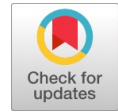


# The Study of Role of Brassware as A Part of Handicraft Industry in Economic Development of India



Charu Agarwal, Rachana Saxena

**Abstract:** Brass an alloy of Copper and Zinc. Zinc has unique properties of hardness, workability and medicinal benefits that help the human body to increase its immunity from several diseases. A creative article under the broad umbrella of the Handicraft industry of India representing the rich and diverse cultural heritage of India and through its benefits it is been exported to various countries around the globe. The study aimed to unveil the problems and challenges faced by the industry. Especially focusing on the various schemes launched by the Government of India for the benefit of the Industry like Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojna, Mega Cluster Scheme, Marketing Support and Services Scheme and Research and Development Scheme. An attempt was made to describe the trend of the export of brass utensils worldwide through AREA charts representing the volume of brass utensils exported over a time series of 2014 to 2021. Major findings and conclusions are found based on it.

**Keywords:** Brass, Handicraft Industry, Government Schemes, Trend Analysis, AREA Chart, Economic Development.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The brassware industry occupies a unique position and importance in the economy of the country. In recent years this industry has been encouraged by the Government to improve its performance. The Brassware industry has two major lines of production: a) Manufacturing of Brass utensils and other utility items / b) Brass/electroplated Nickle silver art wares. "Item or product produced through manual skills, with or without mechanical or electrical or other processes, which appeals to the eye, due to the characteristics of being artistic or aesthetic or creative or ethnic or being representative of cultural or religious or social symbols or practices, whether traditional or contemporary. These items or products may or may not have a functional utility and can be used as a decorative item or gift". (Proposed definition of handicrafts by EPCH) In India, Export Promotion Council is covering Brassware Industry also, which comes under the umbrella of the Handicraft Industry. The Handicraft Industry of India always contributed to earning a significant share of foreign exchange through its artistic work known worldwide.

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Besides this, it employs a vast segment of artisans, craftsmen, skilled and unskilled labour. India is known for its cultural heritage and this industry is playing a significant in conserving, preserving and above all spreading the rich cultural heritage of India worldwide. This Industry is contributing to the Indian economy dual handed, from one making the inner self stronger i.e., providing employment to women or persons generally belonging to weaker sections of the society from low investments since it's a labour-intensive industry, environment friendly and less energy consumption industry; and yet helping in the development or economic advancement of the country and from other may making exports to serve enormous demand from foreign countries and earning the valuable foreign exchange and enriching foreign exchange reserve for the country. Thus, this industry is helping in the strengthening of the Indian economy. It is having roots spread all over the country from east to west, from north to south and mostly located in rural areas of the country which demands regional growth and through proper nurturing the rural Indian economy could be strengthened. After agriculture, it is the second-largest employment provider for rural India. Despite the hard hit of COVID 19 The Indian handicraft Industry managed to have an annual growth of nearly 15 per cent from 2015 to 2021 which could be further expanded till 2025. Export Promotion Council plays a very important role in the development of the Brassware industry of India. Handlooms and handicrafts exports promotion council is looking after the export promotions of brasswares. This council was set up to create export consciousness in the country promotional activities abroad/ general publicity/ establishment of offices abroad, implementation of export assistance scheme etc. The council collects the commercial information for the export of art brassware. Out of which major and updated authentic data is provided and presented underneath:

## II. CONTRIBUTION OF INDUSTRY IN EARNING FOREIGN EXCHANGE

Table 1 Export of Various Segments during April 2020 to January 2021 Stood as below:

Segment	Earned Foreign Exchange
Woodwares	US\$ 611.48 million
Embroidered & crocheted goods	US\$ 463.13 million
Art metal wares	US\$ 353.92 million
Handprinted textiles and scarves	US\$ 239.73 million
Imitation jewellery	US\$ 144.19 million
Miscellaneous handicrafts	US\$ 714.67 million

Source: Indian Handicrafts: Handicrafts Exports, Industry & Manufacturer in India | IBEF



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Handicraft Industry has always been a major source of foreign exchange accumulation. From the above statistics, it is evident that Art metal wares are a major category that always secured a place among the top three exported category items. The study focuses on the economic analysis of utensils of brass a speciality of India.

