



POLICY ROUNDTABLE REPORT



Launch of USTTAD Scheme

by the

Ministry of Minority Affairs, Govt. of India

14th May 2015, Varanasi

Supported by:



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INTRODUCTION

On the occasion of the launch of the USTAD Scheme of the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Govt. of India, a National Policy Roundtable supported by the Ministry was organized by All India Artisans and Craftworkers Welfare Association (AIACA) in partnership with ACCESS Development Services on the 14th of May 2015 at Ramada Hotel in Varanasi. The main objective of the policy roundtable was to initiate a multi stakeholder dialogue on creating an enabling eco system for the craft sector so that its producers are valued and respected for their skills and they become active stakeholders and beneficiaries of the larger wealth creation process. The broad objective of the policy roundtable was to explore an inclusive and socially responsible approach for supporting producers through the entire value chain, strengthening both production and marketing and leveraging their traditional skills into internationally competitive craft products and enterprises.



Panel discussion in session

The speakers at the roundtable included industry experts, designers, UNESCO, local artisans, craftworkers and government officials from the Varanasi Weavers Service Center, Directorate of Handloom and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India. A total of sixty-one participants including representatives from

European Union, industry, government and actual practitioners attended the roundtable and actively took part in post session discussion and question- answer sessions. The policy roundtable was designed in the form of Panel discussions and focused on two key themes:

- ‘Skill Development of youth in traditional craft skills -- ensuring dignity in work and life’
- ‘Invest in Handicrafts’

A variety of issues and solutions emerged from the discussions and interactive sessions. With the changing crafts landscape, it was noted that there is a need to build capacities, encourage entrepreneurship amongst the youth, and skill craft communities in marketing techniques, finance, business development and IT. Skilled crafts persons discussed their needs and the challenges they face in striving to maintain a balance between their inherited traditional skills and demands of the contemporary world. Discussions were held on

socially conscious business models with the conclusion that interventions must build capacities of artisans to identify markets and manage production effectively and professionally to meet modern market requirements, quality standards, etc. In light of this, social enterprises could play a critical role not only in strengthening capacities of craft enterprises but also creating an enabling environment including fair wages, adequate working environment, ethical branding, etc.

The importance of basic formal education and alternative learning avenues along with training in craft skills for young artisans was stressed upon. Placing these discussions in the larger context of the role of the government, policy revision and effective integration and implementation of regulations and schemes for protection and promotion of handicrafts in India were emphasized. It was suggested that the government could facilitate the development of crafts and crafts persons by strengthening the supply chain and initiating partnerships with civil societies and private bodies to support and promote crafts.

BACKGROUND

Today, the Handicraft and Handloom sectors in India are a Rs. 24,300 crore industry contributing Rs. 10,000 crore to India's export earnings annually. According to the 12th Five Year Plan, handicrafts production is expected to double between 2012 –2017 and exports are projected to grow at an annual rate of 18% in that period. The craft sector will consequently provide employment to an additional 10% per year in this period, making it the largest non-farm sector in the rural space.

In the absence of a comprehensive handicrafts census, it is estimated that the sector employed 68.86 lakh crafts persons in 2011-12, the figure having risen from 65.72 lakh in 2005-06. Of these, 24.16% are Scheduled Castes, 4.18% are Scheduled Tribes, 47.4% are women and 22.99% are minorities¹. It is clear that the sector provides livelihoods to a large segment of disadvantaged and marginalized persons.



Artisan carving wood

Though traditional craft skills have historically been a regular means of earning livelihood in rural India, presently they suffer from declining skills, lack of markets, devaluation of hand crafted products, and lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities in the modern world. Thus, the younger generations from the traditional craft producing communities are not interested in engaging with this sector or learning these skills because they do not see any future in doing so. This is leading to dying craft skills, unemployment among youth and their engagement in menial jobs adding to low self-esteem, exploitation, dire working conditions and further marginalization.

Looking at the tremendous opportunity that this sector holds, there is thus an urgent need to evolve an integrated approach for the development of this sector taking on board the entire value chain and evolving a roadmap for its sustainable progress in alignment with the country's development trajectory.

¹ Report of the Steering Committee on Handlooms and Handicrafts Constituted for the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012- 2017), Planning Commission, Govt. of India

The key needs of this sector include excellence in traditional craft skills to successfully respond to market standards, continuation of the specialized craft skills through apprenticeship for younger generations, capacity for production, financial and business management, market understanding and effective merchandising, and creation of market and consumer awareness for recognition of the true value of unique craft skills and products.



USTTAD, the scheme launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Govt. of India recognizes the potential of the traditional art and craft industry for socio economic development of the minority communities practicing traditional art and craft. USTTAD is the ministry's initiative under the central sector 'Seekho Aur Kamao' (Learn and Earn) Scheme.

The Scheme addresses capacity building of master artisans; training of younger generations by master artisans to create meaningful and dignified employment; preservation of crafts; connecting craftsmen to markets and mainstreaming their products; and initiating research and development of traditional crafts for the preservation and continuation of their rich heritage. The scheme aims to achieve these objectives through effective skills training, launching a Fellowship programme for research and development, marketing through E-commerce platforms (such as ShopClues) and lending support to Craft museums for curating traditional arts and crafts.

INAUGURAL SESSION

Mr. D. S. Bist, the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Minority affairs, Govt. of India, delivered the welcome address. In his speech, he outlined the relevance and benefits of the USTTAD programme and how it could contribute to reviving and revitalizing traditional crafts, particularly those in which minority communities are engaged. He highlighted issues of globalization, lack of market access, and declining skills as some of the challenges experienced by artisans. He spoke about the critical role of imparting relevant education to children of artisans, to ensure future development of crafts and dignity of work. Finally, he emphasized that the government must comprehensively address needs of the artisans from education to financial assistance, in order to facilitate holistic growth of the sector.



Mr. Bist delivering the welcome address

Following his speech, the Executive Director of AIACA, Madhura Dutta, set the context for the policy roundtable. At a time when India is looking at skilling youth for employability and entrepreneurship and is exploring the economic potential of the Handicraft and the Handloom sectors, she pointed out the relevance and opportune timing of the policy discussions. She highlighted the role of multiple stakeholders for taking an integrated approach as well as introducing design and business innovations for development and strengthening of this sector. She also shared AIACA's successful endeavors in building sustainable livelihoods through craft based entrepreneurship, focusing on business skills and organization development, production management, innovative design interventions, product development as well as market access.

SESSION I

The first session focused on ‘Skill Development of youth in traditional craft skills- ensuring dignity in work and life’. It comprised of two panels-- ‘Guru-Shishya Parampara for the 21st century- successes and challenges’ and ‘Voice of the young craft persons- needs and challenges’. These sessions consisted of a mix of industry experts and local artisans and weavers.

