

Name _____

Class _____

School _____

City _____



INTACH

LESSER KNOWN ARTS AND CRAFTS

KAMRUPI BELL METAL CRAFT, ASSAM



Brass and Bell Metal products are one of the most popular productions in Kamrup. They are known for their beauty, strength and utility. Sarthebari in the Barpeta district in Assam is well known for its **Bell Metal Craft**.

ACTIVITY: *Is there a metal industry in your city? Why is it popular? When was it opened?*

SOME METAL CRAFTS OF INDIA

Handicraft is an expression of culture and tradition of a country through art forms. This traditional knowledge and talent transcend from generation to generation. Artisanal craft of local skills is used to make a variety of useful and decorative products by molding the local materials by hand and simple tools.

NAME SOME OTHER METAL CRAFTS OF INDIA AND MENTION WHERE THEY ARE PRODUCED

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



CRAFTS AND ME!

Crafts make me connect with nature and my country.

HANDMADE CRAFTS ARE DISAPPEARING!!

This is happening mainly due to competition from machine made goods, lack of patronage, growing middle men, expensive raw materials, limited artisans with knowledge, lack of demand in market...

**What can I do to save a Craft?
Adopt it!**

INDIAN CRAFTS

India's diversity is reflected in its numerous art forms. The handicrafts of India are unique and have acquired its own place in the world, with India being one of the major producer and supplier of hand made products.

The Indian handicraft manufacturing is mostly done in rural areas which are rich in specialized art forms. We must understand that most of these art forms evolved from their surroundings, rituals, routines and with the help of local materials.



DID YOU KNOW?

Bell Metal is known as Dhokra in Northern India. It is one of the most ancient techniques of metal casting. Making of bell requires a blend of arts and science. It has a unique process of making.



The **Kamrup district** is the administrative district located in the western part of Assam. It has remained a large administrative district since the colonial times. However, the villages still have the traditional Vedic culture, while in most of the towns and cities, it has relaxed. The bell metal products from Kamrup are famous for their beauty and toughness.



Often made with brass, Kamrupi crafts are designed with pure gold, silver, and copper. The major items which are made are the kalah (water pot), sarai (a platter or tray mounted on a base), kahi (dish), bati (bowl), lota (water pot with a long neck) and tal (cymbals). Gold, silver, and copper are a part of classical metal craft and the State Museum in Guwahati displays a large collection of such articles.

ACTIVITY: Find out what this object is called locally in Assamese? What is its utility?



WHAT IS BELL METAL?

Bell-metal is an alloy of copper and tin. The craftsmen of this industry are called '*Kahar*' or '*Orja*' as bell metal is called '*kaah*' in Assamese. The objects are mostly used in domestic and religious purposes.

WHEN DID KAMRUPI BELL METAL TRADITION START IN ASSAM?

The tradition of bell metal is believed to have started ages back in Kamrup. The craftsmen still use objects manually adhering to the age old technique. They use old tools required for burning and shaping the metal.

According to various written records, this craft form dates back to the 7th century AD. They show that the bell metal industry of Assam existed from the time of Kumar Bhaskarvarman, the king of the Varman Dynasty. The records show that he gifted drinking vessels to Harshavardhana of Kannauj.



One may also find in the scriptures, the existence of the skilled bell-metal masters, where it is written that a pair of '*Bhortal*' or cymbal, a musical instrument was gifted to Hieuen Tsang, during his visit to Kamrup.



But it was only during the period of the Ahoms that the bell metal industry underwent its golden period. The Ahom kings took special interest, out of whom, Swargadeo Siva Singha was the most notable. The kings, nobles and the subjects used bell-metal utensils and thus allowed bell-metal production of Sarthebari to flourish. This was the first bell-metal industry in Assam.

ACTIVITY

- A. Given below are pictures of some commodities made out of bell metal in Assam. Find out their local names and utilities.



REFERENCES

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