

A Study on The Thanjavur Art Plate

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Tamil University-1985
Thanjavur, TamilNadu.



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Publication : No. 15

Thiruvalluvar Year 2016 Thai - January 1985

Author : P. Saravanel

Title : A Study On The Thanjavur Art Plate

Edition : First - 1985

Price : Rs. 60-00

\$ 12

Press : Tamil University Offset Press,

Thanjavur - 613 001.

**A STUDY ON
THE THANJAVUR ART PLATE**

FOREWORD

Exposition of the art of metalware such as copper, silver and gold had always enjoyed royal patronage in South India, particularly in the Thanjavur area which had the benefit bestowed by the Cauvery irrigation. The Imperial Cholas, Vijayanagar chieftains called the Nayak Kings and the Thanjavur Mahratta rulers had ruled in succession this land of plenty and prosperity. Earlier, their contribution centered on carvings of exquisite sculptures and castings of graceful bronze images which adorn the temples even today. In later times it was left to the Mahratta Raja Serfoji II, who ruled Thanjavur from 1797 to 1832, to introduce plate-metal art and patronise it by improving and adopting the Bidri pattern of the North of embossing in silver, gold and copper on brass plates, invariably with mythological figures with floral designs to attract the masses.

Unlike the earlier concentration of art, by the princely class, around temples, the art exposition in metal art plates tried to cater to the needs of the middle class. The easy availability of raw materials for the workers in this field resulted in sustained and continuous economic production and marketing facilities. The author who is a Professor of Commerce has admirably

tackled this aspect in his introductory chapters.

Besides referring to the princely and pioneering work done by Raja Serfoji II to promote this cottage industry, a splendid photograph of his Italian marble statue made by Flaxman, available in the Art Gallery, has been fittingly reproduced in the book to express the deep debt of gratitude which the industry owes him.

Thanjavur district as a whole, is known for its excellent and sophisticated metal industry. Nachiarkoil and Swamimalai were well known for Bronzes. Iron smelting in ancient days at Thanjavur, Alangudi and Sakkottai attracted the probing metallurgists. Thanjavur and Kumbakonam are specially reputed for their gold and silver articles. Though the aesthetic value of the plates, Kudam, Panchapatram, bowls etc., has been much enjoyed and appreciated both in India and abroad, by the common man and the connoisseur of art, the know-how, technique and the precise and delicate work involved are not known to many. The author has admirably described the various stages of its production in simple language so that it can be easily understood. I hope that the book will be useful both to the connoisseurs of the art and the artisans themselves for the further development and growth of this industry.

Thanjavur palace

Thanjavur.

Rajaram Raja Saheb
Senior Prince

A STUDY ON THE THANJAVUR ART PLATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who helped me in the course of this study of the Thanjavur Art plate. I am deeply indebted to Dr. T. Murugarathinam, Director, Tamil Promotion, Tamil University and Thiru Padmanaban, Deputy Director for Documentation and Library Science, Tamil University for their valuable suggestions and encouragement throughout the course of this study. I express my heartfelt thanks to the Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University for having given me the opportunity of carrying out research under the Short Term Research Project.

My Sincere thanks are due to the Managing Committee of A.V.V.M. Sri Pushpam College, Poondi for granting permission to carryout this project. I also express my gratitude to all my colleagues and friends who helped me in various ways in the completion of this study. My special thanks go to Thiru R.Prabhakar and Thiru G.Sabesan who have helped me in several ways in completing this work on time. I am also grateful to the various art plate craftsmen and dealers without whose willingness and ready co-operation the study would never have been completed.

This Volume is inscribed to the memory of T.K.Palaniappan I.A.S. Finally, I do not find words to express my gratitude to Srimanth RajaRam Raja Saheb, Senior Prince, Thanjavur Palace who has readily agreed to write a foreword to this book.

P.Saravanavel

CONTENTS

	<u>Pages</u>
FOREWORD	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
 CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1-9
II HANDICRAFTS IN TAMIL NADU	10-17
III HISTORY OF THE ART PLATE	
CRAFT	18-27
IV PRODUCTION OF ART PLATES	28-45
V MARKETING OF ART PLATES	46-60
VI MARKETING: INSTITUTIONAL	
APPROACH	61-73
VII FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS	74-80
 APPENDICES	
A. Questionnaire/Schedule to Units	81
B. Poompuhar: Showrooms & Production	
cum Training Centres	
C. H.H.E.C. Offices in India and	
Abroad	91-94
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 95-99
INDEX	101-104

LIST OF TABLES

Table No.	Title	Page
1.	Abstract of cost of production	40
4.	Details of material cost	41
3.	Statement of labour cost	43
4.	Comparison of prices of Art plates with different dealers	52,53
5.	The business trend of the Society 1976-83	63
6.	Statement of production & wages 1976-83	65



Tamil University Emblem in Art plate

CHAPTER I

Introduction.

"The Craftsman is not an individual expressing individual whims, but a part of the universe, giving expression to ideals of Central beauty and unchanging laws, even as do the trees and flowers whose natural and less ordered beauty is no less God given".¹ Thus wrote Ananda Coomaraswamy of India's Craftsmen, whose excellence has never been in dispute. Excellence of design and form, and an unsurpassed sense of colour have been valued, from father to son, both as a skill to be inherited and as an achievement that follows sustained application. The value of labour lies in its fulfilment; beauty is the result.

Crafts represent a great cultural heritage of our country. They also occupy an important position in our economy, most vitally from the point of view of employment and export. Craft already provides employment to a broad section of our society; it is a sector which is capable of providing much more. Indeed, the scope for continuous and further employment is considerable.

Metal Craft in India is a truly ancient craft. The metal worker was called the **Karma** and as early as the **Rudhra** of **Yajurveda** we are told of the deep respect in which he was held. **Namah Kulalebhyah karmare-bhyascha:** "I bow to the family of the **Karma** who is as the Lord himself". The earliest bronze figures found at Mohenjo-daro reveal the high degree of skill attained by this art almost 5,000 years ago. The bronze figure of a dancing girl, with her carefree stance, is one of the first solid-cast pieces discovered in India.

Indian metal craft has attained the standard of a fine art and plays an important part in the religious and community life of the people. Of the metalware produced all over the country, plates, vessels and utensils, in innumerable shapes, form the major part. The commonest objects are a variety of water vessels, cooking vessels, serving dishes and containers made of brass, copper or silver. It has been praised by the American designer, Charles Eames as the most perfected form, resulting from a classical tradition where form and function have been ideally 'married' by generations of users.

About 2 lakh artisans are employed in the manufacture of art metalware in the country with an estimated annual production worth about Rs.120 crores. The export earnings of metal crafts have gone up from Rs.2.43

crores in 1966-67 to Rs.59 crores in 1979-80 and are expected to reach Rs.140 crores by 1984-85. It is proposed to increase production accordingly through additional training and increase of other inputs.

Traditional Indian metalware in brass and copper has a worldwide reputation and has in the past found a ready overseas market, incorporating, as it does, fine workmanship and relatively modest prices. A wide range of objects are made today by craftsmen who have devoted a life time to master the different hand crafting technique-shaping, casting, engraving, enamelling and repousse work.

Thanjavur, the ancient capital city of the Chola Kings, in Tamil Nadu occupies a position of pride among places that foster artistic sheet metal work. Sheet metal is processed into a variety of articles by embossing designs and cut-out work. Articles of grace and beauty have won the appreciation and admiration of art cannoisseurs from different parts of the country and the world. The craftsman almost seems to breathe life into the inanimate metal.

The Thanjavur art plate is an exquisite example of the work of the artisan of Thanjavur, and occupies pride of place among the showpieces adorning many drawing-rooms of elegantly-furnished houses. This art of engraving and embossing beautiful figures

and images of different sizes and shapes on metal, mainly on copper and silver, and fixing them on brass plates, is unique and confined to Thanjavur. This art which even today is limited to a handful of families of goldsmiths, is more inherited than acquired, the skill being handed down from father to son. It is delightful to watch the craftsman working carefully, with the aid of a hammer and chisel, the details on the rough forms of the images on silver and copper plates, such as the fingers of the hand, the eye-brow and other minute details. These artisans were noted for their skilful workmanship. Art for them was a way of life.

During the rule of Maratha Kings, the craft flourished well and there was a lot of encouragement for these craftsmen. With the rapid political and social changes that took place during the last century, these artisans were adversely affected and many of them, due to circumstances, switched over to manufacturing gold and silver ornaments. This handicraft too was slowly lost. But, after Independence, the Government of Tamil Nadu and the All India Handicrafts Board (A.I.H.B.) have taken up the cause of reviving such languishing handicrafts.

Importance of the study

The classical decorative Thanjavur Art Plate, with its unique distinction, has conquered the hearts of many foreigners, and stands

as a valuable foreign exchange earner. The local market accounts for only 10% of the total sales, while the lion's share is contributed by the sales emporia in Madras, Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta through which exports are done. The prices range from Rs.10 to Rs.10,000 for the 20 different sizes ranging from 3" to 48". Besides, craftsmen make and market Kudam, ornamental bowls; cigarette cases, jewel boxes, snuff boxes, match box cases, paper weights, napkin holders, ashtrays, handmirrors, doorhandles, penstands, keystands, keychains and pooja vessels. The current production of these art plate works is to the tune of about rupees twenty lakhs per year. At present, there are about a hundred families in Thanjavur Town depending, either directly or indirectly, on this craft for their livelihood. A bumper sale in any season will be followed by a dull season when a craftsman, unable to keep the article with him, will be compelled to sell at any price. In recent years, the markets for art plates have been growing very well, attracting new entrants either as producers or as middlemen in this field. However, the economic conditions of the craftsmen remain generally poor. Hence the present study on 'Thanjavur Art Plate Industry' is undertaken in the context of 'gloom and sunshine' of such a background. It seeks to analyse the origin, economics of production, marketing aspects of such art plate works with a view to providing an in-depth knowledge of the subject-matter on the one hand, and on the other, to make

suitable suggestions, to popularise the product in India and abroad through an integrated marketing net-work.

Object of the study

The object of this study is to present the results of a quick-survey of the working of the Thanjavur Art Plate Industry with particular reference to marketing aspects. The main motivating force for choosing this particular industry is two fold: (i) the rapid development and product diversification as a small scale handicraft industry and (ii) the local industry, employing local craftsmen within the town of Thanjavur, for several centuries together.

Scope of study

In the light of these basic features of the Thanjavur Art Plate Industry, the scope of the current study may be spelt out:-

- (a) to present a synoptic review of art plate production units,
 - (b) to assess the efficacy of marketing channels of such art works,
- and
- (c) to articulate the production and marketing problems confronted by the craftsmen and middlemen/dealers with a view to identifying problem-areas (and indicate possible solutions).

The main reason for restricting the scope

in this manner is to keep the study within manageable limits in view of the limited time available.

Methodology

For effective prosecution of the study, recourse was made to both secondary sources such as pamphlets, marketing journals, administration reports, and census reports; and to primary investigation by means of adhoc schedules and questionnaires (vide Appendix A) designed to elicit information, opinion and attitudes of a cross-section of Craftsmen-respondents. Taking into consideration the financial and time constraints and conditioned by the response factor of the producer and dealer, purposive-sampling technique had to be adopted.

The particulars furnished by the craftsmen/dealer respondents of the primary survey are subjected to similar analytical process, while the answers in the form of opinions, attitudes, and the structured questions are to be qualitatively analysed. With a view to ascertaining professional opinion on the subject-matter, specialist recourse was had by way of extensive personal interviews and discussions with the office-bearers of the State Bank of India, Cauvery Super Market, Triumph Enterprises, Art plate Coop-Marketing Society and District Industries Centre at Thanjavur, The Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Deve-

lopment Corporation, Victoria Technical Institute and V.G.Panneerdas & Co., at Madras.

The field work was carried out during the months of January-March 1983, for a period of 90 days. To begin with, the researcher got himself well acquainted with the respondents. Interviews were conducted in the conventional manner and to suit the convenience of the respondents. It took an average of 50 minutes in each case, for an interview with the producers, dealers and consumers. The production processes right from the preparation of dies upto finishing were observed by the researcher personally. In the course of interviews the respondents were encouraged to express their opinions and views freely and frankly. By and large, a good response was shown by all the respondents.

Limitations

The main limitations arising in this study are:

- (i) its coverage includes 75 percent of the craftsmen, mainly goldsmiths, leaving out hard metal workers, lathe operators etc.,
- (ii) development of the industry during the last decade, particularly 1975 onwards, and
- (iii) further, dealers/exporters outside Tamil Nadu, who claim more than 70 percent of the art plate production, are left out.

Arrangement of Chapters

The study is divided into seven chapters. This introductory chapter is followed by a presentation of a brief sketch of handicrafts in Tamil Nadu. The third chapter deals with the different views about the history of Art plate craft in Thanjavur. The production technique is described in the fourth chapter. Various marketing functions relating to marketing of Art plates are presented in chapter five. Chapter six details the role of various institutions connected with this craft. The last and the final chapter deals with conclusions and suggestions for further development of the craft.

CHAPTER II

Handicrafts in TamilNadu.

Craft is man's first technology, the technology of the hand. A craft at its finest, represents man's need to create simultaneously with mind and hand: A fine object is intended not only to be aesthetically pleasing; it is essentially a skilled solution as well to a specific need. India's handicrafts are almost inexhaustible; in variety they are infinite. Here, several local village and country traditions have existed through the course of a changing history, giving and taking among themselves. These cross-currents have at certain points in time inspired the creative impulse of our craftsmen, to use, with singular skill and ingenuity, the most mundane of materials. A specific function together with the materials most readily available have invariably determined a design solution of great beauty.

