

Export-Oriented Eco-Friendly Products of Hereditary Artisans and The Need to Promote Their Craftsmanship

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Abstract

Artisans both hereditary and traditional are an indispensable part of Indian society and culture. Though they have a lot of talents useful for their development and have huge potential to support the nation's economic development, their talents and the scope of their capabilities are yet to be explored and utilized in their proper way. Though there are a lot of government schemes and initiatives, the benefits of all of them do not reach the poor ignorant artisans, many of them still live in superstitious practices. There have not been many sincere serious efforts to bring them to the forefront till recently. Even if there are programs by various governmental agencies, most of the artisans could not make use of them due to their deficiencies. Therefore, there is a special need to reach out to them and improve their entrepreneurial abilities to tap them for greater growth of the economy and inclusive development of these marginalized groups. To achieve this, this paper suggests a nationwide empirical study to find out the socio-economic and educational realities of these hereditary and traditional artisan communities and based on the findings, necessary correctional measures are to be made urgently. To carry out the above, a separate ministry for artisan affairs is needed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Hereditary and traditional artisan communities are a peculiar feature of Indian society. Hereditary artisans are different from traditional artisans. The occupations of the hereditary artisans are conferred on them by inheritance¹. It is received as a lineage, a direct descent from ancestors. Hereditary legacy of crafting skills passed on from father to son in their particular profession². Some of the major occupations of

hereditary artisans were performed by a certain sect of hereditary artisans called *Vishwakarma*, from time immemorial. Traditional on the other hand exists in or is part of a tradition, long established. It need not be received as a lineage. *Vishwakarma* were the people who acquired creative skills through hereditary means of the generational dispensation of socio-engineering in artistry and craftsmanship³. Carpenters, Braziers, Founders, Sculptors and Gold smiths find themselves among other

¹ Definitions from Oxford Languages

² Vijaya Ramaswamy, (ed) *In Search of Vishwakarma*, 2019, Primus Books, Delhi, p.3

³ VP Raghavan, *Heritage and Culture in a Creative Economy*, The *Vishwakarma Craftsmanship in Kerala*, Part of unpublished Project

Thesis, Tagore National Fellow in Cultural Research (2019-2021), Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, Regional Centre, Bangalore.

manufacturers as potters, weavers, and cane and bamboo craftsmen, for which the classical theory of Varna categories does not provide a reference⁴. These occupational groups were considered *Viswakarmakula*. Though their work was predominantly materialistic and associated with technology, it had an element of spirituality also in it⁵. They were the architects and engineers of ancient India and were an indispensable part of Indian society⁶. It was they who were instrumental in the construction of beautiful temples, palaces and similar other structures with stones and wood, they were the makers of attractive ornaments with gold and silver, pottery, statues and sculptures with bronze and metals, tools and implements with iron etc⁷. *“They are the Brahmins who create the five pillars of material culture on which society rests and by which it is distinguished from nature, it means that, for life’s essentials, the world depends on the Viswakarmas”*⁸. The constructions and the products made by them are replete with marvellous skills. It is this magnificent skill of these artisans of yesteryears that attracts thousands of tourists every day to the country. But the talents of these skilled artisans were not properly recognized in independent India and the plight of the majority of these occupational communities is pathetic even today. Underutilization of the capabilities of these artisanal communities is a great loss to the economy too. When we think about the implementation of the Prime Minister’s vision of *“Atmanirbhar Bharath”* for the inclusive development of the nation, the role these indigenous communities can play is great.

2. NEGLECTED AND UNDERUTILISED POTENTIAL

The major reasons for the neglect of these occupational groups were the advent of the British and the introduction of products from England to India during the British period. This resulted in the declining importance of these sects of Indian hereditary artisans in several fields. Pre-colonial India had

