A STUDY ON HANDICRAFTS IN ANDHRA PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

India has a history of rich and diverse cultural tradition. And among its diversity, the legacy of India's craft culture always occupies a special place owing to its beauty, dignity, form, style and aesthetics. “To write about Indian Handicrafts is almost like writing about the country itself. So vast, complex and colourful, and yet with a simplicity and charm, difficult to attain under comparable conditions”. It is a fact that Indian handicrafts have very ancient origin and of high quality. They have customarily received royal and aristocratic patronage and handicrafts men were honoured by other communities. The versatility of the various materials used in Indian handicrafts items, such as wood, stone, metal, grass, glass, cane and bamboo, textiles, clay, terracotta and ceramics, makes these products truly unique.

Emphasizing on the greater value of the arts and crafts, T.M. Abraham wrote: “the world of art and craft is as valuable as the world of science, philosophy or ethics. Like art, crafts reflect the state of human society through the individual. Craft treasures like art’s give us a glimpse into the core and kernel of the collective mind and societies through the mirror of individual mind that created them”. As said above there are numerous varieties of art crafts in India which are made with attractive designs and meticulous craftsmanship. This paper is aimed at highlighting the various Handicrafts products produced by limiting to the Andhra Pradesh State.

INTRODUCTION

Indian arts and crafts have made a distinction for themselves all over the world. These ancient skills have been learned and acquired by craftsmen from their forefathers and today it unfolds itself in a splendid variety of products, combining aesthetic appeal with utilitarian value. Each region of India marvels in handicrafts portraying the genius of its local craftsmen. Andhra Pradesh in the south has patronized itself in a host of arts and crafts that not only attract millions but earn the artisans a decent livelihood.

OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER

The paper seeks to highlight the products of Handicrafts Industry of Andhra Pradesh contributing to Indian Economy.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data is secondary obtained from archives of Government – Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Textiles, Trade Papers, bulletins etc.

VARIOUS FORMS OF HANDICRAFTS

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KONDAPALLI

If any of the several head turning art and crafts of Andhra Pradesh is same popular with the adults and the children, it is the Kondapalli dolls. The Kondapalli dolls of Andhra Pradesh are light weighted wooden dolls, which come from a small village called Kondapalli in the vicinity of Vijayawada. The dolls are so adorable yet warm and realistic. The faces of the figures are extremely expressive and the subjects are taken from our life. Soft Poniki wood is used to create these dolls and toys, which depicts everyday scenes, figures of deities, animals, birds and mythological characters.

The Kondapalli dolls are mainly based on village life, its incidents and characters. The popularity of this fantastic craft work has reached the foreign shores also, the main reason being its flexibility. The process of making these dolls and toys commence with the seasoning of the wood. Carvings are done separately on independent units, which are then joined to the body. An adhesive paste of tamarind seeds is used for the pasting purpose further coated with lime glue. Then the painting is done with special brushes made with goat's hair. The entire process is long enough and the artisans carry on with the work very patiently. Some of the toys and dolls are also made of a mixture of sawdust, cow dung and clay. The Kondapalli dolls is one such item, that you will readily agree to your children's request to buy it for them.

DECORATIVE HAND CROCHETED LACE

The Decorative hand-crocheted lace work of Andhra Pradesh is a kind of handicraft, which is one of the most contemporary handicrafts of the state. This type of decorative art is prominent in the Narsapur and Palakollu of West Godavari district. The Decorative hand-crocheted lace work is widely used to design dining mats. It is also used to beautify bedsheets, pillow covers, telephone covers, wall hangings, tea cozy, dressing table mats and curtains.

The popular Decorative hand-crocheted lace work of Andhra Pradesh are made with slender threads woven with the help of stainless steel crochet needles, which comes in different sizes. This form of craft work was brought in by a Scottish couple and their contributions have inspired
thousands of women in Narsapur and Palakollu regions. Today the number of artisans involved in Decorative hand-crocheted lace manufacturing has touched 1,25,000 of which most are women. The exquisite lace works come in vibrant colors like green, pink and mustard. However white and beige are the most commonly used color. Round, oval, square, oblong or rectangle - the lace works are found in various shapes. Frocks, waist coats, skirts, dupattas and other garments adorned with the lace works are a big hit with the young brigade. You just can not resist the attraction of the Decorative hand-crocheted lace work of Andhra Pradesh and you will see yourself buying at least one of the excellent examples of the beautiful craft work.

