

## **Jadupatias in the Aesthetics of the Craft of Jewellery**

### **Long Abstract**

The Jadupatias is an obscure community in Jharkhand, India, who engage in the dokra jewellery making. The aesthetics of brass jewellery are not just based on the aspect of 'charm'. But there is a larger social construction of its aesthetics of making. It is based on their own environment, the materials they procure from their environment and other secular and non- secular agencies. Family, religion, markets (both local and global) and intervention from the government and non government agencies construct the aesthetic of production, and in turn this constitute their larger social world of interaction which involves and includes the petty businessmen to whom they sell their products, the customers and the artists and the designers with whom they come in contact while in training camp.

But, it's sad that they have forgotten their own stories and songs that constituted the aesthetic of jewellery making earlier, as it has been largely replaced by the songs and stories on the transistors that play in the background. The issue is not that whether the folk songs or stories can always make a claim for their moralistic and superior status over the products of culture industries. But, what was part of their production will never be told or reproduced. Thus the paper would address the role of these agencies that construct the aesthetics of craft which have multiple relationships with art. Also, it would delineate how the community attitude changes towards various agencies which construct the aesthetics of making and their larger social world.

### **Short Abstract**

The aesthetics of brass jewellery of Jadupatias of Jharkhand are not merely about 'charm' but about the agencies that cobble up the making of it and the community. It includes the various social agencies and cultural elements that construct the aesthetics of the craft which have multiple relationships with art. The whole ensemble of such myriad interactions in a matrix of agencies constructing the aesthetics of the craft is what will be on the pedestal in the current study.

## **The Approach**

Contrary to the recent anthropological analysis by Soumya Venkateshan (2009) on craft in the context of India and Gell's (1998) analysis of art, the approach would be an attempt much nearer to the discipline of humanity rather than to a task fulfilling the expectations of a rigorous science. Yet, it would be heavily drawing from the methods and knowledge from the human science of 'interpretation', which is essentially a part of social sciences. Unlike a 'detached analysis' of anthropology-'the science of man', it will be an attempt towards an 'engaged reflexive appraisal'.

Through the path breaking works of Latour(2012) and others, we have expanded the notion of 'social' and 'culture' to the species other than human beings and the inanimate things(such as material things) with which we are in relationship with. Although, this notion of 'interconnectedness' is very much implicit in the wisdom of the Upanishadic and Buddhist texts, our scientific rationality is still in search for a more convincing exposition of this notion. I have nothing against such efforts because they are only in the direction towards exploring the practices for ecological conservation and ultimately towards humanity. But, on a daily basis when we are merely operating under a mirage of post modern situation where an issue of good, truth and beauty becomes a non-issue by either appropriation of a Science or an Art, then I am wary about this utter confusion. Gardener in his recent book has refuted this unwanted confusion and has asserted that the notion of good, beauty and truth will always be relevant beyond the post modern din (Gardener, 2011). Therefore, the over-emphasis of 'interconnection' between different species just in the name of diversity also tends to lose a direct addressal of the issues of humanity. This emphasis is then more of an excuse for ignoring our suffering fellow beings in the name of the mere material progress. And here, I agree with Latour (ibid), that Science and Technology cannot be just understood from a mere "progress" mode. The issues of ecological diversity cannot be just addressed in the name of a rigorous detached Science or merely through the assertion of detached aesthetic experiences of Art. We have to address the issues of humanity very directly. Perhaps, it may sound scandalous for art and sciences in the context of their commitment for "disinterestedness", but it can be invoked through our moral practices of Art and Sciences. By moral practices of Art and Sciences, I mean their wisdom to be translated in our daily practices. E.g.; we may not agree with everyone, but we have a duty to protect others' right to the freedom of expression. Similarly, it is absurd that we may not be even having time to say hello to our own friends who must be living just few paces down our own place of living and we are enthusiastic to delve into the so called intimate relationship that we have with the other species and the inanimate things in our life. But, then we know what our treatment towards the other species often comes to be. Since human beings do not resort to cannibalism, they often end

up in a relationship of power-which is either of benevolence or of a despot under the skin of benevolence.

