, no. 4 (2014): 237–42, <https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:rjss&volume=14&issue=4&article=014>.

communication facilities can be a changer in improving society⁴⁸. All these schemes run by the government must focus on improving the skills of the people.

Another study undertaken by Rathod⁴⁹ stresses on the need of training about micro financing must be given to community people to bring some bigger change in their community. A study conducted in Marathwada in Maharashtra found out that farming is the main source of income of the Banjara community people based at Marathwada⁵⁰. Being owners of small land holding with limited farming tools their monthly consuming expenditure of the community comes to around 1000 to 1700 Rupees⁵¹. The amount of loans taken by them is of a limited amount as they have small land holding and in lieu of that they are given small loans.⁵²

In order to empower the Banjara community several initiatives have been taken such as Amazon has started India's Karigar program which helps the Banjara community women to sell their goods online on Amazon. This initiative has also helped to preserve their culture, promote artisan work and provide them with economic benefits.⁵³

Types of rural entrepreneurship

In India 75% of the rural population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood.⁵⁴ However, due to limited land holdings, meager profit margin on agriculture and limited resources to produce more crops from agriculture a significant portion of the rural population is moving towards urban regions. Based on the available studies the different entrepreneurship options are Individual entrepreneurship, Group entrepreneurship, cluster entrepreneurship and cooperatives based on the ownership.⁵⁵ Rural entrepreneurs can also be classified based on industries they operate such as agricultural, skill based artisan, retail and tribal entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the development of Indian economy in terms of providing employment opportunities at the local level, production of goods from the material easily available with local resources.⁵⁶ One of the advantages of rural entrepreneurship is that there is no compulsion of developing infrastructure like offices, inventories and frameworks. The production costs of the items produced is also very low and have a lower marketing cost. However, due to limited income generated by rural entrepreneurship specifically if it is family-

⁴⁸ T Nagaveni, "A Historical Transition of Banjara Community in India with Special Reference to South India," *Research Journal of Recent Sciences* 4, no. 2277-2502 (2015): 11–15, <https://www.isca.me/rjrs/archive/v4/iISC-2014/3.ISCA-ISC-2014-Oral-20SHS-14.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Tanaji Rathod, "Redefined Strategies For Infrastructure Development In Banjara Thandas Of Karnataka: A Case Study of Karnataka Thanda," Academia.edu, 2018, <https://www.academia.edu/35866843/>.

⁵⁰ Saidulu Bhukya, *Banjaras of Medieval Deccan: Trade, Transport and Itinerant Communities*, Google Books (Read worthy Publications, 2021)

⁵¹ Naik Priti, A Pawar, and S Rathod, "Economic Status of Banjara and Dhangar Community in Marathwada," 2012, https://www.worldwidejournals.com/paripex/recent_issues_pdf/2012/June/economical-status-of-banjara-and-dhangar-community-in-marathwada_June_2012_9915153055_0901329.pdf.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ The Hindu, "Banjara Kasuti Partners with Amazon India to Empower Karnataka's Banjara Community," The Hindu, July 2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/banjara-kasuti-partners-with-amazon-india-to-empower-karnatakas-banjara-community/article68356578.ece>.

⁵⁴ Prabhu Pingali et al., "Rural Livelihood Challenges: Moving out of Agriculture," in *Transforming Food Systems for a Rising India* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2019), 47–71, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-14409-8_3.

⁵⁵ Andreas Rauch, Robert van Doorn, and Willem Hulsink, "A Qualitative Approach to Evidence-Based Entrepreneurship: Theoretical Considerations and an Example Involving Business Clusters," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 38, no. 2 (February 4, 2014): 333–68, <https://doi.org/10.1111/etap.12093>.

