

MAGIC OF GIFTED HANDS: EMPOWERING HANDICRAFT ARTISANS

- Handicraft is rightly described as craft of the people and in India it is not just an industry but is the aesthetic expression of the artisans.
- The **definition of handicrafts** as per Honorable Supreme Court in **Louis Shoppe judgment** decided in 1995 says *“it must be predominantly made by hand. It does not matter if some machinery is also used in the process. It must be graced with visual appeal in the matter of ornamentation or inlay work or some similar work lending it an element of artistic improvement. Such orientation must be of a substantial nature and not a mere pretence”*.

Importance:

- It provides **employment** to a vast segment of craftspersons in rural and semi urban areas.
- It generates **substantial foreign exchange** for the country, while **preserving its cultural heritage**.
- Handicrafts have great potential, as they hold the key for sustaining not only the existing set of millions of artisans spread over the length and breadth of the country, but also for the increasingly large number of new entrants in the crafts activity.
- 56% of the artisans are female.
- In non-agricultural or lean seasons, handicrafts become an alternative means of subsistence for this population and safeguards them from food insecurity.
- Handicrafts add value to the tourist spots and attract tourists providing an income for local artisans and other petty vendors/service providers in the surroundings.

Statistics:

- There are approximately 70 lakh handicraft artisans in the country practicing various types of crafts.
- Out of these, 35 crafts have been recognized as **“Endangered Crafts”** such as Assamese Jewellery, Rogan Painting, Sanihi Crafts, Ganjeefa Cards and Chamba Rumal and 92 crafts have been registered under **“Geographical Indication Act”** like Ganjifa cards of Mysore, Kashmir Paper Machie, Madhubani paintings, Kathputlis of Rajasthan, Odisha pattachitra, Varanasi Glass beads and Warli painting of Maharashtra.

Export Scenario:

- India has been a **large exporter of handicrafts** over the years and the exports trend has been increasing year by year.
- The **top ten countries contributing to export** of handicrafts items during the last five years are USA, U.A.E., United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, France, Australia, Italy, Canada, Latin American countries, Japan and Switzerland.
- India is the **world’s largest producer and exporter of handmade carpets** since 2013-14.
- India is the only country that makes handmade carpets that start from 16 knots per square inch to 2500 knots per square inch and also uses more than 10 types of raw materials and makes carpets in all sizes, shapes and colors.

Challenges:

- The handicraft sector has challenges of working capital, poor exposure to new technologies, absence of full market intelligence and institutional framework.

Steps Taken:

- The **office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)** is the nodal agency in the Government of India for craft and artisan-based activities.
- The office supports the artisans and the sector through its *six regional offices at Mumbai, Kolkata, Lucknow, Chennai, Guwahati, and New Delhi.*
- **Domestic marketing platform** is provided by organizing **Gandhi Shilp Bazaar, Crafts Bazaar**, etc. and organizing handicraft exhibitions in prominent shopping malls of the country.
- International Marketing platform is being provided to awardee artisans through participation in international marketing events.
- The **handicraft awards** namely **Shilp Guru Award, National Award, National Merit Certificates and Design Innovation award** are amongst the highest awards to give recognition for encouragement to outstanding craftspeople to maintain excellence in craftsmanship and keeping alive our old traditions.
- As recognition of India's contribution, India was made the **Partner Country in the world's oldest and one of the best exhibitions "Ambiente" 2019, Germany.**
- **National Handicrafts & Handloom Museum** at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi is popularly known as Crafts Museum.

SUSTAINING ARTISANS ECONOMICALLY

Be it *Kutch embroidery of Gujarat* or *Zari-Zardozi and Chikankari of Uttar Pradesh*, *wooden toys of Karnataka* or *bamboo crafts of Assam*, *puppets of Rajasthan* or *Sikki, Tikuli and Madhubani arts of Bihar*; all these are not only the traditional arts of the respective provinces but also form an important source of alternative income for the artisans.

Features:

- Like the unique diversity of our country, *our handicrafts are also very diverse* and can be placed in innumerable categories.
- Some of these may be decorative, religious, historical, artistic, ornamental, daily utilities, symbolic and so on.
- The sector also includes village-cottage industries, handloom and carpet sectors. It uses locally available raw materials.