Handicrafts in Tamilnadu were, in a way, cherished as an important part of our rich cultural heritage. Now, though this sentiment

continues to be rekindled, there is a pronounced change in the general attitude towards crafts, which is completely upsetting our basic sense of human values. For, though handicrafts helped to fulfil a positive **physical** need in the daily lives of the people, they also served to satisfy the aesthetic hunger in man and provided a vehicle for his urge for self-expression, which revealed itself in a conscious aesthetic approach. The inspiration has come from the tender core of the substance of every day life and nature's own rich store-house. These significant and meaningful facts are being rapidly forgotten. To-day handicrafts are becoming just commodities for sale, not the essentials of elegant living. Handicrafts of Tamilnadu are available in several materials and forms.

1. WOOD CARVING: A high degree of technical skill characterises the wood carvings of Madurai. The delicate carvings in the Kalyana Mahal of the Shree Meenakshi Temple at Madurai and the elaborately carved temple-cars speak of the excellence of wood carving as a decorative and devotional art in this part of the country. Today, while a few traditional craftsmen continue to carve splendid specimens of mythological and human figures, others are applying their skill to objects of every day use. From Madurai and Virudhunagar come tables, especially peg tables, exquisitely carved with traditional designs, with characteristic elephant motifs on the legs.

2. HANDLOOMS: Tamilnadu is a part of the great weaving belt that extends down the east coast of India. The cottonweavers of this region are particularly well-known. Lungis and shirting, mostly in checks, and the popular Bleeding Madras are woven all over the villages of Tamilnadu. Here, the co-operative organisation of weavers is also very strong. Madras cotton-60sx40s-in plain, checked and striped designs are an important export item as fabrics as well as tailored, readymade casual wear.

Kanchipuram silk saris with their rich gold borders have again become very popular with traditional designs adopted for modern wear. The All India Handicrafts Board did some pioneering work in this field in the early sixties. A Weavers Service Centre of the All India Handloom Board at Kanchipuram has been doing remarkable research and design work in Kanchipuram silks and saris.

3. PALM-LEAF PRODUCTS: Palm-leaf products include trays, flower baskets, shopping bags, travelling bags, suitcases, folding fans and toys. Although palm-leaf products are made in almost all coastal areas of India, the craft (in which usually women are employed) is concentrated in Tamilnadu in Ramnad, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari, Thanjavur and Chingle put districts; it is prevalent to some extent in Salem and South Arcot as well.

The leaf, after it is cut according to

the desired size, is dipped in dye, and beautiful articles like baskets, trays, etc., are made by incorporating into the weave, coloured leaves and even variegated aluminium foil in such a way as to give an attractive pattern. The rib or stem portion of the leaf may also be used occasionally for reinforcement. About 2,500 workers are engaged in this craft and they produce goods worth about Rs.15 lakhs annually, a substantial part of it for export.

4. MAT WEAVING: Kora grass mat weaving is an important handicraft in Tamil Nadu. It is basically a family craft, each hut is a production unit, with grass drying in the courtyard, looms working inside, mats being handled at the back. Of the 80 industrial co-operative societies functioning in the State, about 40 are engaged in this craft. Though mat weavers are found throughout the state, they are concentrated in Tirunelveli. The availability of good quality kora grass in sufficient quantity in this district has made mat weaving an important craft. The finest mats, made on simple looms, come from Pattamadai, and have received several awards for design and craftsmanship. They may be used as floor coverings, bed-spreads, wall hangings, or table mats; cut up and stitched, they can be made into attractive hand bags, cigarette cases and other utility articles. Over 2,000 artisans make medium and ordinary kora grass mats and about 100 are engaged in fine quality weaving. The total annual value of mats is about Rs.15 lakhs.

5. CANE ARTICLES: Cane weaving is a speciality of Madras city, which produces chairs, tables and chase-lounge in a variety of attractive designs. From Wallajapet and Anaikaranchatram come other decorative and utility items like baskets and trays of excellent workmanship.

6. KARIGIRI POTTERY: In Karigiri, a small village near Madras, a dozen potter families are engaged in producing glazed artistic pottery, with traditional Persian designs. The main raw material used is a clay known as **namakatti**. Chemically, this is a kind of low-fusing China clay; the material is so soft and plastic that highly intricate designs in various shapes can be easily thrown on the potter's wheel, with beautiful cut-out or incised designs. Low-fired glazes in emerald green, deep blue and gold are commonly used. Apart from decorative vases, a variety of attractive utilitarian objects like water jugs, ink-stands and ash-trays in traditional and modern forms are also made.

7. CLAY AND PAPER TOYS AND DOLLS: Tamilnadu has a great tradition of toys and dolls which also figure in ceremonies, festivals and auspicious occasions. At Dasara, for instance, dolls are arranged on the altar of worship even if there were no image of Durga. The largest variety is in clay.

Dummy horses, bulls and sometimes even human figures in various sizes—from

A STUDY ON
THE THANJAVUR ART PLATE

HANDICRAFTS MAP
OF
TAMIL NADU
WITH
INDEX OF SYMBOLS

INDEX OF SYMBOLS

	Bidri
	Cane and bamboo
	Carpets
	Conch-shell
	Dolls and toys
	Filigree and silverware
	Folk paintings
	Furniture
	Grass, leaf, reed and fibre
	Horn and bone
	Ivory
	Jewellery
	Leather (footwear)
	Leather (other articles)
	Metalware
	Metal images (classical)

	Metal images (folk)
	Musical instruments
	Papier-mâché
	Pottery and clay objects
	Rugs and durries
	Stone (carving)
	Stone (inlay)
	Terracotta
	Theatre, costumes and puppets
	Textiles (handloom)
	Textiles (hand-embroidered)
	Textiles (handprinted)
	Wood (carving)
	Wood (inlay)
	Wood (turning and laquer ware)
	Zari

HANDICRAFTS
IN TAMIL NADU



small to larger-than-life size-are made in clay by village potters. These are kept at the Village entrance as gramma devates (guardian deities of the village). Aiyanar figures are reported to be found in the village sanctuaries located at Chettampatti and Nallur (Thiruchirapalli), Tirupuvanam (Madurai), and Vadugapalayam (Coimbatore).

In the traditional types many paper toys too are found. These are largely either mobile or oscillating, both folk in concept and abstract in execution. Thanjavur was once reputed for its elegant and excellent Oscillating paper toys. They are now found more in the neighbouring centres of Kumbakonam and Myladuthurai.

8. JEWELLERY: Traditional South Indian Jewellery shows Indian craftsmanship at its best. Madurai, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram and Coimbatore produce an innumerable variety of ornaments in gold. Necklaces and bracelets made in Tiruchirapalli are attractive and popular as is jewellery made of semi-precious stones with enamelling.

9. PITH ARTICLES: A traditional art-craft, the pith articles of Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli and Madurai have a distinctive charm. Models of temples, birds, animals and mythological and human figures, and realistic studies of flowers, carved with great delicacy make excellent decorative items.

10. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS: Elegance

of design, meticulous craftsmanship and a tradition that goes back several hundred years characterise the musical instruments of South India. A wide variety of concert and ritual instruments of excellent workmanship and quality are made at Thanjavur. In Madras the All India Handicrafts Board has a centre for research into, and development of, musical instruments.

11. SHELL WORK: Decorative objects are made with various types of conches and shells. Functional items like lamp shades, ash-trays, paperweights, incense stands and costume jewellery are made from these. In Tamilnadu the craft is centred in Rameswaram, although it is practised in certain other places like Kanyakumari, Nagercoil, Kizhakarai and Madras as well.

12. ART METALWARE: The artistic metalware of Tamil Nadu includes wax-moulded **kuthuvilakkus** (lamps), silver and copper encrusted brass sheet work, and bronze sculpture. The production of bronze or copper icons by the *cire perdue* (lost wax) process is concentrated mainly in the Swamimalai area of Thanjavur, though the craft also exists in Kumbakonam, Tambaram, Madurai, Nachiarkoil and a few other places. Craftsmen usually manufacture the icons against orders from temples. Stylistically the images belong to different periods like the Pallava, Chola, Pandya and Nayaka periods, and images which are now produced belong to one of these

styles. Sometimes the order specifies particulars of design but very often these are left to the craftsman's discretion. Copies of old masterpieces are also being cast, for sale, under the direct supervision of traditional master craftsmen.

From Thanjavur, the capital of the Imperial Cholas come some of the finest examples of embossed work. The beautiful Thanjavur (Tanjore) plates, bowls, napkin rings, jewel boxes etc., made of copper and brass, with motifs drawn from Hindu mythology and encrusted in silver against a finely engraved background, exemplify both superlative skill and mastery of material.

Other objects cast in copper, brass, bronze and bell metal, include puja items such as different types of lamps, chembus, (Containers for ritual water) bowls and bells, special utensils and items such as paperweights, menu stands and ash-trays which are made at Nachiarkoil, Nagercoil, Kanchipuram and Arcot. Madurai is famous for a range of charming miniature brass insect and reptile models. The number of crafts men engaged in metal work is about 1200 and their estimated turnover is Rs.40 lakhs annually.

CHAPTER III

History of the Art Plate Craft.

Sculptural art on metal in India dates back to 300 B.C. It had spread to different parts of the country and developed as a handicraft of the people. The craft reflects the skill and dexterity of the fingers and the imagination and creativity of the mind.

Art Metal Ware Centres

Non-ferrous metalware industry is a very old and traditional industry of Northern India dating back to more than four hundred years. At present Moradabad, Varanasi, Jaipur, Almore, Hathras, Pambarthi, Thirupathi, Swami-malai and Thanjavur are the important Art metalware centres in India, producing metalwares from time immemorial. In fact, the industry had emerged and flourished during the Mughal period, especially during the reign of Shahjahan, when elegant touch of artistic glamour was introduced. Then, the metalware industry producing utensils and other household items, shifted to manufacturing of Art metal-

wares of exquisite beauty and earned world wide reputation for the delicacy of its products. The intricate engravings on metalwares, particularly on brass-ware products of Moradabad, were internationally recognised.

Origin of the Thanjavur Art Plate Craft

Experienced manufacturers believe that an Egyptian King presented an ornamental Copper pot to King Serfoji and the sculptors of the Thanjavur palace started making it thereafter. But there is also another version.

The origin is traced back to 250 years at the time of the Maratha rulers in Thanjavur. Some artisans in Moradabad in the North who specialised in the three metal art industry visited Thanjavur and imparted the secrets of mixing the three metals to the local men.

According to another source, Serfoji in his pilgrimage to the three holy centres of Prayag, Kasi, and Ganga brought samples of Bidri plates common in North India. The pilgrimage is described in Thirthayatra Lavanya, a poetic memoir written in Marathi. Serfoji who ruled Thanjavur from 1797 to 1832 made the local Kamala community imitate the artistic beauty and workmanship of Bidri Plates. Inspired by the challenge and in expectation of royal Patronage, they made art plates similar to the Bidri plates. This is the story of the origin of art plates current among the royal family¹ of Thanjavur

(Maratha) and some families of artisans engaged in this work.

According to the 'Indian Art' (1903) Centres of Bidri production existed at Lucknow, Murshidabad, Purnea and Kashmir. According to Birdwood, the word² 'Bidri Plate' is from Bidor, a place in Nizam's dominion, now in Karnataka State, where it was principally practised. This has no doubt thrown some light on the origin of the Bidri work. But whether the metal art work of Thanjavur developed as a refinement of Bidri plate is still uncertain.

Raja Serfoji, the Patron of Arts & Crafts

It is very difficult to verify the correctness of specific source because no proper record has been kept by any one about the origin of this art. Serfoji has played a very important part in the development of the arts of Thanjavur district and it is likely that he and his successors had given good encouragement to the local Viswakarma community in the manufacture of such articles and their improvement in technique and artistry. But it will be unsound to consider that the perfection of the Thanjavur plate could have been attained by a simple trial by four craftsmen. It is untenable to hold the view that Indian art which is largely a process of evolution rather than of discovery could have been developed by royal patronage in such a short time. According to the oral tradition



2. Raja Serfoji

the art has had a foreign origin in the sense that it was a copy of the engraved copper pots manufactured elsewhere, but the work of the plate reflects the genius of South India and the skill of the artisans of the Kam-mala Community, a fact which will be evident to any one who has compared Bidri plates with Thanjavur art plates. We are, therefore, inclined to the view that the Thanjavur art plate was evolved by the artisans of Thanjavur District under the encouragement of the early Hindu Rajahs of Thanjavur and, in the eighteenth century, it had pronounced royal patronage from Serfoji and his successors. This is the view recorded in the District Gazetteer of Thanjavur published in 1933 and currently held in some families of artisans. In this connection it will be worth recalling that Serfoji and his successors have encouraged the development of the art and culture of Thanjavur district in various forms.

Bidri Plate And Thanjavur Art Plate

As indicated already the local artisans while imitating the Bidri art plate have actually improved on the original. In the Bidri plate the brass plate which formed the base, was cut in grooves and inlaid with decorated reliefs and the reliefs were on the same level as the surface of the plate. But in the Thanjavur Plate, the reliefs were encrusted on the base plates, a process which facilitated the incorporation of three dimensional figures thereby rendering the scope of work more

elaborate. In the former the designs were only floral decorations. In the latter mythological figures were embossed amidst floral decorations. Thus the creative imagination of the local artisans has been superimposed on the imported art and a product of great artistic value thus produced.

