

Role of Craft & Technology in Interior-Architecture

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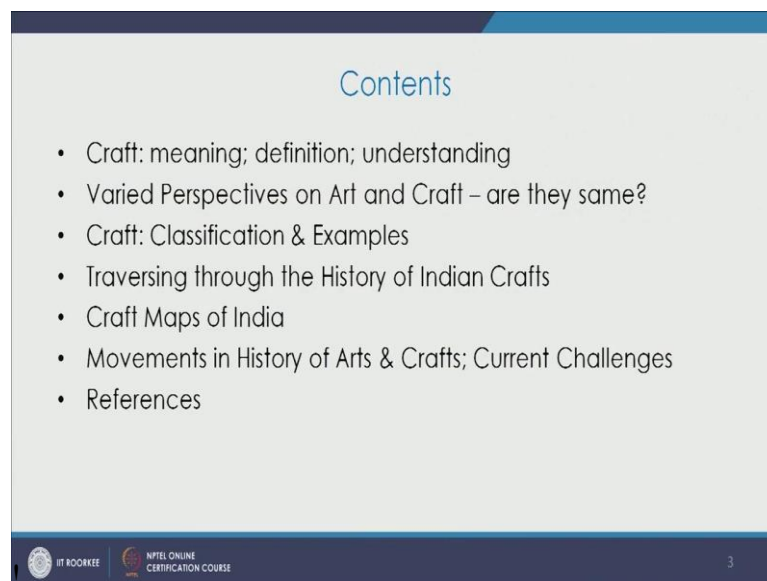
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee

Lecture – 02

Craft: Definition and Understanding (Varied Perspectives on Art and Craft)

Hello everyone. Today we will have the next module of the course Role of Craft and Technology in Interior-Architecture. This is module 2 and it deals with craft what is its definition, what do we understand from this term, and what are the varied perspectives on art and craft, are they the same things they are different, let us just see. So, the contents for this module today we start with craft – meaning, definition, understanding.

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Varied perspectives on art and craft, craft - classification and examples; Then we will traverse a little bit through the history of Indian crafts. We will also have a look at craft maps of India. Then few movements in history of arts and crafts what are the current challenges that we face and then few references.

So, what is craft? It is not a very easy term and it is not yet difficult it is just that sometimes we do not observe or we do not put things around us in proper words. So, lot of people use art for craft, craft for art and lot of us might not even know what exactly craft is all about. So, to understand this term, because it is very important for a course like this where one of the nodes is craft and technology, we need to understand what is craft.

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Now, this is where infographic that I had prepared if we see this closely and I will stay on the slide for a while, so that everybody can have a closer look. This clearly shows that craft has been the centre of many socially driven initiatives, it has enjoyed an extraordinary locus when we talk about the fields of design, visual art, architecture.

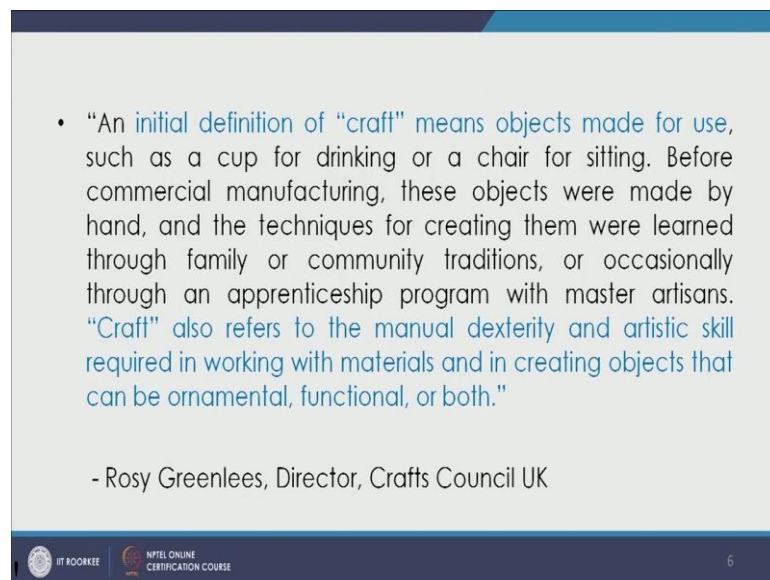
So, if we see craft, craft could be associated to so many things with surround us it is something which is very universal yet at the same times it would be something which is very personal. It is very multidisciplinary, it could belong to the elite, it could belong to the popular when we talk about craft we connoted to arts and crafts movement that I have happened in history, it also has some link with the interior architecture that we are going to see throughout this course.

When we talk about craft there is also a mention of indigenous, locality. There is very much a talk about materials and skills and craft persons. Then there is something called is creative economy maybe we will just come across it later. It also makes us talk about or believe in ethnicity, morality, domesticity.

Craft is about communication, story telling, process, traditions, vernacular. So, if we see over here we could understand the kind of challenge one would face while talking about craft, trying to define it, describe it. So, much that surrounds us like almost everything that has a mention of craft do it. So, we will slowly and fold and see what many people have defined it as, how do they perceive it as, what kind of activities do we associate to when we talk about craft. So, let us just unfold all of it.

Going by an initial definition which is given by the director at the craft council UK and initial definition of craft means objects made for use. Like very simply the objects made for use.

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• “An initial definition of “craft” means objects made for use, such as a cup for drinking or a chair for sitting. Before commercial manufacturing, these objects were made by hand, and the techniques for creating them were learned through family or community traditions, or occasionally through an apprenticeship program with master artisans. “Craft” also refers to the manual dexterity and artistic skill required in working with materials and in creating objects that can be ornamental, functional, or both.”

- Rosy Greenlees, Director, Crafts Council UK

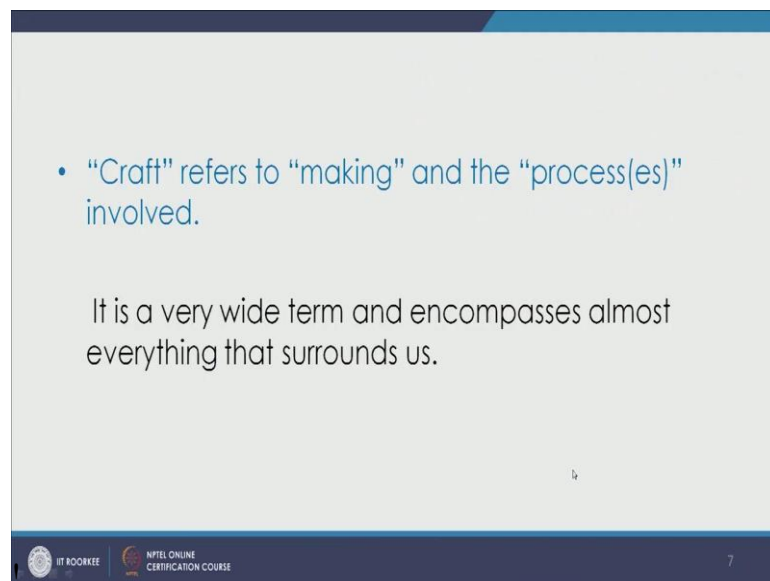
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Such as a cup for drinking or a chair for sitting, before commercial manufacturing these objects were made by hand and the techniques for creating them one learn through family, a community traditions, all occasionally through an apprenticeship program with

master artisans. So, usually these traditions and these learning methods and skills they were transferred from a one generation to another, and it was like a family tradition.

