



CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, INDIA

**DIAGNOSTIC STUDY
ARTISAN
THE CHIKAN EMBROIDERY CLUSTER
LUCKNOW, UTTAR PRADESH**

**BY
PANKAJ ARYA
SHILP SADHANA
(TEXTILE BLOCK PRINTERS ASSOCIATION)**

**DEVELOPED UNDER
THE CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT AGENT TRAINING
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&

**THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
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1. INTRODUCTION

India is a land of craftsmen. The textiles of India have been well known in Europe since Greek and Roman times. From 1600 to 1800 AD, India was the biggest exporter amongst all of the textile exporting countries. Textiles are decorated by various techniques, e.g. embroidery, brocading, printing, painting and dyeing, but among all of these, the embroidery craft is ranked at the top.

1.1 AN OVERVIEW OF EMBROIDERY CLUSTERS IN INDIA

In India there are many popular embroidery clusters such as Chikankari of Lucknow, Katha of Bengal, Fulkari of Punjab, Kutchi Embroidery of Gujarat & Kashidakari of Kashmir. Each style of embroidery is different from the other and has its own beauty and significant value.

The city of Lucknow has a prominent place in the history of India particularly for its art, historical monuments and rich cultural heritage. The rulers of Awadh, particularly the Mughals were very fond of art and cultural activities such as music, poetry, architecture and handicrafts. Besides being famous for its hot summers and a glorious past, Lucknow is also known the world over for its many fine Handicrafts. Some of the most popular names in this list are Chikankari, Hand Block Textile Printing, Zari Zardozi, Ivory or Bone Carving, Terracotta and many others that are practiced by various artisans of Lucknow. Chikankari is considered to be the most popular amongst these and is recognized worldwide.

1.2 HISTORY AND TRADITION OF CHIKANKARI

The art of Chikan embroidery in India is about 400 years old and it is believed that this is a Persian Craft, which came to India with Noorjahan, the queen of Jahangeer the Mughal Emperor.. At that time it was designed and practiced by her and other begams (wives) of Mughal Emperors.

Chikankari flourished under the patronage of the rulers of Awadh. Later when the capital of Awadh shifted to Lucknow from Faizabad, in the year 1722, the knowledge of the craft came to Lucknow. It is informed that here the Mughals found the Hand Block Printing skills that made it easier for them to practice this embroidery, as earlier the tracing of design was very difficult. This availability of easy process of drawing of base design encouraged them to teach this fine embroidery-work to their Kaniz (servants), who in turn taught it to their other family members and gradually this embroidery become a part time earning source of many women of rural areas.

The craft of Chikankari is quite distinctive and forms an integral part of life in Lucknow. The fine needlework adorned the garments made from gossamer silk fabrics and muslin for the ruling elite. The love and hard work of the artisans created delicate designs on fabrics that was reminiscent of sheer grace.



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They captured the beauty of intricate patterns of marble 'jaali' and inlay work of the Mughal period monuments and developed this indigenous form of artistic embroidery called Chikan.

The tradition of Chikankari has come down from families who served the ruling elite. The craftsmen with love and devotion worked on topi-palla or angarkha, for their masters, creating designs that were unmatched in beauty. With the decline in patronage, economic compulsions forced the men to look out for more lucrative employment and the craft passed on to the womenfolk of the community, as a source of subsidiary earning for the family. Gradually, it became the main source of earning for the family.

In the beginning, the Mughals and Persians who settled in Awadh practiced & patronized the craft but later on its touch and style were continued in Dhaka and Bengal, mainly Calcutta where Navab Wazid Ali Shah of Lucknow remain in captivity of British Rulers. Bengali work was mainly for the European market but no trace of it remains today; neither in Calcutta nor in Dhaka.

In Lucknow, embroiderers used to work under the patronage of the local courts. When these declined in the mid nineteenth century Chikan-work changed from professional activity of men to a cottage industry for women. Today, it is mainly in the hands of rural Muslim women and is still a significant Industry in Lucknow.

