

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In India, handicrafts are not just products or income sources; in fact, they have much deeper significance which binds them to rituals and traditions. In that sense handicrafts are deeply rooted in our culture and thus are interlinked with our identity too.

Handicrafts are also a potential tool for nation building through sustainable development. However, owing to modernization, market forces and various barriers, the handicraft sector is under systemic pressure. Efforts for its revitalization and bringing it into organized sectors are being made but there are various constraints to it.

Each state or region in India is known for its handicrafts. This holds true for central India also. The central region of India, now known as Madhya Pradesh, presents a smorgasbord of textile traditions ranging from woven textiles to hand printed, resist dyed and embroidered textiles.

One of the most magnificent techniques of the region is *zardozi* embroidery which is practiced in Bhopal, the present-day capital of Madhya Pradesh and which was once a part of the erstwhile Bhopal state. Bhopal owing to its strategic geographical location and it being the second largest Muslim principality of its time, became a prominent *zardozi* center around the early nineteenth century. The city is still famous for its delicately adorned *zardozi* and beadwork *batuas* though few people know about its prominence as a historic *zardozi* center.

Zardozi embroidery incorporates a variety of metal wires of different shapes and forms. Other materials such as beads, sequins of various kinds, semi-precious stones, even wings of Elytra beetles and the likes are used for filling into patterns.

Zardozi embroidery has been in existence in Bhopal for almost three hundred years. After the merger of the Bhopal state with the newly formed Madhya Pradesh state in nineteen hundred and forty nine the royal patronage stopped. A change in the patronage also resulted in far-reaching effects on the materials used for the craft, the workmanship and designs. From creativity the craft became consumer-dictated. The luxurious silks and velvets that were used as a base fabric were soon replaced with mill made synthetic

and cheap replicas of the original fabrics. The original *zari* was replaced with imitation *zari* and the quality of embroidery also went down. The resultant products were thus of inferior quality as compared to the original products and the workmanship also failed to match the quality of the products from earlier times. Adding to the agony of the artisans were the rapid technological advancements, changing markets and cheaper products. The new conditions demanded a change in the way artisans worked. Not able to understand the markets and trends the artisans adopted a variety of coping mechanisms such as use of synthetic fabrics for base, artificial *zari* instead of pure, simpler motifs to name among the few. Sadly, it also resulted in dyeing of some of the old techniques, disappearance of traditional products and hence a dilution of the original craft. All this also came with a sense of loss of identity and pride in the artisan community of Bhopal. In the aftermath of this downfall the younger generation also started to drift from the craft.

Both government and private organizations are involved in implementing welfare and training programmes for the betterment and upgradation of *zardozi* artisans of Bhopal. Most of the efforts are targeted towards skill development of the *zardozi* artisans through training, design inputs for product development, branding and creation of market linkages for a better income.

Despite numerous efforts the desired results are far from achieved and artisans are not able to fully utilize these welfare measures owing to a variety of reasons which range from simple ignorance to more complex issues such as rigidity on part of artisans, lengthy documentation process, presence of middlemen etc. The less than expected growth also indicates that there exist reasons that are hampering the various initiatives for the artisans.

Rationale of the Study:

It is important to investigate the causes leading to the fading away of the glory of Bhopal as a prominent *zardozi* centre as not only the craft is linked to the city's cultural heritage but it is a community identity and livelihood source for thousands of artisans. The research investigates and seeks knowledge on various issues facing the *zardozi* embroidery craft as well as its artisans for its sustenance and it is in this context that

several questions about the genesis, historicity, patronage, design, evolution and present status were therefore raised.

Research Questions:

1. How and under what context was *zardozi* embroidery initiated in this part (Bhopal) of the country?
2. Who were the patrons behind the initiation of *zardozi* embroidery in Bhopal and what patronage did the craft enjoy in the past?
3. Why was the embroidery brought to this area and how?
4. Was the tradition oral or well documented?
5. Is there any documentation available for the craft? If yes then do the artisans have access to the documentation?
6. Are the artisans aware about the rich cultural heritage of the embroidery traditions?
7. Are the artisans thriving?

Statement of the Problem:

New dimensions without diluting the traditional craft techniques are required for the *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal in terms of design intervention, training in order to achieve the requirements of the contemporary customers. Thus, it was deemed fit to conduct an exploratory study titled “**Sustenance of Zardozi Embroidery of Bhopal through Documentation, Training and Product Development**”.

Research Objectives:

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To document the history and origin of *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal.
2. To explore the present status and changes in the *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal.

3. To document the traditional and prevalent motifs, material and techniques of *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal.
4. To study the issues, challenges and training needs of the Bhopal *zardozi* artisans.
5. To design and develop a training program for capacity building and skill up gradation of the Bhopal *zardozi* artisans.

