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POSITION PAPER

NATIONAL FOCUS GROUP

ON

HERITAGE CRAFTS



राष्ट्रीय शैक्षिक अनुसंधान और प्रशिक्षण परिषद्
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Focus Group Objectives:

- i To incorporate the cultural, social, and creative attributes of craft into the educational system, through both theory and practice.
- ii To ensure that craft is viewed as a professional skill, leading to employment opportunities.

Why Heritage Crafts in the School Curriculum?

One out of every 200 Indians is an artisan. Hand craft is a production process and a wonderful, indigenous technology, not an outmoded tradition.. **This point needs to be emphasized in the school curriculum, and craft be taught as a professional expertise rather than a “hobby”.**

Training in craft skills, whether at home, or through the traditional Guru-Shishya tradition, should be recognized as industrial training, and given the same supports as other technical and vocational education.

Craft skills should be on par with other vocational training, especially in traditional crafts pockets, part of a properly structured curriculum,

In areas where craft is the primary activity, children should be able to opt for craft as a course option, offered as a specialized stream in itself, learning ancillary skills like product design, book keeping, display, merchandising and entrepreneurial skills.

Craft can teach

- **Consideration of relationship between the student and his/her environment** and the inter-dependence of the two.
- **Societal skills** – tolerance, understanding and appreciation of difference as a means of enriching their world. It includes the means of empowerment for so-called marginalized groups.
- **Information processing skills** – how to locate and collect relevant information, compare, contrast, analyze relations between the whole and a part.
- **Reasoning skills** – give reasons for opinions, use precise language to explain.
- **Enquiry skills**: ask questions, plan activity, improve ideas
- **Creative skills** – Expressive arts, explore different ways of personal expression and involvement in school projects and with business. Entrepreneurial skills create an attitude allowing people to enjoy change, practice risk management and learning from mistakes.
- **Work related culture.**

The Focus Group concluded that

- Indian craft and its millions of practicing craftspeople are a huge and important resource of traditional knowledge and indigenous technologies.
- this resource could be used to value-add to the educational system in a number of ways.
- craft should be taught both as a vocational, creative activity and as a theoretical social science.
- craft should not only be taught as a separate subject in its right, but be integrated into the study of history, social and environmental studies, geography, arts and economics, since it is an integral part of Indian culture, aesthetics, and the economy.
- craft is particularly suited to value-add to projects of all kinds – as an illustrative teaching aid, and as a learning device.
- experiencing and working hands-on with a craft medium can lead to learning that is useful and enriching; whatever discipline or profession a child may eventually chose. Working with your hands, materials, and techniques helps you both in understanding processes and in problem solving.
- in IITs and technical institutions abroad, model making and origami are used to teach the fundamental of engineering, mathematics, and physics
- craftspeople themselves should be used as trainers and teachers, rather than training another cadre of crafts teachers.
- craft are taught as a lively, experiential exercise, and not as a revivalist lip-service to the past.
- craft is best taught as a project, rather than a classroom exercise.
- Crafts projects and interactions could be a means of linking rural and urban youth.
- Craftspeople used as resource persons or trainers should receive the same remuneration and status as other trained professionals.
- different curricula could be developed for schools in rural craft pockets where craft education could enhance existing craft vocations (Entrepreneurship, technical training, language skills, accountancy, marketing, packaging). and for schools in urban belts, where education in craft would constitute an alternative experience and a creative outlet.
- aspects like gender, environment, community, caste could not be left out of the teaching of craft.
- craft could also be a valuable entry point and asset in other careers - export, museum curators, teachers, NGO sector.

Tools and Infrastructure Required

A pool of craftspeople trained to impart basic knowledge.

Trainers/trainers from diverse backgrounds interested in the subject.

One person in school who would coordinate inputs, projects, external trainers, craft demonstrations, field visits

A craft lab with space, facilities and raw materials.

Resource Material Required

1. Craft Mapping of India
2. Regionwise listings of craftspeople/crafts Institutions
3. Monographs on Craft
4. Films, and other visual material
5. Manuals/Handbooks on different techniques, skills, materials
6. Separate criteria for crafts people.
7. Skills to work in group
8. Having/making a space for teaching in motivation.
9. Restarting the technology and product
10. Co-relation between various Government agencies

Resource people and institutions who could be tapped for help

Indira Gandhi Manav Sangrahalay, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Eklavya, INTAC, Fabindia, Bharati, Jaya Jaitley, Mapin, Shantiniketan, Childrens' Book Trust (CBT), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Films Division, The Khadi & Village Industries Corporation, National Book Trust (NBT), Dastkar, National Institute of Design, National Institute Fashion Technology, Crafts Museum, National Museum, Calico Textile Museum, Bal Bhavan, Bharat Bhavan, SPIC-MACKAY, SASHA, Crafts Councils of India, Craft Institute, Jaipur, Weavers Service Centres, DC Handicrafts & Handlooms Offices, Govt Design Cells., Handicrafts & Handlooms Export Corporation & Central Cottage Industries Corporation, Dilli Haat, Crafts Revival Trust, Shri L.C Jain, SANSKRITI, Dakshinchitra.

