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Present status and potential of the Farrukhabad hand block printing cluster

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Abstract

The hand block printing of Farrukhabad being one of the most famous age-old craft, did remarkably well until mid-20th century but declined considerably after the advent of new technology and shifting away of the markets. It requires great deal of thrust to revive, which is only possible with the combined mammoth efforts of all the stakeholders in conjunction with the government. In order to put this craft back into the world map, it's imperative to assess its present status and potential. Therefore, keeping the need of the hour in focus, this cluster needs to invest in quality productions and deliver according to the consumer's taste. The infrastructure facilities available or being planned to be made available were studied in light of achieving the target for more quality-oriented production in the cluster.

Keywords: Block printing, artisans, cluster, government initiatives, Textile Park, technology upgradation

1. Introduction

Uttar Pradesh is the fourth largest state of India in terms of area and largest state in terms of population. The economy of the state ranked third in the country in the year 2015-16. In terms of numbers of MSME units (about 46 lakh units, 8%) Uttar Pradesh stands first in the country. This state has distinction of being able to offer a wide range of handloom products like home furnishing, floor coverings, bed covers, bed sheets, dress materials etc. and a vast range of woven & printed sarees made of cotton & silk. It has 5.6% share of total weaving units in handloom sector of India. It not only has a very significant contribution in earning foreign exchange through exports of these crafts, but also has very high employment generation potential after agriculture.

Farrukhabad in the state of Uttar Pradesh is known for its textile block printing, screen printing, block making & Zari Zardozi Udyog. Till about mid 1980s hand block printing was its peak here and declined thereafter. Alternatively, Zari Zardozi industry picked up and many artisans in need of work shifted from cloth printing craft. With time Zari Zardozi Udyog came to be known as the traditional Udyog of district Farrukhabad and is now widely spread across the state including rural areas.

Amongst the handloom producing states, U.P. comes first on the map of the country. There are several cottons, silk, woollen and synthetic handloom fabric from U.P which are famous all over the country. (MSME Development Institute, Kanpur, 2015, p. 39) ^[1]. Though, not much has been written about the handprinted textiles from this region, but it is believed that every region in this belt has had its own printing facility since time immemorial and was self-sufficient. Of all the regions which practiced hand block printing craft Farrukhabad was amongst the famous three including Lucknow and Bulandshahr since 19th century. Farrukhabad block printing cluster has long been neglected and not much has been done to revive it till date. The various government records of the departments and reports of agencies working in the field were collected to understand the ground reality.

A. Handloom & Handicraft

Farrukhabad has always been more famous for cotton printing rather than for handloom. Whereas the neighbouring district to the north i.e., Etawah is well known for stripes, checks and plains cloth and bedsheets, which were always sourced by Farrukhabad for export purpose.

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Like Etawah the handloom industry once flourished in Farrukhabad too and was the most important occupation of the people. The number of weavers back in 1987 were about 11,375, with number of handlooms in the district counting up to 6000. Out of which 90% of these looms were pit looms and only 10 % were frame looms, jacquard looms were not used in this district at all. Presently, there are no operational handlooms in the region. Though, earlier the main centres of production in the district were Farrukhabad, Kamal Ganj, Shamsabad, Kayamganj, Kanauj and Chhibramau. The total number of persons engaged back in handloom industry in 1987 were about 65,000 and estimated no. of 30,000- 35,000 were engaged in printing. Earlier, the cloth used for printing was mostly handloom obtained from U. P, Kashmir, and Maharashtra. (Tripathi, 1987) [2]. Presently, the mill made fabric such as, rayon/viscose from Erode, cotton from Malegaon (Maharashtra), silk from Bangalore & Surat and wool from Srinagar are sourced.

The block making craft of Farrukhabad has been very famous too and with diminishing demands for the wood blocks for printing many of the artisans shifted to *tarkashi*. Today, many of them make show pieces and other decorative products besides carving blocks for printing.

