Heritage Crafts

For

Senior Secondary

(Classes XI and XII)

Introduction

India is the only country in the world with a unbroken, living vibrant tradition of crafts. While agriculture employs the largest number of people in India, the crafts sector is next and sustains over 20 million practitioners. The wide geographic spread embraces all of India and covers a huge gamut of widely differing work structure and cultures. Crafts communities, using similar materials that range from clay to precious metals, work with widely differing techniques and technologies to create a rich variety of forms.

Acknowledging the importance of handicrafts in India the National Curriculum Framework – 2005 sought to integrate it into the school curriculum and formed a National Focus Group on Heritage Crafts. The Focus Group submitted a position paper that includes several recommendations and concluded that Indian craft and its millions of practicing craftspeople are a huge and important resource of traditional knowledge and indigenous technologies that could add value to the educational system in a number of ways. It was suggested that Indian Crafts should be taught as a theoretical social science with a strong component of field study and applied creative activity.

With the learning of crafts traditions many skills could be developed among the students. These include the consideration of relationship between the student and his/her environment and the inter-dependence of: societal skills, information processing skills, reasoning skills, enquiry skills, creative skills, entrepreneurial skills and a work related culture**.**

The Objectives

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

area will be introduced for senior secondary level in schools with the following objectives:

- To understand the critical role of the crafts community and its integral relationship to the Indian society.
- To enable students to understand the relationship between economics, culture and aesthetics,
- To enable students to explore the linkages between environment, craft traditions and society through field studies,
- To develop a respect for the diversity of Indian craft traditions and to uphold the dignity of its practitioners by understanding the difficulties that they face,
- To introduce Indian culture through the crafts, so that school students appreciate the variety of skills and expressions of the Indian artist
- To provide students a creative aesthetic experience of the unique visual and material culture of India and develop values of conservation, protection of the environment, resources and heritage of the country,
- To enable students to understand the relationship between tradition and contemporary trends, form and function, creator and consumer.
- To understand the processes of creating a craft object from start to finish,
- To equip students with the tools to extend craft traditions to wider applications through applied crafts,

The syllabus

The subject of Indian Crafts will consist of three components in each year (classes XI and XII):

I.	Theory	40 marks
II.	Field Study	30 marks
III.	Applied Crafts	30 marks

I. Theory 40 marks

The theory part of the syllabus will have Two Units;

Unit I will consist of a general introduction, an introduction to the crafts traditions of India, details about the different crafts, their classifications, regional distribution etc. Each of these topics will incorporate aspects such as the

i. Philosophy and aesthetics,
ii. Materials, processes and techniques,
iii. Environment and resource management,
iv. Social structures,
v. Economy and marketing and
vi. International examples.

Unit II of the theory will discuss all these aspects in detail. A textbook will be required which will have the print material with maps, photographs, illustrations, anecdotes and case studies in boxes and the book may be supplemented with a CD having slides, video-clippings etc. showing different crafts traditions and their processes.

UNIT I

1 Introduction

This chapter will be an exhaustive part of the textbook, which will include different dimensions of the Indian crafts traditions, such as the history, philosophy, sociology, economy, environment and resources etc. in general.

To introduce the subject, teachers may have a few brainstorming sessions with students about their perception and understanding of crafts and what crafts actually are. They can initiate or orient themselves with their home first, where they could look for objects created by traditional crafts persons, bring them to the classroom and discuss them.

A general introduction to the seven major issues related with crafts traditions, identified as core areas will be carried out here. These issues will be repeatedly referred to during the two years of theory and project work, as well as during the applied crafts component of the syllabus. They will also cut across the chapters on various crafts traditions. These crafts related issues are: i. Crafts Traditions, ii. Philosophy and Aesthetics, iii. Materials, Processes and Techniques, iv. Environment and Resource Management, v. Social Structures, vi. Economy and Marketing and vii. International Examples.

1.1 Crafts Traditions

A historical overview of crafts traditions from ancient and medieval, to modern and contemporary periods would be required in order to situate them in the cultures that produced them. The associations between living practices and temples or hunting traditions, nomadic journeys, ritualistic practices, ceremonial occasions, customary beliefs, would all in some way or the other become part of the study of the culture of crafts. The history of a particular craft tradition, its geographical distribution, myths and legends associated with different influences on the craft and patterns of patronage etc. may be discussed.

