



THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

"...ensuring sustainability of artisans and their craft..."

August 2017

CCI National Meet, Sanskriti Kendra, 25 February, 2017

Crafts and our Environment: What does it take to go green?

An Overview

Ashoke Chatterjee

The context for this year's theme, CCI's articulation of the sector's green challenge is reflected in the February 1 - 15 issue of Down To Earth. Speakers and discussion focused on the need for eco-friendly crafts that communicate their competitive advantage in today's markets, and for national systems that respect and encourage the sector's ecological strengths and potential. While globalization has brought unparalleled opportunities, it also makes stringent demands for compliance to standards firmly established in world markets, and now increasingly at home. Yet most standards have been developed with organized mass-production in mind. Artisans are seldom involved in the development of compliance requirements, or aware of what is imposed and expected of them. A critical learning that has emerged from the National Meet is the need to challenge this situation with standards and practices specific to small-scale hand production, and to give artisans access to the knowledge, incentives, technologies and testing facilities that can enable Indian crafts to be and to remain 'green'.

The Council has in recent years consistently advocated the environmental advantages of crafts understood as a gigantic industry with a relatively low carbon footprint. It has argued that this ecological contribution demands recognition in an era obsessed with the dangers of climate change, reinforcing the sector's claim to priority. CCI has also learned, through its own experience as well as that of others, that arguments need to be backed with data and evidence. Today, the green argument is itself being challenged by those who consider it a barrier to 'development' --- growth is now often advocated as good, irrespective of its cost on the environment or on the livelihood struggles of groups like artisans and cultivators. The rise of Donald Trump has its parallels at home. Sustainability as a concept demands renewed acceptance as the wellbeing of humans and of nature, travelling together on the same trajectory rather than as competitors. The National Meet has underlined 'handmade in India' as a brand that must emerge as symbolic of care for both people and for the earth that is their shelter. It has reminded CCI of Gandhi's truth.

Attention at the National Meet was on directions which could assist CCI chapters and partners toward the research, experimentation and action essential for sustaining India's crafts as 'green'. The argument so far has been that the craft sector is environmentally greener and more sustainable than mass production because of its dependence on natural materials, low use of fossil fuels, and decentralized patterns of production. This assumption now needs to be backed by evidence. Several challenges --- including raw material and water scarcity as well as safer production

processes --- must be addressed together if crafts can be promoted as really green as well as to meet tightening compliance standards. The signal is that green can no longer be assumed or taken for granted. It must be practiced by millions of Indian artisans, with evidence-based certification as a marketing USP and strategy.

In her keynote presentation, Shikha Mukherji (Crafts Council of West Bengal) underlined the three verticals which determine whether craft production is green and can stay that way: environmental indicators, business requirements and consumer demand. Going green demands a production discipline that conforms to established standards, independently verified and certified. These represent a cost, which in turn must be made worthwhile as a marketing advantage. Consumers must be persuaded to value and therefore to pay for what is green. A key factor here is the need for standards that all stakeholders understand. Shikha pointed out that issues of compliance are not restricted to environment alone. They also concern fair trade practices including those of child labour, appropriate wage structures, gender sensitivity and safe working conditions. The challenge therefore is not just about being 'green' but also about being 'clean' from several perspectives. A critical factor is that prevailing standards have emerged from organized industries and mass production systems. Artisans and craft processes have had no say in the discipline they are now required to accept. The playing field is thus far from level. The need is to help innovate and promote standards that are sensitive to what is special about a sector as diverse, decentralized and innovative as crafts.

Meera Goradia (Jeypore, ex-Khamir) shared the example of Khamir's experience with Kala Cotton in Kutch, undertaken as an effort to revive a languishing raw material, with important implications for the rural economy and ecology. The effort involved growers, spinners, weavers, designers and a marketing strategy in which the quality of Kala Cotton could emerge as a USP for all stakeholders. Meera described the environmental, social and economic factors which were involved. Underlining that revivalism has its own cost, she indicated that Kala Cotton now responded to a niche audience rather than to traditional local demand. Design was at the centre of this experiment. While over 100 weavers now use Kala Cotton, rising demand takes weavers to go to the open market for supplies beyond what Khamir accesses and supplies from a cohort of 170 farmers. Already what is sold as Kala may not always be genuine. Developing a belief in the product was now the key to sustainability, and this in turn required consumer education and product certification systems that are both affordable and specific to the craft.

In 1992, CCI undertook a study of a crisis in wood supplies: sandalwood, rosewood, red sanders in four southern states. Usha Krishna (CCI) said that its purpose was to bring the situation to the attention of forest and other authorities and to influence policies pertaining to forest resources, plantations and the need to develop substitute varieties. Subsequently CCI extended its study to woods in some northern states (Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh). In the period that has followed, the crisis in wood supply has become far more acute in every region, and there is still no perceptible national framework for the protection of wood crafts. The immediate need is for attention to the supply situation as well as to technologies and training required for the development and use of alternatives. The participation at the Meet of Down To Earth was particularly welcomed, given the concentration at the Centre for Science &

Environment (CSE) on India's natural resource situation including its timber, grasses and fibres. CCI/CSE partnership could encourage national attention to this dimension, highlighting wood craft situations throughout the country.

Dwindling access to raw material that was once a free resource emerged in mastercraftsperson Shri Harkishan's report on constraints faced by the community of potters in Delhi's Uttam Nagar. Not just clay but water resources and space are also threatened. Originally located on the city's outskirts, it is now surrounded by urban sprawl. Wood-fired kilns are causing environmental issues and neighbourhood resentment. A framework of rules and regulations is being enforced which relate to small industries and are insensitive to craft production. Considering that potters and weavers are acknowledged as the largest concentrations of India's artisan population, as well as the pace of Indian urbanization, an urgent need arises for specific attention to the condition of urban potter communities. A possible first step would be for DCC to locate partners who could study the situation Harkishanji described, and recommend options practical in the Delhi context. Authorities would need to be approached. The experience could then be used to bring national attention to the future of a sublime craft so embedded in India's civilization.

