Need Assessment Survey report
An Interactive design study of
Sujini Craft Cluster, Danapur, Patna, Bihar
Under
Upendra Maharathi Shilpa Anusandhan Sanathan
Department of Industries, Govt. of Bihar
&
MSME Design Clinic Scheme, 2014

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**Preface**

Sujni Craft at the Danapur Patna cluster was not the traditional occupation. This particular women folk community from Danapur are practising this craft from last 8-10 years. Sujni Craft was meant to be a technique of sewing together layered pieces of old cloth for making quilts called sujni or “kathri” and from there the term Sujni and Kaatha for a same form of embroidery was arrived at the two neighbouring geographic location Bihar & Bengal respectively. Kantha was stitched using the large size needle often called as “Sujja” in the local language of Bihar and hence the name “Sujni” was an extension to the tool & technique that was used in making of the quilts.

The community involved in this traditional technique at Danapur are semi urban dwellers from low-income areas unlike the mainstream traditional crafts cluster. This craft is highly unorganized and is spread across different geographies in India under different names. In Bihar it is called Sujni, in Bengal it is called Kaantha and in Rajasthan it is called gudri. This embroidery art work was done in the leisure time by the women folk irrespective of their class and caste in earlier days. It was mostly an art of recycling old and worn pieces of fabrics for making quilts for home. The earliest examples of Sujani date from the mid-1920s, and beyond which the evidence is not yet traced even when it is believed to be one of the oldest and an effortless embroidery form.

Since the last 10 years of their existence they are engaged only in embroidery work on the fabrics that are given to them by a local NGO or a direct small client from Patna city. The male members of the family are often engaged in a contract labour work or as a small shop owner in and around Patna city. The problem of this cluster is the dependency on the one source of NGO that has established this cluster for their Sujni job work. They are not given the support by the organization if they wish to work for any other sources. The cluster independence is monopolized and as a result this craft potential is jeopardized.
Acknowledgements

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I really appreciate the dedication of each of the artisan’s participation that played an important role in this project and also made it an exciting and a memorable journey with a promising future.

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1. 1. About MSMEs

The President under Notification dated 9th May 2007 has amended the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961. Pursuant to this amendment, Ministry of Agro and Rural Industries (Krishi Evam Gramin Udyog Mantralaya) and Ministry of Small Scale Industries (Laghu Udyog Mantralaya) have been merged into a single Ministry, namely,

“MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SUKSHMA LAGHU AUR MADHYAM UDYAM MANTRALAYA)”

Worldwide, the micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have been accepted as the engine of economic growth and for promoting equitable development. The major advantage of the sector is its employment potential at low capital cost. The labour intensity of the MSME sector is much higher than that of the large enterprises.

The MSMEs constitute over 90% of total enterprises in most of the economies and are credited with generating the highest rates of employment growth and account for a major share of industrial production and exports.

In India too, the MSMEs play a pivotal role in the overall industrial economy of the country. In recent years the MSME sector has consistently registered higher growth rate compared to the overall industrial sector. With its agility and dynamism, the sector has shown admirable innovativeness and adaptability to survive the recent economic downturn and recession.

As per available statistics (4th Census of MSME Sector), this sector employs an estimated 59.7 million persons spread over 26.1 million enterprises. It is estimated that in terms of value, MSME sector accounts for about 45% of the manufacturing output and around 40% of the total export of the country.
1.2. About Design Clinic Scheme (DCS)

The Design Clinic Scheme (DCS) is an initiative of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Scale enterprises (MSME) and India’s premier Design institute namely National Institute of Design. Launched under the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Programme (NMCP) on February 17th, 2010 in New Delhi, the unique and ambitious design intervention scheme proposes to benefit 200 industry clusters to create a dynamic platform to provide expert solutions to real time Design problems, and in that add value to existing products.

**Purpose**: To increase awareness about the value of design and establish design learning in MSMEs. To increase competitiveness of MSME products and services through design.

**Objectives**
To create a sustainable design ecosystem for the MSME sector through continuous learning and skill development. To promote use of design by MSMEs for developing products and services that are market led. To focus on building the design capability of MSMEs to enable them to improve business performance as well as compete in the global market.

**Key principles**
Adopting a rigorous, yet applicant friendly, process. Promoting and disseminating design concepts in regional or local languages understood by the MSMEs. Establishing benefits without overwhelming the MSMEs. Learning from other successful design-support programmes. Establishing systematic processes for design and product development in MSMEs.

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**Scheme description**
For easy percolation of design thinking and philosophy and maximum benefit for MSME units the Design Clinic Scheme is divided at 3 broader levels. These activities are helpful in smooth transition in to several levels of design intervention in industrial and business activities of MSMEs.

**Design Awareness Seminar**
The design sensitization seminar is aimed to create a platform for MSME units to improve the manufacturing competitiveness. The seminar will help MSME participants to interact with design experts/speakers to understand design methodology and benefits of design to MSME in their business, product, process, service and operations. To take design to a higher level of manufacturing functions, it is very important to develop an understanding of the design scenario and environment at an early stage of conception.

