Chapter. I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction:

The Artisans and handicraft sector is the largest decentralised and unorganised sector of the Indian economy. Craftspeople form the second largest employment sector in India, second only to agriculture. Handicrafts are rightly described as the craft of the people: there are twenty-three million craftspeople in India today. In India, craft is not merely an industry but a creation symbolizing the inner desire and fulfillment of the community. While handicrafts, be it metal ware, pottery, mats, wood-work or weaving, fulfill a positive need in the daily life of people, they also act as a vehicle of self-expression, and of a conscious aesthetic approach.

In the developing countries, after agriculture, handicrafts and artisans’ works have been described as “the second largest source of income”. There is no doubt that artisans make a significant contribution to national economy. For example, Indian handicraft exports touched Rs.8060 crores in the year 1999-2000 with white metal-ware from Moradabad alone accounting for Rs.2000 crores. Similarly, many other forms of handicrafts like antique woodwork, carpets, copper ware, pottery types, leather goods, paintings, etc. have a market (e-gyankosh, 2012).

Artisans in India:

The village community traditionally, was an entity based on family groups. These groups have certain autonomy. The group of artisans, used to assume a separate entity in the village life (Das, 1994).
Artisans traditionally belonged to the profession of blacksmith, carpentry, pottery, shoe-making, weaving and oil-extraction. They used to provide effective support and servicing facilities for the economic activities like household tools and farm equipments and maintenance’s of these equipments in the village. In return they used to get a fixed share of the peasants’ produce and raw material for producing the equipments and households things (Das, 1994).

The agriculture and artisan sectors as indistinguishable and termed artisans as village servants who were to serve the need of the peasants and villagers and, therefore, played a subordinate role in the village economy. The artisans are also entrepreneurs, who are engaged in production of different products.

The word 'entrepreneur' is derived originally from the French “entreprendre” which means an organiser of musical or other entertainment. Oxford English Dictionary also defines it as director or a manager of a public musical institution, one who ‘gets up’ entertainment, especially a musical performance. But, in 16th century, it meant to those who were engaged in military expeditions,. Later in 17th century, the terms ‘entrepreneur’ covered civil engineers. From 18th century onwards tins term was used to refer to economic aspects. “An entrepreneur is the economic agent who unites all means of production: the land of one, the labour of another and the capital of yet another and thus produces a product. By selling the product in the market he pays the rent of the land, wages to labour, interest on capital, and what remains is his profit” (David Amirtha Rajan, S and Gnana Soundari, 2007). Therefore an entrepreneur is a director who combines various factors of production to produce a socially viable product. A woman enterprise is defined as “an enterprise owned and controlled by a woman having a minimum financial interest of 51 per cent of the capital and giving at least 51 percent of the employment generation in the enterprise to women” (David Amirtha Rajan, S and Gnana Soundari, 2007).
This followed a pattern where the offspring of artisans used to adopt the skills of their parents and continued to do the same work in the village. From the several studies done on the system of artisans industry in pre-British period, it appears that rural artisans also provided employment to landless labourers in their workshops and followed an ensured system of income distribution in the village society in its own archaic way.

The artisans have been a significant actor and pillar of the rural society. It was the artisan alone who contributed considerably to the development of techniques of making a bullock cart, a chaff cutter, plough, agriculture tools, pottery, etc. These techniques emanating from this indigenous skill were duly accepted by the rural masses, because the artisans had always fully involved themselves in the development of native technologies. They received encouragement from fellow villagers who had confidence in him and his ability to do the required job. There is always the scope of enhancing his traditional skill through the application of modern technology. Lack of application of new technology in rural areas is serious which reduces the impact of science and technology in dealing more effectively with economic, cultural and social problems that stalk rural India. The lacuna so far has been that in almost all development programmes the rural artisans were not given their due place. They were neglected as irrelevant, unsophisticated and unproductive workers. The present technological development has broken the traditional linkages between the farmers and artisans, the linkages that could help in adoption of new technique and technologies. In Japan, after the Meiji Restoration in 1968, there was drastic socio-economic development on capitalist lines. This development converted artisan production into commodity production. Rural industries expanded and many new ones were established. In many cases, small industries employed one or two workers each, providing part-time or subsidiary employment to peasants.
Such a development could have also occurred in a mixed economy if pursued with appropriate policies and commitment. It would have been more benefiting and appropriate if rural artisans and craftsmen were given the opportunity to adopt new technologies first and then transfer them to user-groups in the villagers through a systematized after liaison with the government.

It is generally assumed that the rural artisans are competent to meet the requirements of the rural development strategies ignoring the fact that there is a need to pass certain knowledge and skill to them. In view of the development strategies for rural areas which demand more skilled labour, it is essential to give due emphasis to skill formation of rural artisans.

Again the rural technical manpower is readily available and demand for technical services is also there; only thing required is to frame a suitable strategy to solemnise a happy marriage between the two. It will help on the one hand a considerable relief towards magnitude of unemployment prevailing over the rural economy and on the other hand smoothen the process of surplus generation in the rural economy by re-establishing the traditional like between agriculture and rural industries.

The gap which exists between this supply and demand can be bridged up by suitably training the traditional rural artisans in modern technology – its repairing and maintenance by the establishing rural artisans’ workshop within the village.

The workshop and services intended for the rural population should be sited where it is accessible to the peasants and not in the towns. It would be an interesting approach a machine designed by an engineer, modified by the village artisans with the help of peasants who are going to use it. It would also be helpful for the villagers to advance on every front and stop the rural people migrating from the village to town in search of jobs.
This, however, is not the only way of using the available technical manpower in rural areas. There are certain traditional commodities made by rural artisans which if suitably upgraded can serve the demand of the modern industries. In the case of Bankuva, West Bengal, NISTADS study revealed that the artisans manufacture items like fillet, bust, etc. which are used in the modern industries. If a little technological inputs is offered to the artisans a happy marriage can occur between the traditional and modern sector (Das, 1994).

