Chapter 6

Conclusion & Suggestions

6.1 Conclusion of the Study

It is well established how miraculous the thewa craft is, its highly intricate designs, delicate fusion of a extremely thin 23k gold sheet (40 gauge), onto a transparent colored glass and use of traditional motifs and narratives, gives it a very unique identity and an enchanting look hence making thewa jewellery, objects of extreme desire. It requires very high level of expertise in order to fuse gold sheet and glass properly.

Such great level of manual dexterity and instinct comes only after years of practice and experience. It takes a lot of time, efforts and dedication to properly execute thewa craft that only few artisans are able to practise thus making the availability of thewa products rare in terms of quantity and quality. Not just thewa products are rare but also possess great history and heritage. This unique craft of thewa dates back to the Mughal era which is believed to be approximately 350 years old. The craft was invented and introduced to the world by Shri Nathu Raj Soni, who was the goldsmith for the then royal family of the princely state of Pratapgarh. Ever since then thewa craft has been part of the same family lineage and has never been practiced outside of it. The thewa craft is also rich in traditional and cultural value. Popular subjects are Srinath ji, a form of Krishna, a statue situated at the famous nearby temple at Nathdwara. It is a place very frequented by pilgrims, and of radha-Krishna. Another is of ram darbaar and ram parivar (lord ram, sita, laxman, and hanuman) luv and kush. Others are lord shivaparivar. The other secular or mythological scenarios
consist of hunting scene (shikargah), mrigaya (woman with deers in the forest), lots of flora and fauna.

But even being of such great value, it is hard to acknowledge the fact that this craft is languishing and that there is an urgent need for the upliftment and repositioning of the craft.

It becomes quite evident from the detailed study of thewa that this craft has a lot of scope to become luxury and is no way meant to be a languishing craft. The craft has got all the major constituents that are must to create a luxury product and/or brand. Amazingly beautiful and intricate designs, rich craftsmanship, the unique and very difficult to achieve, fusion of glass and gold, traditional & cultural values and only one family practising the craft makes thewa very aspirational and rare at the same time making thewa jewellery precious which makes thewa to qualify to be in the segment of luxurious jewellery and products.

All throughout the research, It was also very well understood and observed that in a country like India, people are very much inclined towards gold. It is considered auspicious to buy gold in India. All across India, gold and celebration always go hand in hand. Buying gold in India is not only considered auspicious but is also treated as an investment and a factor of financial security.

It was also observed that how several organisations, governmental and non-governmental, national and international are working towards the upliftment of the languishing crafts. Several governmental schemes were also found to be in favour of the upliftment of the languishing craft. From the market analysis, It became very much clear that the gem and jewellery sector of India is growing at an amazing rate and is likely to grow even in the coming years.
Further jewellery consumption patterns were also studied and analysed with respect to the Indian context. It was very interesting to realise in how many different forms gold and other jewellery is consumed in India. It was also equally interesting to discover how different jewellers practise different value propositions and how this pattern vary based on several factors. An attempt was made as well to study and understand the nature of luxury and luxury products. Considering several notions and perceptions of different people towards luxury, certain core factors that are responsible behind making of a luxury product and a brand were identified. It was also very interesting to see the new emerging luxury clientele in India from tier 2 and tier 3 cities. Considering all these studies and Kundan Meena and what Kazumi Murose did to Urushi as inspiration. It was all hinting towards the upliftment of the thewa craft. A craft that is not at all meant to be languishing and struggle for its survival, rather a craft that has a lot of scope to rise up and become a luxury commodity. From the literature review, It became quite clear that thewa does have a lot of scope and several interventions can be made at various levels for the revival of this craft and turn it into a luxury.

The only need was to develop a sustainable model of luxury design, to establish a design framework that is flexible enough to adapt to the ever changing needs and demands of the modern day consumer and its lifestyle, to hold intact the traditional and cultural heritage of the craft and to rise up to such high levels of perceived value that thewa can considered as luxury.

The research and literature review provided very useful insights to several opportunities but before coming up to the conclusions, It was very much needed to study and analyze the Indian consumer. For this, a target group of loyal consumer
group and were willing to experiment within the domain of thewa were surveyed. Further several well established and experienced designers were also interviewed to get insights about the emerging trends in the gem and jewellery industry with respect to the indian market and consumers. Outcomes of the consumer’s survey and designer’s interviews really helped a lot to establish the identified opportunities based on which three collections were designed in modern, traditional and fusion styles to test the design framework. These collections were designed keeping in mind the insights gained from the study and understanding of the thewa craft, from the review of the literature, consumers’ survey and designers’ interviews.

These collections were further reviewed and surveyed among the people who were earlier surveyed and asked to comment on the thewa craft.

Results observed very much positive and inspiring.

6.2 Suggestions for the Industry

This thesis primarily focuses on analysing the scope of the thewa craft with an objective to study and identify the factors responsible for the craft languishing and to come up with a sustainable model of luxury design. Due to the limitations of resources and time only very few of the many identified opportunities were explored and examined with only three collections developed and tested among the potential consumers. But very clearly the thesis and experiments done as the part for the thesis demonstrates several possibilities to harness the true power the thewa craft.

Following are the key suggestions for the industry:
• It becomes very clear from the descriptive ethnographic study of the thewa craft that in order to keep the age old tradition of practising thewa craft only within the family has made thewa lost its relevance in the current context where the taste of the consumers have evolved and changed a lot over the time. But as discussed in the thesis, now craftsmen are opening up to the new suggestions and possibilities and are willing to expand. Several workshops can be organised to further aware and educate artisans about the impact of changing consumers’ lifestyles, market dynamics on the product development cycle. Also researches and studies can be conducted on specific factors and reports and insights can be shared and applied to the product development to further increase the contextual relevance of the thewa products.

• Design trends and fashion forecasts can be taken into consideration while designing and developing the thewa products while preserving the key characteristics elements of the craft.

• In a country like India, where buying gold is considered auspicious, desirable and investment with widely varied forms of jewellery consumption, thewa craft with gold as its major constituent and lower product costs in terms of technique promises a great scope when it comes to product diversification within the craft. This also opens up the possibility of targeting various market segments even within the niche.

• In the beginning of this study, an attempt was made to articulate the major constituents of a luxury brand namely craftsmanship, rarity, history/story and focus and later thewa was found to possess all these major luxury
constituents. Further consumers’ reviews on the newly designed thewa collections were found to even strengthen the idea. Collaborative efforts can made between designers, entrepreneurs, philanthropists and the craft community to come up with luxury brands selling high-end, premium thewa products with several possible value propositions.