B. Craft clusters of Uttar Pradesh

In order to promote the economic development of a country the formation of clusters for different products has played a significant role in the state. Uttar Pradesh with its numerous traditional clusters of crafts and their unique product offerings has an edge over the other states. It has very high export potential which still remains to be explored further. (MSME Development Institute, Kanpur, 2015, p. 38) [3] These clusters created are taken care of by the central and state government organizations for better functioning and their future development.

Hand Printed Textile clusters of Uttar Pradesh

The artisanal cluster list of Uttar Pradesh state prepared by (UNIDO) United Nation Industrial Development Programme has printed textiles from Aligarh, Allahabad, Azamgarh, Faizabad, Farrukhabad, Ghaziabad, Jahangirabad, Kanpur, Lucknow, Mathura, Meerut, Mirzapur Moradabad, Shahjahanpur, Varanasi enlisted. Another list of major export centers of U. P and the products exported enlists, hand printed cotton and silk bed spreads, Zardozi work, wood block, *tarkashi* from Farrukhabad. Some even mention the additional centers such as Pilkhuwa and Fatehpur. (<https://epbupindia.in/>) 4 (Export Potential of Handicraft Products From Uttar Pradesh, 2006, p. 84) [4]

Cluster Status

The Farrukhabad hand block print craft was not listed in the Census scheduled for the 11th five-year (2007-2012) plan by the Planning Commission, Govt. Of India. While the data of Planning commission itself of much earlier date does include hand block printing and wood carving under languishing craft, with hand printed textiles (hand screen printing) enlisted under core crafts. The list of 2009 with 42 recognized handicrafts from Uttar Pradesh didn't enlist it, indicating it of no significance. (Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), 2009) [6].

C. Central Govt. Organizations and their functions

Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Development Organization (MSME-DO) which works under the aegis of

Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India is very active in this region. It is an apex-body and is the nodal agency for formulating, coordinating and monitoring the policies and programmes for promotion and development of MSMEs all over the country. The MSME-DI are the field offices of MSME-DO with the two-textile related clusters, that of cloth printing and Zari zardozi from Farrukhabad falling under the Kanpur division.

D. State Government Departments & other Organizations functional in the region:

The Directorate of Industries, U.P, with their initiatives and constant guidance are able to gauge requirements of the craft and extend further support to these Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises and Cottage Industries in the State.

They have under them various registered implementing bodies/institutions such as, Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and U.P. Khadi and Village Industries Board. The District Industries Centres (DICs) established in the O/o the Development Commissioner (MSME) cater to financial and technical requirements and monitor implementation and progress. The U.P. State Industrial Development Corporation (UPSIDC) which plays an important role for rapid industrialization by providing industrial accommodation for industries. The U.P. Handicraft & Marketing Corporation which is engaged in exports of the product manufactured by MSE units and Handicraft units, offshore warehousing, sourcing of raw material, dissemination of information related to export, sponsors and facilitate promotion & marketing via fairs and emporia. (MSME Development Institute, Kanpur, 2015, pp. 38-55) [7]. Other than the ones mentioned already there are many more developmental institutions/organizations/authorities associated with this industry at Farrukhabad.

1. Methodology

The present research to study the present status of the cluster and its potential was conducted in two phases. The quantitative data from the government portals regarding the number of textile unit, business conducted, active government bodies etc. was collated and corroborated with the data collected from the field survey of DIC office at Farrukhabad, DCH office, Bariley and the stakeholders. The artisans were interviewed and manufactureres were administered questionnaire to elicit the response in regards to their socio economic status, market demand for the craft etc. Also, export data was collected from EPCH to assess the present market dynamics for hand printed textiles (from all over India) and their destinations. This was done to assess scope and its potential to sell in the domestic and export market both.

