



" KAMALA " COMES TO KOLKATA

Kasturi Gupta Menon

When the ICCR's "Tagore Centre" designed by Charles Correa and located on Ho Chi Minh Sarani (Kolkata) sent out feelers for a souvenir / cum crafts shop to be set up within its premises, The Crafts Council of India seized the opportunity to establish its third "Kamala" _ on the lines of Delhi and Hyderabad. The interior layout was elegantly conceptualized by Garima Sipani of 'Wildflowers', whose design ensured the filtering



Inauguration: Kamala, Kolkata

in of as much natural light as possible into the "L" shaped space. Formally inaugurated by Aparna Sen, award winning film director and actor on 05.01.2009 whose very presence generated huge publicity, its sales on the inaugural day, touching almost a lakh, evinced hope and promise

The ICCR's " Tagore Centre " has an auditorium on the ground floor, exhibition spaces in the form of galleries both on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors, and a conference centre on the 4th floor with seminar rooms, as well as a set of guest rooms for performing artistes and lecturers visiting from overseas. It also has a lively café on the ground floor with an amazing repertoire of " Tea " as well as light refreshments

Because of its multiple venues which can be used by different organisations at a time, - be they performances, exhibitions, seminars or conferences - the footfall to the centre is continuous. Its multifaceted facilities is also conducive to hosting " Festivals " - such as the hugely popular Tagore Festival which has just concluded. It has also opened a window for the consular - corps of Kolkata to visit the Centre for

its wide range of events, and it is these visitors to the Centre who enter the shop - initially as



Visitors at Kamala, Kolkata

casual and curious browsers, _ to discover an astonishing treasure trove of hand-made crafts and weaves in a vast assortment of prices

Considering these advantages, one would have thought that the Kolkata Kamala would have been a money-spinner right from inception. Sadly, this has not been the case, - the primary reason being the excessive security measures that are enforced to monitor the vehicular traffic on Ho Chi Minh Sarani by the Calcutta Police

The Tagore Centre's two gates face those of the American Consulate. American

consulates the world over have become vulnerable as potential targets for terrorist attacks, and the Kolkata Consulate is under similar threat. Wedged between two police check-posts on either side of its gates, prospective visitors travelling in their own cars to the Tagore Centre or to "Kamala" have to stop and explain to the police where they are going and why. Those travelling in black and yellow cabs have to dismount at the check-post and walk the remaining 100 yards. This form of inquisition obviously acts as a deterrent

But what has been a revelation in the last one year is the kind of merchandise which Calcuttan's purchase. Unlike Delhi's "Kamala", stone items are non-starters. Not only is the price too high, (on account of the steep VAT levied by the State Government on all stone products) they are also difficult to transport because of their weight. The yellow Jaisalmer stone in particular, is very very brittle and chips at the slightest provocation. VAT is also levied by the West Bengal Government on (a) metal, (b) wrought iron (though not on dhokra), (c) ceramics, (d) silk, (e) leather, and (f) silver which pushes up the price of crafts based on these raw materials

What is hugely popular are Chinnayachari's "Ettikopaka" items which are well finished, beautifully lacquered and reasonably priced. So also smaller "meenakari" items from Delhi and thread bangles from Chennai. The last appeals to women of all ages and even to overseas visitors. Jewellery, it transpires, sells fast - especially the inexpensive kind

What has NOT done well however, are the Kondapalli toys. Nor the baskets made of Sabai grass. Basketry from Assam however move fast, - especially the larger capacious ones, as also Md. Yusuf's printed bamboo mats from Bagh.

Terracotta items from Pondicherry are popular as well as their coconut shell jewellery and artefacts. But what sold very well surprisingly in the recent exhibition were the ceramic items from Shantiniketan. Black and white tableware from Delhi is also much sought after and for which there is a continuous demand. The shop has had to place orders with the studio potter for supplying these products on a regular basis to Kamala

In the Textile Section, woven Varanasi silks of "Kasem" sell, though not in summer. These should be stocked only for Diwali and winter. The Kanjeevarams are popular, though not the checks nor broad borders. Plainer ones appear to move faster particularly those priced not too high. Kotas do not move though Ikkats are popular; so also woven Chanderis and Maheswaris with silk thread borders, and of course plain and printed tussars from Jharkand. Serenity's (Lucknow) silk cushion covers are exquisite, though more suited to a temperate climate and therefore popular with foreigners, and Sukriti's (Bhuj) items also move fairly fast

CONCLUSION

At the end of one year, it is time to now take stock of how we can improve matters. In spite of its locational short-comings, the shop has great potential, specially if the merchandising is directly sourced and stocked during the right seasons

The four seasonal exhibitions proposed for Kolkata's "Kamala" for 2010 must have adequate publicity, and for which invitation cards should be sent well in advance. Obviously the shop's mailing list needs to be expanded, and telephone numbers of invitees incorporated. Work to update this list has started and it is hoped it will be ready by January end

What is also needed is a minimum quantum of funds for publicising events. Releasing of 2" x 1" size 'ads' in the print media just before major exhibitions will give the shop visibility. ICCR has also agreed to enclose a "Kamala " book-mark with all the invitation cards they mail so that more and more people are made aware of its existence.

May be an article in one of the popular women's magazines like " Shananda " will also give us mileage. A concerted effort to source really unusual kinds of crafts will make a difference, and once our reputation for quality and fair price is established, Kamala will have acquired a permanent clientele.

