

**PUTTING ICTs IN THE HANDS OF WOMEN OF KANPUR
AND "CHIKAN" EMBROIDERY WORKERS OF LUCKNOW**

An infoDev-World Bank & Microsoft
Unlimited Potential Project

Datamation Foundation Charitable Trust

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A. 1. Background : Tale of Two cities

Kanpur and Lucknow districts located in India's most populous and one of the most socially, economically backward state—Uttar Pradesh (popularly called UP)—have always enjoyed historical prominence. Central UP was also called 'Awadh' and has been ruled by the royalty of Awadh apart from the Moguls. The British empire also flourished in Central UP almost around the same time the Empire started to actively trade from Bengal, under the East India Company. Central UP was on the vital trunk that linked India's North-West Region and the Silk Route with the Eastern India's ports in the close proximity of Calcutta. Consequently the 'Awadh' region was patronized by the British, even before they started consolidating their influence in other parts of the country. Yet, even the influence of the British combined with that of the Royalty of 'Awadh' and Moghuls, could not save the 'Awadh' region getting into a morass of poverty and under-development. Despite being called the 'Manchester of the East', Kanpur's textile mills and other ancillary units suffered considerably. Even after achieving Independence; Kanpur's and entire region's industrial and socio-economic growth continued to lag; leading to a state of utter neglect and under-development. However economic compulsions forced a large number of Kanpur women to engage themselves in small businesses and trades as a means of sustaining their families.

However the royalty of Lucknow were very fond of art and cultural activities such as music, shairi (couplets for every mood and occasion), architecture and handicrafts. Consequently they made serious efforts to cultivate the arts and the artisans—'Chikankari' being one such art which has been a distinctive and integral part of life of Lucknow. Under the patronage of the 18th and 17th century rulers of Awadh, the craft of Chikankari flourished.

The fine needlework adorned the garments made from gossamer silk fabrics and muslin for the ruling elite. The love and hard work of the artisans created delicate designs. The tradition of Chikankari was passed on to generation after generation. The craftsmen with love and devotion worked on intricate designs for their masters. However with the decline in patronage, economic compulsions forced the men to look out for more lucrative employment and the craft passed on to the womenfolk of the community as a source of subsidiary earning for the family. Gradually, it became the main source of earning for the family since the women were able to adapt themselves to the changing times; whereas the men experienced insurmountable challenges in adapting themselves to the changing technologies and economic cycle.

In the backdrop of livelihood difficulties faced by the women of Central UP apart from insurmountable barriers faced by them in gaining equity, access to livelihood and skills enhancement; the Datamation Foundation a non-profit, apolitical, non-partisan registered Charitable Trust (Trust Deed # 3258 dated March 8, 2001); with the help of infodev designed a multi-dimensional, multi-stakeholder Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for Development Project The Project "Putting ICTs in the Hands of Women of Kanpur and 'Chikan' Embroidery Workers of Lucknow" was meant to establish Community Multi-Media (CMC) centers in several poor communities in the Lucknow/Kanpur area; was meant to impart training in the target skills areas: IT skills, handicraft & other vocational skills of choice and Health knowledge. The project aimed to address three key questions:

- Can ICTs improve the capacity of women engaged in the informal sector to increase their incomes and/or enable women to enter the informal sector and generate sustainable livelihoods?
- Can ICTs improve the capacity of women engaged in handiwork trades, such as "chikan" embroidery, to increase their incomes?
- Can ICTs improve the capacity of "chikan" workers to engage in alternative sources of livelihoods within either the informal or formal sector, thereby improving their ability to achieve sustainable livelihoods given the over-saturation of workers in the "chikan" industry and the associated declining returns?

The CMCs were targeted to be set in five Districts of Central UP—Kanpur Urban, Kanpur Rural, Barabanki, Unnao, Lucknow—targeted towards the informal sector of the economy. This report covers some action research findings from Kanpur & Lucknow Centers.

2. Kanpur and Lucknow Districts at a Glance

	Kanpur (Rural)		Kanpur (Urban)		Lucknow	
Population	1584037		4137489		3681416	
Sex ratio (females per 1000 males)	856		869		891	
Population density (numbers per sq.km.)	504		1366		1456	
Literacy rate	76.84 among males	54.49 among females	82.08 among males	72.50 among females	76.63 among males	61.22 among females
0-6 years population	271,020		530,016		523,059	

Table 1: Kanpur and Lucknow: Vital Statistics

Source: Census 2001, Government of India

The data at the district level clearly brings out some important issues and reinforces the need for Datamation Foundation type of interventions. The area is thickly

populated and the density of population is particularly high in the two urban districts putting great pressure on the almost non-existent civic amenities and infrastructure. The under 6 population is in the range of 15-20% suggesting very high population growth rate. These statistics also highlight the need for the educational and livelihood resources needed in the future, to cater to a burgeoning population.

Adverse sex ratios and low literacy rates amongst women, brings out gender discriminatory practices such as sex selective abortions and lack of access of education for the women. Overall the average literacy rate in the area is quite low compared to other parts of the country but women face far more disadvantage and inequity in the access of educational services.

To help the poorest of the poor women and to ensure sustainability to the I.C.T. centre of Railbazar, Kanpur centre, we have set up three SHG s and one group for *Chikankari* at Bangla Bazar Lucknow.

(a) Candle Group : A whole-selling arrangement for the purchase bulk amount of candles produced by the women of the SHG.

(b) Stitching group : 3 sewing machines have been provided to this group.

(c) Beauty parlor : Recently separate cabin has been made for the beauty parlor. SHG. of 8 women has been formed and they are coming to centre turn by turn.

BRIDAL MAKEUP AT RAILBAZAR CENTER



Chikankari or chikan work is traditional pattern of hand embroidery. This embroidery pattern is a speciality of Awadh province (Lucknow, Kanpur, Barabanki). As Lucknow was the capital of Awadh province before the freedom of India. It is also known as Lucknow chikan work.