Art and Craft

The Group recommends that these two subjects should be merged, rather than bifurcated, and Indian craft skills and materials be used to develop the creativity and artistry of the child, in conjunction with sketching, painting, etc. Design is a very important component that should be taught as part of both subjects, with students using **craft** techniques to **design** their school environment, classrooms, uniforms, etc.

Queries and Concerns

How will it respond to the aspiration and context of different regions and different social groups?

Does it have the flexibility to provide space to marginalized voices?

How will it deal with issues of diversity and commonality?

Did the term "Heritage" Craft send out revivalist, dated messages to the young?

Ideas for Implementation

- Craft Labs in all schools
- Craft as a compulsory area of learning in Junior and Middle School, and as an elective major in Senior School, especially in crafts pockets.
- Children should work on projects to create local museums of archival crafts, relating it to local history, geographic conditions, flora, fauna, costumes, culture and ritual.
- Annual fair, with children developing and selling products.
- Vacation excursions and camps in craft pockets, working with craftspeople.
- Lecture-demonstrations by craftspeople (parents of school children)
- Puppetry as vehicle of instruction
- Exchanges and shared excursions between rural and urban schools, with crafts children teaching craft.

Respect for the craftsperson and for the art of craftsmanship is the integral aim of the recommendations. Allied is our awareness that the continuing existence of an extraordinary richness of craft traditions and producers is one of India's unique assets as it searches for its own identity in a world that is increasingly uniform and technological.

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"Learning is an integrated event; it is not a separate process."

K. Jinan, Designer and Craft Teacher

1. SOME SOBERING FACTS THAT SET THE SCENE AND FOCUS ONE'S MIND

- India is home to 16 per cent of the world's population.
- India spends 3.8 per cent of its GNP on education; 46 per cent of its population over the age of 15 is illiterate.
- Since most of the population growth in India is taking place among those who will have the least skills/education when entering the job market, the country is likely to be inundated with either completely illiterate or poorly schooled youth and children.
- With 388 million children under 15 years of age, India faces a major challenge on the educational front.
- Fifty-four per cent of adults in India cannot read or write.
- Craftspeople form the second largest employment sector in India, second only to agriculture. One in every 200 Indians is an artisan.

2. THE OVERALL VISION OF THE FOCUS GROUP

To impart an all rounded and holistic education that equips the Indian youth of today to face the challenges of a global and rapidly changing world, while preserving their own cultural assets, traditions and values.

3. THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FOCUS GROUP

- To incorporate the cultural, social, and creative attributes of craft into the educational system through both theory and practice.
- To ensure that craft is viewed as a professional skill, leading to employment opportunities.

As someone said, "Tell me, and I'll forget. Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I'll understand."

4. METHODOLOGY

A common charge against Indians is that we have a great ability to visualize dreams but not the corresponding capacity to actually realize them. So we felt it important to develop a range of recommendations that are practical, specific and accessible; that are backed by personal experience, data and guidelines; and that build on the strengths rather than the weaknesses of the system.

Knowledge is an experience, not a formula.

5. WHY HERITAGE CRAFTS SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The Focus Group represents a sector of over 20 million practitioners, with a geographic spread that embraces all of India, and covers a huge gamut of widely differing work structures and cultures, with craftspeople working with widely differing techniques and technologies, using materials that range from clay to precious metals. Craft is the largest sector of employment after agriculture, and one of the largest

contributors to the economy in exports revenues as well as domestic sales.

In addition, craft can be used as a means of interpreting many social issues and ways of living. Craft in India is so universally prevalent that it has been used over the centuries as a metaphor for numerous philosophical, metaphysical and social concepts. Many words, forms of measurement, colours, and materials have a craft origin. The *thaana* and *baana* of life is something with which we are all familiar. Caste, gender, religion, and social practice all play significant, varying roles. All these different criteria need to be kept in mind when we strategize. *Can exclusion be transformed into awareness?* There is no generic answer to this question. All that we can attempt to do is create an understanding of the diversity and complexity of the craft sector. The contention of our Focus Group is that *craft—both in theory and in practice—can be a powerful tool of emotional, economic and intellectual empowerment for children at all levels, locations and sectors of school and society.*

Words like *craft* and *heritage* carry a lot of baggage with them. In the Indian context, they are especially emotive. To trendy yuppies in metropolitan areas, they carry connotations of something that is boring, passé and irrelevant; to others, the words evoke images of a 5,000-year-old civilization with rich multiple cultures and traditions to which each of us claims ownership and wants never to change. Some want the heritage clock to stop short at pre-Mughal India; a few recognize that craft never was and never should be static.

Contemporary Indians get terribly excited when an Indian enters space, wins an international beauty contest, or gets a silver medal at the Olympics. Sania Mirza's recent entry into the ranks of the world's best 100 tennis players has us agog. But few appreciate India's unique distinction of having literally millions of master

craftspeople still practising skills that are no longer extant in the rest of the world.