Use of natural dyes in the Andhra area was the subject of Meena Appender's (CCAP) intervention. Contrasting the diminishing use of vegetable dyes in Kondapalli with a more successful scenario in Ettikopaka, Meena pointed out challenges of material and product consistency. These are also experienced in the leather puppet activity, where the need to use a bamboo stick (in place of a brush) with natural dyes makes the process more time consuming. Customer preferences are also involved as the natural-dye palette is muted in contrast to bright alternatives. Interestingly, in Ettikopaka natural dyes are cheaper than synthetics. The speaker pointed out that the use of natural dyes must be understood in the context of the material to which these dyes are applied. There is a tendency to treat issues of natural dyes applied to yarn, wood and leather as uniform while the need is for researched data that can provide specific options to each situation.

Bela Khaleeli (CCI) described efforts in the leather industry to reduce the impact of chrome. The need is for sharing knowledge and technology with artisan communities. N. Shashidhara (CCKarnataka) spoke about intensive efforts to reduce the use of lead in paints, and of the hard work invested in several crafts (including image-making) to reduce the use of lead, encourage natural alternatives, and to create awareness that can impact consumer preferences. School children have been in the vanguard of this achievement in Karnataka and elsewhere. Mridula Ramesh. Jt. MD - Southern Roadways Ltd and Founder Sundaram Climate Institute shared her experience in post-production and compliance issues in the Coimbatore textile industry where she had tested and successfully applied the Japanese TPM (Total Productive Maintenance) approach, using waste as a resource for profit and productivity. She described effluent treatment possibilities which are within reach, but often frustrated because water is not priced and is therefore so often wasted. Mridula underlined the importance of the research back-up and the hand-holding required to putting data into practice, and the importance of identifying affordable effluent treatment options for craft communities.

The concluding presentation by Meghna Ajit (Centre for Environment Education) described CEE efforts at developing appropriate eco-systems that could promote natural materials for local

skills and crafts. These have included bamboo, fibres and papier-mâché in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, and a study on red sanders supply. To uplift green production, CEE's Rural Programme Group is developing young professionals as community mobilizers under a Gram Nidhi cadre scheme. These activists engage with the community to develop entrepreneurship, offering a potential for craft application. In Hyderabad, CEE has developed an Environment Management Framework as a sustainability check at each stage of livelihood practice and output in specific mapped areas. This experience of life-cycle analysis could be relevant to crafts. In terms of post-production and compliance issues, CEE has a programme for environment management in handloom clusters which includes mapping, study and analysis to develop common effluent treatment plants (CETP).

Discussion on speakers' interventions focused on opportunities identified for CCI action within what first appeared as a formidably complex challenge. It had become clear that developing and sustaining a 'green' culture is not an option if the craft sector is to access the priority it deserves and flourish in competitive conditions at home and overseas. Of the practical actions that emerged, perhaps the first was to work with craft authorities toward compliance regulations specific to hand production rather than the current pattern of imposing frameworks developed for mass production on the hand sector. Standards need to respect what distinguishes craft production and marketing while fully accepting the needs for standards and compliance. Other do-ables identified include understanding the situation of Delhi potters and advocating solutions relevant to them and to other such urban communities, advocacy of national attention to wood availability and to water and effluent management, monitoring lessons emerging from the Kala Cotton and natural dye activities, active participation in the national campaign to reduce exposure to lead poisoning, as well as developing strong partnerships with CSE and CEE in the pursuit of interests which CCI shares with them. The CCI website and its Newsletter could be used as channels for follow-up, perhaps with a column on the green concerns and actions shared at this National Meet.

KAMALA AWARDS 2017

Saluting Kamala Awardees

Pushpa Chari

Instituted by CCI in memory of Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay the Kamala Awards honour and recognize craft activists and hereditary artisans for excellence in craft skills and for their contribution to the craft field.

Kamala Award for Contribution to Crafts 2017

Shri. M.R. Ranganatha Rao

The recipient of the Kamala Award for Contribution to Crafts 2017 is Shri. M.R. Ranganatha Rao from Karnataka.

Shri. Ranganatha Rao is a revivalist of Karnataka's temple based craft of wooden puppets and mastercraftsperson of the state's traditional string puppetry. A graduate with degrees in drama, theatre and Kannada, he began his career as a school teacher teaching the art of puppetry in schools and scripting new plays and lyrics for his puppet shows. Along with his wife Smt. Gayatri

Rao, he has also crafted rare wooden puppets as well as taught puppet making, scripting, composing music and costume designing to a large number of aspirants.

Shri. Ranganatha Rao has toured the country with his team conducting lecture- demonstrations and workshops training puppetry troupes. He was the Founder Director of a children's puppet troupe. His extensive travels abroad to present India's cultural heritage through string puppetry have been greatly acclaimed and his exquisitely crafted puppets are part of the museum collections in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Swiss Puppet Museum and museums in Tokyo and Beijing.

Among the many awards Shri. Rao has won are the Sangeet Natak Academy Award, Partisubba Award from Karnataka, Yakshagana Bayalata Akademi Award and Karnataka Rajyotsava Award bestowed on him by the Government of Karnataka.

The Crafts Council of India is privileged to confer on Shri. Ranganatha Rao the Kamala Award for Contribution to Crafts for the year 2017.



Kamala Award winners with Chief Guest Shri Joshi

Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship 2017

Shri. Arun Pal

The recipient of the Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship 2017 is Shri. Arun Pal from West Bengal.