Scope of the Study:

- throw light on various aspects that are crucial for effective modular training course design that enhance knowledge, skill, and attitude of the artisans keeping in mind their socio-cultural requirements
- serve as an aid to the craft designers for development of designs that maintain the visual identity of the craft while also taking into consideration the inherent features of the respective craft designs
- provide direction for sustainable livelihood generation through *zardozi* embroidery specially for home-based women artisans and aid in employment generation for other marginalized sections of the society too.
- suggest policy recommendations to further support the safeguarding and sustenance of *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal with future research directions.

Delimitations:

1. The analysis of training programs would be limited to government training programmes.
2. The time period for traditional design would be taken from 1822 to 1960 CE

Methodology Adopted for the Study:

The study adopted a mixed methods approach and both qualitative as well as quantitative data was collected for the present study. A descriptive cum exploratory research design was used and the study was carried out in four phases. Both primary as well as secondary data were collected for the study. Phase I was exploratory and

consisted of documenting the origin and history of zardozi embroidery in Bhopal as well as the traditional motifs, material and techniques of the Bhopal *zardozi* embroidery. In the second phase which was an exploratory cum ethnographical, the present status of the craft as well as artisans were explored. This involved exploring the contemporary products, material, motifs and techniques of products available in the local markets and their packaging, pricing and branding. A comparison of contemporary and traditional products through content analysis and study of personal and museum collections also gave the changes in the workmanship that has come over a period of 300 years of the existence of Bhopal *zardozi* embroidery. The second phase also involved studying the socioeconomic conditions of the artisans. The traditional and prevalent motifs collected in the first and second phase were utilized for making a design catalogue which was also used for familiarizing the artisans about the traditional motifs of the Bhopal zardozi embroidery during training. In the third phase design and development of a training programme was executed. Issues and challenges of the artisans were explored and the government training programmes were also studied in detail for this. A detailed analysis of the issues and challenges and the training programmes gave valuable insights of the unmet training needs and struggles of the artisans, based on which the training programme was designed. The training programme was then sent for validation to experts. The fourth phase was an action research whereby the training programme was implemented and its effectiveness was checked with the help of pre and post analysis method.

In the absence of the exact numbers of artisans, non probability sampling techniques namely purposive, snowball and convenience sampling was utilized for the various phases of the study. present study. A sample size of 124 that included artisans and entrepreneurs was utilized for the socio economic survey. Both primary and secondary data were collected for the present study. The primary data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation and focus group discussion whereas the secondary data were collected from journals, books, magazines, policy documents and government records. Thus data triangulation could also be achieved by using multiple methods of data collection and tools.

Findings of the Study:

The salient findings of the present study were:

- The data pertaining to Bhopal *zardozi* embroidery is very scattered and disaggregated. Also, various events and records point towards the presence of *zardozi* embroidery and its artisans in Bhopal from the early nineteenth century onwards and before 1968 as mentioned in the written records. The official records such as gazetteer, craft surveys and official documents from the erstwhile Bhopal state also point to *zardozi* embroidery and its usage by the royal family since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Thus it can be inferred safely that *zardozi* embroidery has been practiced in Bhopal since at least 1820 CE.
- Probably Bhopal was the only place where *zardozi* embroidery was introduced in school curriculum that too for girls and women though traditionally it was a male dominated craft.
- Apart from *zardozi*, various records, visual and textual, also point to the presence of some other traditional embroideries in Bhopal nineteenth century onwards (**Table No.**). Thus it can also be inferred that apart from *zardozi*, other embroideries such as *zari*, bead work were also practiced in Bhopal which have imparted a unique character to Bhopal *zardozi* embroidery that led to amalgamation of *zardozi* and bead work which has been named as Bhopal *zardozi* embroidery in the present study.
- The traditional motifs of *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal had a Persian influence and consisted mainly of a variety of vegetal motifs along with geometric and calligraphic motifs. Images of humans and animals thus did not find much place in the motifs of *zardozi* embroidery of Bhopal.
- Bhopal *zardozi* embroidery had a strong Persian influence. Gold was preferred over silver with heavy embroidery work. The stitch density in earliest Bhopal *zardozi* products appeared to be dense with elaborate use of filling stitches and satin stitch along with its variation padded satin stitch was used profusely. Pure, exquisite fabrics such as kinkhwab, silk, satin silk and velvets.

