

Gendered Labor in The Artisanal Industry: Uncovering The Lives, Histories, and Conditions of Women and Artisans in India and Guatemala

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ABSTRACT

This research paper offers an analysis of gendered labor and its effects on the female artisanal industry in India and Guatemala. In this study I examine the meaning of gendered labor and how historical and socio-cultural influences impact gendered labor in these artisanal communities. My research revolves around three primary areas of focus: grassroots movements, government policies, and fiscal measures that support female artisans. I conclude with the importance of preserving traditional artisanal communities for employment purposes and for future generations. I advocate for the advancement and empowerment of women artisans and aim to delve into the complex interplay between gender, labor, and traditional craftsmanship in diverse cultural contexts, while citing real life case studies and examples.

Introduction

The turn of the 18th century marked a watershed moment in garment manufacturing and the textile industry. The Industrial Revolution and the advent of steam powered machines forever transformed labor, product, and pricing dynamics. With mass manufacturing becoming a global phenomenon, numerous artisans lost their livelihoods. As the labor landscape in developing nations starkly shifted, artisan women, who were significantly involved in the creation of traditional textiles and fabric goods, encountered challenges due to the shrinking handmade market.¹

Cultural barriers in some of these developing nations further complicated gender dynamics as women were discouraged from seeking employment outside the home, and even if they did manage to secure employment, they were subjected to significantly lower wages and exploitation. As a result of societal and cultural influences, women who were employed in home-based factory work were assigned back breaking labor-intensive manual tasks.² With an increasing competition in the market for mass-produced factory-made goods these women were employed as a cost-effective labor force. Furthermore, the waning interest in traditional skills and crafts due to the increasing popularity of the mass-produced western style aesthetic contributed to the erosion of these long-standing techniques.³ This resulted in the loss of employment opportunities for women specializing in traditional goods and began a cessation of female income generation, leading to a diminished influence within their households and increased exposure to inequitable circumstances. The 'industrial revolution' was not revolutionary for all, as the exploitation of women who have traditionally been a part of the textile and garment manufacturing segment became ever more rampant.⁴

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the organization of gendered labor in relation to female artisans in India and Guatemala. Through a literature review, historical context and background information, we seek to shed light on how gender influences the labor provided by women in the artisanal sector. To do so, in this paper, I begin by drawing upon the history of gendered labor and expand on the understanding of the Artisanal Industry in India and Guatemala; then I delve into contextualizing our two case studies: India and Guatemala; in making these comparisons, I focus on three main areas: first I look at a few grassroots movements that provide opportunities for female artisans; next, I present an analysis of government and fiscal

policies of India and Guatemala; lastly I conclude with relevant empowerment initiatives to keep their traditional craft alive for future generations.

What is Gendered Labor?

For eons, there has been a division of labor based on gender expectations. Every society has clear expectations for each gender and has used gender to divide distribution of work and wealth. Women have been assigned roles based on their gender, and both their labor and contributions have been considered unequal to their male counterparts. Young girls were taught skills that are expected of women, taking care of kids, cooking, cleaning, or working in the field, while young boys were trained to do tasks in the areas expected of men, hunting, farming, trading, and commerce etc. Men were doing tasks that directly generated wealth.⁵ Due to this inherent separation of labor based on tasks, a deeply unjust socio-economic system has been created favoring men. These divided gendered labor systems provide a social backdrop, outlining women's roles as primary caregivers in the labor market and how it puts them at significant disadvantage compared to men. The nature of women's work coupled with societal restrictions has secluded them from the public spheres. Due to private household labor commitments, women cannot generate any wealth. Consequently, in the public labor arena, a woman's work is undervalued compared to men.⁶

In this social order based upon the gendered division of labor, women are expected to "naturally" succumb themselves to the secluded and domestic sphere, whilst men can commit their time and efforts towards public and productive work. Though these gender roles are rooted upon this stark male/ female divide, these are derivative of traditions as well as cultural norms and are not inherent practices. In many cultures, women are presumed to tend to domestic tasks, raise children and help the elderly, whilst men sustain the household; yet in many other heavy farming dependent communities, women are expected to sustain and support households with their labor in fields alongside men, further burdening them with additional responsibilities. With these pervasive divides there is an underlying expectation for females to partake in the activities that constitute "womanhood" and hence only by fulfilling these expectations a female becomes a true woman. This construct of womanhood and its many societies' stagnant refusal to validate any deviations manifests creation of strong stereotypes. These traditional practices, though not the sole composition of gender identity, remain dominant. For centuries, women have enacted to their socially delegated gendered roles, creating an unjust distribution in the gendered hierarchy of tasks, where male activities are valued and economically rewarded.⁷ Time and time again, women have performed both domestic duties as well as participated in some of "masculine" productive tasks that generate economic value. Women, partaking in both the professional and domestic spheres, are overworked and yet significantly underpaid.⁸