**Technology and the Indian Artisans:**

During the first sixty years of independence, India has put in massive efforts towards modernization, aimed ultimately at raising the standard of living of her teeming millions. The thrust has been focused primarily on modernization of industrial agricultural practices. Notable gains have been made on both the fronts. There has, however, been a continuing and growing realisation of one major lacuna in these efforts. The impact of modernization has by and large failed to percolate down to a prominent segment of the rural economy – the unorganised sector of artisans. For a variety of reasons, a majority of these artisans have continued to persist with traditional tools and practices with adverse consequences for themselves as well as for the rural economy. The implements made by these artisans fail to stand in competition with their machine made counterparts. Thus, over the years, the artisans’ financial position has been declining, and they are discarding their professions in large numbers.

A look at the overall development process in India over the past 50 years reveals that a plethora of modern and appropriate technologies of special relevance to various segments of the rural sector have been developed. A basic flaw has been that the outcome of the research and development has by and large failed to filter down to the level of artisan in the unorganized sector (Solanki, 1997).
Artisans and Rural Society:

The artisans are an essential link in the traditional village economy of India. It was the artisan who contributed considerably to the development of techniques for making bullock carts, chaff cutters, ploughs wells, agriculture tools and equipments, clay, pottery, black smithy, weaving, etc. Such techniques, emanating from indigenous skills, were duly accepted by the rural masses, because the artisans had fully involved themselves in the development of traditional technologies.

Almost every evening, the users of the artisans’ technologies used to visit the artisan’s work place and discuss with them their experiences and the modification they needed in particular technologies. On the basis of experience and realization of the needs of users, the artisan would make the needed modification. The linkages operative in the traditional approach are depicted in model 1. This was a regular feature of the rural society in the past. For the successful adoption of new technologies in the rural areas, it is necessary not only to provide financial support for science and technological activities, but also to establish strong links among various segments of the society. The basic lacuna has been that in almost all development programmes, the rural artisans are not given their due place. They are considered as a routine and unimportant component of the production system. R & D institutions and Central and State government agencies responsible for the generation of modern technologies and their transfer to the rural masses for their socio-economic development have the normal tendency to liaise, with only resourceful and wealthy persons in the village society for the purpose of transferring modern technology (Solanki, 1997). The following model as stated by Solanki (1997) revealed that in the traditional society, there are strong linkages between agriculture and artisans and handicrafts.
In the currently prevalent approach (model 2), no permanent linkages are established between the taker of the technology and its developer, once the technology is handed over to the users. As a result, today most of India’s artisans are struggling for survival. Many have given up, and moved away from their traditional occupations. Others cling on desperately, not knowing what else to do or whom to turn to. Their skills, evolved over thousand of years, are getting dissipated and blunted. Their succession neither willing nor able to carry on the family tradition and a rich culture is on the verge of extinction.

There is ample scope for improving the traditional skills of artisans through the application of modern technologies. There is woeful lack of application of new technologies in rural areas, which reduces the effectiveness of science and technology in tackling the economic, cultural and social problems that stalk rural India.

Historical research reveals that most of the technical and social innovations in any country were based on prior experience. The Indian rural artisans have a good technical knowledge base; they liaise with users and then effect changes at village and town levels. These inventions were made by the rural artisans to fulfill
the needs of the people. Today, thousands of rural artisans, technicians and villagers earn their daily bread from these appropriate technologies.

**Model-2**

**Linkage of Modern Technology**

Successful transfer of modern technology and its benefits to the rural masses can be ensured only if the Research and Development institutions and Central and State agencies first establish linkages with artisan groups in the villages. These groups require technical training, financial resources, raw materials and improved tools and techniques pertaining to the particular technology. The artisans, after acquiring training, tool and raw materials must go back to their native places and pass on the technology to the user groups. In this way, the transfer of technology will be more effective than its being done through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Central and State government agencies. The basic philosophy involved here is that the artisan is born and brought up in the village and his language and culture are those of the user groups. Secondly, if something goes wrong with the technology, the user can approach the
artisan immediately in the village itself and ask him to repair or modify the technology at short notice. Through this approach (Mode 3) modern technology can play an important role in the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of rural masses and in generating employment in the villages.

Hence, it can be stated that India is the only country in the world with an unbroken, living vibrant tradition of crafts. While agriculture employs the largest number of people in India, the crafts sector is next and sustains over 20 million practitioners. The wide geographic spread embraces all of India and covers a huge gamut of widely differing work structure and cultures. Crafts communities, using similar materials that range from clay to precious metals, work with widely differing techniques and technologies to create a rich variety of forms. The crafts and artistic occupations include the following based on the raw materials and finished products:
1. Clay Products:

Being one of the most basic materials found in every corner of the country, clay has been used for making earthen ware, figurines, bricks, tiles, beads etc. Terracotta objects are one of the earliest artifacts found during excavations of archaeological sites as early as the chalcolithic period and continue to exist in the present times. This chapter will deal with the different practices, techniques and distribution of pottery and terracotta crafts in India.

2. Stone Work:

Another basic material that does not need much processing and technology is stone. Different types of stones from the most common ones to region specific ones to precious gems have been used in different ways from architectural construction, to sculptures, to making jewelry and so on. One would need to discuss different aspects of stone works that have existed through thousands of years.

3. Metal Crafts:

Metal has a wide variety where technology plays an important role. A number of crafts communities have been sustaining on age old practices of making objects from metal which involves the knowledge of technology/ indigenous technology among artisans, from processing the metal, to casting, polishing and finishing the objects. Whether it is Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh, or Kondagaon in Bastar or Cuttak in Orissa and so on, these are the pockets where the livelihood of families of hundreds of craftsmen is sustained through metal crafts.

4. Jewelry:

Jewelry, whether made from precious stones, beads and metals or bell metal or terracotta, from most intricate and delicate forms to the bold and traditional motifs, Indian traditional jewelry is one most cherished items in the international
market, among tourists, foreigners and Indians are the biggest buyers of jewelry in the world.