Paradoxically, while craft traditions are a unique means of earning a livelihood for rural artisans entering the economic mainstream for the first time, they also carry the stigma of inferiority and backwardness especially at a time when India is entering a period of hi-tech industrialization and globalization. Craft and the ancillary aspects of design and tradition are considered by activists and economists, bureaucrats and business strategists, as decorative, peripheral and elitist, as rather retrograde ways of earning a living. Craftspeople are usually seen as picturesque exhibits of our past rather than as dynamic entrepreneurs of our present and future. We forget that one out of every 200 Indians is an artisan. Hand craft is a production process and a wonderful indigenous technology, not an outmoded tradition. The raw materials used by artisans (cane, cotton, clay, wood, wool, silk, minerals) are not only available indigenously but are also environmentally friendly. *The existence of unique living craft skills, techniques, designs, and products is India's great strength, leading to career opportunities at all levels, not a weakness. This point needs to be emphasized in the school curriculum, and craft should be taught as an area of professional expertise rather than as a 'hobby'.*

To those of us now looking at the new millennium and seeking new directions for India, the potential of crafts and craftspeople is something to which younger generations should be sensitized. Let us not lose sight of the fact that every ten years we lose 10 per cent of our craftspeople.

One of the areas that our Focus Group concentrated on was the specialized stream of education in craft pockets where the bulk of the community consists of craftspeople. In India, the choice is often between a craftsman's child learning ancestral skills (while on the job, and contributing to the family

income in the process) while remaining illiterate, on the one hand, or getting a conventional education, on the other hand. Given the very poor levels of rural and state-provided education, this formal schooling might not actually equip him or her for any job in the future.

Training in craft skills, whether at home or through the traditional guru-shishya relationship, should be recognized as industrial training, and should be given the same support as other technical and vocational education.

Craft skills should be considered on par with other kinds of vocational training, especially in traditional craft pockets, and should be a part of a properly structured curriculum, with trainers or parents paid to impart the skill, rather than using children as unpaid labour. Equally important is the issue of providing facilities for conventional education alongside those teaching traditional skills; it is important to schedule semesters and school hours according to the work structures and seasonality of craft production. Most young craftspeople do not go to school because school hours and locations make it impossible to avail of both disciplines, that is, craft apprenticeship and formal schooling. Much craft production is usually a seasonal affair, with peaks and lows according to market demands. School terms and curricula should be organised accordingly.

In areas where craft is the primary activity, children should be able to choose craft as a course option. Craft should be offered as a specialised stream in itself, enabling children to learn ancillary skills like product design, book keeping, display, merchandising and entrepreneurial skills.

For example, in a handloom-weaving area, the course skills that should be taught are:

- Entrepreneurship
- Money management
- Communication

- Textile design
- Draughtsmanship
- Scale drawing
- History of the craft
- Technical skills
- Exposure to other weaving styles
- Different yarns, counts and looms
- Interaction with other designers, artists and craftspeople

We need to introspect on the steps required to include craftspeople in the mainstream, and take them forward as skilled entrepreneurs and economic partners. We need to create an awareness of and build on the strengths rather than the weaknesses of each craft and craft community. We need to be sensitive to their different nuances and cultural consciousness. Economic considerations may be the driving force, but we need to recognise that social, cultural and familial concerns also shape the direction of the decision-making process. We need to take the craftspeople with us. We need to learn to listen as well as to speak. There must be a shift from patronage to partnership.

The noted master craftsman, Ganapathi Sthapati, warned us (apropos of Western vs Indian traditional culture), “If we don’t tell them, they will tell us.” We could do well to turn this observation on its head and reflect that if we do not listen to craftspeople, a time may come when they will not be around to listen to us.

Shalini Advani, as part of the informal discussion group on the National Curriculum Framework, bulleted eight points on the values that should underpin the National Curriculum. All of these points apply equally well as arguments for the incorporation of craft in the school curriculum:

- It is a means to shape the social, cultural, physical, and mental development of the individual.

Child Labour and Crafts

Properly regulated, the age-old system of apprenticeship could be developed as an alternative means of education rather than a system of exploitation. A blanket ban on children learning craft would miss a unique opportunity to create a skilled workforce of potential high earners. It would also miss the opportunity to generate self-employment in a country with rising unemployment and few employment avenues for rural youth, especially home-based women. But let me also stress that in my view any child under 15 who is not in school IS child labour.

Sadly, in the craft sector in India, the choice is often between a craftsman's child learning ancestral skills (while on the job, and contributing to the family income in the process) while remaining illiterate, on the one hand, or getting a conventional education, on the other hand. Given the very poor levels of rural and state-provided education, this formal schooling might not actually equip him or her for any job in the future. In Ranthambhore, the village school teacher would report to duty only to sign his daily attendance sheet, and then go off to the forest as a tourist guide!

For me, this is the crucial issue. Not poverty, which is often cited as a justification for child labour, but whether there are alternative educational opportunities available for the child that would give him/her the same employment opportunities. Can child labour be transformed—through legislation, innovative new planning and educational mechanisms—into a vibrant new form of training and empowerment? I must emphasize here that I am looking at the issue today purely from the perspective of the craft sector, in particular home-based traditional industries and those relating to women.

