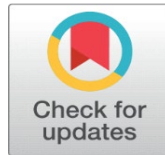
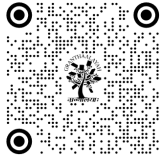


GLOBALIZATION AND METAL REPOUSSÉ CRAFT OF VARANASI: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Sachin Pathak ¹, Dushyant Dave ²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Design, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India & Assistant Professor, Department of Foundation, Pearl Academy, Delhi (West), India

² Associate Professor, Department of Design, Banasthali Vidyapith, Rajasthan, India



Corresponding Author

Sachin Pathak,
Sachin.pathak@pearlacademy.com

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ABSTRACT

Varanasi, on the Ganges River in India, is recognized for its old crafts and culture. Metal repoussé is one of several art forms that reference millennia-old aesthetics and methods. Varanasi metal repoussé had problems and possibilities with globalisation. This abstract explores Varanasi's metal repoussé craft's complex relationship with globalisation, its problems, and potential for sustainable expansion. Globalisation has benefited and hurt Varanasi crafts like metal repoussé. Artists may present their work abroad with greater connection and market access, boosting economic and cultural interchange. Globalisation causes loss of authenticity, mass-produced replacements, and artisan exploitation for profit. Metal repoussé artists in Varanasi battle to preserve their skills and creations despite progress. Globalisation might destroy ancient traditions. Customers want quicker, cheaper goods; therefore, craftspeople must decrease their quality and authenticity requirements to compete. Globalisation has commercialized craft, turning it into commodities. Commercialization devalues each piece's work, ability, and cultural relevance, exploiting artists who are already suffering. Despite these constraints, globalisation may reinvigorate Varanasi's metal repoussé craft. One solution is using digital networks and technology to reach more people while retaining creative expression. Handicrafts are respected more because internet markets and social media allow craftspeople to exhibit their work, engage with buyers, and share their story. Collaborations with cultural organisations, historians, and designers may modernize and experiment with methods. Craftspeople may attract more customers and stay up with the market by incorporating new ideas and design features while keeping their trade. Varanasi craftsmen may benefit on the rising demand for environmentally and ethically manufactured goods by presenting their products as cultural heritage and sustainability. Craftspeople may attract socially conscious clients by emphasising local resources, eco-friendly processes, and fair trade. In today's globalized world, the Varanasi metal repoussé craft has many obstacles but also many potentials for development and creativity. Collaboration, technology, and historical preservation help craftspeople participate in the global market.

Keywords: Globalization, Metal Repoussé, Varanasi, Traditional craftsmanship, Cultural heritage, Challenges, Opportunities

1. INTRODUCTION

Finding out how globalisation has impacted our day-to-day lives, or to be more specific, how it has impacted our level of life, would be an intriguing topic to investigate. Opinions on this subject are not unanimous. Opponents of globalisation

believe that it worsens inequality, increases poverty, and decreases human standards of living, while proponents of globalisation maintain that it enhances economic development and quality of life indicators. An investigation of the ways in which globalisation has transformed people's quality of living, both economically and culturally, is at the core of this heated disagreement. To use the language of developmental economics, this analysis may also be referred to as the metrics by which we assess "human development." However, I am focusing my attention on the handicraft sector in India and the millions of rural craftsmen who have been responsible for preserving this rich history and the distinctiveness of this large nation for all time.

The idea that extending people's alternatives is a necessary component of human development is often explored. It is essential to work on improving people's skill sets (UNDP, 1990). In the lack of education (knowledge), good health, and the resources necessary to maintain a fair quality of life, humanity is incapable of conceiving of such possibilities or contemplating advancement. If individuals do not possess these basic talents, they will be unable to get access to or make use of the resources that are necessary for human development. "Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices the most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated, and to enjoy a decent standard of living," writes the United Nations Development Programme (1992). "Human development is a process of having more choices available to people." Other choices include the right to freedom of expression, the protection of human rights, and respect for oneself.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

