



Declining Acceptance of Genuine Leather over Faux Leather: A Review Paper with Special Reference to Kutch

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Abstract

Globalization has highly impacted the leather industry demographics for clothing and accessories. This paper provides the current scenario of consumer perception of faux leather over genuine leather. India's diverse culture is firmly embedded in its history and customs. It has a diverse spectrum of traditional fabrics and artistry, resulting in artistic and unusual items. Gujarat is a place of contrasts, spanning from the periodic salt deserts of the Kutch district in the north to the typically dry and semiarid scrubland of the Kathiawar Peninsula, the lush, rich coastal plains of the state's southeastern region. Gujarat was likely the world's most prominent hub for excellent commercial needlework. This paper aims to highlight.

Keywords: Faux leather; Genuine leather; Synthetic leather; Consumer goods; Socio economic livelihood

Introduction

India's leather industry provides around 13% of the global leather output of hides/skins and manages a robust yearly production of over 3 billion square feet of leather. The country makes up 9% of all footwear in the globe. The industry is very labor intensive, employing over 4 million people. The sector is home to numerous leather and footwear clusters spread over India. The leather industry is a millennia manufacturing sector that creates a wide range of commodities such as leather products, leather bags, leather clothes and so on. The raw material utilized in the leather industry is generated from food waste, specifically from meat processing. The handloom sector is an employment intensive business that employs over four million people, most of whom come from lower income families. Women make up around 30% of the workforce in the leather products business.

Since the early 1970's, the Indian leather industry has been regarded as the most potential foreign exchange generating sector. In 1989-90, when the first environmental restriction was enforced by its biggest

export absorbing nation, Germany, leather export profits accounted for 7% of the overall foreign exchange earning sector (and ranked fifth in export earnings). However, even after ten years (CLE, 2008-09), with yearly profits of 7 billion USD, the industry has reached such a phenomenal height of achievement that it has positioned itself as the world's sixth greatest foreign exchange generating country. On the one hand, the export generating potential to boost the economy's growth rate and on the other hand, the pollution intensive nature of the industry has distinguished this sector, especially when the 'pollution haven' hypothesis emphasizes that under free trade, the exports of dirty industries increase in developing countries [1].

Since the 1990's, the Indian leather industry has been subjected to several international environmental prohibitions and domestic environmental legislation [2]. Firms' compliance strategies and government involvement have aided the industry in reforming its technology and as a result, an apparent rise in the exports sector has been observed. This once again calls into question many so-called hypotheses that show a tradeoff between environmental compliance and export competitiveness and it supports porter's hypothesis, which states that strict environmental regulations do not inevitably hinder comparative advantage against foreign rivals, but rather often enhance it India is also one of the world's top 10 producers of finished leather goods. With over 20 million people directly employed and much more than 100 million indirectly dependent on it, it is positioned to become an even more significant factor in job creation in the future. Every year, the worldwide leather industry generates more than \$40 billion in revenue. Leather products are famous all around the world [3]. It is one of the most well-known. The leather sector is booming as the population and urbanization grow. Because people use leather items regularly, the leather industry is profitable. The industry's scope is constantly increasing due to the diverse applications.

Gujarat takes its name from 'Gurjaratra,' a historical territory in ancient India that included eastern Rajasthan and northern Gujarat between the 6th and 12th century CE and was controlled by the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty. Most historians think that the Gurjara-Pratihara dynasty descended from the nomadic gujjar tribe [4]. These nomadic gujjar tribes, which proved to be an ethnic group, were the first residents in the state, naming this region Gujrat after themselves.

Gujarat, an Indian state on the nation's western coast, has a rich and storied history. It was one of the significant center locations of the Indus valley civilization. It comprised 23 ancient ruins, including lothal, the world's first dry dock and dholavira and gola dhoro. The excavations at lothal show that the vibrant Indus Valley civilization was there as early as 3700 BC. Its inhabitants' trade pursuits enriched the ancient history of a state. The state is known for its food loving population, festivals and traditions, but it is also a center of talented craftsmen and handicrafts. The state's arts and handicrafts are world renowned and are a wonderful blend of colors, designs, stitches and materials. Its embroideries, beadwork, woodwork, leather crafts, ceramics, textile weaving, hand block printed textiles, woven clothing, colorful tie dye and tribal handicrafts are expressions of folklore. They are imbued with the region's social and cultural tone.

