



## Promoting Indigenous Craft Heritage through Vocational Education at the Secondary School Level: A study of Bharewa Metal Craft

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### ABSTRACT

*'There are obviously two educations. One that teach us how to make a living and one that teach us how to live' (Quote by James Truslow Adams: "There Are Obviously Two Educations. One Should ...," n.d.). The traditional teaching in one way helps the society for upward movement by creating learning and job opportunities for the learners. But with the rapid growth of population, it seems nearly impossible to even think that the same system can guarantee growth opportunities for all when there is a shift in interest of people, living conditions and advancement in the technology sector. The advancement in technology has helped people from various divisions and areas to connect and share their earnings and learnings. This has given rise to increased value of vocational skills and a need to formally integrate vocational education in schools. The study emphasises on one such traditional skill called Bharewa metal craft from Betul district of Madhya Pradesh and guides you from learning about it to taking it as an example. The main objective of the study is to incorporate indigenous skills as a part of vocational education, with reference to NEP 2020, in the secondary level government school with a case study of Bharewa metal crafts from Betul district. Qualitative study with expert interviews is conducted to gain insights on the topic. Many issues were discovered in mainstreaming indigenous crafts as vocational skills in the mainstream curriculum and an effort is made to provide solutions for those problems in the discussion.*

**Keywords:** Bharewa Metal Craft, Vocational Education, Indigenous craft, Secondary Education.

### INTRODUCTION:

'Give vocational training to the manually minded, and the children' s courts will have less to do.' (TOP 13 VOCATIONAL TRAINING QUOTES | A-Z Quotes, n.d.) This Research paper is based on Tribal Bharewa Metal Craft integration with secondary level vocational education. NEP-2020 highly recommends vocational education at secondary level in formal education as well as skill

development and job opportunities among learners. It aims to provide skill development opportunities to each student based on their abilities. The paper suggests ways to integrate indigenous crafts to be included in the secondary level education so that the students can preserve the culture and get business opportunities by acquiring skills in the trade works prevalent in their area. For this Bharewa metal craft from Betul district were taken for the study. Bharewa metal crafts is an art that has been prevalent since ancient times and has been preserved by tribal artisans of some villages in Betul district. Therefore, Including Bharewa metal craft in vocational education in Betul district's secondary level government schools will contribute to the development of tribal cultural awareness, employment prospects, creativity, vocational training skills and local knowledge, among other positive outcomes.

Vocational education programs have made a real difference in the lives of countless young people nationwide; they build self- confidence and leadership skills by allowing students to utilize their unique gifts and talents. By Conrad Burns. (*TOP 13 VOCATIONAL TRAINING QUOTES | A-Z Quotes*, n.d.) suggests that vocational education has served its purpose right by changing the lives of many young people, training them with a skill that suits best for their personality, uses the best of their potential and also provides quality workers for the industries. In a way, catering the individual and economic needs of individuals and the nation and also moving towards a positive path. Needless to say, these skills work from local to global level.

#### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

This is of great importance as it investigates the potential for integrating Bharewa Metal Craft into secondary school vocational education in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This research helps to support and advance the heritage of indigenous craft by highlighting its educational value. It offers recommendations for curriculum developers, educators, and policymakers on how to incorporate local crafts into school vocational programs. These findings have the potential to promote skill development, entrepreneurial spirit, cultural awareness, and appreciation of traditional knowledge among students. Moreover, Furthermore, the research can be employed as a guide for future investigations into indigenous trades and vocational education in India.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- 1.To study of Bharewa metal craft to promote indigenous craft promotion.
- 2.To study of traditional, cultural, socio-economical and educational value of Bharewa metal craft.
- 3.To study of alignment of Bharewa metal craft with the vocational education objectives of NEP-2020 is being investigated.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

Promoting Indigenous Craft Heritage through Vocational Education at the Secondary School Level: A Study of Bharewa Metal Craft.

### **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERM:**

**Indigenous Knowledge:** “Indigenous knowledge refers to the understanding and practices developed by indigenous communities over generations, rooted in their unique cultural experiences and relationships with the natural environment. This knowledge encompasses aspects of ecology, agriculture, and medicine, linking traditional wisdom with the natural sciences. It plays a crucial role in sustainable resource management and biodiversity conservation.” – (*What Is Indigenous Knowledge? Meaning, Definition.*, n.d.)

