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HANDICRAFTS

Introduction:

1. Every Region in India has its unique handicrafts tradition mostly using locally available material
2. The Heritage of Indian handicrafts goes back to the Indus Valley civilization, where homespun cotton was used to weave clothes.
3. Thus, the origin of Indian handicrafts goes back to the early man living in caves and giving creative expression to his / her emotions through various carvings made on rock.
4. It travelled through the ages through various forms of skill, techniques, art forms preserved in various folk tradition and aesthetic expressions.
5. Handicrafts is rightly described as craft of the people and in India it is not just an industry as the word is commonly understood but is the aesthetic expression of the artisans which not only fulfils the daily needs of the people but also satisfies their aesthetic desire.

Importance of Handicraft:

- ▶▶ The Definition of handicrafts. It must be predominantly made by hand. It does not matter if some machinery is also used in the process. It must be graced with visual appeal in the matter of ornamentation or inlay work or some similar work lending it an element of artistic improvement. such orientation must be a substantial nature and not a mere pretence”.
- ▶▶ Handicrafts have great potential, as they hold the key for sustaining not only the existing set of millions of artisans spread over the length and breadth of the country, but also for increasingly large numbers of new entrants in the craft activity.
- ▶▶ It plays significant and important role in the country’s economy.
- ▶▶ It Provides employment to a vast segment of crafts persons in rural and semi – urban areas.
- ▶▶ It provides alternate source of income for the agriculture workers, who keep themselves employed in this sector during lean periods of agriculture.
- ▶▶ This sector have led India to establish its distinct identity in the International market.
- ▶▶ Because of its low capital investment nature, it became a nature of choice for small entrepreneur.
- ▶▶ Indian handicrafts industry is highly labour-intensive cottage based and decentralized.
- ▶▶ Although this industry is fragmented it helps in promoting art and craftsmanship in regional level.

Cultural Significance:

- ▶ Like Unique diversity of our country, our handicrafts are also very diverse and can be placed in innumerable categories.
- ▶ Some of these may be decorative, religious, historical, artistic, daily utilities, etc.,
- ▶ The handloom industry play an important role in women empowerment due to employment of lot of women in this sector
- ▶ This sector are an important source to express art and skill in crafts and promote our culture by making crafts and textile items available locally.

▶ Various crafts in India

Zari	Handloom accounting for 85% of total production globally.
Leather Footwear	Textile hand Embroidery
Carpet	
Rugs and Dwories	
Pottery and Clay Object	Textile hand printing
Terrracotta	Cane and Bamboo
Folk Painting	Filigree and silver ware
Coir twisting	Metal ware
Theatre Costumes	Jewellery
	Grass leaf, peed & Fibre

Economic Significance:

- ▶ This industry is now on the way to becoming the second largest manufacturer and exporter in the world after china.
- ▶ It Constitutes an important part of the Indian economy it is one of the largest generators of employment potential source of foreign exchange earnings handicrafts industry is on rising trend and heading towards a significant share of all India Exports.
- ▶ Handicrafts add value to all tourist spots and attract tourists providing an income for local artisans and other petty vendors.
- ▶ Textiles and handicrafts have been a key source of employment the handloom and handicrafts sector together provide about 111 lakh employment both in organised and unorganised sector. Most of the International brands like marks & spencer IC penny and GAP acquired most of their fabrics from India.
- ▶ Affordable raw material and labour, great strides in textile technology could together make India not only a preferred but a formidable destination for foreign. Investment in the textile and garment business.

Government Initiatives:

- ▶ In an effort to establish authenticity of handmade products there is a scheme of handicraft mark.
- ▶ Marketing portal – pachchan for marketing the handicraft products is even from furlong areas.
- ▶ To spread head and address the immediate need of the textile industry, successful efforts were made in developing 72 qualification packs out of which 71 have been cleared by National skill Qualification committee (NSQC)
- ▶ A Memorandum of understanding (Mov) was signed with the National institutes & Private sector for better design development and training for handicrafts artisans.
- ▶ There is also process for the retail presence of handicrafts product is major malls & retail stores.
- ▶ Innovations in the form of ‘Khadi Mitra’ is on the cards, where the housewives could sell Khadi with a very nominal capital investment.

