Chapter 3

DEVELOPMENT OF HANDICRAFTS IN INDIA

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DEVELOPMENT OF HANDICRAFTS IN INDIA

Handicraft is a labour intensive industry included in the Village and Small scale Industries sector of Indian economy. The industry widely dispersed throughout the country utilises the traditional skill of artisans handed down from one generation to the other. Handicraft comprising a variety of crafts such as metal ware, wood carvings, carpet weaving, ivory carving and so on is diversified in its nature also.

The importance of handicrafts to Indian economy lies in its employment potential and export earnings. It provides direct employment to about four million craftsmen. Besides another five million are indirectly dependent on it for their livelihood.1 The export earnings from handicraft industry during 2004-05 amounted to Rs.4,204 crores while the total for the country was Rs. 361879 crores.2 Thus this craft accounted for about 1.16 % of the total share of export.

Historical Importance

The handicraft industry in India has a history of several centuries. The artisans even in the early days were known worldwide for their skill and

1 Handbook of Statistics and Indian Economy, Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, 2006, p. no. 131-132.
craftsmanship. The granite carvings of the temples in those times stand as testimony to this.

There were exports of handicraft goods and textiles from India to the rest of the world from time immemorial. India was one of the leading suppliers of ivory to the world. Greece and Rome were the chief importers of Indian handicrafts. Besides, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English also used to purchase from India heavily. In the 15th and 16th centuries the Patola fabrics of Surat were exported to cities like Baghdad and Basra. Because of great popularity, the East India Company used to import Indian handicrafts in large quantities. This affected the demand for the products of indigenous producers of England to a large extent. They agitated for a curb on their import from India. In consequence, the Government of England was forced to put a ban on the import of certain Indian textiles and impose heavy import duties on the rest of the items.

In Mughal times the demand for handicrafts came heavily from feudal lords and nawabs of the country. They used the products of handicrafts to decorate their durbars. Artisans could realize very large prices for their articles. Mughal period was in fact a period of prosperity to artisans in handicrafts.

2. Ibid.
Guild System

During the early days of prosperity the handicraft industry in India was organised on Guild system. Guild was an association of artisans formed for an economic purpose and it enjoyed absolute freedom from governmental interference. The administrative set-up of Guild consisted of three components viz;

1) General Assembly;
2) Guild Head and
3) Executive Officers.

All the members of Guild constituted the general assembly. The master craftsman, normally, the eldest son was the head of the Guild. He exercised very great power over the members. The executive officers chosen from among the members, used to assist the Guild head and look after the day to day affairs.

The Guilds provided raw materials for manufacturing, controlled quality of manufactured goods and their prices and explored markets for finished products. They were located in urban areas. The artisans belonging to Guilds were well-off and they enjoyed great social status.

The Guilds were a source of revenue to the State. The State imposed taxes on their income. In return, the Government provided facilities to them by maintaining roads for the transport of merchandise. Besides, it granted
subsidies and loans too. A close examination of the working of Guilds in those times indicates that they had a very strong organisation structure which is comparable to those of the modern successful business organisations.

**Decay of Indian Handicrafts**

The period of prosperity for the handicraft industry in India continued till the arrival of British. The establishment of British rule resulted in the abolition of nawabs and durbars leading to a drastic reduction in the demand for handicraft goods. Stocks of goods began to accumulate with Guilds. Because of low sales, there were problems of cash and the artisans could not be paid wages and they started leaving the Guilds. Thus the Guilds weakened, which in turn set in motion the process of ruin of handicrafts.

The British Government adopted an indifferent attitude towards the miserable state of handicrafts and craftpersons. It followed a policy of placing stress on production of utilitarian articles instead of decorative ones. The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth century bringing about tremendous changes in the field of transport and industry had an adverse impact on handicrafts. There was mass production of goods by machines and they were very cheap. Development of various forms of transport enabled public to bring goods from distant areas at low cost. Meanwhile, there took place a change in the tastes of the public also in favour of utility articles made by
machines instead of handicrafts. All these factors contributed to the decline of handicrafts industry engaged in the production of both utility and decorative articles.

Efforts were made by national leaders under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi to protect the cottage industries of India. They had in their mind the sufferings and hardships which thousands of artisans associated with rural crafts had to undergo consequent on change over from hand made goods to machine made goods. Gandhiji advocated encouragement of cottage industry and use of its products in the country. He was against the development of capital intensive and mechanised industries based on western model of economic growth since they result in reduction of employment opportunities.