As per data available from India's Trade Bank the export of Utensils of brass has rised from just 79 countries in the year 2014 to 108 countries in the year 2020-21, The number of utensils of brass exported from 196.68 thousand tons in the year 2014 to 380.75 thousand ton 2020-21 which means approximately 94% increase in the volume exported in the 8 years of study, it indicates towards a great potential and progress of the brassware industry which could ultimately lead towards the economic development of the nation.

## A. Objectives of the Study:

The study has been executed to accomplish the following objectives:

- To study the problems of the Indian Handicraft Industry.
- To study and analyze the steps taken by the Government for the growth and development of the Indian Handicraft Industry.
- To illustrate the volume of exports of utensils of brass to the top 5 countries where utensils of brass were exported in the period of study.

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

To get a deeper insight on the subject matter of the study various research papers from reputed journals were studied within a time frame of 2012 to 2018. Some of the major ones are highlighted underneath:

(Ranjan Yadav, n.d.) (2018) in their descriptive paper on brass utensils industry of Mirzapur District (U.P) tried to investigate the basic problems behind the obsolescence of the studied industry and found that state government's role is lacking to play a major role as there is no proper institution developed to take care of this industry. Centre and state governments are not paying attention to the industry which leads to the poor standard of living of the artisans and craftsmen.

(Ghosal, n.d.) (2018) in her empirical paper discussed the problems of the bell and brass industry of West Bengal and tried to study the difference between socio-economic profiles of the owners of the specified industry and the workers of the particular industry.

(Chattopadhyay K Pranab) (2017) in their report revealed the introduction of brass and the progress it made in the forthcoming years.

(Bhat Ahmad Jhangir, Yadav Pushpender) (2016) in their paper announced that there is a direct linkage between the handicraft industry and rural economy as it reflects its mirror image. In this paper 15 years of data has been studied and the growth and downfall of the handicraft industry were discussed, significant weightage was given to the contribution of the handicraft industry is accumulating foreign exchange in India. (Sahay Mridula) (2015) in her paper focused on the problems because of which the brass industry of Assam was declared sick and the ways to

rejuvenate this industry by focusing on change in strategy, technological advancement and Government intervention.

(Bhushan Sangram and Mohi Ud Din Towseef) (2014) in their research paper talked about the great potential of the culturally and artistically rich handicraft industry of India. By regression analysis, they tried to found the expected export in the upcoming years and try to analyse the trend of Indian Handicrafts. (Syed Khalid Hashmi) (2012) in his paper elaborated on the variety of products produced in the Indian Handicraft industry and in what geographical area of the country, which means which item is a specialization of which geographical area. The different worldwide areas from where the demands for these products are rising. The objective of the paper was to study the most demanded product and which country demands more of Indian Handicraft products, to analyze the position of Indian Handicraft Industry in comparison to China. (Kumari Gayatri and Srivastava Nariyana Abhaya) in their research paper discussed the uniqueness and untapped potential of the industry. They showcase that illiteracy and lack of awareness is the major problem among the artisans to take advantage of the various schemes launched by the Government for the upliftment of the said Industry and artisans working for the industry.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study covers only the Brass Ware Industry of India. The item under observation was Brass Utensils. This study mainly used secondary data collected through the EPCH website and various research articles to know the problems and remedial or growth measures taken by Government. The discussion section was structured in three broad areas, first is to analyse the problems and prospects of brass utensils manufacturing which provide the basis for the study; the second part highlights the work done by the Government through analysing various schemes like Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojna, Mega Cluster Scheme, Marketing Support and Services Scheme and Research and Development Scheme for the upliftment of Indian brass utensils manufacturing and sales and lastly, the third and most important discussion was about the export of brass utensils to top 5 export countries from the year 2014 to 2021. The trend was being analysed based on the volume of brass utensils exported from India to countries that had been among the top 5 importer countries in the studied period. To present different geographical locations over a time series Area chart is taken as a data analysis tool to have a better insight into it. Based on which an opinion or strategies could be made to improve the export of brass utensils in the listed countries.

