Chapter-5

Essence of Arts and Crafts in Festivals, Fairs, Rituals and Our Modern Daily Life
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India is one of the most important agrarian countries in the world with an ancient heritage where a large number of different castes and religions exist. The rich traditions of religious ceremonies bring love, unity, liveliness in the society. Foreign traders, travellers and people from all over the world have gone through the length and breadth of the country and left rich accounts of their impressions. The wide spectrum of Indian festivals truly depicts the rich variety of crafts of India.

Different festivals have played an important part in the life of the Indian people. They serve to provide large number of opportunities for enjoyment and also produce a change in daily life. Particularly women find a major change, as on festivals they can free themselves from their household works and participate in various kinds of recreational and spiritual activities such as observing fast, worshiping gods and goddesses and after the completion of the ceremonial rites, enjoying grand feasts with other members of the family at the end (Sharma, 1978, p. 3).

Hinduism, the chief religion in India has great richness and potential in the field of festivals. India is a land where religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Arya Samaj, Jainism, Sikhism and Christianity and others coexist with harmony and amity. Religions like Islam and Christianity were introduced into India by foreign saints and missionaries. Arts and crafts add creativity to the Indian heritage by way of festivals celebrated. India is the most popular country which believes in mass celebrations. Indian festivals are celebrated by different cultures. The rituals, however, are confined to the devotees of a particular faith. Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism, is monotheistic faiths. They have a few festivals as compared to the Hindu faith which has festivals for different deities.

Crafts are closely related to festivals and rituals. Artefacts are crafted by men, women and children who make them suitable for certain occasions or ceremonies. They are real artists because they keep the traditional arts and crafts alive.
Even before it was enshrined in the Indian Constitution, secularism grew out of the social intercourse between diverse faiths, born out of need and nature. There are so many festivals that if all the festive days of the faiths practised in India were to be declared holidays, it would be all play and no work. Mere listing of festivals celebrated in India would be a strenuous job, the labor resulting in a bulky directory. To strike a balance between business and leisure it is needed to declare public holidays on the occasion of some major festivals only. Need of a public holiday or the need to take leave to celebrate does not arise because majority of Indian masses are farmers. Farmers celebrate each and every festival with devotion, zeal, pomp and gaiety because they are true to their gods, making India a country of great ostentation, pageantry and festivity (Sanon, 1987, p. 2).

Ritual crafts have special significance. Indian festivals celebrated by different cultures through their special rituals add to wide arena of vibrancy. Some festivals generally welcome the season of the years, the harvest, the rains, or the phase of the moon, the movement of the planets. Some may lead to pilgrimage and thus are occasions for a faith. These are held at sites, which are associated with religious episodes. Other celebrated religious occasions are birth anniversaries of mythic or divine being, or for incoming New Year, marriage, birthday celebration, and rituals of death, afterlife and ancestor worship are social customs which are celebrate by different communities of most parts of India.

The arts and crafts have their origin in rituals. The objects and utensils used for offering, dresses of Devis and Devtas, their forms and arrangements create the ritual aesthetics. Each thing needs to be pure for offerings made in ritual ceremonies. Indian rituals begin with the Vedic period.

Starting from the marriage ceremonies and ending up to the rites of the cremation ground, each and every stage of human life involves rituals which become a part of individual awareness. It is believed that right performance is learned at the feet of the guru when the child is invited into the community of Dvi-Jas, ‘twice-born’, born of the womb and born of rituals. Daily rites of individuals include the greeting of the sun at its rising a cycle of yogic and ritual gestures directed towards the east accompanied by reciting mantras, offering of grain and illuminating butter to the pure flame, and the reciting of Sandhya or twilight prayers at dusk falls when lamps are
lighted in every traditional home and the sound of bell and gong are heard (Mookerjee, 1998, p. 13).

Ritual arts and crafts develop a symbolic language of vertical and horizontal line circle and dots. Every form, action, event, circumstances are correlated in ritual arts. In the Indian country a ritual is still vigorous and prolific, and visual symbols are simple and subtle. Everywhere, the dawn-flower, chalk white, camphor, sandalwood powder, grains, herbs according to the season, splash of scarlet on a wayside stone or shrine singles the approach to sacred space.

Fairs are a part of rural India. People from all the surroundings come to do a brisk trade in selling and buying the crafts products. Craftsmen and women display their artefacts which are admired by tourists. Fairs fulfill a social and economic need. Like festivals India is also rich in fairs. Nagaur fair, Gangasagar Mela, Pushkar Mela, Urs Ajmer Sharif, The Goa Carnival, Tarnetar Mela, Haji Pir Mela, Lucknow Budakki Mela, Kumbh Mela, Shrawan Jhoola Mela, Ram Navmi Mela etc. Each has its own specialty in the field of arts and crafts.

Saurashtra has an amusing tradition of decorating the homes beautifully for marriages and festive occasion. Deepavali involves special preparations. Wall on to the inner courtyard are freshly plastered with a mixture of clay, cow dung and straw in many homes. Patterns of stylised parrots and elephants are then painted on the wall. After that final coat of clay and lines mixed with mica pieces is put so, that when clay mixture is dried the mica glistens in the sunlight. On the day of Deepavali, the embroidered and mirror-worked Chakla, Chandrawa Patti and Poran, are brought out and hung on the walls for special puja; when the oil lamps are ignited in the night, every mirror reflects the light, and the mica-covered walls shimmer as in a dream. (Dhamija, 1970, p. 78)

Diwali, a contraction of Deepawali, means a file of lights of earthen lamps, is the most popular festival of Hindu religion. Decorative crafts items are used to present a bright and beautiful look. Diwali lanterns and lamps are an expression of joy, of welcoming, of an inauguration, of worship, and of dispelling darkness, both of ignorance and gloom, and to give bright and artistic look (Sanon, p. 94)
Today, creative designers and craftsmen paint and turn *Diyas* (earthen oil lamps) in innovative shapes and pattern. Wax filled *Diyas* are very much in demand as they are more convenient to use than the oil *Diyas*. Brass and aluminum *Diyas* are also popular among wealthy communities. Candles are important decorative items. They come in creative artistic shapes and innovative designs to present a calm and soothing atmosphere. Floating candles come in glass pot filled with coloured and glittering water.