The leaders formed two organisations viz: All India Spinners Association in the year 1925 and the All India Village Industries Association in the year 1935. All India Spinners Association focused on khadi, while All India Village Industries Association was devoted for cottage industries like pottery, cobblerly, black smithy, carpentry etc. There was no agency to protect the interests of craft persons engaged in handicrafts. Thus the industry had been ailing throughout the British period.

Revival Steps

On attainment of independence in 1947, the National Government stressed the need for developing the traditional occupations. The Union
Government began to make efforts towards restoring age old crafts such as handloom, handicrafts, khadi, coir and other village industries to their past glory.

With the object of chalking out measurers for the revival of cottage industries, the Union Ministry organised an Industries Conference in 1947. The main attention of the Conference was the problems faced by the cottage and small scale industries including handicrafts. The problems identified were:-

1) lack of finance;
2) outdated techniques of manufacturing;
3) defective marketing;
4) non-availability of raw materials and
5) competition from mechanised goods whether imported or locally made.

The Conference strongly recommended the Union Government to form a Cottage Industries Board to look after the traditional occupations and to lift them out of their crisis. Accordingly All India Cottage Industries Board was set up in 1948. The Cottage Industries Board recognised the importance of cottage industries on grounds such as generation of income, equitable distribution of wealth, development of entrepreneurship ability, utilisation of locally available raw materials and contribution in export earnings.5

The main functions of the Cottage Industries Board are:-

1) to advise and assist Government on the organisation of cottage industries;

2) to examine the schemes of provincial and the State Governments for the promotion of village and small scale industries and to co-ordinate them;

3) to examine and advise how cottage and small scale industries can be coordinated and linked with large scale industries and

4) to advise the Government on the marketing of products of cottage industries both in India and abroad.

As soon as the Board started functioning, problems began to crop up. The status of All India Cottage Industries Board as a mere advisory organisation without having any executive powers, stood in the way of execution of programmes chalked out. In order to overcome these problems, a Cottage Industries Directorate had been formed within the Directorate General of Industries and Supplies. It functioned as the executive agency for the steps taken by the Board.

The Board had taken initiative to organise a Central Cottage Industries Emporium at Delhi with a view to enhancing the domestic market for cottage industries. In order to attract foreigners and to capture the foreign market, the Trade Commissioners Offices at various places were persuaded to exhibit cottage industries products.
The Board impressed upon the Government the need for conducting research for the utilisation of raw materials. Then the Union Government set up “The Central Institute of Cottage Industry” for doing research on the matters related to cottage industry.

The Central Government placed funds at the disposal of State Governments for ensuring that the development programmes of the sector did not suffer for want of finance. This enabled the State Governments to intensify their efforts for the development of cottage industries in their respective states.

Lack of data stood in the way of Central and State Governments in extending financial and other assistance to cottage industries. At the initiative of the Board, the Government took steps to gather information on various cottage industries and published them through “The Industry and Trade Journal” of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The Cottage Industries Board soon reached the conclusion that the steps it had initiated, were inadequate to solve the problems of cottage industries. Further, it understood that the cottage and small industries sector included various groups of industries which have altogether diverse and peculiar problems. The sub-groups required more interest, attention and different treatment to overcome their difficulties. A single agency was insufficient to deal with them. Therefore, the Board suggested the Union Government for the formation of separate organisations for different groups of industries. Based on its recommendations, the Central Government split
the Cottage Industries Board into three All India Boards in the year 1952. They are:-

1) All India Handloom Board;
2) All India Handicrafts Board and
3) All India Khadi and Village Industries Board.

Later other Boards such as Coir Board and Central Silk Board were also organised by the Central Government in the year 1954.

**All India Handicrafts Board**

The All India Handicrafts Board’s main function is to advise the Government of India on problems relating to handicraft industries and suggest measures for their improvement and growth. The Board is expected to carry on intensive surveys of the existing handicraft co-operatives, diagnose their ailments and suggest measures for their treatment. Organising training programmes for artisans to update their skill is also included as one of its important functions.

