

National Conference on Going Green

Future of Crafts

New Delhi | June 11, 2018

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Background and Objective

AIACA has undertaken a journey towards rediscovering the “green-ness” of our traditional craft practices since 2014. As the discussions around sustainability expand and enter into other spaces such as fashion, we are trying to bring back and emphasize what has been a USP of this sector for centuries.

In this context, it would be pertinent to discuss the stories, case studies, learnings and aspirations that have been shaped through our Going Green Project that commenced in 2014 in partnership with Traidcraft Exchange, UK, supported by the European Union. This project focused on textiles and was undertaken in six clusters of UP and Rajasthan, namely, Varanasi, Lucknow, Kota, Jaipur, Udaipur and Churu.

The National Conference on Future of Crafts was about the understanding that has emerged from AIACA’s and Traidcraft’s work with craft clusters under the Going Green project. There have been synergies in partnership with dynamic NGOs that have opened up concerns as well as hopes for the future.

Agenda

Registration & Tea

9:30 – 10:00 AM

Opening Session – Context Setting		10:00 – 11:00 AM
Welcome Note and Introduction	Ms. Madhura Dutta, <i>Executive Director (ED), AIACA</i>	
Keynote Address	Shri Ashoke Chatterjee, <i>Former ED, National Institute of Design and Adviser to Crafts Council of India</i>	
Special Address by Guest of Honour	Ms. Cecilia Freire Costa, <i>Team Leader – Cooperation Manager Delegation of European Union to India</i>	
Special Guest	Shri Shantmanu, IAS, Development Commissioner - Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India	

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Session I – Cluster Stories: Achievement, Challenges and Way Forward (Panel Discussion)	
Moderator: Mr. Mukesh Tiwary, Operations Lead, Traidcraft Exchange (UK) 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM	
Varanasi	<p>Keynote Speaker: Mr. Umesh Kumar Singh, Joint Commissioner, Industries, Varanasi and Vindhyachal Division, Government of UP</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Dr. Rajani Kant, Executive Director, HWA (Human Welfare Association)▪ Mr. Aftab, Weaver and Board member, Varanasi Weavers and Artisans Society (VWAS)▪ Mr. Nizamuddin, Weaver and member, Varanasi Weavers and Artisans Society▪ Ms. Nusrat Jaha, SHG (Self Help Group) leader
Udaipur	<p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mr. Shekhar Kumar, Director Projects, Vishvas Sansthan▪ Ms. Ranjana Trivedi, Artisan▪ Ms. Rekha Jain, Artisan
Kota	<p>Keynote Speaker: Mr. Harimohan Sharma, District Industries Officer, DIC, Kota</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ms. Shehnaz, Weaver and Project Lead, Kota Women Weavers Organization▪ Ms. Shaheen, Weaver▪ Mr. Rafiq Attari, Dyer
Jaipur	<p>Keynote Speaker: Mr. Vikram Joshi, Managing Director, Jaipur Integrated Texcraft Park Private Limited (JITPPL)</p> <p>Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ms. Mridula Chandra, Chief Executive & Secretary, HSDRC (Health & Social Development Research Centre)▪ Mr. Ramswaroop Khandelwal, Calico Cooperative
Lucknow	<p>Keynote Speaker: Mr. Virendra Kumar, Deputy Director Handicrafts, Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Lucknow.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ms. Runa Banerjee, CEO, SEWA Lucknow▪ Ms. Nasreen Siddiqui, Artisan▪ Ms. Shama Parveen, Artisan

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Lunch

1:00 – 2:00 PM

Session II – Imagining the Future of Crafts (Panel Discussion)	
Moderator: Ms. Roopa Mehta, <i>CEO, SASHA</i>	2: 00 – 2: 45 PM
Ms. Shyamala Ramanan, <i>Business Head, Taneira</i>	
Mr. Ayush Kasliwal, <i>Creative Director, CEO AKDPL, Jaipur</i>	
Ms. Sunita Shanker, <i>Fashion Designer</i>	
Dr. A.A. Ansari, <i>Assistant Director, NITRA (Northern India Textile Research Association)</i>	