ARTISANS ALLIANCE OF JAWAJA : SOS

Ashoke Chatterjee

The Artisan Alliance of Jawaja (AAJ, Ajmer Dist, Rajasthan) is seeking a low-interest / no-interest loan that can help release it from debt to a local moneylender and resume its position as a design and production source of handmade products that have won national and global recognition

AAJ stems from an experiment in self-reliance by and for the poor, initiated by the late Prof Ravi J Matthai (founder Director of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad). After stepping down from IIMA's leadership, Prof Matthai decided in 1975 to test whether corporate management disciplines could be related to gut issues of Indian poverty. He selected Jawaja block, then regarded by Rajasthan authorities as devoid of development opportunity. Believing that people were the greatest resource for development, Matthai began to work with village communities on issues of livelihood and empowerment in an environment that was (and still remains) among India's most degraded and oppressive. Volunteers from IIMA and the National Institute of Design (NID) joined with local citizens in the search for livelihood options that could be sustained in the face of social, environmental and political challenges. Languishing skills in weaving and leather work were selected in an effort to develop new opportunities for earning that could be outside the control of local vested interests while

remaining rooted in familiar and tested capacities

The Jawaja experiment thus began with Prof Ravi Matthai leading a small group of volunteers to what seemed a barren patch of land with little resources and even less hope. Forty years later, the Jawaja Leather Association and the Jawaja Weaver's Association, linked as AAJ, continue their struggle for self-reliance and dignity. They have come a long way. The leather workers and weavers have won a degree of economic independence. Their products are reputed in India and in many parts of the world. They now live in homes, not hovels. They now eat twice each day, not once as in 1975. Higher castes offer occasional respect. In these years, they have never had to pawn their possessions, migrate, or work on relief projects. Significantly, they have won access to the village well

Despite these achievements, AAJ is in crisis. Some of this has to do with the impact of the global slowdown on export markets as well those as at home. Even more, it has to do with a debt of about Rs8 lakhs to a local money-lender who is also the wool merchant at Beawar. It is he who provides raw material on credit (and steep interest) to the weavers. The crisis reflects several factors. One is the market slowdown. Another is the behavior of some weavers who in the downturn went in search of other earnings, leaving raw material debts unpaid and orders undelivered. A third is the

steep and accelerating rent demanded by the Government of Rajasthan from AAJ for the little piece of land leased to them for a common facility and storage centre on the outskirts of Beawar. Payments to Government have reached almost Rs6L, more than the value of the land when it was rented on lease to AAJ in 1997

Pressure from the money-lender is today threatening everything that has been achieved through over three decades of building capacities for self-reliance through the development, design, production and marketing of products which have won national and international recognition for quality. Artisan membership (including from the younger generation) cannot expand until debts are settled, and large orders cannot be fulfilled without expanded membership in this Catch-22 situation. For the past several months the artisans and their well-wishers have been seeking a low-interest / no-interest loan (not a gift or handout) that could enable them to repay Rs8L to the money-lender, settle other internal outstandings, and concentrate on putting together the management and marketing capacities and systems that are demanded of producers in this era of stringent competition and accelerating change. Like artisan groups all over the country, those in Jawaja are learning that there is little room for error in a globalised context that demands greater professionalism as the price for survival

It is strange that in an economy that provides lavish grants of land, tax-free incentives, loans and other carrots to "organized industry", a group of artisans (OBC and still below the poverty line) should be going from pillar to post in search of a loan (not a handout). This, after demonstrating the ability of the dispossessed for self-reliance within some of the most extreme conditions of our land as well as influencing some of the most important developments in civil society.

Innovators and institutions in every region of India acknowledge their learning from Jawaja

Although these months of effort at securing a loan have yet to succeed, interactions have indicated support systems for product and design development, capacity building for financial and group management, website development, and orders from home and overseas markets. The organizations that have offered to work with AAJ include IIMA, NID, Indian Institute of Craft and Design (IICD, Jaipur), Basix (Hyderabad), Pradan, the Rajasthan Mission on Livelihoods (RMOL, Jaipur), Crafts Council of India, the Industree and Mother Earth retail chains, Maiwa and others

Taking advantage of these opportunities however depends entirely on an immediate ability to repay past debts and move into a new chapter of better organization and improved market response

Earlier this year, AAJ was invited to Canada in October to share its experience in self-reliant craft development of over forty years. The invitation came from the respected Maiwa Foundation (Vancouver) that intended the Jawaja artisans to share their experience with craft communities and activists from all over the world. This was the first recognition of its kind to AAJ, and anticipation was high until their application for visas was rejected by Canadian authorities. Despite huge disappointment and regret in Jawaja and Vancouver, the artisans participated in the event through video-conferencing facilities extended to them by IIMA (symbolically, from the Ravi J Matthai Centre for Development). The strength of their presentation and spirit of confidence and hope have now won them fresh support, not just in Canada but from the international community that had gathered in Vancouver to hear the Jawaja story. This opportunity for exchange indicated that in a sense, the Artisans of Jawaja speak on behalf of their peers all over the world, justifying the faith that Ravi Matthai reposed in the ability of India's millions

MEET SHILP GURU

Giriraj Prasad

'My ambition is to see that every potter in India who creates such lovely things of utility gets to earn enough to live a decent life and I will work towards this goal'. Giriraj Prasad's answer to students' querying him on his life's ambition at the recently held 'Kumbham' exhibition in Chennai sums up this talented potter's philosophy.

Born in Alwar in Rajasthan in a Kumhakar's family, he trained under his father from childhood, making traditional terracotta pottery items of daily use such as pots, glasses, 'kulhars' etc. He perfected his skills in creating large pots

in the traditional style using local firing methods which produce a lovely smoky effect on red clay. This double firing effect has been developed by Shri Giriraj. He has trained many budding potters in this technique. Shri Giriraj Prasad has won the National Award for Excellence in pottery as well as numerous State awards. He has exhibited all over India and in Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, USA, UK, Holland and Australia.

Shri Giriraj Prasad was honoured with the Shilp Guru Award by the President of India in 2006

CRAFTBYTES

Yet another year goes by. A year of major upheaval on the economic front. Do we have any information/statistics on how the Indian handicraft sector fared?

Meanwhile, the Climate Summit in Copenhagen threw up some interesting facts and even more interesting situations.

<http://planetforward.ca/blog/green-gazette-issue-27-lessons-from-denmark-climate-summit/> is a blog that makes an interesting read.

A news filled site on the subject can be found in

<http://green.in.msn.com/copenhagensummit/archive.aspx>

The Craft Revival Trust quarterly hosted an article by Shri Ashoke Chatterjee on the sunrise or sunset of the Indian craft

<http://www.craftrevival.org/voiceDetails.asp?Code=106>

A random search threw up the website of Industree.

