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Chikan Craft as a Subsistence Occupation among the Muslims of Lucknow

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Extremely beautiful, sophisticated, fine, delicate floral tracery of white on white clothes is actually called *Chikankari* or *Chikan*. Chikankari is a distinctive integral part of Lucknow culture. In India it is believed that Chikan embroidery may have existed, or may have been known by some other name from times immemorial. Ancient books revealed bronze needle dating 1500 – 2300 BC and figurine wearing embroidered drapery has been mentioned and seen in the ancient Buddhist stupa sculpture. The *Babur Nama* accounts for the clothes worn then, and the mention of very fine muslin with white embroidery, which is in fact the chikan. The famous historian Abul Fazal documented the clothes decorated with fine embroidery.

Akbar patronized and established the industries for fine embroidery work. He invited the expert chikan craft masters from Nishapur, Iran. All the craftsmen like cutting masters, tailors, embroiderers, gold-silversmith manufacturers of fine wires used to sit under one roof. The cross-cultural exchange encouraged an advanced embroidery craft, which spread to all parts of the country. Indian embroidery craft was influenced by middle-east, European and Chinese embroidery, when cross-border cultural exchanges improved. Dhaka was an important center of chikan craft. It is said that Jahangir brought this craft to Lucknow and later it was whole-heartedly adopted by the Nawabs of Lucknow. Thus it became a part of the culture of Lucknow. Throughout the history of Indian textile, we see that the embroidery work on clothes was a common feature. In ancient and medieval periods embroidery may have been more popular among

the elites but in the present age it is common even among the masses. Thus, due to increasing demand within India and foreign countries, chikan craft has become an important industry in Lucknow and Avadh. About 2500 entrepreneurs are engaged in manufacturing the chikan for local, national and international markets. By rough estimates about 2.5 lakh chikan workers are engaged in this industry who are residing in Lucknow and in the entire Avadh region. The consumption of chikan produce is approximately 15 per cent locally in Lucknow market, 10 per cent in other parts of Uttar Pradesh, 50 per cent in rest of India and 25 per cent for export. Chikan craft entrepreneurs are almost equal in numbers among Hindus and Muslims. However chikan craft workers are divided amongst Hindus and Muslims in proportion of 30 and 70 per cent respectively. Participation of Hindus as chikan craft workers is a recent phenomenon. With a rare exception most of the chikan craft entrepreneurs are males while the majority of chikan workers are females, who do the needle work – embroidery. The core of chikan craft is the embroidery, which is successfully done by chikan craft women workers. A question arises why has Lucknow become famous for chikan craft? Why not other parts of the country? Some give explanation that those wooden stamps for making the designs on cloth is carved only in Lucknow, and nowhere else in the country it could be made of this quality. This argument seems to be untrue as nothing is impossible to be created in any part of the country. It is also true that in Lucknow about 40 per cent population belongs to Muslim community and among them a large number don't have any alternative, e.g., no agricultural land in rural areas or any viable employment for their livelihood. Since chikan craft industry is an unorganized enterprise, its' entrepreneurs thrive on exploitation of chikankar women workers, whose average monthly income is less than Rs.600/-, when the average reported income of entrepreneurs is Rs.21231/-, which is roughly 35 times higher than that of chikankar women workers.

In chikan craft industry, chikan craft women workers are in majority who do the delicate embroidery work (needle and thread work) and their eyesight is affected leading to total blindness. Related to chikan craft, there are a few other artisans like cutting master, tailor, printer, washermen and agent, but they enjoy better income, i.e. more than Rs.2500/- per month. About one-fifth of the households of chikankar have more than one chikankar. Average annual item-wise production per sample entrepreneur is *Kurta* 3601, *Ladies top* 2829, *Shalwar-Kameez* 2824, *Saree* 2215, *Shirts* 1742, *Aba-Chadar-Dupatta* 248, *Sherwani* 78 and *Lahanga* 12. About 12 per cent sample entrepreneurs have reported that they export their products to foreign countries (mostly middle-eastern countries). The impact of income is reflected from the living condition of people engaged in chikan craft. Average size of residential house of chikan craft entrepreneurs is about 2321 sq.ft. while in case of chikankar it is only 469 sq.ft.. About half of the sample entrepreneurs have taken loans from various sources at the average rate of 12 per cent interest, while they expect to be given by the government at lower rate of interest.