Institutional Framework:

- ▶ The Office of Development Commissioner (handicrafts) is the model agency in the Government of India for craft and artesian – based activities.
- ▶ It asset in the development, marketing and export of handicrafts, and the promotion of craft forms and skills.
- ▶ Assistance is in the form of Technical and financial support is given.
- ▶ Market linkages are provided through various domestic and international events. Like Gandhi shilp, bazaar, craft bazaar etc.,
- ▶ The handicraft awards namely shilp guru award, National Award, National Merit, Certificates, etc.,
- ▶ Indian Handloom bazaar, online marketing portal is based on marketing of the handicrafts through facilitating direct interaction between sellers and buyers

Challenges:

- ▶ Like any other Industry, the handicrafts sector is associated with its fair share of challenges and rewards.
- ▶ The Handicraft artisans are mostly working in a un – organised setup which makes them prone to exploitation by middlemen.
- ▶ The sector has challenges of working capital, poor exposure to new technologies.
- ▶ Absence of full market intelligence & Institutional framework make them indebted.

- ▶▶ Due to changing world scenario, the change in consumer taste and trends are not at match with local produce.
- ▶▶ Majority of population in handicrafts are in unorganised format, so there is no reliable and authentic data to provide solution to their problems.
- ▶▶ Manufacturing costs of handicrafts products like textile is higher due to fragmented structure of the industry and presence of MSMEs.
- ▶▶ One of the key challenges which India faces is duty disadvantages in consuming market like European union as compared to competing countries viz Bangladesh, Srilanka which have zero duty access.
- ▶▶ Most of the manufacturing units have small capacities and low manufacturing efficiencies which make it difficult for them to compete in global markets.
- ▶▶ Changing and Volatile nature of exchange rate pose the challenges in establishing bond with export market.
- ▶▶ People involved in this sector are of lack of skill, which hinder their progress and adoption of new technology.

Way Forward:

- ▶▶ The changing world market, crafts persons need an institutional support at their places of work like other competitors, China, Korea, etc.,
- ▶▶ India should tie up with partner countries for marketing and skill upgradation.
- ▶▶ Establishing museums, markets, fairs, wide range to make people aware about the handicraft.
- ▶▶ There is need for recognition for the artisans and their products, they should get their product geographical indication (GI) tag to enhance the credibility.
- ▶▶ On a macro level, initiatives to strengthen the sector will support in preserving this cultural heritage and transferring it to the next generation as a potential source of livelihood.
- ▶▶ At micro level, various socio – economic issues like unemployment, poverty, migration and indebtedness will be addressed.
- ▶▶ There is huge demand for Indian handicraft products in both the national and International market. To match the demand and supply with quality, there is a need to have greater technological support and culture of innovation.
- ▶▶ The demand for the handicraft sector will increase in future due to the developing fashion industry and sector like retail and real estate that offer enormous demand for handicrafts.
- ▶▶ So Promotion methods like building brand – image, conducting road shows & craft festivals in the targeting countries, innovative marketing method and appealing packaging

need to be extensive. The Government in partnership with private sector, need to encourage integrated enterprise development by providing supporting services such as local centres for skill training, product adaptation, vocational training and entrepreneurship development.

- ▶▶ The sector also needs to improve supply chains and internal system, focus on research and development cost optimization.
- ▶▶ The Industry has to rise to the occasion and ensure that the share of India's exports increases by diversification in product and explore the new market.

Handicraft of North East:

- ▶▶ If we closely look at contribution of different sector for handicraft growth, North – east plays one of the biggest contributions for the growth of the textile industry.
- ▶▶ North East India occupies a unique and important place in the indigenous textile culture of India. Each Ethnic Group has its own distinct, dynamic set of tradition, mythology, history and social structure. Textile and dress are dominantly identifiable cultural aspects which shows the resemblances as well as the difference among the ethnic group.
- ▶▶ Different motifs and designs of textiles have relationships with the ritual and religious life of the people of NE India.
- ▶▶ The Material used, method of weaving, usage of dye, ornaments, in textiles are also varies example cotton, wool, eri, muga are used.
- ▶▶ If one gets to know more about the handicrafts and textiles of the region, one would realize the potential of the region.

Conclusion:

- ▶▶ India is the only country that makes handmade carpets that start from 16 Knots / Square inch to 2500 knots & also uses more than 10 types of raw materials, makes carpets of all size, shapes, and colours. Access to economic independence through the handicrafts sector can address the livelihood issues and would lead to income generation in rural areas
- ▶▶ Which would help in achievement of sustainable development goals.
- ▶▶ Craftsman and artisan can produce unlimited products without any negative impact on sustainability. Handicrafts, as Gandhiji, believed is not only the tool of self-reliance rather it can play a vital role in the economic growth of the nation.
- ▶▶ The pride of India lies in the treasures of India's crafts and textiles. Preservation of Indian weavers and craftsman is the need of the hour, because the world is taking notice of our immensely unique heritage and the time is ripe for artisans and craftsman to reap the rewards.