Session III - Concluding Session	
Moderator: Mr. Mukesh Tiwary, <i>Operations Lead, Traidcraft Exchange (UK)</i>	2: 45 – 4: 00 PM
EU perspective on Going Green and way forward	Ms. Sarojini Kaul, <i>Project Manager – Cooperation Section, European Union</i>
Going Green – Learnings and Outcome from Endline Study	Abhihaara
Open Session on Way forward	Ms. Meera Goradia, <i>Craft Consultant</i> Ms. Madhura Dutta, <i>ED, AIACA</i> Mr. Rajesh Supkar, <i>Business Head, Traidcraft India</i>
Vote of Thanks	Ms. Madhura Dutta, <i>ED, AIACA</i>

Networking over Tea & Snacks

4:00 PM

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Opening Session: Introduction and Special Address

Speakers

Ms. Madhura Dutta, ED, AIACA

Shri Ashoke Chatterjee, Former ED, National Institute of Design and Adviser to Crafts Council of India

Ms. Cecilia Freire Costa, Team Leader – Cooperation Manager Delegation of European Union to India

Shri Shantmanu, IAS, Development Commissioner – Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, GoI

The mandate of the 'Future of Crafts' Conference was to mark the end of the Going Green Project, discuss the developments in the clusters where it was implemented and elaborate the way forward.



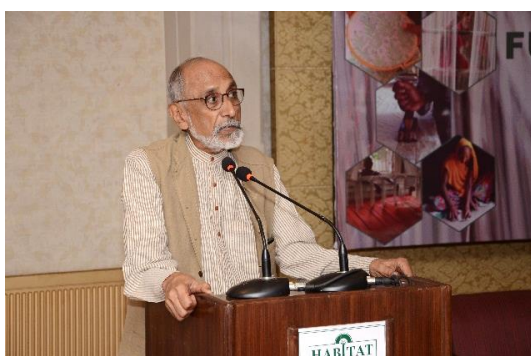
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Ms. Madhura Dutta, Executive Director, AIACA, addressed the National Conference on Going Green and discussed how this project has set pace for the way forward for sustainability efforts in textile and non-textile sector. She talked about the four-year journey of the Going Green Project that was elaborated through case studies, successes and challenges shared by the artisans and weavers themselves, from different clusters of UP and Rajasthan.

Dr. Ashoke Chatterjee, Former ED, National Institute of Design, India, and Adviser to The Crafts Council of India, addressed the critical need for 'going green' and how to achieve sustainable goals at the Future of Crafts conference. Dr. Chatterjee emphasized that a sustainable economy is the need of the hour and not a choice, and suggested ways to mediate in the crafts sector to achieve eco-friendly processes at all levels. He said that being Green requires that we work in cooperation with crafts workers at remote locations and create spaces where knowledge about sustainability can be shared and effective contacts can be provided to guide and help the artisans. To preserve water and environment, he identified the necessity to urgently master techniques of rain water harvesting, recycling, effluent treatment and other ways to be able to use the resources in a responsible manner.

A special address was given by our Guest of Honour - **Ms. Cecilia Freire Costa, Team Leader - Cooperation Manager, Delegation of European Union - EU to India**. She was pleased with the environment-friendly initiatives implemented in the clusters of UP and Rajasthan under the project, and accentuated the importance of conscious, eco-friendly methods of production required globally for sustainable growth. Highlighting the cornerstones of the Going Green Project, she emphasized the need to promote economic prosperity by adopting sustainable production and consumption in small and medium enterprises.



