



August 2018

## AIACA on the future of 'Going Green'

*Ashoke Chatterjee*

In June, Madhura Dutta (Executive Director of All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association, AIACA) brought stakeholders together at New Delhi's Habitat Centre to share its experience on 'greenness' of traditional crafts ever since AIACA efforts at sustainability began in 2014. This 'Going Green' Project, supported by the EU and in partnership with Traid Craft Exchange (UK), focuses on textiles in 6 clusters: Varanasi, Lucknow, Kota, Jaipur, Udaipur and Churu. AIACA interventions exploring eco-friendly production and business were earlier shared by Madhura at the CCI's National Meet last April in Chennai, as well as at the 2017 National Meet in New Delhi. AIACA administers the Craft Mark scheme, and the Habitat discussion took a fresh look at a conceptual framework that might also lead to a Green Mark for the sector. While quality compliance of this kind could have major advantages, it would need to take into account not just the extraordinary diversity of craft practices and operations but also the readiness of stakeholders located in every corner of the land.

### Mapping sustainability

Toward such an objective, the one-day AIACA conference heard practitioner voices on future possibilities, beginning with the task of mapping sustainability criteria. The CCI participants recalled National Meet discussions on this topic over two years, and the reality that 'Green' is no longer a choice, but a requirement for survival and growth. With AIACA, the CCI too has understood the critical need for inter-disciplinary partnerships toward problem-solving in the sustainable use of scarce resources, energy, and the importance of effluent treatment and recycling. Discussions at the Habitat Centre made it clear that past assumptions of greenness are now dependent on better evidence as well as on scientific / technological competence that only partnerships can deliver. That craft production automatically means ecological safety is being challenged in many locations: from crowded Uttamnagar, to Bagru and Ajrakhpur --- with the latter a significant reminder that entire communities can be displaced in the search for sustainable environments.

### Bankable carbon credits?

Dr Rajni Kant (Human Welfare Association, HWA) described the experience of Varanasi as the biggest handloom cluster in the world with 16,000 handlooms --- and where lacs of powerlooms are given subsidized electricity that is denied to those who weave by hand. He challenged participants to calculate how much carbon footprint one handloom weaver saves through an 8-hour working day and asked whether this saving should not entitle him to carbon benefits. Imagine some 18,000 weavers receiving carbon credits in their bank accounts, just as so-called organized industries might receive! A campaign toward such bankable carbon benefits could be

an important innovation to support weavers as well as other artisans making products by hand, suggesting an important opportunity for sector activists to pursue. Another revelation was how women are now proving bankable in the Varanasi cluster and the success achieved through clients including Titan and the Taj Hotels are helping to promote women weavers --- 54 are understood to be weaving exquisite Banarasi saris.

## Quality control, GI and green compliance

Weavers Aftab and Nizammuddin (Varanasi Weavers & Artisans Society) described AIACA support as having helped them move toward better solutions such as quality control of dyes, practice of azo-free dyes, and business communication skills as well as the strength that comes from group mobilization. Aftab said weavers have learnt that their craft cannot assume to be green unless better quality control systems are mastered. Linked to this are issues of intellectual property. Although Banarasi saris received a GI in 2009, there was little initial support to convert GI into a marketing strategy. While cheap imitations from Surat and China still continue, there are now signs of GI significance linked to overseas demand for authentic fabric that is compliant and certified to be so. What is important is the impact of consumer awareness in export markets, where international buyers are now demanding a handloom certification tag. A link to a Green Mark could be a powerful market incentive. Dr Kant estimated a market increase of over 30% in export demand, thanks to GI, with daily earnings rising from Rs 150 per day to Rs 400 per day. GI has helped online shopping to move into these clusters. Aftab said his problem now was that he cannot find enough weavers to cope with demand, calling for accelerated training facilities under a Maheshwar model. For him, the powerloom is not the biggest problem today --- the need is for entrepreneurship, design and marketing. (He invited participants to visit him via Google!) Greater market confidence has now led to past fears of pirating now being transformed into a demand for market leadership through design development and diversification as real answers.

An important sidelight was shared by SHG leader Nusrat Jaha of Varanasi. Craft development that helped women come together in home-based production was also giving them social opportunities that the purdah tradition had long prevented. In addition she said there was now the advantage of bank accounts, cleaner water and built toilets --- as well as men able to work at home because of growing demand for handmade quality.

## 2-track strategy

Joint Commissioner of Industries (Varanasi) Umesh Kumar agreed that craft development requires a holistic approach to replace past piecemeal approaches, with intensive training at several levels. Another extraordinary example of sustainable craft was reported from Udaipur where Vishvas Sansthan receives free truckloads of waste fabric from Surat to empower hundreds of women to work at home on the creation of garments for local consumption. In another example from Kota, District Industry Officer Hari Mohan Sharma described his experience of 'organizing the unorganized' through a common facility centre (CFC) and of making crafts the future through building consumer demand. Going green would require a 2-track approach: science and technology applied to production, plus the critical importance of building consumer demand for products that are handmade. Can a Green Mark be a symbol of the sector's ability to achieve both goals?

## Occupational health as a green factor

An aspect of 'going green' that is often overlooked was highlighted through SEWA Lucknow. Chikan embroiderer Nasreem Siddiqui spoke of the importance of occupational health within this context, and of how new awareness and exercise had contributed to the wellbeing of chikan workers through better understanding of the physical demands not only of embroidery, but also of washing and ironing processes. These drudgery factors are seldom taken into account, according to Mr. Virendra Kumar (Deputy Director, Handicrafts, Lucknow). He stressed the need for accelerated research into craft processes that should now include ergonomic considerations, a factor that was also raised in the context of hand-block printing in Rajasthan. The younger generation in Bagru was turning away from the drudgery of processes that are deemed unclean and unsafe. Attention to occupational health emerged as a critical dimension to future 'greenness' and sustainability.