5. **Natural Fibre Weaving:**

Natural fibres such as grass, bamboo, shola pith, cane, jute, leaves etc. have varied usages from making/weaving baskets, mats, brooms, rooftops, clothing etc. which provided shelter and income to many communities in India. Many communities have a practice where women themselves weave household objects for their daily use whereas many industries survive on production of materials from jute. All north-eastern states have rich traditions of handicrafts manufactured from cane and bamboo. By and large weaving from natural fibres is part and parcel of every region/state.

6. **Textile Crafts:**

Clothing and textile being one of the three basic needs of human beings, apart from food and shelter, finds place almost everywhere from the most common material of cotton to the expensive silk and wool. Most of the textile crafts are self sufficient systems where the process starts right from acquiring raw materials to making them worthy to be woven, dyeing, printing, painting, embroidery, etc. Some of these traditions are hundreds of years old. While textile exports are high, new experiments with jute, banana fibre etc. are also underway.

7. **Painting:**

Painting is one of the first expressions which makes manifest different emotions and deeds of the earliest human settlements. Whether painted on walls, floor, roof, paper, palm leaf, wood, cloth or any other surface, paintings have a pictorial communication/a visual language narrating traditional practices, folklores, folktales etc.
8. Paper and Paper Crafts:

Handicraft traditions where different products are made from paper and paper Mache have been prevalent from Jammu and Kashmir to Kerala for preparing various objects. The process of making these objects, vary from place to place. To study them from the point of view of resources available in the region and the opportunity to market their products are some of the aspects which needs attention.

9. Theatre crafts:

In some parts of the country performing art traditions draw on other art forms in their performance, theatre being foremost among them. Theatre has many crafts which make them a successful performance tradition, be it stage-crafts where carpentry, carvings, paintings etc. are involved or costume design and jewelry, facial masks and depending on the tradition, many other crafts may be involved. Exploring various aspects of the theatre crafts will enhance the understanding of students to how traditional societies have integrated various art forms into their practice; how crafts have traditionally been used in performance and how different traditional crafts have become a part of contemporary theatre.

Acknowledging the importance of handicrafts in India the National Curriculum Framework – 2005 sought to integrate it into the school curriculum and formed a National Focus Group on Heritage Crafts. The Focus Group submitted a position paper that includes several recommendations and concluded that Indian craft and its millions of practicing craftspeople are a huge and important resource of traditional knowledge and indigenous technologies that could add value to the educational system in a number of ways. It was suggested that Indian Crafts should be taught as a theoretical social science with a strong component of field study and applied creative activity.
The caste system of ancient India revealed the occupation based castes. As such, still many of the tribes and backward classes are engaged in caste based occupations and handicrafts. Almost all of these occupations and professions are hereditary and based on the caste. Hence, these occupations were unique in nature and needed particular types of skills. Some of these occupations include weaving, pottery, carpentry, tattooing, rope making, etc.

The informal sector, which includes handicrafts, has been described by the International Labour Organization (ILO) as a part of economic activity characterized by certain features like reliance on local available resources and skills, family ownership, small scale operations, labour intensity, traditional technology, skills generally acquired outside the formal school system, unregulated and competitive markets.

One of the best definitions of handicrafts is that adopted by UNESCO-UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) at Manila 6th- 8th October 1997 during a Symposium on crafts which is:” Artisanal products are those produced by artisans, either completely by hand or with the help of hand tools or even mechanical means, as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. The special nature of artisanal products derives from their distinctive features, which can be utilitarian, aesthetic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant”.

Invaluable and integral parts of the nation’s heritage, handicrafts command an importance, both cultural and economic. The sector yields a number of economic, social and cultural benefits such as:

- Highly dispersed and centralized; spread all over the country, in rural and urban areas.
- Highly labour-intensive, especially helping weaker sections of society.
- High employment potential in relation to capital employed.
- High output to investment ratio.
- Generation of subsidiary off-season employment.
- Generation of foreign exchange from exports.
- High ratio of value addition.
- Large-scale involvement of women, weaker sections and minorities.

The artisan is an important factor in the equation of Indian society and culture. By performing valid and fruitful social functions for the community, they earn for themselves a certain status and position in society. He or she is the heir to the people’s traditions and weaves them into his/her craft. Most craft people have learned their skills from their fathers or mothers since caste and family affiliations, rather than training or market demand, have primacy in the Indian situation.

The handicrafts sector is a home-based industry which requires minimum expenditure, infrastructure or training to set up. It uses existing skills and locally available materials. Income generation through craft does not (and this is important in a rural society) disturb the cultural and social balance of either the home or the community. Many agricultural and pastoral communities depend on their traditional craft skills as a secondary source of income in times of drought, lean harvests, floods or famine. Their skills in embroidery, weaving, basket making are a natural means to social and financial independence.

The craft sector contains many paradoxes. Artisanal contribution to the economy and the export market increases every year and more and more new crafts-people are being introduced into the sector - especially women - as a solution to rural and urban unemployment. At the same time mass-produced goods are steadily replacing utility items of daily use made by craftspeople, destroying the livelihood of many, without the concomitant capacity to absorb them into industry. However, with ever-increasing competition from mill-made products and decreasing buying power of village communities due to prevailing economic
conditions, artisans have lost their traditional rural markets and their position within the community.

There is a swing against small scale village industries and indigenous technologies in favour of macro industries and hi-tech mechanised production. Traditional rural marketing infrastructures are being edged out by multinational corporations, supported by sophisticated marketing and advertising. The change in consumer buying trends and the entry of various new, aggressively promoted factory produced commodities into the rural and urban market, has meant that craft producers need more support than ever if they are to become viable and competitive.

As a socio economic group, artisans are amongst the poorest. Research shows that households headed by artisans, in general have much lower net wealth and almost all (90%) are landless as against 36% for households headed by others. The average income derived by a craftsperson is Rs 2000 per month for an average family of five members. The current state of India’s artisans is a matter of serious concern. Government Policies since the early twentieth century have emphasized generating employment and increasing export earnings through crafts, but in spite of this most craft people live in abject poverty. Though some have managed to adapt to changing times, and a few even thrive most of them live in dismal poverty with no prospects for a better tomorrow.