1.3 THE UNIQUENESS OF CHIKAN-CRAFT

Due to the variety of stitching-styles involved in Chikankari, it is claimed to be one of its kind hand embroidery that is impossible to imitate in any other part of the world

Chikan embroiders claim a repertoire of about thirty-two stitches, to which they give delightfully fanciful names: Double-Star Earring, Peacock Feather's Eye. Some of the names in their local language are; Sidhual, Makra, Mandarzi, Bulbulchashm, Tajmahal, Phooljali, Phanda, Dhoom, Gol murri, Janjeera, Keel, Kangan, Bakhia, Dhania Patti, lambi Murri, Kapkapi, Karan Phool, Bijli, Ghaspatti, Rozan, Meharki, Kaj, Chameli, Chane ki Patti, Balda, Jora, Pachni, Tapchim Kauri, Hathkati & Daraj of various types. Closer analysis reveals that many of these are different combinations of the same few basic stitches.

1.4 PROCESS OF CHIKANKARI

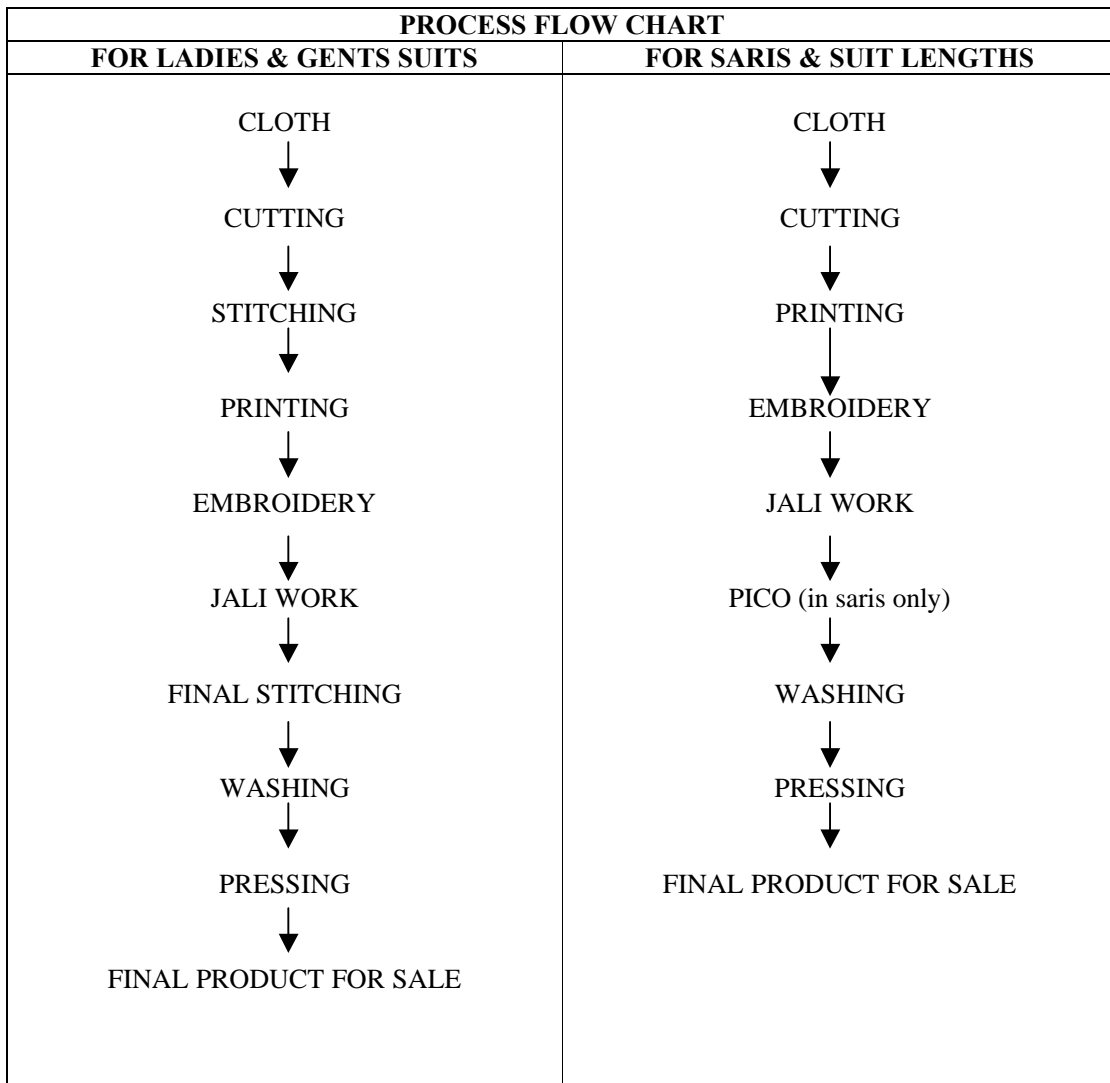
CHIKANKARI is an art, which results in the transformation of the plainest cotton and organdie into flowing yards of magic. The word "Chikan" steps from a Persian word derived from Chic, which referred to the 'jali' work done on marble or wood. It is also famous as "shadow work" or "white embroidery work", traditionally practiced in the city of Lucknow and its environs.