Panel I

The first panel was chaired by Laila Tyabji, the chairperson of Dastkar, a Society for Crafts & Craftspeople. Before introducing the panelists, she spoke about her experience with Pochampally weavers, where they wove contemporary patterns only after completing their daily routine of weaving ritual inches that they believe connected them with their gurus. Through this story, she emphasized on the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity in crafts, today. With rapidly evolving markets and technology in the 21st century, there is a need to expose crafts workers to new markets, focus on business and product development and integrate technology in their work.

Sangeeta Sen, a senior designer from the industry, talked about how we must marry market demands with traditional methods and motifs. Drawing from her extensive experience with a variety of artisan communities, she emphasized that designers should innovate and design within the traditional language of the respective handicrafts. Artisan



Participants at the Policy Roundtable

communities are highly skilled in their craft forms, and therefore the focus should be on meeting market demand in terms of in-season colors, designs and patterns and bringing in new technology to improve infrastructure, working conditions and efficiency. Thus, efforts must not be to subsidize the skills of the artisans, but should focus on improving their products and outputs in innovative ways.

Hemendra Sharma is the COO of Women Weave, a craft based organisation in Madhya Pradesh that is working towards overcoming the vulnerability of women who weave on handlooms (either part-time or full-time) and towards making handloom a profitable, fulfilling, sustainable, dignified income-earning and life-improving activity. Amongst a variety of livelihoods development programmes for women weavers, they

have recently started the Handloom School in Maheshwar, where they impart 'barefoot' business education, computer skills, English, and designs to handloom weavers and weaver entrepreneurs. Drawing from his experience with the batches at the school and extensive involvement with craft communities, Hemendra, talked about encouraging younger generations to join the sector by making handlooms more competitive. He emphasized that the cloth market is very competitive because of the variety of players in it. Therefore, handlooms must compete based on their exquisite design and highly skilled production, to sustain in the current market scenario. Craft entrepreneurs may either target existing handloom markets or create new ethically conscious markets. He stressed the fact that India is the largest handloom producer in the world and its share of handloom production will continue to increase in the coming years. Therefore, handlooms present a bright economic future and younger generations must be encouraged to take up handlooms to meet the emerging global demand. Improvements in the production process, product development and imparting market know-how are important for new generations to sustain and grow in craft businesses.



Handblock printing

Nilanajan Mondal, Programme Coordinator at Somaiya Kala Vidya, a Kutch based education institute for traditional artisans, spoke about the importance of imparting business and design development education to artisans. Practical solution-oriented business education, such as basic management skills, understanding of supply chain, quality control, improving operations, costing, etc., must be imparted. Similar to Sangeeta's point, he said that design inputs and training must not be external to the community and their traditions. Instead, such interventions must draw from the existing traditions and enable artisans to use these designs effectively, in their work to reach to appropriate markets, while strengthening their traditional identity. Nilanjan emphasized that such business and design education will not only increase the income of artisan groups but also lead to dignity of work and a feeling of pride for those associated with the craft. This, as well as the key role of community role-models will encourage younger generations to take up traditional crafts.

Sharique Farooqi, the former director of Craft Development Institute in Srinagar, and currently an Associate Professor at Ambedkar University, highlighted learnings from his experience of engaging Kashmiri youth in crafts. His experience was that only design development and innovation does not work, and targeted interventions at each step of the supply chain, from raw material to finishing of the product, are necessary in ultimately producing a marketable product. In order to scale and capture bigger markets, artisan groups need to be brought together in collectives. He also, pointed out that unlike the agricultural sector; there is lack of concrete effort in research and development in the crafts sector. The government, sector level stakeholders and artisans must collaborate to invest in scientific research for innovation and development in crafts. In a slight departure from Nilanajan's and Hemendra's argument on craft based education, Sharique emphasized on setting up craft management courses for artisans in mainstream institutions. Drawing from his experience at Craft Development Institute (CDI) in Srinagar, he put emphasis on creating an environment/ platform where craftspeople engage with people from other professional backgrounds. Such an endeavor at CDI has helped mainstream crafts. He opined that this will also lead to dignity of work and a realization amongst the primary producers that crafts can be a highly skilled and technical mainstream profession.

Ramzan Ali, an established Banarasi master weaver stressed that artisans must adopt new technology and designs to improve efficiency and appeal for changing market tastes. Younger generations must be educated in craft institutes in courses such as business development, product development and mainstream education. To conserve traditional crafts, artisans require support from the government and other organisations to link them to emerging market channels. Education will enable weavers to reach out to these markets and find a foothold. In addition to this, large design institutes such as NID (Gujarat) should consider opening branches in craft clusters, such as Varanasi, for the local artisans and weavers.

Panel II

The second panel on 'Voice of the young craft persons- needs and challenges' was chaired by Roopa Mehta, the CEO of SASHA Association for Craft Producers, an organization working towards developing craft communities so that their skills and creativity find expression, recognition and fulfillment. She began by introducing the panelists and the key pointers for discussions which included relevance of 'Guru-Shishya Parampara', promoting crafts by preserving our heritage and encouraging younger generations to pursue crafts as a profession, and ways of generating awareness by the stakeholders to ensure that traditional crafts are valued.

Kunj Bihari Singh, a master artisan practicing the unique craft of pink enameling in Varanasi attributed his success in continuing this dying craft to innovation through product improvement and product diversification. He has received the Geographical Indication for Pink enameling and is actively encouraging and training younger craftworkers in his community.



Panel II in session

Pyare Lal master weaver from Varanasi spoke about the lack of bargaining power that the artisans have. They are often dependent on buyers and exporters and most of the time have to compromise on their profits. He was of the view that the development of this sector is dependent on the empowerment of the primary producers.

Rameshwar Singh, a master artisan who makes wooden and lacquer toys has been engaged with this craft since childhood and is running a successful business. He emphasized the importance of understanding and identifying different types of markets and balancing the supply of products in both export and local markets to safeguard artisans and craftworkers from market shocks. He believes that development of the crafts sector is dependent on improving production efficiency (through technology), increased wages and setting up of platforms that create a direct link between the producer and buyers. Younger generations of artisans should be educated in formal institutions by established master artisans and sector experts.

Dayalal Kudecha, faculty at Kala Raksha and Somaiya Kala Vidya, the next speaker, focused on the need for relevant education for younger artisans. He emphasized on the critical role played by role-models in encouraging younger generations to continue traditional crafts. He encouraged artisans from the sector to value the skills possessed by the craftworkers. This is important for building self confidence in artisans. While talking about design interventions, he said that that new designs must be created with inputs and in collaboration between artisans and designers. Designs must be reworked to appeal to the market, while at the same time preserving the traditional elements.