Shri. Arun Pal was born in a traditional family of potters based in the potters' village of Laxmikantapura in South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. His creativity found expression early in his

career in building kilns incorporating indigenous technologies at Viswa-Bharati, Santiniketan and for Crafts Council of West Bengal's Pottery unit. He also set up a potter's wheel which he used for creating objects, using terracotta technologies taught to him by British potter, Jim Keeling, Pal developed a range of 'jaali' work products and other innovative designs and products suitable for the urban market. He has held many terracotta workshops and demonstrations of clay modelling at various Kolkata schools. He has mastered the use of natural glaze with different types of clay to produce subtle colours after being fired at high temperatures. This was a technique used by the Romans 2000 years ago. Shri. Arun Pal has been honoured with the Best India Potters' Award 2009 at the Ulsan International Onggi Competition and the Best Terracotta Designer in India by the British Museum, London.

The Crafts Council of India is proud to honour Shri. Arun Pal with the Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship for the year 2017.

Kamala Samman 2017

Smt. Kethavath Lakshmi

For the year 2017, the recipient of the Kamala Samman is Smt. Kethavath Lakshmi from Andhra Pradesh.

Smt. Kethavath Lakshmi of Yellamma Thanda, Rangpur began learning Banjara embroidery from her grandmother at the age of 8. Later, she was trained by Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh's initial training scheme of Banjara embroidery at Yellamma Thanda. She has also received training in the Entrepreneurial Development Training Programme conducted by CCAP and FICCI. She has participated in numerous Banjara embroidery workshops and Design Development Programmes which have helped her to innovate and introduce new designs and colour palettes in her traditional embroidery craft.

With her experience and exceptional stitchery skills Smt. Kethavath Lakshmi has ensured the highest standards of quality in executing both her orders and those of other members of the Yellamma Thanda. She has trained many women's groups in the Yellamma Thanda cluster as well as women in surrounding villages.

Her Banjara embroidery has been exhibited at the Surajkund Mela, Dilli Haat and in exhibitions in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, London and Tehran.

The Crafts Council of India has great pleasure in honouring Smt. Kethavath Lakshmi with the Kamala Samman for the year 2017.

Shanta Prasad Award for Excellence in Craft 2017

Shri. Kabiraj Nayak

The recipient of the Shanta Prasad Award for Excellence in Embroidery 2017 is Shri. Kabiraj Nayak from Odisha.

Shri. Kabiraj Nayak comes from a traditional Bomkai weaving family of Odisha. He learnt the intricate craft of Bomkai weaving at an early age from his father. For the past 36 years, he has

woven saris of rare beauty expressed in this rare weave. Over the last couple of years, he has been able to revive all the original motifs that a Bomkai sari was once known for. Today, Shri. Kabiraj Nayak is one of the four remaining Bomkai weavers in his village.

In 2015, Shri. Kabiraj Nayak was awarded the Sutrakar Samman from the Delhi Crafts Council for his excellence in traditional weaving skills.

For his exceptional skills and proficiency in the art of Bomkai weaving, The Crafts Council of India has great pleasure in honouring Shri. Kabiraj Nayak with the Shanta Prasad Award for the year 2017.

GREEN TECHNOLOGY

Green Signal – a Wake up call to Craft Councils

Gini Sen

*“The same stream of life that runs through my veins, night and day
Runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.
It is the same life that shoots in joy, through the dust of the earth
In numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.”*

- Rabindranath Tagore

The great poet sang a paean to Nature and its eternal green cycle of life that unites us all.

Today the world is on the brink of global warming that threatens the destruction of the planet. Industrialization, chemicals, carbon footprints and destruction of natural resources, are adding to the disaster that awaits the next generation. There is hope yet, with global rethinking and alternative measures designed to protect and preserve the environment, the impending crisis can be curbed. Research and information technology have prompted world leaders and opinion makers to lay down laws of sustainability not only for industries, food and agriculture but for crafts as well.

Green technology in crafts

Today, sustainable design must comply with the given parameters of social, economic and ecological sustainability. The objective is to eliminate negative environmental impact completely through minimum usage of chemicals, proper waste management and judicious use of nature – friendly and non nature destructive elements. In the sphere of arts and crafts it means re –educating the craftspeople and professional handlers. It entails improving and innovating products, services and standards, working with guidelines set by the Governments and practice policies.

CCWB’s Executive Committee Member, Ms Shikha Mukherji read an important paper at the National Meet & Business Meet in Delhi this year on February 24 and 25, on the topic of what the concept of green technology means in relation to crafts. The presentation note says that going green does not only mean using natural raw materials for hand made products that are environmentally friendly. The concept of sustainability and green technology means a great deal

more. It means adherence to strict specifications, laws and guidelines. Only when the crafts comply to the set rules can the crafts be certified 'green' and be stamped with the relevant logo, which declares to the buyer that the product is environmentally friendly.

Labelling is of utmost importance, it can tell the entire story of the green object. Its genesis, origin, entity, crafts person's history, tradition and its environment can be encapsulated in the certified label. The certified tag must tell whether the manufactured good is earth- friendly, hand made, not crafted by child labour, not made with harmful dyes or chemicals, or contributing to toxic waste. Waste management and recycling are the other aspects of implementing green technology. In other words the craft, if certified 'green' can only arrive at the retail outlets after it has passed all these stringent green compliance tests.

Independent bodies and authorized experts specializing in sustainability norms can only certify the product after verification. Authorities like the Rainforest Alliance, USDA Organic, Fair Trade, must put their seal of approval. The watch guards are already working with major agricultural and food companies to ensure ethical practices of manufacture and sustainability. It has to be remembered that a crafted object cannot be called a green or organic product just because it has been hand made with natural resources in a rustic environment.

