Ittar Artisans of Kannauj: Towards a Sociological Understanding

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the Award of Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Dedicated to

Beloved Maa ji and Pita ji

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कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भुर्मा ते संगोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ (*Gita, Chapt. 2, Chant:47*)

(You have the only control over your action, do that sincerely and never think about the result. Neither be overly optimistic about results nor escape from the action.)

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■

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Table of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Description
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
ODOP	One District One Product
DIC	District Industries Centre
FFDC	Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre
GI-Tag	Geographical Indication Tag
BC	Before Christ
AD	Anno Domini
OAME	Own Account Manufacturing Enterprises
NDME	Non-Directive Manufacturing Enterprises
DME	Directive Manufacturing Enterprises
TNC	Transnational Corporation
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
DOP	Dioctyl phthalate
WHO	World Health Organization

Popular Local Terms are in Practice of Ittar Perfumeries

Table: 1

Sl. No.	Indigenous Name	Meaning or Description
1.	Deg	A copper pot use for distillation of flower.
2.	Bhapka	This is another copper mini pot that stores liquid stage of vapor coming from the deg.
3.	Chonga	A bamboo pipe that connects deg with bhapka.
4.	Sarpoz	The cover use to lock the degs.
5.	Kham	Clay use to seal deg mouth.
6.	Bhatti	A big hearth or furnace on which deg is placed.
7.	Gacchi	A mini water tank in which bhapka is placed.
8.	Kuppi	Ittar container usually made of camel leather.
9.	Agaadi	This is initial distilled output of flowers stored in bhapka. This is pure and most concentrated form.
10.	Pichaadi	The bhapka with late output or that came after an agaadi bhapka.
11.	Rooh	Essence of flowers like rose, kewda or bela.
12.	Artisan or Kaarigar	The person who handles ittar making process.
13.	Digha	The most experienced and senior artisan who perform and bear the major responsibility of ittar-making.
14.	Adhaati	The person who supplies flower from farmers to perfumery.

Hindi-English Name of the Different Flowers and Herbs used for Ittar Creation in Kannauj

Table: 2

Sl. No.	Local Hindi name of the Flower/herb	English Name
1.	गुलाब (gulāba)	Rose
2.	बेला (belā)	Arabian Jasmine
3.	चमेली (camēlī)	Jasmine
4.	केवड़ा (Kewra)	Screwpine
5.	गेंदा (gēndā)	Marigold
6.	मेहँदी (mēhandī)	Lawsonia inermis
7.	मिट्टी (mittī)	Clay/Mud
8.	खुस (khasa)	Vetiver grass
9.	मौलसिरी (maulasiree)	Spanish cherry
10.	अगर (agar) or Oud	Agarwood or aloeswood
11.	चन्दन (candana)	Sandalwood

Apart from above, the distilleries also distill many other kinds of medicinal plants and herbs.

Detailing for the Words used in the Thesis

Table: 3

Sl. No.	Name used in the thesis	English Name or Meaning
1.	Gulab	Rose
2.	Bela	Arabian Jasmine
3.	Chameli	Jasmine
4.	Mehndi	Lawsonia inermis
5.	Kewda	Screwpine
6.	Maulshree	Spanish cherry
7.	Khus	Vetiver grass
8.	Mitti	Clay
9.	Agarwood or Oudh	Aloeswood or Agarwood
10.	Samama	A mixed ittar made by several herbal ingredients
11.	Chandan	Sandalwood

Preface

Kannauj, the perfume capital of India, has been producing natural perfume since antiquity. In fact, the ittar making at Kannauj can be traced back to the days of King Harshavardhan in the 7th century and the art gained patronage from the Mughals as well (Smith, 1908; Tripathi, 1937). The industry offers a major source of livelihood to residents of the area and the prominence of the industry in ittar manufacturing is recognized by the Government of India through the GI tag and the 'One District One Product' (ODOP) scheme. Ittar making in Kannauj is a heritage, equipped with the traditional process of ittar producing or 'deg-bhapka', the industry produces some of the finest indigenous perfume (ittar) varieties, namely the 'Samama' and 'Mitti' ittar. This study aimed to explore the lifeworld of the people engaged in the art.

The brief history of perfume making in India and the world, the sociological understanding of perfume is discussed in Chapter 1. A brief description of the research site and its historical roots have been presented. Moreover, along with the rationale of the study, the applied theoretical framework of Manuel Castells (2000c) is discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2 deals with the literature review. Here various socio-economic studies on crafts/artist-based works are narrated. In other words, a detail study of dynamics of small-scale industries in India are presented. The research aimed to study the lived experience of the artisans engaged with the trade, the social networking existing in the industry, and the bottlenecks that the industry is currently facing. Moreover, the knowledge gaps and unexplored avenues in the existing wisdom are identified, and the research questions are formulated.

Chapter 3 of the thesis describes the research methodology that was used to address the research issues. The qualitative nature of the study is detailed here. Furthermore, selection criteria and sampling techniques for perfumeries, artisans, and consumers have been discussed. In this process, the perfumeries that are traditionally associated with the trade across generations were identified for the study, and the idea was to pay close attention to the daily discursive practices of ittar-making. Observation and semi-structured interviews were the main tools of data collection. Moreover, the chapter also talks of the limitations and ethical considerations of the research work.

Chapter 4 deals with the findings and it discusses the rich heritage of ittar making at Kannauj, the artisans' perception of the art, the craftsmanship involved in the process, how the legacy of ittar making is preserved and transmitted across generations, and the challenges and bottlenecks that the industry is currently facing. In other words, three major aspects come to light in the findings chapter: the art of making ittar, social interrelationships within the business, and challenges that the industry is facing.

Finally, in Chapter 5, we summed up and discussed the various findings obtained and the problems faced by the industry were analyzed from different sociological perspectives. Adopting the Castellian (2000c) perspective, the adverse effect of global capitalist force has been discussed and the social exclusion of the ittar industry is portrayed. Furthermore, some of the proposed solutions for reviving the industry were also contemplated.

Chapter- 1

Introduction and Historical Trajectory of Fragrance and Ittar

Aesthetic grooming has been an integral part of human existence since the antiquity. Perfume, aroma, scent, or ittar are expressions of the human desire to appear presentable and attractive. “Ittar” is an Arabic word and it derives its root from ‘ittar’ or ‘ittra’ meaning fragrance or aroma. Though the terms ittar and perfume are used synonymously, there exists a clear difference between the two. Ittar/ittra is essential oil derived from flowers, plants, herbs, and wood species having natural scent or aroma, perfume is a chemical product and is produced out of a synthetic, chemical process.

1.1 The Sociology of Smell

The concept of smell is essentially social (Synnott, 1991). Synnott in his article, “A Sociology of Smell” put across several examples to elucidate his point. For example, in echoing Gibbons (1986), he contends that by evoking a sense of memory, smell connects us to our past and our culture. For instance, the smell of fried fish may evoke a sense of nostalgia and connectedness among the diasporic Bengalis about their bygone days in Kolkata. However, such smell of fried fish may not be equally appreciated by people of other cultures. Hence, olfactory evaluation, positive or negative, is shaped by our culture and influenced by our socialization process. Moreover, odour shapes our moral construction of reality, and we tend to be guided by the proposition: what smells good, must be good. Contrarily, what smells bad, is ought to be bad. For example, we enjoy the smell of flowers, fresh air, first rain, and the sea and abhor the idea of consuming rancid

meat, rotten eggs, burnt rice, putrid fish, etc. As a matter of fact, we differentiate between edible and non-edible foodstuffs by their smell.

As in the case with the environment and food, we also tend to judge people by their smell. If a person smells 'foul' or the smell deviates from the prevalent olfactory cultural norm, we tend to be sceptical about the physical, emotional, and mental health of the person. Further, we also pass moral judgements about the person. Thus, we often tend to designate a villainous character as a 'foul person' or his/her activities as 'stinking to high heaven.' Similarly, we also tend to associate odour with abstract entities as well. For instance, we tend to use idioms like 'the sweet smell of success' or 'the sour taste of defeat.'

The designation of good as 'fragrant' and 'bad' as foul, has tremendous implications in contemporary society. Thus, the expenditure on colognes, perfumes, and aftershaves are not only investments towards the presentation of the self but also is an integral part of the moral construction of the self. As the standards of living have risen over the years, the lower class perhaps do not smell the same as the upper class. For instance, a survey conducted in 1976 at France revealed that 43 per cent of women, of executive and industrialist status, bathed or showered at least once a day in contrast to 10 per cent of those belonging to farm worker households and 17 per cent of women from manual labourer households (Bourdieu, 1984). Thus, differentiating odour is a manifestation of distinguishing class status, whether by means of body odour or by the quality, brand, and price of the perfume used in the contemporary setup. Odour, therefore, becomes a source of moral labelling. As Gunnar Myrdal (1944:107) exemplifies:

"The belief in a particular 'hircine odor' of Negroes, like similar beliefs concerning other races, touches a personal sphere and is useful to justify the denial of social intercourse

and the use of public conveniences, which would imply close contact, such as restaurants, theatres and public conveyances."

In fact, the smell became the basis for the institutional segregation and discrimination of Blacks in the United States.

Additionally, the odour is also gender segregated. While women are expected to smell fresh and appealing, males are expected to smell like sweat, cigarettes, and alcohol. Thus, the perfumes brands cleverly exploit such gender stereotyping and advertise their products by building on these cultured notions. It is also argued that the brands build on such stereotyping by projecting different brand names for the products (like Ivoire or Imperiale, Passion or Polo, Joy or Toro, etc. for gender-based differentiation of perfumes) and packaging differentiation.

Thus, people de-odorize and re-odorize just to appear attractive, presentable, and appropriate in front of others. It is no wonder that perfume is widely used in religious ceremonies, funeral practices, food preparation, self-odorization, and even in the mortar used for the construction of certain mosques in Arab (Thompson, 1969). It not only helps us to mask unpleasant body odours but also to differentiate our status in society. For instance, overuse of strong perfume is taken as indicative of lower class (Largey & Watson, 1972).

Finally, Synnott (1991) contends that smell has also considerable industrial applications. Studies conducted in Japan have revealed that certain fragrances trigger positive psycho-physiological effects and result in increased efficiency at work. Thus, a company in Japan circulated fragranced air through a computerized system to a hotel, convention centre, and office tower. Now let us focus briefly on the history of perfume.

1.2 The History of Perfume

The first-ever trace of perfume use in human civilization goes back to the ancient Mesopotamian civilization (Voudouri & Tesseromatis, 2015; Schwarcz, 2017). History reveals that in the 18th century BC, a person named Nfir-ili practiced trade in sweetened oil in Mesopotamia (Muller & Lamparskha, 1994). Further, writings claim that "Tapputi" was the first maker of perfume in ancient Mesopotamian civilization (Rhoades, 2017; Houlihan and Wotiz, 1975). It was revealed that perfume was used as a gift item by the royalty and artisans were hired to serve as aromatic oil experts for the kings.

Interestingly, perfume in this initial period was not produced out of the distillation process but was derived out of a mixture of oil and herbs (Castel et al, 2009; Lucas, 1930). The blending was done for preserving the freshness of perfume. Perfume catered not only to pleasure and aesthetic purposes but was also used as a prestige symbol as well.

In Egypt, perfume was used for aesthetic, religious, and as a flavoring agent in food items (Butler, 2000). In fact, the pyramid of Emperor Khufu, constructed around 2600 BC at Giza, several jars of alabaster filled with aromatic ointments were found. In fact, according to the earliest recorded history, the systematic production of perfume first began in ancient Egypt. During the Nubian dynasty (6th-7th century), perfume was mainly derived from lotus and lily (Byl, 2012).

Perfume arrived in Greece from Egypt and the popularity of the item could be traced back to the 10th century BC when it was used for religious, medicinal, and grooming purposes, etc. Groom (1992) claims that in 450 BC, the Greeks developed trade relations with Arabia in aromatic substance. The Greeks venerated the perfumes and believed that they are given the knowledge of perfume by the Olympian God (Voudouri & Tesseromatis, 2015). In the initial period, perfume was produced out of the concoction of plants and

leaves. The marjoram perfume was very popular during the time and historian Pliny described it as, “very height of luxury, the last word on perfume.” (Butler, 2010: 90). It is said that the funeral of Alexander the Great, involved use of generous amounts of perfume (Dussauce et al., 1868).

Perfume arrived in the Roman society from Greece and its extensive popularity was revealed from the fact that Rabbis, a Jewish congregation in Rome, used perfumed oil to wash their hands after meal and ablution. Interestingly, in the Jewish wedding, there is a custom of reserving a certain amount of money, colloquially known as “Ketubbot”, for spending on perfume (Bradley, 2015). Nonetheless, perfume use during the time was monopolized by the affluents.

France has a long history of perfume use. History reveals that the baptism of King Clovis, the ruler of France in the 5th century AD, was celebrated in a grand way and involved copious use of perfumes, fragrance, candles and incense, etc (Dussauce et al., 1868). Some scholars like Augustine Challamel (1882) argued that perfume enjoyed limited popularity in France till the time of Henry III (1574-1589). The first alcohol-based perfume was referred to as ‘I Eau de la Reine de’ was produced in Montpelier, Southern France in 1390 (Moeran, 2008). Further during the plague epidemic in medieval France and England, people used to perfumate the patient’s room and used rose water to wash their hands (Classen et al., 2003). By the end of the 16th century, the use of perfume was largely hegemonized by the societal elites and they adored their gloves, shoes, hair, clothing, and hand fans with perfume (Piesse, 1879).

Grasse is an important perfume centre in France and imports large quantity of rose water from Bulgaria. Jean Carles was a famous perfumer of Grasse and is credited to have designed several iconic perfume brands like ‘Shocking’ and ‘Canoe’ (Groom, 1992).

However, alcoholic cosmopolitan forms of perfume came into use in the 19th century. The first modern perfumery was established in France in 1889 and it was known by the name of 'Jicky.' (Muller & Lamparsky, 1994)

England also had the tradition of using perfume. For instance, during the era of King William I in the 18th century AD, people used various herbs for fragrating their houses. There was a practice among the nobility to use rose water for aesthetic purposes. The popularity of perfume was noted in the royal courts in the 16th century, when people used to apply perfume on their handkerchief (Butler, 2000). From such sporadic use, perfume was mass produced only during the 17th century. Finally, it was in the 18th century that camphor, aldehyde was used in the making of synthetic perfumes. The first perfume shop in London opened its doors in 1834 (Butler, 2000).

Since Arabs had developed trade relations with the Egyptians since 1500 BC, there was the diffusion of cultivation practice of 'myrrh' and 'frankincense' (Groom, 1997). History reveals that Arabs used to burn Storax, an aromatic plant, to produce pleasant fragrance (Pliny, 2018). The famous book of folk tales, "Arabian Nights" discuss the use of perfume water by the royal families of Persia (Piesse, 1879). Thus, perfume use was a differentiator of political positions in society.

Other evidence of perfume use in Arabian society can be found in a book by Al-Kindi in 850 AD. The book reveals that like Europeans, Arabians were well-versed with the art of perfume- making (Groom, 1997). They made perfume from apple and they were very fond of a perfume named, "Naddah." (ibid).

The popularity of perfume in Arabia had to do with the socio-political context of the time. During the 9th century AD, the Caliph of Baghdad had control of Persia and mandated Persia (which had expertise in perfume making) to send rose water as tax to Baghdad.

(Groom, 1997). In the 11th century, a Persian named Ibn Sina is credited to be the pioneer of making flower ittar through distillation process (Essa & Ali, 2010). It is said that Arabians mastered perfume production technique from different kinds of spices and flowers (Stefania, 2017). Heaven according to the Islamic religious belief is conceived as a garden full of graceful and celestial fragrance.

In congruence with their religious beliefs, Arabians preferred non-alcoholic fragrance and hence ittar, agarwood, and incense enjoyed popularity (Sampson & Page, 2018). According to Calkin & Jellinek (1994), Egyptians and Greeks were not familiar with perfume making technologies. They simply used to macerate fragrant leaves and flowers in oil and apply the resultant concoction on their bodies. It was the Arabians who developed the stream distillation technique to prepare essential oils and perfume. Other scholars like Muller & Lamparsky (1994) contend that Arabians only upgraded the distillation method and it was originally developed by the Mesopotamians.

1.3 History of Perfume in India

History is full of evidence about the existence of perfume in ancient India. For instance, the Brahmasamhita corroborates the existence of aromatic substance in Vedic India. Similarly, Butler (2000) and Corson (2003) note the popularity of perfume in the form of sandalwood oil in ancient India. Mahabharata, the ancient Hindu epic, records the existence and use of perfume. The epic mentions of a woman named Satyavati, Ved Vyasa's mother, who used to smell very pleasant. She was referred to as "Yojanagandha" as her fragrance used to diffuse to a distance of eight miles (*Yojans*). Further, the epic evidences liberal use of perfume in the funeral of king Pandu. As P. C. Roy (1965: 297) describes in his translation of Mahabharata: "*Then they brought water in many golden*

vessels, washed the prince's body besmeared before with several kinds of fragrant paste, and again smeared it over with sandal paste".

Arthashastra, written in the 4th century BC, explores the use of agarwood as a source of perfume and reasons its popularity in the durability of the fragrance (Sampson & Page, 2018). The Jataka Katha of Buddhism, which dates back to the fourth and fifth century BC, notes the popularity of sandalwood oil (Pierce, 1969; Sampson & Page, 2018). It is believed that Lord Buddha used to eat food cooked by using aloe wood (Sampson & Page, 2018).

Pliny in his book on Natural History talks about the import of "Gandhamukuta" (fragrance garlands) by Rome from India in the first century BC (Chandra, 1977). Similarly, historian Romila Thapar (1995) notes several instances of trade in aromatic substance between India, Middle Asia, and China. It is believed that Barygaza (now Bharuch in Gujarat) and Barbaricon (presently known as Sindh, Pakistan) were the two most popular ports in northern India that were involved in perfume trade with Egypt, Rome, Arab, and Italy (Liu, 1988; Chandra, 1977; Groom, 1997). It may be noted that not only did India only export perfume, but it imported perfumes, wines, and silver products and dates from Rome and Persia during the Monsoon trade. In fact, in the first century, there is a mention of a special officer 'Gandhika', who was given the responsibility of supervising trade of perfume and other aromatic products in the Kalliyena (modern-day Kalyan in Mumbai) port of India (Chandra, 1977). In his celebrated works Meghaduta and Kumarasambhava, the celebrated Sanskrit poet Kalidasa of the Gupta Empire (3rd and 4th century AD), mentions of an object known as 'Nabigandha', which scholars consider synonyms to musk (King, 2017). Varahamihira, the legendary Indian astrologer, dedicates an entire chapter of his work, 'Brhatsamhita', to various ingredients and aromatic plants used in making perfume (Iyer, [1884] 2022;

King, 2017). So, it may be derived that musk, sandalwood, agarwood, aromatic plants, and oils were the primary source of perfume and fragrance in the sub-continent in the ancient India.

In Medieval times, Dhanapal in his wok 'Tilakmanjari', composed around the 8th and 9th-century, mentions of a prince named Samaraketu who was very fond of perfume. Moreover, sandalwood and aromatic water were popular aromatization agents of royal palaces (Chandra, 1977). Moreover, Sanskrit works like 'Gandhasara' and 'Gandhavava' highlight the proliferate varieties of odor products and fragrance in medieval India (Ray & Ray, 1956; Balakrishna, 2020; King, 2017).

The discussion on perfume use in India will remain incomplete without adequate consideration of the Mughal contribution. In the Mughal period (1526- 1707), India had an affluent culture of art and tradition and thus perfume became popular during the period. As a matter of fact, Abu'l Fazl in his celebrated work 'Ain-I-Akbari' discusses various preparation techniques and ingredients used in the making perfumes. Further, the text bears reference to varied types of perfumes and its varied denominations (Hassan, 2008). Emperor Akbar had an obsession for perfume, and it is said that he formed a dedicated department named 'Khushubu-khana' for monitoring of perfume production and distribution. 'Amber-e -Ashab', was a popular perfume during the time of Emperor Akbar and ten grams of the perfume was approximately priced around three gold coins Likewise, two other perfumes namely 'Chuwa' and 'Barjat' gained immense popularity during the period (ibid).

