

IMPACT OF DISTURBANCES ON CRICKET BAT MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY IN KASHMIR VALLEY

Dr. Imtiyaz-ul- Haq*

Bilal Ahmad Dar**

Irfan Ahmad Thoker**

Abstract

One of the most important wood based industry in Kashmir valley is Cricket bat industry. The origin of this industry is supposed to be from Sialkot Pakistan. The industry has a great potential of providing employment opportunities to thousands of people in the valley. The industry has an important role in earning foreign exchange, creating jobs and are expected to play an important role in future development of the economy. The industry manufactures cricket bats for both soft and leather balls under the brand names and these products have a market in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Rajasthan etc. There are at least 300 big and small manufacturing units of cricket bats in the valley. Each unit manufactures on an average 25000 bats per annum at a price ranging from Rs 100-2000 per bat. The annual turnover of the industry is Rs 10 crore. The industry exports nearly thousands of finished and semi finished cricket bats. The industry records of sound sales and it has been increasing with the passage of time. In the year 2003-04, total sales were Rs 55 lakh and in year 2008-2009 the total sales has elevated to about Rs 105 lakh approximately. Due to the political unrest from last two years (2009-2010) in the valley the sales has declined to Rs 80 lakh. The overall business has taken a nosedive due to unrest. Before protest each manufacturing unit manufactures on an average 200 bats daily but the output has fallen to 50 pieces. The main focus of the paper is to analyze the impact of disturbances on the production and sales of cricket bats in the valley.

Key words; Cricket bats, Political unrest, Protest. Manufacturing unit, Disturbances

* Sr. Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Kashmir, Srinagar

** Research Scholars, Department of Economics, University of Kashmir, Srinagar

Introduction

The fast economic development everywhere has been made possible essentially due to rapid industrialization. As a matter of fact, the essential criteria that are being used to distinguish a developed economy from an underdeveloped one relate to the proportion of work force engaged in industrial activity and the proportion of national output originating in the industrial sector. No wonder that not much distinction is made between the two terms i.e industrialization and economic development and both are used interchangeably. The important factors which favour rapid industrialization as a means to fast economic growth are; higher productivity of labour than in agriculture, more easy availability of industrial surplus for investment. The industrial sector contributes significantly to the achievement of a self sustaining economy with continued higher 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 arising out of remoteness, poor connectivity, poor infrastructure, shallow markets and most important political uncertainties and unrests. More ever the natural factors are more conducive for many small and medium enterprises especially cricket bat manufacturing industry, handicrafts etc. Cricket bat industry is considered as one of the most important small scale industrial units, it provides employment to thousands of unemployed youths in the state especially in the valley of Kashmir. Thousands of boys, girls, men and women wrap their palms around the handle of willow carved from the trees of the valley and get their livelihood.

The main objective of the study is; to analyze the impact of political unrest, hartals and conflict on the cricket bat manufacturing industry in the Kashmir Valley.

Methodology

The study is largely based on secondary data. The secondary data related to impact of political unrest, disturbances, hartals and conflict on cricket bat industry has been collected from District Industries Centers and Directorate of Industries and Commerce J and K Government. Besides this, the sources of secondary data include Diagnostic Study Report of Cricket bat Cluster, District Industries Centre, Anantnag as well as papers, magazines, journals etc. The data obtained from the above sources has been analyzed using simple average and ordinary least square techniques (OLS).

Cricket Bat Industry

One of the most important wood based industry in Kashmir valley is Cricket Bat Industry. The industry in Kashmir has its roots in Sialkot, Pakistan. When India got partitioned in 1947, many skilled craftsmen migrated to some states of India, where the Sports Goods Industry got established, which later expanded to different areas of the Country- State of Jammu and Kashmir is being one of them. The industry is very famous in the Kashmir Valley. Over the past few years, the cricket bat industry in Kashmir has experienced an incredible growth and today it has secured a very prominent place in the state economy. In terms of its immense potential in providing employment opportunities to many people, the industry also has growing prospects of revenue generation through increased exports.

