

Pembarthi Metal Crafts

A CRAFT DOCUMENTATION



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National Institute of Fashion Technology, Hyderabad
Craft Cluster Documentation

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CONTENTS

Introduction Page 8

- Abstracts about the Craft, Project and the Documentation
- Objective
- Methodology
- Chapterisation

History and Patronage Page 10

Present Status Page 12

- Adaptation of the Artisans
- Artisan's Profile
- Pembarthi Village

Process Page 16

- Sheet Embossing
- Casting

Marketing Page 20

- Selling and Promotion
- Products
- Pricing

Conclusion Page 22

- Key Findings

References Page 23

Appendix





Pembarthi Metal Craft is a metal handicraft manufactured in Pembarthi, Telangana State, which is well-known for its sheet metal artworks.

INTRODUCTION





More than 800 years of exquisite sheet metal brass engravings and relics can be found here, in Pembarthi. Pembarthi is a village situated about 80 km from Hyderabad. The region has witnessed glory during the period of the Kakatiya dynasty which had spanned 500 years. Pembarthi has a rich history of outstanding workmanship of the **Metalworkers** or the "**Vishwakarma**".

Sheet metal craftsmanship became famous as a result of its use on the viagra has (statues) and vahanas (chariots) of various Hindu temples. Pembarthi Brassware has retained the vital nuances of both Hindu and Muslim influences over the years, allowing it to mix smoothly into both cultures. The famous Geographical Indication has been bestowed upon the craft form.

Objectives

- The project revolves around aiming to know more about the craft and its rich and varied culture.
- Inculcate insights about Pembarthi metal craft and how it is practised till date.
- To gain interest in the craft regarding the upliftment of the rural india and provide us the means to contribute.

Methodology

We began with researching about the the metal handicraft and pembarthi village. Then we gathered our secondary research through books, and internet this also included our questionnaire. In our Visit to Pembarthi village we interviewed three artisans who have been practicing this handicraft for many years. The artisans' workplaces, their homes, their shops, and other aspects of the village visit were all carefully studied, from the collection of raw materials to the final result. The entire experience was overwhelming looking at how the artisans work in reality knowing the market situation and the after effects of the pandemic.

Chapterisation

The document is divided in six parts starting with introduction about the metal craft then the history followed by the present status of the craft, going ahead to the process which includes collection of raw materials that is pre production to post production. Then comes the marketing techniques which include promotion and sale of the products. The last chapter is the conclusion about the document, ending it with references to everything.

The Origins

HISTORY AND PATRONAGE



Pembarthi Village is known across the world for its brassware, artefacts, metal tools, and everyday goods, as well as **statues, carvings, and castings** created from **copper alloys** such as brass and bronze.

Pembathi Village's Metalworkers, or "Vishwakarmas," have a long history of outstanding craftsmanship dating back to the **Kakatiya Kingdom**'s majesty and glory. This Metal Craft attained the peak of perfection of highest degree of skill which is demonstrated by the master craftsmen.

The rulers of Pembarthi patronised the Vishwakarmas for building temples, making 'Vigrahas' - deity idols, 'Vahanas' - chariots, and other creative accessories of temple sculpture. The exquisite Vigrahas, which are examples of moulded crafts, and the 'Keerthi Mukha', 'Prabha' - Pinnacles, which adorn many notable temples in South India. The beauty and glory of the Kakatiya dynasty gradually gave way to the **Nizam's power**, resulting in a shift in Pembarthi art. As a result, during the Nizam period, the Vishwakarmas created

and crafted household and decorative objects like as Pandans, Nagardans, Itar pots, and Sangardans. The rise of the craft led to an increase in the number of artisans families in Pembarthi who were involved in it at this time. The number of artisan families involved increased to around 600 during this time. Because of the mastery and ability displayed by the craftsmen, the craft has endured political ups and downs as well as natural disasters. Following independence, the craft had a renaissance, resulting in a shift in demand

The origin of Pembarthi Metal Craft dates back to more than 500 years.



toward the creation of utilitarian goods rather than exotic ones.

Many villagers have taken up brass craftsmanship, and their wares are now exported to other countries. Copper and alloys were used to make metal tools and everyday goods before iron was discovered. Later on, the early social-historical ability continued to make art artefacts. Copper alloys such as bronze and brass are still used to create statues, sculptures, and castings. Although the raw material originates from contemporary mines and furnaces, the methods

employed are still ancient and traditional.

