



THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

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

July 2013

" Shifting Sands "

Another way of looking at Geographic Indicators

Ashoke Chatterjee

Pushpa's call for a piece on GI came to mind when Jasleen Dhamija arrived in Ahmedabad a few days ago to release Archana Shah's wonderful new book (*Shifting Sands: Kutch, A land in transition*. Bandhej Books, Rs. 3900 available through Art Book Centre, Ahmedabad) on craft as part of the natural, social and cultural ecologies of Kutch. The book carries no mention of GI and IPR issues, yet the human story of artisans is really all about their cultural geographies, and what these spaces and the 'intellectual property' which they shelter tell us about what needs protection, and why

Shah's central message is this: the craft heritage of Kutch, like that of the entire subcontinent, is at risk of being lost forever. That is not because craft heritage is irrelevant to modernity or chained to mere sentiment about the past. It is because of willful ignorance of craft heritage as a cutting-edge for what ' sustainable development ' should really be about, and blindness to what it is needed to make this planet livable for future generations. Long before the UN's Human Development Indicators and Bhutan's courageous experiment with Gross National Happiness to replace GNP as the true measure of progress, communities like Kutch had innovated and lived the answers which the world is now seeking. Those answers are the true human significance of what we shared at the Business Meet about Geographic Indicators, Intellectual Property Rights, Design Registration, Patents and all those other dimensions of managing heritage in a market-dominated era

The author looks at the past without blinkers, recognizing the challenges of a harsh environment and an even harsher patriarchal, casteist society with its full share of oppression. She indicates the changes needed for justice and equity, particularly for women. Most importantly, she finds role models for change within artisan communities. The contradictions of the past also contain seeds of tolerance, trust and respect on which are founded the glorious crafts celebrated on these pages, giving them the context and the true value without which products become mere artifacts, to be admired in museums rather than accepted as a relevant and contemporary way of life. Archana makes the reader pause and ask why all this is so little appreciated, despite all the rhetoric over so many years on the glories of Indian tradition

In " Shifting Sands ", Archana Shah (an NID alumnus who built her Bandhej brand into a renowned flagship of craft quality), explores several key questions: where did that Kutchi sense of inclusive quality come from, infusing the Kutchi way of life for centuries? What does it really represent in current conditions? What sustained it then, and should it be sustained now? And if so, why and by whom, and how? Impacted by the pace of change -- rapid industrialisation, a ravaged ecology, the devastation of the 2001 earthquake and the patterns of 'development' that have followed it, new demographic and political pressures that are transforming the Kutchi ethic of tolerance and respect, the aspirations of new generations, the opportunities and challenges that await them -- where can Kutch go from here? Shah suggests that wherever it goes, Kutch will take with it something of India's body and soul. Her thesis could apply to so many other regions blessed with the same integrated understanding of quality and threatened by the same ignorance and arrogant mimicry that marks so much of Indian decision-making. The great strength of the book is that it goes well beyond the breathtaking pictures one expects of every coffee-table publication on Kutch and on craft (there is no shortage of visuals here, including many by the author, enhanced by a brilliant use of

black-and-white and high production standards that set off the splendour of the products featured on these pages: textiles, embroidery, apparel and more) into the heart of what Kutch and its crafts represent in terms of national survival – and beyond survival, in terms of national wellbeing, dignity and alternative patterns of growth. Unconsciously perhaps when her NID mentor Helena Peerhantupa first sent Shah out into Kutch to document its people and their crafts as part of her design education, and then with growing understanding and sensitivity as she and her peers reflected on issues of transition between tradition and so-called modernity at NID, Shah as a young entrepreneur transferred her understanding of craft into livelihood opportunities for artisans within a changing market-place, using this partnership to build one of India's finest craft brands

The book gives the reader only a fleeting understanding of the Bandhej story of entrepreneurship (that too as a kind of finale. Yet it records Shah's impressions of Kutch through three decades of observation, documentation, conversation and above all empathy and comradeship with the people whose skills, knowledge and wisdom she celebrates. Each craft (with the exception of architecture and woodwork which receive short shrift) is analysed in terms of material, process and product – and then in terms of challenges of transition. (Excellent references for future GI applications!). We learn how these challenges have been managed, through examples of experience at Bandhej and through the remarkable achievements of other craft activists and of a new generation of brilliant young artisans, both men and women. We learn of what has worked and what has not, and, above all, why. We learn too of the influences and pressures for change: patriarchal dictats that forbid women from wearing traditional embroidery or jewelry, the rising costs of materials, the loss of natural resources, rising new patterns of oppressive orthodoxy, recurring crises of drought and earthquake that lead to the loss of homes and possessions, the falling water table as large industry grabs dwindling sources so essential for craft processes (such as dyeing and block-printing), new schemes of 'development' that deny any understanding of local mores or of the need for sustaining the context for what is of value to the community as both heritage and future

BOOK LAUNCH

SHIFTING SANDS
Kutch: A Land in Transition

Chief Guest
Elaben Bhatt

Introduction
Jasleen Dhamija

Book presentation
Archana Shah

Sunday, 26 May, 2013
11.30 AM

the story of a people and an enchanted land

It is my pleasure to request your presence for the launch of my book SHIFTING SANDS.

Archana Shah

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Indeed, it is Shah's understanding of context that gives "Shifting Sands" its importance both as a document and as a direction. She is able to demonstrate the confluence that has made craft not only India's second largest industry but also its unique vehicle of culture integrated with social cohesion, community identity and individual dignity, environmental sustainability, empowerment of millions still at the margins of society, and of values – spiritual, ethical and social – that are being increasingly valued as the hope for a sustainable planet. A question raised in the author's Epilogue positions Kutch's dilemma of 'progress' into the forefront of global concern: "Maybe it is time" she observes "to reconsider the very idea of what we call development". The question seems to charge the solemn little girl on the cover of "Shifting Sands". Where should she shift, she seems to ask, all dressed in her finery – the 'Geographic Indicators' that are fast disappearing from 'developed' Kutch. Her eyes demand an answer, and seem also to wonder if any of us really care. On that answer may depend the future of a land and a region which needs to understand why Kutchi tradition is as much about strategies for the future as it is about a glorious past