(d) Chikankari or Chikan work group : *Chikankari* is a distinctive and integral part of life of Lucknow. Skills that came to India nearly four centuries ago were shaped and polished in Awadh. Under the patronage of the 18th and 17th century rulers of Awadh, the craft of *Chikankari* flourished.

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B. Brief Description about the Initiative and the Community Multi-Media Centres (CMCs).

The Community Multi-Media Centres (CMCs) set up in the poorer and under-developed areas of Kanpur-Lucknow lacking basic facilities such as health, education and sanitation apart from high crime rate; have Computers, High Speed Printers and Scanners, Internet access to train the disadvantaged and marginalized women in the basic ICT skills apart from vocational skills enhancement. A community based mobilization effort has been undertaken to spread application of ICTs in the day to day lives of the women; apart from facilitating income generation and livelihoods.

The CMCs are located at:

1. Rail Bazar (Kanpur)
2. Basmandi (Kanpur)
3. Bithoor (Kanpur)
4. Jajmau (Kanpur)
5. Bangala Bazar (Lucknow)
6. Nishat Ganj (Lucknow)
7. Kakori (Lucknow)
8. Kasmandi (Lucknow)
9. Farstipur (Barabanki)

The participants have been constituted in the Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The SHGs participants have been imparted training in the Microsoft Unlimited curriculum; apart from below ICT based vocational and skills-based modules.

Some details of Activities at each centre are:

Railbazar CMC: This is the oldest CMC located in the close proximity of the Kanpur Central Station. The communities comprising railway porters, menial workers, sex-workers, manual scavengers; are extremely

impoverished and disadvantaged. The CMC has the distinction of enrolling till date; 307 students from below poverty line (BPL) families and 24 students from the middle class families. 161 participants have been successfully certified after completing the course.

Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been set up so far, currently handling stitching, beautician and candle making. Four women have been trained in the 'chikancad' software. The software has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) containing below features:

- ? The application has been designed and developed in JAVA. It is 2D based.
- ? The application has large no. of inbuilt tools and a database of large no. of motifs.
- ? The motifs are designed in basic shapes like leaves of(peepal,guavas etc)
- ? The software is very easy to draw these shapes, and needs only click and drag.
- ? The tools support drawing of figure, shaping it, resizing, copying and moving in (x y axis), also in mirror display in (x y axis). color(internal & lining), outlining(in smooth as well as in stitching look).
- ? The software tools enable use of multi type of threaded/stitches designs.
- ? The application enables drawing of a figure with free hand drawing of mouse. but in very attractive smooth lines.
- ? The power to create complex design is in-built in the application.
- ? The software breaks a complex design in different shapes.
- ? The software stores any design(thousands) in library for further use.
- ? The application enables retrieval of any design from library.
- ? The application alters design that is called from the library to give new as well as store it.
- ? The application enables making of a block within 30 minutes cutting short the time in process. Other wise making of this block requires more than 2-3 hour with hand.
- ? After the block has been made; the designs dumped on cloth with the help of engraver machine.

Bansmandi CMC : This CMC located in the predominant Muslim area that comprise 99% of the population, has been running in the famous Urdu library of Bansmandi area of Kanpur. This area is famous for the work of bamboo. It is a very densely populated area. There are 259 enrollments till now and 82 of them completed their courses. There were 4 women who have

completed 2 courses at a time. Along with computer basic literacy course, the women are trained in Stitching, Painting, Henna making, Beautician course and also they are they are being trained in ceramic work.



Bithoor CMC: Bithoor is a historical and mythological place located in a rural area near Kanpur. There are 144 students in Bithoor center till now. 45 students have completed their course and their certificates have been distributed. The women have been coming to CMC to learn stitching, bag making, embroidery, computer basic literacy course. As rural communities lack information about the various topics, they were motivated were to see different modules on different subjects like health, economic regeneration modules and women rights etc.

Jajmau CMC : Jajmau area is famous for leather tanneries. The CMC was set up here in August and there are 73 women trying to learn different skills such as basic computer literacy, stitching, beautician course and Heena course there.

Bangla Bazar CMC: There are 187 enrollments till now at Banglabazar center of Lucknow, located in the urban periphery of the city. The women enrolled here to get basic literacy skills apart from vocational skills such as stitching, bag making, embroidery, computer basic literacy course and also a musical instrument called 'Dholak'. 62 women have completed their courses and certificates have been provided to them. The participants have also making designer imitation jewelry for their livelihoods.

EXHIBITIONS OF DESIGNER JWELARY AT BANGLA BAZAR CENTER.



VISITOR JOEY PURCHASING DESIGNER JEWELRY MADE BY THE WOMEN



Nishatganj CMC: The CMC is located in a Madarasa (Islamic religious school) in a predominantly Muslim dominated area. Most of the women have been using veils and despite access problems; more than 104 enrollments have been done till now. There has been enthusiastic response to the vocational courses.

Kakori CMC : The CMC located in rural area near Lucknow. So far there have been 11 enrollments.

CHIKANKARI WORK AT KAKORI CENTER



Kasmandi CMC : Kasmandi CMC is located in a rural area near Lucknow. Despite lack of basic amenities and ICT knowledge; there have been 57 enrollments so far including basic computer literacy course and stitching.

Farstipur (Barabanki) CMC: Barabnki is Lucknow's adjoining district. The area is well known for *chikan* work. Women from each household of Farastipur known *chikan* work. Farastipur CMC was started 2.5 months ago, but there has been an excellent response from the villagers for training women from their families at the CMC. So far there have been 79 enrollments till now for the basic computer literacy course, stitching, beautician course and painting course.

C. Information and communication: Content and Use

Kanpur-Lucknow women create their own content:

Early enough in the project, it was evident the ICTs have given to the women of Kanpur-Lucknow a "voice" for expression. Belonging to conservative families; leading claustrophobic existence where stepping out of the clustered homes, unaccompanied and without "pariah"; the role of ICTs in providing a "voice" for their expression and creativity is undisputed.

The community ventured forward for a holy rendition of "Quran-Sharif" when the CMC Centre started.

The women started first with designs—sharp, colorful designs have been created from their socio-cultural context—applying Paint Brush.

