



SAPTA SAJYA
festival
December 2022



Saptasajya Festival 2022

Empowering Traditional Artisans of Odisha
Through Designer Intervention

Editors: S.G. Rida Yunus

Graphic Designer: Arka Ghosal

Photography: Abhishek Anand, Arka Ghosal

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From the Founder-Director

The third edition of the Saptasajya Festival was held after a one-year pandemic break at the Artisan Village premises, in Sadeiberini village. The beauty of the venue – nestled in the hills – combined with days that began and ended with stunning sunrises and sunsets, made it the ideal setting for an experiment such as this.

The Festival was conceived with the objective of bringing a new perspective to the traditional designs of age-old crafts. Our attempt was not to modernize the process, but rather to introduce small and seamless changes that would result in the making of new products. These products are for today's audience – buyers who have had infinite exposure to the best of Eastern and Western design.

Over the course of three editions of the Festival, we have made progress. At the third edition, nearly every artisan group experimented with the material of another group, while building their own product. A group of Dhokra artisans at the 2019 edition were the very first to engage with a fusion of this sort at the Festival. They fashioned their animal figurines and added stones and bricks as novel elements, later taking this innovation a step further with lively shiva-lingas and bowls.

The terracotta cluster created canvas 'potli' bags with fired clay bases. I can already imagine my mother and aunts carrying these bags to their temple visits, myriad puja items in tow.

But I realized that a Festival of this caliber needs much more than a group of willing artisans and enthusiastic designers. The market linkage for these new products is essential for them to gain acceptance. Exposure and access to a discerning audience are crucial for traditional crafts to fit into new markets. That is a challenge we, at the Saptasajya Foundation, need to accept and solve.

Over the course of three editions of the Festival, we have made progress. At the third edition, nearly every artisan group experimented with the material of another group, while building their own product. A group of Dhokra artisans at the 2019 edition were the very first to engage with a fusion of this sort at the Festival. They fashioned their animal figurines and added stones and bricks as novel elements, later taking this innovation a step further with lively shiva-lingas and bowls.



GAYATRI RATH

Curatorial Note

The Saptasajya Festival has been a part of my life for the last two years. But even before 2020, I had a deep understanding of the purpose and sentiment that drove the Saptasajya Foundation, as a designer with three decades of experience in Odisha.

In its previous editions, the Festival hosted many artists and designers who served as mentors to artisans from various regions of Odisha. I believe this is what makes this festival distinct: It allows different art and craft forms to coexist and take new turns, all under the same roof.

Dhenkanal itself is home to exquisite handicrafts like Dhokra, bell metal, and bamboo. The Saptasajya Festival has opened its doors to crafts from regions outside Dhenkanal as well, some of which are only known to a handful of people. Interactions between crafts of different clusters build the scope for fusion. When I curated the festival's 2022 edition, I wanted to bring diverse handicrafts together, as well as devise a common, overarching concept or theme — a tapestry made of interwoven threads.

'Newstalgic'

The 2022 Saptasajya Festival connected the past with the present, resulting in aesthetics for the future — rooted as it was in the emotional experiences of living through a pandemic. Named 'Newstalgic', the theme prompted designers to delve into unvisited memories, moments, even objects and commodities of the past, and blend them with the sensibility of today's world. The driving thought was 'past + present = future'.

Participants engaged in organic conversation and experimentation during the four-day workshop, where ideas and knowledge were freely exchanged.

With ten mentors and ten clusters of artisans, this year's edition brought a new dimension to Odisha's crafts. I hope the festival continues to grow and offer countless opportunities to our skilled craftsmen, creative professionals, and appreciators of all things artisanal.



SIDHARTH MOHANTY



DESIGNERS AND ARTISANS AT
SAPTASAJYA FESTIVAL 2022

Bamboo



In order to make a bamboo weaving product, two distinct sets of bamboo strips are usually interlaced at right angles. The longitudinal lengths of the strips are known as the warp, while the lateral lengths are known as the weft. The nature and method of their interweaving defines the final look of the product.

In East Asia and South-East Asia, where bamboo weaving is a popular craft and the raw material is abundantly available, pieces are typically made by hand.