You will be able to locate the handicraft industry, which has deep roots, across the country. Over the course of many generations, residents of the region have been employed in the field of fine crafts and companies that are run from their homes (Banik, 2017). There is a possibility that helping crafts might contribute to the achievement of the 17 sustainable development goals listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2010). These objectives include the elimination of poverty and the preservation of the environment (Vijayagopalan, 1993). Handicrafts have a significant impact on the economic progress of a country, particularly when they are created by businesses operating on a smaller scale. Even though they have continued to develop without interruption throughout the course of the millennia, the artisan traditions are going to have to confront the realities of rapid change brought about by the unavoidable forces of communication and globalisation. Since the arrival of things that are created by machines, many of our traditional artisans have been under intense competition from the growing industrial sector.

More than eighty percent of the North East region's population lives in rural areas, and the distribution of economic activity is strongly related to the way in which they make their living. Thus, the expansion of the rural economy is of critical importance to the overall development of the area. It is estimated that the handicraft industry is responsible for around eighty percent of the total money that artisans make. The majority of the region's artisans, around 61%, make their livelihood from this sector of the economy. According to the Ministry of Textile (2010), the region is home to a wide variety of handicrafts, including but not limited to the following: carpet weaving, weaving textiles, cane and thread crafts, woodwork, jewellery, and carved wooden vessels. Crafts that may be found in the northeastern region of India are described in this table (Das, 2006).

Table 1

Table 1 Identified handcraft discovered in north-eastern area.	
State	Handicrafts
Arunachal Pradesh	Cane and bamboo, painting, carpetmaking, handloom
Assam	Crafts, handlooms, tea, silk, polyester yarn, jute
Manipur	Food items, hosiery, clothing, furniture, paper, printing, plastic, rubber, non-metallic minerals, transportation components, cane, and bamboo
Meghalaya	Crafts, cane and bamboo works, baking, printing, stone, cement, leather, tailoring, lime - manufacturing, handlooms, wood furnishings
Mizoram	Handloom, bamboo, handmade goods
Nagaland	Textiles, silk, arts & crafts
Sikkim	Handloom wool and silk, arts and crafts, food processing, tea, etc.
Tripura	Rubber, bamboo, handloom, food processing, tea, other handicrafts

This report was compiled by the State Department of Industry, Commerce, and Textiles.

3. GLOBALIZATION OF CRAFTS

Despite India's post-liberalization reopening to multinational firms, the global market is a place where not only economies but also people and cultures interact with one another. It is fair to state that the export of Indian handicrafts has achieved an astounding level. Both age-old handicrafts and cutting-edge automated manufacturing contribute to India's diverse economy. Regardless, no one interpretation of the term is commonly accepted in India. In 1989, the Task Force on Handicrafts defined "handicrafts" as "items that are made by hand, frequently with the use of simple tools, and are generally artistic and/or traditional in nature." Objects of ornamentation and those of practical purpose are both covered here (Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts. 2006-2007).

There have been both positive and negative consequences of globalisation since it began in 1991, and India has been no exception. Conversely, it has been beneficial to many sectors, like the handmade goods industry. Given its export and employment potential, the handicrafts sector may be considered in this perspective. Indian handicrafts (including carpets and other floor coverings) had a promising export season in 1990–1991, with a total of more than 1,220 crores rupees leaving the country. Impressively, this represented a substantial leap from the pitiful 10 crores shipped during the mid-nineties. The figure soared to 9270.50 Crores in 2000–2001 from 7157.64 Crores in 1998–1999. Its peak was Rs. 17276.71 Crores in the 2005–2006 fiscal year. In Table 2 we can see the export data of Indian handicrafts for a variety of years (Saraf, 1991).

Table 2

Table 2 Export of Indian handicrafts, apart from flooring materials. (2026–27 to 2005–06) (Creative States of India)	
Year	Export Growth
1986–1987	387
1987–1988	415

1988-1989	551
1989-1990	589
1990-1991	713
1991-1992	1065
1992-1993	1412
1993-1994	1970
1994-1995	2636
1995-1996	3020
1996-1997	3569
1997-1998	4553
1998-1999	5058
1999-2000	5923
2000-2001	6955
2001-2002	6770
2002-2003	8343
2003-2004	10465
2004-2005	13033
2005-2006	14527

It is believed that this data came from the following places: Annual Reports of Different Years, the Ministry of Textiles, and the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, Government of India, New Delhi.