Once they got exposed to the multi-media capability of the computers especially the recording features; they started enthusiastically recording:

**Naat: Religious songs sung for the Prophet

**Ghazals: Melodies of love, solitude, companionship and friendship

**Sher-Shairi: Rhythm melodies on variety of topics

Barring Fridays observed as "Jumma" as per tradition; the women have been singing and recording their renditions uninhibitedly. The deployment of ICTs has enabled restoration of traditional arts and cultural practices of Kanpur-Lucknow such as Naat, Ghazals and Sher-Shairi.

It is not simply religious arts and cultural practices being restored with the help of ICTs; but even basic skills such as Tailoring, Embroidery and Handicrafts too are getting restored with the help of ICTs. Some skills improvement modules especially tailoring modules developed by Datamation Foundation for enhancing the skills of the women have used the content provided by the women.

Searching and retrieving content for personal needs:

The women have been using searching English newspaper sites since they get usually Hindi papers at home. Since there is a keen desire amongst the women to learn English; they have been searching internet for different sites to learn English. The women have been expressing themselves in Hindi and Urdu by writing in Roman letters. Writing in Hindi with the help of Roman words has given them a very fine method to express their views. A large number of women have consistently used this format to convey their sentiments and thoughts.

Searching and retrieving content for education:

Kanpur-Lucknow Districts have very high school drop out rate especially amongst the women. However the women are keen to complete their education especially High School and College for which they frequently search content pertaining to distance education www.nios.org (this web-site of the National Institute of Open Schooling is being used frequently by the women for their enrolment into academic and educational courses offered by the NIOS.)

Another web-site searched frequently by the women is www.ignou.ac.in is frequently accessed by the women for gaining information on the distance education courses offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

So far these web-sites have been searched for retrieving information on enrolment and admissions. We have been trying to convince the women to access the websites of NIOS and IGNOU for retrieving contents and learning materials.

Searching and retrieving health content:

In wake of epidemics such as viral, dengue fever and other diseases there is a great interest amongst the women to retrieve various health sites. They are also interested in knowing about the preventive steps to cure various diseases and how they could be helped in the wake of epidemics such as dengue fever, viral fever etc.

Using alternate channels of communications:

For elderly women with large families, access to the ICT Centre has been a major concern. Towards this end; we facilitated telecast of the vocational and skills enhancement modules over the cable network. The telecast generated very enthusiastic response.

The combination of video and community's own recording has enabled the community to learn the process of holding camera efficiently for recording purposes apart from observing the process of editing and mixing of the audio cum video; therefore the women have started feeling motivated enough to produce their own multi-media modules.

The understanding of audio and video recording process and integration of the same in the development of multi-media content is a major breakthrough for the Kanpur-Lucknow women. Despite lack of technological exposure apart from lack of sound academic background; the fact they could use the audio and video recording for their content creation is a major step forward.

Usage of enrich:

enrich the local community browser has been used enthusiastically for searching various schemes offered by the Delhi Govt. apart from the Central Govt. The deployment of the Desk Manager has also facilitated

the translation of the English content to Hindi. Consequently the usage of the community browser enrich has been very high.

The women have also been using the audio recording feature of enrich.

Usage of off-the shelf Digital content:

The response of the community to the off-the shelf Digital content prepared in advance by the Datamation Foundation in below thematic areas has been very positive and has contributed to the confidence building of the team apart from building their own self-esteem.

The topics of digital content have ranged from women's empowerment to legal rights and issues; apart from skills enhancement and income generation.

Health and education have been primary contributing factors towards the empowerment of the women.

The women have been using the prepared content with lot of seriousness. Qualitative assessment of the content deployed to the women have also been executed by us to enable us to understand how much they have grasped and what are the pitfalls in the learning process.

Content creation: Women's strategic interests as the guiding principle

On the technology side, an important direction for the future towards women's economic empowerment is the creation of content and applications that will serve women's interests. The direction that content production for women needs to take is two-fold. One, a conscious attempt to map women's information needs and preferences is needed. The second has to strategically push content that promotes the interests of women. Mainstreaming women's needs and concerns in the ICT projects constitutes only a limited perspective of what women deserve; the array of possibilities is much broader and rooted in the manifold experiences of poor women as workers, producers, managers, care-givers, and autonomous human beings, negotiating constantly their position in relation to social institutions.

The two-fold agenda of advancing women's rights - comprising a basket of social, political and economic rights - and addressing women's economic interests and livelihood concerns is at the core of mobilizing ICTs for women's empowerment in the infoDev Kanpur-Lucknow project. It is important to construct the two as equally critical and explore ways to bundle one with the other. Building online spaces for women to utilize the power of the Internet to enable community building, sharing development experiences, advancing the rights agenda and advocating against exploitation and oppression is a priority.

D. Opportunities for Capacity-building and Employment

Disadvantaged women in the Kanpur-Lucknow area with handicaps in education and training have benefited from opportunities in the IT labour market, if they can master basic aspects of computer use and maintenance. Such training in basics outside the formal education system is an area that some organizations have tried to explore. We have also tried to link the training initiatives to the employment market, learning from earlier experiences that ICTs don't materialize in real terms for poor women. However we have experienced that the outcomes of the convergence of gender and class bias and gender-based discrimination at all institutional levels - the household, the community, the market, and the state - imply that for women, work opportunities in the mainstream are hard to come by, even after acquiring the requisite skills.

To enable the benefits of IT to trickle down to poor women, the larger institutional framework of the IT industry has to make spaces for the poor in general, and poor women in particular. A more pro-active policy in public and private institutions towards induction and mentoring of socially disadvantaged women is required.

Opportunities for Self-employment:

Self-employment through ICTs is another area that has been seen as an income-earning possibility for the poor women of Kanpur-Lucknow. The tele-centre business, which is based on the enterprise model, has been amply demonstrated by organizations like n-Logue that provide rural ICT solutions. The scope for such enterprises has to be exploited in the Project so that poor women can benefit from the business opportunities that ICTs offer.