Tucked away in this extraordinary record of craft transition in Kutch is a photograph rich with symbolism. It shows master artisan Ismail Khatri of Ajrakhpur, representing India's craft excellence in an era of change and stringent competition, receiving a doctorate in 2003 at De Montfort University of Leicester for contributions to the protection and enhancement of the Kutchi art and craft of Ajrakh as a heritage significant to the world. It is an honour no Indian university has ever conferred on the scholarship and wisdom of a hereditary artisan schooled in the tradition of his or her forbears, but still considered 'uneducated' within our official systems. That attitude and the neglect which accompanies it imbues great significance on the photograph as well as on the importance of Archana Shah's wake-up call

Know your Craft

SILVER FILIGREE OF KARIMNAGAR, ANDHRA PRADESH

Pushpa Chari

Each of the twenty nine Geographic Indicators (GI) certification conferred so far on craft products across the country by the government is a recognition of a particular, uniquely distinctive craft product which has developed in a particular geographic location within its larger cultural context of history, ritual, customs, eclectic influences, environment, climate, waters, etc. The GI certification is acknowledgement and celebration of *this* unique craft product which was brought to creative life by artisans in *this* geographical location, defining and giving a badge of identity to the craft as and the region in which it is rooted. No craft except that originating in a specific geographic location possessing its special quality, processes, etc can be called by its traditional name

The silver filigree work of Karimnagar got its GI certification in 2006. An exquisitely delicate lace like craft made up of micro thin silver wires, it features loops of silver wires set in intricate motifs of flower, and leaf, vine, etc., in the interspaces of the larger design defined by a silver frame made of flat wires. The silver wire itself is made by beating silver ingots with a hammer on an anvil, elongating it into long, thin wires. A filigree product is made up of a number of components and design pieces pieced together to form a whole



The craft is believed to be of the Persian origin, brought to the Deccan 2 centuries back by Mughal Governors. In the 1700's Karimnagar became a hub of silver filigree artisans who supplied decorative items, vases, paandaans, trays, boxes and hookahs to the Nizams and the aristocracy. By the 1940's the craft had begun to languish. It was revived in the 80s by a group of artisans making boxes, kumkum holders, trays, vases, tambool boxes, etc

Ashok Arroju, National Award winner for silver filigree craft has been part of the revival process of this exquisite craft. Watching him fashion, a tiny many petalled flower to fit in with other flowers waiting to be placed in the frame is a magical experience compounded of deftness of hand and impeccable design sense. Says Ashok " I come from a paramparik family and learnt the craft from my father who had left silver filigree work for the more lucrative gold work. But I saw so much beauty in this craft. I decided to take it up and did the DCH training scheme. I've taught some 100 people in this craft. My children go to school but work at the craft after finishing school work. Today there is a great demand for silver filigree boxes, kumkum cases and agarbatti stands, trays and other decorative products, particularly as gift items. I am hopeful of the craft's future. We need more innovation in the product line as well as support such as I got from the Craft Council of Karnataka, DCH's office and so on "

[Ashok Arroju participated in the World Crafts Council's 'Kaivalam' as part of the Living Legends]

KAMALA AWARDEES 2013

Pushpa Chari

Saluting Kamala Awardees

Instituted by CCI in memory of Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, the annual 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 Excellence in Craftsmanship

Shri Giriraj Prasad

The Kamala Award for Excellence in Craftsmanship for the year 2013 was presented to Shri Giriraj Prasad of Rajasthan

Shri Giriraj Prasad of Alwar, Rajasthan trained under his father in making traditional terracotta pottery for items of daily use like pots, glasses, etc. His unique skills as a potter enabled him to excel in making very large pots in the traditional style, using local firing methods which produce the characteristic black “smokey” effect on red clay. This “Double Firing” technique has been developed by him. He has won many awards for his work and has trained a large number of young artisans in this special technique. Shri Giriraj Prasad has received many awards including the National Award (1987), Delhi State Award (1988) as well as awards for pottery given by the Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and the Rajasthan governments. Shri Giriraj is the recipient of the prestigious Shilp Guru Award for his invaluable contribution to Terracotta Pottery

Shri Giriraj Prasad’s work has been exhibited and acclaimed at exhibitions in Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, USA, UK, Holland and Australia



Kamala Award for Contribution to Craft

Smt Shantha Bai Kalhalli

The Kamala Award for Contribution to Craft for the year 2013 was presented to Smt Shantha Bai Kalhalli

Smt Shantha Bai Kalhalli belongs to the Lambani tribe of Karnataka and comes from the village of Susheela Nagar Thanda in the Sandur taluk of Bellary district

She joined the Sandur Kushalakala Kendra as an artisan in 1992. By sheer dint of hard work, total dedication to the craft of embroidery and her leadership qualities she has risen to her present position as the head of the Embroidery department, Design and Production at the Sandur Kushalakala Kendra

Smt Shantha Bai Kalhalli won the National Award for Excellence in Craft for the year 2001. She has also won the Unesco Seal of Excellence Award for her craft work and has participated in various exhibitions in Sweden, Spain, Beijing, China and the Folk Art Mart in Santa Fe, New Mexico

Smt Shantha Bai Kalhalli has trained more than 200 artisans in various training programmes. Presently, she is conducting the Guru Shishya Parampara programme held under the aegis of the Office of the Development Commissioner of Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India

Kamala Samman 2013

Shri Brij Bhushan Bhasin

The Kamala Samman Award for the year 2013 in honour of a lifetime dedication to crafts was presented to Shri Brij Bhushan Bhasin

Shri Brij Bhushan Bhasin is a distinguished economist and retired police officer whose life has been dedicated to the cause of India's handcraft and craftspeople. For over 40 years, Shri Bhasin has worked with single minded commitment towards the improvement of the craftsmen's social and working conditions, expansion of markets both national and international for their products, as active participant in formulating government policies for the craft sector and towards poverty alleviation of artisans through income generation schemes. In the process he has worn hats as varied as that of Chairman and Managing Director, Handicrafts and Handlooms Exports Corporation of India Ltd., Chairman, Central Cottage Industries Corporation of India, New Delhi, Advisor (Handicrafts) of Indian Economic Mission to the EEC Trade Centre, Brussels, and many many more

After resigning from government service, Shri Bhasin has founded Barsana, an NGO which is a catalyst for Indian skills with a focus on crafts and education

Shantha Prasad Award for Excellence in Craft

Shri Jyotish Debnath

The Shantha Prasad Award for Excellence in Craft was presented to Shri Jyotish Debnath

