



SHIMLA DOLL MAKING CRAFT

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ABSTRACT

The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) has played an integral role in research and design education related to the craft sector. The resources available and the methodologies followed by the institute has always been put to use for learning and documenting different crafts of India for many years. The department of Fashion Communication is closely involved with a variety of projects and workshops which are craft centric. This paper entirely focuses on the revival and awareness of an extinct craft. The craft picked for the research paper is Shimla Doll making, that declined within last 2 decades. Hence, a meticulous documentation along with its detailed comprehension which justifies the reasons of its downfall has been considered. Thus, a colloquium paper, is very crucial for the development of a well structured source of information that aids in the process of education, their conservation and even in the evolution of art, craft and culture of Shimla. It is our endeavour to sensitise everyone about the craft and the people associated to it by publishing the paper in authorised journals. The outcome and contribution of the paper is the understanding of a lost craft, which will further help building in the awareness and understanding the recovery potential within our area of research.

KEYWORDS : Craft Research, Experience, Awareness, Knowledge, Craft Extinction**OBJECTIVE**

To study the costume, history, culture and making of Shimla dolls wherefore understanding the decline of the craft. To restore awareness of the craft in both civil and artisan sector by infusing this information in our research and deliverables.

SUB-OBJECTIVES

- Detailed study of the history and origin of Shimla dolls, understanding decline of the craft and create basic awareness about the craft which will further fuel the revival process.
- Understanding the familiarity and involvement of locals with craft of making dolls through interviews, to get to the core factors affecting the craft's timeline.
- Creating deliverables with collected data and publishing a colloquium paper in an authorised journal.

OVERVIEW

This paper investigates how research and craft can join in the enterprise of craft research to advance craft as a discipline that makes a contribution to future living. The paper begins by setting out the context of craft as a discipline and activity, which is bound to the sensibilities of material and material understanding, of making and haptic perception as well as to the production of emotional values found in human relationships and personal identity. The authors of the study approached the research to explore the regional costumes of Himachal Pradesh through the craft of Shimla Dolls. The paper introduces the emerging need of a dying craft and spreading awareness about its presence in past. It can thus serve to integrate, investigative, practice and theory in order to harness the potential recovery of the lost craft. The participants are composed of the city locals, shopkeepers, middle-men, artisans and government departments. The authors on the field found relevant information via remote sources. The process of data extraction was initiated by the questionnaire method and causal data analysis method was used to create a structured paper on the same. The outcome and contribution of this research is to establish a better understanding of the regional costumes and an insight into history and culture. It explains the potential and value of research for

the advancement of craft, both as a practice and discipline that is viable and relevant for the future.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative Research Interviews

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews offer a considerable amount of leeway to the researcher to probe the respondents along with maintaining basic interview structure. Even if it is a guided conversation between researchers and interviewees – an appreciable flexibility is offered to the researchers.

Keeping the structure in mind, the researcher can follow any idea or take creative advantage of the entire interview. Additional respondent probing is always necessary to garner information for a research study.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Personal interviews are one of the most used types of interviews, where the questions are asked personally directly to the respondent. For this, a researcher can have a guide online surveys to take note of the answers. A researcher can design his/her survey in such a way that they take notes of the comments or points of view that stands out from the interviewee.

The authors of the paper conducted multiple personal interviews with the participants through a set of prepared questionnaires. Group-to-one interviews were taken while maintaining the research guidelines and reliable qualitative data was collected.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) Who initiated the idea of Shimla Doll making?
- 2) On what scale this craft was practiced in Shimla?
- 3) How many number of artisans and workers were involved?
- 4) What is the reason of the sudden decline or extinction of the craft?
- 5) What is the process of doll making?
- 6) What led to the progress of doll making in Shimla and how?

- 7) What is the reason for people's lack of interest in the craft?
- 8) How were the sales of the Doll during the period of its existence?
- 9) Why did the government never take any initiative to save or protect the craft?

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEWS

Telephonic interviews are widely used and easy to combine with online surveys to carry out research effectively.