In the year 1958, a co-operative society namely ***the Vishwakarma Brass, Copper and Silver Industrial Co-operative Society*** was established to support, strengthen and promote the craft. The craft then got a major boost. The sincere efforts of **Mr. Ayla Achary** in obtaining Government assistance for the promotion of craft enabled it to flourish to its present glory. Presently more than 100 families of craftsmen are involved in making of the Pembarthi Metal Craft.

Pembarthi Metal Craft was accepted under Sub-section (1) of Section 13 of ***Geographical Indications*** of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 in the year 2010.





Adaptation and Modern Changes

PRESENT STATUS

The artisans take part in welfare and awareness programs for the artisans.

100 families are practicing currently, (besides Vishwakarma there are other communities that practice it as well).

Online business is done via Facebook, WhatsApp, promotions via exhibitions.

Adaptation of the Artisans

During different festivals like Muharram, Mr Khalid one of the pembarthi artisans gave us an insight into how he sells products according to that particular festival, and for the rest of the year, they sell trophies, utensils, vases, worship idols.

Presently their main focus is

home decorative items as there is no much demand for brass utensils.

Instead of making devatha designs on some decorative products, they replaced them with other designs such as birds and animal designs so that the products can be purchased by people of different religions and communities and can be sold globally.

Normally the head of the family use to teach their children pembarthi handicraft from the age of 14-18 and then by the age of 24 they use master that skill, whereas now that the time has changed the artisans provide their children with better education facilities for betterment of their future.





ILA SOMA NARASIMHA CHARY

Community: Vishwakarma.

Family Members: Mother, Father, 3 sisters

Work Experience: 30 years

Working hours: 8 to 10hrs

Artisans working under his guidance: Only he and his family craft the products but as he gets more orders he employs other artisans.

How many products does he make in a day?

It takes a lot of time to make a single product, a minimum of 4 to 5 days are required for making a single product. He doesn't make any product in a single day.

Education Level: B.A Degree

— Government has appointed him for training new artisans under 3 months and 5months programs conducted by the government of Telangana.

— He participates in many awareness programs conducted by the government for the welfare of the artisans.

SRI RAMA RAMESH

Community: Mudiraj

Education: 10th HS

Working experience: 15years

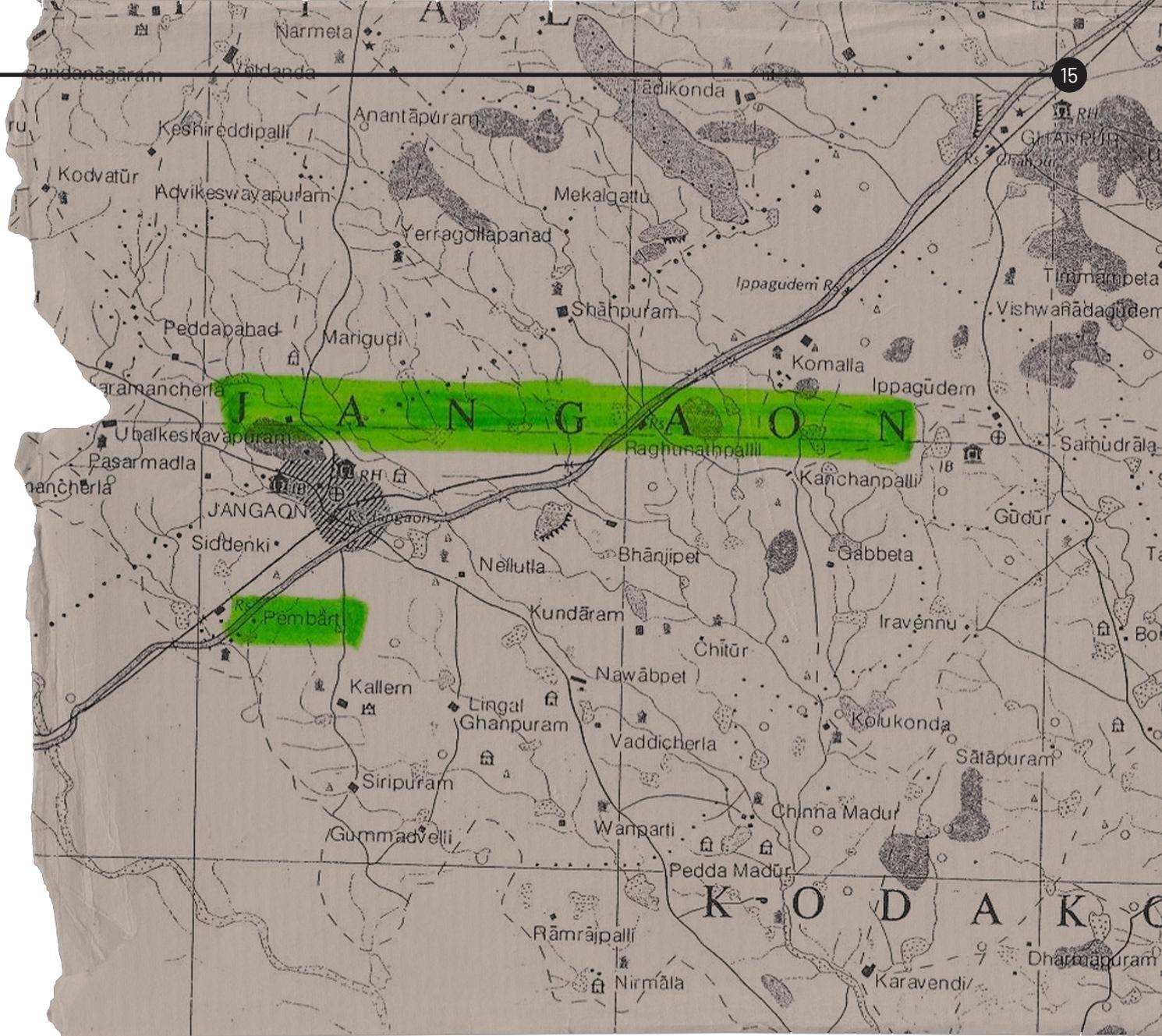
Artisans working under his guidance: no one