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The Conference was honored by our Special Guest **Shri Shantmanu, IAS, Development Commissioner - Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, GoI**, who addressed the holistic issues of the crafts sector and the way forward. He discussed the work that has been done over a long time for artisans and the crafts sector, and its progression from basic development to sustainable development and now to green development. The importance and need for green design, green development and renewable sources was recognized and emphasized by him strongly.



Session 1: Cluster Stories: Achievements, Challenges and Way Forward (Panel Discussions) - Varanasi

Moderator: Mr. Mukesh Tiwary, Operations Lead, Traidcraft Exchange (UK)

Speakers

Dr. Rajani Kant, Executive Director, HWA

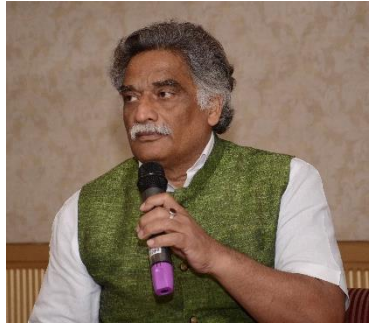
Mr. Aftab, Weaver and Board member, Varanasi Weavers and Artisans Society

Mr. Nizamuddin, Weaver and member, Varanasi Weavers and Artisans Society

Ms. Nusrat Jaha, SHG leader

Keynote Speaker: Mr. Umesh Kumar Singh, Joint Commissioner, Industries, Varanasi and Vindhyachal Division, Government of UP

Dr. Rajani Kant, Executive Director, HWA, said that the Going Green project has played a significant role in creating a positive environment by providing linkages for financial and social welfare schemes for the weavers at the grass-root level. He cited the unfair experience of Varanasi, which is the biggest handloom cluster in the world with 16,000 handlooms - where lacs of power looms are given subsidized electricity while it is denied to those who weave by hand! He challenged participants to calculate how much carbon footprint one handloom weaver saves through an 8-hour working day and asked whether this saving should not entitle the cluster to carbon benefits. He presented the scenario of how great it would be that if ~18,000 weavers received carbon credits in their bank accounts because of energy saved through use of handloom, just as so-called organized industries might receive! A campaign towards such bankable carbon benefits could be an important innovation to support weavers as well as other artisans, suggesting an important opportunity for sector activists to pursue. He said that to secure the future of handloom we need two important things – firstly, consumer awareness about handloom and secondly, demand for the handloom mark by international buyers.



Handloom weavers Aftab and Nizamuddin from Varanasi Weavers & Artisans Society, described how the project created awareness about the use and adoption of better solutions such as natural and safe dyes, water conservation, business communication and design skills as well as group mobilization in the Varanasi cluster. Aftab said that if we create designs in line with the eco-friendly production methods, then the final product would be of good quality and would not be rejected. Nizamuddin takes pride that the weavers in the cluster work with natural silk on handloom, using no machinery to make Banarasi saris, and want to move in the direction of Going Green with AIACA's support. **Ms. Nusrat Jaha, SHG leader**, highlighted that the women workforce of the cluster has increased and they have benefitted a lot from various social welfare and financial schemes with loans approved for more than 50 SHGs and digitalization for 60 SHGs. They have been able to access many government schemes and now have pan cards, aadhar cards, artisan cards, bank accounts, facilities such as old-age pension, toilets, etc.

Mr. Umesh Kumar Singh, Joint Commissioner, Industries, Varanasi and Vindhyachal Division, Government of UP, mentioned that the three important aspects of the project were that it targeted the rural areas at the grass-root level, worked towards woman empowerment and provided training for all steps of production with focus on design development. He said that the upliftment should happen at the producer level where the actual work takes place.

Session 1 (contd.): Cluster Stories: Achievements, Challenges and Way Forward (Panel Discussions) – Udaipur

Speakers

Mr. Shekhar Kumar, Director Projects, Vishvas Sansthan

Ms. Ranjana Trivedi, Artisan

Ms. Rekha Jain, Artisan



Mr. Shekhar Kumar, Director Projects, Vishvas Sansthan, Udaipur, shared his experience on how the Going Green project was initiated for the women of Salumbar tribal district of Udaipur. He said that these women received training in production to create cloth bags from scrap fabric, design development and embroidery, and learnt how to make new products from textile waste which were sold in international markets. He was proud to share that currently 210 women have artisan cards and around 1,500 women are linked with the Going Green project.