Gujarat's rich textile and handicraft legacy adds to India's arts and crafts. One may observe a reflection of the state's variety throughout its arts and crafts. The state's embroidered craft has a long history and is unique from other states' art and craft [5]. It is proud of its needlework styles, which include patola, rabari and mutwa and are

expertly produced by its famous artisans and craftsmen. Traditional artisans in tribal communities who dye, weave, embroider and print textiles produce some of the greatest. Gujarati tribes' wonderful creations are Warli painting and Pithora painting.

Many temples and homes in Gujarat include wood carving, an ancient art technique that has attained an incredibly high degree of technical knowledge and talent. Mahuva and Idar are well known for their lacquer toys. Sankheda in the Baroda area is well known for its lacquer quality. Beadwork is well known in Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar and Junagadh. Torans, chop, rugs, headgear and belts are beautiful beadwork goods [6]. In Gujarat's most renowned and oldest craft, pottery is well known for creating beautiful clay masterpieces into eye catching artifacts. Terracotta toys are another specialty of Kutch potters. The state's potter groups specialize in mud murals and clay kitchenware.

Literature Review

Another traditional state handicraft is the art of making jewelry and cutting and processing precious and semi-precious gemstones. Gujarat is well known for its wonderfully designed folk jewelry, which is unique to each town and community. The Kutch region is well known for its unique silver technique, which entails delicately embossing thin silver plates and decorating them with etching and scraping.

The wide selection of textiles and crafts is due to the people of the state's varied communities, castes, tribes and regions, who have kept the age old heritage alive. The state's handicraft products have won praise and acclaim not only in the country but also in other countries. The federal and state governments, as well as various government and commercial organizations, have launched initiatives that have created long term job prospects for artisans who work in handicrafts and handlooms [7].

This waste product is converted into desirable and functional leather goods. Leather and its derivatives are one of the most traded commodities worldwide. They are made from renewable and readily available materials. The leather industry trade exceeds US\$ 80 billion annually and is predicted to rise as nations' populations and urbanization increase. Craft is normally subject to a hierarchy that varied from time to time irrespective of its form and style. In India, people consume leather items on a routine basis and use them virtually every day [8]. The primary raw materials for just any leather processing enterprise come from slaughterhouses and livestock sector trash. In tanneries, the raw material is refined and transformed into useable leather. As a result, the tanning sector is regarded as one of the most basic leather processing units in the overall leather business.

Even though the leather tanning business essentially uses animal waste, it also entails the application of numerous chemicals to turn raw material into a final product. Consequently, the leather industry uses its assets and produces toxic and hazardous pollutants for the environment. In the leather industry, for example, one metric hell of much raw material is turned into just 200 kg of usable leather product (containing 3 kg of chromium). About 250 kg of non-tanned solid trash, 200 kilograms of tanned waste (containing 3 kg of chromium) and 50,000 kg of wastewater effluent (containing 5 kg of chromium) comprise the solid and liquid waste. One metric tonne of raw material provides just 20% as finished leather products and more than 60% as raw material [9].

The indigenous Meghwal community is a significant manufacturer of leather work in Gujarat's Kutch area. This is one of the ageless crafts that have evolved to integrate old design principles with modern functionality. Its creation is the result of a collaborative effort among men and women. The men make the product out of leather, while the ladies adorn this with mirrors and beadwork. Initially, the technique was employed to produce elephant and horse saddles, sword sheaths and military equipment. It is now used to produce lovely purses and footwear with colorful tassels and ornaments.