(During Interview) Sri Rama Ramesh learned the craft by working under different people. He decided to choose this path because all the people around him knew the craft too.

The major changes in orders for him were how 15 years back they used to get more orders of awards and shields, but now-a-days they get most of the orders related to temple items only.

He revealed that it takes around an average of 2 years to learn the craft. He admits to the work being risky and backpain, eye related problems as a common ailment faced by the craftspeople. As he feels the demand for the craft is decreasing day by day, he expresses his wishes for his children to pursue other jobs.





The Geographical area of production of Pembarthi Metal Crafts lies within the coordinates -

Latitude: 17 degrees, 72 minutes, 0 Seconds North

Longitude: 79 degrees, 18 minutes, 0 Seconds East

Pembarthi Village

Pembarthi, a large and a prosperous village, is situated 86km from Hyderabad towards Warangal in the Jangaon district of Telangana, India. With an area of 1256 hectares, the village holds about a population of 4295 people (2142 male and 2153 female) and 1065 households (2011 Census). With thousands of houses, most of them are made either in stone, or in brick and mortar. Featuring the Sri Bhairagi Jagannadhadas Mutt as a place of religious, historical or archaeological importance, Pembarthi with new advancements has the potential

to become a village of tourist interest in the near-future. Witnessing glory during the period of the Kakatiya dynasty which had spanned 500 years, Pembarthi has a rich history of exquisite workmanship of the Metal Craft workers or the "Vishwakarmas" **locally known as Koncharlos.**

The research document 'Metal Craftsmen of India' by Meera Mukherjee reveals how a hundred families of Pembarthi, consisting of a thousand members, claim their descent from one known ancestor, Pamulu, a finished crafts-man and artisan who had settled in the village years ago.

Stages of Production

PROCESS

Sheet Embossing

Tools and raw material:

- A metal sheet of brass is required to emboss the design on it.
- Lac (Lakka) is spread on the wooden plank that holds the metal sheet and more delicate design surfaces. It is a mixture of Beeswax, resins, castor, mustard oil, brick and dust.
- Chisel (Kila) is required to carve the design on the metal sheet.
- Gas torch burner- needed to melt the lac and join the metal pieces.
- Concentrated Acid (Nitric acid, Sulphuric acid etc.) and tamarind- used to wash the product.
- File and buffer- To smoothen the edges and enhance its lustre.
- Diluted Gum- to stick the design on the metal sheet.



Sheet Embossing/Flat

ornamentation

In this technique, a Brass or copper sheet is cut according to the requirement. Later they shape and fix it on a wooden table with the four sides of the sheet covered with Lac (Lucca). It effectively sets the sheet on a wooden plank or table.