⁵⁶ B.K Prasad, *Rural Development: Concept, Approach and Strategy*, (Sarup & Sons, 2003),

based entrepreneurship there is reluctance that parents exhibit for their children involving in joining their family run business.⁵⁷

Rural entrepreneurship and inclusiveness

Rural entrepreneurship is crucial for encouraging inclusive growth, especially in developing nations such as India. The micro-level entrepreneurs of Banjara community highlights the significance of rural-to-urban migration in promotes alternative business opportunities.⁵⁸ However, migration poses socioeconomic issues such as relocation and limited access to legal services for them. Studies suggest⁵⁹ rural entrepreneurs frequently face challenges in acquiring financial resources, managing legal processes, and developing long-term market relationships, all of which might hinder their enterprises' capacity to grow. For the small-time traders from rural centers, establishing the urban markets provides an opportunity for merchandise, and selling their unique products associated with their culture.⁶⁰ However, in the case of nomadic populations such as the Banjara community, the persistent pressure of moving to other places hampers their commercial expansion. Henceforth, there is need for stable market systems and supporting regulatory frameworks for fostering rural business.

Cultural & family preservation and rural entrepreneurship

The relationship between cultural, family preservation and rural entrepreneurship has emerged as a significant area of study for researchers within the context of sustainable development. Cultural preservation involves safeguarding the unique traditions, customs and heritage, aiding as a cornerstone for many rural communities.⁶¹ Rural entrepreneurship helps in preserving language, art, craft, jewellery and even rituals.⁶²

Moreover, merchandising traditional crafts, apparel and jewellery not only helps in generating income for small-time rural entrepreneurs but aids in the survival of rural community people in urban areas and helps in the preservation of cultural traditions. Being small rural entrepreneurship also helps in strengthening family which later on develops as family-based entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurship provide employment opportunities for family members and coping issues like poverty, unemployment and exploring skills for livelihood.⁶³ Therefore, rural entrepreneurship helps in creating and management of businesses in rural communities utilizing local resources and cultural assets. However, studies suggest several challenges associated with rural entrepreneurship including limited access to resources, lack of entrepreneurship skills, assessing the needs of the market, and

⁵⁷ Cristina Keiko Yamaguchi et al., "Young People's Perceptions about the Difficulties of Entrepreneurship and Developing Rural Properties in Family Agriculture," *Sustainability* 12, no. 21 (October 22, 2020): 8783–83, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12218783>.

⁵⁸ Saidulu Bhukya, *Banjaras of Medieval Deccan: Trade, Transport and Itinerant Communities*, Google Books (Read worthy Publications, 2021)

⁵⁹ Ruslan Prijadi et al., "Financing Needs of Micro-Enterprises along Their Evolution," *International Journal of Ethics and Systems* 36, no. 2 (April 9, 2020): 263–84, <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijoes-05-2018-0071>. See also Joseph Amankwah-Amoah et al., "Entrepreneurs' Learning from Business Failures: An Emerging Market Perspective," *British Journal of Management* 33, no. 4 (November 14, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12557>. See also Andrea M. Prado, Jeffrey A. Robinson, and Zur Shapira, "Serving Rural Low-Income Markets through a Social Entrepreneurship Approach: Venture Creation and Growth," *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* 18, no. 2 (July 26, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1002/sej.1442>.

⁶⁰ Sally Kah et al., "Entrepreneurial Motivations, Opportunities, and Challenges: An International Perspective," *Journal of African Business* 23, no. 2 (October 25, 2020): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15228916.2020.1838835>.

⁶¹ Claudia Melis and Donna Chambers, "The Construction of Intangible Cultural Heritage: A Foucauldian Critique," *Annals of Tourism Research* 89, no. 0160-7383, (July 2021): 103206, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2021.103206>.

⁶² Anzelika Smagina and Iveta Ludviga, "Craft Entrepreneurship and Created Value," *Rural Environment. Education. Personality (REEP)* 13, no. 2255-5207 (April 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.22616/reep.2020.044>.

⁶³ Md Abid Hasan et al., "Rural Entrepreneurship as a Sustainable Livelihood Alternative for the Returnee Migrants: Reviewing the Potentials and Challenges," *Journal of Small Business Strategy* 33, no. 1 (April 25, 2023): 20–35, <https://doi.org/10.53703/001c.57750>.

competition from medium and large-sized corporations selling similar products.⁶⁴ Despite these challenges in rural entrepreneurship the present research delves into the specific factors that contribute to the success of rural entrepreneurship with special reference to the Banjara market at Gurugram Haryana.