Traditional Chikankari was embroidered on Muslin with a white thread. Gradually the work was started being done on other fabrics like Organdie, Malmal, Tanzeeb, Cotton and Silk. Presently all types of fabrics, namely Voil, Chiffon, Lenin, Rubia, Khadi, Handloom cloth, Terry Cotton, Polyester, Georgette, Terry voil etc are used in Chikan Embroidery.



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The pattern is Block Printed on de-starched fabric using temporary (not fast) dyes. Chikankari is something like unity in diversity i.e. it includes some simple and complex stitches giving it an effect which is simple, gentle, delicate and yet elegant. These days Chikan work is being done on variety of items such as Saris, Suits, Kurtas, Table Covers, Bed Sheet, and Cushion Covers etc.





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2. IMPORTANT FEATURES OF THE CLUSTER

2.1 BIGGEST ARTISAN BASED CLUSTER

Chikan embroidery in Lucknow is the biggest artisan cluster of India. There are about 2.5 lacs artisans of hand embroidery associated with this cluster. Apart from this, the artisans from other fields such as Cutting, Stitching, Hand Block Textile Printing, Jali work and Washer men are also a part of this cluster. The total number of artisans associated with Chikan Embroidery Cluster, other than chikankari artisans, are about 5000.

2.2 GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

The artisans of Chikan Embroidery are scattered in and around Lucknow within a radius of about 125 K.M. The districts covered are Unnao, Barabanki, Lakhimpur, Hardoi etc. Some other villages where one can find few artisans of Chikankari are Raibareilly, Sultanpur and Faizabad.

2.3 RURAL WOMEN BASED ARTISAN CLUSTER

The embroidery artisans of this cluster are mainly from rural areas. They are mostly housewives doing this work as their part time job. In most cases it is also their only source of their personal income.

2.4 PROVIDING EMPLOYMENT TO MANY NON ARTISANS

This Chikan Embroidery is not only providing employment to about 2.5 lacs artisans of different crafts but people from non-craft base are also earning their livelihood by associating themselves with this craft. Expected number of non-artisan persons earning their bread and butter from this craft is about one million. They may be contractors, manufacturers, retailers, raw material providers or employee with manufacturers.

3. KEY MILESTONES & PERFORMANCE OF THE CHIKAN EMBROIDERY CLUSTER AT LUCKNOW

TILL 1860

Till 1860 this artistic embroidery was the craftsmanship of the ladies of royal mogul families. The products were in use by royal family members only.