True, Art or Sciences may not have to do with morality directly but they cannot evade the issues pertaining to it. In the cacophony of the multiple voices of the Post modern din, the voice of Indian philosopher Hirayana is still vital “Art should not have a moral aim, but most necessarily have a moral view, if it should fulfill its true purpose” (Hiriyanna, 1930). Therefore, the significance of nature of relationship between human and human can never become anachronistic. And though anthropology is not a discipline of humanity, its core concerns are the issues centered on humans. So, my focus would be emerging out of this concern to explore the nature of relationship between people and people, although the study will not be unmindful of human’s relationship with their surroundings.

I do not deny with the general observations made by Venkatesan(ibid) on craft in the context of India. In her analysis, she tries to capture the multiple images and word pictures by which the trope of craft is constructed and used in development. She further argues, that to seek an essential meaning or description of the craft or craft production would be denying of the other powerful descriptions that produce different kinds of actions from different kinds of agencies. I do not wish to differ either from this point of view. But, in the case of Jadupatias, I would particularly focus on the everyday aesthetics with which they are associated with respect to their work, their environment, their community and the larger relationship that they are in with the other agencies such as the government agencies and the non-government agencies.

## **The Jadupatias**

The Jadupatias say “we have got the name from the government and the people have also known us by this name only”. Explorations in anthropology about the role of the state in the construction of a community on the basis of the craft or the profession that they specialize in are not something new. The fact can be traced through the government archives. However, what is significant is that, the moral political aim behind the naming of a community is to construct an aesthetic for the community. The literal meaning of Jadupatias is ‘the magic packers’. According to them, “we have derived our name from the work itself”. The work is characterized by an act of concealment where they pack the brass metal in a clay mould followed by an act of revelation where the coming of the being of the product is not visible through the eyes.

However, the Jadupatias do not think that there is anything magical in their work. They are well aware that their work is not enchanting. Yet, there is a tinge of narration when they explain about their work and its connection with the magic. Thus, they distinctively remember about a master craftsman called as *Chitpagla* who used to tell a lot of stories in relation to their work and other affairs of their life. However, they have forgotten those stories and songs. So, it is not clear, whether the aspect of magic had an inbuilt presence in their stories and got recognition by the

government to identify them with this name or it was initially the government's initiative to name them in such a way as the feature of concealment and revelation is very much inbuilt in their work. And this got readily accepted by the community and later got romanticized. However, this romance does not exist any more amongst them.

While explaining about their work, they simultaneously and confusingly use the words *abhas* (intuition) and *andaz* (estimate) with which they add metal to the mould in which the design of the jewellery is embossed. The word *abhas* has a dimension of mystery than *andaz* which has an empirical connotation more nearer to the hit and trial method. Thus, even though the romance is not there because there is no such great mystery to be discovered, the word *abhas* alludes to it. But, the estimation is not as 'rough' as it may sound because they often weigh the metal before putting it in the clay mould.

So, while there is always a mystery associated with a work of art, science provides an explanation behind this mystery. According to Gell (ibid), the anthropological explanation about the work of art is about the relationship in which its makers and receivers are with each other, rather than the aesthetic theories of art. The makers tend to leave a cognitive incommensurable impact on its viewers, thus causing awe in him. The Jadupatias know that there is nothing awesome in their work. Their work can only draw some kind of 'patronage' or occasionally a 'reward' from the government and the development agencies, or utmost the work can draw a 'charm' from the customer.

Yet, they continue with their work because that is the only chief means of their livelihood that they have been carrying out since time immemorial. True, they do not have many choices because they are poor and marginalized living in a rural setup. They have their own anxiety about the market, about what will sell and what will not sell, education for their children, etc. Yet, they immerse themselves in the life and the work of which they are composed. Here, I neither seek to create any kind of nostalgia by the description about their work nor wish to romanticize their way of living. Further, nor can I afford to go native like Elwin<sup>1</sup> did in his effort to know the 'tribal way of life' in India; nor would it be appropriate to assert like

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<sup>1</sup> Verrier Elwin was a missionary who lived amongst the tribes of Central India. Though not formally trained in anthropology he wrote passionately about the tribal life of the different parts of the country and influenced the policies of post colonial India. In contrast to the detached approaches of the contemporary practicing anthropologists, his writing was passionate and drew a lot of criticism from the certain sections of the academia. E.g., see, Guha (2007). Also see Elwin (1951, 1954, 1973, 1988, 2009)

Coomaraswamy<sup>2</sup> and Morris<sup>3</sup> about the craft in its pristine past. But why not to seek to learn from the attitude behind the ‘craft’? Is there any reason?