## Mubarakpur voices

Following the meeting, participants were introduced to a brilliant short film on the weavers of Mubarakpur created for AIACA by a team of young film-makers led by Indraneel Lahiri: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUOlx4zpHU--> a required viewing for anyone eager to know how artisans view their future, and to share their vision, wisdom and optimism.

## KAMALA AWARDS 2018

### Saluting Kamala Awardees

#### *Pushpa Chari*

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

## Kamala Samman 2018

### Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon

Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon (IAS Retd) is the winner of the Kamala Samman Award for the year 2018.

Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon is an illustrious member of the Indian Administrative Service. She has held some of the seniormost positions in the Service dealing with, and heading, portfolios as diverse as economics, archaeology, handicrafts and tourism. Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon was Development Commissioner, Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles (1987 - 1990). During her tenure she chaired a Task Force to formulate a National Policy of Handicrafts in the 8th Plan. As Development Commissioner of Handlooms she has revived programmes for handloom clusters of Odisha, West Bengal and Assam and initiated workshops on Natural Dye Techniques in traditional sectors. As Principal Advisor (July - December 2004) Smt. Menon was responsible for policy formulation of the Village and Small Enterprises Sector.

Today, as Honorary President of The Crafts Council of India, Member of Delhi Crafts Council and Chairperson of the Executive Committee of SASHA, Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon continues her

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deep connect with India's crafts and craftspersons, reaching out to them in remote craft pockets, not just as mentor and guide but also as practical advisor on design, marketing and more.

The Crafts Council of India has great pleasure in honouring Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon with the Kamala Samman for the year 2018.

### **Kamala Award for Contribution to Craft 2018**

**Shri. Dayalal Atmaram Kudecha**

The recipient of the Kamala Award for Contribution to Craft 2018 is Shri. Dayalal Atmaram Kudecha from Bhujodi, Gujarat.

Born into a traditional weaver's family which migrated to the weaving village of Bhujodi near Bhuj, Shri. Dayalal Kudecha learnt the initial weaving techniques within the family and later worked under a master weaver, weaving traditional and contemporary designs for over 25 years. In 2008, Dayabhai took Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya's (KRV) design course and learnt to innovate within his tradition with brilliant results. In 2010, Dayalal Kudecha joined KRV as a core faculty member. Since then he has taught design to traditional artisans and conducted weaving workshops for international students.

Shri. Dayalal Kudecha has evolved from job worker to master weaver to entrepreneur, participating in fashion shows and in the Santa Fe Folk Art Mart. He has represented India at an International Weaver's Conference in Peru in 2013 where he both taught and learned.

The Crafts Council of India is privileged to confer on Shri. Dayalal Atmaram Kudecha the Kamala Award for Contribution to Craft for the year 2018.

### **Shanta Prasad Award for Excellence in Craft 2018**

**Shri. Farooq Ahmad Mir**

The recipient of the Shanta Prasad Award for Excellence in Weaving 2018 is Shri. Farooq Ahmad Mir from Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir.

Born in a poor weaver's family in Khaiwan, Narwara village in Srinagar, Shri. Farooq Ahmad Mir learnt the basics of weaving from his father National Awardee Ghulam Mohammad. Becoming a 'complete' weaver by the age of 13, he totally mastered the traditional weaving of the fabled 'Kani' shawl of Kashmir. He has created lyrically beautiful shawls, even introducing new techniques of weaving to make it easier for artisans to weave the shawls and which has led to the introduction of double shaded Kani shawls where traditionally only plain shawls were woven.

Shri. Farooq Ahmad Mir has played a signal role in reviving the craft of Kani shawl weaving which had nearly become extinct by the 40s. He began his revival programme in the 90s. Till now he has given training to over four hundred and fifty artisans, enabling them to earn their livelihood and keep the priceless heritage of Kani shawl of Kashmir alive.

For his exceptional skills and proficiency in the art of weaving Kani shawls, the Crafts Council of India has great pleasure in honouring Shri. Farooq Ahmad Mir with the Shanta Prasad Award for the year 2018.

## Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship 2018

Smt. Ambika Devi

The recipient of the Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship 2018 is Smt. Ambika Devi from Madhubani, Bihar.

Master artist of Mithila or Madhubani art, Smt. Ambika Devi, grew up in Rashidpur village in Madhubani district, Bihar. The district is famous for its uniquely stylised, colour-suffused Madhubani art depicting mythological stories, Gods and Goddesses and the mesmerising beauty of nature. It is done by women on the walls of their homes. She learnt the art from her mother Smt. Leela Devi, a master artist in her own right.

Ambika Devi creates brilliant Madhubani paintings on walls, specially created traditional canvases and on fabric. Her themes are mostly drawn from the extravagant bounty of nature around her: the beautiful flowers, birds and animals. Her depiction of Hindu Gods and Goddesses as well as thematic vignettes from the Epics have a touch of poetry and lyricism. The colours are drawn from flower, leaf, bark and other natural ingredients.

Ambika Devi has participated in prestigious exhibitions across the country and held demonstrations of her art at Nantong International Contemporary Craft Biennale (2014) organised by World Crafts Council. She has been honoured with the Mastercraftsperson Award (2009) by the President of India. Ambika Devi has taught Madhubani art at more than 150 schools and colleges including various IITs, NITs, IIMs across the country through painting workshops.

The Crafts Council of India is proud to honour Smt. Ambika Devi with the Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship for the year 2018.