favourable foreign trade due to excellence in indigenous production. Indian artisans were famous all over the world for their skills. There was large-scale production of cotton and silk, jute, dyestuffs, mineral and metallic products like arms, metal wares and oil. India, towards the end of the 18th century, was undoubtedly one of the main centres of world trade and industry. This status of India was destroyed during colonial times. Thus the artisans began to face serious challenges to their existence. To protect the interest of these occupational groups and for the self-reliance and self-sufficiency of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi proposed a basic education system for India, in which the promotion of all hereditary and traditional occupations was given due importance. The basic education system Gandhiji proposed was to support the reconstruction of Indian villages in a sustainable manner. But in independent India, the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi on basic education were not accepted or considered. Similarly, C Rajagopalachari, the last Governor General of India, is also said to have advocated for giving special consideration to the children of these hereditary artisan communities to give modern training in the respective fields of engineering. But he was severely criticized by many stating that it would only help the continuance of the caste system. He was even nicknamed as modern “Manu”⁹. Though his arguments had positive and negative elements, unfortunately at that time the positive aspects were overlooked. It was also heard from the old generation that this idea of catching them young and training in the area of their heredity and aptitude, attracted the Soviet administration of that time and they re-modelled their education system accordingly and reaped great positive results. Unfortunately, it did not happen in independent India to date. Perhaps caste-based discrimination and inhuman exploitation and oppression were the major reasons for the criticism and total avoidance of this suggestion. It is well known that the caste system in India had the drawbacks mentioned above. Otherwise, it had its good features; the most important features among them were training from the family itself and efficiency in skills and its continuity through generations. Those who have expertise and aptitude in such areas will have the capability to produce a wide variety of products, especially long-enduring eco-friendly products very useful for people everywhere. There

⁴ Jan Brouwer, 1995, *The Makers of the World. Caste, Craft and Mind of South Indian Artisans*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, p 14.

⁵https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwj5j_qpOz8AhXzIrcAHX42DvcQFnoECA8QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cambridge.org%2Fcore%2Fjournals%2Fjournal-of-asian-studies%2Farticle%2Ftechnophany-and-its-publics-artisans-technicians-and-the-rise-of-vishwakarma-worship-in-india%2F158AE7D06EB7C0205911D00A21B91B&usg=AOvVaw32pgjPHid1oqYHJtyMGSM317/01/2023-4.00p.m *Technophany and Its Publics: Artisans, Technicians, and the Rise of Vishwakarma Worship in India* Published online by Cambridge University Press: 26 January 2022 Kenneth M. George and Kirin Narayan

⁶<https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjivp28l-z8AhWLTGwGHWMMDdkQFnoECAgQAw&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.thehindu.com%2Fsociety%2Fhistory-and-culture%2Fartisans-indispensable-part-of-ancient-society%2Farticle31356763.ece&usg=AOvVaw3WSFnwMukbntR074L UmnMW18/01/2023-2.45p.m>

⁷https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwisi6fOlez8AhUmR2wGHSKYCJkQFnoECA4QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.indianetzone.com%2F16%2Fcrafts_south_indian_states.htm&usg=AOvVaw1QKHL2kmhv4ryl8TMNCxto18/01/2023 2:00 pm

⁸ Ibid p 14

⁹ Ancient Indian scholar who wrote the text “Manusmriti” which advocates ‘the “Varna system”.

are an end number of products the hereditary artisans are still producing and are capable of supplying to the market, starting from wooden spoons, knives, and vessels forvoyages and the manufacture of gold and diamond ornaments. Unfortunately, many of these hereditary artisan communities who have immense potential to generate millions of employment opportunities and foreign exchange are a neglected lot in the independent Indian society. Once their talents are recognized and promoted, they will be able to contribute much to the national income in a tremendous way. The products they are capable of making can be marketed in the domestic and international markets. Any efforts to boost them will not only help to improve the pathetic living conditions of the poor but also will contribute to the nation's GDP. The Indian artisans are spread over the length and breadth of the country which is observed in villages, towns and cities. The objects designed, crafted and made by them can acquire markets in western countries that attract huge foreign exchange¹⁰. Many of these products manifest India's rich and diverse cultural tradition. Owing to its beauty, dignity, style and aesthetics, the legacy of the nation's craft tradition always enjoys special recognition and distinction.

3. THE NEED TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE ARTISAN COMMUNITIES

Most of these hereditary artisan communities are living in a closed economy. Therefore, their problems are invisible to society. They live in their faith and tradition and are ignorant about modern technological developments and the development of social norms. For them, the biggest barrier is a capital investment and lack of entrepreneurial and marketing skills required for the modern world. The marketing, sale and distribution of their products are mainly through personal networks and middlemen. These enterprises by the Indian artisans can deliver strong economic contributions and greater social inclusion, provided they have the right kind of support by all means, particularly in fostering innovation and exploring new markets. They need recognition and support¹¹ their skills are part of intangible heritage. The goal of safeguarding, as with other forms of intangible cultural heritage is to ensure that the knowledge and skills associated with traditional artistry are passed on to future generations so that crafts can continue to be produced within their communities, providing livelihoods to their makers and reflecting creativity¹².