One of the areas worth replicating is the Village Pay Phones project of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh is an example in this area that has received a lot of attention. In the late 1990s, the Bank started to lend money to women to buy cellular phones. Typically they borrowed the equivalent of US\$350 to buy the phones and sell telephone services to villagers. A pilot program involving 300 villages revealed that women were earning about US\$700 per year after covering all their costs, more than twice the per capita annual income in Bangladesh. Currently, there are more than 20,000 village phones in operation and many more are expected online soon. One of the conditions of participation in the project was that husbands sign over ownership of property to their wives, thus creating protection for women should their husbands decide to appropriate the resource from their small business¹.

Ensuring women's access from the CMCs: A continuing challenge

The underlying concept of a shared community resource provides tremendous value to CMCs in under-served

contexts. The challenge however, is to ensure that women's stakes are accounted for in these models.

Given that the short history of the tele-centre/kiosk model suggests the exclusion of women from information and networking benefits; therefore we implemented the project in Kanpur-Lucknow keeping these lessons in mind. Preliminary evidence suggests that tele-centres in developing countries are not particularly effective in helping women to gain access to better economic, educational and other opportunities. Some other factors that influenced our thinking included:

- Women use tele-centres much less than men
- The design of tele-centres reflects models that meet the priorities and interests of male users, with the onus on the user to come in and try the equipment and to find out on one's own, what it can do.
- It is assumed that women have the disposable income to choose to spend on and pay the fee charged by tele-centres.
- The assumption is that women will feel comfortable with a one-on-one technical assistance situation with a man.

The project has provided opportunities for women's groups to become collective managers and users of technology. Bringing women into the net of beneficiaries in community-based projects is a challenge that needs to be addressed continuously. It requires careful planning, and an on-going commitment to address and deal ingeniously with gendered barriers to access.

Poor women's journey from training to employment: Risks and Road blocks

Like every other model, the ICT for development model is embedded in many risks. The ostensible empowering process of appropriating ICTs has enabled the women to renegotiate their status. For the women of Kanpur-Lucknow districts, entrenched in cultural barriers and constraints, apathy of the state, and ruthlessness of the market; ICTs have meant a way forward. The issue of building capacities of and finding employment for the disadvantaged women of Kanpur-Lucknow belt in the IT labour market is no doubt an important agenda.

There are two lessons here. The first is the need for a realistic visualization of the potential of technology. While it is possible to imagine infinite power in ICTs to address development, the over-optimism, with respect to what it can actually deliver needs to be tempered. The second and more important one is that both, the design and delivery of models, requires very consciously thought-out approaches to bring the excluded into the net of beneficiaries.

E. Gender Sensitivity: The primacy of Context -A Research enabled process for assessing the impact of ICTs on the Kanpur-Lucknow women

The goals of promoting women's access and enhancing women's gains from ICTs really depend on how gender relations are understood with respect to the context and how this understanding is then employed in specific strategies. The project deployed research findings applying:

- ** Informal discussions with the women participants.
- ** In-depth interviews with couple of participants from different categories selected based on the marital status,
- ** Participants profile given to the participants at the time of admission to ICT center.
- ** Few blank pages handed to the participants at the time of admission to ICT center for eliciting one-time responses we wanted to get from them
- ** Diaries.

Main themes for focused research emerging are:

- Earning versus purchasing power,
- Meeting aspirations at what cost/affordability,
- Presence of unsocial elements within and outside the community

Illiteracy: Illiteracy is a very big problem of this area. And people point out that poverty is the biggest reason of illiteracy.

'My name is Rxxx Yxxxx. I have 3 sisters and a brother. My brother and two of my sisters got married. When I was just a kid, my father expired. He was ill and has got diabetes. The conditions of our family were very poor. We were economically crushed due to which all of the brothers and sisters couldn't study much. My brother passed class IX and 2 of my sisters passed class 6 and I have passed class VIII.' (18.06.05)

Unemployment among the educated youth is one the various reasons of illiteracy. Most of the people think that if they have to struggle even after getting education then why to waste the time ? Instead of learning they push their children in some work.

I went to Mr. XXXX, who is a successful businessman and an educationist. He started his work from a small garage Now he has 6-7 factories and all of them are running successfully

Besides the business, he is a researcher, he researched on social aspects of the population and found that our

education system is not fulfilling its motive. We are only encouraging youths to serve to somebody we are not developing qualities of self development. They must have enough courage to start their own work. He insisted on doing yoga to get mental peace. He started a school called 'Manav Prabandhan Sansthan' at Naramau where he gather some spoiled children of nearby villages and taught them. These children gave up all the bad habits and now they are an important component of the society. (21 march 05 by Ujjwala Subhedar)

Nowadays younger generation is paying much emphasis on women' education and mothers are supporting to their daughters.

Sxxx said that if a boy is spoiled, one family's future is spoilt but if a girl goes in a wrong way, three families suffers (parents, in laws, and her own family)

(Group discussion by Tarannum 10.10.05)

I talked to Ra 's mother. She said that she is sending Ra to learn stitching so that if she gets any bad time in future, she could be able to run her family. She would not remain dependent on somebody's money.' (Field notes of Devanshi 06.09.05)

Lot of women now paying attention towards their studies

'I went to the houses of AM,SK,NY,PY,AG,A Vfor they were not coming to the center, they said that summer holidays are over and they have to attend the school first so they would come to the center after their exams only.' (Fieldnotes of Deepu, Lucknow 17.08.05)

Caste system: There are various castes in both Hindus and Muslims. People of one caste prefer to marry into their own caste only but nowadays caste system is getting eradicated slowly. The number of children in traditionally lower are more possibly because of the other associated factors such as lack of education and awareness.

Marriage: In both Hindus and Muslims the families arrange marriages. Mostly women prefer to marry with the consent of their parents. Families often try to spend out of their capacity in marriage ceremonies.