The industry with it's around 300 small and big manufacturing units, provides direct and indirect employment to hundreds and thousands of people in the valley and is estimated to have an annual turnover of Rs 10 crore. The industry, a leading manufacturer of world class cricket bats was found in the year 1940. The products manufactured at the time of inception were hockey bends, badminton and tennis curves which at present produces only cricket bats. It is well known fact that bat industry in Kashmir produces most bats in the country. It is one of the biggest industries and perhaps most of the bats seen on cricket pitches came from small towns of Anantnag and Pulwama Districts of the Kashmir valley. The industry produces an estimated 500000 bats of International standard annually at a price ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 2000 per bat. In order to increase the production, sales, employment and exports, the industry has to attain following objectives;

- To manufacture world class cricket bats
- To keep upgrading skills to satisfy customers
- To work towards producing better quality of willow
- To increase production of cricket bats by 15% every year
- To get into international market

Present product line and main markets

The industry manufactures bats for soft and leather balls under the brand names the products have a market in Maharashtra, Gujrat, Utter Pradesh, Madya Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Rajasthan. Generally Kashmir willow bats are preferred by players of Sub-Continent.

Traditional methods are still used by the industry established in Kashmir, whereby bats are shaped by hands and eye measurements, combining traditional tools with modern technology, the industry has a very strong back up of skilled laborers. The industry also has machines which are used for manufacturing purposes like cutting, planning, smoothing blades and pressing. Hence the industry has both traditional as well as modern technology which enables it to deliver world class products.

Conflict, disturbances and cricket bat industry

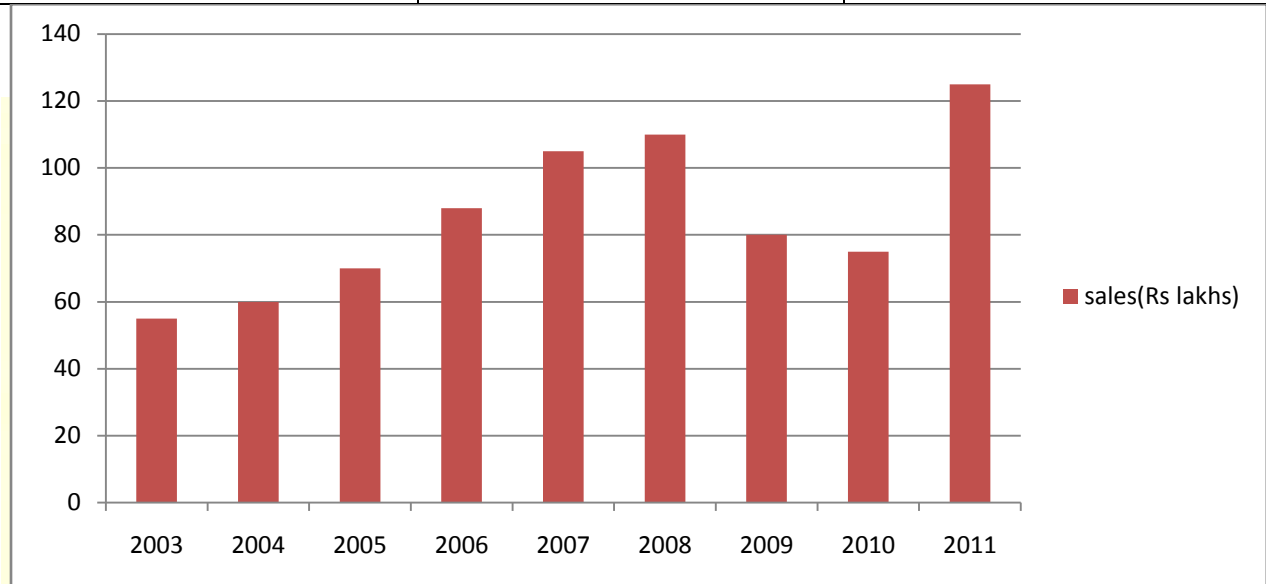
Sangam, some 40km from Srinagar, beneath the shade of a towering kashmiri willow, lines of poplar and mulbary trees, is a cricket bat paradise. Beyond the industrial grime of the capital and the pockets of sludge and environmentally unfriendly filth that is the business of any city's periphery; the main through fare leads you to a calmer repository of cricket bat industry. The industry in Kashmir forms an important part of economic life of the people. The industry plays an important role for providing bread and butter to thousands of people in the valley. Any type of economic activity whether production, consumption, sales and investment needs suitable environment i.e there should be peace. Disturbances, bandh, hartals, conflicts have negative impact on the development process. Kashmir's cricket bat makers suffer a mid violent. The droves of Indian tourists would stop by shops in Halmuiia, Sangam, and Sether etc where skilled craftsmen carve out bats of all sizes from locally grown willow.