## V. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This part of the study is divided into three sections. The first section identifies the problems of the Indian Handicraft, the second section focuses on the Government initiatives and supports through various schemes to the Indian Handicraft Industry, the third and the last part highlights the export of brass utensils to the top 5 countries from the year 2014 to 2021.



### A. Problems of Brass Ware Industry

Based on previous studies, research articles and newspapers the following basic but prominent problems are listed:

#### a. Raw Material

Brass is an alloy of copper and zinc, prepared from heating copper and mixing zinc in it, the basic raw material required is copper whose deposits in India are on a downfall in the last few previous years, but still, India is among the top 20 leading producers of brass utensils in India. The raw material consumption is also fulfilled through the use of old brass utensils, import of a scrap of brass and import of brass scrap from ship breaking yard. So this is a threat as well as a strength too as it is indicating towards high productivity.

#### b. Labour

The problem with labour productivity in the studied industry is child labour and most of the labourers working in this industry were because it was their family business and they are watching this business since their birth and the working efficiency of this industry is in their blood. But the involvement of children as labourers in the past year is the basic problem that needs to be addressed as per the prohibition of child labour and labour welfare act.

#### c. Technology

As per a report prepared by Winrock International India on Energy Conservation, it was discovered that most of the manufacturing units of brass in India from old age, hence the technology was not upgraded and hence consumes more energy thus raising the cost of production, Technological up-gradation is much required in the industry.

#### d. Devaluation of Rupee

Devaluation of Indian Currency continuously in comparison to the US \$ is again a major problem as most of the industries are importing brass as scrap, the raw material which is getting expensive day by day and thus, reducing the profit margin from the industry.

#### e. Environment Degradation

Most of the brass industries waste was getting carelessly disposed of in the rivers, causing water pollution leading to health problems in the surrounding areas of the manufacturing units and degradation of the environment.

### B. Government Support and Initiatives

The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) is the apex Government body and operates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The objective of the organization is to assist in the development/ benefit of the Indian Handicraft Industry.

As per the Handicrafts scheme of the Ministry of Textiles of Government of India, the ministry had launched 4 major schemes under the 12th five-year plan of India. The description of the schemes and their key characteristics are illustrated underneath:

#### a. Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojna

Under this scheme, artisans are surveyed and the benefitted artisans are grouped under the clusters. These clusters are specifically limited to a certain geographical area confined to villages in rural areas or a ward in the municipal area, only in

specific cases this span could be increased to adjoining villages within a diameter of 3 km. The thrust of this scheme was the formation of Self-help Groups, providing credit facilities to the economically weak artisans through Jan Dhan Yojna. Financial assistance will be provided for a maximum of three years for the formation of Producer Company/ Federation/Institution. 100% of the assistance amount was released in the first year, 75% in the second and 50% in the subsequent third year as soon as SHGs are registered as a Company/ Institution or Federation. Issuing Artisans Identity Card (AIC) to all the artisans belonging to the cluster. A cluster manager is appointed to convert these SHGs into entrepreneurs. After which a Detailed Study Report (DSR) discussing the success of the company, the products range produced, infrastructure facilities, number of artisans their sex, education and caste are recorded, the infrastructural facilities provided, the details of Government schemes represented are recorded. This report motivates other artisans to take advantage of this scheme

Since its introduction in 2001-02, 1,237 clusters have been sanctioned under the AHVY

scheme. It has covered approximately 4.43 lakh artisans and 30,276 SHGs have been formed since 2001-02

#### b. Mega cluster scheme

This scheme was launched to keep pace with the infrastructural and production facilities to boost the unorganized and non-modernized handicraft market. the focus of this scheme lies in the modernization of tools and machinery, diversification of the product or process so that strong brands could be created through innovative designs and technical know-how by entering into niche markets and market linkages. it also focuses on the skill up-gradation of the artisans. a detailed report describing the gaps are prepared to increase the revenue generation through rising exports, providing better living standard and employment opportunities to the artisans.

