



From Nomads to Artisans:
A case of Sabala's experience of
promoting sustainable livelihoods for
Lambanis in Karnataka

INTRODUCTION

Lambanis, a nomadic tribe, comprises of a significant population of extremely poor in Bijapur and Bellary valley of Karnataka. Being nomadic, they are landless and dependent upon other rural households. With the gradual decline of agriculture, the living conditions of *Lambanis* was further deteriorating due to loss of traditional livelihoods. *Lambanis* especially women are also known for their hand crafted dress materials and jewelry (popularly known as *Banjara art*) which was part of their traditional attire. In the changed times, *Lambanis* of Bijapur were loosing their traditional artisanal skills and their attires were also changing. This was leading to loss of a rich traditional craft.

Sabala, a voluntary organisation set up in 1986, is working with *Lambanis* in Bijapur and has succeeded in developing a sustainable livelihoods model for around 350 ultra poor households by utilizing their traditional skills while developing products for modern markets. Sabala worked with a value chain approach wherein it looked at each component of the supply chain and developed standardized production process to ensure timeliness and high quality. Sabala set up a 'linked enterprise' - Crafts Development Center (CDC) to facilitate communities interact with market, both domestic and export and is now selling its products under the brand name of 'Nomads'. This has resulted into significant impact at the community level wherein each woman earns upto Rs. 2000 per month. The initiative has led to revival of a traditional craft in modern society, reduction of migration and settlement of the nomadic tribe in a respectable and dignified manner. Currently, the Craft based Livelihood Initiative is a full fledged business enterprise which has sustained in the market for more than twenty years without any convention funding support. *Lambani* tribe, who belong to the scheduled caste are today recognized as an artisan group. The programme has thus shifted the community's social identity and preserving the cultural identity.

This case study presents Sabala's journey in promoting sustainable livelihoods for a typically ultra poor community and the knowledge created in this process. It also presents the key features of the intervention model and analyses the key factors along with challenges faced. The case also comments on the issue of size, sustainability and replication of promoting sustainable livelihoods for the ultra poor.

LAMBANIS – THE NOMADIC COMMUNITY

India is a land of cultural diversity where a lot has been contributed to the national heritage by schedule castes and tribes through their culture and unique styles of performing certain jobs. One such underprivileged community is - The ‘Lambani community’. The community is historically nomadic and hence called ‘Banjara’s’ which is derived from the Sanskrit word “Vana Chara”, meaning wanderers of the jungle. They are known differently in different parts of the country, as Vanjari, Lambada, Lambani and Labban.

Much of their history is still a mystery, but the Banjara or *Lambani* tribe is believed to have descended from the Roma gypsies of Europe who travelled across the rugged mountains of Afghanistan into the deserts of Rajasthan in north India thousands of years ago before migrating down into the country’s southern states. They are primarily Hindu-Animists with their own gods and goddesses, festivals and worship practices. Music, dance and storytelling remain central to their culture, as do their fine textiles made from natural materials and dyes. Theirs is a distinctive style of dressing characterised by vibrant colours, ornate embroidery and range of embellishments.

Today, however the *Lambanis* are experiencing many changes and their traditional culture and institutions are undergoing considerable transformation. They have lost their traditional calling of keeping cattle, trading salt and transporting goods for livelihood and have eventually settled down to agriculture, although it had never been their occupation. Most of them are agricultural labourers settled in their isolated settlements called Tandas in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan where they have been listed as schedule castes and get exposed to various welfare programmes. Karnataka state which lists the *Lambanis* as a scheduled caste since July 1977 has rectified the anomalies, however, their outreach and benefits have been extremely limited. This has compelled the *Lambanis* in search of new opportunities for their socio-economic betterment.



Photo 1: Lallibai in her traditional Banjara outfit

Though the community is a treasure of rich information, culture, tradition, Indian ethos but they have their own inherited beleaguered problems in the society. They live mostly in the inaccessible or remotely situated undulating terrain and have been far behind the mainstream of economic development. This socio economically and educationally lagging community, even today is lacking in basic infrastructure needs. Such is the case in Karnataka, especially in the districts like Gulburga, Shimoga, Bijapur, Chitradurga and Bellary, where the *Lambani* population is very high.

Sabala recognized and studied the issues of the *Lambanis* of Bijapur district and initiated a sustainable crafts based livelihood programme around 28 years ago. Today Sabala is working with 400 families in 8 habitations spread over 8 villages in Bijapur district in Karnataka and is responsible for providing livelihood opportunities to 221 *Lambani* women.

In this backdrop we critically analyze the work of Sabala as a development paradigm in providing sustainable livelihood options to the *Lambani* community, also one of the ultra poor communities of the country.

SABALA – THE FACILITATING ORGANISATION

Sabala, meaning ‘*mighty*’, aims to combat their poverty issues through proper policy advocacy and enhancing the community’s livelihood options. Sabala is headed by Mallamma S.Yalwar and is supported by core staff comprising of professionals and village level workers. The organisation works mainly with women from *Lambani* community, Dalit, shepherds and other backward communities in 60 villages of 3 *talukas* of Bijapur district. Sabala, since its inception has focused on issues like gender discrimination, devadasi system, illiteracy, housing, unemployment, social evils like dowry and child marriage which directly impact women. The organisation has organized women into SHGs and executed programmes on gender sensitization, health issues, housing for homeless, watershed management and sustainable agriculture. With some external support and funding the organisation also conducted trainings and established a women’s cooperative bank which directly caters to around 1000 families.

CRAFTS BASED LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMME: THE GENESIS

In late 1990s with the migration of Lambani families to other states in search of employment, there was a drop in the number of women accessing the services of Sabala and an increase in school dropout rate. Sabala studied this pattern and found that lack of livelihood opportunities at the local level was prime reason for this exodus. This paved way for a conducive and economically sustainable initiative by Sabala.