The traders begin a new financial calendar year from this day. New book of accounts are opened with a sign of the *Swastika* for good luck. The mercantile community keeps doors open through the night so that Goddess Laxmi may bring them good fortune. On this day women draw auspicious *Yantra* diagrams, cleanness and lights attracts her on the first day as windows are kept open to welcome the Goddess Laxmi into house and shop, office in the darkness of the night.

Embroidered wall hanging on cloth panels with the images of Ganesha and Laxmi are popular Diwali decorative items. Small Laxmi-Ganesha sculptures come in various designs and sizes and are purchased by every Hindu household for worship. Brass and silver sculptures are quite popular in these days. New cloths are worn by all and everyone. *Torans* or door hangings add new looks to the home. Diwali *Torans* are handcrafted and come embellished with embroidery, mirror, shells, bells, coloured threads, beads, stars, etc. Images of Lord Ganesha or other divine personalities enrich their beauty.

Millions of people light lamps and candles on the occasion of Laxmi Puja all over India. Diwali is an occasion of great anticipation for children. After worship is over the fireworks begin. People rejoice greatly when crackers explode, rockets streak through the skies, sparkle shower. A large variety of fireworks spin, flash, boom, and sparkle all around. All these decorative items, we can find ready to gift sets in the market. *Diwali* is the most widely and gleefully celebrated festival of India. This is a day of meeting and greeting people, worship and enjoyment with sound, colour and sparkle (Chand, 2014).

Figures of Govardhan made of clay are prepared by women in north India that are very essential for the puja to be performed. Clay images of Lord Shiva with his family are made in the Kumaon Hills during Kartik. Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati
are seated along with Lord Ganesha and Lord Kartikeya with the Nag encircling the family. The image is first painted with white and then in different colours like pink, yellow or black. The images are placed on the edges of the homes after the completion of rituals. Rows of these images can be seen in the street, though each form is basically the same, yet it has distinctions of the colouring, size or other details.

The natural forces like sun, the wind and the rain soon soften them into the basic elements and they are recreated again the next year in the festival. *Shyama Chak*, a festival celebrated at Mithila in North Bihar also involves the telling of story connected with the festival by the aid of clay images created by the girls of the house. The festival principally highlights the love and care of the sister for her brother. Clay forms of the Shyama are prepared by young women. The figures of *Rishis*, the scarecrows relate the story in song after which the clay figures are engrossed in the local tank (Dhamija, p. 74).

Colour throwing festival *Holi* is celebrated around February or March. *Pichkari* (Water squirting piston) and balloons are the most important playing colour instruments. They are also a part of craft work. *Pichkari* comes in market with interesting designs, colour, shape and size. Men, women and children go from house to house to smear or drench each other in colours.

Traditionally, *Mahua* and true flowers were boiled in water to obtain a liquid dye for Holi. Textile craft took special place in Holi festival as women used white cotton saree made from voile. Indian pink line border and decorative designs highlight its beauty. Gold and silver *Gota* (lace) are stitched on the edges of saree. *Kiran* (golden lace) gives a shimmering touch to the *Pallu* (loose end of sari). Newlywed bride adorns herself with sari on *Holi*. Men wear *Malmal* (light cotton white fabric) *Kurta Dhoti* or trouser tied with pink cloth around their head. *Holi Mela* (fair) serves as an occasion of enthusiasm and entertainment for young children and elders. They celebrate with the colour filled balloons and dry colour also. Fairs are more popular in the villages than cities.

*Hola Mohalla* is celebrated for the day after Holi at Anandpur Sahib by Sikhs. Martial arts like archery, sword fencing, horse riding, tent pegging etc. are the main focus of the festival. Tools which are used on the display of martial arts are the examples of arts and crafts. They are dressed with a long tunic of bright deep blue
turban, banded with strips of bright yellow, armed with bows and arrows, spears, swords and shield muskets, guns. The Nihang displays his skills at this festival (Sanon, p. 16).

_Eid-ul-Zuha_ and _Eid-ul-Fitr_ are the festivals of great joy for the Muslim community. Goat or sheep, camel, cow are sacrificed on _Eid-ul-Zuha or Bakraeid_. On this day, Muslims dress in new clothes, pray at the mosque, meet and greet each other. _Eid-ul-Fitr_ comes after twenty nine or thirty days of _Ramzan_. Markets are flooded with people to buy new clothes, home decorative, daily need accessories of their homes and families. Many people give new look to their homes. Mouth watering dishes are made into beautiful decorative crockeries which are made from craftsmen, women adorn her self with attractive dresses and men wear _Kurta Pajama_, girls like to buy local jewellery, bangles etc. Tailors, shopkeepers and vendors do brisk business.

_Shivaratri_ is celebrated all over India. The wedding anniversary of Lord Shiva and his wife Parvati is celebrated. Hindus celebrate the festival in Shiva temples throughout the country. Some fabulous crafts items are used in _Shivratri_ greetings like stone crafted Shiva _Linga_. It is used as a showpiece or worship on _Mahashivratri_. Flower garland gives new look to Lord Shiva’s neck. _Damroo_ is a craft work which rotates rapidly in alternating direction to produce some different type of sound.