Training in craft skills, whether at home or through the traditional guru-shishya relationship, should be recognized as industrial training, and given the same support as other forms of technical and vocational education. The family, master craftsman, cooperative society, institution, or NGO imparting the training should receive some stipend so that the child rather than the employer receives any money that he/she may earn during the period. Otherwise, there is the temptation, often succumbed to, of practising bonded labour of children under the guise of imparting a skill—as in the brass industry in Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh where the craft has moved from being a family occupation to being an assembly-line mass-manufacturing activity. The carpet industry is another notorious example, though international pressure and legislation have brought about some changes. For example, the Rugmark Smiling Carpet campaign, though not perfect in either concept or application, could be one such module used for developing further strategies.

Craft skills should be on par with other forms of vocational training, especially in traditional crafts pockets, and should be part of a properly structured curriculum, with trainers or parents paid to impart the skill, rather than using children as unpaid labour. Equally important is the issue of providing facilities for conventional education alongside those teaching traditional skills, scheduling semesters and hours according to the work structures and seasonality of craft production. Most young craftspeople do not go to school because school hours and locations make it impossible to avail of both disciplines. Much craft production is usually a seasonal affair, with peaks and lows according to market demands. School terms and curricula could be organized accordingly.

In a country as diverse and multidimensional as India, there is no one single solution or methodology.

-Laila Tyabji, Child Labour in Crafts TRAIDCRAFT Workshop, 2003

- It is a means to seek equality of opportunity for all.
- It upholds and teaches democracy, not in the centralised statist style of the 1960s but in a way that promotes the empowerment of individuals and communities.
- It promotes a productive economy.
- It promotes sustainable development.
- It teaches us to value our identity, our relationships, ourselves, and the wider groups to which we belong.
- It promotes the diversity of our society.
- It values the environment in which we live.

Similarly, Shalini Advani's listing of cross-curricular skills could also form part of our argument for the inclusion of craft in school education:

- *Appreciation of the relationship between the student and his/ her environment* and the interdependence of the two.
- *Social skills*: tolerance, understanding, and appreciation of difference as a means of enriching their world. This includes the means of empowerment for the so-called marginalised groups.
- *Information-processing skills*: how to locate and collect relevant information; how to compare, contrast, and analyse relations between the whole and the parts.
- *Reasoning skills*: give reasons for opinions, use precise language to explain.
- *Enquiry skills*: ask questions, plan activities, improve ideas.
- *Creative skills*: Expressive arts; explore different ways of personal expression and involvement in school projects and with business groups. Entrepreneurial skills foster an attitude

allowing people to enjoy change, practise risk management, and learn from their mistakes.

- *Work-related culture.*

THE FOCUS GROUP CONSENSUS IS THAT:

- The inclusion of heritage crafts as a focus area in the National Curriculum Review for the first time is a significant recognition of the importance of this sector.
- This is a unique opportunity to review and impact the educational system in India today.
- The challenge is not only to develop an innovative and meaningful programme but also to ensure its implementation.
- Therefore, the recommendations need to be accessible and adaptable to the situation and resources (human and fiscal) of government schools.
- The recommendations need to address the needs of both parents and children if they are to be accepted.
- In a market-driven society, unless parents are convinced that the curriculum enhances the professional development of the child, they will not support it.
- The universal disillusionment and discontentment, at every level, with the current educational system presents both a challenge and an opportunity to bring about change.

6. CRAFT-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Indian craft and the millions of practising craftspeople in the country are a huge and important resource of traditional knowledge and indigenous technologies.
- That this resource could be used to add

value to the educational system in a number of ways.

- That craft should be taught both as a vocational and creative activity and as a theoretical social science.
- That craft should not only be taught as a separate subject in its own right, but should also be integrated into the study of history, social studies, environmental studies, geography, arts and economics since it is an integral part of Indian culture, aesthetics, and the economy.
- That craft is particularly suited to add value to projects of all kinds, as illustrative teaching aids and as learning devices.
- That experiencing and working hands-on with a craft medium can lead to learning

"I should be paid more, because I was thinking and doing."

Kalaraksha Craftswoman, Kutch

that is useful and enriching, whatever discipline or profession a child may eventually choose. Working with one's hands, and with different kinds of materials and techniques, helps one both in understanding processes and in problem solving.

- That in IITs and technical institutions abroad, model making and origami are used to teach the fundamentals of engineering, mathematics, and physics.
- That craftspeople themselves should be used as trainers and teachers rather than training another cadre of crafts teachers.

- That craft should be taught as a lively, experiential exercise, and not as a form of revivalist lip service to the past.
- That craft is best taught as a project rather than as a classroom exercise.
- That crafts projects and interactions could be a means of linking rural and urban youth.
- That craftspeople used as resource persons or trainers should receive the same remuneration and status as other trained professionals.

Some examples of how craft could be integrated into other subjects and projects

- That different curricula could be developed for schools in rural craft pockets where craft education could enhance existing craft vocations (entrepreneurship, technical training, language skills, accountancy, marketing, packaging), and for schools in urban areas where education in craft would constitute an alternative experience and an outlet for creativity and personal expression.
- That factors like gender, environment, community, and caste could not be left out of the teaching of craft.

