



# THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

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

AUGUST 2012

## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ARTISANS & THEIR CRAFTS: AN UP-DATE

*Ashoke Chatterjee*

When enumerators from the national Economic Census 2012 knock on your door later this year, give them a special welcome. Census 2012 is going to be hugely significant for CCI and all crafts activist in the country – and you may well be part of the preparation the enumerators will have gone through in order to do their job. That job is linked to CCI's "Craft Economics & Impact Study" (CIES) which was completed last year (see Learning Together, Newsletter February 2012)

### CEIS Impact

The February Newsletter attempted to keep members informed of developments that have followed the submission of the CEIS to Government, soon after the Study was shared at the Business Meet last August. The Study and its recommendations were then reviewed by a partnership group which came together at the Crafts Museum in New Delhi in September. That was when members of the CEIS team (Raghav Rajagopalan, Gita Ram, Manju Nirula, Shikha Mukherji and I) met with key officials in the Planning Commission and at the Office of the Development Commissioner. CEIS had an impact. Early in March, the Commission called a series of meetings bringing together activists from civil society and a range of Ministries and Departments at the Centre who are (or should be!) concerned with the wellbeing of artisans and their crafts. Those discussions on the CEIS and related experience have proved hugely significant. The CEIS premise (which echoed concerns expressed earlier in discussions with stakeholders leading up to the 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan) was accepted that national data currently available on the sector is dangerously inadequate. It does not reflect in any way the size and scale of the contribution which artisans make to the national economy. It was also accepted that unless this foundation of facts is rectified, policies and schemes as well as investment in the craft sector will continue to miss the bus

### Key Decisions

At the Planning Commission, two decisions were taken that will have far-reaching effect. One was to include crafts and artisans in the 6<sup>th</sup> Economic Census 2012. Another was to follow the Census with a 'Satellite Account' specific to the sector, which will provide details which cannot be captured in the Census 2012 focus on 'commercial establishments'. Following these decisions, the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) and the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) have looked at CCI for support on next steps. These have included the framing of guidelines and key questions to be used by field enumerators to correctly identify craft activities and artisans, development of tools and materials to be used in the Census process (including in the training of enumerators and their supervisors), a listing of activities and processes involved in 40 selected crafts identified by the DC(H), and linking these to established statistical codes used to classify commercial activities for Census purposes

The materials developed for the Census include generic and state-specific illustrated maps (developed by CCI with a team of researchers coordinated by Vidya and Gita), bringing together available information with the 560 crafts analysed in "Handmade in India" (Aditi and MP Ranjan, NID), using that publication as a key resource. PPTs are also being prepared to use field examples that can sensitise Census staff on the processes and activities involved in craft production, and the numbers / levels of artisans that need to be included in the understanding of 'artisans' and craft production. This has been a huge task, carried out by a small team at the CCI office in Chennai, with support from Manju and the Delhi Crafts Council office

### What Census 2012 will do – and not do

The Census 2012 surveys commercial establishments, i.e. of products and services exchanged in the marketplace. The Census will provide broad indicators of the size and contribution of the craft / artisanal sector to the economy. It will include as 'commercial establishments' those who produce for market sale and where the activity of respondents represents more than 180 workdays in the year -- thus excluding many activities in the sector that are beyond these limitations, such as seasonal work that does not extend over 180 days.

These exclusions can be of critical importance to craft activists, as well as other details such as the contribution of women artisans, the invisible half of the sector. These important aspects will be covered by the more detailed analysis of the sector to be made through the 'Satellite Account' that is to follow the broad outlines revealed by the Census 2012. Hopefully, data from the Census will be enough to provide a wake-up call to the nation on the importance of crafts and artisans, and begin the process of reforming national policies and programmes. The crunching of data emerging from the Census 2012 will take time (60-100 days after the Census' field process is completed). Therefore there will be ample opportunity to understand and use the data as it emerges so as to influence the Satellite Account process. Studies may be needed in preparation for the Satellite Account, and CCI intends to be an active partner in these preparations

### An Important Guideline

Raghav, Manju and Gulshanji represented CCI at a May 4 meeting at the Planning Commission, where progress on Census / Satellite Account was reviewed. Of particular importance were two issues. One was the understanding that handloom production would be integrated with the Census' understanding of 'craft'. Another was the 'guideline' that has finally emerged to help describe the sector: *"Handicrafts are items made by hand, mostly using simple tools. While they are predominantly made by hand, some machinery may also be used in the process. Skills are normally involved in such items / activities, but the extent thereof may vary from activity to activity. These items can be functional, artistic and / or traditional in nature"*

The challenge of 'defining' crafts and artisans has been a major one. A workable definition had emerged years ago at the time of the 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. The CEIS suggested a definition based on it. Things got complicated when the Supreme Court issued its own definition – one that was directed at resolving export legalities, not at national data requirements! A 'guideline' was needed to address a concern within the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Statistics on distinguishing between crafts and other handmade products (papads, pickles, bricks, bidis etc) that Government does not want to include in its understanding of crafts / artisans. The matter came up again at a June 1 meeting at the CSO, attended by Gita, where the Census 2012 time-table was worked out

### Training for the Task

Field work will begin after the rains in October, continuing till August 2013. The important issue for CCI is to assist the training that will soon begin throughout the country to sensitise enumerators and supervisors to their field tasks. Details of the training process will emerge from a meeting in New Delhi in late June. Meanwhile, CCI has been asked to assist by identifying resource persons in every region who can be associated with the training process, sharing their knowledge of local crafts in the local language. The support of State Councils and other partners will thus be critical as so much now depends on successfully and quickly sensitizing and 'educating' enumerators and their supervisors to the sector. By the time this Newsletter appears, several readers will have been contacted and involved

The range of materials being developed in the course of these efforts will also be of great use and benefit to all craft activists. These can help ensure that future planning and field action are more focused. In addition, the Planning Commission is considering research studies that can support the proposed Satellite Account. It has also expressed its concern to better understand the problems and aspirations that are driving artisans today, most particularly those of the younger generation. Here again are opportunities for advocacy, and for the changes we have all felt so necessary in the way official agencies reach out (or fail to reach out) to artisans through existing schemes – as well as on changes needed within the NGO sector

That, in a nutshell, is where we are today. So keep in mind all that is at stake when Census 2012 comes knocking at your door!