In the face of constant struggle, most artisans have given up and moved away from their traditional occupations. The skills, evolved over thousands of years, are being dissipated and blunted. Research indicates that neither the craftspersons nor their progeny want to join the crafts sector, only a lack of available alternatives forces them to do so. They would not mind the tradition coming to an end. In one of the studies by Jaya Jaitly (2001), she reveals that in more than half the traditional leather artisan households, several family members have given up
leather work, and are working as casual labourers. The new economic and industrial order that is emerging concedes no space to the artisanal sector.

While the cohorts of globalization theory view globalization as improving economic growth and quality of life indicators, the critics view globalization as accentuating inequalities, promoting poverty, and degrading the overall quality of human life. Running through this contentious debate, Pradeepkumar Jena (2008) examines how economic and cultural globalizations have influenced the overall quality of life, or in the language of developmental economists, how globalization has influenced the indicators that constitute ‘human development’. However, my focus here is on the handicrafts sector of India and those millions of rural artists, who have sustained this invaluable tradition/identity of this vast nation since ages.

As India opens up doors to the multinationals during the post-liberalization era, it is not only the economies that often meet in the global market sphere, but also the people and cultures. Talking about Indian Handicrafts, its export has reached at a commendable height. Indian economy experiences the existence of both traditional handicrafts and modern mechanized production. However, there is no universally accepted definition of the term in India. As the Task Force on Handicrafts definition (1989) puts it, 'Handicrafts are items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools, and are generally artistic and / or traditional in nature. They include objects of utility and objects of decoration'. Since its advent in 1991, India has experienced both positive and negative impacts of globalization process. But one of the sectors benefited out of it, is the Handicraft industry. The case of the handicrafts sector can be discussed here taking its export and employment potential. The growing opportunity for handicrafts in global market is observed when the Indian handicrafts export (including the carpets and other floor coverings) crossed Rs 1,220 crores in 1990-91 from merely 10 crores in the mid fifties. Again it increased to Rs. 7157.64 Crores in 1998-99 and Rs 9270.50 Crores in 2000-01. It had reached at the peak of Rs. 17276.71 Crores in 2005-06.
Another important aspect of handicrafts sector is its employment potential. The Annual Report of various years of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India suggests that the employment in this sector in 1997-98 was 52.92 lakhs which became 58.41 lakhs in 2001-02 and 60.16 lakhs in 2002-03. In 2005-06, 65.72 lakhs people were employed in this sector. Based on the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) survey of 1995-96, of the total workforce engaged in handicrafts, 47.42% are women of which 37.11% are coming under the backward communities like SCs and STs. Indian handicrafts sector forms the second largest employment sector -second only to agriculture. The skilled hand of the Indian craftsmen is its most important and invaluable asset. To quote D. N. Saraf, ‘the workmanship of the Indian craftsmen is so exquisite that throughout the 18th and 19th centuries India was known to other countries on the trade route more by her crafts than by her art, religion and philosophy’.

But despite the prospect for high export and employment generation in this sector, the real concern is that, can the ‘local’ really meet with the ‘global’ by truly sustaining its localness? Although Indian handicrafts have been benefited enormously many of its forms have been facing extinction in the globalized/liberalized market economy. The state of condition of the rural artisans is critical and they have been mere spectators of the developmental process. Although the products they make are becoming global, the grave question raised is how global really these artists are. If we study their socioeconomic status, reports suggest that households headed by artisans in general have much lower net wealth and almost all (90%) are landless as against 36% for households headed by others. Another statistic shows that the average income derived by the craftsperson is Rs. 2,000/- per month for an average family of five members. Most of them live in abject poverty without the prospect of having a better future. Even the wages they get is much lower than the earnings of many others in agriculture. With this little resource to spare, the artisan communities barely have anything to enlarge their
choices and expand their capabilities. This leads them to a situation where their human development almost becomes impossible.

Unlike the earlier period, during the present liberalized market system the artisans have lost their holds over the old patron-client business network and jajmani relationship leading them to increasingly depend on the middle men and trader entrepreneurs who drag a major part of the profit which should have gone to the artists. A report suggests that, there are over 25 lakh crafts persons in India, based mostly in the villages who are not used to interaction with buyers and don’t have the necessary skills to safeguard their own interests.

As most of the artisan communities have scarce resource and somehow manage their bread and butter, a large section of them remain illiterate. Poverty makes them become more vulnerable. As a result most of the artists are now a days choosing to shift to other professions rather than to stick into their hereditary occupation.

In the globalized/ liberalized market, the traditional crafts need to be beautiful and cost effective and maintain quality to face competition. Unfortunately the home consumers are under the influence of liberal imports of cheap mill-made products and no longer use the handmade items. Since Handicrafts come under the state list, each state has set up its own handicrafts policy. The Central government through various developmental schemes plays the role by supplementing their efforts. But unfortunately most of the governmental schemes have failed to produce visible results. The states assist those crafts and artisans who have viable market and high export potential. The languishing crafts in turn suffer a lot.

Problems and Challenges of Handicrafts People and Artisans:

There are several problems faced by the handicrafts sector (Satya Sundaram, 2012):
1. Most of the work relating to handicrafts takes place in rural areas and is informalised. This is both an advantage and a challenge. The advantage is that women get employment at home. The disadvantage is that the dispersed nature of production increases the cost of developing an efficient value chain for production and marketing. Very often, the artisans do not get returns that commensurate with their skill or labour.

2. Workers in the handicrafts sector are mostly unorganised. There is lack of understanding of occupational health and safety issues weak legal and policy provisions protecting the worker and non-implementation of laws. The National Commission on Labour (2002) drew attention to the high incidence of lung diseases in bangle industries due to inhalation of toxic fumes, smokes and dust.