Immediately, on the inception of the Handicrafts Board, it conducted an elaborate survey of the handicrafts existing in the country. It started introducing changes in traditional designs to suit them to modern tastes. In order to make design changes a permanent feature in handicraft industry, the Board started design centres. The efforts of the Board began to be focused on ensuring quality marketing also. For internal marketing
it has taken up a scheme of Rural Marketing Centres at block level. The Board started 220 centers in different parts of the country by the year 1978. Handicraft museums have been established to popularise the products and increase their sales. Besides, it used to conduct exhibitions both within the country and abroad with a view to maximise sales. The Board started imparting training to the craftsmen in the four major export oriented crafts of hand-knotted woolen crafts, art metal ware, hand-printed textiles and wood ware. A total of 1.4 lakh persons have been trained in these crafts up to the year 1980.

The Board decided to give pensions to old and deserving craftsmen as a social security measure. In the course of its working, the Board felt the need for decentralising its activities mainly to speed up the work. So it organised five regional offices in cities such as Delhi, Lucknow, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

**DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER (HANDICRAFTS)**

In the year 1980, The All India Handicraft Board has constituted two sections viz: Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and the other is Development Commissioner (Handloom). These two wings come under the control of Ministry of Textiles (Central Government).

The Office of Development Commissioner Handicrafts (D C H) is currently the nodal agency for the implementation of all the Central Government schemes on handicrafts. D.C.H is expected to assist the Government in the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at the development of crafts in the country. Its other functions are to identify the new lesser known languishing handicrafts, to identify the problems related to crafts men, to participate in the market promotional events and to provide marketing assistance. It has been entrusted with promoting the marketing of handicrafts through different market developmental programmes viz: craft bazaars, market meets and product promotion programmes. Supplying paper designs, arranging training programmes, arranging credit, assisting the artisans in forming co-operatives and attending the trade enquiries from exporters are the main aims of D.C.H. This office is also responsible for formulation and implementation of several schemes for the development of handicrafts at central level and also at state level through co-operatives and apex federation at each state. A close examination of these functions of D.C.H indicates that it is performing the very same functions as those of Handicrafts Board. But by splitting it into divisions such as handicrafts and handloom, greater specialisation is expected to be achieved.

D.C.H has taken the following steps for strengthening handicrafts sector:-
1) **Setting up The Handicrafts Marketing Service Extension Centres**

These centres are established at the craft pockets to play an important role by guiding and helping craftsmen in availing of the credit facilities under refinance schemes of financial institutions. They also provide raw material assistance and help artisans to form co-operatives. In addition, they extend marketing assistance and arrange and participate in exhibitions.

2) **Establishment of Regional Design and Technical Development Centre**

There was an overwhelming need to regularise assistance to the craftsmen in evolving new designs to suit the contemporary taste of consumers both in India and abroad. The Regional Design And Technical Development Centre (Technical Wing) of D.C.H. Bangalore was set up in 1958 with this objective. Besides it is engaged in conducting research and experiments on the tools, equipments and techniques involved in the process of manufacturing handicrafts. This is done after a careful study of the existing conditions with a view to avoid manual drudgery, specially in the stages where the skill of the craftperson is either wasted or uneconomically used. Thus the centre not only plays a major role in the overall development of the craft, improving the colour, shape and design of the articles produced, but also assists in production thereby uplifting the socio-economic condition of the craft persons.
Due to the efforts of the Centre, improvements have been effected mostly on the existing tools. These innovations can be procured by the craft persons at minimum prices, including specific tools for a craft which are otherwise not available in the market. Hand lathe, pedal operated, power operated baby lathe, village potters wheel with ball-bearing adjustments are some of the instruments developed at the centre.

Supply of scarce raw materials like fibre, natural dye materials etc is also arranged by the Centre. Individuals and institutions are motivated by the Centre to take up handicrafts as a profession.

3) **Formulation of Training Programmes**

D.C.H has formulated training schemes meant for upgradation of skills. Training is imparted to groups of 15 persons. There is no provision for stipend. For raw material wastage, a compensation of Rs.500 will be provided. For depreciation of tools Rs.500 to Rs.1000 will be provided to each trainee. The duration of the training is fixed as three weeks to four weeks.