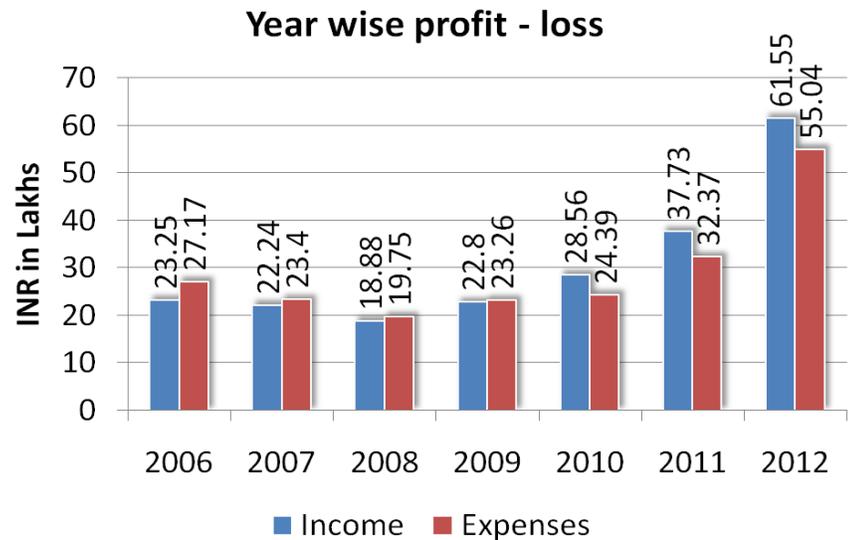
The traditional *Lambani* embroideries are designed for a nomadic life style, featuring geometric, floral and animal motifs. The combinations of stitches and mirror work are worked out extraordinarily with vibrant colour, making the design strikingly different. Sabala, initiated a social enterprise using this traditional skill of *Lambanis* in which the traditional *Lambani* art was used to create modern products by the women from their homes and sold to the mainstream market in an organized manner. This programme created a platform for the *Lambani* women to engage in productive activities that generated income on 'piece rate' basis. Sabala trained more than 400 women and organized into SHGs and formed a network of SHG called 'Banjara'. The organization focused on livelihood promotion, skill development and skill up gradation, establishment of training and production centre and design and marketing support. Other underprivileged women are also a part of the programme and have been trained in Kasuthi art and jute making but Banjara art remains exclusive to the *Lambani* women. The organization creates variety of products for the national and international market like bags, cushion covers, clothing, decorative and gift items using these art forms.

Reportedly the women are spending their incomes on their children, in repaying small loans and increasing their savings. Since initiation, a rise in monthly income from Rs 600/- to Rs 3000/- per month is reported. The piece rate cost has also doubled in these years (for example, for making cushion covers the women were paid Rs 25/- per hour in the year 2000 and are now paid Rs 55/-).

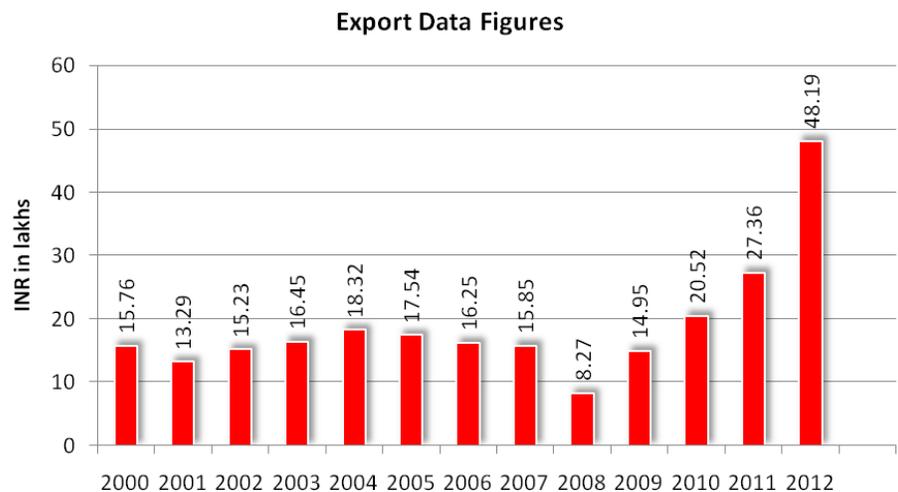
The process of production from marketing to sales has provided immense recognition to the *Lambani* women. The earnings that the women contribute to the household have empowered them and have given them acceptance as an earning member in their family. The women have participated in various national and international exhibitions and workshops which has increased their self esteem and confidence.

CRAFTS BASED LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMME: THE KEY OUTPUTS

1. **FINANCIAL TURNOVER:** Increase in profit (ranging between 4 to 5 lacs) in the past three years. Since the organisation's primary market is international, the recession and lull market period affected the overall sales causing a loss between 2006 and 2009. The organisation started maintaining separate accounts for the crafts centre only after 2006.



2. **MARKET SALES:** A rise in exports over the period is observed. An increase in both domestic (from 5.50 Lacs in 2000 to 13.36 lacs in 2012) and international (from 15.76 in 2000 to 48.79 lacs 2012) market sales. The rate at which international sales is increasing is higher than the domestic sales. The sales dipped down between 2006 and 2009 due to recession in the market.



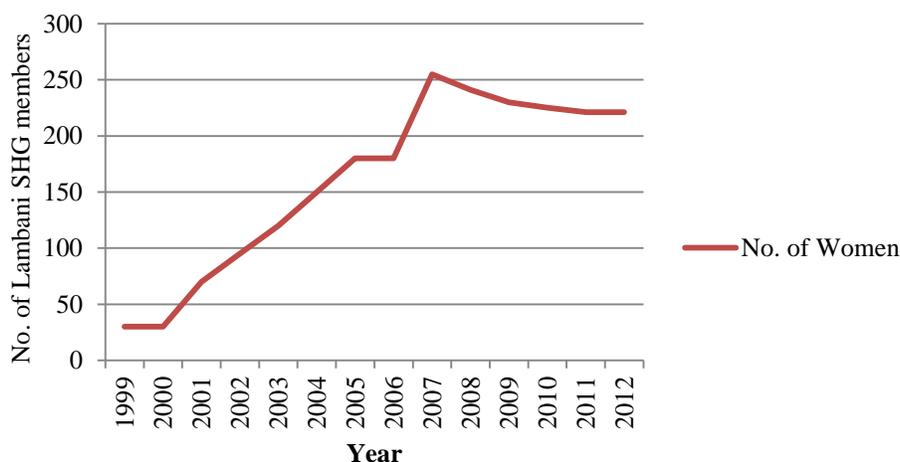
3. EMPLOYMENT

CREATION: The number of Lambani women in the SHG has increased over the years from 30 women in 1999 to 221 in 2012. Due to reduction in sales between 2006-2009, Sabala did not provide employment to all and there was dropout of women from

work. As sales improve the number of women working is also increasing.