The ritual is observed on the _Shravan Purnima_ (full moon day). Beautifully crafted _Rakhi_ is the sacred bond of love and affection between brother and sister. _Rakhi_ is a token of sisterly love and goodwill for her brother. The brother is one who swears to protect her, so it is rightly called a bond of protection. Brothers and sisters exchange _Raksha Bandhan_, cards, _Rakhis_ and gifts.

Many people make _Rakhi_ cards and _Rakhis_ with their own hands. Creativity is considered more special. Craftsmen display the _Rakhi_ in the market for sale. Various types of _Rakhis_ are available in the market. Some _Rakhis_ are made from velvet piece, paper, fresh or dried leaves and flowers, silken, golden and silver threads and ornate with semi-precious stones while the others are simple and sober with just a piece of string or thread. Gift, handmade cards, _Rakhis_ make the occasion more meaningful. Sisters tie a _Rakhi_ to their brothers’ wrists and take money, present or gift items in return.
Festival Janmashtami is celebrated with great devotion at Mathura, birth place of Lord Krishna. On the day of Janmashtami, temples and homes light up for the joyous occasion. Cribs and other displays with dolls in traditional costumes depict the life and times of Lord Krishna called Jhankis. The birthday is celebrated by devotees in the midnight. Sculptures of Lord Krishna in traditional costumes depict the life and times of Lord Krishna. At the time of Krishna’s birth, prayer ceremonies are held in temples and homes to welcome the Lord at midnight. Dance and drama create an act of Krishna’s life which gives a special status to the artists. Performing artists perform events from Krishna’s life amidst much pomp and show. People fast till midnight, Puja or prayer ceremonies are held in temples and homes to welcome the Lord at midnight. Craftsmen set up a beautifully decorated pot full of milk, curds or butter high above the ground suspended by ropes alongside is also suspended a bag containing money which is the prize for those people who climb on to the shoulders of one by one to get the pot. The Sanjhi is a popular stencil of Lord Krishna’s life scenes are used to create Rangolis, dry colours or powders transfer on the ground and on water. These are main crafts of Janamashtmi (Sanon, p. 68-70).

Dussehra is the popular festival of Hindu religion and occurs around September or October. It is also known as Vijayadashmi (Vijay meaning victory and Dashmi meaning tenth day). Rama (hero and God King of the great Hindu epic, Ramayana) killed the Ravana (ten-headed demon King of Lanka who kidnapped Rama’s wife Sita). His ten heads signify his great intellect and learning. After nine days of battle, he killed the evil Ravana on 10th day of Ashuina, and find victory. The day comes to be called Vijaya dashmi. Another legend that is linked to Dussehra is that of the Goddess. Dussehra is a popular festival celebrated by Hindus all over India, albeit with different names. In other words, it signifies the triumph of good over evil. The legendary triumph is reenacted till today.

To this day Ram Lila, an ancient folk play, is staged in towns and villages across the country. The actors of Ram Lila have a variety of design and interesting colour combinations. Various dresses with different colours are really superb. It is a great creation of craftsman. In the northern parts of India, huge effigies of Ravana stand on the Ram Lila ground with his giant brother Kumbhkarna and son Meghnath. The effigies are made from paper, bamboo framework, and packed with fireworks which explode as they are sparked with flames.
The overall effect of the block embroidery, lace, is rich. Stages and Rath of Lord Rama and other deities are combination of wood carving with decorative brass fitting. The Ram Lila performance creates a festive atmosphere and enables observance of religious rites. This festival is rich in crafts such as costumes, jewelry, masks, headgear, makeup and decoration. Dresses have special significance in pantomimic styles Lilas. Ayodhya is popular for Mandali Ram Lila. The performance represented on a stage and complemented by songs with musical elements from the folk operas and Kathak dance. Eye-catching decoration is an amazing sight guaranteed to hold every spectator spellbound till the end of this performance. DussehraMela is celebrated on the Ram Lila ground. This Mela is flooded with arts and crafts materials. Thousands of people come to see and buy craft products. These are the folks and daily needs crafts which are created by people for their personal use.

Durga Puja is celebrated in Bengal by Bengali people in Puja Pandals (marques). Preparation for this occasion begins long before the actual day arrives. Unbaked clay images of Durga are made by potters. The artists or potters make these models according to the patron’s priest. This tradition is two hundred years old. A large number of splendid Durga images are made in the act of killing Mahishasura. Hand skills of potters are really desirable. All the images may be tall and short. Some images are seen twenty feet tall. Human anatomical details, liner beauty, graceful curves are delicately furnished.

Christmas Day is celebrated by Christians on 25th December. Churches are given a new looking with paint and colour preparatory to the great celebration. Decoration of Christmas tree is really amazing. This tree is specially prepared for the occasion with small bulbs, stars, bells, candies, ribbon, gifts and other decorative items. India is fairly familiar with the joined figure of Santa Claus, main centre of attraction, bringing present to the children. Santa Claus is fully dressed by skilled designers. This festival is full of burning sparkles, crackers and bursting lots of crackers. Christmas tree is the best example of the craft work.

Decoration done on Christmas can be of a great joy and satisfaction whether they are for yourself or a gift. The central bead should be large enough to accommodate the necessary wires. The star can be made simply by using different wires, or more complex by adding even more wires. Colourful stars hanging on the
Christmas tree or catching the light at the window looks very beautiful. (Maguire, 2001, p. 27).

*Ganesha Chaturthi* celebrated mostly by people of west and south India. Bombay is the main centre of the tremendous scale of festivities and zeal. During *Ganesha Chaturthi* people offer *Prasad* to the images of Ganesha in their mini temples at the home. They attribute considerable social significance to the *Pandals* as communities compete with each other to put up a more outstanding one.