**Design Awareness Programme**
The design awareness programme is focused on exploring industrial functions and activities to develop a holistic map of MSME clusters and units. The design expert/s will generate design information about products, market scenario, technology, communication, research and development, and various industrial functions along with human factor study for ergonomics, safety, convenience, learning and skill upgradation through design research. The programme will also provide design remedies for identified opportunities through the design clinic workshop. The design awareness programme is conducted in two stages.
- Need Assessment Survey
- Design Clinic Workshop

**Design Projects**
Design projects are identified during the need assessment survey and discussed during the design clinic workshop. Project, which requires intensive design observation and interventions can be taken up as design projects with the help of design experts. The project can be related to design intervention in area of product/process/strategic areas where design can help in generating solutions and value for individual or group of MSMEs. The initiatives are expected to inculcate an innovative and futuristic approach towards Product Development, In the long term, the effort is expected to accrue cost effective solutions and equip with the ability to identify opportunities for enhancing existing product value. The skill level achieved by beneficiaries of the Design Clinic Scheme is anticipated to equip them with the capability of offering competitive and breakthrough solutions for the MSME sectors and in that switching the production mode from Original Equipment Manufacturing to Original Design Creation and hence Original Brand Manufacturing.
1. 3. About NID

National Institute of Design is internationally acclaimed as one of the foremost Multi-Disciplinary Institutes in the field of Design Education, training, design consultancy services and outreach programs. Established in 1961, NID is the autonomous institute under the Ministry of Industry, which is now known as Ministry of commerce and Industry, Government of India NID has been a pioneer in Industrial Design Education after Bauhaus and ULM in Germany, and is known for its pursuit in Design excellence to convert the designs of India for the world. The National Institute of Design is the nodal agency for the Design Clinic Scheme with its rich experience in Design training and Consultancy, NID being the synergizing catalyst between Design professionals and Design Clinic Scheme beneficiaries, with an administrative command of facilitating the Design Clinic Scheme schedule. The Design Clinic Scheme offers an enriching opportunity to the large sector of MSME (Associations and Units) as well as the Indian Design fraternity, including consulting firms, independent Designers, Design institutes as also Design students, to engage in assisting the country’s large and significant MSME sector.
1. 4. About Upendra Maharathi Shilpa Anusandhan Sanathan, Department of Industries, Government. of Bihar

It was established in the year 1956 by the Dept. of Industires, Govt. of Bihar. The institute conducts development, research, training and publicity of the under developed handicrafts of the state. There are various development activities undertaken by them. For the purpose of training and research, skilled craftsmen have been appointed. The institute provides training to 104 trainees in a year. the training is divided into 2 sessions of 6 months each. Candidates get a monthly stipend, food and stay.

The following sections have been created in the institute to develop handicrafts:

- Woodcraft
- Wooden toys
- Screen printing
- Dyeing and Block printing
- Lacquer ware
- Appliqué and Kashida
- Brass and Bell metal craft
- Weaving
- Wood carving
- Tikuli painting
- Pottery
- Papier mache
- Batik
- Bamboo craft
- Stone craft
- Clay moulding
2.1. **Brief History of Sujni Craft and its significance:**

Sujni Craft was meant to be a technique of sewing together layered pieces of old cloth for making quilts called sujni or “kathri” and from there the term Sujni and Kaantha for a same form of embroidery was arrived at the two neighbouring geographic location Bihar & Bengal respectively. Kantha was stitched using the large size needle often called as “Sujja” in the local language of Bihar and hence the name “Sujni” was an extension to the tool & technique that was used in making of the quilts. This craft is highly unorganized and is spread across different geographies in India under different names. In Bihar it is called Sujni, in Bengal it is called Kaantha and in Rajasthan it is called gudri.

This embroidery art work was done in the leisure time by the women folk irrespective of their class and caste in earlier days. It was mostly an art of recycling old and worn pieces of fabrics for making quilts for home.

The earliest examples of Sujani date from the mid-1920s, and beyond which the evidence is not yet traced even when it is believed to be one of the oldest and an effortless embroidery form.

It depicts the day to day activities of a village life that includes animals, birds and human etc. It was traditionally done by straight running stitch embroidered on layered cotton but now the same technique is used irrespective of layered cloth.

**The traditional technique of Sujni:** A fine running stitch all over the sheet in the same colour as the base cloth creates the background upon which motifs are outlined in chain stitch. The design is then filled in with tiny running stitches in coloured thread. It has a unique narratives in each frames of a fabric that makes it an incredible piece of speaking fabric. Women stitch their experience, their sorrows and their realities on the sujni if they are asked to make anything on their own otherwise, they do what is asked from them for the commercial market.

Now for commercial reasons fresh fabrics are used for making finished products other than quilts, example: bags, kurti, dupattas etc.

Traditionally, women quilt together old sari and other pieces of cloth with tiny running stitches, and embroidered these beautifully.

The traditional product was a quilt-cum-bedspread, sometimes stuffed with tattered cloth to give it added thickness. Sujni is an intricate embroidery form and is time consuming. In order to meet production demand it becomes labour intensive. The number of stitches per square inch varies from 80-210.
2.2. Process and Technique
The Bihari embroidery technique includes two types of stitches: chain stitch, and the Sujani stitch (starkly similar to the running stitch).

The Chain stitch: It is like weaving, where each stitch is followed by making a loop over the previous stitch.

The running stitch: It is a continuous type of stitch where the thread is changed only when it finished. The style of embroidery uses cotton thread, over different types of cloth. By setting them in separate layers and then stitching – it takes swollen shape that is why it is called Sujani (from the local word Sujan that means boil).