For instance, according to the Pew Research Center analysis on global median hour earnings, in 2022, American women earned an average of 82% of what men earned doing the same task. But beyond this, women in the context of their historical past continue to be overrepresented in lower-paying careers (nurses, teachers, cashiers) relative to their share of the overall workforce.⁹ This further contributes to the gender differences in pay and stems discriminatory practices. Both discrimination against women and male domination remain fundamental to understanding the intricacies of the wage gap. For over two centuries, women have collectively struggled to gain fundamental unalienable rights: a right to work, vote, freely express motherhood, as well as to gain equality in the family, workplace, and public realms.¹⁰

Gendered Labor in the Artisanal Industry

In this section, we delve into the history of the artisanal industry and seek to understand the implications of gendered labor. Artisanal techniques have long been cornerstones of culture and are ubiquitous in both rural and urban communities. Artisans are the experts in and of their craft and create useful and handcrafted products.

Economically, the term “artisan” is defined as one who is a small-scale producer of goods, owns their own production, and derives a profit from their craft. These artisans are taught techniques and skills and secrets that have been passed from one generation to the next and many of these skills take years to learn and decades to perfect.¹¹ Typically, in rural and indigenous communities, where artisanship prospered and continues to prosper, women have been involved in textile and handicraft production. It is estimated that 80% of all artisans are women.¹²

These female artisans generate income for their families, yet they face constraints when trying to get fiscally involved in the selling of their craft. They are unable to control the economics of the process, such as pricing, costing, and negotiation, which remain in male hands. These impediments affect these artisans as they deny them any control over their earnings. They are unable to allocate their profits to their desired investments or reinvest their earnings to bolster their own craft process and lives.¹³ Globally, artisanal women face different challenges, which are now coming to light. They are becoming aware of the cultural, social, and political circumstances which have created their experiences of oppression. They claim that “(they) are discriminated against one, because (they) are poor, second, because (they) are indigenous and because (they) are women”¹⁴

In fact, much history has been lost as female artisans have gone unmentioned in even European and western folklore and craft. Up until the late 20th century, historians had assumed that women had not played an integral role in the European markets and had been subjected to solely domestic responsibilities, yet recent research has revealed that women had significant roles in many European market economies.¹⁵

Though these early modern women were excluded from guilds, they would join their fathers, brothers, and husbands in learning craft and artisanal trade. Early Modern women took upon the role of dyers, shoemakers, and even tailors in major European hubs. Many women in Amsterdam, York, Belgium, and Germany produced thimble markers, pewter, and needles. By the 18th century, women's work grew increasingly concentrated in textile industries and a gendered division of labor had emerged. As the Europeans began outsourcing labor in the later 18th centuries, developing nations began to draw upon the labor formats of European Nations and formally employ women in the textile industry. Yet, as Western employers demanded western styles, traditional craft productions came to a halt, as well as long passed cultural techniques. These artisans now participated in low unskilled labor and lost their age-old techniques and traditions. They were no longer considered artisans; they had become factory workers.¹⁶

In the rural artisan segment, a gender imbalance is further aggravated. These under-educated women are constantly robbed of opportunities for any economic growth. Due to their domestic labor commitments, artisanal women are unable to contribute as much as their male counterparts. Furthermore, these deep-rooted gendered labor traditions inhibit men from participating in domestic responsibilities. Thus, the equal distribution of unpaid labor remains a rarity, as these women, especially in the unorganized sector, balance both domestic and public activities.¹⁷

Women in Artisanal Industry: Case Studies of India and Guatemala

In the following sections we study the stories of artisanal women in both India and Guatemala.

Case Study of India

It is crucial to examine the history of the Indian textile industry to gain a comprehensive understanding of the socio- economic and cultural aspects of gendered labor market dynamics in the Indian artisanal industry.

