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## Growth, Performance and Challenges of Cricket Bat Industry of Kashmir India

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### ABSTRACT

*The cricket bat manufacturing industry is considered one of the most important wood based industries. The industry has an important role in earning foreign exchange and creating jobs and are expected to play important role in the future development of the economy. Cricket bats are mostly manufactured from willow trees. There are at least 300 big and small manufacturing units of cricket bats in the valley especially in two districts viz. Anantnag and Pulwama. Each unit manufactures on an average 20000-25000 bats per annum, at a price ranging from Rs 100-1000 per bat. The annual turnover of the cricket bat industry is Rs 10 crore. The main focus of this paper is to analyze the growth, status, performance and challenges of cricket bat industry in the Kashmir valley as well as the problems faced by this industry and to suggest further ways and means for solving these problems.*

**Keywords:** small scale industry, employment, growth, constraints, cricket bats, Kashmir

### INTRODUCTION

The industrial sector, which possesses a relatively high marginal propensity to save and high marginal propensity to invest, contributes significantly to the achievement of a self sustaining economy with continued high levels of investment, rapid rate of increase in income and employment. Unfortunately Jammu and Kashmir State has not been able to attract investments in this sector and remained an industrially backward state due to its unique economic disadvantages such as poor infrastructure, sparse population density and shallow markets (Ahmad 1989). Nevertheless, many small and medium scale industries have come up basically in the traditional sectors along with some new areas like food processing, agro based units, wood based units etc. However natural factors are most conducive for handicrafts, village and small scale industries, especially Cricket bat Industry. Besides, due to the saturation of employment opportunities in the Government and non Governmental sectors like agriculture, industrial sector has been declared as the main vehicle for accelerating economic activity, besides providing employment to educated youths in the State, especially in Kashmir Valley, it serves as an engine for economic growth (Butt, 2005). One such industry that provides bread and butter to thousands of people in the valley is Cricket bat Industry.

The cricket bat industry in Kashmir began in Sialkot, Pakistan, during British colonial rule, with technical know-how imported from England. In due course, the trade flourished in different areas of Kashmir where the raw material was plentiful (Wani and Jaiswal, 2011)

Up to 1975-76, the Valley based traders exported willow as the main raw material for making cricket bats to Jalandar and Meerut based cricket bat industries. When the State government realized its potential and become conscious of the fact of that if the raw material is allowed to go like this, the precious Kashmir willow would be left no more and the people engaged in the trade for manufacturing the Cricket bats would have to close their units for want of raw material. It was strongly felt that a cluster of Cricket bats with a modern common facility centre was set up to provide all needed facilities under one roof to boost local industry and to help them make good quality of cricket bats.

Presently C B I have a turnover of Rs 10 crore per year. It is important to mention here that during the course of more than century of making bats, Kashmir has gained a name and fame. In 1975-1980 there were only 25 cricket bat manufacturing units in District Anantnag and Pulwama of Kashmir division. It has grown to 273 units by the of March 2009. Each unit manufactures on an average 25000 bats per year. The Cricket bat Manufacturing Industry in Kashmir is already

employing 10000 people and collectively exports nearly thousands of cricket bats in a year at the price ranging from rupees 100-1000 per bat.

The present study examines broadly the growth, performance and challenges of C B I in the Kashmir Valley. The broad objectives of the study are to study the growth and status of cricket bat industry in Kashmir Valley and to examine the problems faced by this industry and suggest further ways means for improving the prospects of their activity.

### METHODOLOGY

The study is largely based on secondary data. The secondary data related to growth, performance and challenges of C B I has been compiled from official records of DIC's and Directorate of Industries and Commerce J & K.