FROM 1860 TO 1947 (TILL THE TIME OF INDIA-PAKISTAN PARTITION)

After 1860 till 1947, the only commercial product was TOPI PALLA. The main buyers were of Muslim Community and main markets were Dhaka (now in Bangladesh) and some areas that are now



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in Pakistan, Hyderabad and Lucknow. In this decade the business was in good condition. Few manufacturers were catering to the entire market.

AFTER 1947 TILL 1970

After partition the main markets of Topi Palla of Chikan Embroidery were not easily accessible because they became foreign markets for Indians. It forced the manufacturers to develop new products and they started producing Gents Kurta and after that Saris.

FROM 1970 TO 1990

Some manufacturers started manufacturing Ladies Suits (with or without dupattas) and even Luncheon sets. But this period is also seen as the worst period of Chikan embroidery. Because of producing only lower value products, consumers started using the products as night wear.

FROM 1990 TO 1999

This period can be referred to as the Golden Period of this cluster. New products, such as Suit lengths were developed and manufacturers started producing high value products. In this era new entrepreneurs with high ambitions entered the field and started manufacturing good quality products. Some reputed fashion designers also included Chikan Embroidery in their samples and catalogues which highlighted the Chikankari at national and international levels.

FROM 1999 TO 2001

Introduction of work on Georgette has kept the manufacturers in business. An overall general business slump in the economy has been affecting this cluster also and a decline in turnover has been observed. Sudden changes in fashion also adversely affects the performance of this industry, as the manufacturers are not able to cope with the changes. But nevertheless this era gave Chikankari products a good advertisement through media especially T.V serials and films.

4. STRUCTURE OF THE CHIKAN EMBROIDERY CLUSTER

4.1 STRUCTURE OF THE ENTERPRISES IN THE CLUSTER

The total turnover of the cluster is in order of Rs. 600 crores. There are about 4000 manufacturers in the cluster that can be classified as large, medium and small according to their turnover as given below.

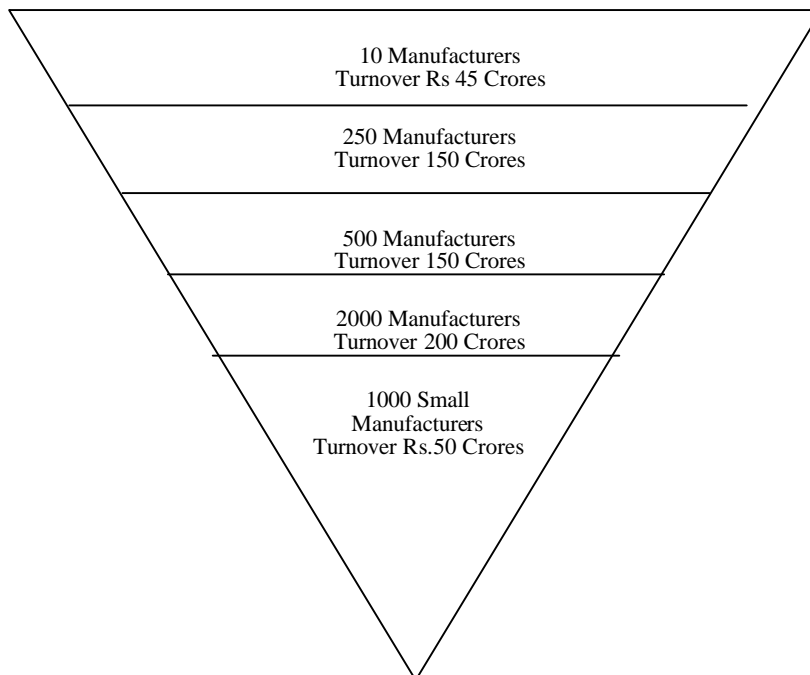


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Turnover (in Rupees per annum)	Number of Enterprises
4-5 Crores	10
50-100 Lacs	250
20-50 Lacs	500
5-20 Lacs	2000
3-5 Lacs	1000

Of the above, only two manufacturers have their own registered brand names. Their brand names assure the customers about quality of the product. Besides, there is only one manufacturer who is exporting 100% of his production to different countries.