The Indian textile industry, over 5000 years old, is one of the oldest in the world. Historically known for its beautiful handmade fabrics, the very name 'India' was the shorthand for 'cotton' in ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. Yet, this rich cultural textile heritage was drastically altered during the British Colonial period. As post-industrial revolution Imperial Britain flooded Indian and global markets with cheaper machine-spun fabrics, yarn, and cloth, a stiff competition emerged against laborious and expensive hand-made textiles and goods.¹⁸ The traditional Indian textile and manufacturing industries were unable to compete and became severely hampered. As India began to wave its flag and gained independence in 1947, an immense revival of Indian nationalism, culture, and traditional jewelry and textiles emerged.

Today, India is internationally recognized as the largest producer of cotton and jute garments, and women comprise over 60% of their textile workforce. This number is striking as only 20% of all Indian women are employed, 39 million women compared to 361 million men.¹⁹ India has various strengths across the entirety of the value chain from fiber to yarn, and fabric to even apparel. The organized textile industry in India is characterized by the use of capital-intensive technology but there remains an active participation of unorganized rural and domestic segments.

My Personal Story

I feel a deep personal connection with the Indian artisan. The village of Ghata located about an hour away from the historic city of Jaipur is where I started my social impact for profit organization. This is a village with about 3000 people, of which 48% are women. About 50% of these women are of working age. The female literacy rate is less than 17%. These women are married very young, are socially subjugated by men, in an extremely rigid patriarchal community that is majorly male dominated. Almost 80% of these women belong to socially disadvantaged communities, officially recognized by the Indian government as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.²⁰

I first learned of this community back in June of 2020, after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women in this community supplemented their family's incomes by working in farms during harvest season and by creating small handicrafts using traditional embroidery and needlework techniques. Their crafts were primarily purchased by western tourists visiting the historical sites in Rajasthan.

With the onset of the pandemic, all commercial activity came to a standstill. The tourism industry dried up and there was no farming due to the stoppage of all supply chain. People had no savings and had lost all means of sustenance to the virus. Whereas many western governments were able to support their populations, the Indian government made no such commitments and failed to provide any special support to these individuals.

It was during this time that I learnt of them and wanted to do something to help them. I started JeeJi-Hood (Jeeji – means elder sister in Hindi), a grassroots level organization to help these women. In my own small way, I wanted to make a difference. These women were semi-skilled in a traditional craft, so all I needed to do is to find a market. As I wanted to keep things simple, I started with designing handbags using photoshop, PowerPoint and with numerous calls with suppliers, I was able to source the correct raw materials. I obtained a domain name, created an online presence, and quickly started selling bags online, in my school and local community.²¹

The objective was to enhance the agency of these women and create economic opportunities to help them gain financial freedom and some independence. However, when I began working with these women, I was exposed to another dimension of sociocultural complexities. These women expressed their enthusiasm at the opportunity to make money and gain recognition from men and elders in their community. I learnt that while their income was being used to put food on the table, schooling children, it was also being saved for their

daughters' marriage dowries. The dowry system further perpetuates the cycle of economic dependency through marriage as women are considered an economic burden: girl's families pay the groom's family for taking their daughter in marriage. I was deeply impacted by this dichotomy, where at one end these women dream of self-reliance, yet on other end are still participating in practices that curb their economic independence and portrays them as a burden. After the passing of the pandemic, I am continuing my work with these women and encouraging them to focus on enterprise, education, and the benefits of being self-reliant.

Similar narratives of women artisans exist all over the world. Now we will discover the complexities on the other side of the world, in Guatemala.

Guatemalan Comparative Study and Data

The labor market in Guatemala is characterized by unfair, unjust, and unequal relationships between genders. In fact, according to the ENEI (2013), in Guatemala a male labor force has participation of 83%, whilst the female population has a 40% participation rate. Most Guatemalan women, roughly 39% of the female labor force, work in commerce and partake in informal economic activities without government benefits or Social Security. Furthermore, of this total women's working population, about 7.2% of women work as household employees (maids, nannies, cleaners, or other caregivers) with more than 80% of indigenous women partaking in these careers.²²

These workers are not legally protected, they are often paid salaries below Guatemalan minimum wage, and they are not able to get government benefits or qualify for Social Security. In Guatemala one woman would earn 78% a man's wage, though this is an estimate, and the gaps grow whilst considering indigenous women in rural areas. Oftentimes, women's agricultural and farming labor is not compensated because it is regarded as part of men's income even though women devote nearly 6.1 hours of their day to unpaid labor and 7.5 hours to paid labor. While Guatemalan males only devote 2.6 hours to uncompensated labor, they devote 8.6 hours to paid labor. The average Guatemalan woman is underpaid and overworked.²³