After obtaining the requisite information the following tools are used

1. Regression analysis i.e.;

$$Y = a + bx \text{ where } b = \frac{\sum XY}{\sum X^2} \text{ and } a = \bar{Y} - b\bar{X}$$

Y = Dependent variable, X = Independent variable, a = Intercept and b= slope

2. Correlation i.e.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\sum xy}{\sqrt{\sum X^2} \times \sqrt{\sum Y^2}} \text{ where}$$

$$X = (X - \bar{X}) \quad Y = (Y - \bar{Y})$$

3. Annual Growth Rate

Current year - previous year / previous year × 100

The C B manufacturing cluster is mostly concentrated in a 13-15 kilometers radius along the Jammu and Kashmir national highway between Bijbehara and Awantipora. Anantnag including the Pulwama District is the hub for Cricket bat manufacturing in Kashmir Valley. Nearly 3/4th of the 248 formally registered units with DIC exists on either sides of national highway.

Table 1: Number of units registered and functional in Anantnag and Pulwama

S.no	Name of the District	No. of registered units	No. of Functional units	Untraceable/Non-existing units	Closed units
1	Anantnag	216	195	5	16
2	pulwama	63	53	6	4
	Total	279	248	11	20

Source: Digest of Statistics, 2008-09

The detail regarding the production, sales, employment and number of units (year wise) as well as their annual growth rates and is given as under (Table1.2).

Year	No. of units	% growth rate	Employment	% growth Rate	Production (lakhs)	% growth Rate
2001-02	130	-	400	-	943.60	-
2002-03	150	15.38	500	25	990.45	4.96
2003-04	167	11.33	540	8	1070.80	8.11
2004-05	187	11.98	618	14.44	1118.85	4.49
2005-06	200	6.95	678	9.71	1155.45	3.27
2006-07	208	4.00	712	5.01	1257.60	8.84
2007-08	213	2.40	760	6.74	1310.65	4.21
2008-09	213	0.00	857	12.76	1354.52	3.35
2009-10	218	2.35	1062	29.92	1378.25	0.01
2010-11	248	13.76	1355	27.57	1510.40	9.59

Economic Survey (2010-2011)

### GROWTH OF CRICKET BAT INDUSTRY

Cricket bat industry of Kashmir valley contributes significantly to the state's economy and provides employment to nearly 10,000 persons as on 2010-11. The production of cricket bats has gone up

from Rs 946.60 lakh in 2001-02 to Rs 1510.40 lakh in 2010-11. The number of units and employment also went up. The growth of CBI is shown in the table 1.1 which reveals that there has been phenomenal growth in the number of units, production, and employment. As is evident from the table 1.1, a significant growth has been registered in the number of units manufacturing cricket bats and employment. The total number of registered CB units at the end of March 2001-02 stood at 130, generating 400 employment opportunities. Over the years the industry has shown an improvement by providing bread and butter to thousands of people in the Valley. The formal registration of units has registered 13.76% growth during the year 2010-11 as against 2.35% in the corresponding year and the production has also shown improvements i.e. in 2010-11 production has registered 9.59% growth rate as against 0.01% in the corresponding year. The numbers of villages such as Kandipora, Thajwara, Samthan, Punjpora, Chersoo, Dagripora, Malahura, Reshipora etc in tehsil have established CB manufacturing units recently. After 2009 the industry registered sharp growth rate in number of units and employment due to the reasons like increase in demand for cricket bats, expansion of infrastructure facilities, increasing popularity of cricket, higher spending on physical education, cricket world cup 2011 etc.

In the current study the available data related to number of units and employment were projected to obtain a linear trend and correlation, So as to obtain the value of intercept and slope in the equation  $y=a+bx$ , the detail of the available data is as follows:-

Y = employment

X = no. of units

The correlation between employment and number of units is positive. As by relation it should be expected that there is fairly a strong positive relation between these two variables. The most significant feature of CBI in the valley according to statistics given is that there is positive correlation between employment and number of units. The correlation coefficient between these variables is 0.93. The explanation for the observed correlation between the employment and production is that employment largely depends on production i.e. when production increases, employment also increases. The linear trend i.e.  $\hat{Y} = -19.6 + 3.97X$  shows that when number of units are increased by 1, employment is increased by 3.97. On an average 4 persons are employed in one cricket bat manufacturing unit.