As mentioned earlier, due to industrialisation, the importance of the traditional jobs of these hereditary artisans has declined to a great extent. They became bankrupt as a result of automation; they lost their age-old vocation, the only source of livelihood. In this process, these original hardworking household entrepreneurs got converted into mere labourers or workers in various other fields or their fields. The status of these makers of the world was reduced to class workers, menial labourers in unorganized

sectors, and jobless or part-time workers. They could not become owners or entrepreneurs in their traditional art or business in the contemporary economy. They were reduced to mere workers with the system snatching the ownerships or entrepreneurship business enterprises respectively. Despite traditional knowledge and expertise in the respective areas of business, they are reduced to daily labourers. The startling truth is that the hereditary artisans are increasingly losing their job opportunities as a result of modernisation, mechanisation, globalisation and also through the onslaught of industrial giants in the manufacturing and marketing fields¹³.

The products of these traditional craftsmen have a huge market and market potential abroad and in the domestic market. To keep the traditional craft alive, the artisans must understand entrepreneurship, designs, marketing, trade fairs and participation thereof, understanding of the profit and loss and pros and cons involved in the global market, interact with consumers explaining them the products and the details and meaning and stories behind them. This inspires the customers and establishes a connection between art and the buyer. This also helps the artisans know the consumer's likes and dislikes. Price fixation is another very important area of study especially when it is meant for export in the global market. According to an IMARC Group report, handicrafts are flourishing in India on account of the low capital investments. The sector is one of the largest employment generators in India and accounts for a significant share of the country's exports¹⁴. However, the artisans face challenges such as inaccessibility of funds, low penetration of technology, absence of market intelligence, and poor institutional framework of artisan groups. Over the years, a large number of artisans have moved to urban centres, seeking low-paying and unskilled employment. To address these challenges and to develop and promote the sector, the government's National Handicraft Development Programme is being implemented by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). Presenting the Union Budget 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also proposed the exemption on the import of duty-free items as an incentive to exporters of handicraft items to give a boost to the sector.

4. CONSTITUTIONAL VALIDITY AND IMPORTANCE

In India, the importance of traditional handicrafts becomes more appealing because of its rich heritage and diverse culture. Article 29 of the constitution guarantees the fundamental right to the individual to protect his culture and heritage. In respect of handicrafts, it is important to have a distinction between traditional and technical handicrafts. The protection can only be provided to handicrafts as they are a major source of the custom of any society and it is a prima facie responsibility of the legislature to protect the rich custom of India. Given the Indra

¹⁰ <https://www.ibef.org/exports/handicrafts-industry-india>

¹¹ <https://idronline.org/article/livelihoods/why-india-needs-to-empower-its-artisan-economy30/12/2023> 8:10 pm

¹² <https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiam8anvuz8AhWaSmwGHfQ5DowQFnoECAwQ>

AQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fich.unesco.org%2Fen%2Ftraditional-craftsmanship-00057&authuser=2&usq=AOvVaw37XarpNAIAzY7xL6fT-dVg 21/01/2023 9:58pm

¹³ <https://hummedia.manchester.ac.uk/institutes/gdi/publications/workinpapers/bwpi/bwpi-wp-15611.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.imarcgroup.com/handicrafts-market-india>

Sawhney v. Union of India case, by the analysis, any Hindu caste is found to be occupationally, socially, educationally and economically backward it should be regarded as eligible for benefit under Article 16(4) because it would be within constitutional sanction. The court has clearly stated in the case that the people who are engaged in hereditary or traditional occupations are regarded as the category of weaker sections. The Mandal Commission report also raised an opinion to protect these traditional artisans as they come within the category of other backward castes. The Constitution provides for the protection of monuments under Article 49, Directive Principles of State Policy, which states: “Protection of Monuments, Places, and Objects of National Importance – ‘Every monument, location, or object of aesthetic or historic interest, recognised by or under the law passed by Parliament to be of national importance, shall be protected by the State from spoliation, disfigurement, destruction, removal, disposition, or export, as the case may be.’ Protection of Cultural Heritage: The Preservation of National Heritage is a duty imposed by the Constitution of India under Article 51 (A), Fundamental Duties, – It states that- ‘It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to value and preserve their rich heritage of our composite culture.’ This is clear and has expressly mentioned the preservation and protection of national heritage which depict India's culture so there is always a great need for the artisan communities who were behind the making or creation of these historical monuments or objects need to be protected from extinction and even these communities should be brought to light. Under the constitution of India Handicrafts falls under State subject. Every state is expected to ensure the promotion and protection of valuable crafts culture prevailing in the state. Traditional crafts are next to agriculture in providing employment which increases its importance immensely. It is the means of livelihood for millions of Artisans in India. The Central government through various developmental schemes plays the role by supplementing their efforts. These are following