The structure of the Chikan industry and the turnover pattern of different categories of manufacturing units reveal an inverted pattern as presented below.





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4.2 OTHER INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES

(A) SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

There are many NGOs working for welfare of artisans in the cluster. They are implementing various schemes of Central or State Government Departments. These NGOs have established Craft Development Centers in the area, which directly helps the artisans. One very prominent NGO who has done significant work in field of Chikan Embroidery is SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association). Other NGOs are also working in the cluster with help of O/o the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts).

TRANSPORTERS AND CARGO MANAGEMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are many transporters and Cargo Management Service providers. Usually manufacturers of the cluster prefer to send their parcels (Domestic) by Gati or SEF Express cargo management services. International Airport at Lucknow has cargo dispatch facility, which can be very useful for exports. Container depot for exporting goods is also there in Kanpur just 80 KM from Lucknow. For sending samples and materials abroad International Courier Services such as DHL are also available in Lucknow.

STATE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

DISTRICT INDUSTRIES CENTER (DIC), LUCKNOW

This centre functions under the Director & Commissioner Industries, Government of Uttar Pradesh, Kanpur. It is the main coordinator between other Government offices and artisans. It recommends names of enterprises for various exhibitions, bank-financing, State/National Awards for master craftsmen. It also implements the Prime Minister Rozgar Yojana for benefit of unemployed persons. The centre also provides Small Scale Handicraft Industry registration to Manufacturers of the area. Besides, a Central Design Center (CDC) & Craft Museum was also setup under the DIC of Lucknow. CDC is closed and in Craft Museum articles are getting dust because of no proper attention taken by state govt.

EXPORT PROMOTION BUREAU, LUCKNOW

In 1999 the Export Promotion Bureau was formed under the Ministry of Small Scale Industries in U.P. The main functions of the bureau are monitoring and policymaking. It also provides Marketing Development Assistance to small exporters in form of grants under different schemes. There are very few manufacturers/Traders of Chikan Embroidery products in the total list of members of Export Promotion Bureau. Out of these only four are actual exporters. Others are not even having any proper manufacturing or trading units.



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U.P. TOURISM

The basic aim of this office of the Government of Uttar Pradesh is to promote tourism of state but it also gives an exposure to the craft and culture of state through organising festivals, publicity catalogues and website. .

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

There are many banks in the area but very negligible amount has been given as finance to the manufacturers of Chikan Embroidery goods. A total Rs.5 Crores has been financed till now to about 300 manufacturers and that too mainly as a working capital loan.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

SMALL INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT BANK OF INDIA (SIDBI)

SIDBI has its head office at Lucknow and provides credit under Micro Finance Credit Scheme to NGOs who then sublet it to artisans for working capital. They also have some other schemes for artisans and manufacturers.

(B) OTHER INSTITUTIONS

STATE GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

U P TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITIES, KANPUR

Established under Commissioner Director of Industries, Government of Uttar Pradesh (UP), the organisation is making efforts for promotion of trade from UP. It organises fairs and exhibitions of different product groups. It is also responsible for setting up the U.P. Pavilion of Pragati Maidan, New Delhi for advertisement and marketing of products manufactured in the state. It also participates in international fairs.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

HANDICRAFTS MARKETING AND SERVICE CENTER, BARABANKI

(O/o the Development Commissioner Handicrafts)

This is the grass root office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) under Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The main aim of the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) is to uplift the economic & social conditions of the handicraft artisans. It provides assistance directly to artisans for conducting training and also provides direct marketing outlets through various Craft Markets, National Craft Fairs and other small exhibitions. They also run many schemes through various NGOs.



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In the Chikan Embroidery Cluster, there are three Craft Development Centers that are established by NGOs under sponsorship of the DC (Handicrafts). For publicity of Chikan Embroidery, this office has also sponsored two-three catalogues.

