



Project propose by: -Lata Arya, Lecturer, DIET Champawat (Uttarakhand)

Theme: SDG Goals- Quality Education, Women Empowerment, Hill Challenges. - Designing Women Empowerment Project Using Canva and Social Media.

1. Title

Hunar ki Ushma: Handcrafted Warmth as a Path to Women's Empowerment and Self-Reliance in Hill Areas

2. Problem Statement

The hill regions of Uttarakhand and similar mountainous areas face unique socio-economic challenges that deeply affect women. Women in these regions contribute significantly to household responsibilities, agriculture, and community life. Yet, they remain **socially restricted, economically marginalized, and educationally disadvantaged**.

Key challenges include:

- **Limited mobility and social restrictions:** Many women are not allowed, or lack the resources, to work outside their homes.
- **Economic dependency:** Without access to stable employment, women remain dependent on male family members for financial decisions.
- **Low literacy levels:** Educational backwardness reduces opportunities for formal employment and entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Cultural and traditional boundaries:** While traditions are strong, they often limit women's exposure to modern platforms of growth.
- **Migration of men:** Large-scale outmigration of men for jobs leaves women burdened with agricultural and household duties but without direct income generation.
- **Unutilized skills:** Women possess rich traditional knowledge of **weaving, knitting, and handloom crafts**, yet this skill is often confined to domestic use and not converted into sustainable livelihoods.

Thus, there is a pressing need for a project that transforms **traditional handcrafting skills into sustainable income opportunities**, while respecting cultural identity and empowering women towards **self-reliance (Atmanirbharta)**.



3. Proposed Solution

The project “**Hunar ki Ushma**” aims to empower women in hill areas by **reviving, enhancing, and commercializing traditional wool weaving and knitting skills**. It focuses on creating a **community-based cooperative model** where women can work from home or village centres, ensuring:

- **Skill upgradation** through training in design, quality improvement, and digital literacy.
- **Market linkages** via social media platforms, e-commerce portals, and handicraft fairs.
- **Cultural preservation** by promoting traditional patterns and eco-friendly materials.
- **Financial inclusion** through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and microfinance support.

The solution blends **tradition with technology**, enabling women to generate income while preserving cultural heritage and overcoming social restrictions.

4. Tools/Technology Used

1. Digital Platforms –

- **Canva Application-** Pamphlet/ Advertising posters/videos/ and other modern designs can help do develop good presentive face for the market.
- **Social media**, Instagram, Facebook & YouTube can showcase women’s work through reels, live weaving sessions, and knitting women’s workers stories.
- **E-commerce Platforms (Amazon Karigar, Flipkart Samarth, Etsy, GeM, India Mart etc)** for direct sales and Integration of **QR codes** on product tags linking to knitting women’s workers profiles and cooperative’s digital store.

5. Step-by-Step Plan

Phase 1: Community Mobilization and Awareness

- Conduct village-level meetings to sensitize women about the project’s purpose.
- Build trust with local leaders and families to overcome social restrictions.
- Form **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** and cooperatives under Techsavvy women leadership.

Phase 2: Skill Enhancement and Training

- Organize workshops on advanced knitting, weaving, and modern product design.
- Introduce natural dyeing, eco-friendly production, and quality control measures.
- Provide **digital literacy training** for marketing and financial management.



Phase 3: Production and Branding

- Establish cooperative production units for sweaters, shawls, rugs, caps, and scarves.
- Develop a unique brand identity, e.g., **“Hunar ki Ushma – Warmth from the Hills.”**
- Train women in packaging, labeling, and storytelling to enhance product value.

Phase 4: Market Linkages

- Launch social media campaigns with photos, videos, and testimonials of knitting women’s workers.
- Organising fair-trade, and doing showcase on online platforms.
- Organize exhibitions at district/state levels to promote the cooperative’s work.

Phase 5: Financial Sustainability

- Link SHGs with local banks for micro-credit and government subsidy schemes.
- Introduce saving and reinvestment models for long-term sustainability.
- Encourage younger women to take roles in **digital promotion and bookkeeping**.

Phase 6: Monitoring and Evaluation

- Regularly assess women’s income growth, confidence levels, and participation in decision-making.
- Collect feedback from customers and knitting women’s workers to improve production and market strategies.
- Document success stories to inspire wider replication.

6. Learning Outcomes

1. For Women Knitting women’s workers

- Development of entrepreneurial and financial literacy skills.
- Ability to use traditional knowledge for sustainable livelihoods.
- Confidence to participate in decision-making processes at home and community levels.
- Reduced economic dependency on male members.

2. For the Community

- Revival of local handicrafts as a source of pride and cultural preservation.
- Strengthened rural economy, reducing forced migration.
- Improved social acceptance of women’s contribution to family income.



3. For the Market and Society

- Increased awareness of eco-friendly, handmade products.
- Strengthening of fair-trade practices.
- Creation of a model that can be replicated in other hill regions.

7. Link with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The project “**Hunar ki Ushma**” directly contributes to multiple **United Nations SDGs**:

- **SDG 1: No Poverty** – Provides sustainable income to marginalized women.
- **SDG 5: Gender Equality** – Promotes women’s empowerment, leadership, and economic participation.
- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth** – Creates dignified livelihood opportunities in local settings.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities** – Helps bridge the gap between rural women and urban job opportunities.
- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities** – Preserves cultural heritage while ensuring local development.
- **SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production** – Promotes eco-friendly, handmade products.
- **SDG 13: Climate Action** – Encourages sustainable practices like natural dyeing and reduced carbon footprint through local production.

Conclusion

“**Hunar ki Ushma** – हाथों की बुनाई, आत्मनिर्भरता की कमाई” is more than just a livelihood project; it is a **movement of empowerment, resilience, and cultural pride**. By converting traditional weaving and knitting into sustainable income, this initiative not only uplifts women but also preserves the **soul of the Himalayas**.

The project envisions women who once faced restrictions and invisibility now standing tall with **confidence, financial independence, and social recognition**. Every sweater, shawl, or rug they weave will not just carry warmth for the body but also embody the **warmth of their struggle, spirit, and self-reliance**.

video link <https://youtu.be/-dstRuQB3t8>