

ODOP Scheme and Development of Chikan Craft in Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

There are numerous well-known embroidery clusters in India, including the Lucknow Chikankari, the Bengali Kaatha, the Punjabi Phulkari, the Gujarati Kutchi embroidery, and the Kashmiri Kashidakari. Every embroidery style is unique from the others and has its own appeal and value. Lucknow has played a significant role in India's history, thanks in large part to its artistic achievements, historical landmarks, and diverse cultural legacy. The Mughals in particular were huge fans of art and cultural pursuits like literature, music, architecture, and handicrafts. Lucknow is well-known for its many exquisite handicrafts in addition to its sweltering summers and illustrious past. Chikankari, hand-block textile printing, ivory or bone carving, terracotta, and many other crafts that are practiced by different Lucknow artists are some of the most well-known names on this list. Lucknow region is known for its traditional handicrafts called Chikan. The work is famous across the world for its grace, finesse, and purity. The development of Chikankari in Uttar Pradesh is highlighted in the current study within the framework of the state's "One District One Product Program."

Keywords: *ODOP Scheme, Chikan Embroidery, Artisans, Employment opportunities, MSME*

Introduction:

A place associated with handicrafts are distinctive in nature. They provide information on the history, tradition, and culture of that location. The Chikan craftsmanship originated in Persia and was brought to India by emigrant craftspeople. The kings and emperors of India were unable to wear their elaborate works of gold and silver


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Retrieved from <https://ijeponline.com/index.php/journal>

encrusted with pearls and stones during the intense summers. Chikankari was employed solely to keep people comfortable during the heat. Chikan is a type of exquisite needlework done on a fine cloth using white untwisted thread and a needle. On viol, silk, cambric, georgette, terry cotton, etc., it is done. Most of the people who did it were women. Initially, different stitches or embroidery work are done on the cloth while designs are printed with washable colours on it. This is a home-based industrial activity that is primarily carried out by female workers and artisans. The East India Company's historical documents from the 17th century show that Dhaka produced the exquisite embroidery known as "Chikan." The Nawabs of Oudh are credited with bringing Chikan craft to Lucknow in the 18th century from East Bengal. According to legend, it was first introduced in Lucknow by Nurzahan, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir's wife. The Nawabs and Rulers of Oudh were fans of it. The Mughal rulers supported the industry. But, the emergence of the British Raj gave the Chikan craft a major boost. The market for Chikan craft fell due to the arrival of ultra-fine, low-cost mill textile from England.

It is a type of pure needlework that is typically done on soft cotton fabric and is known as "white work" because it is done with white thread on white-colored fabric. These days, the art is offered in a variety of colours and fabrics. The idea that it is a summer garment is still prevalent. In addition to kurtas, saris, salwar suits, tops, handkerchiefs, and dupattas, new goods like tablecloths, tray covers, napkins, lehngas, etc. are embellished with Chikan embroidery. Both domestically and internationally, there is a growing demand for these priceless works of art. The Chowk neighborhood of ancient Lucknow is where the majority of Chikan work is concentrated in Lucknow. In December 2008, Chikankari received the geographical indication designation. The GI designation hasn't given the work any notable advantages or distinctions of any kind. The causes may range from the need for innovation in clothes design, fabric, and outfit to skill development, health, education, and artisan awareness, as well as market expansion and penetration. The industry, which is disorganized and safeguards the local cultural heritage by providing employment for a significant number of people, persists as a result of the craftsmen's traditional skill and knowledge that have been passed down through the years. Entrepreneurial creativity and involvement are now required to revive the current art form and address related problems.

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Submitted: 27 March 2023, Revised: 09 April 2023, Accepted: 18 April 2023, Published: May 2023

White was a symbol of royalty and sophistication in the courts of Harshvardhan, where it is also thought that Chikankari was utilized (Dongerker, 1951). According to popular legend, it was first used by Noor Jahan in the Mughal courts in 1600 AD, after which it travelled to Bengal and eventually ended up as royal needlework in courts. It is now one of Luckno's most well-known textile decorations. The finest white cotton cloth, known as muslin or mulmul, was used for Chikankari. Several travelers to India have written about this flimsy, light muslin fabric; a lot of muslin was made in and shipped from Bengal. Cotton was primarily grown at Dacca because of the area's high humidity, which prevented the delicate thread from breaking when it came into touch with the air. Because the Brahmaputra and Ganges Rivers contain bleaching characteristics, the cotton that was spun was exceedingly white. The Bengali Chikankari artisans embroidered on this beautiful muslin. In and around Lucknow, some extremely beautiful muslin was also created. The East India Company made the decision to send two factors or employees to Lucknow in the seventeenth century in order to live there and purchase bales of a particular type of muslin that was produced in the Hasanganj neighborhood of Lucknow on the northern bank of the Gomti.