Total artisans in the crafts programme

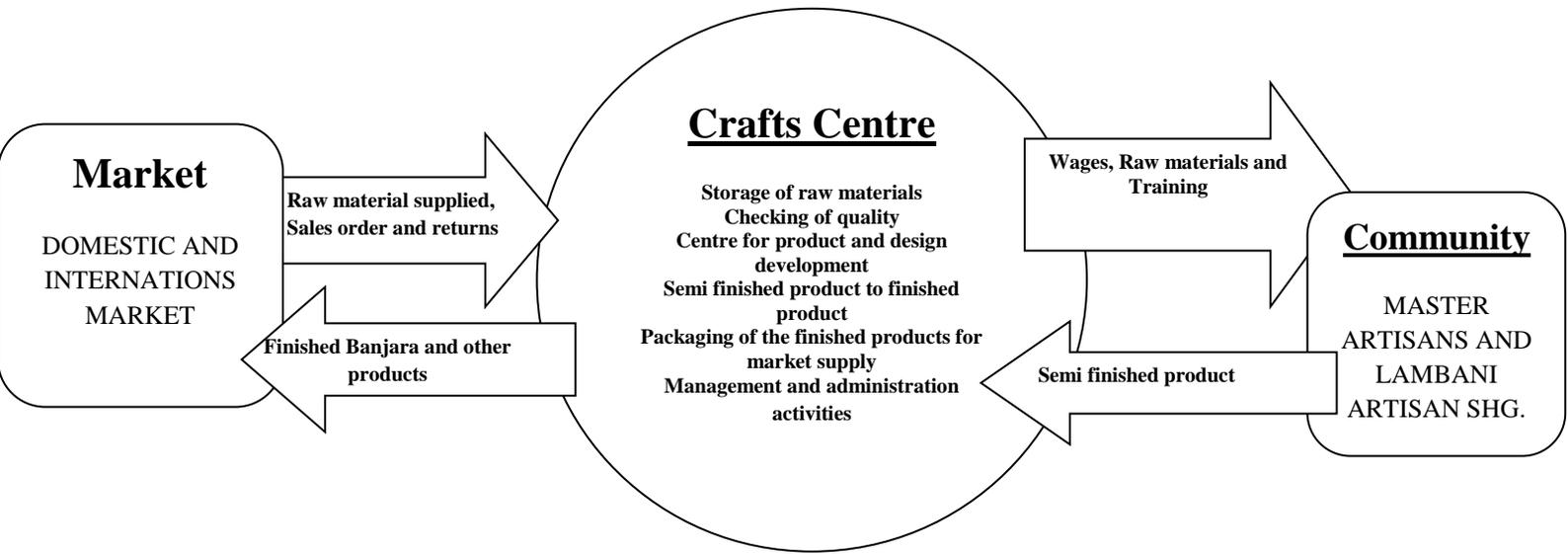


THE VALUE CHAIN APPROACH: EMERGENCE OF LINKED ENTERPRISE ‘CRAFTS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (CDC)’

The organisation established CDC in 1996 and registered it under Limited Liability Partnership Act in 2012. This CDC acts as a commercially viable intermediary institution that is capable of negotiating between artisans and mainstream market in a manner that improves the terms of trade and income of the *Lambani* artisan community.

This model connects the social value creation in the various areas of the economy identified by linking the voluntary economy of giving, to social enterprise, public services, socially responsible and

mainstream business and the rise of ethical markets. The crafts centre emerges as a 'linked enterprise in this process of 'value chain'.



KEY FEATURES OF THE INTERVENTION MODEL



Photo 2: The stitching team

'I sow the buttons in the bag and also check if there are any defects in them' - Ningraj Bisnal- crafts centre staff

1. Assembly line production : Sabala engages in a sequential manner of creating a finished product. The CDC assigns specific tasks to the staff and trains them on the same. Each member involved in the process excels in one particular task and performs it in her/his best capacity. The uniqueness of the model lies in the fact a traditional craft based process has been broked down into standardised processes to ensure high quality and timeliness. In the production-sales process, the staff involved includes:-

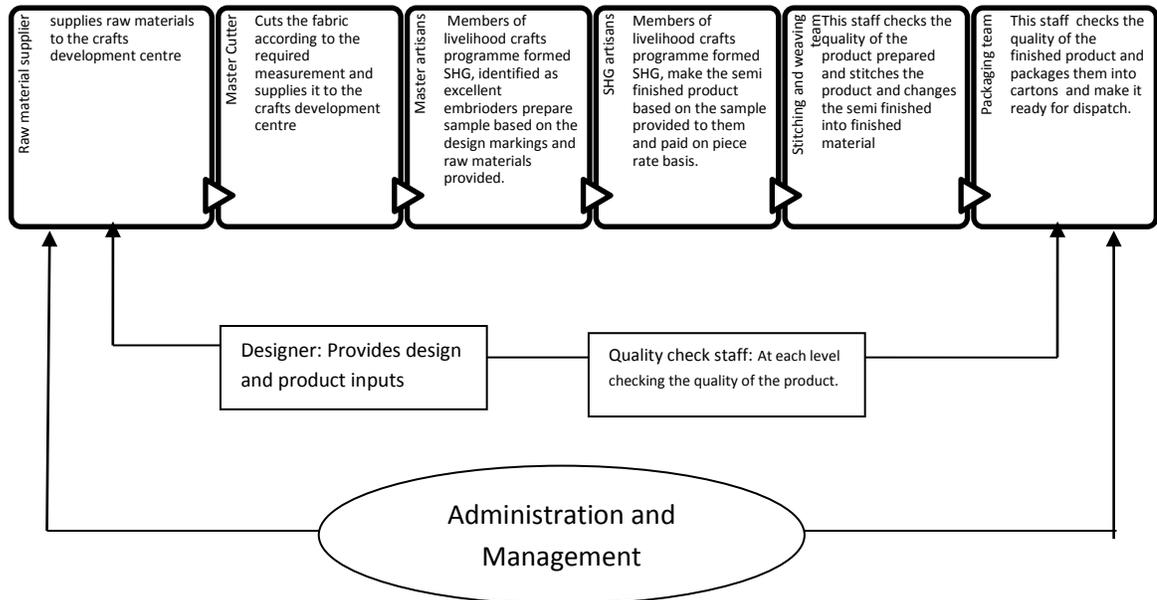


Photo 3: Staff checking the measurements of the product

‘ if there is some defect in our embroidery Mallamma madam wants us to make it all over again’’

-Lalitha Rathod, a member of SHG Minchanal Tanda.

