



# THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

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

March 2015

## TRIPURA

*Kasturi Gupta Menon*

The Tripura chapter of the Crafts Council of India (CCI) had become dormant for about four years, and although it was a thriving council when I had first assumed charge as the Crafts Council of India's Honorary President, their representatives stopped coming to our National Meets from around 2010. I suppose, over time the Founder Members grew older, and found the annual trip to Chennai somewhat long and cumbersome because of their geographical location.

Tripura is a land-locked state surrounded by Bangladesh and is cut off from the rest of India. The fastest and easiest way to reach Kolkata from Agartala is by air, which few can afford. Consequently, this leads to marketing problems for their products, which apart from cane and bamboo, comprise handloom, both cotton and silk and terracotta. Government training programmes take a long time to reach, and are superficial and half-baked affairs.

I often had long conversations over telephone with Tripura CCI's former President Sri Subimal Roy, but failed to re-activate the council.

Now a new group of enthusiastic craft-lovers have decided to revive the council, as a consequence of which, at their invitation, Smt. Usha Krishna, Smt. Dally Verghese, Smt. Geeta Rao and I spent 3 days in Agartala last month interacting with various craftspersons in different craft pockets.

I had last visited Tripura in 2008, and was very pleasantly surprised to see how a frontier-town of a north-eastern state has developed in just 5 years into a planned and architecturally beautiful capital.

The majority of the people are Bengali-speaking, who migrated to Tripura in 1947 from what was then called East Bengal, and has now been renamed "Kokboro" which means the language spoken by "homo-sapiens"! Tripura also has one of the oldest Durga temples in Udaipur which reputedly possesses a very powerful deity and is one of the 52 "Shaktapiths".

Although a new Executive Committee has been formed with Sri Subhash Das (former Director Tourism) as the Chairman, the previous Chairman and all senior members of the erstwhile council have all been retained on their Advisory Committee. This has given the new council a sense of continuity, as the expertise of the older members will prove invaluable.

The handicrafts of Tripura, particularly the cane and bamboo crafts, occupies pride of place in the country. They are popular among connoisseurs for their intricate workmanship and elegant beauty.

Bamboo screens, moorhas, trays, and baskets and momo-steamers are popular utilitarian products, and are available in the national market. What is missing however, is design guidance, and an exposure to the export market.

The Tripura Crafts Council's revival is therefore a welcome event, which I am sure will act as a guiding force to its weaver and artisan communities.

## KNOW YOUR CRAFT : PATACHITRA

*Pushpa Chari*

The iconic Patachitra paintings of Odisha are redolent with devotional themes and bhakti, waves of which had led to the building of magnificent temples in the state from 12th century onward. 'Patachitra' was originally painted on the interior walls of the 13th century Jagannath Puri temple, in rich exhilarating colours of red, orange and yellow derived from rocks and seashells. They depicted tales from the great Epics, Krishna Lila, avatars of Vishnu and above all the story of Jagannath, the presiding deity of the temple. The figures in a Patachitra painting are heavily bejewelled, and often seen in the classic 'tribhanga' pose, dressed in costumes with exquisite detailing of motifs, folds, etc. Lyrical flower laden trees under which Krishna plays his eternal 'Lila' and geometric or floral borders are typical features of Patachitra art.

Today the art is done on cloth canvas created by the artists themselves, coating hand spun cloth with a mixture of gum and chalk, and polished with a special stone which gives the surface a lovely sheen. The 'chitrakar' does free hand drawing on the canvas often depicting the story in carefully arranged panels. Raghurajpur village has the heaviest concentration of the best Patachitra artists, many of whom are national and state awardees.

The walls of many huts in Raghurajpur which are covered with brilliant Patachitra paintings is eloquent proof of a living flourishing tradition. The artist usually paints with his canvas spread on the floor. Today Patachitra is also being done on greeting cards, fans, book marks, etc.

The future of the craft, with so many living practitioners of the art form, lies perhaps in wall hangings, frames and scrolls. A recent exhibition in Chennai which showcased 33 superb Patachitra panels, created by both masters and emerging artists, was a total sell-out.



Six Seasons Patachitra

## CRAFT NEEDS CONVERSATIONS

*Priya Krishnamoorthy*

### *Future Forward for Craft*

That the craft industry is only second to agriculture which is the largest source of income in India; was, for me, a surprising nugget of information. I call it an industry because it signifies numbers that can be calculated, numbers that matter today in the development rhetoric in India. Jaya Jaitely has cited how 32000 makers of miscellaneous one-off products in England and Wales alone were able to generate a turnover of £ 826 million. This is more than what their motorcycle or sports goods manufacturers could cough up. We need to be more comfortable citing those numbers when we talk craft.

Cultural economist, Dr Arjo Klamer argues that art when seen as a conversation becomes a common good, one that is shared and beneficial for all or most members of the community. 'The more

intensely someone experiences the ownership of a common good, the more willing he or she is to take responsibility for that good.' Art, culture and heritage can no longer be articulated and measured according to traditional parameters of value. For craft to be seen 'as a conversation which is produced, consumed and enjoyed together', it requires that we start talking about it, for only if the knowledge is shared and sustained in a conversation, will it create value in our lives.

In this context it is also important to acknowledge the role played by technology and media and its potential significance in creating an informed and involved audience or patron. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest cannot and should not be avoided. Technology can serve to bridge the gap between the urban and the rural, between the indifferent and the isolated. Travellers should be encouraged to document. Bloggers should be urged to blog more. Indians are travellers by nature. Would it not be wonderful to create opportunities for people, children, families, schools to explore the incredible country that is India and start conversations about their experiences?

Craftspeople should be encouraged and equipped with tools to de-codify their work and its significance - what one is doing and why. This will help not just audiences and sponsors to appreciate the form better but also value it. But for this system to be in place, we need to drive innovative ideas for the education of the traditional craftsman. It therefore becomes imperative that crafts across the country are not only documented but also made available to everyone, including the craftsman. Given that most of our craft traditions are passed down orally through the gurukul system, documentation of the processes is no longer a luxury, but a necessity.

Another area which requires immediate focus is a sustained push for the arts and crafts to be incorporated in our institution-driven pedagogical processes. Every parent aspires to send his / her child to a school in India. This is a reality. One does not need to force a child to learn a craft that he or she does not want to. But what stops us from using the arts and crafts to explain math, science, geography, history, even teach English? Why should essays in English textbooks talk about William Bentinck as the harbinger of English education in India? (A school principal in Orissa asked me this question) Why can that chapter not be devoted to learning something new about a local craft tradition? For example, young students in Puri can learn English by reading about the art of Patachitra.

In many artist communities across India, some are born with talent to create objects of beauty. Many others on the other hand are differently gifted. Some are really good with marketing; others are good with telling stories. An artist in Raghurajpur said, 'I wish I could speak Hindi or English well. I would have become a wonderful teacher.' If schools across India would start employing local artists and craftspeople to share their knowledge in art classes, imagine the potential for employment !

Hobby classes have become the new-age gurukuls in the urban centres and can go a long way in bridging the urban-rural cultural divide that is widening in India. Most contemporary masters of traditional dance and music forms started their journeys in hobby classes. Today they are able to take their art to a wide variety of audiences. A hobby class in Bhubaneswar attracts many young children wanting to learn the traditional art of Patachitra. One young girl wants to pursue engineering but is determined to become a successful Patachitra artist as well.

Lastly, we need to open up avenues for cultural entrepreneurship. During times when government budgets are fast disappearing, creating self-sustainability within the arts and crafts industry is crucial. World over, countries are recognising the need to pursue alternate models of development. Cultural entrepreneurship is one such area of enquiry that is fast gaining ground. Harvard is promoting it, Oxford is teaching it. Some might say it is just another label. It was however a label, social entrepreneurship, that has brought the world's focus on India in recent years and has given rise to a whole new generation of young change-makers.