At first, designs are printed on the cloth with washable colours mainly indigo. This is a specialized job done by a printer, mostly men who use the traditional wooden blocks. Once the design is printed, the garments are transferred from printer to the chikankar, who are mainly women, for needlework. The main stitches of chikan are called: *Jali*, *Murri*, *Phanda*, *Bakhia*, *Hool*, *Keel*, *Tepachi*, *Dhoour*, *Joda-Pattee*, *Ghaspattee*, *Hath-Katee*, etc. Each stitch form has a wide variety of motifs. Quite a number of workers specialize in one of the stitch forms, but their proportion in the total workers is still quite low. Chikan embroidery is done on a number of products such as *Kurta*, *Tshirts*, *ladies' top*, *shalwar-kameez*, *saree*, *Sherwani-kurta*, *dupatta-chadar-aba*, *curtain*, *table-clothe*, etc

Population Dynamics

Since no authentic information is available about the chikan craft industry or people engaged in it, on random basis chikan craft workers and their households (not necessarily related to our sample entrepreneurs) were surveyed through a well planned detailed questionnaire. For our study we surveyed randomly 6 cutting masters, 14 printers, 6 tailors, 63 chikankars, 6 washermen and 9 agents. Thus a total of 104 workers were extensively surveyed. Out of our survey 28 were Hindu workers and 76 were Muslim workers, meaning that percentage-wise they are 26.67 per cent and 73.33 per cent respectively. If the entire family members of the 104 respondent chikan workers are added, it comes altogether 579 persons out of which males and females are 276 and 303 respectively. The overall sex ratio among the family members of chikan craft workers is high, i.e. 1098 females per 1000 males. Of 579 persons of family members of chikan craft workers, 146 are Hindus and 433 are Muslims. The sex ratios among Hindu and Muslim populations are 1116 and 1092 females per 1000 males. The reason of high sex ratio among Hindus is due to high proportion of Scheduled Castes in its population. The highest sex ratio is found among the families of chikankars, i.e. 1407 females per 1000 males. It reveals that the high sex ratio along with extreme poverty compels the females to take up extremely low paid chikankari, i.e. embroidery.

Table 1: **Religion and Caste wise Population of Chikan Craft Workers**

Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Sample HH of workers	Household Population of workers			Percentage to Total Population		
		Total	Male	Female	SC	OBC	Others
<u>Hindu</u>							
Cutting Master	1	6	3	3	—	—	100.0
Printer	1	3	2	1	100.0	—	—
Tailor	1	3	2	1	—	100.0	—
Chikankar	22	116	52	64	30.17	31.04	38.79

Washerman	3	18	10	8	100.0	—	—
Agent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<u>Muslim</u>							
Cutting Master	5	30	18	12	—	40.00	60.00
Printer	13	80	51	29	—	10.00	90.00
Tailor	5	34	19	15	—	—	100.0
Chikankar	41	221	88	133	—	51.58	48.42
Washerman	3	18	8	10	—	100.0	—
Agent	9	50	23	27	—	12.00	88.00
<u>Total</u>							
Cutting Master	6	36	21	15	—	33.33	66.67
Printer	14	83	53	30	3.61	9.64	86.75
Tailor	6	37	21	16	—	8.11	91.89
Chikankar	63	337	140	197	10.39	44.51	45.10
Washerman	6	36	18	18	50.00	50.00	—
Agent	9	50	23	27	—	12.00	88.00

Source: Based on survey conducted by the author and his team at Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, for the project “Diagnostic Study of Chikan Craft in Lucknow”, July-August, 2006.

High proportion of widows/divorced among females combined with high sex ratio and poverty are the prevailing conditions, which unfortunately is found the majority of Muslim households. Once a prominent cleric of the community, in his speech on rampant poverty among Muslim community, said that “*chikan is the cancer of the community*” which is difficult to be cured unless government intervenes.

Entrepreneurs are able to extract high profits despite the vagaries of market forces by squeezing the wages of poor female chikankar (embroiderer) as they have no other alternative for their survival.

Table 2: **Religion-wise Age-Structure, Widow/Divorced and Sick Among Households of Chikan Craft Workers**

Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Percentage to Total Male and Female									
	0-14		15-59		60+		Widow/ Divorced		Reported Sick	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Hindu</u>										
Cutting Master	—	—	00.00	100.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
Printer	—	—	50.00	100.00	50.00	—	—	—	—	—