Social values hidden in this art form: Sujani Embroidery mainly depicts stories, and in the past has been used extensively to spread awareness about social issues. It recycles old cloths

Unique design element: The embroiderers outline and fill motifs in a circular manner with coloured quilting stitches, while covering the background with white stitching. The circular stitching creates a dimensional distortion which renders a unique surface character.

The ancient beliefs:
First, cloth bound together by Sujani served a ritual function it invoked the presence of a deity, Chitiriya Ma, the Lady of the Tatters and stitching together these disparate pieces symbolically embodied the holistic Indian concept that all parts belong to the whole and must return to it.
The second purpose of stitching pieces of old cloth together was to wrap the newborn; to allow it to be enveloped in a soft embrace, resembling that of its mother. New cloth is considered to be too harsh on the baby’s skin. In fact, the word Sujani itself reflects this principle – su means easy and facilitating, while jani means birth. To wrap the newborn, to allow it to be enveloped in a soft embrace, resembling that of its mother. New cloth was considered to be harsh on its skin. When dissected, the term sujani reflects the above-mentioned functional nature of this practice – “su” means easy and facilitating, while “jani” means birth. A woman would be attributed as a sugrahini, if she recycled the used cloth and make it into new, to be meant for not just her children but grandchildren as well.
2.3. New developments:
Apart from the straight-running long stitches, Sujani also features intricate geometric patterns and motifs. These motifs and patterns on the fabric were often purposeful and ritualistic, becoming an adornment for the koberghar (nuptial chamber) and as gifts for family members. The varieties were endless. For example, one could find sun and cloud motifs signifying life-giving forces, fertility symbols, sacred animals, fantastic winged creatures for protection against destructive forces, and other motifs to attract blessings from the gods. Different coloured threads were also symbolically used, such as red, signifying blood, a life force, and yellow for the sun. Now contemporary patterns mostly organic forms are becoming a fashion statement by the design interventions done by some of the designers in recent times. Minimalist approach and market understanding of fashion and consumer has led to breakthrough in this age old tradition which, now sees some changes from the rudimentary patterns.

2.4. Embroidery Industries in India:
Embroidery Industry is rich and widespread in India in its variety of form and regional styles. Machine made embroidery has still not able to replace some of the authentic and unique hand embroidery styles. Even when the machine embroidery is getting flooded in the market in the imitation form for embroideries like Phulkari and Kashmiri stitch but for Sujini and Kutch embroidery still the imitation has failed to attract the consumers. In India some of the most popular and commercial embroideries are Zardozi, Kashmiri, Kutchi, Phulkari. Sujini was always overshadowed by these embroideries as it was limited to Kanthas or quilts. The beauty of Sujini is now creating its demand and value in market off late and no doubt due to its rich narrative and unique surface style it is becoming more and more popular for the surface embellishment works on various kinds of products other than decorative. It is now popularly used in lifestyle accessories and Home furnishing accessories and has now found its place in apparels and ramp shows of Lakme fashion week.
3.1. NAS approach and methodology

This field study was conducted over five days period from 12th June 2014 and continued till 16th June 2014.

2.2.1. Orientation for NAS for Sujni Cluster

The survey started with the base orientation at the outskirt of Patna city near B.S college Danapur. The central place from where it all started was the house of Smt. Asha Devi who is a senior artisan and also leader of this Sujni craft women folk from that area. On 12th June 2014, there were personal introductions, discussion sessions about the scenario of the cluster and information on NAS Program were addressed to the unit members.

The problems were discussed in detail and the project mapping started the very first day. The communication approach and system was analysed.

2.2.2. Field research:

The objective was to investigate the craftsmen’s level of understanding and knowledge of the process of creating the end products from starting to end. In addition, their understanding of the business was also required to investigate. Field research consisted both the quantitative and qualitative research.

Quantitative research

A structured questionnaire was prepared that mainly contained predefined questions, which yielded closed-ended answers, like profile of the members: age, education, the length of time they have been in the business, other business engagements, the kind of products they make, their buyers, etc. The quantitative research consisted 38 face-to-face structured interviews that was conducted at Danapur village of Patna city.

Qualitative research

The aim of the qualitative data was to get in-depth insights through friendly conversations. The discussions were targeted towards yielding more of individual based responses. The discussions revolved around themes like member’s day-to-day activities, the living conditions, difficulties in their business, issues with local dealers, family issues, financial issues, educational facilities, etc.

2.2.3. Interview with other key holder

Interviews were conducted with a few Shopkeepers from Patna city in order to understand the local business ecosystem.
3.2. Units and Craftsmen Profiles

Participants of the Design workshop and Micro units that were assessed.
3.3. Design Audit report

Units
Under Danapur, the units were scattered across 2 small tolis: Chaitola, Nasriganj being the main hub and Nauta Diyara where work has started to spread. Most women in these pockets are married girls and some young girls participate to help their family and earn some pocket money.

Unit no.: 1, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Asha Devi, Priyanka Kumari, Nandini Kumari
Age: 30 years, 18 years, 17 years
Has been working from last 8 years. She is the master tracer and traces all the designs and distributes the work to other micro units. Her daughter does Sujni work and often helps her in developing new designs.
Products: Frames, saree, dupattas etc.
Working Hours: 4-5 hrs a day and as they get time from household chores.