1.1.1 Clay

Being one of the most basic materials found in every corner of the country, clay has been used for making earthen ware, figurines, bricks, tiles, beads etc. Terracotta objects are one of the earliest artifacts found during excavations of archaeological sites as early as the chalcolithic period and continue to exist in the present times. This chapter will deal with the different practices, techniques and distribution of pottery and terracotta crafts in India.

1.1.2 Stone work

Another basic material that does not need much processing and technology is stone. Different types of stones from the most common ones to region specific ones to precious gems have been used in different ways from architectural construction, to sculptures, to making jewelry and so on. One would need to discuss different aspects of stone works that have existed through thousands of years.

1.1.3 Metal Crafts

Metal has a wide variety where technology plays an important role. A number of crafts communities have been sustaining on age old practices of making objects from metal which involves the knowledge of technology/ indigenous technology among artisans, from processing the metal, to casting, polishing and finishing the objects. Whether it is Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh, or Kondagaon in Bastar or Cuttak in Orissa and so on, these are the pockets where the livelihood of families of hundreds of craftsmen is sustained through metal crafts.

1.1.4 Jewelry

Jewelry, whether made from precious stones, beads and metals or bell metal or terracotta, from most intricate and delicate forms to the bold and traditional motifs, Indian traditional jewelry is one most cherished items in the international market, among tourists, foreigners and Indians are the biggest buyers of jewelry in the world!

1.1.5 Natural Fibre weaving

Natural fibres such as grass, bamboo, shola pith, cane, jute, leaves etc. have varied usages from making/ weaving baskets, mats, brooms, rooftops, clothing etc. which provided shelter and income to many communities in India. Many communities have a practice where women themselves weave household objects for their daily use whereas many industries survive on production of materials from jute. All north-eastern states have rich traditions of handicrafts manufactured from cane and bamboo. By and large weaving from natural fibres is part and parcel of every region/ state.

1.1.6 Textile Crafts

Clothing and textile being one of the three basic needs of human beings, apart from food and shelter, finds place almost everywhere from the most common material of cotton to the expensive silk and wool. Most of the textile crafts are self sufficient systems where the process starts right from acquiring raw materials to making them worthy to be woven, dyeing, printing, painting, embroidery, etc. Some of these traditions are hundreds of years old. While textile exports are high, new experiments with jute, banana fibre etc. are also underway.

1.1.7 Painting

Painting is one of the first expressions which makes manifest different emotions and deeds of the earliest human settlements. Whether painted on walls, floor, roof, paper, palm leaf, wood, cloth or any other surface, paintings have a pictorial communication/ a visual language narrating traditional practices, folklores, folktales etc.

1.1.8 Paper and paper crafts

Handicraft traditions where different products are made from paper and papier mache have been prevalent from Jammu and Kashmir to Kerala for preparing various objects. The process of making these objects, vary from place to place. To study them from the point of view of resources available in the region and the opportunity to market their products are some of the aspects which needs attention.

1.1.9 Theatre crafts

In some parts of the country performing art traditions draw on other art forms in their performance, theatre being foremost among them. Theatre has many crafts which make them a successful performance tradition, be it stage-crafts where carpentry, carvings, paintings etc. are involved or costume design and jewelry, facial masks and depending on the tradition, many other crafts may be involved. Exploring various aspects of the theatre crafts will enhance the understanding of students to how traditional societies have integrated various art forms into their practice; how crafts have traditionally been used in performance and how different traditional crafts have become a part of contemporary theatre.

Each chapter will have:

- Maps
- Boxes with Case Studies
- Illustrations
- Techniques
- Anecdotes
- Audio-video/ multi-media programmes

UNIT II

2.1 Philosophy and Aesthetics

Students then may be told about the impact of different philosophies on handicrafts industry in the last hundred years or so. Individual efforts to promote crafts, including Gandhi's philosophy on crafts and village industry, special role of Khadi in the freedom movement, the study of concept of 'small is beautiful' as expounded by E. M. Scumacher, study of Ananda Comaraswamy and role of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Pupul Jayakar etc. in contributing to the sustenance and growth of crafts in India can be covered in this section demonstrating their contribution related to their philosophy.