MENTOR

Athousana Singha

ARTISANS

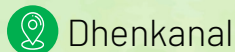
Prasant Senapati

Bijay Senapati

Debi Prasad Senapati

Ananda Senapati





Bamboo Experiments: A Versatile Material in Fashion and Homes

While creating spatial experiences as an architect, I have always admired the use of craft in interiors. I began my career with a stint as a freelance graphic designer, creating brand images for agricultural and pharmaceutical companies. Now that I have my own architectural firm and have worked in Odisha for quite a few years, I look forward to imagining and devising a new language of design, imbued with the rich traditions of the state.

Bamboo, an intricate element of the craft world, offers up a world of experimental options. From ancient times, it has been used to make a wide range of objects; in India especially, bamboo craft is both well-known and established, practiced as it is in many parts of the country. We see multiple uses of the material around us, from small-scale showpieces to colossal interiors. It has been turned into chairs, tables, hammocks, ottomans, as well as everyday accessories like boxes, baskets, ornaments and jewelry. Among tribal communities, bamboo was also used to make weapons, furniture and vessels to store food.

When introducing bamboo craft in a new market, it must be imagined with a little twist and fusion, to ensure that it fits into the culture of the new generation.

The idea behind 'Repositioning bamboo in the fashion industry' is the rekindling of the material's potential in today's world. I endeavored to make it a space, including partition walls, art installations and more.

ATHOUSANA SINGHA





A SPECTACLE CASE





ADJUSTABLE BAMBOO FORM



Metal Jewelry



Outfits designed by leading names in the fashion world can be made complete with Odisha's range of metal jewelry, created by local and tribal communities. Jewelers in the state who work with metal often rely on simple tools like pliers and hammers to turn ordinary wires and sheets into things of beauty. To this day, they use blow torches that run on petroleum to solder metal for these fine accessories.

MENTOR

Jagrutee Das

ARTISANS

Nukhuri Sahoo

Sulochana Sahoo

Pradip Maharana

Gadadhar Sahoo



HAND CUFF

Karamul Ornamentation: of Nostalgia and Tribal Tradition

As a child, I was fond of games and collectibles, and this is where my creative journey began. To this day — after many years of working in Odisha — my design language is still rooted to those fond memories. I invoked those memories in my collection, titled 'EN-CO-DED-OC-ED'.

Odisha is home to 62 tribes, each of whom have their own way of life. The jewelry worn by tribal women is often made by artists who are primarily based in the districts of Rayagada, Phulbani, Gajapati, Koraput, Nabarangpur, and Dhenkanal. Daily rituals, spiritual practices and tribal culture all shape the way that a community's jewelry is made, and each tribe values the authenticity of its ornaments. EN-CO-DED-OC-ED was an attempt to revive this practice for current sensibilities, thus making it an accessory that could potentially be exported.

The demand for Odisha's tribal jewelry is growing, as it gains popularity in the international market. I focused on Karamul jewelry, which does not have the visibility enjoyed by other types of ornaments. This form of jewelry is fashioned out of brass sheets and wires, which are fused with beads and entirely handmade by tribal women.

My design range brings together nostalgia and craft, offering a visual tour of core childhood memories like playing with pebbles, beads and cards. Making Karamul my visual language, my aim was to create fashion and lifestyle accessories that remind us of our childhood days when we wear them.

JAGRUTEE DAS





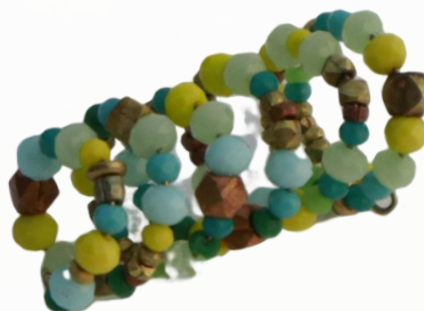
BAGS



BOX



PALM CUFFS



FINGER RING

Terracotta



In this artform, clay transforms from a lump on a potter's wheel, to a graceful form shaped by an artisan's hands, to the final product — baked in a kiln to perfection. Though the etymology of the name terracotta is Latin, traces of the craft have been found in ancient civilizations like the sites at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. Aside from vessels and decorative objects, Odisha's terracotta practitioners also use the technique to make tiles.

MENTOR

Sheela Jena

ARTISANS

Sunamani Rana

Pramod Rana

Sanyasi Rana

Lukesh Rana



ODIA DIGIT NINE
SHAPE COASTER

 **Sonepur**

Moulding Terracotta to Preserve Childhood Memories

Working with clay is an evocative, emotional experience for artists, whether it is in the form of pottery or the building of mud houses. As children, many of us have played with mud or kneaded dough made of flour, in an attempt to make meaningful shapes. Terracotta gives us the opportunity to take this idea of play further, and layer objects with meaning and storytelling.