An enormous responsibility lies ahead, already British organizations like Kinetika (Silk River Project) are asking pertinent questions regarding the above mentioned do's and don'ts of fabrics made in India.

What it takes to go green

First and foremost, by creating awareness amongst the change-makers and the artisans of the urgent need to save the planet. with talks and conclaves on global warming, natural disasters, need for clean river, conservation of natural resources, planting and saving trees etc. Sustainable designs and crafts can emerge from

- Sharing personal experiences of the artisans about their products
- Instilling consciousness of the environment and the urgent need to preserve nature.
- Educating the artisans, their community and trade
- Educating school children and building youth leadership activities for green crafts.

CCWB has taken 'small' steps towards creating awareness through education, talks and demonstrations.

Education

CCWB has a history of working with school children. Not only in the villages, but in Kolkata as well. CCWB participates in fairs and festivals at the Museum as well in recognized schools. Artisans are encouraged to exhibit and demonstrate handmade crafts, which are essentially indigenous to the region and earth friendly. At a reputed school, students were given an opportunity to get hands- on experience with clay and have a go at the potter's wheel. Demonstrations of shola work (pith from lotus stems), basket weaving etc were eye -openers for the students and the teachers commented

that it was a learning experience for all. The students participated with enthusiasm. Embroidery work and Satgaon kantha work revived from Portuguese traditions have been demonstrated at many craft melas in Kolkata. The general public, were appraised of the indigenous fabrics and traditional skills. Students from an underprivileged school had the opportunity to see and learn about crafts at the Christmas fair last winter.

Innovation

Pattachitra of Bengal, a traditional story telling art of Orissa and Bengal, has evolved as an interesting medium of education for village folk. Scrolls painted with natural dyes obtained from flowers, seeds, shells of nuts and bark were used traditionally to illustrate legends and myths. During the Balucheri seminar and exhibition last winter at Birla Museum, Srimati Swarna Debi, an exponent of Pattachitra from the village of Naya in West Bengal and national award winner, amazed and enthralled foreign visitors with her singing and her innovative narrative. As she unfolded the artwork made from natural material and dyes, she narrated the story of biodiversity, explaining the cycle of bio-diversity, through her songs and scrolls. She sang and demonstrated through her art work, how trees are important to life and why the natural habitats of plants and animals must be protected. Her awareness and innovations are positive steps towards future action plans.

Urgent need: Education on a larger scale

It is the need of the hour to re-educate Council members and village heads. Dialogues and education programmes with global experts are imperative as are the need for funds to implement them. Sustainable crafts and design have to be supported and funded on a local and global scale. A multi- tiered, time bound plan should be implemented which would include talks, seminars with facilitators, Government bodies and NGOs.

The road map towards a green future for crafts has to be drawn up now, before it is too late.

Environmental Sustainability through Potters' Kiln

Kanika Pal

Solutions for Clean and Healthy Environment Foundation (SoCHE) is a not for-profit social enterprise founded in 2015 by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability experts, to mainstream environmental sustainability among marginalized communities. It is built on the principles of passion, commitment and love for conserving both the environment and handicrafts.

The mission of SoCHE till 2035 is to:

- Enable greenhouse gas savings to the tune of 0.5 million tonnes (of CO₂e)
- Influence at least 10 million lives in urban and rural areas for sustainable living, enabling behavior change for a cleaner planet
- Alternate livelihood generation and / or income enhancement of 10 million people dependent on natural resources directly or indirectly

SoCHE's mission is in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):

- SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption & Production
- SDG 13 - Climate Action
- SDG 17 - Partnership for the Goals

The first project to achieve this mission is to drive energy efficiency in potters' kilns.

Having conducted an in-depth socio-environment research on ground in the potters' community in Uttam Nagar and *Hastaal village*, Delhi in October 2015, SoCHE is now creating a prototype of an energy efficient kiln at an affordable cost, in consultation with the potters, applying principles of thermal engineering and combustion control. This flagship project of SoCHE called Project *Maati Milaap*, is running in Delhi's potters' community as a pilot to demonstrate a working model of energy efficient pottery kilns with reduced pollution and enhanced health benefits. The affordable energy efficient kiln prototype, once successful, can be replicated not just in the country, but across the Asian region. Post the pilot completion, SoCHE will be happy to partner with other organizations, NGOs, social enterprises working in the handicrafts sector for the larger welfare of the artisans, to maximize positive impact on the environment. Recently, Delhi Crafts Council also expressed its interest to partner with SoCHE and replicate the prototype among more number of potters.

CRAFT REVIVAL: for craft journeys to continue.....

The Royal Golden Dolls OF Panroti

Tracing its origin to the Chola period when these endearing dolls were given as wedding gifts, the last of these dolls were made 100 years back. These dolls which are a maximum of three inches tall and light in weight are made of terracotta and covered in gold, and are a testimony to the lives and livelihood of the people of the period.



The Council has discovered one elderly man, who is today engaged in making 'kolu dolls, and whose grandfather Abbalu was a craftsman exclusively making these dolls. Our work has been in identifying this family, unravelling authentic samples belonging to families in Tanjore, Madras and Pondicherry. The same designs will be reproduced in size and form. We have selected the 'Vahanam' set as the sample to start with. Currently, the methods of gold covering are being studied. We are waiting to showcase the fully completed dolls.

DOCUMENTATION

Pachai Kuthal or Traditional Tattooing

Pachai as traditional tattowing is called in Tamil Nadu can be traced to ancient times when they were used as symbols to mark an individual's identity, a process to prepare a girl to bear the pain of childbirth and even as a healing for various maladies. The fact that this art is dying and only a few old ladies recall the old designs and songs that went with them took CCTN members on a journey to the tiny hamlet of Sevur where we have been able to document a few old designs and their names. This art is made with a bunch of 7, 11 or 14 needles tied together and drawn with a dye made of herbs. Today body art has evolved into a cool fashion statement. It is with the intent of tracing its simple beginnings and to save Poovathal's memory to posterity that an attempt has been made to document Pachaikuthal.