Yet, this gender gap goes beyond work and pay, and remains in nearly all areas of Guatemalan life, impacting women's participation in both the informal formal economy, their exercise of political and social leadership, and their access to goods, resources, and services. Furthermore, gender discrimination is blatant. Particularly, female workers at Maquilas, Guatemalan Textile Factories, are formally employed, but their employment is unstable and scarcely regulated. International investors demand piecework and continue to violate human rights and labor regulations.

The quick pace of the work tires out the employees and these companies continue to increase the workload. It is nearly impossible to complete a job in eight hours and many of these women work 10, 12, or even more hours per day without receiving overtime pay. In addition, these Maquilas prohibit breaks, and access to restrooms is restricted during certain hours. As nobody cleans these restrooms, they are typically unkempt and unhygienic. The production facilities lack or provide insufficient quantities of pertinent equipment. Ventilation and illumination are inadequate. The employees are kept "awake" by playing loud music. Gloves and protective equipment for the mouth, nostrils, and ears are not provided. There is no potable water available. Women are subjected to verbal abuse, threats, and physical violence. Indigenous women endure the most. They are sometimes humiliated, sexually harassed, and even raped.²⁴

Despite this, many women tolerate these working conditions because they are impoverished and need the money to survive. In many cases, the women in question are the only ones in their family with a source of income, and it is possible to locate maquila jobs quickly. Therefore, families frequently exert pressure on these women to earn desperately needed money and care little about harsh labor conditions. In fact, with the onset of COVID-19, unemployment has worsened. According to the government document National Labor Policy 2012-2021, approximately 71% of women are unemployed. Thus, many women are willing to work in these precarious circumstances and tolerate violence.²⁵

A good reference in respect of this is work by Shabira A. Williamson, who had the opportunity to visit indigenous women in Guatemalan Maquilas. To Williamson, one worker shared that the unspoken motto of her community is “you work until you die” (Rosa, 2017, June 1, personal interview). As tasks are usually assigned based on gender, Williamson’s collaborators came to know themselves as women based on the tasks they were assigned from childhood. Most women reported having compulsory tasks to assist the family from very young ages (3-5), with the most common tasks being: preparing nixtamal for tortillas, selling tortillas or tamales, clothes washing, light field tasks such as sewing seed and harvesting, and sewing and weaving.²⁶ Usually, these tasks were carried out alongside their mothers and sisters, and by watching them and repeating their actions they learned how to be women within their communities.²⁷

When asked why and how they got into weaving, every woman Williamson interviewed stated that they learned it from the women in their families and they did so because it was mandatory to support their households. Yet, they also stated that it was their deep-rooted tradition that they had pride and joys for. Many of these Maquila workers used to be artisans, yet after Guatemala fell after the civil war, they were not able to produce and partake in private small-scale artisanry, as they were unable to charge rates that would provide for their families. But, there remain grassroots movements that are trying to help indigenous women and empower them and once again brace their age-old craft and halt their work in the Maquilas.²⁸

Grassroots Initiatives in India and Guatemala

There are several grass root initiatives that have sprung up in India. One organization “Producer-Owned Women Enterprises” (POWER) is supported by USAID and helps over 6,000 women participate in handicraft manufacturing. Their projects are being rolled out in several Indian states and assist in forming women run enterprises that will ensure a sustainable livelihood.²⁹ In contrast, there are other smaller organizations like Okhai and Trishul that provide online platforms to these artisans. There are also NGO’s like Dastaar that support handicrafts and support over 100,000 artisans in over 25 states promoting different traditional crafts, providing them platforms to sell their goods in craft fairs and organizing small community sales. The grassroot level is not limited only to economic aspects but also focuses on training, social support and financial education. Programs like Kalashala, a finishing school for artisans through a customized curriculum, designed specifically for practicing artisans and craftsperson’s.³⁰ Much like many organic Indian grassroot, JeeJi-Hood pushes for gender equality and empowerment of Indian tribal women. We are working towards the goal of financial independence, recognizing that craft-based work is frequently the first sense of financial independence for women artisans and often their only entry into a more formal workplace. It is vital to keep the grassroot level initiatives ongoing to continue the growth and sustenance of the artisanal community as it requires both domestic and international support.³¹

Similar to India, Guatemala has several grassroots initiatives that are supporting and helping female artisans. We will discover the history and foundations of one such organization called MayaWorks. This organization’s core belief is that women’s economic development contributes to community development. As a non-profit social enterprise this organization empowers indigenous women of Guatemala to attain economic security by providing markets for handcrafted goods, access to microcredit financing, and increased educational opportunities: enabling women to provide financial assistance to their families and actively participate in their own communities.