5. MEASURES WERE TAKEN BY THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

1. Baba Saheb Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY): this is a Cluster Specific scheme meant for promoting traditional crafts of India. This is made for sanctioning projects to the interested agencies and assigned with the accountability of carrying out all the specialised interventions.
2. Under Dastkar Shashktikaran Yojna, the programme enables community empowerment to mobilise artisans into self-help groups.
3. SFURTI SCHEME (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) The objectives of the Scheme are as follows:
 - a. To organize the traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and provide support for their long-term sustainability and economy of scale;

¹⁵https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj2Ke6j-z8AhXt2HMBHYQdA1oQFnoECAsQAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgfc-t%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F02%2FCHAUHAN_Who-are-the-Artisans-A-case-for-their-creative-and-cultural-28/01/2023

- b. To provide sustained employment for traditional industry artisans and rural entrepreneurs;
4. Periodic training of Artisans.
5. Self Help Groups (SHGs) members may also be extended to these general and miscellaneous supports as extended to the artisans under Cluster Programme.
6. *Mega Cluster Scheme* The objective of this scheme includes employment generation and improvement in the standard of living of artisans. This programme follows a cluster-based approach in scaling infrastructure and production chains at handicraft centres, specifically in remote regions, where the sector is largely unorganised and has not evolved to adopt modern developments. Under this scheme, clusters are identified by the Handicrafts Mega Cluster Mission (HMCM) via central and state agencies for upskilling and development.
7. *Marketing Support and Services Scheme* This scheme provides interventions for domestic marketing events to artisans in the form of financial assistance that aids them in organising and participating in trade fairs and exhibitions across the country and abroad. Financial assistance is also provided for the social and welfare needs of artisans. Craft awareness, demonstration programmes and buyer-seller meets are other key aspect of this programme to ensure integrated, inclusive development of the sector. Another component of this scheme is increasing publicity and promoting brands in print and electronic media to improve visibility¹⁵.

These schemes fall under the government's National Handicraft Development Programme, which is being implemented by the Office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts. Apart from these there are schemes and initiatives through National Skill Development Corporation. They are the following. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), Rozgar Mela, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKK), School Initiatives and Higher Education, Pre Departure Orientation Training (PDOT)¹⁶.

6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Handicrafts are items made by hand, often with the use of simple tools and generally artistic and or traditional. According to the TRIPS agreement, traditional handicrafts were sought to be protected by way of geographical indications under national laws. The geographical indications of goods act 1999 provides a mechanism for the registration of GIs and elucidates on the concept of an authorised user and registered proprietor, both of whom can initiate action for infringement. In this effort of registration, government plays an important role as it can register the traditional handicrafts by itself becoming the prima facie holder of the traditional handicrafts as most of the craftsmen who make these handicrafts are ignorant about the value of their creation, in this way by becoming prima facie holder it not only

¹⁶https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjBprm2yOz8AhUM2nMBHSOzBEYQFnoECBkQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fmsde.gov.in%2Fen%2F%2Fschemes-initiatives%2Fschemes-initiatives-through-sdc&usq=AOvVaw3JLA_tSm0KZrI8Tifwz8FR 6/01/2023 2:23 pm

protects traditional handicrafts but also the right of craftsman in realizing the value of their creation.