In leather production, several chemicals are used to turn rawhide/skin into a finished leather product. There are several sorts of waste produced by the leather industry. Hair, fleshing, chrome trimmings and other solid wastes are produced during the processing of the rawhides from the animals. The effluents released by the leather industry have a more significant proportion of toxic chemicals and heavy metals, severely affecting the environment. Leather industries are implementing numerous contemporary technologies on the manufacturing and effluent management sides to limit toxins released into the environment and decrease waste formation. Various processes are used depending on the kind of waste or effluent to achieve zero-waste creation [10].

Bhujodi is a well-known hamlet in Kutch mentioned for its handicrafts and various crafts are performed in this area. Embroidery work may be observed throughout the village and rabri women do it. Leather work is conducted in several communities around Kutch, including Hodka, Bhujodi and Sumrasar. Shawl weaving, leather products and embroidered work are examples of Bhujodi crafts. Leather shoe manufacture is one of the most well-known Bhujodi trades.

Discussion

The three most common hides and skins used in leather production are goats, buffalo and camel. Before they are utilized to make leather goods, these leathers undergo a tanning process. The process of transforming raw hides or skins into leather is known as tanning. Tannic acid and other chemical compounds may be absorbed by hides and skins, preventing deterioration, making them resistant to wetness and keeping them supple and durable. Leather was first used during the Neolithic period. The Arena-1 shoe, produced in Armenia by a team of archaeologists circa 3500 BCE, is the earliest and most well-known piece of leather footwear. The shoe is about 55,000 years old.

Every area in the province specializes in a distinct type of art. Regarding cultural heritage, the desert area of Kutch is the richest in the state. It is abundant in art forms and handicrafts that are distinctive to the region and linked to its rich culture and history. This region produces intricately carved wood, crated leather and metal works, to mention a few, as well as some of the world's most unique textile items.

Gujarat's largest district, with over 18 nomadic and seminomadic tribes, clans and villages coexisting harmoniously despite their different language, culture and customs. In Kutch, the Rabari community has a sizable population. Kutchi, a Sindhi dialect, is the widely spoken language in the area, followed by Gujarati, Hindi and Sindhi. According to the official Census data from 2011, Kutch had a population of 2,092,371, with 1,096,737 males and 995,634 females.

Bhuj, the region's headquarters, has a population of more than 1.5 lakh people (per the 2011 census report).

Kutch is well-known for its handicrafts, hills, white deserts, gorgeous virgin sea beaches, many forts and, most notably, dholaveera, one of the five major Harappan sites and one of India's most well-known Indus valley civilization archaeological sites.

The desert like Rann of Kutch occupies a large part of the region, which is dry in the summer with a white coat of sodium and fills with water during the monsoon, interspersed with sandy islets of thorny scrub and serves as a breeding ground for some of the enormous flocks of greater and lesser flamingos. It is a sanctuary for migratory birds and is well-known for the Indian wild ass sanctuary, which is home to the last of three species of Asiatic wild ass (equus hemionus Khud or Khar). Wolves, foxes, jackals, chinkara gazelles, nilgai antelope, blackbucks and various larks live there.

The district, which boasts a diverse array of flora and wildlife found in the Rann of Kutch, is also a treasure trove of customs, culture, handicrafts and art forms deeply embedded inside the lands and its people's past. The region is home to a colorful assortment of handicrafts, ranging from metal molded to produce exquisite silver jewelry to gorgeously embroidered textiles, from one of a kind textile goods to intricately carved metal pieces. Entire towns are frequently tuned in to a specific ability passed down from generation to generation. Handicraft is a way of life in Kutch.

The Kutch region was an essential part of habitation. Several Indus valley civilization sites have indeed been discovered here. Throughout history, the area was populated and governed by many dynasties, races and tribes that arrived from the north and east and significantly impacted the region. Kutch's customs, handicrafts and art forms clearly reflect the culture and lifestyle of the different ethnicities and nomadic tribes that lived here over time.

The dry climate and geography of the region are critical causes driving the populations here to develop inventive, clever and enterprising ways of satisfying their requirements by converting resources into goods for everyday living. Pastoralism is the alternative option. Pastoralism previously thrived in the region and was a pivotal contribution to developing craft traditions and related livelihood. The pastoral tribes not only supplied raw materials like wool and leather to the artisans but also contributed value to the crafts *via* their distinctive needlework, decoration and dyeing talents. They played a vital role as target consumers of the craft, defining product aesthetics in collaboration with artisan communities.