### KNOW YOUR CRAFT

*Visalakshi Ramaswamy*

### The Chettinad Kottan

The traditional palm leaf baskets of Chettinad are called *Segappolai Kottans*, referring to the traditional red and purple colours of the earliest baskets. The kottans were used mainly for storage around the house and as containers for gifts and offerings during agreements, weddings and other sacred rituals held in the family

The typical Chettiar household followed the joint family system and each house contained several families. The women, referred to as Aachis were famed for their thrift and industriousness. After the morning's chores were done, the women of the house would sit around in the courtyard, gossiping and making these colourful baskets. The younger girls would also join them and learn the craft

The frequent travels abroad by the Chettiar menfolk leaving their wives for long stretches of time might have been the reason for the kottan emerging as a hobby craft. The passage of time saw a change in the lifestyle of the Chettiar community; the women started travelling with their husbands and settling outside Chettinad. The joint family system broke up and the women no longer had the time to indulge in kottan making. The craft faded out of use

Over the years, the kottans were replaced with metal and plastic baskets for rituals and ceremonies. Plastic baskets avoid the laborious procedure of harvesting the palm leaves, drying and splitting them, and dyeing them to required shades. The community began using these other alternatives to the kottan for ritual and practical use



The kottan revival's most crucial need was a new purpose for existence. When faced with this scenario, the M.Rm.Rm. Cultural Foundation was started in the year 2000 to revive languishing crafts and culture of the Chettinad region and Project Kottan was its first initiative. When looking at reviving the kottan tradition, it was essential to analyze the marketability of the kottan. Today's need is not for traditional baskets for ritual use, but products that suited an urban contemporary lifestyle. A year-long training program was conducted by Kannamai Aachi, an octogenarian who had knowledge of the craft, and an initial group of seven women were taught to process the palm leaf, splice it to size, dye it in the characteristic bright colours and master the nuances of weaving

The Kottan Project was originally started in Keelayapatti, an agricultural village. The Foundation now also runs centres in Sravayal Pudhur, Nachiapuram, Vairavanpatti and Kanadukathan. The number of craftswomen engaged in basketry also has increased from 10 women in the first group to more than 100 women across five centres

The Chettinad kottan is woven from the leaves of the palmyra tree. Only tender Palmyra leaves may be used in this craft and are stripped from the tree during the summer months. The tree suffers no damage and continues to flourish, thus making the craft eminently eco-friendly. The green palm leaves are meter wide fan like structures with pointed ends. The leaves are dried in the shade for five to six days till all the moisture is lost and the green turns to a light brown. After removing the central vein, the leaves are spliced into wide strips of equal width and sorted according to length. For dyeing the leaves, firewood is lit and water is heated to a boil and the dye is added to it. The leaves are added and stirred well with a wooden stick. The dyed leaves are washed in a bucket of water to remove the excess dye. The leaves are then dried in the shade to prevent fading due to direct sun light. The leaves are gripped by the feet and kept in place with the knees jack-knifed. The base is built by bending over and inserting palm leaf strips crosswise. The weaving of the horizontal strips into the vertical strips makes the base of the basket. Now that the width is determined, the sides are woven according to the shape and design. The final stage is the rim. After this, the lid of the basket is woven. Other processes like adding an extra weft for more complex designs are also used as per the design requirement

The kottan has been adapted to suit contemporary needs and has been reinvented as lifestyle and fashion accessories with products focussing on both functionality and aesthetics. While designing, the Foundation tries to ensure that the nature of the design does not have an adverse effect on the craftswomen, the craft, the consumer or the environment. Careful planning in production ensures that it is practical and sustainable. Experimentation in weave design and colour by the craftswomen themselves is encouraged to help them grow as an independent and self-contained group. The introduction of natural dyes and further experimentation by the craftswomen has produced a wide variety of shades as subtle as they are exquisite

The increasing demand for the kottan has ensured that the current group is working to capacity, and slowly entire families have got involved in the craft leading to improvement in the economic situation for the craftswomen and their families. Apart from increased respect in society the participation in various exhibitions has been a

great source of confidence to the rural craftswomen who now travel to international exhibitions, manage their stall, make sales hold accounts and attend workshops. Exposure has given them a world view on handicrafts and the positioning of their own craft of kottan making in relation to a larger perspective on crafts

Along with economic and social empowerment in the rural set up, village sanitation and levels of education have increased significantly, and today there are no school dropouts. Many of the children now pursue higher education. There has been a significant growth in the number of girl students, a previously infrequent occurrence. Those that have completed their education have found jobs, enabling them and their families to look forward to a better future

## **KAMALA AWARDEES 2012**

*Pushpa Chari*

### **Saluting Kamala Awardees**

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

#### **Kamala Samman**

The Kamala Samman award for a lifetime dedicated to crafts goes to Smt. Anasuya Pavanje. Love of handicrafts, their nurturing and development have been an intrinsic part of Smt. Anasuya Pavanje's life. She pursued these goals in her capacity as Manager of the Karnataka State Handicrafts Development Corporation, member of the Executive Committee of Crafts Council of Karnataka since its inception in 1965, and as Officer in charge of 'Kaushalya', Artisans Training Project in Canara Bank, Bangalore. She has played an invaluable role in furthering the cause of craft and craftspersons through seminars, workshops, training projects and exhibitions

Her 8 volume 'Metal Craft Survey in Karnataka' is an encyclopedic work giving a detailed account of bell metal master artisans of the state and a general survey of the Bell Metal Training Project of Kundapur

