

Earning Isparta Carpet Business To The Local Economy Again And Ensuring Its Sustainability By Revising It

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Abstract

Hand-woven carpet, one of the symbols of Isparta has lost its popularity in the sense of business, employment, socio-cultural and economic aspects. In 1960s the carpet industry which provided a great amount of income especially in local areas, and then in the overall city

was pushed out of the market by failing to compete due to prevailing of machine-woven carpets and their being much more cheaper.

Isparta hand-woven carpet is known as winter-time carpets in respect of its technical properties. Among the patterns of the Isparta hand-woven carpet whose weaving woof and warp thread are made of cotton and loops are made of wool, plant motifs stand out. Moreover, weaving thickness (weaving quality) is low because wool knits are thick; that is, the number of loops in each decimeter is limited. Motifs include rougher details, so figures cannot be understood. It is necessary to renew the Isparta hand-made carpets that are needed to be revised in the sense of materials (using tinsel strings made of wool, golden and silver) and figures in order to have the business regained the Isparta hand-woven carpet industry.

In this study, the revitalization of Isparta hand-woven carpet industry and its sustainability have been handled. SWOT analysis was done regarding this purpose. As a result of SWOT analysis, the strong and poor sides, and the opportunities and threatening factors of Isparta hand-woven carpet industry have been found out.

Keywords: Hand-woven carpets, Sustainable development, SWOT analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Isparta has been an important carpet production centre from the past till present. In Isparta, usually family facilities or people that weave carpets as a source of income usually conduct hand-woven carpet manufacture. Today, it is rather hard to gain healthy data about the employment rate and production amount of hand-woven carpet sector in Isparta. To what extent the current data reflects the truth is also unknown.

Isparta hand-woven carpet business is facing serious problems and a risk of disappearing in recent years. Production has decreased and nearly come to a halt. The fact that the enterprises have maintained a production concept, which is closed to the demand in the world, has been influential in coming to this point. Especially not keeping pace with the fashion trends concerning carpet designs and quality, not indulging in innovation or advertisement activities or not sparing enough afford for them, lack of coordination and cooperation among the business enterprises that make up the sector have lead the sector to its current troublesome situation.

In our point of view, Isparta hand-woven carpet sector, which has a deeply rooted infrastructure, can be handled and organized again in the frame of sustainable development plans. As a result, several carpet looms, which are not in use currently, can start operating again for production, knowledge accumulation on carpet art which is about to be forgotten would be brought into use and transformed to future generations (Bariřta, 1994: 53).

The purpose of this study is determining the recent problems of the sector, providing recommendations about the work that should be done in order to increase the competitive capacity in the national and international levels and revisions.

While conducting the study, secondary sources relating to Isparta hand-woven carpet tradition were examined, face-to-face interviews with the representatives of the sector were organized and the problems were detected. As an outcome of the interviews, there was a consensus on the fact that the sector is declining and production is about to stop. Solutions were recommended together.

2.HISTORICAL DEVELOPEMENT OF ISPARTA HAND-WOVEN CARPETS

“Carpet and rug are handicrafts that are integrated with Turkish history and culture and they enable people to reflect their emotions, souls, thoughts and inner worlds to the designs and colors (Bilgin, Demir, 2008:63). Carpet and rug have an important place in the lives on Turkish communities since the nomadic period. Hand-woven carpet sector has flourished during the Seljuk era, the period of principalities and Ottoman Empire and reached the top point in 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. (Türelı et al., 2006).

Turkmen clans* residing in and around Isparta are known for their delicate carpet weaving. The carpets weaved during the period of Yamut (Hamitoğulları) principality belonging to Oghuz Tribes which migrated to Anatolia from the Seljuk Oghuz territories and settled to Isparta and around are named Yamut carpets. Thus, we may say that Yamutoğulları principality is the first group to have a broad knowledge of carpet weaving and develop this sector in and around Isparta with the name of Yamut carpets (Sakarya, 1992:540).

