



THE CRAFTS COUNCIL OF INDIA

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

January 2016

Craft Ethics: Finding a Moral Compass in a Harsh Terrain

Ashoke Chatterjee

Cut-throat competition is perhaps the most distinguishing feature of today's marketplace. Every player must survive by delivering on promises of quality – promises that are ultimately tested by the consumer. Her situation is difficult, surrounded by competing claims and attractive inducements, malpractices, brand loyalties and new regimes of consumer protection that raise almost as many concerns as they attempt to address. The Maggie Noodles example is before us, although what we should learn from it remains obscure. In earlier days, the rough and tumble of a competitive marketplace kept some distance from craft activists. Our task was to identify craft quality and to showcase it, bringing artisans, traders and buyers together in some kind of harmonious relationship. That objective was not always easy, yet the bona fides of stakeholders were seldom questioned. The CCI banner, like that of other respected activists, attracted trust. Marketing thus became the catalyst around which all the USPs of the sector could be promoted and better understood: livelihoods for millions, empowerment of those still at the margin, green production to protect the environment, cultural identity within pressures of globalisation, and spiritual enrichment as well. A call of another kind was heard at the 2012 World Crafts Council (WCC) gathering in Chennai: the ethics of international craft trade.

This call came with the concerns expressed by Bangladesh about India's Geographical Indicator (GI) for the craft of jamdani, and perhaps even earlier with the crisis of fake brocade in Varanasi. Was jamdani the exclusive craft preserve of a single geography or a heritage that has for centuries moved like so many others across regions and boundaries? The issue has profound significance in south Asia, a region with such a rich experience of shared knowledge and practice. At the WCC in Dongyang (China) a year ago, some kind of consensus seemed to emerge on the need to place the artisan and her craft at the centre of concern, rather than look exclusively at location. Threats could emerge not just across political boundaries, but within them. Machine-made 'Banarasi' brocade from Surat was one much-quoted example. More recently, protests have been heard over the use of the term patachitra: must this craft be confined to either Odissa or West Bengal? The need appears for setting benchmarks of craft integrity and excellence as a first priority. Set by artisans themselves, these standards could be the foundation for protective efforts. Trade and other market regimes should then be enabling contexts rather than mere arbiters. Many experiences have been shared since Chennai and Dongyang. They confirm the complexity of protecting artisans as well as the societies to which they belong. Sensitivities and interests can challenge simple prescriptions. An extraordinary instance is a current trail of emails set off by an exhibit now on display at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London.

News has gone around the world of this spectacular V&A display of textiles from the subcontinent. Among the exhibits are examples of contemporary design that demonstrate the vitality of crafts that reflect today's aspirations. Controversy has emerged on a particular exhibit. It draws on an Ajrakh past, reflecting a leading designer's effort at innovation using contemporary design and non-traditional production. The theme (there are skulls visible), and the technique (digital printing) have all raised issues. For some, the culture of an artisan community and the integrity of their craft have been disrespected. Others point to the importance of respecting creativity and the universality of design inspiration. The exhibit label and the exhibition catalogue appear at odds and in need of review. Artisan, textile designer, scholar, exhibition designer, craft activist, the market – all these players are represented in a dialogue that is still unfolding online. Tradition, geography, custom, religion, technique, design and the market are elements in this debate. Despite some extreme positions, the exchange also reflects a growing mutuality of respect and a genuine desire to learn from experience. Although it may be too early to draw any conclusion, one item hanging in a London display has brought home the universe that craft cultures represent. This responsibility is truly huge, and craft activists must bear it to protect the integrity of a heritage that belongs not only to communities and countries but to the world. Sensitivity, respect, tolerance and a stamina for uncertainty are needed. Above all, the challenge suggests the importance of spaces in which discussion can be encouraged so that guidelines and benchmarks, rather than diktats, can emerge to influence creative decisions. The future we all want is of a time when heritage and modernity are in harmony, with a genuine respect for the artisan as a bridge between the past and the future. Perhaps it is the quality of her tomorrow that can be our moral compass today.

Afterword: from the hospital bedside of Dr. Ismail Khatri (he is convalescing in Ahmedabad from a serious operation), the celebrated Ajrakh ustad of Kutch and its great torch-bearer. "Yes, I know of the V&A matter. Some time ago, the design was brought to me for production. One look at the skulls, and I refused. In our faith, human representations are forbidden in art. Skulls – well, you can imagine how I felt. Not just me but other Ajrakh practitioners who were approached also refused, and again not just those who follow Islam. The values we share were offended. For us who practice Ajrakh, it is not just a technique or a product. It is our lives. It is the culture we breathe. I do not stand in the way of anyone's creativity. To each his own, but please – not this in the name of Ajrakh. I ask only that the V&A remove the term 'Ajrakh'. Remove it totally. Our culture is a celebration of nature and all the ways that God speaks to us through flowers, trees, grains, birds, wind and water – all these are the inspiration we draw upon. Ajrakh is a garden of beauty and peace. To convert this garden into a cemetery is sad, very sad".