3. The industry has to pay attention to marketing techniques, which involve activities like assessment of the consumer needs and their tastes, and fixing the price at a reasonable level. At present, market research does not receive proper attention. The manufacturers generally manufacture products based on information provided by the dealers and their past experiences.

4. Some unique designs have been lost because artisans hesitate to part with the secrets of the trade.

5. Using poor substitutes is also a problem. For instance, in place of costly ivory, bone and horn are used with effective polishing. Very few people have the patience to apply tests to find out the genuity of ivory.

6. Another problem relates to packing, which remains neglected. Shabbily packed items do not attract foreign buyers.

7. As the handicraft units are scattered, the cost of production is not uniform. Of course, there is no standard price for unique pieces.

8. Small exporters are in great difficulty. They are worried about the government’s proposal to phase out the income tax exemption. This will not only curtail profitability of exports, but also lead to harassment of exporters.
Women in Handicrafts and Artistic Works:

The globalization and especially technological transformation opened the door for the women new opportunities towards their work life. Now, women occupied in all the occupations and professions, which were occupied by men earlier. Hence, the women engaged as successful professionals as Medical Practitioners, Nurses, Teachers, Lawyers, Bankers, Lecturers, Librarians, Information Technologists, Engineers, etc. But, the women are not like men. Further, women who are not educated were playing an important role in unorganized sector like domestic servants, housemaids, beedi workers, construction workers, etc. Due to the globalization, a divide was made between urban people and rural people in terms of occupations, as the rural people are engaged in their old caste based artistic occupations and urban people exploring the new occupations based on modern trends. Further, it is noted that due to globalization and establishment of industries, many of these occupations were disappeared and only a few of these occupations have remained and that is too they are available in rural areas.

The caste based artistic occupations are also involved in women’s work. In other words, in many of the caste based occupations, women are actively involved. But, it is highlighted that due to the establishment of big industrial organizations, their occupations are in danger, as these industries manufactures the products in bulk and sell it cheaper compared to handicrafts or artisans, who were played an important role in the same earlier. As such, the people engaged in caste based handicrafts and artistic work are now unemployed or under-employed. Consequently majority of these people are poor. A particular characteristic of these people is they are living in rural areas, as the big industrial organizations become popular in urban areas. In caste based occupations, women are playing an important role in manufacturing the artistic works and services. Due to the globalization, their economic status is under threat.
Basically, the handicrafts include weaving, pottery, blacksmithy, tattooing, preparation of forest products, rope making, knitting baskets, etc. In urban areas, demands for their products and services have been considerably reduced due to the establishments of industrial organizations and such traditional occupations were now become limited to rural areas.

Women are in general keepers of cultural traditions and knowledge. They build strong communities through supporting religious functions, producing handicrafts, using natural medicines, wearing indigenous traditional dress and performing indigenous songs and dances. Roles of women in maintaining intangible heritage are of particular significance, and encompass what may be described as fundamental domains and expressions of cultural heritage, which are very often Their skills in this sector are sources of cultural and ecotourism. Policy is beginning to reflect the potential positive outputs of well-managed eco-tourism that can bring in the context of conservation in several developing countries. The other promising source of development potential may be found in what is known as cultural tourism (Lanjouw et al, 2001) which links tourist attractions to the cultural practices of the indigenous peoples such as colorful ceremonial celebrations; exotic dances and music; and fascinating ethnic arts and crafts. Cultural and ecotourism involve the survival of threatened cultures, and the conservation of rapidly disappearing wild lands. Hence artisan women who are blamed of environment degradation are stewards and custodians of indigenous knowledge which is source of healthy environment. They are sources of alternative livelihood options like craft sector. Crafts development can represent a constructive, positive contribution to the development of alternative to resource-destructive agricultural practices, based on the provision of gainful employment (Bula Sirika, 2008).
With the spread of education and awareness, women have shifted from the kitchen, handcrafts and traditional cottage industries to non-traditional higher levels of activities. During the 1970s the decade of the International Women’s efforts to promote self-employment among women received greater attention from the government and private agencies. The new industrial policy of the Government of India has laid special emphasis on the need for conducting special entrepreneurial training programmes for women to enable them to start their own ventures. Financial institutions and banks have also set up special cells to assist women entrepreneurs. The result has been the emergence of women entrepreneurs on the economic scene in recent years, though the number of enterprises initiated by women is still quite low (Bose, 2006).

Women entrepreneurs are defined as a group of women who initiate, organize and operate a business enterprise. The Government of India (1988) defines women enterprises as follows: “Enterprise owned and controlled by a woman entrepreneur with a minimum financial interest of 51 percent of the capital and giving at least 50 percent employment generated in the enterprise to women. Women Entrepreneurs or Enterprises is a small-scale industrial unit/industry related service or business enterprises, managed by one or more women entrepreneurs in proprietary concern or in which she/ they individually or jointly have a share capital of not less than 51 percent as Partners/ Share Holders/ Directors of Private Limited. Company/members of co-operative society is treated as women Entrepreneurs Enterprise (Gurubasappa and Kamalakshi, 2013).

Though women are half of the total, their contribution to the economy is unrecognized mostly. They are under-represented in many economic sectors. Even though women are successfully participating in the employment related to artistic works and handicrafts types of entrepreneurship, their contributions are not recognized. Even so, a number of women have successfully scaled the peaks which many men find hard to reach. They are the models for other women,
particularly in business, having qualities like hard work, devotion, sincerity, professionalism and significant managerial capacity. Women entrepreneurs' functions, as those of the male counterparts, include: exploring the possibilities for starting an enterprise, undertaking risks and handling economic uncertainties involved in business, innovation, co-ordination, administration and control, supervision and leadership (Kavitha and Ramachandran, 2009).