In his autobiography Tuzuk-I-Jahangiri emperor Jahangir, son of emperor Akbar, writes about how a single drop of perfume would diffuse throughout the court and make the atmosphere fully fragrant (Iftikhar, 2010). Additionally, the storage of perfume during the period was aesthetically done. The vessels were very elegantly designed with

distinctive motifs (Markel, 1999). In fact, Emperor Jahangir in his diary credits Asmat Begum, mother of Begum Nur Jahana, for producing ittar from rose and named it 'Itr-i-Jahangiri', (Markel, 1999; Smith, 2012). It is said that emperor Shah Jahan used to relax by having exotic oil massage and Mumtaz Mahal during her marriage with Shah Jahan was ointed with various perfumes (Smith, 2012). Moving through the pages of history, we witness the popularity of various perfumes during the reign of Bahadur Shah Zafar. Popular ittar and aromatic oils of the period were: 'arq-e-muskh', 'arq-e-gulab', 'arq-e-bahar', 'arq-e-chameli'. 'Mush-e-Muskh' (probably dear musk) was a precious ittar of the time and was sold at the rate of rupees 4-5 per tola (ten grams). (ibid).

1.4 Kannauj: Nomenclature and History

The 'ittar-nagri' of Kannauj is well-known globally for the production of natural perfume and the ittar industry is the main source of livelihood for the people of the district. The ittar industry of Kannauj has an annual turnover of six hundred and fifty crores, involving around thirty thousand people in 375 small and medium units in the cluster (MSME Development Institute Report, 2016). The industry is listed under the Geographical Indication (GI) index as per Sec 2(f) of GI Act of 1999 for manufactured goods in 2013-14 (Lalitha & Vinayan, 2019; GI-Journal (GOI, 2013).

The history of Kannauj can be traced back to 15, 000 years and its existence has been recorded by renowned historian Vincent Smith (1908) in his article entitled 'The History of the City of Kanauj and of King Yasovarman' in 1908. In terms of location, Kannauj is a town situated on the banks of the river Ganges in the northern part of India. The city boasts of a diverse cultural heritage and vibrant history. According to classical Hindu religious texts, the word Kannauj is derived from Kanyakubja, which in Sanskrit means 'the city of hunchbacked maidens' (Smith, 1908; Tripathi, 1937). According to the legend

of Valmiki Ramayana, there was a king named Kusanabha who had hundred hunchbacked daughters and from there the place got its name 'Kanyakubja'. Another legend tells a man named Amavasu, the son of Urvasi, the heavenly damsel, was the founder of Kanyakubja. Kannauj has been variedly known as Kanyakubja, Mahodaya, Gadhipura, Gadhinagara, Kusasthala (a place famous for the growth of 'kusa' grass) and Kusumapura or the city of flowers (Smith, 1908; Tripathi, 1937).

According to Smith (1908), four pilgrimage centres were famous during the Parihar rule mainly Kashi (Benares), Uttarakosala (Ayodhya), Indrasthana (Indraprastha near Delhi), Kushika (the city of Kannauj). Mentions of Kannauj can also be found in the Mahabhasya composed by Patanjali in the 2nd century BC. Further, the Chinese traveller Fa-Hian in his historical travelogue of India in the 5th century AD also talks of Kannauj, which is referred to as 'Ki-Jou-I' in the book. However, historical texts differ in their pronunciation of the city; while Smith spelled it as 'Kanauj', Tabaquat-I-Akbari spelled it as 'Qannauj', Tabaqat-I-Nasiri, and Sarb-I-Yamini pronounce it 'Kinnauj', Rajasekhara in Prakrit text spells it as 'Kannaujja' (Smith, 1908; Tripathi, 1937).

The socio-political history of the Kannauj can be found in 'Harsha-Charita' based on the life of king Harshavardhan written by Bana Bhatt in the 6th century (Smith, 1908). King Harsha (606-647) of the Vardhan dynasty made Kannauj the capital of his kingdom. During the time Kannauj steadily grew as one of the most renowned cities of northern India after Pataliputra (modern-day Patna) (Heitzman, 2008). Referring to the tradition of production of aromatics in the city, Padhy et al. (2016) records the incidence of imposing commercial tax over aromatics and their derivatives (especially 'khus') at Kannauj by king Harsha.

During the 9th and the 10th century, Kannauj became the political hub among the leading Indian dynasties like Rastrakuta, Palas and Gurjar-Pratiharas. In fact, Gurjar–

Pratiharas declared Kannauj as its capital in 815 AD (Thapar, 1995; Heitzman, 2008; MSME Report, 2011). Additionally, the Bhakti movement's well-known Hindu guru Parmananda Swami and Sufi saint Abd al-Wahid Bilgrami lived and practised in the area (Orsini, 2012). While the glory of Kannauj started to decline after the rule of Iltutmish (Sen, 2013), yet the glorious past of the city is reflected in the archaeological remnants, traditional artefacts, inscription, ancient sites located around it.

1.5 Ittar Making at Kannauj

The city of Kannauj is located at a distance of 123 kms from Lucknow, the state capital of Uttar Pradesh. The district has a sub-tropical climate and river Ganges separates it from the neighbouring Hardoi district. Since the area lies in close proximity to the Gangetic plain, alluvial soil contributes to a high agricultural fertility. Kannuj is known as “India’s perfume capital” and is renowned for the production of Kannauj perfume (Das & Bajpai, 2021). Approximately 83 percent of the district land is used for the cultivation for flowers, herbs and other agricultural activities. According to One District One Product (ODOP) Report of UP government, aromatics and potato cultivation are the main industries of the district. According to MSME Report (2016-17), essential oil (Ruh), ittar, and its derivatives are the main industrial goods produced by the artisans of Kannauj. The aromatic products of Kannauj are globally famed and are exported to Arabian countries, Australia and Europe. The industry relies on natural ingredients like Rose, Marigold, Jasmin, Henna, Screw pine (kewda) and Vetiver (khush) for the manufacturing of ittar. Ittar making in Kannauj is an art and the industry has been recognized by the government of India under the Geographical Indication (GI) tag of 1999 (Rongmei, 2022; Sengupta & Sen, 2015).

The ittar industry of Kannauj is categorised by the Indian Govt. under the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME Report, 2016-17). The MSME Report (2008)

reveals that there are 375 functional ittar production units at Kannauj. Nonetheless, a study by Schaffmeister (2015) notes that the number of perfumeries has declined drastically from 700 in 1990 to only 90 in the present times. The industry has an annual turnover of 650 crores and offers employment (direct or indirect) to thirty thousand people. The method of ittar production is of traditional nature and the entire cluster has an investment of sixty lakhs (ibid). The raw material for ittar is provided by the local peasants and cultivators (DSD Report, 2018; MSME Report, 2016-17) and the major ingredients are Rose, Marigold, Jasmine, and Henna.

Ittar is an indigenous product of Kannauj and artisans of Kannauj have their special recipe and secrets of 'ittar' production (Narielwala & Rakshit, 1946). Recognizing the speciality of Kannauj perfume, the report of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) (1986: 10) puts it; "*As India is the only ittar producing nation, no overseas expertise, can be drown for the enhancement of production."* Similarly, Narielwala & Rakshit (1946: 24) observe: *"Ittars may be described as blends of flower oils with sandalwood oil in varying proportions; the proportion of flower oil determines the quality of the ittar and the more predominent the flowery note, the higher its price"*. It is customary to judge the purity of *ittar* by knowing the proportion of extracted flower oil in the liquid mixture. In sum, *ittar* refers to the concoction of natural flower extract with a non-alcoholic oil base (Borgave & Chaudhari, 2010; Sengupta & Sen, 2015).

In fact, Sengupta (2018) contends that the history of ittar production is inexorably connected to the history of Kannauj. In fact, Shah (1998) talks about the popularity of Kannauj as an 'aroma centre' about 8000 years ago and was renowned for the production of henna *ittar*. Mention of Kannauj *ittar* can also be found in the writings of Banbhatta, the royal poet of Emperor Harsha. In fact, there is a reference of a

fragranced substance named 'Gandhika' during the 7th century and the use of aromatic incense at the marriage of Rajyashree, sister of Emperor Harsha (Marwah, 2012).

Ittar production at Kannauj achieved newer heights during the Mughal empire (Pal, 2016; Sengupta, 2018). History tells us that Mughal rulers were particularly fond of exotic aromas and perfumes (Padhy et al., 2016). Evidentially speaking, writing about the royal court of Emperor Akbar, Abul Fazal writes: *"His Majesty is very fond of perfumes. The Court wall is continually scented with ambergris, aloe, and compositions according to the ancient recipes, or mixtures invented by His Majesty, and incense is daily burnt in gold and silver censers of various shapes, while sweet smelling flowers are used in large quantities"* (Narielwala & Rakshit, 1946: 7). The 'Ain- I-Akbari', the book of Akbar's administration, reveals that the emperor founded a formal *ittar* centre at Kannauj. In fact, there was the existence of a locality 'Gandhi-an Mohalla' at Kannauj, which specialized in *ittar* production since the Mughal days. Dwellers of this locality had the responsibility of supplying *ittars* to the Delhi rulers (Marwah, 2012).

Deg-Bhapka or the traditional process of *ittar* extraction through distillation, has been in existence from centuries (Tandon et al., 2008). Besides Kannauj, there are other centres of ittar production in India namely, Moosanagar, Jaunpur, Gazipur, Bharatpur (Rajasthan), Gangjam (Odisha) (Dutta et al., 1987; Maharana et al., 1993). Among these centres, the Ganjam district of Odisha specializes in Kewada *ittar* and Kannauj artisans procure kewda oil from them to manufacture perfumes (Skaria et al., 2007; Padhy et al, 2016; Padhi & Sodangi, 2020). Similarly, Kannauj artisans procure sandalwood oil from Mysore for creating the base note of their perfumes. Mysore is one of the leading sandalwood producers around the world and produces around 70-80 tons of sandalwood oil annually (Narielwala & Rakshit, 1946). Thus, Kannauj remain one of the main centers of ittar production in India both in terms of quantity and varieties of ittar produced.

2.0 Rationale of the Study

The research wants to delve deep and find out more about the ittar craftsmen who have been associated with the trade for generations. The research is an attempt to develop nuanced understanding of the lifeworld of the artisans and how the skills are learnt and transmitted across the generations. Additionally, I attempted to grapple with the questions: how do the artisans perceive their art, what is the role of social capital in sustaining the trade, what are the challenges and bottlenecks that they are currently facing, how are they dealing with the challenges, etc. Broadly speaking, the study will focus on the following themes:

1. The artisans as an occupational group-The history of ittar making at Kannauj, the process of ittar making, the skill required therein, the categories of artisans, the relationships between them, the ties that artisans share with ittar unit owners, their perception of their art, etc.
2. The current market condition of ittar industry-Identify the factors responsible, study the perception of the consumers, and propose potential solutions, etc.

The rest of the thesis will attempt to evolve a comprehensive picture of the neglected, anonymous ittar artisans working in the oblivious alleys of Kannauj.

I used a grounded theoretical approach for the current research. I used grounded theory in conjunction with inductive logic of inquiry to answer the research questions. But after gathering information, the study is able to acknowledge the importance of Manuel Castell's notion of social exclusion for the investigation. Clearly, the framework may have been performed by seeking deductive logic of inquiry, which the researcher never anticipated to do due to the researcher's decision to employ grounded theory.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

The study is concerned with the problem of social exclusion in the contemporary society. The renowned book "The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture" by Manuel Castells includes a chapter titled "The Rise of the Fourth World: Informational Capitalism, Poverty, and Social Exclusion" that discusses the "Fourth World." He says there are many black holes in the fourth world. The black holes result in social exclusion is most affected by black holes. In reality, the report discusses how the marginalisation of Kannauj's ittar industry is a result of globalisation.

Social exclusion can lead to poverty, unemployment, and suffering. In his analysis of the subject, Castells has made an effort to comprehend the reasons behind and consequences for social exclusion (Castells, 2000c). According to him, the tendency to exclude specific demographic groups from the formal market—a practise known as social exclusion—is a result of capitalist restructuring.

Globalization has made the entire world smaller, and capitalism and information and communications technologies are expanding the possibilities for corporate engagement. Since the 1970s, "informational capitalism" has employed information networks to monitor international business and manufacturing activities. In essence, ICT has sped up the development of capitalism. As stated by Castells (2000b:5):

"Technologies as a material tool, and meaning as symbolic construction, through relationships of production/consumption, experience, and power, are the fundamental ingredients of human action, an action that ultimately produces and modifies social structure."

A region or country's least technologically advanced company is more likely to have to fire its employees because it cannot keep up with the competition. Similarly, technical innovation, organizational innovation, and worker living standards are closely related to

one another (Castells, 2005). As a result, new occupations are created while older ones are phased out by technology. According to Castells (2000a: 241):

"Mechanization first, automation later, have been transforming human labor for decades, always triggering similar debates around issues of workers displacement, deskilling vs reskilling."

Therefore, those who lack informational skills are regarded as lower-quality workers (Castells, 2000a:164). In a world where trends in competition and innovation are the norm, adaptability is crucial for survival. It is important to stress that social isolation is a process, not a situation. As a result, restrictions alter over time, as do the people who are excluded or included, depending on things like demographics, education, business practises, the current political climate, etc. Due to the lack of a reliable source of income, exclusion may result in destitution. More information about the potential for social exclusion in a network society is provided by Castells (2000c). This possibility may affect both specific people and specific geographic areas. The entire neighborhood or city may be excluded under certain conditions.

ICT can simultaneously bring income, information, and power to the various locations and people who make up the network (Castells, 2000c). In short, social exclusion refers to the practice of persistently denying some individuals and groups access to jobs that would otherwise qualify them for an independent existence in accordance with the social standards already in place. In the context of capitalism, it is thus the process of denying the working class its rights (Castells, 2000c: 72).

The study tried to analyse social isolation as experienced by Kannauj's ittar sector from a Castellian perspective. In particular, the idea of social exclusion is placed within the context of development, namely in terms of technical improvement in the age of globalization. The risks posed by globalization and technical improvement to the ittar craftspeople in Kannauj have been studied. The ICT revolution has replaced the

traditional mode of manufacturing, causing “redundancy of labour.” The knowledge is considered imperative for marketing of ittar and keeping updated about new advancements.

According to Castells, economic restructuring has resulted in a reorganization of corporate companies’ operating procedures since the 1980s. Technology is the buzzword right now, and employers hire people according to their expertise in it. To put it another way, employers make decisions on who to recruit depending on how well a candidate possesses the skills necessary for the technology. In addition, social isolation can take on a variety of ways even when a regular job or other source of income is usually absent.

The quick speed of globalization is drastically altering the local area and its economic structure. The outcome has been a change in how people work. In a time of advanced technology and growing consumerist aspirations, the study shows how labour is becoming more marginalized. The focus of organizations has likewise shifted from competence to profit. In addition to the supremacy of high technology, the traditional working class is seen as disposable.

Chapter- 2

Literature Review

This section offers a review of the studies relating to small scale sector and attempts to identify the knowledge gaps.

2.1 Social Variables within the Industry: Some Conceptualizations

Sheth (1979) a leading Indian scholar worked in the field of industrial sociology. In his book, "The Social Framework of an Indian Factory" Sheth highlights the inadequacy of research applying sociological perspective in analyzing Indian industries. In Sheth's view, labor commitment towards their jobs and employment has been the prime concern of the initial industrial-organizational and labor relations studies. Elaborately speaking, the attitude of employer, organization, stability of workforce and availability of workers are the basic research themes.

Holmstrom ([1976] 2008) studied 104 workers of private and government factories in Bangalore city in his work, "South Indian Factory Workers: Their Life and Their World". Holmstrom was interested to investigate the impact of high technology and capital-intensive industrialization on workers and their families. Specifically speaking, he was trying to examine the individual and group consciousness of workers, workers' attitude about their jobs and careers. Interestingly, Holmstrom finds caste consideration was important for marriage and getting the contacts for work. Further, he notes that in the modern industrial system, the workers prioritize their individual identity over collective identity and valued organized sector jobs as they provided security and better life chances.

Baviskar (1969) in his study "Co-operative and Caste in Maharashtra: A Case Study" attempted to understand the significance of caste in co-operative managed sugarcane factories. Specifically speaking, his study attempted to answer the following questions: Why and how do castes differ in their participation attitude to different co-operative activities? What role does caste play in the success or failure of co-operative activities?. His extensive fieldwork entailed observing the factory activities, the election process, managerial meetings, etc. and he observed that 60 per cent of the stakeholders of the cooperatives belonged to dominant caste and local leaders maintained their power using co-operative resource. Likewise, it was found that the leadership position (e.g. the position of the director) in the cooperative was influenced by the Central and the State governments and so, most of the directors of the cooperatives belonged to the ruling party. The cooperatives mostly recruited workers from outside because of the apprehension that the recruitment of local workers would lead to a decline in productivity and loss of hands working in agricultural lands. Baviskar contended that caste is not a barrier to economic development and recognized a correlation between the caste of the worker and the kind of job held by the worker.

Parker et al. (1981) in his work on "The Sociology of Industry" attempts to examine the mutual impact of industry and social stratification. Though the industrial system has attempted to reduce the economic gap between the working and the middle class, yet it is far from satisfactory. However, there is an increasing tendency among the working class to imitate the consumption patterns and lifestyle practices of the middle class. Parker observes that in the rural areas, there exists a difference in the 'status at workplace' and 'status outside of workplace' and status outside of the workplace tend to be governed by ascribed characteristics. Parker thus concludes that stratification cannot be defined in absolute terms and actors and context shape it.

2.2 Small-Scale Craft Industries in India: Current Issues and Challenges

In his article "Artist, Craftsman, Factory Worker: Concerns in the Study of Traditional Art," renowned Philippine historian Mojares (1986) discusses the country's traditional arts. The study is based on the experiences gathered in three industries: shellcraft, textiles, and pottery. The author covers some underlying issues, including how folk artists became craftsmen and craftspeople became factory laborer. Forces responsible for forming guilds and then unions out of artisans and farm laborer. What socioeconomic factors caused people to lose control over their jobs? In response to these inquiries, the author claims that it was technology that emerged from the market that disregarded such aesthetic abilities. Because of this, artisans became craftsmen, and craftsmen became laborer. This is as a result of the market's standardized protocols reducing the space for individual expression for such artists. Craftsmen took satisfaction in referring to them by their identification as artisans, but industrial society has reduced them to the status of mere employees, who today organize in labor unions. The artisans or craftsmen have lost their local and reciprocal users, connected by emotional and expressive bonds, after entering a new market arena. Since they are cut off from their own natural job, environment, raw materials, distribution channel, and knowledge, along with dealing with changing fashion, cost-efficiency, quality, and quantity elements in the market, they are no longer able to perform labor-intensive tasks.

Dutta et. al. (1987) in their study "Kewda Perfume Industry in India" discusses the Kewda perfume production process in Odisha. Specifically speaking, they highlight the Kewda production and distribution, composition and chemistry of perfumes. Speaking of the challenges that the industry is currently facing, the authors underline the requirement of deliberate efforts to revive the production process of the industry.

In 1991, Kenoyer et al. published a study on the stone beading of the Khambhat district of Gujarat. The study's title is "Contemporary Stone Beadmaking in Khambhat, India: Patterns of Craft Specialization and Organization of Production as Reflected in the Archaeological Record". The manufacturing of bead involves a number of procedures, including assembling the ingredients, drying, heating, chipping, further heating, cutting, grinding, drilling, polishing, and finishing with heating. Three forms of ancient bread production have been interpreted by the authors: production at the domestic level (artisan mode of production), production in various workshops, and large-scale production.

Maharana et. al. (1993) in their article "Kewda Perfume Industry and Rural Employment in Orrisa", provide a vivid description of the Kewda perfume industry in the Ganjam district of Orrisa. The authors provide a detailed description of the manufacturing method, process and industrial value of kewda perfume along with employment created through the industry. The study reveals that the industry is seasonal by nature, and it has been creating maximum man-days work in August and September months of the year. Though seasonal, the industry offers useful employment in the rural areas of the region. The authors also urge for deliberate enhancement kewda production for continued employment generation in the region.

Sathe (2002) in her field study on "Industrial Slowdown and Small-Scale Sector" highlights the impact of slowdown on small-scale industries and their responses to this. The causes of the fall in sales of the industries were attributed to the slowdown of the economy and excessive market competition. The Pune based study on 182 small scale factories revealed that the industries counter economic recession by cutting down the labor force in the industry but very rarely by reducing wages. This is because the industries remain apprehensive of the fact that reducing wages would lead to labor

apprising and disturbance at the workplace. Another strategy adopted by the industry to counter the challenge of slowdown is by means of client differentiation.

