



**ARTISANS
CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT
&
SKILL IMPROVEMENT - ENTREPRENEURSHIP
PROGRAMME**



Implemented by

Shanti Maitri Mission Sansthan, Pugal, Bikaner, Rajasthan

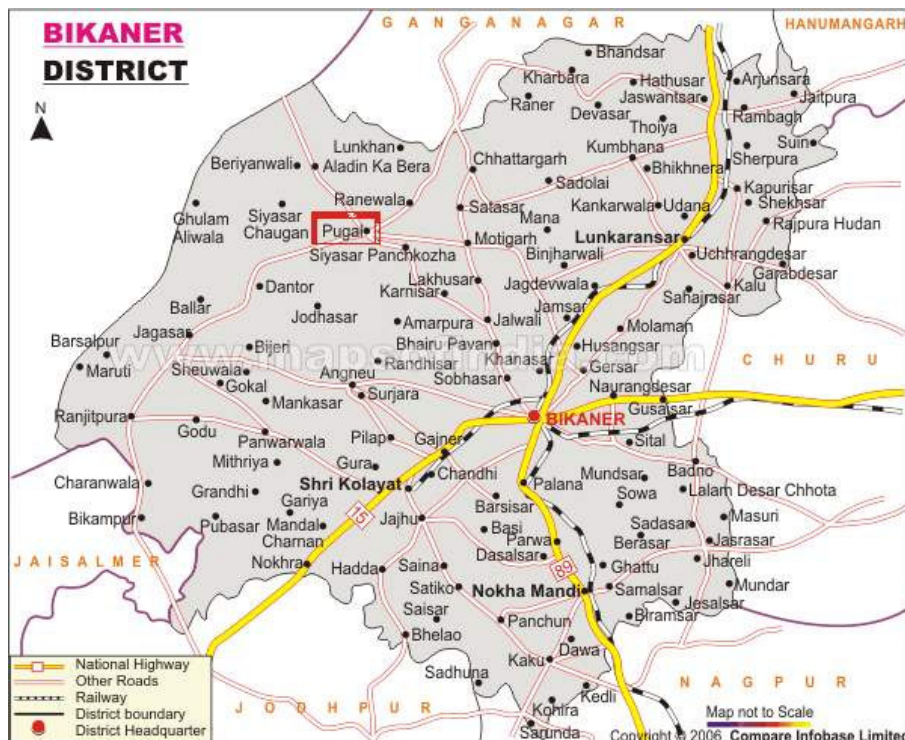
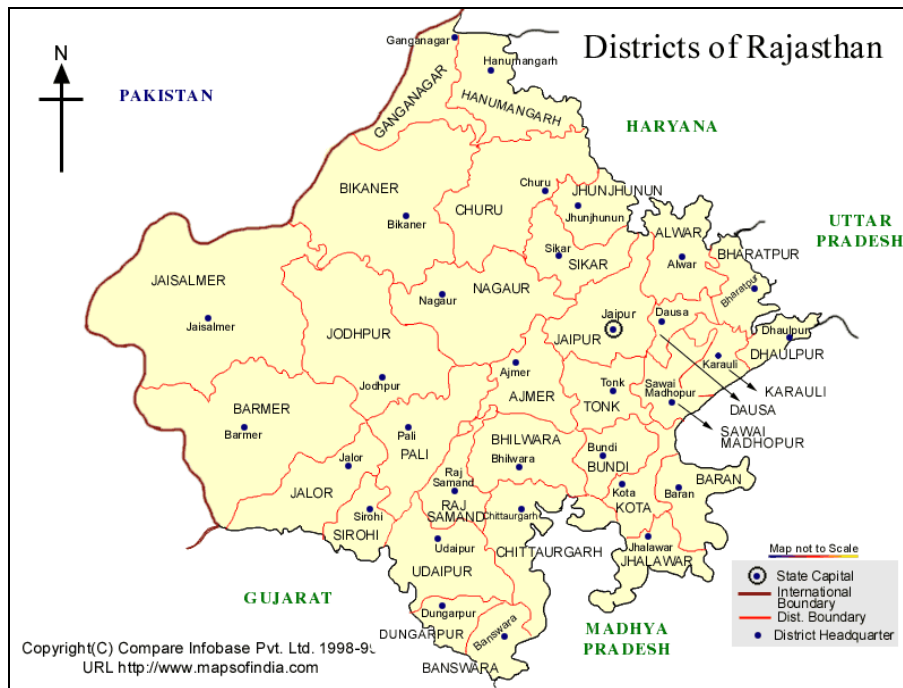


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Background and Context



Rajasthan is one of the largest states of the country spanning 342'239 square kilometers sharing its borders with Pakistan. It has a population of about 56 million (census 2001) and density of 129 persons per sq. kilometers. It accounts for 14% of India's cultivable land; however, since 1% of the total land is irrigated, the state remains one of the most socio-economically deprived states of India. More than half of the total ground water in the Thar is

considered brackish and highly saline. The water table is at a depth of 250-300 feet. For most of the villages located in the arid drought prone region, rainwater is still the dominant source of water for subsistence. Potable drinking water is a serious problem and several villages are still without their own captive ground water source, having to rely on wells and reservoirs several kilometers away.

The districts of Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Churu and Nagaur spread over thousands of kilometers form part of the Great Indian Thar. Bikaner and Jaisalmer share common borders with Pakistan. The state has the highest proportion of Scheduled Castes (17%) and high concentration of settlement, with diverse physiographic ranging from desert and semi arid regions of western Rajasthan to comparatively greener belt east of Aravallis, and the hilly tracts in the southeast. The state is characterized by fragile eco-system, geo-physical, scanty and erratic rainfall and climatic conditions leading to fluctuations in production and peoples' livelihoods. Owing to the poor economic conditions and harsh physical terrain and presence of recurrent natural disasters like drought, the investment on children at the family and government level is not adequate as most of the expenses are diverted towards the employment issues.