Despite the scope of direct marketing of products through this office, very few artisans of Chikan Embroidery have got themselves registered as artisans with this office. Only 8000 artisans of different places are registered with this office out of which only 600 have received Identity Cards.

EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL FOR HANDICRAFTS (EPCH), New Delhi

The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, sponsors the EPCH council. Their main aim is to promote export of handicrafts from India. They undertake many activities for export promotion of handicrafts like participation in national and international fairs, organising buyer sellers meet, trade delegations, seminars & workshops and publications etc.

APPAREL EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL (AEPC)

The prime objective of the Council is to promote and regulate the growth of export of readymade garments from India and to project India's image as a reliable supplier of high quality readymade garments and services.

HANDLOOM & HANDICRAFT EXPORT PROMOTION CORPORATION, NEW DELHI

A Central Government body that works for promotion of handicrafts through promoting participation of artisans and manufacturers in national and international trade fairs.

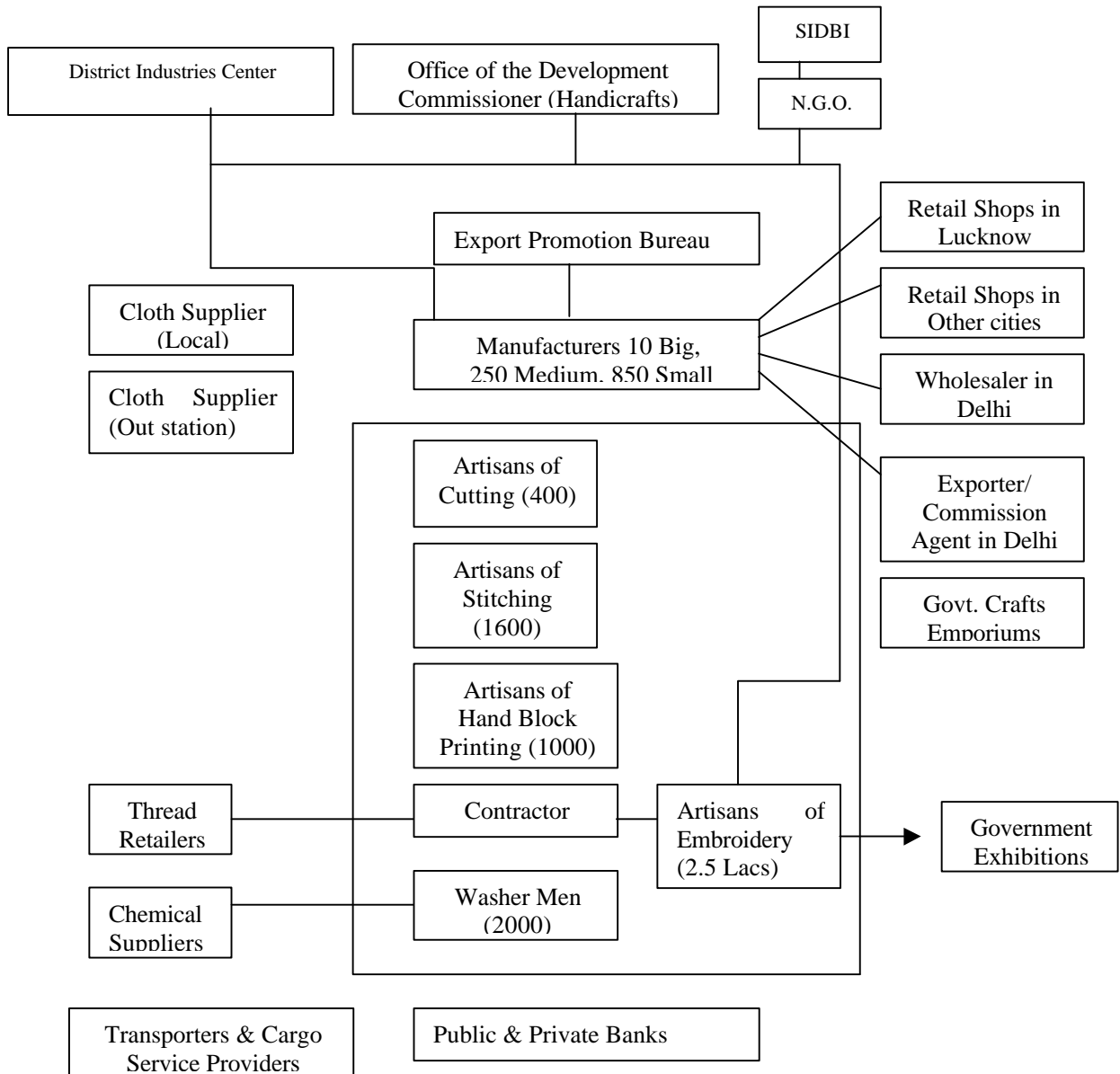
INDIAN TRADE PROMOTION ORGANISATION (ITPO), NEW DELHI

This is the nodal agency under the central Government that works to develop and promote Indian exports in general. They also assist in upgradation of technology through participation in fairs held in India and abroad. They undertake publicity of Indian products through print & electronic media. ITPO is also running a Trade Information Center, which is engaged in procuring, processing and disseminating trade related information on all aspects of international trade for all commodities.



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4.3 CHIKAN EMBROIDERY CLUSTER MAP





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5. ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS

AVAILABILITY OF RAW MATERIAL

The basic raw material for manufacturing of Chikan Embroidery products is cloth, which is easily available in India. Availability of various variety of cloth in the market provides manufacturers with opportunities to produce many varieties of products.

SUBCONTRACTING OF PRODUCTION PROCESS