#### c. Marketing support and services scheme

This scheme as per its name provides various marketing platforms where artisans can showcase their art and craft and get associated with possible buyers and thus, providing a boost to the sale of the artistic products. Craft exhibitions are held in metropolitan cities/ state capitals/ tourist places or in all those areas where artistic work is been appreciated and duly paid for like Gandhi Shilp Bazars at historical places in India.

The duration of these exhibitions last from 7 to 10 days and nearly 60 to 100 stalls are available to showcase their art. 75% of the cost is borne by the Government as financial assistance and the rest 25% is to be borne by an independent eligible organization, or as per the city's population in which the exhibition is being held. Financial assistance also depends on the number of stalls an exhibition is having.

It helps in building the brand name for the artistic products like 'Incredible India' etc. Products are also sold through web marketing or e-marketing.

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## d. Research and development scheme

This scheme was launched in 1956-57 as a Central sector scheme where time to time research was conducted to generate feedback on economic, social, aesthetic and promotional aspects of various crafts and artisans. It conducts surveys to provide in-depth analysis of specific areas or problems of the handicraft Industry of India so that useful inputs regarding aid, planning, infrastructural facilities could be provided. To check whether the living conditions of the artisans has improved. To study whether the overseas market had enlarged. to study the foreign exchange reserve has been increased

After all this, the handicraft Industry and its artisans will be uplifted. Financial assistance for these research work or

surveys are also provided sanctioned by Project Approval and Monitoring Committee, Chaired by the secretary

## C. Analysis of Export of Brass Utensils

To understand the major volume of brass utensils exported overseas, data is collected from EPCH's official website. As per the data available, the export of brass utensils was to only 76 countries in the year 13-14 which rose to 107 countries in the year 20-21, which leads to approximately 41% growth in the area of brass utensils exported overseas. Since it will be a cumbersome task to analyse each country and present it in a single research article, an attempt was made to understand the volume of brass utensils exported majorly to the top 5 countries. The extracts of which are shown underneath in table No. 5.3.1

**Table No. 5.3.1 Quantity of Brass Utensils Exported**

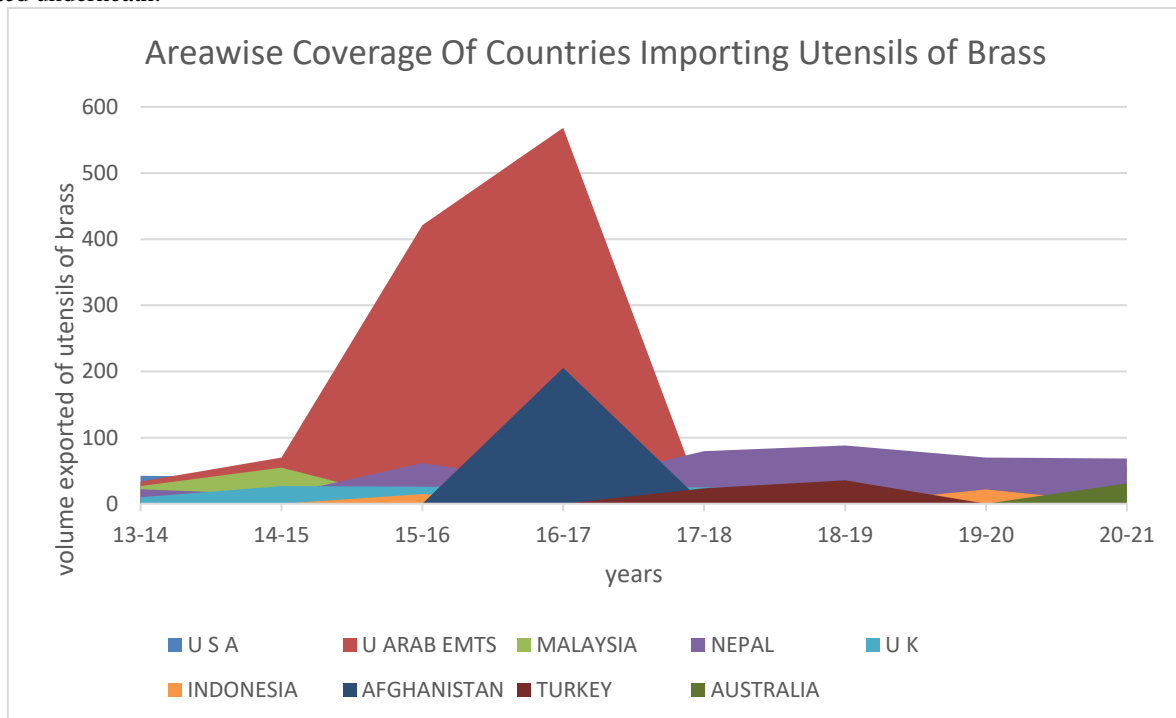
(Figures in thousands)