#### **Kamala Award for Contribution to Crafts**

The Kamala Award for Contribution to Craft for the year 2012 goes to Shri. Nageshwara Rao

Shri. Nageshwara Rao has crafted aesthetic, colourful and very attractive Kondapalli toys and artifacts for the past 50 years, bringing a rare passion and commitment to his vocation. A votary of vegetable dyes, he was a pioneer in introducing vegetable dye colouring on Kondapalli toys. He has disseminated his knowledge of vegetable dye making to other toy makers, making the legendary Kondapalli toy eco-friendly and environmentally sensitive

He has also introduced many new entrants to the craft of Kondapalli toy making, carving and painting by his training workshop. He has been at the forefront of Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh's 'Craft in Schools' programme

#### **Kamala Award for Excellence in Craft**

The Kamala Award for Excellence in Craft for the year 2012 goes to Shri. Rajendra Mishra

National Awardee Shri. Rajendra Mishra, represents the wonderful culture of stone carving associated with the world famous temple of Lord Jagannath in Puri. Trained by his father, Shilp Guru Debendra Mishra, he imbibed the finest traditions of intricate carving, grace and fluid lines which are intrinsic to Odisha's stone sculptural traditions. Apart from crafting superb icons of the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, Shri. Mishra creates aesthetic utilityware. His masterpieces have been exhibited at various national and international exhibitions at venues such as Barcelona, Berlin and Dubai. He has trained many students under the Government of India's 'Guru Shishya Parampara' scheme

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

The Shanta Prasad Award for Excellence in Craft for the year 2012 goes to Shri. Devidas D. Shet

State Awardee Shri. Devidas D. Shet, a paramparik wood craft artisan is a master of the technique of deep wood carving in sandalwood, teak, rosewood and country wood. His speciality includes superbly carved temple chariots, 'mandaps,' beautifully carved depiction of scenes from the Epics, as well as icons of gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon. Marrying tradition with innovation Shri. Shet has crafted 'raths' and 'maharaths' which are lightweight and temple doors, 'utsav raths' elephant, lion and Nandi 'raths' which he has made for temples in Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra

Shri. Devidas D. Shet is the winner of the Karnataka State Award for Sandalwood Carving, the Karnataka Shilpkala Academy Award, the Karnataka State Award and the Rajotsava Rajya Pratishan Award. He has trained many young aspirants of woodcraft at the DD Shet Handicrafts Academy, taking a heritage craft into the future.

## STUDY TIME FOR CCI : SUMMER OF 2012

*Gita Ram*

The recent exercise which CCI did for the Sixth Economic Census 2012 (refer to article by Ashoke Chatterjee in this Newsletter) was to develop a set of tools for training the enumerators. There are to be 12 lakh enumerators, all of whom have passed 10th standard who will do a house to house enumeration of persons involved in making handicrafts or handlooms

The task before us is to sensitize them about what craft is. How would they understand what a craft is? A very simple set of guidelines has been framed. 'crafts are items made by hand, mostly using simple tools --'. Of course we have to rule out *papad* or brick making!

The training tools include the following:

Each craft has been given a specific generic icon.

A map of the state which shows the craft clusters and the craft icons

An XLs showing districts with all the crafts in it with the local names

Images of all the crafts of the state with the relevant icons

A power point presentation sensitizes the enumerator to

- \* Guidelines on how to identify a craft
- \* A wide range of crafts from the simple broom to a *meenakari* box
- \* How crafts are made by hand with the help of simple tools
- \* The crafts of the state

All this is intended to provide as close a fool proof methodology as is possible. Apart from this, we were asked to list the activities in the making of each craft. We now have an illustrated set of processes for 44 crafts

The wonderful thing about the whole exercise is that we get to actually think about crafts theoretically and academically. If one were to do a curriculum for crafts, we now have all the tools for it!

## EDUCATE TO SUSTAIN: CONTACT PROGRAMME FOR STUDENTS FROM RAGHURAJPUR, PURI AND SHANTINIKETAN (FEBRUARY 2012)

*Anjula Asokan*

### Raghurajpur

Raghurajpur is a heritage crafts village developed by INTACH located a few kilometers away from Puri. The artisans here practice primarily two crafts, patachitra and wood carving

Our visit on 5th February for a contact programme with the Educate to Sustain students was held at Bhagaban Subbudi's place;

The artisans of Raghurajpur work and sell primarily from their homes. Children are exposed to these monetary transactions and are encouraged to take up the crafts as they have a first-hand account of their career prospects. We saw drawings done by the students which were of a fairly good standard as most of them show an inclination for the arts.

Our meeting threw up interesting insights: Bikas Moharana a budding artist, makes small wooden balls which he decorates with lovely paintings of animals, birds and plants, while Anil Subudhi's sketches of his wood carving samples reflect his passion for the craft. The case of Subha Ranjan Sahoo (a student in our programme), who is fairly certain he does not want to follow in his father's footsteps and learn the craft of silver filigree work, illustrates the need for constant monitoring of the children by the people in charge of the centers, in this case, Bhagaban Subudhi. Another candidate could take the place of Subha Ranjan Sahoo

### Puri

In Puri we have a further 10 children enrolled in our Educate to Sustain endeavour. The children live in close proximity to each other down a long narrow lane and the production of stone carving goes on in practically every home in the immediate vicinity. The children are faring quite well in school and are learning the craft alongside. They brought small samples of their work to show us

Three students (Santosh, Govinda and Sangeeta) are completing their 10<sup>th</sup> standard this year and expressed their interest in wanting to complete their schooling through Class 12. Mona Lisa who joined our program last

year is an exceptionally good student and is keen to learn the craft. She brought a sample of a flower carved in stone by her. Sunil Mohapatra who happened to be the youngest student did a design on thermocol as he is still learning to sketch. Sonali Mishra paints very well and expressed her desire to study Arts in college



