

# Indomitable

It is the story of Swagata Ghosh of Santragachi, Howrah. In her early childhood Swagata lost sensation in her right hand due to a sudden attack of poliomyelitis. Her right hand was virtually lost; she cannot write or engage in any major activity using that hand. But she did not lose her resolve to do something in life. She learnt Batik printing from La Martiniere Self Employment Oriented Multi Purpose Training Society (SEOMP). Immediately after training she started her venture. In 1993 she attended an Experimental Workshop at Baruipur and received advanced training. Post-training, she was recognised as a master trainer. She is actively pursuing her passion for training and have trained several self-help groups in Amta, Udaynarayanpur, Uluberia.

In the initial days she used to sell her products door to door. With confidence growing, she started selling to government emporia - Manjusha, Tantuja, Khadi Board, Khadi Gramodyog, Central Cottage Industries, Bangashree. However, the fairs are always regarded as the best place for



marketing. She attended several major fairs all across the country - in Hyderabad, Bangalore, Delhi, Nagpur, Goa, Haryana, Chennai, Ahmedabad. She also got an opportunity to reach out to the customers at a fair organised in Singapore. Her husband Uttam Ghosh too is a trainer in his own right. He has trained in Tripura, organised by the Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre. Both of them won several state level awards for their work. Over the years they could develop a relationship with multiple zonal cultural centres (EZCC, WZCC, SZCC). She took SVSKP support in 2012. The loan amount of Rs.1.45 lakh could be completely repaid on schedule.

Later she expanded her boundaries even further, stepping up her efforts as an individual entrepreneur towards a collective endeavour. She was the lead organiser for a self-help group, 'Santragachi Kalap'. The SHG members were provided training and marketing support and the group is now self-reliant.

Swagata claims the distinction of being a pioneer in introducing multi-colour spread in Batik printing. As per her version, boutique used to be made traditionally with three to four colours only. She brought new colours in the paradigm. According to her knowledge no one else was doing it at that time. Once she started doing it, the trend spread.

There is no end in sight for the future of the craft. She sees unending possibilities, provided quality is maintained. Once she thought to keep her uniqueness to herself. But later her mindset changed and she wanted to spread the knowledge she accumulated. So she started training others. She even coached students for admission to the National Institute of Fashion Design, Salt Lake and her students are now doing exhibitions in some of the major cities of the country, including the national capital.