Shri Jyotish Debnath of Kalna district in Burdwan, West Bengal has been working on the craft of Jamdani design in Khadi muslin for the past 35 years. In the quest to revive the almost forgotten technique of producing the finest home spun yarn, Jyotish Debnath began working to produce yarn of 300 to 500 counts which could be woven with intricate jamdani designs. Part of CCWB's Kalna project, Shri Debnath has

rediscovered the almost lost process of making Jamdani from home spun yarn. His saris are exquisite one-off pieces which are part of West Bengal's textile heritage. Another innovation by Shri Debnath is the use of vegetable dyes on khadi muslin

Shri Debnath has participated in many prestigious exhibitions both at home and abroad

In Praise of the Real Thing

The pursuit of GI for products of traditional craftsmanship

Ritu Sethi

Kolhapuri chappal look alikes made in rubber and sold by a large shoe chain, Ajrak hand-blocks printed on a roller machine, powerloom masquerading as a Banaras handloom, Kantha printed by silk screen, Dhokra lost wax statues made in moulds that replicate it in thousands ' copycat ' stories are endless

For many copying is a profitable business

A freely available emporium of ready made goods that require no investment in product development, an ageless appeal of goods with cultural and symbolic values that add up to a sum that is greater than its parts, the instant recognition and mass appeal of handcrafted products duplicated with mass production technologies churning out replicas at a low cost, with no fear of reprisal, makes for a win-win business model !

Craft activists and craft communities no longer have the luxury of time to deal with issues of copying and faking. Faced with increasing consumerism and demand for new products cases of copying will only multiply

For craftspeople and their communities who are at the receiving end of this free-riding it has led to not only huge economic loss but equally to a loss over the collective knowledge of their forefathers. This is further compounded by feelings of marginalisation and helplessness by their inability to prevent or effectively deal with this copying and faking

We in India have found a solution to this problem

The promulgation of the Geographic Indicator Act (GI) that came into play in 2003 provided succor under the law and affords GI holders legal protection. Further the law protects the GI and its promotion by conferring exclusive rights to brand, market and certify the quality and genuineness of the GI goods to the holders of the registration. Production and sale by anyone other than the producers is a punishable offence under the GI law

A decade after the promulgation of the Act, 135 arts, crafts and handlooms have received a GI status with 17 applications pending. Of the total GIs registered across India 70% are of handicrafts, a noteworthy number, implying that the application for a GI is being taken seriously by the sector

This then begs the question of why no handicraft GIs have proceeded to use this powerful tool as a marketing opportunity?

Why have none of the registered GIs used the law to proceed with infringement action against cheats and counterfeiters?

This is a huge gap, a space on post-GI registration action where joint action by NGOs and GI holders is now the need of the hour

As pioneers who will have no markers to go on perhaps the first step could start with the adopting of a GI registered craft cluster, working with the community to develop a process methodology that leads to the leveraging of this powerful marketing tool. Developing the GIs economic potential to help craftspeople

regain their Rights over their community knowledge, provide guarantees to consumers on the genuineness and quality of the product, create a brand, promote and market it and empower the community

This could be a methodology for others to follow

A Tale of Two Weaves

Does the GI Act give them identity protection ?

SANTIPUR SARI

Ruby Palchoudhuri

Popularly known as **Santipuri sari**, it is woven with a special quality of fine cotton yarn produced in Santipur, located in the district of Nadia, West Bengal. The sari invokes a certain sophistication of class and a subtlety of temperament

Description of goods

Santipuri sari, as per the GI registration is woven on fly shuttle frame / pit looms using 80s-100s cotton yarn in warp and weft. The specifications require the border to be woven with extra warp presently woven on jacquard loom with designs of different characteristics viz. floral, abstract, geometrical, instrumental motifs and special motifs of different historical backgrounds, temples and other natural motifs using typical colour patterns in the pallu. The body of the fabric may be plain or decorated with “ buti ” using extra warp / weft without the help of jacquard. The edges or paars of the saris also had a variety of motifs- chandmala, the bhoomri, aashpaar, bekikalka, taj, choukalaka, paacha paar, etc. The speciality of Santipur sari is that it is marketed in a typical traditional folded form known as “ Guti Bhanj ”

Geographical area of production

Santipur (latitude : 23° 14' 24½, longitude : 88° 29' 6½) lies 96 km to the North of Kolkata on the banks of the river Bhagirathi in the district of Nadia and covers an area of about 25 sq. miles which is equal to 64.75 sq.meters

History of Santipur sari

The Santipur sari finds a very significant place in the colourful diversity of traditional Bengal handloom saris. It is said that a large number of weavers of different castes migrated from Dhamrai (presently in Bangladesh) to Nabadwip attracted by Vaishnavism. They wanted to settle in Nabadwip at the feet of Lord Chaitanya. Chaitanyadeb Mahaprabhu advised them to go to Santipur instead to become disciples of Shri Adwaityacharya. They then settled in Santipur and continued with their weaving tradition. The handloom weaving tradition of Santipur had been recorded in the biographical manuscript namely “ Adwaityamangal ” of Shri Adwaityacharya (1460-1558). This corroborates with the record that these handloom weavers had settled down in Santipur during the reign of King Ganesha of Gaur, (Bengal) in the earlier part of the 15th century

However, the handloom weaving tradition of Santipur came up as an industry in the reign of Nadia Raj Rudra Roy (1683-94) and during Mughul rule. The products were mainly saris and dhotis. The work received wide national acclaim and fame during the reign of King Rudra Ray of Nadia (1683 - 94). During the East India Company days malmal (muslin) was also woven and exported in great quantities by the company. People from all over Bengal and India began to realise the tremendous talent and potential of these weavers of Santipur. So famous were their saris that they had actually claimed a spot in the heart of Bengali folklore, as is evident from their mention in the works of Adwaitacharya

