Chapter-2

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In the earliest times when human civilisation came into existence, man tended to show curiosity and interest in arts and crafts which is proved from the archaeological remains in forms of hunting tools and agricultural implements made from stones, wood, and other metals. They show man’s creativity in the field of craft. We find crafted tools made by proto humans that have been traced back two millions of years in the northwestern part of the subcontinent. The first tool made in that age was made up of stone, for that, the era is known as Stone Age.

The earliest form of working in stone is found throughout India since Stone Age such as weapons like arrow-heads, javelin points, hammers, chisels, scraper, primitive types of knives or cutting tools, etc., and such articles of hunting, defense and utility are still being used in abundance. For instance, the stone implement like hammer-stones made of quartzite, basalt, sandstone, cels of basalt and diorite, and small implements made of chert were found in Banda district and the principle classes of implements like chert flake knives and arrows were discovered in Mirzapur (Mehta, 1980, p. 1).

Few stone tools have been found of lower Palaeolithic Age. Some pointed and sharp-edged stone tools of upper Palaeolithic Age have also been found in the Bhim Bhatika caves. In south India too, mostly tools and the remains of this age have been found.

The first major culture of India centered on the upper reaches of the Indus river valley during the late third and early second millennia B. C. Mohenjo- Dro and Harappa in Pakistan were the chief sites. Recently, other important centers of this culture have been found farther South at Kalibangan in Rajasthan, India, and near Karachi, Pakistan (Crox, H. D. L. and Tansey, R. G. 1991, p. 126).

The Indus Valley civilisation had a rich craft tradition and technical excellence in the field of sculpture and metal works. The chisels, fish hooks, razor, and spear-heads found at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. At Mohenjo-Daro we find a copper
statuette of a woman dancer with excellent casting by the Cire Perdue process. This process is also known as ‘lost wax’ process in which the image to be caste was the first modelled in wax and covered with the thick layer of clay. Wax modelled was melted and hollow mould left in the clay. Copper bronze alloy was poured into it. When metals were cooled, clay layer was removed and the sculpture finished. Bronze and copper vessels were also found. The famous dancing girl of Harappa found with alluring ornaments like bangles and body jewellery (Metallurgical Techniques of Indus Valley Civilization).

The ornaments found at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro showed that at the early chalcolithic age, the Indian jewelers were skilfully efficient in using gold, silver, bronze and a variety of beautiful semiprecious stones for the purpose of manufacturing ornaments (Ganguli, March, 1951, p. 7).

The River Indus plains and Thar Desert of north-west are the areas of Indian subcontinent where much of embroidery was produced around some 2,000 years before the birth of Christ. The famous sites among these regions are Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Dyers and bead makers were the ones among various others who had workshops in Mohenjo-Daro, thus, making it a major manufacturing centre. The famous Indian cash crop of cotton grew in the areas surrounding these cities. The bust of a man who appears to be a priest wearing an ornate shawl showed very well that embroidery have been highly advanced in these regions. The motifs on the shawl suggest that it had been worked in raised embroidery (Morrell, 1994, p. 9).

Gold and silver moulded ornaments have been found in Harappa sites. These were made in different shapes and forms, cylindrical, fluted, long barrel, cylindrical, globular, segmented, gadrooned and median ribbed. These were shaped out of stones of all kinds like agate, carnelian, chalcedony and feldspar. They were made of faience and earthen shell and steatite. Some glazed and beads made ornaments were treated with various kinds of heat. They are given beautiful shapes and all the shapes did not seem to have been overlooked. Here we find beads shaped and put together in proper and symmetrical way.

For more than a thousand years, the simplest crafts such as the ancient and elegant craft of working with vegetable fibres into useful and decorative baskets and mats along with those of making pots and weaving cloth have been considered modest
occupations of India. It uses an abundant source of materials with almost no tools and without arcane technical secrets, among which basketry and mat weaving share with pottery is found as being the earliest human crafts. For example, ancient pots bearing the imprint of a fibre mat are found in the north-west India (Barnard, 1993, p. 175).