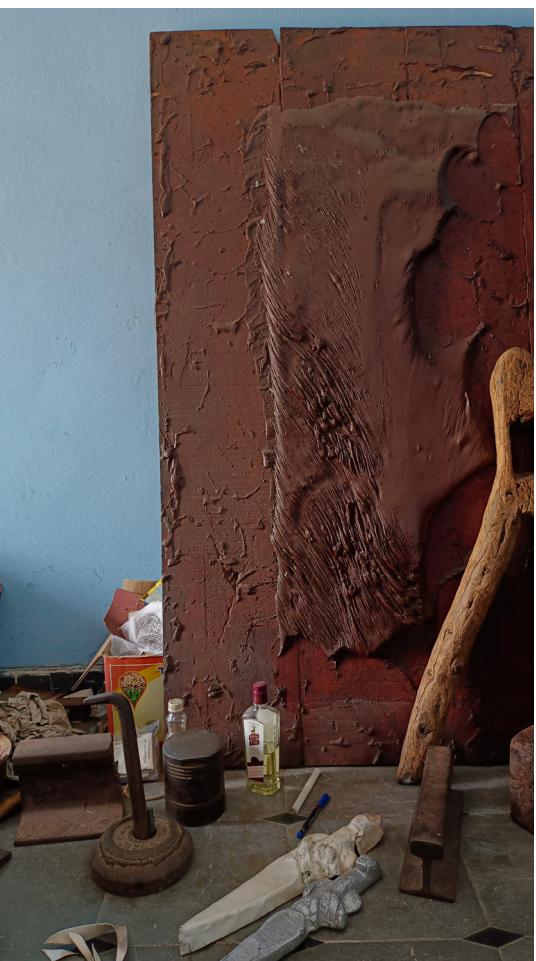
1. The design is drawn on a paper sheet and later pasted on the brass sheet. They are carved on the sheets using fine instruments (chisel and hammer).
2. After carving the basic design, the paper sheet is removed. Lac is heated, and the carved sheet is removed from the plank. Further, delicate carvings are added by hammering the sheet with different shapes and sizes of chisels. Ash powder is used to clean the sheet, and detailed embossing is added respectively. Some parts are designed and embossed individually and later welded together using a gas torch burner.
3. To provide the shine, acid and tamarind are used to wash the embossed sheet. It is later filed to smoothen the edges and buffed to give illumination and lustre to the surface.

Hollow Sheeting

This process is used to make hollow utilitarian or decorative items.

1. In this process, the sheet takes the shape of a hollow container according to the mould of POP used. A4*4 'sheet of brass is taken as the raw material. It is weighed in kilograms and is taken as per the customer requirements. The metal Sheet is measured as per the mould required; An extra two inches of the sheet is also measured.
2. The sheet is beaten with a variety of tools and a hammer to give it a proper shape. It is heated using a blow torch and beaten until the form is achieved. Almost 75% of the work is completed in this stage. It is then washed in the Conc. Acid to clean the surface.
3. The next step is to heat Lak and pour it into the shaped metal. Upon cooling, the desired design is made on the shaped metal as per the artisan's views.
4. The Lak is then heated and removed. Once the product is ready, it is either delivered to the customer or showcased in the showroom.







Casting

It is the process of creating a solid three-dimensional figure by pouring molten metal into a wax mould.

Tools and Raw Materials:

- Puttstmstti (black soil), the box mould is filled with this soil, imprinting the pattern.
- Metal Scraps are required for casting
- Wax model
- Furnace
- Box Mould- a hollow iron container in which black soil is kept
- Concentrated acids like Sulphuric and nitric acids are used to clean the object is obtained after it is solidified
- Chisel (Kila), mallet, file and buffer.

Box casting Technique

1. Firstly, a wax model is placed inside a box container filled with black soil, composed of two halves. The required shape and size are acquired from the impression.
2. The two parts of the box mould are the front and back faces of the model to be made. They are joined using screw picks and notches.
3. Molten brass from scraps is poured into the mould from a hole at the bottom of the wax mould.
4. After the molten brass cools down and solidifies, the wax is melted away, and the figure is obtained.
5. It is then cleaned with concentrated acid and further enhanced with surface design.