The pictures show you some popular designs as listed by 85 year old Poovathal from her sharp memory; the elakkasaram (cardomom string), Vaikunta potti (the box from Lord Vishnu's celestial abode), Mallippoo (jasmine flower), Vethalai saram (betel leaf string), Jadhikka potti (nutmeg box), Vanki (jewellery design of an armlet), Suryagandhi poo (sunflower) and a few local fishes called kendai and kelathi. Our various interactions with craftsmen of varied crafts of different regions has made one aspect abundantly clear: the next generation though interested and capable is not interested in pursuing the family profession. CCTN took it as a mission to take craftspeople and



Pachi kuthal design

their children to a design academy to enlighten them about the dignity and respect attached to their profession and about how it had evolved into a professional course with various prospects and possibilities. The outcome of this meet was an added bonus: the institute has offered to arrange workshops and short term courses in design and marketing for them. A team from the institute is also visiting the craftspeople in their own diaspora to study the crafts.

Brass Lamps of Makavarampalem

Dr. Renu



Brass lamp of Makavarampalem

Makavarampalem is a small village in Visakhapatnam district in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The population is around 6000 and the literacy rate is 69.19 percent. Most families are into cultivation. The Manepalle family of this village makes unique brass lamps, which are used in the temples. The history of this craft is not known or documented. At present only one artisan Manepalle Srinivas Rao has the ability to make this lamp.

In order to develop the craft, the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts and Handlooms requested the artisan to teach youngsters. A stipend was arranged to conduct the workshop but nobody showed interest. In fact even this artisan has changed his direction to temple brass works which are comparatively easy to craft and economical. CCAP members of Vizag have met this artisan to pursue this unique art.

Budithi Brass Craft



Budithi brass

CCAP members also visited a small village called Budithi in central Srikakulam distt., Budithi brass craft are made out of an alloy which looks like brass. This craft may date back to the era of swords and shields but its application extended even to gunmetal in recent centuries. Black and gold rings are the unique features of this product. Only one person named Apparao has kept this craft alive. The composition of this alloy and its making is a closely guarded secret. This artisan too has moved away from this craft. CCAP members are putting in all their efforts to revive this dying craft.

Udayagiri cutlery

Ranjana

Udayagiri is situated in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, which is known for its intricately carved wooden cutlery.

This craft probably dates back to the times of Quli Qutub Shah dynasty. Ghouseia Begum, a third generation craftswoman and a state awardee heads one of the groups, which involves 70 women, in keeping this craft alive. Her son, who is a graduate, helps her market the products. Their targets are the overseas market, corporate houses, malls, accessory stores, design boutiques and restaurants.

AP Handicrafts along with Lepakshi and local NGOs have contributed in a big way in the form of design and marketing and getting them the prestigious GI tag, which is the second for Nellore district, the other being Venkatagiri sarees.

The raw material is sourced from Durgampalli hills near Udayagiri. Devadari, nardi, bikki chakka (wood), kaldi chakka or palabarki are the different types of wood used in making these beautiful items. The products range from salad spoons, forks, salad bowls, pen stands, place mats, tissue holders, photo frames and many more. The pictures will speak more about the products.

This craft is not without its problems, according to Ghousia Begum, procuring raw material has become a challenge, as there are restrictions imposed by the forest department.



Crafts and our Environment – Mapping the Route to Go Green

National Meet - February 25, 2017 – A Report

Sudha Ravi

The impact of automation in the manufacturing and information technology sectors leading to job losses and the poor performance of the government in creating jobs provide an excellent opportunity for the crafts sector to bounce back as a significant provider of jobs. At the same time the stringent environmental compliance criteria in design, production and post-production effluent and residue let outs pose enormous challenges to a sector which has always received inadequate attention. Given this situation, the theme for this year's National Meet could not have been more apt, addressing the vital question: what does it take to go green?

Ashoke Chatterjee's "Weaving the Craft Economy" in the February Issue of Down to Earth set the tone for the meet. He had flagged several important issues of product safety, raw material standards, occupational health, and several environmental issues pertaining to production and post- production emission criteria.

The meet hosted in the sylvan setting of the Sanskriti Kendra, New Delhi, to coincide with the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Delhi Crafts Council provided an ideal ambience. With over fifty participants from CCI, various Councils, observers from the Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), All India Artisans and Craft Workers Welfare Association (AIACA), and a galaxy of speakers with varying experiences, an excellent opportunity was provided to learn and interact.



National Meet & Odissi dance performance



In his opening remarks, Ashoke Chatterjee who presided over the meet pointed out the need of the crafts sector to provide evidence on green production, and answer the question if the sector can continue to be green with expansion in scale. That set the ball rolling for a lively debate.

Shikha Mukherji in her comprehensive keynote address on 'What Does it Take to go Green', warned that today's consumers are concerned about ethical production as well as social responsibility issues and one cannot rest on the assumption that hand made products are automatically made from naturally occurring raw material and are environmentally friendly.

There were three panel discussions in all. The first focussed

on the sustainable use of raw materials, which automatically led to the issue of identifying and propagating the use of alternatives, like bamboo instead of wood. Usha Krishna who had spearheaded a survey in 1992 by CCI presented a paper on availability of scarce woods and Meera Goradia, former Director, Khamir, spoke on the revival of Kala cotton in Kutch.