Unit no.: 2, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Vina Devi
Age: 28 years
Has been working from last 6 years. Only sujani worker/s in the house
Products: Frames, saree, dupattas etc.
Working Hours: 2-3 hrs a day when and as she gets time from household chores.

Unit no.: 3, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Madhu Devi
Age: 32 years
Has been working from last 1 year. She is learning this art.
Products: Learning
Working Hours: 1-2 hrs a day

Unit no.: 4, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Meena Devi, Radha Kumari
Age: 40 & 16 years (Mother & Daughter)
Has been working from last 15 years and one of the oldest artisan and also the finest one. She is expert in appliqué work and does Sujni only if she has no other option. Her daughter helps her in handling Sujni orders.
Products: Cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 5-6 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.
**Unit no.:** 5, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Malti Devi,  
**Age:** 40 years  
Has been working from last 8 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 6, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Reshmi Devi,  
**Age:** 25 years  
Has been working from last 8 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 7, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Rubi Devi,  
**Age:** 28 years  
Has been working from last 8 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 8, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Anita Devi,  
**Age:** 35 years  
Has been working from last 8 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 9, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Vimla Devi,  
**Age:** 28 years  
Has been working from last 4 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 10, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Suman Devi, (Appliqué & Sujni)  
**Age:** 24 years  
Has been working from last 8 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 11, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Kanchan Devi,  
**Age:** 25 years  
Has been working from last 8 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 5-6 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 12, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Pinki Devi,  
**Age:** 24 years  
Has been working from last 5 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 5-6 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

**Unit no.:** 13, Chaitola, Nasriganj  
**Artisan/s:** Munni Devi,  
**Age:** 24 years  
Has been working from last 8 years.  
**Products:** cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.  
**Working Hours:** 5-6 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.
Unit no.: 14, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Mamta Devi
Age: 23 years
Has been working from last 8 years.
Products: cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

Unit no.: 15, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Shakuntala Devi
Age: 26 years
Has been working from last 5 years.
Products: cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

Unit no.: 16, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Malti Devi, Wife of Sahipat (Appliqué)
Age: 40 years
Has been working from last 8 years.
Products: cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

Unit no.: 17, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Shanti Devi, Sulekha Kumari
Age: 45 & 18 years
Has been working from last 15 years and one of the oldest artisan and also the finest one.
Products: cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

Her daughter helps her in handling Sujni orders.

Unit no.: 18, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Prema Devi, Sulekha Kumari
Age: 26 years
Has been working from last 4 years.
Products: cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

Unit no.: 19, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Sulekha Kumari
Age: 18 years
Has been working from last 3 years.
Products: cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 2-3 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.

Unit no.: 20, Chaitola, Nasriganj
Artisan/s: Menka Kumari
Age: 18 years
Has been working from last 5 years.
Products: cushion covers, bed sheets, Saree etc.
Working Hours: 5-6 hrs a day when and as they get time from household chores.
4. Purpose of Sujni Craft Cluster NAS report (NAS: 12/06/14 - 16/06/14, 5 Days)

This report seeks to put forward the efforts and activities of individuals involved in the Sujni Craft Cluster of Danapur, Patna through the following deliverable:

1. Analysis of the following:
   - Location
   - Present condition of the cluster
   - The holistic system, of concept to customer approach of the cluster
   - The product and service developed by the cluster

2. Analysis of challenges
   - Sujni Crafts Cluster business approach
   - Craftsmen, buyers, and other important individuals who are involved
   - Process and production
   - Products significance

3. To Identify intervention to be undertaken in terms of
   - Improvement in the product quality, process and technology
   - Cost competitiveness
   - Diversification in the product portfolio

4. Recommendations for a way forward
   - The future direction for the cluster development
   - Awareness of modern trends and market need
   - Improvement in existing skills

5. Scope of the Sujni Craft cluster
4.1. Analysis of the following:
- Location:
  This Sujni Craft cluster is located near B.S college, Danapur. It is 21 minutes from Patna railway station if travelled by car else 1 hour by shared auto.

- Present condition of the cluster:
  **The Cluster Characteristic & Inhabitants**
  It is a settlement by the low-income class and their main livelihood source depends on the Patna city. Head of the family either owns a small shop or work at other’s shop. Most of them are coolie who does unskilled manual labour work, some are tractor driver, some are masons. Women involved are mostly married women and mother in laws.
  They discourage the participation of girls as they will get married. However girls help in completion of the sujni work in their family on behalf of their mother. Almost 38-50 women are involved in this work and all of them are from same locality. The Cluster unit comprises of activities typical of an unorganized sector with not a single unit being registered. The cluster runs only on the support of one NGO Angana. Only Asha Devi and Meena Devi are two women who also work as a staff for Angana and thus have some affiliation. The Cluster configuration is homogeneous and largely dominated by the skill sets available with artisan in this cluster.

- Demographic profile
  Literacy is low in this area with an average literacy level of 55% male and 46% female. The inhabitants have built their houses in the narrow lanes and a small patch. Almost 100-150 houses have crowded over a small place. The drainage is open and very few houses have sanitation facilities. Most of the inhabitants go for open defecation near the banks of Ganges. Cleanliness and hygiene is absent. Most of the houses are not permanent.