Gell argues that there is a technical base to all social relationship. But the technical dimension of the relationship has always been ignored. Therefore, he explores this dimension in the logic that the lag in return of the gift is strategically maintained to have sounder and long lasting effect in the relationship (Gell, 1999). No doubt, Craft involves manipulation of material things with mind and body both at action. But is this manipulation also an integral part in the sphere of relationship? Is ‘craftiness’ also an aspect of the craft? It is surely not an essential aspect or worthy aspect to deliberate upon. Yet, there has been attempt to consider it as one of the possible meanings in the context of craft (especially in the context of India (Venkateshan, 2009)).

Unlike the craftsmen, who can be doubted for their ‘craftiness’, the Jadupatias must be excused from this category. But, they have got a taste of it in the recent past-not only in their relationship with the materials that they use, but also in the relationship in which they are in with the other agents. The experience is not just of ‘push and pull’ but of bitter taste in their relationship with these agents. Still, that shouldn’t constitute sufficient reasons for disillusionment with the word ‘craft’. True, craftsmen are not themselves homogeneous communities. True, there are some who are well off than their fellowmen. They have individual agencies through which they garner the benefits issued by the agencies in their own favor, rather than allow the entire community to have the benefits (Venkatesan, *ibid*). Yet, this cannot be the reason enough to become an unromantic being with respect to craft because some craftsmen act with trickery and laziness. Similarly, there is no reason to subject the sector of craft in India every time to a dissection by rigorous analysis. Yet, there is a necessity to have an appraisal in the absence of confusion created by the Post Modern din.

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<sup>2</sup> Coomaraswamy was a nationalist intellectual who was greatly influenced by the art and craft movement in nineteenth century England. He wrote passionately against the degradation of quality of Indian handicrafts and its rejection by the new bourgeois class at the cost of mill made clothes. (See Coomaraswamy, 1909)

<sup>3</sup> William Morris was a pioneer of art and craft movement in England and was one of the prominent advocates of socialist ideology of time. (See Morris, 1889)

**Fig.1 Dumka (in red), Jharkhand, India**



Though an obscure craft community, the Jadupatias exists in the present times. They are specialized in dokra jewellery making and reside in small hamlets of Jagudih and Jaivardaha in the district of Dumka in the north eastern border of the state bordering West Bengal. The dhokra (also known as *cire perdue*, or *lost wax technique*) craft is considered as one of the oldest metal casting craft of India practiced by some of the oldest communities- such as the karmakars of Bankura and Dariapur in Bengal, Kaser and Ghadwa of Bastar in

Madhya Pradesh and many other communities who have different names in the tribal regions of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand etc. (Kochar, 2011; Smith & Kochar, 2002). The Jadupatias about whom we know and who have been mostly accounted and written about are basically the scroll painters or the chitrakars who live along with the Santhal tribes (See, e.g., Hadders, 2002). But there are no writings on the Jadupatias who are specialized in the dokra jewellery making.



The Jadupatias exist in their rural environment with dense forest and fields around them from which they still procure some of their materials- such as clay and the husks of the grain. In the earlier studies on dhokra workers, it has been mentioned that historically the work was mostly carried by the people of forests who used to wander off into distant places in the forest, and have been, for a long period, procuring most of the materials from the forests itself, such as wood, dhuma, brass metal, etc.

However, it cannot be denied that there has been a huge change in the relationship of production. The materials and the technical base of the dhokra craft production has also changed in a significant way. Coal has replaced the wood and the other materials are mainly procured from the nearby market of the Dumka city which is 28 km from both the places where they reside. The dhuman and wax are melted together to get a molten mixture from which they prepare thin malleable shreds. Dhuman adds malleability to the wax and thus it can be twisted and given variety of shapes. The thin shreds are then used to make designs directly on the clay mould. They have been using coal in the recent times but earlier they used to draw woods from the forest. But, due to deforestation- a fact that they themselves acknowledge- they have stopped using wood for

their craft. Thus, their dependence on wood has been largely reduced to cooking purpose for which they collect dry woods from the forest instead of directly cutting them down.