<http://industreecrafts.org/home.html>

The World Crafts Council hosts an 'indian' site

<http://www.worldcraftscouncil.org>

ACTIVITIES

The Crafts Council of India

- **Stone Project: Integrated Design & Technology Development Programme (June - December '09):** The conclusion and closure of CCI's 6 year Stone Tech project with stone craftspersons from across the country is now underway in Agra with a 6 month project involving 30 stone artisans. Divided into specialty groups for sizing stone, carving, preparing ' jaali ' polishing, etc, the artisans are in the process of preparing 40 prototypes which will be market tested at the Kamala Shop, Delhi
- **Textile and Jewellery Exhibition (7 - 8 August, 2009):** A brilliant two day exhibition of textiles, saris, fabric and jewellery brought the Chennai - cognoscenti in droves to the exhibition venue. The best of sari traditions such as Benarasi, Uppada, chikan, Patan Patola and many more were on view
- **Crafts Bazaar 2009 (18 - 27 September, 2009):** One hundred and fifty participants showcased quality handcrafts ranging from textiles to basketry, stone and metal ware, jewellery, embroidery, bronze and brassware at the Bazaar. All of Chennai visited and appreciated the quality and range of the crafts
- **EPCH's IGHF Autumn Fair (10 to 13 October 2009):** The Craft Council India was invited to the EPCH expo mart in Greater Noida held from 10 to 13 October 2009. The items which were selected from Kamala Delhi were textiles (Sujani wall hanging, kantha stoles, madhupanika dupatta, appliqué bed sheets, block printed dohars), natural fibre (block printed bamboo runners, mats), wood (coasters, boxes, burnt wood products like birds, flowers), stone (aroma candle bowls), painting (pattachitra, Madhubani) and papier mache (dustbins, baskets)
- **Kumbham (16-22 November, 2009):** The terracotta exhibition celebrated the work of 15 outstanding Indian potters, many of whom had participated in the terracotta exhibition held in Korea organized by the Korean government and InKo Centre. The products on display were superb in quality and concept and ranged from Ayannar horses to urns, pots, jewellery, ceramic dinner sets, masks and much else
- **Earthwise-Natural Dye Exhibition (23 - 29 November 2009):** The best of Korean and Indian natural dye fabrics and products came together in brilliant synergy at ' Earthwise ' organized by InKo and CCI with the support of the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The exhibits were exquisite
- **Cuba FIART Exhibition: (10-20 December 2009):** FIART, the annual craft fair for Latin American countries organized by the Cuban Govt. in Havana coincided with the WCC Board meeting. Five crafts: papier mache, leather craft, weaves from Bhuj, palm leaf craft from M.Rm.Rm. Cultural Foundation were exhibited at the fair with the craftspersons in attendance. The response to the crafts from India was fantastic and an enormous amount of awareness was generated

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF ANDHRA PRADESH

- Leather Workshop(1-15 December'09): Shri Rajesh Kumar, the designer engaged by CCAP for the workshop showed 25 new products to the craftspersons. He was able to communicate his ideas to the craftsman successfully and created "Light Thru Leather", a line of lights making use of their traditional skills in painting and perforation of leather. The products will be displayed at the National Meet scheduled to be held on 28 -29 January '09 at Hyderabad.
- Puttapaka Cluster: CCAP have now started the 2nd year programme for the cluster. A dye workshop for 20 weavers is being conducted from 16-26 Dec. under the guidance of master dyer, Shri Jalla Ramdas

DELHI CRAFTS COUNCIL

- Wax-resist Textiles Exhibition (July 2009 at Kamala Shop): This interesting exhibition of sarees and dupattas was created by young designers, Suchi and Pepe of " RARE ", with artisans from Shantiniketan. It was different from the usual batik from Bengal in terms of the colours, the designs and the lovely materials used
- Tableware Exhibition - Patram (September 2009 at Kamala Shop): In this exhibition of tableware, linen and accessories the focus was on a collection of terracotta created by Shri Giriraj, Shilpguru and Mastercraftsman. Other new designs using traditional skills were developed in copper, wood and natural fibres in diverse products like trays, table mats, bowls, etc

- Block Prints Exhibition (Mughal Garden, October 2009 at Kamala): An Exhibition of fine block prints by Rashid Bhai of Jaipur on quilts, bedcovers, table cloths and cushions was held to great acclaim

- Sarees - 2009 (October 2009): This fund raising exhibition has been extremely successful this year and had generated the highest sales so far. The "Sutrakar Samman" for 2009 was awarded to Smt. Jamini Payeng, a women weaver from the Mising Tribe of Majuli, District Jorhat, Assam

- Indira Gandhi Birth Anniversary Celebrations (November 2009): DCC and Kamala shop set up a stall displaying good quality crafts items for the Indira Gandhi Birth Anniversary Celebrations. The stall was visited by the country's top dignitaries including the President, the Prime Minister, and Smt Sonia Gandhi and drew appreciative comments from them. DCC also arranged a stall for four craftswomen on this occasion. They were Ambika Devi for Madhubani, Aringla for North East textiles / jewellery / black pottery, Sanju Devi for Sujani and Sunita Karan for papier machie

- " 1001 Cups " - Ceramic Exhibition (December 2009): The National Handicrafts and Handlooms Museum and Prohelvetia- (Swiss Arts Council) showcased a contemporary ceramics exhibition, " 1001 Cups " at the Crafts Museum. Curated by Swiss ceramist Claude Pisset, the exhibition featured the work of a thousand ceramists from around the world, including eleven from India. New Delhi was the first stop of this exhibition, after which it travels to China, Korea and parts of Europe

Along with the Exhibition, a three day interactive workshop was held at the Crafts Museum in which the Swiss potters

interacted with traditional as well as several well known studio potters from Delhi

Delhi Crafts Council organized a display of the experimental cups produced at this workshop. Alongside, DCC also put together and displayed a small collection of traditional pottery from private collections

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF KARNATAKA

- **Eco - Ganesha:** The Craft Council of Karnataka(CCK) in association with The National Referral Centre for Lead Poisoning in India (NRCLPI) and Regional Design & Technical Development Centre and other like- minded organizations has taken initiative in organising awareness programmes for the general public to worship only Eco- Ganesha idols during the Ganesha festival. The Eco -Ganesha is made of clay and is small in size for easy immersion. Only natural colours are used for painting the god and all lead based paints are avoided. CCK has created a lot of awarness amongst the general public and the potters by spreading the message of Eco- Ganesha.