The most well-known and well recognized of these is Chikankari. White on white stitching known as Chikankari is subtle, with tiny, delicate threads that show out as textural contrasts, shadows, and tracteries. Some stitches are worked from the front while others are worked from the rear. Uniquely, the stitches in anokhi chikan do not show on the underside. The material is thin and is often muslin. From the Persian term Chikin or Chakin, which means fabric fashioned with needlework, it appears that chikan was formed. The Mughal empress Norjahan introduced it, and it was initially a court craft. At the courts of Kolkata, Delhi, Dhaka (Bangladesh), Gaya, Varanasi, Allahabad, Rampur, and Bhopal, there were Chikankaars. The elaborately embroidered muslins became a mandated necessity of the ceremonial court in Lucknow under the rule of the Nawabs of Avadh. One Chikan artwork requires the talents of numerous talented artisans, including a designer, printer, embroiderer, and washer man. Originally, it would frequently take between three and four artisans to embroider a single garment since many artisan families would practice and develop one style of stitch. In the 1980s, the shadow effect created by the bakhiya, or herringbone stitch, which is applied to the fabric's back, became a defining characteristic of

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the art. Six fundamental stitches are employed in Chikankari, and there are more than 35 more traditional stitches that can be combined in different ways depending on the pattern that needs to be embroidered. Tepchi (back running stitch), Bakhiya (double back stitch), Hool (Eyelet), Zanzeera (chain stitch), Rahet (stem stitch), and Banarsi are the six fundamental stitches. Phanda, Chana Patti, Ghaas Patti, Ulti Jaali, Bijli, Jaali, Kharau, Keel, Kangan, Bulbul, and Hath Kadi are further stitches. Depending on the style of garment and the embroidery pattern, the complete procedure takes place over the course of several stages over months or even years. The Awadhi kings encouraged the flourishing of Chikankari. The craft's knowledge was later brought to Lucknow when Awadh's capital moved there from Faizabad in the year 1722. The Mughals discovered that their mastery of hand block printing enabled them to practice this embroidery with ease, as it had previously been quite challenging to trace the design. Because there was a simple method for drawing the basic design, they were encouraged to teach their kaniz (servants) how to do this exquisite embroidery work, who then passed it on to their family members. Over time, this stitching became a source of side income for many women in rural areas.

In India's history, Lucknow has played a significant role thanks in large part to its artistic, historical, and cultural heritage. The Awadhi kings, especially the Mughals, had a great appreciation for the arts and cultural pursuits like literature, music, architecture, and handicrafts. Lucknow is well-known for its many exquisite handicrafts in addition to its sweltering summers and illustrious past. The most well-known crafts that are practiced by different Lucknow craftsmen include Chikankari, Hand Block Textile Printing, Zari Zardozi, Ivory or Bone Carving, Terracotta, and many others. Among them, Chikankari is the most well-known and is known all over the world. According to popular belief, it was first used as a royal embroidery in Mughal courts around 1600 A.D. after which it travelled to Bengal and then, in the 17th century, to the Nawab of Avadh. It is today one of Lucknow's most well-known textile embellishments. The finest white cotton cloth, known as muslin or mulmul, was used for chikankari. Several travelers to India have written about this flimsy, light muslin fabric; a lot of muslin was made in and shipped from Bengal. Cotton was primarily grown at Dacca because of the area's high humidity, which prevented the delicate thread from breaking when it came into touch with the air. Because the Brahmaputra and Ganges Rivers contain bleaching characteristics, the cotton that was

spun was exceedingly white. The Bengali chikankari artisans embroidered on this beautiful muslin. In and around Lucknow, some extremely beautiful muslin was also created. The East India Company made the decision to send two factors or employees to Lucknow in the seventeenth century in order to live there and purchase bales of a particular type of muslin that was produced in the Hasanganj neighborhood of Lucknow on the northern bank of the Gomti. The two or three types of fine, white fabric—Addhi, Tanzeb, and Girant—that are utilized for chikan craft. These were the customary chikan textiles. Their sheerness was the ideal complement to the delicate white stitching. Currently performed on materials that are similar to sheer cambria, mulmul, chiffon, georgettes, nets, and others.

ODOP Scheme:

The "One District One Product" (ODOP) programme was initiated by the state government of Uttar Pradesh with the goal of preserving, developing, and boosting local employment and revenue in each of the state's 75 districts. The government's aim for the programme was to increase the number of young job opportunities and to promote the state's inclusive and sustainable development. The programme aims to promote locally produced and specialized goods and crafts. In its budget for 2018–19, the government allocated Rs. 250 crores, or 46.3 million USD, for the programme. The capital of the state's 75 districts is Lucknow, which is well-known for its Chikankari artwork produced under the ODOP programme (Singh, 2020).