Indian potters from prehistoric times have been master craftsmen as may be seen in the pottery excavated at Mohenjo-Daro in its symmetry and balance. Clay pottery made by Indian potters since prehistoric times have been master works of craftsmanship. As may be seen in the excavated at Mohenjo-Daro in its creativity, symmetry and balance, its painted patterns like birds, animals, geometric designs and glazing, while the black polished wares found at Taxila may be obtained as an example of finished pottery of historic times.

Bronze needles were found at the excavated site of Mohenjo-Daro which was probably used for embroidery and similar patterns of embroidery were seen in Buddhist sculptural representations at Bharut and Sanchi, particularly in the veils and head bands of the carved figures on the railing pillars of the stupas (Upadhyay, 1966, p. 72).

The design has been drawn on the red base pottery with black lines, are preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi. These terracotta utensils are still smooth and shining. It is a matter of wonder that what type of varnish was used by the artist? The big earthen pot is preserved in the Museum and its shine becomes the matter of wonder for archeologists even today. Its civilisation is also known as terracotta civilisation.

Ivory carving is an ancient craft in India. Ivory objects were also found in the Indus Valley civilisation. The vessels made from stone, steatite, seals with animal motifs found at Mohenjo-Daro are examples of the ancient carving art in stone, myths and imaginary of signs and symbol. The most remarkable work ‘Priest King’ on (soap stone) is famous for its carving and ornamentation.

Indian hand-woven textile showed that ancient Indians knew the art of weaving. Cotton fabrics and bobbins discovered at Mohenjo-Daro. Madder-dyed fabric was found here sticking to a silver vase, thus, we can say that the mordant process of dyeing cloth was known in India some 5,000 years ago. Clay was the chief
used materials in the Indus basin. They made coloured pointed based goblet toys, worship objects that have close parallels to those produced in modern India.

A landmark in the history of women’s costume in India is constituted in the sculpture of the Parkham Yaksha’s statue and of a sari in the Didarganj Yakshi from the vicinity of Pataliputra (modern Patna), belonging to the Mauryan period (B.C. 323 to B.C. 184). Apart from it, the earliest example of costume was observed in the the rock drawings of Spain and in the Egyptian civilization of the period of about 3,200 B.C. which thrived on the banks of the river Nile, the Indus Valley civilisation of the 3rd millennium B.C. (Dongerkery, 1963, p. 3-4).

The Indus artifacts show homemade sculpture, but stone was not much used for decorative and constructive purpose. They used knives, axes, and spear-heads, fish hooks made from bronze and copper.

The rich heritage of the Indus Valley civilisation was followed by the Vedic age. When Vedas were written, there are numerous references in the Vedic literature where instances of artisans involved in weaving, wood crafting, pottery making etc. are mentioned. The Rig Veda in particular, refers to a variety of pottery made from clay, wood, and metal are being duly mentioned (History of Indian Crafts).

The use of leather is very ancient in India. “Siva the Great Destroyer in the Hindu Triad is clothed in a tiger’s skin, and deer skin was used as a seat by the Brahmins of ancient India. In the Rig Veda leathern bags to hold water have been mentioned, similar to those in India at the present day. Leathern bottles were also made. Straps and bands were manufactured of leather and hide.” (Mehta, 1960, p. 23)

It also refers about the leather craft practice in this period. Agni Devtas painting on leather is mentioned in the Rig Veda. The members of the “Bhrigu Rishi” have also been done as specialist in wood work.

Woodcarving has a very old tradition like other crafts mentioned in the Rig Veda and subsequent earliest books. The wood worker is referred Sutradhar. In Sanskrit, literally ‘the man who holds the strings’ that is a key man. The Shilpa Shastra, a treatise on arts and crafts, gives full knowledge of the making of wooden articles. And also throw light on the selection of trees for clear-cutting and for seasoning (Chattopadhyaya K. D., 1963, p. 66).
In the Rig Veda the term Seven Ratna denoted treasure rather than a jewel as it came to do later. The fabulous Maniratna, the serpent stone is mentioned in the Atharva Veda as an amulet against all kinds of evil. A famous book “Ashtadhayayi” written by Panini talks about art being divided into two parts as Charu and Karu. Charu means fine art whereas Karu has been used for the useful art. It is clear to say that useful art was craft having done perfectly in this age.