2. Quality check: Sabala’s products are not only appealing to the eye but made from pure cotton or silk. The fabrics are bought directly by the weavers without involvement of any middleman which ensures the quality of the cloth. There are 3 people at the crafts centre allocated for quality check and 5 people in the supervisory team. The quality is checked at different levels:-
- a. **Level 1-** The cloth getting tested at the TUV –Bangalore for color and usage of ASO free chemicals.
 - b. **Level 2-** After the master cutter sends the material; the quality of the material is checked by the staff and then presented to the design team.
 - c. **Level 3-** Once the master artisan prepares the sample, each sample is checked by the quality check team and supervisors following which the sample is sent to the Lambani artisans in the SHG for further production.
 - d. **Level 4-** The supervisors visit the Tandas regularly to supervise the work. After the ready pieces are sent to the crafts centre, the quality of each piece is checked. All minor errors are rectified at the crafts centre by the staff (stitching team, weaving team and quality check team). In case of any major defect, the piece/s is sent back to the Tanda to the women to be remade and reworked.
 - e. **Level 5-** The team of eight women involved in stitching recheck the items before sewing.
 - f. **Level 6-** The product quality is checked before the final stage of preparation, like sewing buttons, beads and any other small items. The minor defects in stitching are again rectified by the team.
 - g. **Level 7-** Before packaging all the items are checked by the supervisors and the team looking after quality control. The packages are also checked for damages.



Photo 4: Traditional Lambani embroidery

"The Banjara art is done by only the Lambani community..because no one else can do it better than them"

- Mallamma, CEO Sabala

3. Banjara art: Sabala has selected an art form which is very unique and specific to the Lambani community. It has been reported that this art is in high demand in European market and has a growing demand in the domestic market as well. The competition in the international market is low compared to the domestic market as the Banjara art is getting supplied by different organisations in Gujarat and Rajasthan. There are four major buyers who give in regular sales and income to Sabala. In India, Sabala makes regular supplies to Federation of South India Producers Association (SIPA) and to retail outlets like Suruthi in Mumbai, Dastakar in Bangalore (for the past 5 years) and Fab India, SASHA, Calcutta and ANTS, Bangalore (for the past 3 years). These retail outlets have not been beneficial to Sabala as they do not provide adequate compensation and do not use the 'Sabala' tag for promotion.



Photo 5: Geeta is a physically challenged 'quality check' staff member

“Sabala has given us a lot of support in educating our children, today both my children go to school...I am proud of them”

-Malashree Parashuram Rathod- SHG member, Ainapur Tanda

4. **Social support:** Since inception Sabala has been providing social support through women’s counselling, support committees and awareness campaigns. The organisation helped the women to access social security schemes like ration card, artisan card, widow pension, handicapped pension, subsidy for housing. Sabala is also attached to various social organisations that provided assistance like Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), Federation of Voluntary Organisation for Rural Development – Karnataka (FEVORD-K), Bangalore, IDOBRO, Mumbai . The crafts centre has also employed two physically challenged staff members.



Photo 5: Bank for the women

“I took loan from the bank for making a borewell in my field..soon I took loan to educate my children” –my one son is studying

engineering and the other is in college- Somibai Chawan, Master artisan.

5. **Access to easy finance:** In 1995 Sabala established a Cooperative bank called ‘Chaitanya Mahila Co-operative Bank’ (under Reserve Bank of India umbrella) to provide financial

assistance to women. The bank provides for low interest rates (From 11 % -17 % in 1995 to 4 % - 11.25 % today) and waives security till upto Rs 25000/- for women. The association with the bank helped the women repay the money lenders, take loan for seeds and other agriculture related activities, for children's education and marriage and also bought sewing machines for their personal use. Though this bank is open to all but most *Lambani* SHG members have accounts in this bank and have taken loan from this bank. This is reportedly because of the provisions of the bank for women and its association with Sabala. The women in the livelihood crafts programme have shown an upward trend in the loan taken from the 'Chaitanya Mahila Co-operative Bank'.

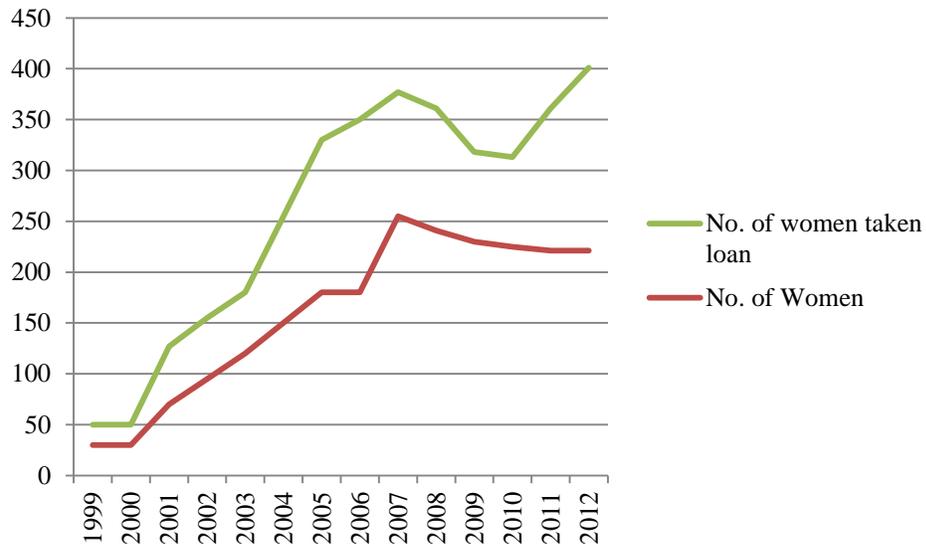




Photo 6: women taught to make traditional jewellery without nickel for export.

“ We use bright colors that the foreigners don't like..we were trained on using colours by madam..these colours people like”

–Kasturba Bai, SHG member, Minchanal Tanda.

6. **Capacity Building:** The Lambani community through the livelihood endeavour of Sabala has received various trainings (Annexure 3). Though the art form is already known to the community women, the usage of design, colours and other capacity building activities has improved the community knowledge and developed their skills. These trainings were supported by organisations like NABARD, Development Commissioner and District Industries Centre.



Photo 7: Sabala banner with 'Fair Trade' mentioned on it

“Because of Fair Trade we are getting more recognition in the mainstream market”-Pranesh Jahagirdar, Manager ,Sabala

7. Networks and Standards – CDC through Sabala as a business organisation is very well connected. The raw materials are sourced from different parts of the country. Association of Sabala with organisations like South India Producer Association (SIPA), Chennai, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), New Delhi ensures maintenance of certain prescribed standards.

