

Tarakasi

- Silver filigree of Cuttack •



Image on the cover:

Filigree artisan soldering peices of silver using a flame torch, in Alisha Bazar, Cuttack.

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Published in 2018

Processed at National Institute of Design

Digitally printed at Chaap Digital, Ahmedabad



TARAKASI

•Silver Filigree of Cuttack•

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Lifestyle Accesory Design 2016
National Institute of Design, Gandhinagar

Acknowledgement

This research was conducted and supported by National Institute of Design as a part of our course curriculum. We are thankful to all the people who provided their expertise, help and assistance throughout the research and documentation process.

We are grateful to our Dean, Ms. Krishna Amin for her enthusiasm during the orientation classes which was inspirational and gave us a sense of responsibility towards documenting the Indian crafts. We also thank her for providing expertise and comments on earlier versions of the typescript which assisted us in compiling the document.

We would like to express our appreciation to Mrs. Shimul Mehta Vyas and Mr. Amresh Panigrahi for shedding light on the critical areas of craft sector where research and documentation was required and further helping us in selecting the craft.

We wish to express our gratitude to the filigree artisans Mr. Bullu Prushti, Mr. Sukanth Sahoo, Mr. Subhash Chandra Singh and a few others for showing and explaining to us the complete process of the craft and patiently answering all our queries. Most importantly, we would like to thank Mr. Ramesh Chandra Das and his family for providing us with critical information about the history of the craft and the related government associations.

We would also like to thank Mr. Chiranjeeva Sahoo, the librarian of Biswanath Pandit Central Library, Cuttack for helping us to find relevant information and referring us to Harekrishna Mahtab State Library, Bhubaneswar.

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Fig 0.1 NID Ahmedabad

About NID

This research was conducted and supported by National Institute of Design as a part of our curriculum. The Government of India invited Charles Eames, American industrial designer and his wife and colleague Ray Eames for recommendations on a programme of training in design that would serve as an aid to the small industries; and that would resist the present rapid deterioration in design and quality of consumer goods.

They toured throughout India, making a careful study of the many centres of design, handicrafts and general manufacture. They talked with many persons, official and non-official, in the field of small and large industry, in design and architecture, and in education. The India Report emerged as a result of their study and discussions.

Following the report, the Government set up the National Institute of Design in 1961. The institute functions as an autonomous body under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. It is recognised by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research under Ministry of Science and Technology, government of India, as a scientific and industrial design research organisation. It is accorded as "Institute of National Importance" by Act of Parliament, under the National Institute of Design Act, 2014.

With the open market economy, many new challenges are thrown to the Indian industry in design and innovation. NID has a strong body of faculty and state of art infrastructure that provide a perfect environment for creating design professionals ready to face industry and provide design leadership.



Lifestyle Accessory Design @ NID

The Lifestyle Accessory Design (LAD) postgraduate programme educates and trains professional designers to visualize and create lifestyle accessories and systems using different materials, processes and technologies.

It relates to people's way of living and the products they interact with, which form an important basis of their day- to-day lives. Focusing on personal and space accessories and products, it offers a strong multi-disciplinary edge wherein the students get an opportunity to work in wide spectrum of domains such as jewellery; watches; bags; luggage; footwear; lighting; furniture, space accessories and interior objects; trend research; and colours, materials and trims for white goods and automobile interiors. The students are encouraged to build emotive connect and conceptual experiences for the consumers through the products they create.

The programme draws from indigenous contexts and their socio-cultural values, beliefs, practices, cultural diversity, and knowledge which have contemporary applications in a global context. It delves into perception and trend studies of diverse dynamics that influence the lifestyles of consumers from various strata of society.

The designers from this programme aspire to drive the market by Designing for Changing Needs and Designing for Future Needs, and make 'Designed in India' a premier global brand.

Fig 0.2 LAD students working in the studio at NID, Gandhinagar

Preface

In the field of design education, National Institute of Design has been actively associated to a number of study methodologies that aim to understand the design culture in India from the perspective of art and craft of its different regions. Craft documentation is one such important phase of learning which is about research and archiving of a craft of India from its origin to its cultural scenario in the most lucid and genuine form of representation.

Silver filigree also known as Tarakasi is an intricate metal craft practiced in Cuttack, Odisha. It is the oldest of the crafts in the Cuttack district. Filigree artisans have a big role to play in spreading Orissan cultural heritage and has brought the Orissan style a great fame and familiarity in the world of craft and craftsmanship.

The research content provides the historical perspective as well as reflects the present situation of the craft. It also includes life of artisans, their workspace and detailed process of making and marketing. Further, to understand the needs, strengths and weaknesses of a particular craft and the scope for design intervention opportunities in the craft sector as these communities need to survive, adapt and thrive in the fast-changing world.

Our research started with referring to existing information of the craft in books as well as online sources, acquiring the contacts and planning our trip, going to various artisan's places, interviewing and photo documenting and finally compiling all the data as well as suggesting future possible opportunities.

This document is a means to share our experience, information and the knowledge that we gained from the entire field visit and research work. The research provides information on social, economic conditions and human factors involved.



INTRODUCTION



Fig 1.1 Cuttack Railway Station

1.1 Cuttack

Cuttack is known as the cultural capital of Orissa. With its exceptional filigree work in silver, ivory and brass works and textiles of woven silk and cotton, Cuttack city is the grandest showroom of Orissa. It is widely known as the Silver City because of its fine workmanship in silver.

Tarakasi (from Oriya (tara) meaning 'silver', and (kasi) meaning 'work'), Silver Filigree work is an inherited craft of Oriyas over generations. The silver is drawn into thin wires and laced in a dextrous manner to make magnificent filigree products. Only Cuttack in Orissa and Karimnagar in Andhra Pradesh produce pure-silver high-quality filigree.

Silver wires of varying thickness are produced by the machine. The craftsman first moulds rods by melting silver which is then pressed to bring out various thicknesses. These wires are then cut into different sizes and made into motifs by joining them together.

Silver has been widely used in making ritualistic objects and embellishments for idols that people worship in temples as well as at homes. The manufactured articles are mostly jewelry and home decorative articles. It is the filling of interspaces by the delicately bent silver wires that gives filigree its character. The distinction comes from the contrast of the thick ribs around the fine intricate work which brings out the exquisite artistry of the craft.

1.2 Indian Handicrafts and Traditional Craftsmanship

India is a country of rich and diverse culture and is one of the major producer and supplier of Handicrafts products in the world. Handicrafts are a substantial medium to preserve rich traditional art, heritage and culture, traditional skills and talents which are associated with people's lifestyle and history. Traditional craftsmanship is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage.

"The handicraft sector technically and statistically forms the second largest source of employment in India" [1]. The Indian handicrafts' industry is highly labour intensive, cottage-based and decentralized industry. Idea of production versus encourage the artisans to continue to produce craft is a debatable issue, for which encouraging an artisan has always put up an upper hand, because, they can pass their skills and knowledge onto others and encouraging the artisans every time has lead to a neo art and fresh art is born. In response to industrialization, many people around the world enjoy handmade objects that are imbued with the accumulated knowledge and cultural values and which offers an alternative to the numerous 'high tech' items.

1.3 Purpose of Craft Documentation

Craft culture of India represents its unique cultural diversity and at the same time serves as a medium



Fig 1.2 Barabati fort

of livelihood to the community practising the craft. In recent years, with the introduction of digital technology and upgraded machinery, there has been a drastic change in the craft sector of India which is influencing both its current and future scenario. It has resulted into abandonment of traditional techniques and rise in imitations along with the poor representation of the craft in the name of commercial gains. It becomes important for us as the students of design education to study the craft culture and all the aspects associated to its existence in today's context for its sustainability and longevity. There is a responsibility and need to bring awareness, value and a sensible attitude among the people about the craft and the community whose identity rests upon it. In relation to the opportunities related to commercial welfare, the process of documenting a craft can also help us understand the craft, the people, social and economic backgrounds, the culture, history and evolution of the craft. Further, to recognize the problem areas and suggest future possibilities and to promote the craft.

1.4 Field Work Methodology

After a primary research on the Silver Filigree of Orissa the need for a series of secondary research arose for the better understanding and documentation of the craft. Consulting various documents on filigree and an extensive research directed towards the small yet prominent cluster practicing in the city of Cuttack. Efforts to understand the origin of Silver Filigree prompted the study of the history of Orissa, Cuttack in particular. Various



Fig 1.3 Biswanath Pandit Central Library

places of historic importance in Cuttack, namely The Barabati fort, The Netaji Birth Place Museum and The Biswanath Pandit Central Library helped in gathering vital pieces of information regarding the craft. Visits to The Harekrushna Mahtab State Library of Bhubaneswar also gave direction to the research that lead to stories about the various dynasties that ruled over the land, and the lifestyle of the common people during. As times changed people's earlier livelihoods began to be practiced and recognised as crafts. To understand the various factors that affect the craft and the craftsmen an intensive field study was conducted. Spread over a course of nine days a meticulous schedule was followed. An unmediated approach was adopted wherein the artisans and their families were interviewed about their history and that of the Craft's. Finally a survey by observing, noting and visually documenting the process through photographs and sketches, assisted in completing this extensive study.



CUTTACK LANDSCAPE

2.1 Location

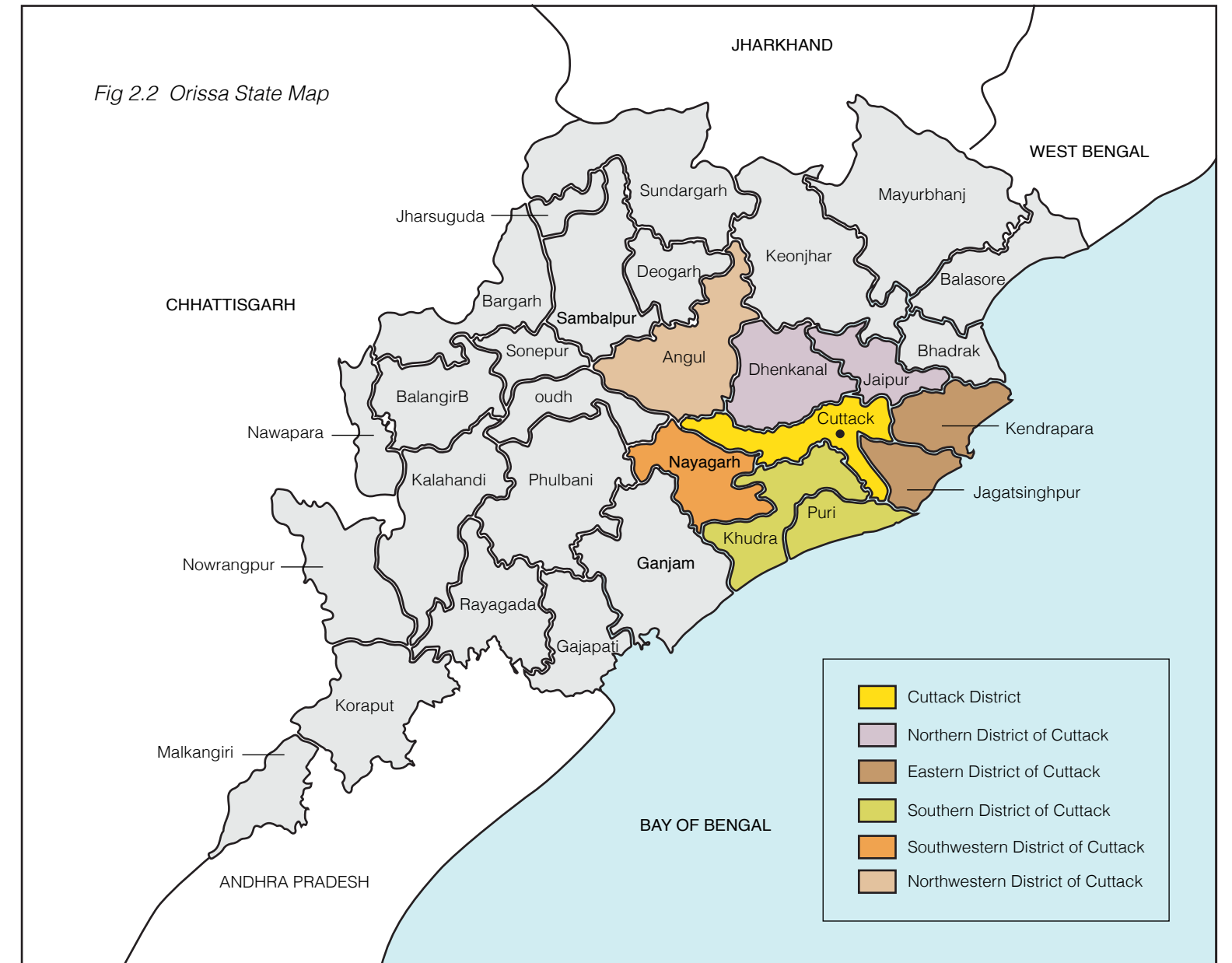
Cuttack is the former capital and the second largest city of Orissa. It is a narrow strip of land located in the eastern central heartland of Orissa extending in an east-west direction. The district extends from 84° 58' E to 86° 20' E longitude and from 20° 3' N to 20° 40' N latitude. The total geographical area of the district is 3,733 Sq.km which is 2.51% of the total geographical area of the state.