Indian Handicrafts products have always been in demand in the international market but due to lack of any standardized quality; lack of innovation in terms of products; designs and utilitarian value as per the changing fashion trends; fluctuating customer tastes and acceptable universal norms, the overseas market for these craft products is coming to stagnation. The view of craftspeople is outmoded and in need of modernisation¹⁷. To sustain its share in the global market, Indian Handicrafts need to adapt and innovate as to changing global demands. Protection of crafts through intellectual property laws like GIs and Certification Marks has raised hopes of Indian craftspeople to protect their innovations and their tradition from piracy and thus help them earn more in the international market. This has encouraged Indian artisans to diversify their product range and adopt new and innovative designs. Most of the craft artisans follow traditional designs and patterns being practised for years and do not want to experiment much with the designs. But with the strengthening of the Intellectual Property Regime, Craft entrepreneurs are willing to innovate in designs as they know that their creation shall be adequately protected, and will not be copied by their competitors hence they will be the sole beneficiary of their creativity. That the new developments in design education for artisans have a positive impact on their confidence in seeing themselves as unique powerful creators in the industry¹⁸.

6.1 CASE STUDY: LUCKNOW CHIKAN- POOR EFFORTS TO GET ARTISANS REGISTERED AS AUTHORIZED USERS OF GI¹⁹

The capital city of Uttar Pradesh has the distinction of producing one of the best embroideries in the world – Chikankari. The craft employs about 250,000 artisans, 95% of whom are women in rural areas. It's also a source of livelihood for about one million non-artisans. Direct export of chikan brings in an estimated \$12.5 million per year to the state. The GI registration was expected to bring a distinct identity and increased market for the craft. However, it is ironic that although chikankari was the first craft from UP that applied for the GI certification and also got it, the artisans working in this sector are yet to get a complete benefit. This is due to the sluggish attitude of the Craft Promotion Authorities of the State Government towards organizing all the workers working in the chikankari sector and creating awareness about the GI Indications Act. Most of the artisans do not know

that they need to get themselves registered as an authorized users of GI to avail the benefits of GI status to the craft.

6.2 THE ARTISANS (WELFARE AND PROMOTION) BILL, 2015 By Shri Maheish Girri MP²⁰

A bill to provide for the establishment of a Board for the welfare and promotion of cultural and traditional handicrafts in the country and further to provide institutional and financial assistance to the artisans living in rural areas and for matters connected therewith. The object of the bill was that in rural areas many talented people create extremely creative and productive products through their art. But unfortunately, due to the non-availability of resources, low market exposure, lack of awareness, financial disability and no institutionalization support, these artisans face significant problems as they neither get fair prices for their products nor they can showcase their artwork at a broader prospect. The Bill seeks to provide for the welfare and promotion of traditional and cultural art of the country and to provide institutional and financial support to the artisans to improve their social status in such a way that more employment and economic activities can be carried out in rural areas. Clause 3 of the Bill seeks to provide for the constitution of an Artisans (Welfare and Promotion) Board for the Welfare of artisans in rural areas. Clause 4 provides for the setting up of art centres and other facilities for artisans. Clause 5 provides for the constitution of the Artisans (Welfare and Promotion) Fund. It is estimated that an annual recurring expenditure of about rupees one hundred crore is likely to be involved from the Consolidated Fund of India. Strongly formulating such acts from the authorities enables the persons from the background of artisans to remain in their communities and build many wider varieties of things with the help of modernised techniques and can still hold on to those traditional cultures and may be able to pass this culture to generations and generations. In May 2020, PM Narendra Modi gave a call for Atma Nirbhar Bharat or a self-reliant India which shall stand on the five pillars of Economy, Infrastructure, Technology, Demand, and a Vibrant Demography. The Minority Affairs Ministry's 'Hunar Haat' platform for products made by traditional artisans and craftsmen is becoming an effective platform to strengthen the resolve of 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' and "vocal for local", Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said. Naqvi said magnificent indigenous products of master artisans are the "local pride" and have come in for "global praise" for 'Hunar Haat'. 'Hunar Haat' is becoming an effective platform to strengthen the mission of the "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" and "vocal for local" initiatives by promoting and encouraging indigenous

¹⁷ Ruth Clifford, Nottingham Trent University, Ruth.clifford@ntu.ac.uk, *Balancing local tradition and global influences: Design and business education for traditional artisans in Kachchh, India*, <https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwidiuqdz8AhXFBLcAHRHJAaoQFnoECA4QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fdigitalcommons.unl.edu%2Fcgi%2Fviewcontent.cgi%3Farticle%3D2073%26context%3Dtsaconf&usg=AOvVaw2i88Uq478ym9cGmpLCXFa3> 22/01/2023