Most important is its association with Fair Trade Forum – India (FTF-I) and World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO), Asia. Sabala under the banner of Fair Trade forum follows and maintain certain prescribed standards. As a part of this association and to meet the national/international market standards products are usually eco-friendly in nature. The fabrics either use vegetable dyes or are tested for ASO free chemicals and colour fastness at the TUV India Pvt Ltd before production. The products are also packaged using biodegradable stretch film and biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP plastic).



Photo 8: Design markings and sample design

Sabala adhere's to 10 Fair Trade Standards :

- Creating opportunities for economically disadvantaged Producers
- Transparency and Accountability
- Capacity Building
- Promoting Fair Trade
- Gender Equity
- Ideal Working Conditions
- Payment of Fair Wages
- Protection of Environment
- Protection of Children's Rights
- Trade Relations

"We are the only organisation who club today's fashion with

the traditional work..we create usable and trendy products"- Mallamma, CEO Sabala

8. Product development and design- The key feature of the products supplied by Sabala is its variety and design. Sabala devoted huge focus on product development and hired design consultants on an ongoing basis. The consultants use Banjara craft effectively to design a product that best suits the modern consumer's needs. The organisation is a

member of PENTON and TRENDS, the international organisations providing universal colour coding and trend forecasting.



Photo 9: Products are packaged in a bag with the brand name Sabala

"I have gone to many exhibitions..many a times people ask me to make and show the embroidery live"-Somibai, Master Artisan

9. Marketing and Brand Promotion- The products made by the Banjara women are branded as 'Nomads'- as it is globally understandable and acceptable. This tag on the products says 'Nomads' along with which there is a picture of a Lambani women and a quote by her. This methodology of branding provides information about the producer to the buyer and also attracts the sales. To promote the name 'Nomads', every customer is given a free t-shirt on a purchase of Rs 2000/-.

The marketing strategies adopted include web-based sales, brochures and exhibitions. The organisation sends a master artisan or any other artisan who excels in their embroidery work to these exhibitions with their sample products. The consumers get an opportunity to meet the artisan themselves and check the authenticity of the product. The retail shop in Bijapur focuses on presentation of products and has an attendant with knowledge on Sabala, its activities and also the *Lambani* community.

Under the umbrella of Fair Trade organisation and as member of WFTO India, Sabala crafts centre has been able to reach



Photo 10: Bijapur, retail store-NOMADS

out to the mainstream market. Apart from the these creative marketing strategies, Sabala also has plans of setting cultural centres promoting Lambani art and linking those to retail outlets; promoting the Sabala products and tourism in Bijapur.

10. Pricing : Sabala, produces a range of products. The products are priced based on labour charges, raw materials and other factors of costing. The profit margin is about 15 % and there is a variation in price of about 5 % between the retail, wholesale, exhibition and international export rates. Below are the product listings with their price range.

Products	Price range(In Rupees)
Cushion Covers	200 to 700
Gifts Items like Mobile & Spectacle Case, Kit Purses, Purses, Folders, Key Chains, etc	40 to 250
Tops, Kurtas & Jackets	400 to 2,500
Wall Hangings	500 to 3,000
Clutches	250 to 800
Sandles	400 to 800
Bags	250 to 1500
Ethnic jewellery	50 to 1000



Photo 11: Some SHG members at the Aianapur Tanda

"We all feel like good that we don't have to depend on our husbands for money. We keep the money for our children and for buying small things for us"- All SHG members, Aianapur Tanda

11. **Wage Negotiations:** In the process of deciding the piece wage rate, the organisation promotes decision making by the SHG women. The women have regular SHG meetings wherein the changes in domestic /household costs and labour charges are discussed and a consensus on wage rate is arrived at. The SHG leaders from all the hamlets have regular

meetings with the organisation head to negotiate their wages. The organisation vests the decision making power to the artisan women on an adequate piece rate.

EMERGING MODEL OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH TRUST INNOVATION AND LEADERSHIP AS KEY THEMES

Though Sabala does not follow a pre-assigned entrepreneurship model to plan its functions but the analysis of the features of the value chain approach exposes themes and interpretations. The paper conducted thematic network analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Clarke and Braun, 2006) which led to creation of theme piles namely- a) product development b) community development and c) market development. When these themes were related and associated through a thematic map, a macro theme emerged which is the final tenet. This ‘macro theme’ that emerges out of this analysis, depicts the social entrepreneurship collective that Sabala has evolved into. The macro theme or the overarching factors that have impacted Sabala’s operations are - Trust, Innovation and Leadership.