- The holistic system, of concept to customer approach of the cluster
  Most of the time this particular Sujni cluster has no work at all. Sincerity is lacking due to long absences of orders. Sometimes women leaders like Asha Devi or Meena Devi manage to get independent direct small orders from Patna city. All the women work from home and thus there is no group synergy and proper communication and deadline achievement. There is no such big place where they can gather together once in a week. Asha Devi hence comes as a big support as she provides her house for such gathering.

  This cluster is not allowed to engage with any other organization as Angana NGO aims at making their own producer group despite the lack of orders. In such situation, their personal approach to other potential buyers are perceived as threat to them as they fear losing the loyal partnered NGO. And there had been the discouragement to the direct open support from the designers for their marketing assistance by the concerned NGOs. There is no sustainable business for this Sujni cluster. It is highly unorganized and uncertain. Whenever there is an order it is from Angana. Some of the women have involved themselves in Appliqué work and they have their small loyal buyers as they are into this work from last 18 years but such women are only 3-4. It would be right to say that this cluster is a job work cluster for handwork and will always depend on an anchor body like Angana if the efficient ecosystem is not developed.
The product and service developed by the cluster:

Products made were mostly embroidery on a given piece of fabrics.

**Existing products:**
Wall pieces, frames are most common. Only sometime when there is an order for kurti, saree or dupatta then the product is given to the artisan and they do work on it.

Only limited varieties of products are produced in the cluster. Production in the cluster is only seasonal during the festival and marriage days because of the no of problems and constrains. Artisans are looking for their growth opportunity.

**Service:**
Embroidery work service provider as and when required for NGO Angana.
Study of existing Product design, redesign, and new product development and product diversification

ISSUES:

• The existing products are limited to the dictated needs and designs of the NGO. There is no imagination or creativity from the artisans part, hence the craft is losing its ethnic flavour.

• The products are limited to order basis, and no one’s making products apart from the ones where material is provided for. This is mainly owing to firstly lack of market acceptable quality raw material nearby and secondly the cotton fabrics and yarns used for good quality products is expensive and most of the artisans belong to below poor households.

• None of the pieces are made here, they get a pre-designed and traced fabric with all colour and yarn specifications, all they do is follow instructions. From colour, size, stitch everything is pre-decided.

• The existing market range of sujani products, seems to have lost its flavour, it has succumbed to modern designs and patterns, hence they look like just a piece of embroidery in running stitches and not a native Bihari craft.

• Product diversification, is limited again to what has been asked for, nothing new from their own inputs.

• Since they have been tuned to blindly follow instructions, they are unaware of using their own potential to diversify or progress, whether its design or product range.

POSSIBILITIES:

• There is a good scope for introduction of new products.

• The existing traditional embroidery designs can be simplified, hence making them market friendly without losing its ethnic flavour.

• New motifs inspired by local textiles and heritage can be developed.

• New ideas and skills to make their own products and sell instead of depending on order based clients.

• Using the traditional motifs will give the product a local identity.

• Stitching training can make this cluster a lot for independent and sustainable

• Making them avail SMEs subsidy loan for starting their own enterprise.

• Training them in making most of the investment in sensible manner.

• Registering it as an SHGs
4.2. Analysis of challenges
- Sujni Crafts Cluster business approach: Craftsmen, buyers, and other important individuals!

Process and production challenges
Design tracing process

Designs are traced by drawing the design on the tracing paper that is then pierced by the needles by maintaining a 2mm gaps. With the help of bluing fabric powder and kerosene the liquid is made. In small tea cup of kerosene 1 spoon of bluing fabric is enough. The liquid should be thin enough to permeate through the small holes done on the tracing paper onto the fabric. Cotton fabric is used to transfer the design onto the fabric after dipping it into the liquid and then on the surface of pierced tracing paper.
- Products significance in current market scenario:
4.3. To Identify intervention to be undertaken in terms of
- Improvement in the product quality, process and technology
- Cost competitiveness
- Diversification in the product portfolio

Scope of Interventions

Short Term Intervention
Long Term Intervention

Existing market model
Suggested market model

Existing product range
Suggested product range

SWOT analysis

A Future vision
Short Term Intervention
Problem: Poor lighting affects the eyesight. Due to small working space and lot of artisans the working conditions become suffocating and congested. Resulting in cramped sitting positions.

Local solution:
1. Work against natural light or light
2. Work in a free open space

Working conditions: Lighting!

Open space
Natural lighting
Problem:
The craftsmen work for long hours while sitting on the floor. This results in pain and discomfort while working for long hours. Squatting posture and bending forward for long hours is not recommended. Back problem is common. Since the work is an intricate and tedious task it also affects eyes. Most of the women have to wear spectacles. There has to be a suggestive model about proper sitting postures and suggest material which enhance both the productivity in work as well helps in reducing severe health impacts in the near future.

Local solution:
1. Support the back with a wall.
2. Raise the frames towards face instead of bending down too close to the frame.

Ergonomics:
- Wall support
- Neck strain reduced
Problem: Before
Working on floor spoils the piece of work. It adds extra cost to the finished products as the product has to be washed before it is packed. Children at work diverts the attention of the female artisans and keep them engaged. For small babies such work place can be injurious as small needles are often lost in the working space and that can cause accidents.