If the response to Craft Council's recent exhibition, Crafterpreneur 2014, is anything to go by, entrepreneurship within the culture industry is only here to stay. Craft can become one of its biggest beneficiaries. Many of the entrepreneurs who participated in Crafterpreneur are creating innovative models with the help of design to enthuse audiences and engage with the artisans. Communicating the contexts within which craft thrives in India and drawing consumers into a conversation is already part of their strategy. Promoting entrepreneurship can also serve the Gen-Next craftsman who no longer wants to play the role of a passive, un-intelligent producer. Cultural Entrepreneurship can bring in new competencies and mobilise a vibrant creative economy that can revitalise the crafts in India.

'A thing of beauty has no fear of time' Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, the grand lady of the craft renaissance in India, once said. Perhaps it is time to re-visit this idea today. For an urban Indian like me, my love for craft is rooted in the inspiration I derive from it. In this age of information, it is sometimes easy to get lost in the brouhaha of critique. Perhaps, it is time now for the rhetoric to shift away from what is wrong to what is right, from all that 'was' to all that 'is' and 'can be'. I was lucky to have found people who were patient with my ignorance; they focussed on sharing their passion for all that is alive and wonderful in the hand-crafted traditions in India. We need many more such joy-givers who can inspire big and small ideas, fresh conversations and new ways of falling in love with the crafts all over again. It is time to widen the circle and make craft meaningful to one and all.

## WHERE IS CRAFT HEADED

*Meena Appender*

There seems to be a renewed urgency to the question all of us are asking ourselves today – where is craft headed? And indeed, how do we perceive craft today? As just part of our 'glorious' past, or as part of functional life?

Do we want Craft to remain exclusive? Available only to a few? Do we want the artisan to get a fair price for his work so that he thinks training his children in this craft is worthwhile? Do we want a future for crafts at all?

Whenever Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh & Telengana plans a programme, these are the questions that beset us. Who are we helping and how are we helping them? Largely we focus on the needs of the artisans and the general populace of our two states. This is possible if we provide design help and marketing platforms to artisans and bring about an awareness amongst the general public of the existence and availability of quality craft.

Art objects from other parts of the world are retailed globally, their prices, pictures and delivery schedules are instantly available. We have realised over the years that our crafts are not easily available. When we want a lamp or a sculptural piece or a carpet, we need to find the right craftsman, place an order and wait for the product. The competition is not from the 'global' product but from the 'global' system.

Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh & Telengana has long wanted to help address this issue of bringing the craftsman and the buyer closer together with an emphasis on quality. 'Kausalyam 2014' was about sourcing quality crafts from all over the country and showcasing it in a manner that inspires people to use Indian craft as collectibles, decorative pieces, etc. In this journey we approached many craftsmen and designers.

We were truly amazed at the interest and enthusiasm shown by the craftsmen and the designers! They understood what we were trying to do and the limitations of our budget and the uncertainty that faced us in our initial attempt at something so large. Explaining the concept to designers we realized



they also had problems marketing their creations. Designers were willing to work with us if they had a reasonable assurance of sale.

Some artisans were so enthusiastic that they recommended CCAP & T to other artisans. They vouched for us and a lot of them had the confidence in us to send us their goods on consignment. This faith in our organisation was a moment of intense pride for us.

Now to showcase this whole attempt the venue was important. Hyderabad has more than its share of heritage buildings. And Chowmohalla Palace was chosen for its size and ambience.

Textiles also form a large part of our craft tradition and to ignore our handlooms would have created a lopsided exhibition. We partnered with designer Gauarang Shah, who with great enthusiasm offered to organise a fashion show with Shubha Mudgal singing in the background. Sufi Kathak artist Manjari Chaturvedi was invited to perform. Craft and culture are intrinsically linked. Traditional Hyderabadi cuisine finished a long evening. The whole Council was enraptured by the wonderful synergy of this event.

The response of the people of Hyderabad and our fellow Council members was so heartening, that we are tempted to repeat Kausalyam, in a few years.

What we learnt in the months preceding the event is that the craft industry exists in our country – confused and in urgent need of marketing help from the customer / connoisseur. It is our mission to bring both together.

## HOW TO KEEP CRAFT ALIVE

### *Ruby Palchoudhuri*

Samaresh comes from a traditional family of potters residing in a village at Kunor Haatpara in North Dinajpur, West Bengal. This village is a potters' village in the true sense as it has excellent clay and most of the inhabitants are professional potters creating thousands of fired clay items like ritual figures, horses and decorative items for the local as well as the Kolkata market. In his young days Samaresh helped his father after school and learnt to prepare the clay, throw it on the potter's wheel and fire clay objects.

Samaresh completed his higher secondary education and moved to Siliguri for further education. In Siliguri he completed his graduation in Business Administration specializing in Design Management. This gave him the knowledge, expertise and courage to develop entrepreneurial skills. After finishing his education he came back to his village and took up his family trade of terracotta pottery. Before starting the business he studied the market thoroughly. He understood that the value of the terracotta decorative products is decreasing day by day. After realizing that the market was shrinking he decided to start



Sridevi, our celebrity guest



The exhibition venue

making terracotta jewellery as he realized on the basis of a market survey that there was a demand of these products. Along with his family members he started making terracotta jewellery which were painted with colours. Gradually he engaged a few apprentices from the same village to help him. Now he has set up a terracotta jewellery unit by engaging more potters from his village. He studies various designs in the internet and manufactures the prototypes himself. He also trains his fellow potters to produce jewellery as per his design. The products are sold in the local market as well as in Goa, Chennai, Cochin, Kolkata, Mumbai and Delhi, to wholesalers and retailers in large quantity. He supplies to exporters.



Terracotta artisan at work

In the initial stage he faced some hurdles because of lack of capital and scarcity of skilled craftsmen. But gradually he has been able to overcome the problems and has trained local potters in the areas of quality and durability. His products are beautiful and the local clay which is very fine also adds to the quality of products. While working for the rural market he was able to learn more about colours and shapes. Today he is not only a skilled artist but also a good entrepreneur after having gone through a wide range of experiences. He is helping the village craftsmen to sustain a self-sufficient rural economic activity. His dream is that his son and grandson will carry on with their forefathers' profession with increasing prosperity.

## THE FUTURE OF INDIAN CRAFTS : CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

*Geetha Rao*

### *What role will E- Commerce play?*

News was made a few days ago, when leading Bengaluru headquartered e-tailer Flipkart, announced, that it has tied up with Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) and Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (Kassia) to promote the sale of handicrafts and products of small sellers and local entrepreneurs from across the state. This means that artisans featured on Flipkart would have access to a registered customer base of 26 million users across the country – a new marketing platform and a unique opportunity to grow their business. Other e.tail biggies like Snapdeal and Amazon have also entered the business and have forged alliances with crafts promotion bodies.

High end crafts portals like Jaypore.com feature beautifully designed and produced craft products like jewellery, textiles, linen and gift items. Others like Craftsvilla, Varnam, are marketing wood lac turnery toys and home products, and many others are also players, sharing a piece of the online pie.

What are the challenges for artisans who choose this avenue for marketing? Forging good partnerships with online retailers and understanding contemporary trends is a must. Designs that meet high aesthetic and functional standards, consistency in quality, cataloguing of products, proper packaging and ability to meet deadlines are absolutely essential to maintain a smooth supply chain. What are the challenges for the etailers? Partnering with reliable institutions in the crafts sector, who will help in identifying quality crafts clusters and working closely with the artisans.