EDUCATION, SKILL BUILDING AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Way Ahead for Craftpreneur

Gita Ram

In the last few years there have been such significant changes in the markets and in the economy that we have all been concerned about the next generation of artisans, the

opportunities they would need to log into the changes in demand and the way business is to be conducted. We have been hearing of many initiatives being undertaken to link the artisan with designer entrepreneurs, to draw artisans to business courses.

Judy Frater had seen the need for introducing design courses for the artisans of Kutch years before anyone else did. Having moved on from the Kala Raksha Vidyalaya she had started, to the Somayala Kala Vidya, she has been able to improve on the impact the course offered. She has been able to change things that don't work and which lack focus to areas with potential impact. The curriculum improvement is a continuous process.

I was at the recently held jury for a batch of students passing out of the design course at Somaya Kala Vidya at Adipur. The other members of the jury were Ritu Kumar, Anuradha Kumra from Fabindia, Reena Nrupen from MS University Baroda. There were eleven students. A profile of each student indicated their family background, their education and their dreams. The jury took one hour with each student. The student in that time does a presentation of his work. Each student talks of the concepts he has learnt in the course: form, perspective, colour, market trends, costing, brand building, etc. The students had been taken to Ahmedabad, where they visited several shops through which they could possibly sell, they visited homes which use craft in their everyday life. In the open forum the current batch of students, students who have already graduated, their families and friends were present. The advisors to the course, Shamji Bhai, Gulam Bhai and Daya Bhai were present and spoke. A wide range of subjects were discussed. Each member of the jury was asked questions on market demands and trends. One student asked persistently how he could take his brand forward. He was not satisfied with any suggestions. To put his mind at ease, I told him that CCI would invite him to a Crafts Bazaar, which means he would soon be invited by our other Councils to Bangalore, Hyderabad, Delhi, Kolkata and Coimbatore. He smiled and said that's just what I wanted you to say!

A value added education which is meaningful to the future for artisans and which has elements of design, production management and exposure to current domestic markets are beautifully captured in this course. Most of these students were working in other workshops. They are now looking to become entrepreneurs with their own set up. A little training in business and financial and business management should help them set up as 'craftepreneurs'. There are several new initiatives to provide just this. IIM Ahmedabad is looking at training artisans to build up a brand of artisanal businesses.

What works in one region does not necessarily work in another. That is because of the heterogeneity of our regions, the sector and the communities involved. However, we do need to keep trying and come up with innovative ideas to help young artisans in learning to face the challenges of doing business in the world.

CRAFT-ENTREPRENEUR

The Story of an Artisan from Andhra Pradesh

As told by Meena Appender

Chinnaya Chari is a young man with an affable personality and a bird like alertness. He grew up in the small village of Ettikopaka where there has been a community of wood lacquer ware toy makers living for many generations.

This story of a boy who could not finish his 10th Class because of financial reasons, but has now become an entrepreneur who employs about 40 people, makes interesting reading.

The lathes that 'turned' the toys were hand operated many decades ago. So whilst a person turned the piece of wood into a toy or object, there used be another who would make the lathe turn. Such a person was called the 'puller' and he was paid 25 paise on the rupee of all the production. Chinnaya Chari's father was a carpenter. It is only 20 years back that electric motors were introduced. His mother and sister used to help the family finances by painting toys. From his fifth year he has been learning this craft from his mentor Gutti Suri Babu.

His family was in urgent need of the Rs. 500 he would earn as an apprentice. He soon dropped out of school. Though he planned to write his tenth class exam privately he could not cope with both his work and his studies. Once he started working he realised the innumerable problems facing these craftsmen—irregular power, lack of raw material, low margins. He bitterly regretted having to give up his studies for such an uncertain future.