Bhavani (2002) in his essay, “Small-Scale Units in the Era of Globalisation: Problems and Prospects”, highlights the struggles that some small-scale industries (namely garments, electronics and auto parts) are facing. The paper talks about garments industry facing problem of maintaining quality standard and proper mechanization, electronics industry encountering global market competition and issue of maintaining quality. The auto parts industry is facing the problem of lack of latest technology and high production cost. He describes certain tactics adopted by these small-scale industries to survive some of the above-mentioned problems. The paper also talks about some of the protective measures undertaken by the Indian Government like licensing of the unit and several internal measure and import licensing as external protector.

The author proposes various modifications like implementation of mechanization, better organization and reformulation of policy measure/revision of policy measures to trigger the growth of small units and countering their isolated mode of operation. Proper vigilance on technological upgradation and quality emphasis are the major implementation should be followed.

Shrikant Sharma (2003) in his thesis “Economics of Production, Marketing and Processing of Flower Crops in District Kannauj (U.P.)” discusses the perfume industry from the agro-economical approach. He elaborately discusses flower cost, cultivation, distribution, and marketing. Further, the study explores the problems faced by the farmers, namely irrigation concerns, lack of governmental support and training about agricultural production, problem of capital investment, lack of proper crop rate, etc. Sharma has called for the improvement of agricultural infrastructure and imparting training to the agricultural laborers.

In the essay “Handmade in India: Preliminary Analysis of Crafts Producers and Crafts Production,” Liebl & Roy (2003-2004) analyze the issues, potential, and use of Indian crafts. The development of these enterprises is being hampered by a number of ongoing and new obstacles, according to the authors’ analysis of data from numerous government reports. For instance, the average craftsman knows relatively little about the market, its strategy, investment capital, and the latest and most recent knowledge and technology. Additionally, there is a notable problem with handmade goods in comparison to large factory-made goods. While the character of factory outputs is homogeneous and harmonious, craft works are uneven in this regard and may have somewhat diverse forms and patterns. Craftspeople find it exceedingly challenging to get out of this scenario since they lack the resources to conduct market research, understand what their consumers’ needs are, and engage in effective advertising. The main issues the Indian craft industry is experiencing include a lack of adequate raw material availability, increasing competition from foreign markets, corruption, administrative barriers, along with social and environmental problems. Craftsmen struggle with sufficient market exposure as well as having limited knowledge and skills. The discussion paper suggests an interventionist approach to address these issues and increase profit. And this might be accomplished by coordinating services, establishing a brand for products, looking for new distribution channels, carrying out adequate research, replenishing raw material sources, and elevating the status of artisans and craftsmen as they currently stand.

Roxas (2007) writes a research paper entitled, “Clarifying the Link between Social Capital and MSME Innovation Performance: The Role of Absorptive Capacity”, in which he explores the function of social capital in MSMEs. In his study he points out the role of social capital in growth and sustaining an industry. He also talks about “absorptive

capacity", which refers to the capacity of a business to embrace and implement certain values from outside.

Elaborating upon his point, the author explains how strong social ties may be helpful for problem solving and opportunity seeking. Similarly, trust and safety of the neighborhood also provide access to greater business opportunities. Greater tolerance for diversity also leads to diversified innovative ideas. In all, the paper talks about how social capital helps in higher absorptive capacity which in turn greater innovation in the firms/unit. So, the author contends that greater amount of social capital will result in better absorptive capacity.

Sahu & Misra (2007) in their study entitled, "Ecology and Traditional Technology of Screw Pine Perfume Industry in Coastal Orissa" describe the botanics of kewda ittar production in Ganjam district of Odisha. The paper discusses processing technology of ittar at great length. Apart from describing the production process of Kewda perfume, the article also entails a description of various products manufactured in the industry. Therefore, the main outputs of the Kewda industry are Kewda ittra, Kewda oil, Kewda water and its byproducts like charcoal and manure. The authors lend supports to the use of the traditional method in Kewda ittra production; however, they opine that modern technology that maintains ecological balance can be adopted in the industry.

In her book entitled, "Potters without a wheel: Ethnography of Mritshilpis in Kolkata", Saswati Bhattacharya ([2008]2014) attempts to locate the complexity of the term 'urban' as being layered with social and cultural histories. The study is not merely an exploration of clay art or artists in Kumartali (Bengal) but how urban communities and locales emerge as defining elements of the cities. Specifically speaking, the research documents the interdependence between place-making and identity formation, which is very much

evident in Kumartali. As a matter of fact, the author contends that the city of Kolkata owes much of its identity as 'cultural city' to the creative artists of Kumartali.

Pradhan & Munda (2010) in their study, "Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Economic Development of Odisha", highlight the performance of MSMEs of Odisha. The study focuses upon the constraints faced by MSMEs. Data have been gathered through primary and secondary sources and focuses on the handloom and handicraft industries. These two industries are the heritage of the state Odisha and play a crucial role in the rural economy. The MSMEs of the state are facing various issues like technological deficit, lack of advanced technology and shortage of raw materials and lack of funds. Nonetheless, the research posits that MSMEs are particularly useful in countering the tide of urban migration and relieve the rural areas of their dependency on urban areas.

The difficulties faced by the terracotta artists of Panchmura, a village in West Bengal, India, are described in Satpathi's (2011) article "Terracotta Craft of Panchmura: Problems and Possibilities". The craft has grown in popularity on both a national and worldwide scale and is of major cultural significance. However, the artisans of Panchmura face a number of obstacles that endanger the preservation and promotion of their craft, including poverty, a lack of assistance, a decline in interest, and paucity of resources that make it difficult for them to invest in contemporary materials, tools, and equipment. In addition, the piece stresses the value of government assistance, financial stability, training possibilities, and showcasing the trade at cultural gatherings and exhibitions. The author also mentions the waning interest of the younger generation as a significant issue. Since so many young people are choosing alternative professions, there may not be enough craftspeople to preserve the tradition. This decline in enthusiasm also affects the marketing and sales of the craft because of a lack of excitement and efficient marketing strategies. In spite of these challenges, Satpathi highlights many initiatives that have been

made to support the Panchmura terracotta craft. The West Bengali government has created training courses and facilities as well as provided financial assistance to the artisans. In summary, this study sheds light on the challenges faced by the Panchmura terracotta craftsmen and the measures taken to support their line of work. It demonstrates the value of continual support and the need for protecting the traditional craft for the coming generations.

Majumdar & Choi (2012) in their essay, "Cluster Dynamics and Performance in Traditional Industries: Critical Review of Lock, Brassware and Glassware Industries in North India", provide a critical analysis of the industrial clusters: lock, brassware and glass. The authors explain the cluster dynamics of these industries as well as trace their historical root and explain the reasons for declining performance.

In the lock industry, they found two major issues; the issue of child labor (which is vary from 10 to 40 thousand with 12-14 a day working hours) and environmental damage due to electroplating process. Moreover, the industry struggles to compete with China made cheaper locks. To make matters worse, the industry plagued by frequent power cuts, the problem with backward technology, price fluctuation and shortage of raw materials.

The glass industry, on the other hand, is struggling as a result of rising cost of energy and power shortage. This reduces their market competitiveness. Further outdated technology and the growing percentage of child labor are the other major challenges the industry is facing.

Similarly, the brassware industry is facing the issues of child labor and adverse health impacts on the workers due to the nature of cluster work.

One of the major reasons why the brass and the glass industry are in a better shape than the lock industry is because the former two involve indigenous Indian artisanship. Manufacturing techniques in glass and brass industry is somewhat common and so

imitation is not easy in this industry. Therefore, they have survived the challenges of globalization. The book also talks about cluster cycles so lock industry falls in declining cluster while brassware and glass are in sustaining cluster. Another interesting observation made by the authors is that if the labor-intensive industries orient themselves to capital intensive domains, their profitability will not decline.

Deshpande & Sharma (2013), "Entrepreneurship or survival? Caste and Gender of Small Business in India", attempt to understand the structural components of Indian small-scale industries. Specifically speaking the authors focus on the involvement of marginal sections (Dalits, tribes, and women) in the MSMEs. The study observes that MSME units typically have lower representation of SCs and STs in comparison to the upper caste. Further, gender disparity is also observed in this sector. This can be evidence from the fact that upper caste women are under- represented in terms of unit ownership than lower cast women. This can be understood by the fact that upper caste women enjoy material gains within the family and faced restriction on their mobility outside of their homes and community. However, it was also noticed that unit owned by the lower caste rurally located and suffered from low productivity. They mainly served survival needs rather than the entrepreneurial needs of the underprivileged caste.

Further, the upper caste owners of MSME parochially employed people from their own caste backgrounds and denied opportunities to the lower caste members. This way the homophile nature of the caste system was preserved in the functioning of the MSMEs.

In his study of migrant goldsmiths in Kerala, Maruthur (2014) highlights how the industry's production relationships, hierarchy, and organisation were negatively impacted by the expanding market economy and the implementation of deregulation. In light of the changing economic scenario, the article examines the various skills required in the

jewellery making and position of workers (local workers, women workers, and migrant workers) with respect to each other.

Raha (2017) in his paper "The Everyday Life of Jewellery Karigars in Siliguri: A Case Study" talks about the everyday life of the artisans engaged with the trade. They follow monotonous routine throughout the day and there is gradual internalization of the routine. The karigars therefore become alienated laborers with no stake over the end product they produce or the surplus value they generate. Their financial crisis often leads to alcohol abuse and personality problems. They are stuck within the vicious cycle of poverty as marginal, neglected, and overlooked workforce.

In his article entitled, "Analysis on Application of Traditional Arts and Crafts in Exhibition Design", Wang (2017) claims that traditional Chinese art and craft have always been a vital component of Chinese culture. He promotes specific strategies, such as providing legal support through government policies, fusing traditional art and craft with modern culture and innovations, and applying art or craft with taking into account the characteristics of that particular art or craft. The report also discusses the advantages of using traditional techniques in displayed designs. According to the study, there are two reasons for this: first, such applications will strengthen the cultural validity of the showcase design, and second, in addition to strengthening an art or craft's legacy, this will aid in its development. The study's central hypothesis is that adding a high-wavelength hue to traditional arts and crafts shows can make them more appealing and draw in more visitors as a result.

In the study "Revival of Pyatker Painting through Craft Village: Study of Jharkhand", Kumari & Srivastava (2017) discuss the decline of Pyatker painting, a traditional art form in Jharkhand, India, and propose the establishment of a craft village with assistance from the government and NGOs to revive it. They also highlight the challenges faced by rural

artisans as well as the opportunities for marketing and corporate social responsibility to promote and protect traditional handicrafts. The craftspeople's poverty, illiteracy, and rural upbringing limit their access to markets and opportunities for progress. They emphasize how important it is to preserve traditional handicrafts and how governments and NGOs may help advance and protect the rights of the craftsmen. It underlines the necessity for financial assistance, skill development, marketing assistance, and government programmes awareness in order to uplift the artists and their profession. They also draw attention to the challenges that artisans face, such as their limited access to resources, lack of education, and limited social security and healthcare options, as well as the potential for marketing to expand the handicraft industry, particularly in rural areas where internet access is growing. They discuss their investigation into Pyatker painting and offer some suggestions for revitalising and promoting this primordial medium of expression. These strategies include gaining exposure through multiple media channels, inspiring young artisans to continue their trade, spreading awareness of government initiatives, applying cutting-edge design approaches, and reaching out to a wider audience. The writers stress the need for government action and support, as well as cooperation with NGOs and business entities, in order to preserve traditional handicrafts like Pyatker paintings and promote their economic potential. They also emphasise how crucial financial and marketing support is for promoting craftsmen and preserving traditional crafts.

The experience from north-east India is described by Majumdar & Banerjee (2017) under the heading "Challenges to Sustainable Growth of the Micro-Scale Kuhila Craft Industry of India." The study focuses on the Kuhila artisans in Assam to look into the difficulties this craft is facing from the socio-environmental perspective. Lack of Education and awareness, competition from products made of synthetic materials, lack of capital and

markets, are some of the hurdles that the artisans are encountering. Additionally, the loss of wetlands makes it more expensive to produce the raw ingredients for plants. Thus, the Kuhila maker families are not able to sustain the entire family and they lack any other income source. Another issue is that young people are flocking to cities in search of a secure economic foundation.

Aggrawal, Gupta & Sengupt (2017) in their work "Conditions of Unorganized Manufacturing Industries with Special Reference to MSMEs: A Field Study in Uttar Pradesh" discuss the condition of MSME sector industries in Ghaziabad and Noida. In their study of 500 production units, the authors classify the MSMEs into three categories: Own Account Manufacturing Enterprises (OAME), Non-Directive Manufacturing Enterprises (NDME) and Directive Manufacturing Enterprises (DME). The study defines OAME as units operating with the help of family labors, NDME are the ones in which less than six workers including family and hired labor are involved, and DME involves more than six workers including family members and hired workers. They compare OAME, NDME and DME in terms of workers, wage rate, number of units, size of the industry, input and output, worker' efficiency. They conclude that while OAMEs are the smallest, yet they have the highest productivity. Nonetheless, all MSMEs are suffering from basic facilities, health and security issues at workplace.

In her research "Challenges to Indian Micro Small Scale and Medium Enterprises in the Era of Globalization", Mukherjee (2018) studies the coir industry of India. This small-scale industry located in coastal region of country (especially in Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Maharashtra, etc.) and is labor intensive in nature. As per MSME annual report 2016-17, major part of the coir production (which is around 29%) is exported to China followed by USA. Despite this, the industry is facing stiff competition from Chinese synthetic products. Other challenges that the industry is facing

are as follows; inadequate and high rate of credit, unavailability of raw materials at fair cost, lack of basic infrastructure facilities like road, light, water. To tackle the situation, the government as well as R&D institution has extended helping hand in the form of modifying the rules of IPR, reduction in tax rate, collaboration with other countries. Further, cluster development, access to credit, and technological improvement have been resorted to. Finally, the study suggests infrastructure development of the MSMEs should be focused on.

In their article "Recognition and Marketing Opportunities of a "GI" Tag in Handloom Product: A Study of Banaras Brocades and Sarees" Verma & Mishra (2018) discuss the marketing opportunities of the Geographical Indication (GI) tag in the context of Banaras brocades and sarees, which are traditional handloom products. The paper highlights the importance of GI for preserving and promoting these products, protecting the cultural identity associated with the products, creating value for local communities, enabling them to command a premium on the global market, as well as the need for post-GI measures to fully realize their commercial potential. Additionally, they talk about the challenges the Banarasi silk industry is currently experiencing, including declining turnover, a fragmented cottage industry structure, a shortage of skilled weavers, changing consumer preferences, limited access to international markets, and ineffective brand-building initiatives. While recognizing the efforts made by the government and commercial actors to revive the industry, it is indicated that additional measures are necessary. The paper offers numerous strategies for exploiting the GI's business potential. These include modernizing product offerings to better serve modern consumers, implementing branding initiatives to increase brand awareness, establishing a strong online presence through specialized portals and social media, and developing a vertically integrated production model and distribution system.

The study "Sholapith Craft' of Murshidabad- Problems and Prospects of the Art and the Livelihood of the Artisans" by Ganai (2018) analyses the Sholapith Craft of Murshidabad, West Bengal. The craft, a crucial element of ritualistic significance in the area, is practiced by the Malaker community. The essay makes the case that these people's livelihoods depend on their artistic endeavors. The study tries to understand how Sholapith crafts are made, as well as the socioeconomic position and attitudes of the artists and the next generation towards their trade. Here, the research shows waning generational interest in the arts as well as additional issues brought on by the modern market.

In their paper on 'Sankha Shilpa' (conch shell craft) in West Bengal, Sukanya Datta & Abhijit Das (2019) investigate how the culture/skill is transmitted across the generations. The study elaborates on the ethno-history of the people engaged with the craft and the current socio-economic standing of the industry. Stated differently, the study highlights the role of the industry in employment generation and problems faced by the industry.

In his study of the weaver community of Jamdani saree, Sayed Ahmed (2020) describes the condition of socio-economically marginalized artisan households in the backdrop of competitions faced from spurious garment production of Narayanganj. Though there is substantial demand of Jamdani production in upscale fashionable houses and boutiques, yet they are falling behind because of low rate of production, lack of earnings, and increasing dissociation from the trade. The author suggests automatic/semi-automatic looms, offering training to weavers, and institutional marketing policy as potential remedies. Furthermore, the study highlights the marginalized position of the women workers engaged in the industry in terms of low wage, weak collective bargaining, and lack of equal pay for work. Nonetheless, the study underlines the contribution of the craft in sustaining rural livelihood.

In their article, “Unlocking Potential- A Study of GI Tag for Phulkari Crafted Products” Kapila & Kaur (2020) focus on the production dynamics of Phulkari art of Punjab. Phulkari is the name of an ancient style of needlework, and it has gained considerable recognition in India and other countries through routine renovation. The art has been given GI labelling in order to maintain its heritage nature. The survey, which gathered the perspectives of 60 Phulkari artisans and a group of traders, discovered that the craftspeople were unaware of the benefits of the GI badge. It's interesting that a sizable majority of respondents don't work in this field because of financial constraints. The report emphasizes how crucial a strong market network is for these artisan groups.

In his research paper titled “Everyday Politics of Economic Life in Small Town North India: A Social History of Kannauj through the Lens of the Ittar (Perfume) Business,” Prakash (2021) aims to understand the social history of Kannauj with reference to the production of ittar. In order to understand and reveal this social history, the author has made an effort to develop an intersectional understanding of the social, economic, and political domains of the Kannauj ittar labour. The paper explored a broad range of everyday behaviours common to Kannauj’s social environment, such as competitiveness, cooperation, and other comparable routine and micro-level institutional activities in the setting of social networks.

In their paper entitled, “Gold Governance and Goldsmithery: Economic Sociology and Informal Manufacturing Sector in India”, Sruti Kanungo & Anindita Chakrabarti (2021) examine how the craft and trade of gold jewelry is coping with state legislations. The essay describes how the goldsmithing industry changed in the post-independent India. For instance, the authors document the impact of the repeal of Gold Control Act (1968) in 1990 and the surge in demand of gold in the post-liberalization period. The study also highlights the occupational recasting (in terms of replacing the traditional goldsmithing

caste) that has happened in the trade over the years. Finally, the study highlights the role of social capital in terms of engagement with the trade.

In his article "Handicrafts: The Cultural Identification of Kashmir," Shiekh (2022) discusses the diverse traditional handicrafts of Kashmir namely traditional woollen shawls, gaba sazi, paper mache, wood carving, copper ware, embroidered, crewel, and carpet items, have been produced in Kashmir. A GI tag can be seen on many of these goods. Since the tourism sector, handicrafts in Kashmir are a significant source of employment, but the challenge is that since the introduction of machines and new technologies, the quality of handicrafts in this region has not kept pace with expectations. The author contends that these crafts' precarious status is a result of their survivalist nature. If we could transform these items of beauty from being used to earn a living to serving as symbols of cultural identity, the problem could be handled.

In her paper "Research on the Integration of Traditional Arts and Crafts into the Design of Modern Cultural and Creative Products," Jin (2022) draws attention to a crucial feature of the creative arts and cultural products. She claims that to meet the derived needs of communities, such handcrafted and traditional goods are being produced in large quantities. But at the same time, the manual or skill-based creation of cultural arts and creativity is moving more and further away from its true nature as art and craft. Jin claims that rather than accentuating their art or craft approach, many creative and craft-based products are being made by simply duplicating their conventional patterns. The study highlights that it is not fair or sustainable to simply increase the production of such creative objects on a big scale; rather, the manufacturing method for these products should be connected with that fundamental traditional technique. Through the emotive attachment of users, contemporary creative art could expand the market with astonishing authenticity in this way. In other words, the study argues that because contemporary

technology has given cultural goods and art a new value, we should employ technology to satisfy widespread demand while also preserving the craft's originality, purity, identity, or authenticity.

While the above-mentioned studies focus on the condition of small-scaled industries and the experience of the artisans engaged in them, the conceptualization is incomplete unless we engage in olfactory literature review. People have been wearing fragrance for ages for masking their body odor and in the attempt to look more attractive. There are ample evidence suggesting that olfactory cues often influence the person's perception. For example, bifurcatory odour constructions, for instance, are present in the field of gender interactions.