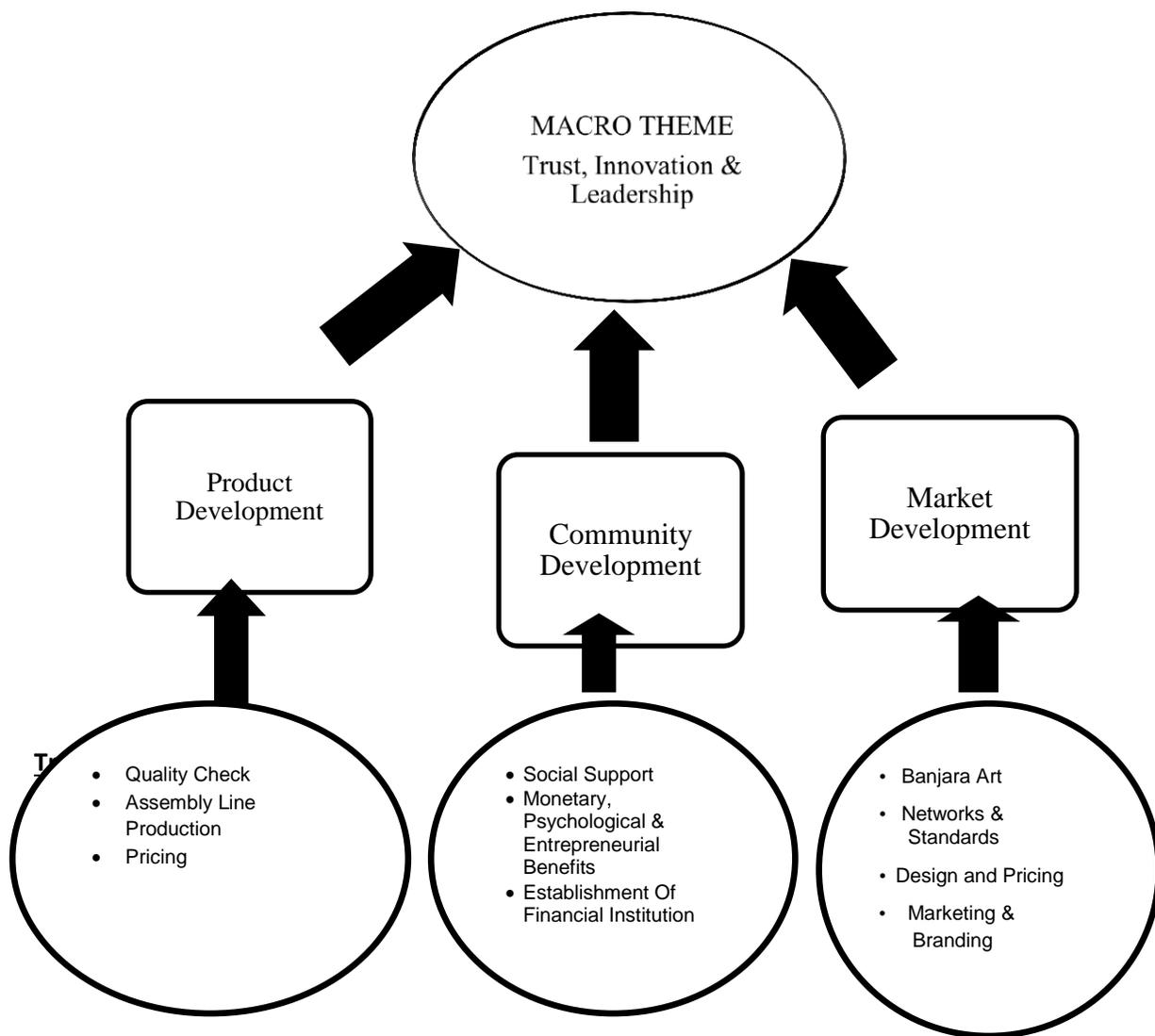




Photo 12: From Banjara to Kasuthi, Sabala's growing community

THE ROLE OF TRUST

Lewis & Weigert (1985) characterized trust as *'the undertaking of a risky course of action on the confident expectation that all persons involved in the action will act competently and dutifully.'* The growing interest in building trust between organizations stems from the belief that trust enhances business performance. Trust has been identified as an important component which makes partnerships, strategic alliances and networks of small firms successful (Kramer, 1999). Trust has emerged as a promising variable in the thematic analysis of Sabala's value chain components.

Under product development, the organisation has adopted stringent quality control measures at every stage of production along with the efficient production method of assembly line which ensures the superior quality and timely delivery of the product to the consumer. According to the perspective of rational choice theory, individuals are presumed to be make choices which maximize expected gains or minimize expected losses from their transactions (**Kramer, 1999**). Sabala, by creating a niche in the market for superior quality Banjara art establishes a trust relationship with the market.

Trust has played an integral role in community development initiatives of Sabala Crafts programme. The efforts of the organisation since its inception to establish contact and maintain it with the *Lambani* community has helped build the trustworthiness and willingness of the population to engage in Sabala's activities and also accept new initiatives without any conflict. Through the cumulative interaction for providing social support over the years, built a strong rapport between the organisation and the *Lambani* women creating a relationship of trust and confidence; Kramer (2006) calls this interdependency *History-Based Trust*.

The crafts initiative tapped the most pressing issue of women and their economic empowerment. The monetary, psychological and entrepreneurial benefits provided through the CDC not only gave sense of ownership to the *Lambani* women towards the programme but also created a platform for '*renegotiating their social identity*'. Today they look at themselves as suppliers ('artisans') of Sabala or SHG leaders/members rather than just *Lambani* women. The existing SHG members mobilize women in their community to join the group through social interaction. This '*Category based trust*' wherein trust is built merely on the basis of membership in a social category, in this case - *Lambani* women has influenced more women to join the initiative which in turn has impacted the organization (Kramer, 1999).

Schelling (1960) noted that choice is motivated by a "conscious calculation of advantages, a calculation that in turn is based on an explicit and internally consistent value system". Such is the case in developing market relations. Sabala made a very calculated choice of selecting Banjara art, an art that the *Lambani* women were well versed with and could be trusted to produce the best quality Banjara product. The community also trusts Mallamma, the leader, with her role of overall supervision and work delegation. This mutual trust between community and the organisation sustains the activity of production and work delegation; a '*Role based trust*' where individuals adopt a presumptive trust based upon knowledge of role relations, even in the absence of personalized knowledge or history of prior interaction (Kramer,1999).

The various marketing strategies, product designs and attempts to strengthen networks are indicative of the determined effort to build and maintain the 'trust' in the market. The representation of *Lambani* women during the exhibitions or product labels with information about the *Lambani* artisans signifies the level of transparency that Sabala maintains with its customers. By keeping pace with the trends and tastes of the buyers, Sabala attempts to improve

the sales. Also, third parties in organizations are important conduits of trust because of their ability to diffuse trust-relevant information (Brut &Knez, 1995). The association with well established organisations and networks has also been favourable for Sabala's crafts sales. For instance, the affiliation with Fair trade is reported to have given Sabala a place in the mainstream market.

INNOVATION: PROCESS AND PRODUCT

Schumpeter (1934) said that entrepreneurship activity involves the carrying out of new combinations, the 'creative destruction' of an existing equilibrium with a particular industry.

Sabala as an entrepreneur is making constant efforts to reconceptualise the services and continually reassess the organisational routine in order to keep pace with the dynamically changing business environment. In this process, the organisation brings new products, services and practices to the organisation, community and the market. This act of introducing something new, as a novelty is called 'innovation'.

By bringing in innovative techniques of quality check in product making and assembly line production in a small scale, Sabala surely is catering to the market demands of timely delivery and high quality product. These innovative techniques which are rather found in large scale industries or corporate profit making bodies when introduced by a small scale producer like Sabala has certainly increased the manpower costs but in return discharged employment to the community thereby, causing an increase in its sales.

Innovation is a process whereby invention is put into practice, transforming a disembodied idea into workable and economically viable operation (Baumol, 1993).The identification of 'Banjara art' as a means of livelihood promotion is an example of 'Innovation'. This innovation kept the costs low and the returns high at all levels. At the community level a known form of art coupled with convenient work setting provided for both monetary and psychological benefits, at organisational level, intervention with a familiar community coupled with minimum training cost led to increase in sales and income and at market demand for high quality Banjaras art product was also met.