Solution: After
Carpet that is locally available should be used. Children should be left at home or women should work from home.
For traced design visibility on different coloured fabrics, contrast colour zinc powder was introduced. For example on a black fabric, bluing powder was not visible resulting in difficult execution of the given design. For solving that problem silver/gold dust was introduced.
Product diversification using existing skill sets!

Keeping in mind the current market need, which is consumer driven and competition, new products were developed. The small decorative and accessories items were scratched from the drawing board and ideation. Instead the commercial products that are in demand were introduced. Embroidery is a surface embellishment done on a fabric. It is mostly preferred by the women in their apparels. The embroidered apparels have a huge market both in domestic and international exports. The product design brief was executed keeping domestic market in consideration because of the reach and capacity of the current cluster.

The detail of product diversification process is further illustrated later in this document.
Outsourcing

A marketing model should be adopted to outsource the raw materials for a good quality production that is suited as per the market need. For this immediate interventions were done by introducing different kinds of fabric/products in the cluster. This base ready to wear products were outsourced from different parts of the country especially from Delhi & Mumbai. Since Bihar is rich in its handloom varieties and production for silk, it will make it easier and economical to procure stoles, dupattas etc. from the local weavers and will add diversity to the existing product range. The major problem here being the accessibility and knowledge for which the interventions are suggested in the long-term module.

Georgette, chiffon sarees single and double colour, silk stoles, tassar stoles, boutique blouse etc. were some of the new fabrics and items that were introduced in the cluster by outsourcing.
**Workshop Training**

The craftsmen were benefitted from this short term training course and such courses in future will be beneficial. As by teaching new techniques and process it encourages them for their sincere involvement. This way they can be prepared to face the competition from the big companies and can sustain in the competitive market. The workshop helped them immensely in learning the design making process and properly tracing them on to the fabric. It opened up their own design thinking process for developing new designs rather than sticking to limited number of designs that were taught in the workshop. This feedback was received from the team on the closing ceremony of the Design workshop.

New embellishments and different kind of raw materials and experimentation has to be a part of their work culture. To initiate such culture fewer items were purchased from the local market and was introduced in the product design and diversification process. For example the metal sequins, and silk/ zari embroidery threads etc.

![Metal Sequins](image1)

![Zari threads](image2)
Long Term Intervention
Development Centre
A common facility centre has to be implemented to create a work synergy amongst all the women who currently work from home due to lack of a large well lit working space. Common facility centre will act as a platform for knowledge sharing and strong team participation. It will promote the inclusive growth process and participation. It will also increase the sincerity amongst women as they will feel part of an organized workforce. It will make communication hassle free and will build confidence in dealing and taking up newer opportunities. It will become a healthy breeding ground of newer ideas. It will enhance the production time, which is currently extremely slow and highly unstable. Over all it will create an eco-system that will make the production and marketing both easier for them. Thus resulting in faster and more sustainable growth.

Technological Advancement
At present women are only engaged as embroidery worker in sujni style. There has to be a group of women who shall be trained in stitching and finished product development skills. It can only happen if there is a basic stitching facility set up along with a training workshop. Access to courier and transport system and raw materials suppliers will enhance the product development and its reach in the market.

Business Model
An efficient business model has to be setup to run the system efficiently as well distribute the products to as many markets. This can only happen by forming a cooperative society. It will gain unity as they all will be working for a single goal. They will also be introduce to the better market for selling their products and it will increase the exposure for the weavers. The system has to be monitored and should be able to adopt to new trends. There should be buyer seller meets where existing business owners/entrepreneurs should be invited for the marketing assistance. A better marketing channel shall be developed by the anchor bodies here in this case preferably by Upendra Maharathi.
Existing Marketing Model:

Artisans → Middlemen → Customer/Clients/Exhibitions

Suggested Marketing Model:

Sujni Craft Cluster

- Clients
- NGO
- State Emporiums
- Direct sales

- National fairs & exhibitions
- Buyer-seller meet
- Customers
SWOT Analysis

S- Strength
- Good skills and dedicated artisans
- Healthy strength of women almost 50 nos
- Endless product possibilities for the global market
- Married women are almost 90% from the total thus sustains the skills at a given place
- This cluster is at the outskirts of Patna city and that can be a good exposure if they are trained and made aware of the various access channels for the raw material procurement and marketing.
- Government policies & scheme interventions support

W- Weaknesses
- No proper working space
- No infrastructure or common facility centre for stitching of finished goods
- No stitching expertise
- No proper market to sell their products
- No time management, no deadlines
- Opportunity based costing, lack the economics of business and its essentials.
- The units do not have marketing arrangement for direct sale of goods.
- Lack of awareness regarding raw material sourcing and client acquisition
- Women are over burdened with home responsibilities and many kids
- Their independent marketing access is monopolized by single organization ownership and authority.
- Product diversification is impossible due to financial constrains and raw material sourcing can't be done by them.

O - Opportunity
- There is an urgent requirement of regular design interventions for product diversification and its proper production
- Provision of loan and profitable policies for small units.
- There is an opportunity to employ more women in this sector, as they can work in various stages of the process.
- Registration of each home unit for making them avail the Govt. DCH schemes. Artisan's card and insurance scheme shall be applicable for this cluster's women.
- Common facility centre for raw material. Standard quality of raw material can be provided to the artisans through common centre.
- For tracing the design done of the tracing paper is hand pricked by using the small embroidery needle. It is a time taking and a painful task. A machine can be designed for replacing this manual work. Such intervention was implemented in the SEWA organization that works in Chikan Stitch and is based in Lucknow.