6.1 In History

- Example of continuity and change
- Part of people's history
- Role of khadi in the Indian freedom movement
- Homes, costumes, living styles
- Trade in textiles, artifacts and jewellery with the Greek and Roman Empires

- The temple and the court as patrons of the arts
- Karkhanas in the court of Shah Jahan
- Batik and ikat textile crafts, from India to South-east Asia and back
- History of indigo during the British Raj
- The jamewar shawl
- Handlooms and the Industrial Revolution
- Indus Valley Civilization
- Social life interpreted through artifacts

6.2 In Geography and Environmental Studies

- Emergence of local craft traditions based on availability of local raw materials
- Use of local materials
- Mineral and vegetable dyes
- Water: use in weaving, dyeing, block printing
- Construction of traditional houses: dictated by availability of stone, wood, bamboo, clay
- Shahtoosh: preservation of species or preservation of livelihood?

6.3 In Science

- Origami
- Balance and proportion

- Chemical properties of materials
- Tools and technology
- Firing and casting

6.4 In Literature

- Myths: Visvakarma, etc.
- Literary references to handicrafts and handlooms
- Weaving and the loom as metaphysical metaphors

“Skills need to succeed in today’s world.”

Dr Cyrus Vakil, Chair

Focus Group on Examination Reforms

6.5 In Classroom Projects and School Activities

- Posters
- Maps
- Masks, costumes and sets for school plays
- Model making
- School decorations
- Paper bags, handmade paper
- Developing school museum of local crafts and artifacts
- Developing school archives of designs, motifs and forms

A Case study: Story of Archana Kumari

Archana Kumari comes from a small village in one of the poorest and most deprived areas of India, Muzaffarpur district in north Bihar. At age 14, she left school and began earning a pittance doing the traditional sujni embroidery of the area. At age 17, her creative skills came to the notice of a local NGO, Adithi, and a Canadian textile expert, Dr Skye Morrison, who together sent her to NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology) on a scholarship. Despite being handicapped by her lack of English and other academic skills, Archana regularly topped her class at NIFT, won a prize for the Best Design Collection of her year, and has been accepted at NIFT for further studies on her own merit. She says her hand skills and experience of working hands-on in craft have given her an edge over the other students. Her one regret is that the local school did not give her and other children the early grounding that would have empowered them to be both craftswomen and entrepreneurs.

"We may be wage earners but we are still walking on someone else's feet. Because we lack the tools of education and language, we are still dependent." - Shiva Kashyap, Madhubani Craftswoman, Bihar

"His friends laugh at my son because he helps his mother."

Rinjani, Embroidery Craftswoman, Indonesia (Dastkar, Threadlines Workshop, 1998)

7. CAREERS AND EMPLOYMENT

- Craft skills are unique to India and are at a premium in today's mechanized society.
- The crafts sector is the highest contributor to export earnings.
- The crafts sector is the biggest employment sector after agriculture.
- Hand skills are useful in many professions such as architecture, engineering, design, and fashion.
- Craft could also be a valuable entry point and asset in other careers such as exports, museum curation, teaching, and working in the NGO sector.
- This fact should be highlighted in school career counselling sessions.
- It is important to make parents/teachers understand the commercial potential of craft study.
- It is important to stress the potential of craft as a career, especially in areas with existing craft traditions.
- In such craft pockets, students from craft backgrounds could be taught design, entrepreneurship, management and merchandising to help professionalise their skills.

8. GENDER

Craft and gender have significant linkages. On the one hand, craft is a microcosm of male–female roles within the family and society. Men and women work together in the different processes of the craft. Women knead the clay and men turn it on the wheel; women spin the yarn and men weave it; women embroider the leather juthis and men cut and stitch them. Mostly, this is an unpaid add-on to the multiple roles that women already juggle with within the home.

On the other hand, women have increasingly taken on many craft activities formerly practised by men who have left the sector, becoming empowered entrepreneurs in the process. Chikan embroidery in Lucknow, for instance, is now almost wholly done by women rather than men, as is block printing in many parts of Rajasthan. Over the last two decades, craft has become an increasingly successful source of earning and employment for otherwise unskilled home-based women. This in turn has been a catalyst for many other forms of social empowerment. An awareness of these issues and opportunities should be built into the theoretical understanding of craft as students enter the senior classes.

“There should be equality between men and women and all professions should be open to both. But all professions should be respected and craft should be treated as a profession.” said Maria Garanito, Embroiderer, Madeira (Dastkar Threadlines Workshop, 1998)

The Dastkar case study of Bal Bhavan, one of the few national-level institutions offering crafts as an extracurricular option, shows that many girls have gone on to use the skills in mehndi hand painting, artificial flower making, and tie-dye learnt at Bal Bhavan as home-based professions in later life.

9. ECOLOGICAL

Craft is one of the few professions that is a direct result of the natural environment in which it is practised. The existence of the surrounding natural materials—stone, wood, metal, clay, cotton, cane and bamboo, silk, lac—is the impetus of most traditional crafts. This harmonious balance between man and nature, economic growth and environmental balance, not requiring huge inputs of artificial energy, infrastructure or investment, is what makes craft viable even today.

In a world increasingly dependent on resources that come from outside, craft has many lessons.