Trading and Pricing of the Goods

MARKETING OF THE CRAFTWORK

Selling and Promotion

The Pembarthi Metalworkers get orders through various networks, including **B2B and B2C channels**. Presently, they can easily share and ship the designs to the customers for selection thanks to the internet. Although, most artisans are still not familiar with the online business but are willing to learn and train themselves with the help of various organizations. They take orders from multiple **retail shops, societies, go-betweens** and other commissioned assignments, respectively.

Many artisans take part in various exhibitions as well, which helps them promote their work. Some of the craftsmen have personal shops while the others can display them in the society's showroom. Artisans have a tie-up with the society, a part of the **Telangana Government, Golconda Handicrafts (Lepakshi)**.

A government order issued by the Telangana tourism department ensures that all government orders for brassware products are placed directly to the Pembarthi village to ensure the craft's sustainability. The Vishwakarma society plays a significant part in the processing of orders and money transactions. The

community receives an advance to procure the raw materials and to start the assignment work. The entire amount is transferred upon completion of the work and is distributed amongst the craftsmen associated with the society equally.

Products

The most prominent items sold include temple items like Makaratoranalu statues, panels depicting scenes from the Ramayana & Mahabharata Gitopadesha, Dashavatara scenes, Navagraha & Ashtalakshmi Panels, Utsava Vigrahas etc. Instead of making devata (god) designs on some decorative products, they **replaced them with other designs** such as birds and animal designs so that people of different religions and communities can purchase the products. To attract more customers, they have even started including modern art in some designs instead of traditional designs.

Pricing

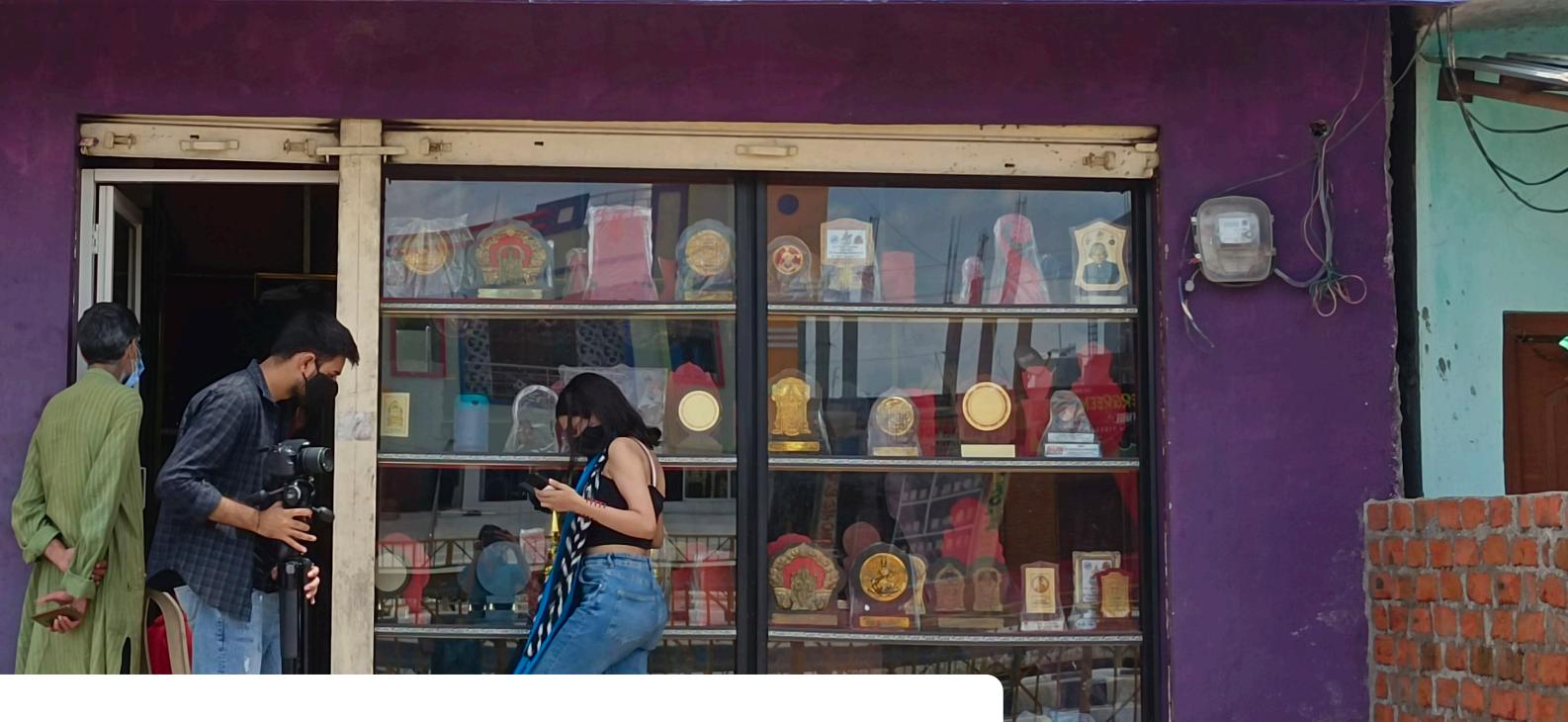
For a traditional design, they charge 75% for the raw material and 25% making charges, and for a customized design, they charge 25% for raw material and 75% making charges.