Between the years 1872–1875, during the period in which Eyüplü Ali Rıza Efendi was the governor of Isparta, first Girls High School (Isparta Kız Rüştıyesi) was established in 1872, and weaving trainings started in the additional building in front of the Girls High School after bringing master trainers from Manisa (Küçükerman, 1990:133). Those years were definitely important years for the emergence of Isparta carpets. We see that the British monopolized the carpet sector in 1880s on every level from the manufacture of the carpet yarn to the exportation of the carpets. Those incidents have prepared the base for the East Carpets Campaign on the following years (Türelı, et al., 2006). Thanks to the company which was founded between the years 1890-1891, during the period of Governor Zihni Pasha, carpet weaving expanded to villages (Böcüzade, 1983:252). During this period carpet weaving was thought to women in Isparta Girls High School and the number of women willing to learn this art increased (Küçükerman, 1990: 135). Dr. Badosaki and Etreli Zade Mehmet Efendi founded special looms, design and dye houses and carried this art forward (Böcüzade,1983: 252). During 1908, Isparta hand-woven carpets were considered among the most quality carpets. Isparta carpet was weaved by tying 22x28 knots per dm² and 24x32 knots per dm² and was in demand of European Market (Temurçin, 2004:82). The years 1912–1918 are quite important for Isparta carpet sector. Previously the carpet was weaved by Turkish women but traded by Greeks and during those years attempts to help Turkish people to make them trade their carpets started. “The fact that there were more than 10.000 carpet looms in Isparta city center shows that in nearly every household there was at least one carpet loom.” (Kayıpmaz, 2002). In 1926 first worst factory was established in Isparta to meet the carpet yarn demand of the district. In 1943 the factory joined the Sümerbank Foundation under the name of ‘Isparta Worst and Carpet Weaving Facility. In 1989 it was renamed as Sümerbank Holding A.Ş. Sümerhalı, Halıcılık El Sanatları ve Ticaret A.Ş. (Sümerbank Holding Inc. Sumercarpet, Carpet weaving Handicrafts and Trade Inc.) (Sakarya, 1992: 544). Sümerhalı has been the leader of hand-woven carpet production in the region for long years and determined the carpet production and trade.

Until 1980s, the most important activity in the workshops or households was carpet weaving. In the following years, in spite of the establishment of the biggest and only carpet market (bazaar), the economical value and thereby the market value of the hand-weaved carpets

* Melli, Sarıkeçili, Saçıkaraı, Karahacıı, Horzumlu, Tüngüşlü, Eskiörük, Honamıı, Karakoyunlu, Fettahlı

decreased and machine-woven carpets slowly started taking their place. As a consequence of this, there was a substantial decrease both in hand-woven carpet sector and in the number of people performing this art.

3.CHARACTERISTICS OF ISPARTA HAND-WOVEN CARPETS

Isparta hand-woven carpet is a kind of carpet, which has a low weaving density, and wool weft, warp, cotton and knots. Its designs are in herbal forms. As the weaving density quality is low, they have indelicate details. Their colors are in pastel shades. Concerning the designs of Isparta hand-woven carpets, usually herbal motives such as rose, bouquet, sprig, flower and leaf are placed in corner-centre and scatter styles. These designs are named according to their composition styles such as Çelenkli (Chaplet), Saksılı (Vase), Kandahar, Balçiçek (Honey flower), Beşir, Şamdanlı (Candelabra), Kıvrımlı (Wiggly), Goncalı (Rosebud), Goblen, Elvan (Coloured), Davraz, Köşegöbek (centre-cornered), Üzümlü (Grape), Köşegöbek Zemin (Centre-cornered ground), Serpmeli (Scattered), Köşegöbek Serpmeli (Centre-corner scattered), Süpürgeli (Whisk), Saat Kapağı (Clock Lid), Karpuzlu (Water Melon), Kuşlu (Bird) Gülistan (Rose Garden), Güllü (Roze). Apart from these some special designs for the wall rugs are also available. Those design compositions include the scenes (Istanbul Bosphorus, city walls, Venice etc), mosques (with five minarets, four minarets), writings (Hat examples), animal figures (partridge, peacock, lion) and coins. Those designs are colored in navy blue, copper, pink, yellow, green, beige, white, brown, musk, glass-green blue, black and their shades.