The hot arid zones of the Great Indian Thar would surely rank as one of the most inhospitable and forbidding terrain characterized by extreme climate (with temperatures reaching below freezing point in winter and over 50°C in summers) as compared to anywhere in the rest of the country and is a difficult area to work and to live in. Monsoons are infrequent; rainfall is erratically distributed – the average rainfall ranging between 10 cm to 40 cm. In the last 100 years, this area has witnessed over 40 droughts.

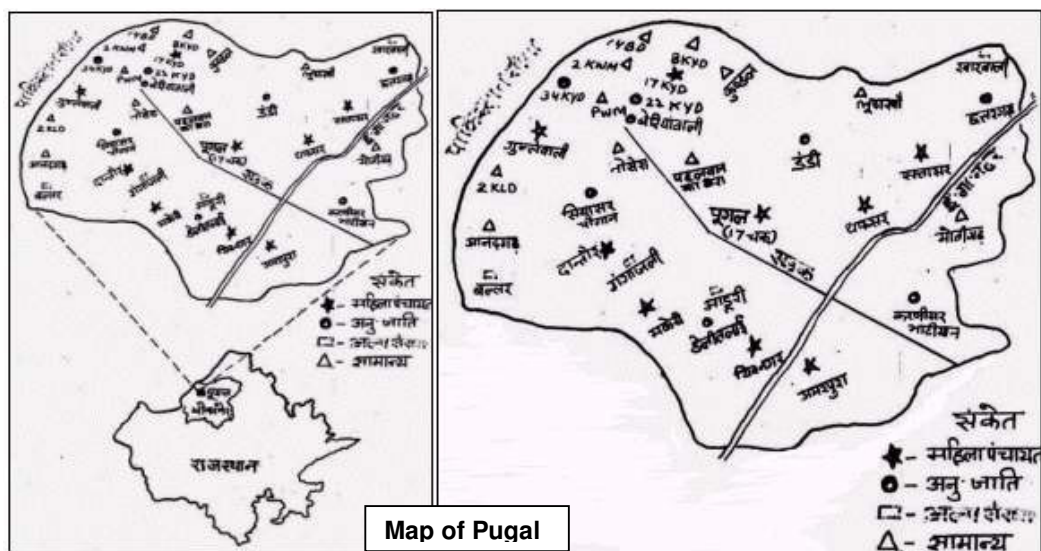
The area, dotted with sandy deserts and marshes, is characterized by low humidity and high wind velocity resulting in high potential evaporation/transpiration which may be substantially higher than precipitation, even during the monsoon months, thus making the area moisture deficient).

Big and small dunes (covering some 30-40% of the region) interspersed by plain and sandy agricultural lands mark the topography. These dunes are formed because of the southwest winds, which blow at great speed from March to September. Because of these severe sandstorms, communication links esp. with the rural areas are badly disrupted, making the provision of development support services almost impossible.

Around 85% of the population lives in villages. A peculiar feature of the desert demography is its scattered nature. Despite such a high growth rate, population densities for most of these districts vary between 7-15 people per sq. km. The scattered communities and their seasonal settling patterns make it a challenge to institutionalize any form of service delivery – whether health, education, or extension of banking or agriculture related services.

Animal husbandry and subsistence farming are the primary economic activities of the area. A combination of agriculture and semi nomadic pastoralism based on the utilization of large tracts of non-arable and marginalized lands still forms the basis of much of the region's rural economy. The majority of the arable is mono-cropped.

For the rural agricultural classes the more preferred mode of existence is a hamlet (*dhani*) often isolated and located in the field several kilometers away from the main village. In fact, the majority of sheep breeder's *chedus* as they are called in the local slang have no fixed dwelling at all. The halting stops under open sky amidst flocks serve as the only surrogates for home (with all its security and comfort) during all round the year during journeys spanning hundreds of kilometers.



After the onset of IGNP (Indira Gandhi Nahar Pariyogana) in the area, vast tracts of unoccupied land were distributed among different sections like victims of 1971 Indo-Pak war, land-less labourers of Bikaner, Nagaur, Ganganagar and other districts and also displaced people from Mahajan field firing range. 25 Bighas of land was allotted to each family along the channel/tributaries of IGNP. Once the IGNP got fully operational, the value of the land increased as rich farmers from Punjab, Haryana and Ganga Nagar started buying land from rehabilitated and local people. The IGNP has covered 12% of the total land area for irrigation. As the local people were unaware of modern agricultural practices, the big farmers brought along with them agriculture-labourers to work on the farms. These labourers are now settled and majority of them are land-less. The settled communities have distinct social and cultural identities and do not mingle with one another.

The Indira Gandhi Canal, has in many ways been responsible for the disappearing of the grazing lands and severe water logging.

Uncertain rainfalls give rise to large-scale distress migration (almost 30% of the total population) every year. Though this gives them enough opportunity to survive, it has obvious long-term repercussions in the areas of health and education of the family members. This uncertainty does not let the people come out of the throes of poverty, which is more marked in case of backward castes as these are the people who have always lacked access to resources and opportunity. The well being of the livestock is also dependent on rains.

The Thar Desert has never been hospitable to large permanent settlements due to environmental constraints such as: grossly impoverished soils, seasonal high wind velocity, winds creating acute soil erosion, continuously shifting sand dunes, and very deep and saline water resources (300-500ft).

Most interior settlements do not have roads here, only sand tracks. Camel carts are still an indispensable mode of transport in the rural economies. Lines of communication too are far from efficient. Whatever little growth of infrastructure to deliver essential services has happened is mainly along the metal roads and has not touched the interior pockets.