Kammalar Community

Originally, during Serfoji's time, the making of Thanjavur art plates was confined to four families residing in Thanjavur. Recently a number of others have taken up this craft, but all of them belong to the Kammala community.

The word **Kammala** is derived from **Karma**. There are five distinct sub-divisions among the Kammalas. They are as follows:-

1. Thattans -- Gold and Silversmiths
2. Kannars -- Copper and brass-smiths
3. Kollans -- Blacksmiths
4. Thatchans -- Carpenters
5. Kal Thatchans -- Stonemiths

By religious persuasion, the Kammalas are either Saivaites or Vaishnavaites. But the majority are Saivaites. They speak Tamil except a small section of Vedugu Kammalas who speak Telugu. They wear the sacred thread like the Brahmins, and consider themselves as important as Brahmins. They have their own priest to officiate in their ceremonies.

Concentration in Thanjavur Town

This handicraft is confined to the few families belonging to this community and has never gone beyond the limits of Thanjavur town. Most of the craftsmen have their residences and workshops in and around the South Main Street. Nanayakara chetty street, Ellaianman Koil Street, and Javuli chetty street are the three substreets of South Main Street where more than 50 percent of the artisans reside at present. Throughout the centuries this craft has been considered and treated as the monopoly of the members of this community. It was their policy to see that the knowledge and technique of this craft was not imparted to members of other communities. In earlier times, even other members of the community were denied the facility to learn this art. But the situation has been gradually changing and the community has now successfully persuaded the artisans to share their knowledge with other members of their community in its larger interest.

Developments during 1940's

The market for art plates was limited and only persons with artistic tastes and tourists would purchase these plates. The artisan classes were not economically strong enough to maintain this craft by themselves, so that the middlemen began to purchase the plates at low prices and send them to places like Madras and Bombay for sale.

The profits from this limited market went to such middlemen. Even as early as the thirties of this century one could have seen many of these craftsmen attempting to sell them to foreigners even to the extent of pestering them. This craft however, enjoyed a temporary boom during World War II (1939-46) when these plates were in great demand among the foreign soldiers stationed in Vallam, 15 kilometers from Thanjavur. This period of boom was followed by a period of depression. Due to a sudden decline in demand, some of the artisans took to jewellery making as their primary occupation.

Developments After Independence

With the establishment of the National Government under a democratic set up, a definite encouragement was given for the promotion of handicrafts, rural and small industries. For example, during the First Development Plan several organisations such as The Khadi and Village Industries Board, The All India Handicrafts Boards, The Small Industries Board, etc., were set up in order to promote the production and marketing of handicrafts. The display of the art plates in various sales emporia opened by the Government in various parts of the country has made them known to the general public and has stimulated the demand for such articles.

It must be mentioned that District Collectors like Shri T.K. Palaniyappan and Shri

Bhaskara Thondaman have helped these artisans in large measure, by organising exhibitions, seminars and conferences on Thanjavur Art works, during 1953-58.

The establishment of "THANJAVUR ART PLATE WORKERS' CO-OPERATIVE COTTAGE INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY LIMITED", on 1-9-1957, has stabilized the industry and an increasing number of artisans have enrolled themselves as members of the society.

The bulk of these plates are now sent to the sales emporia such as Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan in Bombay, Central Cottage Industries (CCI) in Delhi, Bengal Home Industries in Calcutta, Kaveri in Bangalore, Lepakshi in Hyderabad, Kairali in Trivandrum, Victoria Technical Institute (VTI) in Madras, etc., and a large number of them are purchased by foreign tourists visiting this country.

Many Craftsmen have been given the National Award for their embossing work. For example,

Shri T.G.Ganesan in the year 1968 (See Photo 3)

Shri Nataraja Achari in the year 1969 (See Photo 4)

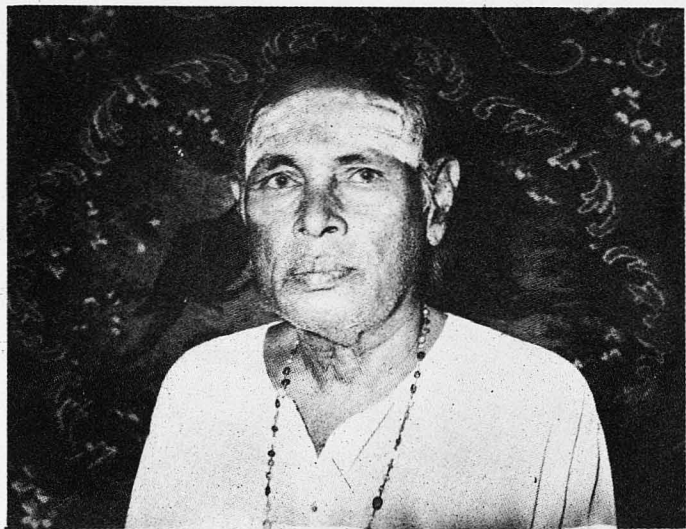
Shri V. Natarajan in the year 1982 (See Photo 5)

The first two are being given life monthly pension of Rs.200 each.

A few of them have been awarded certificates of merit by the All India Handicrafts Board. Experienced mastercraftsmen are now and then invited to participate in the seminars, conferences and exhibitions organised by the All India Handicrafts Board.

Workshop And Artisan Families

Twenty families are now engaged in the Production of Art plates in Thanjavur town. It is practised as a household industry. The front verandah of the house (sometimes enclosed) serves as the workshop which is known locally as 'Pattarai'. Of these families twelve have their own pattarai and tools. Others who do not have any pattarai, work for other craftsmen for wages. Five to six of them are not active producers due to economic reasons. No role is given to the women in this craft. But boys are engaged in giving such assistance as they can to the elders. Actually it is during this unpaid apprenticeship that the boys of the community get acquainted with the intricacies of this art under the guidance and supervision of their elders. This is how the craft technique and skill have been handed down from generation to generation and preserved as a family secret to this day. Even now the workers are unwilling to demonstrate their workmanship before outsiders, especially those who are likely to take up that work.



3. Thiru T.G. Ganesan, Senior Craftsman awarded Certificate of Merit by A.I.H.B. in 1968.



4. Thiru G. Nataraja Achari, Senior Craftsman, awarded Certificate of Merit by A.I.H.B. in 1969.



5. Thiru V.Natarajan, received State Award in 1982 for best Craftsmanship



6. Thiru D.Arunachala Pathar, wellknown for his creations in Art plate craft.

7. Thiru T.A. Kumaraswamy Pathar, Senior Craftsman, is still active at the age of 75 years.



8.a. Thiru Alagiriswamy, an experienced artisan showing the difference between Thanjavur Art plate and Moradabad (brass) Art plate.

As pointed out already, only ten to fifteen craftsmen own their workshop and carry on production regularly. Each of them transacts business yearly upto a lakh of rupees and a few of them even up to 2 lakhs of rupees. Following are the names and address of leading Craftsmen in Art plate works at Thanjavur.

1. T.A Kumarasamy, Nanayakarachetti Street, Thanjavur. (see photo 7).
2. P.G.Alagirisamy, -do- see photo 8
3. Mahendra Varman -do-
4. V.Rajagopalan -do-
5. T.C.Govindachari, -do-
6. T.G.Ganesan, South Main Street, Thanjavur.
7. D.Arunachalam, (see photo 6) -do-
8. S.Thangavel, Javulichetti Street, Thanjavur.
9. A.Dharmalingam, Subedar Street, South Main St., Thanjavur.
10. S.Govindarajan, South Main Street, Thanjavur.
11. A.Jothi Thirunavukkarasu, Kaliammankoil Street, South Main St., Thanjavur.
12. G.Natarajan, Ellaammankoil Street, Thanjavur.
13. V.Natarajan, -do-
14. G.Marimuthu -do-
15. S.Venkataraman -do-

1. Facts gathered by me during the course of ordinary conversations with Srimanth Rajaram Raja Shaheb, the Senior Prince of Thanjavur.

2. George C.M.Birdwood: Industrial Arts of India, Idarah-I Adabiyat-I, Delhi-6, 1974 (Reprint).

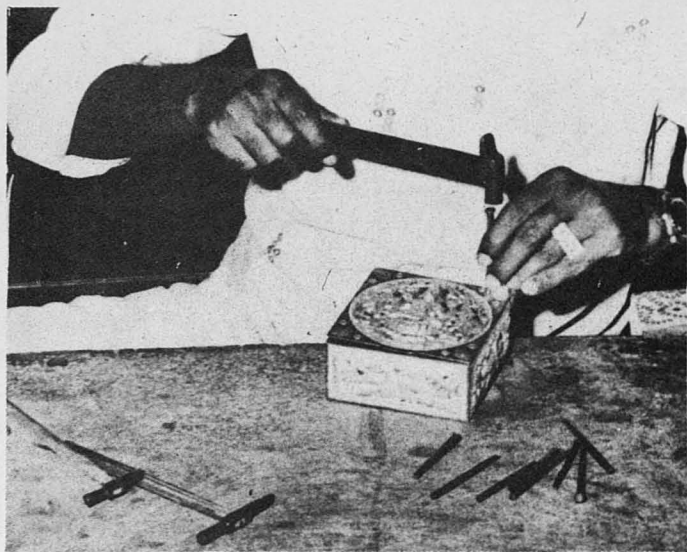
from Vijayawada previously but it has become costly and is being substituted by a locally made wax. This local wax is made out of a mixture of bdellium (known locally as 'Kungiliam'), gingelly oil and brick powder.

Tools

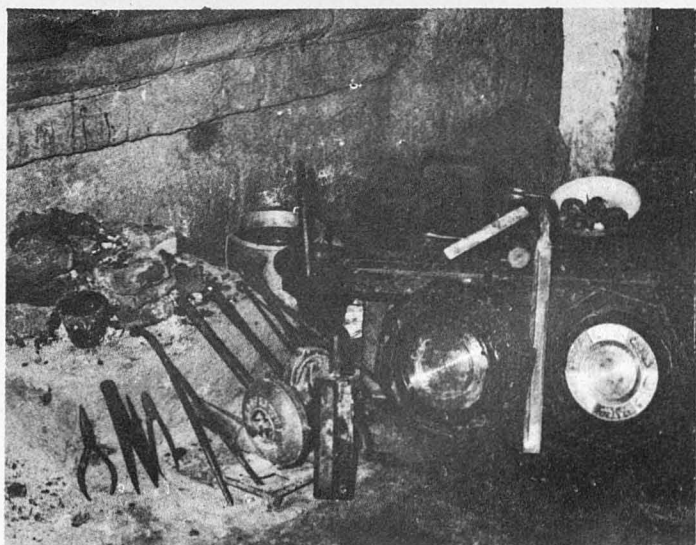
The tools required for the craft are the base board, the hammers, the punches and chisels. Most of the tools are made locally and are available at local hardware stores. It is to be noted that the craftsman inherits the workshop consisting of tools, machine, etc. from father to son. They use the same type of tools over the centuries, despite the changing designs. (See photo 7).

The Base Board:

The base board consists of a wooden plank on which an asphalt bed of thickness of about three to four inches is set firmly. The base plate is set on the asphalt bed before the workman begins to work on the plate. In making the os-plate also, the thin copper sheet is first fastened to the asphalt bed before the design is traced on the sheet. The base plate must be set firm against a solid background before the craftsman can work on it, because cutting grooves in the base plate and rivetting the relief sheets involve quite a lot of hammering and any shake would hamper the delicate work. The base plate is set on the asphalt bed by warming



8.b. Tools & Equipment required for Art plate production.



up the surface of the asphalt bed with a blow pipe. The asphalt once cooled and set gives a very solid backing for the metal and prevents any 'shakes' while hammering. The base board with the asphalt bed is about one to one and a half sq.ft.in area and the artisan can turn about the board any way in which he wants to work on the base plate.

Hammers:

Next important item among tools is the number of hammers of varying sizes and weights made use of in the various stages of work. The hammers have flat working ends and are fitted with wooden handles. The light hammers are used in tracing the designs and in chiselling and the heavier hammers are used to cut grooves in the base plate and to rivet the relief sheets on base plates.

Punches And Chisels:

The most important item among the tools is the large number of punches and chisels which form part of the craftsman's repertoire. These large number of punches and chisels may be divided into four groups on the basis of the use to which they are put. Firstly, there are the tracer punches which are used for tracing out the impression on the os-plate. These are sharp edged punches. Secondly, there are the impression punches which are used in engraving floral decorations

on the base plate. These impression punches have flat working ends with a motif or design carved out at their working ends. When these impression punches are placed on the base plate and hammered on, firm impressions of the motif or design are obtained on the base plate. Thirdly, there are the chisels and punches with pointed working ends. These are used in working the minute details of the design or motif and in refining the coarse impressions. Lastly, there are the bossing and cushioning punches with blunt working ends which are used in repousse work. Each of these groups consists of a large number of punches of varying sizes and shapes. The punches are about four to six inches in length but vary in thickness. They have generally a thick middle section, so that the grip may be firm. The artisans buy these punches with unground working ends and get the local blacksmith to grind the working ends according to their personal requirements.