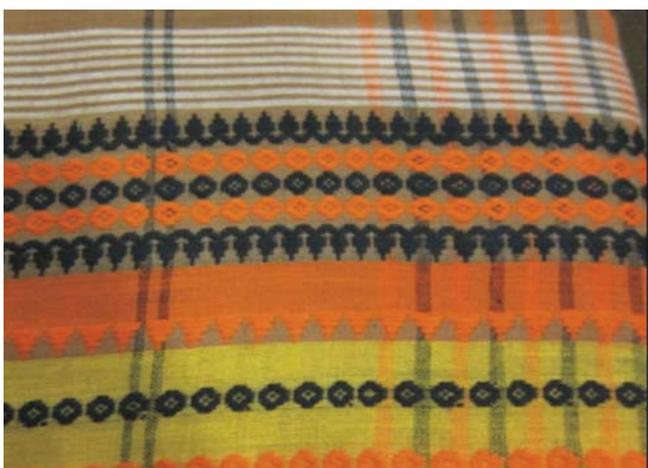
The present situation of GI registration of Santipur sari

CCWB arranged a round-table discussion on the status of GI in Santipur. The findings are that the Santipuri weavers are aware of the matters concerning GI. They had attended a number of seminars organized by the government. Development Commissioner of Handloom along with Patent Information Centre, West Bengal State Council of Science offered their help to file the GI for Santipur sari. The actual picture of the understanding and the implication of GI in the daily lives of weavers became clear to us

One of the important problems facing the sari was that other handloom production centres outside the area of Santipur area are copying the borders and selling them as Santipur saris. “ How do you check on them? We cannot spend time going around to find out whether they are using specification stated by GI rules ” the manager of the Santipur Kutir Para Cooperative Weavers Society, Swadesh Pramanik, said. Members of Santipur Kutir Para Cooperative Weavers Society are aware of the GI, but neither the members of the weavers’ society nor the independent weavers have a clue about how they will ensure that the production of Santipur will remain in the actual area

Power looms in adjacent Ranaghat area pose a threat to the livelihoods of the Santipur weavers. Copies of Santipuri saris are being produced in Ranaghat at cheaper price “ In this case Government’s vigilance is necessary ”. They feel quite despondent about it. Even after getting the GI of Santipur sari their situation is miserable as they have no one from Government to monitor the production or help them to make it easily applicable for them

Though they are aware of the legal options they do not want to explore these because they do not want to waste money or time on court cases. And although some of them are acquainted with the specification mentioned for GI registration they are anxious as they feel that repetition of design may kill the market. Once they lose the demand survival will be difficult



..... AND SUALKUCHI

Madhab Saikia

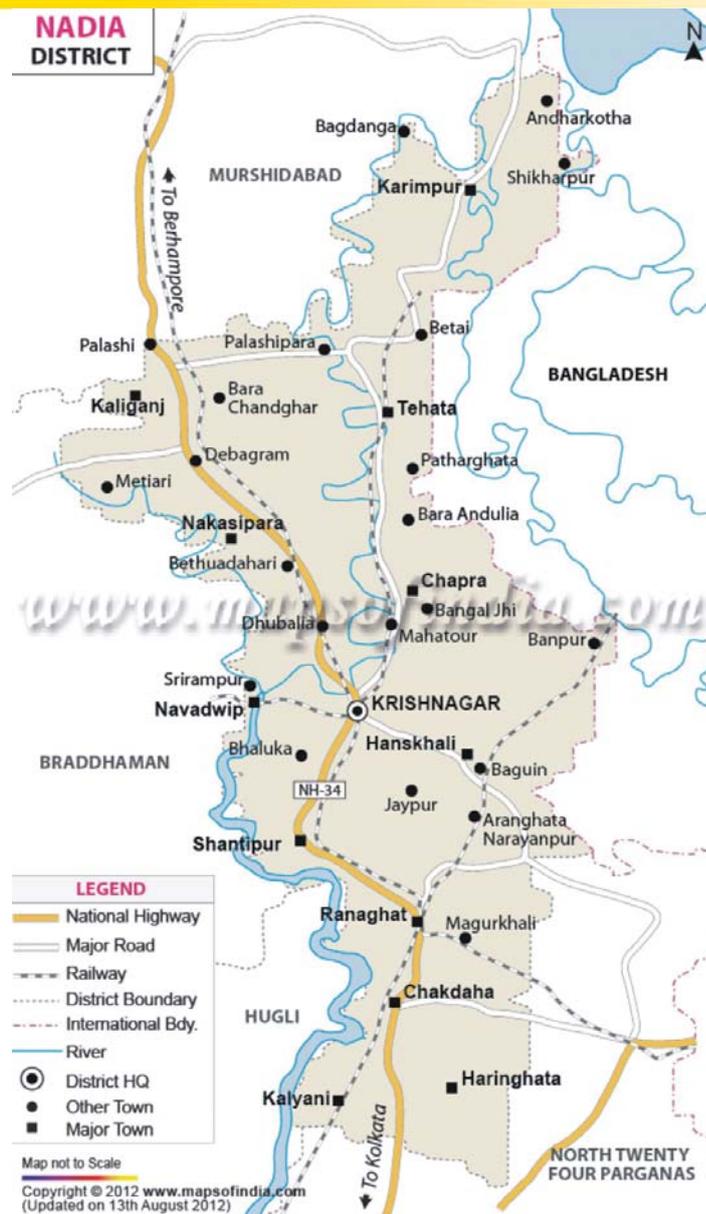
On the eve of the most important festival in the Assamese Calendar, Bohag Bihu, characterized commercially by the biggest merchandising opportunity to sell the traditional mekhela chador, Sualkuchi erupted as weavers clashed with the police, leaving many injured. They were protesting against the sale of Benarasi silk in the name of Sualkuchi silk, complete with traditional Assamese motifs

“ We have no problem if people buy Benaras silk or for that matter any other silk. But if this silk comes with typical Assamese designs and is passed off as Sualkuchi silk, that is something we can't allow,” says Mrigen Kalita, a fourth-generation weaver of Shanti-tol in Sualkuchi who has 50 other weavers working for him. “ Once the market is flooded with duplicate Assam silk, where will we go? This is a traditional industry that provides livelihood to about 25,000 people in Sualkuchi and to over 50,000 people across the state. We will all simply get wiped out. ”

Sualkuchi is famous as the ‘ Manchester of Assam ’ and was established by Momai Tamuli Barbarua, a great administrator of the Ahom kingdom during the reign of Swargadeo Pratap Singha (1603-1641). Shri Barbarua set up this weaver's village by shifting a large number of master-weavers from all over the region to that village. The weaving tradition in this hamlet can be traced to the 11th century when king Dharma Pal, of the Pala dynasty, sponsored the craft and brought 26 weaving families from Tantikuchi to Saulkuchi. The village took shape as a weaving village when the SHAMS occupied Sualkuchi defeating the Mughals in the mid 17th century. Mahatma Gandhi visited in 1946 to attend the handloom exhibition which was going on there at that time