Initiatives:

- **Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)** organizes product-specific shows and also 'Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair' bi-annually.
- **Market Development Assistance and Market Access Initiative** envision better marketing of these products through fairs, exhibitions and producers-buyers meets.
- '**India Handloom Bazaar**', an online marketing portal is based on marketing of the handicrafts through facilitating direct interaction between buyers and sellers.

Way forward:

- The artisans and their association should move forward to get Geographical Indication (GI) tag to enhance the credibility of their products.
- Some of the handicrafts which have received GI tag are-**Kangra paintings, Varanasi brocades and saris, Bustar wooden craft, Villianur terracotta works** etc.

- On a macro level, initiatives to strengthen the sector will support in preserving this cultural heritage and transferring it to the next generation as a potential source of livelihood.
- While on the micro level, various socio-economic issues like unemployment poverty, migration and indebtedness will be addressed.

VARIOUS CRAFTS IN INDIA

Zari:

- Zari is an even thread traditionally made of fine gold or silver used in traditional Indian, Pakistani and Persian garments and curtains, etc.
- **Surat** is the home of zari industry in India. Other clusters producing zari are Bareilly, Varanasi, Agra, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Vadodara, Lathur, Jaipur, Barmer etc.

Carpet:

- Major centers of carpet production are Bhadohi, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Agra, Jaipur, Bikaner, Kashmir, and Panipat, Gwalior, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Karnataka and Elluru in Andhra Pradesh.

Handloom:

- India is a major handloom producer in the world, accounting for 85 per cent of the total production globally.
- Major clusters in India are Bahraich, Bhuj, Karimnagar, Patan, Varanasi, Nawan, Shaher, Boudh, etc. Handloom industry is the second largest employment generator in India, next only to agriculture.

Textile Hand Embroidery:

- In textile hand embroidery, embellishment is made on fabric with threads and sometimes with other materials.
- There are many popular embroidery clusters such as chikankari and zardozi of Lucknow, katha of Bengal, pulkari of Punjab, kutchi embroidery of Gujarat and kashidakari of Kashmir.

Textile Hand Printing:

- Hand printed textiles is a craft in which cloth is dyed with hand or printed using shapes. Various types of hand printing practiced in India are block printing, batik, kalamkari (hand printing by pen) and bandhani (tie and die).

Cane and Bamboo:

- Assam and Tripura are recognized as prominent places for cane and bamboo products both nationally as well as internationally. Other major cane and bamboo handicraft centers are Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh in North Eastern region, West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha.

Filigree and Silverware:

- Filigree is an extremely ancient technique dating back to 4000 years ago. Filigree work is performed on silver and involves significant precision and technicality. Two major clusters of silver filigree in India are Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh and Cuttack in Odisha.

Metal Ware:

- Different categories of handicrafts that come under metal ware are, **brass metal ware** of Moradabad, **metal bidri work** and **bell metal** in Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and so on.
- **India is the largest brassware producer in the world.** Major clusters of brassware are Moradabad, Murshidabad, Madurai, Salem, Cuttack and Haryana.

VAJIRAM & RAVI

- Bidriware is a metal handicraft that originated in **Bidar, Karnataka**. The term 'Bidriware' originates from the township of Bidar, which is still the main centre of the unique metal ware. It is a form of encrusted metal ware, where one metal is inlaid on to another.
- It travelled from **Iran to Ajmer in Rajasthan** in the 13th century AD, and from there to Bijapur and *flourished during the reign of the Deccan Sultanate*.
- It is also practiced in Aurangabad district in the state of Maharashtra and Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. The basic metal used for Bidri is the alloy of zinc and copper.

Jewellery:

- India has well-established capabilities for hand-made jewellery, both in traditional and modern designs.
- Major centers of handmade jewellery are Delhi, Moradabad, Sambhal, Jaipur, Kohima (Tribal), Nellore, Mysore, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, etc.

Pottery and Clay Objects:

- Most popular forms of pottery include *blue pottery, black and red pottery, roulette ware, and dull red and grey water*.
- Asharikandi in Assam is the largest cluster in India, where terracotta and pottery crafts is found. Other clusters are Bhadravati, Bulandshahar, Nizamabad, Pune, Chandrapur, etc.
- The main raw material for this craft is ordinary clay, derived from the beds of water bodies.

