

IIM-Indore, Lucknow admin weave a blueprint to give boost to chikankari

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Lucknow: To promote Lucknow's famous chikankari, IIM Indore has prepared a detailed study which will serve as a blueprint to propel the art into the global spotlight while preserving its traditional essence.



Lucknow DM
Surya Pal Gangwar

The study, commissioned by Lucknow district administration one-and-a-half years ago, aligns chikankari with the broader mission to empower communities, promote women's financial autonomy, and drive sustainable development.

Working alongside the chikankari industry participants, including artisans, entrepreneurs, exporters, bankers, and traders, IIM Indore facilitated the



IIM Indore director Prof Himanshu Rai releasing the handbook on Wednesday

development of detailed project report strategies to enhance operational systems, processes, marketing, and branding of ODOP chikankari products. On Wednesday, a handbook titled 'Chikankari: A Complete Guide for Artisans and Stakeholders' was unveiled by IIM Indore and Lucknow administration via video conferencing, attended by various industry stakeholders.

"The 48-page handbook covers various aspects such as establishment of units, procurement of raw materials, plant machinery requirements, marketing strategies, branding approaches, and export procedures.

The guide serves as a centralised information repository for all stakeholders involved in the chikankari industry," said IIM Indore director Prof Himanshu Rai. This collaborative endeavour is expected to stimulate investment and generate employment opportunities within the district. Chikankari, introduced by Mughal empress Nur Jahan, exemplifies a fusion of Persian craftsmanship with Indian aesthetics.

This craft constitutes the foundation of Lucknow's handicraft economy, sustaining thousands of artisans, predominantly women from rural backgrounds. However, artisans encounter challenges including unsustainable income, diminishing interest among younger generations and industrial exploitation. "Lucknow administration realised that chikankari, an exclusively handcrafted piece of art, which is characterised by curating timeless ensembles crafted in breathable

fabrics, is of late facing tough competition with other machine-made embroideries, and sincere efforts are required to uplift its status with enhanced training and strategic marketing. Thus, a dire need was felt to take a step towards promoting the art of Chikankari and reviving it so that it registers a global recognition," said Lucknow DM Surya Pal Gangwar. "An MoU was signed with IIM Indore to strengthen the art and its ecosystem," he added. The purpose behind this initiative of district administration was to bring in academic expertise into the field of chikankari so that the craft can infuse traditional essence into modern aesthetics while continuing to draw inspiration from its age-old sensibilities. Joint efforts led to the unveiling of first comprehensive report on chikankari in Jan 2024 wherein IIM-I made workable suggestions for augmenting a new era in the craft of chikankari," he added.