Isparta carpets have been certified by TSE as 26x33 Isparta Super, 25x31 Isparta I, 24x30 Isparta II, 24x28 Isparta III, and 38x38 Isparta thin. For those carpets, Iranian knotting is used which is locally known as single knot or open knot. Carpets have been named differently according to their sizes: paspas (door mat) (40x40) (50x50), seccade (prayer rug) (80x120), divan (sofa cloth) (50x150), karyola (bed cloth) (120x220), yolluk (hall rug) (85x235), kelle (head) (200x300), taban (floor).

4.SWOT ANALYSIS OF ISPARTA HAND-WOVEN CARPETS

“SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis is a procedure which includes analyzing the facilities in terms of the external factors (opportunities, threats: OT) and internal factors (strengths, weaknesses: SW) of their current conditions.”(Yumuk, İnan, 2005:181).

In this section of the study a SWOT analysis of Isparta hand-woven carpet sector was conducted. By SWOT analysis we tried to manifest the strong sides (external opportunities and advantages); weak sides (technology, finance and market based elements that prevent reaching the targets); opportunities (advantageous terms offered to the sector by external environment, environmental developments) and threats (environmental problems that emerge in reaching the targets) of Isparta hand-woven carpet sector.

Strong Sides of Isparta Hand-woven Carpet Sector:

Knowledge accumulation in hand-woven carpet production (the number of manufacturing companies is 31.) (Ölmez, 2006:22).

- Easy raw material supply.

- Existence of factories which can start production (there are 4 worst factories) (Ölmez, 2006:23).
- Existence of qualified work force and its eligibility. (According to 1996 Chamber of Commerce data, the number of weavers is 35.000) (Ölmez,2006)
- High number of looms (According to 1996 Chamber of Commerce data, the number of looms is 20.000) (Ölmez, 2006:12).
- Existence of a carpet bazaar.
- Isparta hand-woven carpet has no hazardous effects on the human health as it is produced using natural material.
- Hand-woven carpet production causes no pollution.
- Incombustibility feature as wool does not catch fire easily.
- It absorbs the electricity on the human body due to the fact that wool prevents static electricity.

Weak Sides of Isparta Hand-woven Carpet Sector:

- Carpet weaving is not seen as a profession (it is considered by many as an activity of women which provides additional income)
- Lack of adequate information about the External Market.
- Exportation is rather limited.
- Facilities do not possess ISO 9000 quality certificate.
- The carpets produced are not fashionable.
- There is no effort for manufacturing quality products.
- Facilities do not constantly indulge in quality improvement activities.
- The desired quality cannot be managed with the production in households, standardization cannot be maintained and the quality cannot be controlled
- Small-scaled facilities form the majority and their costs are quite high.
- Absence of workshop-type manufacture.
- Facilities operate with minimum labor force and employees complain about this issue.
- Lack of mass production
- Lack of team work and cooperation
- Lack of a sectoral unity.
- Lack of an authorized body to coordinate the corporations in carpet sector
- ‘Isparta Rose Carpet Culture and Tourism Festival’ organized in the Isparta city centre every year is rather in a street fair mood which is quite far from the expectations.

Threats of Isparta Hand-woven carpet sector:

- A strong competition.
- High prices of hand-woven carpets compared to machine-made ones.
- Machine-made carpets are cheap and there are various design alternatives.
- Decrease in the sales both to local and foreign tourists.
- No brandization.
- Manufacturers usually have to supply the raw-materials and semi-finished products from uncertified (not possessing ISO 9000 certificate) facilities.
- Change in the consumer preferences.
- Internal market narrows continuously, and machine-made carpets are in demand.
- The negative public opinion about Isparta hand-woven carpets in terms of their high fluff length and indelicate appearance.