Methodology

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the artisans selling products at Banjara market, the researchers chose to undertake a two-method research approach. Both qualitative and quantitative approach has been utilized. Photos and videos of the study has been captured for record purposes. The Banjara market, which was previously in sector 56 of Gurugram has now been shifted in sector 58 and sector 70. The researchers have conducted an observational study and executed a survey for five consecutive days starting from Wednesday to Sunday. Careful observation and one-to-one survey were conducted both in sector 58 and sector 70. A total of 120 responses from those who were handling these shops were gathered for this study.



Figure 5: During interaction with one of the artisans at Banjara Market, Gurugram. Photograph by authors.⁶⁵

The Banjara market of sector 58 area was dust-laden with garbage thrown carelessly in the nearby locations. The cleanliness in sector 58 requires urgent attention and few shoppers also pinpointed the breathing difficulty in the area. However, in sector 70 Banjara market, the area was well maintained. The most prominent sale observed was of handicrafts. The sale is higher during weekends and festive seasons are a big hope for the shopkeepers. The market place beamed of home décor items at a very cheap price. Customers were limited in numbers and the stall keepers treated their customers very well. Unfortunately, these shops are only temporary.

The artisans who sold their goods were extremely hesitant of sharing much information and it was only after much encouragement that they agreed to answer. Their past experiences with few social media influencers have not been very good as they believed that their unnecessary talking about the market on various online platforms is the reason behind the change in location of Banjara market which in turn has led to the decline in the sales of their products. Some of these market stalls were also taken care of by workers who hesitated sharing information due to their fear of getting fired from their work. Few others were doubting that their revelations might lead to some negative coverage and consequent filing of a report against them and that their lives may become worse. It was difficult to elicit responses from females as they lacked confidence of interacting with strangers. Females were hesitant in answering most questions. They found it more suitable to let the male member take the conversation further. As compared to sector 58, the responses were easily collected from Sector 70 as respondent understood and some of them were even educated.

⁶⁴ Oladayo Ramon Ibrahim, "Rural Entrepreneurship Development and Poverty Alleviation: A Review of Conceptual Issues," *Covenant Journal of Entrepreneurship* 7, no. 2 (2023): 59–68, <https://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjoe/article/view/4104>.

⁶⁵ Photograph clicked by authors

Despite initial inhibitions, the respondents were successfully taken into confidence and were convinced that nothing harmful will happen, also that this study in reality can help them. While during the survey, none of the respondents confided that children 14 years or below were also engaged in the work, but the fact that they were sitting along even during a time when they were supposed to be in their school brings forth the fact that this work also interferes with primary education of children of those engaged in this profession. Most men who were selling their products were smoking and consuming tobacco putting forward silent cues of children receiving a negative influence.

Few of these respondents narrated incidents of how they were forced to migrate from one place to other due to their circumstances. Most lived inside their own shops, their livelihood remains unstable and the only aim is to earn meals at least twice a day. To save and plan something for future is unimaginable for the people working here. This community desperately waits for a consideration message that could be communicated through proper channel to the government. It requests for a change in their lives, their need for proper shelter, education facilities, toilets and women safety.

Case 1: 21-year-old Priya is married and is parenting a toddler son. She and her family members are presently living in sector 70 market and the same place is used to sell their handicrafts. There are total 10 family members in Priya's family including her husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, two brother in laws, a sister-in-law and two other children. This family is into this business for over 20 years now and this present shop started operating just nine months back. The family also worked in sector 56 Banjara market of Gurugram which now stands demolished.

Priya explains that she and her family live with this fear that their shops can get demolished anytime without any prior notice by the authorities. Additionally, there have been instances in the past when the residents living in nearby society complained about them leading to shops being shut down. The authorities/government never hesitate to run bulldozers all over their shops. It is ordinary to see conflicts and clashes and men getting beaten up by the police in the area. Priya and others like her strongly believe in their identity and demonstrates the features of a true Banjara, she says, *"Asli Banjare vohi hai joh itne saal se bus yehi kaam karte"*

Case 2: 52-year-old Feroz khan is originally from Bengal, Kolkata, India. Feroz and his wife have two sons and a daughter. All three siblings, in their early 20's have only completed their primary education from their village in Kolkata and didn't study any further here in Delhi. Feroz has never been to a school and his sons works as rickshaw pullers in Nizamuddin area of New Delhi, India.