In 1995 he started working with Shri CV Raju, using his skill to develop prototypes and also learning the finer nuances of vegetable dyes from him. He worked with him for eight years and gained great exposure to new products, new markets and to a different thought process. In 2004 CCAP had a competition in wood craft for the Kamala Devi Sanmaan. Chinnaya Chari's entry was a set of 23 eggs nesting in one another. The greatest number made till then was 12 eggs nesting in one another. He won the Kamala Devi Sanmaan prize in 2004, and CCAPT recommended his name for the National Award, which he won in 2005 for a set of 32 eggs. Later he was mentioned in the 2010 Limca Book of Records for a set of 51 eggs. After the recognition he received in 2004 he realised that there was no limit to what could be done with the craft and with his skill. He also made the most perfect miniature chess set, which has won him a lot of recognition. At that point there were 300 artisans in Ettikopaka eking a living battling power cuts and raw material shortage. A pharmaceutical company and a cement factory were set up in the neighbourhood and were paying Rs. 250 per day. There was a rush of youngsters to work in these factories.

This is where Chinnaya Chari's contribution to craft and his vision stand out. His passion for nurturing the craft led him to realize that the exodus would lead to the craft dying. The poor wages was another reason.

He trained 10 women and men under the norms set by the government to National Awardees. Some people had machines but not enough orders. Some were very skilled but were bogged down with routine work.

In this period he went as a trainer to Chennapatna and observed the training programme there. The designer there had broken up the work into assembly line functions. Some were doing only the 'turning', some the 'joining', some the 'painting'. There was a supervisor who did the quality control and co ordination and was paid about Rs. 30,000/-. The designer who could not work on the lathe needed a master craftsmen who was paid Rs. 30,000/- per month to execute his prototypes. The designer charged Rs. 40,000/- per month. There was also an influx of brightly painted toys from China which were flooding the markets. It was a confluence of ideas and circumstances that made Chinnaya Chari think of the many problems facing the Ettikopaka artisans. These were low wages, lack of demand, competition, abundant down time and poor margins.

He worked out the following solutions: have a show room that has new designs of good quality, a centralised production unit, where specialised functions are carried out, pay better wages, ensure good quality. Because of his capability he could take up the jobs of quality control supervisor and coordinator along with that of a Master craftsmen to develop prototypes, hire designers for specific periods or specific number of designs, work with other designers exclusively for their products but glean new ideas and techniques from them.

He now has 16 people working directly under him and has 24 skilled craftsmen doing job work for him. Eventually he hopes to employ 100 people.

Women training under him now get a monthly income of Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 4500/-. Skilled artisans earn about Rs. 7500/- to Rs. 9000/-. Those who do job work can earn up to Rs.15,000/-

He is fascinated with the Chinese model of assembly line production and feels that, it is the only way to increase productivity, thereby increasing margins. Also he feels by employing not so skilled women to add the finishing touches he can free the skilled craftsmen for other work.

He works closely with CCAPT in its Lalitha Praveenyam Scholarship Fund, where CCAPT supports school going children who are learning the craft from their parents. He is a patient and positive mentor to the youngsters.

This is the vision and work of a young man who could only finish his 9th Class and wants to make a difference to his community and to the craft.

This story is his – I can only claim credit for loosely translating it into English.

GREEN TECHNOLOGY

Water Hyacinth—Nature's Gift

Nandini Dutta

Assam is blessed with numerous lakes, ponds and "bheels". However the bane of these natural water bodies is water hyacinth. This weed clogs up and chokes these "lungs" and has also crept into urban areas through large drains and "nullahs". The weed spreads so fast that cleaning operations cannot keep pace with their growth.

A few years ago Mrs. Gita Ram spoke about the unexplored commercial value of this weed as an alternative to mediums like cane. The Crafts Council of Assam started a dialogue with the Northeast Development Financial Corporation (NEDFI) to see if a pilot project could be initiated. The Chairman Mr Kashinath Hazarika fully supported the idea with finance and administrative help. Mrs. Gita Ram helped us with the initial workshop with an expert from Industree, Ms. Neelam Chibber. The prototype products that emerged from this workshop excited everyone and NEDFI decided to make this into a commercial venture. Crafts people were selected for introducing this new craft and a work centre was started in Khetri in rural Guwahati. Crafts Council of Assam helped with designs and commercial inputs and then NEDFI called on experts from Thailand to add variety and sophistication to the products of this developing craft.



Harvesting Water Hyacinth



NEDFI Workshop

The Centre in Khetri has become a permanent work place and the craftspeople are turning out various products like baskets, mats and both decorative and utility items. Rural women are taking to harvesting this once menacing weed and selling it as a commercial raw material to earn some money. Nature's curse has become a blessing to many.

The next step was to value add and market the products. The use of natural dyes seemed to be the best way to add colour and brightness to the products. Crafts Council of Assam roped in Mrs. Jagada Rajappa to conduct a workshop on Natural Dyes in NEDFI'S Khetri Centre. The results were excellent and eye catching.