Ms. Rekha Jain, Artisan, discussed the challenges faced to encourage women to step out of their homes and join the SHGs and attend trainings to upcycle waste. **Ms. Ranjana Trivedi, Artisan**, added that women of the cluster have been empowered economically and socially and are contributing to their family income. She said that the women now have a purpose and they think about themselves, their family and the society! She is proud to say that they have learnt to use waste during the project and developed sensitivity towards the environment.

Session 1 (contd.): Cluster Stories: Achievements, Challenges and Way Forward (Panel Discussions) – Kota

Speakers

Ms. Shehnaz, Weaver and Project Lead, Kota Women Weavers Organization (KWWO)

Ms. Shaheen, Weaver

Mr. Rafiq Attari, Dyer

Keynote Speaker: Mr. Harimohan Sharma, District Industries Officer, DIC, Kota

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Ms. Shehnaz, Weaver and Project Lead, is a very proud member of KWWO and explained how women have been encouraged and empowered through this initiative. They have established 38 SHGs through which they have mobilised women and have enabled access to government and financial schemes, artisan cards, market linkages and sustainable livelihood generation. She shared that they are very excited to work for clients such as Good Earth and will be preparing a base collection for the Lakme Fashion Week in August 2018. **Ms. Shaheen, Weaver**, added that the Going Green Project has provided opportunities for women weavers to step out in the market, interact with the customers and understand the demand – they no longer have to deal with the master weavers and deal directly with the market.



Mr. Rafiq Attari, Dyer, explained that under AIACA's project they were provided a dyeing training which explained what is azo-free dye, its benefits, its usability and harmful effects of chemical dyes. This led him to adopt azo-free dyes in production which has increased the marketability of his products. He also shared his experience of training other dyers in Kota on azo-free dyes along with the acceptable standards of safe dyes.



Mr. Harimohan Sharma, District Industries Officer, shared that the broad objective was to mobilize the women of the Ansari community so that they become self-sustainable. As per Mr. Sharma, a challenge that needs to be addressed is to create consumer awareness regarding the eco-friendly and authentic technique of Kota Doria production which should be distinguished from its cheap duplicates available in the market. Under the project, learning and earning was encouraged for the women.

Session 1 (contd.): Cluster Stories: Achievements, Challenges and Way Forward (Panel Discussions) – Jaipur

Speakers

Ms. Mridula Chandra, Chief Executive & Secretary, HSDRC

Mr. Ramswaroop Khandelwal, President, Calico Cooperative

Keynote Speaker: Mr. Vikram Joshi, Managing Director, Jaipur Integrated Texcraft Park Private Limited (JITPPL)

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Ms. Mridula Chandra, Chief Executive & Secretary, HSDRC, has been part of these development initiatives for a long time and shared that the Going Green project has evolved situationally from time to time to address and implement the interventions as and when required. She said that the Jaipur cluster has three sub-clusters – Sanganer, Bagru and Bassi, where significant achievements included setting up an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) in Sanganer, focus on use of natural dyes in Bagru and an attempt to use natural indigo on denims in Bassi.

Mr. Ramswaroop Khandelwal, President, Calico Cooperative, shared that traditionally only natural dyes were used for printing derived from jaggery, alum, iron water, flowers, etc. which led to no pollution. However, post 1980, there was a new trend of screen printing, along with block printing, which encouraged the use of chemical dyes and posed water pollution problems necessitating the need for setting up an ETP.