'Rxxx, Sxxxx, Nxxx, Jxxx, Txxxx think that there are much benefit in arrange marriage. Parents and society pay respect to the couple and help them when they are in need. Nxxx says that there is much enjoyment in love marriage because both girl and boy know each other well so it gets easy to settle down but the love should be coverted to arrange marriage. Permission of parents should be taken and parents should also help the couple. (Group discussion by Anupama on 24.03.05)

Dowry system: There was no dowry system in Muslims some time ago but nowadays family of bridegroom

expects dowry in form of house or car or gold and furniture.

Q. Is there any dowry system in your (Muslim) society ?

A.(Sxxx): Yes, 15 or 20 years back there was no dowry system but now parents of a bridegroom expect so much like refrigerator, bike, car and cash money with gold from the bridegroom side. (Group discussion at 16.08.05 at Bansmandi center)

Divorce: In all Indian women try to save their married life but both Hindu and muslim ladies have right to give divorce to their husbands. Hindu couple gets separated with the help of court while muslims do not like to go to court for getting separated.

Q. Could a woman get divorce from her husband if she is not satisfied ? Is it permitted in Islam ?

A. (Sxxxx): Yes, if a woman is being tortured from her husband or from his family, if the husband is involved with some other lady or he is a drunker or edict of some drugs, the wife could get divorce. I myself is a divorcee.

Q. May I know the reason of your divorce ?

A.(Sxxxx): Sure, My husband was good for nothing. We were told that he had his own business but after marriage I got that he enjoys only to eat and to sleep. He had to ask for money for his daily necessities from his brother. Whenever I used to come to my parents' house he put some demand. My father gave some money to him for the business but wasted all the money. Every time when I went to my parent's place he used to sell some of my things and ornaments, that's why my father and brothers decided that I should not go back.

Szzzz: Actually we don't prefer to go to court. Our Kazi 's who were the mediator at the time of Nikah plays a good role in parting husband and wife. Before that they asked both to live together for 6 months. (Group discussion by Ujjwala Subhedar on 16.08.05 at Bansmandi center)

Art and culture: Most of women are fond of painting, stitching and embroidery. Chikan embroidery is very common and famous in the area. Most of the population in these areas know the work of chikan embroidery. Some have adopted it as an occupation but they are getting very poor returns from it.

'In Bangla Bazar. Most of the population is muslim. It is a very poor and backward area. Some of the women know how to do the chikan work. Some of them are already earning some money from this but it is not sufficient to give them good shelter and food. When some women were given idea about our Datamation foundation charitable trust, few of them were ready to learn and earn. Some of these women are working at some chicken centre for about 6:30 hrs. Daily and earns

700-800 Rs. Per month. Most of the ladies are eager to do something but their families would not support them.'

'When I talked to Sabina Kxx, Sxxx, Axxx, Rxxx Bxx, Pxxxx, Kxxx, all this women are working in a chikan centre. They told us they work from 10 to 4:30 pm. At the centre. They complete one saree in a month. When they complete 20 flowers, they use to get 25 Rs. They started working from 12 Rs. And now they are getting 20 Rs. They earn 700-800 Rs. Per month plus some bonus on festivals. This bonus is in the form of small lunch box or other utensils.' (Field notes of Alka Bhardwaj 15.12.05)

Use of new technologies in chikan work: Nowadays educated women are much aware of using new technologies in chikan work so they could improve their quality of work and could stand in cut throat competition.

'Dr. Ray told about Media Lab Asia Project. He told that a software has been developed, and with its help designing is very easy. He showed newly developed engraver called XY engraver for block making. This engraver is made up of resin so it easy to engrave some design on it to make a block for taking out design on a cloth. Till now people are using block made up of wood or steel so it is not easy to make block with these things. It takes a lot of time and money to create a new block.' (Report of work shop by Ujjwala Subhedar 05.03.05)

' I talked to Nxxx and Txxxx (the women getting training of chikan work). Txxx said, "We have learnt a lot in only one month of handling the software but we need one more month to do work satisfactorily. If would definitely improve our efficiency and quality. (Ujjwala Subhedar 23.09.05)

Lack of Employment Opportunities: Office jobs are less in number. Especially in village areas people are engaged in the work of farming or piggery or poultry.

Most of the people in Usari village are either laborers or they are engaged in piggery. Most of the women works in the houses of other peoples so they are not willing leave their work and going outside to learn anything. When I asked a woman called Cxxxx why she has kept pigs, she said that every thing of a pig gives us some economic benefit. Brushes are made out of its hair. It's hair are so strong and don't get spoiled even after remaining wet for long time so ropes for ships are also made of it's hair. It's flesh is eaten. Fats under its skin is very useful as a medicine for joints. It has other medicinal uses also. (11.12.04 Interview of Cxxxx by Alka)

' I asked the principal of Kanya Pathshala about some social persons of that area, she asked me to meet Mr. B

/ (Corporator) Saley nagar. We got a cycle rikshaw and went to him. He informed us that it is a ward having 50000-60000 population. But most of the people are engaged here in making and selling 'country liquor'. They have nothing to do with literacy. When I asked him that when our mobilizers use to go to them, it is told that most of them are daily paid labours, then he said that no body would tell you about his/her illegal business but many white collared people also use to visit here. Specially ladies are engaged in wrong business and they would not learn any thing when they are getting easy money.' (Field notes of Ujjwala Subhedar)

Health: There is lack of awareness. Most of the diseases spread in the area is due to air or water pollution. Mosquitoes also play a key role in spreading illness. T.B. is a main problem here. Patients of Blood Pressure and diabetes are also increasing due to modern life style. Drug addiction is also becoming a problem.