As a result, even basic health, education, electricity and life support services either do not exist or cannot be maintained in the remote villages. Due to this poor state of communication services, life in the rural areas is still characterized by a fairly high degree of insularity.

The society of this region is characterised by a patriarchal order where women have a secondary and subjugated status. Traditional conservative practices and the persistence of the feudal ethos continually keep the women in the arid zone silenced, exhausted, and confined to interiors, veiled and secluded from birth to death.

The disruption and breakdown of the traditional mosaic of material cultures and social communities, ecosystems and their boundaries, rangelands, bird lands, wildlife, biodiversity, etc., is a part of the on-going process.



Project Description

Name of the Project	: Artisans Cluster Development and Skill Improvement & Entrepreneurship Programme
Project Location	: The program area, Adoori Tehsil in Pugal Block, Dist. Bikaner, is located in the northwest part of the state, in the district of Bikaner, bordering Pakistan, which is predominantly desert - barren and remote.
Duration of Project	: 36 months
Name of Counterpart	: Shanti Maitri Mission Sansthan
Requested Contribution	: Rs. 3,57,28,980.00
Objective	: Socio-economic development of the marginalized women artisans communities of the Thar
Target Group/Beneficiaries	: This project is intended to benefit traditional women artisans in the Adoori Tehsil of Pugal Block of Bikaner dist. belonging to the poor, vulnerable and marginalised communities of the Thar.



Summary of Project Proposal

The project proposes a major thrust for the social and economic empowerment of the marginalized women artisan communities of the Thar.

- **Time Duration**

The project is to be implemented over a period of three years.

Positioning of the Project

The project would be positioned at the Gram Panchayat and Block level. While the project would be implemented at Adoori Tehsil, some of the trainings would be held at Tehsil/Block level at Pugal.

Income Generation Programme

The severe drought of 1987 prompted SMMS to search for alternative livelihood (non-farm) in the areas of Bikaner dist. The villages here are rich for its rich traditional handcraft esp. embroidery.

The organization started its work from Pugal, with a group of refugees from the Indo-Pak war of 1971. These people were allotted land along the Indira Gandhi canal area by the Govt. of Rajasthan and the women here were skilled in exquisite hand embroidery. They did not have the appropriate to market their goods and were working for middlemen who paid them

exploitative rates for their intricate handwork. SMMS took the responsibility of organizing the women in self-help groups and linked to the NABARD as *mahila samuhs*. SMMS also imparts them training with a view to improve quality and produce products that could be marketed in the urban domestic market. Designers from NIFT, NID and Dastkar were roped in for this purpose. SMMS provided the women with raw materials and appropriate designs and work commenced with the production of hand-made, hand-embroidered items like cushion covers and bags. Each group has a group leader who is called *vyavasthapak*, who takes care of getting the raw materials from and distribution and production at the village level. She also monitors the quality of production in her village. SMMS is working on promoting traditional handicraft (mainly four stitches Paka, Sindhi, Soof, Kharekh) in the region as an economic activity and supports women's for alternative income generation activity.

The current product range includes apparels, bags and soft furnishings that can be marketed all over India as well as internationally. The women can easily earn a decent amount of Rs. 1,500/- to Rs. 2,000/- per month. The women also get an opportunity to participate in various exhibitions and get back customers' responses on their products. The artisans are also involved in the entire decision-making activities of the programme.

Along with the income generation programme, the focus of the organization is also on providing the communities with better health, education and awareness on socio-economic issues as well as information on Panchayati Raj system of governance that would help in bringing about an all-round holistic development of the marginalised artisan communities.



Problem Analysis

Justification

The native populations of the Thar rank as societies that have the lowest literacy rates in the country. The society here persists to be largely pre literate aural culture where the written word either has a limited penetration or is understood by a few. Seasonal migration is another serious problem. Following a spell of drought, and with the onset of the harvesting of winter crop, the entire family migrates to neighboring irrigated settlements. The displacement of the refugees to this side of the border and the allotment of the land in these command areas also meant a breakdown of the traditional mosaic system. These issues are related to access and the existing social and environmental factors. Further it is coupled by the geophysical, socio-economic conditions peculiar to the Thar.

Women and poor women in particular are the most vulnerable segments of developing societies. This is because men have been considered in these societies to be the income earners—those who go out to work while women's work has been confined to the household. Women are thus invisible and unremunerated for their household work. When, due to economic pressures, women have been forced to go out to work, it has given rise to multiple burdens on women of household work, children's welfare and wage earning. The multiple burdens have resulted in women making the adjustments, at great cost to their own health and well-being. While women have increasingly become important economically to the household and have been recognized to be contributors to the household economy, they lose the most when economic forces negatively affect livelihoods. They and their children, suffer the effects of dislocation and loss of income due to forces that they do not understand or have control over. Further, their economic lives have been mainly subsistence-oriented—to fulfil basic needs. They have not received their share of education, training, health and livelihood opportunities consistent with their potential, which will enable them to deal with crises and shocks or improve their well-being.

One of the key interventions for poverty-alleviation for women in many parts of the developing world in the 1990s is micro-credit. In India, micro-credit was introduced mainly through the mechanism of Self-Help Groups (SHGs). SHGs were involved in saving and internal lending activities, which gained them experience in financial management and helped them to qualify

for bank finance. Women used the small loans from their groups mainly for consumption but also for small economic activities.

Globalisation has imposed severe constraints to sustainable livelihoods for poor women. This needs solutions that go beyond micro-credit—solutions that build women's access, knowledge and capacity in a variety of ways. Women's vulnerability has increased due to the ascendancy of the market. Even for more secure actors in the economy with greater exposure, skills, assets and access to resources; the market can have a devastating effect on livelihoods. For poor women without any of these advantages, market uncertainties can result in reduced incomes and number of days of employment. These uncertainties are, principally:

- Losing markets they knew to traders who can negotiate them;
- Not knowing which markets can sustain volumes which will convert into income and employment;
- How to access and negotiate those markets;
- How to organize their enterprise processes to sustain the negotiated market links.