Session Summary

Discussions in the first session revolved around the need for skill development of youth in traditional crafts. Panelists highlighted challenges posed by the 21st century that are discouraging the youth in pursuing traditional crafts and recommended relevant solutions to overcome these challenges. As Laila Tyabji aptly

put it, tradition and modernity are two sides of the same coin and sector stakeholders must work towards balancing these two sides. The panelists unanimously agreed that young artisans must be exposed to mainstream education, while at the same time giving due emphasis on skilling them in their inherited crafts. While Hemendra Sharma, Nilanajan Mondal and Dayalal Kudecha echoed that specialized schools for young artisans must impart practical design and business development education, Sharique Farooqi was of the view that craft-based education must be introduced in mainstream educational institutions. This will present an opportunity for artisans to realize that traditional crafts are as important a profession as any other. Ramzan Ali talked about existing specialized institutions such as NID and NIFT that impart design education, and expressed the need for opening their branches in craft-intensive regions and educating young traditional craftworkers as well. Hemendra, Nilanajan, Kunj Bihari and Dayalal emphasized the importance of community role models and master artisans in training, mentoring, inspiring and encouraging youth from the craft communities.



An artisan doing embroidery

In the light of globalization and the challenges posed by imitation and machine made handlooms and handicrafts, panelists recognized business development, design improvement, strengthening of supply chain and effective market linkages as the need of the hour. Master artisans in the second panel talked about the low self-esteem and lack of bargaining power of artisans in the market. Therefore, interventions must focus on spreading market awareness, building direct market linkages between the producer and buyers and by making crafts competitive in terms of their design and uniqueness rather than pricing. Artisans should be trained in other entrepreneurial skills such as organizational, financial and production-based management.

Sangeeta Sen and Dayalal stressed that design interventions are important but should be developed in partnership with artisans. Most panelists agreed that new technology should be introduced in crafts to improve efficiency and quality of products. In addition to this, Sharique stressed that the government and craft sector organizations should invest in scientific research and development of the sector to bring about innovation and development of handicrafts in a holistic manner.

The solutions or recommendations may be summed up as lending dignity of work to craft workers, building the sector in a holistic manner, encouraging younger generations to consider their inherited crafts as a viable profession and empowering craft youth to become entrepreneurs.

SESSION 2

The second session focused on ‘Invest in handicrafts’. It comprised of two panels: ‘Developing socially conscious business models’ and the ‘Government’s perspective and voice of the stakeholders’.

Panel I

Discussions in the first panel, chaired by Roopa Mehta, CEO of SASHA Association for Craft Producers, revolved around the potential of the sector to generate large scale employment and sustainable livelihoods, the role of social enterprises in promoting crafts, the devaluation of handlooms and handicrafts, and learning from international crafts promotion and preservation models.

Jacob Mathew is the CEO of Industree Foundation, an organisation that works on building up the production base, enabling artisans to become owners of their enterprises. He elaborated on the economic potential of the crafts sector and the type of markets craft workers should target. He pointed out that there are over 40 million people engaged in handicraft and handloom in India, and the artisans must take into



Panel I in session

consideration both niche and mass markets. He then presented a mathematical analysis of the profit potential of the crafts sector and emphasized that to achieve such scale, the sector needs massive investment, which is the biggest challenge because unlike regular businesses, it is difficult

for the artisans and artisan organizations to receive large working capital from formal financial institutions. Therefore, funding can be generated from a range of sources such as bank loans, through equity and donation. His experience with Industree indicated that to attract large investments, the sector requires a certain scale of production. This would eliminate middle men and put the producers directly in touch with investors and buyers.

Manika Dhama heads Content and Communications at Jaypore, an e-commerce website for crafts. In her presentation, she spoke about the evolution of Jaypore.com and the growing potential of e-commerce platforms selling crafts. She emphasized on generating consumer awareness and knowledge about crafts, their special features and the craftsmanship and the skill that has gone into making a particular product. Story telling about craft products not only helps to market them in a better way but also contributes to a

good shopping experience for the consumer. She highlighted aspects of appealing photography and cataloging that contributes to better online sales. She concluded by reiterating Jacob's point of attracting large investments in the crafts sector.

Siva Devireddy is the CEO of GoCoop.com, an online market place for handloom and handicraft products. Their model involves linking producers directly with consumers through their website. He primarily spoke about the two key challenges that are affecting craft businesses. Firstly, imitation and fake machine-made products limiting the market for handmade crafts. The weavers, in order to compete and survive, are replacing expensive raw material such as silk with imitation silk to lower costs. This has not only adversely affected the producer but has also limited the consumer experience. Secondly, the presence of several intermediaries has made the market inequitable towards the producers. Facts state that the export market has increased by 69% in the last 5 years and the income generated by the handloom sector is also increasing, yet large chunks of these are going to the pockets of the intermediaries and the artisans are barely earning a respectable wage. Therefore, he recommended that connecting the master artisans and producers directly to the consumers, especially through online marketplaces is a key opportunity to eliminate unnecessary middle men and make this sector more equitable. He also emphasized on building an entrepreneurship model, through which, primary producers can directly access designs and markets.

Moe Chiba, head of the Culture Sector of UNESCO New Delhi pointed out the need for a holistic vision and a coordinated action plan for crafts in India and spoke about the international model of Cultural Capital in this context. . While on paper, policies and schemes are comprehensive and address production aspects of crafts and aim towards welfare of artisans, there is lack of awareness, coordination and implementation of these schemes. She talked about the Capitals of Culture programme of the European Union, which selects different cities, every four years, to celebrate cultural features of the city. The selected city is given 4 years to bring together its resources, coordinate and plan for a final event². Such an effort requires coordination and planning of key stakeholders at the city level. A city comprises of all the actors from primary producer to traders and consumers, therefore, it is small enough to make an impact and big enough to market the products. Therefore, she recommended the need for a clear action plan for craft protection, promotion and preservation in India.

²http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm

Panel II

Chaired by Ritu Sethi, Chairperson of Craft Revival Trust, a principal online encyclopedia on the arts, crafts, textiles and its practitioners in South Asia, the second panel discussed the government's perspective and the need for collaboration between them and key stakeholders to strengthen and support the craft sector.. In her introduction, she pointed out that due to its expansive reach through the length and breadth of the country, the government's role is critical in developing the crafts sector. She emphasized that we must work together in an integrated manner to develop the sector.

Nitesh Dhawan, the Assistant Commissioner, Handloom in Varanasi, pointed out that the handloom sector is important because it is eco-friendly, generates employment and represents our national heritage. Yet, they have experienced decline due to their poor competitiveness, large conversions of handloom to power looms, low wages and terrible living conditions of artisans. In order to overcome these challenges he recommended that there is a need for model handloom clusters supported by the government; implementation of small saving schemes for artisans; constituting a rebate scheme and a relief fund for poverty stricken weavers that cannot cope with shocks; using technology to improve handlooms; setting up testing labs and quality control mechanisms; and design interventions and buyer-seller meets. He also emphasized that the government, non-government craft enterprises and artisans must work together to develop the sector.