Revenue from the export of Indian handicrafts is expected to reach 32,700 crores by 2010, according to forecasts made by the Indian Handicraft Export Council. Of all the countries that have received Indian handicrafts, the US has been the most important, taking 34.35% of the total. Germany (9.98%) and the United Kingdom (11.15%) have trailed closely behind. In table-3, we can see a detailed breakdown of the most significant markets for Indian handicrafts (Sood, 2007).

Table 3

Table 3 Handknotted carpets and other Indian handicrafts exported to major countries from 2002-03 to 2004-05 (in crores of rupees)

Country	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Australia	128.48	158.84	200.16
Canada	272.06	327.76	392.70
France	384.95	482.59	539.65
Japan	278.64	331.21	381.48
Netherlands	218.82	291.10	369.30
Germany	917.79	968.43	1384.82
Italy	288.97	356.48	425.34
Switzerland	136.38	150.94	198.35
Saudi Arabia	193.87	241.31	290.51
Total	8343.41	10465.14	13032.70

United States	2630.14	3200.67	3556.92
United Kingdom	938.65	1130.67	1495.88

Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 6208, dated 06.05.2005, is the source. Published on www.indiastat.com as well.

Another important aspect is the possibility of finding employment in the arts and crafts sector. According to the Annual Report of various years given by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, there were 52.92 lakhs of persons working in this business in 1997-1998. From 2001-2002 to 2002-2003, this figure jumped to 58.41 lakhs and 60.16 lakhs, respectively, according to the research (Chatterjee, 2005). There were 65.72 lakhs of people employed in this sector in the 2005-2006 fiscal year. In 1995 and 1996, researchers from the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) found that women made up 47.42% of the handicraft workforce, with 37.11% of those women identifying with economically disadvantaged groups such as SCs and STs. Only agriculture provides more jobs in India than the handicrafts industry, which ranks second overall.

The skilled hands of the Indian craftspeople who made it are its most valuable and important attribute. Paraphrasing D. N. Saraf, other countries along the trade route came to know India more for her exquisite handiwork than for her art, philosophy, religion, or religion in the 18th and 19th centuries. All during that time, this was the situation (Mohapatra, 2005).

4. METAL SCULPTURE (REPOUSSE)

Metal sculpture refers to the process of moulding metal sheet into a desired shape by hammering it. The Repoussé technique and this method have several similarities. Some of the world's first metal sculptures may be found in Hindu and Buddhist cultures. Finding works of visual art from the early Buddhist era proved challenging. Manifestations of clearly supernatural beings started popping up in the northern Indian subcontinent, Tibet, Nepal, and China at the start of the third century B.C. Sculptures of the Buddha were created from stone and wood in the first century following the common period. Throughout the Nepal and Himalayan areas, these statues were widely distributed because of their sacred nature.

Between the 320s and 475s CE, under the Gupta dynasty, Indian handicrafts and Nepalese art became more prominent. Nepalese craftspeople started depicting the Buddha and other Indian gods in metal about this period. Sculptures made of metal were more common during the Licchavi period (450-750 CE), when the Licchavi dynasty—which had its origins in India—ruled. Trade between Tibet and the Licchavi kingdom, which used embossed coins modelled after Indian money, deepened the cultural and political links between the two nations throughout time.