The authors of the paper conducted several telephonic interviews with the people once involved in the craft production.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1) How were you involved in the craft production?
- 2) What was your contribution during the existence of the craft?
- 3) What did you love the most about dolls?
- 4) According to you, what led to the extinction of the craft?
- 5) What measures did you take to promote or save the craft?

CURRENT STATUS UPDATE

The current scenario of the doll making craft is yet another example of craft depletion in our country. Post globalisation, citizens have deprived local crafts of any attention resulting in their extinction. The Doll making craft was an educational and interactive experience for anyone involved. It promoted co-existence through diversified costumes of Himachali tribes and figurines. The hand-full of people involved enough to mourn the loss of the craft are elderly veterans who seem to have moved on. The memories of the craft are faint and the preservation is poor. While the dolls were once proudly placed at window displays of local emporiums and government offices, they now are no where to be seen. Throughout the entire research, which was intensive and hands on, the authors failed to come across any samples. What is left are a few anecdotes from the veterans.

QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected, into some form of explanation, understanding or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating.

QDA is usually based on an interpretative philosophy. The idea is to examine the meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data.

INDUCTIVE APPROACH

Inductive approach, also known in inductive reasoning, starts with the observations and theories are proposed towards the end of the research process as a result of observations. Inductive research “involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through series of hypotheses” The purposes for using an inductive approach are to

- (1) to condense extensive and varied raw text data into a brief, summary format;
- (2) to establish clear links between the research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data and
- (3) to develop of model or theory about the underlying structure of experiences or processes which are evident in the raw data.

CAUSAL DATA ANALYSIS

As data science becomes more matured and starts influencing almost all human activities, questions of cause and effect grow into a potent tool to predict and control the future.

The next revolution of data science is causal analysis, a quantum leap over correlation techniques. Correlational analysis allows you to predict with some accuracy. But it cannot tell you anything about cause and effects.

Causal analysis involves causal discovery and causal inference. It allows you to know what factors impact your predictions from the same data. It also lets you control those factors independently to change the value of the target parameters. This leads you to create a clear action plan based on the viable values of the causal factors and optimise the target variable value from data analysis. **SAMPLING**

Below mentioned are the parameters set for sampling of interviewed groups of men/ women:

PARAMETER

AGE	40 AND ABOVE
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LOCATION/AREA	OLD MARKETS OF SHIMLA eg: Lakkar Bazaar, Scandal Point
OCCUPATION	BUSINESS MEN
	ARTISANS
	GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- -What is Shimla doll making craft?
- Who initiated this craft and how?
- On what scale, this craft was practiced in Shimla region ?
- How is craft a representation of culture of Shimla ?
- What do we understand about the costume of Himachal from the craft?
- How did the craft get extinct and what were the key factors responsible in it?

HYPOTHESIS

The Shimla doll making craft is a handicraft practiced in the district of Shimla and regions around it. The craft was initiated by the artisans in the Kasumti region with the funding provided by the Himachal government. The dolls were intended to be kept in homes and shops as a display or an element of decorations. The industry was provided with appropriate funding and aid by the Himachali government. It generated profit as well as adequate employment. The dolls were made to be symbolic of various regions of Himachal, for example the Gaddi doll based on the Gaddi tribe. The dolls were created after an intricate study of the various regional costumes of Himachal. the decline of the craft was caused by the lack of interest shown by the upcoming generation. As the modern times diverted our attention to screens and westernisation, the virtual world won over the real one and pushed the dolls to extinction.