Production stages

In the production of an art plate the following stages of work are involved:

- (1) Preparation of the base plate
- (2) Preparation of the reliefs through os-plate
- (3) Encrusting the reliefs on the base plate and engraving the floral designs round the reliefs; and
- (4) Final touches with chiselling and polishing.

Each of the first three stages requires obviously different types of skill and experience which are rarely found in the same individual craftsmen. The base plate, in the first stage, is prepared only by a heavy metal worker; in the second stage, the preparation of the reliefs is done only by a jewel maker and in the third stage encrusting of the relief on the base plate is done by a diamond-setter. Thus it is a co-operative effort of three experts. All the workers don't attempt every item of the work involved in the production of the plate. Thus the craft is based on a certain division of labour among the artisans.

Preparation of the base plate

A typical craftsman buys brass sheets from the market and employs the services of the heavy metal worker, to cut plates out of the sheets in the size and shape in which he wants them. The average thickness of the brass plate may vary from 10 to 24 gauge. However, it has been found that a brass plate of 14 gauge thickness serves the purpose well. Plates of varying diameters, 3 inches to 36 inches and even 48 inches, are cut from the sheet metal. After cutting the plate of required size, it is polished till the surface attains a certain standard of smoothness.

Planning of the designs

The planning of the designs involves the selection of the design and motifs and

proper spacing of these on the plate to secure a pleasing and harmonious pattern. The craftsman has a stock of os-plates of standard pattern (os-plate is a local term which describes the basic design plate or the mould from which dies are cast). Whenever he evolves a new pattern, he has to prepare a new os-plate for that design. When the selection and composition of the design are completed, the next stage in the craft sequence is the preparation of the relief sheets.

preparation of Os-plates

The relief sheets are not prepared directly but are cast from the basic design plate popularly known as os-plates. This is a copper plate on which designs are worked by repousse work and it serves as the basic design for the preparation of the reliefs of the particular pattern. To prepare the os-plates, a 40 gauge copper sheet of required size is cut and firmly fixed on an asphalt bed with a wooden base. Asphalt is a kind of wax which can be easily melted and it has the hardness of sealing wax in normal temperature. The copper sheet is fixed on the asphalt bed by slightly heating the surface of the bed with a blow pipe and the copper sheet is made to rest on it firmly. Care is taken to ensure that it rests on an even and hard surface and that there are no air bubbles in between the copper sheet and the bed. Asphalt bed is warmed up with the blow pipe and levelled evenly with the help of a smooth iron rod or spatula. The

copper sheet is then pressed and kept down with the handle of a hammer. Heavy weights are also placed on the metal surface till the bed becomes cool and hard and the copper plate is firmly set in it. The surface is examined very minutely for the location of air bubbles. Any air bubble left under the plate is located by a hollow sound which the metal gives when tapped. Any such plate is heated once again either with a blow pipe or by placing a red-hot iron over it and pressing down again to get a solid backing for the metal.

Having thus fastened the sheet to the asphalt bed, the craftsman proceeds to work on the surface of the metal sheet. He first traces out the design on the copper plate from the design paper with a copying pencil and then proceeds to obtain a firm impression of the design on the plate with the help of metallic tracers. He engraves an outline of the design on the sheet with the tracers. After finishing this stage of work, the craftsman removes the metal sheet from the asphalt bed. The asphalt is slightly warmed for this purpose and the metal sheet stripped off the bed. The face that had been in contact with the bed is cleaned. He also uses the liner punches to give a varied structure to the background wherever it is necessary. In this process, he has to work on both sides of the plate with the bossing and cushioning punches. While punching is done on the reverse side, protuberance is formed on the front

side and vice versa. This process is repeated till the elevations and bulges required for the board details of the design are obtained. (See Photo 9).

Casting of dies

After preparing the os-plate in this manner, the craftsman proceeds to cast the lead dies. Two lead dies are cast on the os-plate, one on the front side and the other on the reverse side. The os-plate is set on a smooth sand bed with its surface covered with lime and a clay border is raised around the sand bed. Lead is melted and the molten lead is poured slowly over the os-plate surface. The os-plate is then reversed and the process is repeated to get the mould of the reverse side which should fit in tightly with the mould of the front side. These two lead dies are known among the craftsmen as the 'male die' and 'female die' (See Photo 10).

Preparation of relief sheets

After this, silver and copper are cut into thin sheets of required sizes, and they are slightly heated to make them malleable. They are then pressed one by one, between the male and female dies, to get the impression of the design on the sheets. Care is taken to see that while pressing the relief sheet between the dies, the surface does not give way or tear. Only a coarse impression



9. Pattern/Design

10. Female Die Male die



of the design is obtained on the relief sheet, but any number of them can be taken from one set of dies. The next stage in the preparation of the relief sheets is the chiselling and refining of the coarse impression. The craftsman has to work with chisels and punches of various sizes until a refined and finished figure is produced. Then it is ready to be fixed on the base plate. The main relief and the subsidiary relief are thus obtained by using lead dies for any number of art plates of identical designs to be prepared by them.

The next stage in the craft-sequence is to encrust the relief sheets on the base plate. For this purpose the base plate is firmly fixed on the asphalt bed exposing the working surface. Cutting recesses and grooves in the base plates will involve a lot of hammering and the plate should be set firmly against a solid background. He then marks out the areas with the help of a compass and a scale on the plate where the primary relief and the subsidiary relief are to be superimposed. He also marks out the portions where floral decorations are to be worked.

The contours of the designs are then marked on the plate with the impression punch which has the particular motif needed for the plate. When the impression punch is pressed with proper inter-space and is hammered on, a deep impression of the motif is obtained on the plate. Such motifs punched one after the other make up the decorative or floral design.

The art of encrusting

Next he cuts recesses along the contour lines with the lozenge shaped and sharp edged punches. To do this, he first marks the outlines and then deepens the lines. The grooves cut in the plate are slightly slanting so that small ridges are formed above the grooves for the relief sheet to be encrusted into the grooves and then to be rivetted by punching on the ridges. The relief sheet is taken and a slight rim at the edge of the sheet to a width of one-tenth of an inch or smaller, is bent slightly to facilitate the dovetailing of the relief sheet into the groove. The hollow depressions at the back of the relief sheets are filled with a locally prepared wax made of brick powder, gingelly oil and frankincense. The relief sheet is placed on the earmarked portion of the base plate in such a way that the slightly bent rims of the relief sheet fit in well into the grooves and it is then rivetted by punching along the grooves. Thus the relief sheets are set firmly in the base plate. (See photo 11).

Final touches

Having set the relief sheets in the base plate, the craftsman examines the relief sheets and refines any coarseness he may see, with the chisel and hammer. After these final touches, the plate is removed from the asphalt board by chipping through the side of the plate which came in contact with



11. Art Plate fixed on a Wooden Plank before giving finishing touches.

12. Art plate is ready being brushed with the sulphuric acid



the asphalt board. Then it is polished and traces of asphalt removed. The plate is then washed in diluted sulphuric acid and then in soapnut powder and brushed with a soft wire brush. Thus the final product with a shine, is produced. (See photo 12)

Cost of production of Art plates

The total cost of production of Art plates is composed of chiefly (i) material cost, and (ii) direct labour cost. Given below is Table -1 relating to cost of production of 100 plates composed of 50 Nos. Nataraj, 30 Nos. Lakshmi, 10 Nos. Ganesh and 10 Nos. Saraswathy, of 8 inch size.

TABLE-1

Abstract of cost of production

(1) S.No	(2) Particulars	(3) Amount Rs .Ps.	(4) Percentage
1.	Materials	4,163.62	(70%)
2.	Direct Labour not included in Machine hour charges.	1,218.95	(20%)
		<u>5,382.57</u>	
3.	Centage on labour and raw materials	538.25	(10%)
	Total Cost	<u>5,920.82</u>	100%

Source: Compiled from the records of Poompuhar Production Centre, Thanjavur.

Close scrutiny of the above table reveals that material cost alone claims nearly 70% of the total cost of production. The labour cost is around 20%. 10% of the direct cost (material and direct labour) is added to cover overhead charges. An analysis of sub-divisions or itemwise cost is presented in the succeeding tables.

TABLE-2

Details of material cost

(1) S.No.	(2) Particulars	(3) Size	(4) Rate Per.Kg.	(5) Qty.	(6) Amount Rs .Ps.	(7) Percentage
1.	Brass plate (12 gauge)	8"	10.52	100 Nos.	1,052.00	(22 %)
2.	Silver (40 gauge)	"	3.61	870 gms.	3,140.70	(75 %)
3.	Copper sheet (44 gauge)	"	92.25	1.5kgs.	138.38	(2 %)
4.	Copper sheet (32 gauge)	"	90.00	300gms.	27.00	(0.2 %)
5.	Brass plate (32 gauge)	"	75.00	315 gms.	23.65	(0.2 %)
					<u>4,381.73</u>	
6.	Asphalt materials				44.55	(0.3 %)
7.	Brass hook				20.70	(0.2 %)
8.	Polishing material				18.56	(0.1 %)
	Less scraps				4,465.54	100 %
					301.92	
					<u>4,163.62</u>	

From table-2 it is evident that silver material cost forms a major portion, followed by brass plate cost. Other materials like copper (item no.3 relating to subsidiary reliefs and item No.4 for preparing and fixing buttons in between central motif and subsidiary reliefs) asphalt materials, polishing material etc., form a very insignificant amount.

Direction for cleaning and polishing

Apply tamarind or lime juice with a pinch of salt and water and brush the art plate with a soft fibre brush till it gets bright. Then wash the art plate with fresh water and use a thin brass wire brush till it gets a good polish. Again clean well with fresh water on all sides of the plate for better shining. Remove the water on the art plate by placing the art plate aslant or shaking it. Rub it with white soft cloth neatly and keep it in the sun light for 15 minutes. This will impart a bright gloss. Cleaning may be totally eliminated by coating the article with clear invisible lacquer.

TABLE-3
Statement of Labour Cost

(1) S.No.	(2) Particulars	(3) Amount Rs .Ps.	(4) Percentage
1.	Kadasal Polish	60.00	(5%)
2.	Machine Polish	60.00	(5%)
3.	Fixing wages	650.00	(54%)
4.	Die Charge	60.00	(5%)
5.	Nagas wages	56.50	(4%)
6.	Sheeting wages	82.45	(7%)
7.	Shaping charge	200.00	(17%)
8.	Final touches & Merugu polish	50.00	(3%)
		<u>1,218.95</u>	<u>(100%)</u>

Source: as in Table-1

From the above table it is evident that fixing wages occupy nearly 50% of the total cost, followed by shaping wages which constitute nearly 15%. Other charges are of lesser amount.

Training

As observed in the third chapter, the craft technique and skill have been handed down from generation to generation and preserved as a family secret. But in recent years the monopoly has been challenged with the inauguration of training programmes, one at the Poompuhar production unit by the Government of Tamil Nadu; and the other by the office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts Board), Government of India.

Poompuhar production - cum - training centre

With the financial aid of the Government of Tamil Nadu a training programme was started with effect from 1.11.1980 and both the training as well as the production programmes have been functioning satisfactorily. Currently, on an average, about 10 (male) candidates ranging from 12 to 18 years of age are recruited yearly to impart training in art plate making. The training period is about one year. The first batch completed its training towards the fag end of 1981. During the training period the trainees are given a stipend of Rs.80 per month.

Advanced Training Centre

Seeing the increasing demand for art plates on the one side and scope for employment potential on the other, the Ministry



13. Key Chain with Goddess Gajalakshmi and Lord Ganesh

14. Art plate Workshop at Poempuhar Production cum Training Centre at Thanjavur.



of Commerce of the Government of India had started an advanced training centre in art metalware making in Thanjavur town under the Control of Asst. Director of Trainees, Pondicherry Office. This training centre is situated at 318, Ellaiammankoil Street, Thanjavur. The master craftsman, Thiru V. Natarajan, imparts training to the trainees (See Photo 6). Only trained candidates aged between 12 to 15 years are selected to impart advanced training in art metalware making. The first batch consisting of 19 boys and 6 girls, was selected during March, 1981. The duration of the training is two years comprising 8 months in drawing, 8 months in fixing work and 8 months in nagas work. During the training period a stipend of Rs.60 is given to each candidate.

CHAPTER-V

Marketing of Art Plates.

Marketing Tasks

Modern marketing starts and ends with the consumer; it precedes and succeeds production. It is thus the guiding element of business. Marketing Tasks or Functions include:-

A. Marketing Research

1. Finding out markets
2. Identifying consumers and ascertaining their preferences.
3. Demand forecasting

B. Product Planning

4. Designing and developing the product.
5. Standardising and grading.
6. Packaging
7. Branding and labelling.

C. Product Pricing

8. Fixing a price
9. Maintaining it (as far as possible)
10. Modifying it (when necessary)

D. Sales Promotion

11. Personal selling
12. Advertising
13. Building Company image.

E. Physical Distribution

14. Storage
15. Transportation.
16. Selling.

F. Follow-up (After-sales Service)

17. Servicing the product
18. Feedback information.

G. Facilitating Functions

19. Financing
20. Insurance

To collect information about these marketing functions in the Art Plate industry, the questionnaires and schedules were framed and administered. These data are processed, analysed and interpreted in the succeeding paragraphs.

