



# A BRIEF ANALYSIS ABOUT THE ROLE OF HANDICRAFTS INDUSTRY IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Handicrafts in India are the most sought-after industry with a great export value contributing to the economy. There are many livelihoods pursuing this art as a lineage to subsist in the present, and the government has recognized the handicraft industry under certain acts, so as to continue in the future. The importance of these crafts is realized as these are the true roots and soft power of India that reflect great stories of ancient civilization, heritage, and culture. When the world looking for sustainability and eco-friendly concepts, handicrafts that have both decorative and utility aspects precisely designed within them along with a passionate storytelling finish have great economic value. So the industry is thriving of the government by creating employment, subsidizing, and also opening exhibition stalls both within and outside India.*

**KEYWORDS:-** JEWELLERY, ANTIQUE, CERAMIC, BASKETS, EMBROIDERY, BLOCK PRINTING, GLASS CRAFT.

## INTRODUCTION,

Handicrafts are unique expressions and represent a culture, tradition and heritage of a country. The Handicraft Industry is one of the important productive sectors. Various attempts have been made to define this broad and diversified industry. The following definition strives to cover diversity and complexity of Handicraft Industry.

### Defining Handicrafts:

Definition According to **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/Information Technology Community (UNESCO/ITC)**

Handicrafts can be defined as products which are produced either completely by hand or with the help of tools. Mechanical tools may be used as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. Handicrafts are made from raw materials and can be produced in unlimited numbers. Such products can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant.

### Definition according to Govt. of India:

Handicraft can be defined, which is made by hand; should have some artistic value; they may or may not have functional utility.

Crafts, a temple of inheritance value, are the stories and mastery passed through generations that offer colorfully visualized narrations. The sustainability and feasibility of the crafts sector have become a stipulation, particularly in an age of rapid communication, urbanization, and global change. The outlook of Indian crafts portrays

many descriptions and shades of meaning that reflect interactions with socio-economic, cultural, and religious forces. The crafts manifest themselves in the pervasive household products crafted with originality from local materials, skills, and labours.

### **The Origin of Crafts in India**

The art of crafting is deeply embedded in the lap of Indian history and heritage. It was around 5,000 BC when the tradition of handmade crafts used to orbit around religion. Around 3,000 BC, during the Indus-Valley civilization, several forms of arts and crafts were initiated, which can be found in museums and art centres today. The Vedic Age experienced a significant rise in crafts, majorly in the fields of textile, stone, metal, painting, pottery, and wood.

In the 3rd century BC, there was a shift in the trend, and the art of sculpturing and making contemporary jewellery bloomed during the Mauryan age.

The craftsmen during the Gupta period (320-647 AD) outshone in jewellery-making, woodcarving, sculpting, stone carving, weaving, and different other art forms. However, the handicrafts of textile, leather products, and metalworking piloted during the later ages, reflected a strong foreign influence on Indian crafts, which later on transformed as per the scenario of India. Throughout the ages, the crafts of India thrived and evolved, keeping up with the needs of the public.

### **Significance of Indian Crafts**

The Indian handicrafts sector plays a significant role in the country's economy. The importance of handicrafts has increased a lot during recent years, because of their economic and cultural values. The Indian Handicrafts industry is a decentralized and labour-intensive industry. It provides employment to a large number of craftsmen in rural and urban areas of India and generates considerable foreign exchange for the country by showcasing its cultural heritage. Indian art and craft have great potential, as they hold the key for supporting not only the millions of artisans and craftspeople spread over the length and breadth of the country as it employs almost 6 million artisans, including women of society.

### **Eco-Friendliness of Handicrafts**

The most attractive thing about handicraft items is their eco-friendly property. These types of handicrafts mostly help to recycle waste. The most used raw materials come from recycled wastes like bottles, plastic cups, cans, cardboard boxes, pins, buttons, magazines, wood, and old clothes. It also generates the least amount of waste. Handmade products are completely free of hazardous materials and chemicals and are more focused on biodegradability and environmentally friendly components.

### **Contemporary Scenario**

Owing to the presence of a rich and cultural heritage of design inspiration, exquisite skillful craftsmen, and plenty of raw materials, Indian artisans despite the industrial and technological revolutions, hold their position in today's competitive world. Indian crafts acquire connoisseurs from around the world and preserve and promote the Indian handicraft industry across the globe. Indian craftsmen are in demand even abroad.

Handcrafted jewellery, hand-printed textiles and scarves, embroidered and crocheted homeware, hand-knotted rugs, Indian silks, shawls, leather and a large variety of household and decorative items are some of the most popular crafts that are exported from India to other countries.

Despite the development of the handicrafts industry and the measures reserved by the government to promote this industry, the average earning of a craftsman when compared to that of other fields is very low in India. To overcome this challenging situation, the need of the hour is to help the Indian craftsmen and promote their arts with proper marketing and training them with technical knowledge.

