

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
Publication No. 5

URBAN HANDICRAFTS
OF THE
BOMBAY DECCAN

BY
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[*Price Rs. 8-8*]

1936

**Printed at the Huxley Press, 114, Armenian Street, George Town, Madras
and Published by D. R. Gadgil, M.A., M.Litt. (Cantab), at the
Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona 4.**

To
The Memory of My Father

N. M. Joshi

FOREWORD

This publication was first written as a thesis for the M. A. Degree of the University of Bombay. It is now published by the Institute in a considerably revised and abridged form. The Institute has included it in its series of publications as the author carried out his investigations and completed his study at the Institute and as the type of work carried out and the region selected are those in which the Institute has chiefly concentrated its work.

It is impossible to deny the great importance of handicrafts in Indian economic life. But while a number of descriptive accounts of handicraft conditions in various regions are available nobody has yet undertaken as comprehensive and detailed a study of any branch of handicraft industry as Mr. Joshi here attempts for the urban handicrafts of the Bombay Deccan. The way of a private student-investigator in a field like Indian handicraft is strewn with great difficulties; and it will be readily acknowledged that the volume and nature of the data gathered by Mr. Joshi do him credit. The part of Mr. Joshi's study dealing with the evolution of handicraft activity in the Bombay Deccan is an important contribution to recent Indian economic history. The important changes brought about in the localisation, character, and organisation of handicrafts by the impact of machine competition are narrated in as great a detail as the data available permitted and though to those interested entirely in the problems of the present day, the space allotted to the historical study may appear excessive it was retained as of considerable interest, at least to the academic students, and also as throwing some light on an understanding of the present itself. Mr. Joshi has, I believe, succeeded in showing that the problem of the reconstruction of Deccan handicrafts is of extreme urgency. As a fact the situation calls for even more immediate action than shown in this publication. For, the wage and employment conditions that Mr. Joshi describes relate to the year 1932 and the general conditions of the handicraftsmen have further deteriorated since that time. Mr. Joshi has, of course, addressed himself mainly to the problem of the Deccan handicrafts. But his preliminary general sketch, his concluding chapter and specially his study of state policy in

India and in foreign countries will, it is expected, prove of interest to students of the problem in all parts of India. We thankfully record the fact that it would have been impossible to bring out this publication but for the substantial publication grant received by Mr. Joshi from the University of Bombay.

Gokhale Institute of
Politics and Economics,
Poona. 4.

D. R. GADGIL,
Director.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The present book is an humble attempt at an academic study of the artisan industries (handicrafts) of India. I had to restrict myself to a small tract, due to limitations of single handed investigational work and due to considerations of costs and labour involved. Independent investigations, to supplement available data were carried out in representative handicraft centres of the Bombay Deccan, the results of which are largely summarised in Chapter III and have formed the basis for Chapter V. This work was originally submitted in 1933 as a thesis for the Master of Arts Degree of the Bombay University. It is now considerably revised and brought up-to-date wherever possible.

The entire work in all its stages has been carried out under the guidance of Prof. D. R. Gadgil, Director of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona. Prof. Gadgil took great pains in directing me from the initial stages of reading and investigation to the final preparation of the volume for the press. I cannot adequately express the deep debt I owe to Prof. Gadgil for his constant encouragement and guidance. I have also to thank the authorities of the Gokhale Institute for consenting to include the work in the series of publications of the Institute, and bearing a part of the costs of publication.

Dr. V. V. Gokhale, Ph.D. of the Fergusson College, Poona, helped me considerably in connection with the study of the German publications referred to in this volume, for which I tender him my heartiest thanks. I have to further record my appreciation and tender my thanks to all those gentlemen who rendered me valuable assistance in the survey work. Chief among these were Mr. P. V. Kelkar, the then Inspector of Weavers' Co-operative Societies, Central Division, Bombay Presidency, Prof. R. V. Oturkar, M.A., sometime Professor of Economics, Nasik College, my friend Mr. S. V. Irabatti, now a leading entrepreneur in the hand-loom industry of Sholapur, Mr. Karmarkar, the then manager of the Malegaon branch, of the Provincial Co-operative Bank and Mr. M. B. Nirhale, B.A., LL.B., of Sangamner. My thanks are also due to Mr. B. M. Deo, Assistant Librarian, and Mr. V. V. Kale, both of the Servants of India Society's Library who helped

me throughout the work in the Library. I wish to recognise with thanks the help I received from the Department of Industries, the Central Provinces and Berar and the Department of Industries and Commerce, Mysore State, in the form of certain detailed statistics regarding industrial schools and industrial loans, which they supplied and which were not easily available in the published documents.

Last but not the least I acknowledge my indebtedness to the University of Bombay for the substantial financial help it has given towards the cost of publication of this book.

Willingdon College, Sangli,
1st October, 1936.

N. M. JOSHI.

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