Feroz and his wife run a shop in sector 58 of Banjara market where they sell handicrafts and floor mats. The entire family lives in a tiny room which is at the back side of the tent. The urgent goal of this family is to get there 23-year-old daughter married and later sell off all their belongings so as to collect money for shifting back to their village. Both Feroz and his wife expressed that there are days when nothing is sold and the couple have to depend on their sons who have meagre incomes.

Feroz had taken a loan of Rs 80,000/- for setting up his shop and he still is in debt. He pays 15000 per month, along with paying loan instalment and spending on

Tables, Charts and Analysis

Age	Number	Percentage
16-25	37	30.83
26-35	40	33.33
36-45	22	18.33
46-55	18	15.00
Above 56	3	2.50
Gender	Number	Percentage
Males	87	72.5
Females	33	27.5
Educational Qualification	Number	Percentage
Without formal education	57	47.9
Primary education	35	29.2
Secondary education	28	22.9

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents. Source- Primary data.

Table 1 identifies that more than half of the workmen (64.17%) who are selling handicrafts and antiques in Banjara market are young, they are in the age category of 16-35 years. On further dividing this age group, it is identified that 33.33% are in the age category of 26-35 years and 30.83% are in the age category of 16-25 years. The remaining proportion (33.33%) is between 35 years and just 2.5% workmen are 56 years or above. This business in this market is male dominated with as many as 72.5% males in the market. Since a very high proportion of these respondents are married (85%), it throws light on an unfavourable cultural norm of early marriage among this community. One among these was a young 19 years old lad who was married and already had two kids. This can probably become a reason of their limited growth in future. Kanji et al. (2023)⁶⁶ underlines how early marriage is associated with unwanted pregnancies, childbirth and foetus termination. The greater risk is of sexually transmitted diseases that are mostly overlooked once someone is married.

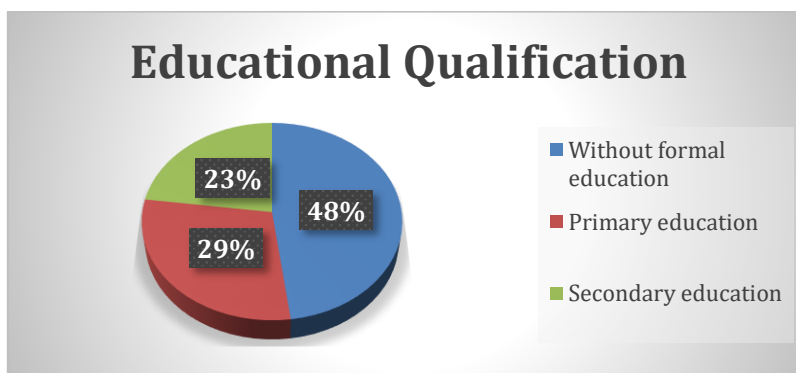


Chart 1: Educational Qualification of Respondents. Source- Primary data.

⁶⁶ Shireen Kanji et al., “The Impact of Early Marriage on the Life Satisfaction, Education and Subjective Health of Young Women in India: A Longitudinal Analysis,” *Journal of Development Studies* 60, no. 5 (December 18, 2023): 1–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2023.2284678>.

Chart 1 depicts one of the most unwelcoming truths regarding this community is that maximum percentage is (47.9%) is not formally educated. Only 29.2% has received primary education and 22.9% have gone to school till class 10th only. This lack of education leads to social problems like economic instability, health disparities, exclusion and increased vulnerabilities. The Ministry of Textiles in order to overcome the constraint of education, the National Handicrafts Development Programme and Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme was launched under, Government of India. It recognized the unorganized nature of handicraft markets and lack of education and absence of market intelligence (Texmin, 2022)⁶⁷. However, no form of development has been identified for the artisans of Banjara market under this scheme.