BANJARA EMBROIDERY

The Kuchipudi dance originated in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. It derived its name from its originating place, the village called Kuchelapuri or Kuchelapuram. The dance form is known for its grace, elegance and beauty. Around 300 B. C., it developed and from then the art form is continuously evolving and has become the living tradition of the region. During its birth it was performed by the male members of the Brahmin community.

Kuchipudi is a perfect blend of music and abhinaya. The dance form of Kuchipudi is accompanied by musical instruments like Mridangam, Manjira (Thalam), Vina, Violin, Kanjira, Surpeti, Venu and Tanpura. While performing the Kuchipudi dancers use quick rhythmical footwork and artistic body movements. It is accompanied by Carnatic music which add to its beauty. They perform using stylistic hand gestures and body movements including vivid expressions and with more realistic acting. At times the dancers even speak dialogue to give it a dramatic effect.

The themes of Kuchipudi dance are largely derived from Indian scriptures and mythology. Some of the mythological characters are very famous like Satyabhama, second wife of Lord Krishna. Another distinctive feature of Kuchipudi is the Tarangam. In it the dancer performs by balancing on the edges of a brass plate. The dancer carries out elaborated rhythmic forms with extreme dexterity. At times they even balance a pot of water on their head. The three aspects of dance- Nritta, Nritya and Natya, has been appropriately blended in Kuchipudi.

KALAMKARI PAINTINGS

Out of the many beautiful forms of handicrafts, the Kalamkari in Andhra Pradesh has always been favorite with the art and craft lovers. The Kalamkari craft of Andhra Pradesh involves the art of printing and painting of fabrics. This is a rare kind of art, which uses a Kalam or quill, from which it has earned its name and also vegetable dyes. It is exclusively found in the Machilipatnam and Srikalahasti areas of the state. However the areas have distinct styles of their own. While artists in Machilipatnam use designs carved in wooden blocks for printing, the Srikalahasti style uses the wax process to fill in the colors after drawing the outlines with the quill.

All the colors and dyes, which are used in the Kalamkari craft style are made of natural products. The printing process of Kalamkari is very delicate and time taking as it involves not less than twelve different stages. Kalamkari is mostly used in wall decorations and clothes. It is highly
inspired by the Persian patterns and motifs. The art form of Kalamkari usually showcases mythological figures and stories. Stories of the epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata and Shiv Puranas are also depicted on the fabrics. The origin of Kalamkari dates back to the 10th century when it was derived as the result of trade relations between the Indian and Persian merchants. Kalamkari is one of the most traditional Indian handicrafts and you should not miss to bring home a 'piece' of this tradition in your next Andhra Pradesh visit.

**BUTTA BOMMALU**

Butta Bommalu is a popular dance form in the state of Andhra Pradesh. It is the foster child of the West and East Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. The name Butta Bommalu literally means puppets made in the form of basket. Butta Bommalu or the basket puppets are made out of thin bamboo strips. These strips are woven into the shape of long spherical basket figures.

The performer of Butta Bommalu gets into the huge, hollow figure, the puppet. The performance starts with the dancer moving to the rhythm of four dappus, a musical instrument. It is generally performed in the open space. The puppet-figure is about eight feet tall and it has a radius of three feet. The figure is hollow at the bottom it is from there that the performer gets into the puppet. The puppet is tied down to the performer's waist and shoulders.

Being made out of bamboo strips, the figures are very light. It becomes very easy for the performer to carry the figure easily. A paste of tamarind seeds is applied on the structure made of bamboo strips. Then, different bright colors are used to make the puppets look attractive.

