

## CHAPTER - II

### SILVER SMITHY A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION :

The Silver Smithy is one of the traditional and at present a flourishing handicraft in India. It is a widely scattered industrial activity. A large number of persons are involved in the Silver Ornament trade and also in the transportation of silver and allied metals like copper, zinc, and acids ( sulphuric and Nitric acid) which are largely used for amalgamation.

The extension of silver ornament industry for the modern white silver industry has contributed to the socio-economic development of many places and significant improvement of the well being of the local people.

On the basis of economic activities we can categorise the rural people in three broad groups.

1. The farmers, who are engaged in agriculture and its allied,
2. Artisans, and activities craftsmen who have traditional skills but very elementary tools to produce goods which command both local and distant markets.
3. The class of land less labourers and unemployed youth.

Since long back India is famous for her rich heritage and beautiful handicrafts. The arts and handicrafts were patronised by the kings and feudal lords. Indian handicrafts have been adjudged as the best in the world. They have been appreciated for their exquisite shapes, designs and durability.

The Silver Industry in India has been occupying though small but significant position in the economy of the country. After independence, there has been a remarkable expansion of Silver Industry. India is one of the major countries producing white silver. In India the State of Maharashtra stands first in the production of silver.

Evidence was gathered that the metal handicrafts were existing during Rigveda age.<sup>1</sup> Artistic crafts must have also flourished as an art and were injected in the texture of Indian way of life since the Vedic age. It was also recorded.<sup>2</sup> that there was a mention in Ramayana, saying that the craftsmen were serving the industry, with cooperative principles.

These historical references would bring the point home, that industry in India in the shape of handicrafts is as old as the Indian civilisation, and was nurtured by the craftsmen as part of their duty towards the society.

Further, handicrafts reflect the synthesis or blending of the culture of all communities composing the Indian nation.<sup>3</sup>

Perfection in art, durability beyond doubt and appeal to the eye of the individual are the qualities inherent in Indian handicrafts, that brought ever lasting fame for this illustrious country in the past. The spread of Indian fame throughout the world, resulted in the expansion of foreign trade. Indian skill and master craftsmanship were exported and in return India used to get precious metals including gold. The number of goods exported had also grown in varieties. They included jewels, perfumes, textiles, ivory goods and the like that were known to the civilised world.

The royal patronage for these crafts had the important influence on the growth of the industry by artisans. The workshops called 'Kharkhanas' came into being. The organisation that brought the craftsmen into, an association was called "Crafts guild". In Kharkhanas, different departments were maintained for different crafts. Embroiders, tailors, makers of brocades, goldsmiths, turners, joiners, painters, etc. were all separately given spacious halls with all facilities and encouragement from times immemorial till the earlier years of the eighteenth century. India was one of the major countries involved in international trade mainly with the help of the Indian handicrafts.

## 2.2 ORIGINS OF SILVER SMITHY :

Jewellery in India is as spectacular as it is old, and comprises a large variety of ornaments that are both unique



and characteristic. There are many types of head ornaments coming as they do with hair style and decoration. The motifs found in India Jewellery through the ages are not on numerous, but like all the other crafts already described, they too have been influenced deeply in their modes by religious themes, ceremonial, auspicious signs and symbols and ofcourse nature. Gods and goddesses and other characters from sacred history and legend had their special resplendent personal ornaments, and a host of jewels were associated with ceremonials in the temples, as well as with custom and celebration in daily life.

Ornaments, it may be recalled, have been in existence in this land since time immemorial.<sup>4</sup> through perhaps their form and shape and the materials out of which they are manufactured, might have undergone many changes from time to time. There are references in Rugveda to many types of ornaments. " It tells of the maruts decorating themselves with various ornaments and "shining necklaces are pendent on their breasts. The Sage Kakshirat, the author of many of the hymns of the Rugveda prays for a son " decorated with golden earrings, and a jewelled necklace.<sup>5</sup> Ornaments are mentioned quite prominently in Ramayana and Mahabharat, the two great epics of India. We are told that Laxman, brother of Lord Rama, the hero of Ramayana, could recognise his sister in law, Sita, Lord Rama's wife, by a glance at the ornaments worn on her feet, especially toe etc.

Since he never, it is said, used to look at her face out of complete obedience and modesty, so also Hanuman, or Maruti the monkey god, was once given a necklace of precious gems by lord Rama as a reward for the services rendered but Hanuman we are informed chewed every gem of the necklace and threw it away since he could not find image of lord Rama in them. Again when Hanuman went to Lanka, where Sita was in captivity of Ravana, the King of Lanka, he carried with him a ring of Lord Rama as his credentials. Similar references to ornaments are found in Maharashtra also. It is said that the illustrious Saint of Maharashtra, Tukaram spurned the Nazarana of costly jewellery offered by Shivaji Maharaja as it symbolised perpetual attachment to wordly existence. All these stories go to show that people in those days used to wear ornaments.

The materials like bones and ivory which were used extensively in the manufacturing of ornaments were soon replaced by such metals as copper and brass, gold and silver and now by synthetic materials like plastics etc.

Ornaments are worn by persons primarily for three different reasons. Firstly they are supposed to enhance the personal beauty of the wearer and to decorate ones body so as to look attractive. Soon when ornaments began to be manufactured in precious metals like gold and silver, they were looked upon as

a means of a safe investment to be utilized in times of want. It was perhaps due to this safe investment consideration that the ornaments of earlier times were rough in shape and wanting in intricate designs. Importance was given to value rather than to decorative part of the ornament and thus, a gold rod was given a circular shape. The hair ornaments were originally substances which were esteemed as spirit scarers. The moon, the sun, the sweet, pandanus, the cobra, and the tortoise are all guardians. The places chosen for protection were at the chief openings by which spirits were believed to enter the body, the suture in the skull, the ears, nose and mouth, the throats which the movements of the urula seem to have suggested as the abode of one of the body's vital spirits, at the wrists and ankles where the pulse beats, and at the fingers and toes through which the spirit passed in and out.