The city is situated 14.6m. Above main sea level and bounded by Dhenkanal and Jajpur districts on the north, Puri and Khurda district on the south, Nayagarh district on the southwest, Angul district on the northwest, Kendrapada and Jagatsinghpur districts to the East. It is situated on the right of the delta formed by Mahanadi and its tributaries including the Kathjodi, the Kuakhai and the Birupa from almost all the sides.

The district headquarter is located at Cuttack. Before 1993, the Katak district was much bigger size but the present Katak district has been carved out of the old Cuttack district after its division into four districts (i.e., Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada and Jajpur).



Fig 2.2 Orissa State Map



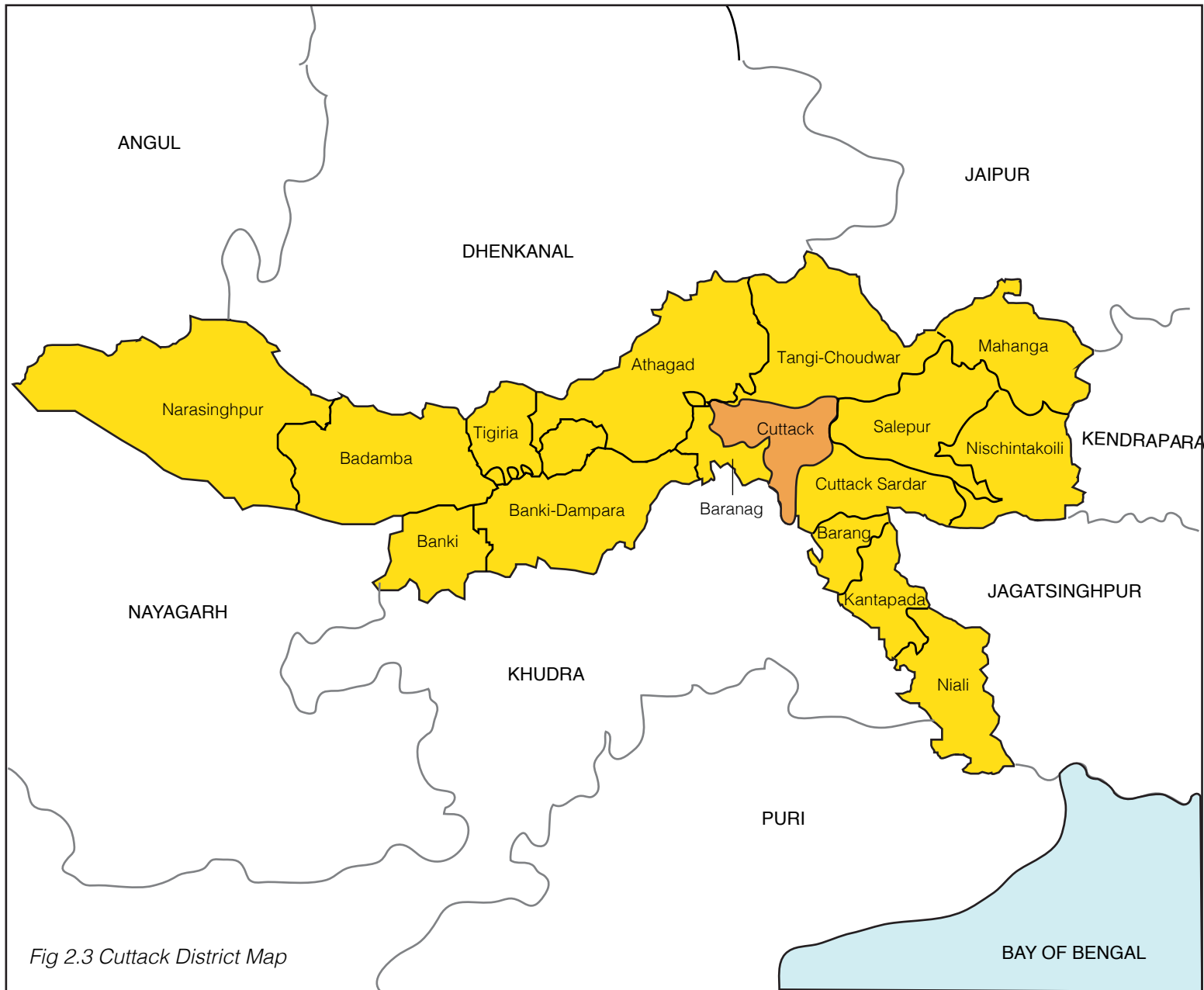


Fig 2.3 Cuttack District Map



Fig 2.4 Children playing in the streets of Cuttack

2.2 Population

According to the 2011 census of India, population of Cuttack City in 2011 was 606,007; of which male and female are 303,530 and 302,477 respectively.. The children form 8.02% of total population of Cuttack City. The sex ratio of Cuttack City is 997 per 1000 males. Child sex ratio of girls is 916 per 1000 boys. Cuttack has an average literacy rate of 91.17% and ranks high in literacy rate among Top Cities of India.

2.3 Climate

The city located on the convergence of the Mahanadi and Kathajodi rivers experiences a tropical climate. The summers are hot and humid whereas the winters are dry and cold with occasional showers. Temperature rises as high as 40C in the summers and drops as low as 15 degree Celcius in the winters. The summer starts around the end of March followed by monsoons starting in June till September and winters from November to February. Monsoons supply most of the city's annual average rainfall during the month of July and August up to 250 mm a month.



STORY OF CUTTACK



Fig 3.1 Street in Cuttack, Orissa, taken in the year 1857

3.1 History

The oldest city in Orissa and the former capital of the state, Cuttack is known as the Millennium City due to its history of 1000 years. The city derives its name from the anglicized Sanskrit word Kataka, which has two meanings, one being a military cantonment because of its impregnable situation that further developed into the capital of the state of Odisha and the other meaning being the seat of government, protected by the army. Literally, it also means the fort, referring to the ancient Barabati Fort, around which the city developed. The remains of the old moated Barabati Fort still exist in the heart of Cuttack.

In addition to that, "Inscriptions of Anangabhimadeva III refer the original city as Abhinab-Baranasi-Katak. Like the city of Varanasi, situated in between Varuna and Assi, Cuttack is situated between the rivers Mahanadi and Kathajodi and was therefore named as Abhinab Baranasi (a new type of Varanasi)"[2].

Early History of Cuttack begins with its association with the Keshari dynasty. "Eminent historian A. Sterling stated that present-day Cuttack was founded as a military cantonment by King Nripati Keshari of Keshari dynasty in 989 A.D. This statement was based on Madalapanji, a chronicle of Puri's Lord Jagannath Temple. During the illustrious reign of Markata Keshari, he built a stone embankment

to protect the new capital from flood in 1002 A.D" [3].

The History of Cuttack also suggests that in 1211 AD, Cuttack became capital of a kingdom founded by Anangabhimadeva of Ganga dynasty. At the end of Ganga rule, Orissa came under the rule of the Suryavamsi Gajapati Kings (1435-1541 A.D.) under whom Cuttack continued to be the capital of Orissa. It was after the death of Mukunda deva - the last Hindu king of Orissa that Cuttack came under Muslim rule and later under the Mughals, who made Cuttack the seat of new Orissa Subah (imperial top-level province) under Shah Jahan.

"Cuttack came under the Maratha rule by 1750, and flourished greatly as a business center. It served as a convenient point of contact between the Marathas of Nagpur and the English Merchants of Bengal. It was in 1803 that the British occupied Cuttack and made it the capital of Orissa division in 1816. In 1948 the capital was shifted to Bhubaneswar, But Cuttack continued as the administrative headquarters of Orissa" [4].

3.2 Craft Culture

Utkal, the other name of Orissa connotes an excellence that has been attained in the sphere of arts and other artisan pursuits. It has been the hub of



Fig 3.2 A group of eight artisans at work in Cuttack, taken in the year 1873

sculpture, fine art and architecture since centuries. There are nine categories of Artisans in Orissa : Sankhari (Bangle makers), Mali (Florist), Kamar (Blacksmith), Tanti (Weaver), Kumbhara (potter), Kansari (Bell metalsmiths), Sutradhara, (Carpenter), Swarnakara (Goldsmith), Ropyakara (Silversmiths) and Chitrakar (Painter).

Cuttack has a rich tradition of handicraft. It is famous

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Fig 3.3 Old Silver Filigree Ornament made in the 20th Century

for its Horn works, Patta Chitra, Dokra Casting, Wood Carving, Silver Filigree work, Brass/Bell Metalworks and Stone Carving. It is also known as Rupo-nagari (Silver City) for its famous silver filigree works. Cuttack also generates substantial revenues

from the exports of these handicraft products. The presence of a number of handicraft cooperatives and handicraft training institutes gives a boost to this handicraft industry.



WAY OF LIVING



Fig 4.1 Typical artwork drawn on the walls of a house during marriage in Alisha Bazaar, Cuttack

4.1 People

The culture of Cuttack, is a melting pot of various customs and traditions, since the city has been subjected to the rule of a number of dynasties like the Kesharis, the Marathas, the Mughals and finally the British rule as well, in the past. It is home to a number of significant Hindu religious shrines like the Cuttack Chandi Temple as well as a prominent Gurdwara and a Jama Masjid.

Geographical location of the state contributes to the culture of Cuttack, which is a coastal corridor between the northern and southern India and has a blend of the races and cultures of the Aryans and the Dravidians. People of this place have moved towards urbanisation but still, certain primitive traditions and values are kept alive in its original or ancient form. Now, the cultural capital of Odisha has its mass population conclusive of several communities i.e. Oriya, Bengali, Marwari, Gujarati and Telugu.

Odia people appear to be simple and the city was running at a slow pace, people were not in a rush rather they would stop their car on a roadside stand and enjoy a plate of Dahi-bada Aloo Dum or Puchka (Two great delicacies of Odisha). They were warm hearted, friendly and willing to start a conversation.



Fig 4.2 A candy seller of Cuttack making a sale



Fig 4.3 The entrance of a Jagannath Mandir in Alisha Bazar, Cuttack



Fig 4.4 A priest during his morning prayer inside the Jagannath Mandir

4.2 Religion

According to Cuttack city census 2011, Hinduism is majority religion in Cuttack city with 89.65 % followers. Islam is second most popular religion in city of Cuttack with approximately 8.23 % following it. In Cuttack city, Christianity is followed by 1.36 %, Jainism by 0.18 %, Sikhism by 0.12 %

Mostly the people of Odisha including the tribal population follow the traditions pertaining to the Hindus with a small variation depending on the various racial groups they originate from and finally it is displayed as a blend. Mostly all the religious and social ceremonies like wedding,



Fig 4.5 The ornamented outer wall of a house in Alisha Bazaar, Cuttack

birth and death include singing songs, rural dances along with feasts.

At times of religious festivals and fairs, sacrifices of different kinds of livestock along with rituals are quite common among the people. They believe it is a way to appease the god and spirits.

4.3 Festivals

Festivals are an indispensable part of the society of Cuttack. Durga Puja, Dusshera, Kali puja, Bali Jatra, Makar Sankranti (harvest festival accompanied by kite-flying), Eid-UI-Fitr are a few of the festivals celebrated by the residents of this city.