2.3 The role of Olfaction in Human Interaction

Synnott (1991: 449) for instance writes: "men are supposed to smell of sweat, whisky, and tobacco…[while] women, presumably, are supposed to smell 'good', clean, pure, and attractive." Likewise, gender scent polemics can be noticed in the names, size, and structure of perfume bottles. Thus, fragrances and perfumes for women are named as "Beautiful", "White Linen", and "White Shoulders" whereas the men's perfumes are named as "Boss", "Brut", and "Polo." (ibid). Extending the argument forward we may contend that such polemical divisions could very well socialize the sexes into two different roles. Similarly, Seeger (1981) posits that smell has been used to express and maintain gender-based hierarchies and divisions. He exemplifies this with the help of Suya of Mato Grosso region of Brazil, where women are classified as "strong smelling" and men as "bland smelling.". The division stems from the fact men are generally associated with the domain of "culture" and women are associated with the domain of "nature." Oalfactory stereotypes were also observed in the perception that social classes have about each other. Thus, working class and rural farmers are considered to be 'skunky

class' by the upper class and urbanites as hard physical work is associated with sweat and body odor. Thus, smell can be the basis of stereotyping and social discrimination (Calabroso & Malacaman, 2013).

However, it may be noted that good and foul smell is culturally defined and is associated with one's socialization process. Therefore, smell have the power to trigger memory. As Synnott puts; *"Good times equate with good smells: even cow manure smells great because it evokes such wonderful memories; conversely, bad times equate with bad smells. Smells are often evaluated, therefore, by the positive or negative value of the remembered context. The meanings of odours are therefore extrinsic and individually or socially constructed"*.

Oalfactory polemics are also observed in supernatural and religious discourse. For example, the evil spirits are supposed to emit "evil" smell while the good spirits emit "pleasant" fragrance (Classen et al., 1993). The belief is related to the notion that scent is a common way for deities to communicate their presence, and Christians hold that the presence of the Holy Spirit was communicated by a mystical aroma. Thus, the "odor of sanctity" stands in contrast to the smell of moral corruption or frailty (Classen et al., 1994; Le Guerer, 1994).

The oalfactory bipolarities has also been employed in socio-spatial analysis. The anthropological study of Bangkok soi (lane) by Cohen (1988) analyzes the role of smell in Thai culture. He coins the term 'olfactory dualism' to highlight how smell is related to personal hygiene and the external environment. He notes that although there are many single people living in soi, particularly women working in tourism-related sex work, soi is contaminated by "heaped up refuge" and "stagnant swamy water" (p. 42). Cohen observes that Thai girls are too focused on maintaining their cleanliness and attractiveness

to notice the stink surrounding them. Thus, dualism is seen in the separation of body/self from the surrounding one inhabits. Cohen reasons it to the lack of civic consciousness among people in Thailand and as a result they are only concerned about their olfactory conduct.

Thus, the use of perfume stems from the desire to look presentable in society. The idea closely resonates Erving Goffman's conceptualization of "Presentation of Selves in our Daily Lives". Goffman contends that our social life can be conceived as a stage, where we are all performers. Thus, any loss of control over our bodies can lead to social embarrassment. Bodily odors can thus represent a loss of control over our bodies. It is a form of olfactory breach and can lead to social and moral defilement. As Goffman (1971) posits bodily odor is a form of "modalities of violation" (p.44) to be categorized under "bodily excreta" (p. 46). Thus, perfume use as a form of olfactory scrupulosity may be understood as not merely an attempt to remove unpleasant bodily odor but also as an effort to present a social self that is olfactorily appropriate for social interaction.

This research is unique as it focuses on the current socio-economic dynamics of ittar industry at Kannauj. Ittar-making is an indigenous art-form and includes the involvement of various artisans. A close inspection of the community associated with the trade will help us to unveil various realities about them. The primary aim of the study is to focus on these artisans. Stated differently, the idea is to investigate how the community are carrying forward their generational skills and legacy. The thesis therefore attempts to answer the following questions: Who are these ittar artisans? What is their way of being? How do they perceive their art? How are they carrying forward their legacy? What are the challenges that they are currently facing?

Chapter- 3

Research Methodology: Accounts of Research Site, Methods, and Techniques

3.1 Research Methodology

In this section of the thesis, the research methods, tools for gathering data, and analytical tools used in this study are discussed. An introduction to the research site's background and organizational setup, including its morphological structure, has also been covered. Additionally, the chapter discusses the sampling technique and elaborates on method, selection process, and underlying reasoning have all been addressed.

3.2 Administrative Setup, Demographic Profile and Climatic Conditions

Kannauj is a north-Indian town located on the banks of river Ganges. Kannauj, is located in longitude 27 degrees 13 minutes north and 79 degrees 19 minutes east and is boasts of having alluvial soil that is perfect for the growth of plants and flowers (Brief Industrial Profile of Kannauj District, 2011). Emperors like Harshavardhana and Jaychandra ruled the region during its glorious days. Throughout the pages of history, it has gone under several names, including *"Kanyakubja," "Gadhipura," "Gadhinagara," "Kusasthala," and "Kusumapura."* (Smith, 1908; Tripathi, 1937).

Kannauj was formerly a part of the Farrukhabad district of Uttar Pradesh before obtaining its current administrative status. The district currently falls under the administrative control of the Kanpur division, and it has a total area of 2,933 square kilometres

(Kannauj.nic.in). The three tehsils that make up the district are *Chhibramau*, *Kannaui*, and *Tirwa*. In total, there are 752 villages included in the 499 Gram Panchayats that make up the entire administrative region (ibid). The most widely spoken language in the area is Hindi, however in the interior villages, people speak in a local dialect called *"Kannauji"* (which is close to Hindi language) for their daily conversations. However, trade documentation is done in either Hindi or English.

There were 1,656,616 people residing in Kannauj overall, of which 881,776 were men and 774,840 were women, according to the Census of India, 2011. Male and female literacy rates were 76.52% and 66.77%, respectively, in Kannauj, which had a sex ratio of 891 and a literacy rate of 71.92. According to the Kannauj Nagar Palika Parishad's City Population Census 2011-2022, the percentage of Hindus in the city was 62.53%, while the percentage of Muslims was 36.60%.

Kannauj, which is in the Ganges belt's northern plains, has a subtropical climate. Rivers 'Kali' and 'Ishan' are its tributaries, while 'Ganges' is the district's major river. The region's alluvial soil is particularly well adapted for agricultural pursuits. So, in addition to the production of aromatics, the area of Kannauj is widely renowned for its potato farming (Reema et al., 2020). According to the MSME Report (2016–17), some of the most well-known fragrances manufactured in Kannauj are Rose (Gulab), Marigold (Genda), Jasmine (Chameli), Henna (Mehandi), Pandanus odorifer (Kewda), and Vetiver grass (Khus), etc. (Verma et al., 2020).

3.3 Morphological Structure of the Research Site

With a railway station and a State Transport Bus Stop, the city is easily accessible from Kanpur, Aligarh, Lucknow, and Hardoi. Additional transit possibilities are provided by the Agra-Lucknow expressway, which is located at a distance of 18 km from the city. The local market serves the requirements of the local population, and there are branded stores

and small shopping centers as well. Multiple mosques and temples are found throughout the city. The most respected temples in the city, the Gauri Shankar and Goddess Fhulmati Temple, are associated with the royal families of Kannauj. The museum displays the remains of palace excavated at Kannauj.

Furthermore, the city has two separate entry point gates: 'Tirwa Chauraha' and 'Makarandnagar'. According to the local legend, they were built by two wealthy merchants of the city. The city's oldest areas are densely packed with residential structures, stores, and crowded streets. 'Haji-Tola,' 'Chipatti,' 'Talaiya-Chowki,' 'Bara-Bazar,' 'Gaurishankar Road,' 'Gwal-Maidan,' 'Pansariyan Mohalla,' and 'Makrandnagar' are the important ittar producing localities in the city. An ittar-producer 'firm' is commonly referred to as a 'Kothee' in local parlance.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

The study employs a qualitative approach to research. Given the study aims, a qualitative technique appears to be the apt choice. Further, because qualitative research investigates the nature of human relationships, the method is most suited to investigate the life worlds of Kannauj's perfumers (owners and "kaarigar"). According to Partha Nath Mukherji (2000), observation and interviews are among the most popular methods and tools for data collection in a qualitative investigation. Data was acquired through observation and interview. An interview guide and an open-ended schedule of research questions were used to conduct the interviews. Respondents were invited to share their experiences and thoughts during the interview process. The researcher explored various viewpoints and ideas on the topic at hand. The interviews were conducted by following the criterion of saturation[1]. The researcher thus tried to arrive at an 'emic[2]' viewpoint by studying the

[1] The stage of data collection when no new insights or ideas are derived from the data.
[2] In this method, the researcher tries to understand the things and experiences people have in their own way, style, and words. The approach is sometimes referred to as the "insider approach."

perfumeries social behaviors, relationships, and experiences (ibid). The strategy closely parallels the goal of qualitative research, as stated by Bronislaw Malinowski ([1922]2013: 25), which is *"to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize his visions of his world."*

Observation is an indispensable component of qualitative research. There were various unrevealed aspects of the research objectives that were only revealed through a mutually in-depth conversation. Young (2014:162) emphasized the relevance of observation in qualitative research as follows:

"*Social processes, social trends, or cross-sections of life processes, or continuities of personal experiences, require interviewing and life-history techniques. But one can hardly think of an empirical study in which some observation had not been made"*.

So, the research does not rely just on observation, but is supplemented by interviews that followed a detailed interview schedule.

3.5 Sampling: Sample and its Technique

According to the research requirements, three types of respondents were required: ittar unit owners, artisans and ittar consumers. For the sake of research purposive sampling method has been adopted to select the ittar units and respondents. The study's requirements are addressed by non-probability (purposive) sampling approach (Sandelowski, 2000), which is complimented by snowball [3]sampling. Snowball, because being a sensitive business and in-house production nature of units it was not easy to search (in dense streets) and knock every door. A total fifty-two respondents have interviewed to get research data. Out of which twenty were perfumery owners, twenty were artisans and remaining twelve were ittar consumers. A larger number of artisans and ittar-unit

[3] This method of sampling is useful when the researcher gets a lead for another sample unit with the help of an earlier sample unit with whom he/she has met.

owners were interviewed as the primary focus of the study was the ittar-makers of Kannauj. After selection of ittar units, the artisans were selected from these units. In this section, we will first discuss the sampling method and approach used for owners, followed by a same comprehensive description for artisan:

The names and contact information for ittar units were obtained from the Kannauj office of Zilla Udyog Kendra (District Industries Centre, DIC). Using a reliable data from DIC, a list of 118 fragrance units (with detailing of perfumeries, those registered with Zilla Udyog Kendra) was gathered. However, these units varied in terms of size, numer of kaarigar, and years of operation. The ittar industry may be categorized into three categories depending on the number of workers employed, according to the list supplied by Zilla Udyog Kendra (Table 3.1). These three sorts of units can have 0-5 employees, 6-10 employees, or 11-40 employees.

Table: 3.1

Sl. No.	**Number of Units in the Category**	**Number Range of Artisans/Kaarigars in Units**
Category 1	56	0-05
Category 2	48	06-10
Category 3	14	11-40
	Total number of units: 118	

However, because the data shows that the majority of the units have a small number of workers (i.e., less than ten), proportional stratified sampling is not the best choice for the research. Using proportional random sampling, you run the danger of picking a small and unrepresentative number of units. Given the above rationale, the study employed purposive sampling to identify the units. Taking purpose of research objectives before the units were identified by snowball sampling method.

These three sections of the units were utilize to insure representativeness of sampling units. The selected units were approached through the leads provided by other unit owners and local people. Since segment one is relatively vast, the greatest number of fragrance units originate here as sample units. A total of eight purposive units were found from stratum one. The second layer has the next highest concentration of perfumeries. Seven fragrance units were chosen for the study by ensuring a fair representation of sample units. Similarly, despite the fact that the last and third stratum contains just fourteen units, it is notable that this is the only stratum with the greatest number of labour involvements per unit. Five units were chosen for the investigation from here. A fundamental argument underlying these choices was that small or large firms could not give a comprehensive view of data, alone. After examining the actual situation, it appeared that selecting aroma units from all of these strata may be a reasonable solution for a just and representative sample. Twenty perfumeries were chosen from among the three categories (the list of shortlisted perfumeries is shown in Table 3.2). Table 3.2 includes an organized list of all selected perfumeries together with their tentative establishment year and interviewee (typically the unit owner is designated by pseudonym rid character to maintain confidentiality).

Table: 3.2 **Perfumery Owners and Firms: Selected Sample Units**

Sl. No.	Name of the Unit has Interviewed	Establishment Year (Tentative)	Interviewed On	Pseudonym for the Owner/ Respondent
1.	Devi Prasad Shyamlaal Attarwaale Kannauj	1923	September 17, 2021	**O1**
2.	Gauri Sugandh	1920	September 05, 2021	**O2**
3.	Indian Flower Fragrance	1984	September 06, 2021	**O3**
4.	Baikunth Perfumers	1720	September 15, 2021	**O4**
5.	Kings and Company (formally renowned as Beniprasad Moolchand)	1880	September 08, 2021	**O5**
6.	Devi Prasad Sundarlaal Khatri	1929	September 07, 2021	**O6**
7.	Kedarnath Khatri and Sons	1728	September 11, 2021	**O7**
8.	Jagat Aroma Oils Distillery	1880	April 16, 2021	**O8**
9.	Rajaputa Enterprises	1850	April 13, 2021	**O9**
10.	Meena Perfumery (Prior, Lala Jugal Kishore and Sons)	1840	September 08, 2021	**O10**
11.	Huma Fragrance	1950	September 12, 2021	**O11**
12.	Siddhimulam Sugandham Pvt. Ltd.	1780	September 06, 2021	**O12**
13.	Kannauj Attars	1930	April 14, 2021	**O13**
14.	Puja Perfumery (Formally, Lala Jugal Kishore and Sons)	1920	September 11, 2021	**O14**
15.	Munnalal Sons and Company (Perfumers) Pvt. Ltd.	1911	September 09, 2021	**O15**
16.	Not disclosed (located in Makarandnar)	1995	April 09, 2021	**O16**
17.	Kannauj Perfumers	1990	September 08, 2021	**O17**
18.	Creative Fragrance	1840	April 14, 2021	**O18**

19.	Moh. Ayub and Moh. Yaqub (Malik and Sons)	1929	September 06, 2021	**O19**
20.	Samriddi Attar Industry	1700	April 06, 2022	**O20**

The artisans were targeted for interviews in the second round of the sampling process. Artisans plays a crucial role in ittar producing process and often has been associated with the trade for generations. Without artisans, the research seems to be a one-wheeled chariot. Artisans's strengths and actual data were not available in a systematic, formal manner. As a result, artisans were shortlisted from already approached ittar units (in first step) on the basis of purposive sampling method under the category of non-probability sampling (Blaikie, 2000). This selection was made in accordance with the purposive sampling method's argument: *".....qualitative research typically involves purposeful sampling to enhance understanding of the information-rich case (Patton, 1990)."* As previously stated, the research was extremely attentive to acquiring well-illustrated and in-depth data from artisans of ittar making community. Given this, ittar artisans have been studied. In terms of the exact number of sample units, these groups were neither stable nor properly identifiable. That's why, twenty artisans were purposefully selected from selected ittar units. In light of these logics, all of the purposeful sample units from diverse perfumeries were picked: interviewed and observed. The number of interviews were based on the criterion of saturation. Table 3.3 is a detailed list of selected artisans (with pseudonym) from the perfumeries.

Table: 3.3 **Artisans or Kaarigar: Selected Sample Units**

Sl. No.	Name of the Firm where the Artisan is working/worked	Interviewed On	Pseudonym for the Artisan
1.	Devi Prasad Shyamlaal Attarwaale Kannauj	April 07, 2022	**A1**
2.	Gauri Sugandh	April 05, 2022	**A2**
3.	Indian Flower Fragrance	April 03, 2022	**A3**
4.	Baikunth Perfumers	April 02, 2022	**A4**
5.	Kings and Company (formally renowned as Beniprasad Mulchand)	April 01, 2022	**A5**
6.	Devi Prasad Sundarlaal Khatri	April 04, 2022	**A6**
7.	Kedarnath Khatri and Sons	April 10, 2022	**A7**
8.	Jagat Aroma Oils Distillery	April 11, 2022	**A8**
9.	Rajaputa Enterprises	April 06, 2022	**A9**
10.	Meena Perfumery (Prior, Lala Jugal Kishore and Sons)	April 12, 2022	**A10**
11.	Huma Fragrance	April 08, 2022	**A11**
12.	Siddhimulam Sugandham Pvt. Ltd.	March 28, 2022	**A12**
13.	Kannauj Attars	April 15, 2022	**A13**
14.	Puja Perfumery (Formally, Lala Jugal Kishore and Sons)	April 16, 2022	**A14**
15.	Munnalal Sons and Company (Perfumers) Pvt. Ltd.	April 17, 2022	**A15**
16.	Not disclosed (located in Makarandnar locality)	April 19, 2022	**A16**
17.	Kannauj Perfumers	April 09, 2022	**A17**
18.	Creative Fragrance	April 13, 2022	**A18**
19.	Moh. Ayub and Moh. Yaqub (Malik and Sons)	April 14, 2022	**A19**
20.	Samriddi Attar Industry	April 18, 2022	**A20**

The next task in this process was to meet and interview to the artisans of all these categories. First contacting an artisan during the unit's operating period was not possible as they were too busy to spare some time for the interview. Artisans were addressed in their respective neighborhoods with the assistance of a key respondent (who was himself a journeyman artisan). In research parlance, this person is also known as the gatekeeper. This person's name was Ramesh Kumar, a psudonamed person from the nearby village of Kannauj. The Ittar work was well known to Ramesh Kumar because of his family's generational history. He joined an ittar perfumery in the Gwal-Maidan neighbourhood of Kannauj a year ago as a journeyman. As a result, the researcher was able to gather a wide-ranging, representative, experienced, and novice range of artisan's experiences all at once. As a result, given the importance of artisan in the ittar manufacturing process, the research would have been incomplete if the artisan perspective had not been included. As a result, the study comprised interviews with 20 such craftspeople.

Consumers of ittar are another segment of the interview. We have identified the consumers from the academic fraternity of the researcher. These respondents typically represented the middle-class[4] consumers of India. Their socio-economic profile is attached with here (in Table 3.4). In such a way, following the purposive standardization of sampling, a total of 12 customers were identified. Although a larger number of

[4] The middle class is thought to be the engine of growth in the economy. The growth of the economy has occurred over the last few decades as a result of middle-class consumers' increased purchasing. Between the working class and the upper class, the middle class occupies a medium position in the social order. Krishnan and Hatekar (2017) define the lower middle class as those who spend between $2 and $4 per capita per day, and the upper middle class as those who spend between $6 and $10 per capita per day. Professionals employed in the health, education, financial, insurance, administrative, and information technology (IT) sectors of the service economy make up the majority of the middle class and upper middle class. Vendors, people employed in the food business, carpenters, drivers, etc. may now be considered to be members of India's lower middle class. According to estimates, members of the lower middle class still have enough discretionary income to cover their children's health and education expenses (Roy, 2018).

respondents were engaged in informal conversations, this was done to examine the background of the ittar-consumers in keeping with the research's goal. Following this, a full formal discussion on a variety of issues and concerns relating to ittar-consumerism had been developed. The ittar consumers were interviewed using a similar, but having different questions, thorough interview schedule like the owners and the artisans. The following table 3.4 contains detailing of the selected consumers who were interviewed.

