

Role of *Chikankari* NGOs to Ameliorate the Artisans: An Exploratory Study in Lucknow

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ABSTRACT The aim of the study is to highlight the role of *chikankari* NGOs to ameliorate the artisans in Lucknow. There were 43 *chikankari* NGOs on the list of Development Commissioner (Handicraft) Office, Barabanki, Lucknow. From this list, ten NGOs were randomly selected. The selected NGOs were operating in five blocks of Lucknow district namely, Bakshi Ka Talab, Kakori, Mal, Malihabad and Sarojani Nagar. The study is based on primary data collected from the chairperson of the NGOs through interview technique. Results revealed that all the NGOs had procured funds under the Rural Development Schemes-Baba Saheb Hastshilp Vikas Yojana, Design and Technology Up-gradation, and Marketing Support and Services implemented by DC (Handicrafts). Thereby majority of the NGOs were financially assisting to encourage the artisans' participation in *chikankari* craft. The NGOs also upgraded the skills of artisans through regular trainings that helped them to improve the quality and range of their work.

INTRODUCTION

The enthralling city of Lucknow is known more for *chikankari* than any other craft. Since its commencement, *chikankari* has been inspired for the intricate and beautiful patterns, and finely engraved marble *jali* of Mughal era architecture. The *Nawabs* had their own personal artisans trained to design *chikankari* embroidered garments that suited the royal stature. With utmost devotion and passion for their masters, these artisans worked on *angarkha* creating delicate hand embroidery that was unmatched in style and charm. The encouragement and the patronage gradually diminished and these artisans were forced to look for other means of employment. With this, the art of *chikankari* was passed on to the women of their community and till date, *chikankari* is the main source of income for the Muslim women in and around the rural areas of Lucknow (Anon 2013).

According to Arya (2002) there were 2.5 lakh artisans presently working on *chikankari* product development which involved activities related to cutting, stitching, block printing, washing, etc. It is surprising that the cluster of beautiful craft of hand embroidery within the 125 km radius of Lucknow and adjoining districts has reached out to men and women all over the world.

Since independence, the Government has implemented a number of schemes and welfare programmes for the survival and upliftment of craft sector which faced a strong blow of competition from mill sector. Consequently, various NGOs came forward to support and direct the artisans in product development and marketing.

Objectives

The objectives of the paper are to study the socio-personal profile of chairpersons of *chikankari* NGOs and to explore the role of *chikankari* NGOs in the implementation of rural development schemes.

METHODOLOGY

According to the list procured from Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Office, Barabanki, Lucknow, total 43 NGOs were found to be operating in eight blocks of Lucknow district. Ten NGOs were selected from the list of 43 NGOs which were functioning for upliftment of rural artisans and promotion of *chikankari* handicrafts. For this purpose every fourth NGO on the list of NGOs was randomly selected for the investigation. The selected NGOs were operating in five blocks of Lucknow district namely, Bakshi Ka Talab, Kakori, Sarojani Nagar, Mal, Malihabad.

An interview schedule was prepared to collect information from the NGOs regarding basic profile, the establishment year, their registration and certification status, their funding sources, the covering blocks and villages under different schemes, the total SHGs and artisans working under NGOs and information regarding events organised and participated by the NGOs. Data were collected by administering the interview schedule to the chairpersons of the NGOs during July 2014.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-personal Traits of the Chairpersons of *Chikankari* NGOs

The socio-personal factors are major determinants of the prospects of a population. It is essential to know the background in which inquiry had been conducted. Personal characteristics of the respondents have been discussed with respect to their gender, age, educational qualification and marital status. The data pertaining to the socio-personal characteristics have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Socio-personal traits of the respondents of *chikankari* NGOs (n=10)

<i>Socio-personal traits</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	6	60
Female	4	40
<i>Religion</i>		
Hindu	6	60
Muslim	4	40
<i>Caste</i>		
General	3	30
OBC	4	40
SC/ST	3	30
<i>Age (years)</i>		
30-35	1	10
35-40	6	60
40-45	1	10
45-50	1	10
50 and above	1	10
<i>Qualification</i>		
Graduation	2	20
Graduation and Diploma courses	2	20
Post-graduation	6	60
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Unmarried	2	20
Married	8	80

No significant gender-wise difference was observed among the chairpersons of NGOs. The

data indicated that maximum percentage of respondents (60%) were male, while the rest of the forty percent respondents were female. Data regarding age of the respondents in NGOs indicated that the largest percentage of them (60%) were between 35-40 years of age and only ten percent were 50 years or above in age. Amongst the NGOs, sixty percent respondents were post graduate followed by twenty percent each who had done Diploma Course after graduation or possessed only graduation degree. As far as marital status of the respondents is concerned, the data showed that eighty percent chairpersons of NGOs were married.