Fig 4.5 Chauliaganj Durga Puja in Cuttack

1. Durga puja

The first recorded Sarvajanan Durga Puja in the state is said to have been in the year 1832 in the Kazi Bazaar area of Cuttack. A Pandal in Odisha is called "Medho". For many years, the most expensive

installation was the Chaandi Tarakasi Medho. The ornamentation was done entirely in gold and silver. Cuttack's Durga Puja is celebrated for ten long days and it attracts huge congregation from all over the world. A substantial increase in funding has led to the gold plating of the ornamentation. Now it is known as "Sona Medho".

The Durga Puja festivities are also prominent in 'Maa Katak Chandi' Temple. Maa Cuttack Chandi is the presiding deity of Cuttack. She is worshipped as Bhuvanewari. In Cuttack, people deeply devote Maa Katak Chandi as 'The Living Goddess'. The grand Pujas are being celebrated countrywide but particularly as the special celebration in Odisha. One reason for the wide acceptance of Durga Puja is the importance of 'Maa Tarini', who is considered one of the embodiments of Shakti in Odia culture. In addition, the state is close to Bengal and the people share a common sociocultural history spanning millennia. Odisha is home to many important shrines dedicated to the Goddess; great festivities are organised there during Durga Puja and Kali Puja.

Every year, during Durga Puja in Cuttack, Tarakasi jewellery is used at many pandals to embellish the idols of Durga. One of the most famous idols is the one at Chandni Chowk, where the entire crown and accessories of Durga are made of silver, popularly known as Chaandi Sona Medha/medho. Other pandals using Tarakasi are Chauliaganj, Choudhury Bazar, Khan Nagar, Banka Bazar, Balu Bazar etc. Every year more than 150 filigree artisans are engaged in making backdrop and ornament design. The style was introduced at the Choudhury Bazaar puja pandal with a 250 kg chandi medha in 1956.



Fig 4.7 Bali Yatra In Motion, Cuttack 2017

2. Bali Yatra

There was a time when the merchants of Cuttack traded with South East Asian traders. While returning from the foreign countries, they brought back merchandise from those cities and there used to be the celebrations with merchants returning home. Of all the major foreign destinations, Bali Island which is now a part of Indonesia was the major destination for the Odiya merchants when they used to go for trade. In the memory of this event, every year the fest of displaying the Odiya goods, handicrafts, are being sold in the Bali Yatra festival which lasts for seven days. Many stalls of products related to the art and crafts of Odisha are being sold during the Bali Yatra fest.

3. Dusshera

Durga Puja and Dussehra are two different festivals yet have a common reason behind them. These are clubbed together for the simple reason that most Hindus celebrate both of them and at the same time. Dussehra is celebrated to mark the defeat of Ravana by Lord Rama. Durga Puja is celebrated to mark the triumph of warrior Goddess Durga over the buffalo demon, Mahishasura.

During this time, the idols of Durga are decorated with huge amounts of silver and gold jewellery. Each locality tries to outshine the other in the amount of gold they are able to adorn their idols with. During Dussehra the city practically comes to a halt with streets flooded with people eager to witness the burning of the effigies of Ravana.



Fig 4.8 Burning of Ravan's idol during Dusshera



Fig 4.9 Kite Flying during Makar Sankranti

4. Kali puja

Kali Puja is celebrated in Cuttack just a few days after Dusshera. It is celebrated on the day of Diwali with bursting of firecrackers at the Riverside of Mahanadi which is known as the 'Gada Gadia Ghat'.

It is celebrated as the victory of the goodness over the evil powers and it also symbolizes tribute to the Goddess Kali.

5. Makar Sankranti

Odisha is also a state of farmers. The major crops cultivated here are rice and grains. Makar Sankranti is a harvest festival and is celebrated in the month of January when the crop are being harvested. In urban cities like Cuttack, people celebrate it as a festival of Kites, where the sky gets filled with hundreds of colorful kites. Various kite-flying competitions are also organized at the river bank of Mahanadi and Kathjori on that day.

6. Eid of Cuttack/Eid-UI-Fitr

"Islam is the second dominated religion in Odisha after the Hindu religion. Several Muslims migrated from the west Bengal to Odisha and most of them settled in Cuttack. This becomes a major reason for celebration of the Islamic Festivals in the city and some of the major festivals are Eid and Muharram. During this time all the Islamic community people gather at the famous Jama Masjid at Balubazar situated near the High Court of Odisha in Cuttack. On this occasion, several pop-up sweet stall are put up" [5].

4.4 Music And Dance

With a charming and colourful music encompassing several streams, the state of Odisha unfurls many vistas of dance forms and musical styles. The rare



Fig 4.10 Sharmila Mukherjee - Odissi Dancer and Choreographer

dance forms of the state such as Odissi and Chhau are flourishing from ages. And the music popularly practised in Cuttack is quite cosmopolitan in nature. Songs from Oriya movies, Carnatic classical music, tribal songs are popular.

1. Cuttack Mahotsav

Utkal Yuva Sanskrutik Sangh, a non-governmental organization, has been organising the International Theatre and Dance festivals in Cuttack every year in January since 2010. This week-long festival is named as 'Cuttack Mahotsav'. More than 500 artists, including dancers, vocalists, instrumentalists, choreographers, experts and critics take part in the festival.

The Cuttack Mahotsav exemplifies unity in diversity and provides an opportunity for the dance enthusiasts to witness various streams and colours of Indian dance forms by high-quality artists. The festival also provides a platform for young budding talents while enabling them to learn from the maestros.

2. Odissi Dance

Odissi is the most popular dance form practised in Cuttack. It is one of the 8 classical dance forms of India. Over the centuries, Odissi has been developed under 3 schools namely Mahari, Nartaki, and Gotipua. Mahari has its roots from the devadasi tradition in the temples used to dance; Nartaki which was developed in the royal courts; and Gotipua style where young boys perform in female clothing.



Fig 4.11 Mayurbhanj Chhau Dance

Odissi originated in the 'Devadasi' cult, wherein young women were 'married' to gods and remained in the service of the temple, worshipping their lord through this lyrical form of dance. This subtle dance form epitomizes Indian femininity at its most sensuous. Independence brought a major change in the attitude towards Indian Dance. Like the other classical arts, dance was seen as a way to define India's national identity. Government and non-government patronage increased. A number of people and experts took initiatives for the reconstruction and popularization of Odissi dance.

An Odissi dancers dress themselves in sambalpuri saree and silver tarakasi ornaments, namely choker, padaka-tilaka(necklace), bahuchudi(armllets), kankana(bracelets), a mekhalaa(belt), anklets, bells, kapa (earrings) and a seenthi(ornament tied on hair and forehead). These ornaments are sometimes embellished with natural uncut stones with silver and gold.

3. Chhau Dance

"Chhau is one of the two martial art dance forms of India, other being Thang ta from Manipur. It is an ancient form of dance which is believed to have been emerged in Jharkand, West Bengal and Odisha. The Mayurbhanj chhau has originated from the forests of Mayurbhanj, Odisha in 18th century" [6].The stories enacted by Chhau dancers include those from the Hindu epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the Puranas and other Indian literature. It is usually performed by men. Different moods of the dance are illustrated through various body movements and facial expressions.



Fig 4.12 Traditional clothing of men and women in Orissa

4.5 Clothing

Women mostly prefer to wear sarees. Famous saris include Katakari Sari, Bomkai Sari and Sambalpuri Sari. These are adorned by females in Orissa during festivals, marriage, and other special events. Shalwar Kameez, western attire is popular among younger women in cities and towns. The motifs created on these sarees is unique to this region. This technique also gives the sarees of Orissa an identity of their own.

The traditional dress of the men of Orissa is dhoti and kurta. Mostly the working men tie a turban around their head and also use this piece of cloth to put on their shoulder. This piece of cloth is locally called

gamuchha. Lungi also is quite common among rural areas which is more of an informal outfit and mostly used by the younger generation. Western-style dress has gained greater acceptance in cities and towns among men, although people prefer to wear traditional dresses like Dhoti, Kurtha and Gamucha during festivals or other religious occasions.

But with modernization and urbanization, the people are also slowly opting for western outfits. Apart from salwar kameez, women are seen wearing jeans, trousers, capris, etc. Men now usually wear trousers and shirt when they go out. Dhoti is worn while relaxing or is reserved for special occasions.

4.6 Language

The official language of Cuttack is Odia. Hindi is also widely spoken and understood by the natives. Telugu and Bengali are also spoken by a significant population of immigrants resides in the city. The people of Cuttack mostly converse in Odia, however, the IT boom has brought in professionals from around the country to Cuttack and other cities in Odisha. Which is why, English and Hindi are also commonly heard in the streets of Cuttack.

4.7 Cuisine

The staple food of the people of Odisha is rice. They have a lot of liking for creamy rich curd in their food. The Seafood is also favourite among the people, and

they cook it traditionally in curd and coconut milk. Sometimes brinjal and pumpkin are also cooked in the curd.

There is also the widely prevalent practice of taking cooked rice soaked in water overnight, called Pakhal (water rice), as an alternative to a warm rice meal. This can be freshly prepared with cooked rice and adding water and curd/lemon juice in it or can be prepared overnight and kept for little fermentation for its typical smell and taste.

For breakfast, usually, people prefer Pakhal, chapattis, parathas or curd/milk rice with sugar and bananas. The meals usually comprises of steamed rice with the dal or Dalma (pulses with vegetables), green leafy vegetables, a vegetable curry or santula, fish curry for non-vegetarian. Also, there may be some sour pickle or chutney added to it. The street foods like Dahibadaa-Aaludum are the most loved food in the city.

1. Santula

Most commonly prepared vegetable dish of this area. It can either be fried or boiled. Ingredients include potatoes, brinjal, papaya and tomato which are boiled together, then fried in an oil with diced onion, green chillies and panch phoran (a blend of five spices : cumin, brown mustard, fenugreek, nigella and fennel).

2. Dalma

This is again a common item taken with rice as well as with the chapatti. Pulses are cooked with mixed

vegetables and seasoned with cumin seeds, chillies and onion. On religious occasions, the seasoning is done with pure ghee and without onion.

5. Sweet Gaja

Sweet Gaja is a signature dessert of Odisha, which is prepared by combining chhena (cottage cheese), sugar and semolina. The ingredients are mixed well and moulded into rectangular shapes and deep fried in oil. The fried Gajas are coated in sugar syrup and are served dry but the sugar crystals remain on the surface of the dry sweet.



Fig 4.13 Sweet Gaja, a signature dessert of Orissa

4. Biryani

Biryani, a mixed rice dish, is made with spices, rice, meat and vegetables. Katak Biryani is a borrowed



Fig 4.14 Street hawker selling Dahibara Aloodum

item and is prevalent here due to the influence of Mughals in the area. Biryani is normally served in the festivals and feasting occasions, more popular in the Muslim community of Cuttack.

3. Dahibara aloodum

This is a very common and popular food item of Cuttack. The bars, fritters made of black gram, are soaked in cold water, then they are added to seasoned curd and potato curry. It is a very low-cost

recipe, easy to make and tastes tangy and spicy.

5. Rasagola

Rasagola is a dessert made of cottage cheese and semolina dough, cooked in a light sugar syrup. It has been a traditional Odia dish for centuries and has a market beyond the boundary of Orissa. They rasagolas are being parcelled to different places of India in caned containers.



Fig 4.15 The toe separating peg on sandals made of horns

4.8 Crafts Of Cuttack

Though large-scale manufacturing industries and trading houses flourish now, Cuttack is still famous for traditional crafts like silver filigree, horn works, appliqué work, wooden carved articles and furniture, terracotta items, stone carved statues and articles, that are being made in the city and suburban areas. Over the years craftsmen have evolved their own conventional methods of making these are handmade items in their own style and techniques. Hence, even for making the same craft, object and the method of production and types of tools they use may differ from one another. The government has also taken initiatives by implementing various schemes through which training, skill upgrading programs and marketing are provided to the artisans for their better exposures and better earnings to increase their standard of living.



Fig 4.16 Craft Fair organised by Utkalika Orissa State Emporium in Chennai



Fig 4.17 Hornwork showpiece of a crane feeding its young

1. Hornworks

This is an ancient and traditional craft form prevalent in India for ages. Since ivory craft has been banned the craft people have shifted to horn craft. Horn working is the craft of manipulating animal horns by means of heat, pressure or by soak in water to soften. They



Fig 4.18 Brass and bell metal sculptures from 17/18th century or earlier

are sanded several times and then polished to bring out the natural beauty and color of the horns. Artisans mainly use the cow and buffalo horns to make a wide range of artistic utility articles like ashtrays, cigar pipes, pen stands, flower vases, jewelry and combs. In Cuttack, the horn and filigree works are blended to create home decor articles as well as ornaments. These articles have long durability and huge market.