Folk Painting:

- Indian Folk paintings are pictorial expression of village painters which are marked by the subjects chosen from epics.
- The **Gond tribe of Madhya Pradesh** is engaged in floor and wall painting.
- **Warli** is vivid expression of daily and social events of Warli tribe in Maharashtra.
- Rajasthan is famous for **Phad painting** done on cloth.
- Other types of paintings are **pithora painting** in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, **Madhubani painting** of Bihar, **Chitrakar painting** of West Bengal, **Patachitras** in Odisha, and **Kalamkari** in Srikalahasti, Andhra Pradesh.

Coir Twisting:

- Coir is natural, eco-friendly, water proof and exceptionally tensile fibre extracted from the nuts of coconut palms.
- This craft is primarily produced in Odisha (Sakhigopal, Puri, Pipli, Bhubaneswar, Batamangala and Kendrapara). It is also produced in Kerala (Ernakulam).

Theatre, Costumes and Puppets:

- There are four types of puppets – glove, rod, shadow and string. These are produced in several states including **Odisha** (*Kundheri nach, Kathi Kandhe, Ravanachhaya*), **Karnataka** (*Gombeyatta, Togalu Gombeyatta*), **Andhra Pradesh** (*Tholu Bommalata*), **Tamil Nadu** (*Thol Bommalattam, Tolpavakoothu*), **Rajasthan** (Kathputli), **Bihar** (Yampuri) and **Kerala** (Tolpavakoothu, Pava-kathakali).

Grass, Leaf, Reed and Fibre:

- Different parts of the plants are used for preparing various handicrafts such as footwear, basketry, mats, chiks, bags, lampshades and boxes.

- Major centers of this craft are Almora and Dehradun in Uttarakhand, Goa, Ernakulam in Kerala, Kullu in Himachal Pradesh, Midnapur in West Bengal, etc.

CONTRIBUTING TO ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh) and Raghurajpur (Odisha) are separated by over 1100 kilometers but one thing brings them closer and that is their association with project of linking '**Textiles with the Tourism**'.
- These are the first two centres chosen for a project aiming to give textiles and handicrafts a new dimension.
- This initiative has helped, even in a limited way, the traditional sector to get a face lift.

Contribution of This Sector in Economy:

- The textile sector has been one of the oldest industries in India currently estimated at around US\$ 150 billion and expected to reach US\$ 250 billion soon.
- It contributed **seven per cent of the industry output** (in value terms), **15 per cent in export earnings** and over **two per cent in GDP** (Gross Domestic Product) of India in 2017-18.
- This industry is now on the way to becoming the **second largest manufacturer and exporter in the world**, after China.
- Textiles and handicrafts have been a key source of employment. As per the latest available Annual Survey of Industries data, number of persons employed in the organized Textile and Wearing Apparel Sector is around 26,94,280 in 2016-17.
- Further, the handloom sector provides direct and indirect employment to 43 lakh weavers and allied workers.

Handicrafts Sector:

- It is mainly an un-organised and diversified sector with estimated 70 lakh artisans 32 broad crafts categories throughout the country.
- **To organize and standardize** the Indian handicrafts, approximately 22.85 lakhs artisans have been trained under '**Pachchan**' initiatives.
- For standardization of carpets, carpet rating scheme has been formulated.
- In an effort to establish authenticity of handmade products there is a scheme of handicraft mark.
- Any handicraft artisan registered under 'Pachchan' can utilize this portal for marketing their products.

Cotton:

- In order to protect the interest of cotton farmers, the **Minimum Support Price (MSP) has been increased** for 2018-19 by 28 per cent and 26 per cent for Medium Staple Cotton and Long Staple Cotton respectively.
- Also, to pass on the benefit of MSP and to ensure remunerative price to a large section of cotton farmers, there is a **nodal agency called Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)**.

Challenges for Textile Sector:

- Growth of the textile sector depends not just upon the domestic market, but equally on the export market.

- Manufacturing costs of textile sector in India is higher due to the fragmented structure of the industry and presence of MSMEs.
- One of the key challenges which India faces is **duty disadvantage** of up to 9.6 per cent in important consuming markets like the European Union as compared to competing countries viz. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Pakistan which have zero duty access.

Steps Taken:

- Now, in order to meet these challenges, there is a package for garments and made-ups sectors.
- It offers **Rebate of State Levies (RoSL)** and **labour law reforms** and **relaxation of Section 80 JJAA** of Income Tax Act.
- Products such as fibre, yarn and fabric in the textile value chain are being strengthened and made competitive.
- Assistance is been provided to exporters. Also, **interest equalization rate** for pre and post shipment credit for the textile sector has been raised from 3 per cent to 5 per cent.