Tapan Sharma, the Deputy Director & OIC of the Weavers Service Centre in Varanasi, began by briefly talking about schemes and entitlements for weavers in Varanasi. He stressed on the need for a service center to inform artisans about these schemes and of a trade facilitation center to ensure fair trade. He also spoke of creating a crafts museum to preserve and promote handicraft and handlooms.

B.S. Singh, the Assistant Director, Handicrafts in Varanasi stressed on the need to innovate and develop marketable designs. In addition to this, crafts must diversify their products in accordance with market demand.

Maqbool Hasan, an established master weaver, echoed the need for building consumer awareness and knowledge creation of crafts in India. In addition to this, big designer and retail brands must promote handicrafts and handlooms, they should look at handloom as a highly skilled art-form and



Panel II in session

not pressure artisans to compromise on quality and pricing. He also talked about skill evaluation of artisans, as they are highly skilled in their craft forms, similar to a Master's degree holder in any mainstream field. Such an effort of mainstreaming crafts will help in building dignity of the craft workers and provide encouragement to the artisans.

Dr. Rajnikant, head of the NGO- Human Welfare Association started by introducing his organization which played a critical role in attaining the Geographical Indication for brocade weaving in Varanasi. He pointed out that on one hand, the number of weavers is reducing and on the other, export is increasing. This means that machine made and Chinese imitation fabric is being sold in the name of handloom. The competition from power loom products is forcing artisans to compromise on their material, quality and skill. A major reason why these imitations are selling is because of the lack of consumer awareness. There are several



Participants at the Policy Roundtable

certifications such as GI, Silk mark, Handloom mark that exist but consumers rarely know or actively ask for certified craft products. It is the responsibility of stakeholders and the government to generate such awareness and support artisans. He gave the example of Darjeeling tea and the fact that it is known worldwide which makes the consumers demand the real Darjeeling tea.

We need to build awareness about handicrafts

and handlooms. In addition to this, the government must make an active effort to reach out to all crafts equitably and set up centers for building quality standards, training of artisans, business and product development.

Session Summary

The second session revolved around issues and solutions on strengthening the crafts sector for developing self-sufficient craft based business enterprises. Roopa Mehta began the session by stressing on the enormous economic potential of the handicrafts and handloom sectors. All panelists reiterated this and deliberated on how to ensure equitable economic growth of artisan and craftworkers and to engage new generations in this sector. Jacob Mathew and Manika Dhama stressed that attaining scale, developing business sense and facilitating multiple financial channels are critical for this sector's growth. Jacob explored challenges of lack of equity and refusal of loans by formal banking institutions to artisans. Generating

consumer awareness on ethically sourced products were discussed by the panelists. Extreme competition from machine made goods and imitated products is limiting the crafts market and forcing artisan to compromise on quality and authenticity. There are several certifications such as Silk mark, Fairtrade, handloom mark, etc. that exist, yet not much has been done to build awareness amongst consumers to demand these. Manika recommended tools such as storytelling to generate awareness among the buyers about primary producers.

While talking about the craft-based interventions, the collaborative role of NGOs, government, social enterprises and the craft workers themselves was discussed. The role of 21st century internet based technology in aiding development of the crafts sectors and enabling fair market linkages, was highlighted. While Manika talked about the growing potential of Jaypore.com (e-commerce platform for handlooms and handicrafts), aspects of ethical branding, and the use of marketing tools such as story telling of a product, Siva's presentation focused on developing online marketplaces, which successfully eliminate unnecessary intermediaries from the supply chain, help artisans receive fair wages and connect producers directly to buyers. Besides this, discussion revolved around positive government initiatives to improve conditions of artisans and linking them to markets. Government officials from Varanasi echoed the need for facilitation centers for business and design training of artisans and conducting buyer seller meets. They also spoke of socially conscious interventions aimed at poverty alleviation of artisans and craftworkers. In her conclusion, Ritu Sethi emphasized that all the actors including government, social enterprises and NGOs should work together to ensure development of the sector. Stressing on the role of all actors and stakeholders, Moe Chiba from UNESCO recommended the need for a comprehensive action plan for the development of the sector. She emphasized the success of the Cultural Capital programme in Europe that successfully brought together city level stakeholders to promote arts and crafts of different cities.

CONCLUDING SESSION

The policy roundtable concluded with a speech by Dr. Arvind Mayaram, Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Govt. of India. He emphasized the need and significance of USTTAD programme and hoped that this would catalyze the crafts sector in a market oriented way for its future sustainability. He proposed four reforms to develop the sector and improve lives of artisans and craftworkers- firstly, to evaluate and establish levels of excellence or benchmarks for crafts; secondly, to improve the physical living conditions and poverty alleviation of artisans which will encourage younger generations to view crafts as a viable employment option; thirdly, to mainstream handicraft and handloom sectors; and lastly, government must actively make the sector inflation proof and aim to create steady market channels through which artisans and craftsperson receive higher and regular income. He concluded by saying that, USTTAD is just the beginning and outcomes from the policy discussion will pave the way to more positive and empowering initiatives in the sector.



Dr. Mayaram delivering the Concluding Remarks

Vipin Sharma, the CEO of ACCESS Development Services delivered the Vote of Thanks. He thanked the participants for attending the roundtable and emphasized the key recommendations that emerged from the sessions. He reiterated key intervention areas such as improving market linkages, design and product



Concluding session

development inputs, mainstreaming crafts and building pride and dignity of the artisans by engaging all key stakeholders. He also pointed out that government must closely monitor implementation of its schemes and use of its resources to ensure that they adequately benefit the intended beneficiaries- grassroots artisans and craftworkers.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Parallel to USTTAD's goal of skill development and promotion and protection of crafts, the recommendations are geared towards self-sufficient enterprise development in the craft sector. Such efforts will encourage younger generations to consider traditional arts and crafts as an economically viable option. It will also lend dignity and a sense of pride to producers and workers associated with arts and crafts.

Recommendations

An integrated approach is required to create a measurable and meaningful socio-economic impact on communities practicing crafts. Entrepreneurship development in the crafts sector should be undertaken as an overarching model which amalgamates and binds education, skill development, improvements in production, design interventions, business and market development and financing in an integrated manner, with measurable economic and social development outcomes.

The recommendations can be summarized in terms of supporting craft-based enterprises to become economically viable, strengthening marketing and branding of crafts, attracting financial investment in the sector, mainstreaming crafts, and charting out a systematic approach for social security support to artisans and craftworkers.