4) **Marketing - through Exhibitions**

D.C.H. is acting as a marketing agency for the individual craftsmen and co-operatives. Every year it is conducting exhibitions throughout the country. There is no provision for T.A or D.A to participating craft
persons. The craftsmen themselves have to meet travelling expenses. D.C.H has urban Haats in Jammu, Tirupathy, Karwal (Hyderabad) and Bhuvaneshwar. The Haats and the stalls are provided for the craftsmen. In Pragati Maidan, New Delhi, D.C.H has a permanent place of exhibition. It contains semi pacca stalls. The Haats are chargeable. A nominal fee of Rs.200 per day is collected for each stall. This exhibition is mainly meant for encouraging marketing new kind of products. The running expenses of the Haats are met by the Ministry of Tourism.

D.C.H is providing Rs. 30 lakhs for opening new emporiums by governmental agencies. For renovation purpose, they are funding up to Rs 5 lakhs.

4) **Setting of Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts**

D.C.H has set up E.P.C H at Delhi and it is meant for exploiting the export prospects of handicrafts. It performs both advisory and executive functions. It acts as clearing house of information on exports of handicrafts. The trade enquiries from different countries will be disseminated to interested exporters who had registered their names with the council. It also helps the exporters in expanding overseas market of their products. The council participates in Trade fairs, Exhibitions etc conducted outside the country. It also sponsors trade delegations, study teams and sales teams to market handicrafts abroad. It undertakes publicity propaganda also.
Thus Handicraft Development Commissioner’s Office has set up different centres for the allround development of handicrafts like raw materials, method of production, modernisation of tools, skill upgradation and marketing both within India and outside.

**Handicrafts under Five Year Plans**

The Planning Commission included handicrafts among Village and Small Scale Industries sector of Indian economy. The First Five Year Plan made an outlay of Rs.15 crores for the promotion of handicrafts. The Commission noticed the influence of middlemen in marketing of handicraft products in those times. In order to eliminate them, handicraft emporia for the sale of its products began to be organised. It was during the First Plan period that the Central Government constituted the All India Handicrafts Board for the development of handicrafts.

The Second Five Year Plan allotted a lesser plan outlay of Rs.9 crores for handicrafts. This was 40 percentage lower than that for the First Plan. During this plan period, four regional design centres (Delhi, Bombay, Bangalore and Calcutta) and thousand emporia and sales depots were set up. The sale through public emporia came to Rs. 2.7 crores while the exports amounted to 19.34 crores.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) *Draft Third Five Year Plan*, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, p. no. 242.
The Third Five Year Plan provided Rs. 14 crores for the development of handicrafts. There was an increase of 55 percentage over the plan outlay. 1600 emporia were started during this period. The sales through public emporia were Rs 4 crores as against 2.7 crores in the Second Five Year Plan.9 Thus the sales registered an increase of 48 percent. The exports of handicraft products from India during the Plan period were Rs. 76.5 crores while it was only Rs. 19.34 crores in the Second Plan.10 Thus during the Third Plan Period, there was a four fold rise in exports.

The Fourth Plan provision for the handicraft sector was fixed at Rs.17 crores. In respect of outlay there was only a marginal increase of Rs.3 crores over the previous Plan period. The Planning Commission laid stress on improvement of productivity of artisans and this was sought to be achieved through supply of improved appliances, introduction of new design and promotion of co-operatives. The sales during the plan period were Rs.10 crores which was 150 percent higher than that in the previous Plan.11 The value of exports stood at Rs. 100 crores showing an increase of 33 percent of the export earnings in the Third Plan.12

The Plan outlay for the Fifth Plan for handicraft sector was Rs.22 crores which was 30 per cent higher than that for Fourth Plan. A major

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9  *Draft Fourth Five Year Plan*, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, p. no. 212.
10 Dr. S. Paul  *India’s Exports*, Latma Printers, Delhi, 1992, p. no. 369.
11 *Draft Fifth Five Year Plan*, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, p. no. 240.
scheme undertaken during this period was training of 30000 carpet weavers.\textsuperscript{13} The purpose was to produce quality carpets and thus to enhance exports. Production of handicrafts came to Rs. 2050 crores.\textsuperscript{14} The target fixed for exports was Rs.240 crores, but the actual exports came to Rs.839 crores which was in fact three and a half times higher than the expectation.\textsuperscript{15}

The Planning Commission increased substantially the plan outlay to Rs.110 crores in the Sixth Five Year Plan. There was a five fold increase in the amount provided over the previous Plan. Assistance was provided to primary co-operatives and apex societies towards share capital, common facility centres and appointment of secretaries. The production of handicrafts increased to Rs.3500 crores from Rs.2050 crores of the Fifth Plan period.\textsuperscript{16} During the Sixth Plan exports had gone upto Rs.1700 crores as against Rs.854 crores in the Fifth Plan.\textsuperscript{17} Thus the exports during the Plan period doubled nearly compared to that of previous plan period.