Crafts Council of Assam introduced the value added products through the Kamala Shop Kolkatta and also at exhibitions elsewhere. The response has been most encouraging. NEDFI has been able to take water hyacinth eco friendly products to Trade Fairs both within India and outside. Some of the items have also been awarded for innovation and for use of the natural fibre.

The use of this eco friendly fibre is limitless. Being a new product the exposure to entrepreneurs and craftsmen must increase and they must not only be educated in the intrinsic value of the fibre but also in its commercial value. The user base must increase e.g. the use of water hyacinth to make gift tea caddies, can change the economics of the exercise.

Finally, Crafts Council of Assam thanks NEDFI in believing in CC Assam by extending unstinted support. The success of this project can change the lives of many rural people and make life easier for civic bodies to clean up our urban drainage system.

INNOVATIONS IN CHAMBA RUMAL

Anjana Somany

Delhi Crafts Council began the Chamba Rumal revival project more than two decades ago. It is a matter of pride that all aspects of the revival have been painstakingly addressed over this time. The rumals that are currently being recreated in our Centre, "Charu" in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh are of as fine in quality in terms of technique, materials and overall aesthetic appeal as those found in museum collections.

Having accomplished the original mandate, our focus invariably turned to how we could take this project forward and innovate with the craft, as it was felt that it was necessary to give a contemporary context to the rumals. It was with this in mind that DCC decided to embark on a series of special workshops this year and experiment with contemporary themes. We engaged Swati Kalsi, a designer with experience in many forms of traditional embroideries including Sujani, to design the new rumals as well as to conduct the workshops.

A series of three workshops took place from May to September 2015 in DCC's office premises. Embroiderers from the Centre in Chamba and two artists, one from Chamba and Jaipur each travelled to participate in these workshops.

Planning and designing new contemporary themes for the new rumals to suit the style of the Chamba embroidery was a challenge. The office was converted into a reference library with multiple books on Indian miniature paintings dotting the workspace. Under Swati's meticulous direction, the two artists sketched the new themes. The team decided to concentrate on the popular themes of the traditional rumals - these include nayika, raas and shikar and interpret them in a contemporary manner.



Chamba Rumal Design Workshop

There was a lot of interaction between DCC members, the artists, the embroiderers and Swati on how to translate the vocabulary of miniature painting into a contemporary design and also how to embroider these new paintings using their traditional techniques. Given the time consuming nature of hand embroidery we were able to work on six new rumals. Thus far, the results have been very promising and it is an exciting step forward in this project. DCC hopes to display these new works in a special collection.

We are happy to add that Delhi Crafts Council will be showcasing its core collection, 'The Chamba Rumal: Life to a Dying Art' at the prestigious Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai from December 18 to 31, 2015.

A GREEN FESTIVAL - KARAM FESTIVAL

9, 10 & 11 May, 2015 at Srijani, E Z C C (Shantiniketan)

The Crafts Council of West Bengal organized 'Karam Festival' a festival of Santhali recitation, songs and dance in collaboration with Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre. A group of 25 Santhals including Karam Guru came from a remote village named Silda of Jhargram in West Midnapur. The festival started with the worshipping and cutting of two branches of the Karam tree and followed by worshipping of the branches with songs and dances and the whole festival ended with the immersion of the branches. The music and dance performed by them was superb.

The Karam (*Adina cordifolia*) is a tree which the Santhals consider sacred for the ecosystem and the festival they celebrate is named 'Karam'. Though this festival is reported to be celebrated both by the tribal and the non-tribal people of Eastern India, it undoubtedly has gained elaboration and assumed more significance among the Santhals, the dominant homogeneous tribe of the country and also of West Bengal.