The concept was taken by CCK and NRCLPI to Kolkata two years back which resulted in West Bengal turning to Eco Durgas during pooja

- The Integrated Design and Technical



Inauguration of 'Vastrabharana'

Development Project in Cane and Bamboo Craft at Kushalnagar, Coorg Dist., Karnataka(Aug 09-Feb10): The Integrated

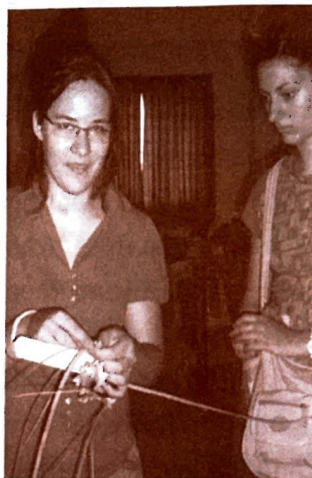
Design and Technical Development Project in Cane and Bamboo craft sanctioned by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), New Delhi, was inaugurated on 18 August. Fifty artisans are participating in the project.

- **Vastrabharana - 09 (30 Sep -5 Oct 09):** A very successful fund raising exhibition on textiles and jewellery titled "Vastrabharana - 09" was organised by CCK at Chitrakala Paishath, Bangalore.

- **Publication on Metal Craft of Karnataka :** Publication of book on Metal Craft of Karnataka is under progress and will be published during January 2010.

CRAFTS COUNCIL OF TAMIL NADU

- Mrs. Kamala Sivasubramaniam, CCTN



Olai Craft Workshop

member along with other committee members taught 35 students of Std VII, banana leaf folding in the Thai style, lotus flower folding in 2 different ways and palm leaf plaiting There was also a garland maker to demonstrate the art of simple garland making



Craft Training for Schoolchildren

- **Young for a United World Super Congress 2009 :** One of the working principles of the Super Congress

was to engage children as active participants in the craft workshops led by The Crafts Council of India. Live demos of olai, terracotta and glass blowing were held on 9 August. Flower tying, kolam and mehendi were also taught to the children

- Skill test for ID cards: Twenty six artisans working in olai, sheet metal and stone were identified by CCTN for their superb skills. All of them passed the test and were assured of their ID cards. In addition, CCTN also arranged for LIC and General Insurance cover for them

- Shrishti and Crafts Bazaar 2009: CCTN's fund raiser had 49 stalls with textiles, jewellery, baby clothes, bed linen, etc. CCTN also sponsored the Crafts Bazaar which was held from 18 - 23 September. A total of 38 craftspersons from all over the country took part in the fair. The amount got by way of sales was taken by the craftspeople

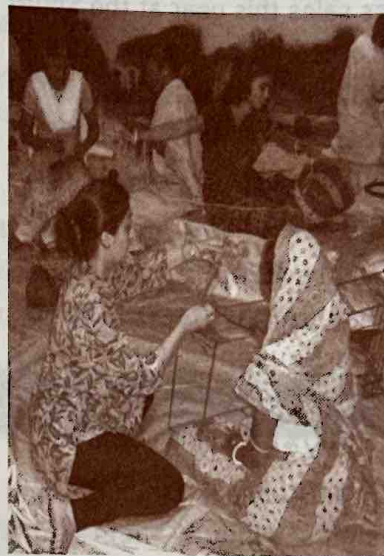
CRAFTS COUNCIL OF WEST BENGAL

- Wood & Bamboo Carving Training at Kasba: June 2009: Crafts Council of West Bengal, in association with Charuchetana held an 11- day workshop for teenagers from indigent families on split bamboo basketry and wood carving at the Modern Institute for Girls, Kasba. Six boys and two girls quickly learnt the art of mask-making with split bamboo and barks of trees in an amazing demonstration of deftness and innate skill.

These items will be displayed in an exhibition to be held at the Academy of Fine Arts and the proceeds will be given for welfare of such children from indigent families. Manideepa Pal, one of the trainees,

is so proficient in art that she has secured admission into the Government College of Art and Craft

- Integrated Design & Technical Development Workshop / Project in Natural Dyes & Development of Prototypes using Natural Dyed Fibres: An intensive workshop was held in Kolkata at the EZCC (Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre) venue for 3 months. Natural fibres like jute, sabaigrass, bamboo,



Fibre Craft Training Workshop

sisal and banana fibres were dyed using organic dyestuffs. This training was given by Jagada Rajappa to about 30 artisans of different crafts in the first 10 days.

Designer Payal Nath in the 2nd phase of the workshop created marketable designs after training new innovative methods to 50 craftspeople practising different crafts

SANTA FE FOLK ART MARKET , 2009

Manjari Nirula

Santa Fe Folk Art Market this year was held on July 11 & 12. Ms E. Rajeshwari and I represented the South Asia booth at the market. This year, inspite of the global economic downturn, the support by the Market organizers, the 1300 volunteers and the increased turnout of the crowd were most encouraging

I am happy to report that although we expected much less sales this year at the South Asia booth, we recorded an increase in sale of 12.5%. Our gross sale in 2008 was USD 13000 and in 2009 it was USD 14862. We brought less stock this year. We were advised to bring items which are lower priced

The products that sold well were: Bhutan's woven stoles (sold 35% of the stock), Maldives lathe turned wood souvenirs (sold 35%), Srilanka's lace scarves (sold 100%), Nepal's singing bowls (sold 100%), Sadhna's scarves

(sold 100%), Uttam Kumar's terracotta (sold 100%), M.M Design's window sheers and stoles (sold 100%), Mura Collective's stoles (sold 70%) and CCWB's Balaposh quilts and jamdani dupattas (sold 75%). These were the products which were winners