Mr. Vikram Joshi, Managing Director, JITPPL, was quite happy to share that through JITPPL, even the younger generation of block printers, in the age group of 22-28 years, are proud to be associated with the Textile park and work there. A minimum wage is set for the artisans and the printers of Bagru and Sanganer are positively motivated to be associated with the park because of benefits such as assurance of jobs and free transportation.

Session 1 (contd.): Cluster Stories: Achievements, Challenges and Way Forward (Panel Discussions) – Lucknow

Speakers

Ms. Runa Banerjee, CEO, SEWA Lucknow

Ms. Nasreen Siddiqui, Artisan

Ms. Shama Parveen, Artisan

Keynote Speaker: Mr. Virendra Kumar, Deputy Director Handicrafts, Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Lucknow.

Ms. Runa Banerjee discussed how the Going Green Project has brought about a change in the adoption of Occupation, Health and Safety (OHS) measures and now the women of the cluster are much aware about them and practice these on an everyday basis. She also shared that they started work on Geographical Identification (GI) from 2014-15 onwards and the number of GI holders in the cluster has increased from 3 to 35; however, the logo is yet to be registered.



Ms. Nasreen Siddiqui, Artisan, shared that the nature of their work is such that they faced a lot of health problems in the back, neck, eyes, etc. However, under the project, they have become aware of the measures that need to be followed for better health and she is proud to share that 80 women everyday start their day with exercise, without fail, which has helped them a lot in their day to day issues. **Ms. Shama Parveen, Artisan**, added that while SEWA has made them self-sufficient, the Going Green Project has polished their craft through trainings on business skill and health. This project has showed them a new beginning.



Mr. Virendra Kumar, Deputy Director Handicrafts, discussed that the handicraft and handloom sector is facing a lot of health and environmental problems, and research in each field is very critical and interventions need to be suggested to the Government of India for implementation.

Session 2: Imagining the Future of Crafts (Panel Discussion)

Moderator: Moderator: Ms. Roopa Mehta, CEO, SASHA

Speakers

Ms. Shyamala Ramanan, Business Head, Taneira
Mr. Ayush Kasliwal, Creative Director, CEO AKDPL, Jaipur
Ms. Sunita Shanker, Fashion Designer
Dr. A.A. Ansari, Assistant Director, NITRA

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Ms. Sunita Shanker, Fashion Designer, believes that design intervention for the crafts community has to be in such a way that it enables upgradation of skill of the craftsmen which helps in generating and sustaining livelihood for them. It is also important that the craftspeople are not displaced while working with them, to keep the craft alive.

On the topic of fast fashion, Ms. Sunita said that we have to be socially responsible as designers, as producers and as consumers, and need to check the need to consume mindlessly.

Mr. Ayush Kasliwal, Creative Director, CEO AKDPL, Jaipur, gave another angle to the discussion and presented some counter questions as to whether crafts are naturally sustainable. He said that development and crafts go together only to a certain extent, and money and business are critical to support the craft industry and take it forward. He stressed that the craftsmen don't need charity and his business runs because of the artisans he works with and not the other way round.

Ms. Shyamala Ramanan, Business Head, Taneira, shared that as a brand they focus on handloom and handcrafted products, especially sarees and textiles. Through their products they want to bring the Indian heritage back to the people in order to sustain these crafts and empower the artisans. She said that Titan Company Limited, as an organization is a pro-green company.

Dr. A.A. Ansari, Assistant Director, NITRA, shared his research in the field of textiles and cautioned about different types of chemicals present in dyes such as azo, formaldehyde, PCB, pesticides and toxic heavy metals. He said that NITRA can provide guidance on how to cope with these substances and discussed the options of safe dyes that can be used to make eco-friendly products. For treatment of waste water, he suggested that Common Effluent Treatment Plants should be used which are available at a monthly charge.