Aesthetic appreciation should cover basic principals of aesthetics, the specific aesthetics of different art styles e.g. shapes and forms in Indian sculpture, roots and impulses of traditional painting, different schools of classical painting e.g. miniature, Tanjore, etc., architectural principles in Jain temples, Islamic architecture, Hindu temples, Buddhist monasteries and symbolism e.g. mandalas and auspicious symbols, tribal votive expressions, significance of colours, symbolism in forms, tantric art and its concepts, Sikh art etc. can be incorporated in this part of the textbook. Also, the connotations of *shilpa shastras* and other texts with examples may be given.

2.2 Materials, Processes and Techniques

The students would examine much of the following description of a broad range of materials used for crafts and alternatives adopted in changing circumstances (e.g. bone instead of ivory, mango instead of sandalwood, polyester and other synthetics, plastics, etc.), nature of craft depending on the quality of the material used, varieties and qualities of wood, stone, metals, alloys, grasses, bamboo and cane, naturally cultivated fibres, e.g. cotton, silk, wool, jute, coir, gems/glass, animal products e.g. leather, horn, bone (with emphasis that these are harvested only after the death of the animal), shells, shola pith, papier mache, nature of dyes and colours (mineral, chemical, vegetable), hand made paper out of different materials etc. Each of these materials undergoes different stages of process before converting them into objects. Different techniques to handle materials each of which require various tools, possibilities of recycling by using waste materials creatively for economic purposes, chemical waste processing etc. are other dimensions which need to be discussed. Each of the crafts communities have certain religious and social practices/ festivals related with their crafts, the deities like Vishwakarma or Prajapati whom they worship, folklores and mythology associated with the crafts, its origin the materials and tools they use etc.

While studying a particular craft, students must also know about all these aspects.

2.3 Environment & Resource Management

Nature is the source of all the raw materials that are functioned into food crafts. Existing topography (e.g. forest cover, land mass, major water bodies) determine the availability of clay for pottery and terracotta, locations of crafts people dependent on these resources, effect of climate on craft production, existing and/or dwindling supply, range of resources needed by crafts people, present mode of access, reforestation, water harvesting, dependence on animal population for resources (for transportation, raw material) , benefits of eco friendly materials for health, recycling, preservation of soil and water i.e. non-polluting, bio-degradable qualities, reforestation and cultivation for crafts and natural dyes etc. All these should be studied in light of the sustainable development of various resources. Possibilities of substitution of raw materials to improve technique, to reduce costs, durability, attractiveness etc. is another aspect which needs to be explored.

Various issues related to environment and natural resources, what needs to be discussed to bring about awareness among students. There is a need to focus on some of the issues like global warming, pollution, recycling of wastes, health related issues that the crafts communities have to face during their work etc.

2.4 Social Structures

Students will discover some unique features of India's social structure through examining crafts traditions. There are examples of the interdependency of social groups (castes, communities etc.) and crafts, eg. tribal social and religious beliefs, and how their usual occupations are reflected in their crafts, social occasions in which the craftsperson is required to participate, he guru-shishya tradition, the jajmani tradition, barter traditions, traditional structure like the haat which served the need of marketing in a agricultural-artisanal society, the guild system which has existed for hundreds of years… The gender component of craft may also be examined.

In earlier days, the caste system had sustained crafts production because of the social immobility of the artisans and the demand for crafted objects being restricted to local demands. Students should thoroughly understand the relationship between craftspersons and the societal structure, specially within a historical / traditional society, so that they can analyse them in the current context. How changes are taking place in society- the shifting gender equations, the awareness of crafts persons as well as among people about different crafts, the economics, revival of dying crafts, communication etc. In traditional society, identification of artisans through their names, reasons why there is concentration of artisans in certain castes, issues of landlessness, or small farmers as part time artisans depending on the season, the social interactions of crafts persons with other communities and their equations etc. are some other issues which need to be explored.