## Kamala Award for Outstanding Contribution for Preservation of Indian Art, Craft & Tradition

Shri. R. Selvanathan Sthapati

The recipient of the Kamala Award for 'Outstanding Contribution towards the Preservation of Indian Art, Craft & Tradition' is Shri. R. Selvanathan Sthapati from Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Shri. R. Selvanathan Sthapati comes from an illustrious lineage of temple architects and sculptors going back to Sthapati Kunjaramallan Rajaraja Perunthachan who designed the Tanjore Brihadeeshwara Temple more than a 1000 years back. Selvanathan's guru was his uncle Shilpguru, Padmabhushan Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati, under whose guidance he graduated in the theory and application of the scientific aspects of Shilpa shastras from the Government College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mamallapuram. As a young boy of 8, Selvanathan began to learn and explore the nuances of temple craft and sculpture at this family 'pattarai'.

As the prime disciple of Ganapathi Sthapati, Selvanathan gained experience under his guidance in designing, building, rectifying and restoring temples, 'mutt' buildings, architectural and sculptural elements. He has also been trained to analyse temple structures and sculptural forms that need rectification and restoration. He has restored and rectified many temples in South India and Sri Lanka. He has also designed new temple projects and monuments configured in accordance with Shastric principles and traditional aesthetics.

The Crafts Council of India is privileged to confer on Shri. R. Selvanathan Sthapati an Award for Outstanding Contribution towards the Preservation of Indian Art, Craft and Tradition.

### Young Artisan Award

Sponsored by the Kaivalam Foundation

Shri. Adil Khatri

The recipient of the 'Young Artisan Award' sponsored by the Kaivalam Foundation and administered by the Crafts Council of India is Shri. Adil Khatri from Bhuj, Gujarat.

The first recipient of the 'Young Artisan Award' Adil Khatri, learnt the intricate craft of tying from his mother and dyeing from his uncle. Surrounded as he was from a young age with lyrical colours and the designs of bandhini, he chose to become a bandhini artisan after completing his 12th class.

Although Adil has practiced his traditional craft for a short time, he is eager to take it into new directions. He has finished a one year Design Course at Somaiya Kala Vidya, an NGO based in Kutch, teaching textile and fashion design to traditional artisans. His innovatively designed stoles, dupattas and saris as well as his palette of colours are already catching the imagination of bandhini lovers. By creating new products with his craft and design skills, Adil wants to preserve this beautiful craft for the coming generations.

The Crafts Council of India takes pleasure in bestowing the 'Young Artisan Award' sponsored by the Kaivalam Foundation on Shri. Adil Khatri.

### Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship 2018

Shri. T.K. Bharani

The recipient of the Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship 2018 is Shri. T.K. Bharani from Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

Master artisan and National Awardee Shri. T.K. Bharani was born into a Vishwakarma family of sandalwood carvers. Young Bharani worked assiduously at miniature carving and by the age of 18 or so could make exquisitely carved and detailed 2" Shiva Parvati seated in a beautifully engraved mandap complete with 1 mm floral decorations, stories from the Epics incised in 6" frames or Ganesha seated in a rath driven by 2" mushikas. From the embroidery on the God's dhoti incised to perfection to the floral detailing on 1" chatris and ½" 'tombais', every exquisitely carved detail is done by hand by Bharani, using a magnifying glass and tiny basic tools. He has created many miniature sandalwood pieces like Radhakrishna idols, various Hindu Gods and Goddesses and the replica of the Santhome Church.

T.K. Bharani is the last of the sandalwood micro miniature carvers, though he has trained his son in the craft. He has participated in exhibitions in Chennai, Delhi and Salonika International Fair, Greece. He is the winner of many prestigious awards including the National Award from the President of India (1991), several VTI Awards given during Mahatma Gandhi's Birth Celebrations annually and the Lalit Kala Akademi Award.

The Crafts Council of India is honoured to bestow on Shri. T.K. Bharani the Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship for the year 2018.



## GREEN TECHNOLOGIES IN CRAFT

“Greening Leather Sector for Inclusive Growth”  
at the National Meet of the Crafts Council of India

Dr. B Madhan, Principal Scientist, CSIR-CLRI made a presentation on “Greening Leather Sector for Inclusive Growth”. Dr. Madhan started his presentation unraveling the myth that animals are being killed for leather industry, he clarified that hide or skin is a by-product of meat industry. In fact leather industry in one way does the job of cleaning the environment; and if not utilized hides and skin pose a serious threat to the environment. Even natural burial of dead cattle with intact hide will deter the decomposition process, which was recognized by early man and hence utilization of hides and skins for making products existed from pre-historic times. Processed animal hide / skin is probably the first fabric of choice for humans. Dr. Madhan covered the evolution of leather manufacture from early age to middle age and the modern age, and how industrialization increased the need of water in processing and thereby the discharge of wastes. Traditional practice of leather manufacture had been greener and cleaner compared to the large-scale industrial practices. However the leather and leather products sector provides very high employment and thus this sector contributes towards the inclusive growth of economies. In his presentation he highlighted current initiatives of CSIR-CLRI in making the leather manufacturing sector greener and cleaner. Waterless processes and zero discharge technologies of CSIR-CLRI were highlighted. The work carried out by CSIR-CLRI in skilling the leather products artisans in Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat and North Eastern states were also highlighted.

in the presentation. Delegates who attended the National Meet were able to understand the value chain and the employment generation associated with leather and leather products manufacture; and how this sector connects a rural farmer to the fashion world. The presentation was well received and appreciated by the participants and members of the Crafts Council of India.