Both ‘cloth of gold’ and (Hiranya) Kinkhab are mentioned in the Vedas. Megasthenes (BC 302-298 BC) speaking of the costumes of the princes of India, remarks that their robes were worked in pure gold. “In contrast to the simplicity they observe in other matter they love finery and ornament. They wore dresses worked in gold, adorn with precious stones and also flowered robes of fine muslin.” (Upadhyay, p.57)

The rich stuffs of Babylon brought from India were in all probability gold brocades from Ahmedabad, Benares or Murshidabad. It would appear; however, that the Kinkhab were originally woven of pure gold and that silk was added both to give a body to the textile and to afford a means of colour illumination.

Jewellery is mentioned in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Sita on her wedding day had her ears and nose resplendent with jewels, her waist, wrists and arms adorned with bracelets. Her anklets were circular round with golden ring, a little bells tinkle upon her toes. And she would walk with bare feet over the carpet floor. This is the proof that time the rug work was in vogue. The Nakashi (carving) on the furniture was priceless. Textile field was very wide in that time. Stone crafts, wood craft, metal crafts, weaving, stitching, embroidery is clearly mentioned in the two epic scriptures.

We find the great development in the field of sculpture in Mauryan age. During Mauryan Empire artistic production of crafts too proliferated. Starting from 3rd century B.C. it is said during the reign of Ashoka 84,000 stupas were built in India (Cultural India: Indian Crafts).

The ‘Sanchi Stupa’ has gained worldwide fame for its beautiful stone carving and relief work. Sanchi (first century B.C.) also reminds of more ancient work in wood and ivory. An imprinting discovered at Sanchi firmly states that a carved panel
had been donated by the guild of ivory carvers of Vidisa nearby. Another carving on the Sanchi Stupa gateway number 1 reminds one of the carved ivory panels of Begram, the ancient Kapisa, and also in Afghanistan under the influence of Indian cultural traditions and political domination (Mehta).

Various sculptures were found in Mathura, Amravati, Vaishali Bharhut, Sanchi etc. depicting female figures adorned with an array of beautiful jewellery which is a proof of jewellery making of this period. The iron pillars of Delhi and Vaishali (Bihar) created or constructed during the time of Ashoka are marvellous spectacle in the field of metallurgical works (Cultural India: Indian Crafts).

The Kushana period was rich in craft. Early Kushana arts and crafts we know only the murals round the Stupa of Miran near the Niyo oasis in Eastern Turkistan (2nd century). Ivory products, potteries, metal crafts, gold, copper, iron and precious stone were the most popular crafts in this period. The intrinsic beauty of the particular object was never lost sight of, and its grace of shape or texture was highlighted by decoration it shows influence of ancient Mathura and Taxila art. Kanishka started the creation of the images of Bhagwan Buddha because Buddha in human form was banned. There was Greek effect on these statues. These statues were prepared at Peshawar, Rawalpindi, and Taxila. The whole area was known as Gandhara (Naqvi).

Factually, the Gupta period is believed to be the Golden Age of the Ancient India and no other period has produced so many piles of gold coins as the Gupta period has, which is the indication of prosperity of that time. And it is again that during this period, all the fine arts reached their climax, experienced all over and utilized most liberally which is evident from the coins under study through their artistic designs and poetic legends (Chhabra, 1986, p. 14).