The highlight of the second session on 'green production' was the presentation of the mastercraftsperson Harkishen who vividly described the plight of potters in Uttamnagar. Meena Appender shared CCAP's experience with the use of natural dyes and Shashidhara passionately pleaded the cause for lead free paints. Bela Khaleeli's paper was on her experimentation with chromium free treatment of leather.

The last session on post-production issues was addressed by Mridula Ramesh of Sundaram Climate Institute, a regular columnist and an ardent advocate of zero discharge.

What was obvious at the end of the day was the need for standards in crafts production and for like minded groups to work together to achieve a sustainable, green craft sector.

On the overall experience, one has to confess that the participants were overwhelmed by the hospitality of the DCC. They were in for a visual treat – Sanskriti Kendra was tastefully done up and the fifty lamps lit up to mark fifty years of DCC added to the splendour. We were indeed fortunate to see an excellent exhibition on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay that brought out many interesting features of this multi-faceted personality and doyenne of crafts and spent a fun evening entertained by students of Madhvi Mudgal. To top it all, the food was a gourmet's delight with every meal being different and something that we looked forward to during our stay in Delhi.

Craft News Round up

- The Ministry of Textiles (MoT) will subsidise the education of all weavers enrolled in the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). As per this scheme MoT will pay the weaver 75 per cent of the education cost leaving them to pay one fourth of the normal fee. On completion of the course the weaver-students will get certificates equal to the secondary level National Board certificates.
- Government's crackdown on cow slaughter and ban on tradition cattle for slaughter, alongwith the closing of unlicensed abattoirs in Uttar Pradesh has hit tanneries and the making of shoes, belts, accessories and bags including for big brand names like Clarks and Zara. India is the fourth largest producer of leather products in the world. Agra's forty percent of the population depends on shoe making for the domestic and international market. The ban has hit leather workers hard.

GST on Crafts – A Perspective

Pushpa Chari

GST, the “One tax for one country” mantra seems to leave the craft sector in a grey area and craftspersons often holding the short end of the stick. In the GST tax structure the policy worked out by the government mandarins, not only are handicrafts, hand weaves and handskills not mentioned anywhere, there is no perception of difference between hand and machine craft. The role of the craftsperson in the value added chain has not been calculated nor his practices and products which are based on ancient histories and skills. These give India a unique place in the world and economic sustenance to rural artisans in remote areas of the country. Little wonder that “A Plea for Recommending GST Rules for the Craft Sector” for Crafts, Textiles and Traditional Arts has been prepared by Jaya Jaitly of Dastkaari Haat Samiti and Ritu Sethi of Craft Revival Trust to address the anomalies in the GST tax structure for craft products.

The anomalies are striking: 5% tax on kites sold on dusty road rides for Rs. 20 also on broomsticks and on embroidered zari articles with salma, gota, chamkis, woven fabrics of silk waste—all handcrafted by disadvantaged groups, mainly women. There is 12% GST tax on roadside chiks, floor mats made out of natural fibres, basketry again, handcrafted by economically marginalised groups, while the tax rate for non-polluting azo-free natural dyes like indigo, A 1 etc is 18 %, a slot supposedly meant for luxury items. The same 18% rate is the tax on cloth and jute handbags (jholas) used by students as also on clay and terracotta items other than earthen clay pots. The taxed terracotta items include whistle, tops, festival and votive toys etc, which are made in roadside kilns and sold at melas, religious fairs, etc. Any rise in their price would impact the sales and livelihoods of small craftspeople.

There's more. A punishing 18 % GST will be charged on every stage of job work done on a craft product from processing to finish. All these steps go through various hands and an 18 % tax rate at every stage will make the product very expensive, impacting both individual artisan and online vendors who purchase in bulk from craftspersons.

The practical difficulties of GST for craftspersons is huge. Many are not computer savvy, some are semi-literate in their understanding of accounting, e-filing, working out annual returns, tax invoice, etc., Even if GST exempts tax on an annual craft incomes of less than Rs. 20 lakhs the artisan still has to do registration, paperwork, when he travels across India to sell at various exhibitions, sales, haats and bazaars in their cities.

“Plea for reconsidering GST Rates for the Craft Sector” has made many suggestions. Is anyone listening?

ACTIVITIES

The Crafts Council of India

Textile Show (7 & 8 April, 2017): The biannual 2 day Textile Show brought together the best of handwoven cotton and silk saris with exciting design inputs in weaves, traditional embroidery, lace embellishment format, hand block prints and painting. The best of Benarasis, Chanderis, Mangalgiris, khadis, Kanchivarams, Uppadas, mulmuls, Paithanis, ikats, tie and dyed saris were hugely appreciated by the cognoscenti, both young and old.



Marumalarchi: The Crafts of Tamil Nadu

Marumalarchi (15 April, 2017): The Kamala Awards function coincided with the opening of “Marumalarchi” an exhibition of Tamil Nadu’s handcrafts brought together at ‘Kamala’. Evocative terracotta urns and figures, Toda embroidery on bags, pouches and table linen, Vadaseri temple jewellery, Kalchatti tableware and cookware, Sungudi saris brought into the modern lifestyle frame were highlighted at the exhibition.

Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh

The year 2017 started as a landmark year for CCAP becoming the 10th affiliated Council of the Crafts Council of India. We came into existence on 21 January and had our inauguration meeting at Vijayawada on the same day. Some of our members from Vijayawada and Vizag joined DCC on 23 February in New Delhi for the National Meet and to celebrate their golden jubilee year.

- Aakruti Vastra (20 & 21 March): Chief Minister Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the exhibition. This has brought a lot of awareness among the local people, which was the need of the hour. Vizag had their Aakruti Vastra on 23 and 24 March. Both exhibitions have done very well.
- Programmes on the anvil for CCAP are, taking in new members from different parts of Andhra, a medical camp in a weaver’s cluster nearby and a workshop. Aakruti Vastra is coming up again in December at Vizag and Vijayawada.
- Some of CCAP members have been busy collecting information on different crafts and documenting them. We shall be presenting Udayagiri cutlery and brass works near Vizag.