T-Threats
- Due to poor quality of production there is less sales.
- Due to no time-management and excess time consumption for single product delivery the sales are extremely low and shows a bleak and non-lucrative future if not managed well.
- Young generation female are not involved in this more seriously as they are assumed to get married and that results in slow increase in number of women participation,
- Leaving work: Due to no reasonable wages, laborious work, and regular job artisans are migrating to other regular jobs in near by constructive sites.
- Because of less education crafts persons will not be able to follow the proper process of costing and will fail to deal with a buyer. In such a scenario anchor . body should be there to guide.
- Artisans from this particular cluster are not traditional artisans hence, lack the knowledge about its history and significance.
- Machine made embroideries are a threat to it, if given the price & production tally.
- Experienced artisans are not recognized for their talents
5. Scope of the Sujni Craft cluster: A future vision!

The style of sujani has evolved over time by incorporating unique narrative elements in its embroidery. Experimentation with the embroidery execution technique is also making it popular amidst variety of other style of embroideries. Brands like Fab India, Anokhi has already given this stitch a unique recognition and visibility through its apparel. Scope of Sujni is definitely lucrative and profitable if done in an organized manner with efficient production system in place and culture. The very idea of hand-made being a unique piece due to which no two pieces can be similar is an excuse and a bypass for establishing an efficient production system. Quality is an important aspect of any product design as well as the production quantity for bring the cost in the competitive market column. If this issues of quality versus quantity can be dealt well then scope is undeniably sustainable and stunning with better remunerative.

Scope for research and development direction for future initiatives:
The next important aspect if previous two are fulfilled would be the following:
#1. Branding & Communication for bringing Sujni craft in the forefront of commercial and high soaring market.
#2. New Product Development for variety and different customer & market segment for better remunerative
#3. Tools & Work station for efficient production and expansion
#4. New Packaging Design for acquiring consumers as well as for maintaining the product quality and presentation.
Existing status and opportunity for visual identity, branding and communication design

ISSUES:
• There is no proper documentation/catalogue of traditional and non-traditional products made. The samples are not even archived for reference or promotion. What they make, they sell.
• Artisans have no snaps or samples of their work.
• Upcoming centre, still needs to form an individual identity as a cluster, currently dependent on one NGO.

POSSIBILITIES:
• The cluster needs to be an independent entity, able to function and market themselves like many other self-help groups across the country.
• A product and sample catalogue is a must.

Scope of technology, modernization and design collaborations

ISSUES:
• Due to lack of sewing units around they are dependent on the cities.
• Lack of internet and its benefits, keeps them aloof to the market’s reaction to their products.
• Electricity irregularities.

POSSIBILITIES:
• Modern sewing machines should be installed at the common workshop centre, also more women should be trained to use it efficiently, hence making the cluster a self-sustained one.
• The common centre could be spacious and well ventilated with an inverter back up so as to encourage women to work their without straining their eyes in the dark.
• Regular eye check up and encouragement to wear spectacles would help in maintaining their healthy eye sight.
Scope for operations and process innovation from design perspective

ISSUES:
• Due to lack and expense of good quality materials, like cotton/silk fabrics and yarns, especially bleed free in the villages, artisans waste their hard work on synthetic material which has no demand in the market value. Also the value of Sujani works best on natural fibres based fabrics like cotton and silk.

POSSIBILITIES:
• Either the state govt. should provide them with quality raw materials at subsidized rates, or get them sponsored by big companies. This material can be stored and used from the common centre and can function as a raw material bank.

Design Opportunity in workstation and tooling design and Description of ergonomic and environment factors

ISSUES:
• No proper work space they all work from home, even their collection and deposition of products happens in one of the artisan’s house.
• There is no proper lighting system for working in night hours. Since women get most of the free time then to work on these products. Lack of electricity affects the rate of production.
• They sit on the floor and work with improper working benches, resulting in backaches.
• Since sujani is an intricate process a lot of artisans complain of eyesight issues and headaches.

POSSIBILITIES:
• Proper allocation of a common centre where they can operate from.
• Regular medical checkups for eyes should be organized here so that their problems can be attended to before they become worse, hence reinforcing their faith.
• Proper and comfortable seating arrangements for the artisans to work. Furniture that can support back for long hours.
• Solar lights can be introduced so that they could work in the evening hours.
Details of market and competition study for design advantage and Distinction

ISSUES:
• Decrease in profit margins due to indirect contact with the consumer. No exposure to the market and interaction, as middlemen/traders buy products from the artisans and sell it in the market.
• This also leads to no direct feedback from the consumer about his needs and demands.
• In today’s fast running world, handmade products are losing their charm owing to their slow nature of production and hence lesser availability.
• There is a serious competition from the Kantha of Bengal which is on similar lines to sujani.
• Machine embroideries and prints replicating the technique, is available widely and for lesser prices than the handcrafted pieces.
• The artisans don’t store sample pieces generally, so when a customer directly visits them there is nothing to show them.