In the Konkan, rice is the staple grain, the chief scarer of the fiend hunger. To keep off spirits, heads of rice called Bugdi were worn and are the origin of the present day ear ornaments of that name. The Malhar Kelis of Thana, as a cure for pimples, scratches, and other skin diseases, which they believe to be spirit caused, wear a necklace of *gulvel menispermum glabrum*. They also wear an armband of the creeper called *bhutamalli* or spirit wrestler to keep away evil and their children wear a necklace of *bajarhattu*

beads to keep off the evil eye.....of guardian or spirit scaring animals a trace of the holiness of the cow remains in the Hindu women's ornaments, patli, literally pale red or cow coloured. A tiger claw enclosed in gold or silver is tied round the neck of some Hindu children to guard them against spirit attacks and the ivory patalis or bracelets worn by Hindu women are held to be luckier or more spirit scaring than any metal or gem studded ornaments. So among the modern metal jewellery of low class Hindus is the ganthale or knotted necklace and the gantha or knotted ear ring. Beads especially black beads were worn as spirit scarers by the early tribes and the regular marriage necklace of all Hindus the mangalsutra or lucky thread, is of black beads. On several occasions Hindus wore ornaments to keep off evil rather than for show, proving that fear is an older passion than vanity. Most things, now done for show have their roots in the wish to scare evil spirits or bhutasathi.<sup>6</sup>

The development of any craft presupposes a reasonably long spell of peace and prosperity. No craft can survive and thrive in a period of conflict. Moreover, such prosperous and peaceful period enables the people and rulers of the land to patronise arts culture and handicrafts. The intricate designs in the ornaments therefore, must have been introduced when there

was a demand for such costly pieces by the rulers and sophisticated noble gentry of the land. This is reflected in the fact that most intricately designed ornaments were costly and worn by members of the noble family and these ornaments were made out of gold which is costlier than silver. The common people ( and especially the rural masses) therefore, are attracted to silver rather than to gold since they can afford to have an ornament of silver in place of gold because of the relative cheapness of the former.

### 2.3 SILVER SMITHY IN MAHARASHTRA :

In Maharashtra many graceful ornaments are made. The goldsmiths and silver smiths of Ahmednagar show extraordinary proficiency in making neck ornaments consisting of three rows of hollow gold and silver balls filled with lac set in a pad of ornament.<sup>7</sup>

More popular, however, are the various products made out of brass, copper and silver. These metal products used to be produced at various centres spread all over India. For example, South India was famous for its bronzes regarding inlay work, many centres in North India were famous for 'bidri' work with its 'richness and variety of design.' Hyderabad and Moradabad were famous for inlaid metal ware.

The city of Bombay produces both archaic and streamlined designs of high standard. With a number of Jewellery shops with modern tools, upto date designs are brought out. In Nasik men wear ear rings, silver wristlets, gold necklets, and also rope of silver wire with a loop at one end, a tassel at the other. The hill tribes of Thana wear rows of blue and white beads round the neck and rings both in the lobes and rims of the ear. They also wear bangles and bracelets in abundance.

#### 2.4 SILVER SMITHY AT HUPARI AND SURROUNDING AREA<sup>8</sup> :

Silver Jewellery is one of the traditional and even flourishing crafts of the state. In almost all the towns as well as in big villages artisans are found working with silver to make jewellery. Hupari and Kolhapur have been renowned for superior designs and workmanship. Name of Hupari has become synonymous with silver jewellery which maintains its unique identity and an appeal of its own. Hupari silver jewellery is in demand not only throughout the country but also in foreign markets. It satisfies diverse tastes and holds its sway among rustic and the elite alike. The richness and variety in designs are not only a delight for sight but also create an inner urge for procuring them.

Hupari, a village in Hatkanangale Taluka of Kolhapur District, is famous for silver ornaments not only in Maharashtra

but throughout India. It is situated to the South East of Kolhapur, at 16° 35' North and 74° 20' East and is at a distance of 22 Kms. from Kolhapur. It is well connected to all important places in Kolhapur and Sangli Districts by bus routes and as many as 52 buses play regularly to and from Hupari to various places of the district. It has a post and Telegraph Office as also a telephone exchange. Tap water supply is also provided. It has an area of 6.6 square miles and as per 1961 census, had a population of 10,000 persons as against 7039 of 1951 census. In other words the decadal increase in population of the village is 42.08 percent as against 33.50 percent of Hatkanangale Taluka and 22.05 percent of the district. The 1981 population of the village was 17112.

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TABLE NO.2.1**2.5 DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY NINE BROAD INDUSTRIAL****CATEGORIES AND SEX**

Industrial Category	Description	Population		
		Male	Females	Persons
I	As Cultivators	731 (25.08)	449 (31.35)	1180 (27.15)
II	As Agri Labour	422 (14.46)	238 (16.62)	660 (15.17)
III	In mining quarrying live stock forestry fishing etc.	15 (0.51)	1 (0.06)	16 (0.36)
IV	At Household Industry	1471 (50.42)	629 (43.92)	2100 (48.28)
V	In Manufacturing Other	106 (3.63)	102 (7.12)	208 (4.78)
VI	In Construction	14 (0.47)	1 (0.08)	15 (0.35)
VII	In Trade and Commerce	158 (5.43)	12 (0.85)	170 (3.90)
Total		2917 (100)	1432 (100)	4349 (100)

NOTE : Figures in brackets indicates percentage.



TABLE NO.2.21971 CENSUS OF INDIA DISTRICT CENSUS HAND BOOK

Industrial category	Description	Population		
		Males	Females	Persons
I	A Cultivator	940 (26.93)	78 (29.11)	1018 (27.07)
II	As agriculture labour	406 (11.62)	115 (42.92)	521 (13.85 )
III	I Mining quarrying live stock forestry, fishing	54 (1.55 )	—	54 (1.45)
IV	At Household Industry	169 (4.83 )	35 (13.05)	204 (5.44)
V	In man other than household Industry	1690 (48.40)	26 (9.70)	1716 (45.63)
VI	In trade and commerce	233 ( 6.67)	14 (5.22 )	247 (6.56)
Total		3492 (100 )	268 (100 )	3760 (100 )

NOTE : Figures in brackets indicates percents ge.