Among Nepal's most innovative and prized artistic expressions is the craftsmanship of metal sculptures. Princess Bhirkuti of Nepal sent a statue of the Buddha as dowry when she was married to King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet (618-649 century). The Jokhang temple in Tibet was the subsequent location of the statue's installation. The seventh century was the time of this occurrence (Basu, 2005). This in Tibet is directly responsible for the rise of metal sculpture. Among Nepal's indigenous peoples, the Newari are famous for their elaborate metal sculptures. This in Tibet is directly responsible for the rise of metal sculpture. The Newari people of Nepal are one of the traditional groups famous for their elaborate metalwork. Newari artisans have a stellar reputation for their exquisite metals. Because of the

influence their work has had on Tibetan and Chinese traditional art, Newari craftspeople have travelled to Tibet and China to showcase their skills at temples and monasteries. The great majority of these artists' metal sculptures were universally appealing idols, rather than focusing on a particular religion (such as Buddhism or Hinduism). Nepal is one of the few places on Earth where the practice of both Hinduism and Buddhism has coexisted peacefully for over two millennia. The Newari people's sculptors brought their own unique style to metalworking. Some of the features that may be seen in Newari metal art are large, relaxed eyes, a wider face, elaborate ornamentation, inflated poses, and unique jewellery designs. Early sculptures cast in bronze or copper were sometimes somewhat little, but their craftsmanship earned them great esteem regardless of their diminutive stature. Even more subgroups within the Newari community exist: the Tamrakar, the Shakya, and the Swarnakars. The artists had to devise several processes before they could melt gold and use it on metal sculptures. The rulers of the Himalayan region, especially Tibet, were quite appreciative of these methods (Scrase, 2003). Numerous Tibetan Buddhist monks were hard at work at the monastery making metal sculptures. The number of deities increased due to the incorporation of new traditions and texts and the impact of the outside world. During this time, there was a notable increase in the manufacturing of metal sculptures. The gods and goddesses' statues that were exported from Tibet ended up all over the world, not only in Asia.

The thin shape and well-formed limbs and fingers of the idols were a product of the strictures imposed on the human body during this era. The idols' voluptuous features, including their large breasts, wide hips, and bodies, were noted. Many believe that the idols made in the Mathura kingdom had an impact on these traits. The metal artisans of Kathmandu developed their own unique style of metal sculpture in response to the impact of the Mughal period towards the end of the twelfth century and the several conflicts that had preceded it. Pots, bowls, plates, cups, and water containers were all products of the metalworkers' trade (Samaja, 2006). The final goods were of such high quality that they were sold to merchants, priests, and monarchs. Building their houses on the ground floor and their offices on the ground level was a revolutionary concept for the Newari people, who pioneered the concept of working from home. Three independent kingdoms emerged from the Kathmandu valley after the 1484 death of Nepal's monarch, Yaksha Malla. The art and architecture of each of the three kingdoms showcased their individual nations' dominance. Each kingdom showed its dominance in a different craft: metalworking, woodworking, stone working, or textile weaving. The most skilled artisans in these fields were well compensated for their work. Across Asia, the Mallas were the ones who provided utensils to the rich and set up Buddhist monasteries and temples. They were also instrumental in advancing metal art.

An indication of the widespread Buddhist influence in Himachal Pradesh is the large number of Tibetan and Nepalese artists who settled in the region's monasteries some 500 years ago. Metal sculpture is very valuable since it is one of the only remaining artistic practices in these monasteries (Stiglitz, 2002). The art of making metal idols has been passed down through many generations, and many of the basic processes involved are closely held secrets. It is possible to encounter tamrakars, shakyas, and swarnakars in the Tibetan and Nepalese valleys even now. This group of people has devoted their whole life to protecting the historical and cultural artefacts that have been handed down from generation to generation. Thanks to their extensive training, they have perfected the art of metal sculpting, which is today revered around the world (Santhanam, 2006).



4.1. TOOLS AND RAW MATERIALS

Delhi is the origin of the raw ingredients. Among them are copper, pearls, gem stones, gold, and mercury. Typically, pearls and gem stones are the major components of Buddha jewellery.

- **Copper sheet:** To construct the monument.
- **Hammer:** For use in moulding the monument.
- **Chisel:** To mark and detail the copper sheet with precision.
- **Steel rod:** Made use of for moulding the copper sheet.
- **Gold:** Use to add lustre and gloss.
- **Mercury:** Application: gold gilding.
- **Flame torch:** Serves as an agent for heating.
- **Traditional herbs:** To add colour and lustre to gold
- **Pearls and gem stones:** For use as a jewellery embellishment.