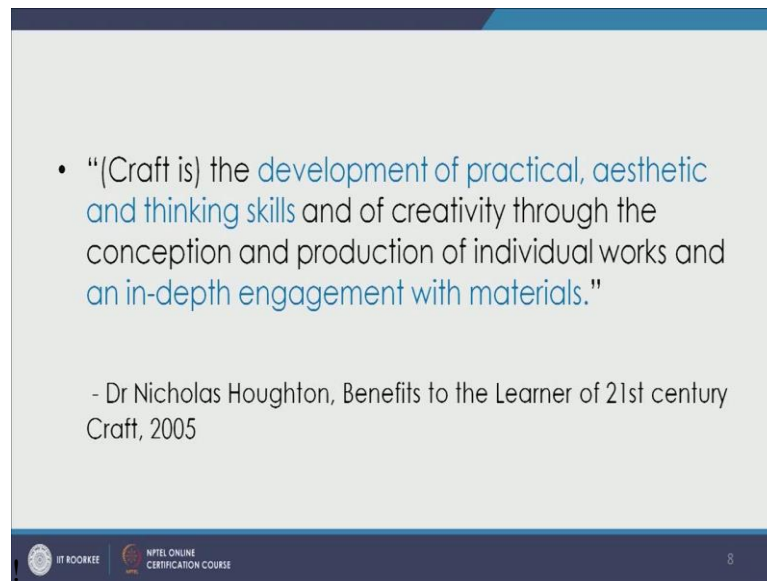
Craft also refers to the manual dexterity and artistic skill which is required in working with materials and in creating objects that can be ornamental or functional or both. So, it usually involves materials, making and it involves community traditions that are transferred from generation to generation and it involves a utility, it is made for use.

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So, craft could be referred to as making and the processes which are involved during making of something. It is a very wide term and like I was discussing few slides ago. It just encompasses almost everything that surrounds us.

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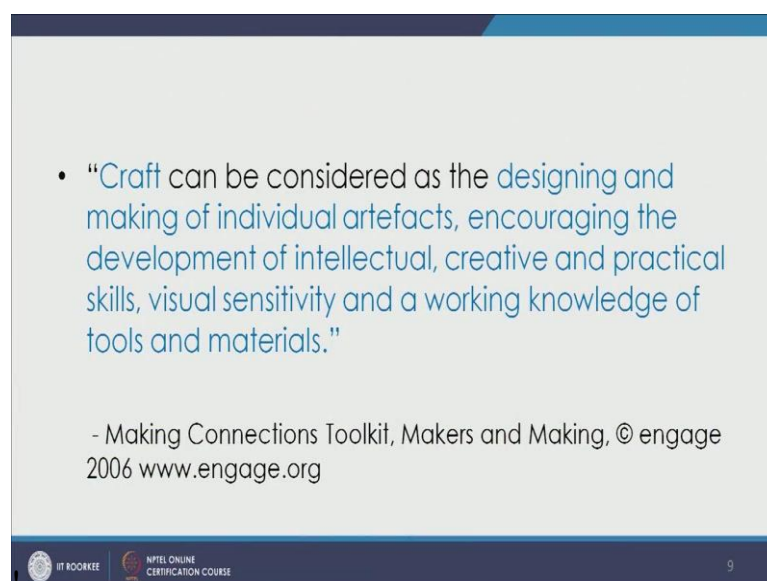
• “(Craft is) the development of practical, aesthetic and thinking skills and of creativity through the conception and production of individual works and an in-depth engagement with materials.”

- Dr Nicholas Houghton, Benefits to the Learner of 21st century Craft, 2005

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Another definition which is given by Dr. Nichola Houghton; “Craft is the development of practical, aesthetic and thinking skills and of creativity through the conception and production of individual works and an in-depth engagement with materials.” Here also what we see in-depth engagement with material. So, material a very very primary focus when we talk about craft, and related to materials we would talk about skills, and these skills belong to certain guild of people, some craft person, some artisans.

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• “Craft can be considered as the designing and making of individual artefacts, encouraging the development of intellectual, creative and practical skills, visual sensitivity and a working knowledge of tools and materials.”

- Making Connections Toolkit, Makers and Making, © engage 2006 www.engage.org

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Another definition, “Craft can be considered as the designing and making of individual artefacts, encouraging the development of intellectual, creative and practical skills, visual sensitivity and a working knowledge of tools and materials.”

So, again we say another word tools. So, when we talk about materials and skills they will be tools, there will be techniques, the entire process. So, this vocabulary we have to build on we have to stay with this and we have to see how everything is encompassed within this umbrella term called craft. This definition or understanding or description is given by making connections toolkit makers and making. Few other perspectives or few other definitions we can just have a glimpse through these also.

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- Many try to define craft through materials, or disciplines, or a combination of the two, for example: wood, jewellery, furniture, weaving, ceramics etc.
- For some, craft is about making objects, predominantly by hand, where functional and aesthetic considerations are equally important (Anscombe 1991, Anscombe and Gere, 1983, Cumming and Kaplan, 1991; Dormer, 1997, Naylor, 1971, Sevigny, 1969).

- Making Connections Toolkit, Makers and Making, © engage 2006 www.engage.org

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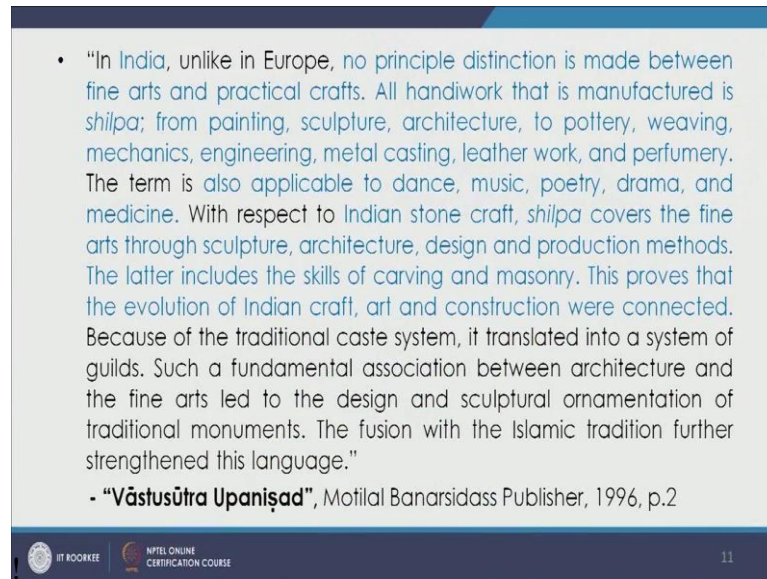
Many try to define craft through materials or disciplines or a combination of the two, for example: wood, jewellery, furniture, weaving, ceramics. So, if I talk about wood that is a material, if I talk about furniture, furniture craft, so, material and craft.