TABLE NO.2.3

1981 CENSUS OF INDIA

Industrial Category	Description	Population		
		Male	Female	Persons
I	As Cultivators	864 (6.23)	105 (1.19)	969 (4.26)
II	As Agri labour	543 (3.91)	349 (3.95)	892 (3.92 )
III	In Mining quarrying live stock forestry fishing etc.	462 (3.32)	31 (0.35)	493 (2.17)
IV	At household Industry	-	-	-
V	Other workers	3121 (22.45)	145 (1.64)	3266 (14.36)
VI	Total main workers	4990 (35.90)	630 (7.13)	5620 (24.73)
VII	In trade and commerce	3916 (28.17)	7516 (85.09)	11432 (50.30)
Total		13899 (100)	8833 (100)	22732 (100)

note : Figures in brackets indicates the percentage.

## 2.6 THE PREDOMINANCE HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRY :

The predominance of workers in Household industry can be gauged from the fact that 21 percent of the total population of the village or 47.11 percent of the total workers of the village are engaged in the household industry which is in its turn, predominated by silver smithy. Since as many as 1542 or 34.70 percent of total workers are engaged in one way or the other in this craft.

The same holds for 1971 census. The predominance of workers in house hold industry can be gauged from the fact that 20.04 percent of the total population of the village or 5.43 percent of the total workers of the village are engaged in the house industry. Which is in its turn predominated by silver smithy. The same again is reflected in 1981 census.

The predominance of work in house hold industry can be gauged from the fact that 32.66 percent of the total population of the village or 14.37 percent of the total workers of the village are engaged in the house. Industry which is in its turn predominated by silver smithy.

## 2.7 WHY HUPARI ?

Hupari is a small village which is situated in the South East of Kolhapur, city. It is 22 Kms away from Kolhapur.

It covers an area of 7.6 Kilometers. The Name "Pari" it self indicates the dwelling den of goddess, and hence the name 'Hupari' is aptly given to this small village which is prosperous one for last 300 years the craftsmen and artisans of Hupari have been making the various articles of silver for the horses and elephants of the chhatrapati of Kolhapur.

There are about 17,000 people in Hupari. There exist many cooperative organisations in the village. It has primary schools for boys and girls, a high school and a composite junior college. It also has a sub office and a telephone exchange more surprisingly it has three theaters. It also has three Irrigations schemes. The Panchganga river supplies drinking water and water for irrigation agriculture. It has a regular bus facility. The craftsmanship of Hupari workers is of rare excellence and designs in its kind, and so the silver ornaments have won reputation not only in India but even abroad.

Automatically one question arises in our mind as to why the silversmithy concentrated only in Hupari or in other words who are the initiators or originators of this craftsmanship ? Thee craft of manufacturing silver ornaments at Hupari seems to be of recent origin since the Dis-strict Gazettee of 1884 does not make any mention of the existence of this craft in the village in 1881. Its population as per 1881 census was 3335

and no industry worth the name was mentioned. The origin of the present craft seems therefore, to be in the present century. Hupari must have had usual number of traditional goldsmiths as are found in any other village of India. However, the craft of silver smithy today is not confined to traditional caste i.e. Sonar but Maratha, almost all major castes i.e. Brahmin, Maratha, Kumbhar, Mahar.etc. among the Hindus and other religious like Muslims Jains etc. are also engaged in this craft.

Silver Jewellery of Hupari with its characteristic identify holds its own name in the Indian Jewellery, popularly known as Hupari Jewellery. The craft has grown over decades to claim its rightful place amongst the foremost in the country. Providing employment to the majority of population of Hupari and its nearby villages i.e. Pattan Kodoli, Rendal, Yelgud, Talange, and Mangur in Karnataka State. It is the very back bone of the village economy and has considerable growth potentiality.

It is rather curious to see that this craft should be located at Hupari which has neither the advantage of availability of raw material ( e.g. Silver, Copper, Zinc acids, etc.) nearby nor are the market centres for silver ornaments near Hupari. The markets for ornaments of Hupari are as far away as Delhi, Agra, Poona etc. The origin of this craft as understood from

craftsmen is given in the following paragraphs.

#### 2.8 THE GENESIS OF THE CRAFT :

Krishanaji Sonar and Dadoba Sonar the pioneers of Silver Smithy made it into an industry in Hupari around 1904. Shri. Krishanaji Ramchandra Potdar was a man of foresight, conviction, and integrity. He imparted necessary skills required for manufacture of ornaments to others. He sometimes advanced money to them as capital and encouraged them to establish their own workshops. The profession was continued by the sons of the family. The successors were enlightened and they were interested in the prosperity of the workers also. They introduced many improvements in the craft. When it was realised that the time wages paid to the craftsmen obstructed productivity they didnot, hesitate to introduce the "Piece wages" for many operations involved in the craft. They thought of introducing such machinery as "hand press wire and strip drawing machine." etc. in to the craft. This mechanization changed the scope and working of the craft altogether. Earlier only skilled and semi skilled used to be employed. Introduction of machinery however, made it possible to employ unskilled persons to carry out various operations. The mechanization increased labour productivity and led to a significant reduction in per unit cost. Some the members of this Potdar family migrated to Kolhapur during 20's .

About 40 employee craftsmen working in the workshops of pioneer families commenced their own establishments after their departure from the village.

These 40 persons were drawn from various castes and thus, the caste barrier was broken once for all and the silver smithy craft of Hupari is not now confined to any one particular caste. The prominent persons who were engaged in this craft were sarvashri. R.G.Kulkarni, D.A. Kolhapure, S.D.Nakil, S.M.Navale etc. Shri. H.G.Kulkarni revolutionised the craft by introducing the present "chain" and "Gujrav" balls.

The chain forms in most ornaments their base and as such its introduction has helped to diversify the types of production at Hupari. Soon afterwards more developed machinery was introduced in this craft by the Chandi Audyogik Sahakari Sangh Ltd., Hupari followed by other organizations like, "Sanmitra Sangh Company", Sudarshan Company, N.A.Patil Company, "Ashok Company," Kajave Company, etc.

In the post II world war period craft expended and qualitatively developed by the emergence of many new designs, introduced by local craftsmen, the prominent among them being. :

1. Shri. Bhojemali
2. Shri. P.B.Ingrole
3. Shri. D.B.Kajave.

4. Shri. B.J.Kajave
- 5 Shri. J.B.Patil
- 6 Shri. D.V.waigade
- 7 Shri. S.N.Vibhute.

This craft since then has been growing with acceleration year after year. The force of this growth lies in craftsmen who are innovative regarding shape design and always keen to changing tastes of the customers. The growth is seen from the following chart. It shows the number of establishments, in existence from 1944 to 1962.