The bat industry suffered directly as well as indirectly due to the mid violence. Before the trouble, Indian traders used to visit the bat industry in kashmir and order in bulks, but due to disturbances in 2009-10 no one came. Some orders are made through telephone, but even if there are orders, people are finding it difficult to transport the goods outside, as majority of Indian truckers are avoiding Kashmir. The production as well as sales of cricket bats has declined due to the disturbances in the last few years. The industry registered slow growth in sales. Following table I shows the sales and growth rate of cricket bat manufacturing industry in Kashmir in different years.

Table I; Sales of Cricket bats over the period 2003-2011

Year	Sales (Rs lakhs)	Growth rate
2003	55	-
2004	60	9.09
2005	70	16.66

2006	88	25.71
2007	105	19.31
2008	110	4.76
2009	80	-27.27
2010	75	-6.25
2011	125	66.66



Source:-Diagnostic study report of cricket bat cluster in Kashmir

It is evident from the above table and diagram that the industry registered sound sales and has been increasing with the passage of time. In the year 2003, the total sales were Rs 55 lakh. With the increase in the fame of cricket and rush of tourists in the valley, sales have increased to Rs 110 lakh in 2008. This shows the the industry in the valley has a bright future. But, due to the political unrest, disturbances etc. the production as well as sales has declined, in 2009 sales has declined to Rs 80 lakh. A complete unrest, strikes and hartals in 2010 had cast a negative effect on the sale of cricket bats in the valley i.e the sales has declined to only 75 lakh Rs. The growth rate in terms of sales was negative in these two years. Therefore it is evident that the Kashmir cricket bat makers suffer amid violent. Before the disturbances, Indian traders used to visit the bat manufacturers and order in bulk, but due to the continuous disturbances in 2009-10, no one came to buy their products. So those people who depend on this industry suffer very badly. This directly or indirectly affects their living standards.

Before the protest, each manufacturing unit manufactures about 200 bats per day but the output has fallen to Only 50 bats in 2009-10. If the unrest and disturbances were like to go this, the

Kashmir's famed cricket bat industry may soon call it a day that it will collapse and hundreds and thousands of people in the valley become jobless and become unable to meet their basic necessities. It is obvious that the industry provides employment to an estimated 15000 Kashmir's. The industry adds an estimated 500000 bats to the Indian and other markets each year. Thousands of men, women, boys and girls work in the industry and get their livelihood.