## Environmental Sustainability through Potters' Kilns

*Kanika Pal*

Solutions for Clean and Healthy Environment Foundation (SoCHE Foundation) is a not-for-profit social enterprise founded in 2015 by Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sustainability experts Kanika Pal and Srisikandh Subramanian, 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 CO<sub>2</sub>e)
- Influence at least 10 million lives in urban and rural areas for sustainable living, enabling behaviour 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 13 - Climate Action
- SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption & Production
- SDG 17 - Partnership for the Goals

To achieve this mission, the flagship project by SoCHE, called Project *Maati Milaap*, aims to drive energy efficiency among artisans and specifically reduce air pollution in pottery kilns. Having conducted an in-depth socio-environment research on ground in potters' community in Uttam Nagar and Hastaal Village, Delhi in October 2015, SoCHE has been successful in creating prototypes of energy efficient kiln (gas enabled and wood-fired) at an affordable cost, in consultation with the potters, applying principles of thermal engineering and combustion control. These kilns are 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 can be replicated not just in the country, but across the Asian region.

SoCHE Foundation looks forward 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.

More information on this project is available at the TEDx here: <https://youtu.be/RpdWf-2kR9k> and [sochefoundation@gmail.com](mailto:sochefoundation@gmail.com)

## Sari Narratives : Creating Eco-textile brands and marketing Rwitvastra - journey of a young brand of natural clothing

*Ruby Palchoudhuri*

Rwitvastra - a Kolkata based young brand of herbal clothing campaigns for the age-old concept of herbal dyeing of textiles, natural fibers, herbal dyes and handloom weaving - integrating these three features into its final product, Rwitvastra has become a unique name in the premium category eco textile market.

In Sanskrit, "Rwit" means truth and "Vastra" means fabric or clothes. Rwitvastra offers natural clothing suitable for all age groups dyed with 100% natural ingredients obtained from various herbs or medicinal plants. It's hygienically comfortable, fashionable and environment friendly.

The main objectives of Rwitvastra's campaign for this eco-friendly natural dyed textile are to reduce the use of hazardous synthetic chemicals as much as possible and to raise the voice in favour of thousands of textiles dyeing workers whose lives are susceptible to many diseases due to regular handling of such carcinogenic chemicals. Rwitvastra also commits itself to uplift the livelihood of marginalised handloom weavers who don't get proper recognition for their creative talents.

The key promoter of Rwitvastra brand, Mr. Subhro Ghosh explains how the journey began with a lot of difficulties. There were several challenges in getting the fine cotton yarn dyed naturally from a remote village in Tamil Nadu. Language was a big problem as village people were comfortable only in Tamil and they were not expert in handling fine yarn. So, initially there was huge yarn wasted due to strength loss and poor shade quality. The colour fastness was also not up to the desired level. These initial challenges were discouraging and at one point it became almost impossible to carry on this concept further.

Then the problems were discussed with many experts in this field at various levels - starting from the head of the dyeing department in Textiles, the College in Serampore to many veterans in natural dyeing. Finally, the key challenges were addressed suitably. The fastness was improved by introducing and increasing the content of natural mordant and yarn strength was maintained by optimizing the soaking time of the yarn, etc.

Though the issues related to yarn dyeing were resolved, the next challenge was to establish Rwitvastra as a unique fashion brand because weaving of natural dyed fine yarn was not an easy task for the Bengal weavers, who didn't know how to process this yarn. The weavers were reluctant to take the weaving job and once again the project was in limbo. At this stage, the Weavers' Service Centre, Kolkata extended their support to get a few weavers who finally agreed to weave a set of saris with this natural dyed fine yarn. The journey began with only one loom in Begampur cluster and a set of 60 saris of 2 different designs were successfully produced. Today, Rwitvastra is enriched with the exquisite creations of skilled artisans from various weaving clusters in West Bengal like Begampur, Shantipur, Dainhat, Fulia, Nirole, Rajbalhat etc. The weavers at Nirole (in Burdwan district) have done a fantastic job by weaving natural dyed hand spun yarn (Khadi) and Rwitvastra introduced their beautiful creations in the global market place. Recently, Rwitvastra has added natural dyed linen collections in the offering basket. The linen fabric is now more beautiful and comfortable with the use of natural hues.

The creations were not restricted to saris alone - garments for men and women, scarves, saris with hand stitched motifs, hand woven fabrics (yardage) from hand spun yarn, bags and many more are being produced now with the help of experienced designers and skilled artisans.

Rwitvastra plans to scale up its creations gradually by incorporating more weavers from various weaving zones and by introducing new unique designs for all its product lines. This will be a great opportunity for the artisans to get engaged with a young but ethical brand of premium eco textiles and Rwitvastra will be honoured to showcase these traditional Indian creations in the global market place.

Rwitvastra has now opened their brand store at 69, Jatin Das Road, Kolkata - 700029 and all creations are available at this address. The products are reasonably priced so that these beautiful eco-friendly creations can reach to a wider part of the community.

## Vastrabharana

The Crafts Council of Karnataka celebrated their 25th year in Mumbai last year in collaboration with Lakme Fashion Week with an awareness programme showcasing museum quality textiles specially curated on this occasion by the Council's talented master craftspersons who are not only celebrated in India but across the world. A trunk show was also held at The Taj, Mumbai, with these exquisite one of a kind museum quality textiles. Well-known designers thronged the shows both at the Coomaraswamy Hall and at the Taj to interact with the craftspersons.

This year the theme was to invite upcoming craftspersons, the budding designer fraternity and master craftspersons with the objective of raising awareness of the textile heritage through exhibition and demonstration as this would help in the conservation and development of our textile traditions at the grassroots level.

Over the 26 years we have been witness to multitudes of weavers that have created many trajectories of histories through their crafts. We were proud to share with Mumbai's discerning buyers and take them into a treasure trove of enriched journeys made by master weavers and the craftspersons' handcrafted textiles nurtured by skilled hands, which combine the creative legacy from generations of weaving, dyeing and printing.