I. Make craft based enterprises/business economically viable and help them grow rapidly.

- 1. Achieving excellence in traditional skills, innovative design interventions and product development:**
 - i. Interventions should focus on developing innovative and contemporary designs that are in sync with the essence and the traditional language of the concerned craft. New designs should be developed in collaboration with the practitioners and drawn from the unique traditions of the craft.
 - ii. Based on data on design trends and market demand, new designs and product lines should be developed.
 - iii. Craft organisations and design institutions should work with artisans and artisan groups to impart design development education through training programmes and demonstrations by adopting a cluster.
 - iv. Artisans and craftworkers should be trained in quality, standardization and excellence in craft skills. Such training can be imparted to artisans in mainstream management and

design institutes or integrated in on-field programmes and craft schools. Designers working with artisans should also facilitate aspects quality improvement, costing, etc.

2. Business development skills:

- i. Practical solution-oriented business education, such as basic management skills, understanding of supply chain, quality control, improving operations, costing, etc. must be imparted to master artisan and artisan entrepreneurs.
- ii. Training should be imparted in institutional development, financial literacy, business planning, and marketing as part of value chain development in addition to design development.
- iii. Private sector, social enterprises and other specialized organizations should be engaged to develop an incubation programme for the craft businesses.
- iv. International models of creative and cultural industry should be adapted to value add and develop effective high impact strategies for craft entrepreneurship.

3. Facilitating direct access to markets:

- i. Connecting artisans and producers directly to the consumers, especially through online marketplaces is a key opportunity to eliminate unnecessary middle men and make this sector more equitable.
- ii. Trade facilitation centers could be setup to ensure buyer seller meets and connect market directly with the actual producers.
- iii. Artisan enterprises should be trained in identifying different types of markets and balancing the supply of products in both export and local markets to safeguard themselves from market shocks.

4. Production management and technology support:

- i. Targeted interventions at each step of the supply chain, from raw material to finishing of the product, are necessary in ultimately producing a marketable product. In order to scale and capture bigger markets, artisan groups could be brought together in collectives. The government must make an active effort to reach out to all crafts equitably and set up centers for building quality standards, training of artisans, business and product development.

- ii. Technology should be integrated, wherever relevant to improve infrastructure, working conditions and ultimately production efficiency.
- iii. Technology institutes may work with artisans groups to upgrade production technology through research fellowships.

II. Financing the craft sector

1. Various avenues such as bank loans, equity, donation and aid based funding and investments should be explored by craft enterprises.
2. Fiscal/tax/banking macro-level environment should be improved to encourage craft entrepreneurial ventures on a small scale and to allow for easier access to loans and PE funding.
3. Debt and equity schemes for small entrepreneurs may be envisaged. Criteria for implementing agencies for schemes should be expanded to bring in more talent and experience in terms of social enterprises and private sector agencies.

III. Branding and Marketing

The crafts sector has not been able to keep up with the rapidly evolving markets and technology. Facilitating market linkages for artisans and craft workers is required for economic development of the handloom and handicrafts sectors.

1. In order to catalyze the crafts sector in a market oriented way for their future sustainability, craft entrepreneurs may either target existing handloom markets or create new ethically conscious markets. In addition to this, crafts must compete in these markets based on design and the USP that they are handmade.
2. Access to a variety of market channels such as retails, export, e-commerce, online market places should be provided.
3. Relevant business development and entrepreneurship education will also enable weavers to reach out to these markets. Master artisans and artisan entrepreneurs should be trained to identify the right markets and in marketing their products.
4. Efforts should be made to connect producers directly to markets, by reducing the number of intermediaries for a more equitable share of profit for the actual producers.
5. Generating consumer awareness and knowledge about crafts, their special features and the craftsmanship and the skill that has gone into making a particular product is an important aspect of market. Story telling about craft products not only helps to market them in a better way but

also contributes to a good shopping experience for the consumer. In addition to this, awareness campaigns must spread the word about handicraft and handloom certifications such as the Geographical Indication, Silk mark, Handloom mark. Stakeholders and the government should actively work towards generating such awareness on the consumer end.

6. Craftmark: The felt need for a comprehensive brand for Indian craft should be addressed via setting up an independent benchmarking programme such as Craftmark (www.craftmark.org) to promote high quality, authenticity, exquisite designs, standards of production, artisans' welfare, occupational safety etc. This will not only facilitate marketing and advertising at one end, but also ensure compliance with norms, necessary for export markets, along the backward linkages.
7. A partnership between government, civil societies, social enterprises, private entities and the crafts persons themselves is necessary to strengthen branding for exquisite, premium handmade products and expand and diversify markets. .

IV. Mainstreaming of crafts through education, training and research

Future development of the crafts sector is dependent on adequate skill development and education of young artisans not only in craft skills but also in market and entrepreneurial skills. An effort should be made towards mainstreaming crafts to encourage younger generations of artisans to value their inherited skills and instill a sense of pride and ownership for their skills.

1. Artisans must be educated and trained in mainstream education as well as in practical courses on business development, management, and quality control as well as design, product development and marketing.
 2. Regular design and product training must be conducted to keep up with the changing market tastes and preferences. Trainers and designers should improve designs in partnership with the practitioners.
 3. Young artisans and craftworkers should be engaged in mainstream craft management and design courses.
 4. Alternatively, centers/schools aimed at building craft-based entrepreneurs should be set-up in big craft clusters.
 5. Younger generations of artisans should be educated by established master artisans and sector experts. Role models play a critical role in encouraging younger generations to continue traditional craft.
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6. Focused research and development in the crafts sector should be undertaken. The government, sector level stakeholders and artisans must collaborate to invest in scientific research for innovation and development in crafts.

V. Convergence of schemes

1. Artisans and weavers should be supported through social security.

The development of the crafts sector is dependent on the empowerment of the primary producer, therefore, the government and craft sector organisations must comprehensively address needs of the artisans from education to financial assistance, in order to facilitate holistic growth of the sector. This could be done through:

- i. Creating model handloom clusters
 - ii. Creating service centers to inform about schemes
 - iii. Implementation of small saving schemes for artisans
 - iv. Linkages with schemes of Ministry of Rural Development, Labour and Employment, health, housing etc. for greater reach and penetration.
2. Stakeholders such as NGOs, Craft enterprises and the government should work together to build a social safety net for poverty stricken artisans and craftworkers.
3. In addition to this, the government must closely monitor implementation of its schemes and use of its resources to ensure that they adequately benefit the intended beneficiaries- grassroots artisans and craftworkers.

CONCLUSION

All the efforts should converge towards mainstreaming handicrafts as a major contributor to national economy. Key stakeholders, such as the government, industry experts, designers, financial institutions, craft entrepreneurs, artisans and craft livelihood organizations must work in partnership to uplift the sector. Adequate implementation and revision of existing policies and schemes by the government is critical. It is essential to integrate current disconnected efforts in design, product development, skill development, marketing into one common plan for craft based entrepreneurship development which is the only way a holistic and measurable outcome oriented development plan can be implemented leading to a shift from aid based initiative to market led initiative towards sustainable enterprise development. Model clusters could be piloted based on these recommendations, which would lead to evidence based development for crafts in India.