In manufacturing of Chikan Embroidery goods, the usual procedure followed is of subcontracting the work. Job workers are hired on per piece basis who then usually work from their own place and complete all the process of production such as cutting, stitching, printing, embroidery and washing. Some manufacturers have also started in-house process of manufacturing.

NO DESIGNER INPUT

Chikan Embroidery dresses are now treated as fashion garments but manufacturers do not use designers for product designing or for development of new products. Very few i.e. just two or three manufacturers are making use of designers expertise. All the designing work is carried out by the manufacturer himself, either by copying designs from fashion catalogues or by ideas imparted by buyers.

LENGTHY PRODUCTION TIME

Normally about 3-5 months time is required for production of Chikan Embroidery products. Sometimes it even extends up to 7-8 months depending on the intricacy of the design

NO REGULAR WORK TO ARTISANS

The Embroidery artisans are not directly related to the Manufacturers for work. One contractor of the area procures the work from the manufacturers and distributes it to the artisans. Artisans are dependent on the contractor who usually exploits them. Artisans do not get regular work and payment from the contractor.

VERY LESS WAGES TO ARTISANS

Due to the job distribution by the contractor, the artisans who are the actual masters of the art do not get their due wages. The normal earning of an artisan is just Rs. 15/- to 40/- per day. Very few artisans of high skills get Rs. 60/- to Rs. 80/- per day.



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POOR WORKPLACE CONDITIONS OF ARTISANS

The workplace conditions of the artisans are quite poor. Usually they do work at their home along with their regular household work. The Kachaa homesteads tend to soil the cloth to be embroidered, and also the poor light and hygienic conditions of the workplace adversely affect the health of the artisan.

ABUNDANCE OF ARTISANS OF ONLY 4-5 STYLES OF STITCHES

Most of the artisans in the cluster specialize only in 4-5 stitching styles of Chikankari. It is easy to find products with embroidery forms of Bhakiya, Murri, Funda, Tepchi and Sidouli Zali but very difficult to get the other styles.

SPECIALISATION IN PRODUCT MANUFACTURING

In this cluster usually a manufacturer has specialization in manufacturing one or two products. Some are only manufacturing Ladies suits while some only produce saris. Even specialized manufacturing of value wise products is also present. The manufacturers can also be differentiated as producers of Low range, Medium range or High range products.