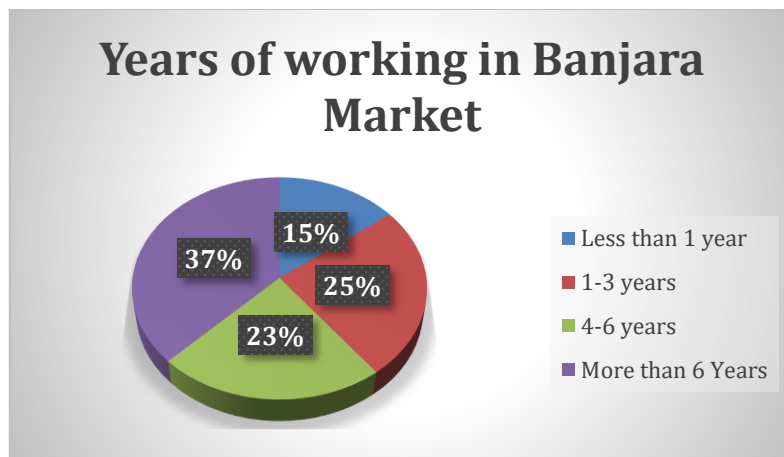


Chart 2: Total work years in Banjara Market. Source- Primary data.

Chart 2 presents that the time spent by crafts people in Banjara market is notable. Maximum of them (37.5%) have been living here for more than six years now. 47.92% have spent 1-6 years here. Moreover, nearly 57% of artisans have started living on permanent basis in tents of the Banjara market with half areas designated as their personal space of living which would include arrangement for their bedding and other necessary kitchen items. The other half is utilized for display and sale of their products. The count of some family members was identified as 4-5 (54.17%) and 6-7 (14.58%) that projects on the challenge of managing to live together peacefully when there is such shortage of space. This also provides an indication on the likelihood of conflicts and tension among the family members.

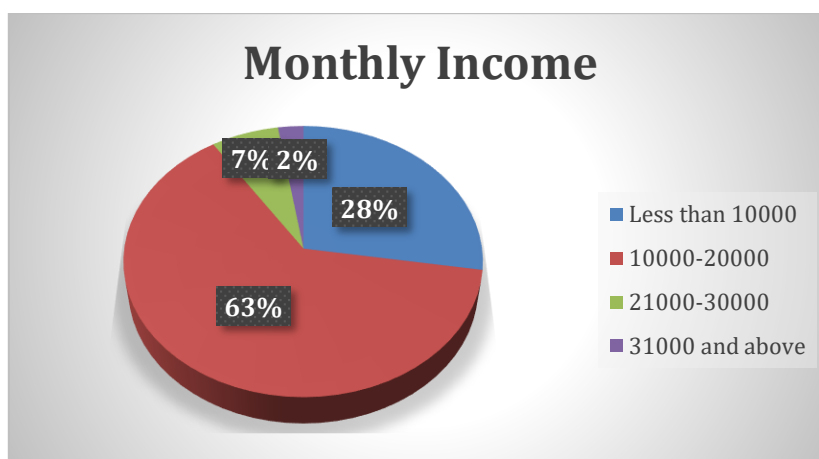


Chart 3: Monthly earnings of artisans in Banjara Market. Source- Primary data.

⁶⁷ Texmin, “Comperhensive Handicrafts I’ Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS) Guidelines. Guidelines for Implementation of Projects under Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS),” 2022, <https://handicrafts.nic.in/pdf/scheme.pdf>.

Chart 3 demonstrates that the monthly earnings of craftspeople in Banjara market mostly range between Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 20,000/-, with approximately 63% of artisans falling within this income bracket. Meanwhile, 28% earn less than Rs. 10,000/- per month, highlighting the financial vulnerability of a significant portion of the community. Only 2% manage to earn more than Rs. 30,000/-, and 7% fall in the Rs. 21,000/- to Rs. 30,000/- range. Most artisans live in temporary tents, with only 12.5% having any additional sources of income. When asked about government support, a staggering 95.83% revealed that they do not receive any benefits from government schemes, leaving them entirely reliant on their craftwork for sustenance. This lack of support aggravates their perilous financial situation, making it challenging for them to improve their living standards.