Consistent with the required market access and control are a range of intermediary problems of capacity facing women such as management, skill and productivity as well as access to credit and technology.

In addition, there are location-specific infrastructural and social constraints on poor women that affect their mobility and circumscribe their present and future potential in market reach as well as income and employment gains.

Hence, capacity building for women for greater market control must be seen in terms of two stages; livelihood security and enterprise growth

- Livelihood security: The attributes of this stage are: women are involved in rudimentary income-generating activities; with training, they begin to understand market channels and operations and the requirements for undertaking sustainable microenterprises; coping mechanisms are in place in generally non transparent and changing market relationships.
- Enterprise growth: The attributes of this stage are the following: there is demonstrable capacity of women to act entrepreneurial; they have understanding of markets beyond the local; enterprises are yielding enough income for them to have become primary sources of income for the women with reduced dependence on intermittent wage labour.

These categories also serve as a reminder that strategies for women's livelihood promotion have to focus on movement that is towards a trajectory of building on women's strengths and potential and enabling them to take greater control over their lives. Hence, critical disadvantages that women face must be identified and strategies devised to overcome them. In addition to dislocation due to the movement across the border from Pakistan to India, women are subject to a feudal and highly patriarchal household and caste-ridden village context that restricts their physical, social and work-related space. The skill has allowed them access to a livelihood, but in highly exploitative conditions where agents make the buck. Women lack of mobility prevents them from visiting markets to learn about market conditions themselves thus depriving them from understanding or negotiating the terms of the trade at the local level.

Critical role of embroidery in a desert area

The crafts sector in India employs the second largest workforce after agriculture. Since the sector is mostly informal with workers being home-based. Hand embroidery, as a cultural signifier and now increasingly as a livelihood provider, occupies a significant space for women in many rural communities. SMMS has promoted entrepreneurship in Western Rajasthan among women with traditional embroidery skills because what women earn from it they

control and use for their own and family welfare. In a desert area, where agriculture is not stable due to poor land quality and uncertain rainfall, women's work in hand-embroidery can assume significance for poverty alleviation if markets can be accessed and entrepreneurship encouraged.

Embroidered products are increasingly finding a place in national and international markets. However, despite the rich tradition and market demand, poverty, illiteracy and patriarchy characterize the women embroiderers in Bikaner. Women's embroidery work is home-based and sales are intermittent for that very reason. They are socialised into segregation and isolation so are veiled in public and do not go outside their village to learn or attend school. They have skills in embroidery and a sense of design and colour but because of restricted mobility, they cannot see and experience the markets where their products are sold; they have difficulty adapting to emerging product and design trends; they do not understand the determinants of price; they do not know how to place a value on design and creativity and they do not know how to search out new buyers and expand their market reach. Rather, due to these constraints, they function as wage labour. Women are paid by the piece for the embroidery. They understand the value of their work but do not know how to enforce that value in the market.

It is estimated that the share of goods produced in the villages around Bikaner in the overall trade in Western Rajasthan in this subsector is only about 15 per cent due to its isolation from markets thus allowing dependence and exploitation by local agents.

Fair-trade micro enterprise promotion has employed the concept of fair wages per piece sold in the market. While this puts a value to the labour employed by women, especially in hand-made products in which their time or creativity is not seen to be fairly compensated, it does not allow for competitiveness of the products in the market where volumes need to be generated for sustainability. SMMS's approach to micro enterprise promotion is to enable women handicraft workers to identify their competitive advantage for greater volumes and build their capacity. SMMS's perspective on fair trade is fair access to markets, fair access to knowledge and innovation in design and marketing and a level playing field so that women can bargain based on informed arguments and judgment.

To enable disadvantaged women to move towards their potential, they must become aware of the opportunities for greater control over their livelihoods. This is especially necessary in the face of variable outcomes for enterprises in general due to uncertain market conditions in the coming years. Training and support to women's livelihoods has the ultimate goal of creating institutions owned and operated by poor women.

Over the years, the artisans of this area have been pushed to a very marginal existence due to isolation, lack of awareness pertaining to market demands and innovations. They need capacity building inputs for development of skills specifically related to quality control and understanding regarding components of production process with color combination and design. SMMS facilitates and believes in strengthening components of collective awareness building and skill development with the help of enhanced participation, capacity building with control on resources and decision-making power. The work will not only help the enterprise to grow because of improved productivity, it will help women to improve their status in the eyes of the community.

Objectives :

- Provide training on different color combinations
- Provide support for developing newer designs and upgrading traditional designs
- To develop and understanding on time management and enabling delivery of goods on time
- Provide training and upgrading the skills of the artisans to make the local crafts more marketable
- To create an artisans cluster in this area so that their problems can be better addressed

The Programme aims to achieve the following outputs in the long term

- Mainstreaming of artisans communities : These communities are highly exploited in terms of livelihood hardly having control over resources. The winds of development in the rest of the country are yet to reach this land and even the bare minimum fallibilities required for survival have been neglected by the government. The specific results planned to be achieved over a period of three years are :
 - Better accessibility of craft communities to livelihood and improvement in overall standard of living and socio-economic conditions.
- Empower communities with Information : The Craft communities have been struggling for their basic and customary rights owing to lack of proper guidance and other socio-economic factors. The project intervention will help to raise their awareness levels about issues related to their livelihood rights.