Imaginative and proper handling of online marketing of handicrafts, both on the part of craftspersons and portals could produce a quantum leap in the growth of handicrafts in the future. On the down side it could lead to artisans being forced to reduce prices, which in turn could lead to mediocrity of products, inferior raw material and losses, that could eventually hurt the business. Can Crafts Councils play the role of Watch Dogs?

## Contemporary Design Development and Training Trends

Caravan Crafts Retail, based in Bengaluru is a unique crafts enterprise committed to the revival and promotion of Indian craft and to providing meaningful livelihoods to the country's artisans. Caravan had made a conscious and evident effort to marry contemporary needs of a modern discerning customer with the rich heritage of Indian craft. It has two stores, the first 2800 sqft store opened at the Phoenix Mall in Whitefield, Bengaluru and the second at the Phoenix Mall, Pune. Apparel is the main product, in luxury weaves, with contemporary designs and cuts, embellished with traditional textile crafts like Kalamkari, Jamdani and Applique work. Home décor products, jewellery, toys and gifts, fusing the traditional and contemporary are other products on sale. A product that caught the imagination of discerning customers in Bangalore were USB sticks with Bidri motifs in silver - an ideal product to represent the Silicon Valley city! Caravan Craft Retail Private Limited has been funded by NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) and Unitus Seed Fund. NSDC 's interest in this venture was Caravan's initiative in its providing design inputs and training to artisans, linkages to markets and a share of the profits.

Market driven high quality design development and training targeted to chosen crafts clusters - Could this be a model for Handicrafts for the future ?

## Luxury Crafts

High end luxury crafts have always been a coveted segment in India since time immemorial, commissioned by royalty and wealthy patrons and executed to perfection by master craftsmen. I saw a glimpse of this in "Kausalyam" an initiative to mould modern design with traditional craft, executed to perfection by Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana led by Chairperson Usha Sarvarayalu and her team of skilled and talented volunteers. They worked with Designer Arghya Ghosh and mastercraftsmen of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana and other states to produce a range of the finest craft pieces in India, many of them a fusion of tradition and modernity. Showcased in the vaulted pillared verandahs of the beautiful heritage building - the Chowmahalla Palace of the Nizam of Hyderabad, it was a jewel of an event.



E-tailor Flipkart

Can luxury craft be a niche segment to focus on in Indian Crafts for the future?

## WHERE IS CRAFT GOING?

### The Role of Traditional Crafts and their Status today

#### *Visalakshi Ramaswamy*

It has been a long-standing dream to visit Gujarat, and I had preconceived visions of beautiful and colourful local craft villages especially in the Kutch region, but I met with disappointment during my recent visit there. While there are some visible crafts, only three or four of the well known craftsmen are left, and even they are hard to find. We were able to visit these craftsmen only because of our prior personal contact with them and were surprised that even local tour guides in Gujarat did not feature them in their tourist trails. When we visited a craftsman working with Ajrakh, he said that after the Gujarat earthquake only four of the 450 traditional mud and mirror houses have been left standing in their region. The new houses that have been built have not used local craft, and have instead been made using urban material to be earthquake resistant. The Rabdi women, who once wore

beautiful red and black Bandhini outfits that they wove themselves, now wear bandhini prints on synthetic fabric. The exquisite crafts that the Kutch region is famous for is now being crafted only by a few select craftspeople and villages have lost their uniqueness in their effort to attract tourists.

This is generally the scene from any part of India today. In my native Chettinad everything in the house was hand-crafted: from the wood, metal and stucco work to the flooring tiles, wall plaster and wall paintings. Craft used to be a part of everyday living, and everything used in the house also had to be aesthetically pleasing, right down to the kitchen tools and utensils. At present we are slowly reaching a stage where it is difficult to find people skilled in these craft forms to even repair and maintain these houses. Our once capable and highly skilled local masons have been replaced by construction workers from other states. Today in Chettinad only the sun-baked and handmade Athangudi tiles remain a living craft tradition. I have worked to revive the palm leaf basketry of the Chettiar community and these are now being carried on, not as the hobby craft it used to be, but as a sustainable livelihood project for the local village women.

The highly skilled wood carvers in Karaikudi have lost the patronage of mansion owners as they are often expensive, and also because wood carving in homes has gone out of fashion. Hence numbers have dwindled, and the remaining carvers have turned to temples for work, where they are now engaged in carving the temple chariots. They are also engaged in new temples locally and abroad, as well as in temple consecrations called *Kumbhabishekams*. Temples have always been patrons of arts and crafts and they continue to be, as seen in their support of the wood carvers. The temples in the Chettinad area, especially the ones that are privately owned, are able to provide continued patronage to at least a few master craftsmen because of frequent renovations and sustained activity.

In earlier times, craft for the craftsman was a passion and a skill proudly passed on from one generation to the next. Craftspeople were respected and patronized for their expertise, and their love for the craft was evident in the perfection of the crafted product. Today after fighting a losing battle to mass production and commercialization, the craftsman no longer wants his children to carry on the craft, but to seek out employment that will offer them higher remuneration and more importantly, restore their lost self-esteem. However it is only some children that successfully study and find well-paying employment. The others who find studies difficult get left behind; they struggle to get good jobs, and they have also lost out on the opportunity to learn and practise their family's traditional craft. I am reminded of a weaver's son who preferred a low paying white collar job over weaving that was more remunerative and part of his family tradition as he was unable to find a bride who was willing to marry him.

For most craftspeople, the problem is not their mastery over their chosen craft or the specialized skill required, but it has to do with acquiring marketing and business skills to sell their craft. If a craftsman's whole family is involved in the craft, they are bound to sell better than an individual craft producer as it is difficult for an individual to produce as well as market at the same time.

Textiles seem to be doing better than craft, though with a lot of compromise. I think longingly of the Co-optex handloom exhibitions from twenty years ago, where each stall had a distinct style of cotton sari. In the present Co-optex exhibitions, the different cooperative societies still produce cotton saris but today everything looks alike, and it is very difficult to make a distinction. Versatility and variety in handlooms is being lost, perhaps due to too much competition in the market.

Some vanishing crafts in India are slowly going the same way as abroad, where they are kept alive as studio crafts. The scenario may change like in the case of M.Rm.Rm. Cultural Foundation, where our women are not traditionally craftspeople but agriculturists who were in need of alternate employment and additional income. As the traditional craftsman is moving out to other fields, others unconnected to craft are moving in. Most of these nouveau craftspeople have no inherent skill unlike the traditional



craft families, and they require a lot of training to achieve a reasonable amount of expertise. A large number of these craftspeople are women who are looking for employment that they can engage in from their homes, that allows them to manage both work and family while bringing in much needed additional income.

However, not all crafts can be successfully sustained, since several of the crafts are dependent on other crafts and skills to be able to survive. A classic example is that of the Athangudi tiles - the tile makers are dependent on the masons who lay the tiles, as well as on the mould makers who fashion moulds for the tile designs. Although today there is a huge market for these traditional tiles, the shortage of both masons as well as mould makers is hampering this craft from thriving as it should. The tile makers are bound by the whims of these allied craftspeople who know their worth to the tile manufacturers and make use of it. Hence unless craft is streamlined and run like a professional business, its continued existence remains questionable.

The internet that now provides a huge online platform for marketing is both a boon and a bane for the craftsperson. Designs that have cost time, effort and money are available freely to would-be competitors when posted online. In our own experience, there are competitors who use similar sounding product names to mislead customers and market similar products. Plastic basket designs are often frequently and blatantly copied and there is little one can do to check this misuse.

When the Kottan basketry project began almost fifteen years ago, I imagined that with initial training and help with securing a market, the craftspeople would be able to stand on their own feet and become independent. However it is not that easy to move out, since there are gaps like design and marketing that the craftswomen cannot yet handle alone. During my visit to Gujarat, I noticed the same issue - the key person in the NGO makes the difference and the loss of market due to lack of marketing skills is immediately apparent.