The sari, unfolding yards of unstitched woven fabric has survived centuries of history, foreign influx, social upheaval and the dictates of contemporary fashion synonymous with Western styles of apparel. Making a classic statement for Indian fashion, the sari sustains the continuity of a tradition over the millennia and showcases the skills of weaving inherent in every part of the country and stands testimony to a dynamic art form. This relatively small length of fabric has become the canvas upon which every imaginable kind of creative experiment has been made by way of weaving and embroidery. The diverse traditions of the sari transcend all boundaries of language, community, region and time.

As the world gets more globalised, new markets and opportunities are opening up for Indian craftspersons, their heritage is also under threat. Motifs can be easily copied, techniques can be mechanized. To the average customer, the difference between genuine and imitation is not apparent. At Vastrabharana, all textiles are handcrafted and exquisite in their originality, appeal and authenticity. Thirty five artisans showcased their expertise through their unique and special weaves.

The theme this time around for Vastrabharana Mumbai was a modest attempt to showcase sustainable, environment friendly organic and natural dyed fabrics and weaves! It was a pleasure to see indigo, kashish along with lac, haldi, etc, vying with each other to be possessed by connoisseurs. Sustainable evolving Indian textiles have relevance all over the world as each region's textiles symbolizes the region's cultures.

## CRAFT EDUCATION

### E to S: Pattamadai - A Ray of Hope

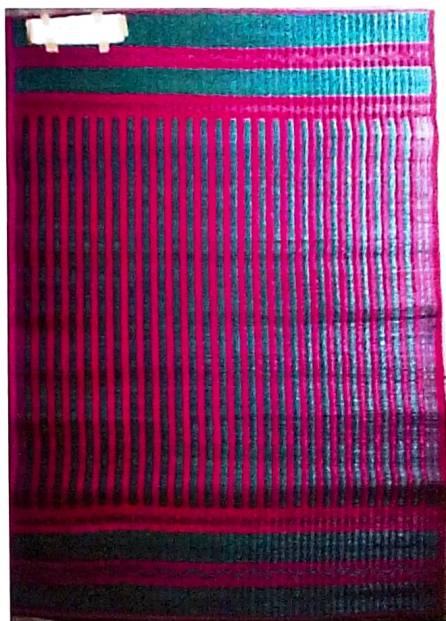
*Sudha Ravi*

Working on E to S projects in different states of India has been a great source of learning. For instance, we find that children of artisans in Odisha and West Bengal are more likely to learn and pursue their ancestral craft, were as our experience in Tamil Nadu has been quite the opposite. In the Veeravanallur Handloom Cluster we found the children doing very well in school and artisans themselves encouraging them to go in for higher studies and white collar jobs. Pattamadai village in the Tirunelveli district famous for its super fine quality floor mats made of kora grass which grows in abundance on the fertile banks of the Tambraparani river has been an exception and provides a ray of hope for the E to S programme.

The craft is very well established and has some excellent artisans. They have a good market and the Crafts Council of India has been active in this area for a long time. We have a strong E to S programme here with around 10 children who come for mat weaving classes during weekends. We have been happy to note that the next generation of women artisans have already entered the sector and are the ones who conduct the classes. These artisans are computer savvy and are able to easily understand new designs.

We have been encouraging the children to perfuse the craft as a hobby and to come up with their own products. Four children have produced very beautiful mats and have been awarded recognition certificates. We hope to have an exhibition of products made by these children in the coming year either at the Kamala Awards Ceremony or during the Crafts Bazaar. We also plan to organise entrepreneurial training and team building programmes for the senior artisan.

Not far away from Pathamadai is the Veeravanallur mat weaving cluster. Here the artisans unlike Pathamadai need



a lot of design inputs, better colour palette, training in quality control and assistance in procuring orders and marketing. However, even here the children are enthusiastic and have regular classes during weekends.

We are confident that encouraging them to participate in the E to S exhibitions will be a source of motivation.

## CRAFT UNDER THREAT

Future of Pedana Kalamkari Block Printing of Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh

*Jayasree Devineni*

Is Pedana drowning in chemicals? Yes, not only has it polluted all the water bodies but also a once flourishing Kalamkari block printing market is slowly drowning.

The weaving community who lived here took to block printing using natural dyes but as time passed by they found easier ways to print in the form of screen-printing using chemical dyes.

Pedana currently has seven societies, sixty printing units with six to seven thousand people making a living out of block / screen printing. There are a total of thirteen thousand printers in and around Pedana. Once weavers turned to block printing and later many have shifted to screen-printing due to quick turn around and low costs. This flourished for three years but soon supply-exceeded demand with indiscriminate new entrants, which resulted in the collapse of 90% of the market.

The rot started when they started mixing three natural dyeing colors with two chemical colors to achieve a number of shades and for its richness. This attracted new entrants using fugitive pigments mixing them with kerosene. Every piece of cloth goes for washing twice in the canals or ponds polluting the water in the process. The same water is being used for farming and for cleaning buffaloes. There was a mention about the situation of the water here in The Hindu dated 26th December 2017. "Drain water changes color every day".

The situation again changed where once flourishing screen printers returned to farming and a hand to mouth existence. They go just for a single crop due to non-availability of water.

According to sources people realized their mistakes, which brought some printers back to weaving using only natural colors. Some of them would like to get back to block printing using traditional designs provided they are trained by the expert printers from Kerala. Kerala printers have mastered the method of bringing rich color combinations using natural dyes, which they export, to the European market.

Co-optex Managing Director and his team from Tamil Nadu had visited Pedana in the month of February 2018. They supplied thirteen thousand meters of fabric and placed orders to print each selected design on a hundred saris. Keeping in mind the potential this craft has, Mr. Tarzan president of a local co-operative is eagerly looking forward to train twenty weavers for at least sixty to ninety days. He confesses this is an expensive proposition but he feels this community can benefit if the Government, media and sponsors came forward to help restore the former glory of Pedana.