TABLE NO. 2.4

GROWTH OF ESTABLISHMENTS

Year	No.of establishments
1944	116
1950	212
1955	190
1960	283
1961	283
1962	315

SOURCE : The census of India 1961.



These figures, include establishments working in neighbouring villages but are affiliated to the Chandi Karkhandar Association, Hupari of the 315 establishments in existence in 1962, 235 were from Hupari and the rest i.e. 80 belonged to neighbouring villages like Pattan Kodoli etc. The reduction in the number of establishments in some years was due to amalgamations of two or three establishments into one.

#### 2.9 TYPES OF PRODUCT :

These establishments in Hupari mainly manufacture ornaments on behalf of their customers. Naturally they are not severely affected by the rise or fall in the price of silver. The main raw material i.e. silver is made available to the proprietors for return in the form of finished products. It is to be noted that the maximum benefit goes to the merchants or traders who ultimately sell.

#### 2.10 MODE OF BUSINESS :

The ornament to the customers. The business that is transacted between the trader and proprietor at Hupari is as follows. :

If A, the trader places an order for a specific type of ornaments of given purity ( say 70/100) of 1 K.g. the trader will have give the proprietor pure silver of 700 grams plus the wages

for manufacturing of the ornaments of 2 Kg. These wages vary from ornament to ornament and design to design and usually range from Rs. 25 to 35 per Kg. The proprietor has thus to meet all the expenses that are incurred by way of supplying, in this particular case 300 grams of other alloy to be mixed with silver, charges for Atni section, i.e. melting unit, wire and strip drawing section etc. wages of craftsmen who assemble the pieces and do polishing etc. as also other material as borax, sulphuric acid, kerosene oil, etc. It was reported that on an average the proprietor gets, after meeting all the expenses, about Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 per Kg. of silver ornaments, manufactured by him. The trader on the other hand selling ornaments worth 1 Kg. at the current market price of silver ( and not for 700 grams only) plus service charges fixed by him for various ornaments gets the maximum profit.

The silver ornaments of Hupari are not only famous in India but even abroad. Today there is a large demand for these articles. At present there are aboutt 5000 daily workers are engaged in Hupari. In addition about 4000 women are involved in the manufacturing process of silver articles. About 6 lakh kilos of silver ingots are turned into various types of silver ornaments per annum and approximately 11 to 12 lakhs of rupees are being disbursed as wages to the craftsmen per month.

This large investment in the industry has caused rapid growth of the village. Due to great attraction of livelihood through employment as trainee artisans there has been significant migration of, of external population towards Hupari village. Moreover the remuneration for making delicate and beautiful silver ornaments increases complexity of the design.

The traders of Bombay, Gujarat, and other states supply the raw silver ingots to these craftsmen and in return they receive silver ornaments of ready made articles labour charges are paid in cash to the artisans.

One of the major problems of the silver smithy is regarding the disposal of waste and poisonous, chemicals which remain in the procedure of refining silver. This has become a serious cause of water and air pollution in Hupari.

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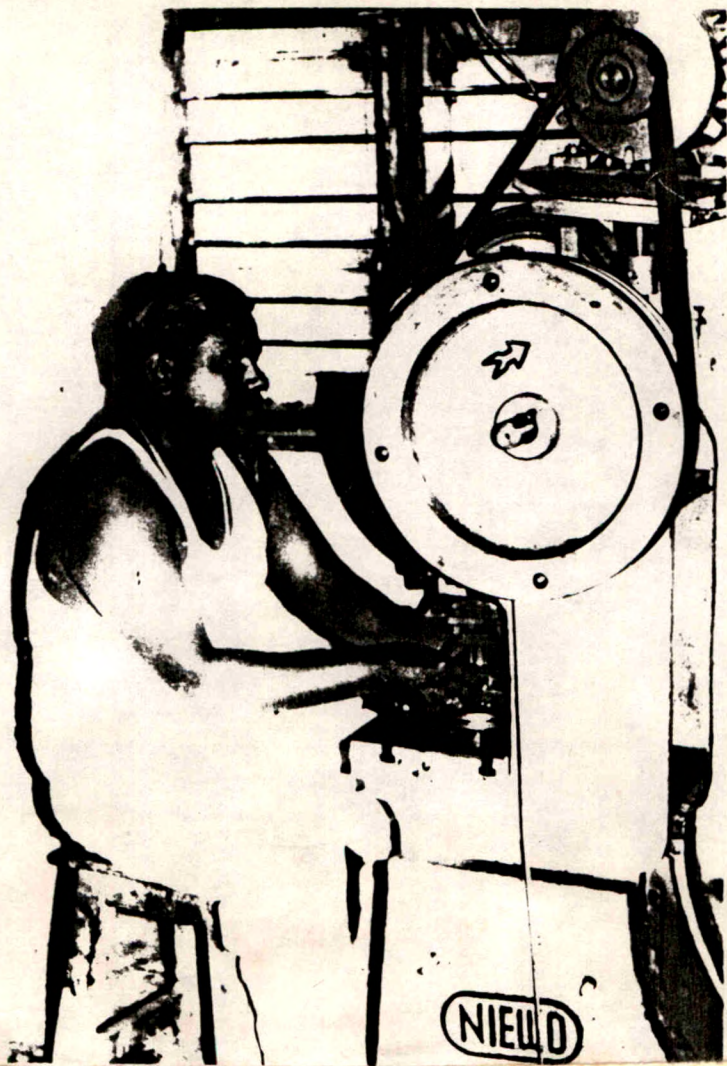
*Photograph No. 1*

A view of Hapari village as seen from the top of the water reservoir in the village.