Same way if I talk about material stone is a material in carving could be a stone craft. For some craft is about making objects predominantly by hand. So, we also have this word now handmade. We are functional and aesthetic considerations are equally important. So, while it is aesthetically pleasing, visually appealing it also has a function

to cater to that is what most of the people tell about craft and how it distinguishes it from other artistic activities. Let us go ahead, now let us talk in the context of India.

So, our own *Vastu Sutra* Upanishad how does it tell about Indian crafts? In India unlike in Europe no principle distinction is made between fine arts and practical crafts.

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• "In India, unlike in Europe, no principle distinction is made between fine arts and practical crafts. All handiwork that is manufactured is *shilpa*; from painting, sculpture, architecture, to pottery, weaving, mechanics, engineering, metal casting, leather work, and perfumery. The term is also applicable to dance, music, poetry, drama, and medicine. With respect to Indian stone craft, *shilpa* covers the fine arts through sculpture, architecture, design and production methods. The latter includes the skills of carving and masonry. This proves that the evolution of Indian craft, art and construction were connected. Because of the traditional caste system, it translated into a system of guilds. Such a fundamental association between architecture and the fine arts led to the design and sculptural ornamentation of traditional monuments. The fusion with the Islamic tradition further strengthened this language."

- "**Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad**", Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, 1996, p.2

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All handiwork that is manufactured is *shilpa*. So, we see this word *shilpa* which comes from Indian history it is there in our scriptures and epics. From painting, sculpture, architecture to pottery, weaving, mechanics, engineering, metal casting, leather work and perfumery.

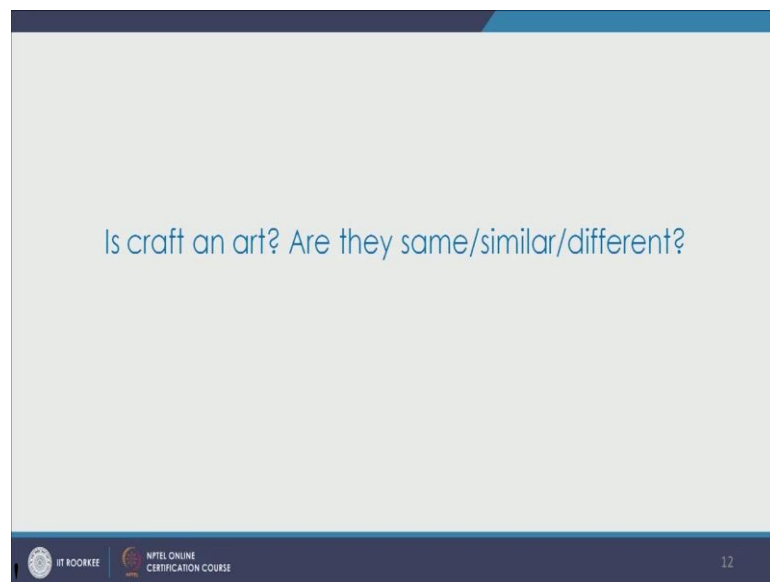
The term is also applicable to dance, music, poetry, drama and medicine. With respect to Indian stone craft *shilpa* covers the fine arts, through sculpture, architecture design and production methods. The letter include the skills of carving and masonry. This proves that the evolution of Indian craft, art and construction were connected. Now, this is very important this tells us that Indian craft art construction were very interconnected in fact, architecture interior architecture interior design all of these are relatively very new disciplines.

Earlier there was no subject or a fields like this, everything was like a *shilpa* we depended on a *shilpakar* we dependent on *stapathis*. So, those were the different kinds of

methods and different kinds of sciences that were involved, but the same which we have now transcended into the modern disciplines of architecture, interior architecture, design, interior design.

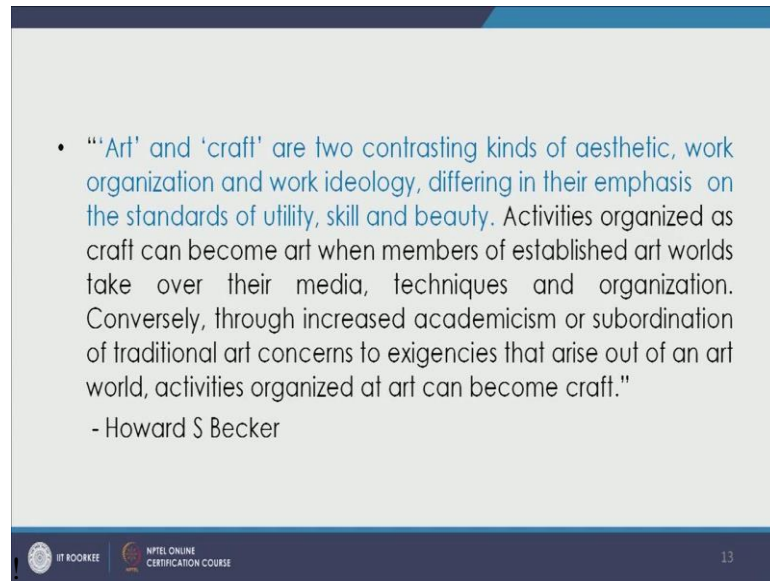
Continuing with this because of the traditional caste system it translated into a system of guilds, such a fundamental association between architecture and the fine arts led to the design and sculptural ornamentation of traditional monuments. The fusion with the Islamic tradition further strengthened this language.

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Now, is craft and art are they same, are different, are they similar? When do we use a term called art? When do we use a term called craft? What are the hairline differences between them or are they completely two different ways of describing some activities or processes. Let us just dwell into that.

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• “‘Art’ and ‘craft’ are two contrasting kinds of aesthetic, work organization and work ideology, differing in their emphasis on the standards of utility, skill and beauty. Activities organized as craft can become art when members of established art worlds take over their media, techniques and organization. Conversely, through increased academicism or subordination of traditional art concerns to exigencies that arise out of an art world, activities organized at art can become craft.”