2. Results and Discussion

The cluster activities and their performance were noted, along with the assisting bodies functional and their role to help in achieving the export goals during the field survey. It was found that both central and state government were actively working towards the betterment of this craft, with MSE -CDP (cluster development programme) being functional in the Farrukhabad cluster. Their activities included conducting awareness workshops, National Awards and implementation of various schemes. (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, 2016) [8].

a. Farrukhabad Textile Park:

The Textile Ministry of India in collaboration with the state

government of Uttar Pradesh, approved in 2016 the setting up of a 'Farrukhabad Textile Park' to promote local textile industry and create job opportunities for the local youth. Though, majorly sanctioned for 'screen printing', but there will be provision for block printing production as well. It aims to provide funding facility to all stake holders for technological upgradation and setting up of Common Facility Centers (CFCs). To reduce lead time for production and maintain quality for export market many testing facilities, pollution certification etc. will be provided. Common Treatment Plant are slated to be set up to make it zero emission zone. As the Central Pollution Control Board had asked the textile units to shift out of city limits, the approval to set up a textile park has come as a boon to the textile industry. _____(Uttar-pradesh-to-develop-textile-park-in-Farrukhabad, 1130125.html, 2022) ^[9]

Here, cloth printing cluster (majorly employs screen printing technique) under MSE is developed and maintained by the SPV by the name "Vastra Chappai Udyog Samiti", Farrukhabad, has 150 units registered under it. The value of exports for this cluster alone stands at 150 crore (INR) and employs more than 1500 people. (Rohit Goyal, 2021) ^[10]. The major problems and limitations of this industry are lack of design interventions, technology for finishing and testing for quality control.

In spite of the tireless efforts of the stakeholders the Textile Parks is yet to start as local SPV is still to complete its role before government begins the disbursement of their share capital. (Upadhaya, 2023) ^[11]. Similar problems can be seen in Bareilly and Pilkhuwa. The textile park at Bareilly has not yet kickstarted due to many functional issues such as backing out of investors seeing the recession in textile trade.

b. Enlisting of Farrukhabad Prints under ODOP

The export of handicrafts from Uttar Pradesh contributes 44% to total export of handicrafts from the country. The share of Uttar Pradesh in total exports from the country is 4.73%. Almost each district in the State has one or more unique products with distinct identity. Therefore, government launched the scheme in the name of 'One District – One Product' (ODOP) in the state to preserve and develop local crafts along with its promotion. This would in return generate incomes and local employment, helping the district retain their artisans and even attract back the artisans lost to other states. The focus is on improving the product quality and skill development in order to transform the products in an artistic way through implementation of quality control parameters, packaging and branding the product innovatively, to attract new markets and retain existing ones.

There are about 62 unique products identified under the ODOP Programme across 75 districts of the state. Of UP's ₹1.21 lakh crore exports in FY21, almost 80% or ₹96,000 crore were of ODOP products. The 'Farrukhabad Prints' is one of the 62 unique products identified under the scheme. (Fig: 1) According to the artisan block maker and printer the orders are now flowing in due to their presence in the ODOP portal. Many of these products are (Geographical Indication) GI-tagged of which many are now languishing craft like 'Farrukhabad Prints' and are need for revival. (Suneja, 2021) ^[12]. Gradually, Zari Zardozi is slated to be included under the purview of this scheme. The sector has further tied up with Co-operatives, Institutions and Self-Help Groups in order to render general and technical training of the craft and its technology development. (<http://odopup.in/en/page/brand-odop>) 13. A training programme was conducted so that the artisans were self-reliant through giving out of training tool kit and information about market, bank loans and government schemes. (Fig-2)



Source: (www.odopup.in)14

Fig 1: Block Printing, Farrukhabad listed in the ODOP website of U.P Govt.



Source: (Hindustan, 2021)15

Fig 2: Training programme under ODOP by the state government conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Institute of Design and Research, Lucknow

c. Cluster (MSME & DCHC)

The four cluster(products) identified under MSME-DI Kanpur in Farrukhabad are Zari zardozi, textile printing, block printing and hand block making clusters for scheme implementation by District Industrial Export Promotion Committee (DIEPC). There are many interventions such as awareness workshop on design clinic, Udyam Samagam have been conducted from time to time. As can be seen from the below Table-1, the number of units and artisans registered under Zari Zardozi tops the list of both MSME and DCHC. The data clearly indicates hand block printing has diminished and textile (hand screen printing) has taken over in the block printing cluster.