Paintings, cushions and stoles were some of the items taken from Kamala and I am happy to report that (85%) of them were sold

Abdul Jabbar Khatri, Mohd Yusuf, Ismail Khatri, Awaz Mohd and Firdaus Jan were also invited to the market. From the moment they reached Santa Fe to the moment they left, they were treated like VIP's. All four of them had wonderful sales. Abdul jabber Khatri has been conducting workshops in various parts of North America - some designers have been working with him. A CD has been made of his techniques and his scarves are selling really well in some exclusive shops. Mohd Yusuf sold most of his stocks and so did Awaz Mohd. Ismail Khatri was not as successful as his participation for this year was for the third time. Firdaus Jan also had sales of USD 20,000

The other success stories at Santa Fe are:- Mohd Yusuf whose bamboo scarves have been selling at the Market and the Museum shops and Sanju Devi's cushions and narratives in Sujani which have been a runaway success

Meera Thakur (Sikki grass), Jaiprakash (miniature painting), Kalaraksha (applique narratives), Uttam kumar (terracotta bowls), Nepal (singing bowls), Srilanka (lace scarves), Bangladesh (kantha scarves) are some of the products that have done well in the last few years. This list could go on and on.

SPONSOR A WEAVER - ALAMPUR VISIT

Meena Appnender

Like everyone else in the country Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh was stupefied by the scale and magnitude of the disaster that struck Kurnool and Mahboobnagar on October 2, 2009

Rather than try to understand and explain this calamity, we have tried to break this

monstrous situation into bits that we can handle and where we can help

We got in touch with the Collector of Mahboobnagar district and on her advice visited Alampur village. This village is on the banks of the Tungabhadra and was inundated by water for 5 days

On November 9, Chairperson Lalitha Prasad, Usha Sarvarayalu, N. Bhuvaneshwari, Gajam Goverdhana, Meena Appender and Advisor Shri Jayaramiah, Retd. Director Weavers Service Centre, visited Alampur along with the Assistant Director for the District Mr Nageswar Rao (AD). We first met with representatives of the weavers and then visited their homes which were badly damaged. Later we visited the weavers' colony

There are 31 weavers in this village, who have lost their looms in this calamity and thus their livelihood. Twenty of them belong to the co-op society and they weave towels for which Alampur is famous. All the 20 looms belonged to the society and were on loan to the weavers. These are frame looms and have a width of 36" and use treadles unlike the pit looms. In a day a couple (husband and wife) could weave about 10 towels for which they would be paid Rs 80. This they did as job work for the co-op Society, which took the responsibility of purchasing yarns, dyes and other chemicals. It would prepare the warping drum, which can hold the warp of upto 70 towels and supply a weaver with the warp. They also give them the basic yarn to get the hanks ready. The main buyer of these towels is APCO, who they claim is a good paymaster. They have no problem marketing their products

Eleven weavers had pit looms in their house. They weave Gadwal sarees for Master weavers based in Kurnool. They are not a part of the co-op society

These villagers have only been given Rs. 8,000/- from the revenue department

On speaking to them and visiting their houses it was decided that each of these 31 weavers would be given a loom of their choice, which would cost about Rs. 15,000/- Rs. 25,000/. A jacquard loom would be given

if they were already using one or knew how to use one. A month's requirement of yarn will also be given to them

It was decided against giving the co-op society the 20 looms, because it is assumed that eventually the insurance company will compensate for the loss or that the government will make good the loss. The looms will be given to directly to affected weavers

It is estimated that it will take 1 to 2 months for the looms to be made to order and delivered. In the meanwhile, it is hoped that these people will repair their homes and be ready to resume work

The weavers were also agreeable to our action plan and as a sign of our future relationship together we purchased most of their remaining stock to sell in our Kamala craft outlet

FOR THE FUTURE

Our Welfare fund has had a very good response with members and families donating generously. We have had business organizations contacting us to advise on the relief work. In Phase - 1, we have ordered the 31 looms for the weavers of Alampur, which will be delivered in the first week of January. Each weaver will be given a month's supply of yarn. In Phase -2, we are in the process of verifying the list of 300 Gadwal saree weavers in Nagaladinne, in Kurnool district where their houses and looms have been destroyed. We have collected the funds to replace the 300 looms. We are approaching the Government and business organizations to fund common work sheds where they will be able to start weaving immediately, since their houses will not be replaced in the near future. It is a long road to recovery for these weavers but Crafts Council of Andhra Pradesh has given them the hope that it is not impossible

INDONESIAN BATIK

The word batik is thought to be derived from the word 'ambatik' which translated means 'a cloth with little dots'. The suffix 'tik' means little dot, drop, point or to make dots. Batik may also originate from the Javanese word 'tritik' which describes a resist process for dyeing where the patterns are reserved on the textiles by tying and sewing areas prior to dying, similar to tie dye techniques. Another Javanese phrase for the mystical experience of making batik is "mbatik manah" which means "drawing a batik design on the heart"

Although experts disagree as to the precise origins of batik, samples of dye resistance patterns on cloth can be traced back 1,500 years ago to Egypt and the Middle East. Samples have also been found in Turkey, India, China, Japan and West Africa from past centuries. Although in these countries people were using the technique of dye resisting decoration, within the textile realm, none have developed batik to its present day art form as the highly developed intricate batik found on the island of Java in Indonesia

Although there is mention of 'fabrics highly decorated' in Dutch transcripts from the 17th century, most scholars believe that the intricate Javanese batik designs would only have been possible after the importation of finely woven imported cloth, which was first imported to Indonesia from India around the 1800s and afterwards from Europe beginning in 1815. Textile patterns can be seen on stone statues that are carved on the walls of ancient Javanese temples such as Prambanan (AD 800), however there is no conclusive evidence that the cloth is batik. It could possibly be a pattern that was produced with weaving

techniques and not dyeing eg. ikat. What is clear is that in the 19th century batik became highly developed and was well ingrained in Javanese cultural life

