



CHITRALA

In Prokaram District, highest concentration of looms in the state. Famous for Tella rural, a square fabric with a tie and dye pattern enclosed within numerous squares with a variety of designs, mostly geometric patterns. A big leading loom also runs for the 'Rani Madras' Handkerchief exported to the West. Made in villages in and around Vetapalem and Jalandrapeta. Bright colours suit the African market. Exclusive Jacquard loom fabrics also made here.

SUDDIPET

100 km from Hyderabad, in Medak District has sarees woven in 80 to 100 counts with elaborate extra weft pallav woven in thicker counts of cotton. Similar to the Annapur sarees. Has figure of Gollaboina, miller, and Radhakrishna with motifs in both the border and pallav. Mostly white body. Skilled weavers make sarees, dhooties, towels, home furnishings.

UPPADA

Of East Godavari district is famous for its Jamdani sarees. A traditional saree made in Dhaka technique where each zari motif is individually set into the body of the saree by hand. 100 and 120 counts fine cotton. Traditionally 900 counts yarn was used. Sold in Andhra and Bengal.

LOCAL SAREES

Mostly shorter sarees of 42 inches suitable for farm work. **MUNICODU** woven in Mangalagiri village, between Nalgonda and Chittoor. Women of the shepherd community wear it as a saree and men as headgear or turban. Available in Campa Jamana Design (with different coloured borders on each side). Small border, made on a shuttle loom and with a very small pallav. Common in 40 counts yarn. **SUDDIPET** white body with small borders for rural women of Medak and surrounding districts. **BANDAR** is produced in Machilipatnam and sold all over the state. Cotton body and silk borders. In dark and light colours in 60-80/100 counts. **DHUPEDA** a small village in Medak District weavers in 80 counts. Also makes (Kerchiefs) for washermen. **MACHERA** village near Giddalur has sarees in 60 counts. Traditional border with arabesque designs in extra weft. Good quality, small quantities. **NEERUGATTIVARAPALI** 70s pure silk for both wrap & weft. Produced in Tirupathi area of Chittoor district. 65" wide. **CHITRALA** has cotton zari sarees in 100 counts. Pure zari is used in the border on one side only. Woven in dark colours for daily use.

VARDAGI

Simple cotton with natural effect of Guntur variegation known as Vardagi. District Ponnur (bordered by Chittoor, Guntur, Rajamahendravaram, and Nellore) is famous for Vardagi. It is a traditional saree of Nellore district. A typical saree with Rajamahendravaram variegation. It is a traditional saree of Nellore district. It is a traditional saree of Nellore district.

REDSAREES

Common in Karimnagar, Guntur, Karimnagar districts. It is a traditional saree of Karimnagar district. It is a traditional saree of Karimnagar district. It is a traditional saree of Karimnagar district.

CHANDERT

Sarees in silk and cotton produced in Rajamahendravaram. **MAHABAVASAM** in Giddalur district sarees in 100 count. Zari in the border. Design influenced by Venkatesh.

JANGAON or semi Giddalur sarees are produced mainly in Jangaon area of Warangal district with single tie and dye technique for border and pallav. Also produced in marooned cotton with zari in border and pallav as a less expensive copy of the popular Giddalur sarees. **PAVAKARAPET** cotton batta sarees are woven with different types of cotton and art silk motifs in body, border and pallav in 100 counts.

DHOTIS

Dhoti, produced in most districts in 4 to 7 metres length and 1 metre width. Best from Ponnur, in Siddaboina in khadi with Peta border (interlocking technique with zari). Bleached after being woven. Garments dhootis with ribbon borders in different colours in cotton. Lightly woven. Mostly in East Godavari district makes grey dhootis in 80 and 100 counts. Pandalapakas dhootis of the same district and Palakala in West Godavari district have art silk Peta borders. Bhollipalle, Kanagala and Ilavaram in Guntur District weave dhootis in 60 & 100 counts. Narayanapuram and Puttur in Chittoor district weave with zari.