2. Brass & Bell Metals

The artisans of brass and bell craft are traditionally called Kansari. Brass and bell metal products can be broadly classified into items that are created by the process of beating and those produced by casting. These can also be divided into two groups in terms of raw materials used i.e. brass, an alloy of copper and zinc; and bell metal, an alloy of copper and tin.

The major items manufactured in the beating process are plates, deep round containers called Kansa, tumblers, buckets, large cooking utensils and storage vessels, various types of pots and pans, etc. These are also known for their medicinal properties. As for casting one can make two broad groups that is brass castings and dhokra casting. Both follow the lost wax process and the articles produced include idols of Radha, Krishna, Laxmi, Ganesha, Vishnu; and bells, lamps and lamp stands.

This craft has provided large-scale employment opportunity to the artisans of Cuttack. State Governments timely intervention has motivated a section of artisans to adopt sand casting method to produce varieties of artistic functional items.

3. Stone Carving

Stone Carvings of Cuttack reflects a glorious cultural past and rich heritage as it is evident from the innumerable archaeological monuments, rock-cut sculptures, caves and temples built and embellished with most beautiful and intricately carved statues. The handicraft is practiced by artisans mainly at Puri, Bhubaneswar, and Lalitgiri in Cuttack district.

The stones are cut to an appropriate size and the outline is incised indicating the shape. The final figure of the article is brought out by chiseling out the unwanted material. Apart from the decorative and modern utilitarian items like pen stand, paperweight,

lamp base, ashtray and mobile stand, the craft also covers another group of stoneware products like utensils and kitchen wares.



Fig 4.19 Stone sculptors of Bhubaneswar at Raghunath Crafts Museum Workshop



The Craft and Craftsmanship

5.1 Origin of Filigree

“Archaeological finds in ancient Mesopotamia indicate that filigree was incorporated into jewelry since 3,000 BC. Specific to the city of Midyat in Mardin Province in upper Mesopotamia, a form of filigree using silver and gold wires, known as “telkari”, was developed in the 15th Century. To this day, expert craftsmen in this region continue to produce fine pieces of telkari” [7].

Because of similar patterns and processes involved in the making of filigree, experts have found the high degree of similarity in Indian and Greek filigree arts. This gives a good proof of the common influence on artistic patterns in both the countries which came out in the jewellery pieces woven by them. This art form also gained some recognition in Italian and French metalwork from mid 17th century to the late 19th century.

There is no historical evidence on how and when artisans in Orissa started crafting silver filigree items, but veterans say the art form was patronized the most during the Mughal era. As this traditional art form was prestigious and costly in the ancient historical period the ornaments were mostly worn by kings, queens and other high dignitaries.

After the initial setbacks, this filigree trade and art got some impetus in the days of second world war when highly placed military and foreign officers stationed in Cuttack took a fancy and delight for the highly artistic products as gifts for the dear ones. As a result, the workmen of this industry had a great time during the Second World War. Export extended to



Fig 5.1 Utkala Gourav Madhusudan Das

Australia, U.S.A., Burma, Ceylon, England etc. The pre-Independence District Gazettier records: “with the exception of the silver filigree work of Cuttack, the industries of the district are of little importance”. (1933.49) [8].

Late Madhusudan Das, a lawyer, social reformer and a patriot, shall ever be remembered for his contribution towards the development of this art. He realised the potentialities of this art and attempted



Fig 5.2 Group of artisans from Utkal Artworks, Silver Filigree Factory

proper amelioration of those people that were engaged in this art. He had started a factory in Cuttack called Utkal Art Works Factory. The factory is no more and the building is being used for a different purpose. He advocated the change of design to suit the modern aptitude and taste. He has contributed a substantial portion of income for the social and economical upliftment of the condition of the filigree workers.

The pace of modern times has, however, had its impact on the art and at other places, artisans have started using machines to make the silver filigree items. But craftsmen in Cuttack have kept traditional alive. This craft had sufficient encouragement during the ancient times and subsequently suffered lack of initiative, encouragement and marketing facilities.

5.2 Artisans

“ The filigree artisans are majorly categorized into three groups depending on the basis of job involvement i.e self-employed, family business and casual worker. Self-employed artisans are single entrepreneurs who have their own organization, invest in the capital, run the risk of incurring losses and employ paid workers from outside. Family businessmen, on the other hand, run business drawing capital resources from the joint family and employing workers mostly from inside the family. Casual workers are those who do not have capital of their own and sell their labour to wage paying employer. Thus, the self-employed and family businessmen can be called entrepreneurs and casual workers are workers who are employed by these entrepreneurs.

This craft being practised from the pre-Mughal period gained sufficient encouragement during the Mughal days but shows a total absence of Muslims or people of other religions except for Hindus. This artisan pursuit has been upheld and transmitted down through the Hindus’ exclusive tradition. It is observed that artisans with different caste background have made their entry into the craft. About half of the filigree artisans belong to the Bania caste. The rest of them comprises Brahmins, Khandayat, Gudia, Teli, Tanti and Keuta caste. Although banias are predominant over the other individual castes, the preponderance of non-banias over the banias is pretty evident. It can be concluded that the traditional caste occupation has not been an occupational restriction.

The respondents are mostly the natives of Cuttack city. Most of them do not remember exactly as to when their forefathers first settled in Cuttack. The Gujarati Banias and the Bengali goldsmiths who are in the silver-smithy of Cuttack now claim to be the natives of Cuttack, and they speak Odia with



Fig 5.3 Casual labourer at Bullu Prushti's karkhana



Fig 5.4 Silver Filigree artisan, Sanathan Behera

fluency. None of the family businessmen was a first generation migrant. At present, one can come across people who may be described as second and third generation artisans, who have inherited their present skills from their fathers and grandfathers. All cases of occupational inheritance have taken filigree artisanship as the 'job' of their first choice. In terms of caste prestige, Brahmins and Khandayats have

experienced downward social mobility while Keutas, Tantis, Telis and Gudias have experienced, 'social climbing' or upward social mobility by entering into filigree craftsmanship. Banias, however, are more or less horizontally placed” [9].

Around half of the filigree artisans live in joint families whereas rest of them live in nuclear families. In both the family structures, the decisions are taken by men. Many of the respondents claim that either they themselves or their fathers to be the head of the family. The traditional filigree household sector has undergone a drastic change as women are now found being relegated to household duties and this trade is left to be carried on by the men in the family. Initially, in the Kalinga Filigree Co-operative society when 200 workers were employed in the factory, around 50 were women. Women used to work and were involved in helping and doing easy tasks like making chains while men worked on big showpieces.

The craft is losing its glamour for younger generations, who are increasingly going out in search of other occupations. Further, the high representations of the aged artisans may be attributed to the fact that there is nothing like the age of superannuation or retirement. The youngest artisan working in the craft is 35 years old after which the survival of the craft is questionable since the new generation is not interested in joining the craft and pursuing education since it not sufficient for living. Hare Krushna Sahoo also known Jhala Chacha is 82 years old being the oldest silver filigree artisan who started working at the age of 8 years and was working until he was of the age 80.



Fig 5.5 Ramesh Chandra Das and his family.

Ramesh Chandra Das (Age - 74), son of late filigree artisan Madan Mohan Das who was founder of Filigree Production and Training Centre, says "Tarakasi means sukho tarer kaaj (intricate wire work) and it started in Cuttack from the year 1514. My family is from Bardhaman, West Bengal. We

migrated to Orissa and started working with silver. My father and my uncle (Mukun She) worked at the Utkal Art Works Factory established by late barrister Mandhusudan Das. My father, Madan Mohan Das was approximately 15 years old when he started working in the factory. The attraction of the craft increased during the 2nd World War when foreigners took silver filigree articles with them. After factory was shut down, we shifted the factory to our home and named it Filigree Production Cum Training Centre. Around 40 workers worked in the factory. People learned the craft and trained more people which helped the craft to grow. The National Idol Company gifted the machinery. Silver Filigree always existed in Cuttack. My father and his uncle introduced new designs and products to fulfill the market demand."



Fig 5.6 Jhala Chacha. oldest Silver Filigree artisan

5.3 Raw Material

Silver biscuits are the main raw material used in the process. Silver also comes in three other forms i.e. biscuits, granules and old used silver. Silver is a soft metal and is not suitable for making ornaments as such, so it is alloyed with copper and zinc making it stronger without losing its lustre of pure silver. The silver biscuits/granules are of 916 silver i.e. the alloy contains 91.6% pure silver and 8.4% copper or other metals. The solder used is an alloy of 82% silver and other metals like copper and zinc.



Fig 5.7 Silver Granuels

The subsidiary materials used are sulphuric acid and soap nuts, suvaga and ammonium thiocyanate. Sulphuric acid and soap nuts are used for cleaning. The silver items are placed in diluted sulfuric acid. They are rinsed and brushed repeatedly to remove residue and to get its natural lustre. Brazing flux powder locally known as suvaga is used while soldering. Fluxes as cleaning agents facilitate soldering, brazing, and welding by removing oxidation from the metals to be joined.



Fig 5.8 Silver biscuit of 999 silver



Fig 5.9 Preparing old silver ornaments for melting

Artisans are mostly supplied with silver biscuits by middlemen or showroom dealers. Old ornaments are also given to them to melt and make other new products. Sometimes, they use from their stock.

5.4 Tools

There are a variety of different sizes of hand tools used while making silver filigree pieces. The following are the list of tools :

Tools	Fuctions
Searidi/Sandosi (Pliers)	These are used to hold things as well as bend wires.
Chimta (Tweezers)	Used in making intricate shapes by bending thin silver wires.
Katuri (Wire cutting pliers)	Used to cut the silver strips, sheets and wires.
Hatudi/Madhia (Hammers)	Used to straighten the silver wires and strips.
Lehi (Steel bench block)	Used as a platform to shape the objects.
Moskala (Metal knife)	Used for making grooves and markings on filigree peices.
Compass	Used to measure and give an accurate shape to the filigree pieces.
Chisel	Used to cut the silver wires or biscuits to the required size.
Kansuli, Jantil, Kitkira, Dhalla (types of metal dies)	Used to curve silver sheets.
Curved Burnisher	It is a finishing tool used to polish by rubbing. The tip is used to get into tight spots and crevices.
Boring Machine	This machine is used to size the silver rods into required size as per the requirement.
Mandrel	A tampered cylindrical rod around which silver is forged or shaped.



Fig 5.10 Tools displayed on the working table of an artisan.

Chulla	Earthen stove for meting silver.
Files	Used to smoothen the rough surface.
Brass Brush	It is a metal brush used to rub on the final products to get sheen.
Bakanauri (Pipe Blower)	Used to direct the flame towards the parts to be soldered.
Flame Torch	Used in soldering the silver pieces.