**Arts of India.** in is one such platform that is making every possible effort to showcase the works of these artists and popularize Indian crafts based on their rich cultural and historical heritage and sustainability. The revenue earned by selling the products on this website goes directly to support the rural artisans. Most of the Indian crafts are produced with 100% eco-friendly techniques with minimum wastes and play an important role in protecting the degenerating environment.

## **DIFFERENT TYPES OF HANDICRAFTS IN INDIA**

Let's understand the handicrafts, types, and places of both decor and utility with a lot of functional factors that are imprinted with human mastery and patience, where even those prints are polished finely.

This is the craft in which people make things using their hands and non-automated tools like hammers, chisels, knives, scissors, chenilles, etc. Handicrafts are a form of art that represents a particular region's culture, and heritage, and preserving them for the people's way of life by crafting with certain mastery and skills with sheer dedication and patience.

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF HANDICRAFTS IN INDIA

Types of handicrafts mentioned below have taken their birth in the valleys, mountains, and plateaus of different cultures and traditions or have been adopted from other regions that are foreign, but the reflection of the culture and heritage of the Indian subcontinent truly echoes in the art. Here are the most popular handicrafts to come out of India.

### 1. ANTIQUES

**Antique handicrafts** in India consist of both metal and wooden items with unique, detailed, and exclusive designs. The term defines any object that has a connection to perceive certain value due to its aesthetic or historical significance that might be of utility or just a showpiece. So, antique handicrafts in India include metallic, wooden, fabric, glass, or ceramics proposing a historical significance. In handicrafting these antiques, certain ancient or medieval relics are collected and these are embedded into or with designs to represent the historic or pre-historic data, heritage, culture, and dynastic roots from different parts of the Indian subcontinent. The range of these antique handicrafts varies both in size and substance.

### 2. BASKETS

These are intricate and delicate forms that require a certain amount of skills and acute observation with patience to bring out beautiful creatives. Each culture from each nook and corner of India brings a different style and substance to the table. Some cultures use logs, some use bark, reeds, and rushes, jute, and others use dried-up leaves to make watertight bowls, baskets, and others with a vibrant decorative effect. Certain baskets' material is also based on the trees that grow in different seasons, a tree due to monsoon shift will dry up, and that material brings out a unique design and structure.

### 3. CERAMICS

Any object that has a utilitarian and purposeful value made of non-metallic materials such as clay is called 'Ceramics'. Many small utility products form part of ceramics like coffee mugs, cups, saucers, and many others, mostly found amongst kitchenware or cutlery. The clay with certain minerals is well mixed up and heated to a particular point and then taken out to mold in the hands of master skill work and later heated up at high temperature to bring them to life. All these are anti-corrosive and resistant enough and come mostly with a design and decoration that even has some story-telling aspects to it.

### 4. EMBROIDERY

This is a handicraft of weaving tiny mirrors, and beads of different forms and colors through the cloth, bags, and decorative home clothes. These are mostly crafted on the finished cloth, some with bare hands and some keep the cloth between tight frames to weave. Each culture from India has different forms of minute objects to be woven along the cloth. The culture of these beads and glitters dates back to the ancient culture that is mostly tribal sects. Thanks to the continuance of the craft and perfecting the mastery, we can find that in any modern dressing materials making it elegant and contemporary in style.

### 5. BLOCK PRINTING

This handicraft is also called 'Hand blocked' or 'Hand block printing' which brings life to the plain cloth of different colored clothes. This is a handmade art with techniques of pressing or stamping on plain fabrics with carved wooden blocks. Even the wooden blocks used for impressing the designs are handmade. These woods are cut, finely grated, and polished to remove excessive or unwanted pulp, and the design molds are smoothly carved. These carved wooden stamps of varied designs are dipped into different colored inks and luminous vegetable dyes by the master artisans with great patience. Decorative and Screen printing with little differences fall under this category.

### 6. GLASS CRAFT

This handicraft includes many varieties such as vases, bottles, tumblers, decanters, jewelry, and glass windows. A fine mix of sand, soda ash, and limestone or sand of different quality like silica or quartz is blended and heated at a temperature, and blowing air through a rare form of pipe begets glass of different models. Different models of glass come with distinct mediums of reflection and refraction of history, heritage, and culture by tainting them with rich colors and designs and a metal finish. These handmade glasses can be a decor and also utility items.

### 7. POTTERY

One of the oldest forms of handicrafts of the Indian sub-continent is pottery, made of clay with a mix of water and spun on a wheel that requires a hand of sheer dedication and patience, later heated for resistance. The process of pottery is the most fun and intriguing to watch as the crafting hands and the clay look like they dance in perfect sync. Pottery once was a necessity for ancient generations to store and eat food, but later, when modernization posed an

evolutionary threat to its existence, pottery followed and started imbibing some artistic amends, and so the spinning tale continues.

### **8. PUPPETS**

These handmade puppets are of different types, popular of them are 2 types, one is for decor and the other used for the puppetry profession. These are made of different solid items but mostly wood material of different shapes and then later joining them with peculiar glue. These are popular art forms of storytelling in many traditions inculcating values and education in kids and many. Some puppets are of finely sewn cloth finished and some are painted with, both bringing life. Puppets from different regions come in different formats of their own culture and stories which has great export value.

