

5. Magan Organic Khadi- Farm to Fabric

Two decades back, with the collapse of the handloom industry, a large number of weavers and artisans working in this sector lost their source of livelihood. The Muslim weavers from the village Kamthi, in Nagpur district, met with a similar fate. With no work and no money, many artisans took to menial work like pulling rickshaws or carrying heavy loads. As usual, the brunt of these economic crises was borne by Muslim women artisans who were not allowed to seek any work outside the four walls of the house. The MSS restored their livelihood and helped these skilled artisans to maintain their dignity by bringing them into the fold of the Khadi sector.

The Khadi enterprise of MSS is providing employment to around 300 rural artisans. All these Khadi artisans involved in hand spinning, hand weaving, dyeing, processing, printing, tailoring, and marketing are covered under the Artisan Welfare Scheme, whereby they get the benefits of provident fund, pension, insurance, and scholarship for students.

Organic Cotton Farming



Despite the pulls and pressures of the multinational companies to use BT cotton and other hazardous chemical inputs, Magan Sangrahalaya Samiti (MSS) has been constantly mobilizing local farmers to grow organic, chemical-free cotton. This year MSS provided 206 farmers with indigenous cotton seeds and brought 2000 acres of land under organic cotton. Some of these farmers supply organic cotton to the MSS Khadi unit. MSS is one of the major organic Khadi producing units in the country.

Organic Cotton Rowing Unit



To safeguard the organic farmers from exploitation by the market forces MSS established cotton collection, storage, and processing unit in the village Girad.

The unit financially supports 100 farmers by providing them the facility to deseed cotton and convert the raw cotton into transportable bales. From these farmers the Magan Khadi fabric unit buys organic cotton at 20% higher rate than the market.



Hand Spinning Unit

To reduce drudgery, increase productivity, and earning of the women spinners, MSS replaced the hand-operated Charkhas (Spinning Wheels) by solar operated Ambar Charkhas. This intervention has doubled the production and earning of the Khadi spinners. The spinning unit provides employment to women spinners, including old and physically handicapped women.



Hand Weaving Unit

The number of Khadi weavers is dwindling down as the younger generation of artisans is losing interest in the traditional craft. To fill this gap, MSS is training women from the farming community in Khadi weaving. Presently weavers from Wardha, Nagpur, Madhya Pradesh, and West Bengal are engaged in the weaving and processing of Magan Khadi fabric.



Natural Dyeing

To combat the environmental hazards of chemical dyes and conserve the environment, MSS set up the Natural Dyeing and Printing unit. In this unit, processing, dyeing and printing of Khadi yarn and fabric is done by using natural, chemical-free dyes. In this unit, Indigo and forest produce like Harda, Behada, Aam, Palash, Pakpu, Bibba, Amar, Manjishtha, Dhrawri, etc. are used for dyeing Khadi.

The Households of five tribal villages earn a livelihood by supplying these raw materials to Magan Khadi natural dyeing Unit.



Printing Unit



For non-traditional women artisans, MSS developed a low-cost innovative printing technique where a fresh leaf is used as a printing block. From a single leaf, 200 motifs are printed.

MSS also trained women artisans in hand printing techniques like wood-metal block printing, Kasim line printing, eco-printing, brush painting, spray printing, tie & dye, Indigo Shibori, discharge technique, clay printing, and watt printing. These women artisans are trained to print on cotton, Silk and wool fabric.



Magan Khadi T-Shirts

MSS developed a new technique of processing organic Khadi yarn suitable for knitting T-shirts. This is for the first time in the Khadi sector that organic Khadi T-shirts are made. Using a set of knitting machines a team of artisans manufactures 100 T-Shirts a day. Its pleasing colors, unique texture, comfort in wearing, and low maintenance is making Magan Khadi T-shirts a popular item in MSS series of new products.

Tailoring Unit



The tailoring unit makes readymade Khadi garments for men, women, children, and infants. It also stitches home furnishing items like pillows, curtain, bed covers, table napkin, runners, towels, bags, pouches, laptop bags, etc. This unit also makes accessories that go with Khadi garments and products like tussles, fabric buttons, laces, motifs, wood beads chains, etc. This unit provides employment to 12 artisans.