Mentioned cotton dhootis of Jangaon in Warangal district and those of Giddalur district are popular. Siddipet, Hazarabad and Yemmiganur dhootis available everywhere.

TOWELS, KERCHIEFS, NAPPINS

Ordinary towels made by most local weavers. Designed towels at Alampur in Mahabubnagar district. Also produced in Karimnagar, Yemmiganur Society in Karimnagar, Warangal, East Godavari, Siddipet, Medak and Karwan Society of Hyderabad. Bleached towels of Puttur in Chittoor district, Jogpet and Pinnampet in Guntur district are also famous. Handkerchiefs produced in Rajamahendravaram, Guntur, Palakala, Giddalur, Chittoor District, Nappins in Karimnagar and Rajamahendravaram.

The Andhra Pradesh Handloom Co-operative Societies sell a variety of handlooms - through a 1972 showroom run by the state government.

WOOLLEN BLANKETS

Locally called Kamli. Kamli, Gampali. In Telangana they say if you have a kamli ya need fear nothing. Made from the coarse, short-stapled wool of local sheep by Karmis, a subcaste of the Galla community of shopkeepers. Loose weave but very strong. Multipurpose uses for rural people in winter. Inexpensive. Found in Mahabubnagar and mainly in Jogpet in Medak District. Available in natural shades of grey, brown, dark brown, black, white.

ANGAVASTIRA

Worn over the shoulder, 4 metres long and 1.30 metres wide. Matches the dhoti. Pure silk angavastira is woven in Dharmavaram of Anantapur District. Pandura's Kappalana angavastira is of fine cotton khadi. Also made in Rajamahendravaram. Zari and art silk in red and blue borders, mostly in 40 counts. Plain made in Bhollipalle, Kanagala and Ilavaram in Guntur District.

LUNGIS

More in Southern Andhra districts. Ethimadikala colour check lungis of Palakuram district, 60-80 counts, good texture. Gunguram colour check lungis of Chittoor are well known. Also woven in Yemmiganur and Puttur in Chittoor district. Chengari lungies popular, and produce in Karimnagar, Warangal, Chittoor, Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar and Rajamahendravaram districts.

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DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

THE twenty-first century has brought with it accelerated change in every sphere of life, dependency on machines and excessive consumption of natural resources in a manner that is no longer sustainable. In the past the crafts sector had been rejected by many as an unviable economic activity for the twenty-first century.

Artisans still make up twenty million of India's working population. Therefore this sector has to be developed in such a way so as to offer sustainable employment to millions of skilled artisans. Crafts producers cannot be economically viable unless their product is marketable. The product can only be marketable if it is attractive to the consumer, i.e., if the traditional skill is adapted and designed to suit contemporary consumer tastes and needs. Design does not mean making pretty patterns—it lies in matching a technique with a function.

In the field of traditional craft these two aspects of design and development are not always synonymous; design can lead to development, and development should be designed. However in the field of design and development a conflict may arise between function and responsibility. Whose creativity will be expressed—the developer's, the designer's or the craftsperson's? Who is the client—the consumer, who wants an unusual and exciting product at the most competitive price; or the crafts community who needs a market for its products as similar to the traditional one as possible, so that it does not need constant alien design interventions, or is at conflict with the social, aesthetic and cultural roots from which it has grown?

The crafts community has several priorities such as food, clothing, shelter, education, health and economic stability. The craft development sector needs to be sensitive to these



very real concerns of the crafts community.

Therefore, craftspeople must be involved in every aspect of design and production and understand the usage of the product they are making. Voluntary agencies or designers must also understand and study the craft, the product and the market they are trying to enter.

CHANGING PROFILE OF THE CRAFTSPERSON

In Ancient India, every individual had an implicitly defined role in society, ordained by birth. Craftsmanship was a heritage that evolved over centuries of arduous apprenticeship in *chhandomaya* (the rules of rhythm, balance, proportion, harmony and skill), controlled and protected by the structure and laws of the guild. In the guild the master craftsman, the raw apprentice and the skilled but uninspired jobsman all had a place and purpose. Today's craftsperson has to be all things in one, including his/her own entrepreneur.

The craftsperson had the status of an artist. As a member of a society with strict rules and hierarchies, both within the guild and the outside world, the community and its products were protected, and the quality was controlled. Patrons were well known to the artists, customers were close at hand, their lifestyles not too markedly different from the artists'. Whether the craftsperson's skills provided simple village wares or jewelled artefacts for the temple or sultan, it was a supportive inter-dependency based on a mutual need, understanding and appreciation.

The craftsperson was his/her own designer and the embellishments came only after the shape was perfected to the function. The aesthetic and the practical blended in a natural rather than artificially imposed harmony.

WHY DESIGN INPUTS ARE NEEDED

Today most craftspeople practising traditional skills are vying with machines, competitive markets, mass-produced objects or consumers' craze for foreign fashions, and are no longer protected by guilds or the enlightened, hands-on patronage of courts or religious institutions. Crafts



communities are increasingly faced with the problems of diminishing orders and the debasement of their craft.

Crafts communities are making products for lifestyles remote from their own, and selling them in alien and highly competitive markets. Their own lives and tastes have suffered major transformations alienating them further from their skills and products. A traditional *jooti*-maker may still embroider golden peacocks on a pair of shoes, but he himself will probably be wearing pink plastic sandals! Consequently, craft has degenerated today. For instance, the metal *diya*, a traditional ritual object of worship has been turned into an ash tray that sells on the pavement for just ten rupees.

DESIGN INPUTS: FROM INSIDE OR OUTSIDE?

Do craftspeople with centuries of a skilled tradition need outside interventions? In the past no deterioration of crafts has been caused by interventions, however well intentioned, from the outside, from agencies outside the crafts community.

However, tradition must be a springboard not a cage.



Craft, if it is to be utility-based and economically viable, cannot be static. Crafts have always responded to market changes, consumer needs, fashion and usage. Today with the distance growing between the producer and the consumer, craft cannot respond to change with the same vitality that existed in the past. It then becomes the role of the designer and product developer to sensitively interpret these changes to craftspeople who are physically removed from their new marketplaces and new clients.

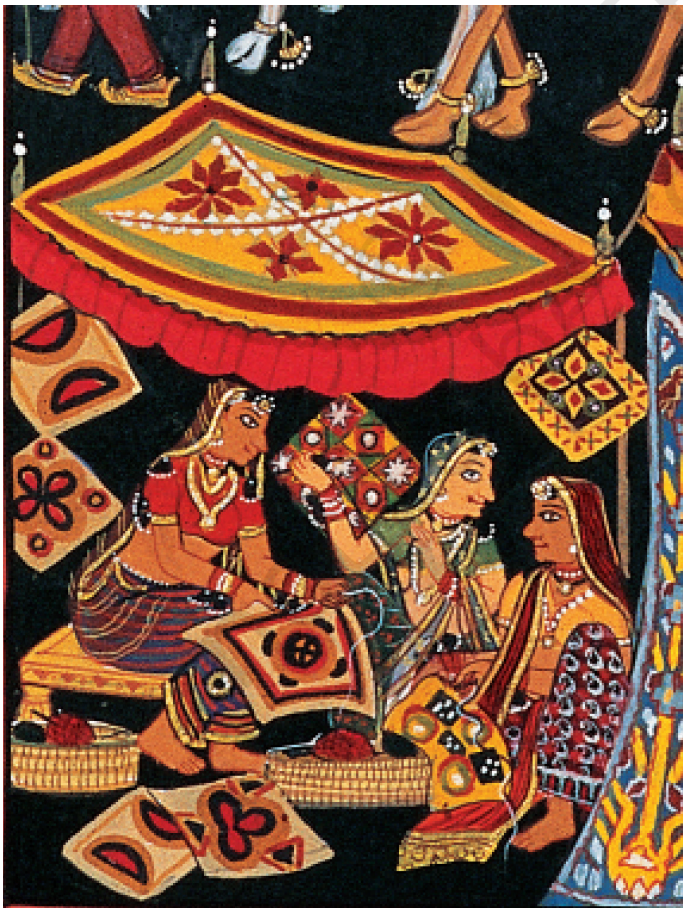
There are professionals with formal art, design and marketing education who have the technical expertise and tools to assist crafts communities in the process of design, innovation, understanding foreign or urban markets and contemporary marketing practices that can protect the interest of the artisans. Working with craftspeople, the design consultant has to dampen his/her own creative flame in order to light the craftsperson's fire. He/she can provide

a sample design range to inspire craftspeople to do their own further innovation, not just force the artisan into passive replication. The crafts community must be at the centre of the crafts development process and at every step craftspeople must be taught to use their minds and imagination as well as their hands.

A Fridge That Uses No Electricity

Mansukhbhai Prajapati, a potter living in Wankaner, Gujarat, has invented a refrigerator called 'Mitticool'. Here is how he made it: Mansukhbhai mixed several kinds of mud in a churner. Once the mud was mixed, the slush was filtered and then made to dry. Then the raw material i.e. chunks of dried clay were simply modelled in a vertical shape and baked in the furnace.

The upper part of the 'Mitticool' can store about 20 litres of water, while the bottom cabinet has a separate space for storing fruits, vegetables and milk. This brown fridge has an inlet for water,



which is circulated through internal piping that keeps the temperature cool. This keeps vegetable and fruit fresh for around five days, while milk can be preserved for three days. His invention is unique, inexpensive and emits no Chloro Fluoro Carbon (CFC)!

– *Young INTACH*, Vol. 6., No. 3,
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There is a need to see product design and marketing as the catalyst and entry point for integrated development in the crafts sector. There is a growing demand for these services from craftspeople all over the country, who wish to learn more about their new clients and customers, of new trends so that they can play a significant role in contemporary life.

Many well-meaning, income-generating projects by the government and NGOs suffer because they have not taken into account the need for design and development of crafts products and the well being of the community in a holistic and integrated manner.



CRAFTS AND INCOME GENERATION SCHEMES

Many government and non-governmental agencies have discovered that traditional crafts can be a vehicle for income generation. Such schemes have not always been accompanied by sensitivity to the needs of the craftsman, consumer, or an analysis of the market.

As the tourist and export demand for Indian crafts have grown, middlemen and traders, many of them exploitative, have begun craft production and sale. This has resulted in the loss and disappearance of many of the more intricate and unusual art forms and skills. Traders and middlemen demand quick production of cheap objects so that their margins of profit are large without regard for how this may affect the craft tradition and the community.

A Tussar Story

Good ideas and good intentions alone are not enough to ensure the desired results. Some years ago a funding agency commissioned a talented young designer to do a design project for an NGO working with tussar weavers. She developed a stunning range of high-fashion Western garments which were showcased at a high-profile exhibition in Delhi.

But the producer group—tribal women who were part of

The Ashram women continued to participate in *melas* and bazaars trying to discount-sale the stock piles of unsold samples, all now out-of-date, crumpled and shop-soiled, and finally the programme folded up altogether.

Techniques, skills, motifs and usages distinctive to particular communities or areas have been merged in the production of new items today. Each region of India once had its unique and authentic design whether in the textiles or the pottery it produced. In order to create products for an international market, traders often force crafts communities to amalgamate designs that are known to be popular in another state and region. Patchwork and Ikat have been introduced into places where the skill never existed.

India produced a wide range of utilitarian crafts for everyday use in the home. This sector has also suffered as artisans are forced to produce more eye-catching, a Gandhinagar Ashram in rural Bihar were unable to fulfil the orders as they didn't have the requisite tailoring skills and the whole investment of over four lakh rupees turned into a disaster. ornamental products for customers outside their own community.

The opposite is also true. Inexpensive skirts and dresses sold on the streets and at *melas* under the generic brand name of 'mirror-work' and 'Kutchi bharat' bear little relation to the extraordinary embroideries various Kutchi communities make for themselves, or their potential customers. This is not just aesthetic disaster, but bad economics as well. Thousands of women with high-level skills and earning power are reduced to breaking stones for a living, while the antique pieces their grandmothers made sell in city boutiques for a fortune.



At a Crafts Council of India seminar on crafts in 1991, Reema Nanavaty recalled the inception of SEWA's project in drought-ridden Banaskantha: "But even before water, the major problem of the women was work. Whenever you talk to the women, the first thing they ask about is work. Everything else is secondary." Today the old embroideries they were selling off their backs are the design inspiration for contemporary garments that earn the craftswomen incomes of ₹1000 to ₹1200 a month.



People often ask why Indian craftspeople don't make the same beautiful things they used to? The reason for this is craftspeople cannot afford to keep and preserve samples and so have never seen what their forefathers used to make. Study, documentation and research of the crafts, the creation of Design Centres, the development of a craft data bank are what are needed for craftspeople to delve into their past to draw inspiration for the future. The motifs and usage of a craft tradition cannot and should not remain static. But changing them requires knowledge, sensitivity and care. The NID students' documentation of crafts programmes and the documentation exercises of this course can be an invaluable reference source. An essential requirement for craft development is that motifs, designs and techniques be documented and are accessible.

What the artisans have is only in their minds and fingertips. If an artisan gets a large order to paint Mickey Mouse on hundreds of papier-mâché boxes instead of a Mughal rose, eventually the memory of the rose will fade away. A craftsperson does not have the confidence to say 'no' to a trader or middleman. He desperately needs the order because the livelihood of his family depends on it.

Therefore, the role and responsibility of the NGO or craft developer should be to enable crafts communities to study their own heritage—to access museum collections and reference books and sensitively interpret to the



craftsperson his own tradition. This is our responsibility.

Project in Madhubani

Mithila in North Bihar—one of the poorest, most backward parts of India—is an example of changing the function, changing the design, and finding an appropriate though radically different usage for a traditional craft through the process of documenting its motif tradition of Madhubani painting.

Discovered in the 1960s, the votive paintings of Mithila were transferred from village walls to handmade paper, and became an instant success. The paintings rapidly became popular in contemporary urban Indian homes. Village women of all levels of skill and artistry were persuaded by eager traders and exporters to abandon farming and to take up the painting brush and mass-produce Madhubani paintings on paper.

Inevitably there was a surfeit, and the market was flooded with Madhubani paintings of every size and colour. By the 1980s, twenty years later, Madhubani painting as a marketable commodity was dead. Women painters who had tasted economic independence through the sale of their paper



paintings, did not know what to do. New ways of tapping this creative source needed to be found. The decorative motifs, the floral borders, the peacocks and parrots, the interlocking stars and circles that embellished their artwork provided a rich directory of design motifs and decorative elements that could be used on products of daily usage and wear. They painted on sarees, *dupattas*, soft furnishings, and tried to support their craft in imaginative ways.

– PUPUL JAYAKAR
The Earthen Drum

PURPOSE OF CRAFTS DEVELOPMENT

The ultimate objective is the all-round development and self-sufficiency of the crafts person.

- The development process must be matched with the existing skill levels of the target crafts group.
- The designer must work with one or more master crafts persons to ensure quality of production.
- Successive sampling workshops over the years must be organised to gradually upgrade skills and design sensibilities in the community.

In the Craft Centre project in Ranthambhore, Rajasthan (see page 112), the women who

started working were almost unskilled—their hands more used to wielding the scythe than the needle. The first patchwork products were made up of vivid and unusual combinations of colours and prints that disguised the crudity of stitchery and simplicity of design. These simple products sold well and gradually the women have been trained to improve their skills, create finer work and develop new products.

NID Problem-solving Method

A community of weavers in South India experienced great suffering when their traditional skills had to compete with mill-made mass-produced textiles. Additional problems arose

because their equipment and technology was dependent on outdoor spaces. This meant that the weavers were idle during the long season of monsoon rain.

The design solutions identified for this community was one of product diversification to reach new markets, the revival of traditional design in new applications. Secondly, they had to redesign tools, implements, workplaces and production techniques so as to move the looms for weaving indoors and thus facilitate year-round activity.