*Ganesh Chaturthi* is celebrated in honour of Ganesha, the god with the head of an elephant in the light of *Bhadrapath*. Highly decorated images of this deity riding on a rat, are first sanctified, and, after being reserved for some days in a building, are carried in demonstration to a river, or pond, or to the sea, and thrown into the water with good wishes. Before consignment to the water the divine spirit is removed from the image by a rite and the recitation of special texts. Feasts are given to Brahmans during the days of the ceremony (H., 1977, p. 97-98).

“People wear fresh and clean cloth. Potters craft clay sculpted images of Ganesha. These magnificent clay idols of Ganesha are made in a wide range of sizes to suit the pocket of each devotee. The idols are purchased and brought home the day previous to *Ganesh Chaturthi*. Clay images of gods and goddesses are baked in the sun. Each Hindu buys a colourful idol for ten days long *Puja*. *Ganesh Chaturthi* is also celebrated in other parts of India. The preparation starts one month before with great enthusiasm to celebrate this occasion. The festival starts with the installation of beautifully sculpted Ganesha idols. In homes and *Pandals* (marquee) these idols are decorated beautifully according to their religious themes. A huge crowd carries life-size or even a bigger image of Ganesha on cart to the pond, river or sea. To the believer, the ritual ensures a smooth progress to the year that lies ahead till Ganesha returns again.” (Lal, 2014)

Navratri is the nine night’s festival. Navratri is the festival celebrated chiefly in Gujarat and in some parts of Rajasthan. A silver coin engraved with Durga’s image, dry fruit box and other crafted gift items are the best options for presenting anyone on the auspicious occasion. Colourful dances of *Garba* and *Dandiya Rasa* are the highlights of this festival during which men and women are dressed in colourful and magnetically attractive traditional attires. The most chosen attire for the dance is sari.
worn in the typical Gujarati style. In Saurashtra region, the performers would wear embroidered *Ghaghara* or backless *Bholi* (kapdu), *Odhani* (mirror-work, *Lehnga* and short blouses). They would adorn themselves with lots of silver jewellery on their head.

During the festive season of *Navratri*, man and women take part in dance performance. The performers stand in a circular form in the night. A lamp is placed inside a pierced earthen traditionally decorated terracotta pot called *Garba* (which are made by potter). The lamp is lit up inside the pierced pot signifying light or knowledge. The pot is filled with a betel nut and a silver coin. A coconut is placed on top of it. The women place the pot *Garba* with lamp on their head and move in a circular motion.

*Navratri Garba* is the most colourful form of dance. The performers both men and women would clad themselves in colourful and magnetically attractive traditional attires. The most chosen attires for the dance are sari worn in the typical Gujarati style. Their male counterpart would wear *Kediyum* (shirt) and *Vajani* (trouser), with a *Rumal* (printed headpiece). Drum, harmonium and *Naal* are the musical instruments usually used for *Garba* dance. Each locality makes its own special *Pandal*. Groups of dances play *Dandia* with richly decorated playing sticks. These *Dandia* sticks are outstanding examples of art and craft, adorned with multi lively and striking colours, paper, cloth etc. Youngsters enjoy the evening with great zeal.

In some communities, people fast during this season that last for nine days of *Navratri*. On days 1-3 small mud bed is prepared for *Puja* (worship) and barley seeds are sown on it. It shows the energy and power of Goddess Durga.

On days 4-6 Goddess Laxmi is worshipped;

On days 7-8 Goddess Saraswati is worshipped for spiritual knowledge;

On the 8th day of festival holy fire is performed;

*Mahanavmi* is the ninth day. On this day *Maha Puja* of *Kanya* is performed. Nine young girls representing the nine forms of Durga are worshipped.

Old Delhi, Gujarat and Rajasthan are the places with a sizeable Jain population. Lord Mahavir Jain is the founder of Jain religion. The birth anniversary of
Lord Mahavir is called Mahavir Jayanti. Peaceful processions are organised where children put skit depicting different phases of Lord Mahavir’s life. Many magnificent and ornate temples in India are constructed by Jains, are true examples of stone crafts. Shwetambara (white clad) and the Digambara (sky clad) are the two principle sects of Jainism. The Digambaras believe in emulating the life of Lord Mahavira to the last detail going to the extent of shedding their clothes in order to follow the doctrine of non-violence. Shvetambaras are moderates and are generally clad in white cloth.

Karva Chauth is a significant festival for the women of North India. Married women keep fast and get dressed in their bridal clothes, jewellery and traditional dresses like sari, Lehnga, Odhinis (long skirt and Dupatta). Dresses of women have beautiful designs on them with subtle combinations and colour contrasts. Not only Resham, golden, silver embroidery, but beads, metallic pieces, mirrors, stars, shells are used to produce decorative designs. A necklace around every married woman, earrings head ornaments, bangles, finger rings are essential for her. She receives a basket of Karva Chauth Sargi sent by her mother-in-law, beautifully wrapped with coloured papers, laces and ribbons. Married women buy new Karvas a few days before Karva Chauth. The potters create a form of a clay pots with own distinct ritualistic look called Carva. These Carvas are painted and decorated with beautiful geometrical designs or flower patterns. Multiple motifs take from their surroundings. They put bangles and ribbons, home-made candy and sweets, make-up items and small clothes inside the pot. The women then visit each other on the day of Karva Chauth or directly exchange these Karvas.

Baya a Puja Thalis (platter) containing the Roli, vermilion, sacred water, dry fruits like cashew almonds, pistachio etc., is a very important decorative piece for performing the Karva Chauth. Different types of Indian sweets are decorated in earthen clay pots; a Kalash is filled with either milk or water. The art of creating attractive Thalis for Puja may also have the ritualistic decoration. Puja Thalis are decorated with flowers, leaves, colour and and multicoloured pulses. In the evening, all the married women gather together at a common place to perform all the rituals of Karva Chauth festival.