Scholarship Student exhibiting Sholapith Craft

### Camp for Students from West Bengal at Shantiniketan

The attendees had come from all parts of West Bengal, accompanied by one or both parents. Ruby Pal Choudhury came down from Kolkata and was the driving force in organizing the programme, generously playing host to all the attendees (along with their parents) in her house in addition to arranging for a caterer to provide them with all their meals

The session began with an interactive session between the children and Ruby. Each child spoke about his / her daily activities. This was typically school, studies, tuition, and play time and craft education in that order. All of them expressed interest in completing their education until class 12. Many of them said they would continue their higher education along with practicing their family craft on the caveat that they

were given timely help in terms of programmes tailored to enhance their skills and contemporize their designs and products with new and innovative ideas

The afternoon session featured visits to several craft workshops so that the children could experience first hand a small microcosm of the world of craft. The children expressed a lot of interest and thoroughly enjoyed their exposure these different crafts such as sholapith, lac craft, etc and the processes involved in producing them

The last programme for the day was a visit to a Santhal village where the children had the pleasure of listening to a Baul singer and watching a tribal dance

At the second day's session Vishal's students gave the children a presentation of what they had learned in their four semesters at Shilpa Sadan. As the computer opened and the presentation began, the children collectively moved forward, eager to listen. Vishal's students showed the children images of various products they had learned to make at Shilpa Sadan and also described how the same medium could be used for several different products as a result of innovation. For the older children in particular this presentation seemed to open a world of future possibilities

One takeaway that was readily apparent after interacting with all the children in Orissa and West Bengal was that most of the children want to complete their school education and finish class 12. Within the purview of our current programme, we could lose several children who want to study past class 10 as we can't find funding for them or locate the right courses or placements for them in time. We need to take an urgent call on educating these children right through class 12 on the one hand and also look for the appropriate courses available for them to pursue post their schooling on the other. These courses should enhance their craft skills while simultaneously providing them with the ability to innovate and market their wares

### IN LIGHTER VEIN.....

*Pushpa Chari*

So you think it will soon be time to write a 'Requiem for the Sari', relegate it to photographs hung on walls of sari-wrapped 21<sup>st</sup> century mummies (you and me silly, not the Egyptian variety), write it off as lost cause, ritual wear *a la the kimono*, intangible heritage, whatever. Pause and think again. Or better still pay a visit to the Ladies of CCI who while zipping around the city and country on serious craft revival nurturing, documenting, marketing and lobbying missions also seriously think, dream, walk and talk saris. Always draped in elegant saris, they are trend setters known for their keen eye in ferreting out rare saris and weaves from remote corners of the country (all of us), from heritage collections (Dally) and even the pavements stores of Shantiniketan (Gita). As for me I once removed a Rajasthani turban off an unsuspecting friend's head, and morphed it into the most colourful fantastic sari ever. Fortunately for turbans I didn't quite set a trend..

But to get back to the CCI ladies' gathering with the girls dressed in bits and pieces of sari history and heritage. Once you have taken your eyes off the beautiful indigo sari (Vijaya), that ethereal khadi (Prema), the stunning tie & dye (Sita), the mud coloured Bhagalpur (Usha), the elegant Chanderi (Uma) etc, etc as well as all the other delectable saris worn by the ladies, get ready for some more sari drama ☒ ☒ ☒

Enter a vision draped in a black gajji silk sari scattered with pink - shading - into - orange chrysanthemums against the background of stars plucked from the sky. 'Whew' goes up a collective roar of joy from the ladies !

“Isn’t it absolutely gorgeous and stunning”. The pallu is minutely examined, the motifs scrutinized and judgement pronounced after having admired the vision from near and far that Ismail Khatri is absolutely a breathtaking dream come true. At which point I might remind the slightly mystified reader that it is not Ismail Khatri wrapped in a sari but the ever elegant Bela draped in an Ismailbhai creation. (Sorry, Bela, you know that we are like this only). We at the CCI are prone to sari gazing to the exclusion of everything else, even the wearer. The ladies are often heard commenting on the saris that came for lunch, how they mixed and matched, how they stood out or didn’t etc, etc. For us it is not so much the singer but the song, not the wearer but the sari – motif, weave, music and the play of colours, history and geography *et al*

CCI ladies favour saris in the entire spectrum of colours particularly those which come out of root, bark, flower leaf, iron filings, stone etc. However we do have a weakness for all shades of mud colour and our appearance in mud resist, mud coloured and mud inspired saris is often referred to us the ‘Charge of the Mud Brigade’

Some of us can also be seen on occasion at distant sari weaving, hand block printing, tie and dye and embroidery locations of the country conferring and confabulating with the sari ‘makers’, lost in the music of the blocks as they ram home, the weaves as they take shape and the play of colours. This is our idea of a soul fulfilling break. New York, London, Paris can wait.....

And you still think that the sari will soon be an extinct species

## A TRIBUTE TO KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY

*Manjari Nirula*



*Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay*  
1903 - 1988



As a tribute to its Founder Trustee Smt Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and her deep involvement with the craft sector, the IIC Trustees felt it would be most appropriate to ask DCC to participate in the year long celebrations of the Centre’s Golden Jubilee

There was an exhibition of photographs as a tribute to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay-1903-1988. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was born in Mangalore, Karnataka, on April 3, 1903. In her life spanning more than eight decades, she played many catalytic roles, which affected several sectors of the country significantly. She was a political activist, a social worker, a champion of women’s rights, and a patron saint of Indian arts and crafts. In her youth, under the influence of Gandhiji, she actively participated in India’s struggle for freedom and the civil disobedience movement, during which, she was jailed several times

With India’s independence came the upheavals of a divided nation, and she plunged herself into the problems of the displaced populations. As a social worker, she charted community development programmes for the refugees. The township in Faridabad, and the Indian Cooperative Movement came up due to her efforts