It is one of the oldest crafts, featuring in many ancient civilisations in the form of pottery or even idols of gods and goddesses. In present times, terracotta is used to make glazed and unglazed ceramic accessories.

A versatile material, it can be added to in-progress pieces using an 'additive technique', or a solid lump of terracotta can be carved using a knife or other instruments using a 'subtractive' technique. Typically, the broad shape is built first, following which details are added or removed.

As a fashion designer based in Bhubaneswar, I find that my creative side — like many in design-related professions — is drawn to Odisha's crafts and cultural heritage. At the Saptasajya Festival, I took inspiration from a 9-year-old girl whose father was stationed in Dhenkanal a few years before the 1999 super cyclone. She had no idea about the way in which life was about to change; she'd never lived near the coast, or heard about cyclones.

She attended the Gajalaxmi Puja Fair with her family. When it began to rain, her father suggested that they turn back. The next day, the girl's world would change completely: the pandals were demolished by the wind and pouring rain; families lost their loved ones to the extreme weather; the roads were strewn with fallen trees; and the city had no electricity.

In my design, I capture her experience: Using geometric forms like waves, cyclone spirals, and a broken heart, I put together a material palette comprising jute, bamboo, sabai grass and glass.

SHEELA JENA





ODIA DIGIT NINE CENTRE TABLE
DRYFRUIT PLATTER



1999
MIRROR STAND



THE CYCLONE
CANDLE HOLDER



AMPLIFIER



1999
CYCLONE POTLI



CYCLONE WAVE
PEN STAND



GREEN SEA
DECORATIVE BOWL



BROKEN HEART
AGARBATTI STAND

Dhokra



Their simplicity of form and enchanting folk motifs have made the creations of Dhokra artisans popular products in the Indian and international market. In the Dhenkanal district, Dhokra is the most prominent craft, with two artisan villages in close proximity – Saptasajya and Nabajibanpur.

MENTOR

Sidharth Mohanty

ARTISANS

Prasant Behera

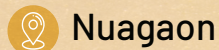
Trinath Behera

Bhansidhar Pradhan

Ramesh Dehury



FURNITURE LEGS



Nuagaon

A Modern Take on Dhokra : A Story of Brass, Stone and Innovation

Dhokra casting is a folk art whose practitioners live in Odisha, as well as Madhya Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar. When it comes to Odisha, it is largely practiced in the South-West region: namely Kuliana in the Mayurbhanj district, Kaimati in the Keonjhar district, Haradagaria in the Puri district, and Sadeiberini in the Dhenkanal district.

The metal used is brass, made using the lost-wax method. Five to seven days are needed to manufacture a product using the traditional process. Using molding, de-waxing and casting techniques, the tribal families of Dhenkanal create figures of gods and goddesses, lamps, boxes, ornaments, and ritual objects that are used for household needs. These products are mainly sold mainly at the local weekly market. This craft has a strong link to the socio-cultural environment in Odisha.

Traditional artists in rural centers, who set prices for their products based on the weight of the metal and not according to the item's aesthetic value, need to be supported. Additionally, giving the traditional practitioners of Dhenkanal a larger commercial area will be an uphill task.

I've worked in the design industry for a considerable amount of time, as a Bhubaneswar-based architect. At the Saptasajya Festival, the idea behind my presentation was to reduce the casting process. We removed the clay from the inside and replaced it with a stone. The technique thus created a fusion between brass and stone.

Initially, we used raw stones to create some traditional designs, but in this edition of the festival, the artisans carved the stones and cut them sharply, giving the products a modern look, geared towards the newer generation.

SIDHARTH MOHANTY





SHIVA - LINGA



FROGS AND BULLS



HAIR PINS



BOWL



FLOWER VASES



Sadeibereni

Dhokra: Finding Beauty and Functionality in an Ancient Art form

As a fashion designer in Bhubaneswar, I have always been fascinated by the traditional crafts of Odisha. This drove me to work on Dhokra, which I believe has great potential in today's market.