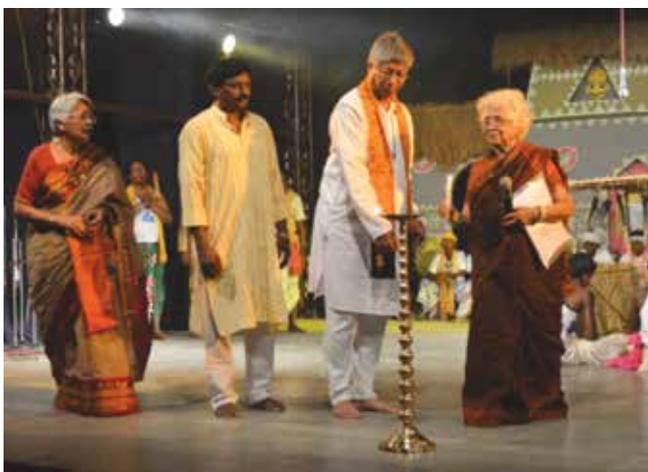
Santhals observe the standard Karam festival i.e the 'Jiwet' Karam, a Karam for the living but with slight modifications on other occasions also. Each one is named differently and occasioned for a specific purpose such as Manjhi Karam for a new headman assuming office, Dangua Karam when village boys and girls are ready for marriage, Guru Karam for celebrating the starting of an Ojha's practice, Cela Karam for celebrating the initiation of the disciples to magical practices, the Mora Karam, a Karam for the dead if he was a Karam Guru or if a Karam seedling has grown either in his court yard or on the site of his cremation and so the Mak More festival was held as a thanks giving for ending sickness.

Each ceremony, however, focuses on the magical properties believed to be inherent in the Karam tree and by honouring the Karam seeks to obtain an increase in wealth and prosperity.

Besides, according to Santhal tradition, young unmarried people of the same sex who want to enter into a friendship alliance formalize this life-long friendship during this festival.

The Karam festival like other earlier occasions provided an opportunity for the Santhal Karam Guru to recite the story of the creation of the universe, origin of man and the division of the tribe into clans and sub-clans. But in modern times this festival is losing its relevance. Not only that, the music and dance associated with each different occasion of

the Karam festival is also losing ground. Its importance in the life of the Santhal can well be realized by the multiplicity of its functions ranging from social to magical. Celebration of the Karam festival means celebration of youth. Celebration of the Karam for seeking wealth and prosperity also puts a question about labeling the Santhal merely hedonistic. The importance of the Karam festival can well be realized by the multiplicity of its functions in the life of the Santhal not only the social or magical but also as a genre containing in itself the repository of their knowledge of cosmology.



ACTIVITIES

The Crafts Council of India

- Textile Show (11 - 12 September, 2015): Rare, handwoven traditional and designer saris were featured in the Textile Show organised by CCI in Chennai in the pre-festive season. The dazzling creative oeuvre of the top weavers and designers of the country was showcased at the highly successful exhibition.
- Craftpreneur (28 - 31 October, 2015): Craft artisan entrepreneurs with their pulse on both market and craft showcased innovative products at 'Craftpreneur', CCI's annual exhibition of taking evolving crafts into the future at the Lalit Kala Akademi in Chennai. The exhibition showcased wonderfully innovative contemporary crafts in metal craft, woodcraft, glass, horn craft, weaves, saris and so on.



Display of Craftpreneur products

Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana

Warangal Dhurries: Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh & Telangana has been invited by the District Collector of Warangal to suggest ways and means of design development, product improvement and marketing of the Warangal Dhurrie. After initial conversations CCAPT had advised the Collector to help the weavers with better dyeing facilities. A trip was made to Warangal by CCAPT to meet the Master Weavers and to convey to the District Collector their requirements and issues.

Puttapaka Cluster: The government has decided to discontinue all cluster programs. The Puttapaka cluster was in its penultimate phase and CCAPT had received permission to

build a CFC (common facility centre) on the land that was procured by the cluster. Under the able guidance and supervision of Gajjam Govardan the building has now been completed.

Sponsor a Weaver: After the council's extensive work at Nagaldinne, there was a brief lull in the pace of development in that village. CCAPT is steadfast in the belief that it should intervene to retain the traditional weaving skills and designs of Gadwal. CCAPT has chosen 'Chenetha Colour Weaves' an NGO that has done remarkable work with the Ikkat weavers of Nalgonda. As a consequence of the Kausalyam Craft Bazaar 2014, a lot of corporates and organisations, have expressed keen interest in CCAPT's work. One such organisation is IIID (Institute of Indian Interior Designers). Using their CSR funds they have opted to sponsor CCAPT's efforts to release 10 weavers in the Gadwal region from their debt to master weavers, give them better wages and have them weave to a producer co-operative.

Ettikopaka Craftpreneur: CCAPT has had an opportunity to help a craftsman become a craft entrepreneur. Chinnaya Chari of Ettikopaka wanted a loan to set up a showroom and buy a few machines which would help him take his products to the next level. The committee took the decision of granting him a loan because of Chinnaya Chari's excellent track record in his dealings with CCAPT as well as the sound business plan that he presented. He has already started repaying the monthly instalments. CCAPT visited the village in November to check how the children under the Lalitha Praveeniam Scholarship Fund were faring. His story appears elsewhere in the newsletter.