MayaWorks has established a market for the traditional Guatemalan crafts, enabling women to generate income without working in the unsafe and unregulated conditions of factories and Maquilas. Textile items, made by Maya artisans, are distributed through both retail and wholesale channels.

Be it India, Guatemala or on a global scale, numerous grassroot organizations work tirelessly to support and empower female artisans. These organizations aim to provide these artists with a reliable and sustainable income while equipping them with essential tools and skills. However, despite the significant impact of

these grassroots organizations on the lives of women, there are several other factors that play a role in determining the progress of this cause. One of the vital factors imperative for growth is a robust and actively engaged government policy.³²

Government Policies on Women in Artisanal Industry

Case of India

India's government's recent policies and initiatives have emphasized the importance of self-reliance, rural employment especially pertaining to women. Some of these policies are detailed below.

Dating back to the First Five-Year Plan launched by the government over 70 years and now the current thirteenth five-year plan, the Indian Government has had multiple policies that have evolved with time, but they have been aimed at promoting the unorganized handicraft sector and providing employment for women. The importance of the MMES (mid-market enterprises) plays in generating rural employment and their significance is undeniable. With over 200 million people involved in this sector the responsibility for craft planning in India has vested primarily in the Offices of the Development Commissioners for Handicrafts and Handlooms. As the primary artisan community is based in the rural part of India: ministry of rural development also has some initiatives that are very important, especially with over 50% of the artisan population being women. It is critical to have policies that aim at giving opportunities to women.³³

Some of key policies aim at providing opportunities to women are: Swayam: Strengthening Women's institutions for Agency and Empowerment (SWAYAM) for the odds Mission NRLM: DAY (Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana) The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is one of India's largest livelihoods programs, supported by the national government and the World Bank through the Ministry of Rural Development. Over 50 million women have been mobilized as a result of this policy. It has enormous promise for improving women's socioeconomic empowerment through the formation of self-help groups (SHGs) and rural poor institutions. By investing in women's arts and craft abilities, these platforms provide income opportunities and livelihood support services. This program only works with rural women, and the mission's dedication to recognizing women's voices and being responsive to their needs and goals has been key to its success. Through women's collectivization, this strategy has been entrenched across all DAY-NRLM activities with the purpose of improving women's agency, identity, well-being, and solidarity.³⁴

ODOP policy: formally known as One District One Product, was launched in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Providing assistance to the unstructured seasonal, family-based, decentralized, labor-intensive cottage industry, the ODOP policy includes efforts aimed specifically towards empowering women. The purpose is to assist local artisans and provide access to a global marketplace that connects both sellers and buyers by grouping skills and items. The purpose is to help develop economic freedom, promote artisan items, and provide a world-wide platform to artisans via marketing, branding, and simple credit through this scheme The main goal is to promote the unique craft skills and techniques at the district level.³⁵

Another significant program is the Atma Nirbhar Bharat program. It aims to provide capital, training, and financing to women entrepreneurs through the promotion of women-oriented handicraft. The program includes multiple initiatives under smaller government subsidies. For example, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), which strives to establish sustainable self-employment. For the first time in the country, a government body is providing livelihood assistance to disadvantaged people afflicted by the pandemic.³⁶ KVIC placed a strong emphasis on local manufacturing and self-employment in order to help struggling families. Under the PMEGP (prime minister's employment generation program), a huge number of teenagers, women, and troubled persons from the weakest sections of society were encouraged to engage in self-employment activities. As a result, these new entrepreneurs will not only be able to support themselves financially, but they will also be able to support many other families by hiring them in their new manufacturing units.³⁷