POSSIBILITIES:
• Product diversification using traditional colours and motifs will give them a distinctive advantage as these designs will not be manufactured elsewhere.
• Maintaining samples. They could archive their pieces through pictures too.
• They could directly sell products to the consumers through boutiques, exhibitions, or even online. Presence of products online will be of great help and reach larger audience.
Study for the need of training and skill up-gradation

ISSUES:
• It is a woman oriented craft, due to patriarchal dominance women cannot choose to work due to pressure from fathers, husbands or in-laws. Most women leave work due to pressure from their husbands.
• A lot of women, once they are married move to other villages, hence affecting the team strength.
• A lot of them are shifting bases to simpler craft options of the same genre.

POSSIBILITIES:
• Master artisans could be sent to participate at National level workshops.
• A common training centre which could provide training on skill enhancement, quality control and product development anybody who is keen on learning and practicing the craft to create new artisans.
• Motivation, awareness and literacy at the family level (mostly in-laws, husbands, fathers) about the benefits of the program and work.
• Education.

Packaging and logistics related design opportunities
• The products need to be sealed carefully and kept in plastic bags before and after work, as they are fabric and tend to get stained.
Exhibition/ Display design opportunities

POSSIBILITIES:
• The artisans can participate in trade fairs at state, national and international level.
• At cluster/village level a small display area/showroom can be created.
• Products can be displayed at art centres, museums etc. in various cities.
• Charity begins at home, hence the state govt. should make the products available in all the state emporiums, in and out of the state.
• Govt. can directly buy from the artisans, display them and promote them.
• Online portals by the govt. can help sell and promote the products to a large market, both nationally and internationally.
• There could be a product display and sourcing centre/directory wherein interested consumers, or companies can see the work, get the information on the artisan and approach them directly.

Scope of design intervention for inter cluster communication

POSSIBILITIES:
• A greater and better cooperation and understanding between the artisans and the traders/middlemen.
• A Common centre will tremendously increase the scope of communication between the artisans and thus lead to sharing of knowledge and skills.
• A common place for procurement of raw material where artisans can buy material on credit basis, as it’s not feasible for them to buy raw material at once.
• Exposure and interactions with other self help groups from neighbouring villages or towns within the state and across state would be helpful, in building motivation and creating new learning experiences.
06. Design Clinic Workshop Report

Design Workshop
Design workshop: Day 1, Presentation on design and designer products
Design workshop: Day 1
Topic discussed:
What is design
Design basics
Design issues
Short term interventions
Design workshop: Day 1
Topic discussed:
Design elements were taught and discussed in small groups of 4-5 women.
Proper technique was taught for design tracing!
**Design Basics!**

1. Design elements
2. Composition
3. Design tracing
4. Colour
5. Texture
6. Presentation

In the workshop:

Colour combination in reference with the base product was taught. The design composition using organic and geometric form was taught for a neat production work. Same designs were taught in different colour composition just for developing the cognitive ability for making the right selection of embroidery threads.
Tailoring was introduced for finished product design! Skirts & mats were stitched in a NGO.
New Designs were taught and implemented for immediate short-time intervention
Tessellation: Geometry pattern
Organic design
Appliqué and Sujni combination!
Organic and Geometric patterns were explored and implemented for design variation and product diversification.
07. Workshop New Design Prototypes

New Product Design
Design#1: Cotton handloom fabric with tassar silk border and sujni work

Embroidery was simplified yet it was used as an enhancer. Such design reduces the time for production and makes execution faster and simpler. Fabrics were sourced from local weavers.
Design#2: Cotton handloom fabric with cotton border and sujni work
Design#3: Cotton handloom fabric with sujni work
Design#4: Cotton handloom fabric with sujni work
Design#5: Cotton handloom fabric with sujni work
Design#6: Cotton handloom fabric with sujni work
Design#7: Cotton handloom with appliqué and sujni work
Design #8: Tassar fabric with sujni work
Design#9: Skirts in handloom fabric and Sujni work
Design#10: Pink Georgette Saree with Sujni border work!
Design#11: Silk Zari Designer blouse with Sujni work!
Design#12: Black Georgette Saree with Sujni border work!
Design#13: Silk Zari Golden Designer blouse with Sujni work!
Design#14: Orange Maheswari silk stole with Sujni work
Design#15: Off white Maheshwari silk stole with Sujni work
Design#16: Magenta Maheswari silk stole with Sujni work
Design#17: Yellow Maheswari silk stole with Sujni work
Design#18: Green tassar silk stole with Sujni work
Design#19: Cotton dupatta with appliqué border and sujni work
Design#20: Cotton dupatta with sujni and kutchi embroidery work
Design#21: Maheshwari silk dupatta with sujni work
Design#22: Maheshwari silk dupatta with sujni work
Design#23: Cotton cushion in Sujni work
Design#24, #25, #26: Cotton cushion in Sujni work
Design#27, #28: Cotton cushion in Sujni work
08. Conclusion

Chief guest and Project host on the closing ceremony of the Design workshop!

From right:
Mr. Ashok Sinha
Deputy Director of Upendra Maharathi

From left:
Mr. Nirmal Kishor Jha
Deputy Director
Department of Industries
Govt. of Bihar

Third Guest:
Mr. Rajan Upadhyay
General Manager, DIC, Bhojpur
Designer Subrata Pandey distributing the certificates to artisans on their successful participation.
Product inspection by the guest!
The complete project team: Artisans, Designer, Host!