Tailor	50.00	—	50.00	100.00	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chikankar	25.00	18.75	67.30	78.13	7.70	3.12	—	14.06	13.46	11.54
Washermen	—	12.50	00.00	87.50	—	—	—	—	20.00	—
Agent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<u>Muslim</u>										
Cutting Master	50.00	25.00	38.89	50.00	11.11	25.00	—	—	—	—
Printer	13.73	27.59	84.31	72.41	1.96	—	—	3.45	—	3.45
Tailor	47.37	33.33	52.63	66.66	--	—	—	—	—	6.67
Chikankar	27.27	27.07	69.32	72.18	3.41	0.75	—	12.03	9.09	1.51
Washermen	37.50	20.00	50.00	80.00	12.50	—	—	—	10.00	—
Agent	21.74	11.11	69.56	88.89	8.70	—	—	3.70	8.70	—
<u>Total</u>										
Cutting Master	42.85	20.00	47.63	60.00	9.52	20.00	—	—	—	—
Printer	13.20	26.67	83.02	73.33	3.78	--	—	3.33	—	3.33
Tailor	47.62	31.25	52.38	68.75	--	--	—	—	—	6.25
Chikankar	26.43	24.36	68.57	74.11	5.00	1.53	—	12.69	10.72	4.06
Washermen	16.67	16.67	77.78	83.33	5.55	--	—	—	16.66	—
Agent	21.74	11.11	69.56	88.89	8.70	--	—	3.70	8.70	—

Looking at the age groups among Hindu chikan craft workers, it appears that dependents of 0-14 and 60+ years are comparatively less than the Muslim workers. Overall, the number of females of above 60 years age group are small in both the communities. Unusually very high proportions of widow/divorced females are found in families of Chikankar workers (embroiderers) both among Hindu and Muslim families, i.e. 14.06 and 12.03 per cent respectively. Among families of Muslim printers and agents, there are 3.45 and 3.70 per cent females are widow/divorced. Above one-tenth males among chikankar, i.e. 10.72 per cent and washermen 16.66 per cent were found with some sickness (see Table 2)

Literacy and Education

Quite a good proportion of household population of chikan craft workers are engaged as students, i.e. 20.29 and 22.44 per cent males and females respectively. The highest proportions of males and females are studying in households of

cutting masters, e.g. 38.10 and 40.00 per cent respectively, who are generally Muslims. Similarly, in households of other different traders of chikan craft, at least one-fifth among males and females are students. Among families of chikan craft workers, the male and female literacy is roughly about 56.16 and 50.17 per cent respectively. About 44.20 and 38.61 per cent among male and female population of chikan craft households are below High School. Those who are High school and above are few in numbers(see Table 3).

Table 3: Religion-wise Students, Literates and Educated Among Households of Chikan Craft Workers

Religion/Caste-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Percentage to Total Male and Female Population											
	Students		Literate		Below H.S.		High School		Intermediate		B.A.& Above	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Hindu												
Cutting Master	--	33.33	66.67	66.67	33.33	33.33	33.33	--	--	33.33	--	--
Printer	--	--	50.00	--	50.00	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Tailor	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Chikankar	19.23	26.56	69.23	60.94	36.54	32.81	5.77	17.19	3.85	6.25	15.38	6.25
Washerman	10.00	25.00	50.00	37.50	20.00	12.50	20.00	--	10.00	--	--	25.00
Agent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Muslim												
Cutting Master	44.44	50.00	71.22	50.00	50.00	41.66	5.56	--	--	--	--	--
Printer	15.69	24.14	62.75	44.83	52.94	41.38	7.84	--	1.96	3.45	--	--
Tailor	31.58	20.00	47.37	53.33	47.37	46.67	5.26	6.67	--	--	--	--
Chikankar	15.91	20.30	45.45	45.86	42.85	40.60	--	6.02	1.14	0.75	1.14	--
Washerman	31.50	37.50	50.00	50.00	50.00	30.00	--	10.00	--	--	--	--
Agent	26.07	11.11	56.52	59.26	56.52	48.15	13.04	14.81	--	--	--	--
Total												
Cutting Master	38.10	40.00	71.43	53.33	47.62	40.00	9.52	--	--	6.67	--	--
Printer	15.09	23.33	62.26	43.33	50.94	40.00	7.55	--	1.89	3.33	--	--
Tailor	22.57	18.57	42.86	50.00	42.86	43.75	4.76	--	--	--	--	--

Chikankar	17.14	22.34	54.29	50.76	40.00	38.07	2.14	9.64	2.14	2.54	6.43	2.03
Washerman	16.67	16.67	50.00	38.89	33.33	22.22	11.11	5.56	5.56	--	--	11.11
Agent	26.07	11.11	56.57	59.26	56.52	48.15	13.24	14.81	--	—	—	—

Occupation and Income

It is observed that in most of the cases if male or female is engaged in chikan craft then their counterparts would work for some other occupation. In case of washermen community, who traditionally carry out their job, where younger male or female help the head of the household in washing, but don't report their separate income or occupation. Chikankar females are in majority among chikan craft workers, whose income is on an average Rs.575.00 per month. Income of female agent is about Rs.2171.00 per month, which is highest even in comparison to female's working in other than chikan craft jobs. Though male workers in chikan craft are less than the females, but their earning is between Rs.1680.00 to Rs.3750.00 per month, which is quite high, when the fellow brothers of their family who work in other than chikan craft trade are comparatively less paid (see Table 4).