Organisation Profile

GENERAL INFORMATION

ADDRESS	:	HEAD OFFICE Shanti Maitri Mission Sansthan Panchyat Samiti Campus, Jaipur Road, BIKANER (RAJASTHAN) Pin Code -334003 0151-2233574, Mob: 09414143574 Email: smmsspugal@rediffmail.com ; smmsspugal@gmail.com
	1.	FIELD OFFICE Shanti Maitri Mission Sansthan Near CADA Godown PUGAL, BIKANER Pin Code- 334023 01523-265477
	2.	Shanti Maitri Mission Sansthan Momasar Bass SRIDUNGAR GARH, BIKANER
CONTACT PERSON	:	Kapil Gaur, Secretary Mob No. 9414143574
SOCIETY REGISTRATION NO	:	REF/28/Bikaner/1990-91 Dated 06 July 1990
FCRA REGISTRATION NO	:	125480010
BANK DETAILS	:	Bank of Baroda, Sadul Ganj, Bikaner A/C No. 9985
STAFF DETAILS	:	34 Persons
ANNUAL EXPENSES OF THE ORGANIZATION(2006-2007)	:	Around Rs. 40 lacs

SMMS (Shanti Matiri Mission Sansthan) is a Voluntary organization initiated by Kapil Gaur, the present secretary under inspiration from Mr. Sanjay Ghosh founder of URMUL Trust, Bikaner and Chairman Shanti Maitri Mission Sansthan. Mr. Binoy Acharya . It links its genesis to support desert communities in the border region of Pugal tehsil of Bikaner district. The organisation has been working since 1996 specifically capacitating communities with respect to knowledge and rights of communities in local self-governance aspects. Activities are need based and include primary health, education, women empowerment, agriculture, animal husbandry, environment, formation of SHGs and income generation programmes. The strength of the organisation is its ability to develop local human resources and build their capacities to become self sufficient. About 95% of the total human resources are locals and the rest are professional staff hired from outside (of the Thar). The combined force of commitment, dedication, shared values and experiences has turned SMMS into one of the finest organizations in western Rajasthan.

Quick responses to felt needs of the communities and understanding of the dynamics involved in the issues, accountability to the communities, equality in decision making at every level, faith in democratic and secular values, human rights, social justice etc. are some of the forte of the organization.

SMMS has also played an active role in networking with other organizations in the Thar region.

2. Mission

Establishment of local self-governance system, along with socio-economic development of the people through livelihood activities. To work towards the empowerment of the poor and marginalised communities through social and economical awareness and skill enhancement.

3. Vision

To enable mainstreaming of the rural communities of the Thar with national development through the Panchayati Raj system.

4. Objectives

- Strengthening of local-self governance system in western Rajasthan.
- Strengthening PRI's role in ensuring that the elected representatives play a pro-active role in the all round and sustainable development of the villages.
- Social and economical empowerment of the poor & marginalized sections of the society through various interventions.

5. Strategy for intervention

Direct intervention

1. Door to door contact
2. Through Awareness campaigns, role-play and theater performance.
3. Direct involvement through schools and community level health institutions.
4. Using PRA tool for community participation



Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Solution Proposed

SMMS endorses the view that poverty is a symptom of deeply rooted inequalities and unequal power relationships and that the key to success of a rights-based approach to development and social justice is empowerment. The entire programme calls for community ownership and involvement of women's groups and elected members of Panchayati Raj institutions will augment this. The Programme will have a community based monitoring system with full accountability and transparency.

Implementation Strategies

- **Project Management**

The project would be implemented by SMMS and there would be strategic guidance of this office in Bikaner including monitoring of progress and monthly reflection meetings.

Positioning of the Project

The project would be positioned at the Tehsil / Gram Panchayat and Block level. The trainings are proposed to be held at the block level.



Proposed Activities

Survey of women artisans

As no relevant survey exists in this region, it is foremost and vital to conduct an indepth door-to-door socio-economic survey (with context to traditional skills and knowledge) so as to ascertain the exact number, nature and position of the women artisans in this region. This survey would take a period of two months.

Preparing an action plan

An action plan will be made for conducting Skill upgradation programme. A holistic approach will attempt to provides knowledge and skill intergraded manner on following principals :

1. The plan will be made keeping in mind the socio-economic and geographic factors.
2. Need based programs would be prepared
3. Diversified flexible and adaptable programmes to cope with varying ground situations.
4. Target group will be traditional women artisans belonging to deprived section of the society.
5. Assessment of trainings will depend on demand and need.
6. All training will be based on the principle of self- employment.
7. Trained and skilled Resource person will be selected as instructors for vocational training.
8. After the completion of trainings, follow-up activities camps will be organised to strengthen and sharpen their skills.
9. Effective micro monitoring procedure will be applied for result-oriented trainings.
10. The Coordinator and field staff will work in close collaboration with the artisans and designers/resource persons.

Implementation of the Action Plan :

Action plan will be implemented with following pattern:

Selection of operational areas :

Drought prone villages will be selected for the selection of trainees.

Environment / Awareness building

Being an isolated and backward region, with the literacy levels remaining quite pathetic, it is necessary to build the environment and share with the communities the essence of this programme. This would be achieved through folk theater performances. As this programme can only succeed with the participation of the communities, this first step is of utmost importance.

Selection of trainees / beneficiaries :

Identification of beneficiaries : The right and deserving beneficiaries would first be identified by a selection team comprising of one member from our institution, Sarpanch / Panch of the area and an eminent local person. For the survey of trainees and selection of beneficiaries, a survey Performa will be prepared

Formation & Strengthening of SHGs

Where the women are not part of SHGs, women SHGs would be formed first. Experts would give a basic training lasting for 07 days. Following this, the existing SHGs as well as the newly formed SHGs would be strengthened through a 15 days advanced training. All these trainings would be of a residential nature and would be held at the block level. Later on, an exposure visit to successful SHGs functioning elsewhere would ensure that these groups are further strengthened and their capacities adequately built.

Identification of trained instructors :

For the result oriented training program, skilled persons and instructors from the District will be selected from the Urban area and if they are not available, local skilled person will be given preference.