The Gupta period is known as the Golden phase of the Ancient Antiquity of India. In Gupta period all the arts and crafts reached their pinnacle practised widely and supported generously by the state. Gupta period is not only the classical period in Indian history it is also known for the history of Indian craft. So many poetic folk tales and artistically designed gold coins were stored the Gupta period. These proved the prosperity of that time. Gupta period took rapid advances in the field of crafts and creative art objects or forms. Ajanta and Ellora murals are example of it. These wall paintings are famous for its texture, gesture and ornamentation. These murals throw a
realistic view of the lifestyle of the Gupta period. Under the royal patronage of Gupta King excelled in wood carving, stone carving, jewellery making, weaving. These crafts are evident in their creative works. We find a great richness and variety of designs on the dresses worn by men and women in the Ajanta caves. Mostly the colour used was blue and some clothes have diagonal strips. Soft and dark tones are exactly similar to the effect produced by the resist-dye technique. In cave number 1 an upper garment is decorated with the Hamsa motif.

The framework of crafts also developed in medieval period. It shows the market shifted from north India to southern part of the country. The Delhi sultanate’s craftsmen prospered in the fields of pottery, weaving, wood carving, metal working, jewellery etc. in the field of bronze sculpture, silk weaving, jewellery, temple carving, the contribution of the Cholas and the Vijayanagar Empire is equally significant. Khajuraho temples are the best example of the stone carving. Medieval Temples of Jagannath Puri in Orissa are known for its richness in ornamentation of wood and stone carving (Cultural India: Indian Crafts).

The beginning of the 8th century saw a series of incursions by Muslim invaders such as Qutb uddin Aibak. Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan traveler which led to the first Muslim kingdom in India from 1333 to 1346 A.D. During this period, more than five hundred specialized artisans wove silk and gold brocades for courtly attire were found working under the greatness of Tughlaq in Delhi, the greatest of Muslim capitals in the East. This came to an end after the overthrow of Bahadur Shah Zafar II, the last emperor of the last and greatest dynasty - the Mughals, by the British in 1858 (Hatanaka, 1996, p. 310).

The era was the golden period in the history of craft which brought a rich heritage, adopted from Turko-Mongolic Persian, European, and Indian tradition. Under the patronage of early Mughal, India’s sophisticated crafts reached the height of perfection. Akbar, Jahangir, and Shahjahan attracted master craftsmen from all over the world. The era of ruler Akbar was the golden time in the history of arts and crafts. This period encouraged the introductions of European realism and mixed the Persian decorativeness and Rajasthani culture with the European style. They used new technique like inlay work, glass engraving, carpet weaving, brocades works etc. Carpet and rug work attained perfection only in this period. Various numbers of silk,
techniques and designs are already rich collection of the Indian master craftsmen. Akbar was the first to bring Persian weavers to India and settle them (Dhamija, 1970, p. 5)

A rich variety of patterns is woven all over the shawl by the use of extra weft threads. Mashru weaving and even velvet manufacturing, which was not indigenous to India, was rapidly developed in all over world surpassing those produced in the original centres of manufacture. The tapestry weaving of shawls in the Kashmir is now a memory, replaced by the stem-feather-and chain stitch work of professional male embroiders, who decorate plain wool with paisley motifs, Mughal arches and a variety of pleasing leaves and flowers. Kani shawl-weaving of Kashmir was introduced from Persia, but it soon developed into a refined form of weaving, with the use of Pashmina wool, so that the Persian products could not compare with the fine pieces produced in Kashmir (Dhamija).

The best carpets were seemed to be woven during the rule of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan. At that time, the designs on the carpets were of the Persian style and aesthetics because the carpet weavers were of the Persian origin. The Mughal period is the best example of it as the scenic or pictorial pieces are depicted in Persian. Now, the carpet factories have been set up in Agra, Delhi, Lahore, etc. which followed the designs of Kirman, Kashan, Ispahan, Herat, etc. It came from Kashmir when this art was introduced there, which carried the Central Asian designs (Chattopadhyaya, 1969, p. 11).