In 1952, she was made the chairperson of the newly formed All India



Lighting of Lamp at Kamala Awards



An attractive Snake Kite



Janur



Students at the Kite making workshop



Kamala Award Ceremony at the Raj Bhavan



Meera Thakur Kamala devi Puruskar winner



Lighting of Lamp at Lucknow



Chettinad Kottans



Shantiniketan camp2



Bhagwan Subbudhi

handicrafts Board. Kamaladevi felt deeply for the pitiable condition of craftsmen and the languishing and decaying craft traditions of the country. In pursuit of a renaissance, she setup crafts surveys, development programmes, and marketing-strategies. With passionate fervor, she travelled all over India, collecting old designs, reviving forgotten crafts, showcasing them, and incorporating them into modern living modes, thereby giving hope to thousands of craftsmen. She was responsible for the revival of kalamkari, Pochampally weaving, blue pottery and many other traditional crafts. She also set up the Central Cottage Industries Emporium and the regional design development centers

As vice-chairperson of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, she did similar pioneering work in reviving classical and traditional performing arts also instituting the national awards for dance and music

It was on her initiative that, in 1970, the World Crafts Council was constituted. The Crafts Council of India was set up in 1976 and today there is a network of regional Councils working on a voluntary basis. One of the schemes started by her at the Delhi Crafts Council is the annual award given to talented children of craftsmen. The aim is to encourage them to continue with their hereditary profession, and thus become preservers of the rich traditional arts of India. They are encouraged to continue their studies and to use their education for the betterment of their craft

In the 25years since the first award was given by Kamaladevi herself, over 120 children has received the award. It has given them status and prestige in their own environment, and improved their prospects. A few have gone on to receive the national award for mastercraftsmen vindicating Kamala Devi's belief that talent, if nurtured can bloom into excellence

The Kamaladevi Puraskar of the Delhi Crafts Council is totally funded by private individuals. The awardees are given a monthly stipend for one year and are included in a variety of programmes that the Council organizes from time to time. Navdit Shilpi is one such programme meant to help the young awardees in marketing and design. A few of the successful awardees have been invited to demonstrate their art on the occasion of the golden Jubilee of the India International Centre, another institution that Kamaladevi helped to found

## **NATIONAL MEET - IICD JAIPUR, MARCH-2012**

*Shivani Modi*

Our trip to Jaipur for the Business Meet was a wonderful experience. Being in Jaipur with members from different chapters sharing the same aim and goal creates a great sense of oneness in purpose and camaraderie

The first day was devoted to Craft and Education and IICD couldn't have been a more appropriate venue. At first the director gave us an overview of the curriculum and then we had the opportunity to hear the stories of 20 children of craftsmen. It was both heart-warming and heart wrenching. To hear the stories of abject poverty and deprivation was very moving and then to see what this opportunity was doing to them was incredibly inspiring

It left me thinking that though in our own ways we do impact the lives of those we work with there is still so much for us to achieve. I wonder if we can facilitate the education of many such children. Can we take up education as an important agenda and work towards the betterment of the crafts people and their communities?

The next day Ashoke Chatterjee spoke to us about the role of Crafts Council of India was playing on a National level with the government, through the Planning Commission

Without going into the details of it, I can say is that it is inspiring to be a part of a larger movement. Under the CCI umbrella we are all moving towards making significant changes for the community we have all committed our lives and time to

I returned from the National Meet with a greater sense of purpose. Also with a renewed understanding of how all of our individual efforts count

## **RESURGENCE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS FESTIVAL IN MURSHIDABAD AND TEXTILE WORKSHOPS FOR REASSESSING MURSHIDABAD'S TEXTILE HERITAGE; STRATEGIES FOR REVIVAL**

*Ruby Pal Choudhuri*

Crafts Council of West Bengal organized a Murshidabad Heritage Festival held at Kathgola Palace, Murshidabad from 16 to 30 December, 2011 in collaboration with Murshidabad Heritage Society, Beharampur, Murshidabad, West Bengal

Crafts Council's programme in Murshidabad sought to celebrate the fabulous indigenous heritage of folk tradition evident in the crafts and arts of Murshidabad district reflecting the synthesis of different traditions. It brought together the silk weavers and Balaposh makers, the bell metal workers and wood carvers, painters of patachitras and the extinct scroll miniature painting that flourished once upon a time in Murshidabad under the patronage of the Nawabs. Many of these crafts have as their best exponents artisans from the Muslim community depicting Hindu deities and customs through their handicrafts that serve as an eyeopener for those concerned about communal harmony. Fifty craftsmen participated in the Festival to demonstrate and to sell their products. They belonged to different caste groups and came from different religious backgrounds

Among other craftspeople who were present at the Festival were Kalam Patua from Murshidabad and Gurupada Chitrakar, Swarna Chitrakar and Tapan Chitrakar from Midnapore with their dual identities bearing Hindu and Muslim names to demonstrate their rare art form which only exists in Bengal. Known as Jorano Pata (scroll painting) it is an audio visual art where the artists known as Patuas compose the story, lyrics and paint and sing the story in a story telling fashion. Though this community of Patuas are Muslims by religion they are well acquainted with Hindu mythology in great detail. They painted stories and sang stories of Radha Krishna, Ram Sita, Kamale Kamini, Manasha Mangal and many other mythological themes

Sakhawat Hossain Khan the one and only maker of Balaposh, a rare quilt tradition from Bengal hails from Murshidabad town. He demonstrated this type of quilt making using colour combinations on hand stitched borders which were of highest aesthetic value

A large number of Master craftspersons (weavers) were present at the Festival for giving live demonstrations making it an interactive occasion. Pratapaditya Khan from Shantipur demonstrated of 'Jharna' sari on Tangail type of weaving

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century a large number of weavers of middle count yarn were enticed into using Lancashire cotton. But Bengal the producer and exporter of higher count cottons was able to retain many of its fine count patterned saris in the domestic market. The tradition continued with the immigrant weavers of Tangail from East Bengal settling in Fulia and around Nabadeep who continued weaving fine cloth between 100 to 120 counts. The weavers no longer adhered strictly to the traditional patterns. Its main character is the extra weft 'butis', repeated motifs all over the ground of the sari worked like embroidery on the loom. Different technologies of weaving have also been developed by the talented Tangail and Shantipuri weavers

