

Editorial

Preservation of traditional arts and crafts has been an intriguing question for people and groups concerned about the rapidly vanishing local traditions in the face of many a factor beyond the control of any singular approach or methods of preservation and revival. Protective approaches can be taken on case-based method having multidimensional remedial, protective and revivalist measures. We propose here one such step, Local Revival—which can support protective initiatives through a visual presentation of the local arts and crafts at different places locally. For instance, for the protection of the terracotta horse of Panchmura of Bankura, West Bengal, local authorities can think of displaying the pictures of the crafts and the famous artisans in institutions like schools, government offices in and around Panchmura. The local population, familiar with the crafts, will come to know its heritage value through a series of visual presentation, which can be just a gallery in the corridor of a building or a road show.

Our educational system based mainly on the Enlightenment paradigm does not attach much value to the marginalized culture and its productions. It teaches a student from an artisan community to look at their own production from an otherly angle. Since there is virtually no provision for allowing a certain amount of respect for the artisan community academically at school levels, students tend to get disconnected from traditional values associated with the crafts. When the crafts are themselves marginalized in real life situation in the age of market economy, the young members of the artisan community find their suspicion of the supposed inferiority of the crafts confirmed. Naturally, the outcome is total aversion to the arts and crafts of their community.

It should be simply acknowledged that just like in art, any craft involves application of acquired skills and individual talent. Such skills need to be respected at very early stage of life, more so in places where the crafts are practised by the artisans. We think even including a chapter or two on local arts and crafts in the school syllabi will contribute to the protective measures.

The first act of recognition must come from the surrounding areas of the place of craft production both from local governmental and public levels. A bond of love for the crafts is to be established among the various sections of the society, which will generate respect for the artisans and pleasure for the people. Such relationship can be beneficial for the artisans who look towards some unknown craft lovers for their recognition and survival. The issue of survival can thus be transformed into the issue of revival.

Editors

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