Women’s participation in income generating activities is believed to enhance their status and decision making power. The economic contribution of women is related to their status and role in the family and in the society. If a woman is economically a parasite, she can never claim an equal status with man. The problem of poverty cannot be tackled without providing opportunities of productive employment to women. Women contribute a large share of what they earn to basic family maintenance than men. Increase in women’s income translates more directly into better child health, nutrition and family well being. Economic independence of women will lead to social change and prove a necessary weapon for them to fight discrimination. If women are to be economically empowered they are to be provided with alternative forms of informal credit, training, employment, management skills and social security (Khyadagi and Shivashankar, 2007).

The significance of women’s participation in entrepreneurship based on family artistic works and handicrafts is revealed by the statistics. Work participation rate for females in rural areas has increased from 28.7 percent in 2000-01 to 32.7 percent in 2004-05, whereas in 2000-01 to 16.6 percent in 2004-05. The work participation rate remains lower for women than for men both in rural and urban areas. A sectoral breakdown of women workers reveals that 32.9 percent are cultivators, 38.9 percent agricultural labourers (as against 20.9 percent men) and 6.5 workers in the household industry including artistic and handicrafts work. Much of the increase in employment among women has been in the form of self-employment, 48 percent of urban and 64 percent of rural women workers
describe themselves as self-employed (Madhu Babu, 2012). These self-employed also include the women engaged in the handicrafts and artistic works.

In November 2000 an unusual festival was held in the city of Hyderabad. This festival was known as Streemela and it brought women from all walks of life together to empathize with and learn from each other. Streemela was the first ever all-India exposition which aimed at helping women to generate income and enabling them to understand and seek their rightful place in society. Its main objective was to build women's self confidence and it helped to create awareness about themselves and the society they live in. But the women entrepreneurs still have a long way to go. In the male dominated Indian society a women entrepreneur is not easily accepted. They have problems securing finance from financial institutions and even getting people to work for them because the Indian society, by and large, is not ready to believe that they can deliver the goods. It will take some more time and a few more success stories of women entrepreneurs before they come to be accepted as professional business women in their own right (Biplab Moitra, 2001).

The social benefits of artisans and crafts women are stated as under.

1. Increasing Gender Equity

Increased income and employment has increases empowerment and household decision-making authority for women in rural communities. Seventy percent of the artisans in the world are women. Numerous studies have shown that when women have access to steady, fair income, rates of education, health, and well-being increase dramatically for their children.

2. Preserving Traditional Art Forms:

Stronger rural economies decrease pressure to migrate to cities and are likely to contribute to the preservation of traditional art forms and culture in rural artisan communities. The Fair Trade Federation Principles and Practices state that fair
trade organizations encourage the production and development of products based on producers' cultural traditions adapted for Western markets. They seek to promote producers' artistic talents in a way that preserves cultural identity.

3. Increasing Environmentally Sustainable Production:

Fair Trade Organizations encourage producers to engage in environmentally friendly practices which manage and use local resources sustainably. Many NGOs and artisan collectives work directly with producers to develop products based on sustainable use of their natural resources, giving communities an incentive to preserve their natural environments for future generations. In addition, handcrafted, artisan production methods are friendlier to the environment than industrial handicraft production. Also, for its operations in the United States, World of Good is working toward using 100% recycled and tree-free materials for labeling and packaging. Strengthening the Fair Trade Movement World of Good Development Organization is well-positioned to build the Fair Trade Movement. The organization is making a focused effort to establish industry standards for handicraft and gift products, to develop tools to measure the impact of fair trade in producer communities, and to promote mainstream adoption and public policy initiatives in partnership with other industry leaders including Fair Trade Federation, TransFair, and fair trade producers and importers.

4. Much Required Products at affordable Prices:

Many of the goods produced by the industries are costly as there is heavy profit from the wholesalers and retailers and also huge expenditure is incurred by the manufacturers for their advertisements and publicity. In case of rural crafts work and artistic work, such expenditure is not there and hence, these products may be cheaper.
5. Qualitative with Personal Touch:

From the qualitative point of view, the artistic works are best to use as they are produced with personal care and attention of every worker.

6. Independent Employment for Women:

Government has already formulated many policies and schemes for the socio-economic empowerment of women. The artistic occupations are playing significant role in providing the economic independence to rural women.

Problems and Challenges of Women Artisans:

In the globalized/ liberalized market, the traditional crafts need to be beautiful and cost effective and maintain quality to face competition. Unfortunately the home consumers are under the influence of liberal imports of cheap mill-made products and no longer use the handmade items. Since Handicrafts come under the state list, each state has set up its own handicrafts policy. The Central government through various developmental schemes plays the role by supplementing their efforts. But unfortunately most of the governmental schemes have failed to produce visible results. The states assist those crafts and artisans who have viable market and high export potential. The languishing crafts in turn suffer a lot.

Modern industrial products, whether domestic or foreign made, are overflowing remotest rural markets. Although it is an undeniable fact that the introduction of modern technology’s products has advantages, it should not be at the expense of indigenous technologies and their owners. The introduction of products of modern technologies such as ceramics, plastic and metallic utensils that are steadily replacing utility of indigenous craft products in both urban and rural areas, is affecting economic status of the artisans. Under this circumstance artisans have lost and are still losing their traditional rural markets and their position within the community (Bula Sirika, 2008).
It is noted that majority of the handicraft artisans including women are facing the problem of good working conditions at their work place. Normally the working space is insufficient and often it is not properly ventilated and lighted. Mostly these artisans work at their work houses in a family environment, which may not always be conducive for production of quality handicrafts appropriate to upmarket segment. This affects their productivity and income.

The other challenge is mainly related to training program and marketing. There is a need to give training regarding design, training, business management and marketing resources that create opportunities for artisans, and a self-sustaining crafts production business. Training on design, business management and marketing resources is mandatory to improve demands for local and tourist market to create opportunities for artisans, and a self-sustaining crafts production business. However, no training is given to artisan to improve the quality of the utensils they make. Though a large number of NGOs have been established, the majority of their projects are mainly concerned with issues of gender and health without explicit focus on handicrafts improvement for poverty alleviation (Bula Sirika, 2008).