Fig 5.11 Tools used while making silver filigree pieces

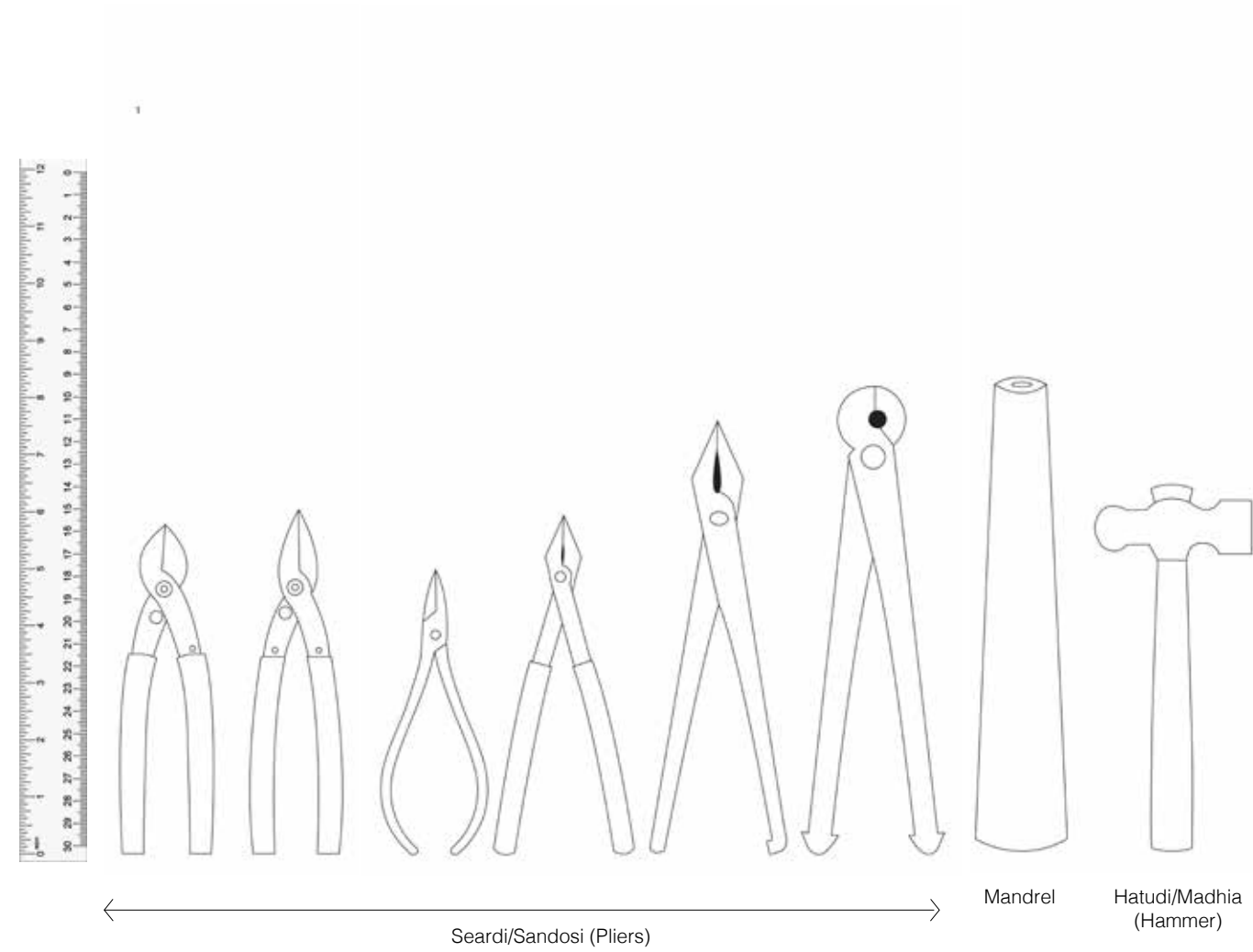
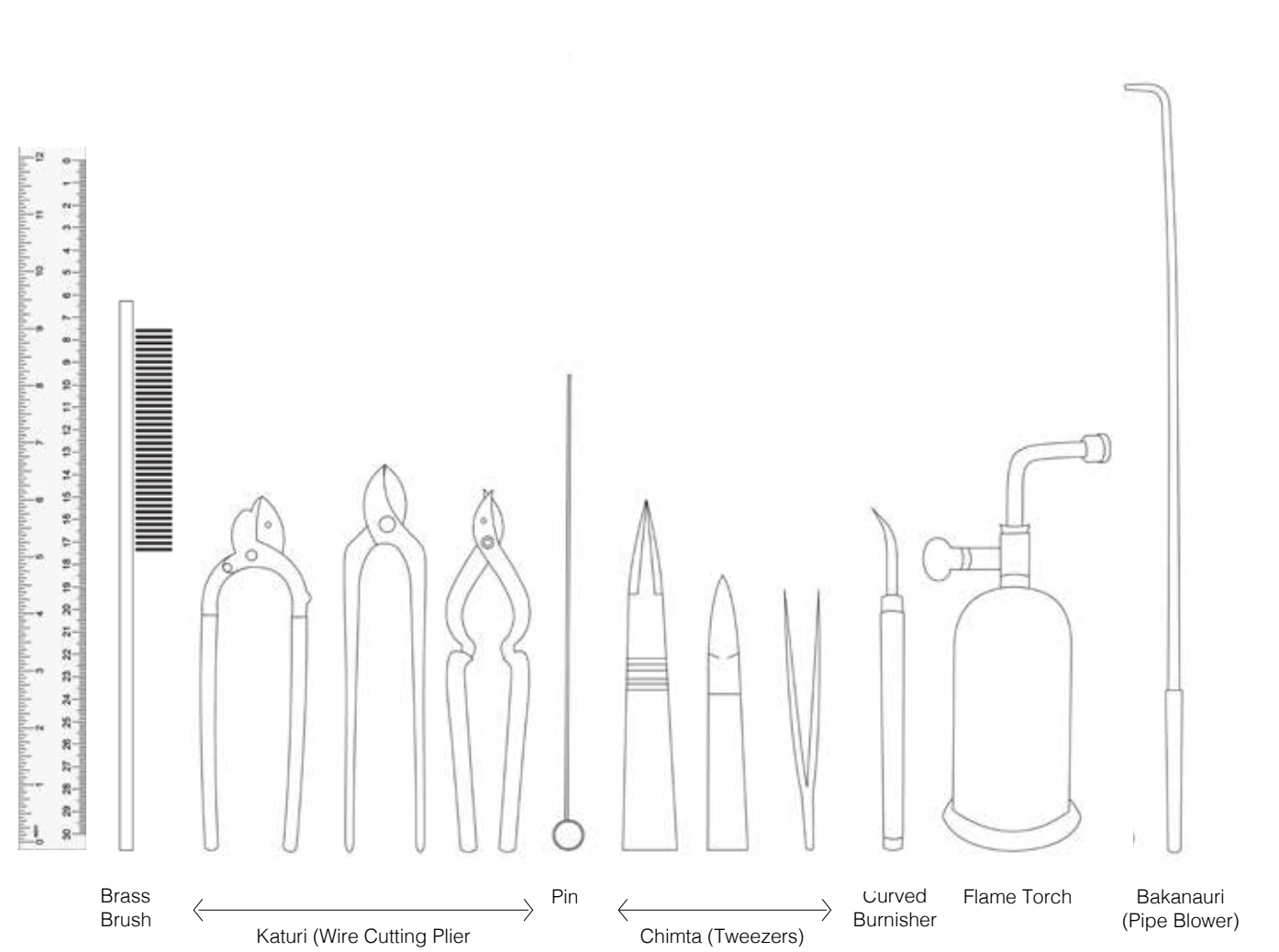


Fig 5.12 Tools used while making silver filigree pieces



5.5 Motifs and inspiration

“ Tarakashi has a Mughal and Persian artistic influence. Designs are first drafted on a piece of paper, inspirations for which are derived from temples, the Konark wheel, flora and fauna. The wires for outlines are placed on the design sheet and shaped according to the drawing. Cuttack has been famous for its spider web work. The rose flower dominates the design in the Cuttack region and most of the designs are built up around flowers and leaves” [10]. The frequently used motifs are birds and animals like peacocks, swan, fish, etc; flowers like rose, lotus, jasmine, etc; different kinds of leaves and chakras. Indian and Greek filigree still have similar patterns and processes to this day; perhaps evidence of common influence.

Jhanjira (zigzag)	~~~~~
Pherpherua (spiral)	
Dhankeyi	99999999
Chakri	
Malda	~~~~~
Jhanjira Chakri	
Pher Phool	