I decided to go to Dr. Bhagat with some women as I already talked to him about this, so I went there along with 4 women Dxxxx, Mxxxx Gxxx, Sxxx and Axxx. I asked the doctor about most common diseases of the area, he told me that lung problems are very common here due to pollution. Stomach problems like dysentery is very prominent here. Dxxxx asked about lung T.B. Doctor Bhagat told that it is due to a virus which can stay inactive in the body of human being and as soon as the resistivity of the person got down the virus attacks on the body. This virus could go anywhere in the body like kidney, brain etc. But most common is the lung infection. Infected person began coughing, fever became a prominent feature. If T.B. is detected earlier, it could be cured, but the problem is that people are unaware of this disease, so first they ignore the problem and then it becomes difficult. I asked him about the treatment of this disease, he told me that the treatment has to be carried out for 6 to 12 months. Now there are good combinations of antibiotic are available for the treatment. Good nutrition is needed, patient should eat protein rich food and fruits to increase resistivity.. (13.03.05)

Virendra and I went to Maulana Hasarat Noorani hospital to meet the doctor. We had to wait for some times because there were some patients. He is running a 'Addiction removal centre'. He said addiction has been increasing in the society. Pan masala is the most primitive and most common form of it. Even now a day 'smelling petrol' is the new kind of addiction. Nerve cells get very worst effect of it. (9.12.04)

Today I went to Pxxxx house for Pxxxx has not been coming to the centre for some time when I reached there her mother was preparing Tulsi and Ginger's tea for her. She said that Pxxxx got flue and she had a high

fever so she had not been coming to centre. When I asked her that whether she took Pxxxx to some doctor she said that she prefers home treatments for these don't have any side effect. In allopathy doctors use to give antibiotics immediacy which are equally harmful to body. I asked her to tell me some more home medicine she said that if some body gets hurt and gets bleeding we should immediately put some sugar on the wound. Sugar helps in making clot of blood and thus excessive bleeding could be stopped. Allovera is a very good remedy on swelling. She makes Amitdhara at home which is a very good medicine for a lot of problems like cold, headache, stomachache, ear pain etc. When I asked her how she makes this thing. She said that she makes it with mint. She said that there generation still prefers these efficient remedies but new generation is losing believes in our precious heritage. They believe much is fast treatment while home treatment takes some time.

Demand for boys and gender discrimination: Every family whether it is Hindu or Muslim wants a son to keep their name alive. There are many primarily traditional norms that act as reasons for demand of a son. There is great difference in upbringing way of a boy and of a girl. Not only in education but also in very small necessities women are avoided and they are depressed in comparison to a boy.

I asked the women of Rrailbazar center if they know about gender unbalance. Dxxxx said yes, it means men and women are not in equal number. Then I asked the reason of this, two or three women altogether at the same time replied that no body wants girl child. I asked him or her to reply one by one, then I asked the reason, Sxxxx Rxx replied that from generations every family member wants a baby boy in his or her house. Every body thinks that their name should remain on this earth for generation. Jxxxx said that there is a social and cultural reason. Everybody wants that there should be some who could put fire to their dead body at last. Just then Anupama returned. I asked her to join the discussion. Dxxxx said that the life of a girl is very difficult. She has to struggle at various levels at a time, so no mother wants that her child should suffer any kind of trouble. The case of women doing jobs is not very much different. They have to carry-out their responsibilities at both the fronts - at office and then at home. She further added that every family expects so much from a girl but boys are not given so much responsibilities for example she has four sisters and she is the eldest of all. She is B.A. Her sisters are also doing their graduation but they are checked all the time from their parents. They have to report and to explain every small thing but it is not the case with her brother. He neither studies nor he is doing any job. Mxxxx Gxxxx said that this is the same case as with her

sister Mxxxx Gxxxx. Mxxxx is allowed to do anything but Mxxxx is not. She had to struggle a lot to come to ICT centre to learn stitching while Mxxxx is allowed to learn computer course easily and then her father said that she could do any other course too, so she joined butician course. I said that it is a very wrong thing to discriminate between two daughters and asked the reason so Mxxxx said that Mxxxx do not speak very much with her father and she takes every help of her mother so father does not like it. He thinks that his importance is coming down, so I asked Mxxxx to start talking to father very clearly. Anupama said that to resist is the only solution of the problem. She said that the same thing was done by her mother. One day when she was about to eat grapes from the fridge her mother said that she had kept the grapes for Anupama's brother. Anupama got very angry on it and she ate all the grapes and said to her mother that she had become partial so as a punishment to her Anupama ate all the grapes and from that day her mother never did any partiality with Anupama. I asked Rxxxx how many issues does she have. She told me that she has three daughters and still her family members want a son. I asked the women about their personal feelings if they want to reborn as a woman again, then Dxxxx said that she would like to be a girl with a freedom. Sxxxx said that physically also women have a lot of problems since their adolscnt stage so she would not prefer to be a girl but others said they have no problem but they must get facilities equal to boys.

(09.03.05 by Ujjwala Subhedar)

Brother of Sxxxx came to give her some cloth to stitch. He was only 9 years old so I asked her whether he is her real brother and she laughed and said that there is one more brother who is younger than he is. She told me that she has 5 sisters and 2 brothers, in all 8 brothers and sisters. She also added that her parents wanted sons that's why they are 8 in number. This was a good point for group discussion I asked the women that what is there opinion about this point. Pxxxx Gxxxx said that her parents also waited for a boy that's why they are 4 sisters. Now she has lost her father so they are facing a lot of problem specially one of her sisters is mentally disturbed. Pxxxx said that every woman want a son, but women and boys must be treated equally. I asked Mrs. Rxxxx about her children she said that she has a boy and a girl, but her mother in law was much interested in a boy, so she prayed a lot in different temples. Pxxxx said that families are not allowing women to go out, so how could they go out for more learning or doing some job ? I said ok, now you are coming here if you would be able to convince your parents to send your younger sister to such a similar place or some other institution for studies. If you would

earn their belief you would be able to do this. Mxxxx Gxxxx said that parents differ between boys and women. Even if a mother has 2 apples one big and one small than she gives the bigger one to the son and smaller to daughter and not only this even her father differ between her and her sister. He allowed her to come to the centre and to join computers as well as beautician's course while he denied her sister to join the centre and her mother sent her to centre while her father doesn 't know this thing and he does not pay her fees. Most of the women said that these things must be changed but they do not know how to change the situations. I said that if they change even their own views than at least for the next generation the things could be changed.

(05.04.05 by Ujjwala)

Women are not paid attention for their very small necessities while boys are free for doing what they want to do. But women support this view (Group discussion by Tar annum on 10.10.05)

Mxxxx said that if they were not interrupted in the early age, they would not listen when they would grown up and do by their own and it would not be good as per today's circumstances for if a girl is not wrong but people of society could prove her wrong.