In this incredible form of puppet dance, the puppets are adorned with appropriate costumes. Highlights in any religious procession, these huge dancing figures are a special attraction in the festivities in Andhra Pradesh.

**LAMBADI**

Andhra Pradesh occupies an eminent place in the classical dance forms of India. Apart from the classical dances, it is also known for its tribal dances. Some of the popular tribal folk dances of Andhra Pradesh are Bathakamma, Gobbi, Mathuri, Dhamal, Dandaria, Dappu, Vadhyam etc. Lambadi dance is a tribal dance of Andhra Pradesh.

Lambadi is related to the Lambadi tribe, who lead a semi-nomadic life in Andhra Pradesh. The Lambadi tribe lives all over the state. They are popularly known as Banjaras or Sugalis. The dancers perform this dance to rejoice an abundant harvest or a good sowing season. They dress themselves in brass anklets, bangles, embellished jewelry and glass beads. The day to day tasks of a farmer, like reaping, harvesting, planting, sowing etc. are represented in the Lambadi Dance. During the festivals like Dussehra, Deepavali and Holi these tribal people move from one house to another dancing and receiving alms.

The Lambadi dancers dress up in gaudy dresses by wearing long colorful skirts decorated with mirrors and white broad bone bracelets covering their arms. An interesting fact about the dance form is that it is monopolized by women. It is permeated with fervent grace and lyricism. The
subtle sensuality of the dancers makes it more appealing. The rhythm and the coordination among the dancers are worth mentioning.

**BIDRI**

The complicated and the very beautiful Bidriware was developed during the gothic times. Bidriware was originated in the 14th century C.E., during the reign of the Bahamani Sultans. The term 'Bidriware' arises from the township of Bidar, which is still the head centre for the manufacture of the antique metal work. Bidriware is an important export handicraft of India and is seen as a symbol of wealth because of its striking inlay artwork. The origin of Bidriware is usually ascribed to the Bahamani sultans who ruled Bidar between the 13th and the 15th centuries. The Sultan invited Abdullah bin Kaiser, a craftsman from Iran to work on embellishing the royal palaces and courts; which he did by joining hands with local craftsmen and thus gave birth to Bidriware. Since then, the local Muslim and Lingayat sects have been handed down the art in order to succeed generations.

The method of Bidri making had its origins in Persia, Iranians and Syrians. However, BIDRI is a specialized metal handcraft manufactured in Andhra Pradesh. The basic material used in order to make this craft is an alloy of 6% copper and 94% zinc. After the molding is done, the required article is then filed and the surface is smoothened, followed by the design sketching and engraving on the same. Into the engraved design, pure silver wires and sheets are inlaid by hammering them and the item is then filed, polished, buffed, and oxidized.

**NIRMAL PAINTINGS**

Adding to the list of the envious collection of fascinating art and craft forms, the Nirmal Paintings of Andhra Pradesh holds a significant position in the art and handicraft sector of the state. The exquisite traditional art form of Nirmal Paintings has earned its name from the Nirmal town in Adilabad district, where it is mostly seen.

The community of craftsmen who are engaged with the traditional art form of Nirmal paintings are known as Nakkash. They usually depict the scenes from Hindu epics of Ramayana, Mahabharata and other historical and mythological stories. This form of art received great patronage from the Mughal rulers, who were captivated by its beauty. Later on, Lady Hydri promoted Nirmal paintings in Hyderabad by bringing in experts craftsmen to the city.

The uniqueness of Nirmal paintings is in the products that are used. The colors and dyes applied in these paintings are indigenous natural products made from gums, minerals and herbs. The widely used golden color are extracts or juice of different herbs. In recent time a change in the subjects can be noticed. Many painters of today are not contended with drawing from epics only but they are exploring the styles of Old Indian schools of paintings.

Be an epic scene or an old school style, an example of the Nirmal paintings on the wall will surely enhance the beauty of your room.
KOLATTAM

The leader of the group controls the troupe and is known as Pennuddi or Kolanna Pantulu or Garuva. A couple of players is called Uddi, among the two one is called Rama and the next one is known as Lakshmana. Kolattam begins with the formation of a big circle consisting of all the members of the troupe, which later splits into two, one within the other. The leader of the troupe of Kolattam is accompanied by the Mridangam, flute, harmonium and cymbal players, who stand in the middle of the internal circle. Each performer holds up two sticks one in each hand that are decorated with colored strings or bells at its end.