Table 4: **Religion-wise Occupation and Income Among Households of Chikan Craft Workers**

Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Percentage Occupation of Household Population				Average Income (Rs.p.m.)			
	Chikan		Other		Chikan		Other	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>Hindu</u>								
Cutting Master	33.33	--	33.33	--	2500	--	1000	--
Printer	50.00	--	50.00	--	2500	--	1500	--
Tailor	50.00	--	--	--	2600	--	--	--
Chikankar	--	39.06	42.31	3.13	--	632	1995	750
Washerman	40.00	--	--	--	3100	--	--	--
Agent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<u>Muslim</u>								
Cutting Master	27.27	--	--	--	1700	--	--	--
Printer	43.14	--	19.61	--	2546	--	1930	--
Tailor	26.32	--	31.58	--	2497	--	750	--
Chikankar	—	37.59	55.68	3.01	—	544	1851	600

Washerman	37.50	--	--	--	2867	--	--	--
Agent	8.70	25.93	34.78	--	3750	2171	1900	--
Total								
Cutting Master	28.57	--	4.76	--	3300	--	1000	--
Printer	43.40	--	20.75	--	2543	--	1890	--
Tailor	28.57	--	28.57	--	1680	--	750	--
Chikankar	—	25.38	50.00	3.05	2000	575	1896	650
Washerman	38.89	--	--	--	2817	--	---	--
Agent	8.70	25.93	34.78	—	3750	2171	1900	--

Housing Condition

A good proportion of chikan craft workers do not own the house like, printers 64.29, washermen 50.00, cutting masters 33.33, tailors 33.33 and chikankar 19.05 per cent live in rented houses. Only all the agents have their own houses. Majority of households of chikan craft workers live in an accommodation of less than 400 sq.ft. and that also majority live in an unhygienic condition. Among Hindu chikan craft workers, except washermen, all the other workers live in two or more room houses, while among Muslim chikan craft workers, except household of agents, rest of the households of workers live in smaller houses with less than two rooms. Living condition reflects the poor condition of chikan craft workers (see Table 5).

Table 5: **Religion-wise Housing Status of Chikan Craft Workers**

Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Sample HH	Percentage to Total Household					Average No. of rooms
		House Owned	Size of Houses				
			<200 sq.ft.	200-400 sq.ft.	400-600 sq.ft.	600+ sq.ft.	
Hindu							
Cutting Master	1	100.00	--	--	100.00	--	2.00
Printer	1	100.00	--	--	100.00	--	2.00
Tailor	1	--	--	100.00	--	--	2.00
Chikankar	22	95.45	13.64	22.72	31.82	31.82	2.14
Washerman	3	66.67	--	66.67	33.33	--	1.67
Agent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Muslim							
Cutting Master	5	60.00	20.00	60.00	--	20.00	1.60

Printer	13	30.77	23.08	38.46	15.38	23.08	1.77
Tailor	5	80.00	20.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	1.62
Chikankar	41	73.17	14.64	58.53	24.39	2.44	1.66
Washerman	3	33.33	--	66.67	33.33	--	1.67
Agent	9	100.00	--	44.45	33.33	22.22	2.22
Total							
Cutting Master	6	66.67	16.67	50.00	16.66	16.67	1.67
Printer	14	35.71	21.43	35.71	21.43	21.43	1.79
Tailor	6	66.67	16.67	50.00	16.66	16.67	1.67
Chikankar	63	80.95	14.29	46.03	26.99	12.69	1.83
Washerman	6	50.00	--	66.67	33.33	--	1.67
Agent	9	100.00	--	44.45	33.33	22.22	2.22

While observing the housing condition, we find that more than 15 per cent houses belonging to chikan craft workers have dry latrines, which is banned by the government. Overall 50.00 per cent tailors, 33.34 per cent washermen, 22.23 per cent chikankar, 22.22 per cent agents and 14.28 per cent printers do not have their own latrines in their premises and they have to go out to defecate on roadsides or in *sulabh-shauchalayas* (public latrines). Similarly, hardly one-third of chikan craft workers have bathrooms in their premises and the rest three-fourth households take bath in open areas, mainly out of their premises. About 40.00 per cent chikan craft workers do not have water supply in their premises and they fetch water from outside. Electricity and streetlight is provided in and around 65.00 to 70.00 per cent houses of chikan craft workers. At least one-third houses are yet to be electrified. In family assets, except printers, majority of workers have scooter or motor bike and television is available in majority of the houses of workers. While sewing machines, which are so essential for chikan craft workers, roughly about one-third households of chikan craft workers have it (see Table 6).

