"ART & CRAFTS OF WEST BENGAL - SCOPE FOR MARKETING PROSPERITY THROUGH FOLK - ART MUSEUM"

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (ARTS) IN MUSEOLOGY

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PREFACE

The hands of the artisan is always pure”. It has been attributed in ‘Manusmriti’ about the craftsman. The hand is the signature of the human being. He makes the environment habitable. From the dawn of civilization to present day, his hand becomes the energetic point of transmission between the inner comprehension and its outer image, that is skill or artistry and artifact. It is necessary to project this urge to focus one’s attention on this subject.

This element of human thought has kept alive the folk tradition in Bengal. That is the product of the rural millions and the root reaching into the deep soil.

I shall therefore confine myself to a few remarks on the nature of art, its form and function, as briefly as possible, strictly within the limits of their relevance to the theme of this survey. Art is something useful as well as beautiful. The traditional art and crafts, which is the subject of my study, adheres to this fundamental truth that its primary aim is not to make a thing of ‘beauty’, but a thing ‘useful’ to the society.

The study addresses the issue of configurations of West Bengal cultural identity as manifested in the folk art of Bengal. It focuses on artistic practices and evolving current scene, influence by currents of globalization, holding new challenges for artists. Configurations of identify and their changing perceptions, vis-a-vis the intelligentsia, have played a major role in fashioning its form. The study analyzes the multiple roles of ‘tradition’ in construction of identify and how ‘folk arts’ of Bengal have continued to provide a rich source for artists to draw upon.

During the past few centuries there have been many change, ups and downs in our national life, but the tradition introduced in West Bengal to pay homage to the artisans for their skill in particular fields still finds a position in our society, particularly in rural Bengal. The rural artisans have been playing their simple tools, handed down to them by their forefathers. The products also have not lost much flavour and excellence.

Present study attempt to introduce the varied and distinctive artistry and artifacts of the province based on field observation. It has given me an opportunity to realize the present state of our traditional art & crafts and the artisans.