People ask me regularly how long I plan to sustain my craft projects. My view is that the craft form will last as long as it is needed, and will then die out. However with the Foundation's craft and design documentation, I hope to give it a chance to be revived when the need arises again. Some crafts die, and are replaced by new ones. Some crafts can be reinvented to suit the contemporary market. Today, the need of the hour is change; the willingness to change and adapt to new customers, new needs and new markets. Today's craftsperson needs financial acumen, a strong business sense and good marketing and communication skills. Craft, in order to get bigger and enter the mainstream must be able to contend with stiff competition.



In the coming years, the number of craftspeople will definitely get smaller as more of them move on to other lines of work. Although craft is also a breadwinning vocational activity, what the craftsperson actually needs is recognition, appreciation and respect, which they think they will find in regular office jobs. The question to all of us is this: do we treat our craftspeople with respect when we meet them? Do the number of employable craftspeople matter, or the quality of their wares? By treating our craftspeople with the respect they deserve, we can keep them in the handicraft industry.



## THE FUTURE OF CRAFTS IN INDIA

*Gita Ram*

What I see on the horizon looks good. The picture is getting clearer and one should hope that the weather will continue to be fair, with no gathering clouds. How best to use the circumstances is in our own hands. One has to look at small flecks as opportunities and be prepared to work hard to make them bigger.

We have been saying continuously that there is a great domestic market for handicrafts and handlooms. Why has the nation been obsessed with exports? It is quite clear that the West is going to take a little longer to recover economically, but consumers in India can still buy the best of 'Made In India'. A recent conclave of economists have suggested that India should look more towards domestic consumption as exports will remain small till the Western nations recover from the economic recession.

We have seen repeatedly at CCI's Crafts Bazaars, and all Dastkar's bazaars, that there is a great demand for good crafts. Quality, and good design are appreciated. Sales are good and the artisans are very happy. The need of the hour is for more of these bazaars to reach smaller metros too. Organised retail is still under developed in India due to high costs of real estate and rentals. However, what seems to be gaining ground are online sales - including some crafts. Some producers have put their act together and sell collectively online. More producers have spent money on developing their websites. GoCoop has a growing list of producer clients. They are mentored and hand held till their online sales take off. What we also see is that the government is waking up from its deep slumber. Suddenly, there is a call for 'action' - a need to re look at Policy.

Civil Society has expressed its recommendations at every opportunity and so there is hope that some of these recommendations are considered.

The need for craft institutions has been felt across the country. Artisans and weavers need training in finance, business and design if they are to be enabled to be self reliant. Classic pilots like the Canara Bank's 30 year old Gurukul near Bangalore need to be replicated. The students pass out with a certificate. The bank helps to set them up with small businesses. Private initiatives have started for weavers like Women Weaves new Handloom School, and Kalakshetra / CCI's Handloom course set to start in July. The courses will offer a certificate / diploma.

What these courses will do is to empower the artisans with the right skills of design, business and communication.

The CSR conditions spelled out under the new Company Law can be used well. We need to be alert on our stated objectives and ensure that we deliver. There may not always be a fixation on numbers as with government schemes. Under CSR there is hope for synergy of skills of different players to get any project going. This could be designed as a perfect PPP (Public Private Partnership). We know all this will work for the artisan because the market is waiting for new products that are smart, useful, sometimes freaky and always handmade.

## UNDERSTANDING THE ADIVASI WAY : An intervention

*Ashoke Chatterjee*

The challenge of honoring the memory of Prabhas Sen is daunting. His life and work covered so many interests, abilities and commitments. Among them were painting and sculpture, the arts and sciences of indigenous communities, the revival of languishing crafts, architecture, and design.

Prabhasda was also an activist who worked ceaselessly for social and political transformation. He saw all these as facets of an integrated whole, as well-being. His was a true understanding of kala as the service of society and as the inspiration for individual enlightenment. From such a canvas, how is a Centre dedicated to his memory to choose and to make the optimal use of its limited resources?

Perhaps one could start by consulting the communities in this region to whom Prabhasda was devoted, and most particularly their youth. What is their understanding of The Adivasi Way? What do they most value about their heritage, and what do they most want to pass to future generations? What aspirations for the future do they have within the changing context of our times? What priorities would they want CCWB's effort to address on their behalf, and with their participation and ownership? A true sense of ownership is critical to sustaining such a Centre beyond the resources of today, and beyond any transient patronage or external intervention. Are there partners within these communities who can share in a responsibility for the success and sustainability of this venture? That is a critical question.

The Mission which CCWB has set out puts emphasis on documenting The Adivasi way. Scholarship of this kind must clearly be the foundation for serious intervention as well as for giving back to communities what they value and wish to sustain. Importance has been correctly placed on promoting livelihoods from within the Adivasi way of life. Sustainable livelihoods from heritage, including from crafts, is the best insurance there can be for the future. The importance of education and health is also recognized. Here it may be important to locate partners who can help take on such activities, allowing the Crafts Council to concentrate on its own core competencies. The danger of spreading itself too thin cannot be over-emphasised. Robust, like-minded partnerships may be needed, and soon. This seminar is in itself a great example of working together in a shared interest, so a partnership process is underway. Sustaining it will not be easy. Any effort to do must begin now. The ambience of a university provides a great context, most particularly here at Santiniketan in Gurudev's own cause. Yet partnerships will need to go well beyond this location, to draw on other wisdom and effort. Many come to mind, among them IGNC, Dastkar, The Craft Revival Trust, NFSC, the Crafts Museum, CEE, IFA, Bangla Natak.com, CSE, Pradan, NID, IICD, MCF, Prof G N Devy of Bhasa, CCRT, Prof Krishna Kumar, Uzamma, Ramachandra Guha, Pratham, VHA, Navsarjan one could go on!

To attract partnerships, the priorities of this effort will need early identification. For the moment, it may be important to select no more than two or three core concerns, and to begin to work and deliver results in core areas before embarking on larger agendas. Equally important will be to clearly establish the indicators which the project will use to measure its progress – indicators that are both quantitative and, more importantly, qualitative so that movement toward cultural goals can be communicated to well-wishers as well as to the Centre's own team. This capacity for sound management is inescapable for institution-building as well as for attracting support in today's competitive environment. It can assist the proposed Centre to monitor efforts unfolding in the field and to strengthening these through constant attention to the processes of social change that are its real purpose.

Perhaps that core purpose is really about articulating and achieving the dignity and harmony that the Adivasi way can offer not only to its own communities but to all of us. India and the world need the wisdom, respect and sense of care that has marked the way in which these communities have looked after each other and the resources that Nature offers them. The attitudes that are their heritage are certainly far advanced from the rapacious, extractive approaches that threaten our planet today. Understanding the wellsprings of The Adivasi Way may therefore be a priority.

Toward such understanding, one could begin with mapping and documenting traditions in a selection of eco-cultural zones. Such a strategy would underline the importance of context to the expressions and artifacts that so often dominate concepts of tribal culture. That each of these is linked to a social and

natural ecology is often overlooked, and yet is important to understand, as Dr Kapila Vatsyayan has so often reminded us. It was her effort that led in 2012 / 13 to an effort by the Prime Minister's Office to create a national register of India's tangible and intangible cultural heritage, supported by the Ministry of Culture. This was to take advantage of the Unesco Convention on Cultural Diversity & Cultural Expression, as well as growing global awareness of the link between issues of culture and those of what is understood (or misunderstood) as development. Although the PMO's initiative fizzled out, as so many good intentions do in our land, it has left behind a concept and documentation that can now be drawn upon to buttress the case for remembering Prabhasda in a meaningful way. The advantage is recognition in at least a few high places that what is needed most of all is a fresh paradigm of 'development' dominated by human factors, rather than by statistics. It is here that The Adivasi Way can be a source of universal learning. It is not about the past, but rather about the future we all want for our children and for theirs.