Delhi Crafts Council

Delhi Crafts Council@50 (February 2017)

2017 is the Golden Jubilee year for Delhi Crafts Council. The celebrations for a yearlong series of events began with a function a day before the CCI National Meet 2017 in Delhi.

The function started with the honouring of senior colleagues and craftspersons who have been closely associated over the years with Delhi Crafts Council. A comprehensive audiovisual presented a panorama on the journey of Delhi Crafts Council during the last 50 years. Interesting interviews with associated persons covered anecdotes about the history of DCC and the personalities who had been involved during the initial years.



Celebrating DCC's Golden Jubilee



Exhibition of Kamala Devi's Life and Times

An exhibition, 'Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay: An Extraordinary Life' was inaugurated by Smt. Gita Ram, Chairperson, CCI. The exhibition portrayed Kamaladevi's remarkable life and highlighted her phenomenal role in reviving the traditional handicrafts of India during the post-Independence era. A freedom fighter, a social activist, an actor, and politician, she

founded the Delhi Crafts Council in 1967 and thus started the voluntary movement in this sector.

In the evening, members and delegates sat down for a lyrical Odissi performance by students of eminent danseuse Madhavi Mudgal who choreographed the performance 'Sohamansmi'. The scrumptious dinner that followed was a fitting end to a productive day.

- National & Business Meet (February 2017): DCC hosted CCI's National & Business Meet 2017, which was held at Sanskriti Kendra. The delegates were offered guided tours of the terracotta and textile galleries of Sanskriti Kendra. The Council organized tours for the delegates to Tulsi farms to meet Anita Lal, founder Good Earth, and to Raw Mango to meet founder Sanjay Garg. A small outlet of Kamala - Delhi was set up at the venue. Some of the Regional Councils displayed the special products of craft they had worked with.
- Kairi (16 - 18 March 2017): This year Kairi, the annual summer textiles exhibition, was held at the Aga Khan Hall. There were twenty-one weavers and artisanal groups participating from around the country. It was amazing to see the craftsmen respond positively to the discerning customer's need for improved designs and quality, resulting in record sales.

To mark the Golden Jubilee Celebrations, the Executive Committee members of DCC honoured all its participating craftsmen with an angavastram during the inauguration.



Honouring craft artisans

As a special event to commemorate the 50th Year of the Delhi Craft's Council, a collaborative exhibition by the design students of Somaiya Kala Vidya was organised at an

adjacent venue of Kairi. Ajrak, bandhej and weaves from Kutch were the textiles exhibited during this show. The students had been taught to use design, business, as well as traditional identity effectively for new markets. The exhibition turned out to be very successful and the artisan/designers were delighted with the positive response.



- Raas: Chamba Rumaal, Life to a Dying Art - a Journey (April 2017): An exhibition dedicated to this unique art form was inaugurated on 3 April 2017 at the Visual Art Gallery at Indian Habitat Centre, to coincide with the birthday of the patron founder of DCC, Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay.

The revival of the Chamba Rumaal, is one of Delhi Crafts Council's success stories. In this exhibition the long journey of over two decades was presented starting from the first rumaal made for this project to the many innovations and technical improvements like the use of natural dyes and pure silk floss etc.

Delhi Crafts Council also showcased for the first time Interface: Chamba Rumaal, New Narrations, a collection of contemporary Chamba rumaals, which is the outcome of a two-year partnership with textile designer Swati Kalsi. The collection had been created through collaboration between Swati, miniature artists and the embroidery team at DCC's Charu centre in Chamba over a series of workshops held in Delhi. The contemporary rumaals were very well received and many orders were received, ensuring continued work for the artisans.

The opening ceremony was a special event and all the artisans from Chamba were present. An informal conversation between Swati Kalsi and the artisans was followed by a short movie made



Chamba Rumaal exhibition : A revival story

by DCC members on the journey of the Chamba Rumaal. To recognize the invaluable contribution of the artisans, DCC honoured them with angavastrams.

DCC also organized two guided 'walk and talk events' by Anjana Somany and Purnima Rai alongside the week-long exhibition. There was an overwhelming response for all the talks by the general public and students from Pearl Academy & NIFT.

Crafts Council of Karnataka

- Technical Training Programme in Terracotta: The Crafts Council of Karnataka organized a Technical Training Programme in Terracotta at Dukkarwadi, Khanapur taluk, Belgaum district, Karnataka for a period of 4 months under Grant-in-aid from Office of the DC(Handicrafts), New Delhi. Twenty artisans attended the programme.



Terracotta training programme



- Vastrabharana -25, Mumbai (13 - 15 April): The 25th anniversary of 'Vastrabharana' the flagship fundraiser event of the Crafts Council of Karnataka was celebrated amidst Mumbai craft connoisseurs. This was a specially curated exhibition where weavers, the keepers of our heritage, and craftspersons interacted and created an awareness to explore the finer nuances of the handcrafted and handloom heritage of our country. This exhibition showcased award-winning hand-blocked prints and weaves. Many reputed designers from across our country were invited by the Lakme Fashion Week organisers who supported and sponsored the social media initiative for this event.

On the final day, 15 April, the TAJ Wellington MEWS, Mumbai, and the Crafts Council of Karnataka arranged a trunk show of exclusive and aesthetically curated collections for their A-list clientele who thronged in great numbers. They interacted with the weavers and appreciated the craft in detail and acquired some of these masterpieces.

- Bidri Craft Workshop: The Crafts Council of Karnataka associated with the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath in the selection of artisans and designs to be developed during the 10 days workshop in Bidri craft organized by Chitrakala Parishath at Bengaluru.