## CCI National Meet, 4 April, 2018 - 'Going Green': Summary of discussions

*Ashoke Chatterjee*

A year ago, the CCI and partners met in New Delhi to better understand what it takes for artisans and their crafts to be environmentally responsible, and to stay that way at a time when both are enduring change and upheaval. Last year's discussions brought together experiences we have had over many years. Lessons learnt and current concerns emerged strongly. It became clear that going green and staying green is a long-term commitment requiring knowledge and access to many partners and streams of experience. The scale of the challenge gave a strong reason to sustain this dialogue at another Meet one year later. This time Chennai has enabled us to reflect on what we have learnt over one year and what we now have to do to further integrate green issues into everyday work and service.

### Critical realities

Perhaps the first and most important reality that has emerged is the stark fact that 'green' is not a choice. It is a requirement for survival and growth in a sector within which compliance is becoming essential even when it is not mandatory. This harsh reality in export markets has now extended into situations at home, where compliance is also becoming critical. Intervention by authorities --- at the local, state, central and trade levels --- is growing, matched by rising consumer consciousness. We learnt how critical this can be through AIACA's sharing of its Craftmark experience. Eco-friendly is now an inescapable element within quality consciousness. In an era dominated by climate change, we have also been made aware that our green agenda is part of a much larger canvas, one that we have to understand so that we can forge essential links across sectors, disciplines and institutions. Critical among these are technology and design. Access by craft communities to technicians, designers and scientists will have to be the foundation for problem-solving. We had some brilliant examples through the interventions on leather processes (from Dr B Madhan, CLRI) that impact 3M workers of whom 80% are women, the energy constraints potters throughout the country and bead-makers in Purdilnagar face with their kilns and other energy sources, and innovations that respond to local resources and knowledge including those developed by Dr Ismail Khatri and other craft masters in Ajrakhpur. They have demonstrated the power of tradition as well as of jugaad to this knowledge mix. Design, understood as problem-analysis and the development of alternative solutions has emerged as an attitude essential to environmental responsibility. Design applies as well to critical issues of occupational hazards and of ergonomics in almost every situation of craft activity. These aspects go well beyond the capabilities of artisans and activists, and need partnership of experts in ergonomics and occupational health.

### Natural resources and local capacities

Over the years the CCI has advocated responsible use and supportive policies for natural resources, principally wood. These two cycles of National Meet exploration have taken us into other dimensions including grasses, fibres, clay, glass, livestock, and the pervasive factor of water conservation and recycling. Sandeep Sangaru has demonstrated the amazing potential of bamboo for a sustainable future. We have had through the Ajrakhpur example the demonstration

of a craft and a craft community moving in search of an enabling environment, with water as the core concern. Is this the future of craft communities in a water-scarce, resource-scarce nation threatened by climate change? If so, is the threat of migration to urban slums a matter for serious consideration within any green agenda?

The need for local and community-specific solutions has also underlined the limitations we have faced in another context (i.e. craft economics) with the vocabulary applied to our sector, so often labeling artisans as 'unorganized'. Each of the examples shared by presenters has demonstrated how carefully organized every craft activity actually is, through self-organization. This feature also underlines the importance of green interventions that can be applied to a cluster approach, enabling technologies and other solutions to be shared and made affordable. Compliance can be expensive!

### Demanding green quality

We have also learnt that the final and most critical element in this endeavor will be to create user demand and consumer respect for hand production that represents quality, heritage and environmental responsibility. In an era of cut-throat competition and the ability of mechanized mass-production to slash costs and prices (the example of glass beads has been striking), our role as craft activists is to be vigilant and to build demand, particularly amongst the younger generation. Youth is today in the forefront of environmental awareness. How can a campaign on green crafts capture its imagination and its support on the future for Indian craft? Madhura Dutta and Neelima Hasija in their presentations underlined the need for an emotional connect with crafts and craft-makers. This suggests that among our tasks in 'going green' must also be communicating strongly what 'green' means: caring for the earth which also is caring for artisans and the wisdom they represent. Green is thus a value to be measured as much in behavior and attitude as in carbon footprint and renewable resources.

### Where do we go from here?

The urgency is evident, while the scale can be daunting for small institutions and teams. Yet the National Meets have also demonstrated the power of every intervention, however modest it might appear --- whether to serve potters in crowded Uttamnagar or the realization that 50,000 persons depend upon hazardous bead-making in Purdilnagar. Clearly the green agenda must be here to stay, with National Meets as spaces to regularly monitor and share priorities, experiences and resources. The CCI and each Council and partner institution will need to build capacities for the emerging discipline of compliance. No longer a choice but a necessity, this demands green savvy. Such savvy can emerge from actual problem-solving experience, working with artisans and communities. Gita Ram has reminded us of the importance of demonstrating sustainable use of scarce resources through the entire craft production process, including energy use, effluent treatment and re-cycling possibilities. Perhaps we could now identify priority issues and partnerships that have emerged through two National Meets. How can we ensure that these linkages are sustained over the coming months for joint learning and experience? The KAMALA stores offer the advantage of showcasing and testing green solutions. The CCI Newsletter can share outcomes. Another advantage is our contact with overseas buyers demanding compliance, fair trade and crafts with green stories. Along with other sector allies, such retail and export spaces must build the case for crafts as India's green advantage and encourage young craft-buyers as

our green ambassadors. Toward these goals, we have two media partners eager to understand the outcome of the National Meet within a country-wide context: *Down to Earth* and *Grassroots*.