The Seventh Plan kept a plan outlay of Rs.122.86 crores for the handicraft sector. There was only a marginal increase of Rs.11.86 crores over the previous plan. The Planning Commission took note of the presence of

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{13} Dr. B.S. Sreekantaradya, Regional \textit{Disposal of Industries and Industrialisation}, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1985, p. no. 125.
\bibitem{14} \textit{Draft Sixth Five Year Plan}, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, p. no. 282.
\bibitem{16} \textit{Draft Outline Sixth Five Year Plan}, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, p. no. 312.
\bibitem{17} Maureen Liebel, Tirthankar Roy, \textit{Handmade in India}, Economic and Political Weekly, December 2003, p. no.32
\end{thebibliography}
middlemen in handicrafts in the field of supply of raw materials, finance and marketing. The Governmental authorities under direction from the Planning Commission have been trying to eliminate them right from the First Five Year Plan onwards. The present statement made by the Planning Commission about the presence of intermediaries indicates the failure of earlier efforts taken by the administrators. In order to reduce their role, the Commission stressed the necessity of strengthening the support organisations in the field of credit, raw materials and marketing and Governmental efforts were directed towards these areas. The total output of handicrafts increased to Rs.7067 crores during this period.\textsuperscript{18} The exports of goods from the handicrafts sector in the Seventh Plan were Rs.6400 crores which was 276 percent more than that in the Sixth Plan.\textsuperscript{19}

The Planning Commission in the Eighth Plan aimed at increasing employment opportunities and income for artisans from handicrafts. It pointed out the necessity of maximizing the export potential of handicrafts. The Governmental organisations began to organise exhibitions and mela for improving marketing opportunities for craftpersons. A number of schemes pertaining to training, design development, market and export promotion were undertaken during this period. The Plan fixed an outlay of Rs.210 crores for handicrafts. There was an increase of nearly Rs.90 crores over the previous

\textsuperscript{18} Draft Outline, Eighth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, p. no. 280.

\textsuperscript{19} Suja Marjit, Ajitava Raychoudhari, \textit{An Analytical Study of India’s Exports}, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997 p. no.198.
allotment. The production during the period was Rs.11423 crores which registered a growth of 61.63 per cent compared to that in the previous plan. The exports amounted to Rs.9240 crores showing an increase of Rs.2840 crores.

The Ninth Plan allotment for handicraft came to Rs. 301 crores. There was 43.33 percentage increase over the previous plan allocation. The plan gave emphasis on marketing, skill upgradation and preservation of craft heritage. Production during the period was Rs.18,677 crores while the exports amounted to Rs. 41,470 crores.

Examination of the schemes under Five year plans reveals that they were intended for eliminating middlemen, improving the skill of artisans and productivity, increasing marketing opportunities and strengthening co-operatives. Production and exports indicate increase plan after plan. The big jump registered in production and exports from the Fifth Plan onwards was because of the inclusion of carpets and gems and jewellery under handicrafts sector. But the Tenth Plan documents bring out problems in the sector like existence of middlemen, low productivity, lack of modernisation and ailing co-operatives and these are indications that the earlier efforts have not succeeded fully.

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20 Draft Outline, Ninth Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, p. no. 172.
21 Dr. S. Paul, India’s Exports, Latma Printers, Delhi, 2000, p. no. 369.
22 Ibid.
Handicrafts in Kerala

The state of Kerala has in her credit a variety of exquisite handicraft products reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the state. The erstwhile kingdoms in the past highly appreciated and nurtured handicraft sector. The handicraft products were used for adorning temples and dwellings in Kerala from time immemorial.

There are 32 different crafts in the state and of them ivory carving, wood and horn carving, bell metal casting, lapidary and reed weaving, cane and rattan work, coconut shell carving, paddy straw picture making, hand embroidery are the important commercialised craft items.