Table 6: **Religion-wise Houses of Chikan Craft Workers Having Latrine, Source of Water, Electricity and Family Assets**

Religion-wise Chikan Craft	Percentage to Total Household				
	Latrine	Bath-	Source of Water	Electricity	Family Assets

Workers	Dry	Flush	room	Pipe	Hand Pump	No water	Home	Street Light	Scooter/ M. Bike	T.V.	Sewing Machine
Hindu											
Cutting Master	--	100.00	--	--	100.00	--	100.00	--	100.00	100.00	--
Printer	--	100.00	100.00	100.00	--	--	100.00	100.00	--	100.00	--
Tailor	100.00	--	--	--	--	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	--	100.00
Chikankar	13.64	77.27	45.45	50.00	4.55	45.45	72.73	72.73	63.64	72.72	45.45
Washerman	33.33	33.33	66.67	66.67	--	33.33	100.00	100.00	100.00	66.67	--
Agent	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Muslim											
Cutting Master	20.00	80.00	40.00	40.00	40.00	20.00	100.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	40.00
Printer	15.38	69.23	38.46	69.23	7.69	23.08	46.15	84.02	--	53.85	15.36
Tailor	--	40.00	20.00	20.00	40.00	40.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	80.00
Chikankar	17.07	53.66	26.83	65.85	2.44	29.37	60.98	58.54	56.10	43.90	19.51
Washerman	--	33.33	--	33.33	--	66.67	66.67	100.00	100.00	100.00	--
Agent	11.11	66.67	33.33	88.88	11.11	--	77.78	66.67	88.98	100.00	22.22
Total											
Cutting Master	16.67	83.33	33.33	33.33	50.00	16.67	100.00	66.67	83.33	83.33	33.33
Printer	14.29	71.43	42.86	71.43	7.14	21.43	50.00	85.71	--	57.14	14.29
Tailor	16.67	33.33	16.67	16.67	33.33	50.00	66.67	50.00	66.67	50.00	66.67
Chikankar	15.87	61.90	33.33	60.32	3.17	34.92	65.08	63.49	58.73	53.97	28.57
Washerman	33.33	33.33	33.33	50.00	--	50.00	83.33	100.00	88.99	100.00	22.22
Agent	11.11	66.67	33.33	88.88	11.11	--	77.78	66.67	100.00	83.33	--

Earnings of Chikan Workers

Among the total 104 chikan craft workers, there were 2 male and 7 female agents, who were each earning Rs.3750.00 (highest) and Rs.2171.42 per month respectively, whereas 6 male cutting masters each earning Rs.3300.00 per month; 8 washermen, each earning Rs.2816.66 per month, 14 male printers, each earning Rs.2542.85, 6 male tailors reported earning Rs.1680.83 and 63 female chikankars reported earning an average of Rs.574.60 per month. Overall 45.19 per cent chikan craft workers reported that they get their work through the agents. Caste-wise maximum work was given by agents to Scheduled Castes, then to OBC and least to general caste workers. It means that the general caste workers get their work mostly from the entrepreneurs directly. Cutting masters and agents were getting their work directly from the chikan craft entrepreneurs and no one was

reportedly getting work from the agents. While 28.57 per cent printers, 33.33 per cent tailors, 63.49 per cent chikankar women and 16.67 per cent washermen reported getting work through the agents (see Table 7).