Young Jadupatias assert that they have resorted to coal because the forests have become sparser; but the older generation claims that the coal is more expensive and everything now has to be bought. In their own words- “We are not Naxalites<sup>4</sup>. We dare not violate the rules. We understand that the forests are to be conserved. We have been staying here since time immemorial and have been using forest products. We understand our habitat much better. But where are the officials? They themselves fear dense jungle, wild animals and above all the Naxalites. We ourselves have to chase out the wild elephants if they lose their way to our villages. We don’t even get a warning from them but it is we the people who remain watchful”.

Though the Jadupatias continue to live in this habitat of dense forests, wide fields and few livestock and lands of their own, they are primarily known by their co-habiting communities as the ones who are specialized in brass work and provide those things to them (their co-habiting communities). The things are either of utility or for aesthetic significance. For e.g. -while *paila* (Fig.2) is used for measuring roasted rice, *ghungroo* (Fig.3) and *paijania* are donned by the tribes



**Fig.2 paila**



**Fig.3 ghungroo**

during the time of marriage and festivals. Though, the Jadupatias still make the things that the tribes and other communities have been traditionally using, its production is less in comparison

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<sup>4</sup> Naxalites are the faction of the communist ideology in India who believes in violence to show their remonstrance against the state. The Naxalite group are said to be operating from the forest region of the eleven states in the country. Dumka is one of the districts infested with naxalism.

to the new decorative items that are sold in the markets at distant places and have a much wider range of customers with the greater connectivity to the market. The traditional exchange system known as Jajmani<sup>5</sup> system of Indian villages does not exist here any more because the transaction is purely monetary.

They have a great awe for the Santhal tribes' marriages because that is quite different from their own customs. In their own words "it is a lot of fun to watch their marriage. It happens in open field. The bride is lifted on the shoulders of her relatives and brought to the site of marriage". Similarly, they stand in awe for the markets in the big cities. I quote one of them "We often visit the markets in Santiniketan and Kolkata, but once invitation came from Delhi to showcase our products and we earned a lot of appreciation beside the money. But the city is too big. Once I almost got lost but somehow retraced my way to the Craft Museum". Though they often visit nearby markets in the towns of Jharkhand, the markets are disappointing for them because the customers there are not so fond of craft objects. Though, the Jadupatias know that there is nothing awesome in the processes of manufacturing the dhokra jewellery, they engage with the work in their hand. This engagement is not just for the sake of engagement because they do not have many choices. But, because they exist in a social world which is constituted by their environment, other people and markets which are a source for their inspiration. Thus, one of the Jadupatias, when he saw a mobile stand in one of the shops of the nearby market cried out of joy- "idea!" This was a 'eureka' moment for him as the idea struck him that he can translate the same into his work. The work exists because there is a platform (market) for exchange and there are people who conduct this exchange. There is nothing extraordinary art based aesthetic experience but the charm exists in their everyday mundane life



Manipulation of materials in new ways and use of new technology are expected to enrich the relationship between the craft agencies and craftsmen but they are always built in a complicated way. I do not disagree with Venkateshan (ibid) in this regard. But, unlike the Pattamadai craftsmen who work in a cooperative competition and are very actively involved with the NGOs, Jadupatias are only occasionally called to the training camps and their visits to the bigger cities have also been comparatively much less. It is

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<sup>5</sup> Jajmani was an old system of exchange between the patrons and clients in rural India which has been defined differently by different sociologist. See for an elaborate discussion in: Wiser(1936), Gould(1958, 1964), Gough(1960)