We should draw from international experiences such as the Capitals of Culture programme of the European Union, which selects different cities, every four years, to celebrate cultural features of the city. The selected city is given four years to bring together its resources, coordinate and plan for a final event. Such an effort requires coordination and planning of key stakeholders at the city level. Similarly, we require a holistic and comprehensive approach to build the crafts sector in India.

ANNEXURE I

Policy roundtable agenda

Launching USTTAD- Policy Discussions at Varanasi, 14 May 2015		
Venue: Ramada Hotel		
Sessions	Time	Speakers
Opening Ceremony	9: 30 AM- 9: 50 AM 9: 50 AM- 9: 55 AM	Keynote Speaker: Mr. D.S. Bisht (Jt. Secy, Ministry of Minority Affairs, Govt. of India) Setting the context: Madhura Dutta (Executive Director, AIACA)
Session I: Skill development of youth in traditional craft skills- ensuring dignity in work and life Panel Discussion I Guru- Shishya Parampara for the 21 st century- Successes and Challenges	10: 00 AM- 11: 30 AM 10:00 AM- 10:45 AM	Chair: Laila Tyabji (Chairperson, Dastkar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sharique Farooqi (Associate Professor, Ambedkar University, Delhi) ▪ Hemendra Sharma (COO, Women Weave) ▪ Nilanjan Mondol (Somaiya Kala Vidya) ▪ Sangeeta Sen (Sr. Designer) ▪ Ramzan Ali (Master Weaver from Varanasi)
Panel Discussion II Voice of the young crafts persons- needs and challenges	10:45 AM- 11:30 AM	Chair: Roopa Mehta (Executive Director, SASHA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 Craftspersons from Varanasi (PyareLal, Rameshwar Singh, Kunj Bihari Singh) and Daya Bhai, Master Weaver Faculty from Bhuj (to present on the aspirations and challenges faced)
Tea & Coffee Break	11: 30 AM- 11: 45 AM	

Session II: Invest in Handicrafts	11: 45 AM- 1: 15 PM	
Panel Discussion I Developing socially conscious business models	11: 45 AM- 12: 30 PM	Chair: Roopa Mehta (Executive Director, SASHA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jacob Mathew (CEO, Industree Foundation) ▪ Moe Chiba (Head, Culture Sector, UNESCO) ▪ Siva Devireddy , Founder, CEO, www.GoCoop.com ▪ Manika Dhama (Head of Content, Jaypore)
Panel Discussion II Government's perspective and voice of the stakeholders	12:30 PM- 1:15 PM	Chair: Ritu Sethi (Chairperson, Craft Revival Trust) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Rajnikant (HWA) ▪ Nitesh Dhawan (Asst Commissioner, Handloom, Varanasi) ▪ Tapan Sharma, Dy Director, Weavers' Service Centre ▪ BS Singh (Asst Director, Handicrafts, Varanasi) 1 Master Weaver
Concluding Session	1:15 PM- 1:30 PM	Dr. Arvind Mayaram, IAS Secy. Ministry of Minority Affairs, Govt. of India

ANNEXURE II

Profiles of Speakers

Session I- Panel Discussion I: Guru- Shishya Parampara for the 21st century- Successes and Challenges



Laila Tyabji

Founder member/ Chairperson,

DASTKAR, a Society for Crafts & Craftspeople

Laila Tyabji is a designer, writer, and founder member/Chairperson of DASTKAR, a Society for Crafts & Craftspeople. She has worked in the craft and development sector since 1978. She received the Padma Shri for her work in 2012. In 2003, Laila was the recipient of the AID TO ARTISANS Preservation of Craft Award in New York – the 2nd-ever recipient and first Asian.

Her organisation, DASTKAR, is a national NGO providing support services to traditional artisans - including training, credit, product development, design and marketing. Established in 1981, its objective is to help craftspeople (India's second largest employment sector) regain their place in the economic mainstream.

Laila has served as member on National Committees and Advisory Boards for handicrafts, the small industry sector, khadi, culture and design.

Working in 29 states, with over 650 grass-roots producer groups and approximately 1 lakh artisans all over the country, DASTKAR strongly believes in craft and the alternative sector as a social, cultural and economic force of enormous strength and potential. Helping craftspeople, especially women, learn to use their own inherent skills as a means of employment, earning and independence is the crux of the DASTKAR programme. The NATURE BAZAAR, Dastkar's newly established craft and natural products marketplace in Delhi's Andheria Modh, is a popular destination for handloom and handicrafts lovers, providing a curated marketing platform for a 100 different crafts groups from all over India every month.

Laila Tyabji studied art at the Faculty of Fine Arts, MS University, Baroda and the Toshi Yoshida Studio in Japan and worked as a free-lance designer in textiles, graphics and theatre prior to Dastkar.

Laila's work with artisans over the last four decades includes the chikan workers of SEWA Lucknow, Kasuti and Kantha embroiderers in Karnataka and Bengal, Madhubani painters and sujni quilters in Bihar, regurs in Rajasthan, and Banjara and Rabari mirrorwork craftswomen in Kutch and Maharashtra, pastoral communities displaced by the Tiger Reserve in Ranthambhore, and women victims of terrorist insurgency in Kashmir.

Laila speaks and writes regularly on craft, design and social issues at both national and international forums. Her book **THREADS & VOICES – Behind the Indian Textile Tradition** was published by Marg in 2007.

Laila has documented and written on chikan embroidery, Lambani embroidery, kasuti, the different embroideries of Kutch and Banaskantha, Godna and Madhubani painting. She is actively involved, as a consultant and mentor, in Student Craft Design and Documentation Projects at NIFT and NID.



Sharique Farooqi
Associate Professor
Ambedkar University (Delhi)

A graduate from National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, Sharique Farooqi, initially worked as a teacher at the National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi from 1993 to 2003. He served as the Director of the Craft Development Institute in Srinagar (an autonomous body set-up by the Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir) from 2004 to 2013 and lead several pro-active initiatives on design innovation and training of artisans connected with various regional crafts, introduction of a unique Masters course in ‘Craft Management & Entrepreneurship’ and registration of six traditional crafts of Kashmir, under the Geographical Indications Act as well as setting up a Testing & Certification Laboratory for genuine handmade Pashmina.

Sharique currently serves as Associate Professor in the School of Design at Ambedkar University (Delhi). His areas of special interest and expertise are Design Education and Institution Building, Design Management and Capacity Development for the unorganised sector especially related to skill based economic activities.



