Gramshree Women Empowerment
Trainings and Workshop
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Gramshree: Designing our Destiny

Gramshree organization is an entity based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It has been persistently working for the past 25 years to uplift women's lives residing in lower-income areas and rural stretches of Gujarat. To date, Gramshree has successfully impacted and empowered 75000+ women by conducting initiatives and launching projects that emphasize vocational skills (chiefly handicraft) and generate opportunities for income generation.

So far, Gramshree along with various other NGOs have conducted various workshops and training programs for the empowerment of women and village-men in the vulnerable areas of Gujarat and neighboring states.

1. Embroidery Training at Gandhi Ashram Training

Date: 22 March 1999

Participants: 25 women

Traditionally & culturally, women of Gujarat have been practicing the art of hand embroidery for generations. The Embroidery Training at Gandhi Ashram activity empowers women by strengthening their economic capacity & supports our mission to continue/revive the art.

Hand embroidery work gives our women the flexibility to work from home. They conveniently earn & simultaneously take care of their daily household work & family members. It involves low capital investment for a decentralized group of women. Hand embroidery products attract both national & foreign markets and in turn, increasing the earning capacity of our women. Moderately educated women & homemakers can be easily trained & converted into social entrepreneurs through vocational programs. The workshop constituted of 25 women to taught learn embroideries like Patchwork, Simple stitch, and Aari work.

2. Kutch (Design Development Training)

Date: 11 September 2003

Participants: 27 women
Kutch embroidery work is a traditional embroidery of Gujarat. The embroidery is marked by its usage of bright-colored cotton thread to embellish home decor and personal clothing.

The technique that results in Kutch designs comprises the usage of a skeleton stitch and a weaving pattern. These two processes can be used to create a range of designs from simple geometric patterns to more complex motifs. The Kutch artisans are well trained on how to embroidery on any cloth but the color combination and design are old. We held a workshop with 27 women to upgrade their skills in design development.

3. Embroidery (Aariwork, Simple Stitch, and Patchwork in Patan)

Date: 05 January 2008

Participants: 105 women

Gramshree Trust has established a women empowerment center in Patan which gives employment to 100+ women by training them in Patchwork, Aari embroidery, and Handwork.

Geographically, the center is located in the area named Rajkavad with Muslim and Khatri communities belonging to the lower and middle class near Tyrenagar slums.

The community of women practiced the art of making godhris (quilts) out of waste fabrics. These were used in their homes, while men were involved in recycling tyres for making footwear and toys. Patchwork was later incorporated with footwear to create beautiful designs. This enhanced the basic look of the products, making them a piece in demand among the villagers.

4. Jewelry Making training

Date: 08 July 2013

Participants: 9 girls
The Jewellery making workshop was conducted for girls to explore their interests and to create products they could utilize in the future. They were given guidance and training on basic usage of beads, drafting designs, sourcing, and understanding handwork. The workshop was a successful initiative as the girls were enthusiastic to try out new experimental designs and create jewelry for themselves and for their friends. Many of them were also eager to understand metal jewelry designs in detail. Necklaces, earrings, nose, and finger rings were included in the workshop, with the girls incorporating their understanding in anklets, waist chains, and maang tikas (forehead jewelry).

5. Kutch Advance Training Workshop Of Embroidery

**Date:** 10 November 2013

**Participants:** 17 women

Women of Kutch are creative. Being a land of the desert, their colors shine through their attire. To add to this spectrum, an advanced workshop for embroidery was held in November 2013 with 17 women who were taught the basics of embroidery during Gramshree’s earlier visits. The workshop involved creating designs on paper, drafting, using different types of needlework and threads to create floral elements on cotton and silk. The women were also eager to experiment with geometric and man-made designs, turning them into motifs for their sarees and shawls.
6. Rudra Center Training

Date: 21 June 2015

Participants: 50 women

The men of Rudra are mostly cobblers, thus, to add on to the already practiced tradition, thus the women of the Rudra Center were taught aari embroidery on shoes. Both the men and women of the community were benefitted from this cohesive practice.

For the training, Gramshree started with only five women for each work and later grew to be a big unit. It was only after Gramshree’s skill development training that the women got introduced to new
designs and patterns to scale up their work. They learned the fundamentals of measurements and finishing with the help of Gramshree and their wages grew threefold in a short span of time.

Gramshree’s Rudra Women Empowerment Centre is a space that encourages and enables women of Ahmedabad’s slum communities to be catalysts of sustainable economic and social change in order to strengthen their families and positively impact their communities.

As the women of the local slum experience great hardships and difficulties in their daily lives, the Rudra Centre creates an atmosphere where these women can feel as though they are in the comfort of their parent’s home.