Table: 3.4 **Ittar Consumer: Selected Sample Units**

Sl. No.	Pseudonym of the ittar Consumer	Age (in Year)	Gender	Education level	Occupation	Interviewed On
1.	**C1**	47	Male	Graduate	Teacher	March 28, 2022
2.	**C2**	30	Female	Post-graduate	Research student	March 30, 2022
3.	**C3**	35	Female	PhD	Assistant professor	March 31, 2022
4.	**C4**	40	Male	Graduate	Office superintendent	April 01, 2022
5.	**C5**	38	Male	Medical Diploma	Medical personnel	April 04, 2022
6.	**C6**	40	Female	Post-graduate	Account officer	April 08, 2022
7.	**C7**	30	Male	Post-graduate	Research student	April 09, 2022
8.	**C8**	36	Male	PhD	College lecturer	April 10, 2022
9.	**C9**	37	Female	Graduate	Clerk	April 10, 2022
10.	**C0**	37	Male	Graduate	Lab in charge	April 13, 2022
11.	**C11**	29	Female	Post-graduate	Research student	April 15, 2022
12.	**C12**	42	Female	PhD	College Lecturer	March 16, 2022

3.6 Why observation Method?

Since the researcher had limited experience to the ittar business in Kannauj, the observation method was best suited for this investigation. Close, in-depth, and scientific

observation appears to be the most effective method for developing a thorough understanding of the heritage of perfume making, the production process, and the social ties that exist in the business. One key rationale for using the observation approach was that the pilot survey eliminated the other potential; ittar unit owners or artists were attempting to avoid answering certain questions regarding the ittar industry and perfumeries. Except for a handful, they were unwilling to divulge much for personal reasons. Furthermore, the sector is characterized with unexplored and ambitious features, and those involved in this activity were concerned about any uninvited policy imposition. Although subjects were initially apprehensive about sharing information about their business to an unknown person the rapport building helped. Initially, these factors made the researcher appear suspicious and untrustworthy to many in the ittar community. Furthermore, the observation was not limited to a certain social environment or ritualistic practices; the under-observation group's facial reactions and psycho-symbolic reactions were also recorded. According to Lindeman (1925: 178-79), "*if you wish to know that he is really doing, watch him, don't ask him"*. In this study, the researcher used quasi-participant observation since the participants were apprehensive that over-involvement would reveal their secret 'nuska' of ittar production, the ratio of concoction, income information, and so on. Quasi-participant observation entailed observing at specific points and occasions, such as assisting perfumeries in recording their daily flower collection, participating in social gatherings and discussions, shopping, and offering various services such as holding vessels or closing the spouts of water pipes, and so on. These were the opportunities for us to closely examine the perfumeries and gain a better understanding of them. The approach also allowed us to see the players in their natural setting.

As urged by Bernard (1988), the perfumery observation was supplemented with time-break features. During the exercise of observing ittar perfumeries, the researcher takes

the necessary time break. When you face a different cultural milieu than your own, you quickly become bored and stuffy. The same thing happened to the researcher. To avoid this, the researcher moved away from the scenario by going to the institution campus, his house, or other relaxing locations.

3.7 Tools for Data Collection

3.7.1 Interview and Interview Schedule

Personal interviews were used as a data gathering strategy in addition to observation as part of the research. The interview was equipped with an interview schedule. The semi-structured and open-ended interview with respondents attempted to cover various aspects such as the ittar production process, cultural knowledge involved in the art, the lived experience of the artisans and perfumers, occupational ideology, social relations prevalent in the industry, and challenges and bottlenecks that the industry is currently facing. Since the research employed a semi-structured interview schedule, there was room for adding questions based on the field scenario and requirements.

The interview schedule included a variety of questions. Age, gender, educational status, and occupation questions yielded a stable and tacit answer. Questions like as 'What is ittar?', 'What is its social history?', and 'What is its production process?' elicit open-ended and comprehensive response. The subjects occasionally digressed from the issue at hand when responding to such open-ended inquiries. According to Johnson (2001), such diversion was often useful in creating new information, therefore the researcher adopted the method of "going with the flow."

In creating the interview schedule, the researcher ensured that the questions were clear so that the respondents could answer them without ambiguity or complication. The goal of conducting such in-depth interviews was to gain a "deep" understanding of social processes that went beyond common sense (Johnson, 2001). The interviews began by

describing the aim of the study, obtaining consent from the respondents, and facilitating them to omit any question along the procedure. In the case of an unclear or ambiguous response, or if the researcher considered that the response required additional study, follow-up questions were asked. Building rapport with the subjects is essential for obtaining more comprehensive data.

A similar pattern was seen when interviewing artisan: there was a variation in vernacular language and accent between the researcher and the craftsmen. Furthermore, craftsmen, notably artisans, were more conversant in Kannauji (a local dialect). As a result, craftsmen were sometimes unable to comprehend the interviewer's questioning. As a solution, the researcher offered these questions in a more detailed, lucid, and simple format. In addition, depending on the circumstances, several lead-generating questions were asked during the interview. Therefore, over the months of rigorous fieldwork, the researcher became acquainted with the location and subjects properly (Bernard, 1988). Informal interaction with the subject of the research, as well as socializing with the subjects at parties and get-togethers (in festival celebration, religious ceremonies at temples), assisted the researcher in developing "trust" so that knowledge disclosure might occur readily. The respondents' comments were captured using a digital voice recorder, and field notes were gathered during the procedure. The recorder gave an exact record of what the participants said, while the field notes supplied contextual information to the researcher while transcribing the interviews.

Furthermore, field photographs were taken of various locations and people, such as the firm or production site of ittar, deg-bhapka involved in the distillation process, the arrival of flowers on perfumeries and their collection style, the plucking and processing of flowers from the field to the firm, flower fields, flower procurement by mediators on the field site, flower collection by mediators at home, the unit owner, artisan, artisan's village

and home. These photographs, in addition to increasing the realism of the field scenario, aid in the interpretation of items and events by capturing relevant memories in their natural surroundings.

Customers, in addition to perfumers, were interviewed to gain wider insight on this olfactory aesthetic. Furthermore, talks with locals assisted us in gathering new information and cross-verifying what we had. The number of interviews was decided by the criterion of "saturation," which occurred when additional interviews produced no new information (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thus, while the initial interviews were more rigorous and entailed "grand tour" inquiries, the subsequent interviews were more targeted and prioritized validating the gathered observations and findings (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

3.8 Challenges and Obstacles during the Data Collection in the Research Field

Field problems and roadblocks are regular occurrences in any research projects. Similarly, our investigation encountered comparable but distinct problems. Under this topic, we will look at some of the key incidents and occurrences that occurred throughout this fieldwork. Undoubtedly, most of the locals at the research location were humble and kind. Following each meeting, it was clear that these unit owners were highly concerned about their businesses. When I met individuals, especially firm owners, they were looking very optimistically at me for business purposes. Later, after becoming aware of my interest and intent, their enthusiasm subsided. To address the problem, I frequently persuaded them of the study's academic and social significance, as well as how it may contribute to the production of fresh knowledge in academic horizon. Furthermore, I persuaded them by adding, "Nobody is aware of the possible advantages this research could have for the sector in the near future." After all of this, I was able to obtain

permission from the participants to connect with them, their fragrance site, as well as its social and economic aspects.

There were moments when the researcher found himself in a difficult circumstance. There are a few significant examples that will go into further detail about the situation. I came into a one-of-a-kind circumstance after meeting with a firm owner who was also a member of Kannauj's ittar trade organization. He tried to dishevel me in multiple self-interested/profit-oriented talks after an initial acquaintance and familiarity with my study purpose. In order to gain favor, he said, "Could you make a collaboration with my firm, in terms of research and innovations, with your Institution?" He also stated unequivocally that I would only allow you to have any more research-related conversations with me if you ensured me of this. I attempted to persuade him, "Sir, that I am merely a student and not a competent authority for such institute choices; you may approach them through existing standard channels."

As another level difficulty, owners were unwilling to release their artisans in order to meet at the manufacturing sites. I found two possible explanations for this: first, they were apprehensive about my intention of meeting kaarigars and second, they did not want to lose workers' working hours. Because of this constraint, the researcher was unable to interact closely with artisans at the site.

3.9 Data Processing and Interpretation

Following data collection in the field, a systematic and logical transcription of the data was performed initially. Systematic suggests that the interview dates and related owner or artisans have been linked with the field notes. Reading the field notes and listening to the recorded interview were the first steps in the data transcription process. Every effort was taken to record the interview's location and social setting. The researcher carefully

noted the para-linguistic data (hesitation, pause, volume, pace, intonation of voice, etc.) when manually transcribing the interviews in order to gain vital hints for analyzing the data. These paralinguistic data allowed for a more accurate understanding of the situation. The following procedure was used in transcribing the interviews:

1. Each respondent received a pseudonym.
2. The time and place of the interview were documented.
3. Classification of the event (e.g., meeting of the FFDC or the Association of Perfumers, parties or get-togethers, interview, casual interaction/informal chat).
4. In addition, and this is crucial, the respondent's actions and surroundings have been taken into account.

Following this preliminary step, a three-column table was created. The location of the interview was listed in the first column. The theme and setting of the interview were noted in the second column. This column included information on the overarching themes, significant notes, the researcher's impression, paralinguistic data, etc. The transcribed speech was presented in its rawest form in the third column. It was attempted to analyze the paralinguistic data by asking: What does the silence possibly mean? Why was someone hesitant to voice his opinion? Why did an artisan avoid responding to a particular kind of query? It was also remarked that there were more pauses and stillness than usual. Standard English was used to transcribe the interviews. Following the completion of the interview transcription, the data was organized into categories based on the many study topics and aims. In order to find distinct themes and sub-themes linked to various issues, the researcher then engaged in data analysis.

On the next phase, coding for category replies was generated, separately. Responses with a similar tone or repetitive answers were grouped together in such categories. For

example, if an ittar firm owner said, “I have been in this work for the previous three generations,” the label “O-Generation” was applied to such close-corresponding statements. Similarly, if a kaarigar stated, “There is no formal training for ittar making; you can learn this art only through dedicated and ongoing practice of the work under the supervision of an experienced artisan,” such responses have been labelled “symbioses”. Every question on the interview schedule was coded, whether it was for the owner, artisan, or customers. The technique condensed and systematized the interviews, resulting in better images of replies. Tracing patterns from them was now rather simple. Inferences were derived after analyzing all the interview codes with their corresponding interview questions. These patterns traced findings, and coding was enabled to improve its scientific and reliability positions.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

Before the interview began, respondents were given a clear image of the interview’s objective, and their permission was obtained for the interview and its recording. Even though most things were done in a formal manner, there were some instances in the field where the researcher obtained highly relevant and vital information for the research interest through casual discussion with the owners or artisan. Following Bernard (1988), the research collected these types of informal yet useful and rich data from many different types of casual interactions. This has undoubtedly given many important implications. Furthermore, respondents were given the option to skip any questions they didn’t want to answer or to leave the interview without providing a reason. They were told that their identities would not be divulged throughout the research and that their names would be replaced with pseudonyms used in reporting the results.

The researcher also attempted to avoid personal value assessment or prejudice to the greatest feasible degree. Furthermore, in order to ensure the neutrality of the research, the

researcher made every effort to remain neutral in terms of his own education, class, and caste background. To do this, the researcher practiced self-reflection and made a concerted effort to monitor himself in connection with others. For example, there were pre-existing views about the ittar sector, such as deterioration, competition with other market competitors, a shortage of raw materials, and so on. However, the researcher approached the area with an open mind and attempted to record the true experiences of insiders under examination. Similarly, the findings were reported objectively, and the respondents' socio-political and ideological differences did not impede data reporting.

3.11 Limitations of the Research

Likewise, this study has some restrictions of its own. The owners of the units were very circumspect in their trade and on the ittar market. The industry has an unorganized sector structure. They thus experience some level of fear from government agencies and groups for interfering with things like pollution control regulations, labour health rules, and other legislation of this nature. Because they have been using the artisan mode of production, many of them have established their businesses on their own home premises. However, these issues are now posing difficulties for them. These kinds of circumstances influenced the data collection procedure, especially when there was suspicion that the interview may recorded. People who work in the perfume industry reacted suspiciously to the researcher as a result of these perceptions. This might have restricted free sharing of views.

During the interview, some business owners spoke and performed customer service or other responsibilities. It was discovered as a result that they had not given the interview their complete focus, something they could have done in their spare time.

The study is also limited in terms of the amount of data it can acquire from artisan. The plan was to read (observe) and converse with artisans as they operated perfumeries in order to gain a clearer and more thoroughly confirmed response. However, having a formal, structured interaction with them during an interview or through observation was problematic. Both kaarigar and the proprietors of perfumeries felt uneasy about this for different reasons. Kaarigar were interviewed in their different villages and homes because they had no choice but to relocate. As a result, we were missing one essential component: the interview's use of the perfumery arrangement. Despite this, the setup enabled the artisans' personal benefit of free and open communication.

Chapter- 4

The Art of Ittar Making at Kannauj: Ties, Legacies, and Challenges

4.1 Findings

The findings of the study are presented under the following sub-headings: (a) The Art of Making Ittar; (b) Social Interrelationships within the Business; (c) Challenges in the ittar industry.

(A) The Art of Making Ittar

The olfactory aesthetics is crafted at an industrial scale in Kannauj. Ittar making is an art at Kannauj and the rise of the city as the ittar hub of India can be attributed to its favorable geographical location. The soil is of loamy sand texture, ideal for the cultivation of aromatic plants. The surrounding villages namely, Khaberpurbag, Khijarpurbag, Paindabad villages, are engaged in flower cultivation. However, rose is procured from the Aligarh-Hathras-Etah belt, located at a distance of approximate 150 km from Kannauj. As respondent O2 described:

> *"I would attribute the growth of Kannauj as an ittar hub to its congenial environmental conditions. The favorable geographical environment makes it conducive for the cultivation of flowers like Gulab, Bela, Mehandi, etc. Moreover, khas (vetiver grass), another ingredient of a popular perfume variety, is abundantly available here. Easy availability of raw materials is a factor contributing to the growth of the hub in the area."*

Likewise, perfumer O3 explained:

> *"We make varieties of perfume at Kannauj and most of the ingredients are sourced from the nearby locality. For instance, rose, marigold, bela, mehndi, chameli, Champa, etc. are cultivated in Kannauj. However, rose is sourced from Etah-Hathras belt, while Kedwa and sandalwood oil are sourced from Ganjam (Odisha) and Mysore respectively."*

Ittar is a product of nature and different kinds of flowers are its main ingredients. However, the name of a particular ittar is derived from the name of the flower that is predominantly used in its making. As Mr. O13 puts it:

> *"Ittar is a product of nature and is produced through the water distillation process. Pure sandalwood oil is used as its base material. The name of a particular ittar is decided according to the flower ingredient predominant in it."*

However, there is a difference between ittar and essential oil. Underlining the difference, experienced perfumer O9, who is having a renowned outlet in the Bara Bazar area of Kannauj City, pointed out:

> *"Ittar is a natural product which is produced on sandalwood oil base. Essential oil or 'rooh' is the nectar extracted from the flowers."*

The study found that ittar comes in wide varieties, for example, Rose, Jasmine, Champak, Mogra, and Kewda. This apart, there are various byproducts like rose oil, rose water, 'agarbatti' (incense sticks), 'gulkand' (sweet preserve made of rose petals), and flavoring agents in shampoo, soap, snuff, toothpaste, etc.

The most important ingredient for perfume making is the flowers. The collection of flowers starts in the early hours of the day (though the 'bela' flower is gathered in the evening as it blooms in the dusk) when the farmers pick the flowers from the field and sell it to the intermediaries. The intermediaries stay in the vicinity of the fields with cash and weighing scales. Both the small and big farmers sell their flowers to the intermediaries. The farmer may negotiate the price of flowers with the intermediaries or sells the flowers without negotiation if he has taken a loan (for the cultivation of flowers) from an intermediary. Once the flower is collected, the intermediaries sell them to the

perfumery units. The price rate of the flowers for every cropping year is decided by the mediator's association. However, the price rate is also shaped by other intervening variables like the availability of flowers and the demand for ittar (of various flowers) prevailing in the market. As of April 2022, the following are the rates of the flowers prevailing in the market:

Table: 4.1 **Price of Different Flowers/herbs in the Local Market of Kannauj**

Sl. No.	**Popular Name of the Flower/herb**	**Popular Local Market Rate[5] (Rs./Kg) in the year 2022**
1.	Gulab (rose)	60-72 (50-90)
2.	Genda (marigold)	50-60
3.	Bela or Motiya (arabian jasmine)	100
4.	Chameli (jasmine)	250- 3000
5.	Kewda (arabian Jasmine)	12
6.	Mehndi (lawsonia inermis)	50
7.	Mitti (clay) (tikki and Pyala)	2.5-3.5
8.	Khus (vetiver grass)	42-50
9.	Maulshree (spanish cherry)	150
10.	Chandan (sandalwood and oil)	7-8000
11.	Agarwood (aloeswood)	25-30000

The intermediary may supply flowers to multiple perfumeries depending on the quantity of flowers collected by him. As the quality of ittar is dependent upon the freshness of the flowers used, hence the interval between blossom and distillation should ideally be minimized. Likewise, ittar will have lower quality if the flowers are plucked half-

[5] there is a great fluctuation over the rates of flowers due to its short-term market nature.

bloomed. Therefore, flowers of different qualities are available in the market and their price is determined in terms of their freshness and bloom quality.

Thus, the owners and artisans explained the importance of fresh flowers in making ittar of finest quality and they emphasized the deep commitment and perseverance required to be in the trade. As Mr. O2 explained:

> *"For making quality ittar, you need fresh flowers. For instance, the full bloom Bela flower retains its fragrance for 12 hours and thereafter it starts to decline. So, it is imperative to use flowers that are fresh in perfume making…It is challenging to derive ittar out of the 'Raatrani' flower as it starts to bloom in the late evening (around 9:00 PM). If the flower is picked before it blooms, there will be no fragrance. The price of the flower is decided by its bloom quality. These are the things you need to know if you are to become a good connoisseur. Ittar making is an art and it takes years of toil and perseverance to be a good perfumer. You need to closely inspect the flower quality and understand the process in and out. People don't have this kind of commitment and patience. That's why we advise anyone joining the industry to focus on synthetic perfumes and sprays instead of ittar making. There is no art involved in synthetic perfume making. It is mechanical and thus easier."*

An interesting fact about Kannauj ittar is that it is produced in the traditional, labor-intensive 'Deg Bhapka' method. The method is mentioned in the 'Charak Samhita', compiled around 2000 BC (Government of India, 2013). The 'deg' refers to the copper utensil containing water and flower petals. The deg is heated over a clay furnace or 'Bhatti' and is connected via 'chonga' (bamboo pipe) to another copper utensil (known as 'bhapka') containing sandalwood oil. A twine is wrapped around the chonga and it acts as a condenser. The opening of the bhapka is covered with cloth and the utensil is submerged in a water-filled cooling tank. Thus, when the deg is heated, aromatic vapors from it gather in the bhapka and mix with the sandalwood oil.

Photo: 4.1 Distillation process and equipment

This is the traditional process of ittar making and the entire production process requires close monitoring and supervision at every step. The heat at the deg should be of the right intensity, which is maintained by adding or removing fuel. As perfumer O3 emphasized:

"The main ingredient for ittar production is flower. Flower has to be fresh and soft. Second, the steam needs to be of the right temperature. Otherwise, the flowers will be burnt and the desired smell may not be derived. So, the maintenance of the right temperature is imperative."

Moreover, the water in the cooling tank needs to be periodically changed so as to maintain adequate temperature. The artisans believe that deg-bhapka method of production is unique in its contribution to retaining the quality of ittar. The deg operates throughout the day; flowers like rose, marigold, and mehendi are distilled in the morning and afternoon sessions, while bela is distilled in the night session. Usually, two rounds of distillation are completed during the day shift. However, the time required for distillation is dependent upon the kind of flower used. For example, it takes 3-4 hours to distill rose whereas the making of samama ittar is a time-consuming process. Apart from distillation, associated works like preparing the clay for the closure of deg mouth, fitting of chonga, etc. are carried out at the units. These jobs are typically carried out by the apprentice craftsman.

Explaining the functionality of 'deg-bhapka', Mr. O1, a third-generation perfumer, explained:

"Mechanization cannot bring the same quality. That is why it is said that "old is gold." Can you deny that the food cooked in firewood over an earthen hearth is tastier than that of the food cooked over gas? We don't use any specific scale to measure the ratio of flower to water or have any timer to understand that ittar is ready; it all depends on our tajurba (experience) and andaaz (estimate)"

Once the ittar is collected, the bhapka is separated from the deg. The mixture is once again slowly heated to evaporate the remaining moisture and gather pure oil after being left to stand for six to eight hours over night. The collected residue is recycled for the creation of agarbatti and dhoop, and the entire distillation procedure is harmless for the environment. The ittar collected is then stored in a camel leather pouch or 'kuppi'. This helps in moisture absorption. As O2 pointed out:

"*After ittar is produced, it is stored in a camel leather pouch (kuppi). Kuppi is clay sealed and placed in sunlight to trigger the moisture absorption process. The*

output of this process is pure ittar. In every house of Kannauj, you will find 10-12 kuppis."