Table 1: Farrukhabad handicraft cluster details

S. No.	Cluster	No. of functional MSME units	No. of Registered artisans (DCHC)
1	Zari Zardozi	180	3799
2	Textile Printing	150	75 (Hand screen printed)
3	Block Printing Cluster	10	143
4	Hand Block making	25	18

Source: (<http://www.dcmsme.gov.in/old/MSE-CDProg.htm>) 16 & DCHC, Bareilly.

The U.P State Government implementing agencies achieved its skilling targets by conducting training programme under the MSME -SFURTI Scheme in December 2022 for the hand block printing cluster. The number of artisans trained by them were 837 artisans and the nodal agencies were Uttar Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Corporation (U.P-KVIC), Lucknow and the technical assisting agency was Uttar Pradesh Industrial Consultant Limited (UPICL), Lucknow. The cluster benefits under the scheme are now extended to this cluster as well and they hope with this they can solve lots of problems lingering in the cluster for a long time. The printed textile from this region is exported to Germany, France, America and important countries of the world with about 30% of the total export being that of block printed. Therefore, the declaration of it being a block printing cluster

recently by the Government of India has hastened the activities in this region.

d. Export Trends (Handprinted Textiles & Scarves)

Export growth in Uttar Pradesh is having a considerable share in the country's exports. The state achieved a growth rate of 21.6% during the year 2013-14 which is the 2nd highest in the country. (MSME Development Institute, Kanpur, 2015, p. 34) [17]. In comparison to other items of exports handicrafts scores very low. According to the DCHC data exports of handicrafts (other than hand knotted carpets) were merely Rs. 386.57 crores during the year of establishment of the Council i.e., 1986-87 rose to level of 25679.98 Crores in year 2020-21. (Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), 2021) [18]. However, the data in Table-2 and Fig-3 below focuses towards the high potential that the handprinted textile can achieve if the baseline facilities & infrastructure is provided to the artisans.

Items for Exports from this region

The list of major export items & their locations mentions only Zari Zardozi of Farrukhabad and doesn't have any listing of block printing craft in records studied for the period available from 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2021. Whereas a 2006 report mentions it in its list of major centres of handicraft products in India under handprinted textiles and scarves segment. The other centres besides Farrukhabad in the list are Amroha, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bagru & Sanganer. (Export Potential of Handicraft Products From Uttar Pradesh, 2006, p. 10) [19].

Major Export Destinations

The major export destination for Hand Printed Textiles from India in terms of the % share in decreasing order is UAE, USA, U.K, Germany and Canada. (Table-2) & (Fig-3) The same data for the period of 2019-2020 and 2020-21 indicate towards the increase in demand from the countries such as Switzerland, Canada, France, UAE, Lac, U.S.A and U.K. These markets can be explored further by the present cluster as well. (Table-2)