The early history between India and S.E. Asia is suffused with references to textiles. One of the early known civilizations in Java was *Taruma Negara* (5th century AD). *Taruma* means indigo (like tarum in Iban) while *Negara*, comes from the Sanskrit word *nagara*, city or a state. The fact that this important state was known as *Taruma*, for indigo, the blue dye used in batik trade cloths of India, indicates the importance of textiles in the socio-economic and cultural history of the people

It is curious how Indian trade cloth, which was considered magical and ritually powerful, managed to penetrate to most parts of the *nusantara* archipelago or the Malay archipelago

Some experts feel that batik was originally reserved as an art form for Javanese royalty. Certainly its royal nature was clear as certain patterns were reserved to be worn only by royalty from the Sultan's palace. Princesses and noblewomen may have provided the inspiration for the highly refined design sense evident in traditional patterns. It is highly unlikely though that they would be involved in any more than the first wax application. Most likely, the messy work of dyeing and subsequent waxings was left to court artisans who would work under their supervision

Javanese royalty were known to be great patrons of the arts and provided the support necessary to develop many art forms, such as silver ornamentation, *wayang kulit* (leather puppets) and *gamelan* orchestras. In some

cases the art forms overlap. The Javanese *dalang* (puppeteer) not only was responsible for the wayang puppets but was also an important source of batik patterns. Wayang puppets are usually made of goat skin, which is then perforated and painted to create the illusion of clothing on the puppet. Used puppets were often sold to eager ladies who used the puppets as guides for their batik patterns. They would blow charcoal through the holes that define the patterns of clothing on the puppets, in order to copy the intricate designs onto the cloth

Other scholars disagree that batik was only reserved as an art form for royalty, as they also feel its use was prevalent with the *rakyat*, the people. It was regarded an important part of a young ladies accomplishment that she be capable of handling a *canting* (the pen-like instrument used to apply wax to the cloth) with a reasonable amount of skill, certainly as important as cookery and other housewifery arts to Central Javanese women

Modern batik, although having strong ties to traditional batik, utilizes linear treatment of leaves, flowers and birds. These batiks tend to be more dependent on the dictates of the designer rather than the stiff guidelines that have guided traditional craftsmen. This is also apparent in the use of colour that modern designers use. Artisans are no longer dependent on traditional (natural) dyes, as chemical dyes can produce any color that they wish to achieve. Modern batik still utilizes *canting* and *cap* to create intricate designs. Traditionally, batik was sold in 2 1/4 metre lengths used for *kain panjang* or *sarong* in traditional dress

BATIK DESIGNS & COLOURS

Although there are thousands of different batik designs, particular designs have

traditionally been associated with traditional festivals and specific religious ceremonies. Previously, it was thought that certain cloth had mystical powers to ward off ill fortune, while other pieces could bring good luck

Certain batik designs are reserved for brides and bridegrooms as well as their families. Other designs are reserved for the Sultan and his family or their attendants. A person's rank could be determined by the pattern of the batik he / she wore

In general, there are two categories of batik design: geometric motifs (which tend to be the earlier designs) and free form designs, which are based on stylized patterns of natural forms or imitations of a woven texture. *Nitik* is the most famous design illustrating this effect

Certain areas are known for a predominance of certain designs. Central Javanese designs are influenced by traditional patterns and colours. (Some of the natural dyes used are in the appendix). Batik from the north coast of Java, near Pekalongan and Cirebon, have been greatly influenced by Chinese culture and effect brighter colours and more intricate flower and cloud designs

High fashion designs drawn on silk are very popular with wealthy Indonesians. These exceptionally high-quality pieces can take months to create and cost hundreds of dollars

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country where most people follow a moderate form of Sunni Islam. Some women wear headscarves, but often with the trendy Western-style clothing favoured by most women.

Indonesian fashion designers who emerged in the 1970s have been creating various designs through uniting traditional and Western designs in accordance with the cultural policy

of the country. Designs uniting traditional culture with Western culture symbolize Indonesia's hybrid cultural background which consists of various ethnic cultures. In the 1980s, with the development of the economy, Indonesian fashion design was presented globally. But since 1997, because of the Asian economic crisis and the collapse of Soeharto's administration, Indonesian designers have begun to present their designs to domestic consumers who have become aware and appreciative of the rich creative potential of this cultural fusion

MALAYSIAN BATIK

A short history and great creativity can serve as catchwords for the commercial production of batik in Malaysia. Covering scarcely 100 years, this history has been full of life and movement. We know that Malays on the East Coast of the peninsula experimented with textile prints without wax in the early 1900s. In the 1920s people in the same area started using a technique with screen prints for fast and cheap production of decorated textiles. Around 1920 the 'real' batik production started, stamping with wax directly on the fabric. (Arney 1987)

The Malays learned the techniques and adopted the patterns from the Javanese. Still today elements of patterns from the Javanese textiles are continued and developed, although Malaysian producers have partly liberated themselves from it and developed their craft in new directions. In particular, the hand-painted batik from the late 20th century is an innovation, a simplification of the Javanese hand-drawing. It makes for more individual freedom and creativity; an entire new design tradition has sprung up

Malaysian batik artisans are now using the 'textile painting' method rather than the

'textile dyeing' method more prevalent in Indonesia. The innovative challenge now is to be able to apply natural dyes direct onto the textile; and to make it colour-fast

A recent research project which I was involved in under the Yayasan Budi Penyayang Malaysia and funded by the Malaysian Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation was aimed at: reviving the use of natural dyes in batik using simple technology that can be easily applied by any artisan; discovering and developing the extraction of other new natural dye sources and packaging the natural dyestuff in dry dye powder ready to be marketed

NATURAL DYES

With the current trend of "Green Design", several Malaysian and Indonesian batik makers are also reviving the use of natural dyes in batik textiles. With the UN Declared Year of Natural Fibre 2009, there is a need for concerted efforts globally to promote the use and the knowledge of natural yarns and natural dyes in a sustainable way (natural fibres such as cotton, silk, ramie, abaca, pina, hemp and bark; and colours that are derived from plants, roots, flowers, fruits, stones, molluscs).