Women's Harassment: Many women are suffering of harassment and violence at their homes. They are often beaten by their husbands or by the in laws. It is a unbelievable thing that women and women also support this thing.

/ asked Dxxxx to bring wax then she said that she was not able to go for she had got tragedy at her house. When I asked her about the incident she told me that her Aunt's (sister of his father)'s husband was beating her aunt and her son tried to interrupted his father and when his father began to beat him he hit him with a stick on his head and he was serious. He was taken to hospital but doctors said that there was no hope. While we were talking, just then a phone came and she was told that the man died. She began to cry. I talked her and asked her some questions.

Q: What's the age of your aunt ?

Dxxxx: She must be around 40. Q.

What's the age of her son ? A. : He

is 13 or 14 yrs. Old.

Q.: What's background of struggle between your aunt and his husband ?

A. My aunt is the only sister of 8 brothers. His husband often used to drink and beat her. She didn 't told anybody for she thought that he has to live in that house only so why should she tell to others ? Her son had been feeling

hurt by beating to her mother. Once when he was 5 yrs. Old and his father was beating to his mother, he went out for getting help and he saw two policemen and he called them, they saved my aunt and beat his husband.

Q. What happened that day?

A. He was beating my aunt, her son interrupted, then his father began to beat him. He got angry and in that anger when found a stick he hit his father. He was serious for 3 days. My aunt sat near his bed for 3 day but now he has died. His family members had filed a complaint against my aunt that she herself asked her son to kill his father, so I am worried that the police would come to my house and would take my aunt. My cousin is not an adult so he would be sent to children remand home. It is not a good place and he may get spoiled.

When I talked to women of our center on this issue Bxxxx, Sxxxx, Sxxxx and other women said that although it is wrong to beat after drinking but some women need such treatment. They spoil the whole family. Anupama said that her sister in law separated from her family just after 3 days of her marriage while her father who had a patient of diabetes was struggling with gangrene and there was no body to look after him except Anupama and her brother.

Sex workers:

At Kanpur there is no particular red light area but in various areas these sex workers have been scattered. Railbazar, Moolganj and Kalyanpur are the main areas.

There are 2 castes found in this area, Habuda and Bhantu. Their forefathers were in the service of British. They were working as slaves but as soon as India became free, these people also became free. They had no work nor they had any skill so they were involved in crimes like robbery etc.

F. The Intervention Ushers In Some Changes: Voices Of Women

Most of the women who have completed or about to complete their stitching course have started stitching clothes of themselves and their family members thus they are saving money. Often they get orders from neighborhoods and thus they are paying their fees of ICT center by themselves. It gives them a lot of confidence. In the festival seasons and marriage season lots of beautician women and Henna learning women get money for their work. Many SHGs are working at Railbazar and other centres and now they have begun earning. Apart from that who have completed computer course they also start getting placement in small shops or some clerk level job

Case study 1

My name is Kxxxx Gxxxx. I am 25 years old. I was born on 17.02.1980 in Lucknow. My father Late Radhelal Gaur was a very intelligent and laborious man. He believed that we could achieve any thing by doing hard work only. I have my mother, one sister and 3 younger brothers in my family. I am eldest of all the brothers and sisters. My father was very careful about us. He tried to give us good education. When I was studying in Ist year, my father got ill, his health was getting worst day by day so everybody decided that I should get married while he was alive. After some time I was married to a well established family. I completed my graduation after my marriage. My father died after one year of my marriage. I completed computer course from Datamation Foundation Charitable Trust. I got a job of a computer teacher and now I am self dependent. I got full support from husband so I am very thankful for him. I am very thankful to Datamation Foundation Charitable trust for providing a very good quality education in a very nominal fees.

Case study 2

I am Km. Axxxx Dxxxx a female of 21 years old I have completed B.A . In 2004. and I have also completed computer course and mehendi (Heena) course duration of 6th month and 3rd month from Datamation Foundation charitable trust. My father is in army but he was a heavy drinker. He always used to Torture my mother so she got mentally disturbed & died when I was 4 years old I came to my maternal uncle's house at meerpur. He and his wife kept me more then their own children they have 3 children they help me in getting my education so I could get my Bachelors degree I come to know from Datamation Foundation Charitable Trust about a job at Disha Healthcare I have to keep an account of stock and income & expense of the firm on registers as wells as on computer I am getting two thousand rupees per month

Case study 3

My name is Nxxxx Bxxxx. My father's name is Mr. Iftikhar Husain and my mother's name is Nisha. I have three sister and one brother my sisters go to college, my father Is business man. He had a very small hotel and my brother is works in my father's hotel and he is graduate. I did computer's course and now I am doing stitching course from the centre. I did data entry work at datamation, and I earned money first time in my life, and I am learning chikankari work with help of computer software without any fees, chikankari is very helpful for me. It increased my confidence. I could get good knowledge and skills with the help of computer. I use to do chikankari on saris and other clothes and get money. Thus I fulfill my own petty expanses. I would

like other women also to join this center. We use to get a great knowledge and skill here in very nominal charges.

Case study 4

I am Sxxxx Rxxxx. My father is a labour. I have 4 sisters and 2 brothers. One of my sister got married. My 2 sisters and 1 brother go to school. I have got education up to class IX. I did beautician course from Datamation Foundation Charitable Trust. I had an ambition to be a beautician for the last four years but institutes running such kind of course were charging a lot. It was not possible for me to pay such a huge fees so I thought that I would never be able to learn this course but when I saw the pamphlets of datamation and found that there is a very nominal fees of 30 Rs. I decided to join it. I came regularly to the center and it fulfilled my dream. Just after one month of joining I began to work. From these workings I began to get money and from these money I myself gave my fees. I didn't ask my family to give me money for the fees. As my family was not giving me money for the fees, they also didn't object me going to center and usually I used to spent a lot of time at the center and my father was very glad that I was learning by heart and that was the reason I obtained the skill successfully. It is all due to Datamation.