The various steps that are included in Kolattam is called Kopulu. 50 types of kopulu are commonly used in this folk dance. When the leader signals, pairs of dancers in the circle start moving offering a prayer to Lord Ganesha. Then a song is begun by the leader by crying out the rhythm of Etlugada. Different verses and beats are used in the songs including prayers, duets, or tales expressing Bhakti, Sringara, Karuna and Virarasa.

BHAMAKALPAM

Andhra Pradesh is known for its rich culture, who has presented a huge range of performing arts, including dance, drama and music all over the world. Praised from centuries in India, dance has been one of the most interesting forms of performing art. Bhamakalpam is one such dance form which is basically originated from Kuchipudi dance form. In Bhamakalpam, Bhma refers to Satyabhama who was lord Krishna's alluring but envious wife and kalpam translates to complaint or argument. The dance form is dedicated to the time when Lord Krishna and Radha shared an idealistic relationship. Lord Krishna’s wife Bhma, always used to mistrust him, because of his close relationship with Radha. She always used to feel insecure and envious towards Radha and used to fight with her husband regarding the same. The story revolves round the quarrel between Satyabhama and Krishna. Lord Krishna in order to tease her looks into the mirror and asks her who is beautiful between him and her. Satyabhama forgets that it is Lord Krishna who is incomparable in beauty and announces herself as the most beautiful one. To which Krishna gets offended and leaves the palace. Satyabhama realizes and begs her confidante Madhavi to bring her lord back. Finally she writes a letter and sends it with Madhavi. In the end seeing Satyabhama’s repentance, Lord Krishna forgives her and they are once again united.

Bhamakalpam is both a theatre and a drama form of dance style which was created by Siddhendra Yogi in the 17th century for the holy use of Kuchipudi artists. A fine example of the feminine movements in dance, the theatre is performed by several groups in Andhra Pradesh which is contrasted to the masculine tandava movements of Kathakali and Yakshagana.

VEERANATYAM

Veeranatyam, which means the "Dance of the Brave", is a traditional form of dance, which belongs to Andhra Pradesh, a state located at the south eastern coastal areas of India. This dance form is associated with religious significance. Like any other dance form of this state of the country, Veeranatyam even includes a variety of colorful costumes as well as different kinds of
musical instruments. The main characteristic features of this dance pattern are the dexterous movements of hands and other skillful steps.

HISTORY BEHIND VEERANATYAM

The name of this form of dance is found in the mythology of the Hindu religion. As per that mythological belief, God Shiva got furious after Sati Devi, His wife was humiliated. Outraged at that humiliation, God Shiva picked out "Jatajuta", a relic from His hair that created Veerabhadra. The extreme anger of Him was portrayed by the performance of a vigorous dance, which is believed to be the cause of destruction of the "Dakshayagna Vatika", which was the location of the function, where the wife of God Shiva was humiliated. To justify the reason, it was named as "Veeranatyam". However, it is called the "Dance of Destruction or Pralayam" as well.

In this Indian state, initially, this dance form originated as one of the rituals that were performed in the honor of God Shiva in the different Shiva temples located there. Veerabhadra's followers, in particular the community of Veeramusti or Veerabhadiya residing in the state, are famous for performing Veeranatyam. Veerabhadiyas or Veeramustis claim themselves to be the Veerabhadra's descendant. Thus, this dancing style is even called Veerabhadora Natyam, which is performed by people from Draksharama, which is located at the eastern bank of the Godavari River. Apart from that, the other areas known for performing this style of dance are the western side of the river Godavari, Kurnool, Anantapur, Khammam and Warangal.