In many nations, including India, micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) are the most prevalent types of businesses. The nation's economic progress is facilitated by MSME, which also creates jobs and directly reduces poverty (Jahanshahi, Nawaser, Sadeq Khaksar, and Kamalian, 2011). Just manufacturing MSMEs contributed 33% of India's gross value of output over the past five years (Gudi & Shinde, 2020). In India, there are both registered and unincorporated organisations (Saxena & Jagota, 2015). Of the 17.79 lakh registered organizations in India, it is estimated that 5.43 lakh were forced to close their doors in 2018 due to a variety of problems. The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (2015-16) estimates that there are 633.48 lakh unincorporated non-agricultural MSMEs functioning in India, with the state of Uttar Pradesh accounting for the maximum 14.20 percent of all MSMEs (Gudi & Shinde, 2020).

It would be dangerous for economic activity, employment prospects, and the fight against poverty if these unincorporated entities also started to close their doors as a result of problems and difficulties. Therefore, it is imperative that these MSMEs be protected by providing them with pertinent policies through effective governance. Of India's 29 states and seven union territories, Uttar Pradesh is one of the larger states with 75 districts. In order to promote micro, small, and medium-sized businesses operating in the state as well as to encourage entrepreneurship and support current business owners, the government of Uttar Pradesh launched a novel programme called "One District One Product," also known as (ODOP). This programme is intended to improve the state's economic growth and employment opportunities. After agriculture, the MSME sector in the state has made the largest contribution to the country's share of G.D.P. There are over 46 lakh units throughout the state that sell distinctive goods from practically every district. The state participates in the export of handicrafts and accounts for 44 percent of all exports of these goods from the nation. Aside from that, the U.P. state produces 29 percent of India's exports of leather and leather products and 39 percent of its exports of carpets. It accounts for more than 4% of all exports from the nation. Each area has a reputation for having one or more handicraft or MSME units, so it is necessary to advertise these businesses in order to increase employment prospects and income levels for those involved in these fields of labour.

Chikankari is a highly delicate needlework that was initially popular with the Mughals. The distinctiveness of Chikankari work is about its stitches, which demonstrate the splendor of discipline via its artwork (Mishra, 2016). In contrast to stitching in Europe, each stitch is exclusively utilized in the context of a specific discipline. The 36 sub stitches of Chikankari, which consists of six main stitches, include the Bijali, Bakhiya, Banjkali, Bulbul-Chasm, Ghaspatti, Hathkadi, Hool, Jali, Karan, Kangan, Kuri, Makra, Madrazi, Mahakari, Pechani, Rahet, Razan, Sazi, Tajmahal, Tepchi, and Zanzeera (Chantia, 2017). The work was originally carried out using white thread on white muslin or cotton fabric in pastel tones (Bhardwaj, 2014; Sharma, 2015), but it is now also carried out using coloured threads on various colours of cloth utilizing a combination of zari-zardozi and gotta Patti work. Chikankari work from Lucknow is regarded as the most prominent artisan cluster in India, with 2.5 lakh hand embroidered craftsmen. Due to the fashion industry's love for it,

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Chikankari work has now spread to the majority of the world's countries (Vedia, 2017). Because of its popularity and the speed of export, politicians were forced to consider its cluster (Chantia, 2017). According to Ahmad & Anees (2016), the Chikankari businesses face a variety of difficulties, including as outdated technology, fragmented business procedures, a rise in the popularity of Chinese Chikan goods, a decline in exports, and ineffective marketing strategies. Additionally, they made the case that the issues might be resolved via serious efforts on the part of the government, businesses, and Lucknow Association for Chikan Handicrafts. Chantia (2017) also discussed some of the weaknesses the Chikankari industry is facing, including the overproduction of low-quality products, the lack of technological advancement, the prolonged production time, the lack of a set time for the return of goods from embroidery, the unorganized cluster of artisans, the poor fund flow from financial institutions, and the poor advertising in foreign markets.

ODOP and Chikan Embroidery The department of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) of the state government of Uttar Pradesh has chosen six cities, including Lucknow, to be the focus of the program's inaugural phase. Every month, they intended to deal with a different city and create events accordingly. They convened a meeting with exporters, the Lucknow Management Association, a few designers, and other professionals from professional organizations to discuss methods to improve the universal appeal of Chikankari work. Awadh Shilpgram, a Lucknow exhibition centre, requests a meeting between a buyer-seller and the producers, exporters, and artisans of Chikan work in order to set up an exhibition. To assure the implementation of the ODOP, or One District-One Product system, the government additionally allocated Rs 1,000 crore to roughly 10,000 individuals from eight districts. This loan amount was given out as part of several government initiatives, including the CM Job Generation Program, PM Mudra Yojana, Stand Up India, and PM Rozgar Yojana. The Chikankari entrepreneur understands of and attitude towards the "One District One Product" programme have been examined in the case study that has been provided (Singh, 2020).