This is a particularly appropriate time for a venture such as the one that has brought us together here under Rubydi's leadership. In 2015 the global community led by the UN will be immersed in an exercise of huge and lasting significance. This is the search for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are to set the development agenda as well as the understanding of progress that is to guide all nations in the years leading up to 2030. While the focus is on poverty reduction, the emerging concept is that of targeting poverty through a holistic concept of change and growth that is sensitive to matters of empowerment, sustainability and identity. Poverty is acknowledged as going beyond income and nutrition to a sense of identity, culture and self-respect. There is appreciation that modernity has to be understood in these terms, and not as mimicry of others, if change is to be accepted as opportunity rather than resisted as threat.

All this gives great topicality and relevance to Prabhasda's life and work, and to this effort to remember him in ways that can take his vision into the future. The idea around which this seminar has been structured is thus at the heart of a dialogue that is local, national and global. It offers a wonderful opportunity to make a difference, and to communicate that difference to India and to the world.

## WORLD CRAFTS COUNCIL GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS - OCTOBER 2014

*A look at how WCC takes Crafts into the streets of the future*

*Manjari Nirula*

World Crafts Council celebrated its Golden Jubilee in Dongyang, Jinjiang Province from 18-23rd October 2014 in a series of spectacular events, exhibitions, expo and workshops.

At the Craft Expo in Dongyang (18 - 23 October) : India had the largest presence with 21 participants. Indian masters interacted with masters from other countries and were able to show and





learn intricate details of their skills. They were able to see the product development being done in other countries. They discussed the price that the contemporary market can absorb. The interaction with the customers was an even greater learning experience for the craftspeople who also held demonstrations.

The artisans were taken to the Museum, the workshops of wood craftsmen where they were able to see the tools used and the working conditions. The craftsmen sold the equivalent of Rs. 1,00,000/- each.

Rajesh Gahlot, the Koftagiri master craftsman showed his skills of lock making and the visitors were really impressed with his demonstration.



Right- Mr. Rajesh Gahlot - Koftagiri



Mr. Riaz Ahmad Khan- Papier Mâché



Mr. Niranjana Jonnalagadda - Kalamkari

Riaz Ahmad Khan showed his painting skills and learnt from other visiting craftsmen from SE Asia.

As an outcome of this participation Kalamkari artist Niranjana Jonnalagadda was so impressed with the batik craftsmen from Yogyakarta, Indonesia that he wants to incorporate some of the designs in his kalamkari using batik like his forefathers did.

CCI is trying to organize a craft exchange programme for him to visit Yogyakarta in the very near future.

*WCC – APR Award of Excellence Exhibition 2014 :* The craftsmen got a chance to see the Exhibition of the WCC APR Award of Excellence Exhibition. The programme encourages craft-workers to use traditional skills and materials to ensure the perpetuation of traditional knowledge while acknowledging the importance of innovative and marketable designs. By setting quality standards for handicrafts, raising international awareness and promoting innovations to keep the products relevant and competitive, the Award aims to strengthen the interest for these crafts. Capacity-building and promotional activities also help artisans sustain a more viable livelihood and long-term employment.

The Forum in Dongyang attended by 370 Delegates included many sessions on diverse aspects of crafts. Crafts Intellectual Property Protection, Crafts Cities and the UNESCO Creative Cities network chaired by ex WCC president Mrs. Usha Krishna, Craft Development through Governmental support, Crafts Design and Intervention, Crafts Education and Marketing and Recent Trends in Natural Dyes were thoroughly discussed. The Award of Excellence for Handicrafts Workshop was also held.



Left - Mr. Gopal Joshi - Phad painting  
Right - Aurangzeb Haji Abdul Razak Khatri-Ajrakh



Right - Mr. Gurupada Chitrakar - Scroll painting

*The Forum in Nantong (24-26 October)* was attended by 200 delegates.

### *Nantong International Craft Biennale 2014*

Nantong International Craft Biennale's theme was "Past, Today and Future of Arts and Crafts". The organisers invited the world artists to participate in the competition.

The Craft Biennale raised philosophical questions about "Tradition and Modern", "Aesthetics and Function", "Content and Form" to reveal the real level of modern and contemporary arts and crafts.

There were 800 products from 40 countries which were shortlisted to 300 in the first round by an international Jury of 10 experts that met in Beijing in July. These products were then displayed in Nantong in an Exhibition where a 7 Member Jury chose 28 products that received awards.

India bagged 5 of these and The award winning Indian craftspersons were Shilpguru. Giriraj Prasad who won the gold prize for Terracotta, Sri Mahesh Jangid, winner the silver prize for sandalwood carving, Shilp guru, Bashir Ahmad Jan, shawl embroidery. Mr. Niranjana Jonnalagadda Shilpagna (Kalamkari), Mr. Asif Shaikh, designer (Embroidery) all won the bronze prize.

The other programmes that were held were The WEFT exhibition with 9 International designers exhibiting their work, a Fashion Show of 9 International designers showing their work, Suzhou Embroidery Extravaganza and The Aileen Web Competition for Chinese craftspersons.

It was a great coming together of craftspersons, craft activists, designers, academicians, historians, curators, representatives of UNESCO, FAO, and government officials from China. It also threw up many questions and issues such as the shrinking markets for handicrafts competing with cheaper machine made products, a lack of market intelligence and a lack of business skills to process orders with deliverables on quality, time and price.

## EXCERPTS FROM WORLD CRAFTS FORUM, 2014

### *Wrap up by Chairperson, Ms. Raja Fuziah binti Raja Tun Uda*

The World Crafts Forum, a 3 1/2 - Day deliberation with 6 Sessions chaired by WCC experts from around the globe was held at Dongyang, China from 18 - 21 October 2014.. While there was much to share much within a short span of 4 days. The presentations were supplemented with visuals was accomplished as capturing the essence and spirit of the subject matter.

WCC Forums have often provided an excellent opportunity and platform for members to get together - to share information and data, to exchange views, to learn new things on the many and varied subjects focussing on craft development and particularly on issues affecting the craftspeople and craftsmanship. In its 50 years, WCC have organised with the support of member countries and collaboration with NGOs - such as the craft councils and the like as well as the business sector, not less

than fourteen (14) international conferences / symposiums in the different regions. Starting with North America in 1964, the journey had taken WCC to Kyoto, Istanbul, Vienna, Oslo, Jakarta, Sydney, Kyoto again, Colombo, Islamabad, Fez, Metsovo, Huangzou and Chennai and, finally to where we are today in Dongyang.

Indeed, WCC Forums have become an important contact point, a link, thus creating an ever-expanding Network among members and in initiating new membership. We get to know and meet experts and Masters in Craftsmanship, leading us towards a better understanding, better appreciation and the deepening of awareness regarding the different fields of the arts and craft practices.

The ideas and proposals that have been put forward at the Dongyang WCF 2014 are indeed a step forward calling perhaps for more resources and the reviewing of WCC's capacity in meeting the challenges ahead. In order to take on these tasks, What needs to be done? Would there be a need to re-assess the present strength of the WCC? its organisational structure and infrastructure? to evaluate the existing support system it receives from the government of member countries as well as the NGO's and the likes, to reassess, if any, the current constraint of the facilities and amenities that are made available? or / and to undertake activities or projects with a view to form a partnership?

Highlighted among the project proposals, the Forum took note of the WCC-APR's on-going Flagship Projects, namely, the Craft & Education Programme, the NDP - National Dye Programme (and the funding pledges made) and the Encyclopaedia on Crafts of Asia - Pacific Region Project. In respect of the WCC Craft Cities Programme Initiative, it was felt that due consideration should be given to strengthen the evaluation and the current appraisal system.

