

The background of the image is a dark blue and purple night sky filled with numerous white stars of varying sizes. In the foreground, there is a silhouette of a forest of evergreen trees. The text is centered in the middle of the image.

TOPIC OF THE WEEK

MAR'19 (28 Feb to 6 Mar)

Crafting Details About Our Indian Handicrafts

The Union Minister for Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani laid the foundation stone of a Hastshilp Complex in New Delhi. The complex would be named after Deendayal Upadhyaya as Deen Dayal Antarashtriya Hastshilp Bhawan. This complex will provide space for awardee artisans on a rotation basis and preference will be given to differently abled artisans. It will bring different offices of handicrafts which are situated at different places currently to one location.

The tradition and culture of a particular place is reflected by its handicrafts items. It carries tales of ancient times of the kings and queens, and tells stories of its heritage. Wooden handicrafts like carved figures, painted figure, chess board, animal figure and other Indian Handicraft Items of wood are designed aesthetically by the skilled craftsman. Today, handicraft is flourishing in the Indian industry because of its rich cultural heritage and diversity. Indian handicraft items ranges from wooden stone, papier mache, metal, glass, bamboo, cane, clay, terracotta ceramics, and textiles. Majority of its production is exported to different countries; the most

popular items in Indian handicrafts are brass ware, pen holder, vases, candle stand, Christmas items, ceramic pots, papier mache and other products of paper. Different states of India like north eastern Manipur, Tripura, Northern States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kashmir or the southern part, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala are popular for its handicraft collection. Each States offers a wide range of handicrafts, with its own identity. These handicraft items represent quality craftsmanship.

India has the largest concentration of tribal population in the world. There are 697 tribes notified by the Central Government under Article 342 of the Indian Constitution with certain tribes being notified in more than one State. The tribal handicrafts are specialized skills which are passed on from one generation to another and these handicrafts are means of livelihood of the artisans.

Let's talk about Assam handicraft which has a flourishing handicrafts business. Assam is renowned for the production of some wonderful silk. The state produces superior quality silk called 'Pat' and 'Muga'. Moreover, weaving and embroidery are counted as major handicraft industry in the state. Cane and bamboo are

also used here exquisitely to make beautiful handicrafts. In addition, terracotta products of Assam are also good examples of beautiful crafts. Assam handicrafts have a huge export market. And most of these crafts are exported across countries like Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, UAE and many other countries of the world. The lovely works of cane and bamboo gets huge attraction in international trade fairs and exhibitions. Moreover, the famous silk of Assam is also quite popular in the export markets.

The handicrafts of West Bengal portray the legacy of the state, which is renowned. The famous textiles of West Bengal have found a unique place in the world market with its Baluchari Sarees, Silk and Tasar Textile etc., which are produced in districts like Murshidabad, Birbhum, Bankura, Hoogly and Nadia in West Bengal. Moreover, handloom of these districts is also popular. Other crafts like jute crafts, wood and cane crafts, conch-shell crafts, brasswares, Dokra art and folk dolls are also popular crafts of West Bengal.

The rich tradition of Punjab handicrafts includes Phulkari along with Pidhis, Jootis, Durries and Parandis. Phulkari is however the most popular of them all. Many of the crafts are used as household items or decorative items in houses and portray the colorful identity of the state. Weaving durries is mainly done by girls and they begin learning the same since childhood.

Instead of higher potentialities, this sector is suffering from the acute declination. Recently, the inclination of Indian consumers towards international brands has become pertinent. After liberalization, as the economy opened up to the international market, imported goods gradually gained traction among Indian buyers. The repercussion is, today the market is almost flooded with goods from international market. The current generation, care less about paying an extra for better quality, facility and ambiance. Mass media, internet and communication have been the factors driving awareness about international lifestyle and culture amongst Indian buyers. This awareness leads to further want of goods and services as Indian consumers tend to follow international lifestyle. Therefore, consumer culture has been reinforcing a globalized lifestyle within Indian buyers.

International brands are coming up as the mediator or this globalized living.

Handicrafts have a great potential to provide employment opportunities to millions of artisans spread over length and breadth of the country, as most of the artisans have inherent art to be converted in to occupation. Women of Gujarat are very prosperous in the art of 'Needle and Thread'. Generally they are used to do such work for their domestic use. But now a days, such products are demanded everywhere. They require professional touch as per the requirement of demand of the market. Government tries to uplift the art and artisans through various programmes and policies. Despite of various government and non government efforts, the reality is not satisfactory. The handicraft artisans suffer a lot due to being unorganized, lack of education, low capital, poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence and a poor institutional framework.

The biggest problem in the Indian Handicraft industry is that the village craftsmen remain concerned with local trade and mass production so their hand-made products of their hard labour will remain out price from other parts of the world. So the basic question arises, is globalization a panacea for every human problems that the mother earth is facing now? Although India adapted to liberalization policies in early nineties, the handicrafts sector continued to get state intervention. Handicrafts being a state subject defined in our constitution, the development and promotion of crafts are the responsibility of the respective state governments. The Central government through various developmental schemes plays the role by supplementing their efforts. As the Annual Report suggests, for the holistic growth and development of the handicrafts, the government during different five-year plan has implemented few generic schemes.

The magic of globalization is that during the modern times, there is always a cross-cultural interaction of both the 'local' and 'global' and notwithstanding many contradictions, global village is now not just a possibility, but a reality. Needless to say, the borders between the

world cultures are now eroding out and becoming irrelevant. The whole world is now interconnected.

References:

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Additional Reading:

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- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/03/the-guardian-view-on-new-drugs-high-hopes-higher-prices>
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