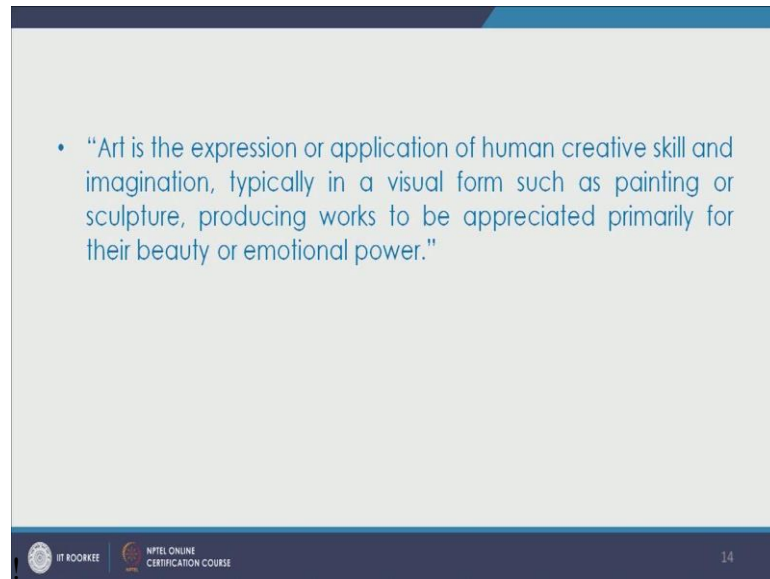
- Howard S Becker

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So, one definition or in understanding that is given by Howard Becker, “ ‘Art’ and ‘craft’ are two contrasting kinds of aesthetic, work organisation and work ideology, different in their emphasis on the standards of utility, skill and beauty. Now, this is important. He talks that both of these terminologies differ quite a lot as far as their standards of utility skill and beauty are considered. Activities organised as craft can become art when members of established art worlds take over their media, techniques and organisation.

So, he further also tells when can craft become art. We still are very away from understanding the primary difference between the two. So, let us just delve more into this discussion and let us see what art and craft are all about.

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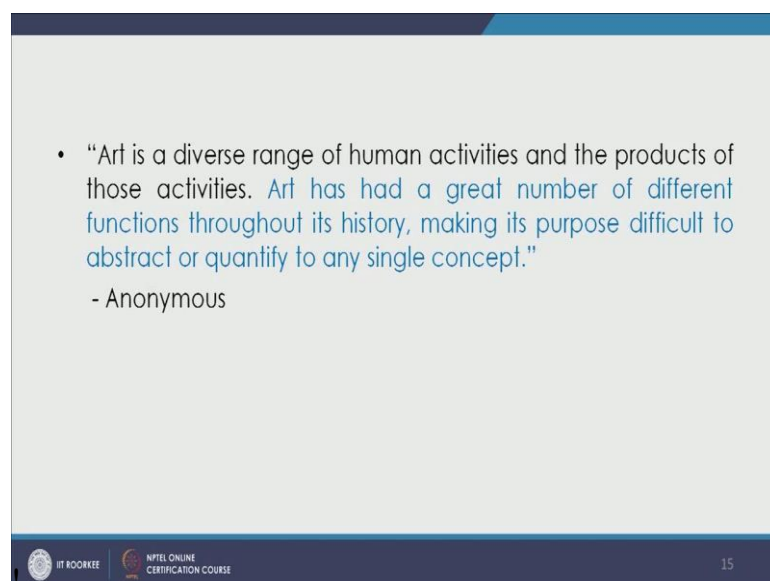
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- “Art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.”

So, art is the expression or application of human creative skill, and imagination typically in a visual form, such as painting or sculpture producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

This is one understanding on art that it is majorly an expression it deals with imagination, it is typically in a visual form, it also connects to us emotionally. So, let us see where are we moving ahead with this.

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- “Art is a diverse range of human activities and the products of those activities. Art has had a great number of different functions throughout its history, making its purpose difficult to abstract or quantify to any single concept.”
- Anonymous

There is another definition I could not trace who has said this it is probably anonymous. “Art is a diverse range of human activities and the products of those activities. Art has had a great number of different functions throughout its history, making its purpose difficult to abstract or quantify to any single concept.” So, this caller does recognise the purpose and the utility attached to art, but also says that it is very difficult to quantify on measure it.

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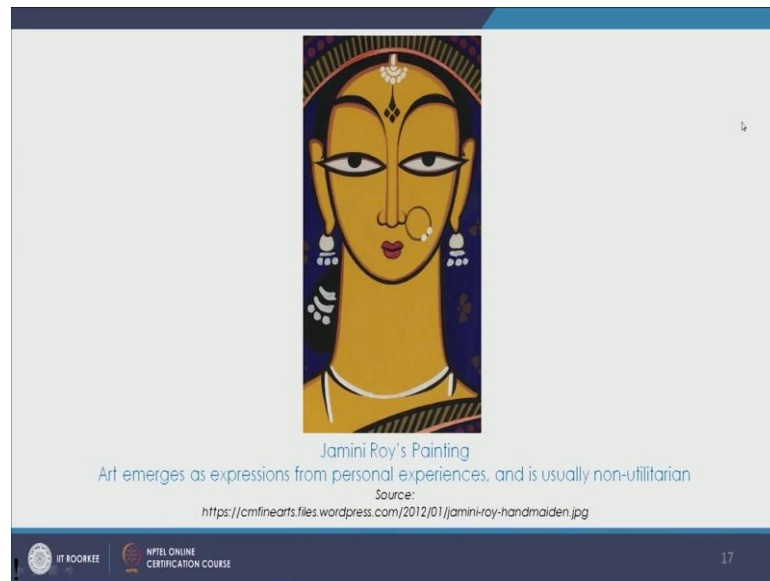


This is one very interesting slide and I find it very fascinating. Here if we see this you see a chimpanzee we see he is cracking a nut with the stone. So, what I am trying to say here is that mostly all the craft have emerged out of needs. We needed something and we had to make something, we had to create something and we involved certain material, certain skill sets and hence it led to the creation.

So, craft emerged out of needs and most of the scholars and the people who have immense knowledge in this field of craft, they say that craft is something that emerged out of needs, whether it is to do with Indian scenario or it is to deal with other places globally. But this is one unanimous understanding about craft that it emerges out of needs.

So, starting from cracking nuts to creating stone tools for hunting to creating shelter and then ornamentation in the form of carving, slowly and slowly as our needs increase, as our skill sets developed we started with the material and then we explored it in various different forms in different dimensions, in different walks of our lives.

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Now, about art, this is a very famous painting from a very famous artist Jamini Roy and again here for art most of the scholars and most of the literature emphasises that art emerges more like expression from personal experiences and not so much out of need or utility. So, it is usually non utilitarian. But all these perspectives and definitions and discussions that we are going through there is lot of debate still going on and lot of people still think that art and craft have very blur boundaries and they are more or less same.

At the same time most of the people and the scholars believe that the boundaries have to be maintained and art cannot be craft and vice versa. So, we can probably explore through all the modules and try to develop an understanding for our own cells as we see all these perspectives, images, explanations and the discourses that we have throughout.

Now, I would just leave those perspectives about art and craft till that point because as I said it could be very challenging and confusing to have a very clear understanding and

specially after this module itself when we had a very little discussion about it. So, let us just explore across through other modules also.

So, we will focus now on varied classification of the word called craft and certain examples that will help us understand what basically craft is about where all is it applied.

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These are the varied classification. Now, just a few slides ago we were discussing that most of the times crafts are defined through varied materials. So, if you see the slide lot of the crafts that are described over here or mentioned over here they are basically define through materials itself, which is a very practical way of classifying craft because as we had been discussing, that there is always a role of a material and then the associated skills and the tools and the techniques. So, it becomes very easier to understand craft in terms of the material.

