PREFACE

Craft based rural industries constitute basic industrial framework of Bankura district. A large number of artisans and craftsmen live on handicrafts since the middle of Nineteenth century. The district is very rich in production of excellent art objects. However, with the emergence of machine made prod uction technology the craft based rural industries became delinked segment of production in the Indian economy. This has resulted gradual decline in household industries. The brass metal craft, which evolved in the seventeenth century experienced rapid expansion during the colonial rule. But with the invasion of cheaper varieties of substitutes, the market of brass metal gradually squeezed and has now reached to a state of virtual extinction.

Revitalisation of brass metal craft was a priority to the author due to His close association with the district since childhood. Apar t from this, he was born and brought up in the locality whose economic framework is much dependent on the activities of brass metal artisans. Being a Metallurgist with specialisation in Metal casting technology, it became an advantage to personally intervene for revitalisation of brass metal craft craft through development and application of appropriate technology. It became a golden opportunity when he was professionally posted at Bankura to look after the project: "Village Artisans & Science", an experiment of CSIR towards developing a technology delivery model. The programme aims at revitalisation of craft based rural industries through appropriate science and technology inputs.

Development of appropriate technology with locally available resources And its application through suitable organisation building required exhaustive networking with different organisations and individuals. As the programme evolved, the extent to which technological inputs can change the socio- economic condition became apparent. It was a pre-condition of technology transfer to prescribe a suitable organisational model, effective within the present mode of operation. However, the efficacy of the whole system is still to be seen.

ABSTRACT

Artisans and craftsmen had been playing significant role in the rural economy in the country since ancient times. But household mode of production adversely affected in the last fifty years due to number of socio-techno-economic reasons. The most important one was their alienation from modern science and technology inputs. In absence of any innovation in the craft sector, artisan based industries gradually got divorced from the framework of industrial activities and a large number of craft practitioners left their age-old hereditary occupation in search of better substitute occupation. This has resulted virtual destruction of rural economy and craft based activities have reached to a point of virtual destitution. The present action research has made a humble attempt to revitalise craft based rural industry through appropriate Science and Technology inputs.

.The study area is confined to Bankura district of West Bengal. For micro-level study and application of the improved technology three Administrative Blocks are identified.

Exhaustive studies could help identifying factors responsible for decadence of craft based rural industries. An inventory into the selected craft uncovered many aspects of forward and backward linkages. Analysis of characteristics brought forth inhibitive factors of development and growth of the craft. The inference from the above analysis gave an idea about the importance of the improved technology for productivity rise and income enhancement.

Assays and analysis of locally available raw materials established their suitability for use in development of the improved technology. Development of technological components were subjected to intensive trial for standardisation. The technology package consisting of improved melting, moulding and casting could be successfully demonstrated to establish superiority over the traditional process. Commercial viability and competitive edges of the improved technology was established through repeated field trial and demonstrations.

Transfer of technology was effected after upgrading the skill of the artisans. An interactive technology delivery model, that would look into various aspects of development of improved technology , its transfer and diffusion has been prescribed.