This weaving industry grew and flourished till the time of Shahjahan. The metal change in form of wire called Koftgari has been practised in India for quite a long time. Akbar was the great lover of this art. This work has been done on his royal armoury. Papier Mache production as an industry flourished during the period. Kinkhab was one of the best known brocades visible in Varanasi. The Karigars embroidered their Angrakhu, Sherwani and female dresses very well. They used gold and silver threads for brocading. This age gives examples of marble carvings. The famous peacock throne is one of the finest examples of gem inlay work and metal craft. It is decorated with precious stone and having few parallels in world art and craft artefacts. Dynasty promoted the creation of enamelled jewellery and a host of other craft traditions. The making of enamelled jewellery, textiles and carpets was
developed into a fine art. The craftsmen were so skilled that new techniques and skills, trading centres developed to export jewel crafts. Petra dura or inlay work is a unique example of this era. It is famous for ornamentation. Craftsmen of this era laid the foundation for the famous miniature paintings. These were influenced by many schools of Rajasthani Paintings and the Kangra Pahari School of miniatures. Shiny flat coloured metal work with attractive designs on its glossy surface called *Bidri* is famous all over the world. Meenakari craft is originated in this era. It is the continuation of the art of enamelling, fixing colour by melting in fire. Today, we can see the objects which are decorated with Meenakari practised even in the early 16th century art. This period introduced many techniques for colouring ornaments and other objects of gold and silver and also other metallic objects. *Pandan* is a prominent piece of art and craft work during the era. The art of enamelling received an altogether different dimension through the *Pandans*.

Soap stone used for carving small objects like ornamental boxes and other handicraft items came from Bundelkhand, and white marble was extensively used by the Mughals, especially under Shahjahan. Hazrat Moinuddin Chishti’s tomb at Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan is an attractive example of stone cutter art from Mughal Empire who created this world famous monument with highest degree of precision and perfection. On the west of the tomb and marble screened enclosure, the Jannati Darwaza is situated, which has silver coated shutters. Shahjahani Masjid (Mosque) built by Shahjahan, Akbari Masjid built by Akbar, are the great examples of white marble works. Daulat Bagh is the famous garden with excellent carved architecture made by Shahjahan. We find a *Jali* work on a large scale at Agra and Fatehpur Sikri by Muslim craftsmen. It was chiefly an Islamic art but was also found in Hindu Temples. The Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti at Fatehpur Sikri, was built in reverence of the Muslim saint who lived in Sikri and was greatly revered by Akbar, is built of pure white marble. Over the lintel of the doors is designed fanlight of pierced white marble and *Jali* screen in a geometrical pattern which gives ornamental richness to the *Varanda* or porch.

Some excellent works of stone craft is also found at the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra, completed by Jehangir prolifically at the tomb of Sheikh Ghiyas Beg (Itmad-ud-Daulah), the father of Noor Jahan, at Agra but which is in marble. One of the finest and most dignified examples of architecture in this stone is of course, the
magnificent Taj Mahal at Agra. It was considered Emperor Shah Jahan’s dream monument in marble dedicated to his beloved Mumtaz is a matchless gift to the world. Here are some of the finest examples of stone carving, ornamental delicacy and grace. The craftsmen’s techniques and skills improved almost to a point of perfection with time and practice.

Persians, Armenians, Arabs, Dutch, Portuguese, French and British, were always curious about spices and textile, printed on cotton and silk. These cloths outside were red and the inside were lined with those patches painted by a pencil of Masulipatam, purposely produced and manufactured with such vivid colours and flowers so naturally drawn, of a hundred several fashions and shapes, that one would have said it was a hanging parterre. The native craftsmen were responsible, and adapted their goods to suit their customer’s requirements, trade flourished through the 17th century.

The red sandstone of Akbar is replaced by the ivory white marble of Shahjahan. Akbar and Jahangir also took special interest in other crafts. Two large cauldrons called Degs and distributed to the devotees as Tabarruq (blessed food), Badi Degh and Choti Degh at Ajmer are the examples of metal pottery. The magnificent tomb of Mughal Emperor Akbar the Great in Agra and Akbar’s capital palace in Fatehpur Sikri and the big mosaics and geometrical tracery of Fatehpur Sikri have been refined till they reach climax in the jewelled inlay and flower-like tracy of the Taj Mahal built by Shahjahan, or the pristine beauty of Moti Masjid. It was a centre of nationalism during the British colonial period and has continued to play a prominent role in Indian political and cultural movements. The state has a rich heritage of traditional crafts and cottage industries of various types that employ highly skilled craftsmen and artisans.