The following conditions will be necessary for Instructors :

1. He/She should have completed at least 10th standard schooling.
2. He/She should be trained in related trainings, priority will be given to ITI / trained resource persons.
3. A minimum of 2-3 years of Training /working experience would be required.
4. The resource person has to have an initiative nature of such vocational training and entrepreneurship programs.
5. Knowledge of sub syllabus of the related programs would be required
6. Fluency in local language
7. Ability to produce and prepare teaching learning materials.
8. Must have analytical approach towards the skill up gradation program.
9. Communication skills would be considered vital

To be noted :

1. The candidate should be from backward class of society, e.g. socially economically backward and SC, ST.
2. Around 30 candidates to participate in each training
3. Preference for traditional women artisans
4. Age group for training would be between 20 - 40 years.
5. The idea would be to include as many families as possible

Before the start of training a brief meeting will be held among the trainees, instructor and program functionaries.

Training programme of instructors:

As the Instructors are the key for success of the programme implementation one-day training cum orientation program will be conducted, so as to impart the concept of the skill development program and the day-to-day routine of the organisation

- a) Introduction and the working of Shanti Matri Mission Sansthan.
- b) Concept of the skill development Initiator Program.
- c) Role and responsibilities of the instructor of training.
- d) Teaching learning material and subject curriculum-its usage and importance.
- e) Maintaining procedure of centre progress report and co- ordination with the organisation.
- f) Refresher, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation tips and techniques

Availability of Raw material and equipments:

Quality and availability of raw materials play a paramount role in the success of the programme. All the centres where program is to be organised, will house raw materials and well-equipped tools at any give point of time.

- Raw Materials
- Tool Kits
- Machinery
- Essential equipments



Activities to be undertaken

Trainings to the Women (Artisans)

Trainings will be offered to women artisans from the villages in Adoori Tehsil. In the first year, SMMS would organize 30 days of training (02 trainings of 15 days each) in a year. After this training, these women can get employment and can earn between Rs. 600/- – Rs. 1,000/- per month.

In second year too, 30 days of training (02 trainings of 15 days each) would be organised. Refresher training would be provided to improve the quality and more inputs would be provided to improve the quality of products. Newer designs in embroidery would be offered too. The trainings would be focused on production of simple products like handbag, Dori, cushion covers etc. After completing this training each woman can earn between Rs. 1,000/- – Rs. 1,500/- per month.

In the third year, again 30 days of training (02 trainings of 15 days each) will be organised. Apart from the refresher angle, much more emphasis would be laid on incorporating newer techniques and latest designs. After the completion of this training, the women artisans would be in a position to make exclusive products and earn between Rs. 1,500/- - Rs. 2,500/- per month.



Past Experience

Capacity-building for entrepreneurship

Theory and practice of enterprise management together have a more enduring effect than theory alone or theory and practice not linked to an activity appropriate in the context in which it is to be applied. Hence, the teaching of principles has to be woven around an enterprise activity.

SMMS is working with women embroiderers in Pugal town and surrounding villages of Bikaner district in the state of Rajasthan. SMMS's interventions would motivate embroiderers towards entrepreneurship through Management Trainings at grassroot levels, which are delivered to women already organized in enterprise and microcredit called Self Help Groups (SHGs). Most of the women in these SHGs are already collecting savings for internal lending as well as to become eligible for matching grants and financing from government banks. The trainings are intended as orientation to enterprise for women who are primarily used to hearing about micro-credit for consumption and limited production. This orientation training is divided into modules consisting of topics such as gender issues in enterprise, how to do a market survey and select an enterprise, feasibility, business planning and marketing. The orientation provides women an idea of what business services other than micro-credit are needed for promotion of micro enterprise. This gives an early start to enterprise awareness generation.

The motivation messages are designed to encourage women to build on their traditional strengths of risk taking in the household, knowledge of household management and experience of multi-tasking rather than on constraints they face, which tends to be the focus of conventional gender training. In Bikaner, because women were already engaged in producing for a market, their entrepreneurship skills were developed around the embroidery activity, incrementally improving their technical and managerial skills for better quality and variety of products. They were also helped to gain an understanding of how products are priced at various points in the value chain, adding up various costs including reasonable margins for services rendered by agents. Although women's labour and creativity are not fairly valued in the price of a product and they feel exploited for that reason, their lack of knowledge of business processes and costs incurred for value added services, led them to believe that agents were exploitative per se. A corollary to this is the view that women held (also promoted in the fair trade perspective), that every piece has an inherent value (hence priced on that basis) regardless of market potential or demand. SMMS (with financial support from SEWA, Ahmedabad and Marwar Hastkala Kendra) has tried, in the past, through its trainings, to make women aware of the importance of a strategic engagement with the market that would require them to balance the need for fair wages with concessions during low demand to sustain market linkages that have been made.

The training would lead to an increase in the number of women who are able to meet the market demand for quality and timeliness and a greater regularity in employment, thus motivating more women to come forward to participate in the program. The number of women in SMMS's project area would increase five fold in three years. This would be a rapid increase given the remoteness of the program location and social exclusion of the target group.

Another significant impact of the training would be the understanding of the need for specialization in particular design forms based on skill and tradition. Certain villages, therefore, have women with certain levels of skills specializing in certain designs and products

for a particular market. For instance in village Adoori and other nearby villages, there are women who specialize in producing appliqué-running material. The artisans would be trained in time management for production and continuous learning. Women would be in a position to know in advance the number of days needed for production in the ensuing month and schedule training programs and meetings on non-production days.

Training for master artisans

The trained rural artisans will get training regarding newer designs, skill upgradation, latest color schemes and would be given inputs to improve the quality of finished goods and bring out products that would be of demand in the market. The master artisans would become more aware regarding their work efficiency with good quality and timeliness.