Religion and caste is an independent variable which determines the social status of the respondents. A large percentage of respondents (60%) were Hindu, while forty percent of them were Muslim. Forty percent respondents in NGOs belonged to other backward classes (OBC), whereas thirty percent each respondents belonged to each of general and schedule caste/schedule tribe (SC/ST).

Period of Establishment of *Chikankari* NGOs

The largest percentage of NGOs, that is, thirty percent each, were established during 1980-85 and 1990-95, while twenty percent each were set-up during the periods between 1985-90 and 1995-2000 (Table 2).

Table 2: Year of establishment of *chikankari* NGOs (n=10)

<i>Year of establishment</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1980-1985	3	30
1985-1990	2	20
1990-1995	3	30
1995-2000	2	20

Thus, it can be concluded that NGOs assumed a far active role in development of *chikankari* cluster from 1980 to 2000. During this period Government's efforts were directed towards building the capacity of organisations which ultimately led to the enhanced participation by NGOs towards a range of people-centred approaches for poverty reduction.

Sharma (2015) reported that period of 1990-2000 was referred as golden period for *chikankari* industry. Innovative and high-value products were developed by the manufacturers. Dur-

ing this era some reputed fashion designers also included *chikankari* embroidery in their collection and catalogues which highlighted the *chikankari* products at national and international level.

Registration Status of NGOs under Various Acts Enacted by Government

All the NGOs were registered under Societies Registration Act (1860). Besides, thirty percent of these were registered under each of Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, (1976) and 12-A Income Tax Act. The least percentage of NGOs (20% each) had registration under each of 80 G Income Tax Act (1961) and Importer Exporter Code. Only ten percent NGOs had the certification for each of NGO-PS portal and UN-DESA's Civil Society Data Base (Table 3).

Its mandatory to get the NGO registered under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 1976, (Ministry of Home Affairs) to avail foreign funds as donations/grants in foreign currency from International Funding Agencies (Anon 2016).

Table 3: Registration status of NGOs under various Acts (n=10)*

Type of Registration	Frequency	Percentage
SRA (Society Registration Act)	10	100
FCRA (Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act)	3	30
12-A ITA (12-A Income Tax Act)	3	30
80-G ITA (80 G Income Tax Act)	2	20
IEC (Import Export Code)	2	20
UN-DESA's CS (UN-DESA's Civil Society)	1	10

Income of an organisation is exempted if an NGO has 12-A registration. All income of the NGOs was non-taxable after 12-A registration. If an organisation has obtained certification under 80-G Income Tax Act then, donors of those NGOs can claim exemption from income tax. Fifty per cent of the donations made are allowed to be deducted from the taxable income and consequently tax is calculated. It is limited to ten per cent of the gross total income. If such amount is more than ten per cent of the gross total income, the excess has to be ignored (Anon 2010).

Also, 12-A Income Tax Act is a lifetime registration, whereas 80-G Income Tax Act needs to be renewed after one to three years of validation period. Registration under 12-A Income Tax Act is mandatory for registration under 80 G Income Tax Act (Kanoi 2015).

IEC Code is unique 10-digit code issued by Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), Ministry of Commerce, which is mandatory for export-import purpose (DGFT 2000).

The main focal point of UN-DESA's Civil Society data base branch is informing the NGOs timely regarding fashion events and opportunities to collaborate with the United Nations (Anon 2016). The main aim of NGO-PS portal is to maintain details of existing NGOs across India and get the grant schemes from key Ministries/Departments. They apply on-line on behalf of NGOs for availing grants (Anon 2016).

Certification Status of *Chikankari* NGOs

The largest percentage of NGOs (50%) had the Fair Trade Certification followed by 20 percent who had certification of Geographical Indication (Table 4). The Fair Trade Certification was created to form a new method for trade. This certification is to emphasize equality in the market place. The organizations form a partnership between the consumer and the producer (Alvarado 2008). The benefit of Fair Trade Certification is to make certain that the producers who take part in the initiative are not being exploited by those buyers who try to reduce their own costs to make a bigger profit or cover the cost of higher taxes (Gupta 2011).

Table 4: Certification status of *chikankari* NGOs (n=10)

Type of certification	Frequency	Percentage
GI certification	2	20
Fair Trade certified	5	50
None	3	30

Lucknow got the Geographical Indication (GI) for *chikankari* in 2008 (Anon 2009), so Lucknow *chikankari* is now branded. This certification helps in differentiating the original products and the cheaper imitations. Thus, it is apparent from the data that very few NGOs had registered under GI certification though this certification is necessary for the upliftment of the artisans as well as craft.