The authors of this research paper have analysed the cause and reasons behind the extinction of the craft. Through the data extracted from the interviews with the sources, researchers can conclude that the craft is no longer known and practiced. The lack of interest in people for the craft and unavailability of the funding from the government lead to the extinction. After concluding the current scenario of the craft in Shimla, strategies for the revival and the measures to create awareness are formulated. In order to rejuvenate the craft, multiple printable like an informative booklet and zines about the craft are designed. The authors also plan to contain the entire process through documentation compiling the recorded interviews and data collected is made which serves as a written record of all the work and research done.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

MISSION

Our mission is to provide the Shimla Doll making industry with due recognition and consideration. By studying the reasons of why it descended into extinction, we have derived possible ways to bring it back into action and to spread awareness about a craft that celebrated regional diversity. Our devoted mission statement exhibit the following important characteristics:

- Awareness: Reaching out to more people and enlightening them about the existence of the craft through visuals, workshops and documentation.
- Revival: Restoring the craft through indulging more people and artisans and creating new opportunities in the field.
- Sustainability: renewal of the craft through multi mediums and sustaining the skills and techniques for the posterity.

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The primary first hand research led to the fact that this culturally rich is no more into practice and production. To revive this extinct craft, the researchers have come up with the following strategies:

WORKSHOP:

At both rural and urban levels, workshops will be conducted in order to spread awareness about the extinct craft. Posters and wall arts of the craft will be created as promotional strategies for the conduction of the workshop. It would create a buzz amongst the students, teachers and also the locals. The main objective of the creatives for this workshop is to entice the maximum audience for it by creating curiosity amongst them about the extinct craft of Himachal.

The workshop focuses on culturing the students, teachers and their parents about the making of Shimla dolls using waste and reusable materials. The audience would get a gist of the costume culture of

Himachal through the doll making craft practiced in Shimla. The students would make the dolls with the help and guidance of the researchers. This will help the spectators to learn about the rich culture of Himachal and also will generate the necessary awareness to revive the extinct craft.

Videos will be recorded to document the children making the dolls and taking interest in the culture of Himachal. This documentary would benefit the other researchers in conducting similar workshops.

TEASER:

The video is to intrigue people about the craft which was once practiced and is now extinct. The teaser is a glimpse of how the natives of Shimla are unaware of the doll making craft and were completely baffled by the question about their local craft. PRINT PACKAGE:

The print package consists of an information booklet and a travel based Zine.

The information booklet includes all the first-hand information collected by the researchers. It provides a base of information for the researchers who might come in search of the same craft in the future. This booklet will be published online and also be kept in the Himachal Emporium, Shimla as further references for future.

The travel based zine includes tourism and local crafts of Shimla with a gist of doll making craft. The zine will be printed and given to the tourism office of Shimla which would benefit the tourists and other researchers. It will also be published online for similar purposes.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDEX

- The success for strategy execution is to be measured in the form of number of people informed during the research and intrigued in the course of enactment on strategies formulated above.
- Capture the attention of a section of society and create a buzz that would direct the actions of higher officials in preservation of the craft, it would be a success measure.
- Rate of success can also be measured through generated costume study of different regions of Himachal Pradesh among masses and it is also a way to add value to the rich culture of Himachal.
- Publishing of information booklet through different mediums such as world wide web & Shimla Emporium would also help in future research endeavours, generating a basic knowledge on the craft for the seeker.

CONCLUSION

The research has provided some firsthand information and has also assessed the problems faced in the decline of Doll making. The discussion, interviews and formal interactions with people had given the base to the study to draw some meaningful conclusions. It can be concluded that growing technology run and industrialised areas in India, people are increasingly forgetting the traditional craft and moving towards new and better innovations. As artisans are moving to alternative income generation methods such as daily waged labour and farming; and art is losing its motive and grip. So it's right time that the doll making forms are revived and the awareness is spread.

- Research of Shimla Doll Making has been an eye opener in the field of craft preservation and has put light on multiple factors that effect existence of any craft. Government, people and their sensitivity towards culture are in major play from the birth of the craft to its extinction.
- The idea behind this research paper is to bring back the essence of the craft not by commercialisation but by preservation of cultural significance that it holds with it. It directly pokes the emotional aspect of culture of Himachal and people connected to it.
- With the generation change and fast lifestyle, we as a country have moved away from the essential and unique factor that separates us from other nations, that being our diversity. Most importantly we need to understand that we start preserving our culture and work in the favour of its upliftment.

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