S.No	Countries/ Years	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
1	U S A	42.32	40.35	54.86	42.22	46.25	36.58	51.49	55.46
2	U ARAB EMTS	33.73	69.57	421.01	568.38			28.86	
3	MALAYSIA	26.73	54.59			26.46	31.69	36.33	54.26
4	NEPAL	21.65	13.76	61.38	29.16	79.44	88.05	70.01	68.24
5	U K	9.92	26.62	25.86	24.42	24.68	19.31		22.01
6	INDONESIA			14.44				21.69	
7	AFGHANISTAN				205.39				
8	TURKEY					23.4	35.4		
9	AUSTRALIA								30.71

Source: <https://tradedat.commerce.gov.in/>

As per Table No. 5.3.1 it is depicted that there is a total of 9 countries which lasts in the chart of top 5 countries from the year ending 2014 to the year 2021. The table provides the data of the volume of brass utensils to the top 5 countries over years under study.

Since the focus was on presenting the maximum number of brass utensils exported to different geographical regions around the globe, AREA chart was plotted to show the trend of brass utensils exported over the studied years. The Chart No. 5.3.2 is presented underneath:



Source: Made with the help of MS Excel



The average exports of the volume of brass utensils are shown in the following Table No. 5.3.3

**Table No. 5.3.3 Average Export of Brass Utensils**

Countries	Avg. export of brass utensils (in thousands)
U ARAB EMTS	224.31
AFGHANISTAN	205.39
NEPAL	53.96
U S A	46.19
MALAYSIA	38.34
AUSTRALIA	30.71
TURKEY	29.40
U K	21.83
INDONESIA	18.07

Source: calculated data

Area charts are a significant tool in the hand of researchers to showcase the variation in the data over a time series. In the study, the same purpose is resolved through using an area chart, as visible in a single glance on the chart the United Arab Emirates imports the maximum number of brass utensils in 5 out of 8 years of study and in the years 15-16 and 16-17 the volume imported was also very high which makes it the leading importer of brass utensils of India. Whereas no imports were not in the top 5 list in the followed two years. In the year 19-20 little import was done and again not among top 5 in the last year of the study period. Average exports within the studied time frame are about 224 thousand tons.

The second most exported country of brass utensils is Afghanistan, which is showing its presence only in the year 16-17 among the top 5 list of brass utensils importer country. But the volume was too high that it is showing its remarkable presence. The average exports of brass to Afghanistan is a little bit less than the average exports to United Arab Emirates i.e., 205 thousand tons in comparison to 224 thousand tons.

The next on the list is Nepal which is significantly less volume but a consistent importer of brass utensils of India. It marks its presence in the list of top five importer countries in all the studied years. The average exports to the country were about 54 thousand tons in the studied period as per table no 5.3.3 .

The fourth-largest area is covered by the USA which was a bit less in comparison to Nepal but again significant and showing its presence in the list of top 5 importer countries in the period of study. The average exports of brass utensils to the USA were about 46 thousand tons.

Malaysia is again a potential export market for brass utensils of India as it makes its presence in almost every year in the list of top 5 importer countries year-wise, except the year 15-16 and 16-17 and the volume exported was about 38 thousand tons.