Table 7: Religion and Caste-wise Number of Chikan Craft Workers and Their Average Income per Month in Rupees

Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Workers/Income	Number of Workers and their Average Income per month in Rupees							Percentage Reporting work given by agents
		Cutting Master	Printer	Tailor	Chikankar	Washer-man	Agent		
		Male	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	
Hindu Total	No. of Workers	1	1	1	22	3	--	--	35.71
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	2500.00	2500.00	2600.00	631.81	2766.66	--	--	
Hindu General	No. of Workers	1	--	--	9	--	--	--	10.00
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	2500.00	--	--	744.44	--	--	--	
Hindu OBC	No. of Workers	--	--	1	6	--	--	--	42.85
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	--	--	2600.00	516.66	--	--	--	
Hindu SC	No. of Workers	--	1	--	7	3	--	--	54.54
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	--	2500.00	--	585.71	2766.66	--	--	
Muslim Total	No. of Workers	5	13	5	41	3	2	7	48.69
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	3460.00	2546.15	1497.00	543.90	2866.66	3750.00	2171.42	
Muslim General	No. of Workers	3	12	5	21	--	1	7	42.85
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	2933.33	2591.66	1497.00	514.28	--	3500.00	2171.42	
Muslim OBC	No. of Workers	2	1	--	20	3	1	--	59.26
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	4250.00	2000.00	--	575.00	2866.66	4000.00	--	
Total	No. of Workers	6	14	6	63	6	2	7	48.19
	Income (Rs.p.m.)	3300.00	2542.85	1680.83	574.60	2816.66	3750.00	2171.42	
Percentage Reporting Work given by Agents		—	28.57	33.33	63.49	16.67	—	—	—

Time and Cost of Manufacturing

For each item of chikan the maximum time taken to finish the respective jobs by cutting master, printer, tailor and washerman is not more than 60 minutes whereas the longer time is taken in embroidery by the chikankar woman. The time duration depends upon the quality of embroidery, which has no limit. Roughly, a single chikankar woman taking minimum and maximum time in embroidering a quality kurta are 61 to 138 hours, a Shalwar-kameez 119 to 218 hours, ladies' top 24 to 49 hours, Sherwani-kurta 451 to 606 hours, saree 178 to 389 hours, bed sheet 240 to 360 hours and dupatta 228 to 430 hours. For expediting the embroidery work

many ladies are engaged on one item at a time to finish the job quickly (see Table 8).

Table 8: Religion-wise Average Minimum and Maximum Time (in Minutes) for Manufacturing Items by Chikan Craft Workers

Religion/Caste-wise Chikan Craft Workers		Kurta	Shalwar Kameez	Ladies' Top	Sherwani Kurta	Saree	Bed Sheet	Dupatta
Hindu								
Cutting Master	Minimum	10	20	10	60	—	—	—
	Maximum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Printer	Minimum	5	5	5	10	10	60	60
	Maximum	10	10	10	15	15	120	120
Tailor	Minimum	35	60	3	60	—	—	—
	Maximum	—	—	—	60	—	—	—
Chikankar	Minimum	280	9780	1980	43920	6500	4400	30720
	Maximum	302	17160	4760	10080	4500	1600	50000
Washerman	Minimum	23	25	10	30	35	--	10
	Maximum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Muslim								
Cutting Master	Minimum	11	16	12	17	—	—	—
	Maximum	5	10	10	15	—	—	—
Printer	Minimum	7	7	7	10	9	60	65
	Maximum	11	11	11	14	14	120	125
Tailor	Minimum	48	63	38	120	—	—	—
	Maximum	45	45	30	—	—	—	—
Chikankar	Minimum	231	5757	1131	14537	7583	—	2400
	Maximum	776	10890	3047	20197	2715	—	43200
Washerman	Minimum	32	25	20	28	25	60	—
	Maximum	38	45	32.50	53	60	—	—
Total								
Cutting Master	Minimum	11	16	12	28	—	—	—
	Maximum	5	10	10	15	—	—	—
Printer	Minimum	7	7	7	10	9	60	65
	Maximum	11	11	11	15	15	120	124
Tailor	Minimum	46	63	37	100	—	—	—
	Maximum	45	45	30	60	—	—	—
Chikankar	Minimum	690	7165	1433	27072	0700	4400	13680
	Maximum	311	13072	2940	36360	3347	1600	25800
Washerman	Minimum	28	25	15	29	30	0.00	10.00
	Maximum	38	45	33	52	60	—	—

Cutting master is a specialized mobile man, he visit the entrepreneurs on request and cutting work is done at the door step of the entrepreneur and the cost of work is paid and received according to fixed rates as mentioned in Table 8.