The raw materials like Brass, copper sheets are purchased from Secundrabad, while silver bars from a nearby retailer later mould them into a sheet.

Jangoan is the nearest place which provides them with all the facilities. Even though the sales of handmade products have increased over the years, many artisans still cannot make a minimum profit.



Artisans need to **work 8-10 hours a day**, according to the consignment.



CONCLUSION

Studying and exploring the craftwork in a team was an interesting experience for all the authors of this research documentation, and it helped aid the holistic learning about **Pembarthi**, its beautiful heritage and handicraft. During this craft documentation cum exploration it became clear that change in the general views of how a handicraft is perceived in the market needs to be changed and merely studying the dynamics of a traditional and/or induced craft cannot help such craft to upgrade its present craft scenario, until and unless its existing potentials and skill sets get fresh interventions with a professional approach. Certain other key findings ascertained during the process of the documentation has been listed below:

Key Findings

- The craft has evolved through hundreds of years of different cultural and religious environments.
- The variation in motifs and design, especially marking of the Kakatiya Kingdom and the Nizam's influence makes the craft diverse, a characteristic of **Bharat** itself.
- With the decline in demand of brass utensils and daily-use items, the craftspeople have been agile and flexible in leaning to the current market demands.
- Given the honour of the G.I. Tag and many government-funded schemes, awareness about the craft and welfare of the artisans is being emphasized and tended to.
- As production is slow, with a single product taking 4-5 days to finish and low number of artisans with the requisite knowledge, the business of the craftwork is fiscally unprofitable.
- Even though the present craftspeople are eager to learn about the new ways of selling, including social media and the internet, only a few can navigate through them, stranding the goods of its potential reach.
- The legacy of the craftwork is also in decline in lieu of newer generations finding better financial prospects and avoiding the health risks the craft may accompany.



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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

1. Do you have any difficulty to find out skilled staff?
2. Do you follow labour legislation?
3. What are the basic problems faced by you in terms of labour and production?
4. Where do you get your raw materials from?
5. What are your quality control and feedback methods?
6. Where do you sell your products?
7. How do you sell your products?
8. Availability of raw materials: Very conveniently/ Interrupted/Conveniently/ Worst/ Manageable
9. Quality of raw materials available: Fine/ Average/ Poor
10. Prices paid for the raw materials: Very high/Moderately less/ Moderately high/ Very less
11. Do you have an inventory control system? Yes/No
12. 5. Do you have wastage (of any kind) problem in term of raw materials? Yes/No
13. If yes, what percentage of raw material counts for wastage %? Wastage reasons:
 - (1) Lack of workers knowledge
 - (2) Change in standard of quality
 - (3) Often break-down of tools/machinery
 - (4) Any other (please specify)
14. What are the major problems, in terms of raw materials faced by your unit?
15. In the last five years, have there been any changes in your product (line). If yes please mention the nature of change.
16. Has this change resulted in? Higher market price/ Increased sales
17. How do you carry out promotional activities?
18. Do you export your product?
19. What are your future plans?
20. What are your comments about the present system of financial assistance?
21. Which policies of the government are most favorable to your performance and growth?
22. Which of the goverment policies adversely affect your performance?
23. In which areas, in your view, the government should contribute for the progress of your industry?
25. How many artisans work under your guidance? 0-10/ 10-20/ 20-30/ More than 30
26. How many products do artisans make in a day?
27. Which product is the most demanded for?
28. How many hours do your artisans work in a day?
29. How did Pandemic affect your craft?
30. What's one way to identify Pembarthi artifacts from other competitors available in the market?

FASHION COMMUNICATION SEMESTER V PROJECT

Pembarthi Metal Crafts

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