Buddh Poornima festival is held at the Arunanchal Pradesh to honour the birth of Buddhist festival is celebrated with joy and zeal from those people comes from far
and wide. Ritual dances depict the victory of the powerful deities of Buddhism over evil spirit. The dancers wear multi-hued long loose outer garments. The dancers are a swirl of colours as they gracefully execute the movements. They wear grotesque masks to show the evil and good spirits. The masks are traditional and the best craftsmen can draw them free hand from memory.

*Makar Sakranti* is the other name of *Uttarayan*. Each state of India celebrates this festival in distinct style. Everyone flies kites on this day. It is the major festival of Gujarat. The sellers of Ahmadabad earn above Rupees 50 lakhs by selling the bobbins, *Manjha*, (thread) and fancy kites in all shapes and sizes with long tail or tailless kites. Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Manipur, Orissa, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Goa are the states which celebrate it as *Makar Sankranti* and greet each other.

*Makar Sankranti* celebrated all over India is known by different names and celebrated with different customs in different parts of the country.

Punjabis throw sugarcane, sweets and rice in the bonfire on the occasion of *Makar Sakranti*. And the following day they celebrate as *Maghi*. *Bhangra*, a Punjabi dance is performed on the day. Tamil Nadu celebrates as *Thai Pongal*, Andhra Pradesh as *Pedda Ponduga*, Assam as *Magh Bihu*; Kashmir Valley celebrates as *Shishur Saenkrat*.

The Assamese celebrate three types of Bihu in a year: *Rangoli Bihu* or *Bohaag Bihu*; *Kati Bihu* or *Kongaali Bihu*; and *Magh Bihu* or *Bhogaali Bihu*. *Bohaag Bihu* is seeding time, *Kati Bihu* is completion of sowing of paddy and transplantation of the saplings, and *Magh Bihu* marks the conclusion of the harvesting.

On Bihu Day people greet each other and pay their respect to the elders in the family by presenting a traditional Assamese hand-woven cotton towel with red designs on the white background called *Gamosa*. On the *Bohaag Bihu* celebrations, men wear them on the head as well as on the body.

Another example of craft work is the *Japi* – a traditional bamboo hat with colourful designs. A more simple bamboo *Japi* is normally worn by the farmer while cultivating in the field protecting oneself from the sun and rain.
**Kati Bihu** is celebrated in middle of October. Assamese do silent prayer and earthen lamps are kept in the paddy fields. Also near Tulsi tree for the success of the crop.

**Bhagoli Bihu** is celebrated in January. They make houses with thatch and dry leaves, trunks, known as *Bhela Ghar* or *Meji Ghar* – an overnight the Assamese people celebrate in thatched houses and early in the morning lit up with fire. The whole night people sing *Bihu* songs with beating *Dhol*. Next day they visit their relative’s homes and greet each other.

On the fifth day of spring called *Basant Panchami*, they get up early in the morning, take bath and worship the sun, Mother Ganga. The youngsters are dressed in diverse shades of yellow which magnify the grandeur of nature and intellectual as well as artistic accent modern, urban and expressive. It represents the ripening of the spring crops. Many people visit temple to offer *Halwa* (dessert) or sweet rice to gods. The goddess Saraswati is dressed in yellow garments and worshipped by men and women attired in yellow.

Kite flying is a popular sport in north India on *Basant Panchami*. Kites are made by creative designers and craftsmen who create it with new forms, new colours, and various materials. Clear blue skies are filled with kites of all attractive colours. The yellow colour has great significance. They use yellow around them, put turmeric *Tilak* (a colourful mark) on their forehead, offer yellow flowers in worship. It is customary that special *Saraswati Puja* is performed in schools, colleges as well as in homes and all educational institutions, especially in music, arts and crafts institution. Books, articles, musical instruments, and other objects related to the arts instruments, earthen inkpots and bamboo quills are placed in front of her. Nobody writes or read any books on this day. This signifies that the every learner receive her blessings through the books placed in front of her.

**Pongal** is the chief harvest festival of the Southern Indian state originally celebrated by Tamils. Tamils coat their tools with sandalwood paste and the harvested paddy is cut with these agricultural tools. They celebrate the festival in four days.
Bhogi Pongal

This is the first day of the pongal. Houses are painted and cleaned on this occasion under influence of India cultural tradition. Doorways are decorated with ornamental objects. Yellow, blue, red, green are the colour series, which are used the order of the day. On this day, people burn their old garments and unnecessary daily need items in a fire made of cow-dung and wood and they dance around the fire singing the honour of Lord Indra.

They also clean and decorate their houses as a sign of getting rid of the old and welcoming the new. The Tamils worship Lord Indra on this day. Tamils decorate their homes with geometrical patterns created with a paste of harvested rice and colourful powders called colourful Rangolis or Kolams.

Generally, Kolam patterns prepared by creating the structure with dots and then link them with lines. Mostly geometric patterns made in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The outlines drawn with double lines are filled by smaller lines whereas the inner ground is divided into triangles and filled in with smaller lines and dots. These patterns are used for a number of festivals, ceremonies and rituals. A special Kolam of sun, moon, and nine planets is prepared in Karnataka on wooden seat for a young couple is placed to bless them. The Kolams of Kerala are made by women. There are the ritualistic Kolams prepared by the priests. The Pulluvans of Kerala make elaborate snake Kolams, Karinagam, which are prepared for propitiating the snake-gods who are then worshipped (Dhamija, p. 76).

Surya Pongal: Rice is boiled in turmeric milk and sweetened with sugarcane juice. Common greetings are exchanged on second celebration (Festivals of India)

Mattu Pongal: On the third day of the festival of Pongal, people clean their cattle and scrub their horns; wash and oil with colourful patches decorating their bodies, necks are profusely garlanded with flowers and bell. Main event of this festival is, Jallikatu or taming the bull. In this contest, a large number of villagers represent their best bulls for fight decorated with colour and flowers (Festivals of India).