**Vocational education:** “Vocational Education prepares learners for jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non- academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation, hence the term, in which the learner participates. It is sometimes referred to as technical education, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology” - (*Government of India, All India Council for Technical Education |*, 2026)

**Secondary School Level:** “Secondary Education under NEP 2020 refers to the four-year secondary stage (Classes IX–XII) that aims to provide multidisciplinary, flexible, and competency-based learning experiences, fostering critical thinking, vocational skills, and holistic development among learners aged 14–18 years”

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:**

This study is descriptive in nature and therefore the information presented is based on the secondary data. Secondary information collected from various documents like books, journals, government reports and interviews with expertise.

### **Government Policies and Programmes for Vocational Education & Craft:**

**Nai Talim/Wardha Commission (1937):** The first report included the basic principles of the Wardha scheme of education, its aims, teacher and their training, organisation of schools, administration, inspection and inclusion of craft centred education regarding handicraft like spinning, weaving etc. The second report dealt with Agriculture, Metal work, Wood craft and other basic handicraft. The basic idea of this scheme is to impart education through some craft or productive work. Craft work helps the child to acquire sensor and motor co-ordination and to appreciate the value of honest labour. Gandhi ji was of the opinion that the method of training the mind through village handicraft from the beginning as the central focus would promote the real, disciplined development of the mind. (*Gandhiji's Wardha Scheme of Education | PDF*, n.d.)

**Kothari Commission (1964-66):** The commission suggested offering both part- time and full-time vocational education in urban and rural areas, with special sections in education departments to assist dropouts. It also recommended that the central government provides special grants to states for the Vocationalisation for secondary education. Additionally, it encouraged vocational school graduates to start small businesses or collaborate in creating small-scale industries (*1753783714\_Handbook for Key Functionaries on Vocational Education (with Reference to NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023).Pdf*, n.d.)

**NEP 2020:** The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a significant transformation of India's educational system, particularly focusing vocational education and promote vocational education from the middle and secondary school levels, ensuring that each student learns about at least one career while respecting the value of labour and the traditions of Indian arts, crafts, and artisanship. NEP 2020 envisions a holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary approach to education, smoothly blending academic and vocational streams. The policy emphasises the importance of skill development from an early age, promoting the idea that vocational education is not an alternative but an integral part of mainstream education. (1753783714\_Handbook for Key Functionaries on Vocational Education (with Reference to NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023).Pdf, n.d.)

**National Curriculum Framework for School Education-2023:** School education should prepare students not just to understand the world around them, but also to do productive work. These capacities for work would enable students to be productive members of their households as well as participate in the economy. Thus, NCF-SE 2023 considers vocational education an integral part of the curriculum (NCF-SE 2023 para. 1.5.2). School education must provide all students with both the possibility to join the workforce and the opportunity to pursue higher education. In the Foundational and Preparatory Stages, multiple competencies will be developed through play and other activities, which will subsequently be useful in vocations. These competencies are termed prevocational competencies. In the Middle Stage, exposure to a wide range of work will be given to students. This will equip them to achieve competencies (including specific skills) in a vocation of their choice in the Secondary Stage and help them progress towards gainful employment and contribute meaningfully to the economy. (1753783714\_Handbook for Key Functionaries on Vocational Education (with Reference to NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023).Pdf, n.d.)

**Case study - BHAREWA METAL CRAFT:** Bharewa metal craft word 'Bharewa' means to fill. In the Bharewa metal craft process, molten brass metal is poured into a mould and different shapes are created using different moulds. This craft is used by Gond, Korku and Baiga tribal communities for business, economic strength, prosperity and efficiency.