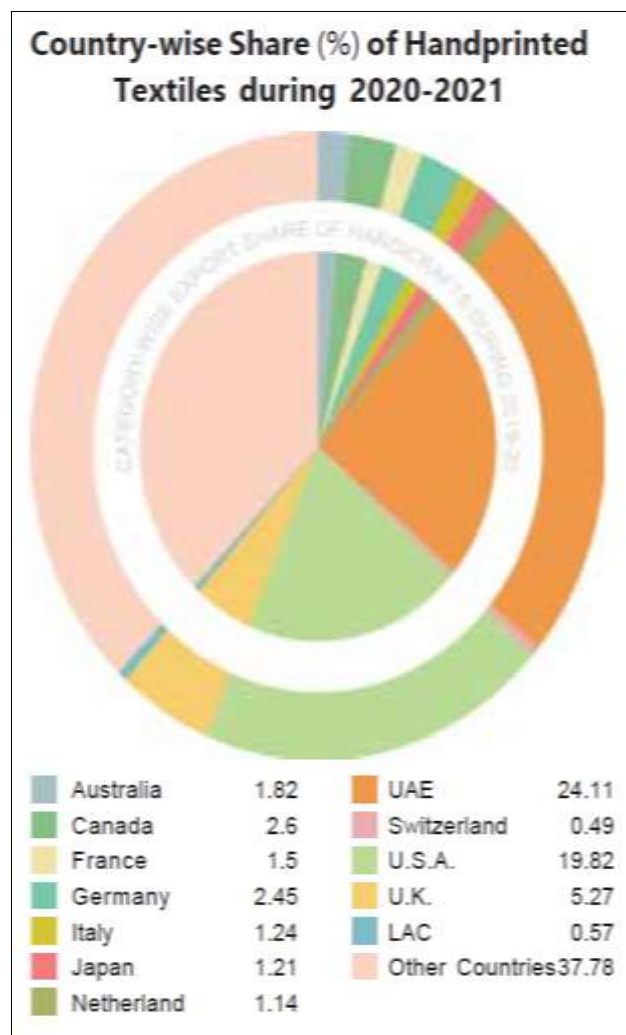
HS Code for Handprinted Textiles

Export promotion council for handicrafts has 167 HS code allocated to the handicraft under Commodity No. :63 - Other made-up textile articles; sets; worn clothing and worn textile article; tags bearing HS Code relevant for hand printing which

are 63079011 (dress material of cotton hand printed), 63079012 (dress material of silk hand printed), 6307913 (dress material of man-made hand printed). (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, n.d.) [20].

Table 2: Hand printed Textiles Exports country wise share (in crores)

Country	2019-20	2020-21	% increase /decrease
Australia	58.49	44.83	-23.35
Canada	25.08	64.01	155.20
France	36.40	36.86	126
Germany	90.56	60.39	-33.31
Italy	32.99	30.48	-7.61
Japan	68.05	29.72	-56.33
Netherland	54.41	28.03	-48.48
UAE	440.86	594.15	34.77
Switzerland	3.32	12.06	263.25
U.S. A	392.95	488.42	24.30
U. K	113.68	129.79	14.17
Lac	11.22	14.10	25.67
Other Countries	1215.10	931.15	-23.37
Total	2543.11	2463.99	-3.11



Source: (Export Promotion Council of India (EPCH), p. 91) [21]

Fig 3: Country wise share (%) of handprinted textiles during 2020-21

Export data available for the handprinted textiles & scarves was sourced from DGCI & S Kolkata. (Table-3) The data indicates that from 2013-14 to 2015-16 handprinted textile and scarves segment showed significant increase in % exports only to decrease for in 2019-20. A very sharp increase post

covid-19 in 2021-22 was witnessed by this segment with 50.46 % jump, but the increase was short lived and decreased drastically in 2022-23. It indicates that the growth is not consistent for handprinted and scarves segment and is in need of constant interventions.

Table 3: Review of export data as per availability for the handprinted textiles & scarves

S. No.	Comparative analysis (in INR cr)		Increase/decrease in % over
1	2013-14 April-March 2673.71	2014-15 April-March 3013.46	2013-14 12.71
2	2014-15 April-January 667.87	2015-16 April-January 814.18	2014-15 21.91
3	2016-17 April-March 3847.40	217-18 April-March 3665.00	2016-17 -4.85
4	2017-18 April-March 3665.00	2018-19 April-March 3483.16	
5	2019-20 April-March 2543.11	2020-21 April -March 2463.99	2019-20 -3.11
6	2020-21 April -March 2463.99	2021-22 April-March 3089.97	2021-22 25.41
7	2020-21 April -October 1088.31	2021-22 April -October 1637.46	2021-22 50.46
8	2021-22 April-February 2780.82	2022-23 April-February 2799.77	2021-22 0.68
9.	2021-22 April -March 3089.97	2022-23 April -March 2871.17	2021-22 -7.08
10.	2022-23 April 297.96	2023-24 April 202.79	2022-23 -31.94

Source: DGCI & S Kolkata (<https://epch.in/policies/exportdata.pdf>) 22

(<https://www.epch.in/policies/exportsofhandicrafts.htm>)23 (Press Information Bureau (PIB), 2019) 24

e. Manufacturing and Exporting Units

The data collected in the Farrukhabad region revealed that there were still many manufacturers and exporters of hand printed textiles, but majorly they all were using screen printing technique. Except for occasional orders from clients, block printing was not preferred. Also, their willingness to go back to block printing seemed very low, with none agreeing to revive the old designs due to high-cost factor. Though, the cluster moved on with the screen printing

long back in late 19th century itself, still that's the only technological intervention which ever took place here. They are still on hand screen printing and are facing fierce competition from machine printed textiles.