Traditionally, the handicraft industry in Kerala was based on the locally available raw materials like timber, coir, coconut, cashew, clay etc. Most of the products are handcrafted and have tremendous artistic value as well as utility value. The handicraft sector in Kerala is widely dispersed throughout the state and has high employment opportunities at relatively low investments. Most of the activities are predominantly carried out in the household sector. Craft persons in the household sector are mostly family members.

In order to support the unorganised handicraft sector, a number of central and state sponsored organisations are at work in Kerala. An examination of their activities is done below :-
1. Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)

Development Commissioner of Handicrafts has opened two regional offices in Kerala, one at Thrissur and the other at Trivandrum. The office at Trivandrum looks after the handicraft industry in the districts starting from Trivandrum and ending with Ernakulam while the Thrissur office takes care of industry to the north of Thrissur. These offices are implementing the schemes formulated by D.C.H at all India level. Presently they are concerned with Baba Sahib Ambedkar Hasthasilpa Vikas Yojana, Design and Promotion, Marketing Support and Services, Research and Development, Training and Extension, Financial Assistance to State Handicraft Development Corporation and State Apex Society.

“Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastashilpa Vikas Yojana” aims at promoting Indian handicrafts by developing artisans in their clusters. In Kerala D.C.H is trying to identify the artisan clusters and then to convert the clusters into professionally managed and self-reliant community enterprises on the principles of effective member participation and mutual co-operation. Craft clusters may consist of a village or group villages in geographically contiguous area having a minimum of 25 families of handicraft artisans practising same or different crafts. D.C.H has identified three important craft clusters in Kerala one in Maradu (Ernakulam) for wood craft, the second in Vellikulangara (Chalakudy) for bamboo products and the third in Quilon for straw pictures.
D.C.H will monitor the schemes which are funded by them. They are taking an one time step to revive the dormant handicraft societies of Kerala since craft persons are mostly settled in groups in particular areas engaged in specific types of craft.

2) **Directorate of Industries and Commerce (D.I. and C)**

The Directorate of Industries and Commerce has a separate wing to take care of the development of handicrafts in Kerala. D.I. & C will co-ordinate and monitor the plan schemes of Central and State Governments. It also provides share capital assistance to primary handicraft societies, grant-in-aid to apex handicraft institutions, funds for implementation and modernisation of Common Facility Service Centres and disbursement of old age pensions to artisans through the local self governments.

3) **Kerala State Handicrafts Apex Co-operative Society (SURABHI)**

The State Government of Kerala formed the Kerala State Handicraft Apex Co-operative Society in 1964 to co-ordinate, assist production and marketing of handicrafts. Its trade name is Surabhi. It is a representative body consisting of one hundred and three primary co-operative societies reportedly, having thirty thousand members. The authorised capital of SURABHI is Rs.600 lakhs. The main objectives of the Apex society are to provide financial, technical and marketing assistance to its primary co-operative societies.
4) **Handicrafts Development Corporation of Kerala Ltd. (H.D.C.K)**

In order to assist the individuals engaged in handicrafts, the Government of Kerala has incorporated H.D.C.K in the year 1968 under the Companies Act of 1956. The Corporation started its activities in 1969 to help artisans outside co-operative sector. The central office of H.D.C.K is located at Trivandrum. The authorised capital of the corporation is Rs. 300.00 lakhs at the end of March 2002.

The major objectives of H.D.C.K are procurement and distribution of raw materials to craft persons, marketing of crafts, conduct of trade fairs and exhibitions, export of handicrafts items and providing financial assistance to craft persons. The Corporation collects various products from the artisans and sells through 11 outlets within the state and another 11 showrooms in other states. It also supplies raw materials to the craft persons. The Corporation owns a Common Facility Service Centre called as “Shilpi Kendra” at Trivandrum.

5) **Kerala Artisans Development Corporation Limited (KADCO)**

Kerala Artisans Development Corporation Ltd was incorporated in the year 1981. It is engaged in the activity of providing welfare of indigent artisans and to provide financial and marketing assistance.
KADCO concentrates on carpenters, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, bronze/copper smiths, masons and potters. It manages two craft show rooms one at Trivandrum and the other at Ernakulam to market the products of its members.

6) **Kerala State Bamboo Development Corporation Ltd**

Kerala State Bamboo Development Corporation Ltd. was established in the year 1971. Its mission is to support and uplift the bamboo weaving and reed cutter community as well as other traditional workers depending on bamboo. The Corporation has nine reed collection centers, 100 depots for distributing reed to the weavers and 15 reed distribution centres to supply reeds to the traditional industries.

