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BA(Hons) Industrial Design

Design Training Strategies for the Crafts Sector in South India.

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This research was undertaken under the auspices of Cardiff Metropolitan University
DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

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Date .....................................................................................

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

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Abstract

Abstract:

This study investigates the role that design and product development plays in crafts enterprises at a grass roots level in development contexts with a particular focus on South India. It argues that design training has a significant role to play in the development of crafts livelihoods by introducing modes of operation in new product development that lead to greater sustainability.

A number of research and practical projects in recent decades have indicated the value of design to crafts people in development contexts. A critical review of publications since 1945 and recent practice relating to this area of study, resulted in a range of expectations relating to helpful training techniques and content, the way workshops could be organised and beneficial strategies to facilitate engagement with crafts people. These were tested in a series of field experiments, with the reflections and findings from each experiment informing the design of the next.

Throughout the project, an approach which draws on some of the principles of grounded theory was used to analyse and understand the information gathered. During the field experiments immersion was used as a research approach coupled with participant observation and techniques taken from action research to facilitate the gathering of information.

An extended practical exploration of strategies for design training in a particular development context has shown that design training can play a significant role in enabling crafts people to develop new products, which meet the needs of users, respond to the market and through this contribute to more sustainable livelihoods.

Conclusions based on experience and learning derived from extended practical exploration showed that approaches to people and environments are of equal importance to the content and focus of any training and therefore care needs to be taken in engaging with such groups to facilitate the acceptance and success of any proposed training. These conclusions are encapsulated in key principles of engagement for design practitioners.
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