

Waste To Wealth: Women-led rope weaving cluster generating 300+ Green Jobs



*As it is said, give a woman a room,
she will make a home.
Similarly, give her some ropes,
she will build a “Sirohi”*

Nestled amidst the plains of a small town, Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, lives Gauhar Fatima. Mother of two and the entrepreneur behind the Rope Weaving Cluster. The cluster is a green enterprise that upcycles industrial textile waste into ropes and then weaves it into different types of furniture. This is a traditional art of the weaving community in the region and this legacy is passed down through generations and women are the keepers of this tradition.

As one walks through the road, surrounded by mango orchards on both sides, is the Common Facilitation Centre (CFC), it is a state-of-the-art building complex that houses high-end machinery for artisans to upcycling industrial textile raw material into finished products right from value-addition to packaging. This is where Gauhar along with 50 other women artisans creates spectacular handcrafted rope designs, such as Ajmeri and Bikaneri, into furniture pieces. Earlier, they used to only weave cots for the household, but with the intervention from the Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF), the artisans are now weave intrinsic designs to make baskets, trays, handbags, trunks and jewellery boxes. IMEDF is the social enterprise development vehicle of the Development Alternatives Group and registered as a Nodal Agency by the Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India. It is set up with an aim to boost an ecosystem for green and inclusive entrepreneurship that promotes and supports enterprise models.



Artisans crafting different products



Artisans showcasing their handcrafted products

This transition has been possible through the vision and determination of Gauhar Fatima, who took the lead in collectivizing women in her community to become a part of Handicrafts Producer Company. As a mother, she wanted to educate her children so that they become financially independent. Hence, she decided not to confine herself behind the veils and utilize her skills. Inspired by her, other artisans joined her social solidarity circle to earn a decent living.

These ladies exemplify how to weave circularity in our lives. Circularity is a concept of sustainability where efforts are made towards reducing the production of waste which ends up in landfills. Fatima Gauhar and her fellow artisans save 60,000 Kg of textile waste from ending up in landfills each year. They upcycle the cloth shreds into ropes and weave them into sustainable and beautiful home decor products. These products are sold under the brand - SIROHI. The operations occur at the CFC, a 1200-square-foot green building made of fly-ash brick technology that releases zero emissions into the environment.

Marking their presence digitally, the cluster has also launched its website www.sirohi.org, through which the products have reached a global market. Now Sirohi is customizing orders for New York, Singapore and London. The artisans are now training women in other geographies with the help of digital tools, they are imparting training on how to weave different designs into products and sell them. The artisans have also displayed their crafts at various exhibitions organized by the Ministry of Textiles, SIDBI, Jaipur Literature Festival, and the Ministry of MSME.



Sirohi's Handcrafted Products