There are two main processes in lost-wax casting: solid casting and hollow casting. While the former is predominant in India's Southern region, the latter is more common in Central and Eastern India. Solid casting does not use a clay core, but instead a solid piece of wax to create the mold. Hollow casting is the more traditional method and uses a clay core.

With its roots in ancient civilizations, Dhokra represents the primitive lifestyle and beliefs of our ancestors – going back to the age of hunting. This is why figures of elephants, horses, tortoises, peacocks, tigers, owls, and deer are commonly seen in this artform.

At the Saptasajya Festival – and in my design practice – focusing on the utility of any product alongside its aesthetics was my primary objective.

MENTOR

Bibhudatta Malik

ARTISANS

Suman Pradhan

Ramesh Pradhan

Banabar Pradhan

Biswa Pradhan



BIBHUDATTA MALIK



HIGH TABLE SWAN GLASS
AND SPOON HOLDER

Paper Mache



Paper mache is one of Odisha's most well-known craft offerings, and most manifestations of this artform are inspired by traditional pattachitra paintings and iconography. Natural fibers and wastepaper and textiles are used as raw material to create masks and figurines. The designs of masks tend to be based on animals, demons and deities.

Odisha's paper mache products are known to be characteristically light-weight and hand-made; even the pulping of paper is done by hand.

MENTOR

Swoyamprava Puhan

ARTISANS

Puspa Samal

Pratima Dehuri

Parbati Behera

Dulla Khatua



FRIDGE MAGNETS

 Keonjhar

Paper Mache: Dreams and Visions

Though I'm a Bhubaneswar-based fashion designer, I have long been fascinated by paper mache. I was drawn by its ability to be molded into any shape or form. Though the term is a translation of the French concept 'papier-mache', it originated in China during the Han dynasty. This age-old technique can be used to make a variety of products, from the more functional egg packaging box to decorative masks.

Traditionally, paper mache adhesive is made of water and flour (or other types of starch), mixed to the consistency of heavy cream. Other adhesives can be used too, if they are thinned to a similar texture.

At the Saptasajya Festival, my interpretation of 'Newstalgia' resulted in a collection of handcrafted decor pieces. To me, the theme is reminiscent of our childhoods and the paper planes and boats we crafted.

SWOYAMPRAVA PUHAN





EGG HOLDERS



FRIDGE MAGNETS



JARS



HANGING LIGHTS



Applique



The name of this craft comes from the French word 'appliquer', which means 'to put on'. In Odisha, Pipili town is renowned for its applique work, and the products created using this technique have been awarded a GI tag. This craft involves the sewing of pieces and patches of fabric in different forms and shapes onto a base fabric, in a pattern.

The state's applique practice is believed to date back to the 12th century, when the application wasn't limited to clothes; umbrellas and canopies often featured applique work.

MENTOR

Saira Afaque

ARTISANS

Rinu Paikaray

Truptee Dash

Rashmita Mishra

Jaynti Khuntia



WINE BOTTLE BAG

 Bhubaneswar

The Allure of Applique, from our Ancient Past to Inspiring Present

The 2022 edition marked my first time as a mentor at the Saptasajya Festival. It gave me the opportunity to explore my desire to work with appliqué – with a contemporary touch. This time-honored method of sewing involves stacking tiny pieces of fabric onto a separate foundation fabric, to create beautiful designs. Appliqué lends a distinctive yet cohesive appearance to fabric. This technique can be practiced by hand, or through machine stitching.

Ancient Egyptians are the founders of this artform, using it on their clothing as well as household items. It is in the Middle Ages, however, that the technique evolved – as it featured on church flags and the walls of built structures.

For my presentation at the Festival, I took inspiration from the poem 'Walk in the Park'. The verses of this poem remind me of the times when flowers were in bloom, and I would never pass up an opportunity to appreciate their beauty.

SAIRA AFAQUE





CUSHION



BAMBOO LAMP



TOTE BAG

Silver Filigree



Tarakasi, a type of filigree work traced to Odisha's Cuttack, takes pure or 90 percent silver as its raw material. A pattern-rich craft, artisans are known to create myriad forms of birds, flowers and animals, and modern products like miniature handbags and other souvenirs. Auspicious ornaments like toe rings, anklets and arm bands are in great demand from locals in the state.