Kaanum Pongal: On the fourth day people visit their friends, relative’s houses and take attractive crafted gifts for all their dear ones. Temples are highly decorated
on this special occasion and everyone goes to temples for the worship of gods (Festivals of India).

_Teej_ is generally celebrated in North India on the third day of the lunar half of June-July. It is an important festival in all over the colourful state of Rajasthan. _Devi_ is seen as a bride. She is worshipped at home for two days. _Maharaja_ of Jaipur walks the length of the road just ahead of the bride’s carriage. Wonderful craft works add charm to the festival. In Uttar Pradesh women and girls buy new bangles, green dresses and other ornamental accessories and, swing or _Jhoola_ are hung from mango trees, decorated with flowers where women and girls gather to swing (Sanon, p. 38).

_Teej_ is traditionally celebrated by women. Parents gift new clothes to their daughters. _Teej_ is also celebrated for arrival of rains. _Teej_ fairs are held at villages and towns where thousands of people come to eat, drink, buy, sell, and generally enjoy themselves. Music and folk dances include are also an integral part of celebrations.

_Baisakhi_ is the New Year’s Day going by the Sikh calendar. The Punjabi _Bhangra_ (folk dance) movements express ploughing, reaping, sowing, and weeding. Beautifully decorated _Dholak_ (drum) changes the sequences progress. Fully dressed dancers perform his labour with grace. Women too join the men folk (Sanon, p. 30).

Puri in Orissa, another important pilgrim centre has developed a number of crafts, such as _Patachitra, Pattdas, and Phards_ which are created by professional craftsmen or artists. The _Patachitra_ paintings on cloth, carved paintings on wood, stone carving, appliqué work on cloth are used for temple ceremonies and pilgrims who visit Puri (Dhamija, p. 78).

The craftsmen also make small pictures of Lord Jagannath and other deities. Lord Jagannath is another name of Lord Krishna having his famous temple at Puri. Lord Krishna’s mobile temple is built on the carts is about fourteen metres tall, its wheels being over two metres high. It is the dignified example of the craft work. Roughly-sculpted images of deities are built in pure carving. The temple of Puri is a work of intricate sculpture in itself.

_Losar_ is New Year’s Day of Ladakhis. The festival continues for five days. They believe that each man’s good and evil are kept in white and black shape of pebbles.
They believe that evil forces may have entered the Gompha (temples) over the years. To drive them away, a ritual of masked dances called the Chhain is carried out. Long horns are blown accompanied by the clash of huge symbols. While fingers play on the step of the Gyaline (flute), a hooked drumstick beats a rhythm on the Gnachung (drum). An air of excitement blows in the crowd. A colourful figure heavily dressed, wearing an age like masks comes inside the encircling crowd and makes swift movements to the quick music. Smoke of incense rise from the instruments that are swinging and waft and with the dancer. Slowly the number of these ritual dancers goes up (Sanon, p. 6).

Houses paint in new look with white washes on the last day of the year and craft items increased beauty to their homes. It looks really amazing as acrobatics goes door to door singing and dancing in dramatic style. Crafts are easily seen in the operas, it makes this celebration a spectacle to behold. In Ladakh wear unique type of crown known as the Perak. This hood-like leather attire decorated all over with turquoise, ruby and coral stones encircles the forehead, rises over the crown of the head and falls down the back to waist. The lizard, snake-or-fish like profile that such a headdress suggests is reflective of the belief the women originated in an underworld occupied by reptile and aquatic animals on their writes the women wear conch shell bangles or Tunglag which are knocked together in greeting (Barnard, 1995, p. 103-104).

Festival Onam is celebrated in Kerala. The boat racing is the most thrilling part of the festival. Row boats divide themselves in distinct classes. The largest Chundan is 100-130 feet long and requires 60 pairs of rowers. Very much specialised and with brass plate in very refined technique, rises some 15-20 feet above the water resembles the neck of cobra and other racing boats are Odi, Veppu, and Churulam. Precious gold coins are used for decorating boats. Kathakali and Kyekothikali are the main dances of these festivals. Textile crafts are the main centre of attraction of the festival dance. Outside colourful silk umbrellas in different shades indicate by their number the economic status of the boat owner (Sanon, p. 54)

“Pushkar Mela is a cattle fair held at Pushkar in Rajasthan. The fair is a complete exhibition of its culture. A great number of tourists visit here from across the world. Pushkar mela is the largest cattle fair in the world in which camels are a
special attraction. It is a colourful fair attended by people from miles around. Camel races, acrobatics and folkdance and music are some of its highlights. Vendors selling the large gaudy turbans of native male arrive here to trade their animals. This is the contrast of desert and arena of colours. People getting themselves tattooed, Ghaghra Choli bead jewellery and Mojdis (shoes) add charm to this fair. The large variety of ornaments like nose ring, necklace, bangles, hairpins and chains, waist chain, anklet, toe rings and the ivory bangles worn from wrist to shoulder are the best examples of jewellery crafts for women. The colourful upper garments of tie and dye and patch work sale goes on high peak.” (Parashar, 2014)

Handmade saddles decorated with bells, beads, and other decorative items fit to every camel’s hump. The woven saddle straps and embroidered back covers add to their beauty. In the evening hundreds of oil lamps placed on tiny leaf boats, each carrying votive flowers on the lake by worshippers.