UNDERCUTTING PRACTICE AMONG MANUFACTURERS

A majority of manufacturers are involved in producing low priced products, so that they make quick profits. As a result they compromise on quality of Chikankari work and indulge in unhealthy practice of undercutting.

ESTABLISHMENT OF EMBROIDERY CENTERS BY MANUFACTURERS

Some manufacturers have established their embroidery centers in villages, where they provide work to a group of artisans and make them payment on monthly basis instead of the regular job work pattern. Here they have a good control on the quality of embroidery.

6. ASSESSMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL LINKAGES IN THE CLUSTER

NO ASSOCIATION OR FORUM OF SMES IN THE CLUSTER

Although there are so many manufacturers in the Chowk Area, the main market of producers of Lucknow, yet they have not formed any association or forum. Years back, efforts were made by some manufacturers to form an association called Lucknow Chikan Manufacturers Association, but the association could not prove to be a great success. Very recently some young manufacturers have tried to reactivate this association.



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NO PROPER LINKAGE AMONG MANUFACTURERS

There is no proper coordination or linkage among manufacturers for any process of business. Because of fear of duplication of product design, they avoid discussing their ideas with each other. No consortium or network type activity is in practice in the cluster.

NO DIRECT RELATION BETWEEN ARTISANS AND MANUFACTURERS

As the artisans of Chikan Embroidery are mostly residing in rural areas and are unorganised therefore they are not directly related to the manufacturers. The contractors of the area come to Lucknow and contact the manufacturer for work. Afterwards he sublets the work to the rural artisans. Manufacturers feel ease in this process as they have to deal only with one person i.e. the contractor and not with a group of artisans.



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7. SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large domestic market • Traditional Handicraft • Huge artisan base • Can be done on variety of clothes • Availability of skilled artisans • High competition among manufacturers • Low-price hand made garments • Available in all price ranges • Customised products can be made • Exemption of Excise Duty, Trade Tax • A Brand Name in itself • Easy availability of Raw Material • Availability of Transport Facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No technological upgradation • Lengthy production time • No designer input • Over production of low quality goods • Manufacturers are not having technical qualifications • Very less export • No association among manufacturers • No fixed time for return of goods from embroidery • Unorganised Artisans Cluster • Very less fund flow from financial institutions • Very less advertisement in Foreign markets • Very less use of modernised facilities such as Computer, CAD, Internet and Email etc. • Products mainly treated as seasonal summer garments • Undercutting practiced among manufacturers
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big scope in domestic market • Big scope in foreign market • Scope for development of new products • Scope for selling low price goods in Latin America (e.g Beach wear in Brazil, Chile) • Various Central and State Government Schemes for benefit of Artisans • Implementation of Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojna under O/o The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) for welfare of artisans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition with Printed & Machine embroidered items • Globalisation might bring Pakistani embroidery or other similar products in India • Change in Government Policies such as imposition of Excise Duty and Trade Tax



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8. VISION FOR THE CLUSTER

8.1 VISION STATEMENT

To increase the turnover of the cluster by 30% within 5 years by development of high quality fashion products and entering in export market

8.2 STRATEGIC GOALS

- To develop High Fashion Garment Products.
- To convert the seasonal summer industry to all weather industry by development of products for winter season.
- To explore new markets within the country.
- To increase export from the cluster.

8.3 PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FROM JAN 2002

1. First Month	Trust building
2. Second Month	Exhibitions for interaction with wholesalers/retailers at New Delhi.
3. Third Month	Design Seminar (Designer input)
4. Fourth Month	Delegation of Manufacturers (with samples) to Gujarat.
5. Fifth Month	One Day seminar for Export Knowledge
6. After Six Months	Start interaction for formation of a Forum/Association.
7. After Seven Months	Implement Mutual Credit Guarantee Scheme of SIDBI
8. After Eight Months	Creating a common website of the Cluster