Emperor Humayun returned with Persian craftsmen from Iran. His son Akbar was interested in art forms and reverted to Hindu architectural forms. His son Jahangir was not only interested in nature but also in painting. He was particularly fond of European art and foreigners at the court. Shahjahan enthusiastically built the architectural forms. Dara Shikoh was the free thinking and favourite son of Shahjahan. Crafts come to an end in the period of later emperor Aurangzeb who was an orthodox disciplinarian. With the break-up of the Mughal Empire, local patronage
started losing ground and uncertain conditions also discouraged profession, the crafts field came to the downfall position.

Later in the seventeenth century when the East India Company gained control of trade affairs, its condition worsened. They organised production for the European markets. Craftsmen’s creativity spread all over the country and became the dynamic force connecting their artistic achievements with the community. Each artistic creation had not a purpose, but became forged to the day to day life of the people satisfying their interests, needs and emotions. Craftsmanship in recent years has given rise to the various creative studios and boosted the morale of craftsmen who have been producing great beauty with many kinds of objects and have done new modifications in ceramics, glass, weaving metal in their own craft workshop.

As large numbers of English craftsmen were unemployed; the Industrial Revolution in England rendered an impressed motivation to production. England flooded the Indian markets with machine made goods with cheap prices which ousted the home made products. The value of the home made products began declining. Everyone preferred to buy the machine made products as these were cheap in prices and having good quality and durable. A number of craftsmen were rendered destitute. Those who continued to practise their trade were forced to compete with machine made goods.

Indian art and craftwork during the British rule had the widest variety of crafts anywhere in the world. Art and craft work was made easier to common man with the efforts of schools, colleges and exhibitions. The range of the crafts forms produced by Indian craftsmen, the root of the creativity took place in craftsmen’s mind. British hands were also involved to promote the creative activity and the development of arts and crafts in India. This led to the attachment of value to such works in British museums. In the 18th century, for training of number of art schools in India, various schools were developed by Britishers to make artists more creative and talented. William Morris showed keen interest in Indian arts and crafts development (Indian Art and Craft during British Rule).

An exhibition which enthuse great concern towards Indian arts and crafts among the English was great Exhibition held 1851, at London’s crystal place. There
was illustration of metalwork, jewellery; Indian textiles, enamels and woodwork were displayed (Indian Art and Craft during British Rule).

The Museum of South Kensington was developed as the Victoria and Albert museum. It proved out to be remarkable in the Indian collection. Museum obtained the British East India Company’s artefacts and thus has the eminent collection of Indian artefacts in Britain. The Government of India tried hard to embolden the arts and crafts movement in India and colonial and Indian exhibitions were organised in London (Indian Art and Craft during British Rule).

To prevent the disappearance of Indian crafts in the 20th century, Mahatma Gandhi was the single personality who magnificently linked the crafts to the village economy and the concept of political freedom. The best example of it was the spinning wheel the symbol of self-reliance (Jaitly, 1990, p. 9).

Newspapers were printed enclosures for decorative appearance and looked more effective. All the crafts were freely available in the market. In 19th century the craftsmanship grew up. Crafts of urban or rural, reached such a high standard in bygone days. Indian arts and crafts under the British rule were taken seriously and Indian natives were also roped in to create magnificent handiworks. In the 20th century the Congress party was leading the freedom movement and Mahatma Gandhi revived cottage industries.

Since 1947 disillusionment with political leaders who have hidden their venality behind a swathe of handspun cotton has devalued Khadi and the attempt to bring industry back to village has lost its momentum. During the British era, India was overwhelmed with the influence from different regions like Dutch, British and French. The freedom movement gained energy and finally freed from the British in 1947.

In August 1947 the greater development and advancement came into arts and crafts field. Thousands of craftsmen who had devoted their talent to the arts and crafts worked for the revival and re-establishment of handicrafts. Through this medium they could move or fit into the contemporary India. The beauty of Indian textile spread all over the world, Bandhni and applique work also gained fame. Katha, Kashida, Kasuti was popular for their fine quality. The Indian historical literature discloses some of
the interesting facts that crafts of India were an important part of religious ceremonies and rituals.