Sualkuchi is a village (a census town) on the banks of the river Brahmaputra and is about 32 kms from Guwahati. It has a population of nearly 50,000 people, most of whom are engaged in weaving magic on their looms. This village has an estimated 25,000 handlooms and produces nearly six million metres of white and golden Assam silk annually. The industry is worth around Rs.100 crores and 70 per cent of this silk ends up as mekhela-chador, 20 per cent as saris and 10 per cent as jeinsem, the traditional dress of Khasi women of Meghalaya, and the gale of the Adi tribals of Arunachal Pradesh

Sualkuchi does not rear silk-worms or produce the yarn for paat. According to a major wholesaler, “While the bulk of the silk-paat or the mulberry silk of the silkworm Bombyx mori—originally came from states such as Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, what they get today is mostly Chinese silk routed through Karnataka and Andhra,” What makes the Sualkuchi fabric different from that produced elsewhere, including in Benaras, is the typically Assamese motifs and also that these are 100 per cent handloom products. ” (muga is reared and the yarn produced in Sivasagar, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam, the bulk of it comes to Sualkuchi)



Basically customers come to Sualkuchi every month from all over Assam to place orders for weddings, while they get regular orders from showrooms in Guwahati and other places. But with Benarasi silk being sold as Sualkuchi silk, businesses have taken a hit

In the face of such stiff competition, a few younger weavers in Sualkuchi have been quick to move away from the mekhela-chador and other such traditional weaves. They don't make mekhela-chador but have specialised in jeinsem, dokhona (worn by Bodo women) and gale, besides making wall hangings, stoles, ties, scarves, bed covers, sofa backs, curtains, file covers and purses, and have tied up with a number of outlets in Kolkata, Delhi, Bangalore and Shillong to sell their products

A few thoughts of a Novice on GI

Meena Appender

Presently a recurrent topic in all our discussions and meetings is the issue of GI. All of us are worried about GI, about the perils of copy cats, about our country losing our hand crafted items to a market where price is the determining factor. What is GI ? GI is Geographical Indicators - it is a label or certification that a product originates from a specific geographical location. So what do you make of the Pochampally sari which is not woven in Pochampally because the local weavers have nice urban jobs. But the same method is used by weavers who don't live close to a big city? What about the Kalamkari or Cheriyal artist who lives in Hyderabad because he is closer to his market, closer to his son's engineering college? Is the product less than valuable because it is created in a different location? These handlooms and crafts are not grapes that need ' n ' hours of sunshine for ' x ' number of days to become a truly representative wine

When we venture a little deeper into this subject we hear the words IPR or Intellectual Property Rights. It is dealt with in great detail by the acronym TRIPS (Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights). Now when we try to use this to protect our crafts. The questions we ask are :

- Who wove the first Benares saree ?
- Who created Kantha embroidery ?
- Who drew the first Warli figures on their mud walls ?
- Who made the first brass lamp ?

So who does all this ' intellectual property ' belong to? If someone in China wants to make a Benares sari, legally who does he apply to and who does he pay ?

Maybe we are playing football with snow shoes? These rules originated in the Western world .Where the population is fairly equal and each section has demanded and got it's rights, like farmers, industrial designers, authors and artists. We also hear terms like Intangible Cultural Heritage, and Intangible Cultural Property Rights, Oral History, Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights, Traditional Knowledge

These are terms used in the developing world to safeguard their rights and their skills and their knowledge. I must confess to a very superficial knowledge of these organisations, but don't we need a system that accommodates our traditions and our culture ?

On the other hand how do we address issues where WE have learnt the craft of another country and now practise it as our own? Jamdhani, used in West Bengal as well as Uppada. Silver filigree is said to have originated in Iran / Turkey and is now practised in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. In a country like ours can we afford to look at any issue from a single standpoint ?

Do we worry about employment? If so is it in terms of growth rate and amount of capital invested and GDP ? Or is it in terms of jobs that don't strain our natural resources, like weaving or handicraft.

Work that will aid the service industry like tourism or traditional medicine. Do we worry about our craft and cultural heritage ?

How do we put our ideas across to the decision makers of this nation? The politicians who envisage welfare schemes without looking into the ramifications of continuity and tradition

The bureaucracy which has its guidelines defined ages back and are trained to assess a situation from a ' developmental model '

The industrialists who have the drumbeat of globalisation beating strongly in their ears. The people who want the security of a white collar job for their children. Who equate education with an escape from their present lives

Another issue that we have to think about is - making our traditional craft relevant to today's world / lifestyle / market. In that case how do we deal with " the application of traditional knowledge in new products " ?

All these inchoate thoughts have been running through my mind since the WCC - Kaivalam in 2012 can anyone give clear answers ?

REPORT

Education for the Children of Artisans

Suguna Swamy

Under the Educate to Sustain (EtoS) programme children of artisans who show promise in studies alongside crafts receive an annual scholarship from CCI to pursue high school, in an environment that also nurtures the traditional skills of their community

The scholarships are usually given in middle school, when the students' aptitude for academic studies and talent for the traditional craft is best observed. The hope is that at least some of them will choose a vocation connected to the traditional craft - with the added benefit of education in order to manage their profession better

Those students who don't choose to work at their craft and make other career choices find that a high school education improves their chances of finding rewarding work. This reduces the financial burden on their artisan parents

Either way the crafts community benefits

The Veeravanallur initiative

The village of Veeravanallur, in the Tirunelveli district of Tamilnadu, is set in a picturesque region in the deep south of Tamilnadu. It is dotted with many water bodies and bordered by the legendary Tambarabarani river

To this region came the Saurashtrian weaving community from Gujarat more than four centuries ago to escape hostile invasions from the north-west. They travelled to the centre of the Vijayanagar kingdom in Hampi and were appointed court weavers. When the Vijayanagar empire collapsed, the Saurashtrians moved further south and settled around Madurai, Salem and Thanjavur right up to Tirunelveli and became weavers to the Nayak kings

This, then, is the centuries old weaving heritage of Veeravanallur

The fabric woven here is known for its special ' korvai ' contrast borders which cannot be made on a power loom. For its special place in craft history and to help arrest its decline, Veeravanallur was one of





eight villages selected by the CCI for the EtoS programme. Currently 23 children are covered by it, with heartening results

The pilot summer camp - Veeravanallur, May - June 2013

To give the students a holistic educational experience beyond the classroom

CCI conducted a summer camp in 2013. The objective was to expand their learning and help them look at their traditional craft in a wider context

Learning the use of colour, primary colours, how to mix them to get different colours, the colour wheel, how to make colour shades by mixing white / black, colour grade, etc., was the focus of creative learning

Camp activities included

Using a computer, for photoshop, to acquire internet skills, to search for information, Learning to weave on new looms with new designs, origami, play acting and story telling to improve inter personal skills, spoken English and , yoga classes for physical and mental agility

Trained resource persons in each of these areas volunteered their time to the students



The experience of the camp

The children were quick to pick up the skills they were taught. In three weeks, from knowing nothing about computers, not even to operate a keyboard, they were able to create an e-invitation to the celebrations at the end of the camp !