2.5 Economy and Marketing

Students need to learn the various aspects of economics of crafts from productivity charts of different commodities in an economy to quantum of production and employment in the unorganized sector, craft production for domestic market and for export, statistics of growth of the craft sector to funds allocated for the development of this sector from First Five Year Plan (Planning Commission) till present). The role of various institutions including Khadi and village industries (Ministry of Rural Development), Ministries that look after crafts, textiles (Ministry of Textiles, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Environment for the development of bamboo and natural fibres) , roles of each of these government offices, roles of NGOs in this sector, KVIC, KVIB, (do they supplement each other or do they replicate and overlap?) etc. Today with new government schemes and work of Non-Governmental Organisations in the field of crafts for which India was famous have been revived and the various crafts communities in India are able to make a viable living from the creation of handmade objects need to be studied.

A comparative study of pricing of an object between traditional societies where raw material like clay was free, the cost of labour and tools was at a minimum and the work place was the home so no overheads were charged in comparison to today where the middle man charges overheads and the profit rarely reaches the craftsperson. Students will learn about the plight of the crafts community during the colonial rule and its fall out and the beginning of industrialization at the turn of the 20th century.

The marketing of objects in a consumer oriented society requires good advertisingt, packaging and quality control. The beauty of a handmade object lies in that each piece is individual and unique and must be marketed in that manner. Students will get practical experience in costing local crafts, experimenting with packaging, developing low cost, aesthetic and environment friendly ways to package.

Other points of discussion in the classroom may include private and state outlets for marketing of crafts, the Export Promotion Council, street markets, village markets, DASTKAR Dilli Haat, Crafts Museum, Crafts Council of India, TRIFED as an urban intervention replicating a traditional structure, the place of crafts in the national economy, competition from mechanized sector, competition from China and other countries, effect of global prices on cost of raw materials needed by crafts people like yarn, sandalwood, etc.

2.6 International Examples

In an era of globalization, students need to know about similar crafts traditions elsewhere in the world. Since there will be focus on the fast changing scenario with reference to globalization and international markets, description of globalization, general and specific to crafts, its advantages and disadvantages for highly developed and developing nations and cultural, economic, results of globalization on crafts are significant dimensions to be reflected upon. History of textile agreements

and India's role in textile trade are other important aspects, which may be useful to the students.

There would be a focus on certain countries, i.e., Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, and India as producer countries to study how their history and culture sustained crafts and how current policies support production. Their position in the world market as suppliers, whether the products reflect the cultural identity of the country or are they made for general utility for homogenous cultures? What is the comparative level of mechanization, use of synthetic raw materials, eco friendliness, contemporary or traditional? A discussion on all these aspects may be generated through text.

Further, a study of USA, UK, Germany, Japan, France, Spain, Canada as consumer countries which have a largely homogenous culture, heavy industrialization, lack of significant numbers of craft producers, nature of studio craft in these countries, nature of products they import from the producer countries etc. too needs a mention.

II. Field Studies

In this part of the course students will be required to do **two short** and **one long** project in each year XI and XII.

Each student will prepare:

1. T**wo short** assignments (10 pages each) (5 marks each)

Students in the first instance will study their immediate environment and learn about everyday crafts in their everyday lives. They will prepare an assignment of crafts found at home, in their town/village, artisans and crafts communities who live in their locality.

The teachers may discuss the areas and topics related with the topics mentioned in the following paragraph, before starting the work and they may call a craftsperson or someone from the community who feels comfortable talking to the children and at the same time is well

versed with the craft traditions specially of that region. Students may talk to people both producers and consumers, find out about different aspects of production and marketing or study the architecture of monuments, visit museums, study the artifacts (sculpture and painting and crafts) and work on the costumes, jewelry, the way of life etc. The assignments can have drawings, illustrations, photographs, maps etc. The students may choose any **two topics** from following areas for this short project:

- **Crafts in their own locality/home/state** to enable students to understand the design and function of craft traditions in their daily life.
- **Local Heritage in Museum/ monuments/ religious-secular structures** to understand the various craft skills involved in historic architecture/building/sculpture/painting.
- **Vernacular architecture to study the variety of craft skills in contemporary building of homes, and other structures**.
- **Market/ shop/ mela/ haat to understand market forces**.