Session 3: Concluding Session

Moderator: Mr. Mukesh Tiwary, Operations Lead, Traidcraft Exchange (UK)

Speakers

Ms. Sarojini Kaul - Project Manager - Cooperation Section, European Union - EU perspective on Going Green and way forward

Abhihaara - Going Green – Learnings and Outcome from Endline Study

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Ms. Meera Goradia, Craft Consultant
Mr. Rajesh Supkar, Business Head, Traidcraft India
Ms. Madhura Dutta, ED AIACA



Ms. Sarojini Kaul - Project Manager, EU, discussed that one of EU's important agenda is to save the environment and promote sustainable production and consumption and they work in Asia via the Switch-Asia project to achieve this. In India, with a focus on textiles, they have implemented 2 sustainable projects (amongst many others) – SUSTEX and setting up of an ETP in the Textile Park in Jaipur (JITPPL) to conserve and recycle water. She then explained how they have worked with AIACA to support the Going Green Project which has produced tangible results in different clusters across India. She emphasized that these are pilot projects which need to be taken forward in a constructive way and urged their inclusion in Government policies.

The **team from Abhihaara** presented the Endline study on the Green project which included achievements, learnings and recommendations based on the field assessment. **Mr. Anurag** shared that the Green project touched around 15,000+ artisans with focus on training and development workshops in the areas of occupational, health & safety, environmental practices and capacity building. He cited the key green interventions, their adoption and benefits in different clusters which included azo free dyeing, ETP (Effluent Treatment Plant), upcycling, use of natural resources and handloom production.

Ms. Anuradha from Abhihaara highlighted that in this project, the things that stood out in different clusters include quality control, interaction with customers, GI and advocacy in Varanasi; dyeing capabilities and trained resource persons in Kota; establishment of an ETP in Jaipur, which was much needed in that location; the enthusiasm about the craft, health and client engagement in Lucknow; the newly formed federation and positive energy in Bagru; and the strong women group in Udaipur. A key

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observation throughout the project assessment was that the women workforce was highly determined and committed to do better and to learn new skills. She also mentioned that the development of contemporary entrepreneurs and the exchange of information amongst them was impressive. **Ms. Sudha from Abhihaara**, recommended that the Going Green initiatives should continue in a sustainable way and a budget should be allocated and available from different organizations.

Ms. Meera Goradia, Craft Consultant, summarized the discussion and highlighted various important points for growth in this area. She said that all the green practices such as eco-friendly dyeing, etc. were a traditional and prevalent practice in the past which have been lost with time and need to be brought back. Earlier, there was a communal way of conducting business with relation to say water, raw materials, processes, etc. and this cooperative way of working needs to be strengthened. She also said that GI seems to be one way of capturing the markets and we need to figure out how to use and fund it appropriately. She believes that the potential of handwork to create employment is perennial and suggested that the Future of Crafts lies with the women of the sector. She also focused on policy making which is critical to empower the crafts at the ground level and emphasized that it is important to leverage the support of multiple stakeholders for this sector.

Mr. Rajesh Supkar, Business Head, Traidcraft India, commented on the marketing of the products and emphasized that the customers also value the 'Story behind the product' which should be highlighted. He concluded by saying that the biggest growing market for fair-trade for the next 5-10 years is the Asian region, especially India, and we need a domestic fair-trade model, not a western one, to take this forward gloriously.



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Towards the end, **Ms. Madhura Dutta, ED, AIACA**, touch-based upon Craftmark Green which is a green-label tested extensively for textiles, to start with. She said that the Going Green project and Craftmark Green is being taken forward to also include non-textile products such as metal, clay, natural fibres, and more, to make these crafts and craft processes sustainable and green.

She emphasized that network building and information sharing across all beneficiaries is extremely critical for Future of Crafts and we need to organize the information in a way so that it is accessible to everyone, including the artisans, in a digital manner. She concluded by thanking everyone and highlighted that the Way Forward entails adding more partners and beneficiaries, including non-textile crafts in the purview of Going Green and building a strong network collaboration with all the stakeholders.