The Questionnaires and Schedules

As already indicated, an adhoc study with the limited objective of identifying problem areas in the matter of production and marketing was carried out. Towards this end, a brief questionnaire (vide Appendix-A)

seeking information as to the year of commencement of production, nativity of the craftsmen, types of art works produced, sources of finance comprising owned and borrowed funds, number of workers employed comprising skilled and unskilled workers, particulars regarding production design, size of the art plates, distribution channels, etc., was prepared. In addition, an opinion and attitude survey, having an immediate bearing on the creation of new design, popular design, market identification, advertising and publicity, assistance from the District Industries Centre, SSI registration and assistance under 20 point programme was canvassed.

Market Research

Since marketing starts and ends with the consumers, the consumer preference satisfaction etc., are to be ascertained. The art metal works are mostly decorative articles used mostly by rich people. Although several designs are used in producing different sizes of plates, only certain designs are preferred by customers and plates of particular sizes are fast moving. For example, figures of Nataraja, Ganesh, Lakshmi, Saraswathy etc., are traditional figures well-known to most of the people. Even foreigners are acquainted with such names and figures. Further, plates ranging from 8 inches to 12 inches in size are fast moving for the simple reason that they suit the budgets of middle class people and are also convenient to handle. If the

plate is of a smaller size like 3 to 6 inches the central motif cannot be made very minute and appealing. It is noteworthy that the craftsmen are not undertaking any systematic market study about consumer preferences and tastes. They simply produce according to their judgments based on past experience as to the sizes and designs.

Product Planning

Product planning connotes designing and developing the product according to consumer preference ascertained through market research. The second stage of product planning includes standardising, grading, branding, labelling and packaging also.

Craftsmen make and market not only art plates of different sizes but also other utility articles with the same ornamental works like Pancha Pathram (Pooja vessel), brass/copper pot, cigarette case etc.

In this industry, standardisation and grading is not practiced. Craftsmen change either the thickness of the base (brass plate) or the silver content in central motif and primary reliefs. Further, the Craftsmen being isolated are not able to create any brand image. Normally for packing material they use wooden cases, straw dust and brown paper.

Pattern of Marketing

In general pattern of the marketing of art plates is that independent artisans working in their homes, or workshop owners (master craftsmen/sub-contractors) sell the goods manufactured by them either to big stockists (merchant-exporters) or small shop keepers, directly or through brokers. The stockists and small dealers in turn sell them either to local consumers or outstation merchants or foreign importers, again, either directly or through specific intermediate agencies. The big dealers have relatively high financial resources and some of them have goods made to order directly from the artisans, advancing money to them for the purchase of materials. Artisans working on this basis were generally in regular debt to dealers on account of these advances. With a more liberalised credit policy being followed by banks in India and the current emphasis on easy credit facilities being extended to the weaker sections of society the situation of indebtedness amongst craftsmen has improved only a little extent.

The role of private enterprise in the field of art plate marketing has been, and is today, overwhelmingly important. About 60 percent of art plate production is handled by private agencies and the rest by public marketing and co-operative agencies. The role of co-operatives in this field, which could be by far the best form of organising a major part of the production and marketing of art plates, has been rather weak and tardy.

Pricing

The individual craftsmen who make art plates do not follow any scientific method of pricing of their products. The customers who visit their workshops have to bargain before concluding the sale. The Craftsmen are generally poor and cannot afford to maintain stocks of high value till they get remunerative prices. Since the cost of production varies from time to time for each item, there is no guaranteed or fixed price.

In the case of Poompuhar production unit which follows the scientific method of ascertaining costs and price fixation, the price is fixed after taking into account the cost of materials, labour, overhead and the profit margin.

Generally, the institutional sellers have a fixed margin policy of 30% to 40% over the cost. Further, Craftsmen do not mark the price on the plate itself. But the institutional sellers calculate the price and mark it on the plate itself which enables the consumer to conclude the purchase smoothly.

The individual craftsmen don't follow any scientific method of cost ascertainment or price fixation. That is why there is a wide difference between the prices quoted by institutional sellers and individuals.

Table-4 gives the list of prices for different sizes of plates with different sellers.

COMPARISON OF PRICES OF

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
S.No.	Seller/Size of the plate	3"	4"	5"
1.	Poompuhar, Madras.	(Rs) 15.00	17.00	30.00
2.	Poompuhar, Thanjavur.	(Rs) 15.00	20.00	37.00
3.	V.G.Panneerdas, Madras.	(Rs) 12.00	16.50	40.00
4.	Kairali, Madras.	(Rs) 14.90	19.80	41.25
5.	Vummidias, Madras.	(Rs) 15.00	17.00	30.00
6.	V.T.I., Madras.	(Rs) 9.50	11.50	20.50
7.	Individual Craftsmen.	(Rs) 10.00	16.00	24.00

Source.. Compiled from field work material during January 1983.

TABLE-4

ART PLATES WITH DIFFERENT DEALERS

(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
6"	7"	8"	9"	10"	11"	12"	14"
8.00	65.00	85.00	110.00	130.00	160	190	310
0.00	65.00	80.00	100.00	120.00	140	180	250
75.00	65.00	95.00	110.00	125.00	150	150	280
49.50	66.00	82.50	107.25	140.25	155	206	304
48.00	66.00	88.00	115.00	140.00	165	200	325
37.50	46.50	60.50	77.00	107.50	135	166	230
35.00	45.00	60.00	85.00	125.00	150	180	240

Product

Marketing of art plates poses different problems which are not found either in industrial marketing or in marketing of agricultural products. The customers who buy such plates belong either to the middle class or the upper class in society. These plates adorn the drawing rooms of many elegant homes. They are treated as presentation articles on various festive occasions such as weddings and birthday parties. Art plates are presented to foreign dignitaries visiting this country. They are kept as show-pieces in several museums in India and abroad.

Middlemen

This trade did not attract middlemen or agents on a large scale as in other businesses. Middlemen are not engaged in this trade all the time. They are usually jewellery merchants and business men for whom this business is only secondary. For example, a few jewellery merchants like "Gopaldas Diamonds" in Trichy and Kumbakonam display such plates as part of their sales articles. Sri Jayam Industries at Swamimalai near Kumbakonam displays varying sizes of art plates in their sales emporium "Icon Sales Emporium" to satisfy icon-loving customers. The Cauvery Super Market, an unit of the Thanjavur Co-operative Wholesale Society (TCWS) has also started displaying such art

plates for sale, in its cosmetics and general section. Recently a firm has come into existence under the title "Triumph Enterprises" at Thanjavur to concentrate on art metalware sales. Some of these middlemen are functioning in Thanjavur and in the neighbouring town of Tiruchirappalli. They do not function as money lenders to these craftsmen but whenever they place specific orders for products with the craftsmen, they pay an advance of about 25% to 30% of the anticipated price of the finished products to enable the craftsmen to buy raw materials. When the products are completed and delivered to the middlemen, the balance of the price is paid to the craftsmen.

Export Marketing

The craftsmen are unable to secure a distant market directly either in North India or export market overseas. It is learnt that a few wealthy merchants of North India, who found the 'exportability' of such plates, entered into the business of exporting art plates to foreign countries. For instance, S.Kasiram Pandia and Co., a Gujarathy concern bought the art pieces from the craftsmen of Thanjavur and exported them to the U.K., the U.S.A. and other Western countries. But exporting of art plates took a turn for the better only after the Victoria Technical Institute was established. This institute has successfully created a general awareness among foreigners about South Indian Art works.

It has regular and bulk importing customers in countries like the U.S.A., France, Italy, West Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Japan etc. Export of art plates is also undertaken by some North Indian concerns like Silpakendra, and Maniklal Manufacturing Company at Bombay, C.C.I., and Taj Exporters at Delhi.

Advertising and Publicity

Advertising is a major promotional tool. The importance of advertising lies mainly in the assistance that it provides to salesmen in the process of selling. Advertising allows manufacturers and sellers to place their products before the likely prospects, to attract the latter's attention and awaken their interest. It provides the likely prospects with information about the product, and by the skillful use of apt words and pictures it attempts to persuade them to buy the product. Advertising makes an appeal to the prospects to buy and use the product.

To popularise the art plate works, advertisement is not being undertaken either by individual craftsmen or by institutions like the Thanjavur Art plate Workers Co-operative Cottage Industries Society Ltd. Everyday hundreds of tourists are visiting Thanjavur but they are not kept informed about such metal art works either before or after their arrival. The art plates and the craftsmen remain in darkness. The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) or The

Government of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), which have their branches at Thanjavur, do not seem to appreciate the importance of displaying such art plates in their reception counters or waiting halls.

But it is interesting to note that the art plate figure/photo is being used as base material for advertising other products. One of the cigarette manufacturing companies has been using such a figure in its advertisement campaign to boost the image of its product.

After-sales Service

After-sales service is one of the aspects of any sales promotion programme. After-sales service is required in the form of attending to repairs and replacements whenever called upon to do so. It may be extended even to cover exchange of articles or sales return, if necessary. In the case of art plate marketing the sellers/distributors have no problem at all with regard to sales returns. Generally, once art plates are sold they will not be taken back. There may be rare occasions where a customer may bring back an art plate for refixing or rivetting the secondary relief, if the latter has come out of the base plate. Sometimes customers bring their art plates for cleaning also. It is done usually free of cost by the craftsmen as a measure of goodwill.

Direct (Personal) Selling

The demand from the local market for this product is very limited. Foreign tourists who visit Thanjavur buy such plates at Poompuhar. The individual craftsmen-not all but a few-maintain contacts with handicrafts emporia in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum etc. These emporia in turn place their orders with the individual craftsmen. A few senior and experienced craftsmen are having 40 to 50 years of regular contact with such institutions. Some of them have travelled throughout India and visited such sales emporia in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta etc. The representatives of such emporia also visit Thanjavur periodically and call on these craftsmen.

Recently the demand for art plates has been slowly picking up due to the overall publicity given by the Handicrafts Development Corporation. Industrial and commercial undertakings also place special bulk orders for art plates and other art works like key-chains, emblem plates etc., to be used as complimentary articles on Jubilee occasions. Such customers give orders for special plates to be made with their company/business emblem in the centre of the plate. The State Bank of India, Rallis India, Chillies Merchants Association in Madras, Agricultural College at Coimbatore, Sri Pushpam College in Poondi, Beekayen Enterprises at Trichy, Indian Potash, FACT, Yenkey International at Bangalore,

16. College Emblem in Art plate work



15. Bank Emblem in Art plate work

etc., are among such institutions that gave special bulk-orders in recent years. The Poompuhar Production Unit had supplied nearly 2000 Art Plates, with a special design, to the World Hindu Conference held in Srilanka during April, 1982.

Credit Facilities

Craftsmen need easy credit to free themselves from money lenders. Earlier, a few of them could get small loans from the State Government under the State Aid to Industries Acts. Then came liberalised credit facilities/schemes, especially after the nationalisation of banks, which helped the craftsman but marginally. Under the Differential Rate of Interest (DIR) Scheme of the Government of India, artisans with specified low incomes can now get loans from Commercial banks upto Rs.1,500 for working capital, and Rs.5,000 as term loan at 4% interest per annum. Nevertheless very few craftsmen have so far benefited under this scheme.

According to the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to all Commercial banks, it is now possible for an artisan anywhere in the country, to receive bank credit upto Rs.25,000 for equipment finance or working capital or both. The rate of interest is $9\frac{1}{2}\%$ per annum in specified backward districts and 11% in other areas, excluding the cases which would be covered by the

DIR scheme. Further, there is a provision for an initial grace period of 12 to 18 months during which the payment of interest on capital will not be insisted upon. The RBI has enhanced the guarantee cover in respect of those loans upto 90% and has advised banks not to ask for collateral security or guarantee. The banks are also expected to give their decision on loan applications within 30 days. However these liberal provisions will be helpful only if all the concerned agencies in the field, including the banks, get the credit delivered to the artisans. The District Industries Centres (DICs) established all over the country are specially expected to help the artisans and sponsor their applications under this scheme.

CHAPTER-VI

Marketing: Institutional Approach.

THANJAVUR ART PLATE WORKERS CO OPERATIVE COTTAGE INDUSTRIES SOCIETY LIMITED

The normal channel of marketing for an industry of this type will be a Co-operative Marketing Society. The Thanjavur Art Plate Metal Workers Co-operative Society was registered on 1st September, 1957 and started its work on 24th November, 1957. The Society is at present housed at the upstairs of the Sangeetha Mahal in the Palace Grounds. The object of the Society is not only to improve the art metal industry of Thanjavur, but also to regenerate the economic conditions of the artisans employed in this hereditary industry. The establishment of the Society was the direct result of the initiative taken by Sri T.K. Palaniappan, I.A.S., then Director of Industries and Commerce, who had a good idea of this industry and the artisans, as he had worked as the Collector of Thanjavur. The society had a membership of 29 persons, which has now risen to sixty nine. Out of them only twenty are art plate (active) workers and others are only sympathizers belonging to the Viswakarma Society.

The Government of Tamil Nadu (then the Government of Madras) gave a loan of Rs.4,000 to the artisans to help them buy shares in the Society. The Society purchases art plates and other articles of artistic value from the members and executes orders placed with them by the various Government Sales Emporia and private dealers throughout the country. Chief of them are The Central Cottage Industries Emporium at New Delhi, The Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan, Small Scale Industries Emporium etc., in Bombay, Tamil Nadu Handicraft Development Corporation (Poompuhar) etc., in Madras, and Bengal Home Industries in Calcutta.

