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Media and Handicrafts of Bankura: A Historical Review(1947-2000)

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Abstract: After independence, Central Government, state government, and even various social service institutions came forward to develop handicrafts. At the same time, various Government and private media came forward to promote handicrafts. Among the media that came forward to promote handicrafts were Akashbani Kolkata, Dordarshan Kendra Kolkata, also various newspaper like daily Ganashakti, Annandabazer etc. Through this dissertation I am trying to show how these promotional organizations came forward for the development of handicrafts and how they developed the handicrafts and how they were able to reach the handicrafts to the common people or the handicrafts to the common people am discussing the importance of it.

Key word: Government, handicrafts, various, development, people, etc.

Research questions : Among all the questions that I faced while writing the research paper, which media and electronic media came forward for the development of handicrafts? 2) All these media took some steps to develop the crafts? 3) How did the handicrafts benefit from the adoption of such measures by media ?

Research Methodology: In order to carry out this research work mainly emphasis was given on primary sources. For this reason, initially emphasis was given on field survey, but later it was written on the basis of companion books and contemporary news paper.

Radio : Established in 1927, Calcutta Radio Station became known as all India Radio Akashbani after the independence of India in 1957. 26 different programs were broadcasted through this radio station. In between every Wednesday at 12.35 PM. Calcutta kha, Gitanjali Prachar Taranga, Sribhaban, a program for the self reliance of village women was broadcasted. Through this program, how rural women can be self reliant, how nature artists have become self reliant with achievements and they came into lime light and their various interviews were aired. It was also discussed that artisans can get support from the government in order to become self reliant. For this, they used to collect information from the artisans who participated in various fairs organized by the Government and Sabala mela. These programs were later rebroadcast again¹.

Kolkata Duradarshan:

Calcutta Duradarshan Kendra was established on 9th August 1975. It was earlier known as DD7 and later as DD National Kolkata. Various programs were broadcasted here such as Bibaha Abhiyan, Eta sur Ato Gaan, Madhyamik classes, Ghara Baire etc. Among these programs, the development of rural women and their various activities were shown through outdoor programs. At this event, the handiwork of these female artisans was often demonstrated by bringing the artisans to the studio.

Also Calcutta Doordarshan produced several documentaries based on the socio economic status of the artisans. Through all these documentaries, programs about the craftsmans construction techniques of the time, their socio economic status were broadcasted continuously².

Production of short films on handicrafts and arrangement for their exhibition:

After independence, many short films based on handicrafts were made for development of handicrafts and they were shown to the general public through audiophile organization. All these short films were notable-

Table 1 Short films published by West Bengal Government

Title of short films	Production year
Banglar Madur silpa	1962-63
Doll maker of Krishnanager	1968-69
Kansari	1959-60
Paschimbanglar Gajadanta silpa	1962-63
Puruliar chhow	1969-70
Solar katha	1960-61

Source: Assembly Proceedings official report, west Bengal legislative assembly

,Calcutta,vol.73,No.i,1982,pp.722-726.

All these documentaries were produced by the Govt. of West Bengal on handicrafts and were made available to the general public³. More than fifty such short films were produced by the West Bengal state Govt. post colonial period. From the information obtained, it can be inferred that watching these short films, on the other hand, the common people 's perception about the handicrafts products was developed, on the other hand, there is no doubt that their sales market also increased. At the same time, there is no doubt that the leisure entertainment of the common people was also done by watching these short films.

Organizing various seminars and workshops for the development of handicrafts:

Many seminars and workshops were organized by the Government and privately for the development of handicrafts. The main objective of these seminars and workshops was to highlight and discuss how these problems of handicrafts and discuss how these problems can be solved. All these discussions were significant in cycles-

- 1) 12th July 1983 Amta Ramsaday College, Amta ,Howrah. Minister of Small Industries Department Chittabrata Majumder was present in this round of discussion, on the other hand among the artisans there were mat artisans, Conch shell artisans, leather artisans, sola artisans etc. The main topic of this discussion cycle was the problem of artisans⁴.
- 2) Discussion seminar on the problems of weavers in Bankura district: On April4,1992,a discussion seminar was held on the problems of weavers under the initiative of the central Textile Industry Development Cooperative Society Limited.30 representative of 33 Primary Cooperative Societies, Central Bank President Mr. Ajit Ganguly, Textile Development Officer Sri P.K. Sanyal and Central Textile Development Cooperative Secretary Radhamadan Hens and President Pagal Chandra Das etc attended this seminar⁵.

Organization of art exhibitions and competitions: The West Bengal Cottage and Scale industries Department started organizing competition for the development of handicrafts and encouragement of artisans. The first ,second and third place winners of district and state level were usually awarded in this competition every year. Usually the award winning artisans from the district level participated in the state level art competition.1st, 2nd,and 3rd places owner artisans from the state would participate in national level competition in Delhi and they would be awarded with presidents' Award. However, there is no doubt that through the organization of such competitions, on the one hand, artisans came forward and on the other hand, the development of art was achieved.