Case study 5

My name is Dxxxx. I am 34 years old. I reside at 470/4, kumhar mandi, meerpur cantt., kanpur. I have father, mother, 5 sisters and 2 brothers in my family. One of my sister is married and another sister and a brother are going to be married soon. My father is a retired storekeeper of ordinance factory. I am eldest of all my brothers and sisters. I am B.A. I am the only person who has completed graduation in my family. When I did my graduation, I and my parents thought that it would inspire and help my sisters and brothers to study more, but none of them was interested in studies. No body has crossed the matriculation level in my family except me. My father worked hard to run my family. He often used to work overtime but he is not attentive about his other family responsibilities. He does not want any of his children to be married. When his retirement was closer, I decided to struggle for the marriage of my younger sister. My brother and I struggled a lot and finally we were able to get a good guy for her to be married. He is not attentive for my marriage nor he wants me to work somewhere. When I learnt about this ICT center, I decided to join it for learning computer and beautician's course. When I joined the center, the strength of the center was very poor, so I went to different houses of my area and convinced the families to send their daughters to center. Many people sent their women

to the center on my risk. I came to know that we can make a self-help group here, so I gathered some women, convinced them to make candles and asked Chetan Sharma sir to help him. When he assured to support us, then I asked each of the girl to submit 200/- Rs. Here are some women who took loan for submitting this amount. I went to market many times with Ujjwala madam to get the knowledge of market, to know the costing of candles, costing of moulds of candles, and then we came to know that moulds of candles are much cheaper at Delhi, but we lost 2 whole months to get the moulds. Women were very much discouraged but at last in the last month we got moulds. Ujjwala madam talked to Wasa Enterprises to provide us free training. We were attending the training for 2 days. In this training we were taught to make simple candles as well as designer candles. We spoiled wax when we made candles for the first time, then when we weighed our candles we found that we are spending 16gm. Extra wax on each candle of Rs. 1 and 6 gm. Extra wax on each candle of 1 rs. So we were in loss. Then again Ujjwala madam went to Wasa Enterprises, who is manufacturer of candle moulds and talked to him so he took 200 rs. And changed our mould of 5 rs. But mould of 1 rs. Candle is yet to be changed. I had given it to Wasa enterprises to get changed. I also went to wholesale market with Ujjwala madam. The wholesalers have passed our samples, they are ready to take bulk quantity of our candles after Navaratra festival, because the market could get closed against VAT but we do not have enough money to buy wax. We are able to purchase only 5 or 10 kg. Wax at a time and each time we have to spent conveyance in collecting it, so all our profit goes in conveyance. If we were able to get a loan of 4000 rs. Then we'll be able to get a good profit and then the women would be able to get some money. I have got physical problem. My blood pressure is getting very low so I was not able to write about my self while Ujjwala madam has told me many time to give my details. Now-a-days teachers of the center are very busy in different works so our classes are getting disturbed specially computer classes. It would affect the strength of students here. Many women are complaining me. For the first three months we got very good computer learning and I along with some other women have done the work of data entry here so we got money through it. It was really a good experience. We are waiting for some other work of data entry.

The women are gaining means of livelihood and confidence as these narratives bring out well. They gradually overcome the many challenges that they have faced in their personal lives till now.

G. Observations From the Self-Evaluation Of the Users

Questionnaires were given to the participants who were about to finish their course. 140 women at different centers of Kanpur and 61 women of Lucknow participated in self evaluation process.

Use of computer before coming to the center: 70.71% women of Kanpur and 70% women of Lucknow never handled computer before joining the CMC.

Duration of joining the center: Near about 90% women of Lucknow joined the CMC center for about 3 months while the most of women at Kanpur have used the facilities provided by the center for more than 3 months

	upto 3 months	up to 6 months	more than 6 months
Lucknow	90.16%	6.56%	3.28%
Kanpur	48.20%	35.97%	15.83%

Table 69: Prior use of computer in Kanpur and Lucknow

Most of the women have used more than one facility at the center. Most of them have seen different modules on different topics and thus used computer along with the training for which they got admission.

Increase in income: Above 22% women of Kanpur have got some increase in their income after they have completed their vocational courses while 21% some times get some work of stitching or they save money by stitching the clothes of their family members so the increase in their income is not definite. In Lucknow families of women are not allowing them to go out of their houses. .02% got job there while 21% women are earning by stitching or by doing some data entry work but their jobs are not fixed. They get money occasionally.

Change in the attitude of the participants: There is a wide change in the attitude of the women. They have developed self confidence and now they are more confident about their future. 50.82% women of Lucknow feel that they could learn more and do more things while 41% women of Kanpur have the same feeling. 52% women of Kanpur and 48.2% women are more confident about their future.

Change in attitude of the family of the participant: There is also seen a vast change in the attitude of the family members. Initially they were not ready to send

their daughters to the center but now the participants accepted that there is a vast change in their attitude. Family members of 67.21% women of Lucknow and parents of 42.446% women of Kanpur have developed more confidence in women while 43.32% parents of Kanpur and 31.14% parents in Lucknow are proud of their daughters.

Usefulness of the ICT center : 66.19% women at Kanpur find the center useful and 20.1% find very useful for them. 70.5% women of Lucknow find the center useful while 21.31% find it very useful.

	Not useful	A little useful	Useful	Very Useful
Lucknow	1.63%	65.56%	27.5%	21.31%
Kanpur	5.75%	79.1%	14.19%	20.14%

Table 70: Utility of ICT center in Kanpur and Lucknow

Recommendation status: 89.9% women of Kanpur and 100% women of Lucknow wants to recommend the center to the other women and infact mouth to mouth publicity is bringing women from 3 to 4 km. distance to the center.

Suggestions of women to improve the CMC: Mostly the women are satisfied with the contents and the facilities but some women of computer literacy course want some extension of duration of course so that they could get perfection in that. Some women demand for basic facility like more fans and inverter or generator to overcome the electricity problem.

CERTIFICATE DISTRIBUTION BY LOCAL LEGISLATURE SATISH MAHANA