Tailors training for quality improvement

Tailors training, facilitated by designer will be conducted in which the artisans would receive training for newer designs and patterns keeping in mind the latest trend. Emphasis would also be given on improving the quality of stitching. Two trainings would be organized each year.

Bank for Raw Materials

A bank would be created at the CFC (Community Facility Centre, Pugal) exclusively for ensuring that the programme does not suffer from want of quality raw materials. An initial amount would be earmarked for this purpose. Later on, this bank would function on a rotational basis. The communities would themselves manage this bank. Sufficient training would be imparted to members of the community to enable them understand the dynamics of this bank and successfully operate it.

Community Facility Centre

A **community facility center would come up in Pugal**, where **SMMS already has a 25-bigha land (with proper fencing)**. This would house equipments, tools, kits, around 50 tailoring and embroidery machines etc. and would function as training cum production center with residential facilities. This building would be constructed with the involvement of the communities in a transparent manner.

Marketing

Selection and training of grassroots Business Promoters

After at least a year of work in building awareness of enterprise requirements and enabling women to apply their training in their work, SMMS would select key women who have demonstrated their understanding of business risks and are willing to move incrementally towards enterprise work including weathering the fluctuation in income that is part of the life cycle of every business. This process of profiling, selection and getting their support, for a market-oriented perspective would help women understand and negotiate markets and market players, was carefully facilitated over a two-year period that would focus on trust building with the community involving a few interventions, such as free design development and skill up gradation training programs followed by sales events that would produce immediate economic returns.

A separate training and mentoring program would be designed for these selected women that includes exposure visits to upscale stores in mega cities for them to understand the price

appreciation for an elite clientele of goods they make, the importance of shop window displays to attract customers, colour-designs and so on.

Market exposure visits as part of the training would be effective in motivating women to explore their own potential. Those who were able to move out of their villages to visit far away markets say their negotiating skills have improved and they are able to negotiate a better deal with the agents in some villages. These business promoters would in turn also have to select, train and mentor at least seven other women to become service providers/leaders. The focus would be on moving up from microcredit to entrepreneurship, the spread of enterprise motivation among grassroots women is a necessary complement to microcredit initiatives, which means that some of these women can be encouraged to start enterprises thus enabling them to go beyond the ordinary and realise more of their potential. These enterprises can also employ other women. It is hoped that these leaders will spread the ideas and practice of entrepreneurship, both business-related entrepreneurship as well as social entrepreneurship.

To improve motivation and productivity and succeed in business, women need social security such as health insurance, childcare as well as community recognition. The enterprise leaders would be made aware of government and other programs providing social security that they can access for the benefit of the embroiderers. By keeping business and welfare measures separate, it would reduce the risk of compromise of entrepreneurship principles by a subsidy-oriented perspective. The poor are used to subsidies, which are endemic to government programs for poverty alleviation in India, including micro credit and enterprise programs.

Enterprise promotion and incentives for producers and market players

In order to ensure satisfaction of buyers in sourcing from producers whose products are presented to them SMMS would facilitate for suppliers and buyers; to understand requirements, constraints, non-negotiables at the buyers' end and help negotiate and cement a relationship between suppliers and buyers. SMMS's facilitation role would include capacity building of women not only to adhere to requirements of buyers but also to be accountable for failures and dissatisfaction of buyers by agreeing to forgo wages for poor quality and schedule disruption. Women have to be oriented towards long-term gains and continuous encouragement and handholding is needed to make them accept penalties for poor work as part of the learning process. As incentive, women, whose work meets the requirement of the buyers, would be rewarded with bonuses and this would act as a demonstration for other women.

Since quality and productivity is a major element in determining the growth of the enterprise, women would be motivated to work in a production centre away from home, at least for some hours in the day. The production constraints of quality, timeliness and physical distance to and between villages (requiring agents, thus reducing the margins for the producers) favours a centralised production and business centre **(Community Facility Centre) in Pugal**. This dual (training and production) facility at the business centre is an effort to balance the requirements of the market with constraints of women from the villages. Committed working hours for the few that come to the centre and setting up of systems, will also lead to higher productivity, diversification into products that are not suitable for home-based work and greater reliability thus raising incomes for these women.

Ownership and scale-up through systems and institutions

To enable disadvantaged women to move towards their potential, they must become aware of the opportunities for greater control over their livelihoods. This is especially necessary in the face of variable outcomes for enterprises in general due to uncertain market conditions in the coming years. Training and support to women's livelihoods by SMMS would lead to the ultimate goal of creating institutions owned and operated by poor women. For the production and marketing aspects of embroidery to be undertaken by the association of embroiderers, working in an organized production and business centre, a business plan would be drawn up. Systems for stocktaking and inventory control would be established and taught to some women.

The creation of an institution at Pugal would enable scale up of production and marketing operations as well as capacity-building services. The institution would provide a legitimacy, collective strength and security to the work of women embroiderers who are subject to ad hoc operations of unscrupulous agents. The existence of an institutionalised set-up and logistical support would encourage buyers to seek out these producers and their products. The buyers would benefit because of 'one stop' window for viewing samples, giving orders, collecting orders and making payment. An institution owned and operated by women and for women will also enable surplus generated to be available as a fund for growth of the enterprise, for reinvestment and for credit support. The institution will become a centre for capacity building for grassroots women. An institution can be directly supported with grants from government institutions, as direct support to registered grassroots institutions is preferred by many government agencies.