The study of endangered / near vanishing crafts should be given priority as much importance is attached to R & D efforts involving academic institutions while the "Code of Practice for Partnerships in Craft & Design" was deemed as a realistic approach to the sharing / imparting of knowledge and in protecting the interest of the parties concerned. The issue of the Market-Place and marketing, however, remained as the life-line for the craftsman / artisan and hence the need to explore all opportunities and channels available such as Santa Fe for the marketing of well-designed product and authentically handmade.

Thus, for the WCC, "THE FUTURE IS HANDMADE", the slogan that was adopted by the WCC in 1964 and which was revived as the theme of the Chennai 2012 World Craft Summit reminding us of its significance. And today, in Dongyang, we have come together to reaffirm it. HANDMADE is what's its all about, and for all these reasons - because it is timeless, it is an integral part of our culture, our everyday life and upon it is dependent the livelihood of the maker - craftsperson / artisan, in meeting the wishes of our patrons as well as to enable the environment that we live in to be a better living space.

In conclusion, may I on behalf of the Organisers thank all the Speakers, Chairpersons and all of you Participants for making this gathering a momentous event for the WCC as we celebrate the WCC Golden Jubilee.

## ACTIVITIES

### THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

- *Craftpreneur (25 – 27 September)* : A slew of innovative high quality handwoven textiles and handcrafts created by craft artisans and entrepreneurs or designer - entrepreneurs working with artisans presented exciting, innovative craft products and textiles at 'Craftpreneur'. A superb selection of ingenious hand block printed saris and fabric, tie and dye, ajrakh, silks, in exhilarating colours and creative formats created style imprints on cotton, silk, Maheshwaris, Chanderis and Kanchipurams. The traditional handcrafts which created contemporary creative waves included



copper craft, dhokra work in delectable combinations of old techniques and functional - decorative forms, woodcraft, sensational metal home decor products from Delhi and more.



Display at Craftpreneur

- *Textile Show (6 - 7 September)* : Complex weaves, exquisitely worked traditional embroiderers, block prints ranging from the traditionally pristine to abstract, innovative designs and formats and a lyrical play of colours - the saris on display at the 'Textile Show' had both classic resonance and designer magic. Benarasis, Paithanis, Mahaeshwaris, Chanderis, Uppadas, Kanchipurams, tie and dye, mulls, silks and more made classic statements of textile diversity and unique design. Needless to say, the much looked forward to show was a resounding success.

- *Phulkari Exhibition & Parsi Ghara show (25 November - 3 December)* : The glamour and delicately flamboyant beauty of Parsi Gara embroidery was celebrated within the frame of illuminating talk on Parsi history, culture and crafts by writer-historian Pheroza J. Godrej, textile designer Ashdeen Z. Lilaowala and Tehnaaz Bahadurji. Each added an inimitable touch to the evening by their take on Parsi lifestyle and fashion. The Phulkari exhibition curated by Jasleen Dhamija presented masterpieces of Punjab's Phulkari embroidery. Vivid flamboyant colours, the witchery of immaculate stitches and the cultural take behind each piece made for an unforgettable experience. Both the Phulkari and Gara exhibitions were part of CCI's ongoing celebrations marking Smt. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay's birth centenary.



Phulkari Inauguration



- *Crafts Bazaar (5 - 14 December)* : Once again, CCI's annual Crafts Bazaar came out a winner. In its emphasis on bringing together the craft diversity of the country and giving exposure to hitherto unknown artisans. A plethora of crafts ranging from tiny clay birds from Assam and Etikopakka and Chennapatna jewellery to exquisite iron craft, lamp shades from Bastar featuring a thousand tribal dancers, contemporary bell metal vessels and dishes, stoneware and brassware, papercraft, sanjhi work panels and grass mats as well as textiles from many regions of the country enthralled not just local shoppers but visitors from other parts of the country and foreign regulars.



Crafts Bazaar 2014 Inauguration

## DELHI CRAFT COUNCIL

- *RESULTS OF SIXTH ECONOMIC CENSUS (July 2014)* : The Release of the Provisional Results of the Sixth Economic Census was held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi on 30 July 2014. One of the most important concerns that had to be clarified was whether establishments using some mechanisation were to be included as handicraft and handloom items. Several members of DCC played a key role in these discussions resulting in the acceptance of hand and mechanisation combinations in the revised definition.
- *HANDLOOM POLICY (July 2014)* : Several DCC members have been working as part of a working group to help ensure action towards implementation of The Handloom Reservation Act and building a national policy for Indian textiles that can address the needs of those working in the handloom, power-loom, and mill sectors.
- *SARIS OF INDIA 2014 & SUTRAKAR SAMMAN (September 2014)* : “Saris of India 2014 - Innovating Tradition”, DCC's annual sari exhibition was inaugurated by Uzamma, Founder of Dastakar Andhra and Malkha Marketing Trust. DCC exhibited the saris of twenty talented craftsmen, artists and designers all involved in developing and innovating with traditional weaving, printing and embroidery techniques. The *Sutrarakar Samman* 2014 was awarded to Shri K. Narasimha from Nalgonda District, Telegana for his excellence in the weaving of Ikat saris using natural dyes.
- *PANCHATANTRA EXHIBITION – CRAFTS MUSEUM (November 2014)* : In collaboration with the Crafts Museum DCC exhibited “Painted Fables - Panchatantra Chitra”. The exhibition was curated by Gulshan Nanda who inspired twelve artists to create sixty-three paintings in several styles of traditional folk art depicting various stories from the Panchatantra.
- *THE TREE OF LIFE EXHIBITION (November 2014)* : “The Tree of Life” Exhibition was held at the Art Gallery, Kamladevi Complex at the India International Center. Bina Rao, trustee of Creative Bee Foundation in collaboration with Delhi Crafts Council had curated this special collection based on the original Tree of Life pieces which were produced in the late 18th and 19th Centuries. The exhibition was a tribute to all those artisans who continue to keep this art alive.
- *INDIRA GANDHI MEMORIAL EVENT (November 2014)* : As part of the events to celebrate the birthday of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and to recognise her life achievements as also

the creative art of this country, the Delhi Crafts Council was asked to participate in a three-day event. Four craftsmen displayed their craft - Giriraj (pottery), Berozgar (Bhagalpur Textiles) Sardar Hussain (wood carving) and Ambika Devi (Mithila painting).

- **KAMALA DEVI PURASKAR (November 2014)** : The annual Kamaladevi Scholarships were awarded to six talented youngsters chosen from across the country. The eighteen-month stipend they receive through the scheme allows them to continue in their craft alongside their education and motivates them to earn a livelihood through their traditional skills.

The Awardees of the Kamaladevi Puraskar 2014 are Lalit Kumar Kori (mat weaving, Haryana), Anjula Kumari (bawan buti weaving, Bihar), Shiva Vishwakarma(iron craft, Chhattisgarh) Pooja Prajapati (painted wooden toys Uttar Pradesh), Atul Shreshthi (Sanganer block printing, Rajasthan), Anil Tuma (decorative gourd craft, Chhattisgarh).



## KAMALA CRAFT SHOP

*"Kamala seeks to demonstrate that professional marketing support is an essential means of developing traditional crafts and providing sustainable livelihoods for those who hold our heritage in their hands."*

**LOVE of the LOOM (August 2014)** : For the first time at Kamala the team put together an exhibition of fabrics and dupattas which included Andhra Ikat, Banarasi silks and cotton, Ajrak, Akola, Shibori and Bandhini to name a few. The response was astounding and the focus on textiles brought to the store a new clientele and buyer that was very encouraging for the Kamala team.