“The largest Muslim fair in India – Urs is held at Ajmer Sharif, Rajasthan every year at the tomb of the Sufi Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. The preparation of Urs Ajmer Sharif starts before a couple of months earlier to the actual ceremony date. The tomb is covered with an embroidered silk cloth. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world gather to pray at the Dargah (shrine) and complete their invocation of God. Chadar or Ghilaf (sheet) which are votive offerings for several hundred thousand devotees offer the tomb, is the best example of craft work made from flower or silk cloth ornate with Kalabattum (golden wire) beads, stars, mirrors, lace etc. People place it on the tomb of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. These are the economic status symbols of devotees. Golden and silver worked Chadar which belongs to people from rich as well as upper middle class. Ivory and white plastic bangles, beads jewellery, conch shell ornaments, embellished with glittering foil and imaginative style of decoration are also found in Ajmer Urs. The shops in the market around the Dargah sell flowers, prayer mats, rosaries, religious objects, books, embroidered carpets and silver ornaments and general merchandise are on sale. The craft of textile find their own special place. Markets are flooded with tie and dye on silk or cotton clothes in multi shades. Red, green, yellow is popular.” (Moini, 2014)

Kumbh Mahaparva is held at Allahabad, Haridwar, Nasik, and Ujjain at the interval of three years. The crafts market also takes place here in large numbers.
Cattle fair is also held at Sonepur Bihar, at Bateshwar and Mukteshwar in Uttar Pradesh. Cows and oxen are coloured in bright attractive shades of yellow, green, and red, orange. Their horns are polished or glazed with oil. Various types of bells are hung around their necks adding pleasant chimes to people’s ears.

Republic Day is held on 26th January and Independence Day is held on 15th August of every year. These two occasions are the national events of great importance which remind us of our historical past of our struggle for independence from the British rule. In the capital city of Delhi, these two occasions are celebrated with processions of military parade and colourful floats representing different states cultural attractions.

*Tarnetar Mela* is held at Tarnetar once in a year. Young tribal men and women get married in large numbers. There is a rich range of craft material. This festival is famous for its folk dances. *Ghaghra Choli* is the main dress of the folk dance artistes who adorn attractive attires

*Haji Pir mela* is celebrated at Haji Pir (Banni) in a remote part of Kutch, Gujarat. A wide range of crafts attracts thousands of pilgrims from all religious groups. They come to see the fair and buy craft materials from the traditional skilled craftsmen (Dhamija, 1970).

“*Budakki* fair is held at Lucknow. It has its own specialty in pottery. Here a large number of potters showcase for sale objects like cup, saucer, glass, bowl, plate, pen holder, flower vase, jars, etc. for domestic use. Each village and town has a large number of potters who make a range of objects for daily use and sell them in the fair. Local people and tourists come here to buy the potteries.” (Kishor, 2014)

“*Taziya* is the good decorative work of art and craft. Thousands of *Taziyas* in different shapes and sizes are prepared every year for the months of Muharram. Today paper artists make an example of traditional and historical techniques. Artists intricate petal details using a series of delicate cut outs or adopt them bringing modern design values and style to their work. Here a wide range of paper types, weights, colour sand texture available is available. *Taziya* is an inspiration in itself to be admired for its own innate beauty, and also a medium for creating work of a bamboo and paper mausoleum art. In modern times, wood and bamboo are used for frame and paper to
create *Taziyas* tin foil, paper, various forms of cloth, lace, beads, flowers, mica and glass and other attractive materials are used in *Taziya*. Nawab of Awadh displayed *Tazia*, which are made of green glass or brass moldings. Few were originally made of precious materials for royal and wealthy patrons, ivory, sandalwood, cedar or of forms filigree silver. For poor buyers colour talc is used.” (Suraiya, 2014).

*Suraj Kund* craft *Mela* – every year the Indian government selects a particular theme and plans the *Surajkund* crafts *Mela*. The *Surajkund Crafts Mela* is held at Haryana and organized once in the year by tourism department. It showcases finest handlooms and handicrafts. skilled artists from all over the country who have specialised in making a variety of art and crafts objects, display a range of eye-catching, delightful handloom and best of handicrafts. It is a strong platform for Indian artists and craftsmen. It is the best crafts fair which has helped to build up the market for crafts abroad. It also attracts a large number of foreign buyers.

The rich crafts bring *Surajkund Crafts Mela* alive the ancient living crafts tradition and presents to its visitors the superb and skillful creation of fine quality crafts, textiles, wood carving, ivory work, pottery, terracotta, stonework, lac work, cane and grass works are the most treasure of *Surajkund Crafts Mela*. Folk operas, dances and musical evenings on the open ground add colours to this popular crafts fair.

Dance, music and other art forms are celebrated in *Kala Ghoda Arts Festival* in the month of February at *Kala Ghoda*, Mumbai. It is a rich performance of crafts. Artists and craftsmen with creative bent of mind from all over the country participate and display their creativity. *Kala Ghoda* is an attraction for creative talent. It infuses vibrancy and zeal amongst people in India. Large numbers of tourists are attracted towards this grand affair of festival. People from distant villages come down to the village holding the fair a week before the festival. It serves as a full entertainment package for visitors.

*Kala Ghoda* Festival is also an attraction point of visitors. Thousands of tourists from all around the world come here to have entertain and enthusiasm. Artists come here to selling their traditional craftwork. Exhibitions of paintings and sculptures, music concerts, literary events, dance performances, film screenings,
theatre shows, workshops, heritage walks, food fiesta, and pavement shows are the main attraction of festival.

Goa Carnival is held annually in the month of February at Goa. Started as a celebration for three days the state and the streets come alive with music and colour. It is held for a week in the mid February of every year in Goa. It is a time for feasting and fun of lively processions, drifts, the strumming of guitars, colourful western dance forms and of non-stop unbridled festivity. Among the many and various colourful feasts and festivals that are celebrated in Goa, the exuberant carnival is the most enthusiastically awaited occasion and attracts thousands of people from all over the country. Enormous parades are organised all over the state with bands, famous red-and-black dance, and floats out all night on the streets, and grand balls held in the evening on the final day. Crafts work magnetizes thousands of visitors.

