

Handicrafts in globalisation times: An analysis of craft producers in Andhra Pradesh and rural tourism

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Andhra Pradesh's myriad craft traditions and living craft skills are, generally acknowledged as living links to the past and as a means of preserving cultural meaning into the future. Andhra Pradesh is the treasure of fascinating Handicrafts, each unique in their style, concept, form and expression, that has made a name for themselves the world over. The evolution of design, colour and form embodied in handicrafts is a story of experiment and evolution through centuries, perfected through the passage of time. The estimated number of artisans in Andhra Pradesh is 2.08 Lakhs and the annual production capacity is 570 crores. Though their contribution to the exchequer as well as to the Indian culture presents a rosy picture, an observation of the socio-economic and working conditions of the artisans in the country leaves much to be desired. The paradox of talented artisans living in unrelenting poverty while their products support a flourishing export trade is the result of the complex, diverse, and pervasive problems that affect the crafts sector in India. Some of the problems are related to the changing context of consumption; others to the social and economic problems of craft communities. The objective of the paper is to understand the status of socio-economic and working conditions of artisans engaged in the selected four crafts of Cotton dhurries, Wood carving; Kalamkari printing and stone studded Bangles in Andhra Pradesh and recommend appropriate measures for the preservation of cultural heritage and welfare of artisans.

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