MENTOR

Vivek Budhia

ARTISANS

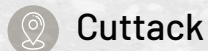
Mahindra Jethi

Surendra Behera

Ramchandra Behera



PENDANT



Tarakasi: A Tale of Intricacy and Artistic Meditation

At my firm Shilp Shastras, I am a jewelry designer, merchandiser, and quality controller. At the Skill Council of India, to which I'm connected, I have worked in the gem and jewelry sector as a master trainer in various roles. I have also worked on several projects to uplift the renowned art of Cuttack, known as or filigree. To create new designs, I fused the skills of filigree with those of other crafts.

Filigree as an artform popularly featured in Italian, French and Portuguese metalwork from the 1660s to the late 19th century. It continues to be popular in India and the larger Asian continent.

Locally, filigree is known as tarakasi and is practiced in a handful of Cuttack's villages. Odisha's crafts are characterized by their intricate handiwork, best illustrated by filigree, which involves the creation of silver ornaments using thin strands of wire. These wires are fashioned into complex designs, such as the shapes of animals and birds, as well as instruments (cutters, hammers, hollow pipes, small tongs).

At the Saptasajya Festival, my design range was inspired by the purple lotus, which plays a vital role in Buddhism. My motive was to speak about the value of peace and self-command to awaken our inner senses and calm our souls, in the aftermath of the pandemic. My material and design language of choice was silver metal.

VIVEK BUDHIA





PHOTO FRAME



RING



EARRINGS

Bell Metal



Bell metal is a form of bronze in which the concentration of tin is comparatively higher — usually in a 4:1 ratio of copper to tin. It is an alloy used to make instruments like bells and cymbals, aside from use in industries.

Aside from Odisha, bell metal practitioners can be found in Assam, Karnataka and West Bengal. The increase in tin in its making results in higher rigidity and greater resonance.

MENTOR

Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo

ARTISANS

Rabi Narayan Sahoo

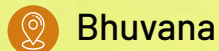
Ishwarchandra Sahoo

Chayakanta Sahoo

Sanjay Kumar Sahoo



MOBILE HOLDER

**Bhuvana**

Re-imagining Bell Metal: An Ancient Craft Yields Modern Products

The 2022 edition of the Saptasajya Festival marked my first engagement with the event, and I chose to work with bell metal – to create utilitarian products with an artistic touch, in the hope that both the craftsman and customer would have a new offering to look forward to. This metal casting technique is believed to have ancient origins, as far back as the Indus Valley Civilisation. The metal objects used in this craft to prepare products still resemble those devised and used by the earliest civilisations.

An Odisha-based designer, I developed my aesthetics and sensibilities through seminars and workshops at institutions like the National Gallery of Modern Art and the Lalit Kala Akademi. My design experiment at the Festival comprised bell metal and bamboo, to develop accessories that were a blend of both crafts.

Bell metal handicraft is widely practiced in Lalitpur, Raigarh and Sarguja. Vessels, jewelry, images of local deities – this raw material offers itself up to many design interpretations. The process of this artform is also called the “beaten ingot technique,” which is well-suited to tribal settings.



JYOTI RANJAN SAHOO



MOBILE HOLDER



FLOWER POT



TRIBAL JEWELLERY BEADS
AND SABAI GRASS

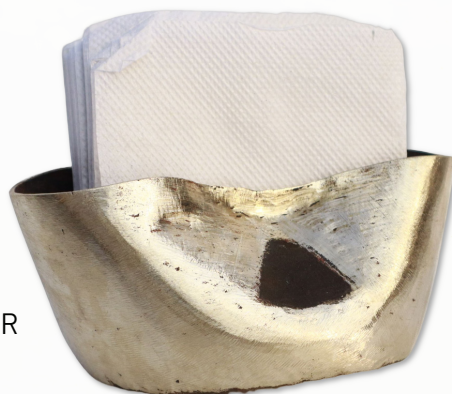




PLATES



NAPKIN HOLDER



Sabai Grass



In India, *Eulaliopsis binata* or sabai grass is a crucial raw material for the production of paper, second only to bamboo, and is largely harvested in the wild. It yields narrow leaf blades, and long and sturdy flowering stems that can be as tall as 90 cm. Sabai grass is a perennial plant commonly cultivated in Odisha and West Bengal on marginal uplands and for its uses as a raw material. It can be fashioned into mats, sails and strings.