Bharewa is a craft used to make a variety of sculptures, jewellery, and utensils, as well as ornaments such as rings, bangles, daggers, etc. These sculptures primarily depict Lord Ganesha, Shiva-Parvati, Goddess Durga, and Thakur Devji. Sculptures of various animals, such as elephants, horses, cows, and peacocks, are also created. The decorative artefacts produced by Bharewa Craft, including



Source Figure 1 Provided by bharewa craftsman baldev Waghmare betul M.P. (2026)

bullock carts, peacock-shaped lamps, bells, anklets and mirror frames, as well as many other useful items, have made a notable mark in the international craft market.

Tigaria village in Betul district is a major centre for Bharewa metal crafts and has been developed as a "**craft village.**" Bharewa metal crafts here are also known as "**Dhokra.**"

In December 2025, **Smt. Draupadi Murmu** honoured Bharewa craftsman **Mr. Baldev Waghmare**, a resident of Tigaria village in Betul district, with the National Handicrafts Award. Bharewa metal crafts also have a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The traditional tribal Bharewa craft of Madhya Pradesh has received national recognition by the National Handicrafts Award (Department Of Public Relations, M.P., n.d.)



**Source Figure 2 Baldev Waghmare, the metal artisan of Bharewa, being honored with the award**

According to Mr. Baldev Waghmare, this craft has been practiced since ancient times. He said that various art works are created by filling brass metal in clay pots which is known as Bharewa art. He now creates many sculptures at home and earns money by selling them at home and in local area markets, while also providing employment to others through his crafts. He travels to various areas to participate in workshops and art exhibitions. There are about nine to ten villages in Betul district where skilled artists of Bharewa art live who make various types of things. These artists create all kinds of small and large artefacts from metal, from shirt buttons to statues. According to him, Bharewa metal craft could be included as a vocational course in secondary education. If students succeed in this art, they can become self-reliant by starting their own business and also provide employment to others. And they can also contribute to maintaining the culture. Although clay pots are used to make this craft, for the purpose of modernization, machines can also be used which can save time and increase production.

### **The Craft Value-**

By adopting sustainable, community-driven metal crafting, Bharewa metal craft is both a socio-cultural anchor and an ecological model that maintains 4,000 years of tribal identity.

**1. Cultural & Spiritual Values:** The craft is deeply connected to the spiritual practices of both the Gond and Ghasia tribes in Sacred Tribal Cosmology. In their quest to obtain divine protection for themselves, artisans cast idols of local gods like Budhal Dev and Dulha Deo.

Ritualistic Value: Items such as diyas (temple), measuring bowls, anklets and "pailee" are of great importance for dancers. At tribal weddings and harvest festivals, they are required to give gifts to invite prosperity.

**2. Ecological & Sustainable Values:** Zero-Waste Circular Economy: All raw materials are locally sourced, renewable and naturally produced. The collection of riverbed clay, and brass metal by artisans is done without any chemical footprint. Instead of mining new ores, the craftsmen in upcycling practice use old brass tools, scrap sheets, and bell metal objects instead of using traditional methods. This is an environmentally friendly alternative. Local earth and organic binders are used to make the casting moulds, which break down naturally and become biodegradable in accordance with environmental harmony.

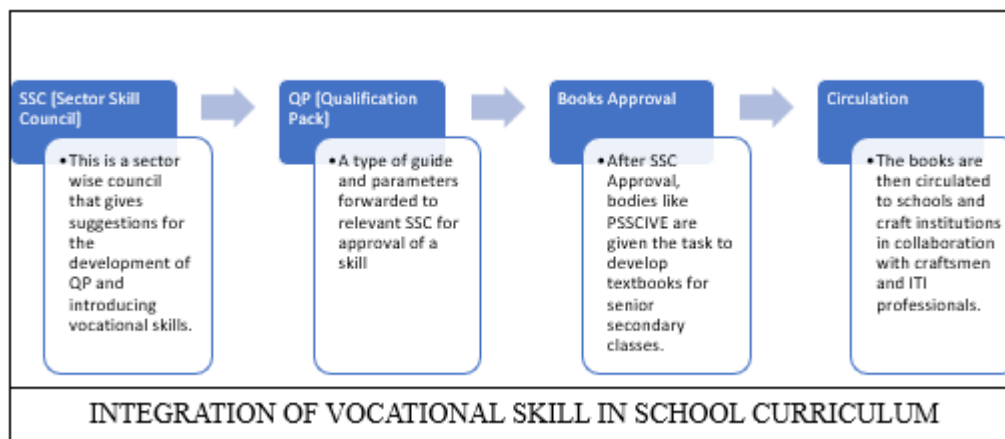
**3. Socio-Economic Significance:** The craft serves as a primary source of non-agricultural income for rural communities in the Betul district, protecting tribal families from seasonal poverty and forced urban migration. The preservation of singularity necessitates the breaking of the clay mould to obtain the metal, resulting in each piece being entirely distinct. It is a highly valued opposite of mass produced, machine-made products. Through the implementation of the National Heritage & Empowerment Tag and various awards such as the Handicraft Award, these rural artisans have become cultural ambassadors with great community pride and economic empowerment. This is possible.