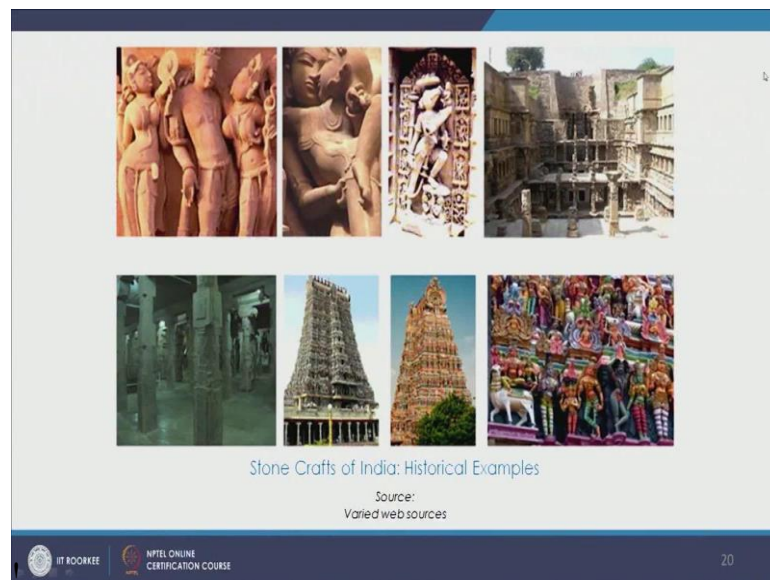
So, if we see over here again this is not a very exhaustive list, but lot many of the crafts which have been described over here ceramics and glass crafts, fibre and textile crafts, flower crafts, leather work, mixed media, needlework, there are paper crafts, origami, we have wood craft, furniture crafts within wood also there are 'n' number of craft techniques there is parquetry, there is marquetry, there is carving, there is inlay, then

stone crafts. Again within stone craft there is whole lot of set of techniques stone inlay, stone carving, then we have metal crafts bell making and so many others.

We could also classify crafts in terms of their purpose, function or connotation. So, we could have a classification like ritualistic crafts, hobby crafts, votive crafts. So, if we talk about terracotta specially it was actually practice as a votive crafts later it became something utilitarian and then it extended into the domain of interior architecture. So, then we have utilitarian crafts.

Now, this is this classification is borrowed from literature, but here again the wonder when we say that craft is something which is made for use which has a utility do we really need to put this specific classification like utilitarian craft. So, we can question this. Everything does not have to be very sacrosanct (Refer Time: 18:42). Rural crafts, urban crafts, folk crafts, decorative crafts, ornamental crafts, so there is a long list and as we discover and learn more each one of us could add to this list and we can have our own understanding about the topic and the discipline.

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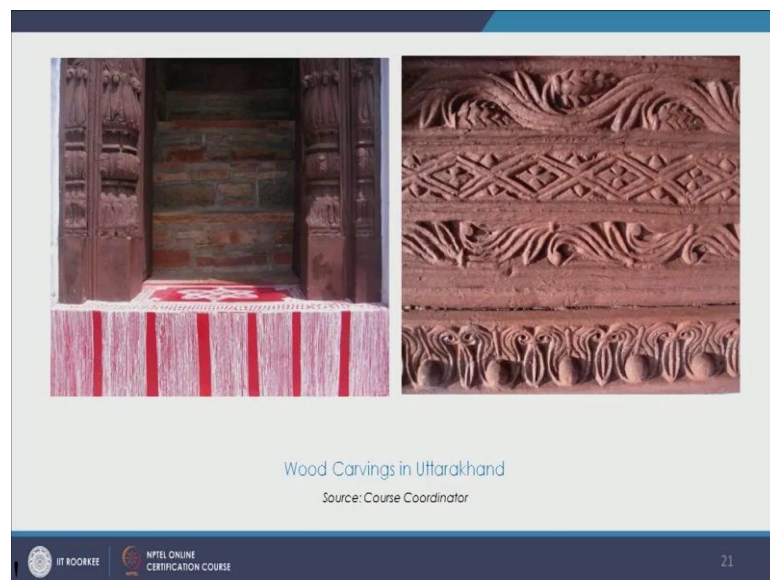


These are examples of the stone crafts, and these are very historical monuments which are very famous in Indian history. And we see lot of sculptures and carving weather it is

a step well or it is a Meenakshi temple which is in the south or we have the sculptures of Khajuraho.

We see very exquisite works over here, lot of skills, lot of handwork involved, lot of sense of scale and proportion and aesthetic. So, all of this here which is done by hand and which has certain meaning and utility, all these monuments the examples that we see in the history of architecture of India they are still talked about we still learn from them and the material the technique the skills that were used in those times there is so much to carry forward.

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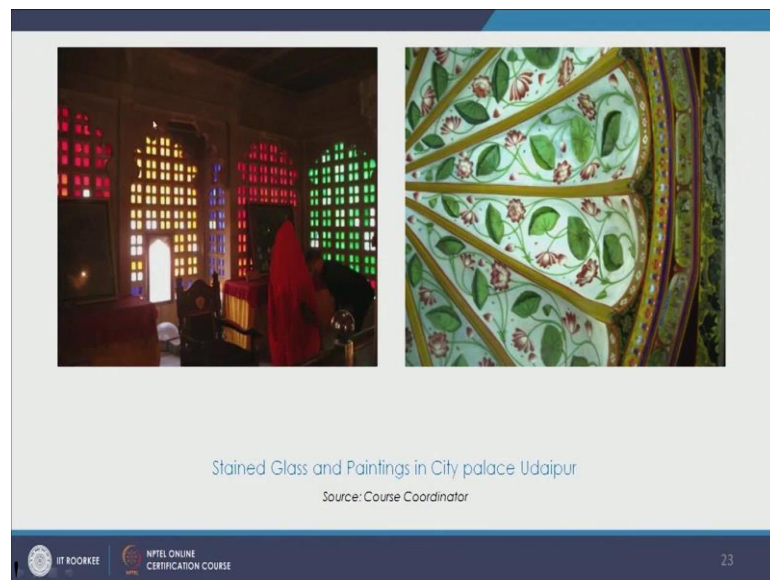
This is another slide that talks about the wood carvings in Uttarakhand. So, here if we see the carvings, now Uttarakhand is known for its timber and their varied locally available woods like *Tun*, *Thunair* (Refer Time: 20:11) which really allow for very very exquisite carving.

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Now, again this is a slide that talks about the textile craft of Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand is known for its textiles also, specially Bageshwar and like this is a setup in Almora, lot of textile work happening the looms over here.