MENTOR

Sakshi Jain

ARTISANS

Parbati Naik

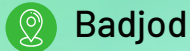
Namita Naik

Bhabani Mishra

Sombari Mohanto



CAP WITH CANVAS
TOPPER

**Badjod**

Taking Sabai Grass to Fashion: A Lesson in Leisure and Comfort

Design, to me, is simply the beginning; it is not found in the components, but in the process of becoming. A fashion and graphic designer by profession, I have my own clothing line, BASISK, in addition to teaching at the JD Institute of Fashion Technology in Bhubaneswar. I have also worked with companies across industries on branding, ad campaigns, and content design.

Sabai grass is used extensively in Indian households. With my presentation at the Saptasajya Festival, the idea was to realign creative values and introduce this raw material in the world of fashion using basket-weave renditions and lighter straw. I prioritized products and experiences that are nourishing and supportive, rather than extractive and exhausting. In doing so, there was a pull towards nostalgia and familiarity.

Taking from the images of nautical themes and renewed classics, I designed products that signal the world's return to travel, for work and leisure. The resulting collection focused on the raw nature of the materials in core neutral tones, with contrasting fabrics making subtle statements. This involved reworking classic hats and envisioning seasonless styles that are gender-inclusive. It was imperative to achieve functionality without sacrificing a fashionable aesthetic — the hats thus called for a protective design in combination with a bohemian look.



SAKSHI JAIN



BASEBALL CAP



VISOR



SUN HAT WITH
SCARF



FLAT CAP WITH
SCARF



HALF CAP



CLOCHE CAP



FISH EYE HAT

Fusion: Power and Possibilities

Every material speaks a certain language, behaves a certain way, and possesses a distinct character of its own. Consider bamboo, which is light, soft and malleable — allowing it to be woven, interlaced or tied into many dynamic forms. Bell metal, on the other hand, can be heavy, sturdy and glossy; it is also time-intensive.

The design languages of bamboo and bell metal are dissimilar, but can they be brought together to create a unique and cohesive language? How will consumers perceive the resultant product? These are some of the many questions that were answered through products at the Saptasajya Festival, which embodied the concept of 'fusion'.

Fusion is a trend in product design, whereby the aesthetics of multiple materials are combined to create contemporary products. Designers at the Saptasajya Festival did so in unconventional ways, leading to the creation of new structures and forms — and ultimately, entirely new product ranges.

Fusion is not restrained by homogeneity, and can be of many different kinds, whether it is the fusing of the aesthetics of one craft and the material of another; the combination of materials of two or more crafts; handcrafting skills being used in tandem with technology, etc. Today, this approach is flourishing, as homegrown brands, start-ups and ventures devise fusion offerings to capture the market, create the demand for a new kind of product,



Fusion is ubiquitous in the worlds of fashion and apparel, as designers across the world have widely explored this notion. 'Indo-Western wear', for instance, is one of the highest-selling categories in the garment retail industry. Not just brands, but celebrities and the world of cinema too have popularized this style, to the point where



‘Indo-Western’ has become a part of shoppers’ vocabularies. The emergence of such trends in the fashion industry is advantageous for stakeholders who successfully capitalize on the idea: artisans and tailors, manufacturers, and retailers.

Can the same be said of product design, specifically in the small-scale industry of Indian handicraft? Craft clusters from Dhenkanal and other regions who were invited to participate in the 2022 edition of the Saptasajya Festival responded to this inquiry – by creating fusions between Odisha’s varied handicrafts, keeping in mind the demands of the market.

With the guidance of designer Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo, bell metal artisans made trays and plates with bamboo edging, endowing them with an urban look and an organic feel. Jagrutee Das, who mentored the Karamul jewelry artisans, designed modern and playful pieces by combining metal with glass beads. The Dhokra artisans and Sidharth Mohanty envisioned never-seen-before products by innovatively fusing locally available pebbles and stones with metal. Other inspired experiments included the blending of leather with applique, Dhokra with sabai grass, etc.

This opportunity for experimentation sets the Saptasajya Festival apart from other initiatives, as an avenue for innovation and fascinating design interventions.



E-commerce: Independence and Empowerment

Artisanal products have become easier to access, owing to the growth of e-commerce platforms in India. In this vein, social media is an effective tool too, not just for promotional purposes, but also for producers and manufacturers to reach buyers across different income and age groups. Today, consumers browsing e-commerce apps and social media platforms are actively looking for new offerings, and the craft industry must make itself visible and accessible to them.