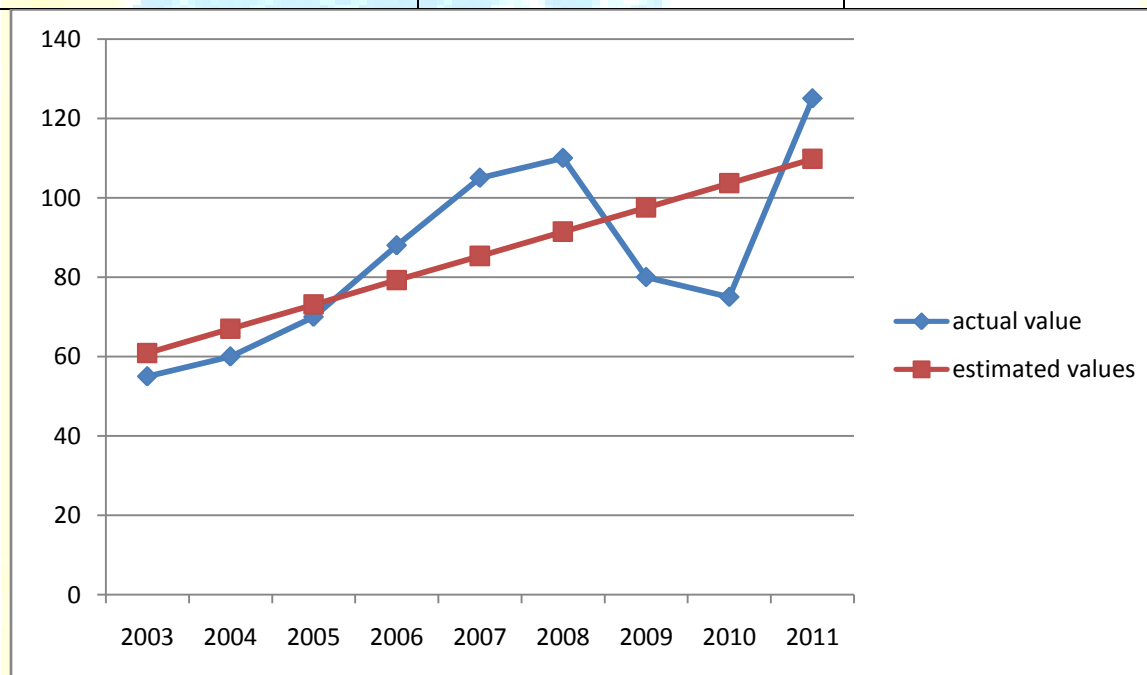
Findings

The fortunes of the cricket bat industry in Kashmir are dependent upon a large political game. The industry produces bats ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 2000 per bat, is a living and breathing symbol of the more than two decade old conflict. A long lockdown in 2010- in response to demonstrations that led to a intermittent curfew, bandh etc saw the entire industry shut down for the summer. The production, sales and employment was hit badly. The workers are not working and with everything on lockdown, bats could not manufacture as per usual. As a result there is a loss of 50 to 70 percent of sales in the unrest of 2010. Usually in the summer, about 40000 bats a month are exported to other states of India, with the lock down the exports has declined to only 20000. The turmoil had badly ruined the business of bat manufacturers in the valley of Kashmir.

In the current study the available data related to sales of cricket bat in different time period were projected to obtain a trend line by the method of OLS. So as to obtain the value of intercept and slope in the equation $y = a + bx$, the detail of available data is $Y = \text{sales}$ and $x = \text{years}$, where y represents sales and x represents years. The linear trend $y = 85.33 + 6.11x$ depicts that in each year, there is an increase of Rs 6.11 lakh of sales. There cricket bat industry is economically profitable enterprise; it leads to the improvements in the living standards of the people. Following table II shows the actual and estimated sales of cricket bat industry in different years.

Table II ; Estimated sales of Cricket Bats since 2003 onwards

Year	Actual values(y)	Estimated values(\hat{y})
2003	55	60.89
2004	60	67.00
2005	70	73.11
2006	88	79.25
2007	105	85.33
2008	110	91.44
2009	80	97.55
2010	75	103.66
2011	125	109.77
Total	768	768



It is evident from the above table and figure that the sale of cricket bats has been increased more rapidly up to the year 2008. In 2009-10, due to the political unrest in the valley, the sales has decline. It is also clear that the actual sales were less than estimated sales ie in 2009, estimated sale was Rs 97.55 lakh, this was not achieved, it remains only Rs 80 lakh, as well as in 2010, estimated sale was Rs 103.66 lakh, but unfortunately due to disturbances, the sale was only Rs

75 lakh. In 2011, the sale of cricket bats has touched the sky. The reasons behind the increase are; political stability, rush of more and more tourists in the valley and cricket world cup.

Organizing cricket bat manufacturing industry in the Kashmir valley on modern line is a challenging task which needs prior attention of the Government ie Govt. should;

- Adopt legislative measures to curb exports or smuggling of willow cleft to the neighboring states.
- Social incentives for bat industry for attracting fresh investment.
- Reduction in the trade restrictions and improvement for the transformation of production patterns and processes.
- There should be no hartals, curfews and other political disturbances.

Conclusion

Cricket bat industry in Kashmir has an incredible and fantastic potential of absorbing thousands and thousands of unemployed youth. The industry has also a great potential of exporting its products not only with in the domestic domain but also with rest of the world especially with South East Asian Countries like Pakistan, Afganstan, Bangladesh, Sri lanka, who are most lovers of cricket bats, because the game cricket is played mostly in these countries. The bat industry in the valley of Kashmir will jump into the national and international arena and create a position for the industry in international market. Therefore it is need of an hour both at State and Central level to open up trade ties with neighboring countries, this will boost the industries in kashmir especially bat industry therefore economic development will take place without any hindrance.

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