Customarily the cutting master charges the new enhanced rates from newly established entrepreneurs, while the old established entrepreneurs, generally pay the old rates, which are never disclosed. Generally printers are stationary, except a few, they hardly move and agents, helpers or entrepreneurs bring the work at the doorstep of printer's work place and according to number of impressions (prints) charges are made. There are only a few entrepreneurs who possess their own printing blocks, which are costly and thus employ occasionally a full time printer on salary. Tailors are also moving and stationary both; according to quantity of workload, he fixes the time with the entrepreneurs and tailoring rates are fixed with some fluctuations. If workload is more, then tailor stitches the clothes at the doorstep of entrepreneurs, but for smaller number of pieces, stitching is done at tailor's residence and clothes are brought by the helper, agent or entrepreneur. Washermen are stationery, either they collect the clothes themselves from the entrepreneurs or the clothes are brought to his doorstep by the agents and washing charges are demanded according to fixed rates for number of pieces. The entire family of washerman is engaged in washing, drying and ironing the clothes. Generally females iron the clothes. Generally, maximum money is paid by the entrepreneurs on per piece of embroidered cloth, but this money is distributed among number of chikankar women who together finish the work in some number of days. Chikankar women are trained easily and they are easily available in and around Awadh region. As the distance increases from Lucknow heartland, where entrepreneurs live, middlemen involve more and wages of embroiderer goes on decreasing. Cutting master, tailor, printer and washerman are all men, who are specialists and required to be within the city and thus, their wages are higher than the chikankar women (see Table 9)

Table 9: **Religion-wise Average Minimum and Maximum Rate (in Rupee) for Manufacturing Items by Chikan Craft Workers**

Religion/Caste-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Kurta	Shalwar Kameez	Ladies' Top	Sherwani Kurta	Saree	Bed Sheet	Dupatta
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Hindu								
Cutting Master	Minimum	1.50	3.00	1.00	4.00	—	—	—
	Maximum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Printer	Minimum	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.0	1.00	4.00	4.00
	Maximum	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	6.00	5.00
Tailor	Minimum	8.00	8.00	3.00	10.00	—	—	—
	Maximum	—	—	—	15.00	—	—	—
Chikankar	Minimum	168.00	176.00	32.00	787.00	346.00	100.00	250.00
	Maximum	231.00	251.00	47.00	977.00	520.00	1250.00	570.00
Washerman	Minimum	7.66	8.00	2.00	10.00	8.00	--	10.00
	Maximum	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Muslim								
Cutting Master	Minimum	1.70	2.00	1.10	2.00	—	—	—
	Maximum	2.00	2.25	2.00	3.00	—	—	—
Printer	Minimum	1.63	1.63	1.63	1.76	1.76	4.30	4.69
	Maximum	2.26	2.26	2.26	2.46	2.46	5.39	5.31
Tailor	Minimum	7.00	8.00	3.80	9.00	—	—	—
	Maximum	10.00	12.00	8.00	—	—	—	—
Chikankar	Minimum	31.36	152.17	33.97	417.14	286.09	—	1500.00
	Maximum	174.14	338.84	86.89	706.15	777.80	—	2000.00
Washerman	Minimum	6.33	9.33	3.33	9.00	9.66	8.00	—
	Maximum	10.50	14.00	9.00	13.00	15.00	—	—
Total								
Cutting Master	Minimum	1.66	2.16	1.08	2.50	—	—	—
	Maximum	2.00	2.25	2.00	3.00	—	—	—
Printer	Minimum	1.57	1.57	1.57	1.71	1.71	4.29	4.64
	Maximum	2.21	2.21	2.17	2.39	2.39	5.43	5.29
Tailor	Minimum	7.16	8.00	4.40	9.33	—	—	—
	Maximum	10.00	12.00	8.00	15.00	—	—	—
Chikankar	Minimum	79.07	160.33	33.33	857.25	306.96	100.00	437.50
	Maximum	194.04	307.88	72.82	371.04	570.31	125.00	642.50
Washerman	Minimum	7.00	8.66	2.66	7.83	8.83	8.00	10.0
	Maximum	10.50	14.00	9.00	13.00	15.00	—	—

Training, Job Satisfaction, Loan Required and Rise of Income

All chikan craft workers of different trades are in fact trained, though they might have not received the formal training, but by virtue of their living in the atmosphere of chikan craft culture, they automatically get trained by trial and error. Table 10 shows the proportion of workers who are virtually formally trained. It is interesting to note that on an average a Hindu chikankar woman took

Table 10: Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers Reporting about Training, Working Hours and Work Satisfaction

Religion-wise Chikan Craft	Sample HH	Percentage Trained	Average No. of Training Days	Daily Working	Working Days in a	Percentage Reported	
						Getting	Satisfied with