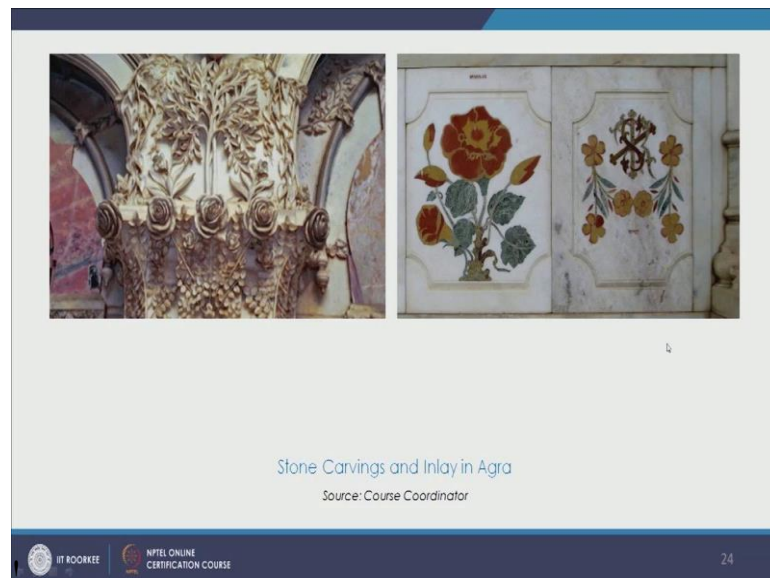
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These are some craft forms which are from city palace Udaipur. So, we see the work here which is done by stained glass there is a play of light and colour. We see here the paintings which are done on the ceiling which were done in those times with natural

dyes. So, lot of sensitivity involved and connection with the nature celebrating the forms that we see around us.

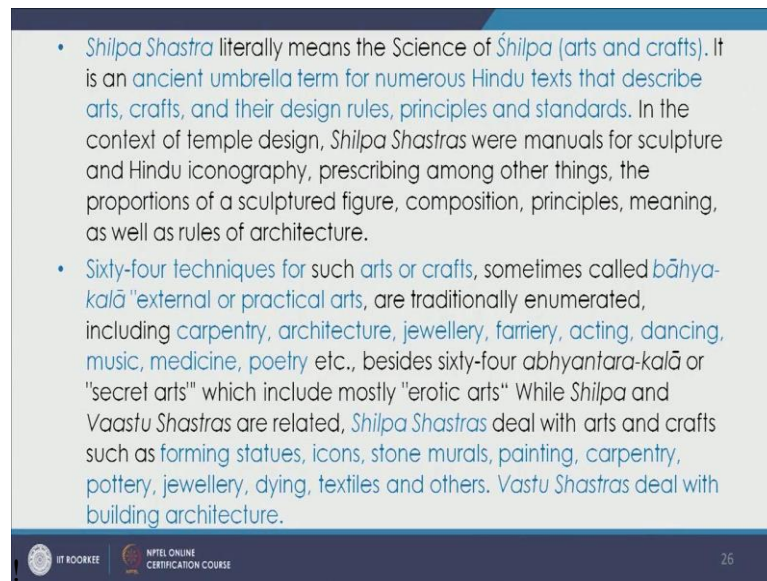
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This one is a very famous building in Agra it is called Radha Swami Samadh and here this exquisite stone crafts, its remarkable work that has been done. So, on the left side we see lot of stone carving and we see motives from the nature which are done in so much detail that it appears almost real and 3D. And here on the right side we see the stone inlay. So, also the colour, so there is green marble, there is white marble, there is red marble and the weight is put together and contrasted. So, again inlay work is another craft stone craft.

So, the examples was very few and simple, when we go to the next module then we will establish more interrelationship we will see more on the craft forms, how are they done, what is the process involved and how do they have a interrelationship with the interior architecture, what is the role of craft and technology in creating of interior architecture. Now, let us have some nostalgia and traverse through the history of Indian crafts. So, when we talk about Indian crafts it is inevitable that there is a mention of *Shilpa Shastra*.

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- *Shilpa Shastra* literally means the Science of *Shilpa* (arts and crafts). It is an ancient umbrella term for numerous Hindu texts that describe arts, crafts, and their design rules, principles and standards. In the context of temple design, *Shilpa Shastras* were manuals for sculpture and Hindu iconography, prescribing among other things, the proportions of a sculptured figure, composition, principles, meaning, as well as rules of architecture.
- Sixty-four techniques for such arts or crafts, sometimes called *bāhya-kalā* "external or practical arts", are traditionally enumerated, including carpentry, architecture, jewellery, farriery, acting, dancing, music, medicine, poetry etc., besides sixty-four *abhyantara-kalā* or "secret arts" which include mostly "erotic arts". While *Shilpa* and *Vastu Shastras* are related, *Shilpa Shastras* deal with arts and crafts such as forming statues, icons, stone murals, painting, carpentry, pottery, jewellery, dying, textiles and others. *Vastu Shastras* deal with building architecture.

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Shilpa Shastra literally means the science of *shilpa* arts and crafts. It is an ancient umbrella term for numerous Hindu texts that describe arts crafts and their design rules, principles and standards. In the context of temple design *Shilpa Shastras* were manuals for sculpture and Hindu iconography; Prescribing among other things the proportions of a sculptured figure composition, principles, meaning as well as the rules of architecture.

They were sixty-four techniques which were mentioned in our *Shilpa Shastra* it is so amazing to see the mention of such techniques. Sixty-four techniques for such arts or crafts sometimes called *bahya kala* or external or practical arts are traditionally enumerated, including carpentry, architecture, jewellery, farriery, acting, dancing, music, medicine, poetry, etcetera.

Beside sixty-four *bahya kala* or secret arts which include mostly erotic arts while *shilpa* and *vastu shastras* are related, *Shilpa Shastras* deal with arts and crafts such as forming statues, icons, stone, murals, painting, carpentry, pottery, jewellery, dyeing textiles and others. *Vastu shastras* deal with building architecture, so there is so much mention of all the different craft forms art forms that we see in our *Shilpa Shastras* and it is very fascinating to look back upon them and learn from them. If we see through our history there is lot of mention and predominance of varied craft forms.

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Kushan Period (1st C. AD.)
Sculptures
Jewellery
Textiles
Leather
Metals

Gupta Period (4th-6th C. AD.)
Handicrafts
Art Forms
Ajanta & Ellora
Mughal Period (16th-mid 18th C. AD)
Golden Age of Arts and Crafts
Inlay Work
Glass Engraving
Caper Weaving
Brocades
Enameling

Indian Handicrafts
Date back to almost 5000 years

Mauryan Period (322-185 BC)
Sculptures
More than 84000 Stupas
Carving
Relief
Jewellery

Indus Valley Civilization (3300-1300 BC)
Local Needs & Trade
Pottery
Sculpture (metal, stone, terracotta)
Jewellery
Weaving

Vedic Age (1500 B.C.)
Pottery
Weaving
Wood Craft
Mention in Rig Veda

Centres of Different Crafts in India

● Paintings (Ramayan period)
● Silk weaving (Akbar period)
● Zari weaving (19th century)
● Jewellery (Mughal period)
● Marble (Mughal period)
● Carpets (Mughal period)
● Cotton textiles (Mughal period)
● Chikanan (22nd BC)
● Metal works (2000 BC)

History of Indian Crafts: A Glimpse (represented by course coordinator)

Sources:
Image: <http://www.studyadda.com/userfiles/image/imap.png>
Data: <http://www.culturalindia.net/indian-crafts/index.html>

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For example, if we see the kushan period we see there is the mention of sculptures, jewellery, leather, metal work, then there is mediaeval period where we see the lot of mention of portray, there is weaving, lot of metal craft came into picture.