Social Security Schemes for Women Artisans:

The Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY) was launched in the year 2001-2002 with the objective to organize artisans clusters into Self Help Groups (SHGs)/Cooperatives with a view to enabling them to take up economic activity for sustainable development through a participatory mode. This scheme empower artisans by making them active entrepreneurs cum primary stake holders in the process of development and bringing them to a visible platform for easy access to domestic and overseas markets and upgrade artisan’ skill through appropriate Design and Technology Intervention so as to enable them to use quality raw material, tools and equipment to produce value-added items. This
scheme provide adequate infrastructure support for improved quality and productivity and to enable artisans’ access to a larger market segment, both domestic and international and ensure effective collective participation of all members involved in production and marketing process for optimal growth in human resource, production, business and income.

Under Special Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) Scheme, training is provided to semi skilled Handicrafts Artisan/Carpet Weavers to upgrade their skill so as to be responsive to changing market requirements. Under SHTP, 10,000 artisans weavers would be benefited under the Tenth Plan. As regards the number of women artisans who have been imparted training under SHTP, the Ministry have informed that so far 5365 artisans/weavers including 2802 women have been imparted training under the Special Handicrafts Training Project.

For providing social security to the handicrafts artisans including women artisans, Bima Yojana and Pension Schemes are being implemented by the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). The objective of Bima Yojana for Handicrafts Artisan’s is to provide life insurance protection to the handicrafts artisans, whether male or female between the age group of 18-60 years. The components of this scheme are coverage under existing ‘Janshree Bima Yojana’ of LIC and Add-on Group Insurance coverage for death. The Ministry have informed the Committee that following type of coverage is provided to the artisans under existing ‘Janshree Bima Yojana (JBY)’ of LIC. Life Insurance cover towards natural death shall be a sum of Rs. 20,000/- per member. For accidental death or permanent total disability, the coverage shall be maximum Rs. 50,000/- per member and for permanent partial disability, the coverage shall be maximum Rs. 25,000/-per member.

Under Pension scheme grant of financial assistance is provided to mastercrafts persons in indigent circumstances on annual basis for which there are few conditions. The Master crafts persons, who are recipients of National Award
or National Merit Certificate or State Award in handicrafts, are eligible for being considered for financial assistance. The private income of the applicant should be less than Rs. 15,000/- per year. The applicant should not be in receipt of similar financial assistance from any other source. The applicant should not be less than 60 years of age on the date of application. Age may be relaxed if the master craftsperson is disabled.

The Ministry of Textiles in their report has stated that Government is contemplating to launch Health Insurance Scheme for Handicrafts Artisans titled “Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana”. The Committee further desired to know the present status of the scheme. The Ministry in their reply stated that Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana was prepared and referred to Planning Commission for approval in January, 2005. The Planning Commission has accorded their in-principle approval. Women artisans are also considered by the concerned field offices while implementing social security scheme.

A Committee was formed by Ministry of Textiles, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi in 2005-06 and gave a report on empowerment of women artisans. It is found that no gender specific schemes are being operated by the Government for women handicraft artisans in spite of the fact that out of 47.61 lakh artisans, 22.57 lakhs are women, constituting approximately 47.40% of the total handicraft artisans, and even when certain crafts, like embroidery, bead work, applique, durries, shawls, cane & bamboo, artistic textile, weaving and mat-weaving etc. are being practiced predominantly by women. The Committee are not satisfied with the reasons given by the Secretary, Textiles, during evidence that “the schemes are gender neutral and the Ministry have not been discriminating the male artisans or female artisans as they all are people living below the poverty line.” The Committee are of the view that women artisans, who have to discharge the dual responsibility of looking after their household and earning livelihood, face many problems arising out of their job. Besides, taking into consideration their
numerical strength in this sector, the Ministry should have formulated some specific schemes for these women artisans. Even the Secretary during evidence admitted “if the Committee feel then the Ministry would give more money to women artisans. From this year onwards, the Ministry would be more sensitive to the needs of the women and focus their schemes towards the requirements of women.” The Committee, therefore, desires the Ministry to formulate not only specific schemes for women artisans but also incorporate some specific provisions in the existing schemes for the benefit of women artisans to cater to their needs.

The Committee found that majority of the handicraft artisans including women artisans do not have good working conditions at their work place and face problems such as paucity of space, inadequate ventilation and light at the work place and so on. The existing environment in their houses is not conducive for the production of quality handicraft. The Committee found that no study or survey has been carried out by the Ministry to identify the problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans. The Ministry, however, obtain the feedback from field formations, developmental partners and other stake holders on the effectiveness of schemes and problems faced by the artisans and based on the feedback and findings of evaluation studies, modifications in schemes have been undertaken from time to time with a view to minimising problems faced by the artisans. The Committee regret to point out that despite knowing well about the lack of conducive working conditions for handicraft artisans, the Ministry have not initiated any steps in this direction. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry should conduct a study/survey to identify the basic problems being faced by the artisans including women artisans and take remedial measures to mitigate their basic problems without further delay.

To summarize, it is highlighted that majority of the handicrafts and artistic works are caste based and having historical development. They depict the cultural heritage of the people and country. But, due to globalization, their importance has
reduced completely. Women are playing significant role in these artistic works and handicrafts. But, they are facing the problem of poor working conditions, lack of adequate income, poverty, lack of proper marketing facilities, etc. Of course, a few of the social security and welfare schemes were already formulated by the government for the welfare of women in handicrafts and artistic works. But, the benefits gained from these schemes are very low. Hence, there is need to study the handicrafts and artistic works engaged by women in rural areas in different states and also study their socio-economic aspects. Based on this study, there is need to form more social welfare and social security schemes for handicrafts women and women engaged in artistic works.