The chief sources of finance to the Society consist of:-

- (i) Share capital from the members of the Society, Rs.39,700
- (ii) Government Contribution towards share capital, Rs.10,000 and
- (iii) Cash credit loan around Rs.50,000 from The Tamil Nadu State Industrial Co-operative Bank Limited.

A subsidy of Rs.3,000/- is granted by the Government of Tamil Nadu and it is deposited in the Thanjavur Co-operative Central Bank. The services of a Co-operative Sub-Registrar have been placed at the disposal of the Society to work as its Secretary/Special Officer.

The practice followed is that the members

give their finished product to the Society for which an advance of nearly 60% of the value of the products is paid to them. After selling the products the Society pays the balance to its members deducting 20% of the total cost as its commission. The business trend of the Society is presented below:

TABLE-5
THE BUSINESS TREND OF THE SOCIETY 1976-1983

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Year	Purchases (Rs. in Lakhs)	Sales (Rs. in lakhs)	Net. Profit (Rs.)
1976-77	1.33	1.94	7,000
1977-78	2.11	2.62	22,000
1978-79	3.73	4.4	22,000
1979-80	2.58	2.72	12,000
1980-81	3.98	4.61	32,000
1981-82	4.03	4.30	22,000
1982-83	3.56	3.96	23,000
1983-84(target)	4.02	4.50	28,000

Source: Compiled from the records of the Society.

A study of the above table reveals that 1980-81 is the best period in terms of the turnover of business and profits. The Society has been increasing its sales year after year, except during 1979-80, in which year a general recession prevailed throughout the country.

Cost of sales of the Art Plates was only Rs.36,000 during 1962-63. In terms of turnover it rose by 13 to 15 times without allowing due credit to inflation. A study of inter-relationship between sales and profit reveals that the Society has been able to improve the general profitability position. It is hoped that during 1983-84 it would be able to achieve a tremendous growth in its turnover and profit.

POOMPUHAR (TAMIL NADU HANDICRAFTS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION)

This Corporation was registered as a registered company under the Companies Act with its headquarters at Madras, and came into existence on 1.8.1975. It is owned by the Government of Tamil Nadu. The main activities of the Corporation are the development and production of Handicrafts (both traditional and non-traditional) of Tamil Nadu. It has production centres in various parts of Tamil Nadu.

Sales-cum-show rooms

Production and marketing of Thanjavur Art Plate has been one of the activities of the Corporation right from its inception. It has a production Unit at Thanjavur. This Corporation maintains several sales-cum-show-rooms throughout the country: 16 such show-rooms are in this State and 4 outside the State, one each in Pondicherry, Bangalore,

Bombay and Delhi (vide Appendix B).

Poompuhar, a Treasure House of Handicrafts

This Corporation maintains showrooms and sales offices under the brand name of 'Poompuhar', a great name associated with the great epic 'Chilapathikaram'. The Trade Mark for Poompuhar is the Thanjavur toy. The Thanjavur Office was established by the Corporation in 1976 and a production-cum-training centre was also attached to it.

TABLE-6
STATEMENT OF PRODUCTION & WAGES 1976-83
(Rupees in lakhs)

(1) Year	(2) Production	(3) Wages paid
1976-77	0.147	0.075
1977-78	0.424	0.244
1978-79	0.599	0.339
1979-80	1.022	0.597
1980-81	1.599	0.847
1981-82	2.421	0.826
1982-83	3.021	1.256

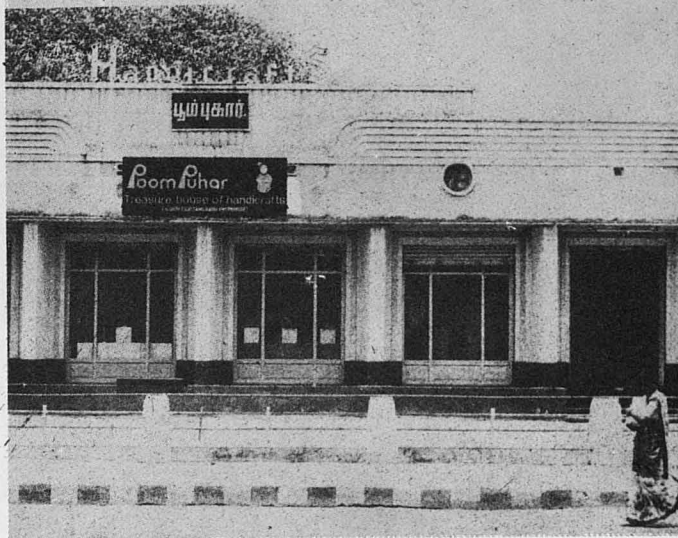
Source: Compiled from the records of Poompuhar Production Centre, Thanjavur.

A close scrutiny of the table reveals that production has been increasing or indeed

doubling, year after year. It is hoped that during 1983-84 the production centre would be able to achieve easily the production target of Rs.3.5 lakhs.

Development of New Designs

It employs 2 master craftsmen and 2 more semi-skilled workers besides a Superintendent. Generally, workers are well paid and employment is given throughout the year. Whenever the unit receives an order beyond its production capacity, it procures plates from the art plate craftsmen through the Thanjavur Art Plate Workers Co-operative Cottage Industries Society Ltd. This Centre produces plates with traditional designs (like God and Goddess) and new designs befitting festive occasions, embodying suitable emblems. For instance, during Bharathi Centenary period/function, art plates embodying Bharathiyar figure in the centre were produced and marketed. This was received very well in the market. This gave an impetus to the making of art plates with figures of national leaders and social reformers like Mahathma Gandhi, E.V.R. Periyar, Arignar Anna and Kamaraj. It produces mostly art plates ranging from 3 inches to 48 inches. The raw materials are procured by the Head Office, on behalf of the Production Centre. Sales Offices of the Corporation are given discretion in the matter of price policy. Production Centres are governed by the Factories Act, 1947, whereas showrooms



17. Poempuhar Showroom-cum-Sales at Thanjavur.

18. Poempuhar: Display of Art plates for sales.



come under Shops & Establishments Act. Generally the Corporation follows a policy of charging 30% to 40% margin on all the products sold by it.

Inter-state And Overseas Business

This Corporation unfortunately did not maintain any inter-state tie-up with other state owned Handicraft Development Corporations like Kauveri in Karnataka, Kairali in Kerala and Lepakshi in Andhra Pradesh. During 1980-81 it organised one exhibition-cum-sales centre at Dubai in which it was able to sell art plates with the Mecca figure to the tune of Rs.2 lakhs. Poompuhar sales offices are recognised shopping centres included in the tourist map of Tamil Nadu.

VICTORIA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, MADRAS

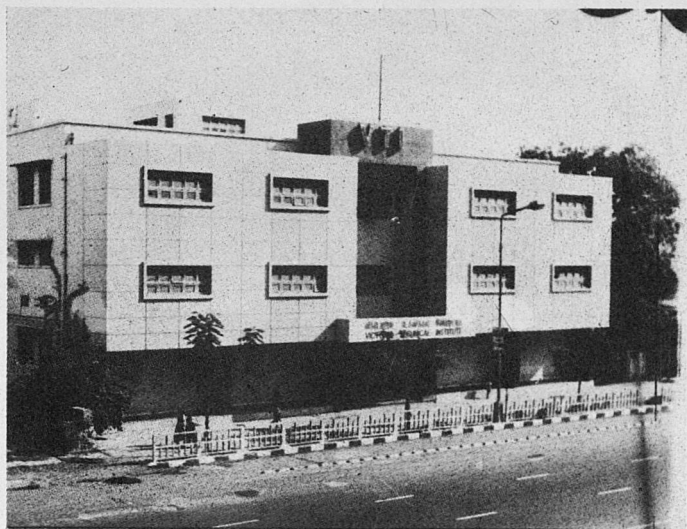
The Victoria Technical Institute (V.T.I) was established as a non-profit organization in 1887 under Government auspices for the preservation and development of Indian handicrafts. It was registered under the Societies Act. The main activity of the Institute is buying and selling, selling on commission the articles produced by handicrafts men and artists. The articles on sale are typical of the country. Prices are regulated allowing only a small margin of profit thus preventing the Institute from working at a loss, and at the same time enabling it not only to

help the craftsmen of to-day but by the provision of scholarships to Industrial Schools of Arts (such schools are at Kumbakonam and Madras) to ensure that craftsmanship will not die out in the future.

V.T.I. as an Authorised shop

The V.T.I. tries to develop and promote South Indian handicrafts. A spacious showroom comprising 3 floors of the building, houses a permanent exhibition-cum-sales centre dealing in an extensive range of our arts and crafts including Thanjavur Art Plates and other art works. Thousands of tourists from abroad as well as from various parts of this country patronise the Institute. The V.T.I. has been included as an authorised shop in the approved list of India Tourism Development Corporation, Government of India, and also Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation. Over the years the V.T.I. has earned wide reputation for offering the world the best of Indian handicrafts, especially the South Indian handicrafts, and a visit to the Institute is considered essential in the itinerary of the foreign dignitaries visiting our country.

The V.T.I. has been playing a vital role in the development of Thanjavur Art Plate Industry by offering reasonable prices to the craftsmen, and providing a permanent exhibition-cum-sales centre. It has a separate display-



19. VTI at Madras.

20. Display of Art plates for sales at V.T.I. Madras.



cum-sales counter in its building, offering a wide range of art plates ranging from 3 inches to 48 inches. Comparatively, the prices charged by the V.T.I. are reasonable and modest.

The total sales of art plate works for the year 1971-72 were around Rs.55,000. But the sales went up during 1980-81 to an all time record of Rs.4,72,281. However, during 1981-82 there was a decline by Rs. 13,161 to Rs.4,72,281.

OTHER INSTITUTIONS CONNECTED WITH THIS CRAFT

The Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India (HHEC)

The Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India is a subsidiary of the State Trading Corporation of India (STC), and came into existence in June, 1962. The Corporation's policy in the field of direct exports is designed to develop new markets and came into existence in June, 1962. The Corporation's policy in the field of direct exports is designed to develop new markets and expand traditional ones and to introduce new products suitable to the consumer's demands abroad. The Corporation undertakes and executes wholesale orders, conducts retail sales operations through retail outlets abroad, and participates and sells in major exhibitions

of the world. The Carpets Warehousing Depot at Hamburg established in 1965 has done well in boosting the exports of hand-knotted carpets to West Germany.

The Handicrafts and Handlooms Export Corporation of India helps private exporters by affiliating them as business associates. It also undertakes a number of publicity and promotional measures for the export of handicrafts and handloom products. Addresses of its offices in India and abroad are given in Appendix-C.

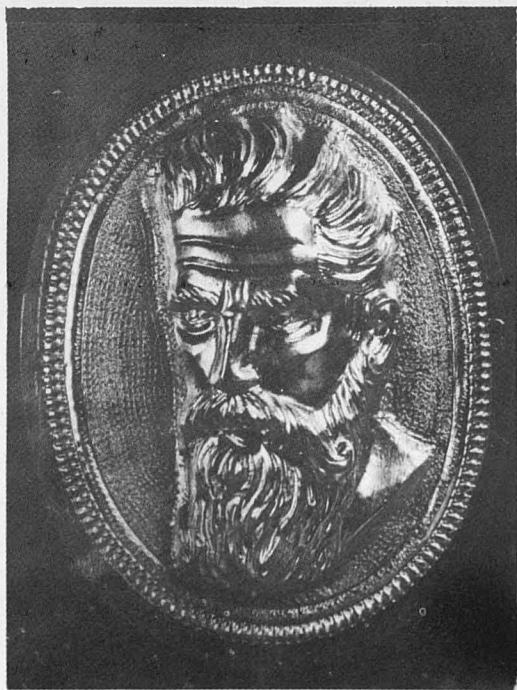
The Central Cottage Industries Corporation Pvt.Ltd. (CCIC)

The Central Cottage Industries Corporation Pvt. Ltd., is a successor to the Central Cottage Industries Association, a registered society which had taken over from the Indian Co-operative Union. It runs the Central Cottage Industries Emporium (C.C.I.E) at Janpath, New Delhi, the premier retail sales organisation in Indian handicrafts. The C.C.I.E. has branches in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Jaipur. C.C.I.E.'s daily sale today is more than its annual sale thirty years ago, when it was started by a band of social workers. The annual sale now exceeds Rs.4 crores.

All India Handicrafts Board

The All India Handicrafts Board, presently

21. Ashtalakshmi in Art plate
Oval shape



22. Paper-weight: Seimen's
figure.

attached to the Ministry of Commerce, was originally set up in November 1952 to advise the Government on problems of handicrafts and to suggest measures for improvement and development. The Board was also required to study technical, marketing, financial, organisational, artistic and other aspects of handicrafts and to formulate plans on these lines. Its function also included advice and assistance to State Governments in planning and executing schemes for the development of handicrafts. It may be noted that under the Indian Constitution the development of handicrafts is a State subject. Therefore, the primary initiative for the development of handicrafts must emanate from the States and the Union Territories themselves.

The Handicrafts Board realises that craftsmen scattered all over India are handicapped by a lack of organisational facilities to articulate their ideas and problems and to participate directly in the development process. The Board is also anxious that the prosperity accruing to the handicrafts sector from increased exports and domestic sales is diverted back to the craftsmen. Their welfare, it is being realised, must find a prominent place in the programme of the Board.