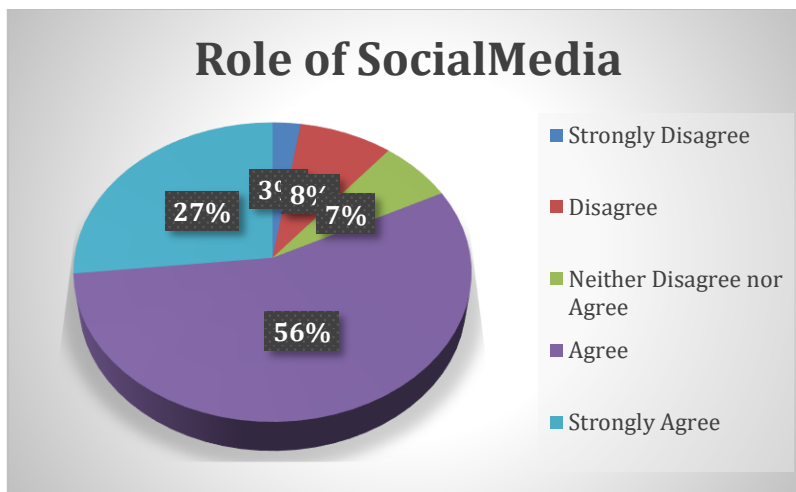


Chart 4: Role of social media in market's popularity. Source- Primary data.

On making a google video search on the keywords “Banjar market in Gurugram”, the researchers found that 320 videos solely on the market the market emerged non-stop. Various influencers have covered the market majorly on YouTube and then in Facebook and Instagram. This throws light on the popularity of the market. Chart 4, elucidates that when enquired on the importance of social media role in Banjara market's popularity, 56 % agreed that social media has played an important role. Grading the social media a little higher 27% strongly agreed and believed that it has made a remarkable impact on market's popularity. Further, 7% artisans remained neutral on the impact value on the other hand 11% of them did not agree on the same. The includes the 3% respondents who strongly disagree that social media has done something relevant for the popularity and they in fact pointed out that it has done more harm than benefit.

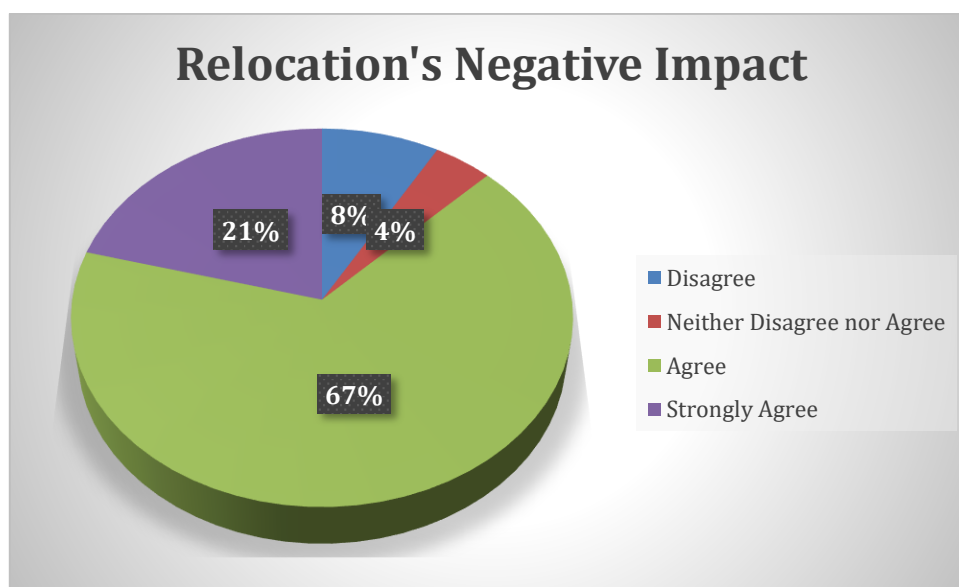


Chart 5: Relocation of the market negatively impacts business. Source- Primary data.

Relocation to a new place causes a deep impact in the lives of the those who had to shift from one place to another. This impact becomes more relevant when the sole reason behind shifting was the need to earn money and manage living. Most enjoy living in their own social set-up, the migrant Banjara community however doesn't have much options other than shifting to places where they could sell their products. The artisans of Banjara market were enquired whether the relocation of market has made negative impact on their business or not, Chart 5 demonstrates that 67% agreed that it has made an impact on their business, 21% strongly agreed that it has made a huge impact on their business. Further, 4% artisans remained neutral about it and just 4% of them opined that the relocation of the market didn't affect their business. Relocation usually has a negative impact on small business.