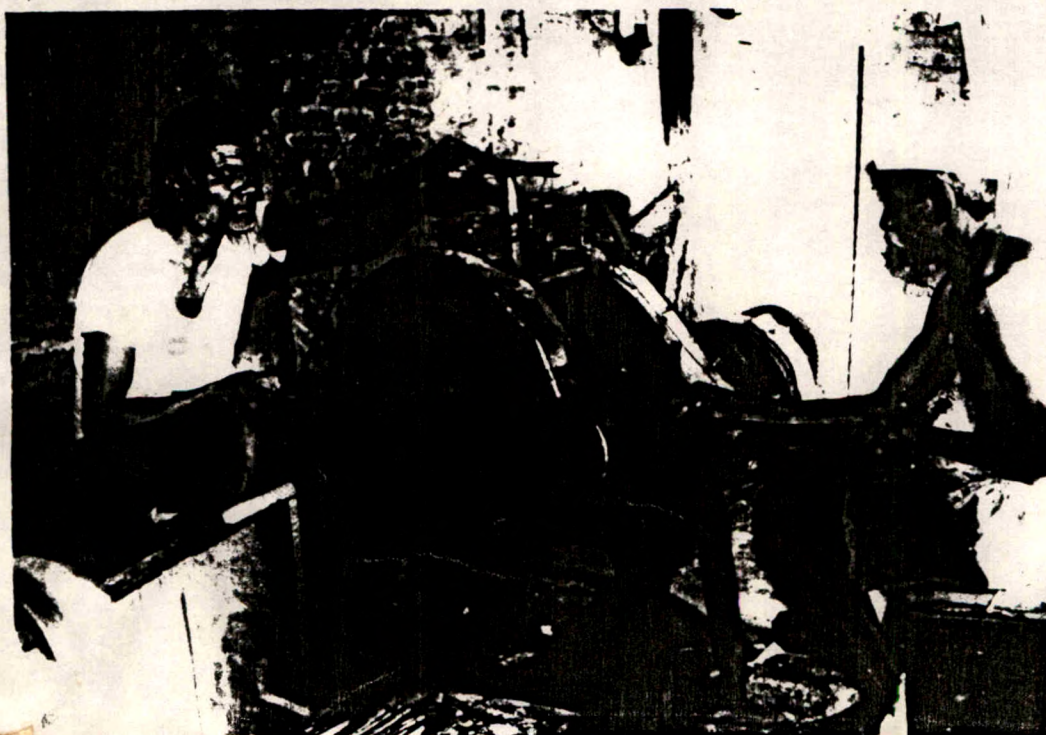


2. Melting of silver in a crucible and the melted silver is pured into a pagha( Matfic) to form an ingot.



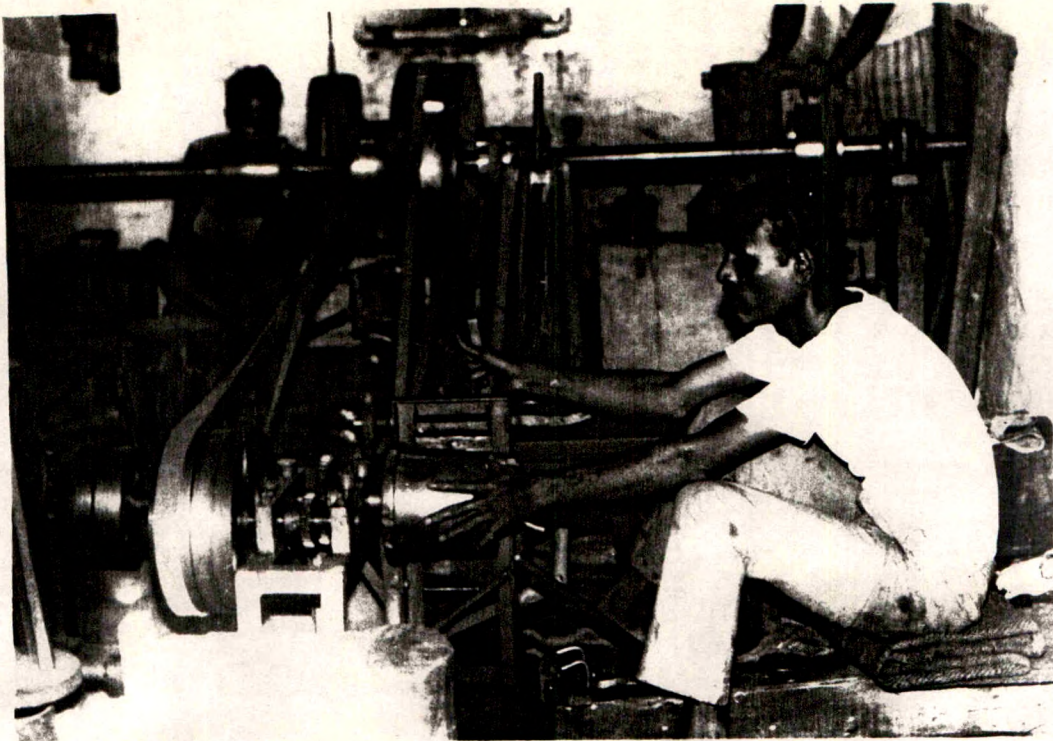


3 The Silver rod is passed through the sut machine.



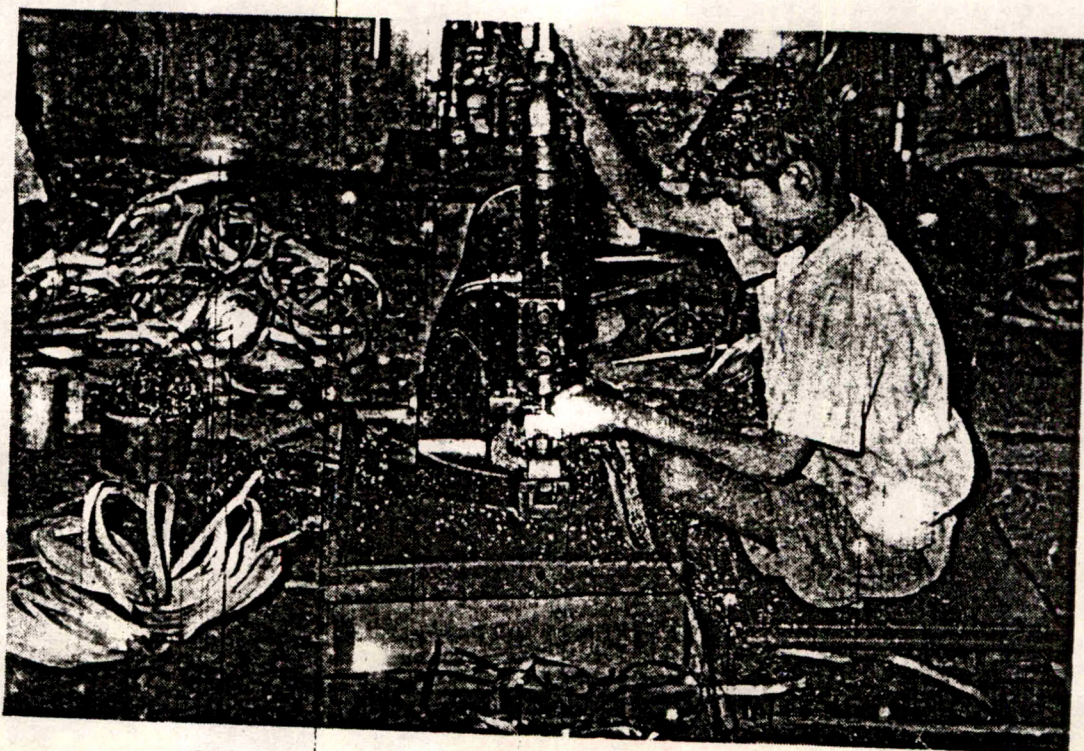
4 The silver rod is passed through the Pastha machine