Gupta period of words came to be known as the golden age of arts and crafts, and we see lot of mention of handicrafts, varied forms of paintings, there is inlay work, glass engraving, then enamelling. Modern periods or another range of varied kind of craft forms there was sculptures. In fact, more than 84,000 stupas were melt, there was carving there was relief work, in this valley civilisation we see lot of mention again potteries, sculptures, stone, terracotta, jewellery was also there which we see a lot in Indus Valley civilisation. Vedic age head another set of craft forms. So, this gives us a glimpse that India has been very rich in varied craft forms.

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Treatises on Shilpa Shastras

Some known Shilpa Shastra-related manuscripts include

- Mayasastri (image printing, wall decoration)
- Benamanana (painting)
- Sakarathi (pratima - murti or vigraha making, icon design)
- Suprabhedagana
- Vastu dhamottara purana
- Agamas (have chapters on other shilpa shastras)
- Agni purana
- Brahmanda purana (mostly architecture, some sections on arts)
- Vastu vidya
- Pratna laksana vidhanam
- Ganaganam
- Manasara (many chapters on casting, moulding, carving, polishing and making of arts and crafts)
- Adyam
- Pratna mana laksanam (includes chapters on repair of broken idols and art works)
- Dasa tala nyagrodha pari mandala
- Sambudbhastisa pratna lakshana vikarana nama
- Mayamatam
- Bihur Samhita
- Shilpa raham (Purvaahaga book has 46 chapters on arts and construction of households, Uttarabaga
- Viska karma prakasam
- Matsya purana
- Ganota purana
- Kasiyapa shilpasastri
- Bhavisya purana (mostly architecture, some sections on arts)
- Alankara sastra
- Artha sastra (general crafts such as windows and doors, as well as public utilities)
- Chitra kapa (ornaments)
- Chitra karnasastri
- Maya shilpasastri (in Tamil)
- Visvakarma shilpa (arts on columns, wood working)
- Agasthya (wood based arts and crafts)
- Mandana Shilpa Sastra (diya, lamps related crafts)
- Ratna sastra (pearls, string, jewelry crafts)
- Ratna pariksa (jewelry)
- Ratna sangraha (jewelry)
- Laghu ratna pariksa (jewelry, lapidary)
- Manimathasya (lapidary)
- Anangarata (lapidary crafts)
- Anangarata (erotic arts)
- Kamasutra (erotic arts)
- Rati rahasya (erotic arts)
- Sangha ratna kara (crafts for fashion, dance and public performance)
- Natyaka (food, utensils, and culinary crafts)
- Paka dasana (food, utensils, and culinary crafts)
- Paka vipiana (food, utensils, and culinary crafts)
- Pakamava (food, utensils, and culinary crafts)
- Kullammatam (needle arts)
- Kaldambai by Banabhalla (chapters on textile art and crafts)
- Samamamtha (textile arts)
- Yatra Kosha (musical instruments, Overview in Bengali Language)
- Sangha ratna kara (music crafts)
- Natya sastra (mostly music and crafts in 2nd century north India, sections on music crafts)
- Cilappatikaram (a 2nd century Tamil classic on music and dance, sections on musical instruments)
- Manasollasa (arts and crafts relating to musical instruments, cooking, textiles, decoration)
- Vasuvdyaya (sculpture, icons, painting, and minor arts and crafts)
- Ujjvaina vishoda (Sanskrit treatise on arbor-horticulture arts, garden house design, aspects of house plants related crafts)

History of Indian Crafts: Shilpa Shastras

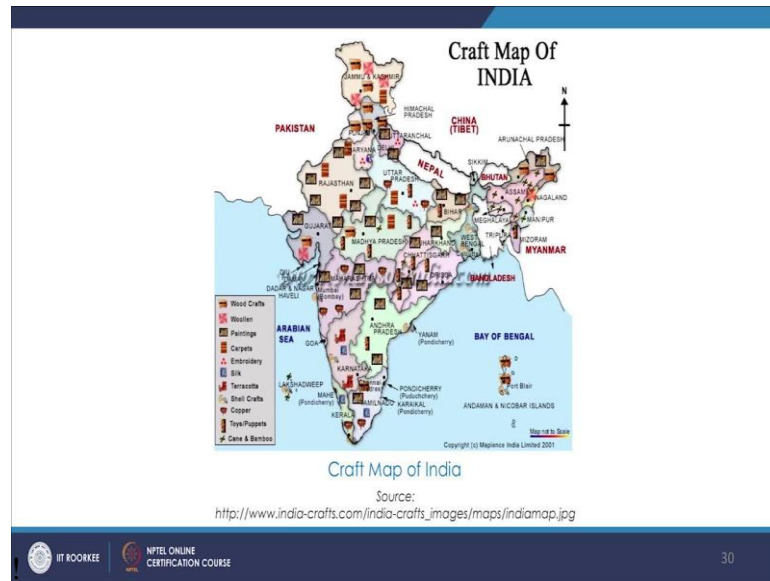
Source:
Kramrisch, Stella. "Traditions of Indian Craftsman" <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/538558?sid=21105267935041&uid=2&uid=4>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shilpa_Shastras

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This is one document which is given by a very famous Stella Kramrisch and then she talks about treatises on Shilpa Shastras and how in our sculptures and literature there is lot of mention of art and craft forms.

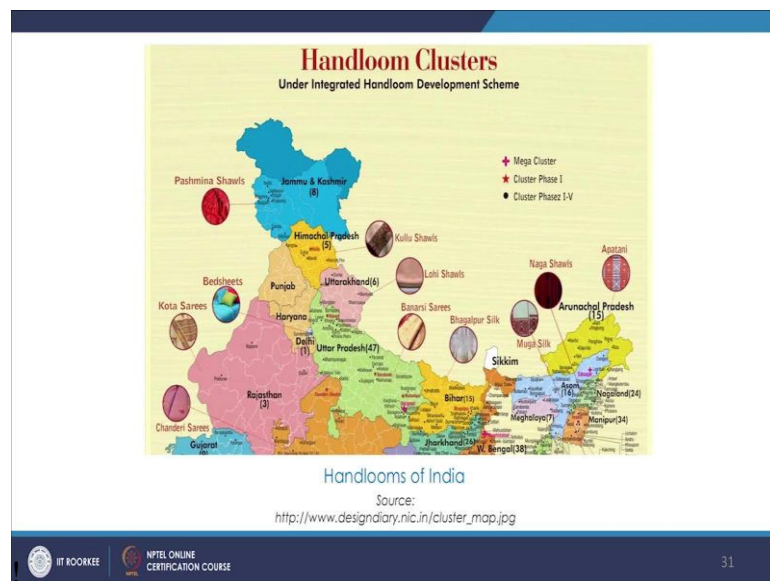
So, if we see over here *Natya Shastra* it talks about music and crafts in second century north India. Then we have *Vastu Vidhya*, it talks about sculpture, icons, painting, minor arts and crafts. Then there is a mention of *Ratna Shastra*, then *Ratna Sangraha* which talks about jewellery and there are varied kinds of treatises which will tell us that there was so many different kinds of craft forms that India had been very rich in, some many of them originated here few were borrowed, few were a result of intermingling and invasions. So, I will not discuss in detail, but very quickly I will show the very interesting craft forms of India.