Ten artisans with their assistants were selected for the workshop in which 3 women artisans' families were included. A shilpaguru, a state awardee and a Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Viswakarma award winner participated in the workshop.

Sixty students from different Fine Arts Colleges of Karnataka were invited for the workshop. They interacted with the artisans to get the details and learned the techniques involved in the craft. The students created a small prototype each of their own design with the help of Bidri artisans.



Crafts Council of Tamil Nadu

- Product Development: CCTN members have formed teams and visited various craft pockets and clusters to give newer designs and better finishing ideas. Traditional grass mats of Pathamadai, sheet metal workers of Dharapuram and Anuparpalayam, the stone workers of Poondi, kolu bommai or terracotta doll makers of Selvapuram, papier mache craftsman of Kurichi, basket makers of Sukrawarpet and soft stone workers of Thirumangalam have been part of CCTN's product development efforts. Various products have been developed and marketed for them so their finish is better and work more lucrative.

Soft stone kalchatti has been the focus of CCTN's many pronged effort to transform kitchen utensils into trendy home decor.

Metal Craft - Newly developed decorative copper platters with floral embellishments have caught the urban customer's eye along with dhoop stand for auspicious functions.

CCTN has also helped develop lotus mobiles for doorways, and stylish tote bags crafted out of Pathamadai grass mats.

Grass Mats - Traditional grass weaving work of Pattamadai has been experimented with to make stylish tote bags.

- Meet The Craftsperson: One step closer to the craftsperson is what CCTN's 'meet the craftspersons meetings are all about. Every month CCTN members get to meet one craftsperson, interact with him and understand his craft. Vijayakumar is a wood craftsperson with over 20 years experience and widely recognised for his easily saleable wares. His is a success story where he employs 8 people including 2 physically handicapped people to craft out utterly charming items.



Kalchutti and Metalware



- Workshops for Members and Children: The miniature painting workshop by master craftsman Mohan Kumar Prajapathi of Jaipur, threw light on the nuances of this craft. The coloured rock dust used to bring a shine to the work, made us view our traditional painting with greater respect and awe.

Other workshops held were collage, kolams, Warli art and sewing for various schools including for mentally challenged children.

- Crafts Bazaar: The week long exhibition is the highlight of the year with over 120 artisans showcasing their wares, directly interacting with their customers thus feeling their pulse and innovating to suit the urban clientele. This year the emphasis was on traditional embroidery like kasuti, phulkari, thoda, kantha, etc.
- Srishti: Following closely on the heels of Crafts Bazar was CCTN's lifestyle exhibition with over 80 designers and boutiques showcasing textiles, home ware, jewellery and much more.

Crafts Council of Telangana

- Aakruti Vastra (July 2016-January 2017): Kausalyam 2016 "a festive collection" is the marketing platform where we invite designers who work with different weavers and weaving techniques, and young designers who work with khadi. The idea is to encourage designers to work with handlooms. In a unique gesture, a fashion show was held where the weavers and designers walked the ramp acknowledging the public's appreciation for their ensembles.
- In Puttapaka, weaving of Nagaldinne Gadwal saris and Warangal durries is progressing well.
- Samman Award: Kethavath Lakshmi Jugnu Banjara needlecraft expert has won the Kamala Samman Award from CCI. The embroidery was done on a Pichwai based theme with all the stitches from traditional Banjara needlecraft.
- Mentoring: Our sister council of Andhra Pradesh is very enthusiastic and active. We are gradually introducing them to the craftsmen of their region.
- CCT has fellowship meetings every quarter where resource people from the field of crafts are invited to speak.

Crafts Council of West Bengal

- Balucharis for ITC Sonar, Kolkata: Balucharis have been commissioned as uniforms for the hostesses of ITC Sonar Kolkata. The project turned into an Exclusive Revival of a 100 year old design from a family collection after ITC selected the design. The border with a motif of marigolds, symbolic of ritual offerings is juxtaposed on a sinuous creeper in Alpona style. The anchal which is an important feature of Baluchari saris, is woven with a Paisley design known as “Baluchari Kalka” set within rectangular frames with borders.
- Baishakhi (28 - 30 March): In celebration of spring, “Baishakhi” a beautiful exhibition of saris and textiles, was held at Gallery Gold in Kolkata. Artisans and weavers from West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Kutch, Bhuj, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Hyderabad showcased their exquisite saris and crafts. Kala Raksha’s suf embroidery and other hand-embroidered products were special attraction in the exhibition. The assortment of saris and other items were much appreciated.
- Seminar (24 - 25 February): CCWB’s Executive Committee member, Ms Shikha Mukherjee read an important paper at the National Meet & Business Meet in Delhi this year, on the topic of what the concept of green technology means in relation to crafts.
- Eco Mela (31 May - 2 June): To commemorate World Environment Day, an Eco Mela was organized at Tata Steel’s office premises. Artisana was invited to participate. Potter Arun Pal exhibited his skills and pottery items, while artist Kinkar Ghosh, demonstrated his delicately carved shell items to visitors.
- Revival Exhibition (15 - 17 June): CCWB has organized an exhibition cum sale of the revival Patteda anchu saris and hand-woven saris of West Bengal at Artisana. Patteda anchu saris were traditionally woven in the villages of Gajendragarh, Belgaum, Raichur, Kodal, Bedar, Bellary, Gulbargah and Dharwad in Karnataka. This tradition can be traced back to the 10th century at Gajendragarh. The sari is named after the pattern (border and checks) of the sari. Patteda anchu is also known as *dundina seere* or *devaru seere* or *laxmi seere*.



Baluchari sari for ITC Sonar, Kolkata



Patteda anchu saris: A Revival story



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