“The Taj Mahotsav is a non-stop ten day much-awaited carnival held annually at Shilpgram, near Tajmahal at Agra. This lively ten day event helps to impart a sense of pride in the craft tradition and cultivate a taste for arts and crafts. Indian crafts and cultural touch come in finest form of innovative effort on the platform. It is a festive introduction to India’s widespread arts, crafts, folk music, poetry, and classical dance performances, elephant and camel rides, games, exotic cuisine and culture. Decorated elephants and camels, drum beaters, folk artists and master craftsmen come together to remake the magnificent past of the Mughal. The impressive festival begins with a spectacular procession inspired by Mughal grandeur. The Taj Mahotsav becomes a live culture, crafts and traditions. It is a great opportunity for legendary artists and craftsmen to display their exquisite works of art. Cane work of Allahabad, wood carvings from Saharanpur, glass work of Ferozabad, brass and other metal wares from Moradabad, handmade carpets of Bhadohi, the pottery of Khurja, Chikan work of Lucknow, the silk of Banaras and much more are the main attractive craft of the festivity.” (Jameel, 2014)

The Taj Mahotsav is a glimpse of Indian rich heritage and extraordinary legacies. Visitors enjoy arts and crafts, folk dancer’s tune and dance style.

Decorating the home is the rich tradition in Kutch. Each community has a distinctive style. The Meghaval Harijans of Banni area decorate their homes with grain containers delicately, making patterns all around mud huts called Bunghas.
Often the outside of Bhungas is painted with mud colours. Women create patterns on their home walls and their embroidered garments are quite similar to those crafts products which are made by men on the carved wooden chests and stools for local use. The wall murals are prepared by women with the use of a twig and white chalk retains the traditional folk character (Dhamija, p. 77).

Dhebaria Rabaris create bold mud work with large mirrors embedded in the walls. Wall decorations are prepared from cow dung cakes in some rural areas of India. Women draw free-hand patterns on mud and cow dung mixed with straw. The patterns are prepared while the plaster on the walls is still wet. In the rural area of Punjab and Haryana women prepare Jali of unbaked clay for their homes especially front wall of the kitchen in the open veranda of the common courtyard. The finest Jali are made by Harijan women. They use silver foil from cigarette packets, mirrors producing effects similar to that of the Sheesh Mahal of Mughal period. The Meos decorates mirrors and creates alcoves and shelves very similar to the mud work of Kutch (Dhamija).

North Bihar women prepare murals on the wall in distinctive style. A number of ritual works are decorated for festive occasions. The visualisation of daily life and episodes taken from the Puranas are around them. The demon with his raised hands painted in black against the white-washed wall express terror. Twigs are used very effectively. These express strong enough to terrify the evil spirits which may try to enter, where the newly married couple meets for first time. Brahmin and Kayastha families’ women prepare this work (Dhamija).

Art and craft is the beauty of life. It has its origin within human mind. In layman’s words, “It is the skill especially in manual work.” Art and craft has a close relation with the modern daily life. Small creations in design make a huge difference to give a cool and casual look to your daily life. Man wants to make his world more creative and beautiful. If art and craft is a thing of beauty to be enjoyed forever, people need to ensure that they capture it in a frame of modern life that is as superior in substance as it is in style. A man is a social animal who involves himself with social activities. India is a country which is a land rich in popular festivals.

Distinctive interiors, accessories, furnishing and gifts can embellish and enhance beauty of our homes in style during festive season. Birthday, wedding
anniversary, Valentine’s Day, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, etc. are today’s more special, well-known days. On each day people celebrate their love with adorable craft. Art and craft can be anything which you would create with your own hands for the person who is close to your heart. Indoor crafts have an important place in modern life that includes various kinds of activities, useful objects, creative involvements, and hobbies. Indoor crafts provide all basic and exotic needs of your family. Indoor crafts can be divided into various sub-divisional.

Furniture is an important part of a furnished home. People of rich, middle and poor classes use furniture according to their status. Rich people use bed, dining table, chair, sofa, centre table, racks, and other decorative items; middle class people use minimum number of items and lower class use basic furniture in their homes like wooden bed, chair etc. Carpets are an important part of the interior of a home. Rich pile-worked carpets, thick wall to wall mattress, brocaded silk spread called Masnad, cushions in attractive shapes and. sizes covered with brocade, silk, and velvets play an important role in modern daily life. People of lower class or the poor often use cotton Durri made on hand block simple sheet for welcoming the guest.

“Hands mold clay into toys or the deity that is worshipped. Kulhar (clay tea cup) is made in thousands for tea, sweets or water and after being used only once, is thrown away. Kumhar (potter) creates not only clay pottery vessels, but also decorative items for our home decoration, like some clay pots as decorative indoor crafts. Traditional craft objects and handicrafts can be used as home decor.” (Lal, 2014)

Jewellery is a symbol of the rank and status of one who wears. The jewellery making tradition is remarkable. Diamond, silver and gold is precious jewellery used by upper class people. Tribal societies use Couries feather, seeds, wings of insects, grass, flowers; leaves are utilised as important means of embellishment. Necklace with pendant, finger rings, earrings, bracelets, bangles, waist band, Chudamadi (hair decorative ornate in lotus flower shape) Bore (a head ornament) nose ring or pin etc. are the main jewellery. Many varieties of shapes and decorative designs of nose ornaments have been developed with the use of a range of material silver, gold, pearls and precious stones. Waist band (a series of chains are worn by women around their waists). Anklets with hollow bells, toe ring and bangles, nose ring, and Mangal Sutra
(chain made from small beads) are the symbols of marriage and are put on by women at the time of marriage. We find children of all castes and communities wear Hansli, supposed to protect their collar bone from dislocation. Beads jewellery, Kundan, enamelled, ivory and other material-based ornaments are used in daily life. Precious stones, gold and silver jewellery are the symbols of women.
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