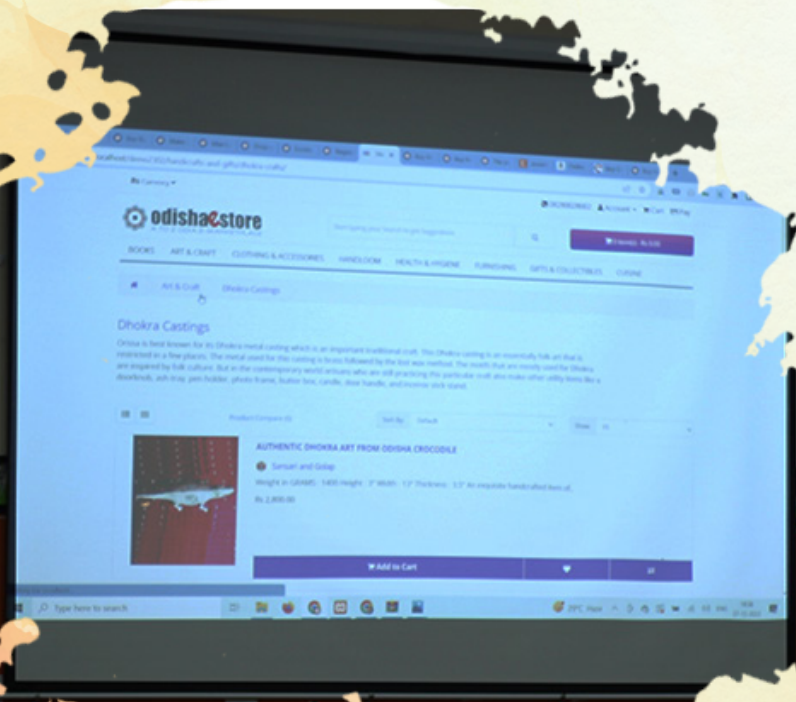


To help craftsmen reach out to their customer base more effectively and to understand the ever-changing market better, the Saptasajya Festival organized a talk by Odisha E Store, an e-commerce platform. Here they can set up their own independent shops, sell directly to the customer, and handle their accounts without the involvement of middlemen.



This collaboration with Odisha E Store also involved the successful sale of items made by weavers, artisans, writers and publishers from across Odisha. The e-commerce platform's representatives gave the Festival's participants guidance about making their products more appealing and saleable through changes in packaging and presentation.

(The platform is owned by M/S Odisha E-Store Private Limited.)



Market Impact: Hope for the Future

In India, handloom and handicraft have long been considered a small-scale or cottage industry. Yet, our country is also renowned for its soft technology, across craft and textile.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a wounding impact on many sectors of the Indian economy – handicrafts included. Reports suggest that artisans were left with very few ways to earn a living. With time, however, innovators and entrepreneurs also devised ways to accelerate this slow-moving industry – by making market-friendly creations. From handwoven, bespoke face masks to contactless utility products, designers and artists reached out to consumers with newer, more exclusive offerings.

Since the pandemic, startups in the sector have witnessed growth and in return, supported the hands that molded and put together their products. The changes in consumer lifestyles and habits that have followed since 2020 have resulted in the creation of new markets, new brackets of customers, new partnerships, and renewed hope for a more capable, robust industry.

One of the main drivers of this market expansion is the steady shift towards modern design, which has coincided with the rising demand for handicrafts from resorts, offices and universities.

Now that travel across the world has resumed, the highly profitable tourism sector also offers opportunities to artisans. They can create commoditized goods geared towards tourists, who tend to be enthusiastic customers.





The creation of handicrafts by this generation of artisans is their way of taking forward years of practice and identity. The process of craft-making is also known to nurture imagination, lower stress, and promote cooperation and involvement. Minimal capital investment, combined with fruitful employment prospects, can foster a favorable outlook for the market and sector.

At the Saptasajya Festival, we will always endeavor to strengthen the market linkages for different crafts and clusters, to preserve Odisha's artistic tradition and sustain the artisans themselves.

As a nation stepping into a new age, it is imperative that we scale up our handicrafts sector, take the necessary steps to commercialize it for the benefit of the artisans, and encourage entrepreneurs to invest for better growth.

The time has come to take pride in this sector by empowering it.



Photo Gallery



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BRAINSTORMING SESSION WITH DESIGNERS



DM VISIT TO THE FESTIVAL



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TRIBAL DANCE PERFORMED AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY



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