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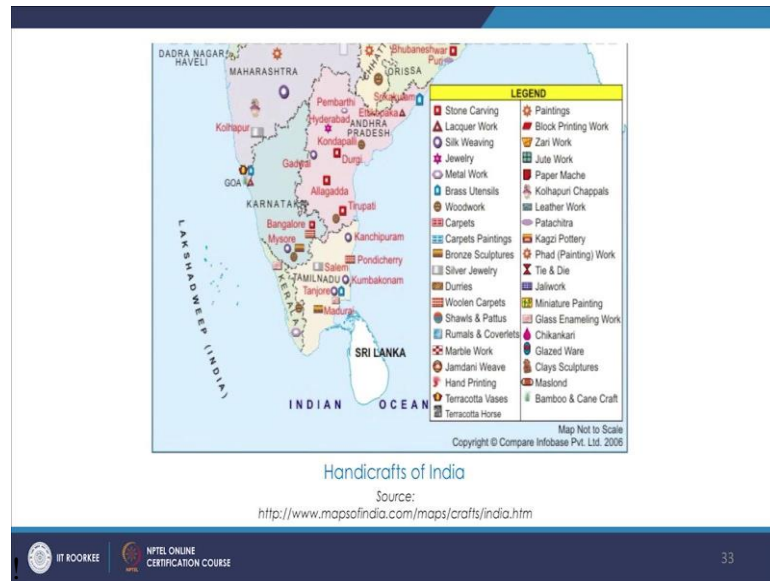
This is one map.

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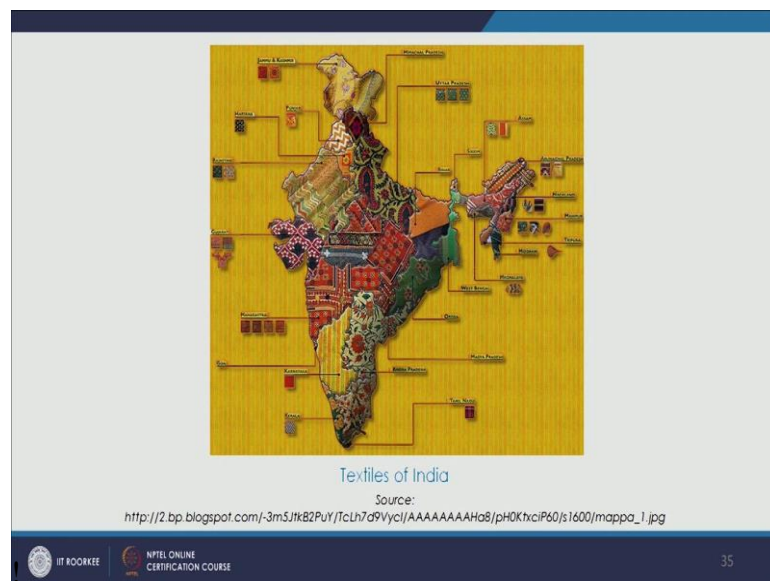
This one talks about the handloom clusters.

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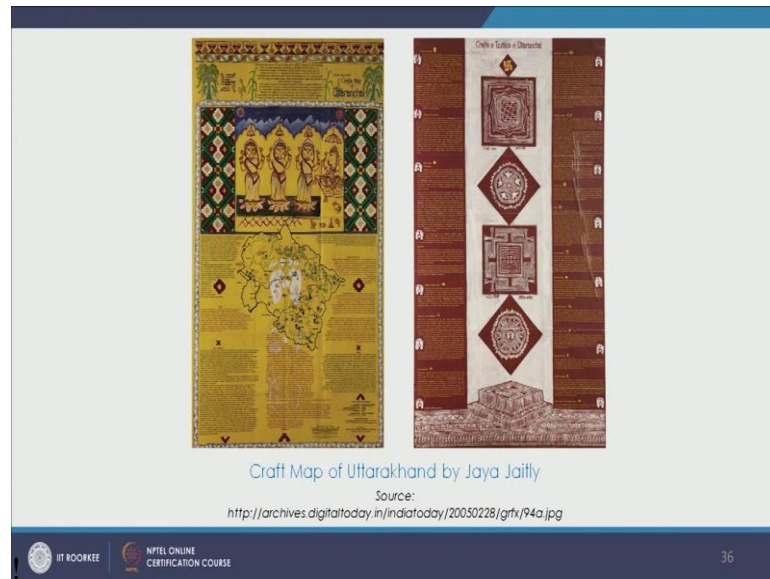
This talks about the handicrafts.

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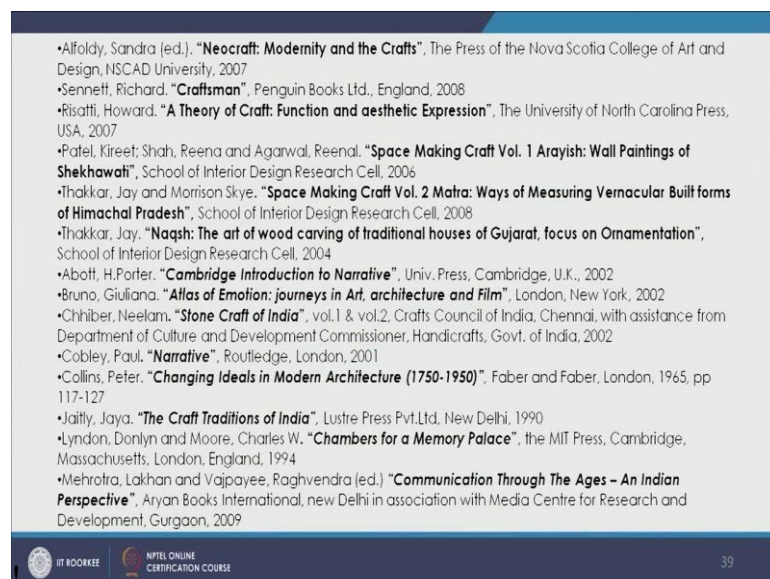
This is the textiles map of India. They are so exquisite and the huge range, so visually we get to know about them.

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These are some craft maps which are developed by Jaya Jaitly Ji and she has done a remarkable job they are beautiful. So, to end I would just like to quote craft in India is not simply about a mechanical process and end product and marketability. In fact, it has deeper meanings and associations which are influenced by backdrop narratives of spirituality, religion and everyday life. And I have paraphrased this quote.

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These are some references. This will be very helpful for all of you to go through this module in detail.

Thank you.