The crafts museum, All India Handicrafts and Handloom Board was set up in nineteenth century with a view to protect the artistic and cultural heritage of India. Several pilot development centres were set up in various parts of the country through which there would not be only renewal of old age crafts, but new techniques could be used to make crafts products more easily and attractive. Indian crafts paced a step further after the Independence. Some important of these centres were the Pilot Training Centre for Doll Making, the Bronze Production Centre for reproducing traditional bronze objects, the Art and Development Centre for Weaving Cotton and Silk Saris (Kanchipuram, Madras) to reorient and re-design the traditional modes to suit today's needs and taste, the Development Centre for Cotton and Silk Saris (Kothakota, Andhra Pradesh), the Procurement Centre for Tada embroidery (Ootacamund, Madras) to revive and popularise the exquisite embroideries done by these tribal people traditionally on their shawls for current garments and on household furnishing and lines; the Development Centre for Educational Toys together with an attached Research Centre for All India; and the Training-cum-Production Centre for reviving the old crafts of making musical instruments used in various regions of India with a research centre for trying out new instruments and techniques. The last one is meant to encourage those with musical knowledge to take up the making of musical instruments in correct and scientific ways. The Pottery Craft Centre gives technical assistance to pottery units in various states and the Pineapple Fibre Research Centre is experimenting in weaving various grades of fabrics from this remarkable and yet simple fibre. Experiments here have resulted in some very fine fabrics or different texture, some of them woven with the old traditional brocaded motifs from the Kanchipuram saris stylised peacock, the mango and floral sprays.

Further, three regional training centres developed and run by private organisation but considered important side shoots of handicrafts development, were established by the Board. The Handicrafts Teachers Training College (Bombay) administered by the Arts and Crafts Educational Training Society, giving training in toy and doll making, cane and bamboo, leather and metal work, clay and pottery, textile printing, embroidery and weaving. A training institute was established for women in Andhra Pradesh where women trainers taught artistic leather and cardboard
work, textile, cane and bamboo work, doll and toy making, book binding. This institute is managed by the All India Women’s Conference (AIWC). In its Kolkata branch, training is also given to trainers by women.

As training centres came up in different states in India, craftsmen took the opportunity to adapt their skills of traditional crafts with new ones. In All India Handicrafts Board the illustration showing some creative works done at these centres, All India Handloom Board and the Design Development Centres rediscover the traditional motifs and ornamentation with new inspiration on similar crafts or for use on different crafts. Embroidery, weaving, textile, printing, wood, inlay work, metal wares and pottery are few examples that have been done on representative crafts and will illustrate how much this trend has enhanced these crafts in India today and helped growth in demand for them. Today, textile mills produce excellent products with natural fibres. Such fibres are most popular. Terrycot is more famous than plain cotton.

Indian handicrafts have increased creativity and have been going to the way of development in rich western countries. Synthetic textile, tie dyed, batik fabrics and hand printed are major export items. Hand-knotted carpets are on demand among foreign buyers. Craft centres are also established in rural India. Earthenware, water pots, cotton, Durries woven by women of the house, Razai (quilt) are all made up by the local tailors and other craftsmen. They walk along streets tolling the stretched string of their bow – the tool with which they floss out the compacted cotton filling to carry out their trade of Razai. Village made crafts sold by craftsmen in the bazaar fulfill daily requirements of many villagers.

Many craftsmen of brass work of Uttar Pradesh are mostly Muslims. In south and north east, majority of craftsmen are Christians. A moderate proposition of craftsmen in Punjab and Delhi is that of Sikhs. Craftsmen in Ladakh are mostly the local Tibetan Buddhists who play an important role and predominate. Janis and Parsis are too involved in commercial crafts in many parts of western India. The women of the other crafts produce fine needlework. Market is divided into different branches according to their specialty in arts and crafts field. The distribution of craft production throughout in India is often directed by climate or geography. Bamboo and cane group is in the moist climate. North-East and South-West of India is ideal for it.
To improve the conditions of unemployment, craft industries were set up irrespective of the availability of raw materials which led to the origination of the short-lived Bidri work in Maharashtra. The brass work industries of Banaras and Moradabad, which were recovered by the British, concentrated more on the potentiality of the customers than to the proximity of metal mines (Saraf, 1991, p. 13).