2. **One long term** project on **Exploring a Craft** (20 marks)

This project will necessarily be a scientific, methodical documentation of a particular craft tradition prevalent in the region (for the first year that is class XI), which will have the following core issues in the background, which the students have also studied in theory;

- **Craft Traditions**
- **Philosophy and Aesthetics**
- **Materials, Processes and Techniques**
- **Environment & Resource Management**
- **Social Structures**
- **Economy and marketing**
- **International Examples**

The projects taken up for this subject may have different stages of planning, execution and presentation. The projects may be taken up in a group of 4 to 6 students where they can work on a particular craft tradition. In class XI students may visit the crafts-persons in their own region whereas in class XII students may take up crafts clusters of another region if the schools and the students find it convenient.

In the preparatory stage, students along with teachers can discuss about various crafts traditions practiced in the region, their history, distribution etc., collect all information available through various sources including library, internet and resource persons. To avail comprehensive data on various aspects of the crafts, students may develop an interview schedule and decide on number of crafts persons to be interviewed, which all places they will be visiting etc. Teachers must equip the students on interaction with craftspersons and other people from the community, type of language they should use, how to be polite with them and while handling their materials etc. Students can buy some of the objects from craftspersons, take photographs after seeking their permission, make drawings, etc. which later on they can use in presentation or submission of project report.

After the completion of documentation, students could make presentation at school assembly or the class or in parent- teachers' meeting for which they can creatively use

III. Applied Crafts – 30 marks

This component will consist of a-hands- on-experience of creative work with a multi-disciplinary approach:

1. Learning a Craft **10 marks**

Students can learn the basics of a chosen craft from a practicing local artisan, such as pottery/ weaving/ drawing and work on its techniques, handling of materials and tools, experiment with colour,

form, texture, rhythm, balance etc. They can then experiment with them, know about the traditional practices in that craft, the symbolism in them and the different points of views associated with it. The schools should have all the facilities required for practicing all the processes involved in a craft including working space, materials and tools. Schools may not have a teacher who is also an expert in all these crafts and in such a case, the schools should identify resource persons/ craftspersons from the community, who can come to the school for demonstrations and students also can visit them.

2. Innovation in design and processes 10 marks

In this stage, students will develop their creative, innovation skills. They will chose one development topic and translate theory into practice.

Eg

- **Materials, Processes and Techniques**
  Experiment with eco-friendly packaging of different crafts,

- **Environment & Resource Management**
  Recycling of materials,
  Reducing hazards,

- **Economy and marketing**
  Assisting a craftsperson in proper methods of costing and pricing,
  Studying consumer needs/ behavior and informing crafts person of changing trends etc.

- **International Examples**
  Creative contemporary uses of the craft in India and abroad

3. Creating an aesthetic environment

Finally it is critical that students who undertake this course have an opportunity to use what they learn to enhance their daily life. Students will be asked to practically demonstrate how they will create an aesthetic environment at school, home, and community. They can

redesign their classroom with crafts they have studied; they can design a notice board for the school, or decorate the principal's office. Periodically students can display and organize exhibitions to show the works and obtain feedback. Students can learn how their products can be creatively used in their lives as well as community members.

Textbook

In this subject area of Indian Crafts, there will be **three textbooks for classes XI and class XII**. One textbook each in both the years will be for theory, and one book giving guidelines/ addressing the schools, teachers and students about the practical components.

The theory textbooks for classes XI and XII will be a fully illustrated textbook giving photographs, sketches, maps, timelines, case studies etc. The **class XI** textbook of theory will introduce children with diverse traditions of the Indian crafts. Whereas the **class XII** textbook will address the six aspects of Craft Traditions: a. Philosophy and Aesthetics, b. Materials, Processes and Techniques, c. Environment & Resource Management d. Social Structures f. Economy and marketing g. International Examples. These aspects will be studied in light of the crafts traditions referred in class XI.

One book which will be addressing the students as well as teachers and schools for conducting different activities in practicum, like the field studies and applied crafts will provide some samples of documentation methods/ formats based on which children can develop their own formats to conduct them. This will be a book for both years. It will also suggest what facilities the schools should provide for conducting these activities etc.

Time Management

Time management in school timetable is an important aspect of the course. Since this will be one of the optional subjects for the plus two stage the subject should be given full weight age for theory and practical components as in other subjects. Usually every subject area is given 6-8 hours per weeks for every subject. Since the very nature of the subject Indian Crafts requires

sufficient time for different activities, schools should provide block periods instead of single periods daily. On Saturdays, schools can keep half a day for field work/ workshop/ practical or applied part of the course.