Batik makers need to be urgently educated that Azo dyes are toxic and may cause genetic mutations and that 1-Naphthylamine is absorbed through the skin and the respiratory and intestinal tract. It is toxic and carcinogenic

The common thread that links all of humanity must be the instinct for survival. But if we neglect to recognize, appreciate and respect the very environment that we live in, we are digging our own graves. Ecology has no boundaries; toxins don't stop for customs inspection and microbes don't carry passports! So why pollute with toxic dyes?

Modern challenges for the traditional craft sector - The response of the UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts

Vanessa Achilles, Culture Specialist, UNESCO Bangkok

Cultural industries have become the fastest growing industry in industrialized countries, and many countries in the Asia-Pacific region are now experiencing a comparable trend. Although the cultural flows mainly reflect the 1990's boom of multimedia, audiovisual, software and other copyright-based industries, the handicraft sector has played a major role in cultural diversity awareness-raising at the global level and community empowerment at the grassroots level. This growing importance of the handicraft industry is undeniably supported with the fact that, over the past few years, Asian design – in architecture, interior decorating and home furnishing design – has catapulted onto the global stage. The diverse array of quality and innovative Asian handicraft products, for instance, is becoming increasingly popular in the Western markets

The handicraft sector is ideally situated to respond to the increasing needs and demands from the international markets for quality products while at the same time promoting cultural heritage and creative expressions of local artisans / producers. Recognizing its significance and potential for economic regeneration can contribute to the socio-economic and sustainable development of Asian nations

But being an artisan is not easy nowadays. Having "magic fingers" is not enough to sustain a livelihood and preserve ancestral traditions. Artisans who wish to make a living from their crafts need more than ever to be able to cope with change and innovation to remain competitive

The new trading rules in a globalized environment bring both opportunities and challenges to which many artisans are struggling to adapt. Email and the internet allow artisans to maintain regular contact with customers or glimpse the latest fashion trends. Shipping across the world has become faster and more reliable for those who can handle complex logistical and customs procedures. On the other hand, competition has grown exponentially within the sector and from industrial or mass-produced items fulfilling similar functions. Khmer tie-dye silk competes not only with other Asian silk, but also with block-printed fabric and industrial textiles from all over the world. Cotton and wool are replaced by synthetic fibres. Natural fibres and wood baskets are up against plastic containers. The respect of intellectual property rights is also a challenge. The craft sector has never been shy to replicate its neighbours' most successful products

Within this context, UNESCO and its partners have developed a programme to encourage the craft sector to preserve cultural diversity and traditional skills and knowledge and promote high standards of quality and authenticity, while encouraging artisans to consider the relevance and function of their creations. The UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts (formerly known as the Seal of Excellence for Handicrafts) was established to support small crafts businesses and creative crafts people in the global market, encourage innovation and training, develop links between crafts and design and raise awareness on the importance of quality crafts

About the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts

The Seal of Excellence (SEAL) for Handicrafts in Southeast Asia was jointly established by UNESCO and the ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association (AHPADA) in 2000, in order to establish quality standards and to enhance international awareness of handicrafts from the 10 ASEAN countries. It became the "Award of Excellence for Handicrafts" in 2008

The Award serves as a quality-control mechanism and as a promotional support device that recognizes the quality of handmade, traditional and innovative craft products. The Award is therefore not awarding the most outstanding piece, but rather acknowledging handicraft products or product lines that meet high standards of quality and have been produced with careful regard to cultural authenticity and environmental conservation

Eligible for the programme are crafts made from natural raw materials and *'which are produced either completely by hand or with the help of tools as long as the direct manual contribution of the artisan remains the most substantial component of the finished product. These products can be utilitarian, aesthetic, artistic, creative, culturally attached, decorative, functional, traditional, religiously and socially symbolic and significant and must be replicable in unlimited number*

The programme is currently implemented in 27 countries in Asia from Korea to Iran, as well as in Latin America, the Caribbean and in West Africa

Objectives of the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts

The UNESCO Award of Excellence for Handicrafts aims to encourage artisans to produce handicrafts using traditional skills,

patterns and themes in an innovative way, in order to ensure the continuity and sustainability of a diversity of cultural traditions and skills. The programme has 4 main objectives

Objective 1: Establish rigorous standards of excellence for handicrafts

The Award promotes quality crafts that uphold rigorous standards of excellence. It aims to ensure that when consumers buy awarded handicrafts, they are buying high quality, culturally authentic products that have been manufactured in a socially-responsible manner with respect for the environment and sustainable use of natural resources

Objective 2: Encourage innovativeness

While it seeks to promote the continuation of traditional skills, the UNESCO Award also encourages a well-balanced level of innovation, either in the design, function, materials or technique. Markets are being saturated by low quality crafts. Innovation allows crafts to be differentiated from the bulk production and remain relevant, valuable, and marketable in modern life

Objective 3: Offer training and support services

The UNESCO programme facilitates capacity-building and training workshops to assist craft producers in the improvement of their product design and marketing, development of their markets, and protection of their intellectual property rights

Objective 4: Provide new opportunities to ensure sustainability of handicraft industries

The handicraft sector plays an increasingly significant role in local economic development, specifically at the grassroots level, and poverty

eradication. By presenting new market opportunities, such as participation in exhibitions and trade fairs, the programme assists artisans in bringing their products to light and identifying new potential targets

Assessing Handicrafts: the Criteria of the UNESCO Award

A product that is granted the Award of Excellence is distinguished as a benchmark for craft production. The selection process for the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts programme is rigorous. Every second year, a panel of international experts in craft production, design and marketing meets to evaluate the submissions

To be eligible and enter the evaluation, all submissions must first fulfill two pre-conditions

- *Respect for the environment in materials and production techniques*

Artisans must demonstrate that the selected materials and production processes are environmentally-friendly. For instance, the sustainable use of natural dyes, natural fibres or recycled materials is valued by the panel

- *Respect of social responsibility and copyrights*

The producers must affirm that no labour law or copyrights was violated and no individual or group exploited unfairly at any stage in the production of a submitted handicraft