BURRAKATHA

BurraKatha is a form of storytelling with the help of drumming instruments and chime and includes a group that comprises of minimum of three minstrels (one main performer and two co-performers) who are specifically trained in family tradition. It is one of the most famous kind of fictive pleasure in the state of Andhra Pradesh as the stories and the songs are dedicated to freedom fighters which belong mostly of Andhra Pradesh itself.

The word 'burra' translates to 'tambura', which is a stringed instrument attired beyond the right shoulder of the artist, whereas 'Katha' refers to a story. Burra translates to skull in Telugu which is formed out of baked clay, dried pumpkin or of brass and copper; the shell portrays a human skull. This musical instrument looks alike veena and to get music out of it, the performer has to pull and press the strings. In this melodramatic style, a narrator along with his partner gives the performances for two or three days by singing, dancing and describing a story amongst the people of the village. The performance commences when the main storyteller, also known as kathakudu, details the story by playing tambura and dancing to the music. The partners play gummema, also known as dakki or budike, which are earthen drums with two heads. The right side artist, also known as hasyaka, acts as a joker and cracks jokes while the left side artist also called rajakiya, enacts as someone who knows about political and social issues. The partners always praise the kathakudu and interrupt him by asking doubts while performing. The kathakudu always begins with singing "vinara veera kumara veera gadha vinara" followed by the partners singing "tandhana tane tandhana na."
Burrakatha has many local names associated with every region, for example- in the Coastal region it is called Jangam Katha, in Rayalaseema it is pronounced as Tandana katha or suddulu and in Telangana as Tamboora katha or sarada katha.

KALAMKARI

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DHIMSA

The Araku valley located in the Visakhapatnam district is mainly inhabited by Valmiki, Bagata, Khond and Rotia tribes. Dhimsa is a popular dance of these tribes, performed by tribal men and women. It is performed especially during the month of chaitra, which falls in March or April, according to Gregorian calendar, and also during weddings and other festivals. Eight types of Dhimsa dance are popular:

i. Boda Dimsa is performed to give tribute to the village goddess. While performing the dance, the dancers form two rows, men stand on the right side and women on the left side and hold each others hand firmly over their backs. The first member in the right row, holds a bunch of peacock feathers and moves in rhythmical steps and the last member in the left row unites him. After that all the dancers, move in zigzag motion similar to a serpent dance in a circle.

ii. In Gunderi Dimsa or 'Usku Dimsa' is a spirited and stimulating dance. The males and female dancers move forward and backwards with stiff steps, and then stride in a circle.

iii. The steps of Goddi Beta Dimsa dance involve bending over down and lifting up their heads, bowing down and going up with a swing. They move twenty-five steps forward and retreat in the same manner. This step is then repeated four to five times.
iv. Potar - Tola Dimsa dance signifies collecting leaves. The dancers are divided into two groups, the two two groups stand in two rows one beside the other and hold each others shoulders. The two rows of dancers march forward and backward by moving their heads right and left.

v. Through the Bhag Dimsa dance people are informed on how to evade from a tiger's attack. The dancers stand on their toes, bending down and then raising their heads. They move around swiftly, and make a 'serpent coil'.

vi. The valmiki and other tribals of the region perform Natikari Dimsa during festivals in general.

vii. The Kunda Dimsa dancers press on each others shoulders in the course of which they sing rhythmically.

viii. Baya Dimsa is performed by the tribal magician known as 'gamachari' when he is influenced by the divine power of the village goddess. When he is in trance, all the villagers encircle the magician and imitate him.

CONCLUSION

The Handicrafts Sector plays a significant & important role; it provides employment to a vast segment of craft persons in rural & semi urban areas and generates substantial foreign exchange for the country. The Handicraft sector has, however, suffered due to its being unorganized, with the additional constraints of lack of education, low capital, and poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence, and a poor institutional framework. Thus it compares poorly with an organized, skilled and systematic sector available in a developed country like Germany where it is not as important for the overall economy and is just a miniscule part. However Andhra Pradesh Handicraft has great growth potential in the changing scenario with its basic strength being the abundant and cheap availability of manpower and being a traditional profession of millions still requires very low investment compared with other states of our country.

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