Workers				Hours	month	work regularly	timely payment
Hindu							
Cutting Master	1	100.00	30.00	8.00	25.00	--	100.00
Printer	1	100.00	15.00	10.00	25.00	—	—
Tailor	1	100.00	90.00	10.00	26.00	100.00	100.00
Chikankar	22	81.82	107.61	6.95	23.91	86.36	81.82
Washerman	3	33.33	30.00	10.67	18.00	33.33	100.00
Agent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Muslim							
Cutting Master	5	100.00	36.00	7.80	25.40	—	20.00
Printer	13	61.54	243.38	10.15	23.00	23.08	53.85
Tailor	5	100.00	33.00	9.40	23.40	20.00	60.00
Chikankar	41	65.85	27.52	7.34	26.20	60.98	43.90
Washerman	3	33.33	30.00	10.00	25.33	66.67	66.67
Agent	9	11.11	15.00	7.56	28.00	55.56	88.89
Total							
Cutting Master	6	100.00	35.00	7.83	25.33	—	16.67
Printer	14	64.29	218.00	10.14	23.14	21.43	50.00
Tailor	6	100.00	42.50	9.50	23.03	33.33	66.67
Chikankar	63	71.43	59.56	7.21	25.40	69.84	57.14
Washerman	6	33.33	30.00	10.33	21.67	50.00	83.33
Agent	9	11.11	15.00	7.56	28.00	55.56	88.87

108 days in training in comparison to a Muslim chikankar woman take 28 days. Obviously, Hindu chikankars are the recent entrants than the Muslims who are born in chikan culture. Most of the chikan craft workers devote 8 to 12 hours daily, but chikankar ladies devote less than 8 hours, as they also work in embroidery centers, which are away from their residence and they have also to perform household duties. Almost all the chikan craft workers enjoy weekends and they also celebrate their important festivals. Thus, on an average 25 are the working days in a month. Availability of work with chikan craft workers depends upon the entrepreneurs who provide the work according to demand and supply of chikan items in the market. All the cutting masters reported that they did not get the work regularly. Similarly 78.57 per cent printers, 66.67 per cent tailors, 36.51

per cent chikankar women, 50.00 per cent washerman and 44.44 per cent agents reported that they don't get work regularly. A good proportion of chikan workers have shown dissatisfaction on not getting timely payment of their wages/salary. For example 83.33 per cent cutting masters, 50.00 per cent printers, 33.33 per cent tailors, 42.86 per cent chikankar women, 16.67 per cent washermen and 11.13 per cent agents are not satisfied because of erratic payment of their wages/salary (see Table 10).

Majority of chikan craft workers in different trades have desired to get loan, if it is provided on low interest rate. The requirement of loan amount is expressed roughly between Rs.50, 000/- to Rs.125, 000/-. Only rarely chikan craft workers have taken loan from their known persons or relatives. Only 14.29 per cent printers have reported that their income has increased between 10 to 20 per cent during last five years. Only 7.14 per cent printers, 19.05 per cent chikankar and 16.62 per cent washermen have reported that their income has increased less than ten per cent during last five years (see Table 11).

Table 11: **Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers Reporting about Loan and Increased Income**

Religion-wise Chikan Craft Workers	Percent Wanted low interest loan	Average amount of loan wanted (Rs.)	Average Loan Taken (Rs.)	Percentage Reported		
				Per cent Income Increased		
				20>	10-20	<10
Hindu						
Cutting Master	—	—	—	—	—	—
Printer	—	—	—	—	—	—
Tailor	—	—	—	—	—	—
Chikankar	31.82	52142	2045	--	--	22.73
Washerman	66.67	125000	—	—	—	—
Agent	—	—	—	—	—	—
Muslim						

Cutting Master	80.00	87500	—	—	—	—
Printer	69.23	55556	—	—	15.38	7.69
Tailor	60.00	116667	—	—	—	—
Chikankar	60.98	58000	—	—	—	17.07
Washerman	66.67	55000	—	—	—	33.33
Agent	77.78	35786	—	—	—	—
Total						
Cutting Master	80.00	87500	—	—	—	—
Printer	64.29	55556	—	—	14.29	7.14
Tailor	50.00	116667	—	—	—	—
Chikankar	50.80	56719	—	—	—	19.05
Washerman	66.67	90000	—	—	—	16.62
Agent	77.78	35786	1000	—	—	—

Conclusion

There is no mechanism where entrepreneurs may be compelled to give proper wages, as the work force is in surplus and they compete among themselves to work on lesser wages for their survival. Government can help the Chikan workers by providing them soft loan on line of Kisan Credit Card(KCC). Another possible solution may be if government helps the entrepreneurs in getting the export orders in order to enhance the Chikan production and ultimately empowering the Chikan craft workforce to work on better wages.

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