Hemendra Sharma
COO
Women Weave

Hemendra Sharma is an MBA in rural Management and is passionate about building livelihoods for communities for a decade. In his current role as COO of WomenWeave, Hemendra leads a team to initiate and manage various projects of WomenWeave and orders for clients across 30 countries. He has worked in livelihood promotion at Udyogini, which has presence in six states across India. He has also worked at UPASaC, a Section 25 company to promote livelihoods in Uttarakhand and with the MP Rural Livelihoods Project, funded by DFID.



Nilanjan Mondal
Programme Coordinator
Somaiya Kala Vidya

After completing his masters in social work (M.S.W) in 2011 from Visva Bharati University, Shantiniketan Nilanjan received the Gandhi Fellowship programme under Kaivalya Education Foundation (a fellowship based on Education, leadership and management) for two years in Mumbai.

During this time frame he worked with School Head Masters in Bombay Municipal Corporation Schools on leadership and management. Thereafter, he joined Kala Raksha Vidyalaya as Project Leader. After serving one year, he moved with Ms. Judy Frater to support the establishment of Somaiya Kala Vidya through the K.J. Somaiya Gujarat Trust, in 2014.

His portfolio includes assisting the Founder Director of the institute, coordinating course development, student and graduate services. He was the Coordinator of SKV's first Outreach program, Bhujodi to Bagalkot. In this, he facilitated an educational exchange between Artisan Design graduates and much less exposed traditional weavers from Bagolkot District and was largely responsible for successfully bringing those weavers to the high end Mumbai market and encouraging them to take their first design course.



Sangeeta Sen
Senior Designer

Sangeeta Sen, is an alumna of The National Institute of Design. She graduated with a Design Diploma in Textiles in the year 1991 and has been working with Handlooms and Handicrafts ever since. Her tryst with this sector began at the Design school itself, when a journey through Molela, Rajasthan, opened her eyes to the beauty of hand made products and the poor plight of the artisans, who made them. She decided in her mind at the time that she'd commit herself to working in this sector to sustain the crafts and improve the lives of artisans.

Her opportunity came in 1992 when she got a job at Fabindia. For the next thirteen and a half years she worked closely with artisans and helped in sustaining several crafts through Fabindia's Export and Retail sector. She worked in the export and design departments for most of her time there and was the Export and Design studio head, before leaving the company to look after her two sons.

Since then she has consulted with Fabindia, AIACA and IL&FS mainly as a designer. Today she is working closely with IL&FS on their Skills programme and has her own brand of childrens clothes called Pappu, the little Indian and has launched her line of sarees last September, under the label Song.



Ramzan Ali

Master Weaver

Mr. Ramzan Ali, began his life as a handloom weaver working on a daily wage basis. However, it was his inclination to improve and an insatiable craving for learning, that he started approaching financial institutions for help to setup his own unit. Starting with only Rs.200 a saree and surviving the unstable cycles of loss and profit, he gradually expanded his business and registered it as the “Banaras Silk Fabrics Cooperative Society”.

Currently, he has 30 handlooms and provides direct livelihood support to 45 weavers. His annual turnover, is around Rs.1 crore. He is a registered and authorized user of the Banaras brocade weaving Geographical Indication, Handloom Mark and Silk Mark. He has also received the Certificate of Expertise from the Handloom Export Promotion Council.

Session I- Panel Discussion II: Voice of the young crafts persons- needs and challenges



Roopa Mehta

CEO

SASHA Association for Craft Producers

Roopa Mehta is the CEO of Sasha Association for Craft Producers (“Sasha”) and the Secretary of Sarba Shanti Ayog (SSA), its associate development organisation. Sasha/SSA provides business support inputs and market access for sustainable livelihoods to artisan groups based largely in rural communities and semi urban areas. She

is on the Board of Sadhna, the handicrafts and income augmentation programme of Seva Mandir, Udaipur, the Managing Trustee of Ruro Agro Services Association, a registered trust which develops natural agro based products, trains producers and identify suitable markets and on the Board of All India Artisans and Craftpersons Association (AIACA). She is also on the Board of the World Fair Trade Organisation.

Roopa Mehta is an MBA from Delhi University with further professional qualifications in Social Communication. In the earlier part of her professional career, Mrs. Mehta worked in the hospitality and merchandising sector and she was the Chief Executive Officer of a renowned textiles manufacturing & retailing company before joining Sasha.



Pyare Lal,

Craftperson

Handmade Punja Dhurrie

Pyare Lal was born in May 1962, at Pure Village in Varanasi. The skill of weaving Hand-made punja dhurries were passed on to him by his ancestors. Despite, economic hardship, he learnt this craft form from his father and grandfather, after completing his primary education. He received the State Level Gyaneshwar Mishra Award in 2012.



Rameshwar Singh

Craftperson

Wooden Lacquerware and Toys

Rameshwar Singh was born in 1961 at Kashmiriganj in Varanasi. He completed his graduation in 1984 from Banaras Hindu University. Making wooden toys was his childhood interest, a skill which he learnt from his father. He used the income earned from toy making to finance his education expenses.

Rameshwarji received the Geographic Indication registration for Wooden Lacquerware and Toys in 2013 for his company name 'Balaji Handicraft Cooperative Society'. He was awarded the State Handicraft Award by the Industries Directorate in 2013. He was recently, felicitated by the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development in 2015. He has exhibited his products at various exhibitions across the country, the most recent being the Karigar Haat 2014 at Kolkata.



Kunj Bihari Singh

Craftperson

Pink Enamelling

Kunj Bihari Singh was born in a goldsmith family in 1977. Possessing an inherent fascination for arts, he was always inclined towards his traditional crafts. He has participated in many craft exhibitions across the country and was awarded the State Level Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Unique Handicraft Award, by the Directorate of Industries, U.P. Government in 2013-14. He has also exhibited his skills and product to the Prime Minister- Shri. Narendra Modi, during his visit to Varanasi in November 2014.

Dancing peacock, Magic Bird, Magic Bird on Rose Flower with Earth biodiversity are some of his outstanding creations. He aims to scale to new heights through innovations and creations. He is also a registered and authorized user of Geographical Indication for Varanasi Pink Enamelling. He recently participated in the Global Expo at Pragati Maidan in Delhi, where he displayed his products to Smt. Nirmala Sitaraman, Minister Industrial Policy and Promotion, who was also fascinated by his exquisite products and praised his skills.



Dayalal A. Kudecha

Faculty

Somaiya Kala Vidya

Dayalal is a traditional weaver. He has woven traditional and contemporary designs provided by a variety of sources from 1986 to present.

Dayalal began his teaching career with teaching his wife to weave. He was a mentor and then faculty at Kala Raksha Vidhyalaya, and has taught weaving to visitors in workshops through KRV and SKV, including workshops in Cusco and across the USA. He has also assisted research on Kutch textile traditions.