¹⁸ Megha Chauhan, *Who are the Artisans: A case for their creative and cultural identities*, [https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj2K6j-z8AhXi2HMBHYQdA1oQFnoECAsQAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgfc-conference.eu%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F02%2FCHAUHAN_Who-are-the-Vol 01 Issue 02; Apr-2024; Pg-13-19](https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwj2K6j-z8AhXi2HMBHYQdA1oQFnoECAsQAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fgfc-conference.eu%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F02%2FCHAUHAN_Who-are-the-Vol%20Issue%202%20Apr-2024-Pg-13-19)

Artisans-A case-for-their-creative-and-cultural-identities.pdf&authuser=2&usg=AOvVaw2hLNy81Sdni2sZlPaPtvjd 03/01/2023

¹⁹ https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Parnil-Verma-2/publication/264556744_PROTECTION_AND_PROMOTION_OF_INDIAN_HANDICRAFTS_THROUGH_INTELLECTUAL_PROPERTY_RIGHTS/links/53e77e950cf2fb748721_9deb/PROTECTION-AND-PROMOTION-OF-INDIAN-HANDICRAFTS-THROUGH-INTELLECTUAL-PROPERTY-RIGHTS 05/01/2023

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²⁰ <http://164.100.47.4/billtexts/lbills/asintroduced/2861LS.pdf> 25/01/2023 9:45 am

products of master artisans and craftsmen. Every corner of the country has a traditional and ancestral legacy of indigenous products and this legacy, which was on the verge of extinction, has got a boost after Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched for 'swadeshi'. Similarly, the Tribal Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs has taken initiative to promote Indian tribal arts and crafts across the globe. The Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), a national body under the control of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, has set up an Atma Nirbhar Bharat Corner or exhibition space showcasing Indian tribal arts and crafts in 75 countries. The space will include tribal art and crafts as well as natural and organic products. Catalogues and brochures showcasing the richness and variety of tribal products are also a part of the exhibit. Being a national nodal agency, TRIFED works extensively to help market and promote India's rich legacy of indigenous products like handicrafts, handlooms, and other produce. Its newest initiative aims at increasing awareness and promotion of traditional arts and crafts²¹.

7. VISWAKARMA VILLAGES

The Government of India has officially declared that the Ministry of tourism will establish five hundred Viswakarma villages across the country. Ms Roopindar Brar, Additional Director General of the tourism department has officially declared it in a function held in Dubai. After independence this is for the first time there is such an initiative from the side of the government of India. Earlier in Kerala, there was such a programme launched by the Government of Kerala. But it could not so far be materialized. To make it a reality, the main stakeholders of the project, the Hereditary and traditional artisan community members are to be given awareness. All others who have an interest and aptitude in these occupations also must be made aware of this. There shall be a nationwide awareness programme to sensitise these groups of people in this respect.

8. INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

In all these cases, the beneficiaries of all these changes shall not only be the industry, but the common people, especially the labouring class also must get the advantages. Governmental policies and programmes must be helpful for inclusive development. According to census 2011, 68.84% of the total population of India lives in villages, therefore any strategy for national development must be associated with the development of its rural areas²². Only when the purchasing power of the poor and common people is raised, the market economy and business will be improved. Therefore, all the measures for the improvement of these artisans will generate more employment, income and foreign exchange. For the achievement of inclusive

development and adequate representation for all different segments of Indian society, a proper understanding of their current situation is necessary. The biggest problem while implementing the developmental schemes is the lack of proper knowledge on handicraft units and number of artisans²³. To find out the reality of Indian society, and the socioeconomic and educational backwardness of all the different groups in India, a nationwide empirical study is required. Census based on caste is the best way for it. Or a separate study to this effect has to be undertaken by the central government. Only when the government of India appointed the Sachar committee, the real situation of the Muslim community was revealed. It enabled the government to take appropriate measures for the development of the Muslim community in the country. Likewise, for the achievement of inclusive development for all the people in India, their current situation has to be scientifically studied. For which a caste-based census is a must. A caste census is not merely geared to the reservation issue; a caste census would bring to the fore a large number of issues that any democratic country needs to attend to, particularly the number of people who are at the margins, or who are deprived, or the kind of occupations they pursue. A caste census, which will generate exhaustive data will allow policymakers to develop better policies, and implementation strategies, and will also enable a more rational debate on sensitive issues. Our Constitution too favours conducting a caste census. Article 340 mandates the appointment of a commission to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes and make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by governments. Caste is not only a source of disadvantage; it is also a very important source of economic advantage in our society in the prevailing circumstances since almost every caste is connected with trade. What we need is to eliminate caste-based discrimination. When the socio-economic and educational standards of any community are improved, caste-based discrimination will slowly disappear. During the past seventy-five years of independence, we were able to reduce the rigours of the caste system to a certain extent. Still, the system and its ill effects persist all over India. It will take its own time to disappear from the scene. The best way is to utilise its positive aspects for economic development.