- They do not fit the modern furniture designs.
- House workshops are forced to close down as apartment buildings increase.

Opportunities of Isparta Hand-woven Carpet Sector:

- There is expertise customs in Isparta.
- There are villages manufacturing carpets in the region.
- There is an airport.
- There is railway.
- There are Carpet, Rug and Old Fabrics Designs- Handicraft Programs in Süleyman Demirel University
- It is close to touristic regions.
- Products manufactured using natural materials are in higher demand nowadays.

5.CONCLUSION

Isparta is an important centre of Turkish hand-woven carpet art. However, in recent years, Isparta hand-woven carpet sector has declined considerably. The pace of this decline could not be decreased although there is adequate substructure and knowledge accumulation in Isparta about hand-woven carpets.

Isparta hand-woven carpet business has to increase the quality of the manufactured carpets and decrease the cost in order to be able to operate and compete in the local and international sectors. People who are in the hand-woven carpet sector in Isparta should see the cost factors they need to deal with in order to reach high quality. This assessment would show them their opportunities and make them more powerful in the sector they are operating.

There is a need for revision in carpet designs and quality as well as determination of the substructure policies. In this regard, carpet manufacturers in the region should be brought together with an aggregation project and KOSGEB's support should be taken at this point. The units¹⁵, which form this aggregation, should complement each other and operate in a harmony. What's more, the units of the aggregation can be brought together under one single facility and this can be helpful in sharing the facility costs and controlling the production costs. A selected leader corporation should intervene in the problems that may occur or have already occurred on time. Consultancy services should be provided to the units, which form the aggregation, consciousness concerning designs, patenting and brandization should be developed, innovative designs should be adopted and applied. A supply chain and cooperative structure should be formed (Craftsman's Association Report, 2008:166).

It must be ensured that consumers purchase carpets consciously and gain high benefit from the carpets they have purchased. Touristic identities (carpet, rose) of Isparta and the surrounding region should be demonstrated and a local and provincial advertising and

¹⁵ Aggregation, is an organization model in which enterprises that operate in the same region, business line and value chain, having a cooperation with each other but also a competition among each other, and having a commercial relation and the Corporations that support them (universities, public institutions, research institutions, Professional unions, technology and innovation centers, banks, insurance companies, logistics firms etc) league together.

marketing understanding should be adopted. Carpet workshops and villages should be opened for tourism; this way, tourists can participate in the designing and weaving processes and this may encourage them to purchase the carpets as well as forming an emotional connection and ensuring remembrance.

Isparta should be brought forward by its hand-woven carpets, tourism and advertisement, and the city should become a brand with its carpets. Just as the consolidation of Paris with love, Rio with entertainment, and New York with energy (Atesoglu et al. 2009:731), Isparta can consolidate with carpet. In order to manage this, Isparta hand-woven carpet should be advertised and accepted to the world. The carpets should also be enriched in inimitable characteristics. Isparta Museum should be brought to the agenda for re-organizing it as Isparta Carpet Museum. Carpet enterprises should possess ISO 9000 certificate. "As ISO 9000 certified enterprises, they should follow-up with the developments on quality and apply quality cost reportage and quality cost system, which is the figural reflected dimensions of the quality activities, in order to survive in the dense competition (Yumuk, İnan, 2005:184)."

An ecological carpet bazaar can be established. An international carpet fair can be organized. Isparta can be made an attraction centre by advertising its cultural characteristics and the natural products manufactured in the city. A business centre in which old carpets are repaired can be established. This way, hand-woven carpet manufacturers may have a chance to increase their market shares over time upon managing an increase in the quality and modernizing.

In order to ensure sustainable development on the local level, human health friendly production should be maintained and continued and knowledge about healthy natural products should be transmitted to future generations. Society should be made more aware concerning the production and consumption of natural products.

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