Asit Singha Roy and his assistance Hari Sadhan Kaliadaha from Mirzapur gave a demonstration of koriyal sari on his pit-loom

Unfortunately, koriyal saris have lost their true former structure and technology. Nevertheless, the products are highly saleable since they are part of ritual saris for Bengali women. Crafts Council of west bengal would be very happy to revive the former structure with proper technology which is not possible to weave with jacquard looms

Jyotish Debnath from Kalna gave a demonstration of spinning yarn on a flat charka and demonstrated jamdani weave of a superior quality to the earlier jamdani designs which have been revived

The weavers were able to interact with the visitors to explain to them the intricacy of weaving technique

We also displayed a few old Baluchari saris which are the heritage of Murshidabad

## **MUGA SILK OF ASSAM**

*Nandini Dutta*

Weaving was a part of every Assamese home till a few decades ago. With gradual urbanization girls are moving away from this skill leading to a major shortage in weavers. This has been further compounded by difficulty in getting raw material, thus leading to exorbitant costs

Four varieties of silks dominate the Assam weaving sector, viz, Muga (the golden silk), Eri (the ahimsa silk), Nuni(summer silk) and tassar. Here we would like to highlight Muga

Muga silk is named after the Assamese word "Muga", which indicates the amber colour of the cocoon. It is popular for its golden colour, glossy fine texture and durability. Muga is hardy in character. It endures for years and improves with each wash

Muga silk is the product of the silk worm *Antheraea Assamensis* endemic to Assam. The pupa of these silkworms feed on the som (*Machilus bombycinand sualu(Litsaea polyanthea)*) leaves. Due to its low porosity, the Muga yarn cannot be bleached or dyed and its natural golden colour is retained.

Muga is an eco friendly hand woven textile due to non usage of chemicals. As a spun yarn, it is of a golden honey colour. Muga is special because of the eco-system provided by the Brahmaputra River valley. It is the only place that provides the perfect condition for its growth

Muga sericulture was encouraged by the ancient royalty of Assam, the Ahom kings, for six hundred years. It was unknown to the outside world until 1662, when Jean Joseph Tavernier, a French explorer, discovered its existence in Assam. Assam has now received the geographical indication for the production of Muga

Muga producing traditional areas in Assam are prone to air and noise pollution arising from oil exploration and pesticides in the tea industry and these have adversely impacted this highly sensitive wild silkworm. The silk worm needs temperatures around 30-35 degrees and humidity levels of about 80 to 85 percent to thrive. The vagaries of the weather—unpredictable rains and drought, have been damaging Muga cocoon production

The Assamese struggle to continue raising Muga silk as it is woven into the very fabric of their traditions, culture and economy

The Government has realized the danger to Muga and it is heartening to see the Assam Branch of the Indian Tea Association, stepping in to protect this natural heritage. A sustained and combined effort is needed and the Crafts Council of Assam is also lending its support to the exercise

## **“KAIVALAM – THE FUTURE IS HANDMADE” : A WORLD CRAFT SUMMIT OCTOBER 7 – 10, 2012, CHENNAI**

*Pushpa Chari*

Joining hands with artisans across the work in an affirmation of the shared value of hand craft. Celebrating, developing and nurturing the incredible cultural diversity of crafts in different regions of the world and providing a voice for the artisan in the community. Striving to bring craft and its maker centre stage and strengthen their status as a vital part of social and economic life. The World Crafts Council seeks to achieve these goals in its mission of serving the cause of crafts and craftpersons worldwide

The World Crafts Council, an International NGO working in the crafts sector world wide, welcomes you to 'Kaivalam', a World Craft Summit held to coincide with the 17<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of WCC to be held in Chennai from October 7 - 10, 2012. 'Kaivalam' will be a series of events culminating in the Golden Jubilee of WCC to be celebrated in 2014

'Kaivalam' will be a many splendoured composite craft experience, bringing together quality crafts from all areas of the world and India, master artisans, national and international craft scholars, historians and analysts

### Highlights of 'Kaivalam' - October 7 - 10, 2012

- ❑ Seminar on the “Future is Handmade” with eminent foreign and Indian participants  
Living Legends Meeting of Great Masters - A creative convergence of 12 international master artisans and 7 Indian Shilp Gurus
- ❑ International Craft Film Festival Competition - featuring 8 - 10 minutes long craft films produced by students
- ❑ An International Craft Expo where about 40 members from different countries of the World Crafts Council and others will showcase and sell their high quality crafts. Some of these crafts have received the UNESCO Award of Excellence
- ❑ A retail space for Jewellery and Accessories
- ❑ Vastra - A textile Expo organized by the Crafts Council of India (CCI) with exclusive textiles from all parts of India and a craft corner by SEWA and NID
- ❑ A Crafts Bazaar organized the Crafts Council of India (CCI) with nearly 150 artisans from all parts of India with an exclusive space for Indian textiles
- ❑ Prominent Art Galleries in Chennai are participating and will be hosting craft events and showcasing crafts for nearly a fortnight
- ❑ Exciting evening entertainment - Fashion shows, Dances and other events on all days

We invite you to participate in 'Kaivalam'! Visit : [www.kaivalam.org](http://www.kaivalam.org)

## SOUNDING OFF.....

### What is Craft and Who is an Artisan?

*Vidya Sastry*

This seems a very simple question to most of us. Especially for those of us who have been working in the field. But do we have an answer? Do we have AN answer?

Most often we are agreed on handloom, pottery, stone carving, and wood carving and so on as crafts. But what about a chair made by a carpenter? It may not be a craft product to some and the carpenter is not an artisan to them. Is a flower garland maker an artisan and is garland-making a craft? Is the blacksmith an artisan? To some of us, products made of recycled waste (including plastics) may not be a craft but for some of us it is. Yes, we know that we may all have different answers but we are fine with that too. We are willing to accept that each of us understands craft differently. It does not seem to matter or bother us

We normally decide that these are mere questions of ideology and semantics and so we are willing to live with differences between us and we continue our work. We buy what we think is craft; we invite to exhibitions / workshops those whom we believe are artisans ... When we think we need to be strict about the boundaries, we say we are focussed. When we are not too particular, we like to think we are generous and inclusive!