The ageing period for ittar in Kuppi might range from one to ten years depending on the raw materials used and the required concentration. The oil collected is then tested and classified.

Ittar comes in various types and forms. Musk, amber, and kesar are considered as warm ittar and are used in winter, while rose, jasmine, khus, kewda, mogra are considered as cool ittar and are popular in summer seasons for cooling effects on the body. The pricing of perfume widely varies and is decided according to the base oil that is used. Sandalwood oil was the predominant base, but its use has dwindled since the government has restricted logging. It is often substituted by a synthetic base (liquid paraffin). There can be expensive varieties of ittar as well; for instance, sunflower ittar is expensive and can be priced Rs. 18000 per liter. Apart from perfumes, the ittar units also produce 'rooh' or essential oil of flowers. As the output of ittar extraction is small (approximately 40 kgm of rose produces 0.7 to 100 gms of rooh), the rooh ittar is an expensive variety of perfume.

The prevailing rates of some of the popular ittar varieties are provided in the table below:

Table: 4.2 Approx. Price Chart for Kannauj based Ittar (2021-022)

Sl. No.	Name of the Ittar/product	Price[6] (Rs. per kg)
1.	Gulab ittar	Rs. 1-5000
2.	Gulab-rooh	Rs. 10-13 lakhs
3.	Bela (Motiya) ittar	Rs. 1- 7000
4.	Bela (Motiya)-rooh	Rs. 8-10 lakhs
5.	Chameli[7] ittar	Rs. 5-10000
6.	Kewda ittar	Rs. 3-10000

[6] All prices are based on the concentration level of ittar or rooh (oil).
[7],Chameli and Kewda ittar and rooh are not produced in Kannauj but the Kannauj based artisans make this and the Kannauj is ultimate collection center for these ittars.

7.	Kewda rooh	Rs. 6 lakhs
8.	Mitti ittar	Rs. 3-10000
9.	Mehndi ittar	Rs. 3-10000
10.	Maulshree	Rs. 5-10000
11.	Khus rooh	Rs. 60-70000
12.	Agarwood or Oudh rooh	Rs. 55-60 lakhs
13.	Samama ittar	Rs. 3 lakhs
14.	Henna ittar	Rs. 1000
15.	Sandalwood oil	Rs. 1.20-1.5 lakhs

There is a distinct base price for each ittar as well as an additional bottling fee. Depending on the size, composition, and design of the bottle, or "ittardan," the price of the product may increase. The bottling, packaging, and branding are done in the workshops only. Of the entire oil production, it is significant to note that only 5% is sold in India, 20% is utilized to make ancillary goods like dhoop and agarbatti, and approximately 75% is exported to Middle Eastern nations.

The two other coveted specialties of Kannauj are the ‘Mitti’ and ‘Samama’ ittar. Mitti ittar or rain ittar is produced by the distillation of clay found in dried-up wells and ponds, which smells like the earthy fragrance of soil after the first rain. This is a specialized art and is produced only by select artisan families of Kannauj. Moreover, it takes long (approximately 20 days) to produce mitti ittar and it cannot be produced in the monsoon season as the clay becomes too soft to be baked.

Samama is another unique variety of perfume produced at Kannauj. It is produced by the distillation of a variety of herbs and spices and each artisan family has its own unique method of producing it. Indeed, some of the ittar-making families at Kannauj have been making Samama ittar for two hundred years. As Mr. O11 recalled:

"Samama ittar is an ancient ittar of Kannauj. It was pioneered by Asgar Ali Mohammad Ali Perfumers in 1857. Their kothi (house) still exists in the Aminabad locality of Kannauj."

Mr. O12, an experienced artisan elaborated:

"In Samama perfume, different herbs are mixed in a certain ratio. However, every family has its special formula of producing Samama ittar. That is their trade secret. For example, if there are four families producing Samama, each will have a different taste and flavor…Samama perfume is used in the tobacco industry, and you must have seen that each brand of tobacco has its own unique flavor. This is because of unique blending and ratio analysis followed by each family."

Not only does ittar making require skill and precision, but the equipment also has its utility. Emphasizing the unique contribution of the deg (copper utensil) in the process, Mr. O3 explained:

"Copper vessels preserve and maintain the natural character of ittar. Specifically speaking, it has two qualities – it loses temperature fast and does not absorb the fragrance. Hence, it is widely used."

Mr. O2 explained the utility of the equipment differently:

"The copper utensil has its functionality. Note that the natural hue (green, yellow, purple, dark red, woody white, etc.) of ittar is due to the reaction of raw materials with the copper deg. Thus, if we replace copper with glass utensils, it may lead to a change in the customer's perception and arouse suspicion."

Similarly, the utility of the traditional furnace was explained by Mr. O4 in the following way:

"The distillation process of ittar making requires sensitive and soft heating. Such heat can be easily maintained by using cow dung chips of appropriate quantity."

Most artisans believed that their traditional deg-bhapka method of ittar production has functionality towards retaining the quality of ittar. As respondent O5 mentioned:

"The traditional method of ittar production has its heritage. Although there are other methods of ittar extraction, deg-bhapka is the best. It produces ittar of the highest quality."

The artisans involved in ittar-making consider it to be an art. Art is a product of creativity and imagination and is the expression of the artist's subjective being. An artist tells a tale and his/her art is an expressive action whose purpose is mainly communicative. In differentiating art from an artifact, Coleman (1988: pp) posits that an artifact is *"not an outcome of a skilled and sensuous engagement between the craftsman and his raw material, but as a copy run off mechanically from a pre-established template or design."* Moreover, art is a self-motivated product and is produced in spontaneity, whereas an artifact is produced out of the impersonal calculation of supply and demand and hence governed by the dynamics of the "market mechanism."

Ittar composition is a sophisticated discipline that combines organic chemistry, pharmacology, and botany. A new perfume's composition is approached by the perfumer as a musical composition, having top, middle, and base notes. In order to capture the "essence" of a scent, a perfumer must spend years honing their sense of smell. Pointing out to the unique quality of ittar, perfumer O2 posited:

> *"Ittar stays in a location long after a person has left, much like an olfactory signature. Previously, perfumes customized fragrances based on the personality and preference of the clients."*

Moreover, the perfumers of Kannauj emphasized the utility of the labor-intensive technique in ittar production and they believed that substituting machinery instead of the artisanal process would make the process devoid of creativity. As the perfumer Mr. O8 replied:

> *"If machinery is used in ittar production, it no longer remains an art. If humans are substituted with machines, creativity will be lost."*

Moreover, since perfume making is an art, consuming it requires understanding its uniqueness. Thus, it is not uncommon to find ittar shopkeepers patiently explaining the

ingredients, uniqueness, production process, and benefits of perfumes to consumers in helping them to choose the right perfume. Mr. O15, an experienced perfumer, explained:

> *"We attempt to explain to our customers the effort that is involved in our art. They should understand that the entire process is labor-intensive, and the artisans are not able to use their hands for a few days because of the thermal burns and bruises sustained in the process…If we replace labor with mechanization, will it remain an art?"*

This is a labor-intensive production process and the artisans thus toil very hard in a hot and humid climate without electricity to produce a concoction of the highest quality. Explaining the key role that artisans play in the process, Mr. O16 shared:

> *"The Kaarigar (artisan) plays a key role in the process. He has to be well-versed about the entire process like how much temperature to maintain, when to replace warm water from the tank, when the temperature needs to be reduced, etc. And from the smell, an experienced artisan can tell when the perfume is ready."*

Likewise, respondent O3 highlighted:

> *"In my view, ittar is crafted and not produced. The artisans are the craftsmen. They know what ratio of water to flower is to be maintained, the exact water temperature to sustain, the timing to change the water, etc. Such knowledge requires years of experience and cannot be mastered overnight. For instance, everyone cooks food using the same ingredients but a few are masters, and their cooking stands apart in taste. In short, the digha are the masters of their trade."*

Thus, the intricate production process requires the presence of a few experienced 'artisan' at the unit. Experienced artisans are in much demand and hiring them is expensive. There is competition among the firms for hiring them. As unit owner O16 pointed out:

> *"If you have few experienced digha at your unit, your work becomes easier. You only decide how much flower to distill and what to distill in a particular day"*

It was found that a few artisans were engaged with the business on a generational basis. Some of the master craftsmen claimed to be associated with the trade for 30 generations. Moreover, few preferred to continue their association with the units that their parents associated with. As A6 pointed out:

"I am working as a digha in X firm. My father worked here for the last forty years. Our relationship with the unit owner is more of a family than of employer-employee."

The skilled artisans were in much demand. It was found that they traveled far and wide to places like Dubai, Mumbai, Hyderabad, etc., to work in the ittar units. As artisan A16 shared:

"I used to annually accompany my father to the Ganjam district of Odisha to work at the ittar units over there. We used to make additional income…My grandfather also used to be associated with the perfumery unit of the tobacco industry."

Kaarigar A14 shared his experience in the following words:

"My family has been generationally associated with the perfume trade. I am working in perfumeries for the last two years. My father was a renowned digha of Kannauj. My grandfather used to be a flower procurer."

Most workers felt indebted to the industry for generating employment in the area. They believed that the industry still has potential for revenue generation and only needs to reinvent itself to tide over the present crisis. As Respondent A8 expressed:

"The industry has kept our hearth running over the years. Take my case, we used to reside in a mud home and now have shifted to a pucca house. If you can master the art (of perfume-making), there is money."

Mr. O2, one of the prominent artisans at Kannauj, explained:

"There is no formal training. They observe the trade practiced in their homes since childhood. The art is rooted in the sociocultural fabric of Kannauj. Individuals learn the art at their homes from their fathers and grandfather. There is nothing to learn; it is their livelihood, passion, and way of being."

The discursive practices and everyday social interactions within the artisan families offer the ideal nurturing ground for the novices to learn the trade. As respondent O3 elucidated:

"As a child learns about the culture and familial ritual through the process of socialization, in a similar way learning the art is an act of socialization. The more time that an artisan spends with an experienced digha, the better he becomes at the art. Learning is not easy and it comes through many failures and struggles. For instance, if an artisan is not careful, the deg can blast or the deg's cap can blow out. This can be fatal…So, in the initial days, we remunerate a novice only to sustain his family. The remuneration increases as the artisan mature in his business."

Sometimes the owners of ittar units bestow the responsibility on the artisan to bring in new recruits from their village to work as apprentices and journeymen. We thus differ from Mark Granovetter (1983) in pointing out that weak ties provide a person with access to job information and better chances for mobility. We argue that strong ties offer the necessary trust and assurance to a novice to enter the trade. In other words, we argue that strong ties provide assistance in times of need.

Ittar making is an art and can be perfected only through years of practice and perseverance. It requires experience and training to be a digha or master craftsman. The process of perfume-making involves a simple division of labor characterized by mutual dependence and solidarity. We categorized workers into three categories: apprentice (when a novice worker learns the skills), journeyman (when the artisan has learnt the worker), and digha or master craftsman (when the artisan has mastered all the skills associated with ittar-making). Depending on their training, different employees are assigned different duties and tasks that are meticulously separated. An apprentice is a novice worker and is involved in petty tasks like filling the water tank, cleaning the deg, putting the raw material in it, etc. The journeyman advises and monitors the apprentice and implements the instructions of the dighas. He is involved in tasks like sealing the deg, removing the chonga, etc. The digha or master craftsman is the senior most person in the workshop and advises the apprentice and journeyman based on his expertise and experience. As a chief artisan, he decides about the flower-to-water ratio, separation of water from oil, the readiness of ittar, etc. They are placed in a hierarchy in terms of payment and status. The salary of the artisans varies in the range of Rs. 5000-Rs. 15,000 per month. The master craftsman also benefits from privileges such as more job flexibility and lenient working conditions.

In the workshop, several workers (apprentice and journeyman) work under the supervision of experienced digha and are given 'responsible autonomy' as most workers come from the acquaintance of the dighas. The apprentice and journeyman usually refer to the digha as 'guru' as they start with low pay and inexperienced hands. As digha A4 pointed out:

> *"You need long association with the trade to master it. Mastery of the art comes through years of perseverance. Also, as you mature with age, you become a better perfumer. You have to be familiar with the concoction that goes inside the deg, the proportionality of ingredients in that concoction, the 'right' temperature to use, how much water to use, when to remove the deg, etc. Such intricacies cannot be found in any textbooks and perfection comes with practice. Also, there is ample scope for displaying creativity in the process. Experienced dighas are always on the lookout to evolve and creatively come up with a new note or specialty. So, you have the scope to experiment and design an innovative product. This is how Mitti and Shamana ittar came into existence. It is no wonder that experienced dighas are in high demand and the firms are always on the lookout to hire them."*

Similarly, digha A3 mentioned:

> *"Producing innovative ittar give dighas an edge and help him maintain a steady income. The artistic touch is needed to produce new perfume."*

Though many of the dighas join the trade through family introductions, first-generation dighas were also there. They developed their skills under the guidance of some experienced master craftsman. Here, in concordance with Coomaraswamy & Moore (1989), we contend that skill is an acquired character and an apprentice undergo long and rigorous training (approximately five to seven years) under the supervision of digha to qualify as a master craftsman (Hanagan, 1977; Habsbawn, 1984; Roy, 2008; Ponda, 2010).

The owner and the dighas often shared strong ties. Since most of the time, dighas were personally known to the owners, they are tied by obligatory rights and duties. There is no possibility of upward mobility until the trust of the employer is gained. Sometimes the

workforce (digha and his associates) would reside in the workshop. Generally, the ittar producing workshops work in two shifts: morning shift (10:00 AM- 4:00 AM) and evening shift (7:00 PM – 12:00 PM). Distillation is faster in the larger workshops (10 x15 ft dimension) having multiple degs (usually 3-5 degs). The day starts with the artisans opening the workshop and cleaning the unit and the degs. The hectic nature of the work contributes to strong comradeship among the artisans. Thus, the artisans were found to crack jokes on each other and enjoying small tea-beaks in each other's company.

Also, the owners stressed the importance of having multiple dighas in their firms, having similar levels of skills. This gives the dighas adequate rest and standardization of the product. As perfumer O11 posited:

> *"For the sake of quality, it is not only important to attract the best of dighas but it is equally crucial to retain them. Also, you need to assure that your dighas get adequate rest and so you use them by rotation. It is also customary to attach few novice helpers/workers to them and this is how they begin to learn the trade."*

Some employers prefer to hire only the experienced dighas to maintain their quality and reduce the time of producing ittar. With the mastery of skills, the speed of the work is increased.

The skill-transferring process corroborates the observations made by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) & Tim Ingold (2001). According to this research, education is a social process that is embedded in a variety of cultural and historical contexts. Stated differently, learning takes place through participation in multiple social practices such as informal gatherings, meetings, public space interactions. However, the notion of a community of practice does not refer to a collection of individuals. It denotes a social process of domain/area-specific negotiation proficiency. The social interactions between those participating in various facets of the occupation are structured as a result of this process. A community of practice like this is not a team, though. A team is defined as a

group of individuals working together to pursue a common goal. A community of practice is a learning relationship in the area of practice, in contrast to a team which is a task-driven partnership. Members of the community of practice may continue to practice while working on various projects for various teams. However, community members continue to grow and develop relationships with one another as they work together.

Apart from emphasizing the acquisition of knowledge and abilities, the theory places the negotiation of meaning at the heart of learning. The process of becoming a particular person in a social environment is a key factor in the negotiation of meaning. The idea of identification enters the picture here. Two things influence identity in a community of practice: how competency is displayed in the group and whether or not people take a person seriously as a member. As respond Artisan A7 elucidated:

> *"I have a master status i.e. the identity of an ittar maker. I have made a reputation for myself of being a proficient digha at Kannauj. I serve many ittar-making units. It has taken years of toil and dedication to accomplish such a reputation. I have given my life to ittar making and this is my worship."*

Learning also influences a person's identity. The idea of reification is related to the query of identity. Reification requires involvement, i.e., accepting or rejecting the label, in order to be significant. It refers to how strongly a person identifies with the label and how much it affects his daily life. A digha's identity is thus both societal and personal. In other words, it refers to how a person defines himself and how others define him, how he interacts with others, and how others behave when interacting with the person. Similar views are expressed by Tim Ingold in his research. Art is embedded in a social context and entails a cultural meaning. Ingold cites MacKenzie's (1998) ethnographic exploration of string-bag (bilum bag) weaving by Telefol people of Central New Guinea to illustrate this point. Young girls are inducted into the art as early as two years and they use their fingers along with tools like mesh gauges and needles to weave the product. Practice is the key to skill enhancement and helps in the reduction of heavy-handedness that prevails

in the work of a novice. As a Telefol woman would explain it to her daughter: *"You must practice to get the proper feel of looping. When you have made your first bilum it will be cranky but then we will throw it in the river. The river will carry your wonky bilums away, and it will wash your heavy-handedness. Then your hands will be good at making bilums, your hands will move easily like running water." (Mackenzie, 1998: 102)*. In this example, Ingold emphasizes the importance of the social context of mother-daughter relations that offers the ideal platform for learning and inculcation of the skills. Thus, it is through practice and experience in necessary environmental conditions that contribute to the flourishing of the skills. As MacKenzie would describe the process of social learning as "observation followed by internalization and then mimesis" (MacKenzie, 1998; 100). The artist thus fine-tunes his skills with practice; through a gradual adjustment of movement and perception, there is a corresponding improvement in speed and efficiency. The process of skill induction in a bilum bag maker is comparable to a weaving bird fledgling acquiring nest-building skills, except for the fact that the former has consciousness about the final form of construction while the latter does not. Interestingly, Telefol women put a great emphasis on the standardization of their looping technique, as it is a way of expressing their tribal identity (Mackenzie, 1998). Thus, the art of ittar making is very much context dependent and connected with the social environment of Kannauj.

Finally, Ingold underlines some important features of 'skills' that is inherent in any art form. First, craftsmanship or skill involves the interaction between tools, raw materials, and the environment. Second, skill is not only related to technique/movement of the body but also to natural context and surroundings. Third, skill does not involve applying mechanical force over an object but a deep-rooted attachment to the work involving care, dexterity, and judgment. Finally, skill is learned through learning and is not bound by any

fixed mechanical formula and is imbibed through observation and imitation. An apprentice qualifies to be a journeyman and subsequently master craftsman through dedication and sincerity. As one of the apprentices mentioned:

> *"We are perfumers by profession, and it is our identity. Every day we begin our work by worshipping the tools and we consider the digha as our guru. The attachment we have with our art makes us to always to look for improvisation and design new perfume varieties."*

Thus, perfume-making might be understood as a craft process as compared to a standardized industrial process. It requires traditional artisanal knowledge shared through apprenticeships and social-familial networks.

(B) Social Interrelationships within the Business

Interestingly, for many unit owners, ittar making is a family-based profession. These ittar-owning family have their own 'nuska' or secret recipe that they add to ittar once it is ready. The specific recipe is closely guarded by every family and is transferred across the generations. Thus, the 'unique concoction and the process' or 'nuska' represents a form of 'cultural capital'[8] that is transmitted in the 'habitus'[9] of the artisan families through the process of socialization. The generational association with the trade was aptly understood from the responses of many interviewees. For instance, respondent O1, whose family is associated with the trade for four generations, mentioned:

> *"Our shop was founded in 1923. My grandfather was an affluent ittar businessman and established a branch of our shop in Kolkata. However, our business started failing over the years because of the changing consumer tastes. Even that did not deter my father from joining his family business. I kept supporting my father in this endeavor. Now my son is helping me in the business for the last four years."*

[8] In Bourdieusian theory of social reproduction, cultural capital is used to describe the transferrable cultural norms and customs that can bring their owners benefits.
[9] Refers to socially learned habits, knowledge, and dispositions.

This succinctly captures Bourdieu's notion of habitus in which an individual's perceptions, experiences, and practices become taken-for-granted or common sense (Bourdieu, 1997). Youth growing up in the ittar craft may not realize they are being socialized into the trade, thus there is "no formal training" and "nothing to learn." Through the habitus they acquire their sense of place in the world.