The panel evaluates submissions based on meeting all of the following four criteria:

- *Excellence*

The use of high quality materials, a high standard of technique and the special attention to manufacturing and finishing details are all essential elements of standard-setting quality in craftsmanship

- *Authenticity*

For centuries, the success of the craft sector was based on transmission of skills and savoir-faire from generation to generation, with often very strict codes governing designs and techniques. Traditional crafts clearly reflect this cultural heritage. Besides, the Award acknowledges all sources of inspiration rooted in local aesthetics, cultural expressions and cultural identity

- *Innovation*

In a consumer-driven society, some innovation in design and production may be necessary to sustain interest for crafts. An effective and successful blend of traditional and contemporary, or inventive and creative use of material, design, and production processes will make a difference without obliterating the authenticity of the product

- *Marketability*

Crafts must demonstrate that they have the ability to appeal to regional and / or international markets. The functionality of the product, security features, a balanced price-quality relationship or the sustainability of production will make the difference between an artistic creation and a commercially viable product

Beyond the Award: Practical Support to the Craft Sector

Awarded crafts benefit from a number of initiatives, including promotional materials and opportunities to exhibit in international craft fairs and exhibitions. Malaysian designer Edric Ong describes with enthusiasm his experience at the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market (USA), where he had a chance to display and sell awarded Pua Kumbu, batik cloth from Sarawak, Malaysia at the UNESCO Award booth

Winners can also benefit from a range of capacity-building that helps artisans assess the quality of their products and develop a critical eye to improve their craft production. The workshops' curriculum emphasizes the importance of quality control and culture-based product development - in effect, learning how to derive inspiration from their cultural environment

Such a workshop targeting specifically basket-makers was organized by AHPADA and UNESCO in November 2009 at the Ayutthaya Museum for Design and Development, in Ayutthaya, Thailand. Twenty participants from 7 South-east Asian countries met for 4 days to learn, exchange and create. Lectures from design and marketing experts were enriched by practical sessions where multicultural groups designed and developed basketry items. The groups got inspiration from their surroundings and their cultural references. This process was a first step to understand the criterion of 'authenticity'. It sparked interesting exchanges among the participants from

different cultural backgrounds. Besides, one of the products created by a Thai-Vietnamese group was named "Meeting Point", illustrating the fusion of cultural influences, materials, and techniques. The participants also used the 4 criteria of the Award programme to evaluate their creations and identify how the products could be improved. Back home, they will be able to use these same criteria for their own quality control as well as to develop stronger sales arguments for their customers

Setting Standards to Sustain Craft Development

Through the Award of Excellence for Handicrafts, UNESCO reveals the potential of high-quality handicrafts and its contribution to development. By setting high standards, this industry can carve a growing niche in a highly competitive market while gaining the trust of informed customers. Besides, it demonstrates that there is no need to compromise between market potential and authenticity, and that commercial crafts can efficiently contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage

SELLING A BASKET

Dominique Bouchart

Buying a basket looks like something very simple. It is indeed, when the purpose is rational:- My shopping basket is too old - I need a new one-I go to a specialty shop and I buy a replacement. However, in reality, it is not like that:- I do not need a new basket,-I am walking in a market or a shopping centre-my attention is attracted by something in the display, and, may be, I buy. If the basket makers were relying only on the people who really need a basket, they would not have much work. The non rational aspect of the decision to buy is becoming more and more

important. If we think more about this non rational decision, we can organise to facilitate the sale, and we will sell more.

If we look at a normal display of baskets, it is not usually very attractive. We know we do not need it and would probably feel guilty to buy something completely useless. We do not want to make the effort to imagine how it could be used. The seller has to provide a justification and facilitate the decision to buy. We have to present the basket as a " live basket ", that is with a scenario which allows

us to integrate it into our life. Some examples:- If it is presented with a toy inside, we think of the children room, with a sweater we think of the bedroom, with knitting equipment, we think of the living room, with a fruit or vegetable, we think of the kitchen, and even, more precisely, with grapes, with asparagus, with mushrooms, we think that this special basket, after all, could be useful. Of course, when there is bread, cakes, nuts, it seems obvious. Why not imagine this special basket in the bathroom for soap, cotton buds, shaving equipment, and many other things

These suggested uses of baskets to facilitate the sale, will be all the more attractive if it is integrated in the present lifestyle evolution. For instance a very successful new line of baskets is intended for the home office. As more and more people are working at home, they have now the choice of what they want on their desk, and forget about the usual plastic equipment. Therefore designers have been working on a coherent group of high quality products (and high price) for this purpose: vertical and horizontal boxes for the pens, square boxes for the post-it, round boxes for the erasers, staples, large horizontal boxes for white paper, large vertical boxes for

filing, and of course, the waste paper box which is an enormous neglected market and needs a lot of design care

The very practical decision to buy a basket in our sophisticated societies is, whether we like it or not, based on a dream. We imagine ourselves surrounded by beautiful natural objects and living in harmony with them. This fits the present trend of connecting handcrafts with fashion. This is most remarkable concerning the colours. We are less and less surprised to see that the baskets which sell most are those with the fashionable colours planned and launched by the clothing industry. This industry is also very near to crafts, and specially with the accessories which are more and more using the basketry techniques and work closely with the jewellery designers to create trendy bracelets, necklaces, earrings

Finally, we focused on one small aspect of selling a basket, the presentation. All the other aspects are essential: the display, using or not the principle of accumulation cherished by the conceptual artists, the design, the technique of manufacturing, the choice of the raw material. It is not that simple to sell a basket

FUTURE PROGRAMMES

Participation in Bahrain	24 - 30 January 2010	Bahrain
National Meet	28 - 29 January 2010	Hyderabad
Textile & Jewellery Show	5 - 6 March 2010	Hotel Sheraton Chola, Chennai
Santa Fe International	July 2010	Santa Fe, New Mexico

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Membership

The Crafts Council of India membership is open to all persons above 18 years of age residing in India. CCI members not residing in Chennai are required to become a member of the local council if it exists. If not, they have to become members of the Council as and when one is formed in that State.

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