Aakruthi Vastra: CCAPT held its textile exhibition Aakruthi Vastra in both Vijayawada and Vishakhapatnam cities in the month of December. It was decided to enroll a few ladies from each of these cities as members of CCAPT who will help the Council in their craft marketing and welfare activities.

Delhi Crafts Council

Talk by Jaya Jaitley (August 2015): The Government of India declared August 7th, 2015 as Handloom Day. To celebrate this a talk and presentation was done by Jaya Jaitley, founder of Dastakari Haat Samiti. Titled "Handloom Landscapes" it was an in-depth and beautifully narrated presentation on the present situation of handlooms in Chanderi (Madhya Pradesh), Phulia (West Bengal) and Bhagalpur (Bihar) based on her recent visit to these three towns in order to assess the current situation of handlooms.

Chamba Rumal Workshop II & III (August & September, 2015): The Chamba Rumal workshops were held in the Delhi Craft Council office under the guidance of Swati Kalsi, a designer. The embroiderers and one artist from Chamba came to Delhi to continue and advance upon the new ideas that had been discussed entirely. The highly skilled embroiderers continued working on the new paintings in contemporary themes that had been developed during the earlier workshop. Various innovations in the traditional stitches were also introduced by Swati to improve the quality of embroidery. At the workshop the artist worked on some new themes for a series of contemporary rumals being planned.

Pichwai Talks (September 2015): Delhi Crafts Council organized three talks alongside the exhibition "Pichwai - Tradition and Beyond". It was a fabulous collaboration and gave us a chance to give a wider audience an academic perspective on a traditional art.

The first talk, “The Pichwai Painting Tradition: Past, Present and Future” was by Mr. Desmond Lazaro, a painter presently based in Pondicherry. Mr Lazaro gave an enthralling account of the historical aspects of this painting tradition, he explained how Pichwai paintings are made, including the intricacies of proportion and geometry and discussed the pigments, papers and cloth that are used in this traditional art.

The second talk was “Pichwai Painting: Materials, Techniques and Conservation” by Smita Singh. Smita Singh is a Textile Conservation Consultant working as Project Associate at the National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural property (NRLC). Smita Singh returned to give another talk to a group of thirty-five students from the National Institute of Fashion Technology. It was inspiring to see the students listen to an expert in conservation and for them to see the dedication of the speaker as well as understand the methods and materials used in the restoration of stunning old masterpieces.



Chamba Rumal workshop

Saris of India 2015 (October 2015): “Saris of India 2015 - Innovating Tradition”, the annual sari exhibition was held at the Aga Khan Hall in Delhi. The Sutrakar Samman 2015 was awarded to Kabiraj Nayak, from the Ganjam District, Odisha for his excellence in the weaving of Bomkai saris. DCC exhibited the saris of twenty one talented craftsmen, artists, clusters and designers - all developing and innovating with traditional weaving, printing and embroidery techniques. Through this exhibition, the Delhi Crafts Council is committed to bringing back the focus on the sari and to those who create these stunning textiles using traditional techniques.



Sutrakar Samman
2015 to Kabiraj Nayak

Indira Gandhi Memorial (November 2015): To celebrate the birthday of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and to recognise her life achievements along with the creative arts of this country, the Delhi Crafts Council was asked to participate in a three-day event. DCC invited four craftsmen to display and sell their crafts - Hira Kanth (Madhubani Painting), Umar Daraz (Paper Crafts), Narendra Verma (Stone) and Bilal Khatri (Bagh). The craftsmen had a chance to meet members of Indira Gandhi's family and discuss their work as part of the inauguration.



At birth anniversary
function of Smt Indira
Gandhi - display by
Umar Daraz, Kite Maker

Kamaladevi Puraskar (November 2015): The annual Kamaladevi Scholarship event was held at the India International Centre on November 21st, 2015. This year the event was presided over by Shri Ashoke Chatterjee, Advisor - Crafts Council of India. The scholarships were awarded to six talented youngsters from across the country and presented by Smt. Syeda Hameed.

The awardees of the Kamaladevi Puraskar 2015 were:

Pragathi Batham (20) from Mainpur, Uttar Pradesh for Tarkashi (Metal wire work), Samrat Fauzdar (19) from Bankura, West Bengal for Ganjifa Playing Cards, Ramu Debnath (19) from Sepahijala, Tripura for Cane & Business Basketware, Tabassum Afreen (16) from Bidar, Karnataka for Bidar Craft, Indrajit Gajanan Mahajan (20) from Kolhapur, Maharashtra for Kolhapuri Chappal in Craft and Deepika Soni (13) from Mohaba, Uttar Pradesh for Traditional Brassware.