also true that a few Jadupatias are doing better than others. But they are the ones who continued with their occupation and hence received a consistent support. Few others who left the work in the time of crisis re-joined it as they could see the assistance coming to them. But many remains outside its purview and either are working as an agricultural labourer or are working as unorganized labor forces in the towns. Over the years, there has been modification of the *bhatti* (the furnace) on which they manufacture the jewellery. One of the old Jadupatias told me that in his grandfather's time it used to be leather *bhatti*. In his words "it was much smaller than what you see today. It used to take a lot of time in catching the fire...burning slowly- *dhpus-dhpus* and before it could have started blazing and was suitable for the cast to be put into it, it had to be constantly attended. After that came Bolero machine. It was relatively comfortable but still it required constant manual labor to keep it working". Then coal *bhatti* was introduced. He proceeded-"It was initially small in size but once an officer came and took note of it. Later he came with the solution and made an arrangement so that we could be taught how to make the bigger one. Now it is much comfortable than earlier two versions and we are able to save our time from drudgery." Thus in the past 10-15 years there has been greater involvement of the government agencies helping them to develop the designs and tools so that they can fulfill the urban taste. Technologies have also evolved through the interventions of these agencies. Thus technology and social relationships are mutually built up and one can surely not make an artificial distinction between the two. But one has to agree that these technologies are neither flashy nor very complicated but are often accepted on the basis of their feasibility factors.

However, the Jadupatias have one genuine complaint. To give their products a shiny and smooth look, they need to buy the finishing machine which is used by the other dhokra workers of the other states. But they could not buy it because the electricity has not yet reached up to their villages. Though there are certain niche customers who like the brazen metal in its raw form that give it a rustic look, many prefer the finished ones. Thus, they have no option than to sell their products at lower costs to the jewellery makers at Santiniketan. They call them as *Vyapari*--means the businessman--and not craftsmen--who provide finishes to the products by the help of machine and do the final assemblage. But, the so called *Vyapari* are the ones who themselves are in the craft of assemblage and operate as petty businessmen.

Thus, with the change of times, they have been themselves adapting with the materials that are more easily available, economical and are simultaneously adapting the techniques that are more viable and suitable. Over the years, their dependence on the natural products has come down to a greater extent but they haven't severed themselves from their natural environment. Though they look forward for the new facilities and new techniques where other co-craftsmen have edge over them, they are often deprived because of the lack of infrastructure, poor administration and lackadaisical approach of the state government.

The work of dhokra jewellery involves elaborate processes that cannot be done in one go. It involves a number of steps (see Fig. as below in the following order) - core preparation (1),

design making (2a 2b), further addition of clay (3) and preparation of small bunches of mould (4), joining of the small bunches into bigger cast (5), preparation of fire on *bhatti* (6), addition of metal in the cast to be put on *bhatti* (7), breaking of cast (8), separation of the products from the bunches (9) and removal of burnt ashes of clay from the products (10). These processes are to be followed in steps and even if the steps may not hold great enthusiasm for the craftsmen, their animated body and deftly moving hands declare about the steps in which they are engaged. The clay (a mixture of black and red soil) is obtained from the fields and is mixed with paddy-husk and cow-dung to prepare the clay dough. The act of preparation of dough requires an intensive labour but the Jadupatias do not complaint about it. Their hands soaked in clay and water deftly prepares the dough and tells about their earthly association. The manipulability of the clay help them to play with the dough and give it the required shape which become the base on which the design is embossed. Similarly it is the malleability of the wax that helps them to set up the design pattern on it. The designs are not done with an aim to cause any kind of cognitive incommensurability that Gell (1999) argues for the work of art. It is rather something identifiable which they learn at the training centre, improvise and can utmost cause 'charm' for the people. Thus each process has its own aesthetic.





At this juncture, I would just deal with one of the processes which reinforce the role of the attendant, who is none other than the wife of the craftsman. The process of taking out of thin malleable shreds from the molten mixture of *dhuma* and wax involve two people. In a nuclear family set up, it is generally the wife who plays a significant role in separating the molten shreds that are pushed out by the husband from a tool called *jaat chungi*. The work is thus a family affair within the household and strengthens the emotional bond between the husband and wife and constructs an aesthetic of togetherness and respect for the attendant.

Also, the place where a woman is married outside the occupation in the community, there is a possibility about sharing of knowledge of craft when the family in which she is married is not engaged in the craft. Thus, the women have played significant role in carrying forward the craft. But most of the time they are engaged in the other domestic chores as well. So their participation in the work of craft is little as compared to the male folks, but not insignificant. Though they



actively support the men in the activities such as preparing of the viscose mixture of wax and dhuman, embossing of the designs directly on the moulds, removal of ashes from the products etc., their participation at the bhatti is certainly of no less significance. This is more so especially when the red-hot casts are to be pulled out from the bhatti; they have to pour water on it to allow it to cool and then help the men folk in removal of the ashes. They may not be always the



protagonist(s) in the act of making but they have to ably fulfill the role of an attendant/ accompanist without which the work would be messy.