7) **Kerala State Palmyra Products Development and Workers Welfare Corporation Ltd.**

KELPAM is engaged in developing handicrafts items such as mats, baskets, shopping bags, screens, toys etc from Palmyra fibres by setting up production centers in major Palmyra palm growing regions.

Thus a multiplicity of organisations are at work in Kerala with the aim of developing handicrafts and placing it on a strong footing.
Handicrafts in Kerala under Five Year Plans

The First Five Year Plan did not have any programme exclusively for handicrafts. It was included among the Khadi and Village industries and the State Planning Board made a provision of Rs.40 lakhs for their development.

Handicraft was separated from K V I Sector in the Second Five Year Plan and separate Plan provisions were made for them. The allotment to handicrafts amounted to Rs.20 lakhs. During the Plan period Common Facility Centres and market depots were set up. The Governmental agencies conducted economic surveys on the handicrafts prevailing in the state.

The Third Five Year Plan focused on opening more sales depots, research and design extension centres and strengthening co-operatives. The Apex Society for the benefit of handicraft societies was established during this period. The Third Plan made a provision of Rs.35 lakhs for handicrafts and this was 87.5 percent higher than that for the Second Plan.

In the Fourth Five Year Plan attempts by Governmental authorities were directed towards improving the marketing prospects and productivity. For this purpose, schemes for publicity and propaganda, design and guidance and distribution of improved tools were implemented. The Plan allotment was Rs.51 lakhs which was Rs.16 lakhs higher than the allotment for Third Plan.
An important feature of the Fifth Five Year for handicrafts was allocating an outlay of Rs.200 lakhs. This was nearly four times the amount set apart for handicrafts in the Fourth Plan. The Planning Board while drafting the outline for the Fifth Plan observed problems like technology and low capital investment for handicraft. Therefore the Governmental authorities turned to the supply of modern tools, training of artisans and provision of share capital assistance to co-operatives and Apex Society.

The Sixth Plan aimed at bringing more artisans under co-operative cover. A programme of organising new societies and revitalising the defunct societies was undertaken for the purpose. It is reported that at the end of the Sixth Plan, 12250 persons were brought under co-operative fold. The plan outlay was only Rs.174 lakhs which was less by Rs.26 lakhs of the outlay for Fifth Plan.

The Seventh Plan emphasised the role that developmental agencies had to play for handicrafts. In order to equip them to perform their duties more efficiently, their capital base was stepped up. The Seventh plan made a provision of Rs.253 lakhs for handicraft which was larger by 45.42 percent of the provision for the Sixth Plan. The actual expenditure far exceeded the provision and it came to Rs.381 lakhs.

The Eighth Plan registered a substantial increase in plan outlay. It came to Rs.900 lakhs which was 256 percent higher than that for Seventh
Plan. The actual expenditure of Rs.820 lakhs was slightly less than the outlay. The Planning Board during the period highlighted the problems of handicrafts like shortage of rawmaterials, ivory, rosewood etc and instructed the steps which had to be taken to improve their availability.

The Ninth Plan provision for handicrafts was Rs.1000 lakhs, Rs.100 lakhs higher than that for Eighth Plan. The Planning Board suggested the Government that the Forest Department be given instruction to set apart a portion of the Rosewood and Sandalwood for handicrafts sector. But this suggestion did not materialise.

Thus the Handicraft sector in the state received increasing attention from the State Planning Board. Schemes for improving the skill of artisans, modernisation of tools and increasing marketing prospects both within the country and abroad were formulated and implemented.

Conclusion

The handicraft industry in India has a history of several centuries. The industry suffered during the British rule. After attaining independence, the National Government began to take steps to revitalize the handicraft industry. It set up all India organisations for the development of the industry. At the State level also, there are institutions like Handicraft Apex Society, Handicraft Development Corporation and Artisans Development Corporation
to look after the overall development of handicraft sector. Under Five Year Plans, the Central and State Governments were trying to help the industry by improving raw-material supply, modernisation of tools, upgradation of skill of artisans and developing marketing outlets. The Plan Documents indicate improvement in production and exports Plan after Plan. However the latest Plan Documents show existence of problems like middlemen, shortage of materials, defective marketing, outdated tools and ailing co-operatives in this sector.