**Folk & Tribal Painting (November 2014)** : Kamala presented a collection of folk art and tribal paintings including Warli, Gond, Patachitra, Dot Painting and Mithila drawing.

**SIND by Ryoko Haraguchi (December 2014)** : SIND is a collection of ready to wear garments that unifies Indian textiles and Japanese design aesthetic while incorporating the traditions of weaving and dyeing from both cultures. Ryoko Haraguchi brought to Kamala a stunning collection of ready to wear garments in December. She has trained Indian craftsmen in Japanese techniques and finishes to create a unique style.

## CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA

- **Kamalini Store Promotion – Eco Ganesha (August 2014)** : CCK launched an awareness drive amongst the general public about the harmful effects on the environment on account of toxic colours used in making Ganeshas during the Ganesh Festival. Unpainted Eco - Ganeshas were sold in Kamalini.
- **Kamalini Store promotion - Gombe & Deepa (12 September – 12 October 2014)** : In celebration of Dassera and Deepavali, a month long Store Promotion "Gombe & Deepa" "Dolls and Lamps" was held at Crafts Council of Karnataka's Crafts Store Kamalini.
- **Vastrabharana 2014 (28 September – 02 October 2014)** : Crafts Council of Karnataka's signature annual fundraiser event - Exhibition and Sale of Saris and jewellery was held at Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath, Bengaluru
- **World Elders Day (16 November 2014)** : World Elders Day was celebrated in collaboration with Ashvasan Foundation. Shri Devendrappa Nilakantappa Rathakar, an 84 year old RathaShilpi, master

craftsperson in chariot making, was felicitated at the event held by Ashvasan Foundation at Rotary Friendship Hall, Lavelle Road, Bengaluru. A purse of Rs 10,000/- was presented to him.

## CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMIL NADU

- **CRAFTS BAZAAR, (JULY 2014)** : CCTN's annual Crafts Bazaar was organised at Ramakrishna Kalyana Mandapam. The bazaar showcased a total of 97 stalls this year and provided a platform for craftsmen from all over the country. The response from the public was overwhelming.
- **SHRISTI 2014, (SEPTEMBER 2014)** : CCTN's annual exhibition, Shristi brought to Coimbatore many well known designers and labels from all over the country. Shristi showcased 80 stalls this year, and Coimbatore truly enjoyed a craft shopping bonanza
- **WORKSHOPS FOR MEMBERS** : A Lipan art workshop was organised for members at the Cosmopolitan Club. This rural art was taught by Ms Falguni, craftsperson from Gujarat. There was excellent participation for the three day workshop.
- **CRAFT AT SCHOOLS** : Collage classes were conducted for the school children of GRN Matriculation school and Kanya Gurukulam school.
- **PRODUCT DEVELOPEMENT** : CCTN is working with the metal and stone craftsmen. The Council is working towards developing prototypes of a range of tableware.
- Meetings with the handloom weavers of this region was organised to facilitate design inputs.
- **A MILESTONE IN THE JOURNEY OF CCTN** : CCTN has reached yet another milestone. An office space has been acquired in one of Coimbatore s finest commercial centre. CCTN will be moving to VUE GRANDE, its newly acquired office space from March 2015.



## CRAFTS COUNCIL OF WEST BENGAL



- **Celebration of "Earth Day" (22 April)** : In collaboration with the Indian Museum, CCWB organized a pottery and alpona demonstration / workshop. Five hundred school children participated from different schools. The objective was to get the children familiar with the concept of reverence and utility associated with 'Tulsi plant'. Arun Pal a traditional potter made a Tulsi mancha which was installed in the courtyard. Baul Das Kumbhakar a traditional potter from Panchmura, Bankura district had prepared earlier several 8 inches Tulsi manch plaster moulds which the children filled up with clay and got the structure of Tulsi mancha out of the moulds.

An alpona specialist Sri Rabi Biswas demonstrated the motifs of Bengali alpona.





- *GODHRIS (11 - 14 June)* : Crafts Council of West Bengal participated in CCI Quilt Exhibition "GODHRI" at the Lalit Kala Akademi, Chennai, organized by CCI.
- *'TREASURES OF ODISHA' (June 28 - July 1)* CCWB celebrated the Crafts of Odisha on the occasion of Ratha Yatra. A rich collection of tribal saris and dupattas woven with traditional weaves of different region like Dongria, Saura, Bomkai, Sambalpuri were showcased. Other items which were displayed were fabric, bedcovers, handicrafts & artifacts.
- *'Agomoni' (26 - 30 August)* : CCWB celebrated Durga Puja by presenting a collection of textiles specially woven by the weavers of Bengal for 'Agomoni'.

### *School Programme :*

- CCWB organized a pottery workshop at Delhi Public School, Ruby Park in August. Shri Arun Pal gave demonstration of throwing on the wheel.



- At the invitation by Earth Day Network, CCWB participated in *Green Puja Bazaar* in September showcasing organic and natural products like textiles, agricultural products and ceramics made by different organisations.
- *Celebration of 'Deepavali' (18 - 22 October)* : Artisana displayed a large variety of terracotta lamps and small figures of Ganesha made by CCWB potters to celebrate Deepavali.
- *'Christmas Bazaar (22 - 27 December)* : CCWB celebrated Christmas and New Year through an annual exhibition at Artisana. Different gift and toys were showcased including coir toys, cowdung toys, paper mache toys and boxes, boxes made of golden grass and sikki grass, woollen shawls and stoles, dokra photo frame and coasters etc.



### *Craft past determines our future*

*Inauguration of the Resource Centre on Tribal Knowledge in Lalbandh, Santiniketan (November 2): The Tribal House*



that belonged to Late Shri Prabhas Sen has been restored by CCWB with the addition of an annexe for holding workshops and other activities. CCWB presented an exhibition on Tribal Art of Bengal and Jharkhand at the annexe. The delightful play 'Maatir Ghorer Gaan' (songs of the soil) presented by a tribal group showed their daily life and myths through songs and dances.

An important feature of the Festival - a Seminar titled '*Adivasi - Mission to Reality*' was also held.

'*Safar-Nama : Journeys Through a Kalamkari Hanging*' exhibition and seminar was held in collaboration with Indian Museum and Indian Council of Historical

The exhibition showcased twenty two panels of digitalized photographs in the first floor lobby and in the wide verandah of the Indian Museum. Another feature of the exhibition was showcasing contemporary works by six young textile artists who were influenced by the Chintz tradition. Dr. Lotika Varadraján gave a talk on the extraordinary piece of Kalamkari both at the inauguration as well at the Seminar. The seminar tried to explore various layers of this extraordinary Kalamkari piece presented with unusual flowers and plants, decorative pattern, mysterious animals and birds that reveal layers of memory associated with the symbolism and cultural ethos of different geographical areas brought together through extensive travel. The motifs, patterns and layout knit together elements of the *chintz* (printed multi colored cotton fabric with a glazed finish) tradition, but to this have been added many elements from miniature painting and murals.

Eminent speakers like Dr. Lotika Varadarajan, Dr. B. Venugopal, Director, Indian Museum, Dr. Paramjit Singh Chana, Director General, Botanical Survey of India, Dr. Ashok Kumar Das and Shyamali Das, Art Historians, Dr. Surajit Sarkar, Smt. Jagada Rajappa, Natural Dye Expert presented papers in the seminar. Artist and practitioner of Kalamkari craft Sri Jonnalagadda Niranjan demonstrated and showed how he has been reviving the chintz designs. Smt. Jagada Rajappa presented a very special paper elaborating on Votive Offerings - Introduction to Amman Selai adaptation of the techniques from Tapis Moghol Textiles.