Photo 13 : Sabala uses bottle covers to make trendy jewellery

Sabala's crafts programme seems to have created a niche for itself in the market with its emphasis on the 'design' of the product. With the creative input from the in-house and external designers, the organisation produces variety of products which retains the enterprise in the competitive market. As Sabala increases its networks and affiliations with social and governmental organisations, it is only ensuring innovative and creative means to meet the needs of the stakeholders. Using a globally recognized name 'Nomads' coupled with a detailed and informative tag on the products, attracts the buyers to the product. The strategy of brand promotion of free Nomad t-shirts is also an example of innovative brand promotion technique. By using of waste materials creatively in jewelry and by creating eco friendly products Sabala meets the standards set by Fair trade innovatively.

LEADERSHIP: MALLAMMA – THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Among the four factors of production, 'entrepreneurship' plays a vital role in Sabala's settings. Mallamma, the founder CEO, has acted as a catalyst in making all components work together. She is a savvy business leader who is in tune with the needs and issues of the community and the market, and keeps an update on the new developments.

It is said that 'a leader with charisma is revolutionary and transvalues everything; it makes a sovereign break with all traditional and rational norms' (EISENSTADT, 1968). With a revolutionary and counter normative quality in her; Mallamma emerges into a charismatic authority. By overcoming the initial challenges of communication with a community which doesn't speak a familiar language, visiting inaccessible villages and managing with very limited finances, Mallamma won the trust and the confidence of the community. The positive community response to her efforts of social support and upliftment created mutual trust. Effective leader are ones that earn the trust of their followers (Bennis and Nanus, 1985).



Photo 14: Mallamma sitting with the staff and deciding the design

By introducing innovative yet practical ideas of setting up institutions for community support, Mallamma has focused on holistic development of the community. The women look upto Mallamma, they feel she is indispensable which makes her a very effective leader today. Willner (1984) says it is not what the leader is but what people see the leader as that counts in generating the charismatic relationship.

Mallamma's charisma has not only influenced the community but also the market. By bringing innovative techniques like quality check and assembly line of production, she ensures she meets the demands of the buyers. She thereby has managed to build strong networks and relationships with external agencies and buyers wherein she is responsible for negotiations in pricing, production needs, improving sales and returns keeping in line with the overall objective of 'social development'. This enormous task of being a liaison between the community and the market makes her a very effective leader.

Mallamma has kept both management and governance as two separate entities. The categorization of roles of the community and roles of the management are demarcated very clearly, while she provides for support to both towards common goals. She has learnt the art forms and is present with the artisans in the crafts centre assisting them, at the same time she gives timely assistance to the management team.

Mallamma stimulates intellectual behaviour among her subordinates. In terms of meeting marketing needs, she has the ability to push the employees to do their best and produce high quality items. This behaviour in her challenges the followers to re-examine their assumptions about their work and rethink how it can be performed. This behaviour promotes cooperation among employees and getting them to work together towards a common goal which makes, making her an effective leader.

Mallamma's determination and trust has today made *Lambani* women into successful artisans. Boa and Bryson (1988) recognize this as the real essence of transformational leadership wherein they say that an effective leader is one who "lifts the ordinary people to extraordinary heights".



Photo 7 : Somibai ,Master Artisan making the sample

“I went to South Africa for a conference and represented my community, before that I was scared to go anywhere alone.

I am proud of myself.....the Banjara art won't die-we won't let it die”- Somibai Chawan, Master Artisan

CHALLENGES AND WAY AHEAD: SUSTAINABILITY, REPLICATION AND UPSCALING

The organization faces challenges at 3 levels, i.e. sustainability, replication and upscaling

Sustainability

Providing continuous work to Lambani and other underprivileged women on a regular basis has been a constant challenge for Sabala as generating business orders also depends upon the overall economic scenario. Since, the global economy has witnessed slow down, Sabala is also facing its effect. The pricing of the products have not increased significantly while the pressure from women to increase wages have been tremendous in light of the constant inflationary pressures. Additionally, the business has not grown expectedly which means comparatively lesser amount of work for women. This also demoralizes women who again have started looking for alternate options. Sabala’s continuous efforts to generate business from multiple sources have somehow ensured regular work to core group of women, however, sustainability still remains one of the biggest challenges.

Replication

Sabala's model runs on the premise of trust, innovation and leadership. All the three factors are highly time consuming. Any project or programme that has time limitations may not be in a position to replicate the same model that Sabala adopts. Such welfare models are only applicable in programme mode which doesn't have strict time constraints. Sabala's efforts to replicate the model in other districts of the Karnataka have had limited success due to these reasons. The leadership, which completely engaged in management of the ongoing initiative, has not been able to devote similar attention to other areas and emergence of new leadership for other areas with similar dynamism and passion has been absent. The absence of strong second rung leadership in the organization can also be attributed to this limitation.

Upscaling

Sabala is under constant pressure to increase the number of women working as artisans. With the number of women getting educated, there is a shortage in the population indulging in the traditional art form. The educated women seek much more lucrative employment. Though the Banjara products are in high demand in international and domestic market but the limited number of trained artisans acts as a hindrance in this initiative. The handmade art takes time unlike the other machine made products whose production can be increased as per the demand. Another important factor in upscaling of any initiative is the career pattern in any industry which is rather limited in this case. The income can be increased only if the value of the products is increased. Due to the limited human capacity of the workers it is difficult to give extra pieces for production to the workers. This might affect the quality also.

In light of the above factors, sustainable livelihoods for ultra poor remains a challenging area as demands years of rigour, trust and innovation. The current development paradigm, which looks to generate results in a shortest time frame, will need to rethink about its strategies. This is more so, as Sabala case provides as an example, that the sustainable livelihoods for ultra poor demands much higher time frame and creation of new forms of linked enterprises or institutions which can help them in interacting and negotiating with the market.