They learnt about the colour wheel and how it threw up a myriad creative possibilities. They put together storytelling sessions, complete with costumes. They were exhilarated by the introduction to yoga. Origami was a revelation and became a simple but engrossing game !

The children's sense of satisfaction is best expressed by their question to the organizers at the close of the month : "Do we have to wait till next summer for another camp? Can we not have another in-between ? "

The parents were happy to see their children usefully engaged and enjoy the camp. Without exception, all of them said that the entire experience was very valuable to them as a community

The resource persons liked the students involvement especially during the last two weeks. Very soon, all of them had an email id by helping each other and could send e.mails. Their progress on the computer was amazing

The CCI - Veeravanallur exhibition

The EtoS sub-committee arranged an exhibition of printed cotton saris at the end of the camp. They had earlier obtained 80 count plain unbleached saris woven at Veeravanallur and sent them out to printing locations in different parts of India. These were printed in time for the camp. The variety, colours and quality of printing was breathtaking and spoke volumes of the collaborative country-wide experiment

Both children and parents were amazed and proud at the transformation of the basic handloom fabric they had woven and were particularly pleased that this led to orders from several sources

CCI now plans to replicate the Veeravanallur initiative in the seven other locations where the EtoS programme is active. Hopefully with equal success

CHAMBA RUMAL

Delhi Crafts Council's Revival project gets the GI Certification

Anjana Somany

Chamba Rumal, is a unique art form, named after the city of Chamba, in the northern Himalayan state of Himachal Pradesh. It combines the skills of the art of miniature painting and embroidery. The word rumal means a kerchief or, in this case, a large embroidered square piece of cloth, the drawing of which is inspired by the Pahari School of miniature paintings. They are used as wrappings for auspicious gifts and as coverings for ceremonial dishes. Even today these rumals must be exchanged between families of the bride and groom as a token of goodwill during weddings. The most common themes seen are the life and legends of Lord Krishna. Rumals can be found in both court and folk styles. The Chamba Rumal is famous for its unusual beauty and is housed in the collections of museums across the world

The initial stage of creating a rumal involves an ink drawing on the fabric by artists from the Pahari School of miniature painting. The drawing then serves as a template for the embroidery, which was earlier done by ladies of the royal families but is today practiced by womenfolk across the Chamba region. The rumals were typically embroidered on unbleached hand-spun muslin using untwisted silk floss dyed in natural colours. The double satin stitch technique used is known as do-rukha and ensures exact duplication of the image on the reverse of the cloth. The elaborate floral borders, ornamentation, and portrayal of figures and animals reflect the sophistication of miniature paintings

A skillful blend of the painting tradition and embroidery, Chamba Rumals have aptly been called 'paintings in embroidery', a term coined by the scholar Stella Kramrisch

CHAMBA RUMAL AND THE DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

The revival of the Chamba Rumal, a unique art form of the hill state of Himachal Pradesh in India, is one of Delhi Crafts Council's success stories. Languishing crafts and their revival have engaged the attention of the Council for many years. Through its intervention since 1996, DCC is proud to have demonstrated that this unique tradition can continue to flourish even under changed circumstances

Today it is successfully running a center named Charu, which trains and guides the crafts persons in design, colour and quality. While keeping the intrinsic worth of the art form intact, innovation and new developments by DCC has helped find a sustained market for the product. The Council has been successful in producing untwisted pure silk floss dyed in natural colours. Innovative framing ideas and packaging solutions have heightened the appeal of the product

Exquisite examples of Chamba Rumals were being made till the early part of the 20th century. Lack of patronage due to the decline of princely states may have accounted for the decline of this skill. Delhi Crafts Council was inspired to take up the challenge for its revival and has been successful in infusing life into this languishing art form

The Chamba Rumal got GI certification in 2007. And a unique craft revived by DCC has found its place in the living craft heritage of the country



Activities

THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

National Meet (18 & 19 March)

- The National Meet of CCI was held at Harrisons Hotel in Chennai. It was attended by the Crafts Councils of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The councils made presentations of their work in the year 2012 - 13 as well as their plans for the next year
- The central theme of the Meet was Geographical Indicators. Ms. Ritu Sethi of Craft Revival Trust made a presentation on the issues related to GI. Mr T C James, Director, National Intellectual Property Organisation (NIPO), made a presentation on the IPR framework. Ms. Shikha Mukherjee shared her experiences with GI in the tea industry

Textile Show (5 & 6 April)

- The bi-annual textile show held by CCI was a resounding success in terms of the superb range of saris on display and the unbelievable craftsmanship. The cognoscenti of Chennai came in huge numbers to refurbish their wardrobes

Veeravanallur camp (April 29 to 24 May)

- A holistic education camp which included classes in aari design, computing, English through dramatics and more gave a great learning cum fun time to 23 school students of the Educate to Sustain programme

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ANDHRA PRADESH

Craft in Schools

- This is an ongoing programme and in its 3rd year now. It has been an uphill task getting schools to set aside time for this activity, since it is not part of the school curriculum. However, CCAP's efforts to sensitize future generations to crafts as part of the heritage and value continues

Puttapaka Cluster

- After a long delay funds for the second year programmes for the Cluster were partially released. After meeting with participating weavers and the Consortium a decision was taken not to continue with the various activities laid out by the Cluster Programme. CCAP has requested for a transfer of funds to be used for the Common Facility Centre. This building would be more useful for the weavers to conduct their Dye & Design Development Workshops. Land has been purchased by the Consortium and the bhoomi puja was initiated by Late Smt. Lalitha Prasad. It has been decided to name the building in her honour