The women receive holistic values through their affiliation with the Rudra Centre. It is particularly noteworthy that the Rudra Centre reaches three different generations:

1. **Girls:** We have recognized that these young girls will grow up to have the power to affect many decisions in the community. Knowing this, we strive to provide these girls with basic education on relationships, nutrition, self-esteem, etc. through what is formally known as the Adolescent Girls Program.

2. **Women:** There is a common belief among members of the slum community that once they have committed to marriage and childbearing, their lives are over in terms of personal growth and development. To develop the mindsets for the improvement of the community, we have reached out to many women on the basis of empowering them with means of income generation, and in the process, give them education on personal development, self-esteem, relationships, general knowledge through various camps, educational trips, etc. We find that empowering women in the given various ways also empowers the members of their community (husbands, kids, other relatives, and social circles).

3. **Elder women:** Grandmothers and elderly women of the village hold the treasure trove of the culture and traditions of their community. Thus, it becomes important to include them in the decisions of the village taken up by the youth. Acknowledging their presence, we have created a series of constructive social activities for them, such as spiritual chanting, film viewings, songs and understanding of music, and storytelling events that don’t exclude any age group.
7. Mud-work Workshop

Date: 3-4 February 2015

Participants: 24

Our health can either support our journey in life, or impede it, and the steps to take care of ourselves begin right before we start eating. With all the confusing information available out there, it can be challenging to do the right thing to achieve our best health.

To clarify the miscommunications in concepts of health and diet, Gramshree conducted an immersive mud work workshop at the Khamir Campus in Gujarat. The stimulating environment of the exhibition, Ghadai by the Kumbhars of Kachchh, showcases the Terracotta art of Kachchh.

Taking inspiration from the past, the workshop explored how cooking in terracotta vessels can be beneficial for our health in the long run. The aim was to make the participants observe the vessels as more than just utensils, as a symbol of the body itself that can be shaped with our hands.

The health retreat was conducted on 3-4 February 2015

Topics in the workshop included:

• Understanding the food we eat and its impact on our health
• Introducing the idea of disease reversal through food
• Preparing meals
8. Leather Training Workshop
Date: 23 March 2016
Participants: 15

A 10 days leather workshop in association with Central Leather Research Institute was conducted with 15 artisans. The workshop was mainly a skill-building exercise for the artisans to explore more opportunities in leather design.

The workshop enabled artisans to bring innovation in the ancient craft of leatherwork by imparting the required knowledge and practical skills. Modern machinery for leather sewing, cutting, dyeing, polishing, and processing was also taught to the artisans.

9. Textile Crafts Workshop
Date: 18-20 May 2017
Participants: 40
Accessories emphasize the beauty of any attire. Thus, to provide the understanding of making your own customized jewelry, a three-day workshop was held at Seva Cafe in Ahmedabad. The participant’s age range was wide (8 years and above), which showed the versatility in the designs.

Basics of weaving, setting up warps and shibori dyeing techniques were also taught during the course. The resources provided encouraged the participants to create small fabric garments such as stoles and shawls. Block printing was also incorporated in the concluding day to complete the piece with a unique design.

10. Cept Metal Craft Training and Space Making Metal Craft Workshop

**Year: 2018**

**Participants: 27**

Metal Craft workshop was organized and conducted by the Faculty of Design, Design Innovation and Craft Resource Center (DICRC), CEPT University in collaboration with Craftroots and Gramshree, Ahmedabad. The workshop had the industry support of the International Copper Promotion Council (India), Mumbai, and Rachaita Creative Solutions, Baroda.

The workshop focused on different types of metal crafts like metal embossing, beaten metalwork, cutwork, metal engraving, sheet metal work, lost wax casting (Dhokra), traditional metal casting, along with upcoming technologies. Gilding workshops, site visits, and industry visits to Patan and Baroda were also conducted to expose the participants to various crafts and fabrication work.
The workshop constituted of 27 Craft Participants, which included Master Craftspeople, Fabricators, and Helpers who came from the Kutch, Mehsana, and Nadid districts of Gujarat. Many also came for the workshop from Andhra Pradesh and Orissa.

Experts for the workshop included UG and PG students from Architecture and their faculties. The craftspeople, fabricators, and design participants worked together on the specific design brief dealing with the spatial applications. Through a collaborative craft-design process, various outputs related to Interior Architecture were produced by hand-on explorations with various metal crafts.