There is also emphasis on crafts development becoming a part of the integrated rural development programme in the States and Union Territories. The Board is taking up a number of new schemes for massive training

in selected crafts, design development, and dovetailing training and design efforts, improvement of tools and techniques used by the craftsmen, expansion of facilities, and extending the marketing network in both internal and external markets.

In the past, craftsmen would receive recognition from royal patrons and patronage would often be inherited by their families. Now, in order to honour craftsmen, the Board since 1965, has started presenting annual National Awards to mastercraftsmen of exceptional skill. Under this scheme, each recipient of the National Award is presented with a plaque, an angavasthiram (Ceremonial shawl) and Rs.2,500 by the President of India. This is a rare and much awaited moment in the life of a craftsman and it is a moving experience indeed, to watch their response to this distinction.

On the twentyfifth anniversary of India's Independence (1972) the Board also presented Special Awards to selected craftsmen throughout the country for their outstanding craftsmanship and imagination. Under this scheme, the Prime Minister honoured 10 Craftsmen with Rs.10,000 each and another 25 with Rs.2,500 each. A scheme to provide pensions to Craftsmen in indigent circumstances is also operating. This is the first step towards providing some form of social security to the crafts community.

23. Keychain: Mosque



24. Keychain: Mecca

A number of young persons receive training under the Board/Apprenticeship Scheme, by which these young boys and girls may train with master craftsmen. Both are paid during the training period and it is hoped that this will deter the families of craftsmen from leaving the profession for more lucrative factory jobs, and encourage others to enter them once the market can guarantee a viable livelihood. Over 1,500 people had been trained in 1981-82.

There are four All India Handicrafts Board Regional Design and Technical Development Centres in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Bangalore which render design and technical assistance to craftsmen. A technical wing for research in tools, techniques and materials has also been added to each of these Centres. Craftsmen have been deputed in the past from one place to another in the country, to acquaint them with more advanced techniques in certain crafts. Such movement must be more frequent and cover a large number of craftsmen. Some of the more inventive craftsmen should also occasionally be exposed to the experiences of other countries known for their craft traditions and skills.

CHAPTER-VII

Findings and Suggestions.

The craft is one of our ancient decorative arts and is worth preserving for its artistic merit alone. To preserve the craft and develop it further, the following course of action is suggested:

1. Most of the artisans confine themselves to the traditional designs which consist of mythological figures. They are generally conservative and do not attempt new designs because a fresh os-plate has to be made for every new design and it involves considerable amount of work. To capture the distant market, the artisans should come forward to study and know the tastes of consumers. They have to adopt new designs as done by Moradabad metal art workers. In brief, the craftsmen should become more progressive in their outlook.

2. Though this ornamental work of engraving and embossing images and floral decorations was originally confined to making of plates, other utility articles like cups, tumblers, bowls, caskets, and jewel boxes came to be made subsequently. Of late, a few enterprising craftsmen who have sufficient capital to

25. Sericulture Emblem in Art plate work.



26. Buddha in Art plate
Octagonal shape.

be invested have attempted new articles and have made ornamental ash-trays, mirror-stands, photo-stands and flask covers. This is the exception rather than the rule. Institutions like Poompuhar can pay more attention in developing new designs and utility articles of ornamental work.

3. Raw materials are mostly procured locally by the artisans. The price level of local market is not steady. Particularly the price of silver is causing hardship to one and all. It forms a major component in the cost of production of this craft. Hence arrangements can be made for the supply of such materials through the Art plate workers Co-operative Cottage Industries Society or the District Industries Centre (D.I.C) at Thanjavur.

4. Only 60 percent of the Craftsmen are getting finance from the organised money market, particularly from the nationalised Commercial Banks. Others get it from local money-lenders like Chettiars, Saits (Seths) etc., at exorbitant interest rates. The latter category includes most of the craftsmen who do not have adequate business outside the State; they deserve more attention from the nationalised Commercial Banks or Co-operative Banks, atleast under the new 20 Point Programme.

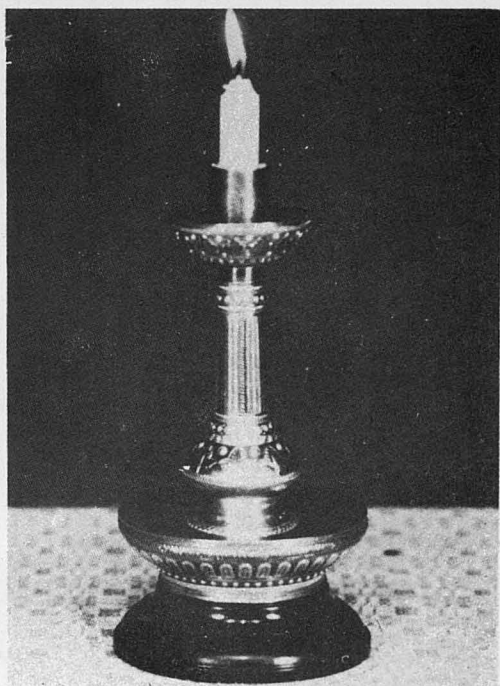
5. The training schemes of Poompuhar Production Unit and advanced training course

by the Training Centre under the control of the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India, are the positive developments in recent times. This shows clearly that the Governments-the State as well as the Central-are also aware of the need for preserving and developing this art. But, lack of master craftsmen is a constraint in these Centres. Experienced craftsmen hesitate to appreciate the role of Poompuhar in this matter. The experienced individual craftsmen should come forward to teach the art without any reservation in the broader interests of the industry.

6. The craftsmen should conform to the standard gauge of materials particularly in brass, copper and silver to ensure durability of the craft. Some of them resort to the reduction of the silver content of the craft so as to quote lesser prices than others. This is done by reducing the size of either the main motif or the primary reliefs. Such practices tend to diminish the majestic look of the craft. Hence, it is suggested that the artisans should try to standardise their work so as to maintain the traditional image of the craft.

7. This industry, like others, has also experienced cyclical trade crisis. During 1943-46, the industry enjoyed a temporary boom as it was patronised then by foreign soldiers and now, from 1976 onwards, it is progressing well, despite the silver-boom. Some institutional sellers are of the view that production

27. Candle stand.



28. Decorated Jar.

of art plates should strictly conform to the demand position. This is based on the view that 'production is limited by the extent of the market'. However, under modern conditions, the extent of the market can be widened by carefully planned advertising and publicity measures.

8. The Handicrafts and Handloom Exports Corporation (HHEC), a subsidiary of the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd., (STC) and the Trade Development Authority of India (TDA) should come forward to set up a Centre to provide common facilities and testing facilities on the model of 'Metal Handicrafts Service Centre' at Moradabad which was established in 1979-'80, with the assistance of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

9. Another finding is that this craft is not getting proper advertisement and publicity. Neither the Art plate workers Co-operative Society nor Poompuhar has taken any serious step in this direction. They are merely satisfied with the present volume of business. But the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) and the Indian Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) through their Thanjavur Offices can give due attention in this matter by displaying such art works either at their reception counters/stalls or Thanjavur Railway Station (box-displays) as done by textile/utensils/jewellery dealers

at Trichi, Kumbakonam Railway Junctions etc. Advertising Boards can be set up near the Big Temple and Palace.

10. Serious and sincere attempts should be made to capture the overseas market like the U.S.A., France and Switzerland. Of late, the oil producing countries with high per capita income have become potential markets for artistic products. Hence, the Tamil-Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation (THDC), the Handicrafts and Handloom Export Corporation, the Trade Development Authority, the Trade Fair Authority (TFA), Central Cottage Industries and other similar institutions should take joint efforts to enlarge the overseas market for the art plates and allied art metalware.

11. For genuine progress it is imperative that the artisan becomes literate. This important aspect of his development should never be lost sight of, while implementing various training schemes for him. We shall be failing in our duty to crafts and society, if young people, while receiving training in crafts either as apprentices or as regular trainees in private or Government Centres, are not simultaneously provided facilities for adequate literacy.

12. The effort by various developmental agencies apart, substantial provision must be made for, and special emphasis placed



29. Thanjavur Art plates and other metal art works like bowls, jewel boxes, Cigarette cases, pots etc.

30. Vessel decorated with Art works



on, those institutional facilities which directly help in increasing production, improving working conditions and raising the living standards of craftsmen. For, it is undeniable that craft activity cannot progress in the real sense, without our craftsmen receiving commensurate attention, care and recognition. It is only thus that we may expect the crafts themselves to transmit their vitality and grace.

13. Handicrafts Development Corporations at the State level like Poompuhar in Tamil Nadu and Lepakshi in Andhra Pradesh can arrange to buy metalwares from each other and promote the sale of handicrafts particularly the metal art craft. Articles like Moradabad plates, Bidri wares, Pambarthi metal wares are very much suitable under such exchange arrangements between these corporations.

14. Similar arrangements can be made by the Cauvery Super Market at Thanjavur with other super markets in the State or other departmental stores in and outside Tamil Nadu.

15. The Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation viz., Poompuhar, should have a few marketing salemen to canvass for such handicrafts like art plate works with leading companies/corporations of both the private and public sectors which in turn can buy such articles in bulk to be presented

to shareholders /directors /distributors as mementos. Besides supplying plates for Government functions, this Corporation can certainly create a new market with such clientele.

16. The Tamil University too can contribute its mite to the task of popularising art plate works by arranging for a box-display containing all varieties of Thanjavur art plate works, both traditional and modern adaptations, in its museum within the University Complex.

Lastly, the researchers in future may also go in depth, as a corollary of this present study, into the details of sales potential of such art plate works in the North as well as in the overseas market.



31. Vinayakar in Art plate

32. Lions International Emblem



APPENDIX-A

A STUDY ON THANJAVUR ART PLATE UNIT SCHEDULE

A. UNIT BACKGROUND

1. Year of start up of production
 2. Growth Start up Current
 2. 1 Employment
 2. 2 Production :Quantity
 Value Rs.
 3. Initial assistance received for setting up enterprise
- | Agency | Loan
Rs. | Grant
Rs. | Total
Rs. | Terms |
|---------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| 3.1 | | | | |
| 3.2 | | | | |
| 3.3 | | | | |
| 3.4 | | | | |
| 3.5 All | | | | |
4. FOR CRAFTSMAN ENTERPRISE ONLY
 - 4.1 Family background
 - 4.2 Experience, including special training,
if any.
 - 4.3 Motivation for choice of line, location,
process and size

B. PRODUCTION PROCESS

1. Description of processes used with indication of the use of improved

tools or equipment and power.

2. Reasons for choice of process.
3. Change in production process, if any, since inception and reasons thereof.
4. If no change, is this the best available?
5. Extent of awareness of improved processes of production in the line.
6. Has assistance been sought from any agency for process improvement?
If Yes, what is the experience?
7. Exchange of information on production processes between similar units in the same centre/other centres.

C. CAPITAL STRUCTURE

1. premises

- 1.1 Separate shed ____ 1.2 Part of residence

2. Type of structure

- 2.1 Kacha ____ 2.2 Semi-Pucca ____ 2.3 Pucca

3. Ownership

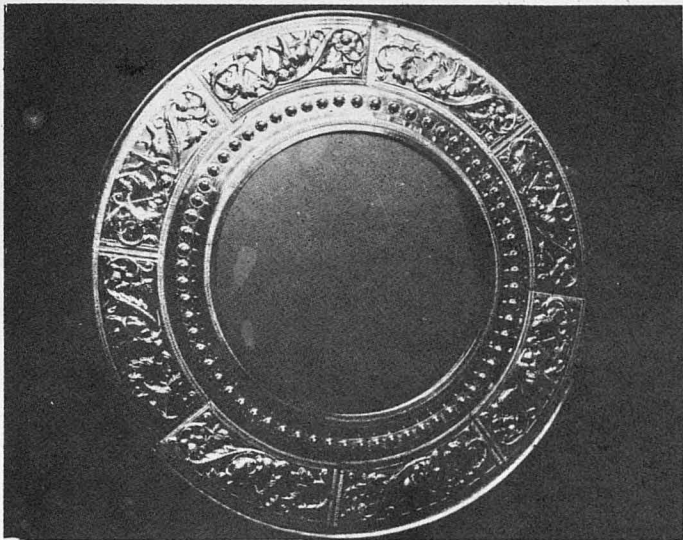
- 3.1 Own ____ 3.2 Rented ____
3.3 If rented, annual rent (1980-83):Rs.

4. Fixed Assets 1982-83 1981-82 1980-81
 Rs. Rs. Rs.

- 4.1 Land and shed
4.2 Tools, implements and equipment
4.3 Other fixed assets
4.4 All

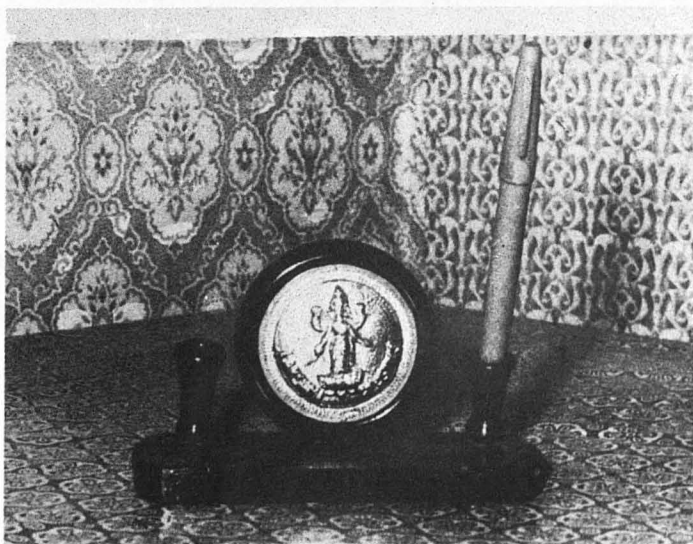
5. Current assets 1982-83 1981-82 1980-81
 Rs. Rs. Rs.