But we do have a problem when we need to define craft and artisan. And this was our first learning in the Craft Economics and Impact Study (CEIS). When we asked our team of researchers to find the number of artisans in the country from Government census data, they naturally wanted us to first define craft and artisan

So we set out working on defining the definition. We soon found ourselves tied up in knots. It was not just the questions and complications mentioned in the first part of this article, but there were a host of others. Here are just a few of them

If the artisan who has been making a craft finds he needs to do aggressive marketing on behalf of his community, he turns entrepreneur-trader (very often the story of master-weavers). Does he stop being an artisan?

The artisan also turns farmer during the farming season and when agriculture fetches him more income - is craft then only a hobby and not a livelihood

Then there is the wife of the potter who kneads the clay and does all the finishes on the pot. So also the wife, daughter, son and mother of the weaver who do almost all the pre-processes of weaving - are they artisans?

What about tailors? And more, tailors working in an export factory from where garments are exported as handicrafts?

Would we consider qualified designers as artisans if they not only had a host of employees but also actually made the products by themselves?

So how were we to define a craft and an artisan for the statistician to know which ones to count out of the census or any other data? Our first response was to go through earlier similar efforts. We drew out their definitions, refined them. We went through dictionaries, improvised them. We got the definition as applied by the DC (Handicrafts), Government of India and found it very limiting - it did not include potters! We went through official websites of organisations such as the UNESCO

In our searches we also hit upon a definition given by the Supreme Court of India! Why the court? This became interesting. There was a case of the exports of an agarbatti manufacturer and it was contested that agarbattis were not handicraft as they are mass produced? So the Supreme Court had to resolve this by defining craft

But that did not suit our need either. So finally, we came out with our own elaborate definition. Visit cci website [http://craftscouncilofindia.org/ceis\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://craftscouncilofindia.org/ceis_final_report.pdf) and read through the pdf to find our definition

After all this, the definition was only one that the statistician could use for her understanding. The data itself had no special category for artisans or craft where one could just pick out a number against a definition. As it was, only by applying several combinations of rules that the numbers could be drawn out

For example - first to narrow down the categories of work establishments in, say, textiles. Those that were having less than 10 people or those that worked out of home. Then within that to further narrow down the possibility of handicrafts, apply a rule that only those that do not use electricity.... and so on

We also applied definitions of the DC(H) or the UNESCO and got different results

But surely these were not fool-proof methods and we could not get the right numbers and figures from all possible data from the Government of India. So finally, that was the point we had to make at the end of the report that Government of India had no figures and no reliable source of data regarding the number of artisans in the country. The numbers would show up based on definitions used and it varied. It was either 8 million or 32 million artisans!

So how many crafts and artisans are actually there? That depends on what we think is craft and who we considered an artisan

## ACTIVITIES

### THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

- LUCKNOW EXHIBITION (22 - 28 February): The Crafts Council of India in collaboration with Crafts Council of Uttar Pradesh organized a thematic exhibition of block printed saris and fabric. The creative oeuvre of brilliant block prints attracted attention with the craft lovers of the city attending in large numbers
- TEXTILE & JEWELLERY SHOW (2 - 3 March): Once again colours and wondrous weaves, designs and exquisite embellishment met in a wealth of saris and fabric at CCI's Textile and Jewellery show. The saris on display included Maheshwaris, Chanderis, Benarasi, ikats, Uppada, Bengal cottons and mulmuls, silks and tussars and much else. As usual, the fabrics, saris and jewellery were a sell out
- KAMALA AWARD CEREMONY at the Raj Bhavan (19 April): This year's Kamala awards were given away by His Excellency Shri. K. Rosaiah, Governor of Tamil Nadu at the Raj Bhavan. The award ceremony will henceforth be held at the Raj Bhavan annually
- KAMALA & MORE (20 - 22 April): In an outstanding exhibition, CCI presented the creative oeuvre of Kamala winners. On display for Chennai's art lovers were stone craft artifacts, woodcraft, icons and figures, masland mats, Tanjore paintings, Kondapalli toys, kalamkari and ajrakh textiles and much more

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ANDHRA PRADESH

- Gajam Yadagiri from Puttapaka has been interacting successfully with designers to translate their idea into fabric and saris. He is not only working with weavers from Puttapaka but also with Gadwal weavers from Nagaldinne. It gives CCAP great satisfaction to see the weavers whom the Council helped with new looms and weaving sheds now working with Yadagiri in the areas of innovation, design sensibility and the advantages of working with designers
- Viji Reddy, a US based CCAP member and designer who works with Indian crafts and craftsmen, recently had an exhibition of exquisite clothes and home furnishings. She has worked with a kalamkari artist Murali and has produced a textile synergy which is interesting and exciting

### DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

- CHAMBA RUMAL WORKSHOP (February): DCC held a three day workshop at the office premises conducted by Rohini, who has been appointed as the project coordinator. The team that travelled from Chamba consisted of Parikshit Sharma—artist, Masto Devi, masterembroiderer and head of 'Charu' the Centre at Chamba, and embroiderers Indu, Heena, Tulsi, Heenu, and Soniya. The workshop aimed at disseminating understanding of motifs visa-vi, colour, outline, and placement; different types of edgings and finishes; and methods of cleaning, labeling and packing of new rumals being sent from Chamba. The team was introduced to method of material dyeing in coordination with the Lady Irwin College. DCC members along with Rohini worked out some new series of Rumals in new fabrics, colour combinations and designs which were discussed for production
- KAMALADEVI PURASKAR (25 February): Every year Delhi Crafts Council gives the Kamaladevi Puraskar to talented young craftspersons between the age of twelve and twenty years. By giving awardees a citation and a stipend the scheme aims to encourage talented young craftspersons to continue practicing their craft and pursue it as a means of livelihood

This year's awardees were: Sabiha Banu from Karnataka for Wooden Lacquerware, Dhanalakota, of Andhra Pradesh for Cherial Painting, Anita Yadav of Rajasthan for Patchwork & Tanka, Dosada Tejaswin, of Andhra Pradesh, Hemachandran, from Pondicherry for Terracotta Crafts, Vaghela Hetalben Pareshkumar of Gujarat for Ari Embroidery and Heena, Chamba of Chamba for Embroidery

KAIRI (March) "Kairi" is held annually by DCC to showcase and promote summer textiles. The exhibition was held at Shilpi Haat just above the 'Kamala' shop. Twenty one weavers and groups participated in this year's "Kairi" exhibition.