We have a road map and we have begun a journey. Next year we should once again be able to share milestones that help demonstrate the argument that the craft sector is second to none in offering India a future that cares for the earth and for those it shelters.

## ACTIVITY ROUND UP

### The Crafts Council of India

- **Crafts Bazaar (2 - 8 January, 2018)** : As usual, the annual Crafts Bazaar organised by the CCI took Chennai by storm. Craft lovers of the city, tourists and students thronged the tastefully done venue, feasting their senses on quality crafts from all parts of the country and interacting with 100 artisans present at the Bazaar. The best of brassware artefacts, bell metal and kansa tableware, kalchutties, ceramics and pottery, traditional folk art paintings such as Pattachitra and Madhubani, cane and bamboo furniture, basketry, grass mats and jute artefacts, kantha, Toda and Phulkari embroideries, a wealth of handloom saris from the great weaving traditions of India and much more gave Crafts Bazaar its rare and unique flavour. Good sales every year makes Crafts Bazaar a worthwhile marketing exercise for the CCI, apart from affording an opportunity for artisans to gauge the mood of the market.
- **Kamala Awards (3 April)** : The Kamala Awards instituted by the CCI, the Shanta Prasad award along with the newly instituted Young Artisan Award honouring craft artisans in various categories of craft excellence and development were given away at a tasteful function organised by the CCI. The short Bharatnatyam dance by Priyadarshini Govind and her troupe emphasised the 'Green' theme of handicrafts (Details of the recipients are given elsewhere in the Newsletter).
- **Business and National Meet (3 - 4 April)** : The Crafts Council of India and its affiliated state councils held their Business Meet on 3 April. All the Councils presented their reports featuring activities and programmes undertaken during 2017 - 18 and their vision for the coming year. The National Meet with its theme of 'Going Green - The way forward' which was held the following day dealt with the various initiatives being taken by NGOs and the government to green craft production processes. It was a vibrant and fulfilling session which highlighted the work already done on the ground.
- **Textile Show (5 - 6 April)** : The CCI's Textile Show had a stupendous showing of the best of designers' work with the fabled weaves of the country, specially designed saris and made-ups with saris ranging from Benarasi, Maheshwari, Chanderi to khadi, mull, Bengal cotton and more...
- **Kamala Shop : Palash - Textile Pop-up show (6 - 8 June)** : The magic of vintage Odisha saris revisited and revived at the hand of masterweavers such as Kalabaten Meher and Nethrapal Bhai was presented at 'Palash' in the Kamala Shop. A fantastic range of spectacular Bomkai, Kotpad, Bhando, Dongirya and khadi saris woven in remote corners of Odisha stole the show at the 3 day event. The interplay of colours, weaves and borders created unforgettable images and 'pallus' which in some cases could be mistaken for painting on fabric!

- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay - An Extraordinary life (April 2018) : DCC concluded its Golden Jubilee year celebrations with an exhibition tracing exceptional events in the life of Kamaladevi, the founder DCC in 1967.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Founder Member of CCWB, Ruby Pal Choudhari, who was also a close associate of Kamaldeviji. An e-version of the exhibition was released on DCC website by Ruby Palchoudhuri. She highlighted Kamaladevi's contribution to the craft-world with personal intimate experiences.

Keeping in mind Kamaldeviji's deep involvement with theatre crafts, a short dance performance of the pung cholam drums from Manipur was staged for the inauguration which was attended by associates of Kamaladevi as well as people who have been influenced by her.

### Crafts Council of Karnataka

- Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay - Retrospective Photographic Tribute: The National Gallery of Modern Art, Bengaluru, in association with the Crafts Council of Karnataka (CCK), in a continued effort to commemorate their Golden Jubilee Celebration, held a 10 day long exhibition on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, the founder patron of CCK.

The exhibition opened on 20 January, 2018, with an inaugural ceremony that had as its chief guest, Dr Devaki Jain, a well known Indian economist, writer and also the wife of late Lakshmi Chand Jain, a close associate of Kamaladevi, who was instrumental in helping organise the Indian Cooperative Union and shared her Gandhian philosophies and principles.

More than 35 exquisite photographs of Kamaladevi, taken across different stages of her life, many of which show her in the august company of Indian leaders who spearheaded the freedom movement, were on display. There were images of her staging a protest with Mahatma Gandhi, sharing a platform with Jawaharlal Nehru and standing alongside Sarojini Naidu. There were also stunning images of an exquisite young Kamaladevi dressed in Indian silk and beautifully created hand woven saris. Her simplicity and determination were clearly visible in many of the images on display.

An audio-visual interview from the 70s between Shri Rajiv Sethi and Smt. Kamaladevi was streamed throughout the exhibition. A live performance of Bhoota Araadhana (Kola) with 12 artistes from Dakshina Kannada was part of the inauguration ceremony. A collection of Bhoota artefacts, Kinal dolls and string puppets were part of this display. CCK was also privileged to showcase a few of the heritage weaves from Kamaladevi's personal collection courtesy RD & TDC.

As part of the tribute to Kamaldeviji, the Crafts Council of Karnataka published a commemorative brochure titled: "Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay: An Extraordinary Life" Eight scholars very well known to Smt. Kamaladevi have written a tribute to her in remembrance of their times. (Courtesy the previous contributors who have gifted value content and a rich legacy to CCK's archives)

Students from fashion design schools and other colleges and educational institutions came in large numbers to view this exhibition.

## Crafts Council of Tamil Nadu

- Crafts Bazaar (24 – 26 December, 2017) : Testing new waters, we took the Crafts bazaar to Madurai. Over 50 crafts men took their wares to an appreciative public, who have not had an exhibition of this caliber in the Temple city.