However, it should be taught with the warning that most of these natural raw material sources are being rapidly depleted. Forests are being cut down and not replanted; water is being polluted; many grasses and reeds are no longer available. For instance, Andhra Pradesh’s famed cotton fields are being turned over to tobacco cultivation.

Issues that need to be debated in the classroom are the ban on ivory, sandalwood and shahtoosh, and how the protection of wildlife and diminishing natural resources impacts people’s livelihoods. Therefore, there is a corresponding need for innovative R &D that will find alternative solutions and materials.

10. TOOLS AND INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRED

- A pool of craftspeople trained to impart basic knowledge.
- Trainers/teachers from diverse backgrounds interested in the subject.
- One person in the school who would coordinate inputs, projects, external trainers, craft demonstrations, and field visits.
- A craft laboratory with space, facilities and raw materials.

“The lake where I used to get khus for my ittar perfumes is now the site of a gas factory.”
A traditional perfume maker, Sawai Madhopore

“Waste is a modern concept.”
Terracotta Craftsperson, Tamil Nadu

“Animals begin to learn by exploring their habitat.”
Madhav Gadgil, Chair, Focus Group on Environment

11. RESOURCE MATERIALS REQUIRED FOR EACH INSTITUTION

1. Crafts mapping of India
2. Region-wise listings of craftspeople and crafts institutions
3. Monographs on crafts
4. Films and other visual material
5. Manuals/handbooks on different techniques, skills, materials
6. Separate criteria for craftspeople
7. Skills required to work in a group
8. Having/making a space for teaching motivation.
9. Re-introducing the technology and the product
10. Relationship between various government agencies

12. RESOURCE PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS THAT COULD BE TAPPED FOR HELP

- *National Bal Bhavan*,
Kotla Road, New Delhi - 110002
(and its affiliated branches all over India)
- *Bharat Bhavan*
J. Swaminathan Marg
Shamla Hills
Bhopal 462 002
Madhya Pradesh
Tel: 91-755-540353, 540398
Fax: 91-755-540353
- *Bharatiya Kala Kendras*,
in Delhi and other major cities
- *Calico Textile Museum*
Sarabhai Foundation, Opp. Underbridge
Shahibag
Ahmedabad 380 004
Gujarat

Tel: 91-79-2868172, 2865995

Fax 91-79-2865759

Email: sarafound@icenet.net

- *Childrens' Book Trust , New Delhi*
- *Council for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) , New Delhi*
- *Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India Ltd.*

A, Barrack, Janpath

New Delhi 110001

Ph: 3326790 / 1577

Fax: 3328334

- *Indian Institute of Crafts and Design*

J-8, Jhalana Institutional Area

Jaipur 302 017

Rajasthan

Tel: 91-141-2701203/ 2701504

Fax: 91-141-2700160

Email: iicd@datainfosys.net;

gitika@sancharnet.in

Web: www.iicdindia.org

- *Craft Revival Trust (CRT)*

1/1 Khirki Village

Malviya Nagar

New Delhi 110 017

Tel: 91-11-29545144 / 29541146

Fax: 91-11-29545185

Email: mail@crafrevival.org

Web: www.craftrevival.org

- *Crafts Council of India*

Vijaya Rajan, Chairperson

GF "Temple Trees"

37 Venkatanarayana Road, T. Nagar

Chennai 600 017

Tamil Nadu

Tel: 91-44-24341456

Fax: 91-44-24327931

Email: craftscouncili@vsnl.net;

- craft@satyam.net.in
Web: www.craftscouncilindia.org
- ***Crafts Museum***
Pragati Maidan
Bharion Singh Road
New Delhi 110 001
Tel: 91-11-23371887/ 23371641
Fax: 91-11-23371515
Email: nhhm@vsnl.net
Web: www.crafts-museum.com
 - ***Dakshinchitra***
East Coast Road
Muttukkadu
Chenglepet District 603 112
Tamil Nadu
Tel: 91-4114-272603
 - ***Dastkar, Society for Crafts and Craftspeople***
Ms. Laila Tyabji, Chairperson
45 B, Shahpur Jat
New Delhi 110 049
Tel: 91-11-26495920/21, 26494633, 26495948
Fax: 91-11-26495920
Email: dastkar@vsnl.net; laila.tyabji@dastkar.org
Web: www.dastkar.org
 - ***Development Commissioner Handicrafts and Handlooms Offices,***
New Delhi and other state capitals
Government of India, Ministry of Textiles
West Block No. 7
R.K. Puram
New Delhi 110 066
Tel: 91-11-26106902, 26103562
Fax: 91-11-26163085
Web: http://www.texmin.nic.in
 - ***Dilli Haat***
Sri Aurobindo Marg, Opp. INA Market
New Delhi 110 023
 - ***Eklavya Education Foundation***
Core House, Off C.G. Road
Ellisbridge
Ahmedabad 6
Gujarat
Tel: +91-79-6461629
Fax: +91-79-6563681
Email: eklavya@ad1.vsnl.net.in
Website: http://www.eklavya.org
 - ***Fabindia***
N-4 Ground Floor
N-Block Market
Greater Kailash Part I
New Delhi 110 048
Tel: +91-11-26212183 / 4 / 5
E-mail: gklinens@fabindia.com; gk.delhi@fabindia.com
 - ***Films Division***
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India
New Delhi
 - ***Government Design Cells***
Ministry of Textiles
New Delhi and other state capitals
 - ***Handicrafts and Handlooms Exports Corporation of India Ltd. (HHEC),*** New Delhi
 - ***Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)***
Bhartiyam (near Humayun's Tomb)
Nizamuddin
New Delhi 110 013
Tel: 91-11-24632269, 24632267, 24631818
Fax: 91-11-24611290