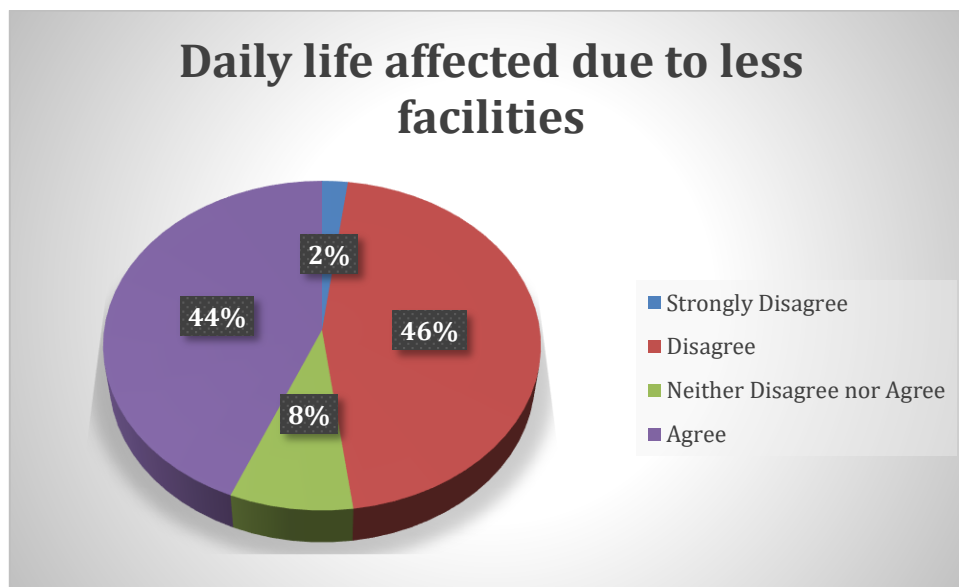


Chart 6: Lack of permanent facilities (such as housing) affects daily life and work. Source- Primary data.

Sector 58 and sector 70 of Gurugram where Banjara community has set up its stalls, is just temporary and the community dwells in the constant fear of their shops getting demolished. Chart 6 underlines that when the artisans were enquired whether the lack of permanent facilities like sanitation, housing etc. affects their daily life or work condition, 44% agreed and shared that the lack of such facilities does affects their daily live. Further, 8% artisans remained neutral about it, while 48% of them shared that having lack of basic facilities in the market, doesn't affect their daily life or work environment.

A set of open-ended questions that were deliberately included in the questionnaire enabled respondents to express further. On being asked about the reasons behind shifting to Gurugram, researchers received almost similar answers like “*Paise kamaane ke liye*”, “*Guzara karne ke liye*”, “*Ghar chalana tha*”. All these referred to the dire need of earning money. It is pointed that 54.17% described that their reason behind this migration is to earn money. Only 6.25% underlined it as their family business, 25% said that they wanted some work and 14.58% said that they wanted to do their own business. The maximum of these craftsmen (62.5%) previously worked as blacksmith as most answered “*pehle lohar ka kaam karte the*” meaning we used to work as blacksmith before. Others were engaged in work like housekeeping, sold home décor items, worked in factory and worked as rickshaw puller. 12.5% have always been doing the same work and 5% of these have never worked before.

The researchers identified that some of these artisans started this work with the aid of their family member “*Papa ne suru kiya family business*” meaning my father helped me to start this family business because of which they already had knowledge about this work “*Ghar se hi phele se chalta aa rha hai yeh..jaankari phele se thi*” meaning this is the business which the elders have also done and therefore we know how to do this business by being a part.

On being asked about how the migration to Gurugram and working in Banjara market has impacted their socio-economic situation. It is important to note here that 52% of respondents believe that their socio-economic life has improved to some extent. “*Kharcha paani hi chalta hai, aur gaon mai parivar ko bhejdet hai*” meaning that we are able to meet our ends meet and we are able to transfer some amount to our family members in our village. On

the other hand, 33.33% feel that there has been no significant change in their situation. Some others believe that the situation is just the same, with no notable improvements or deteriorations as they share, "*Sudhaar nhi hai..situation same hi rehti hai*" meaning there is no improvement and the situation remains the same.