- 5 The silver rod is passed thro ugh the pasta machine (strip drawing machine) in order to form a strip of required gauge.

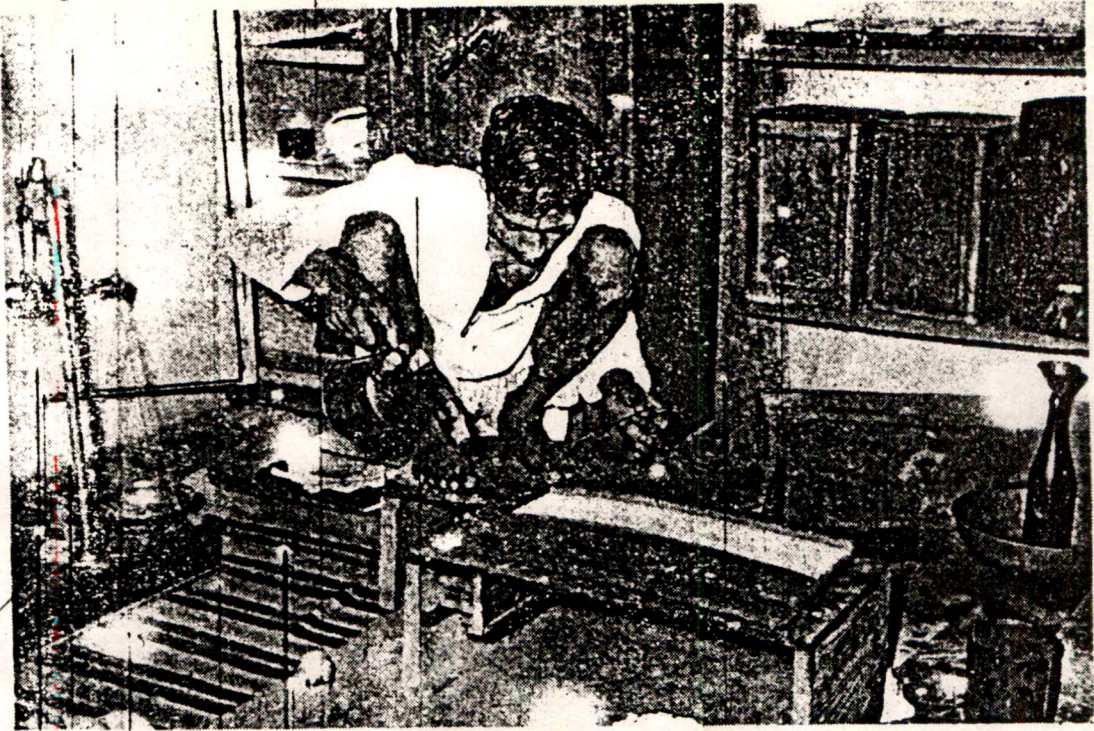
12B



Photograph No. 6

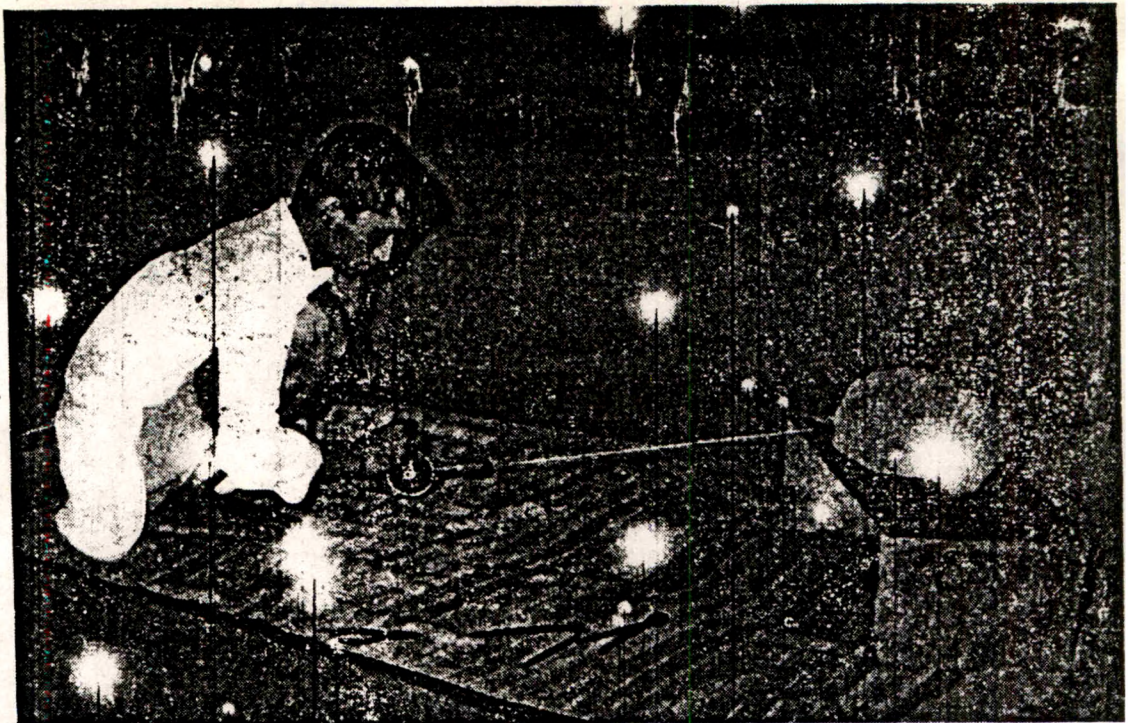
The strips obtained from 'Pashta' machine are passed through the press machine to obtain the design with the help of a die