CROSSING THE SEVEN SEAS

- Each state has its unique handicraft products which reflect the diverse nature of the Indian handicraft industry.
- The Indian handicrafts industry essentially **falls under the cottage industry category**.
- It is a high **employment intensive** sector, employing over 6 million part time and full time artisans including women and a large section from the weaker strata of the society.
- The handicraft industry is economically viable, because of low capital investments while the potential for export of the various handicrafts products is considerably high.
- Most of the manufacturing units are located in rural and small towns, and there is huge market potential in all Indian cities and abroad.
- Some of the important hubs of the Indian handicrafts industry are:
 - Moradabad (also known as the 'Peetalnagari'- city of brass, noted for its brass artifacts), Saharanpur (noted for its wooden artifacts), and Ferozabad (noted for its exclusive glass handicrafts), in Uttar Pradesh,
 - Other important handicraft producing hubs are Jaipur (famous for its unique wooden and wrought iron furniture), in north western Rajasthan.
 - Kutch (the coastal state of Gujarat) also needs a special mention because of its exotic embroidered handicrafts and
 - Narsapur (Andhra Pradesh) famous for its lace handicrafts.

Indian Textile Industry:

- India is the **largest producer and the second largest exporter** of cotton in the world. India is also the **leading consumer** of cotton.
- Domestic textile and apparel industry contributes **2 per cent to India's GDP** and accounts for **14 per cent of industrial production**, 27 per cent of the country's foreign exchange inflows and 13 per cent of the country's export earnings.
- The textile and garments industry in India that employs 45 million people is **second only to the agriculture sector in terms of employment**.

- The textile sector in India is dominated by women workers, with 70 per cent of the workforce being women.
- At 50 per cent of world production, India is the **largest producer of raw jute** and jute goods in the world.
- India is also the second largest producer of silk in the world. Mulberry, Eri, Tussar, and Muga are the main types of silk produced in the country.
- According to a report, the Indian textile industry covers 61 per cent of the international textile market and over 20 per cent of the global market.

Conclusion and Way Forward:

- India enjoys a unique advantage of having abundant raw materials and presence of manufacturing in all segments of the textile value chain. The time has come for the industry to discard outdated technology and modernize its machinery to be globally competitive.
- The industry needs to focus on innovation and value addition for improving global competitiveness of Indian textiles and apparels. Innovation such as promoting waterless dyeing by adopting new technology is also needed.
- However, the sector also needs to improve supply chains and internal systems, focus on research and development, cost optimization and scaling-up to achieve greater competitiveness and command a higher share in the production and export of top items traded in global markets.

PERFECTING CRAFTSMANSHIP THROUGH SKILING

- Indian weaving traditions and handicrafts have existed since time immemorial and have been a representation of the many unique sub-culture within the country.
- Preservation of Indian weavers and craftsmen is the need of the hour, because the world is taking notice of our immediately unique heritage, and the time is ripe for artisans and craftsmen to reap the rewards.

Various efforts in this regard:

- To spearhead and address the immediate need of the textile industry, successful efforts were made in developing 72 Qualification Packs (QPs), out of which 71 have been cleared by **National Skill Qualification Committee (NSQC)**.
- Indian textile industry has strengths across the entire value chain from natural to man-made fiber to apparel to home furnishings.

Conclusion:

- With the advent of Industry 4.0 – where digitization, the World Wide Web, mass customization and pace are shaping the processes, these industries are also positioned to spur and speed up.
- With increasing emphasis on quality, the demand for skilled labor has increased.
- The development of these segments in India is socially significant in terms of creating more employment opportunities, women empowerment and eradication of poverty and destitution.
- It is also a harbinger of growth in terms of enhancing national income, exports, and entrepreneurship, given that some segments in the textile chain are capital-light and have less gestation period for commissioning the project.

KHADI'S JOURNEY: FROM GANDHI'S KHADDAR TO FASHION SYMBOL

- Khadi, as Gandhiji believed, is not only the tool of self-reliance or symbol of nationalism, rather it can also play a vital role in economic growth of the nation.
- Over 30 thousand charkhas were distributed between 2015 to February, 2018 thereby creating over 14 lakh jobs.