Fig 3.12 Small intricate motifs used in setting process

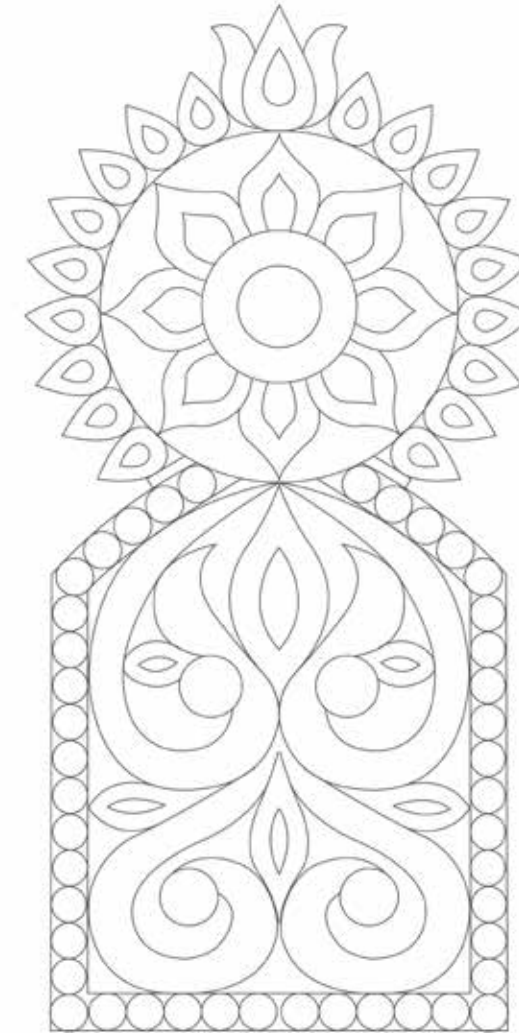


Fig 3.13 Momento design

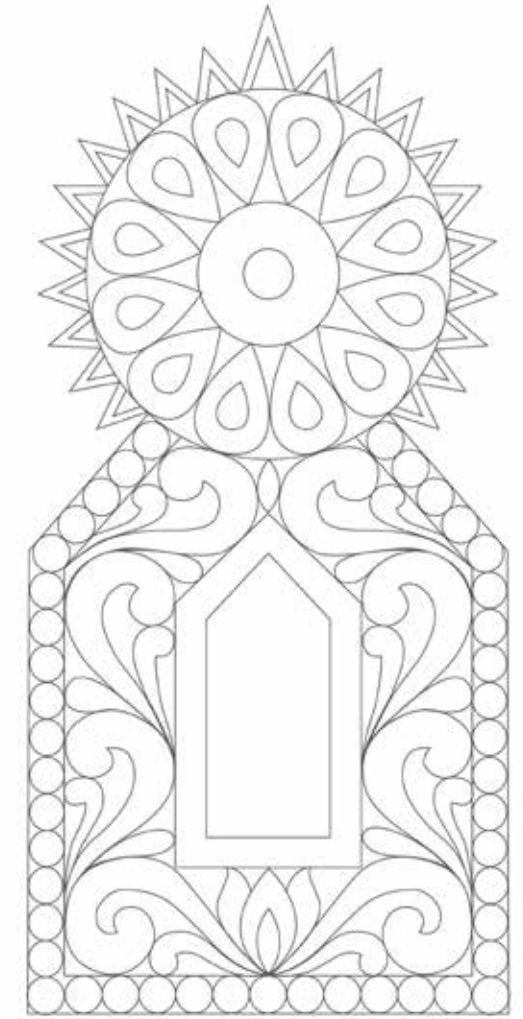


Fig 3.14 Momento design

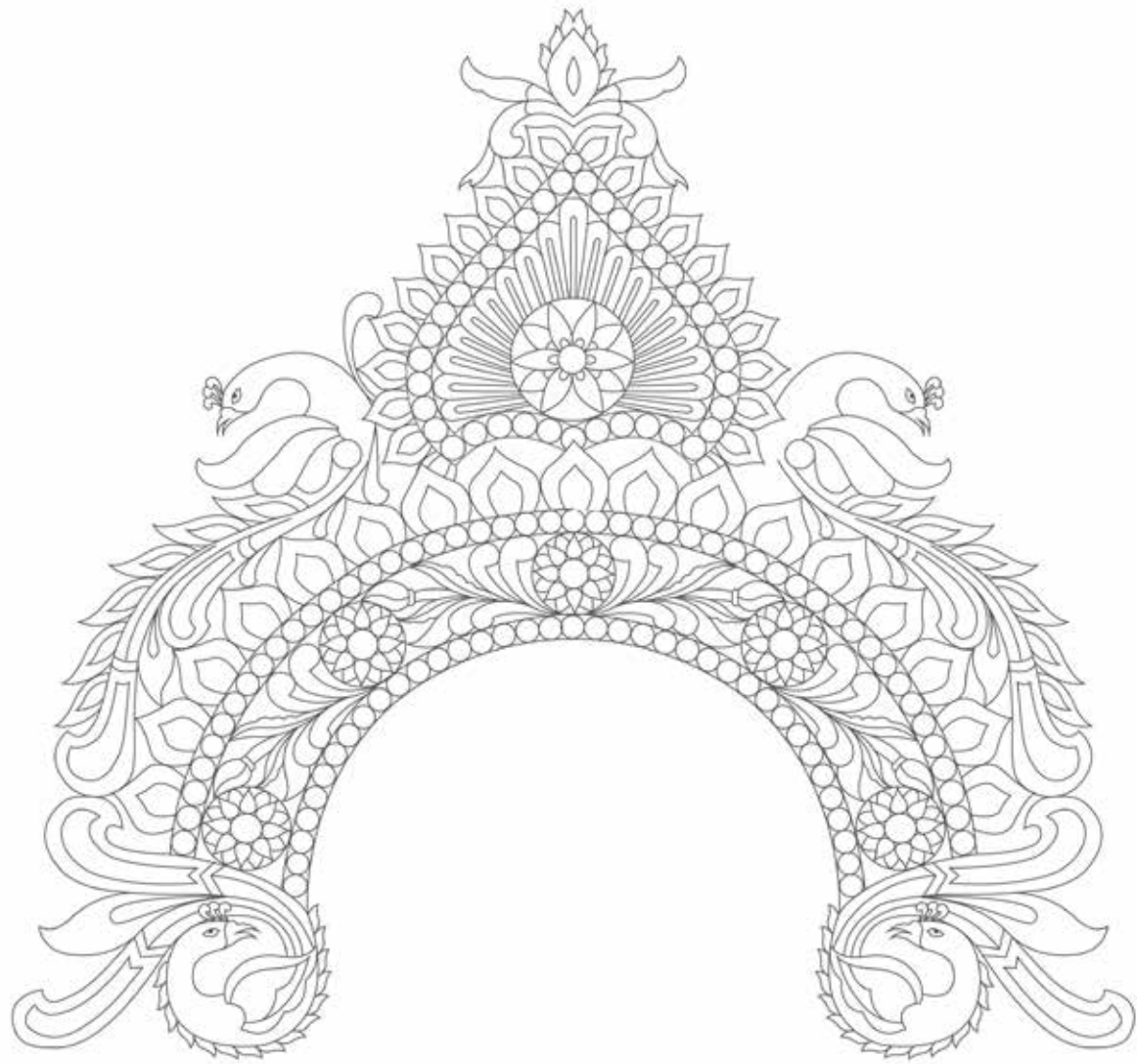


Fig 5.15 Durga Maa's mukut design

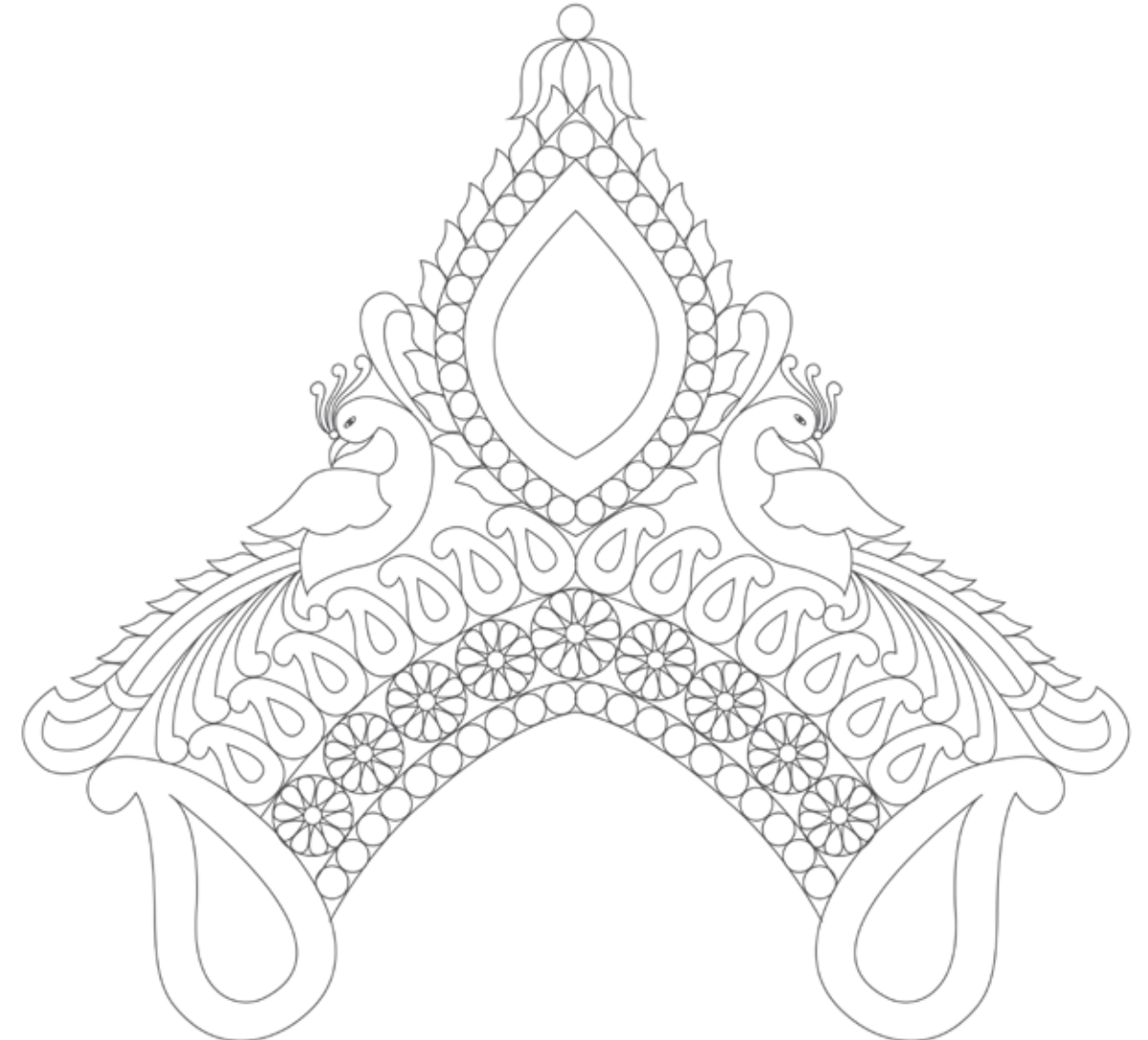


Fig 5.16 Durga Maa's mukut design



Fig 5.17 Moulds used to pour silver after melting

5.6 Process

The making of silver filigree articles involves extremely intricate techniques that require great patience and skill. The craft is delicate and time-consuming. There are six major stages involved while making any silver filigree product. It starts with melting the silver, moulding it into rods, drawing the rods into a wire of different sizes. These wires are flattened and the frames are made in which setting is done using intricate wire motifs. The final stage includes soldering and finishing the final product.

1. Melting & Moulding

The base material for the craft, silver, is bought in the form of biscuits, granules or old used silver. It is taken in a clay container and placed inside the brick



Fig 5.18 Melting old Silver Ornaments



Fig 5.19 Moulded silver rods

hand operated bellows are used to blow air into the furnace to aid the combustion process and regulate the temperature. The melting process takes about ten to twelve minutes.

While the silver is melting, the artisans prepare the rod-like moulds by heated to clean and remove impurities. Then the moulds are wiped with a cloth and is coated with oil before pouring the molten silver. The silver rods are taken out of the moulds and are cooled by submerging them in the water. Silver rods are weighted to check loss of material during this process.

Before the art is taken up for processing the artisans ensure that 92% and above silver purity is maintained or else they cannot take it up for making the art. This is a very vital factor as Silver less than 92% cannot be made in to wires and hence cannot be used in the art.



Fig 5.20 Stirring the silver water against titration with Nitric acid

Three grams of test silver is taken from the sample finished product and melted to get a silver solution. This silver solution is taken in a bottle and to it 5 ml of Mercury is added to get a silver water, which is titrated against Nitric acid. A burette is used for the titration and parameter is fixed at 90%. Slowly the titration is done and the nitric acid is allowed to mix with the silver water. Stirring the silver water against titration with Nitric acid gives it a white color and finally the color changes to red. The reading at which silver solution is turning red is noted and calculated by the sample taken to give the exact purity of the silver.

2. Drawing Wire

Silver is one of the most malleable and ductile of metals, after gold, and one gram of pure metal can be drawn into a wire of more than a kilometer long. The



Fig 5.21 Drawing flat silver wire from silver rods in a wire drawing machine

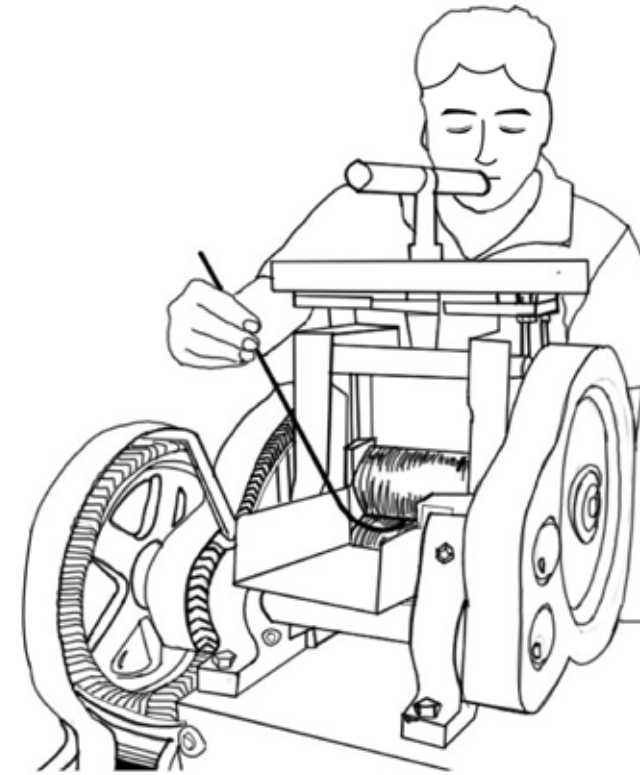


Fig 5.22 Sketch of a labourer drawing wire through the wire drawing machine

silver rods are repeatedly passed through the wire drawing machine to reduced to the desired diameter. In the pre-machine days, the silver rods were beaten on an anvil and elongated into a wires by passing it through the holes of draw plates. The process of making silver wires doesn't require much skill. This is performed by unskilled laborers and non-artisans as well.



Fig 5.23 Small Scale Wire Drawing Machine



Fig 3.24 Artisan drawing Durga Maa,s mukut design

3. Framing

Frame making is the primitive step in process as it provides a base for the product. If the base isn't strong, the intricate work to be done inside the frame won't stick together even after the soldering the parts.



Fig 3.23 Framing

Motifs and patterns are first sketched on a paper and the wires are placed on the outline of the patterns and shaped accordingly by pressing and twisting with hands or pliers. These silver wires are then soldered to make the frame. The wires that are used as frames are usually thicker than the wires that are to be filled inside the frame.

4. Setting

In this process, a number of small intricate motifs are crafted with fine silver wires using hands, tools like tweezers and sometimes, simple machines. In order



Fig 5.26 Artisan making Janjira with the help of Zig Zag machine.



Fig 5.27 Setting pherpherua (spiral) motif in the frame

to get a zig zag effect, the wires are crimped with the help of a zig zag machine which is specially designed for this process.



Fig 5.28 Assembling pieces for soldering

Finally these motifs are arranged firmly inside the frames and are ready to be soldered. The craftsmanship lies in fitting the small parts perfectly in the frame.

5. Soldering

As all the wire motifs and frames are made separately, they are joined together by the process

of soldering. Brazing flux powder locally known as *suvaga* is used as cleaning agent to facilitate soldering. The silver solder is made into fine pieces and dipped in the brazing flux before setting it on the workpiece. Finally, all the parts inside the frame as well as the different frames are fused together by the heat from the blow torch. The silver solder melts at a lower temperature than the melting point of silver and diffuses into the base silver. The soldered piece is then allowed to cool.



Fig 3.29 Soldering silver frame pieces with the help of Bakanauri (Pipe)



Fig 3.30 Dipping silver pieces in sulphuric acid

6. Finishing

During this stage of the process, the product gets its final finish. The product is heated and polished repeatedly, making silver filigree products attain striking shine and lustre that will stay for a longer period. Finishing involves three stages namely cleaning, brushing and filing.