Gajam Anjaiah

- A master weaver and member of Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh was awarded the Padma Shri for 2013. CCAP felicitated him on the 14th of March 2013

K. Srinath

- Leather Puppeteer was awarded the Kamala Puraskar Award by Delhi Crafts Council

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA

Design Development Workshop (14 December to 4 January 2013)

- CCK conducted Design and Technical Development Workshop in Temple Textile Embroidery sponsored by the Office of the DC(H), New Delhi
24 craftspersons participated in the programme

Kuteera Exhibition (17 to 23 January)

- Kuteera exhibition 2013 with 38 participating craftspersons showcased handcrafted artifacts and handloom for the home at the Chitrakala Parishath. As always, this event was well received by the people of Bangalore

Crafts Bazaar (19 to 28 February)

- CCK organized a Crafts Bazaar at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bangalore. 165 craftspersons from different parts of India participated with various craft products and handlooms
- **Miss. Anasuya Pavanje** was felicitated and awarded a purse of Rs. 2 Lakhs for her dedicated work done in the field of development of handicrafts, marketing and welfare of craftspersons. She associated with Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay for the development of crafts



CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMIL NADU

Bagru Workshop (23rd to 25th February 2013)

- Master Craftsperson Lal Chand Chippa conducted a 3 day Bagru printing workshop for the students of PSG Tech at their premises, followed by a workshop for our members & Non-members. The students and others were exposed to the ancient techniques of vegetable dye printing & processing

Crafts Council of Tamilnadu's Silver Jubilee Celebration (12th March 2013)

- Incommemoration of CCTN's silver jubilee, awards were given to outstanding craftsmen
- Muthum Perumal of Thoivalai village near Nagercoil was honoured for his Manickamalai. His is the only family that makes the manickamalai out of oleander





flowers and nochi leaf for the Padmanabhaswami and Suchindram temples

- The award function was followed by a live demonstration and workshop by Mr. Sakul Intakul, world renowned floral artist from Bangkok. This demonstration and workshop was well appreciated by all and received rave reviews in all the leading dailies. Local florists were sponsored by CCTN members to be trained by Mr. Sakul in the workshop
- Mrs. Lakshmi Balasubramaniam, a weaver from Sirumugai was given the award for her master piece : The Thirukural woven in a saree

Mrs V Sulochana a tribal was honoured for her work in propagating craft

DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

Berang (January 2013)

- Delhi Crafts Council collaborated with Sanjay Garg and the Crafts Museum to showcase a stunning exhibition of hand printed textiles. Members of the DCC worked with Sanjay for over eight months during the product development phase. This new collection was made at Akola, a community of dyers and printers near Udaipur. The saris, dupattas and stoles designed for this collection were created using the traditional natural dyeing process and printing methods of this region. The exhibition was a great success

Talk on the Weaves of Odisha (February 2013)

- This was the first in a series of talks and films to be held over the next few months. Gunjan Jain of Vriksh came to the office with stories and samples of her work in the State of Odisha. Through Gunjan's talk our members had the chance to hear a very personal insight into the world of textiles

Kairi and The Bandhani of Kachchh : Ties Across Time (March 2013)

- Kairi is the summer textiles exhibition of DCC. We had a stunning collection of textiles created by twenty craftsmen and clusters from all over the country. This annual exhibition is held with the intention of promoting their craftsmanship and offering them a marketing platform. Hilal Ansari, Sutrarakar Samman Awardee of 2012 (Excellence in Traditional Weaving Skills Award) presented a lovely collection of Maheshwari Saris

Along with the Sari Exhibition we showcased a fabulous exhibition by Khamir, an NGO based in Kachchh, on the Art of Bandhani

Kamala Devi Puraskar (April 2013)

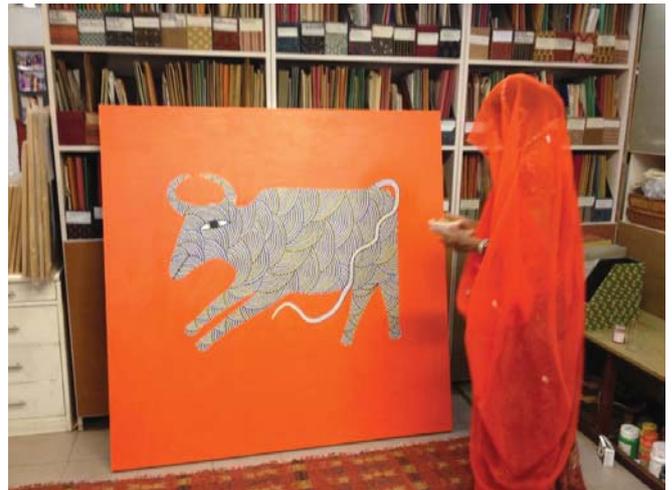
- The Annual Kamala Devi Scholarship event was held at the India International Center. Rajiv Sethi was our chief guest and presided over our event with such a feeling of warmth and pride for the young craftsmen. He called the award ceremony a 'gem of an event'. This year seven scholarships were awarded to talented youngsters from across the country. The children were hosted in Delhi and visited the Crafts Museum and had an educational session with a local designer, Aditi Prakash, which they thoroughly enjoyed

Those selected for the Puraskar were : S. Lakshmi Kanth, 18yrs, (Venkatgiri Weaving, A.P), Subhankar Pal,17yrs, (Bengal Pottery,W.B), Prashanta Sarkar, 20 yrs, (Carved wooden mask,W.B), Manpreet,19yrs, (Phulkari Embroidery, Punjab), Bibek Malakar,15yrs, (Sholapith Carving, W.B), Monalisa Maharana,,14yrs, (Stone Carving, Odisha)



Dot Paining Workshop (April 2013)

- Soni Jogi, an artist from Ahmedabad and her husband Ganesh, held a weeklong workshop in the DCC office. Soni creates contemporary yet tribal drawings of animals in acrylic on paper. She grew up in Rajasthan and had never painted until she married into the Jogi family. DCC used this workshop as an opportunity for her to work with different mediums and create large art pieces on canvas and paper. Her work will be exhibited at United Art Fair in Delhi later this year



Chamba Trip and Workshop (May 2013)