## LAST WORD

### CAN OUR FUTURE BE HANDMADE?

Some highlights of the 5th Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Memorial Lecture (October 29 2014, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, New Delhi) by Ashoke Chatterjee

#### *A crisis in the making*

A year or so ago, the Government of India mooted a plan to assist handloom weavers by attaching a small electric motor to their looms. The logic set out was to increase productivity and therefore the earnings of deprived weavers. No questions seemed to have been asked about the wisdom of converting handlooms into power-looms, removing at one stroke the quality of the hand that distinguishes handloom fabric from power-loom and mill alternatives and providing the handloom product with its global USP. This foolish plan may well have gone through. Fortunately, it did not. A nationwide movement followed, one that is still on-going, to protect India's great handloom advantage from an 'official' threat that compounded the harsh competition from mass production. Almost seven decades after Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and other stalwarts pioneered handcraft development in national planning, the sector is in crisis.

#### *The sunset syndrome*

This crisis demands understanding not merely because millions of Indian lives are at stake. More critical is the crisis of values and of mindsets that is the root cause. How and when did pride and confidence in India's artisans transform into apathy and contempt, their skills dismissed as obsolescent, their culture as defeated, and their industry dismissed as "sunset"?

Today there are no federations or fora that bring artisans together. No chambers of commerce or B-schools are bothered with their business. Artisans do not block highways and train tracks. Like farmers, they are voiceless. They commit suicide.

#### *The concept of cultural industries*

Almost at the same moment that influential Indian planners were declaring craft a sunset activity, the European Union could be heard proclaiming that the 'future is handmade'. This reflected the global growth of cultural economics as a discipline which appreciates the major importance of cultural goods and services to global progress. The challenge therefore is not one of market threat but rather of fostering artisans' own capacity to negotiate effectively with the market, and to protect their interests within unrelenting change and competition.

#### *Building demand for hand quality*

Perhaps the first task is to build consumer awareness of craft quality. Demand requires awareness. Awareness begins with education – education that can sensitise the Indian child and tomorrow's consumer to her craft heritage and its relevance to her own well-being.

#### *Transformed landscapes, tectonic shifts*

We may need an even deeper understanding of tectonic shifts taking place in the context for Indian craft. These shifts include those of societal attitude and perception, and changing aspirations of both artisans and clients toward new concepts of progress, identity and modernity. Huge market transformations reflect rapid urbanisation, political forces, and the colossal influence of environmental change. The truth is that many of our craft traditions have moved out of villages into urban slums.hovels, not kutirs, are often the craft workplace. Contrast this reality with the late Pupul Jayakar's words written some twenty

years ago: “The rural arts of India are the arts of the settled villages and countryside, of people with lives tuned to the rhythm of nature and its laws of cyclical change, an art with a central concern with the earth and with harvesting...” Can that sacred contact with Nature, for generations the heartbeat of Indian creativity, survive within urban squalor? The shift is not just cultural. The natural environment is degrading rapidly. Woods, grasses, fibres, stone, natural colours, earth and water are disappearing. If nature’s integrity is a sine qua none of craft quality, does this also require that craft activists join forces to help redress the imbalance between greed and need?

### *Craft harbingers of justice*

Yet another shift is political and social. Consider the reality of the Naxal corridor, Kashmir and northeastern states holding such a wealth of craft resources. Does this fact tell us something about those attitudes of “sunset” and neglect, and of the potential of crafts as a huge social and political safety-net? Can we expect rich craft contributions from those deprived of their rights and living with neglect and violence?

### *The development agenda: a craft opportunity*

The sector’s greatest strength may well be that its impact and influence are cross-cutting, intersecting with so many national and global priorities. Perhaps as no other industry, craft is deeply involved with the most fundamental development agendas of our time: managing threats to the environment, promoting justice and equity and peace by bringing the deprived into the centre of concern, empowering women through recognition of their craft roles and contributions, offering identity and confidence in an era threatened by globalised uniformity, providing sustainable livelihoods to households and communities in their own locations through the use of local resources, protecting them from the miseries of migration, and leaving a light carbon footprint to address the threat of climate change. And then, carrying within it the seeds of spiritual awakening.

### *Handmade in India for the world*

We are on the threshold of one of the most important debates in economic and political history: the new development agenda that will be framed in 2015 as the Sustainable Development Goals to replace the more limited Millennium Development Goals or MDGs. The new SDGs are meant to take us as nations into a future that is more socially just, more equitable and inclusive, and therefore more sustainable. Craft industries do exactly that. A new opportunity lies within the meaning of sustainable development. We can now link our heritage as well as our current concerns to the most contemporary developmental challenge of our time. As the largest craft concentration in the world, Indian artisans can make a massive contribution to the search for a more sustainable, just and inclusive planet: a future handmade in India for the world.

## OBITUARY

### *Shri. Ismail Sulemanji Khatri*

The Crafts Council of India places on record its heartfelt condolences at the passing away of Shri. Ismail Sulemanji Khatri. He refined Bagh block prints into an art work par excellence investing it with a classic muted loveliness by resurrecting old forgotten motifs and creating a new natural dye colour palette. Today Bagh prints have an international clientele as well as a growing domestic market. Shri. Sulemanji Khatri was a National Awardee as is his entire family of wife, 4 sons and grandson. The craft wealth of the country is immensely poorer for his passing away.



## AFFILIATED STATE CRAFTS COUNCILS

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ANDHRA PRADESH & TELENGANA

H.No. 6-3-713, G-7, Emerald  
Amurtha Hills, Punjagutta  
HYDERABAD - 500 082  
Tel : 040-23418462  
Email : craftscouncilapt@gmail.com

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ASSAM

1 / 1 Penn Road  
Alipore  
KOLKATA - 700 027  
Tel : 033 - 24799536 / 22485229  
Email : nandini\_dutta@hotmail.com

### DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

116-A/1, First Floor  
Shahpur Jat, Nr. SBI bank  
NEW DELHI - 110 049  
Tel : 011- 26491571  
Email : delhicraft@gmail.com

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA

' BHOOMA ', No. 37, 17th Cross  
Malleswaram  
BANGALORE - 560 055  
Tel : 080 - 23347299  
Email : cck@dataone.in

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMIL NADU

128, Appusamy Road  
Red Fields  
COIMBATORE - 641 045  
Tel : 0422 - 4204180  
Email : cctncbe@gmail.com

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF UTTAR PRADESH

A1 / 26, Vishwaskand  
Gomti Nagar  
LUCKNOW - 226 010  
Tel : (0522) - 2309656  
Mob : 094154-08847 / 098390-23508  
Email : craftcouncilup@hotmail.com

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF WEST BENGAL

64, Lake Place  
KOLKATA - 700 029  
Tel : 033-24661360 / 24661357  
Mob : 98310-09845  
Email : ccwb.ind@gmail.com

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TRIPURA

Handloom Marketing Complex  
1st Floor (West End)  
Sankuntala Road  
AGARTALA - 799 001  
WEST TRIPURA  
Tel : 0381-235 2680 / 251 8142  
Mob : 094361-30313 / 98633-24971 /  
098631-89210  
Email : craftscounciloftripura@gmail.com

### CRAFTS COUNCIL OF NAGALAND

Lane 4, Near BSF Camp  
Kuda Village  
C- khel, Nagarjan  
DIMAPUR - 797 112  
NAGALAND  
Tel : 03862-226443, 231333, 240568  
Mob : 094360-02520  
Email : savinonik@yahoo.co.in

## THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

GF ' Temple Trees '  
37 Venkatanarayana Road T. Nagar Chennai 600 017 INDIA  
Tel : +91-44-24341456 Email : info@craftscouncilofindia.org  
Website : www.craftscouncilofindia.org Facebook : www.facebook.com/craftscouncilofindia