Photograph No. 7

The chain is being soldered with a hand-stove.



Photograph No. 8

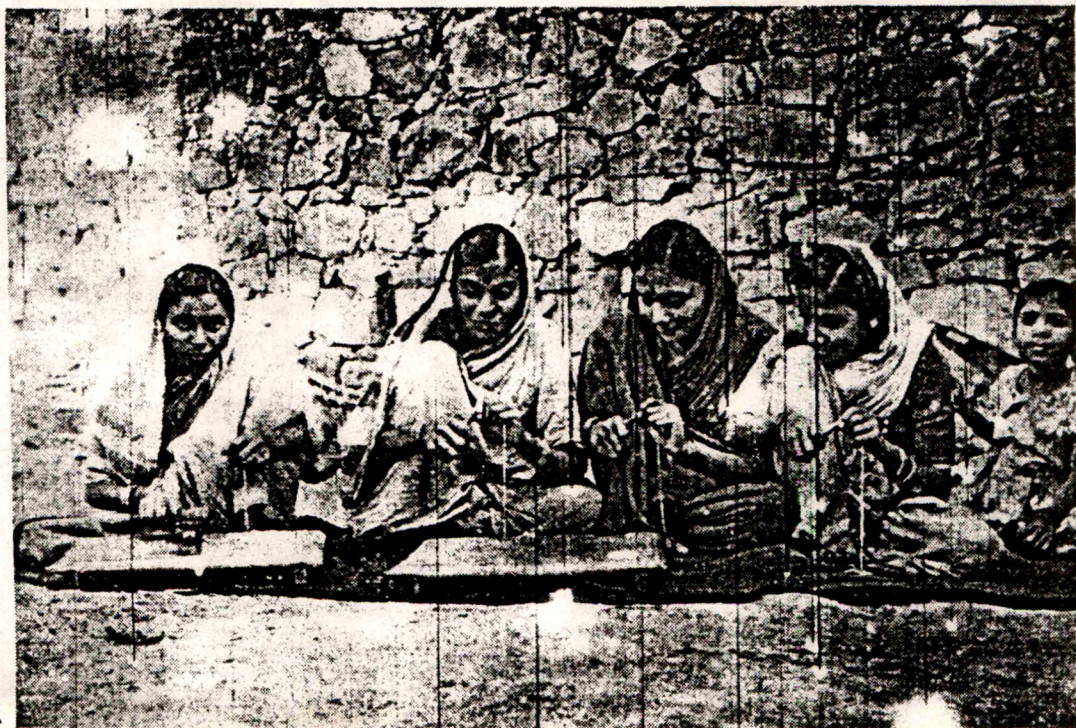
The completed chain is given a slight twist with the help of a drill machine in order to get a design.





Photograph No. 9

The "Spring" is cut into small pieces to get small circular rings with opening.



Photograph No. 10

The small rings are linked together to form a chain. This work is invariably done by females.





- 11 The small pieces of design obtained through the press machine (photograph No. 6) are arranged together and then the entire ornament is soldered with a hand stove



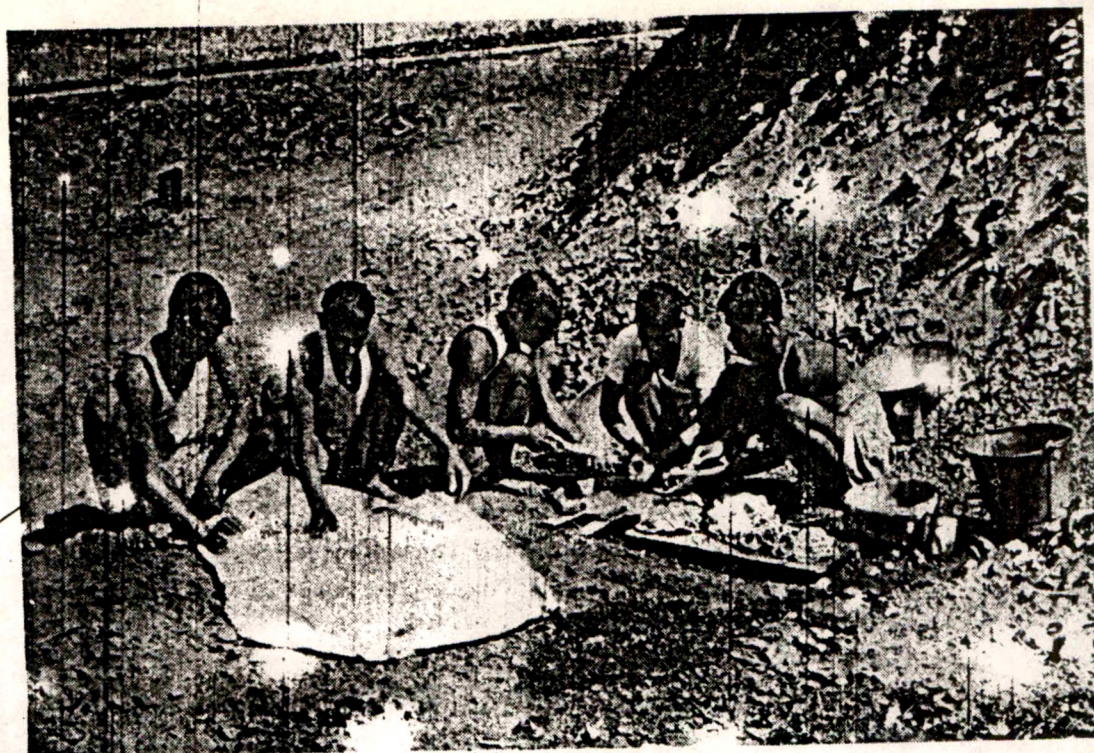
- 12 Polishing of ornaments is done in a zolana containing to 10 to 15 Kg. ornaments.