- ***Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrabhalaya (IGRMS) (National Museum of Mankind)***
Post Bag No. 2
Shamla Hills
Bhopal 462013
Madhya Pradesh
Phone: 0755-2540319, 0755-2547589
Fax: 0755-2545458, 0755-2542076
Email: igmsbpi@mp.nic.in
- ***Jaya Jaitley***
Dastkari Haat Samiti
6/105, Kaushalya Park
Hauz Khas
New Delhi 110 016
Tel: 91-11-23016035
Fax: 91-11-23793397
- ***Khadi and Village Industries Corporation (KVIC)***
1st Floor, ITI Building
Kasturba Gandhi Marg
New Delhi
Tel: 91-11-23010221 Fax: 91-11-23012626
Email: jsak@sansad.nic.in
- ***O.P. Jain***
Sanskriti Kendra
C-6/53, Safdarjung Development Area
New Delhi 110 016
Tel: 91-11-26961757, 26963226
Fax: 91-11-26853383
Email: opjain@giasdl01.vsnl.net
- ***L.C. Jain***
D-5, 12th Cross
Raj Mahal Vilas Extension
Bangalore 560 080
Karnataka
Tel: 080-3344113
Email: lcjain@bgl.vsnl.net.in
- ***Mapin Publications***
3, Somnath Road
Usmanpura
Ahmedabad 3800 013
Gujarat
- ***National Book Trust (NBT)***
A-5 Green Park
New Delhi 110 016
Telephone: 91-11-26564020, 26564540, 26564667
Fax: 91-11-26851795, 26854688
E-mail: nbtindia@ndb.vsnl.net.in
Website: www.nbtindia.org.in
- ***National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)***
Sri Aurobindo Marg
New Delhi 110016
Fax: 91-11-2686-8419
- ***National Institute of Design (NID)***
Paldi
Ahmedabad 380 007
Gujarat
Phone: (079) 2663 9692, 2660 5243
Fax: (079) 2662 1167
e-mail: academic@nid.edu, pro@nid.edu, info@nid.edu
- ***National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)***
(Ministry of Textiles, Government of India)
NIFT Campus
Hauz Khas, Near Gulmohar Park
New Delhi 110 016
Tel: (011) 26965080, 26965059
Fax: (011) 26851198, 26851359

- **National Museum**
(Ministry of Culture, Government of India)
Janpath
New Delhi 110011
Tel. No. 91+011+3018415, 3019272/237
Website: <http://www.nationalmuseumindia.org>
- **SASHA**, Calcutta
- **SPIC-MACKAY**, New Delhi
- **Visva Bharati, Shantiniketan**, West Bengal
- **Weavers' Service Centres (WSC)**
Ministry of Textiles, in Delhi and other state capitals

13. RESOURCES

- Identify institutions
- Identify individuals
- Send out regular notifications
- Make inventory of usage
- Ensure authenticity
- Make listing of crafts
- Make listing of designs and motifs
- Compile oral histories of craftspeople
- Compile local resource book of motifs and designs (e.g. kolam, mandna, weaving and embroidery motifs)
- Explain meaning and significance of motifs and designs (e.g. alpana)

One's own resource (developed as part of classroom projects in school)

14. TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

It was agreed that selecting the right trainers is a crucially important factor. Without the right

motivation and orientation, they could spell the failure of the project. Everyone had horror stories of art teachers killing the interest and initiative of potentially talented and creative students.

A new course in craft studies could not be successfully launched without first identifying suitable trainers/teachers for this new syllabus subject and giving them the appropriate training. The scheme should be tried out in a few schools, and then fine-tuned.

Areas that need to be planned and developed as part of the training module:

1. Identifying the components of training
2. Identifying career options
3. Listing resource materials and tools (educational)
4. Ensuring sufficient exposure
5. Identifying the components of the craft area
6. Networking/interning with resource institutions and individuals

15. EVALUATION

The Focus Group were unanimous that there should be no formal examination or marking, since in this creative area success or failure was partly dependent on the inherent skills and motivation of the individual child and the subjective value system of the teacher. However, some form of regular evaluation should take place, which would also be self-evaluation of both the teacher and the course. The child's effort, interest, and ability to handle materials should also be assessed.

The primary objective of this subject is to widen the child's horizons and enhance his or her skills and creativity. As Pulak Dutta said, "When a child is judged, the child loses joy." The framework and system of evaluation should not be totally rigid.

16. ARTS AND CRAFTS

It is the recommendation of the Focus Group that these two subjects, that is, arts and crafts, should be merged rather than bifurcated, and that Indian craft skills and materials should be used to encourage the creativity and artistry of the child in conjunction with sketching, painting, etc. Design is a very important component that should be taught as part of both subjects, with students using craft techniques to design their school environment, classrooms, uniforms, etc.