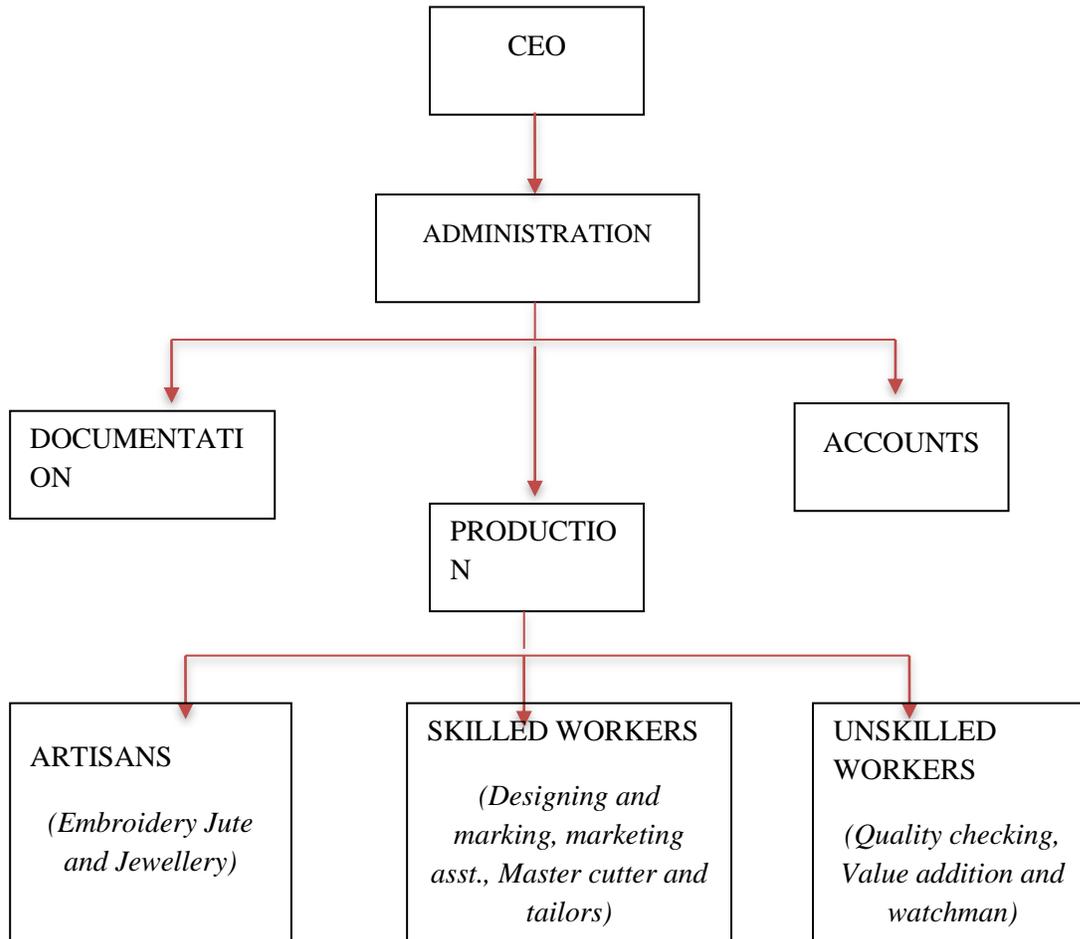
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ANNEXURE 2

SABALA – CRAFT DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, BIJAPUR

STRUCTURE OF THE CENTRE



Annexure 3:

The List of Major Buyers and Supply since inception			
Sl. No.	Name of the Buyer	Country	Sales(in Lakhs)
1	Tribal Area	Spain	10.00
2	Zabriskie Studio	Spain	20.00
3	D. H. Empreases	Chile & Peru	35.00
4	CATSTUDIO	USA	110.00
5	SIPA	INDIA	25.00

Annexure 4:

The List of Trainings conducted to Artisans and Staff			
Sl. No.	Name of the Training	Annually	Since inception
		No. of Prog.	No. of Prog.
	Artisans		
1)	General Awareness Programme and capacity building	4	60
2)	Skill Trainings	2	55
3)	Design Development Workshop	2	10
5)	Exposure Visits		10
6)	Fair Trade Awareness Training		2
	Staff		
1)	Capacity Building Training		10
2)	Skill Trainings - Production and Execution		3
3)	Exposure Visits		4
4)	Fair Trade Awareness Training		2

Annexure 5:

The List of Major Raw material Suppliers			
Sl. No.	Name of the Raw Material Supplier	Type	Place
1	Bharani Trading	Cotton Fabric	Tamilnadu
2	Sri Sabari Fabrics	Cotton Fabric	Tamilnadu
3	Dastkar Andhra Marketing	Cotton Fabric	Tamilnadu
4	Manish Textiles	Cotton Fabric	Karnataka
5	Madhu Silks	Silk Fabric	Karnataka
6	Hemalatha Kalamkari Fabrics	Kalamkari	Andhra Pradesh
7	Kaveri Mahila Sangha	Jut Cotton	Chimmalagi
8	Bhandari Cloth Centre	Cotton Fabric	Karnataka
9	Muskan Enterprises	Zip & Runners & Accessories	Karnataka
10	Carvan Plastics	Zip & Runners & Accessories	Karnataka
11	Ramchand N Sons	Zip & Runners & Accessories	Tamilnadu
12	Pooja Glass Beads	Glass & Wodden Beads	Delhi
13	Jain Thread House	Jain Thread	Delhi
14	Modinsab Aga & S R Ajagaonkar	Cotton Thread	Karnataka
15	Local Market (Bijapur)	Lambani Materials (Like Mirror & Thread, etc	Karnataka

Annexure 6:

Participated in Exhibitions	
Sl. No.	Exhibitions
1	Cauvery Showroom, Bangalore
2	Dastkar, New Delhi
3	Dastkar Haat Samitee, New Delhi
4	CAPART, New Delhi
5	SASHA, Kolkatta
6	EPCH, New Delhi
7	SIPA, Chennai
8	Sunday Sole Sante, Bangalore
9	VITC, Bangalore
10	Consortium of Indian Exporters, New Delhi
11	Mother Earth, Bangalore
12	Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)
13	DIC, Bijapur

Annexure 7:

Sample Costing sheet

COST SHEET				
Product type		Fabric code		
Product code		Grand Total		
Fabric	Fabric Description	Price/m	Fabric consumption	Total cost
Main Fabric				
Lining				
Total Fabric Cost				
Trims	Quantity	Price/Unit	Total Cost	
Sewing thread				
Embroidery thread				
Mirror				
Label				
Total Trim Cost				
Labour	Production/ day	Wages / day	Total cost	
Cutting				
Sewing				
Embroidery				
Hand work				
Quality checking				
Finishing				
Product development				
Total Labour Cost				
Packaging	Quantity	Price	Total cost	
Polybag				
Carton				
Customer bag				
Total Packaging Cost				
Total cost of the product				
Fabric cost				
Trims cost				
Labour cost				
Packaging cost				
Total				
Overheads (10%)				
Total				
Wholesale Profit (15%)				
Grand Total				