### **9. STONE CRAFTS**

Till now many excavation stories and pieces of evidence erected out of the earth date back to the ancient era when the stone crafts revealed at its peak. Crafting the stones for usage comes from the ancient pre-historic men for hunting food by making weapons out of stones. In parallel to the evolution of humans evolved the art of stone crafts. A fine rock or a stone is selected, cut, and carved with a chisel and hammer, and later polished. Many idols, modern rock architecture, and tiny stone decor are precisely carved and are also hued with colors to bring about a variation within the craft.

### **10. PAPER MACHE ART**

One of the rare art that has been passed from generation to generation for centuries is delicate and tender to craft. This flourishing art form has been brought to the attention of creative admirers and enthusiasts all over the world as decor and figurines. The process of crafting includes finding paper pulp mixed with a strong mache glue mixture such as starch or wallpaper paste and colors as a final touch to make it more vibrant and colorful and left in the sun. This also includes making bangleware. Each region comes with different stories yet intrinsically stays true to its foundations of the origin of this art.

### **11. WOODEN CRAFTS**

These handicrafts come in different styles and formats carved out of different woods and logs giving them a distinct look based on the design and use. Apart from the wood used for making puppets and others, this craft is the most popular one to make doors and windows based on art from different origins. Wooden screens of interwoven wooden laths and canes into geometric patterns, multiple pieces and beads to craft decorative ceilings, blending with different cultures, religious idols, and so many are tweaked within this crafting making this a popular and most sought-after in the worlds of architecture. Bamboo crafts also form part of this.

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## **TOP 5 PLACES WHICH ARE POPULAR FOR INDIAN HANDICRAFTS**

Each region has the representation of its rich culture in different handicrafts, but here 5 popular places for Indian handicrafts:

### **KASHMIR**

This region is the most famous for its woolen fabrics that have a distinct yet special aura associated with it. The fabrics include carpets, shawls, dhurries, sweaters, mufflers, and others. The colors are mostly dark in color to provide warmth both to feel and look to distinguish themselves from the mild mist or fog. These are mostly hand-woven from soft wool or yarn spun from the hair of the elusive living creatures in that terrain. Jamavar, Pashmina, Shahtoosh shawls, and Kashmiri carpets are some of the most popular with decent export value. Some of the apparel is available with some beads woven into them.

### **GUJARAT**

Gujarat is the region to revel with rich handicrafts and textiles. The textiles and fabrics here are eye-feasting with intricate designs with beads, glittering mirrors, and glimmering square patterns. The designs vary in formats that

suit the cloth like the borders are woven with thin tender metallic threads connecting to the traditional patterns of different object figures. This region has the best export quality in economic value. The elusive markets throughout the region exhibit the rare styles of funky, tribal, brocade, and many more. Gujarat has garnered a name for itself as ‘a destination of mirrored fabrics’.

### **ANDHRA PRADESH**

Artistry in this region has varieties to offer like Banjara needle crafts, brassware, stone, and metal crafts, but the most famous is the Kondaplli toys. This state is the destination for these toys that are handmade eco-friendly and sustainable toys from different woods. These toys from the southern part of India have a great export value. Since the ambiance of these toys lies in the ancestral craftsmanship, has storytelling aspects to it. Other handicrafts mentioned above are carefully crafted by the artisans with flexibility and dexterity making this place reputable in the handicrafts industry.

### **ORISSA**

Amongst the strong ethnic handicrafts industry, Orissa carved boastingly its name for crafting in applique, metallic, and silver works. The applique sewing craft is a rare one that this region produces by layering small pieces of fabric onto separate bases providing vibrant designs. The region is the most popular destination for plates, bowls, and other accessories done with metallic materials and later laced with silver finish. Silverware of Orissa is well-known for its intricate and flexible designs with artistic excellence.

### **MORADABAD**

Moradabad of Uttar Pradesh is a source of many handicrafts but is most famous for brassware, also called as ‘Brass City’. The brassware industry bloomed in the early 19th century and the British took this art form to the international markets where the art still holds its stance for the precision and elegance in these carvings or making. The designs or the carvings on the brass products display the range of culture, heritage, history, and diversity. This brass capital in India is always ready with a variety of handicrafts in the flea markets, thrift shops, and also in international markets with its variety and elegance with great export value.

## **CONCLUSION**

Go buy any at your discretion and appreciate the art as the handicrafts with enriching traditional or cultural significance offer a lively attachment and positive impact. Handicrafts play very important role in representing the culture and traditions of any country or region. Handicrafts are a substantial medium to preserve of rich traditional art, heritage and culture, traditional skills and talents which are associated with people’s lifestyle and history. Handicrafts are hugely important in terms of economic development. They provide ample opportunities for employment even with low capital investments and become a prominent medium for foreign earnings.

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