Foundation of art museum: After independence ,several steps were taken for the development of handicrafts in this state, one of them was to build a museum. Manjusha, an organization under the Government of West Bengal, established a museum at its head office and showroom in Salt lake, Sector 3,named **Karuangan**. This museum was developed with the art created in this institution from ancient times to modern time. As a result of the creation of this institution, on one hand ,arrangement were made to collect handicrafts made by the state and on the other hand ,the people of the city were able to learn about the handicrafts of Bengal. However, due to the creation of these institutions, it can be assumed that the market for the sale of handicrafts also increased a lot.

Ganashakti bengali news paper:

On January 3 ,1967,the journey of Bengali daily newspaper Ganashakti began. Initially, this magazine had a total of four pages. This newspaper used to publish news on various contemporary issues as well as industrial news. At the same time, various important articles on handicrafts were published in this magazine written by various people. Among the important articles published through this magazine were –

Table 2 **Articles published in Ganashakti ,Magazine**

Article name	writer	Dated
Bankura zilla silper sekal o ekal	Ashis Pande	
Paschimbanger Panchayet o Gram jiboner Rupanter	Prabhat Dutta	31 st march 2000
Bamfront sarkar O Khadi Gramin silpa parshad	Paritosh Chottopadhyay	4 th November 1982
Gramin silpa samparke bhabber katha	Atul Krishna Sinha Maha Patra	10 th January 1980
Khudra o kutir silper samasaya ebong Bamfront sarkarer safalay	Chittabrata Majumder	27 th june 1981

Source: Ganashakti patrika,dated on January 1980-31st march 2000.

Also through this magazine ,advertisement were done on various products to make the handicrafts more attractive to the buyers. Also various advertisements were made by the Government of West Bengal for the development of handicraft products, sometimes to sell the produced materials, sometimes to discuss the products and sometimes to advertise various Government services.

Table 3 Advertisement published in Ganashakti ,Magazine

Advertisement	Advertiser	Dated
Rebate on the occasion of Tant week(2 nd September -8 th September1981)	West Bengal Govt.	1 st September 1981.
Sericulture training	Directorate of Sericulture, West Bengal	
Tender for Canteen room	Paschimbanga khudra silpa Nigam	
Admission in Indian Institute of Handloom technology,Varanashi,1983-84 session	West Bengal Government	15.5.1983
Admission in Malda Vidyapith for sericulture training	West Bengal Government	16.09.1994

Source : Ganashakti patrika, dated on January 1980-31st march 2000.

On the one hand, handicraft products were promoted through the above advertisements, on the other hand, through these daily newspapers, the market for the sale of products produced and the Govt. various grants were promoted. Thus, along with the whole of West Bengal, the artisans of Bankura district were also benefited by the regular reading of these magazine⁶.

Bengali film production: The role of the literature written by private enterprises was also very important in the development of handicraft. Bengali film Silpi were prominent among these literatures. This film was released in 1965 and is a shining example of how the upper casts tried to come together in the face of social change and social division⁷.

Bengali novel: 1) **Dak Banglor Dairy :** Dak Banglor Diary is a Bengali novel written by Subhas Mukhopadhyay and published in Bengali 1372.Through this novel, he had described in detail experience of visiting everything in Bangladesh after independence ,and through this he has described the condition of artisans in Bengal⁸.

- 3) **Rupantar:**This novel was written by Shaktipada Rajguru and through this novel an attempt was made to show how handicrafts had changed in south west Bengal as elsewhere in India.At the same time an attempt was made to show how Bankura ,one of the agrarian districts of South west Bengal, had moved from agrarian economy to Industrial economy.

Limitation: Although the article was written based on the information obtained during the course of this research ,it was not possible to know in detail how much influence these promotional works had on the artisans of Bankura district.

Conclusion: Finally it can be said that there is no doubt that the artisans have benefitted from the adoption of these schemes by the Government and private sector for the development of handicrafts. For example, many new generation artisans got interested in art work after seeing various programs on radio and T.V. Also many artisans were at the peak of their fame fortune as a result of being awarded. As a result, the name of the artisans spread beyond the borders of the country and abroad. There is no doubt that other artisans were subsequently inspired by them.

Notes

¹ Personal interview collection from Ramranjan Das Roy, programme executive Akashbanibhaban dated on 7/6/2022.

² Personal interview collection from Some Hembram, programme executive Kolkata Duradarshan, Kolkata dated on 5/6/2022

³ **Assembly Proceedings official report, west Bengal legislative assembly ,Calcutta,vol.73,No.I,1982,pp.722-726.**

⁴ **Ganashakti patrika, dated on15th July 1983,p.3.**

⁵ Bankura Samabay Sanbad,Bankura,1st Issue ,June 1992.

⁶ **Ganashakti patrika, dated on January 1980-31st march 2000.**

⁷ Bengali movie Shilpi ,Calcutta,in 1965.

⁸ Mukhopadhyay,Subhas,**Dak Banglor Dairy,Calcutta,1372B.S.**