Market expansion and outreach

- ① Advertisements ① Brochures / Catalogues ① Website ① Exhibitions
- ① Buyer Seller Meets ① Exclusive Emporium

Once the artisans are trained and production of skilled products commences, **Advertisements** would be placed in leading **print and electronic media**. **Catalogues** and **brochures** would be designed and printed and made available at **leading hotels, travel agencies**, and other establishments which is frequented by buyers and tourists alike. A **website** would be designed and hosted. This would be constantly upgraded with the latest in the products. The women from these groups would participate in **exhibitions** at major cities which would enable them interact and understand the dynamics of the market trends and the buyers reactions and requirements. The buyer can also then understand the producer better. **Buyer-Seller Business Meets** would also be in the best interest of both the buyer as well as the producers. An **exclusive and exquisite emporium/regional outlet at Bikaner** would also serve the cause of women entrepreneurs.

Monitoring And Evaluation

Sharing & Review/Planning Meetings

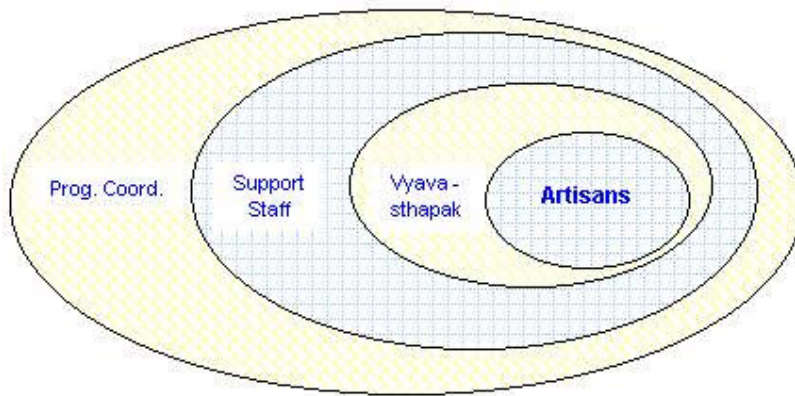
There would be regular interactions/meetings between our staff, the artisan communities, designers / resource persons and PRI representatives during which the progress, difficulties, results and progress of the project would be discussed and problems encountered and possible solutions identified.

During the training, internal tests will be conducted from time to time on instructor level.

Documentation

A well-implemented programme sans documentation is a work done 'half-well'. It is proposed to hire professionals for audio / visual documentation of the entire process. All this would result in the improvement of the institutional memory that can be useful for one and all whosoever is interested in development activities in the desert region, thus ensuring that the wheel doesn't have to be reinvented time and again.

• **Human Resources**



Roles and Responsibilities

Project Coordinator

The project coordinator would be responsible for managing the overall project and activities and will have to liaison with the Secretary, SMMS, officials from GOR, designers, resource persons and the artisans.

Support Staff

Field Support Staff (05) – responsible for the facilitation of work within the Gram Panchayat related to community work, delivery of service, system knowledge and arranging and running all the trainings systematically. All staff to preferably have relevant experiences in their area of work They will be responsible for and identify the beneficiaries from the villages

Vyavasthapak

A Vyavasthapak in each group would be required to take care of ensuring that the group gets its requirement of raw materials, the distribution and production of goods at the village level. She also monitors the quality of production.

Accountant cum MIS Officer

The Accountant would be responsible for accounts requirements and reporting to the management of SMMS and the DIC, GOR on the fund utilization etc. He/She would be responsible for maintaining the MIS information in a systematic manner.

Selection of the candidate :

The procedure for the selection of the candidates would be

1. **Advertisement through news papers :** This being the easiest mean by which the people of the concerned area will come to know about it and can contact SMMS at a specific date, time and place.
2. **By direct contact :** Our workers who are working in the area can contact those potential candidates who are in most need and who can learn & can work with enthusiasm and zeal

3. **Through Interview:** The candidates would have to go through the process of interview in which one member from our institution, Sarpanch/Panch from that area, eminent local person, representative of SMMS



Expected Outcomes

In order to achieve the above-mentioned outcome, it is necessary to understand the issues of Craft communities and develop a strong foundation for long-term programme implementation. Therefore, the first phase of programming is focused on mobilizing people, organizing them, developing methodology for dealing with various issues and to chalk out long-term community based programme plan. The first year will also focus in building their understanding and capacity for long-term goal. The following outcomes are expected by the end of the first phase.

- Mobilising the community and organizing them through Craft Clusters and Craft Groups to deal with their issues in a better way : About four to five villages will be made into a craft cluster. Each village will have a Craft Group. A total of about 50 Crafts Clusters will be formed. The Groups and Hub members will be trained on the various skills pertaining to hand embroidery. The use of best quality raw materials and better fabric etc. will be ensured. All craft groups will undergo detailed training. A long-term plan for the comprehensive development of the community will be developed as the key output of the first phase. The long-term strategy will be based on Micro plans developed by Crafts clusters and specific task based studies (studies for socio cultural and livelihood pattern, credit plan linked to SHG/Craft Groups, value addition for employment generation and better economic returns, reaching the vulnerable people among community). These studies will help to develop a long-term comprehensive plan.
- Craft clusters are to work together for comprehensive development of Craft communities. The experience will lead to better coordination among them and clarity towards future plan of action.
- Improved awareness amongst the community related to issues like building their capacities vis-à-vis socio economic issues and improving their embroidery skills and techniques.
- Conduct meetings with NABARD; enable the communities understand about savings for their future and about schemes and loans etc.
- Enable the artisans understand the importance of quality control and the need for keeping in tune with the changing market scenario.
- Establishment of Community Facility Centre at Pugal and Emporium at Bikaner
- Designing and hosting/printing of Website/Brochures

Conclusive Comment on proposal of Skill Development initiative program:

Organisation has a long experience in conducting training of various types. With the cooperation of technical institute and various Subject specialists we will prepare teaching / learning materials. If Nabard will give us an opportunity to conduct Skill Development initiator program, the rural youth will gain more opportunity in the own home place, so the migration of people will be stopped during the time of drought. The programme, on completion would result in the formation of about 50 artisan clusters and will directly benefit some 1,500 rural traditional artisan women from the vulnerable communities.