Further, each ittar-making family at Kannauj seemed to have its own formula or recipe of ittar-making. It is a trade secret closely guarded over the generations. As Mr. O12 highlighted:

> *"We produce ittar by our own 'nuska' (formula). That's our trade secret. We have inherited it from our forefathers."*

Interestingly, a well-established consciousness is observed among the perfumers about maintaining the conventional quality of ittar. As O2 exemplified:

> *"We never interfere with the classical note of ittar production. It is quintessentially pure and natural."*

However, minor alteration in the form of varying the intensity of notes is feasible. As respondent O16 reasoned:

> *"The classical notes of ittar making are almost the same for everyone as it is extracted from the same flower base. However, it is possible to alter the intensity of the fragrance by changing the ratio of flower to sandalwood."*

Nonetheless, considering the contemporary challenges that the industry is facing, few ittar makers are using synthetic chemicals to keep down the production cost. As Mr. O1 posited:

> *"My son is a chemist and he has recently taken charge of the industry. He is continuously experimenting and creating new kinds of fragrance by blending ittar with synthetic chemicals…But that implies compromising with the very nature of ittar. However, none can help if it is the order of the day."*

In an attempt to support the industry, the Government established the Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC) in 1992. The FFDC aims to promote research and

development in the domain of perfume production and thereby revive the struggling industry. To boost the declining industry, the state, and the central government have implemented several initiatives. For instance, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) alongside the Central and the State government established the Fragrance and Flavor Development Centre (FFDC) at Kannauj in 1991. FFDC serves as the link between the essential oil, fragrance, and flavor industry and strives to develop an agro-chemical technology to positively contribute towards the social mobility of farmers/workers engaged in aroma cultivation (Raghuvanshi, 2019). Further, recognizing the tradition and heritage associated with ittar production in Kannauj, the Government of India recognized it with the Geographical Indicator (GI) tag in 2013-14 (Sharma & Kulhari, 2015).

The state government of Uttar Pradesh has also initiated the establishment of the International Perfume Park project in Kannauj. The park is to be set up over 100 acres of land and the government is exploring the possibility of a tie-up with Grasse (France) to enhance collaboration in perfume making. Unlike the modern facilities and techniques available at Grasse in France, ittar manufacturing units in Kannauj are small-scaled and use traditional methods and techniques (Rai, 2015). The collaboration between Kannauj and Grasse will augur well particularly for the Indian counterpart in terms of export of perfumes and gaining exposure/expertise in modern techniques of manufacturing and packaging ittar (ibid). Respondent Mr. O13 tacitly puts it:

"FFDC was established in 1992 to bolster the Kannauj perfumeries."

Not only is ittar making generational, with its unique family legacy, the equipment was also found to be manufactured by particular families in the locality. According to Mr. O12:

> *"Not only the method of distillation, but also the equipment has its uniqueness and heritage. For instance, the chonga (condenser) in my unit is continuously prepared by a single family over the last four generations."*

In line with Prakash (2021), it was found that the ittar business is sustained through a village-based guild-like structure. The big business houses outsource their orders to smaller units owned by their kin or acquaintance and subsequently brand the final product with their label. Further, such strong networks also served as a hedge against business uncertainties. For instance, the guild-based cluster of firms was found to diversify into wholesale and retail units, and there was close dependency between these units for sourcing and selling of products. Even procurement of raw materials (flowers and oil) was carried out through guild-like networks. Similarly, Mr. O19, a leading ittar manufacturer, remarked:

> *"Our industry survives on symbiosis. The experienced artisan trains the novice and the big business supports the smaller ones."*

The research revealed that relationships within the ittar industry of Kannauj are symbiotic, and rural Kannauj serves as a hinterland to urban neighborhoods. It would supply flowers, 'ittardan' (containers), fuel (cow dung cake), aluminum and plastic drum makers, and labor to the enterprises located in the city. Rural and urban Kannauj are mutually dependent, the survival of one influenced by the other. As artisan Mr. O16 pointed out:

> *"The rural area serves as hinterland in the ittar-making process. The city serves as the hub of ittar sale, and the rural hinterland is backstage. It (rural area) supplies raw material, labor, and acts as the backbone of the industry."*

In a similar vein, respondent Mr. O19 shared:

> *"The industry runs on networking. There is close nexus between the instrument makers (deg and chonga), flower cultivators, ittar makers, cow dung cake sellers. In short, the ittar industry of Kannauj has a profound impact on employment generation in the area."*

The industry offers employment to many. Each individual has a specialized job and everyone's contribution is invaluable. Respondent A7 elucidated the symbiotic interdependence prevalent in the industry in the following words:

> *"Workers specializing in varied skills are engaged with the industry. The survival of the unit is dependent on all of them. Therefore, the industry survives on symbiotic interdependence. If I have to list the specialized workers associated with the industry, they would be: farmers cultivating flowers, flower suppliers, cow-dung suppliers, deg makers (especially the lohar caste from Kannauj and Farukhabad), chonga makers, ittardan makers, dighas, etc. Everyone has a specialized and crucial role to play, and ittar units will suffer if any of these upstream works suffer."*

Moreover, respondent A7 explained the interdependence among people of various castes and religions working in the industry:

> *"You can see the engagement of different castes in the industry. For instance, the deg-bhapka makers are from the kumhar caste, kuppi and chonga makers are made by Muslim workers, etc. All cooperate to make a survival out of the industry."*

Most of the ittar-making workshops are concentrated in Farsh Street, Gwal maidan, Bara Bazar, Pansariyan Toola and Safdarganj and are located in proximity to each other. They were found to exchange raw tools and artisans with each other. Interestingly, some ittar-selling units did not have workshops of their own and outsourced their orders to bigger ittar-making units, which were having workshops of their own. The industry was found to be interlinked to many other ittar centers in the country. There can be two forms of such interlinkage: first, through the trading of raw materials with the different regions of the country; second, the artisans travel to different cities and share their expertise with others. As perfumer O8 elaborated:

> *"As with any other industry, the ittar hub at Kannauj is interlinked to other ittar centers of India. Though we source most of the raw materials from Kannauj itself, specialized ingredients like sandalwood is sourced from Mysore, kewda from the Ganjam district of Odisha, and rose comes from Aligarh and Hathras. When I was a child, people used to come to Kannauj to learn ittar making. Further, artisans from Kannauj used to visit the metropolitan cities, open their outlets or work as an artisan in some other ittar shops, and transmit their skills to others. So, if you*

are talking about the ittar industry in India, you cannot afford to take Kannauj out of the equation."

The findings thus bear resemblance to the Chicago School's proposition that different economic activities concentrate in different ecological zones of the city (Park, [1936] 2005). It is in this area that skill training/transferring takes place and the legacy is carried forward. We thus witness clustered symbiotic existence among the firms.

(C) Challenges in the ittar industry

The research endeavors to contextualize the experiences of ittar artisans and businesses within two broad spheres, each presenting unique challenges. The first sphere encapsulates longstanding issues ingrained within the industry, influenced by overarching environmental factors like capitalism, technological advancements, and the dynamics of the modern market system. These challenges have persisted over time, shaping the landscape within which ittar artisans and businesses operate.

Contrastingly, the second sphere pertains to a more recent and unforeseen circumstance, namely the coronavirus epidemic. This abrupt and unanticipated event has introduced a new layer of complexity and difficulty, impacting the ittar industry in unforeseeable ways. The research aims to delineate how these dual forces—persistent environmental factors and the sudden onset of the coronavirus epidemic—intersect and interact to shape the experiences and challenges faced by ittar artisans and businesses.

1. *Persisting Challenges*

Many of the perfumeries operating at Kannauj were in generational business. Their long-term association with the industry has made the artisan families witness the industry across the seasons, in its good and bad days. Mr. A4, an old artisan, narrated:

> *"We are into ittar trade for generations. In the earlier times, there was hardly any other business apart from ittar trade at Kannauj. One used to be directly or indirectly connected to the ittar industries. Presently, there are many firms (with sizes varying from 50 to 100 workers) engaged in the business. However, the closing of firms is a regular phenomenon these days. Business is not growing."*

There are 375 ittar units in Kannauj, employing about 30,000 people with a turnover of about 400 crores (Brief Industrial Profile of Kannauj District, 2016-17). Moreover, the industry is having active linkage with flower cultivators, brick kilns, bottle manufacturing, etc. and hence the prosperity or failure of the ittar industry directly influences these subsidiary industries (Gangopadhyay, 2021).

In the last few decades, the industry has faced unprecedented stagnation. For instance, the number of ittar manufacturing units came down from 375 in 2008 to 250 in 2012 (Marwah, 2012). Similarly, Schaffmeister (2015) reports that the number of perfumeries in Kannauj came down from 700 in the 1990s to 90 in the present times. While many of the traditional Ittar shops have closed their operations by incurring heavy losses; many of the younger generations in ittar-making families are apprehensive about joining the traditional occupation. Narrating the changing dynamics of the industry over the years, Mr. O3 shared:

> *"The demand for ittar as a means of grooming has gone down over the years. Now the bulk of ittar demand comes from the paan masala and tobacco industries. Not only the demand has changed, the mode of business has also transformed. Earlier our predecessors used to sell ittar in small 'petis' (boxes) by visiting various places. So, visiting places was a part of the business. My grandfather opened branches in Lucknow and Poona after finding considerable demand for ittar in those areas."*

Another artisan A4 says:

> *"In this firm, where I am, initially 10 to 12 degs were functioning continuously. Workers/digha were working day and night mode by staying here. But things like corona have changed the situation."*

At present, the eco-friendly traditional method of ittar production is facing stiff competition from mass-produced, alcohol-based perfumes. This is because of the rising

cost of raw materials and challenges in the procurement of sandalwood oil after the Indian government imposed a ban on the sandalwood trade. The situation is aptly explained by the Castellian (2000c) conception of social exclusion. In line with Karimi, (2016), we contend capitalism and global market structure have excluded the artisanal crafts like ittar-making. The incompatibility of the ittar making industry with the global market forces has contributed to its marginalization. According to the conception of Castells, in the modern society people without informational skills remain vulnerable as workers. Technological change is the order of the day and traditional occupations are phased out in favor of the newer ones. Thus, technological limitations coupled with incongruency with capitalist values, raises the vulnerability of the ittar units in the capitalist market. They experience social exclusion and this results in disfranchisement of labor i.e. they are unable to earn a 'proper' income to lead a decent life. The situation has forced many manufacturers to use liquid paraffin or DOP (dioctyl phthalate) as a substitute for sandalwood oil. We thus witness an ominous trend: units are transforming from being capability-oriented to profit-oriented.

Moreover, factors like rising cultivation costs (of flowers) and labor charges, are also responsible for the rising production expenses. This apart, the maintenance of old equipment also remains a formidable challenge.

Mr. O12, a producer explained:

> *"We face a gross shortage of resources like sandalwood. According to the government mandate, you can plant a sandalwood tree but cannot cut it without permission."*

Talking about the rising cost of inputs, artisan O9 shared:

> *"One of the main ingredients in ittar production is sandalwood oil. The price of sandalwood oil has skyrocketed in recent years. For instance, sandalwood was priced at about Rs.3500/kg in the 1970s to Rs. 1,00,000 (approx.) in the present times. From where will we find the money for buying sandalwood? We are thus*

forced to substitute sandalwood oil with synthetic paraffin and thereby compromise with the quality of ittar."

Thus, the rising cost of sandalwood has resulted in an obvious rise in ittar price. This hike in ittar price has resulted in many customers shifting their alliance to cheap, chemical-based perfumes and deodorants. As respondent A4 elaborated:

> *"Ittar nowadays is mainly used as a flavoring agent in tobacco and allied industries. Natural ittar is costly and hence consumers are increasingly preferring synthetic deodorants and perfumes over ittar. Most consumers prioritize price over quality and so ittar as a grooming agent is steadily losing ground."*

Similarly, respondent O1 narrated:

> *"The tax on sandalwood has increased tremendously in recent years. So, perfumers are compelled to substitute sandalwood oil with liquid paraffin as the base of ittar. We, the old generation people, do not support such a trend and degrade the quality (of ittar) for which we are known since antiquity. This is perhaps the order of the day-the pure, pristine stuff is substituted by artificial products. Soon artists will be replaced by machines."*

Director of FFDC, expressed similar concerns:

> *"The use of ittar for grooming purposes is steadily declining. Kannauj fragrance is mostly used as a flavoring agent in detergent, shampoo, hair oil, toothpaste, room freshener, snuff, pan masala, etc. The business was badly hit by the gutkha ban. A newly emerging market is aromatherapy, but it is yet to establish itself. But the oil used in aroma therapy is just 0.5 percent of ittar produced in Kannauj."*

To add to the woes, the industry has also suffered heavily from the partial ban that is imposed on 'gutkha' or chewing tobacco in certain states considering the issue of public health. Earlier, local manufacturers used to source the scent for their 'gutkha' from ittar manufacturers of Kannauj and this has changed drastically since the ban on the use of chewing tobacco.

The industry further suffered as the status-conscious Indians shifted their allegiance to deodorants and Western perfumes. The lure of Western perfumes and deodorants and the advertisement gimmicks have made it difficult for the Kannauj artisans to compete. Evidentially speaking the demand for ittar has particularly fallen among the present-day youths and they prefer to use branded items (Rai, 2015; Borgave & Chaudhari, 2010).

Considering the public demands, many of the ittar makers have started selling deodorants instead of ittars. Some have entered into the business of producing fragrances from international brands like Zino Davidoff, Ralph Lauren, etc. These imitation perfumes are available for much cheaper rates (approximately Rs. 500) than the original (which costs somewhere in the range of Rs. 4,000-Rs. 10,000) (Munjal, 2015). Others have stopped their manufacturing unit and solely concentrate on selling perfumes imported from Mumbai or Kolkata (TNM report, 2015). Describing the changing mindset of present-day consumers, a female consumer C6, reflected:

> *"I see Westernization playing its part in influencing present-day consumers. The tendency is to reject anything and everything indigenous. Thus, people will appreciate and crave synthetic, branded deodorants but not for indigenous ittar."*

This is more so because consumers are skeptical about paying a premium price for 'unbranded', pure ittar. Mr. O13, an owner, explained:

> *"Ittar is known for its purity and hence it is costly. For example, 10 ml of ittar costs Rs. 1500, and 100 ml of deodorant costs Rs. 100. Customers choose the cheaper, synthetic product instead of buying unbranded, pure ittar. They don't however realize that as ittar is derived out of natural ingredients, it does not have any side effects."*

Reasoning about the fading popularity of perfume, a youngster C5 commented:

> *"Ittar is an intense form of perfume. As it is a strong form of perfume, it lingers on to the clothes for a few days. We do not prefer such perfumes…. Further, there is also a stigma associated with ittar i.e. it is traditional and old-fashioned. Tastes change, preference change, and people nowadays opt for light, funky deodorants."*

In response, the artisans posited that they lack the capital to remodel and reinvent their products as some of the corporate houses of the country. Artisan O2 reflected:

> *"The irony is that consumers today would collect ittar bottles but not wear ittar. Ittar is an antique entity for them…Unfortunately, we don't have the capital to refashion our products on the lines of the big corporate houses. But that would mean corporatization of our art with very little craftsmanship."*

Likewise, one of the artisans, O17 commented:

> *"Kannauj is the ittar hub of India. While metropolitan cities like Delhi and Mumbai may have famous ittar houses, they are completely reliant on us for their base fragrance. Nonetheless, they are experts in giving fancy names to their*

synthetic perfumes-Firdaus, Confidence, Charlie, etc. And consumers fall for such marketing gimmicks."

Respondent O1 also posited that consumers are oblivious to the uses of ittar apart from the olfactory function. He elaborated:

"I believe that customers are not aware of our art. Take for instance samama perfume. People earlier used to sprinkle samama ittar under their quilts in winter to get warm effects. Similarly, 'khas' ittar is known to have a cooling effect on the body. Such awareness has been lacking in the present-day customers."

The ittar makers suffer from financial paucity and lack of capital prevents them from advertising and marketing their products. Perfumer, O8, tacitly replied:

"Because the units are small, they don't have the financial capital/liquidity to advertise."

Similar views were expressed by other respondents. As Mr. O8 reflected:

"Ittar-making units are small and they don't have the financial liquidity to advertise. Furthermore, as the bulk of the procurement is made by the pan masala and tobacco industry, we don't see any requirement for advertising."

However, respondent O6 responded differently:

"I sincerely believe that if you maintain the quality of your product, there is no need for advertising. The purity of the product is the main parameter. If you can maintain the purity, customers will keep coming to you. Most importantly, the ittar industry thrives on networking, you have specific firms to supply to. Such a time-tested network survives on belief and mutual trust."

Interestingly, some sellers opined that the higher production cost of pure ittar should not be a deterrent to the connoisseurs. They contended that consuming ittar is an act of appreciating art and hence the connoisseur will not be able to refrain from it despite the rising price. As Mr. O2 justified:

"You should note that our art will only appeal to those who are connoisseurs. Wearing ittar is a luxury and not a daily necessity. Hence, we only have a segment of the population whom we can cater to."

Mr. O11 echoed similarly:

"People who understand ittar will buy it instantly. Inexperienced buyers require much justification and convincing."

Most of the ittar units suffer from a lack of financial stability. The challenges are even more for the smaller units and their survival is at stake. As Mr. A3 pointed out:

"Most of the ittar units do not have financial liquidity. The challenges are sharper for the smaller units. The price of flowers, sandalwood, and workers' salaries are rising. The cost of inputs is rising without the corresponding rise in sales. Only the larger units will survive in the longer run."

The uncertainty involved in the ittar business, has made many families to look for alternative livelihood options. Unfortunately, many traditional ittar units are introspecting the closing down of their units and moving away from their traditional heritage. We contend that these ittar units are experiencing social exclusion, by the way of promoting an art form that is incongruent with the techno-capitalist ethos of the modern society. As respondent O4 shared his apprehension:

"Recently, I have heard that WHO (World Health Organization) is pressuring the governments of various nations to restrict the tobacco business. As the ittar industry now relies on the tobacco business for its survival, our future is at stake. We are thus forced to think of alternative livelihood options. I have invested in the cold stage and automobile industry as a precautionary measure…It is however challenging to snap ties with a livelihood option that has been our identity for generations."

Moreover, dissociation from the trade is not easy and is akin to sacrificing one's identity and tradition.

Over the years, the smaller units have made way for larger units, and thus the concentration of business is in the hands of a few. As Mr. O5 highlighted:

"There has been a concentration of the market in the last four/five years. Previously, 20 small units were there in the area. Now they have been replaced by 5 big units. The big players are becoming bigger. They are also expanding across various metropolitan cities and abroad."

Interestingly, some of the sellers linked their stagnation to the current pandemic situation. They pointed to the increasing tendency of buyers to engage in online shopping, which

reduces the opportunity to interact with consumers and convince them of their products. According to O11, a young perfumer:

> *"The current pandemic situation is also responsible for the slack in the industry. Previously customers used to visit our outlets to buy ittar. We used to elaborately explain to them the peculiarity of ittar varieties and the detailed production process, and thereby convincing them about our art. It is not possible today. Consumers buy it from e-commerce portals."*

The condition of ittar artisans is still worse. They don't have the education or capital to look for alternative livelihoods. Further, many of them have been associated with the trade for generations and know nothing other than ittar-making. As respondent O5 pointed out:

> *"We have been making ittar for generations. We know nothing else. It is our only skill or cultural capital. Neither are we educated or have money to do anything else."*

In fact, the artisans were particularly stressed during the pandemic when there was no work order. Many of them turned to alcoholism and gambling to overcome the stress. The precarity of the situation was expressed by artisan O4:

> *"The ittar craft is a struggling business. The industry was particularly hard hit during the pandemic when there were no work orders. Many of the artisans dissociated from the trade since then."*

The artisans were, however, appreciative of the support that they received from their families but contemplated switching profession in the near future. As digha A8 mentioned:

> *"I have a large family. My sons are in high school and education now-a-days is costly. My meagre income is not enough to support my family. I can't offer them the basic comforts of life. I am contemplating buying an e-rickshaw to ensure a steady flow of income."*

Optimistically respondent O5 suggested a few options that can bail the industry out of the current crisis. He, however, cautioned that the solution will not be easy and will require active facilitation from the government. He narrated:

"Perhaps a way out of this crisis is to adapt to the changing situation. We need to become a little more technology oriented. We need to advertise and sell our products on social media platforms like Facebook and Youtube and establish our branches in other cities as well. Perhaps, we also need to do a bit of branding for our products. However, this will not happen overnight, we will be requiring considerable financial liquidity, and proactive support from the government."