The awardees were hosted in Delhi for two days and during their stay visited the Crafts Museum and interacted with Ms Gulshan Nanda in an informal meeting. Gulshanji spent time getting to know the youngsters and understanding their working lives and inspired them to continue developing and excelling in their craft.



Kamaladevi Puraskar Awardees

The eighteen-month stipend the young craftsmen receive through the scheme allows them to continue their craft alongside their education and motivates them to earn a livelihood through their traditional skills. We are grateful to our generous sponsors who donate towards the scholarship fund every year.

KAMALA - The Craft Shop, New Delhi

- Love of the Loom - Indulge in Indigo (August 2015): This “Love of Loom - Indulge in Indigo” was the third in a series of exhibitions highlighting woven textiles. We presented saris, fabrics and dupattas from many craftsmen using various techniques, shades and dyes of Indigo. The collection included Andhra Ikat, Banarasi silks and cotton, Ajrak, Akola, Shibori and Bandhini to name a few. This event featured a special collection in natural indigo designed by Bina Rao. The response was astounding and once again the focus on textiles brought to the store a new clientele that was very encouraging for the Kamala Team.



Display at Love of the Loom



Dyed Loom

- Haart Heart by Ryoko Haraguchi (December 2015): Haart Heart is a collection of dye works on elegant Indian fabric. These garments unify Indian textiles with Japanese dye techniques and design aesthetic. Once again, Ryoko Haraguchi brought to Kamala a unique collection of ready to wear garments. She has used Japanese techniques such as persimmon tannin over dye and Itajime dyeing, combined with traditional Indian dyeing and stitchwork resulting in stunning creations.

Crafts Council of Karnataka

- Vastrabharana Exhibition: Vastrabharana, CCKs fundraiser event entered its 23rd year. As always we were thrilled by the enthusiastic response of city's connoisseurs of saris.
- Green Crafts: In order to create ongoing awareness and marketing opportunities for the craftspersons of Karnataka CCK proposes to conduct a workshop on natural dye application in yarn dyeing in association with the Deputy Director of RD & TD Centre, Bangalore. This step should help in reviving the languishing techniques of natural dyeing of textiles. We hope to conduct the workshop at Ilkal in North Karnataka.
- Design Development Programmes: A Design and Technology Development programme has been planned with grant-in-aid from the DC[H] in Kasuti embroidery in Hubli from end November to mid December. A Design and Technology upgradation in Contemporary Jewellery in Bidri craft is being planned in December 2015 with Office of the DC (Handicrafts) support.

A Craft awareness programme in Leather Puppetry has been planned at the Himanshu school at the end of the year.

Crafts Council of West Bengal

- Crafts Council of West Bengal participated and showcased different crafts of Bengal in Come to the One Stop Arcade at Vedic Village on 13th June, 2015.
- Ratha Yatra Festival (18 - 19 July, 2015): The Car Festival, Crafts and Dance from Odisha was celebrated at Artisana. Smt. Sharmila Biswas, a leading Odissi dancer in India presented excerpts from her production Apar Kaya: Speaking Through the Body of Another, and showed the relation between textile and human's life span as an extension of dance. Master Weaver Sri Surinder Meher and his collection of textiles from Sambalpur were on view.



Heritage Odisha textiles at the Festival

- Khadi Collection Exhibition (11 - 14 August, 2015): CCWB celebrated India's 69th Independence Day by showcasing an exquisite Khadi collection.
- Exhibition of exquisite collection of Temple Border Saris (1 - 5, September 2015): The exhibition featured saris from all over India. The temple motif is extensively used to enhance the borders of saris from all over India. It was first created in the southern city of Kanchipuram, in homage to the city's famous Kailasanathar temple. Created in Dravidian style, it is the oldest temple in the city and takes its shape from Shiva's revered shrine at Mount Kailash. The traditional Kanchipuram saris (popularly known as Kanjivaram) were known for their splendid silk, with brocade borders and elaborate pallavs. The borders were woven separately and hand-stitched to the saris. When the

temple pattern was introduced, the motif was woven with the sari in the same color as the border. When joined it created a new style that became an instant hit. In time this developed from being a single pointed spire, to follow the style of other temple spires adding three, five or even more points. The temple motif can now be seen in its various styles in saris from many parts of India.