5. THE CHALLENGES

However, many of us still wonder whether the "local" can really meet the "global" while still being local, even if this sector may provide a lot of employment and facilitate exports. Nevertheless, due to globalisation and market liberalization,

many varieties of Indian handicrafts are in risk of extinction, even if they have gained tremendous advantages. Rural artisans are in a precarious situation, even though they have only ever been on the sidelines of development. Although the artists' creations are reaching audiences across the world, the serious question that arises is if they are global. A substantially lower net worth and a landlessness rate of 90% are recorded for families headed by artisans, in comparison to households headed by others, which stands at 36%. This disparity is reflected in their social condition. Another calculation indicates that a craftsperson can support a family of five with an average monthly salary of 2,000 rupees. There is little prospect for a better future for the great majority of people, and they are living in very terrible circumstances. Their wages are far lower than those of many other agricultural workers (Ghouse, 2012). There is not much that the communities of craftsmen can provide in terms of opportunities to develop their skills and broaden their horizons due to the scarcity of resources. As a result, they are in a position where it is very difficult for them to develop as individuals.

It is no longer sufficient to quantify growth and advancement just in terms of GDP or per capita income; this notion is at the heart of the Human growth Index (HDI). Human wellbeing, which includes aspects like cultural identification, security, and the ability to feel comfortable in one's own skin, one's cultural heritage, and one's position in the world, could instead serve as the yardstick. As a result, indicators of human happiness show that the people of Bhutan are exceptionally content. The reason for this is because the craft activities in Bhutan are on the rise, which is contributing to the bond between craft and Bhutanese identity. The painters' traditional talent, or understanding of the area, was crucial in shaping their identity. But as we will see in the parts that follow, this identity is either fading away or being watered down in India because of economic liberalization, and market pressures are having a significant impact on skill and local knowledge. When it comes to the issue of social security funding, it is possible to draw parallels (Panigrahi, 2017). Rural craftspeople have it bad now; their situation becomes significantly worse as they age as no social security plan is accessible to them. Allow me to go into a brief analysis of the current challenges confronting the craft business.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN PRESENT AGE

Technological advancements are crucial in enhancing quality, productivity, and acceptability. Ghouse (2012) found that most Indian artisans still employ equipment that is at least a decade outdated, which significantly increases the production time of their items. The artisan items that will be mass-produced need mechanical aid for finishing and processing to save artists time and energy. Technological advancements allow for the rapid fabrication of mass-produced goods from identically sized, shaped, and designed prototypes, which may lead to enormous productivity gains (Kathuria, Melchers & Muller-Maige, 1988). When done by hand, the carving and moulding processes are very slow and laborious. Lathe tools can make short work of woodworking tasks like shaping and carving. Although there is a pressing need to incorporate technology into the production of crafts in the modern day, the skill of weaving Banarasi sarees is sadly losing its authenticity. Newer, less expensive weaving techniques are gradually replacing the older ones. While contemporary processes are undeniably more time efficient, they are also reducing the product's authenticity. Due to the use of cheaper materials imported from China, the purity of silk has been reduced (Panigrahi, 2017). In contrast to machines, which may accomplish the job in a few days, a good handloom takes a

month of effort to make the final product (Banik, 2017). We have been sending Banarasi Saris to expos all over the world for the last several years. Weddings and other joyous events are the traditional times to wear Banarasi sarees. Traditional cottage industry and the economy have both been affected by globalisation.