On being asked about the preparation and planning by local authorities or government for upliftment of Banjara community, straight comes the answer, "*Sarkaar ne nuksaan se ubharne ke liye aisi koi yojana nhi banayi abhi tak. Sab kuch ham khud dekhte hai*" meaning that the government hasn't helped us in anyway, whatever efforts are required we do it ourselves. It is worth noting that 100% of respondents pointed out the fact that government has no future planning for them.

Findings

From the above analysis it is revealed that majority of the respondents belong to male gender due to the reluctance of the female community members to reveal information. It was also observed that the main decision makers especially the decisions related to the financial matters, were taken by the male of the family.

- Despite working hard and putting more than 14 hours of labour into making the products, none of the respondents earns more than 30,000 per month suggesting that they hardly can make both their ends meet. They usually earn to feed their families and hardly ever save for future.
- Nearly half of the respondents revealed having no formal education and only less than 22% have studied till 10th education revealing lower literacy rates among the community members.
- More than 36% of the total population working at `Banjara market had been selling their products in the market for more than six years, suggesting that selling products at `banjara market provides them a stable income.
- Nearly 57% of members of the community are living permanently in the makeshift homes in the Gurugram area. However, it was also revealed that despite having more than 6 members in the family they have to adjust in these small temporary homes which are constructed on congested areas.
- Around 56 % of respondents agreed that social media has played an important role in popularizing the Banjara market and bringing young people as well as foreigners in the market.
- During the survey it was also revealed that the relocation of market negatively impacts their business and daily profit.
- The challenges faced by the community members are lack of sanitation, housing etc. affects their daily life and work condition. The community members also revealed that they live in the constant fear of their shops getting demolished and losing their daily livelihood.
- The community members also revealed that the migration to Gurugram and working in Banjara market has improved their socio-economic situation as compared when they were staying at their own native places. For instance, more than half respondents agreed that their economic condition has improved in terms of stable daily income, better price for the products they sell and interaction with the customers.

Conclusion

The present chapter provides an overview on the entrepreneurial endeavors of Banjara community residing in Banjara market at `Gurugram, Haryana. These people merchandize mostly in jewellery, home artifacts and decorative items at a very reasonable price. Despite operating in a competitive urban environment at Gurugram which is popular as IT hub and high-rise buildings housing corporate offices and high fashion brand outlets this flea market thrives especially for selling products associated with Banjara community. Some of the emerging points from the study are that majority of these community-based entrepreneurs are micro entrepreneurs with income 10,000 to 15,000 per month. A major section of these sellers is into this business for more than six years which indicates that they are able to get stable earnings. They also agreed that social media influencers and content has helped in increasing the market footfall. Initially only a handful of shops were there which were selling a limited variety of goods. But with time a shopping hub has been established where hundreds of Banjaras are selling a variety of products. The study reveals that the Banjara community members primarily depend on this market for their livelihood. Due to limited income generation, there is a sense of economic instability. The study also highlights the gender disparity within the community where men are the primarily decision-makers and women refrain from participating actively in the survey.

Nevertheless, the community face challenges related to education, sanitation, lack of permanent housing and infrastructure. However, despite these challenges, the community members agree that their socio-economic situation is improved as compared to their condition in the rural areas.

Limitations of the study

The research has few limitations such as the sample size which is focused on 120 respondents from the Banjara Market in Gurugram does not represent the experiences of entire community spread to different states of India. The research was conducted over five days, the sales may vary as per the festivals, seasons and other occasion the profitability and sales may change. Also, the reluctance of women to participate in the survey further limits the understanding of the role and challenges faced by the women of this particular community.

Future scope of the study

Future research could include a larger sample from multiple markets where Banjara community sells their products across different states of India. Comparative studies could also examine how location influences business outcomes. A long term, longitudinal study could provide valuable insights into how the socio-economic conditions of Banjara Community evolved over the time. Future research could also explore the impact of existing government schemes, financial aid and legal support in improving their socio-economic conditions. The present studies found out the role of cultural products in promoting the cultural identity of Banjara Community.

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