9. THE NEED FOR A MINISTRY FOR ARTISAN AFFAIRS

Despite the several schemes of the governments, most of the artisans are not coming to the limelight. There shall be certain concerted efforts to bring them to the forefront. Special efforts for directly meeting them and educating them about the opportunities, organizing them in self-help groups, through cluster formation, and giving them training in the modern ways of manufacturing, designs, entrepreneurship, marketing,

²¹ IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 20, Issue 10, Ver. III (Oct. 2015) PP 05-07, e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845. www.iosrjournals.org

²² Dr. Amisha Shah & Dr. Rajiv Patel, Problems and Prospects of Rural Handicraft Artisans, Research Guru, Vol-12, Issue-3, December 2018 26/12/2023 11:47 am

²³ CH. Sruthi and T. Ramesh, Thematic issues on Status and Position of Artisans in India, IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS) Volume 20, Issue 10, Ver. III (Oct. 2015) PP 05-07, e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845. www.iosrjournals.org 10/01/2023 5:50 pm

managing, finance etc. with stipends and other benefits, providing them seed funds and other financial assistance and grants, are necessary for transforming them into good designers, entrepreneurs and marketing experts. Their status will have to be raised from mere labourers to entrepreneurs. For the successful implementation of all these, a separate ministry has to be formed for Artisan Affairs. Such a Ministry has to look into the all-round development of the hereditary and traditional artisans by co-ordinating different departments engaged in various developmental activities relating to the field of artisans. *The planning commission of India in the year 2005, in its report of the Inter-Ministry Taskforce on Technological, Investment and Marketing Support for Household and Artisanal Manufacturing, as item number 1 in para 12.04 of its Chapter 12 on Institutional Aspects has recommended that "A new department for the Artisans and household manufacturing may be carved out by consolidating under one department all the activities of different departments about this sector"*. At both the rural and urban levels, workshops should be organised to enhance the skills and also knowledge of the people. Skill showcase, design education, and creative and product development workshops can be followed up with pricing, marketing, branding, micro-finance etc. These workshops can help artisans eradicate the communication gap between the two representations of society and bring in a better understanding of demand and supply. It also initiates traditional art awareness. These awareness programmes will also initiate collaborations between the artisans and the urban designer and brands to explore the opportunities together. Through these kinds of initiatives and activities, we can save our crafts and promote our traditional craft nationally and globally with the various art and craft forms to find a place in the dynamic art culture of the world. These initiatives will bring out the traditional craft and also introduce hidden talents in India. The government is moving

with Atma Nirbhar Bharath. India that is Bharath has to become an economic superpower. At the same time, inclusive development of all citizens must have greater priority in the development agenda. According to an Oxfam report, the Richest 1 per cent of Indians own 40.05 per cent of the wealth. And the bottom 50 per cent own only 3 per cent of the wealth. Growth and development are different. Along with the growth of GDP, the human development index also has to grow. All the policies and programmes must align with this ideal. The caste-ridden Indian society is being transformed into a modern Democratic Secular one. In actual practice, it is a slow process. It will take much more time for the nation to reach such a great reality. In its transformative stage, the above-mentioned measures are necessary. Ultimately it will reach a stage where casteism is annihilated. Dr BR Ambedkar stated that if India had to attain a place of pride among the comity of nations, caste would have to be annihilated first. The 21st century is the right time to solve India's caste question, which would otherwise extract a heavy price, not just sociologically, but also politically and economically, and make us fall behind in the development index.

10. CONCLUSION

A nation-wide empirical study to understand the reality of the current status of all the artisans especially that of the hereditary artisans is suggested. Secondly, a separate ministry for artisan affairs has to be formed to look into the matter of the overall development of the artisans and also to co-ordinate various programmes and schemes of different departments of the central government and the states.

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest declared none.

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