6.2. INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT AND NEED-BASED INTERVENTIONS FOR CRAFT COMMUNITIES

It is time to reevaluate and maybe alter the current governmental framework and institutional backing for the handicraft sector. Given that some craftspeople work alone or with specific families, Kathuria et al. (1988) argue that it is very unlikely that they will be able to affect public policy (UNESCO 2009). The Indian government launched the National Handicraft Development Programme (NHDP) in 2015 to promote domestic handicraft industry (Ministry of Textile, 2015). A variety of plans are created within the framework of this initiative to provide artisan's institutional support. A small selection of the plans is these:

- Babasaheb Ambedkar Hastshilpa Vikas Yojana
- Design and Technical Upgradation Scheme
- Marketing & Support Services
- Research & Development
- Handicrafts Artisans Comprehensive Welfare

The goal of these initiatives is to boost the manufacturing of Indian handicrafts by assisting artisan clusters in developing into autonomous, self-sufficient enterprises (Jena, 2010). There are several schemes that aim to build infrastructure support, and they are all defined by PPP mode. Using cutting-edge tools and the development of innovative ideas, they get training to hone their abilities. Textile clusters are centres of excellence because to their highly integrated forward and backward links. Through a variety of all-encompassing welfare initiatives, craftsmen may get life insurance coverage from the ages of 18 to 60. To better the lot of craftspeople, there are several potential initiatives to pursue. Empowering communities and advancing technology are two of these endeavours (Hussain, 2016). To boost occupational efficiency, it is advised that communities of craftsmen provide housing and work sheds for their members (Ghouse, 2012).

7. CONCLUSION

Statistics on the export of handicrafts show that, even in this day of globalisation, there remains a sizable demand for our country's traditional handicrafts both at home and abroad. Nevertheless, the delicate status of artists needs close monitoring. Globalisation in and of itself is wonderful, but the way we implement it needs serious rethinking. Stiglitz, Joseph, Modern globalisation is a bust. It falls short for a large portion of the world's poor. In most ecosystems, it is ineffective. Unhealthy for the world's economy. Management of globalisation, not globalisation by se, is the problem. One cannot deny the reality of globalisation. But the wealthy should stop taking advantage of the poor and marginalized.

Government financing and training are necessary for the Indian handicrafts sector, nevertheless. Traditional knowledge is the only source of revenue for the artists. In addition to facilitating the annihilation of Indian culture and civilization, dangers to their identity and abilities stunt their own development as human beings.

To boost the status of artisans and make handicrafts more competitive on the global stage, the federal government has been implementing measures. Nevertheless, the policies must be adequately implemented by government organisations, particularly state governments. As a means of involving artisan groups in growth, S. S. Solanki argues that the government should institute programmes such as training, credit cards, loans without collateral, and "interaction meets" to educate craftspeople about new technologies and market concerns. To meet their financial requirements and expand their companies, artists and small artisan entrepreneurs might seek assistance from microfinance institutions and Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

There must be a concerted effort by cooperatives and volunteer groups to improve the working circumstances of artists. Hundreds of Kalamkari artists in Andhra Pradesh get loans from DWARAKA (Development of Weavers and Rural Artisans in Kalamkari Art) to cover expenses like their children's education, healthcare, and weddings. An NGO called "Dastakar" assists skilled artisans from several states in promoting their wares via exhibitions. Since the production foundation of this industry is disorganized and employs antiquated processes and equipment, artists in this field require more education, higher-quality materials, and financial backing. The success of this society depends on its members' unique qualities; thus, innovation must not stifle them. Furthermore, special attention is required for export and product marketing. Facilitate opportunities for middlemen by bringing artisans to the market. Promotion of handcrafted goods should be a joint effort of the Ministries of Information, Commerce, and Tourism. The Indian government may also sign memorandums of understanding (MoUs) for the export of crafts during the negotiation of trade agreements.

Domestic marketplaces could also promote crafts to increase client awareness. Customers are more likely to buy ethnic crafts that include modern elements if the designs reflect their current fashion preferences. But it is important to keep the craft approach distinct.

Assistance for cultural industries and handicrafts is seen by multi-national bodies such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank as an investment in development, rather than an expense. As we have seen, handicrafts are a major export and source of employment. Therefore, it plays a significant role in India's economy and culture. The demand for Indian handicrafts in both domestic and foreign markets has grown due to globalisation. However, to guarantee substantial progress in this sector, careful participation is necessary to prevent profit hijacking, interference from middlemen, promote marketing, and safeguard product originality/identity. Artists will be able to increase their horizons and skill sets in this way, which could lead to societal advancement.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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None.

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