By the time of Independence, Indian crafts were a mixture of village production, dependent on the customs of conservative villagers and tribal people living in isolation from the 20th century world. Urban crafts tended to cater for the British people. This is why the crafts were based on new techniques and suitable for the literate and modern people and some crafts had organised and expert industries.

India struggled to develop with and fulfill the requirement of the large hordes of pollution. It built some crafts industries after centuries of destruction wreaked by colonial trade. During this period the state handicrafts centres were set up for some handicraft industries, the aim of which was to encourage art and crafts at village level. The situation began to change with the green revolution in the beginning of the nineties. India produced all the industrial goods and resolved the food problems.

Television had an important role for its development. The view of metropolitan city life and fashion had tremendous impact on Indian life so much so that today, women or girls of Lucknow or Awadh region now spend more time watching television while they are embroidering. Due to this they can do their work with enjoyment and more efficiently.

Today, women are empowered and active. They can travel to cities to get orders for their embroideries, and other crafts works. They want their daughters to go to school and become highly qualified. They are not remaining illiterate. The crafts works with the new techniques and designs are in demand. The market is flooding with their creative works. Folk traditions are closely linked with the daily life of people and associated with rituals and ceremonies find impression in arts and crafts works.

In India women have adhered to the traditional way of dress while men wear a version of western clothes. Even they shed their alien clothes once they reach home. But still not much has improved in terms of infrastructural support from governments. It is strange that even now in many villages, there are no electricity but the
embroidery of the practitioners or embroiders are not affected in their quality and beauty.

India is a vast country with diverse people from different caste, culture, race and religion having different tastes for arts and handicrafts. We can also divide the crafts on the basis of human age, for example, the old age women prefer to wear sari or suit and youngsters are much more interested in jeans, skirts, middies, trousers etc. Traditional styles of dresses now seem to be nearly rejected by small towns and working class. Technological changes have an important role in change of arts and crafts world. People like to adopt the way of life which resembles the artificial images projected on the cinema and television screens. Youngsters are mainly interested in fashionable dresses. Young girls wear designer costumes, like shapeless frocks, stylish Kameez, bellbottom, trousers, jeans, skirts etc. and young boys wear skin fit jeans, but during rituals and special occasions boys wear traditional clothes and the girls after marriage dress in saris, suits or Ghagra (long skirt). All over India women have kept to the traditional way of dress.

Our Indian craftsmen are fulfilling the demand of people of almost every religious or cultural community like Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, or Sikhism. The crafts are also developed around religious centres. Many important religious places have become specialised centres for particular crafts for example, Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan, an important pilgrim centre for Muslims, has developed a number of crafts. Chadar or a cover made from flowers, are used for laying over the tomb or Mazar of Khwaja Gharib Nawaz. Its beauty is really attractive and adorable. The pilgrims put a red and yellow thread around their neck which is also handmade. The Haji Pir Mela in a remote part in Kutch (Gujarat) which attracts thousands of pilgrims from all religious groups offers a wide range of crafts made by traditional craftsmen. Kumbh Mela of Allahabad is has also an important role in Indian crafts as various tourists and pilgrims come to see the creativity and to take bath in the Ganges.

Village Haats or makeshift markets have been an important part of Indian rural marketing scene. Simple handicrafts products have also been sold throughout them. Village people can save their time and money through these Haats. They earn sufficient money to fulfill their daily needs. These Haats need state aid to develop on the large scale and regular craft corners.
The innate creativity of the Indian craftsmen is still changing with new materials, techniques, which are depending on the requirement of the country people. The arts and crafts have been developed in our country by the local men for use and aesthetic purposes of people in our society.
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