

Kota Doria Initiatives

India Joins the Chain of 'Silky Cities'



Isabelle Moulin of *Silk Me Back Editions* came to India in April 2022 and visited Kaithoon as part of her tour. She was accompanied by Jyoti Gupta and sat with Asgar Ali discussing a fashion show in Lyon, France in which each of India's six types of silk will be showcased. She ordered a cream *kota doria* sari in mulberry silk for one outfit.

While in Bangalore, Isabelle was able to announce that India has formally joined the *Chain of Silky Cities* in which one city represents the nation.

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The other nations are China, Uzbekistan, Italy, France, Spain and Brazil.

Isabelle is concerned that the skills and knowledge of silk production are being lost in France which no longer manufactures silk. Archives are being held in Bangalore of the French silk history, and Lyon is home to heritage industrial museums but has lost practical skills. India still has the skills and is looking for world markets. The challenge is to develop both these strands for mutual benefit.

WICCI Rajasthan Handloom Council

Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WICCI), a totally honorary policy making body, launched the *Rajasthan Handloom Council* on Saturday, 18th September, 2021 with Jyoti Gupta as President, Victoria Singh as Vice-President and nine Council Members to represent handloom artisans throughout Rajasthan.

Silk in Lyon - 18-21 Nov 2021



Jyoti Gupta, our Project Manager for Kota Doria, is part of the Indian delegation invited to the annual silk fair in Lyons, France for the first time. The delegation will be carrying examples of India's finest handwoven silks to display and sell.

Jyoti will then be travelling to Geneva for an exhibition and sale on 24th November in the College of Fine Arts in the heart of the city.

This is a wonderful opportunity and we hope that India becomes a full member of the new 'Silk Route' that includes China, Uzbekistan, Italy, France, Spain and Brazil.



As of April 2022 a lot of progress has been made since the initial meeting in July 2020, which you can read about below.

For her efforts to connect customers to the weavers, Jyoti was felicitated by FICCI-FLO, Jaipur on Women's Day on 8th March, 2021 at the Lalit Hotel, Jaipur.

Invest India, a Government initiative, which promotes one craft product from each of over 700 districts in India, has chosen Kota Doria for Kota district and had said that it would like us to advise them but we have not been able to contact them since and the status of the project is unknown.



At a meeting held at the rather derelict *Common Facilitation Centre* in Kaithoon on 30th July 2020, we listened to the weavers and Hari Mohan Sharma, government officer in-charge of the CFC and tried to find a way forward.

Jyoti Gupta from Mumbai, Madan Meena, Hari Mohan Sharma, Asgar Ali and Rameez Ansari representing the master weavers, and the officers of KWWO, were all there. Ritesh and Om Veer from *Access Development Services* working with the women on a two-year project were also involved.



From 27th July, 2020, the Government abolished the *All India Handloom Board* and subsumed it into the Ministry of Textiles.

Weaving is the biggest employer in India after agriculture and much of it is done at home by women. It is a skilled form of livelihood earning that combines well with other responsibilities.

Badrun Nisha here combines weaving with child-minding her young grandson.

The vision hoped for at the above meeting in 2020 has not materialised. However, KHS has been working successfully with some women weavers and some master weavers to sell their saris across the world. Jyoti has created a range of unique handloom *dupattas* which were popular in Lyon, France and sell well in Mumbai.

Abismrita Chakravarty, an Assamese student doing a PhD. in weaving at Oxford University, U.K. is studying how knowledge is passed from one generation to the next and KHS is actively supporting her.

Amit Goyal, a KHS member, runs *Craft Walks* in Kaithoon to introduce non-weavers to the community and the complex processes. If you are interested, please contact Amit directly on +91 8112269633.



Kota doria paper bags (click to enlarge)

Over the years we have tried various initiatives to support genuine hand woven *kota doria* and have designed paper bags to replace plastic and arranged for *kota doria dupattas* to be on sale in the *Kota Garh* shop. Neither of these initiatives have proven to be sustainable.

We have arranged free spectacles, however, for the women weavers and held eye check up camps in 2012, 2013 and most recently in January 2020. These sponsored eye check ups are most appreciated.

We also connect enquiries to this website to the weavers and try to promote the hand loom industry in general. In 2019 the *Common Facilitation Centre* in Kaithoon was flooded and all the looms and equipment ruined. We are trying to work with the government and the weavers to find a way forward.