Funding of NGOs under Rural Development Schemes

All the organisations procured funds from Ambedker Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Design and Technology Up-gradation, and Marketing Support and Services (MSS). Only twenty percent NGOs had procured funds from Handicrafts Cluster Development Schemes. The NGOs empanelled with Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), Mumbai were eligible to execute this scheme, but procurement of land was the main reason that very few NGOs were engaged under these schemes (Table 5).

Table 5: Schemes providing financial support to NGOs (n=10)*

<i>Rural development schemes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Ambedker Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY)	10	100
Design and Technology Up-gradation	10	100
Marketing Support and Services	10	100
Human and Resource Development	70	70
Common Facility Centre Programme	20	20
Skill Up-gradation Training programme	50	50

The prime intent of AHVY programme is to enhance capacity of the already trained artisans, provide design and technical assistance related to market for the beneficiaries so that they can work independently as entrepreneurs (Banerjee 2013).

Design and Technology Up-gradation Scheme has the main objective of providing design and technology related inputs including skill up-gradation to the handicraft artisans to improve their productivity, quality and marketability of their products (Anon 2016).

Marketing Support and Services (MSS) Programme in order to promote the handicraft market provides financial assistance to the NGOs to organize Craft Bazaar/Exhibitions/fairs, etc. in different parts of the country. The programme also helped to provide direct marketing platform to the handicrafts artisans (MSME 2015).

Human and Resource Development (HRD) Scheme was implemented to impart skills in different trades of handicrafts in a continuous and

sustainable manner by creating an institutional framework to be achieved through regular training courses run by institutes as specified in the eligibility section (Anon 2007).

The objective of the Cluster Development Scheme is to ensure economy of scale, price competitiveness, quality control, application of design and technology input on continuous basis; scope of product diversification and higher unit value realization; and compliance with WTO compatible standards. Such a common facility helps in significant reductions in the cost of production, production of a diversified range of high value products, sample development, reduction in the response times in order execution ensuring high quality of final products (Anon 2016).

These programmes provide an opportunity for the artisans to upgrade their skills, interact with other craftsmen and at the same time create livelihood opportunity for the masses by skill upgradation through training programmes in different crafts. These schemes were implemented by Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Office, (Ministry of Textiles).

Skill Up-gradation Training Programme supported by District Urban Development Authority (DUDA), Govt. of Uttar Pradesh, aimed at human resource development by skill upgradation of (semi-skilled) *chikankari* artisans who were from the minority and ST/SC community or slum areas of Lucknow district (Banerjee 2013).

Blocks and Villages Covered under NGOs

The NGOs implemented their Rural Development Schemes in different blocks and villages. It was found that the considerable percentage of NGOs (50%) had focussed their approach in two blocks. However, very few NGOs (30%) had extended their projects in single block. Rest of twenty percent NGOs concentrated their efforts in as many as 3 or more than 3 blocks. A largest percentage of NGOs (70%) had spread their schemes in more than five villages (Table 6).

Number of SHGs and Artisans Working under *Chikankari* NGOs

Due to economic reforms through liberalization and globalization, India has entered into a new era of economic development and there-

Table 6: Blocks and villages covered under GOs, NGOs and PEs (n=10)

<i>Area of operation (Blocks)</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	3	30
2	5	50
3 or more	2	20
<i>Number of villages</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1 to 3	3	30
4 to 6	4	40
6 or above	3	30

fore, community empowerment programme for handicrafts sector through SHGs is a must to empower the artisans and bringing them to a visible platform which will help to enhance their operational efficiency and competitiveness to face the new challenges and make them feasible and self-supporting economic entity (Jain 2006).

Maximum percentage of the NGOs (50%) had formed 70 and above SHGs, whereas thirty percent of NGOs had formed below 50-70 SHGs. The size of group plays an important role in the process of group dynamics. A large proportion of the NGOs that is seventy percent had 15 to 20 SHG members followed by thirty percent NGOs who had enrolled 10 to 15 SHG members.

Results further presented that very few NGOs (10%) were engaged with 500-700 or more than 700 artisans, while sixty per cent NGOs had about 300-500 artisans for *chikankari* work. Twenty percent NGOs were working with 100-300 artisans (Table 7).

Table 7: Number of SHGs formed under *chikankari* NGOs and artisans enrolled (n=10)

<i>NGOs</i>		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>SHG formed/NGOs</i>		
20-50	2	20
50-70	3	30
70 and above	5	50
<i>Members/SHG</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
10 to 15	3	30
15 to 20	7	70
<i>Total artisans/NGO</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
100 to 300	2	20
300 to 500	6	60
500 to 700	1	10
700 or more	1	10

Banks Associated with NGOs for SHGs and Artisans

This is essential to open a Savings Bank (SB) account with the nearest Regional Rural Bank or

a Cooperative Bank to keep the savings and other funds of the SHG safely and also to improve the transparency levels of SHGs communication. The Reserve Bank of India has issued instructions to all banks permitting them to open SB accounts in the name of registered or unregistered SHGs (John 2008).