Steps to promote Khadi in India:

- Celebration of Environmental Day and Yoga Day,
- Installation of the world's largest wooden charkha at Delhi's IGI Airport
- Installation of monumental steel Charkhas at Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad, Motihari in East Champaran Bihar and Connaught Place New Delhi,
- Khadi showings in South Africa
- Honeybee box distribution among women workers and farmers,
- Charkha enablement across Punjab
- Resuscitation of the worn-down Gandhi Ashram of Sewapuri near Varanasi
- Khadi-draped train that carried people from Pentrich to Pietermaritzburg in South Africa in June 2018.
- **A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** was also signed with the **National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)** for better design *development and training at different Khadi institution.*
- Another innovation in the form of '**Khadi Mitra**' is on the cards, where the housewives could sell Khadi with a very nominal investment initially.
- In a bid to increase cotton supply to Khadi institutions, **six cotton silver plants** have been upgraded.
- Recognising the importance of enhancing the wages of Khadi artisans to a moderate level and in order to ensure that khadi profession provides sustainable life remuneration per hank have been increased from the existing Rs. 5.50 to Rs. 7.
- As many as 143 defunct Khadi units have been revived and steps are afoot to start product at 124 more units.
- PSUs have been approached for deploying their CSR funds towards empowerment initiatives of Khadi artisans and the Khadi institutions. REC (Rural Electrification Corporation) was roped in to revive the legacy of the Sewapur Ashram.

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: WOMEN IN THREADS OF NORTHEAST

- The textile industry is one of the oldest in India and is intrinsically linked to a range of traditions and cultures that is a reflection of the diversity that prevails in our country.
- Some of the important pointers of Indian textile industry are as follows:
 - India covers 61 percent of the international textile market.
 - India is the largest producer of jute in the world.
 - India is known to be the third largest manufacture of cotton across the globe.
 - India holds around 25 percent share in the cotton yarn industry across the globe.
 - India contributes to around 12 percent of the world's production of cotton yarn and textiles.

- India is the second largest producer of silk in the world, producing around 18 per cent of the world's total silk.

Contribution of North East:

- North-East India occupies a unique and important place in the indigenous textile culture of India.
- The people of the hilly areas and the valley areas of North-East India display heterogeneity in terms of varied eco-cultural and ethno-linguistic characteristics though all of them generally belong to the same Mongoloid ethnic group.
- There are 23.77 lakh handlooms in the country of which 16.47 handlooms (69.28 per cent) are in the North East region as per the handloom census of 2009-10.

A. Weaving:

- There are only a few exceptions, such as the Nokteys of Tirap in Arunachal Pradesh and the Khasis of Meghalaya who do not weave.
- Meghalaya is known for establishing tradition of high quality weaving. Arunachal Pradesh weaves are famous for their beautiful colour combinations. Exceptional are the Sherdukpen shawls, Apatani Jackets and scarves, Mishmi shawls.
- Naga shawls, also known as the angami naga, are famous for their bright colours and bold embroidery of animal motifs.
- The striking feature of Tripura handlooms is the vertical and horizontal stripes with scattered embroidery in different colours.

B. Silk:

- Assam is the 3rd largest producer of silk in the country and leading among the north-east states.
- Manipur produces almost 100 per cent of the country's Ooka tussar silk and is the highest producer of Mulberry silk among the North east states.
- Tripura focuses on production of only Mulberry silk with end to end solution.

C. Bamboo and Cane Craft:

- Mizos great pride in their cane and bamboo work.
- Over 16 tribes live in the state of Nagaland. Most are adept at wood, metal and bamboo handicrafts.
- An Assamese life revolves around cane and bamboo goods.
- The Jappi, a traditional sun shade, still remains the most significant bamboo article. The jappi shade was used to welcome the great Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang who visited Assam around 642 AD.

D. Carpets:

- The most ancient form of carpet weaving in Sikkim. The traditional pattern of weaving is done by the 'Bhutia' community.
- Arunachal too is well known for carpets.

E. Wooden and Metal product:

- Sikkim excels in wood carving. One can see the special wood carving with papier-mache in the mask dances of Sikkim. Pemayangtse Monastery is a fine illustration of carved wooden sculptures and wood carvings.
- Some of the finest woodcarvers in India come from the Wancho, Konyak and Phom tribes in Nagaland.