His portfolio includes assisting in instruction throughout the SKV design and business courses. He also led the team of weaver designers in SKV's first Outreach program, Bhujodi to Bagalkot. In this, he taught less exposed

traditional weavers from Bagolkot District to innovate within their traditions, helping to bring those weavers to the high end Mumbai market.

Session II- Panel Discussion I: Developing socially conscious business models



Jacob Mathew

CEO

Industree Foundation

Jacob is CEO of Industree Foundation and Industree Skills Transform, and is co-founder of Tessaract Design, Idiom Design, Dovetail Furniture and Spring Health Water (india) Pvt Ltd.

Jacob works at the intersection of Design, Business, Capital and Impact enterprises and is a design Principal at Impact Edge- Impact enterprise incubator at Srishti Institute of Art Design & Technology.

Jacob spent the first part of his life transforming business through design and intends to spend the next transforming society through business.



Moe Chiba

Programme Specialist for Culture

UNESCO

Ms Moe Chiba, a Japanese national, is a Programme Specialist for Culture at UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). She has been appointed since August 2006 to coordinate the Culture Sector of UNESCO New Delhi Office for Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The current focus of UNESCO New Delhi Culture Sector include the protection of urban heritage, culture based rural livelihood and the accessibility of person with disabilities to the cultural life.

Ms Chiba joined the Organization in May 2000 to work initially for Section for Crafts and Design, Division of Arts and Cultural Enterprise where she was responsible for planning and implementation of the promotion of traditional crafts and design in Asia Pacific region. From June 2002 until August 2006, she was attached to the office of the Director of the Division of Cultural Policies, where she was coordinating the UNESCO Working Team for the elaboration of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural

Expressions adopted in October 2005 by the UNESCO General Conference. Ms Chiba was also closely involved include the organization of the policy debates related to culture and environment protection, including the Thematic Conference on Culture and Water on the occasion of the 3rdWorld Water Forum (Kyoto, March 2003) and High-level round table on Interlinkages between Cultural Diversity and Biodiversity in cooperation with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) at the Johannesburg Summit (September 2002).



Siva Devireddy

Founder & CEO

GoCoop.com

Siva Devireddy is the Founder & CEO of GoCoop.com a Social Marketplace for Cooperative and Community based craft organizations. Siva is passionate about technology innovations that drive social and economic inclusion of people at the bottom of the pyramid. GoCoop has been a result of his passion to help people achieve their social and economic goals through technology innovation.

Mr. Devireddy has over 14 years of experience in Information technology and business consulting with large corporations across the globe. In his previous experience, he was the Director of the Innovation Center with Accenture in India, one of the world's leading technology and consulting firm and played key management and technology leadership roles for many global clients. Mr. Devireddy is a fellow of Corporate Leaders program at Arizona State University and has done his Masters in Industrial and Management Systems Engineering.

Mr. Devireddy over the last 4 years has worked with Co-operatives and other grass-roots organizations in craft sector understanding their challenges and in developing strategies for addressing these challenges. He has played key roles in multiple research and development project.



Manika Dhama

Head of Content & Communications

Jaypore

Manika heads Content & Communications at Jaypore, an online retail brand that showcases handcrafted Indian textiles, jewelry, art, crafts and more. Her work focuses on the storytelling aspect of each of the crafts or textiles showcased on the site. Conducting dialogues with artisans and designers working in this space, she highlights their work through the Jaypore blog & other social media platforms.

In addition to the articles on Jaypore, Manika has written craft and textile features in Pool Magazine and lifestyle articles for Mint Lounge & Hindustan Times. She is a contributor to the Delhi-based blog The Delhiwalla and owns and manages her blog Eggfacemomhead.

Session II- Panel Discussion II: Government's perspective and voice of the stakeholders



Ritu Sethi

Chairperson

Craft Revival Trust

Ritu Sethi is Chairperson of the Craft Revival Trust and Editor of the principal online encyclopaedia on the arts, crafts, textiles and its practitioners in South Asia. She has Chaired the UNESCO Consultative Body examining nominations to the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the World lists; was on the Steering Committee for the 12th Five year Plan for Handlooms and Handicrafts, Planning Commission; is Board Member of HHEC, Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya Samiti (National Museum of Man), Bhopal, Centre for Cultural Resource and Training, New Delhi and several other institutions. She serves on the Advisory Board for Intangible Cultural heritage in Japan and China (UNESCO Cat II centers) and in India on the Ministry of Culture Advisory Board.



Dr. Rajnikant

General Secretary & CEO

Human Welfare Association

Born in 1960, Dr. Rajnikant is a Ph.D. in Soils & Agriculture Chemistry. He has served as a Research Associate in the Banaras Hindu University for 5 years in Ganga Action Plan, after which, he joined a social development organization- HUMAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION in 1993, as a General Secretary and CEO. He has dedicated his last 22 years to development related work.

Dr. Rajnikant was honored with the “Samay Udyami” Best Social Entrepreneur Award 2013 by UP Chief Minister, E-uttara Manthan award of Uttar Pradesh by Digital Empowerment Foundation and UP Government, Vodafone- South Asia m-Billionth Award 2012 for Mahila Shakti Project. He is a senior social worker, GI-IPR Expert and has been contributing to policy advocacy of issues such as handloom-handicraft, child rights and traditional livelihood with skill development.

He has also been a coveted participant and speaker at various important International Programs, such as, the World Future Energy Summit 2012 (WFES) at Abu Dhabi; Asian Development Bank – Annual Meet at India – Greater Noida, to name a few. He is also the Convener of the State Alliance for Right, Empowerment and Livelihood (SAREL) Network, operating in 27 districts of Uttar Pradesh and addressing issues ranging from inclusion of handloom-handicraft under MGNREGA, livelihood rights & small-marginal farmers issues including women and youth skill development related issues.



Nitesh Dhawan

Assistant Commissioner (Handloom)

Directorate of Handlooms and Textiles,

Government of Uttar Pradesh, Varanasi



Tapan Sharma

Deputy Director & OIC

Weavers Service Centre

Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Varanasi

B.S.Singh

Assistant Director (Handicrafts)

O/o Development Commissioner, Handicrafts

Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, Varanasi



Maqbool Hasan

Master Weaver

Maqbool Hassan is a nationally celebrated master weaver, who oversees a collective of over 400 handloom weavers. Born in 1951, in a traditional weaver family, he learnt the art of Brocade weaving from his father.

He is the current CEO of Resham India and has been manning the business for 66 years now, carrying forward the 200 year old legacy of his ancestors. Hasan's work in the handloom sector, has won him several laurels. He received the President's Award in 2001, as recognition of his skills and his contribution to the sector. He was also a Special Invitee to Oxford (UK) by the Oxford College of Arts and Science where, for a ten day exhibition, where he displayed his innovative products.