- (January 9, 2018) : A get together of all our members was made interesting with a unique Paper Folding demo by Mr. Rajarajan of Boston Creative.
- The 30th year Celebration of CCTN was kick started with an event held on April 7th, 2018 at Kasturi Srinivasan Trust Auditorium. A power point presentation of all the activities and products developed by the Council since inception till date was presented.

## Crafts Council of Uttar Pradesh



Glass Craft from Firozabad



- 'Shilpotsav' (March 2018) : The Shilpotsav exhibition was held to celebrate International Womens Day in which Chikankari artisans participated. Shilpotsav was organised at Kala Srot Art Gallery by DC Handicrafts. Women from all over Uttar Pradesh displayed their crafts in Chikankari, textiles, leather, glass crafts, etc.
- Summer Exhibition-cum-Sale (May 2018) : Handicrafts, textiles, handloom products were showcased at the Lalit Kala Akademi. Local artisans as well as artisans from other states were invited. The seven day exhibition was a great success.
- AadiLaghu Mahotsav (June 2018) : Chikankari and Tharu Embroidery were on display at AadiLaghu Mahotsav, an exhibition-cum-sale organised by Tribes India.

Hand crafted Tribal Cutlery

## Crafts Council of West Bengal

- Golden Jubilee Celebrations of Crafts Council of West Bengal (18, 19 & 20 January, 2018) : The milestone year of CCWB was celebrated with a grand three day event at ICCR. The theme of the Golden Jubilee celebration was: "On the Trail of Creativity: The West Bengal Story"



Fifty lamps were lit to mark the grand occasion. Smt Ahona Pal Choudhuri sang a beautiful opening song. A welcome speech was delivered by CCWB's President, Smt. Shanta Ghosh followed by a speech by Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon, President, the CCI.

The celebrations comprised an exhibition on Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, recognition of artisans from the four centres of CCWB, a crafts and textile bazaar, demonstrations by craftspeople, a panel discussion on the "Artists and Crafts of the Eastern Region : Opportunities, Challenges and Directions". The spotlight was on an elaborate and beautiful exhibition on the "Ritual Crafts of Bengal".

A beautiful documentary was screened, tracing the birth and history of Crafts Council of West Bengal, which was pioneered by Smt Ruby Pal Choudhuri. The film traced CCWB's long journey spanning fifty years during which time, many forgotten crafts were revived and showcased to the world.

On this occasion, a tribute was paid to late Smt Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. Speeches applauding craftspeople were followed by Sri Ashoke Chatterjee who spoke on the importance of uplifting the lives of the artisans, who are often impoverished and do not get their just dues. Smt Gita Ram, Shri Goutam Ghosh, Shri Jawhar Sircar and other dignitaries spoke as well. The artisans from various craft sector and four centres of CCWB were felicitated for their contribution to crafts. Smt Ruby Palchoudhuri was felicitated and honored for her contribution.

- Ritual Crafts of Bengal: Exhibition Highlights



The exhibition unfolded Bengal's rural rites and deities, specially folk deities like Bonbibi, Gaji pir, Sheetala and Manasa and other local customs, through idols and images of gods and goddesses and their ritual paraphernalia for worship. However the installation's grandest attraction was the Bengali wedding's ritualistic trappings and their decorations. The finely crafted requisites of traditional Bengali weddings feature ornamental arts and crafts. These are fundamental to Bengali marriage rituals. The exquisite workmanship of every ritual item made from brass, copper, terracotta, bamboo and shola were on display.



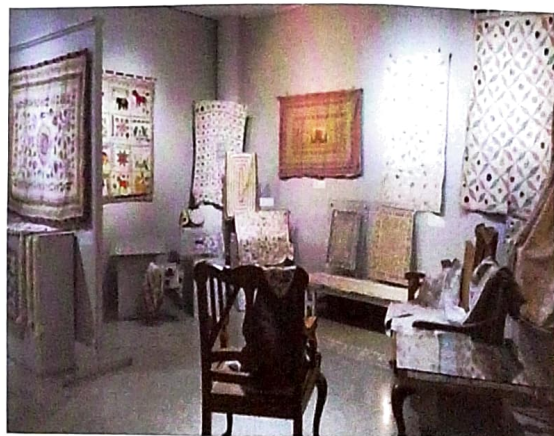
A dance performance by renowned danseuse Smt Sharmilla Biswas, rounded off the inaugural programme.

The celebrations provided a great opportunity for crafts, weavers and vendors to interact with visitors. The colourful bazaar of a variety of exclusive saris, weaves and crafts proved to be very popular.



### BAISHAKHI, (20 - 24 March) :

- BAISHAKHI exhibition sale to welcome spring was held in Artisana.
- Eye of the Needle - Kantha, the Quilt Embroidery of Bengal (25 April – 13 May) : Showcasing the best of Kantha, Bengal's fascinating contribution to the creative arts, The Crafts Council of West Bengal, inaugurated the 'Eye of the Needle', a three-week exposition at the Birla Academy of Art and Culture. Kantha exhibits from the late 19th century to the contemporary times were on display with pieces coming in from collectors, including the Union Ministry of Culture, The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), families of Kolkata, revivalists / designers and leading Kantha entrepreneurs.



Shri Jawhar Sircar delivered the Valedictory Lecture on May 13, 2018. Eminent speakers



shared their experience and knowledge about kantha in the gallery talk which was organized on a daily basis. The speakers were Smt. Shabnam Ramaswamy, Smt. Sharbari Datta, Shri Bijon. Kumar Mondal, Dr Paula Sengupta, Dr Rituparna Basu, a group of craftswomen and a group of young designers.

Kantha has been described by Dr Stella Kramrisch, art historian, as 'beauty out of chaos' and in each motif and each pattern we can hear the voices and see the life stories of our craftsmen.

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