Also, the pattern of domestic consumption of crafts in comparison to the share of exports in the production of handicrafts in the country for the 10th 5-year plan is stated to be 50% each. (Planning Commission, GOI, pp. 134,138 & 139)₂₅. This figure must have only increased as can be seen with so many international brands entering Indian market. There seems to be a change in the orientation of the manufacturers who were earlier majorly exporting, but have recently started paying attention towards domestic market as well. Today, domestic as well as export markets are quality and price both driven.

f. Artisans Condition

The artisans block makers and block printers interviewed were in dire state with not much orders flowing in and the demand shifting towards the screen prints. Slowly, the artistic skills of the carver and printer both are getting lost with the next generation not wanting to join the craft. This situation has led to immense shortage of skilled artisan/labor to execute the orders received.

g. Problems Faced by the cluster

It's history that this industry has shown great resilience towards all the troubled times faced in the past and emerged stronger. However, it is still reeling under the after effects of the recent issues faced. Firstly, Farrukhabad printing industry in 2017 lost business due to demonetization, which resulted in many closing shops and workers were out of their jobs. About 10,000 workers lost their jobs and business orders worth 10 crore were cancelled. There were about 105 garment printing factories in the district and this led to mass unemployment and due to closure of industry. *Secondly*, the implementation of GST further hampered the business to the extent that it couldn't recover from their shock. *Thirdly*, on Central Government orders, survey of textile printing factories was conducted in 2016 to get rid of the Ganga pollution. According to the list of Grossly polluting industries (GPI) with respect to river Ganga in U.P there were more than ^[25]

dyeing and printing units which was causing the pollution both in Angooribagh, Farrukhabad and Fatehgarh area. (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, 2016) ^[26]. The reports of survey conducted in 2018, earmarked many other small-scale (cottage industry) printing units which either didn't have one or had installed low capacity ETP plant. Subsequently, on the instructions of the Pollution Control Board, Lucknow, 70 textile printing factories out of the 100 that were found to be water polluting in nature were closed. Hence, there has been a constant demand by the block printing industry to install Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) at the effected ghats such as Bhairav ghat etc. as there is a fear that not all can move to planned Textile Park due lack of finance.

Therefore, an industry which was already reeling under the blow of demonization, and suffering from closure due to pollution issue, had a final blow from Covid-19. This has caused a lot of unexpected damage and a massive recession in the industry, the investors backed out from starting the textile park and the work has come to a halt. The pandemic which hit the international trade very hard all over the world also made its impact felt in Farrukhabad printing industry as well. Although, there was a sudden spike in demand for dupattas after Covid-19 but the demand was short lived.

3. Conclusion

The study revealed that many printers missed the opportunity to make it big due to their shortsightedness, who forever kept increasing numbers of tables to increase production rather than investing in technological upgradation. Initially it helped them increase the production, but the quality for exports couldn't be achieved, so they got left out of the export business.

Scarves and dupatta alone are two segments which has 500 crore turnover per year presently and is the reason for many of them still pursuing trade of these products in spite of shifting out to Delhi, Noida, Mumbai etc.

According to the MSME data the value of Exports from the clusters is about 150 Crore and employment in cluster is around 1500. As screen printing has rapidly grown in the past 50-60 years, therefore block printing cannot alone survive the onslaught of market demand and technological changes occurring in the textile industry. In order to brace up for the present times block printing requires a stable infrastructure which will support it in future survival in the competitive export as well as local market. It is expected that the facilities such as testing, research and design center, CETP, STP etc. being set up at the 'Farrukhabad Textile Park' though envisaged for screen printing would also benefit the block printing cluster. This will help in scaling up the production and aim for exports by taking advantage of all the facilities of advanced production technology, testing, quality control and

market links. The other initiatives are the enlisting of the block printing craft in ODOP portal of Uttar Pradesh and third that of being granted the GI tag for 'Farrukhabad Prints 'bring hope to the cluster for better future.

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