Temple Border Sari

- Pre-puja “Agamoni” exhibition (19 - 24 September, 2015): The exhibition mainly focused on Bengal Handlooms by a collection of Master Weavers. A collection of chikan, tussar, linen, Kanchi cotton & Chettinad, Paithani, block printed saris and table covers and cushions were brought from different parts of India.



Pre-puja “Agamoni” exhibition

- A famous writer Rosie Llewellyn-Jones visited Artisana on 28th September along with her friends. They were delighted to see the various crafts of Bengal.
- Deepavali Celebrations (5 - 10, October 2015): Deepavali was celebrated with various types of terracotta oil lamps designed by Arun Pal. Textile items were also another feature of this exhibition.



FABRIC OF INDIA - BOOK REVIEW

— A Publication brought out by Victoria and Albert Museum

Kausalya Santhanam

For centuries Indian fabrics have reigned supreme. They have dazzled the world for millennia with the fineness of their weaves, the range of their designs and textures, and the vibrancy of their colours. The Victoria and Albert Museum which has the world's largest collection of Indian fabrics recently mounted an exhibition in London showcasing the history, the variety and the beauty of Indian textiles. "The Fabric of India" is a comprehensive book brought out on the occasion that "takes an overview of the huge subject". It is edited by Rosemary Crill, Senior Curator in the Asian Department at the museum, and the co-curator of the exhibition. The book contains a mine of information, supported by excellent photographs, that captures the significance and the splendor of this finely evolved tradition.

The materials, dyes, technical processes, and expertise needed to fashion each type of textile are covered in detail. These include the Ajrakh print and the Patola weave of Gujarat, the resist dyed Kodalikarrupur saris of Tamil Nadu, the tie and dye of Rajasthan, the elegant chintz of Andhra Pradesh, the gold woven Khamkhwab of Varanasi, among many others. Trade and politics get their due attention. Indian fabrics found their way to various parts of the globe from ancient times until machine made cloth from the mills of Britain struck a staggering blow to Indian handwoven and printed textiles. Gandhiji's emphasis on Khadi, that triggered an entire movement for freedom, is highlighted and so is Indira Gandhi's Khadi wedding sari that made a strong statement for Indian textiles. On the other side of the spectrum is the

focus on cloth as display – the fabulously embroidered garments of the Moghuls, the ornate tent materials for military campaigns, and ceremonial cloth for temples. We learn of the role played by textiles in religion. Production and patronage are also dealt with.

The matter of fact tone of Crill's text and the depth of information help highlight the luminosity of the textiles and the photographs. The book would have been enhanced by bigger print. The small print is taxing on the eye and prevents easy absorption of details; the font of the references is even more miniscule. Page numbers are faint as are the captions; a few pages are not numbered, making it difficult for reference.

Tradition is a flowing river that embraces the currents of change. The works of contemporary designers who reinvent tradition are showcased. They use the hereditary skills of craftsmen often leading to their revival. This is an exciting section of the book and adds to its value. While a few of the innovations are both interesting and dramatic, a few others are just purely dramatic. A sari is intriguingly named "suicide sari" by the designer with no explanation offered. The Ajrakh print coat has digitally introduced skulls. Is it not possible for innovators to be sensitive to the sentiments and beliefs of craftsmen?

What imprint themselves on the mind and eye long after closing the book are the well researched narrative of the text and the stunning visuals of the textiles. The book is a fitting tribute to the extraordinary skills of the Indian craftsman who continues to create enduring magic out of fabric.

AFFILIATED STATE CRAFTS COUNCILS

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ANDHRA PRADESH & TELENGANA

G-7, Emerald Apartments
Amurtha Hills, Punjagutta
HYDERABAD 500 082
TELENGANA
Tel : 040 2341 8462
Email : craftscouncilapt@gmail.com

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ASSAM

1 / 1, Penn Road
Alipore
KOLKATA 700 027
Tel : 033 2479 9536 / 2248 5229
Email : nandini_dutta@hotmail.com

DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

116-A/1, First Floor
Shahpur Jat, Near SBI bank
NEW DELHI 110 049
Tel : 011 2649 1571
Email : delhicraft@gmail.com

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA

' BHOOMA ', 37, 17th Cross
Malleswaram
BANGALORE 560 055
Tel : 080 2334 7299
Email : cck@dataone.in
craftscouncilofkarnataka@yahoo.in

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

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMIL NADU

" Vue Grande ", 3rd Floor
339, Chinnasamy Naidu Street
New Siddhapudur
COIMBATORE 641 044
Tel : 0422 4204180
Email : cctncbe@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 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 2466 1360 / 2466 1357
Mob : 98310 09845
Email : ccwb.ind@gmail.com

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