- A visual analysis of personal collections, portraits, photographs and museum collections point towards the presence of a variety of traditional embroideries such as bead work, aari, vasli and mukke ka kaam being a part of the royal paraphernalia and court costumes.. It could be a possibility that some of these could have been purchased by the *Begums* while on their sojourns abroad or received as political gifts from other royal clans which might have eventually led to the *Begums* inviting these artisans to Bhopal state for establishing embroidery *karkhanas* in Bhopal and execute the embroideries in Bhopal also.
- Focus group discussions pointed towards the existence of problems that hampered the effective implementation of the schemes. The key issues identified were lengthy documentation processes, schemes that were very good on paper but lacked practicality as they did not give much consideration to the socio-cultural background, appalling socio economic conditions and poor education of the artisans. artisans negative experiences. Another major concern of the existing welfare programmes was the perceived absence of government representation from it owing to too many people involved in on- ground implementation. Inaccessibility of these schemes and officials to artisans was another major concern voiced by the artisans.
- On being enquired about utilising the various government schemes 67 % artisans responded affirmatively for using artisan cards. This was followed by awareness of ‘ Design Development Workshop’ which 54 % artisans said they had attended. followed by 24 % artisans responding positively for the ‘ Free Tool Kit’” scheme. This clearly indicated a lack of awareness in artisans about various schemes. On being enquired further many of the artisans said that it was difficult for them to coordinate between many offices and keep a track of all the schemes
- It was further inferred that the artisans were suffering from numerous challenges despite having attended training programmes and the existing training programme focussed more on skill development whereas they should have also taken into consideration the socio-cultural background of the artisan-trainees and the hindrances it was posing in their ability to tap the markets. These issues and challenges gave the base for the training programme.

- A number of training programmes have been implemented for Bhopal zardozi embroidery artisans and field visits revealed several ongoing training programmes such as design development workshop, USTTAD training programme and various trainings under SAMARTH and SFURTI welfare schemes. However the results were not very satisfactory.
- The results of the need gap assessment and training programme analysis along with the results of socio-economic survey and consultation with experts were utilized for developing the training programme. As such the investigator's interaction with the respondents, field visits and survey gave a preliminary base for the development of the training programme.
- The duration of the training programme was decided as per the curriculum requirement and budgetary allowance. The duration was fixed for fifteen sessions spanning over one month. Six hours of training each day with one hour for knowledge building and five hours of skill training were planned. The artisan-trainees were selected as per the inclusion criteria which were drawn on the basis of the field studies and data collected. Pilot testing and validation of training programmes was also done.
- As part of the training programme and for giving a practical exposure, the artisans were given an opportunity to attend two events, a handicraft exhibition and a craft demonstration cum masterclass.
- A pen and paper test as well as skill test of the artisans was taken prior to the commencement of the course. The results of the same were compared with the post training test and samples to get an idea about the effectiveness of the training programme developed in the study.
- A hypothesis was formulated for testing the training effectiveness and the Wilcoxon test was employed on the data collected. Since the p-value was less than 0.5 at 5 % confidence level therefore the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. The alternative hypothesis stated that the training module designed for the zardozi artisans was effective. Thus, it was concluded that the developed training programme was effective.

- The training had maximum effect on the skill of the artisans and they showed maximum improvement in their skill followed by a positive change in knowledge. A positive change was observed in the attitude of the respondents though the change in attitude was least among the three parameters of knowledge, skill and attitude. This can be attributed to the fact that it is comparatively easier to bring changes in skill and knowledge through short term skill courses but changes in attitude require long term measures or repeated measures as attitude is formed due to exposure, experiences, interactions with other people and education.

It can be concluded that exploratory field survey helped in identifying various traditional aspects of the Bhopal zardozi embroidery which would help in preservation of the cultural heritage and community identity behind the craft. The field studies revealed loss of workmanship and quality as well as the unsatisfactory present status of the craft as well as the artisans. Analysis of the government programmes and schemes revealed very low awareness and utilisation of these which could be attributed to policy gaps and ignoring the specific needs of the Bhopal zardozi artisans. Thus a training programme was developed keeping in mind various socio-cultural barriers and limitation of skill and education of the artisans. The training programme helped in skill development and capacity building of artisans which were shown in the effectiveness test of the training programme. The study, thus, helped in documentation of the craft as well as training the artisans in various critical aspects of the craft such as product development as per customer demand, reassociating artisans with traditional form of craft as well as developing a high quality product.

Limitations:

- The research was limited by funds and availability of time.
- The respondents could have not been very forthcoming about the information furnished by them during interviews.

- Intervention was limited to only 15 artisans as closer interactive session with the artisans at every stage of the work was required owing to their limitations and a heterogenous training group.

Recommendations:

Traditional Indian handicrafts can be a potential source of sustainable development and a potential source of employment and additional incomes especially for women, unemployed youth and differently abled persons. However various phenomena such as globalisation, fast fashion and industrialization are posing a threat to the survival of many crafts. These problems were also revealed in the present study in the light of which the researcher would like to suggest following recommendations:

- There is a dearth of information on many handicrafts due to which the craft community associated with the crafts are moving towards manual jobs and hence the continuity of the crafts is endangered. Hence the government should make concerted efforts for preserving the purity of the craft through systematic documentation.
- In recent years there has been an increasing feminisation of the craft sector specially embroidery and weaving. This was also noticed in the present study. However the requirements of home based artisans are very unique thus the government should consider designing policies and programmes keeping in mind their specific needs.
- Not only policy formulation but implementation of policies also require close studies. Thus the researcher suggests involving artisan representation in the implementation stage.