Photograph No. 14

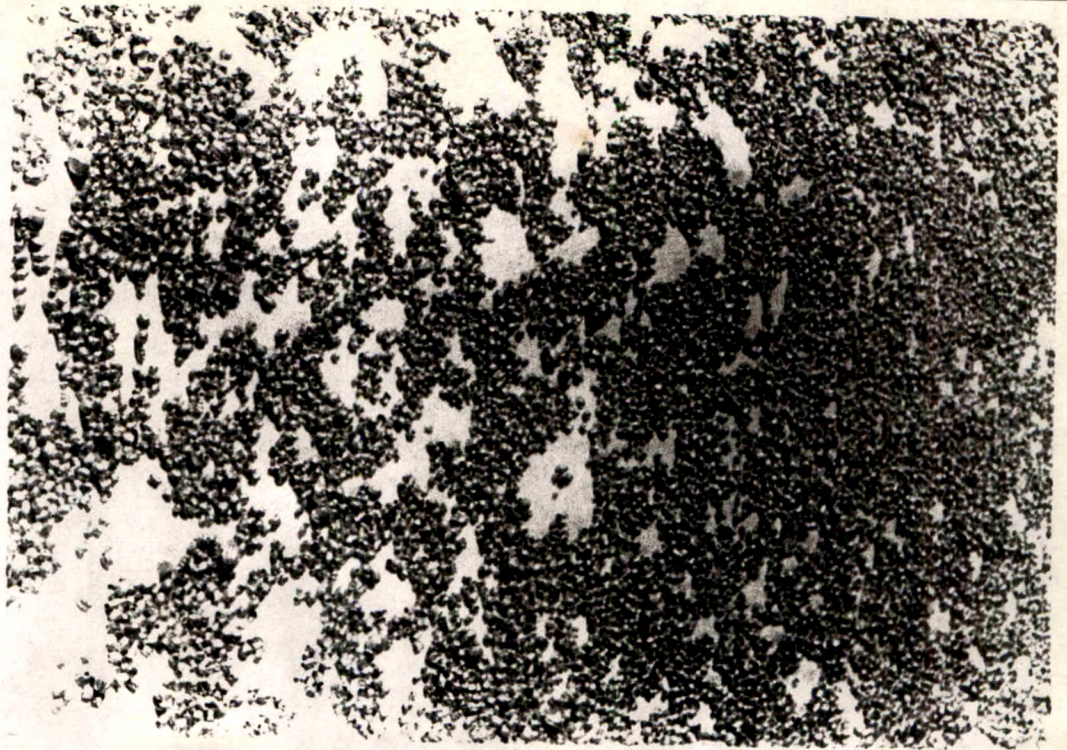
Polishing of ornaments is done in a "Zolana" containing 10 to 15 kg. ornaments.



Photograph No. 15

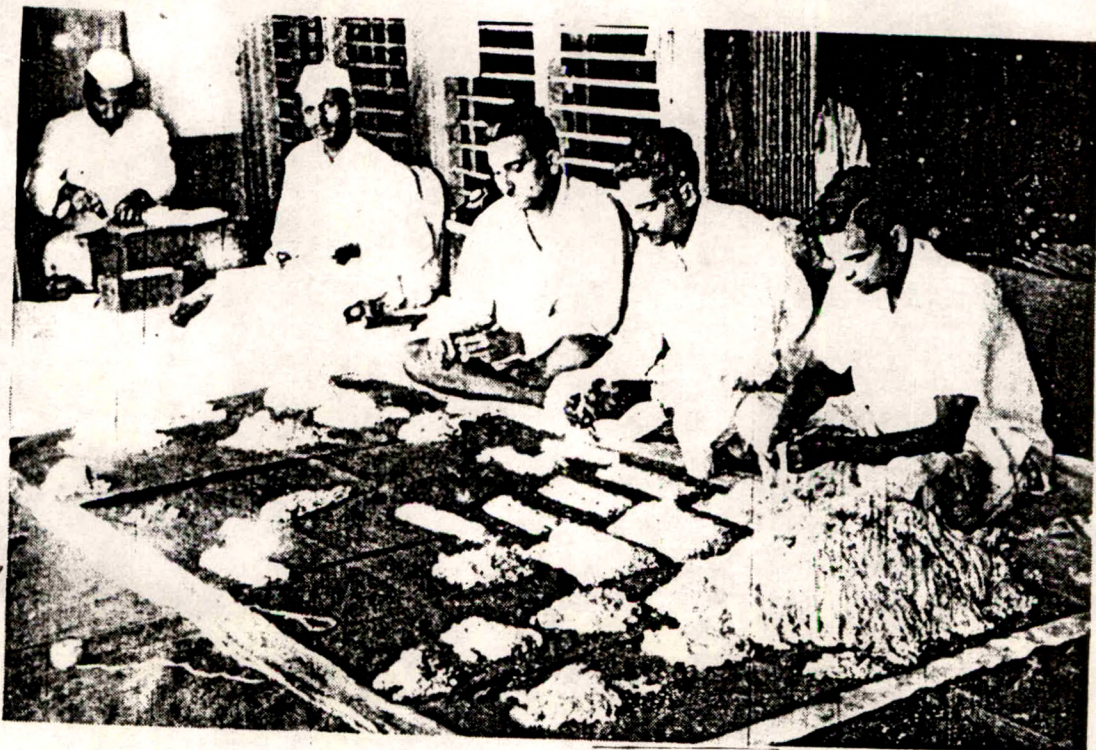
Polishing of ornaments with a brush in respect of some special ornaments involving intricate designs.





15 Polishing for balls.

16A



Photograph No. 16  
Sorting of ornaments.



NEOPAN SSS



17 A fes specimen of silver ornaments.