One can further relate the role of women in this occupation with the story of the master craftsman that one of the Jadupatias narrated: “Chitpagala was a person of great joy but he had a deep anguish. His first wife left him without offering him any explanation. He had a strong sense of justice and therefore he wanted to get to the bottom of the issue before he proceeded for the second marriage. However, he is remembered by the Jadupatias with love and humour as *Chitpagla*<sup>6</sup> because he called the Panchayat in another village instead of his own and got the verdict in his favour only after draining out a lot of his money. Yet his nick-name draws a lot of respect from us for his sense of justice and above all for his artistic craftsmanship and witty

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<sup>6</sup> The most nearest meaning of the term would be as one who does not believe in the hardheaded solution to the problems. It is used as an adjective which has positive connotation in the Indo-Aryan languages. It is more an epithet than a derogatory adjective.

stories that he always had to offer”. This narrative has an allusion towards their occupation that demands mutual dependence between husband and wife and this play an important role in the construction of emotional attachment between the two and in turn the aesthetic of production.

Before marriage the dependence can be on other members of the family, but once the boy is married and forms his separate house then dependence becomes inevitable. However, the breaking of family does not mean total severance. The nuclear families may be cooking on different hearth but they happen to maintain a ‘degree of jointness’ either by the land that they collectively own, or the parents’ house or things of daily need that they often exchange with one another living in the same village or in many cases just in the neighborhood.

Similarly, worshiping of tools and furnace by the Jadupatias occupies a major place in constructing the aesthetic of jewellery making. The Jadupatias are followers of Islam but they are not particular about offering of daily prayers like devout Muslims. Though they celebrate the main festivals of Islam, they also offer prayers to the tools, materials and bhatti used in the jewellery making. This prayer is offered on the day when Hindu craftsmen worship Viswakarma – the lord of tools and the lord of creation. Further on the ninth day (navmi) of Durga Puja, they again offer prayers and offer sacrifice to the bhatti. In accordance with Islam, the Jadupatias are not idol worshipper but they offer prayer to the bhatti- also known as ‘bhatti-puja’ amongst them-in belief that once or twice a year it must happen otherwise they won’t be able to run the bhatti and hence their livelihood. The tools and materials are thus very important for the craftsmen and they want to be assured that there never happens a scarcity.

Most of the craftsmen who are Hindu trace their origin from Viswakarma and call themselves as Viswakarma’s child. There are many legends associated with regard to it but in the case of Jadupatias there are no such legends. Moreover, there is no tradition in mainstream Islam where there is a worship of the tools of the craftsmen. Therefore, this influence can be largely seen in the context of the other Hindu craftsmen community with whom they live and co-exist. The prayers are self conducted without any involvement by an officiating priest. Further, it does not involve any elaborate rituals. The materials used in the making of the jewellery, the tools and bhatti are considered as sacred. The prayer is offered to these things by sacrificing a cock. Before sacrificing it, they make it to eat some grains. If the cock refuses to have the grains, then they are wary of sacrificing it and fear, as a bad omen, some untoward incident in the business. Their belief is thus guided by a rationality that the tools and materials are sacred and hence to be offered prayers and sacrifice. Thus, the worship seems to be driven more towards the moral aesthetic value of ensuring the availability of materials, better operation of tools etc. than its ritualistic value. This aesthetic is guided by the tradition of doing the same occupation since generations that seems to have been ingrained in them as mental and habitual disposition

The political moral economy within which craft operates has its own aesthetics-of empowerment, continuity of tradition and the spirit of craftsmanship. Market has become a

major institution in determining the aesthetic standards. Religion and family are incidental but never can be insignificant to the formation of the aesthetic values. Yet, within this political moral economy operates the *unaesthetic* game of deception, tall promises and poor accountability. Gell (1999) argues that there is a technical dimension to the relationships. According to him, there is material manipulation through which work of art is produced and so there is technical dimension to the relationship through which the various agents ensure that an effective transaction is carried out between them. In this regard he provides logic about the delay in gift exchange that is strategically done to have more effective transaction and ensure a long term relationship. I do not wish to disagree with him. In fact, much before this Marx (1968) provided a nuanced explanation of correspondence between relationship of production and forces of production. But, I am wary about the overemphasis and mechanical explanation to this fact. No doubt, the relationship between the craft agents or the government agents and the craftsmen are technically built through policies. However, it surely must not be built to allow gaps for the agents to misuse it and hence become an unscrupulous agent itself. The craft then becomes an act of trickery or craftiness.