Australia is a very new member in the year 20-21 among the list of top 5 brass utensil importers country as it imported. But the volume imported was about 31 thousand tons only in a single year which shows its potential market.

Turkey makes its presence in the list of top 5 importers of brass utensils in the year 17-18 and 18-19 and the average volume exported was about 29 thousand tons.

The U.K was again a consistent importer in the top 5 importer countries of brass utensils except for the year 19-20. The average volume imported by the U.K. is 22 thousand tons.

Another and the last country marking its presence in the list of top 5 importers of brass utensils in the studied timeframe was Indonesia. It had been there on the list in the years 15-16 and 19-20. But the average volume it imported was 18 thousand tons.

## VI. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

From the first section of data analysis following findings were derived:

- As per news articles and facts available it is found that the reserves of copper are on the declination
- It is found that the labour is not well trained, engaging only those workmen who are pursuing this business as hereditary
- It is found that the technological up-gradation was at a very low pace.
- It is found that the value of the rupee in comparison to the currency of imported currency is devaluing which indicates their being import in greater volume.
- It is found that environmental degradation is always been a darker side of industrial and economic growth, which needs to be focused upon.

The findings of the second section of data analysis illustrate that Government is playing an active role in the overall development of the Handicraft industry and the artisans' economic growth too. The Government schemes aimed at all-round development of the industry as:-

- Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojna is to promote handicraft and the art of artisans presenting the rich cultural heritage of India.
- Under Mega Cluster Scheme, the government attempted to provide a good infrastructure including plant & machinery support to the Handicraft Industry.
- The marketing Support and Services scheme focuses on creating a new and wider market for the artistic goods of this industry by focusing more on exhibitions to showcase our art.
- Research and Development scheme, as the name suggests itself the focus is on providing aids to encourage research and development to provide a boost to this industry

The last segment of research analysis attempts to attain the last objective of the study i.e., to analyze the major market of Indian brass utensils worldwide:

- The results illustrate that the average export of brass utensils to the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan was 224 thousand and 205 thousand in comparison to all other countries which only imported in some thousands
- Among the above two countries, United Arab Emirates was the more consistent importer of the brass utensils of India.

## VII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was executed under the following major limitation:



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- There are many articles/items in the purview of the Handicraft Industry but a detailed overview of only one article that is Brass Utensils of India with HS code 74181021 was taken under consideration.
- The research was secondary data based; data was extracted from the official website of EPCH was from the year 2014 only. Previous years data was not available.
- Less research work had been done in the area of discussing the problems of this industry.
- Export analysis of brass utensils to all 107 countries was difficult so only the top 5 importers of brass utensils were taken under consideration.

## VIII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite having few problems like scarce resources, the development and potential in this industry are great as it is representing Diverse Indian Culture under one umbrella as Handicrafts, too which the whole world is a great fan and the demand for handicrafts item worldwide, especially of brass utensils, is on growth. The attempts and initiatives of the government for the growth and development of the industry is also on a higher pace, which concludes that the industry and the export of brass utensils have greater potential to grow. While studying the patterns of the brass utensils exported the United Arab Emirates is the country that imports brass utensils most from India and fairly consistent importer country of the product. Afghanistan had stroked once in the whole period under study, such a big shot of the volume of brass utensils that it marked its presence in the list of average brass utensils exported from the country. Other countries imported less volume but were consistent importers of the product. Following measures can be undertaken for the further well-being of the industry:

- Government can speed up its efforts to present or market the products of the Handicraft Industry worldwide. It could focus on the Online presence of the products of the industry and through exhibitions also.
- Government can encourage private bodies to provide technical and financial assistance to the industry.
- Government can also directly increase its role by launching or enhancing more schemes in the development of the industry.
- Efforts can be made to put in skilled labourers in this industry rather than only focusing on the weaker section of society.
- Being specific to the Utensils of brass export trend analysis it is suggested that Government should continue its appreciable efforts in increasing the market of the product worldwide by focusing on large volume importers like the United Arab Emirates and Afghanistan and other small volume but consistent importer countries like Nepal, USA, Malaysia and Australia etc. to increase the GDP of India.

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