1.2. Statement of the Problem:

Due to globalization, the handicrafts and artistic works are disappearing as the big industries are manufacturing the products, which were earlier produced by families based on their castes, as their occupation. As such, globalization was become threat to the occupations of these handicrafts people. But, it is noted that still in the rural areas, many of the women are engaged in these handicrafts and artistic works. The men in the most of these families are engaged in organized sector employment or unorganized sector employment, but the women have continued their occupation in handicrafts at their homes. Further, the customers for these products of handicrafts are also lower, these are limited to rural areas and also there is lot of competition from other families engaged in similar occupations or from large scale industries. Consequently, the women working in these occupations are facing many socio-economic problems. Hence, the present study is made to explore the socio-economic problems of women engaged in artistic works and handicrafts and the study is stated as “Socio-economic Problems of Women Artisans in Gulbarga District: A Sociological Study”.

1.3. Significance of the Study:
The artistic people in general and artistic women were playing significant role in rural society. They are supporting to agriculture in terms of providing agricultural implements, providing packing products such as rope, jute bags and baskets, providing for food cooking and storage materials such as pots, supporting by providing woven cloth, even they are decorators like jewelers, etc. In this way, the artisans were playing significant role in village economy. Without whom there was no society.

Due to globalization and mechanization, slowly the machines are started to produce the products in large scale, which were produced earlier by artisans. Hence, it has become threat to the occupations of the artisans and handicrafts. Majority of these populations has become unemployed and even migrated to urban areas in search of employment. Those who are staying in rural areas by continuing their occupations are living below poverty line. They have lack of education, negligence, less secured income, etc. Hence, these artisans are facing socio-economic problems.

Women, even though regarded as subjugates to men in these occupations, still playing important role in continuing their occupations. But they have many problems such as social inequality, lower social status, poverty, illiteracy, etc. Hence, it is essential to focus their problems, so that they can be empowered like other women. Hence, the present study has proved as significant and throws light on the socio-economic, educational and political problems of the women artisans in Gulbarga district.

1.4. Objectives of the Study:

The present study is primarily aimed to know about the socio-economic life of the women engaged in handicrafts and artistic works in Gulbarga district and to explore the problems of these women. The particular objectives are:
1. To study the impact of Globalization on the Women Handicrafts and Artisans in Rural Areas;
2. To assess the socio-economic and family conditions of the women handicrafts and artisans;
3. To explore the supply and demand for handicrafts produced by women;
4. To examine the difficulties and problems of artistic and handicrafts women in their occupation;
5. To study the economic status in terms of income, properties owned, etc of the women artisans; and
6. To know about the expectations, if any made by women artisans and handicrafts, from the welfare policies of the government.

1.5. Hypotheses:

Following hypotheses statements are formed for the present study.
1. Education is not significant factor for artistic occupations and handicrafts.
2. Backward Castes and Classes constitutes majority of the Women Artisans.
3. Majority of the Occupations (Artistic Works and Handicrafts) are family and caste based.
4. Globalization made the Artistic Occupations and Handicrafts more mechanized and increased more demand, production and supply.
5. As working women, the artistic and handicrafts works has increased the status of artistic women.

1.6. Limitations of the Study:

There are more than 700 villages in Gulbarga district and they come under Seven talukas, namely, Aland, Afzalpur, Jewargi, Sedam, Chittapur, Gulbarga and Chincholi. It is estimated that there are more than 3 lakh people in the district are
dependent on handicrafts and artistic works in the district. It was not possible for
the researcher to survey all these women handicrafts and artisans and hence, the
present study was made on the basis of sample survey. The sampling of the
women artisans, collection of primary data, etc. are discussed already in research
methodology. To survey the sampled respondents, the researcher covered 400
artisan women working in 50 villages in Gulbarga district. Hence, the present
study is limited to 400 women handicrafts and artisans in Gulbarga district.

1.7. Chapterization:

The research report is organized into seven chapters with two appendixes as
under.

The first chapter provided brief background information to the research
topic. Here research problem is clearly defined. The need for the study of the
problem is discussed. The importance of this research topic is stated briefly. The
clear aims and objectives are to be discussed. The scope and limitations are set in
this chapter. Some generalizations and assumptions are fixed as hypothesis of the
study. The first chapter is written under the title “Introduction to the Study.”

Before conducting the present study, it is necessary to know about the
research gap in the studies that are already conducted. Hence, the studies already
conducted and published already in the secondary literature such as research
papers, books, journals, articles, conference and seminar papers that are published
are reviewed in the second chapter under the title “Review of Literature”.

While conducting a research, it is needed to follow the principles according
to the methodology. For this purpose, there is need to know about the existing
literature and studies that are already done and the set parameters for the present
study and also to work accordingly. The data collection techniques and tools used
and sampling made, etc are discussed in third chapter under the title “Research Methodology”.

Geographical territory plays an important role in the status and development of the people. As such it is also applicable to the women handicrafts and artisans in Gulbarga district. Hence, there is need to study on the Gulbarga district in general and rural areas in particular. The fourth chapter covered the area, demography, population, literacy, education, employment, occupation, environment, etc of the Gulbarga district under the title “Area of the Study”.

To examine the social conditions and problems, interviews were conducted and primary data was collected and the collected primary data was analyzed and discussed with relative percentages, so as to derive findings. Hence, fifth chapter will present “Social Problems of Women Artisans”.

The respondents here denote women artisans that is the respondents are chosen on the basis of their economic status that is occupation. Hence, the economic status and problems also influence the social problems of the women artisans. The primary data collected on the economic problems are analyzed and discussed in the sixth chapter under the title “Economic Problems”.

After the analysis, discussion and interpretation of the primary data, certain findings are derived from the study and summaries of the study are stated. Useful suggestions are given for the improvement and empowerment of women engaged in handicrafts and artistic works. Further, the research study is concluded. Hence, the seventh chapter is written under the title “Findings and Conclusion”.

Apart from the above stated seven chapters, two appendixes are given at the end covering Bibliography and Interview Schedule. The research papers, books, Journal articles etc. that are used and relevant to the present study are listed in
appendix-1 under the title ‘Bibliography’. The Interview Schedule used to collect Primary data is given in appendix-2.

1.8. References:


