

Impediments countenanced by Lucknow *Chikankari* artisans

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■ **ABSTRACT** : The Indian handicraft sector forms a major part of the rich cultural heritage of the country. Lucknow has carved out a name for itself in the field of chikankari craft. The number of chikankari artisans in Lucknow runs in thousands, yet the sector remains unorganised with no medical insurance, social and financial security. The chikankari artisans, especially those working for private enterprises, faced many difficulties regarding lack of skill up-gradation and direct marketing of the products. So, the prime objective of the study was to investigate the problems countenanced by chikankari artisans. A self-structured interview schedule was administered to a sample of 300 artisans who were randomly selected from the five blocks of the Lucknow district. Low wages as per intricacy and skill of work (66.00%), irregular payment (54.66%) were the major financial issues of the artisans, besides facing work related health problems like backache (36.33%), cervical spondylosis (4.66%) and eye strain (41.00%). No artisans got the medical benefits from any of the organizations/enterprises. They were vulnerable to exploitation due to poor marketing intelligence (29.00%), and irregular orders (10.67%). Inadequate transportation facility (39.32%), poor road infrastructure (81.00%), and poor electric supply (78.00%) led to wastage of time and low productivity. For the upliftment of artisans, government needs to develop more clusters, organise trainings and workshops for skill development and enhancing marketing. There is utmost need to address to these problems.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Embroidery, *Chikankari*, Artisans, Problems experienced

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A variety of Indian embroidery styles have developed regionally with a distinct identity of their own. Consequently, many popular embroidery clusters exist, such as *Kantha* of Bengal, *Phulkari* of Punjab, *Kutch* embroidery of Gujarat, *Kashida* of Kashmir, *Kasuti* of Karnataka, etc. Each technique of embroidery is different from the other and has its own beauty and significant value. Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh is also known for *Chikankari* craft all

over the world.

The *Chikankari* artisans play an important role in the equation of the Indian society and culture. Fingers of artisans roughened due to the hardship of life turn every article into the master piece of subdued sophisticated appeal (Dash, 2011). Thousands of artisans work under this cluster, but even then problems of adequate facilities and financial gain as per the skill level and time involvement were being faced by them

(Anonymous, 2011). Keeping all these issues in focus, the study was conducted to investigate the problems of the *Chikankari* artisans of Lucknow and to suggest suitable measures for the upliftment of the *Chikankari* artisans.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

A self-structured interview schedule was administered to a sample of 300 artisans who were selected from GOs, NGOs and PEs of Lucknow district. Five blocks namely, Bakshi Ka Talab, Kakori, Mal, Malihabad and Sarojani Nagar were randomly selected. Further three villages were randomly selected from each of the five blocks. The details of the selected artisans have been mentioned in Fig. A. Percentages and chi-square test were used to analyse the data.

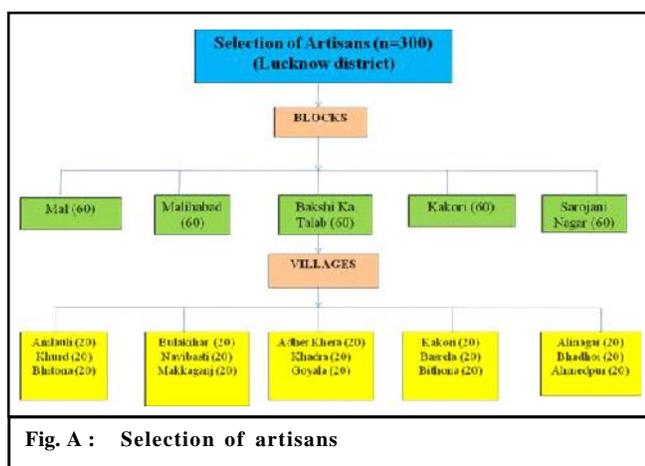


Fig. A : Selection of artisans

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads :

Socio-personal profile of *Chikankari* artisans :

The socio-personal factors are major determinants of the socio-personal status. The population of artisans is a major contributor to the work output in *Chikankari* craft. The socio-personal status like age, religion, caste, education, etc. of *Chikankari* artisans have been presented in Table 1.

Majority of the artisans were females in GOs (95.00%), NGOs (97.05%) and PEs (91.66%), whereas 5.00 per cent artisans in GOs, 2.05 per cent in NGOs and 16.66 per cent of them in PEs were males. Thus, *Chikankari* craft was mainly practiced by women as commercial endeavour. Srinivasan (1989) had reported

that thousands of female *Chikankari* artisans were working in different parts of Lucknow district mainly, in Kakori, Khadra, Bhram Nagar and Sarojani Nagar, etc.

Out of total sample of 300 respondents, maximum percentage of artisans (75.34%) belonged to age group of 18 to 38 years. Desire for financial improvement might have been the reason for practicing the craft. Few percentage of artisans, *i.e.* 15.66 per cent, were between 38 to 48 years of age. Least percentage of artisans (4.66%) were below the age of 18 years.

Only 4.34 per cent artisans were above 48 years of age. With the growing age, they were either forced to discontinue the embroidery work altogether owing to failing eyesight and other health problems, or restrict themselves in quality as well as quantity of work. That explains the lesser number of embroiderers in this age group. Arya (2002) has found that older artisans preferred working at home rather than going to centers.

Out of 300 respondents, majority of artisans (74.34%) were Muslims, while 25.66 per cent artisans were Hindus. Thus, the ratio of Muslim vs Hindu artisans was 3:1. According to Mathur (1975) the data on caste and religion of the embroidery workforce were sparse, but the widespread assumption is that embroiderers in Lucknow are overwhelmingly muslim (Mathur, 1975 and Dhamije, 1964).

Maximum percentage of artisans, *i.e.* 75.00 per cent in each of GOs and NGOs, and 68.34 per cent in PEs, were in OBC category, whereas 23.80 per cent, 20.50 per cent and 20.00 per cent were in SC/ST category in GOs, NGOs and PEs, respectively. Very few artisans in PEs (11.66%) and NGOs (4.54%) were in general category. Thus, this craft is dominated by women in OBC/SC/ST categories.

Education plays a very crucial role in the social and economic development of rural artisans. An analysis of the educational status of the artisans revealed that maximum percentage of artisans (68.34%) had passed primary and secondary level and the next considerable percentage of artisans (27.00%) was illiterate. A small percentage of artisans in GOs (15.29%) and NGOs (3.03%) had passed high-school. Only 1.01 per cent artisans in NGOs possessed graduation degree. Most families gave preferences to the education of male child because the education of a male member is seen as an asset to one's own family in terms of better employment opportunities and financial security. Unfortunately, the

Table 1 : Socio-personal profile of the *Chikankari* artisans working under GOs, NGOs and PEs (n=300)

Socio-personal profile	GOs	NGOs	PEs	Total
	(n ₁ =40)	(n ₂ =200)	(n ₃ =60)	n ₁ + n ₂ + n ₃ =300
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
Gender				
Male	2 (5.00)	5 (2.05)	5 (16.66)	12 (4.00)
Female	38 (95.00)	195 (97.05)	55 (91.66)	288 (96.00)
Age (years)				
Below 18	-	5 (2.50)	9 (15.66)	14 (4.66)
18-28	13 (32.50)	48 (24.23)	13 (21.66)	75 (25.00)
28-38	20 (50.00)	105 (52.50)	26 (43.34)	151 (50.34)
38-48	4 (10.00)	35 (17.50)	8 (13.33)	47 (15.66)
48 and above	3 (7.50)	6 (3.00)	4 (6.67)	13 (4.34)
Religion				
Hindu	10 (25.00)	50 (25.50)	22 (36.66)	77 (25.66)
Muslim	30 (75.00)	150 (75.00)	38 (63.34)	223 (74.34)
Social group				
General	-	9 (4.54)	7 (11.66)	16 (5.34)
OBC	30 (75.00)	150 (75.00)	41 (68.34)	221 (73.66)
SC/ST	10 (23.80)	41 (20.50)	12 (20.00)	63 (21.00)
Education				
Illiterate	22 (55.00)	38 (19.00)	21 (35.00)	81 (27.00)
Primary	-	106 (53.54)	13 (21.66)	119 (39.67)
Secondary	12 (30.00)	48 (24.00)	26 (43.34)	86 (28.66)
High School	6 (15.29)	6 (3.03)	-	12 (4.00)
Graduate	-	2 (1.01)	-	2 (0.66)
Marital status				
Married	26 (55.00)	148 (74.05)	41 (68.33)	215 (71.66)
Unmarried	13 (32.50)	50 (29.00)	17 (28.33)	80 (26.67)
Widow/widower	1 (2.51)	2 (1.01)	2 (3.34)	5 (1.67)

f=Frequency

%=Percentage

*PEs=Private enterprises

same is not true in relation to the girl since it is assumed that she will be married as soon as possible. Shetty (2009) reported that due to financial constraints, most families could not afford to educate all the children. Most girls either never went to school or dropped out in order to take care of younger siblings and help in the household chores.

A large percentage of artisans, *i.e.* 71.66 per cent, were married. The presence of a large number of married women may be due to the system of early marriage practice in rural areas, the feeling of responsibility or the compelling need to earn money after marriage.

Family profile of *Chikankari* artisans :

Rural life is usually characterized by members living

in joint family, but the same trend was not observed in the present study which revealed that 66.34 per cent of the selected artisans belonged to nuclear families. This may be due to the increasing trend of nuclear families (Table 2).

Data with respect to family size revealed that just 25.80 per cent artisans in GOs, 32.00 per cent in NGOs and 18.34 per cent in PEs had five or less than five members in the family. The largest percentage of artisans, *i.e.* 72.20 per cent, 60.50 per cent and 46.66 per cent artisans had 5-8 members in their families in GOs, NGOs and PEs, respectively.

A considerable percentage of artisans (35.00%) in PEs had eight or more than eight members in their families. Some artisans (7.50%) in NGOs and GOs (2.50%) had even eight or more than eight members in

Table 2 : Family profile of <i>Chikankari</i> artisans working with GOs, NGOs and PEs (n=300)				
Category	GOs (n ₁ =40)	NGOs (n ₂ =200)	PEs (n ₃ =60)	Total (n=300)
Family type				
Nuclear	17 (42.48)	133 (66.50)	49 (81.66)	199 (66.34)
Joint	23 (57.52)	67 (33.50)	11 (18.34)	101 (33.66)
Family size				
<5	10 (25.80)	64 (32.00)	11 (18.34)	85 (28.34)
5-8	29 (72.20)	121 (60.50)	28 (46.66)	178 (59.34)
8 and above	1 (2.50)	15 (7.50)	21 (35.00)	37 (12.32)

f=Frequency %=Percentage *PEs=Private enterprises

their families (Table 2). Thus, families of artisans were characterized with large family size to add more burden on the low family income.

Earning members in family of the *Chikankari* artisans :

A large percentage of artisans (76.00%) had 3-4 earning members in the family. Probably that is why the large family size was considered as an asset among them. The more, the number of working heads, the better the family would be in total family earnings. This was the prevailing notion among them as they do not spend much on education of children. Another 14.66 per cent artisans had 1-2 earning members in family. The least percentage of artisans (9.34%) had above four earning members in the family (Fig. 1).

Generally, female workers were engaged in *Chikankari* embroidery and male family members were engaged in construction work, printing section, *zari*-work and tailoring, etc.

Monthly income of the artisans working under GOs, NGOs and PEs :

Maximum percentage of artisans in GOs (72.50%) and NGOs (67.50%), and a large percentage of them in PEs (61.66%) had the monthly income between Rs. 1500-2000 followed by 15.29 per cent artisans in GOs, 18.00 per cent of them in NGOs and 31.66 per cent artisans in PEs who earned between Rs. 2000-2500 per month. Least percentage of artisans in GOs (12.50%) and NGOs (14.00%) earned more than Rs. 3000 per month in organizations/enterprises (Table 3).

Family income comprises of the income of not only the husband and wife, but also the income of all the earning members of the household put together including children or other relatives staying in one house. Findings of the study indicated that majority of artisans (84.67%) had family income between Rs. 5000-10,000 per month after working very hard for whole month. A small proportion of artisans (8.66%) had family income between Rs. 10,000-15000 per month. The least

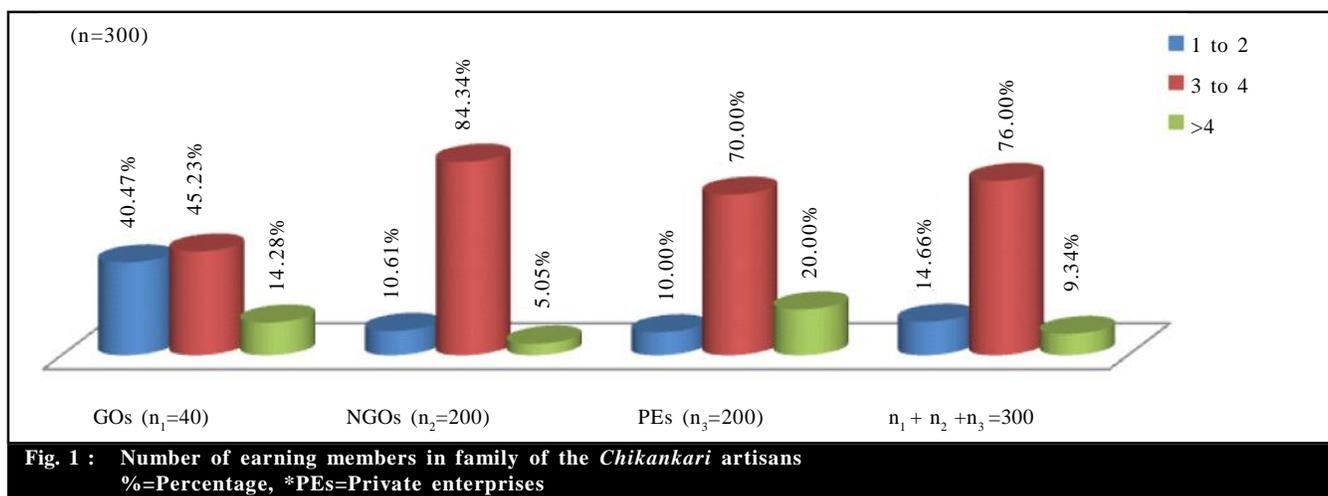


Fig. 1 : Number of earning members in family of the *Chikankari* artisans
%=Percentage, *PEs=Private enterprises

Table 3 : Monthly income of the artisans in GOs, NGOs and PEs (n=300)

Personal income (Rs./month)	GOs (n ₁ =40)	NGOs (n ₂ =200)	PEs (n ₃ =60)	Total
1500-2000	29 (72.50)	135 (67.00)	37 (61.66)	201 (67.00)
2000-2500	6 (15.29)	36 (18.00)	19 (31.66)	61 (20.33)
2500-3000	5 (12.50)	29 (14.00)	4 (6.66)	38 (12.66)
Family income (Rs./month)				
<5000	3 (7.50)	3 (1.50)	-	6 (2.00)
5000-10000	32 (80.00)	174 (87.00)	48 (80.00)	254 (84.67)
10000-15000	2 (5.00)	14 (7.50)	10 (16.66)	26 (8.66)
15000 or more	3 (7.50)	9 (4.50)	2 (3.33)	14 (4.67)

f=Frequency %=Percentage *PEs=Private enterprises

percentage of artisans (4.67%) had family income of Rs. 15000 per month or above. Even 2.00 per cent artisans had family income less than Rs. 5000 per month. Thus, it is clearly evident from the data that the condition majority of artisans is pitiable as their family income for a month was just equivalent to money spent by others in society on a few meals in hotels. This clearly reveals the level of exploitation of poor and disparity in income.

Personal income vs skill level/type of employment:

On the basis of skill level, all the artisans were categorized into skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled. Artisans can make the finest as well as crudest work, but there does occur a little apparent similarity between the best *Chikankari* and the commonplace product. The artisans who make the fine work and know about most of the stitches are categorized as skilled artisans. The skilled artisans were experts in *Murri* stitches, *Jali*-work and *Katao*. Semi-skilled artisans had hands on simple and common stitches like *Bakhia*, *Dhoom*, *Tepchi*, *Canzeera*, etc. Unskilled artisans were just the beginners using only *Bakhia* stitch.

Arya (2002) reported that at the time of study out of 3,500 workers, 1500 (42.87) were skilled and the rest were semi-skilled and unskilled.

Calculated chi-square value (4.605) for frequency

distribution for skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled artisans with the monthly income of the artisans was found to be significant corresponding to four degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. Thus, there was a significant association between monthly income and skill level of the artisans (Table 4).

Calculated chi-square value (17.087) for frequency distribution for part-time, full-time and contractual basis work with the monthly income of the artisans was found to be significant corresponding to four degrees of freedom at 5% level of significance. Thus, there was a significant association between monthly income and type of employment of the artisans. Evidently skilled artisans could get full time employment with higher income. Thus, skill enhancement of the unskilled artisans will help them to earn more.

Status and mode of saving money :

A large percentage of artisans (66.67%) in GOs, 52.53 per cent of them in NGOs, and 41.66 per cent artisans in PEs could save at least some money from whatever little earnings they had. A large percentage of artisans (58.34%) in PEs followed by 47.47 per cent artisans in NGOs and 33.33 per cent artisans in GOs could hardly meet their ends. So, they were just struggling with hand to mouth survival (Fig. 2).

Table 4 : Association of personal income and skill level/employment of artisans (n=300)

Personal income (Rs./month)	Skill level			χ ² (d.f.=4) 4.605*	Type of employment			χ ² (d.f.=4) 17.087*
	Skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled		Part time	Full time	Contractual	
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	
1500-2000	55 (73.5)	118 (105.0)	37 (31.00)		66 (50.66)	105 (109.6)	59 (63.7)	
2000-2500	26 (21.35)	28 (30.56)	7 (9.15)		3 (14.23)	33 (29.07)	25 (17.70)	
2500 or more	24 (10.15)	4 (14.50)	1 (5.35)		1 (5.1)	5 (5.0)	3 (5.6)	

*indicates significance of values at P=0.05

Most artisans described themselves as poor and stressed because they experienced persistent shortfall of money to purchase and procure the most fundamental essentials of life. Though some of them might have been able to meet their expenses with the entire family's income put together, but a large majority found it virtually impossible to make ends meet.

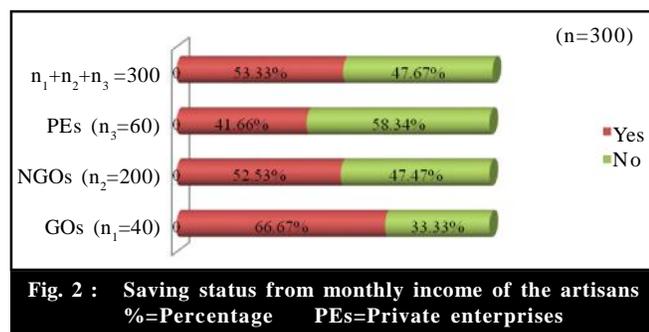


Fig. 2 : Saving status from monthly income of the artisans
%=Percentage PEs=Private enterprises

The savings of the most families were used up to clear debts taken on earlier occasions, whereas few others could keep the money aside to deal with any future eventualities.

Out of 157 artisans who were saving money from their earning, maximum percentage of artisans in GOs (61.50%) and NGOs (61.32%) deposited their savings in banks, while much lesser percentage of artisans (32.00%) in PEs were saving their wages in banks (Fig. 3). Thus, artisans working in GOs and NGOs managed their savings more adequately.

A large percentage of artisans (68.00%) in PEs were keeping their savings at home followed by nearly

equal percentage of artisans in NGOs and GOs (38.67%+38.46%) who were also keeping their savings at home. Out of total artisans, only 26.75 per cent artisans saved their income in post-office.

Distribution of respondents according to the reasons for not saving :

Out of 143 artisans who were not able to save money from their earnings, all artisans in GOs, majority of artisans (96.80%) in NGOs and 57.14 per cent artisans in PEs reported the insufficient funds as the reason for no savings by them (Fig. 4). They spent their wages on the basic needs. Besides, 3.19 per cent artisans in NGOs and 42.85 per cent in PEs were not able to save from income due to family constraints, such as family size, total family income, health and education.

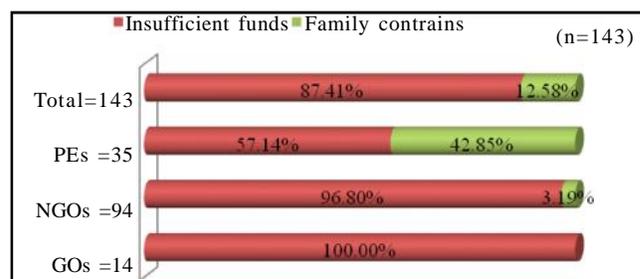


Fig. 4 : Distribution of respondents according to the reasons for not saving
%=Percentage PEs=Private enterprises

Possession of house :

A large percentage of artisans, i.e. 70.00 per cent,

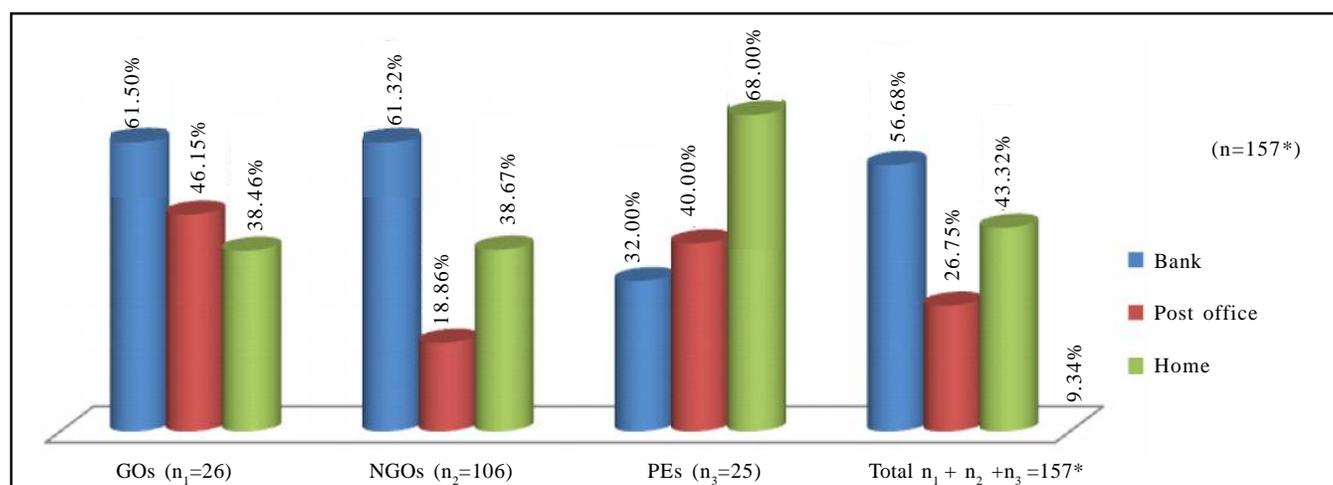


Fig. 3 : Mode of saving adopted by Chikankari artisans
%=Percentage, *multiple response *PEs=Private enterprises

86.50 per cent and 65.00 per cent in GOs, NGOs and PEs, respectively had their own house to live. But, thirty per cent artisans in GOs and 35.00 per cent artisans in PEs were living in rented house. Least percentage of the artisans (13.50%) in NGOs were also living in rented house (Table 5).

Half of the total selected sample of artisans possessed a *Pucca* house (concrete brick house) (50.67%). Out of the total 60 artisans who lived in rented house, 53.34 per cent of artisans paid Rs. 2500 or more per month and 25.00 per cent artisans paid Rs. 1500-2500 per month for the rent. On an average the least percentage of the artisans (21.66%) were paying more than Rs. 1000-1500 per month in organizations/enterprises. Thus, renting the house was very expensive for the artisans keeping in view their monthly earnings.

Most of those who owned the houses inherited those as part of the ancestral property rather than building or acquiring on their own. These buildings were old as the embroiderers expressed their inability to undertake any major repairs due to financial difficulties. Repairs were taken up when they became absolutely inevitable, *i.e.* during the monsoon or winter seasons.

Out of the selected sample, 45.00 per cent, 42.50 per cent artisans in GOs and NGOs expressed that the working space was inadequate in their clusters. Twenty per cent artisans in PEs also faced the same problem at their workplace. Artisans in PEs had to work at their *Kuccha* (mud) house which made it harder to protect the products from staining. Unhygienic condition of the workplace adversely affects the health of the artisans. Majority of artisans (91.66%) in PEs and a considerable

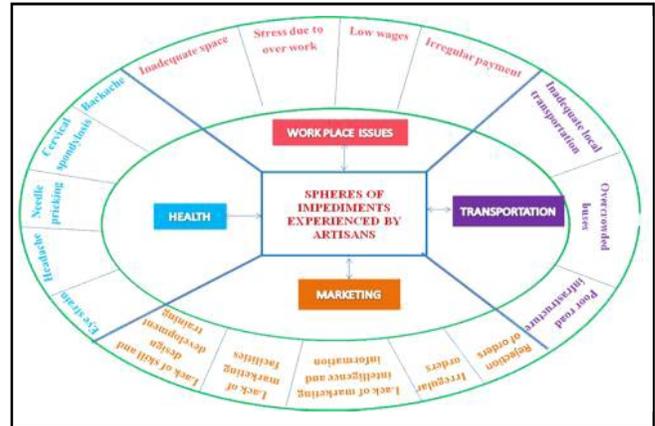


Fig. 5 : Impediments faced by artisans

percentage of artisans in GOs (55.00%) and NGOs (43.00%) reported that there was a lot of stress due to over work. All the artisans in PEs and largest percentage of artisans, *i.e.* 57.50 per cent each in GOs and NGOs expressed their problems related to low wages according to the nature of their work. All the artisans in PEs, 30.00 per cent of them in GOs, and 46.00 per cent of artisans in NGOs faced the problem of late payment of their wages.

For the betterment of artisans following suggestions must be taken into considerations:

Problem: Inadequate space and unpleasant environment faced by artisans :

The artisans working in the centers faced many problems at the work place such as inadequate space and unpleasant environment. Besides, the artisans who

Category	GOs	NGOs	PEs	Total
	(n ₁ =40) f (%)	(n ₂ =200) f (%)	(n ₃ =60) f (%)	n ₁ + n ₂ + n ₃ =300 f (%)
Possession of house				
Owned	28 (70.00)	173 (86.50)	39 (65.00)	240 (80.00)
Rented	12 (30.00)	27 (13.50)	21 (35.00)	60 (20.00)
Type of house				
<i>Kuccha</i> (mud house)	2 (5.00)	17 (8.59)	13 (21.66)	32 (10.67)
<i>Semi-pucca</i>	20 (50.00)	78 (39.00)	18 (30.00)	116 (38.67)
<i>Pucca</i> (concrete brick house)	18 (45.00)	105 (52.51)	29 (48.34)	152 (50.67)
If Rented, Rent (Rs./month)	(n=12)	(n=27)	(n=21)	(n=60)
1000-1500	2 (16.67)	11 (40.74)	0 (0.00)	13(21.66)
1500-2500	6 (50.00)	4 (14.81)	5 (13.51)	15 (25.00)
2500 or more	4 (33.33)	12 (44.44)	16 (43.24)	32 (53.34)

f=Frequency %=Percentage *PEs=Private enterprises

work at their own *Kuccha* houses led to staining of the *Chikankari* products.

Suggestions:

Only those NGOs may be allowed by the government to set up centers who possess some minimum area per artisan. Besides, government needs to develop more clusters. Some special housing plans may be initiated by government.

Problem: Low and irregular wages being paid to artisans :

Minimum wages fixed by government for artisans are Rs. 300/day, but *chikankari* artisans are being paid Rs. 70-150/day.

Suggestions:

Government should enforce strict implementation of the minimum wage payment to the artisans. Guilty need to be punished and fined for exploiting the helpless, hard working and very poor artisans who actually deserve

better living. Since with meagre income they are not able to save money for old age, government should plan old age pension for the artisans.

Problem: Health related issues experienced by the artisans :

The artisans faced many health related problems like cervical spondylosis, eye strain, severe headache and backache. The work environment of the artisans was unpleasant and the poverty further worsened the situation. In such difficult circumstances, if any unexpected health hazard attacks the family, its economy ends in total disaster. The study revealed the fact that the artisans did not have any health insurance.

Suggestions:

The organisations/enterprises must provide medical facilities. Besides, government needs to take suitable action for all artisans to provide health insurance. For pregnant artisans, provision of maternity benefits would be an encouraging action.

Table 6 : Impediments faced by the <i>Chikankari</i> artisans in GOs, NGOs and PEs				(n=300)*
Category	GOs (n ₁ =40)	NGOs (n ₂ =200)	PEs (n ₃ =60)	Total n ₁ + n ₂ + n ₃ =300*
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
At work place				
Inadequate space	18 (45.00)	85 (42.50)	12 (20.00)	115 (38.34)
Stress due to over work	22 (55.00)	86 (43.00)	55 (91.66)	163 (54.33)
Low wages	23 (57.50)	115 (57.50)	60 (100.00)	198 (66.00)
Irregular payment	12 (30.00)	92 (46.00)	60 (100.00)	164 (54.66)
Health problem				
Backache	24 (60.00)	72 (36.00)	13 (21.66)	109 (36.33)
Cervical spondylosis	-	5 (2.50)	9 (15.00)	14 (4.66)
Needle pricking	16 (45.00)	95 (32.50)	39 (65.00)	150 (50.00)
Headache	25 (62.50)	89 (44.50)	54 (90.00)	168 (56.00)
Eye strain	17 (42.50)	63 (31.50)	43 (71.66)	123 (41.00)
Marketing problem				
Lack of skill and design development training	7 (17.50)	14 (7.50)	60 (100.00)	81 (27.00)
Lack of marketing facilities	25 (62.50)	155 (32.50)	13 (21.66)	193 (64.34)
Lack of marketing intelligence and information	18 (23.00)	46 (23.00)	23 (38.34)	87 (29.00)
Irregular orders	-	47 (23.50)	33 (55.00)	80 (26.66)
Rejection of orders	-	9 (4.50)	23 (38.34)	32 (10.67)
Problems related to transport				
Inadequate local transportation	-	-	35 (58.34)	35 (11.66)
Exertion due to overcrowded buses	-	-	19 (31.66)	19 (6.34)
Poor road infrastructure	32 (80.00)	157 (78.50)	54 (90.00)	243 (81.00)
Poor electricity problem	25 (23.50)	155 (32.50)	54 (90.00)	234 (78.00)

f=Frequency, *Multiple responses

%=Percentage

*PEs=Private enterprises

Various central and state government agencies working for the welfare of artisans, especially the Development Commissioner Handicraft should organize health camps for the artisans. Regular eye sight check up camps should be organised and free opticians facilities need to be provided to enable the artisans to practice the craft for longer period in their life.

Problem: Lack of skill upgradation training for semi-skilled and unskilled artisans :

The semi-skilled and unskilled artisans did not possess knowledge about the stitches. Semi-skilled artisans had hands on simple and common stitches like *Bakhia*, *Dhoom*, *Tepchi*, *Zanzeera*, etc. Unskilled artisans were just the beginners using only *Bakhia* stitch.

Suggestions:

Skill upgradation training programmes for artisans are important for their skill upgradation and employment purpose. Besides, the shortage of skilled workforce has adversely impacted the growth of craft. There is an urgent need to identify the gaps, assess the demand of various skill sets and build skilled workforce.

Problem: Lack of marketing intelligence and information among the artisans :

Artisans were too raw to communicate with customers. They were unable to provide proper product information to the customers. Besides, the artisans succumbed to bargaining by the customers.

Suggestions:

Marketing is all about developing profitable customer relationships. To be successful in today's competitive market place, artisans need to understand a customer demand and their buying practices. Artisans need to be trained to understand the psychographics of the target customers, product development and selling tactics.

Problem: Lack of market linkages :

The artisans were lacking knowledge about the contemporary market trends and some artisans in PEs had very limited opportunity to interact directly with buyers. Due to this even the highly skilled artisans possessed low confidence to develop their own enterprises.

Suggestion:

The Government should start Entrepreneurship Development Programmes for the artisans at the block and village level. The various agencies working for welfare of artisans like Development Commissioner (handicrafts), Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Rural Development should promote participation of artisans in exhibitions/trade fairs; provide them free of cost stalls in exhibitions, travelling and transportation charges including boarding and lodging. It will not only increase their knowledge about current market trends, but it will also discourage the involvement of middlemen in this sector.

Problem: Inadequate road and transportation facilities :

The artisans mainly in PEs were facing the problem of inadequate roads and transportation facilities.

Suggestions:

Local transportation and roads need to be planned for the convenience of artisans. Government should develop more centres closer to their areas/villages. PEs should start private vehicle facilities for the artisans who were working under them.

Problem: Lack of awareness, motivation and encouragement among the artisans :

Most of the artisans did not get an artisan card and personal bank account, and they were not aware the importance of the card. It is important for an artisan to have an artisan card and personal bank account that would help to solve their capital crisis and other problems related to finance.

Suggestion:

Development commissioner handicraft, state and central government agencies should organize a camp for creating awareness regarding the need and importance of artisan card and promote registration of artisans.

Various central government and state government agencies working for the welfare of artisans and bank of the area should organize camps for artisans to open the bank accounts. Morale boosting is very important aspect to develop the potential of the workforce. So, government must take suitable actions to organise such events to award the best skilled artisans and motivate

them for further contributions.

Problem: Lack of knowledge of the craft among youth :

It was observed that youth possessed poor skill level in *Chikankari* stitches.

Suggestions:

Schools can play an important role in preserving the knowledge related to this craft. They should include the *Chikankari* craft as a compulsory subject in their curriculum so that students may learn about this traditional craft. There must be educational programme for youths to promoting the *Chikankari* craft. To popularize the traditional craft, the schools/colleges/universities should also start holding competitions at state/national level. The KVKs of agricultural universities too must make efforts in this direction.

Conclusion:

Hand embroidery is an artistic creation on a very plain and uninteresting textile background. This art involves more time and effort to work each stitch meticulously to achieve a pleasant and harmonious effect. Thousands of stitches in different styles that are worked together involve a high level of skill and judgement. Thus, all manufacturers and consumers need to be ethical to pay them adequately. Government should plan more

schemes for the artisans and enhance supervision for strict implementation of the same.

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