6.1 Cleaning: It involves dipping the product or part of the product in Sulphuric acid and then in water.

This process of heating and dipping in the sulphur liquid is done 3 to 4 times to remove the black stain caused during soldering process from the article, thus giving it a glittering effect.

6.2 Brushing: The product is rubbed with a brass brush whose bristles are made of brass wire, which is readily available in the market. It is then dipped into foam water of soap nuts and rubbed until shiny surface of the silver starts appearing. The foam plays an important role here as higher the amount of foam, faster the shiny surface will appear.



Fig 5.31 Heating the soap nut



Fig 5.32 Brushing the silver piece using the soap nut

6.3 Burnishing: Once the silver color starts appearing, a burnisher is used to remove any extra material or residues of flux that is left on the product for a finished look. Burnishing is the last and the



Fig 5.33 Using the curved burnisher to remove the residues

concluding step of the entire process. Some artisans lacquer the jewelry pieces to give even more shinier look and to prevent tarnishing of silver. Finally, the product is wiped with a soft cotton cloth.



Fig 5.34 Before(Left) and after burnishing(Right)



LIFE OF AN ARTISAN



Fig 6.1 Surendra Behera's karkhana



Fig 6.2 Bullu Prushti's karkhana

6.1 Workspace

The karkhanas/workshop located in Alisha Bazar, are of different sizes depending on the number of artisans working in it. The size of a karkhana where 6-8 artisans work is approximately 4 meters in length by 3 meters in breath. The workspace is either attached to the house of the owner or situated close by in the same area.

These karkhanas are production cum repairing units where silver filigree items are also produced from start to finish. The floor space is used to sit and work

where each artisan has a wooden table to work on with an attached drawer or an aluminium box to store small tools, equipments and the silver pieces they are working on.

There are very few single worker establishments existing. Most of the establishments engage two to six casual workers working under a self employed artisan or family businessmen where silver filigree is passed down through generations.



Fig 6.3 Silver filigree artisan lost his thumb while working

6.2 Wages

The artisans have been complaining about receiving very poor returns for their work. Due to the low income of the artisans they have to be dependent on the middlemen for capital and raw materials to invest in. The optimum level of income earned by casual labourers is approximately around 7,000-8,000 per month and by self employed/family businessmen is 35,000-40,000 per month.

The artisans work approximately 10 hours a day, six and a half days a week starting from 9 am to 9 pm with a 2 hour lunch break in the afternoon. The daily wages of the artisan is approximately Rs 400/ day. During the festive season when the workflow is more the artisans work till midnight or even overnight for which they get an additional payment of Rs 60/hour (1.5 times per hour).

6.3 Health Issues

“Silver filigree being an exhaustive and painstaking craft leads to some peculiar health issues. Due to the intricacy of the craft a lot of casual labourers suffer from Asthenopia, which is a chronic eye disease and Hypermetropia, in which the labourers have to wear high powered glasses where the power increases with age. Some also suffer from Lumbago which is pain caused in the joints and lower back due to continuously sitting on the oor of the workshop

while working. Casual labourers working with re continuously, while soldering suffer from Gastritis which is in ammation of the stomach lining” [11].

Alisha Bazar, where majority of the silver ligree artisans reside has poor sewage system making it a mosquito prone area and causing endemic malaria.

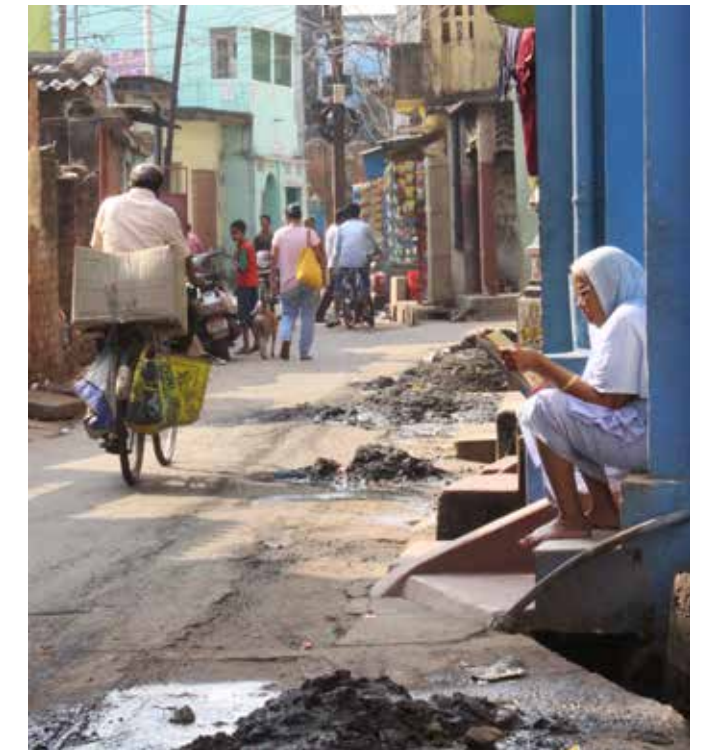


Fig 6.4 Open sewage in streets of Alisha Bazaar, Cuttack



MARKET PLACE



Fig 7.1 Artisans working in Bullu Prushti's karkhana

7.1 Marketing

Though the demand for this beautiful jewelry has decreased in the past few decades, its charm still remains the same when it comes to traditional occasions. With patronage and availability of modern designs, this art is certainly gaining the attention of jewelry lovers.

The Government of Orissa is taking initiatives to preserve this precious art by patronizing the craftsmen by organizing them into a cooperative society and making loans available to them.

The local government bodies are looking after the welfare of this society by taking up the responsibility of marketing these products.

The artisan receives an agreed-upon fee for his work based on the weight of the finished objects he delivers. A skilled artisan called karigar heads a team of artisans. He sometimes acts as a middleman and wholesaler of filigree products, distributing finished jewelry and other filigree products widely in India as well as exporting them abroad. They supply the craftsmen with raw material and the designs

according to changing trends and consumer response.

The artisan has to deal with multiple issues like lack of access to credit, understanding of his market, the idea of design, pricing, packaging, inventory management, etc. The maker's core competency is production, so it is in his best interest that he/she sells it to the middleman who in turn stocks inventory from multiple producers and sells it at a higher price. With the development of technology and increased use of social media, Silver filigree is also sold on various online websites such as Anahata, Silver linings, Jaypore, etc. It is a huge market as it captures people globally and reaches out to many people at a time hence increasing the profit.



Fig 7.2 Casual labourer at Sukant Sahoo's karkhana

7.2 Selling

In order to sell the silver filigree products, the artisans have few options. Many don't deal with the customers directly as they are petty producers. Although middlemen are necessary to enable effective market linkages, they often exploit artisans by paying them a fraction of their wages. This might be due to a lack of information about the true manufacturing costs, or merely due to their ability to coerce artisans, who often lack bargaining power. The other aspect about the middlemen is that they undertake a certain amount of risk by providing the artisans with silver and other raw materials in good faith. There is a possibility of artisans not showing up at all, committing fraud or start dealing with another middleman.



Fig 7.3 Silver filigree retail store in Mohammadia Bazaar



Fig 7.4 Mohommadia Bazaar, market place for selling silver filigree products



Fig 7.5 Sukant Sahoo at his karkhana

Sukanth Sahoo, filigree artisan, said that the demand for silver filigree products is high during the festive season of Dussehra and Diwali. And that the orders for these products come nationally as well as globally, particularly from Italy and Los Angeles. The orders throughout the year of each artisan consume approximately 200 kg of silver.

8.3 Costing

The cost of pure silver is Rs 39/g. The making charges taken by the artisans vary from Rs 5/g to Rs 13/g depending on the fineness of the work. So the making charges for jewelry products are more than the making charges for display and utility products. The shop owners sell these products in the store for double the making charges that they pay the artisans. Most of the shops that sell filigree products are situated in Mohommadia Bazar. In 1958 the price of silver was 62 Rs/Kg and now it is 39,000 Rs/Kg.

7.4 Product Range

The silver filigree artisans of Cuttack have been creating timeless elegant pieces of jewelry and artifacts for 500 years now. Each item created is distinct with fine intricate details made with thin silver wire. It makes us marvel at the incredible craftsmanship and the eye for small details that has gone into creating each and every piece.

Silver filigree products started off with first making jewellery moving on to show pieces, crockery then followed by the first Medho in 1958 which was made for the Chaudhary Bazar Durga Puja. After which orders for Arjun and Ram chariots also started.

The products are majorly categorized into three main categories:

1. Ornaments:

Hairpins, Nose Pins, Earrings, Bangles, Neck Chains, Toe Rings, Tie Pins, Brooches, Anklets, Cuffings and Pendant Sets.

2. Display items:

Chariot, Idols, Konark wheel, Animal figures, Momento, Taj Mahal Model, Durga Puja Medhos

3. Utility products:

Pen Holders, Photo Frames, Cigarette Cases, Candle Stands, Ashtrays, Buttons, Coat Pins, Spoons, Money Purses, Betel Nut Boxes, Vermillion Boxes, Incense Containers, Spoons, Hand Bags

The jewelry pieces are made of super fine quality with excellent finish. They are also available in oxidised form which is different from traditional silver, because it is a darker color and has very little luster. Oxidised silver requires less maintenance and the tarnish simply makes the silver more beautiful.



Fig 7.6 Silver Filigree Ring



Fig 7.7 Silver Filigree Bracelet



Fig 7.8 Silver Filigree Necklace Set



Fig 7.9 Silver Filigree Dangler Earring

The jewelry pieces are made of super fine quality with excellent finish. They are also available in oxidised form which is different from traditional silver, because it is a darker color and has very little luster. Oxidised silver requires less maintenance and the tarnish simply makes the silver more beautiful.



Fig 7.10 Silver Filigree Brooches



Fig 7.11 Silver Filigree Hand Bag



Fig 7.12 Silver Filigree Tray



Fig 7.13 Silver Filigree Spectacle Case



Fig 7.14 Silver Filigree Elephant Showpiece



Fig 7.15 Silver Filigree Puja Chatri



Fig 7.16 Silver Filigree Rose



STATE OF AFFAIRS

8.1 Government Intervention

“ Filigree artisans in Cuttack have been going through a hard time due to the lack of proper policies and schemes for their development. The loss of royal patronage hugely hit the ligree trade, and thereby the craftsman communities. The rising cost of silver affected its appeal to the middle-class, who had lifted sales for a while in the Sixties. As a result the families of craftsman communities have depleted significantly, opting for other professions. Aged craftsman, who have lost the dexterity of their hands and are unable to create, have been reduced to penury. Their children have resorted to manual jobs like auto-rickshaw drivers. Even the award winning artisans are struggling to make a living” [12].

There are various milestones mapped in the history of silver ligree where government intervention has been unsuccessful to revive and restore the craft:

Late Barrister Mr. Madhusudan Das set up the Utkal Arts work factory to revive the oldest art form and converting it into a cottage industry. After factory shut down they shifted the factory to their home and named it Filigree Production Cum Training Centre where around 40 workers worked. People working there learn the craft and further trained more people which help the craft to grow. The National Idol Company also gifted the factory required machinery.

Once the factory shut down the government decided to look into the issue since 1200 families were dependant on the craft. They set up the Kalinga Filigree Co-operative Society, an initiative by the former chief minister Biju Patnaik in 1962 to help the local artisans. Initially, the project yielded results but due to lack of proper guidance and support, it turned defunct.

The failure of the co-operatives is mainly due to corruption and lack of interest shown by both the artisans as well as the officials. Also the artisans were not interested in working for the co-operatives because they got paid almost a month after the delivery due to procedural delays.

In 2008, Tourism Department announced a project to popularize and preserve the silver filigree art form of the city by setting up a hub.

The ambitious project was planned seven years ago but is yet to take off as the district administration has not been able to find a suitable plot for the project. “We have been hearing about the hub since the past six years. But nothing has come up yet. It is becoming tough for most of the artisans to earn a living depending on just the filigree craft,” asserts Prasanta Sahoo, a filigree artisan.

After the failure of the state government, the Durga Puja Committee decided to revive the art form and started decorating the Durga Puja pandals with silver filigree work. This infused fresh life into the threaded silver work which gave a ray of hope to the artisans. The silver pandals attract



Fig 8.1 Utkalika Odisha State Emporium

lakhs of tourists to Cuttack during Durga Puja. But what the artisans need now are the basic amenities for their survival, and new projects that will add some life into the craft.