In discussing the future of the ittar units, respondent O5 shared his anticipation in the following words:

"Yes, globalization has opened up the international market. There are business possibilities in the Gulf nations. However, you need to have substantial liquidity to enter into the export business. It is not for small players like us. Perhaps we will survive as subsidiaries to the larger firms in the near future."

2. *The Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic*

The widespread disruptions caused by the corona pandemic have posed unprecedented challenges for ittar artisans and businesses alike. One of the most immediate impacts was the decline in sales of ittar. Artisans, A13, and A14 collectively described the pandemic situation in the following words:

"With consumers prioritizing essential goods, such as food, medicine, and hygiene products, the demand for luxury items like ittar had declined significantly. With the imposition of the lockdown, consumers had limited to visit to stores for buying luxury items. Furthermore, as people started avoiding social gatherings and spent more hours in isolation of their homes, the need of perfumes declined sharply. Perfumes are considered synonymous to festivities and social gatherings….Thus, a significant drop in the demand resulted in decreased sales and loss of revenue for the ittar-making units"

It was learnt that production came to a grinding halt in most of the units. They were unable to pay the artisans ('digha') and the workers. Many of them chose to join other occupations and some smaller units permanently closed down. As, Mr. O2 narrated:

"During the pandemic, consumers preferred to spend money only essential items. Luxury items were not in the priority of consumer spending….The situation was such that many of the units were permanently closed and several 'dighas' joined other professions like agriculture or construction work to make their ends meet."

Importantly, some owners reflected that their limited online presence affected their sales adversely during the Covid pandemic. Perfumery owner O2 further explained:

"When retail stores were closed all over the country during the pandemic, online sales were the only option. When consumers were confined to their homes, brands that sustained had significant presence on the e-commerce platforms…. Unfortunately, this was not the case with Kannauj ittar. We suffered a heavy loss."

Moreover, the ittar industry of Kannauj is dependent on interlinkages with suppliers and other subsidiary industries. Such supply chains suffered disruptions because of the pandemic and it resulted in delays in sourcing of raw materials, ittar-making products, and supply of finished goods. Contextually, the owners shared the price inflation issue after the pandemic owning to the rising cost of raw materials. As Mr. O15 pointed out:

"Raw materials became costly after the pandemic and as a result the price of the ittar hiked. Consumers were reluctant to shell out a higher price and hence the trade took time to pick up following the pandemic."

Chapter- 5

Discussion and Conclusion

This study attempted to develop a nuanced understanding of the olfactory aesthetics that is crafted at an industrial scale at Kannauj. Art is a product of creativity and imagination, and it is the expression of the artist's subjective being. We contend that ittar making is a sophisticated discipline requiring knowledge of organic chemistry, pharmacy, and botany. Thus, a new composition is approached by the perfumer as a musical composition, having a top, middle, and base notes. The ittar artisans spend years honing their sense of smell for capturing the essence of scent. They experiment with the notes to create new aesthetics of highest quality. Echoing Jen Webb (2005), we contend that there is no homogenization of the art pieces for these artists, and they rely on their emotional and traditional resonances to engage with their art. This research attempted to understand the art of ittar making at Kannauj, the lifeworld of the artisans engaged in the process, the role of social and cultural capital in sustaining the trade, and the challenges and bottlenecks that the industry is currently facing.

Ittar is a natural and indigenous product while perfume is synthetic product of the laboratory entailing standardized production processes. After chemistry was institutionalized in the 19^{th} century, laboratories become the site where perfumes were analyzed and various concoctions were experimented with (Kubartz, 2009). Analysis of the ingredients of perfume reveal that ethyl alcohol constitutes 78-95% of it (Conceicao, 2019). It may be said that modern chemistry institutionalized the process of perfume

making and reduced its dependence on natural ingredients. Prominent perfume brands like Versace, Nautica, and Dolce & Gabbana have popularized the use of synthetic ingredients in perfumes. In other words, one may contend that perfume is a product of science and standardized production, while ittar is a product of nature derived through traditional knowledge and craft practices cultivated in familial networks.

Ittar is produced using the traditional 'deg-bhapka' method and the artisans play a key role in the process. The recruitment of the artisans is largely through social networking and personal acquaintance. We argue that village-based guild like structure offer the necessary trust and assurance to enter into the trade. However, the artisans engaged in the trade are not of homogenous category and they are differentiated on the basis of skills into apprentice, journeyman, and master craftsman or digha. Though the artisans differ in terms of payment and status, yet they are united by the bonds of strong ties and village-based affinity. The junior workers are provided responsible autonomy. In concordance with Coomaraswamy & Moore (1989), we contend that skill is an acquired character and is gained under the supervision of master craftsman through mimetic imbibition. Further, we contend that learning is a social process and is influenced by the cultural and historical context. Echoing Lave & Wenger (1991), it may be said that ittar-craftsman form a community of practice whereby they develop relationship with one another by the way of working together. In the process, the identity of the artisans becomes both personal and social i.e. a label through which he defines himself and others define him.

As the industry survives on symbiosis, we found that unit owners and artisans share an organic bonding. Since most of the time dighas are personally known to the owners, they are tied by obligatory rights and duties. The owners depend on the artisans to make quality

products and the artisans, in turn, depend on the owners for gaining upward mobility through the recommendation of the owners. The owners have their own ‘nuska’ or secret recipe that they add to ittar. This unique concoction forms the cultural capital that is transmitted through the ‘habitus’ of artisan families.

The firms often diversified into wholesale and retail units and there is close dependence between the units for sourcing and selling the products. The big business houses often outsource their order to smaller units owned by their kin and acquaintance and subsequently brand the final product with their label. Even procurement of raw materials was carried out through networking. Further, such strong networks also serve as a hedge against business uncertainties.

However, changing consumer preferences, the rising price and government regulation of sandalwood oil, lack of capital, and overreliance on the gutka and paan masala industries, all pose formidable challenges to the industry. It was found that consumer choice of a particular perfume brand is typically not shaped by the engagement with the perfume in question but by the prominence of the brand. So, the buyer consumes the brand and not the perfume and demand is artificially created by means of branding and marketing. Thus, consumer demographics are researched, and their preferences and trends are closely monitored to appeal to the visual and olfactory senses to urge consumptive tendencies. Close analysis of such trends influences the development of fragrance type, color, bottle shape, packaging, etc. Producers work closely with fragrance suppliers, packagers, and advertisers to design and invent new forms of perfume. Such reinvention of product in terms of innovation, new packaging, and marketing is crucial for maintaining appeal to consumers. Products are advertised and endorsed by popular celebrities. Additionally, prices are set according to the brand name and status associated with it. Consumption of branded products offer the users a sense of status and self-assurance in society. Wearing

branded perfumes therefore is an act of conspicuous consumption and an attempt to belong to the "aspired league." The idea is to become 'equal to superiors' and 'superior to equals' (Bhattacharya, 2020). In sum, perfume consumption is not merely for utility; rather it is conspicuous, functioning as a means for signaling one's status in society (Baghel & Parthasarathy, 2019).

Derivatively, one witnesses the McDonaldization of the synthetic perfume industries in terms of product homogenization and standardization (Kubartz, 2009). The increasing commodification of perfume has resulted in the standardization of products, that is, perfumes of a particular brand and make smell, weigh, look, and cost the same across the world. The perfume bottles are replicas of each other, contain the same amount of mass-produced perfume, and there is little scope for uniqueness and creativity in the production process. The entire process is devoid of artisan character. Branding and standardization allow the products to flow in global commodity networks. The trend closely resonates the portrayal made by Benjamin ([1968] 2008) in his celebrated work, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". Benjamin contends that technology destroys the elitism of art and removes its 'aura' or sacredness. Thus, synthetic perfumes that are produced mechanically lack the original character of art entailed in ittar making. The workers involved in synthetic perfume making are detached from their work as they are produced mechanically. Authenticity, which is the hallmark of "true art", is rendered obsolete as the perfumes are endlessly reproduced mechanically and popularized for consumption by the masses.

Without any form of branding, advertising, and associated marketing strategies, ittar is isolated in the shadows of the global capitalist economy. Echoing Castells (2000), we reason the predicament of the industry to its non-adherence to capitalist production and marketing strategies. In other words, non-adoption of the prescribed model of success

(i.e., industrial modes of production) has disfranchised the skilled artisans of Kannauj and resulted in their struggle for survival. Ironically, in this age of global capitalism, the status of person is defined more in terms of the technology that she possesses rather than the skills that she has (Braverman, 1974). Consequently, this has led to marginalization of smaller units of ittar production and deskilling and "deconstruction" of skilled craftsmen at Kannnauj and their gradual exit from the trade.

In line with Paterson & Kern (1996), we also contend that most modern-day consumers are 'materialists' who seek to fulfill the 'false needs' that advertising creates. In this consumerist society, there is a dearth of "savvy consumers" or those who possess knowledge about the product and are selective in their product choices. Some of these consumers prefer authentic, indigenous, and creative products as compared to standardized commodities that are over-advertised and marketed. Unfortunately, in the 'liquid modern world'[10] of the twenty-first century, the passion and admiration for such 'great art' is lost and is replaced by craze for ephemeral and fleeting trends that cater to the interests of consumer market (Bauman, 2011, p. 15). As a matter of fact, consumption becomes a hallmark of the 'liquid modern world' and it has become a way of staying at par with 'others' in the postmodern society.

[10] According to Zygmunt Bauman (2011), the liquid modern word is one in which time moves forward without marching to a conclusion and in which there is constant change. Bauman contends that globalization creates increasing divide between the haves and the have-nots. Tourists and Vagabonds are two metaphors used by him to analyze the condition of haves and have-nots in a globalized society. While the tourist voluntarily abandons a site when they find greener pastures, the vagabond is always in search of an adequate space to settle. In other words, a tourist moves because he/she finds the world irresistible attractive whereas a vagabond moves as he/she finds the place to be unbearably inhospitable. So, what differentiates a tourist from vagabond is that the former is guided by 'choice' and the latter is guided by 'coercion'. Tourists are wary of vagabonds, as they represent what they should never become. Thus, as Bauman (1998:97) puts it: *"world without vagabonds is the utopia of the society of tourists."* In conclusion, Bauman contends that globalization caters to the aspirations and needs of tourists.

It is argued that the process of economic globalization has resulted in increased unemployment and growing casualization of labor. The Transnational Corporations (TNCs) have exacerbated the inequality levels existing around the world. Further, the withdrawal of the state from exercising control over the market forces and its curtailment of welfare measures, have adversely affected the wage earners of the lower income category (Bauman, 1998).

Globalization have resulted in the transfer of technology, know-how, western lifestyle in an unprecedented and uncontrollable manner. So, globalization is conceived as a form of 'cultural imperialism', in which the authentic, local, and traditional products are render obsolete for the craze of advertised consumer goods. Thus, globalization is contended as a form of cultural imperialism. It is imperialism in light of the purposeful project of spreading a uniform social system from a hegemonic centre of power across the globe. Contextually, highlighting the prominent views about globalization, Held (2000) posits: First, globalization is often associated with the homogenization of economy and culture; Second, there is considerable increase of connectedness and culture sharing across the world; Third, globalization is characterized by the growth of unregulated capitalism; Fourth, global interactions result in complex, diverse, and unpredictable consequences.

Several efforts can be taken by the government to revitalize the ittar industry of Kannauj. For instance, various private players like Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, etc can be roped in to promote the organic ittar of Kannauj. We contend that these e-commerce sites can contribute positively to the vogue of 'Make in India' products. Furthermore, the Government of India can take active steps to create a branding for Kannauj perfumes. Perhaps, like the handloom mark, if the government creates Kannauj Mark for ittar, it will boost the industry tremendously. GI logo specific to Kannauj ittar may be developed to differentiate between the original organic Kannauj ittar and the counterfeit ones. Such

tags could be distributed free of cost to the perfumers, who would be made aware about incorporating these tags on the perfume bottles. Given the product is handcrafted, its exclusivity and originality may be sold as a strong brand USP for the Kannauj ittar brand. Advertisement campaigns, celebrity endorsements, and the placement of hoardings at strategic locations can all be used as promotional tools by the state government. Strong advertising at government and trade fairs, as well as targeted signage at airports and train stations, can also be beneficial. In fact, digital marketing, particularly on social media platforms, can aid in developing a strong consumer connection, especially with young people. Echoing Verma & Mishra (2008), we endorse that a Rural Heritage Resort can be established in Kannauj to familiarize consumers with the art of ittar making and the indigeneity involved in it. Governmental workshops may be organized to educate craftspeople about the market, tailor products to suit consumer needs, and enhancing production efficiency. Similarly, producers can be educated about leveraging the benefits associated with the GI tag. Finally, marketing consultants and sales executives can be hired to boost the trade.

We thus believe that ittar industry could reinvent itself to compete with the branded perfumes and deodorants. Echoing Schumpeterian wisdom, ittar artisans could rejuvenate their trade by inspecting the close relationship existing between innovation and entrepreneurship. One way of doing it is by evolving ittar along its strengths of being an 'organic', 'green', and 'indigenous' product. This could be particularly appealing in this globalized world, where consumers have a fascination for glocalized[11] products that represent a synthesis of tradition and modernity and have a rising concern over adverse effects of chemical-based cosmetics. As Nederveen Pieterse (1995) argues that

[11] Glocalization refers to a good or service that is created, offered, and sold internationally but also adapted to satisfy customers in local markets (Robertson, 1995).

globalization is characterized by the co-existence of two simultaneous processes: a tandem functioning of global/local dynamics and the global cultural experiences are not unidirectionally moving towards uniformity or standardization but encompassing an impact of non-Western cultures on the Western counterparts. As Nederveen Pieterse (1995:62) describes: *"for some time now we have entered into a period of accelerated globalization and cultural mixing."* So, globalization can be conceived as a process of 'hybridization' and the world is a stage for global 'mélange' of cultures.

In other words, ittar may be projected as a blended art produced out of a fusion of traditional knowledge and contemporary aesthetic standards. Some possible models to consider are the growing alternative trade networks that emphasize values such as environmental benefit, organic, traditional and local artisanship, and fair trade (e.g., Kharel & Middendorf, 2015). Exploring how these models might be applicable and beneficial to the artisan ittar makers will be a useful line of future research. Indeed, delving into the consumeristic aspect, application, and social and cultural dimensions of ittar presents a promising avenue for future research. Understanding the historical and cultural context surrounding the practice of ittar and its applications can provide valuable insights into the cultural hurdles that may have existed and how they have evolved over time. However, the biggest epistemological question that remains unanswered at the end of the debate is: Whether it is worthy to remodel this indigenous knowledge system/traditional art in modern capitalist garb to appeal to the materialists of this liquid-modern world?

Thus, the current study endeavors to draw attention to the ittar industry, an area that has received relatively little scholarly attention, with the aim of engaging academics and policymakers in examining its potential policy implications, sociologically. The study's conclusions illuminate the industry's current state and prevailing social structure,

providing valuable insights for government and policymakers to develop appropriate plans and initiatives to support the industry's expansion and revival.

Furthermore, the Indian government has acknowledged the pivotal role of the MSME sector in the country's development. This sector not only generates substantial employment opportunities but also fosters economic growth. Therefore, the insights and conclusions drawn from this scientifically conducted research study, based on firsthand experiences, are poised to greatly contribute to informed decision-making and strategic planning in the near future.

By emphasizing the qualitative aspects of ittar art and business, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the industry, which can serve as a foundation for future project planning. This includes clearing up any confusion or misconceptions surrounding ittar and its cultural significance, as well as identifying opportunities for innovation and growth within the industry.

This thesis on Kannauj Ittar and its business conveys several valuable messages. Firstly, it highlights the enduring tradition of ittar production in Indian society, dating back centuries. Moreover, it advocates for embracing the concept of 'tradition with modernity,' suggesting that even deeply traditional practices can find relevance in the contemporary 21st century through refinement. When a society is prepared to renovate its resources, it ensures their longevity and solidifies their place in the social fabric as legendary status. Additionally, these structures become vital means of livelihood for the community.

Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on cultural heritage preservation, economic development, and sustainable growth by highlighting the importance of the ittar industry and its potential contributions to society. By engaging stakeholders at both the academic and policymaking levels, the research seeks to foster

collaboration and informed decision-making to support the continued success and viability of the ittar industry.

Talking about the future scope of the research, investigating the social and cultural dimensions of ittar can uncover its significance within various cultural and religious contexts, as well as its role in rituals, ceremonies, and everyday life. This includes exploring the symbolism, rituals, and traditions associated with the use of ittar, as well as its portrayal in literature, art, and popular culture.

Furthermore, exploring the interactional aspects between ittar producers, customers, and society can shed light on the dynamics that shape the consumption and perception of ittar. This includes examining factors such as consumer preferences, purchasing behavior, and the role of marketing and advertising in shaping perceptions of ittar.

By comprehensively examining these dimensions, researchers can unfold the multifaceted nature of ittar as both a product and a cultural artifact. This can not only contribute to academic scholarship but also inform marketing strategies, product development, and cultural preservation efforts related to ittar.

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Appendix

Field-Photographs

Slide: 1 Ittar firm (workshop) and ittar shop (outlet)

Slide: 2 From field to perfumery: different steps of ittar making 1

Slide: 3 From field to perfumery: different steps of ittar making 2

Slide: 4 Prepared ittar

Slide: 5 Some random clicks: Interaction with artisans

1.1: Annexure-1

Interview Schedule for Perfumery Owners

Unit no.-----

Firm of the firm:

Interviewed on (the date):

Owner's Name:

Age:

Established in (the year):

1. What is ittar? What is difference between ittar and perfume?
2. Tell me about the history of Kannauj ittar?
3. Why do you consider ittar making to be an art?
4. What type of ittar your unit is producing?
5. How many of your family members are linked to ittar industry direct and indirectly?
6. Which is the most popular ittar in the market?
7. Discuss the process of ittar making?
8. What is the difference between ittar of Kannauj and other places?
9. How do you preserve the legacy of ittar making?
10. How do you advertise your product?
11. What are the prices of various ittars?

12. What are the subsidiary industries that are dependent on ittar industry?

13. Who are the main player in the whole manufacturing process?

14. Tell us about the history of your unit?

15. How many degs do you have and how many artisans are employed?

16. Why traditional deg-bhapka method is still continued in the units?

17. How are the workers trained in their craft?

18. Who are your main customers? Tell us about their socio-economic profile?

19. How do you procure the raw material?

20. What is your contributing in the production process?

21. Do you monitor the everyday production process?

22. What is the role of FFDC and GI tag promoting the industry?

23. What are the major challenges that the industry is facing?

24. How has the consumer demand changed over the years?

25. What is the average monthly income/turnover from the unit?

26. How have you tried to revitalize the unit?

27. What do you think the future of the ittar industry?

1.2: Annexure-2

Interview Schedule for Artisans

Artisan no.------

Name:

Age (in years):

Working/worked in the Unit:

Educational Level:

Residing in (city or countryside):

Village Name:

Interviewed on (the date):

1. Tell us about yourself and your family?
2. When did you join the business?
3. Are you associated with the trade generationally?
4. Tell us about your initial days in the unit?
5. How many of your family members are linked with to ittar industry directly or indirectly?
6. What are the recent changes that the industry has encountered?
7. What is your role in the unit? What is your monthly income?

8. How does the recruitment to the units take place? What is the role of social networking in the process?
9. Are there any scope for upward social mobility?
10. Have you ever changed your unit?
11. How have you acquired your skills?
12. Is there any division of labour existing in the units?
13. Is the wage dependent on the specialization/skill that one has?
14. How is the procurement of raw materials done?
15. What are the challenges that the industry is facing?
16. What is the future of the industry?

1.3: Annexure-3

Interview schedule for Consumers

Name of the respondent:
Age:
Gender:
Educational level:
Occupation:
Interviewed on (date):

1. How frequently do you wear perfume?
2. What is your favorite perfume and perfume brand? Why?
3. Which perfume are you currently using?
4. Why do you think people wear perfumes?
5. What do you understand by ittar?
6. Is there any difference between perfume and ittar? Please explain.
7. Have you ever used ittar? What was the occasion?
8. Have you heard about Kannauj ittar?
9. Describe the popularity of ittar among your family and friends?