The region's crafts help one grasp the region's rich culture and history. There are approximately 20 crafts in the region, each of which characterizes the region by its uniqueness. Traditional embroideries such as Sur, Khareek, Pakko, Rabari, Jat, Mutava, patchwork and applique, printed textiles such as Ajrakh, Batik, Bela, Bandhani, weaving work such as camel wool, Kachchh, Kala cotton, Kharad, Mashru, recycled plastic, knife work, lacquered woodwork, leather work, metal ball works, wood carvings, rogan painting, lippan and copper.

Ojha Bhai is a skilled artisan who claims that they are working with leather is their family business, which they have been doing for many years. Leather is obtained in bulk from leather traders. The leather would either be left natural or colored, with tended to respond in shades of brown or vivid colors such as yellows, blues and reds the artisans. The artisans cut holes in the leather for a reversed appliqué method using punches of various shapes and sizes, ranging from geometrics such as circles, triangles, squares, ovals and rectangles to forms such as leaves, hearts, moons and stars. The artists experiment

with color by placing brightly colored fabric pieces under punched holes in leather, using meticulously composed concentric or linear geometrical patterns. Nirona village is popular for leather craft. The khatris who had been practicing this craft for many generations had no more work. They had no other livelihood options available around their village making it difficult for them to survive.

Charma Karya is a Kutch leather craft that blends embroidery and punches work on leather. Rajasthan's Dalit Meghwal community relocated to Kutch, carrying weaving and leather making traditions with them. Their collaboration with the nomadic pastoralist Maldharis aided in the trade's survival. When their cow died, tribal Maldharis would turn the raw skins into leather and sell it to Meghwal artisans.

Both men and women in the community participate in the craft, with the men creating the product out of leather and the women embellishing it with mirrors, beadwork and hand embroidery. In Kutch, the principal leather crafting skills are Jari Kaam and Torni. A silver or gold Jari is used in the Jari Kaam process to produce numerous patterns and motifs on leather products. This was initially used to embellish horseback riding equipment. This Jari art is used on everyday goods like shoes, purses, lamp shades and other accessories.

Conclusion

Traditionally, the craft produced elephants, camels, horse harnesses, sword sheaths, musical instruments, storage, water containers and footwear. The region's rising cheaper factory produced synthetic leather items have made it harder for artists to survive. To support themselves, the artisans create leather craft products such as footwear, mirror frames, fans, bags, wallets, purses, stationery items and lampshades. The large bulk of the settlements in the area were pastoral. Pastoralism, which formerly thrived in the region, helped to develop craft traditions and related livelihoods.

These pastoral communities also played an essential role as the end user of the artist's craft, shaping the aesthetics of these items in cooperation with artisan communities by adding value to the crafts *via* their distinctive dyeing, stitching and embellishing talents. These pastorals also provided raw materials to the artists, such as wool and leather. This mutual collaboration between the pastorals and the artisans has changed over time. They used to rely on barter for produce and raw materials of the products. These days only some products are needed on special occasions like childbirth and marriage. The altered way of living in the communities has also drastically reduced the exchange of materials and goods. Further, the pastoralist Maldharis who would convert the hide of their dead cattle into leather is no longer doing it as the traditional method is a tedious process. The other reasons are the disposal of the animal carcass after the skin is removed and social stigmas attached to this practice. Poor transporting facilities to dispose of the animal carcass add to the problem.

Scarcity of locally made leather, machines, tools and equipment to scale up production, a lack of proper training and interconnections, a seller's market, modernization and technology advances, the availability of cheaper machine-made products and communities preferring modern forms of dress have forced leather artisans to abandon their craft and work as farmers or in factories. These variables are also responsible for influencing their socioeconomic well-being and causing the next generation to gradually leave the craft in favor of more profitable and less time consuming employment.

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