8.2 Current Scenario

The silver filigree craft that started in 1514 has now lost the royal patronage due to the tremendous increase in the price of silver. In 1958 the price of

filigree trade and the craftsmen communities that are mainly situated in Alisha Bazar, Cuttack. Therefore the craftsmen communities have reduced, shifting to other professions. The new generation is also not interested to carry forward the family business due to the low wages and reducing appreciation for the craft. They are pursuing education and moving on to secured jobs. The aged craftsmen have lost their mastery and are unable to create anymore. Even the artisans who have won prestigious awards are struggling for their survival.



Fig 8.2 ATM built in place of a silver filigree workshop

Further there are very few design interventions and product diversification seen in this craft sector. The designs are repetitive and old without any further innovations. The craftsmen are not able to understand the consumers and the current market trend therefore even with the existing demands for the product, the supply is falling short.

8.3 Scope of Intervention

- Intervention by designers and manufacturers with a cost-effective approach to reach to a larger audience.
- Product Intervention and design input can reposition it in the luxury market.
- Possibilities for innovations with methods, material, tools and process can be explored to reduce laborious work.
- Fine work is USP(Unique Selling Point) that can not be achieved by machines.
- Standardization is alien to these silversmiths. The most fascinating aspect of silver filigree is the element of newness and surprise it has. Every piece looks different, delicate and unique.

The 5 P's of Marketing - Product, Price, Promotion, Place, and People can be used to position a business strategically and give owners a better understanding to how to satisfy customers in their target market, add value to their business, and help differentiate their business from competitors.

Products:

Making product catalogues which will specify the details of various filigree products.

Product design and development in collaboration with institutes like National Institute of Design, NIFT, etc, to explore a variety of products, contemporary designs, new product ranges and more functional products to keep up with the emerging trends and taste of customers.

Price:

Standardization of pricing through grading/quality.

Place:

Permanent exhibition stalls and websites exclusively for Indian silver filigree that sell and export authentic silver filigree items.

Packaging:

New Innovative Packaging for domestic as well as international orders. As of now, there is no packaging done, they use cardboard boxes or plastic bags if they have to transport.

Promotion:

Participating in Jewelry & Handicraft exhibitions worldwide.

Marketing and promotion through various online platforms such as e-commerce websites, social media, YouTube and blogs to increase exports.

Conclusion

The magnificence of the art and culture of Orissa has been beautifully immortalized through the years of craftsmanship by the Filigree artisans of 'The Silver City', i.e. Cuttack. Locally known as 'Tarakashi', the famous silver filigree inlay work requires intensive labour and intricate skills.

Even though the silverware of Cuttack stands unique for their exquisite beauty, delicate designs and aesthetic charm, the production and marketing of it has been undertaken in the most unorganized manner. The state of affairs is hardly promising.

In Orissa, most filigree work is still done in silver and a lack of access to modern machinery and dependence on hand-crafting makes it difficult to create products in massive quantities. Earlier the craft used to be the source of bread and butter for most households throughout Cuttack, but today the lack of reward for the invested time and hard work of these artisans has forced a drastic reduction in their numbers. Hence the craft sector, primarily being a family business, is suffering heavily. The lack of pay and the difficulties of the craft is causing the progeny of the artisans to drift towards other occupations.

Furthermore the insufficient support from the government and the lack of clientele is putting the art in danger. There is a distinct lack of interest and awareness among foreign buyers making it virtually impossible to sustain the craft without the support of exports. As a whole, the state of filigree and its future lies in a somewhat complex state of affairs. Even in its more traditional and essential form in Orissa, the craft is going through a very difficult phase, and both government and industrial impetus seems imperative if the craft is to survive and flourish.

'Tarakasi' is a signature of Orissa and a pride for the Indian heritage, making its eventual evenesence even more tragic. The proper upliftment and appreciation of this craft is desperately required so it could be restored and sustained before it fades away completely.

Glossary

B

- **Bahuchundi** - The armlets worn by an Odissi dancer.
- **Bali Jatra** – Held every year in Novemeber, Bali Jatra is the second largest trade fair to take place in Asia. Merchants from Cuttack after trading with South East Asian traders bring back foreign goods. On their return stalls are setup as buyers from all over the state pour into Cuttack to make purchases.
- **Bankunari** - Hollow pipe used for soldering metal pieces
- **Bharata** – A typical Oriya dish prepared by baking various vegetables and mashing them together mixed with garlic and Indian spices to create a mouth watering dish.
- **Bhati** – Brick furnace
- **Buita** – The sacerdotal head of the Juang tribe of Orissa is called Buita or Nigam.
- **Buyya** – A class of priests of the Saoras community who preside over the agricultural festivals, offerings and sacrifices.

C

- **Chimta** - Tongs
- **Chitrakar** - (Chitra - Painting) The painters of Orissa are known as Chitrakars.
- **Chulla** - Earthen stove

D

- **Dibidi** - Oil container
- **Dom** – The caste of the Oriya community that creates products in cane and bamboo are called Doms.

F

- **Farma** – A silver wire frame with which smaller silver designs are placed to create ornaments.

G

- **Gamuchha** – A woven light-weight piece of fabric that is a part of the mens clothing. It is either tied as a turban on their heads or often hung on their shoulder.

- **Ghadia** - Earthenware pot

- **Gotipua** - A Odissi dance style where young boys perform in female clothing.

- **Gudia** - The Gudiyas are the sweet-meat sellers of the Oriya country, with their name derived from gudo (jaggery).

H

- **Hatudi** – Hammer.

J

- **Jani** – The Jani are the sacerdotal heads of the Kondh tribe of Orissa.

- **Jantil** - Types of dyes

K

- **Kamar** - The blacksmith community of Orissa.

- **Kankana** - The bracelets worn by an Odissi dancer.

- **Kansari** - The artisans of brass and bell craft are traditionally called Kansari.

- **Kansuli** - Dye for silver balls

- **Kapa** - Silver filigree earrings worn by Odissi dancers.

- **Katuri** - Cutter used by filigree artisans

- **Keuta** - The Keuta are the fishermen caste of Oriss

- **Khandayat** - Khandayats are one of the largest and were the highest caste of Odisha throughout its medieval history

- **Kudan** – The Kudan are the class of priests who act as the community prophet, priest and doctor.

- **Kumbhara** – The potters of Orissa.

L

- **Lehi** – Platform

- **Lungi** – A cylindrical piece of cloth that is worn by Oriya men (mostly youngsters) as a casual wear.

M

- **Madhia** - Small hammer

- **Mahari** - A school of Odissi dance that has its roots in the devdasi traditions.

- **Makar Shankranti** - Makar Sankranti, is a festival day in the Hindu calendar, in reference to deity Surya.

- **Mali** - The caretakers of gardens and florists are called Mali .

- **Medho** – Pandals(i.e. Huge installations that acts as a temporary temple for the worship of various deities during religious festivals).

- **Mekhalaa** - The silver belt worn by an Odissi dancer.

- **Moshala** - Metal Knife

N

- **Nartaki** - A school of Odissi.

P

- **Panch Phoran** - A blend of five spices : cumin, brown mustard, fenugreek, nigella and fennel.

- **Padakatilaka** - The necklace worn by a Odissi dancer.

- **Paika** - Odiya warriors are known as Paika.

- **Pakhal** – Cooked rice that was soaked overnight is known as Pakhal.

R

- **Reethaphal** - A kind of fruit used to improve the shine of silver.

- **Ropyakara** - Also known as Rupabania, these are the silver filigree workers of Orissa.

O

- **Oraons** - They are a progressive and prosperous group who have adopted advanced agricultural methods.

S

- **Sandosi** - Pair of tongs

- **Santhals** - A tribal community with a keen eye for beauty who build hand painted homes.

- **Saoras** - One of the oldest tribes of Orissa, the Saoras are intrepid forest dwellers and master artists.

- **Sarvajanim** – (Sarvajan: Everyone) For Everyone.

- **Seardi** - Small tongs

- **Seenthi** – Silver ornaments for the hair and forehead worn by Odissi dancers.

- **Shankari** – The Bangle makers of Orissa.

- **Sikko** – Small intricate silver designs made by filigree artisans that are placed into larger silver frames to create ornaments.

- **Sisa** – Also known as Pujaris ,these are the high priests of the Bondo tribe.

- **Suhaga** – Locally known as Suhaga, is an ayurvedic formulation prepared from borax powder.

- **Sura** – It is a white salt like substance which is mixed with water along with silver powder. These when applied to the parts to be joined along with heat serve as an adhesive hence joining the parts together permanently.

- **Sutradhara** - The carpenters of Orissa are called Sutradhara.

- **Swarnakara** – Commonly known as Sunars,the goldsmiths community of Orissa is also called the Swarnakaras.

T

- **Tanti** - The weavers of Orissa are called Tantis.

- **Tarakasi** - (Oriya :Tara-Silver, Kasi-Work)One of the oldest crafts that originated in the district of Cuttack, Orissa, Tarakasi is a highly skill intensive Filigree work made entirely out of Silver.

- **Teli** - A caste of filigree artisans

- **Telkari** - Produced by a class of expert craftsmen from Orissa, this is a pattern of highly intricate and delicate filigree designs using

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Photo Credits

1. Introduction

Fig 1.1 Cuttack Railway Station
<https://indiarailinfo.com/station/pics/station-pics-cuttack-junction-ctc/488>

Fig 1.2 Barabati Fort
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Barabati_durga_Cuttack_Barabati_Fort_Front-1.JPG

3. Story of Cuttack

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Fig 3.2 A group of eight artisans at work in Cuttack, taken in the year 1873
<https://www.oldindianphotos.in/search?q=cuttack>

4. Way of Living

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<https://cuttackpost.com/top-5-durga-puja-pandals-in-cuttack/>

Fig 4.7 Bali Yatra In Motion, Cuttack 2017
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L6BXJJ27xc>

Fig 4.8 Burning of Ravan's idol during Dusshera
<https://www.connectedtoindia.com/dussehra-celebrating-the-victory-of-good-over-evil-2490.html>

Fig 4.9 Kite Flying during Makar Sankranti
<https://www.financialexpress.com/lifestyle/makar-sankranti-2018-history-importance-and-significance/1013245/>

Fig 4.10 Sharmila Mukherjee - Odissi Dancer and Choreographer
<http://www.sharmilamukherjee.com/>

Fig 4.11 Mayurbhanj Chhau Dance
<https://www.gettyimages.co.uk/detail/news-photo/artists-from-purulia-district-of-west-bengal-performs-chhau-news-photo/658014058#/artists-from-purulia-district-of-west-bengal-performs-chhau-dance-at-picture-id658014058>

Fig 4.12 Traditional clothing of men and women in Orissa
https://wifd.in/articles/costumes_of_different_states_in_india

Fig 4.13 Sweet Gaja, a signature dessert of Orissa
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Fig 4.15 The toe separating peg on sandals made of horns
<http://www.dsource.in/resource/horn-craft-cuttack-orissa/products>

Fig 4.16 Craft Fair organised by Utkalika Orissa State Emporium in Chennai
<http://orissadiary.com/utkalika-organizes-a-unique-handloom-and-handicrafts-exhibition-at-chennai/>

Fig 4.17 Hornwork showpiece of a crane feeding it's young
<https://www.indiamart.com/orissa-state-co-operative/cow-horn-decorations.html>

Fig 4.18 Brass and bell metal sculptures from 17/18th century or earlier
<https://www.lempertz.com/cn/catalogues/lot/1092-1/62-two-orissabengal-brass-figures-17th18th-century-or-earlier.html>

Fig 4.19 Stone sculptors of Bhubaneswar at Raghunath Crafts Museum Workshop
<https://iaccg.wordpress.com/category/iaccg-collection/>

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Fig 5.1 Utkala Gourav Madhusudan Das
<http://www.exploreplex.com/utkala-dibas/>

Fig 5.22 Sketch of a labourer drawing wire through the wire drawing machine
<http://www.dsource.in/resource/silver-filigree-cuttack-orissa/tools-and-raw-materials>

7. Market Place

Fig 7.4-7.17 Silver Filigree Product Range
<https://silverlinings.in/>
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8. State of Affairs

Fig 8.2 Utkalika Odisha State Emporium
<http://www.pearlsindiatour.com/odisha/bhubaneswar/places-to-visit/>

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