Like any other events that have been held in India in the recent past, the National Games held in the state also seem to have been a site of corruption. The Jadupatias did not fail to narrate their recent sour experience of deception from the official who promised them of the good returns from the sponsorship of the games. I narrate some of their experiences “We were invited to make medals and other brass products for the games in the last moment of rush, as has been the characteristics of all such games in India. There was paucity of time and they needed as many hands as possible. Though we were called in the name of state honor, we were clubbed in an ugly competition with the craftsmen of the other states”. In the name of games and state-honor, the Jadupatias were deceived. Another Jadupatias added “We were promised that we would share the credit in making the Games successful but we didn’t even get the opportunity to watch the games. And, when it came to pay back us what was promised, we were deprived of the return fare to our home”. They not only incurred loss but their trust in the bureaucratic processes has also been shaken badly. This was effectively expressed by them in these words “I feel a lot of angst against them when these officers tell lie. What is the need for all those promises?”

The moral political economy of craft is to sustain the age old tradition of the country. The people who continue with this tradition are supposed to be the beneficiaries of government policies but the benefits do not often percolate in the desired form. The Jadupatias are not just victim of unscrupulous agents but are also trapped at the amoral junction of the so called ‘moral economy’ as well as the ‘amoral economy’. Thus the Jadupatias narrates “We take loan from the *Mahajan*. We are fed up doing rounds of banks and visiting the officials. They want papers and proof. From where would we produce the same? What is with us is always insufficient for them.” This unpacks a clear cut dysfunctional aspect of the government policies and a lack of flexibility in the loan system of the bank. Thus, although the interest rate at which the craftsmen have to pay back the returns to the *Mahajan* is much higher than what is quoted by banks, they prefer to

borrow from Mahajan. They are very sure in this way to get the money in hand, rather than to do the endless rounds of the government offices. The internal village system seems to be much intact than the government initiatives which are often skewed and hence draw a rejection from the craftsmen.

The Jadupatias live in the tribal belt and have been living along with the tribes since time immemorial. They were most probably named by the government's initiatives to identify them with the occupation they have been doing since generations and to promote their craft. But they do not draw any benefits of protective discrimination policy of the state that are shaped by the provisions enshrined in the Constitution of India. The Constitution identifies the backward classes as one who have been culturally and socially backward but economic condition is not a criterion. I don't intend to counter the logic behind this provision. But what is clear is that the Jadupatias have only been promoted on the basis of their occupations (craft). On the top of this, although they are in minority in this part of the country and in the state at large, their status is in doldrums.

## **Recapitulation**

No doubt, the craftsmen who may not seem to be having much choice than to participate within this construction of the aesthetic values have their own agencies of negotiations and decisions. But they derive their aesthetic experiences in the mundane everyday affairs of life in the processes of production of the craft, their participation in the local *haat* and distant market, their relationship with the other agencies with which they come in contact and the other kinds of secondary occupations which constitute their way of living. The development agencies operate on a value loaded term- 'development'. The development agents are expected to deliver on this term but sometimes slack down to their own inefficiency and laxity. The Jadupatias have been drawing benefits through their efforts but have been recently at the receiving ends due to the unscrupulousness on their part. They have forgotten their songs and stories, and no single causal factors can be attributed for this extinction. It has been largely replaced by the songs and stories on the transistors that play in the background. Therefore the issue is not that whether the folk songs or stories can always claim for their moralistic and superior status over the products of culture industries. But, what was part of their production will never be told or reproduced. Yet, I have a hope when I see the posters of an orchestra group of Santhals promising for a vibrant evening. No doubt, the Jadupatias have their own anxiety about the money, market and their own well being but they do not stop participating with the limited space of possibilities offered by life. They do not quit the life they subsist on simply because it is full of many hardships and uncertainties.



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