11. Bodhgaya Embroidery Training

Date: April 2018

Participants: 30

Gramshree trust had organized hand embroidery training at Boghgaya in April 2018. Jamyang Foundation, which is based in Bodhgaya has invited us to provide handicraft training under their Sanghamitra program. Sanghamitra is a project to help transform the lives of girls and women in Bodhgaya, a village in northern India with huge problems and enormous potential. Gramshree had provided training to the women of a local community called Rattibigha in Bodhgaya along with the nuns of the Jamyang Foundation. As the foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of women and children from economically, educationally, and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, they are having different initiatives.

Three master trainers had provided training of embroidery, patchwork, and accessories to the 50 beneficiaries (30 local women + 20 nuns) in a week-long training program. The aim of this training was too skilled the women in handwork so they can earn some money by working at their home at their convenience.
12. Kalamkari Painting Training

Date: 10 May 2018

Participants: 20

Kalamkari is an ancient art of India, practiced for the past 3000 years. The word ‘Kalamkari’ translates to ‘pen’ (kalam) and ‘craftsmanship’ (kari). The paintings made with the help of the free-flowing pen used for kalamkari are created on cotton or silk fabric.

The workshop for the hand art was conducted for two days, including the basics of paper/fabrics, techniques and motifs to use, and finally, creating a design of your own.

Natural dyes were used in the workshop to provide an authentic experience to the participants. The participants came up with beautiful intricate details in their designs.

The patience, determination and confident nature required to create these designs sensitized the participants towards the time-taking process of handlooms and handicrafts.

13. Pichwai Painting Training

Date: 03 October 2019

Participants: 30

The 400-year-old visually stunning art of Pichwai Paintings includes the stories of Shrinathji (Hindu form of God Krishna). A three-day session was conducted on zoom as well as offline for the practice of the craft. While basic line art and drawing were taken on the first day, the real elements of the painting were colored on the second and the third day of the workshop. The artisans skillfully guided the participants in different techniques and methods to use in order to find the finesse in each painting.
14. Patwa Making Training

Date: 01 January 2020

Participants: 14

A workshop was organized to learn Patwa craft from the best artisans from Rajasthan. More than 14 participants who included Master craftsmen, fabricators, interns, designers participated in this 7 days long workshop. The workshop gave participants the details of Patwa, right from its origin to its current contemporary significance. A practical experience of creating samples gave them further clarity on this exquisite handcrafted art.

15. Mashru Weaving Training At Patan

Date: 09 November 2020

Participants: 10
A 30-day Mashru training was given to the women of Patan. As a handcrafted fabric, Mashru requires utmost patience and consistency in hard work to create one garment. The participants were taught the process right from the beginning: turning cotton balls into yarn, designing, dyeing, and then finally utilizing it to create fabric on the loom. In the regions of Saurashtra and Kutch, women stitch Mashru blouses, skirts, and cholis. Mashru helped weave communities together, and a similar aim was taken by Gramshree for the future artisans of the families weaving Mashru for centuries.

16. Patchwork Training
(Rudra and Patan)

Date: 7 July 2018
Participants: 30

Recognizing that one of the foundational elements of women empowerment is economic empowerment, Gramshree carefully planned and implemented three types of training programs in the areas of embroidery work and quilting that would give them the proper skills to pursue this path. In essence, we are also training them to have an entrepreneurial mindset.

The training camps conducted are highly effective in their use of a variety of teaching mechanisms, such as lectures, games, interactive discussions, etc. The training included hand embroidery, quilt training, and best out of waste activities.

The program stretched for 7 days in Rudra and Patan, which began with the basic practice of the above crafts, later encouraging the women to create product samples of their design choice. The women also began production by forming groups on their own, which gave them a stable income source and a beautiful pathway to earn a living.
17. Cooking Classes (Pachmari)

Date: 6 July 2021

Participants: 55

'Project Annapurna' was a well thought collective initiative directly contributing to women's skill development in cooking Gujarati cuisines and positively impacting the vicinity of Pachmari, a city in Madhya Pradesh.

Gramshree's team of experts landed in Panchmarhi and began the five-day workshop. Program coordinator of Gramhree Smt. Nita Jadav led the workshop on 06th July 2021 with 55 participants (80% women) at Sanjaygadhi Youth Leadership Training Institute.

During the five day workshop, Smt Tanuja Ben (Gramshree Head Chef) taught the participants a diverse array of Gujarati cuisines from Gujarati Chewda (Sweet Namkeen), Khichu, Thepla
(flavorful flatbread), Batakavada (Potato Fritters), Dalwada (Gram Dal Fritters), Methi Na Gota (Fenugreek Fritters), Khaman, Idda, Dhokla and more authentic Gujarati cuisines. The total counts hail to 30 dishes during five days.