Notable amongst the exhibits were lovely telia rumal sarees by Mr Pandaraiiah, khadi sarees from Gandhigram, khadi from Bengal, organic cotton from Women Weaves and kalamkari work from Dwaraka

- KAAGHAZ PAPER PROJECT (Dec 2011 to April 2012) DCC supported the work of Rashmi Singh, a fashion and lifestyle accessories student whose project called Kaaghaz explored new possibilities of products using paper crafts. The products were crafted out of kite paper, recycled newspaper, and different types of paper. The designs were sustainably simple yet innovative and contemporary, production friendly and also used the craftsmen's skills, providing them with more opportunities and work



### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA

- Digital Capture of Culture and Heritage in Hampi: The ambitious project awarded to the Crafts Council of Karnataka by the National Institute of Advanced Studies to conduct the extensive survey, digital archiving, documentation and craft centric user experience of crafts in and around Hampi, is progressing steadily



- CCK's latest publication, Woodcraft of Karnataka by Smt Indu Parthasarathy was released by Shri. Chiranjeevi Singh I.A.S., Former Indian Ambassador to UNESCO on 16th March 2012 at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, at the "Kuteera" event

- THE KUTEERA EXHIBITION 2012 (16 - 22 March) The exhibition had 35 participating craftspersons who showcased handcrafted artefacts for the home at the Chitrakala Parishath. As always, this event was well received by the people of Bangalore

- KAMALINI The craft outlet of the Crafts Council of Karnataka focuses on the languishing crafts of Karnataka

and handicrafts from all over the country Mysore Ganjifa traditional paintings, Kinhal wooden dolls, handcrafted textiles of Ilkal specially woven with yarn dyed with natural colours, Karnataka's string puppets, Yakshagana puppets, Lambad embroidery of Sandur, Shabalu mats woven near Chamrajnagar, Bidri artefacts and the exquisite lacquerware artefacts of Chennapatna have been highly appreciated. The soap stone craft of Halebeedu in Karnataka, which have been specially designed by the Crafts Council of Karnataka through its recent workshop, is also very popular

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMILNADU

- FROM THE HEAD BY THE HAND NATURALLY (4 & 5 January): This was a craft competition organized as a part of the Coimbatore Vizha 2012. About 14 schools took part. This competition was to sensitize the children to all the natural material available in the environment. The participants had to make items for the competition from unprocessed natural materials



- JANUR ART A demonstration of Janur Art was held during CCTN's fellowship meeting

- SANJHI ART (February 25-March 2) A sanjhi workshop was held with 32 participants inclusive of four tribal ladies. These ladies are being trained by CCTN free of cost, to make them aware of the crafts being practised by tribals in other parts of India as also to give them employment skills



These ladies are being trained by CCTN free of cost, to make them aware of the crafts being practised by tribals in other parts of India as also to give them employment skills

- **GARLAND MAKING:** A garland making workshop was held by CCTN for small groups of housewives from lower income groups. This has been done with a view to enable them to earn an additional income. CCTN have chosen people who have easy connectivity to the demand market

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF WEST BENGAL

- The three phase Kite Festival conceived and organised by the Crafts Council of West Bengal began from August 17, 2011 ended on January 17, 2012

Phase One and two have already been reported in CCI's February newsletter

The Third and final phase of the Kites Festival which was in January 2012, coincided with Makar Sankranti. The programme was organised in two parts in association with the Consulate General of Japan, the Japan Foundation, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, the Indian Museum, the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre and the Indian Army, Eastern Command. On January 17 and 18, a kite making workshop was held at the Eastern Zonal Cultural Complex with kite makers from Japan, Indian kite makers from Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Kolkata. From Japan, a senior kite maker revered as a National Treasure was present at the workshop. On January 19, the international kite flying event was held on the Maidan



- **BHUJ: RISING OUT OF ITS ASHES (2 February - 3 March):**

In a tribute to the extraordinary spirit of Bhuj craftspeople and their capacity to rebuild their cultural moorings and lives, post the 2001 earthquake, CCWB organised an exhibition called 'Bhuj - Rising out of the Ashes'. Well known master artisans from Bhuj such as Sufiyan Khatri (Ajrakh printing), Kumbhar Abdulla Ibrahim and Mohammad Kharva, Hussain Lohar (cattle bell maker), Vakya Meran, Bilal Ibrahim, Hira Bai and Samma Bai (bas relief decorators) and weavers Vankar Narayan Samat, Dinesh Vishram Valji, Maheshwari Ramji, etc participated in the exhibition along with Rabari embroiderers. The products took Kolkata by storm



### OBITUARY

*Smt. Lalita Ubhayaker*

The Crafts Council of India mourns the passing away of Smt. Lalita Ubhayaker, a pioneer of the craft movement in Karnataka. She founded the Crafts Council of Karnataka in 1967 at the behest of Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. Over the years she worked tirelessly not only to revive the languishing crafts of Karnataka but also to encourage and support craftsmen by spreading awareness through organizing workshops, seminars, exhibitions, instituting scholarships for young craftspersons, and pensions for older craftspersons

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