Even though the Chikan sector employs many people, especially low-income women, and is expanding at a pace of roughly 20 percent annually. Chikan commodities are thought to be worth roughly 250 crores of rupees annually. The private sector has a monopoly on determining labour rates, leading to the exploitation of employees and

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Submitted: 27 March 2023, Revised: 09 April 2023, Accepted: 18 April 2023, Published: May 2023

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artisans in the absence of coordinated efforts in terms of training, production, and marketing. Even so, given their low wages and lengthy workweeks, Chikan employees have pitiful living conditions. Once more, as time passes, customer behavior changes, necessitating the development of cutting-edge designs and techniques for production, marketing, and distribution of finished items, among other things. It also calls for concerted measures to empower women workers and artisans while simultaneously promoting, developing, and marketing Chikan craft. In light of this context, the current study aims to analyze the current condition of Chikankari work in the state of Uttar Pradesh while also examining the newly emerging concept of supply chain management for Chikan goods.

The traditional craft of chikankari is primarily concentrated in and around Lucknow, according to information provided by U.P. Export Corp. Ltd., Lucknow. Barabanki, Rai Barielly, and Unnao are few other cities where the craft is rather popular. For Indian women, crafts are their primary source of employment and income. It is also a talent, a creative outlet, a skill set, a legacy, and a sustainable, practical source of revenue. We are motivated to invest in the sector's development and the empowerment of its artisans and workers by the export potential of the industry. It's interesting that the traditional household industry of Chikan embroidery employs so many low-income women and underrepresented groups. Several studies draw attention to the precarious state of employees and artists in the craft sector as a result of poor pay, subpar living conditions, and extreme poverty. In order to empower artisans, labourers, and their dependents, deliberate interventions must be made. The yearly revenue of this sector is Rs 600 crore. 15 percent of the nation's cloth is produced in Uttar Pradesh. Almost 30% of all Indian artisans work in Chikankari. Also, this sector brings in about US\$ 1.2 billion annually. The state's GDP in 2013–14 represented 8.46 percent of India. Chikankari makes up 8.12 percent (\$1.2 billion) of the U.P. GDP. The value of Chikan clothing exports is Rs 60 crore. At least Rs. 200 crore in indirect export revenue is available annually. Chikankari production in Lucknow is halted by the virus. Around a million artisans and labourers are employed in Lucknow's industry, which is estimated to be worth Rs. 4000 crores yearly. The traditional Chikan embroidery of Lucknow is in danger from machine-produced Chikan embroidery made in China.

Conclusion:

One of the handcraft businesses is the Chikan industry. It has considerably contributed by giving a lot of women food and income from foreign exchange. A vital component of Oudh's "palace culture" is the Chikan craft. Currently, Lucknow is well-known for its Chikan embroidery as well as its illustrious historical architecture, culture, and art. The practice of Chikan work has spread beyond Muslim households to include non-Muslim populations, wealthy, middle-class, and low-income individuals. A sizable part of artisans and workers also come from the Hindu community. Similar to this, current fabrics like georgette, polyester, cotton, terry silk, terry cotton, etc. are now used for Chikan embroidery. Seldom are white Muslin and Tanjeb fabrics embroidered. Since the government stopped providing assistance with production, funding, training, marketing, etc., the private sector has continued to handle the Chikan work. Chikan embroidery work is produced and sold by contractors who are given the task of creating Chikan garments and stitching them at prices that have been agreed upon by traders and business owners. The contractors obtain raw materials from traders and business owners, distribute them to industrial artisans and workers at their residences or places of employment, negotiate labour costs, collect the finished products once the embroidery work is complete, and then assist in the marketing of finished Chikan goods. In comparison to the old handmade embroidery, the new Chinese Chikan work is 30 percent less expensive and takes less time to make. In Lucknow, this directly endangers over 5 lakh "Chikankari" workers. Since it is less expensive than the original work, China's machine-produced Chikan industry is flourishing. Chinese Chikan work is preferred by exporters since it is more effective and on-time delivery is essential in international trade. For instance, the Chikan industry has faced difficulties due to a lack of market data on export trends, prospects, and prices as well as financial limitations. Just 5 percent of Chikan manufacturers in the city export their products directly, so slow supply response could be a problem for Chikankari exports. Nonetheless, the Chikan sector of Uttar Pradesh has enormous potential to develop, generate employment opportunities, and enhance India's reputation abroad. The state's ODOP programme is anticipated to significantly strengthen the sector.

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