**4. Educational values:** By offering students hands-on, skill-based learning opportunities, Bharewa Metal Craft is of significant educational importance in secondary-level vocational education. By promoting experiential learning, it enhances creativity and problem-solving skills as well as technical abilities. It also helps students appreciate indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage, building respect for traditional handicrafts and work of the hands. In addition, it cultivates entrepreneurship awareness and links learning with local activities. By incorporating the practice of Bharewa Metal Craft into vocational education, schools can promote holistic student learning and enhance the relationship between education as well as culture within real-world experiences.

### Issues And Solutions

- 1. Training-** India is a complex country due to its geographical, Geo-political, cultural, linguistic factors. Just like every side has two coins, being rich in a variety of ways has also been a reason why our new education policy is still not implemented in many states. And the idea of vocational education is not accepted by every locality/state. Also, very less permanent vocational education teachers [VETs]. 90 percent cases do not have the accessibility, resources or intention of making an Industry-Academic collaboration for better learning so that the skill is workable and useful. There should be community engagement activities initiated by teachers and management.
- 2. Literature-** literature are the basic resources that we can provide a learner to explore their knowledge base. And a good book can work wonders. PSSCIVE has developed books on

various vocational courses for class 11 and 12th and NCERT is now working on the development of textbooks for the younger classes. Project based textbooks can be developed faster by local engagement and interest from the side of teachers and schools. This helps in better accessibility and better utilization of overall finances. *Textbooks are going to remain a key part of learning. They just need to go digital, become more interactive and they need more analytics.* (Osman Rashid Quotes, n.d.)



**3. Ideology-** It is still believed that the skills or knowledge can be transferred to the society by cascading mode. That is the policy and training can be provided by the experts and national level committees but real monitoring and implementation is on the state government which further moves down to the schools. And it is notable that only few states respond to the reports of implementation work. People at every stage must be aware of the process as to what is given to the state and how far it is done. So, keeping the process transparent and accountability from stakeholders at every level might help solving the issue. . (Agarwal, 025; *My Career Advisor*, n.d.)

**Mycareeradvisor-** [Vidhyamitr]  
This is a government application that provides 92 questions to be filled for self review. This application then gives the applicant career options and advises for short term courses, scope and guidance is provided.

**Career Cards**  
An NCERT initiative, that has 500 plus cards on various job roles with directions, compiled in a form of book. It still needs some updates for teachers and subjects to be included , but is still very useful

Source Figure 3 mycareeradvisor and career cards

**4. Financial support -** 99 percent fail because of the funds. the funding mechanism of states is very complex and often leads to blocked flow of knowledge sharing and learning vocational skills that require funds in frequent periods of time.

**CONCLUSION:**

According to the study, the inclusion of Bharewa Metal Craft in secondary school vocational education aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's objectives, which include skill development, hands-on learning, and the preservation of India' s cultural heritage. Bharewa Metal Craft can be integrated into vocational learning to provide students with hands-on experience, creativity and a greater understanding of traditional craftsmanship as well as indigenous knowledge. Such an endeavour can also assist in maintaining a distinct craft tradition

that confronts the obstacles of diminishing practitioner engagement and limited generational dispersion. Additionally, integrating local arts and crafts into formal schooling can foster greater community involvement, enhance artisan skills, and facilitate employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. Suggestions for smooth integration were also made in the most practical way possible.

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