



Globalisation of Indian Art and Handicraft



India has a history of rich and diverse culture tradition & among its diversity, the legacy of Indian art and craft has always occupies a special place owing to its beauty, form, style, dignity and aesthetics. India is home to remarkable number of extremely amazing artists, sculptors & authors all combining to create the popular arts of India. The art work of India be it painting or sculptures or even traditional & folk arts like madhubani, warli, gond art, alpana, patwa art, kalamkari etc has always gathered appreciation from people residing in almost all the parts of the world.

Through the ages, the Indian handicraft is popular around the world for its creativity aesthetics and exquisite craftsmanship. Indian handicrafts have very ancient origin and of high quality. The versatility of the various materials used in Indian handicrafts items such as stone, metal, glass, wood, clay, ceramics and terracotta, makes these products truly unique. Many Indian handicrafts have aesthetics richness & decorative values which have become world famous.

With the passage of time, Indian society and economy has changed enormously. It opened up its economy and adapted to globalization in the early nineties. Globalization has made the whole world one compartment and makes a single village a Global village. In the earlier days only a privileged few Indian artist and craftsman could showcase their work internationally. But with the increasing knowledge about Indian art & handicraft, the demand for Indian artwork in the international market has grown tremendously. Many painters of India have received global recognition and their paintings have etched millions of dollars in international auctions.

As the Global economy continues to contract the art industry is not immune. The Globalization of art is certainly not a new phenomenon. The art industry is globalised with artists, auctions houses, buyers and galleries in most countries around the world. It is not only the economies that often meet in the global market sphere,

but also the people and cultures, which bring new dimensions to the multi culture. There is always a cross cultural interaction of both the local and global.

In this globalized world, art is becoming like any other product or goods exported and imported all over the world. Globalization becomes boom for Small artists as they get the benefit from a larger platform to sell their works. Now they can reach anyone, anywhere in the world. They can now easily access and learn about other cultures and societies through seeing the artwork. Larger Companies which deal in the buying and selling of artwork are weathering the economic storm and innovating day by day by using Internet to expand their marketplace. The Internet is equalizing the art world by allowing anyone anywhere to view and purchase any pieces. Indian art world is shining with the magic of Globalization. No longer is the art world constrained by location.

Globalization of Indian art is possible only when heritage meets modernity. One of the reasons why Indian art is becoming more and more popular abroad is because of its journey in the recent past. Earlier, Indian painters seemed to concern themselves primarily with the societal but with coming of the modernists & then the contemporise, a younger group of artists born after independence, changed India's artist outlook dramatically.

There was a time when only a privileged few Indian artists could travel internationally with their works but with increasing awareness about Indian Art and craft and the quality of work produced by the artists here, the demand for their works in the international art markets has grown tremendously. This helped the artist push their boundaries & create art that wasn't necessarily for an Indian audience alone because now, their art became about subjects that were universal and everyone could relate to it. Artists too have had their works featured prominently at international shows and find that at times there is a better understanding of their works amongst international art lovers.

Moreover, some of the artist even consciously chose to integrate foreign influences in their work in order to enrich their art. Indian handicraft which constitutes a significant segment of the decentralised sector of our economy, its export has reached at a commendable height. Indian folk art and crafts which are integral parts of the Indian culture and tradition are in high demand among the western consumers. Foreign fashion industry borrows a great deal from Indian applied motifs saree design.

Indian handicrafts is not only preserving the cultural heritage of India, but also generating foreign exchange. One of the distinguish feature of this sector is that it uses indigenous raw material such as wood, stone, metal, glass, bamboo, textiles, terracotta, clay and ceramics for manufacturing of products.

Main products of handicrafts consist of art metal wares, embroidered and crocheted goods, shawls and art wares, zari goods, hand printed textiles, woods wares and imitation jewellery. Indian exports are showing a growing trend. Many Indian painters and craftsman have received global recognition and their works have fetched millions of dollars in International auctions.

But despite all these, the real concern for many of us is that can the “local” really met with the “Global”.

The handicraft industry in India is distinguished in forms of infrastructure, government Support, policy scenario, trade strategy and the way industry is defined. The Indian art world and handicrafts are the products of

small and cottage sector, which are largely unorganized and the products are usually handmade, whereas other competing countries have well organized and large scale manufacturing oriented industry. This can have both advantages and disadvantages for India. Advantage of this is that it creates employment terms, whereas disadvantages are low cost production.

For Indian art and handicraft it can be surely concluded that art and handicraft products has a very bright future in global market, but simultaneously it is also facing various negative consequences of globalization. The biggest problem which Indian handicraft industry has is that village craftsman in our society remain concerned about the free trade and mass production. Their concern is handmade products from other parts of the world will out price the products of their hard labour. Other impact of this is that local cultures suffer when their art treasures leave their borders and the local people are not able to see these pieces in accessible, local museums and galleries.

Though today, art and handicrafts exports are showing positive growth we should not forget the challenges artisans are facing. These challenges will slowly take the industry towards the mode from where we have to start again. Although government of our country is taking various measures to make the thing well, but there is still a need to do more & provide the strategic direction and action plans to evolve these systems, so that the art and Craft persons and their industry can grow & survive this competitive era of globalization.