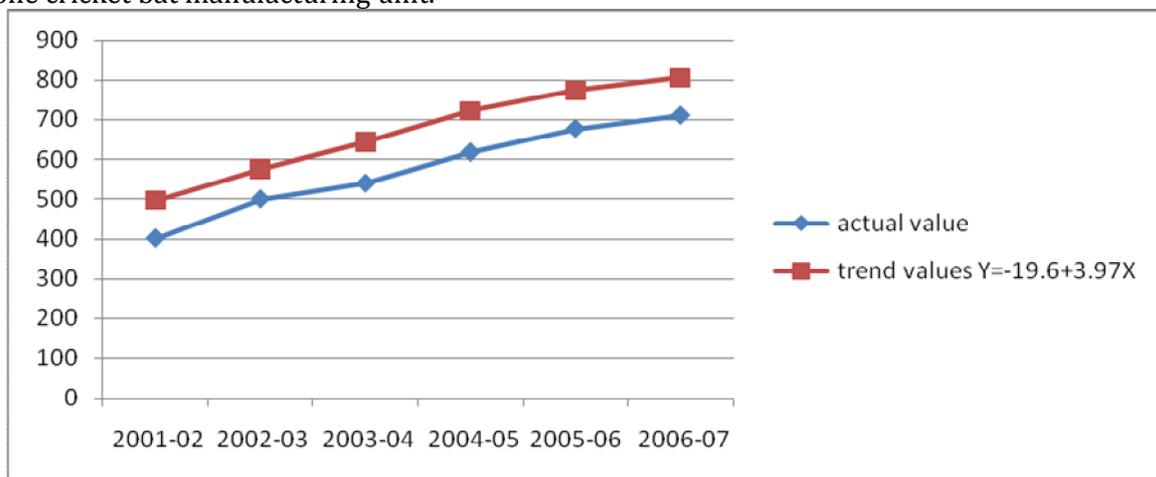


Fig 1: Trend analysis in the number of units and employment in the Valley

It is evident from figure that there is a clear trend in the number of units and employment in the Valley. There is an increasing trend from 2001-02 to 2010-11. In 2001-02 the total number of units stood at 130, providing employment to 400 persons as against 248 units in 2010-11 and providing employment to 1355 persons. The cricket bat industry is economically a profitable enterprise; it leads to the improvement in the living standards of the people in the valley. It also has encouraged the people who depend on this industry.

Kashmir's fabled cricket bats may soon call it a day as the main raw material—the willow—is fast disappearing due to the long gestation period and low returns for farmers. The industry, with around 300 small and big manufacturing units, provides direct and indirect employment to nearly

thousands' of people in the Valley and is estimated to have an annual turnover of over Rs 10 crore. Dwindling willow plantation amid allegations about the incapacity of the government to introduce an upgraded breed of the willow, which grows faster to the required girth, may lead to the demise of the industry sooner than expected. The biggest handicap of the industry is the willow itself, which decades to grow to the size required for making bats.

There are not many trees left and no one plants them anymore because the government has failed to introduce the English willow here. No one will keep his land in use for a plantation which takes 30 years to grow. The "bat-hub", comprising of many villages — Charsoo, Hallmulla, Bijbehara, Sangam, Sethar, Pujteng and Mirzapor in the South Kashmir — also faces another problem. The widening of the National Highway will displace many factories and the government seems to have no plans for their relocation.

Organizing CBI on the modern lines is a challenging task which needs more and more attention of the State Government. The Govt. should focus on the upgraded breed of the willow (*Salix alba*), which grows faster to the required girth. Prevention of un-abated smuggling of willow clef to the neighboring states and providing adequate financial resources to the farmers to plant more and more willow trees will prove handfull in the long run..

### CONCLUSION

Cricket bat industry has a tremendous potential of absorbing un-employed educated youth and contributes significantly to the state's economy. The biggest handicap of the industry is the willow, as the main raw material itself, which takes decades to grow to the size required for making bats. There are not many trees left and no one plants them anymore because the government has failed to introduce the English willow here. No one will keep his land in use for a plantation which takes 30 years to grow. The state Govt. should take such initiatives which will encourage those people who depend on the cricket bat industry directly or indirectly for their livelihood. The CBI will jump into national and international arena and create a place for the industry in competitive international market.

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