CCI (Craft council of India) Scholarship Program: A generation in the artisan world evaluates survival—family survival and craft skill survival. Ability is lost without practice and transmission. Children of artists who retain craft tradition often leave the craft due to economic uncertainties. CCI Scholarships offer craftspeople and their children with education, training, and exposure to help them fulfill market demands. While CCI undoubtedly supports GenNext to flourish in the traditions of its forefathers, the Council also aims to offer artisans' children with the same growth and opportunity that all children deserve. This approach elevates the individual, the society, and craftsmanship by making following traditions a deliberate choice for a young person rather than a caste or communal responsibility. Female children, women artisans, and children from different cultures who have been exposed to have a demonstrated aptitude for craft but do not come from hereditary families receive special attention.³⁸

Despite many government measures, the Indian rural women's artistic community battles for resources and remains impoverished. Overcoming the long-standing societal stigma and navigating the bureaucracy is difficult. Monitoring, licensing, and taxation decisions are extremely difficult for these unskilled women artisans to make, and they usually refuse to participate due to policy intimidation. The government's assistance programs demonstrate a failure to recognize the harsh ground realities. Many women end up operating unregistered due to historically influenced legal constraints as well as limited social privileges.

Rural artisanal women have little to no authority or influence when it comes to actively participating in crucial business or financial decision-making processes due to cultural and social factors. As a result, women's perspectives, needs, ideas, and ability to contribute to solutions at both the policy and grass-roots levels are frequently neglected. Women's groups and women leaders who represent women must continue to advocate and participate more in policymaking. They play a critical role and the need to strengthen ties between the crafts sector and other national initiatives such as the Knowledge Commission, the National Mission on Skills. They need to bring the realities of their lives to the forefront and have an impact on the development of effective policies.

Case of Guatemala

While Guatemala holds regular elections, its power to influence the citizens in areas of public policy and economic and social welfare is minimal. Organized crime and corruption both within the government and in the social environs has taken the focus away from economic empowerment towards violence mitigation. Violence and criminal extortion schemes pose serious problems, and victims have little recourse to justice. Journalists, activists, and public officials who confront crime, corruption, and other sensitive issues risk attack. The issues of violence against women are on rise and though the Government is addressing this issue, there is still little progress being made.³⁹

In 2008, the Congress passed a law against femicide (the killing of women). There are 9.7 murders for every 100,000 women. In 2012, the government established a joint task force for crimes against women. With women having limited social rights and in wake of violence backdrop they have minimal opportunity to be a part in social politics and policy making.

Hence this lack of structured policy initiatives from their administrations and the governments, some international governments and organizations like World bank, IMF, and USAID and have taken initiatives to support these female Guatemalan artisans. To help women secure a more meaningful role in policymaking, USAID has supported municipal directorates for women (DMM) to help the advancement of women's participation in community and municipal committees, strengthening their leadership role in the formulation of political, economic, cultural and social proposals to be funded by local municipalities. DMMs also promote dialogue between women's organizations and municipalities to work on municipal equity policies and help strengthen the role of women's organizations. Whilst, in India the government leads the policy and artisan reform, due to the state of the Guatemalan government, they rely on UN funding.⁴⁰

To promote local economic development amongst women, USAID provides vocational education, expanded market access for women-owned enterprises, business development services, and access to agricultural technology. The USAID also supports Guatemalan the justice and security sector to increase and improve services to victims of gender-based violence and supports communities to develop and implement violence prevention plans that include gender-based violence prevention. Moreover, they work to strengthen the civic and political participation of women so that they have a more prominent voice in decision-making, improved access to public services, and equal access to economic opportunities.⁴¹

Conclusion

We have shed light on histories, uncovered stories, understood policy and recognized how Grassroots organizations make an impact on lives of female artisans in India and Guatemala. In our journey, we have found that both nations have prospering grassroots organizations with similar actions and goals that take steps towards fostering equity and empowerment for rural artisans. Yet, we have also discovered that whilst India's government is taking the initiative to tackle women's problems in the artisanal industries, Guatemala's current government does not share that mandate; all policy initiatives are initiated by USAID.

To advocate for the advancement and empowerment of women artisans, there is a continuous need to engage in legislative advocacy efforts. Elected governments should have the mandate, will and power to work for the development of these women. Much can be achieved by government policy as shown by the government of India. Yet, one cannot ignore the impact of grassroots level work done at the local level. One can contribute to the growth and development of these women by providing opportunities and support to small businesses and/or grassroots organizations. With today's technology it is very easy to create global links and effect global commerce. It's easier today to find platforms and opportunities for connecting these indigenous artisans to the global consumers. All that is truly needed is the will and a little investment of time and money.

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