Table 8: Banks associated with NGOs for SHGs and artisans (n=10)*

<i>Banks associated for SHGs</i>	<i>NGOs</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Bank of Baroda (BOB)	5	50
State Bank of India (SBI)	7	70
Bank of India (BOI)	3	30
Canara	2	20
ICICI	10	10

*Multiple response

In accordance to bank associations with NGOs to help SHGs, the maximum percentage of the NGOs (70%) were associated with SBI (State Bank of India) followed by fifty percent NGOs who were associated with BOB (Bank of Baroda). Few NGOs were also associated with Bank of India, Canara Bank and ICICI bank (Table 8).

Objectives of Rural Development Schemes

The chairpersons of NGOs gave first consideration to the implementation of government schemes for economic development. It was observed that rural development and poverty elimination was the second most important objective. Development of artisan's confidence and upliftment of the handicrafts attained the third and fourth rank in the hierarchy of objectives of NGOs. Provision of technical training, enhancement of the employability and development of new markets attained fifth, sixth and seventh ranks (Table 9).

Table 9: Objectives of rural development schemes observed by NGOs (n=10)

<i>Objectives</i>	<i>Weighted mean score</i>	<i>Ranks</i>
Enhancement the employability	6.4	VI
Development of new markets	6.6	VII
Boosting artisans' confidence	3.4	III
Implementation of government schemes for economic development	2.9	I
Provision of technical training	5.5	V
Rural development and poverty elimination	2.2	II
Upliftment of all handicrafts	4.7	IV

Involvement of *Chikankari* NGOs in Various Events

All the NGOs had organised training and workshop for artisans. The largest percentage of NGOs (60%) had organized exhibitions followed by fifty percent NGOs had organized craft bazaar.

Training programmes provide an opportunity for the artisans to upgrade their skills, interact with other artisans, and at the same time creates livelihood opportunity for the masses. The artisans were also exposed to new designs. Twenty or more trainings were organised annually by maximum percentage of NGOs (70%) and 15-20 trainings were organised by thirty percent of NGOs.

Government provides financial assistance for marketing events at local level. Exhibitions provide a continuous availability of marketing platform to the artisans. A large percentage of NGOs (40%) had organised fifteen or more exhibitions, while 10-15 exhibitions were organised annually by twenty percent NGOs (Table 10).

To promote the market of handicrafts the NGOs either organised craft *bazaar* in metropolitan cities/state/capitals/places of tourists, etc. or participated in these. It provides direct marketing platform to the handicraft artisans from various parts of the country. Ten to fifteen craft bazaars were organised annually by thirty

percent NGOs and only 5-10 craft bazaars were organised annually by least percentage of NGOs (20%).

Maximum percentage of NGOs (60%) organised 20-25 workshops annually for *chikankari* artisans, whereas 20-25 workshops were organised by forty percent of NGOs. The objective of the workshops was to develop new prototype products.

Further the findings of the study exhibited the frequency of participated events by the NGOs. Ten to fifteen craft bazaars were participated by maximum percentage of NGOs (60%) and forty percent NGOs participated in 5-10 craft bazaars. Also, fifty percent NGOs participated in thirty or more exhibitions. All the NGOs conducted training programmes longer than 25 days. The duration of workshops, exhibitions and craft bazaars organised by NGOs was 5-10 days.

CONCLUSION

NGOs were performing very critical role in the process of managing development initiatives of various types for the *chikankari* artisans at the rural level. They were implementing various Central or State Government schemes for welfare of artisans. NGOs have been constantly helping them by conducting training facilities, assisting in designing and direct marketing through various craft *bazaars* and exhibitions by eliminating the middlemen.

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Table 10: Types of events organized and participated by *chikankari* NGOs (n=10)*

<i>Types of events organized (annually) NGOs</i>		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Trainings</i>		
15-20	3	30
Twenty or more than 20	7	70
<i>Exhibitions</i>		
10-15	2	20
Fifteen or more than 15	4	40
<i>Craft Bazaar</i>		
5-10	2	20
10-15	3	30
<i>Workshop</i>		
20-25	6	60
25-30	4	40
<i>Types of events participated</i>		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Exhibition</i>		
20-25	3	30
25-30	2	20
Thirty or more than 30	5	50
<i>Craft Bazaar</i>		
5-10 times	4	40
10-15 times	6	60

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