17. QUERIES AND CONCERNS

How will crafts education respond to the aspirations of students in the context of different regions and different social groups?

Does it have the flexibility to provide space to marginalized voices?

How will it deal with issues of diversity and commonality?

18. DISCUSSION GROUP ON CURRICULUM REVIEW

- What constitutes heritage in the context of crafts?
- Does the term 'heritage' send out wrong signals about a revivalist 'dead history' to young people?
- What is the meaning of craft in different social milieus—rural and urban?
- Should the study of heritage crafts be confined to traditional Indian crafts, or should it be extended to contemporary and non-indigenous techniques as well?
- How can one make the study of craft relevant and exciting to young people in urban areas?

- How can the practical experience of working with crafts be translated into textbooks and manuals?
- What is the form and role of the implementing agency that will pilot this new curriculum?
- How will the quality of teachers be determined?
- How will space be made in the curriculum for craft education?
- How will the lack of resources, such as costs of materials and equipment, be dealt with?
- How can the bureaucracy and the local administration be sensitized to the importance of craft education?
- Craft should not be hijacked for politico-cultural reasons.
- Craft should not be considered a second-class option for non-achievers.

19. "WHERE DO WE COME FROM? WHAT ARE WE? WHERE ARE WE GOING?"

Paul Gauguin

- The findings of the Dastkar case studies of Bal Bhavan and school excursions to the Crafts Museum, New Delhi lend weight to the argument that craft should be part of school education: Craft makes learning fun, and can be used to teach children about subjects like history, geography, science, mathematics, etc.
- Children can experience their cultural heritage through the study of craft.
- Craft-based training can be vocational, and can be used to earn a livelihood later in life.
- Craft provides children a way to express what they feel without the need for words and without fear of punishment.

- Craft brings out the inherent creativity of children, especially if they are left free to decide what they want to learn and when.
- Harnessing creative talent is important since schools focus largely on academics. If a child is not good at mathematics, he or she should be given other avenues to excel instead of being made to feel like a failure.
- Learning is fun at Bal Bhavan largely because of the non-formal methodology adopted. If craft is incorporated into the regular school curriculum, this should be kept in mind.
- Employing traditional craftspeople to teach in schools will not only provide them with employment, but also ensure that the teaching of craft is true to India's rich cultural traditions. For example, they can teach and explain Madhubani painting to children rather than extolling the benefits of cross-stitch embroidery.
- Teaching traditional crafts to children will ensure that these traditions do not die out. As one instructor said, "The time should not come when foreigners come to India to teach us about our own crafts."

20. IDEAS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Set up craft laboratories in all schools.
- Make the study of crafts compulsory in

junior and middle school, and offer it as an elective major in senior school, especially in crafts pockets.

- Children should work on projects to create local museums of archival crafts, relating these to local history, geographic conditions, flora and fauna, clothes and costumes, customs and rituals.
- Hold an annual fair, with children developing and selling products.
- Go on vacation excursions and attend camps in craft pockets, where children will work with craftspeople.
- Hold lecture-demonstrations by craftspeople, especially in cases where they are also parents of schoolchildren
- Use puppetry as a vehicle of instruction.
- Undertake exchanges and shared excursions between rural and urban schools, with children coming from traditional crafts backgrounds teaching crafts.

Inculcating respect for the craftsperson and fostering an appreciation of craftsmanship and skill are important aims of the recommendations.

Allied to this is our awareness that India's extraordinary and rich craft traditions and skilled and talented craftspeople constitute unique assets as the country searches for its own identity in a world that is becoming increasingly uniform, homogenized and technologically driven.

APPENDIX 1

Modules of how a craft could be interpreted at various stages of a child's development:

A module for teaching a craft at different levels of the school system

| POTTERY LEVEL DOCUMENTATION | One afternoon a week CLASS ACTIVITY | RESOURCES REQUIRED | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 6–10 years | Using material, Coiling, pinching, free modelling | Crafts laboratory, clay, tools | shapes types Toys decorative patterns |
| 11–14 years | Throwing on wheel | Wheel, professional potter for demonstration | |
| 15–16 years | forms and functions Firing Glazing | Kiln | |
| 16–18 years | Visits to potters' workshops, exhibitions, tile making Document local pottery traditions Document different vessels/pots Research literary references to pottery | Transport Visits to communities Resource person within school to coordinate cultural and creative inputs | |
| PAPER | | | |
| 6–10 years | tear/patch and paste/collage | Glue, paper (waste paper, tissue, cardboard) | History of paper making in India and China |
| 11–14 years | Strip-weaving, rolling Decorative chains Origami Papier mache Stenciling | Methi powder, imli seeds Corn flour, chalk powder Gobar Paints Sawdust | |
| 15–16 years | Printing Model making, paper sculpture Mobiles, kite making Flower making Puppets Masks Toys Coasters and mats Paper making Marbling | Screen-printing equipment Pulper Buckets, water | |
| 16–18 years school projects | Book binding Posters, chart making Map making Sets and costumes for plays Paper bags out of waste and newsprint | | |