- 5.1 Stock of raw materials



33. Mirror in Art plate

34. Pen stand



- 5.2 Stock of semi-finished/
finished goods.
- 5.3 Other current assets
(including sundry debtors,
loans and advances and
cash)
- 5.4 All current assets

6. Other Investments

Item	1982-83	1981-82	1980-81
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
6.1 Shares			
6.2 Securities			
6.3 Deposits			
6.4 Others (Specify)			
6.5 All			

7. Source of funds

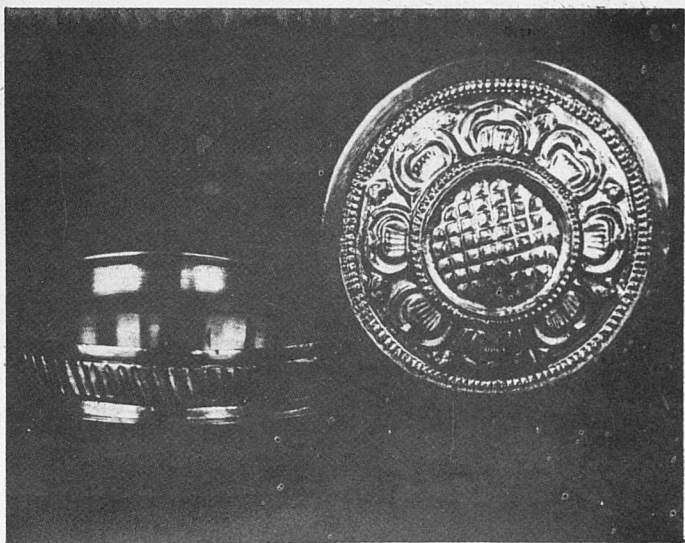
	1982-83	1981-82	1980-81
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
7.1 Own (member's) share			
7.2 <u>Loans outstanding from</u>			
7.21			
7.22			
7.23			
7.24 All			
7.3 Grants, benefacttion, etc.			
7.4 Reserves			
7.5 Total			

Rs.

D. EMPLOYMENT

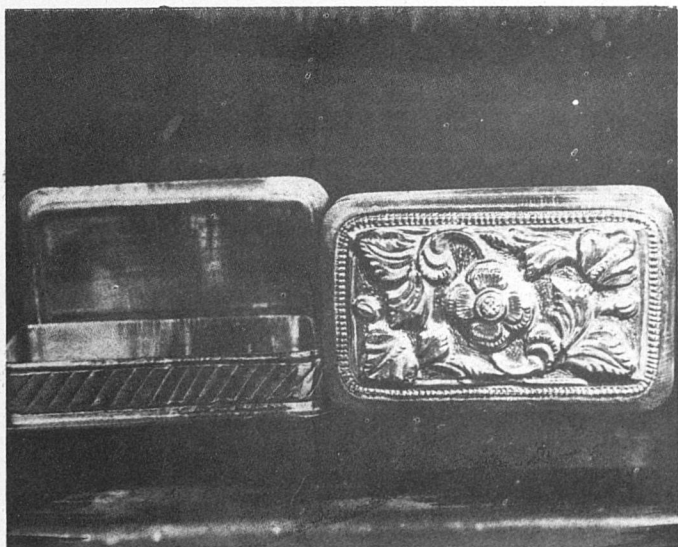
1. Craftsmen

	Regular				Casual			
	Full Time		Part Time					
	Female	Child	Male	Female	Child	Male	Female	Child
1.1 <u>Number employed</u>	Male							
1.11 Family								
1.12 Non-family								
1.13 All								
1.2 Average number of hours worked per day								
1.3 <u>Average number of days worked in 1982-83</u>								
1.4 <u>Payment</u>								
1.41 <u>Basis</u>								
1.411 <u>Piece rate (check)</u>								
1.412 <u>Time rate (Check)</u>								
1.42 Rate Rs.								
1.5 Total payment Rs.								



35. Kum Kum box

36. Snuff box



2. Non-craftsmen

2.1 Number employed

2.11 Full time

2.12 Part time

2.2 Number of days worked

2.3 Total payment Rs.

3. Comparison of wage rates

3.1 In the same production line

3.11 Peak season

3.12 Slack season

3.2 With other production lines

4. How long does it take to acquire skill in the line.

5. Problems, if any, in acquiring skilled labour in this line.

6. To what extent skill availability is a constraint in expanding production.

7. Assistance from agencies for training of craftsmen and experience thereof (specify agency).

8. Working conditions of craftsmen and welfare measures.

E. PRODUCTION

1. Productivity

Activity/Process	Equipment	Output/ worker/day
(Qty & Value)		

2. Total production in 1980-81 to 1982-83

Quantity

Value (Rs.)

3. Is the production the maximum that could be achieved? If no. to what extent theme under-utilisation?

4. Constraints on full utilisation of capacity.

F. SALES

	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
	Qty. Value	Qty. Value	Qty. Value
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
1. <u>Sales and other income</u>			
1.1			
1.2			
1.3			
1.4			
1.5 Sales income			
1.6 Other business income			
1.7 Total			
2. <u>Grants received in 1981-82 (Rs.)</u>			
2.1 Rebates/subsidies			
2.2 Training/research			
2.3 Others			
2.4 Total			
3. Nature of sales (Indicate percentage of sales)			
3.1 Direct to customer			
3.2 THDC			
3.3 AIHB			
3.4 Traders			
3.5 Others (Specify)			
4. Direction of sales (indicate percentage of sales value)			
	Rural	Urban	Total
4.1 Within district			
4.2 Within State			
4.3 Outside the State			
5. Assistance for marketing of products			

from THDC/AIHB/Other agencies and experience thereof.

6. Problems faced in marketing the products

G. RAW MATERIALS

1. Raw materials used and sources of procurement (indicate percentage share)

Raw material	Within District	within State	Outside State
--------------	-----------------	--------------	---------------

1.1

1.2

1.3

1.4

1.5

1.6

2. Problems in securing raw materials

3. To what extent raw material availability is a constraint in expanding production.

4. Assistance received, if any, from agencies in securing raw materials (Specify agency)

H. EXPENSES

	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.

1. Raw materials
2. Fuel, power and water
3. Wages
4. Rent and interest
5. Rates and taxes
6. Excise

6. Excise
7. Marketing, advertisement and selling expenses.
8. Other expenses (Specify)
9. All expenses

I. ASSISTANCE

1. Assistance sought for and experience thereof

<u>Type of assistance Sought</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Experience</u>	<u>Level of satisfaction *</u>
--------------------------------------	---------------	-------------------	------------------------------------

- 1.1 Production
- 1.2 Finance
- 1.3 Marketing
- 1.4 Training
- 1.5 Organisation
- 1.6 Others (Specify)

0									
-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	

2. Difficulties in running the enterprise and areas where institutional assistance is required.

* Score level of satisfaction in respect of each assistance received from each source as follows.

APPENDIX-B
POOMPUHAR-LIST OF SHOWROOMS AND PRODUCTION-CUM-TRAINING CENTRES

S.No.	Showrooms (1)	Production-cum-Training (2)	Products (4)
1.	Madras	Madras	Papier-mache
2.	Bombay	Salem	Bronzes
3.	New Delhi	Nachiyarkoil	Brass Lamp
4.	Bangalore	Nagercoil	Wood carving
5.	Madurai	Madurai	Brass Lamp
6.	Mahabalipuram	Pudukkottai	Palm Leaf
7.	Neyveli	Kanchipuram	Brass Lamp
8.	Coimbatore	Thanjavur	Art Plate
9.	Thanjavur	Wallajapet	Woollen Shawl
10.	Trichy	Mahabalipuram	Stone Sculptures
11.	Tirunelveli	Ambasamudram*	Wood (turning and lacquer ware)
12.	Salem	Kaverinagar	Palm Leaf
13.	Vellore	Ayakudi*	Woollen Shawl
14.	Erode	Kallakurichi	Sandal Wood
15.	Cuddalore	Vazhaikulam	Brass Lamp
16.	Ooty	Swamimalai	Bronzes
17.	Pondicherry		

*Unit closed.

APPENDIX-C

HHEC OFFICES IN INDIA

1. New Delhi The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Lok Kalyan Bhavan,
11-A DD Upadhyaya Marg.
New Delhi-110 002
2. Madras The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Sudarsan Building,
14, Whites Road,
Madras-600 014.
3. Bombay The HHEC of India Ltd.,
11th Floor,
Nirmal building,
Nariman Point
Bombay-400 020.
4. Calcutta The HHEC of India Ltd.,
10th Floor,
6-A, Raja Subodh
Mullick Square,
Calcutta-700
5. Ludhiana The HHEC of India Ltd.,
"Ashiana",
Dr.Hira Singh Road,
Civil Lines,
Ludhiana-141 001 (Punjab)
6. Bhadohi The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Mohalla Rajpur,
Bhadohi-221 401
Varanasi (U.P)

7. Cannanore The HHEC of India Ltd.,
"Bhagya Niwas",
Talap,
Cannanore-670 001.
(Kerala).
8. Srinagar The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Gogji Bagh,
Srinagar-190 001
(Kashmir)
9. Badagara The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Valsala Nivas,
Narayana Nagar,
Badagara-673 101
Calicut Dist.(Kerala)
10. Bangalore The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Chandrakiran Bldg.,
10-A Kasturba Road,
Bangalore-560 001
(Karnataka)
11. Bhagalpur The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Holding No.30,
D.N.Singh Road,
Bhagalpur-812 202
(Bihar)
12. Kollegal The HHEC of India Ltd.,
10/90 New St.,
First Floor,
Kollegal-571 440
(Karnataka)

13. Nellore The HHEC of India Ltd.,
12/221-B Narayanaraopet
Opp.Nellore Municipal Office,
Nellore 524 001 (A.R.)
14. Quilon The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Triveni House, Near Rly,
Overbridge Kadappakada,
Quilon-691 008.
(Kerala)
15. Bhuvanagiri The HHEC of India Ltd.,
10/13 Rettai Pilliarkoil
St, Mel Bhuvanagiri
(Tamilnadu)

HHEC OFFICES ABROAD

1. New York-Sona The HHEC of India
Ltd.,
29th West 38th Street,
New York, (U.S.A).
2. Paris-Sona The HHEC of India Ltd.,
400 Rue Sait Honore
75001
Paris (France).
3. Nairobi-Sona The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Jeevan Bharati Building,
Harambee Avenue
Post Box No.49984
Nairobi (Kenya).
4. Tokyo The HHEC of India Ltd.,

4. Tokyo The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Room No.301-303, Atagoyama,
Bangeshi Building,
3-Chome, Jinato-Ku,
Tokyo (Japan).
5. Hamburg The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Carper Warehousing Depot,
2000 Hamburg 11,
Magdeburger Street5-7
(F.R.G).
6. Zurich The HHEC of India Ltd.,
Zoilfreilager Freilagerstrasse
47,CH-8043
Zurich (Switzerland).

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INDEX

A

Advanced Training Centre	44
Advertising	56
After-sales service	57
All India Handicrafts Board	4, 70
Ananda Coomaraswamy	1
Art Metalware	16
Art plate Co-op Marketing Society	7, 77
Asphalt	34

B

Base Board	30
Base Plate	28
Baskara Thondaman	25
Bidri plate	19

C

Cane articles	14
Cauvery Super Market	7
Central Cottage Industries Emporium	62, 70
Chola Kings	3, 16
Charles Eames	2
Claytoys	14
Cost of production	39
Credit facilities	59

D

Diamond setter	33
Dies	36
Direct selling	55
District Industries Centre	60
Dolls	14

E-J

Export Marketing	55
Export earnings	2
Female die	36
Ganesan T.G.	25
George C M Birdwood	20,27
Handicrafts	10
Handlooms	12
Handlooms & Handicrafts Export Corporation	62,69
Jewel setters	15

K

Kammalar Community	22
Karigiri Pottery	14
Kairali	25
Kaveri	25
Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan	25

L

Labour cost	40
Lepakshi	25
Limitations	8

M

Male die	36
Maratha kings	4
Marketing tactics	46
Market Research	48
Mat weaving	13
Middlemen	54

Metal craft	2
Methodology	7
Musical Instruments	15

N, O

Natarajan V	25
Nataraja Achari	25
National Award	25
Nayaka	16
Os-plate	34

P,Q,R

Palaniappan T.K.	24
Palm-leaf products	12
Pandya	16
Panneerdas V.G.	8
Pallava	16
Paper toys	14
Pith articles	15
Poompuhar show rooms	64
Poompuhar Training Centre	44
Pricing	51
Product Planning	49
Primary Relief	28
Raw Materials	29

S

Shahjahan	18
Serfoji	19,20
Shell work	16
State Bank of India	7
State Trading Corporation	69
Subsidiary Reliefs	28

T-W

Tamilnadu Handicrafts Development Corporation	7,64
Tools	30
Triumph Enterprises	7
Victoria Technical Institute	8,67
Wood carving	11