- Six members of the council travelled to the North-West corner of Himachal Pradesh to visit the Revival Project and Center set up by the Delhi Crafts Council in Chamba. It was a fabulous trip and a treat to meet the ladies working in Chamba, to see where they work and how young talent continues to be encouraged to sustain the craft of the Chamba Rumal. New ideas and experiments were worked into the rumal



The Kangra valley is and after a breathtaking eight-hour drive through the gorgeous mountains we reached Andretta. We visited the pottery studio set up there by the well-known potters, Mini and Mary Singh. Working against the background of the rolling hills of valley DCC developed a collection for Patram, a home décor exhibition to be held at Kamala. It was an amazing trip and we felt so privileged to meet and work in person with the craftsmen of the region

Saanji Traditional Kalakaar - A film by Devika Gamkhar

- DCC collaborated to with the India International Center to showcase a film made by Devika Gamkhar on the crafts of Sanji. It was wonderful to have the artist portrayed in the film attend the event. The film contains a wealth of research and provides a permanent record of the craft and its craftsmen

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF WEST BENGAL

- Bengal Leads CCWB Show (15 to 17 January): On repeated requests from the Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal, CCWB participated in a crafts show Bengal Leads 2013 at Haldia. The artisans who participated were: Akhil Jana(Madhur), Tapan Chitrakar (Pattachitra), Basanta Malakar (Shola), Anima Dey (Shell craft), Buddhadev Jana (Basketry), Rajib Maity (Dhokra), Arun Pal (Pottery), Tarun Pal and Saraswati Roy
- Village Fair (2 Feb) : A Village Fair was organized at the Saturday Club on 2nd February 2013. Craftspeople who participated were Mamata Saha with handmade bead jewellery, Basanta Malakar exhibiting exquisite sholapith and Kinkar Ghosh with jewellery Pattachitra paintings and artefacts were on display at the Fair



- Pottery Workshop “ Terra Sigilata ” (7 to 10 January): This unique workshop was organized by Clay Stories at Aorang Studio, Kolkata. French potter Dalloun demonstrated a special type of non-toxic natural glaze known as sigillee made from different kinds of clay which were used by the potters of ancient Rome. Arun Pal was very happy to have participated in this workshop as he felt he had learnt something useful and easily applicable on his products

- Seminar on Women and Crafts (9 February): “ Creativity, Empowerment,

Transformation ” was organized by Loreto College Alumnae Association. A talk was given by Smt. Kasturi Gupta Menon who spoke about women’s role in craft production and offered help from CCI to the Loreto faculty and students for furthering the cause, G.M.Kapur from Intach spoke on how they have linked tourism for promotion of the craft village in Odisha. Ashoke Chatterjee also gave a scintillating talk on crafts

NABANNA (23 to 29 March)

- A seminar and an exhibition of the crafts of Bengal was organized by Smt. Shanta Ghosh on behalf of her trust Amiya Suresh Memorial and as Vice President, Crafts Council of West Bengal, in Santiniketan. Crafts Council of West Bengal participated in the festival Mrs Purabi Roy gave a talk on Crafts Council of West Bengal’s role on craft development. FICCI and NABARD participated in the Seminar giving talks on their role in promoting crafts. A number of craftspeople brought their products for their sale

Last Word

Artisan's views on GI

Pushpa Chari

What is the Indian artisan's perception of GI, his view on the impact of GI on his professional and creative life, its role in opening up markets and better opportunities for his craft - and in the safeguarding the priceless heritage which he carries in his hands ?

As he creates precious objects and weaves which define us as a people, in remote corners of the country, is he aware that his craft product's historical, cultural and geographical connect and its unique creative processes are now getting an official GI marking and a special identity ? And that, apart from giving pride of place, the GI registration protects his craft from deception and faking and nurtures it for future growth ?

An adhoc, random survey with craft artisans throws up interesting reactions, out of the box suggestions and not a little ignorance about GI. Conversations with artisans about GI, both in the larger context and in explaining the nitty-gritty details of the registration reveals the immense pride of the craftsman in his familial vocation, which he sees as an extension of himself, as his ' mothers gift ' or patrimony. There is a lot of curiosity and questions about GI with interactions invariably ending with how will it help me sell my craft and find markets " and so on

Weaver Noor Mohammad from the village Khaitoon in Kota district arrives every year in Chennai with huge bundles of exquisite kota saris which he and the 1500 weavers of his village have crafted for the Chennai exhibition. He is aware of the GI certification for the Kota saris and very proud of it " The weavers may have migrated to Kota from West Bengal. 400 years or so ago but the kota weave was developed here " says Noor Mohammad. National Awardee and Bagh printer par excellence. Sulemanji Khatri echoes the sentiment when he says " It is the waters of river Bhagini which give the Bagh prints their special beauty. Once the Begum of Bhopal asked me to practice my craft in Bhopal. It didn't work and the prints just didn't and the prints didn't have the shine ". Unique techniques and geographical location which are the leitmotif of GI, finds, a resonance in most craft artisans, from Shilp Guru and Chikankari artisan Rehana Begum who believes that chikankari can only be created in Lucknow to Mysore wood inlay artisan Shabir to whom Mysore alone is the home of this craft. And Gond artist Roshan Dhurve says simply. I don't know of any GI chaap, but I only know that God sent us to make these paintings and it will never die

Odisha's icon maker and National Awardee Rajendra Mishra, West Bengal's successful weaver-entrepreneur Ramanand Basak, Pattachitra artist Bishnu Prasad Mishra, Manish Patel, hand block artisan from Madhya Pradesh and many more have not heard of GI but are willing to be educated and enlightened about it. All feel it's a good thing and will protect their crafts from many issues such as mass copying, passing off screen printing as block printing, hybridization of motifs, etc. The artisans are vociferous in their plea that information about GI be transmitted to artisans throughout the country

Shilp Guru Gajam Govardhan master artisan of Telia rumaal who is applying for GI registration for Puttapakka ikat, feels that GI marking will spread the fame of Puttapakka telia rumaal throughout the world. However, according to him the ordinary weaver will get little benefit, though GI certification will be good for coming generations, and so on. " The Government should do special programmes to educate artisans in the technique of ikat says Govardhan. Then only can Telia rumaal be saved. Financial assistance for the GI registered craft artisans is also called for. It is after all a matter of pride for our artisans to stay in the craft "



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