



*Tisser*  
hand to heart

**TISSER  
ARTISAN  
TRUST**

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# ABOUT TISSER

The word 'Tisser' means to 'weave.' A word holding immense value given that India is one of the only countries in the world to preserve its style of fashion handwriting still. Moreover, the Indian handloom and crafts industries, built and developed by their rural artisans, still provide a livelihood for many, with **60% of global looming and artisans present in India**. Evidenced by its success, Tisser India aims to provide sustainable livelihoods, income-generating opportunities, and access to professional support to rural craftspersons in India. Through its professional training, innovative models, and technological solutions, Tisser has forged a diverse market for both the modern consumer and the rural artisan. Tisser has a network of more than **10,000 artisans, groups, and SHGs** across South Asia. Working in more than **100 art forms**, Tisser generates livelihoods for **40+ rural clusters** in **18 states** of India with more than **1,000 products** made using traditional and cultural art forms like Madhubani, Warli, Kalamkari, Ikat, Terracotta, Pattachitra, Tussar Silk, Block Print, Chanderi, Maheshwari, Dokra, etc.

- **10,000+ Artisan Groups and SHGs**
- **100+ Art Forms**
- **40+ Rural Clusters**
- **18 States in India**
- **1,000+ Products**

With entrepreneurial power, Tisser has carved out an online and offline market with other businesses and consumers while weaving the pride of our homeland throughout the longitudes and latitudes of the country.

# TISSER ARTISAN TRUST

Tisser India works as a not-for-profit organisation:  
The Tisser Artisan Trust (NGO)

## TISSER ARTISAN TRUST

*The Tisser Artisan Trust* works towards empowering women artisans across India. Through its outreach program, Tisser aims to build fruitful partnerships and undertake a variety of projects to uplift and support women artisans at the grassroots level. While providing them industry exposure, its activities also ensure that the artisans are connected to bigger and inclusive value chains:

- Estd. 2015 - Becoming an NGO in 2019
- Supporting livelihoods of 6,000+ artisans
- Empaneled Agency with SFURTI, NABARD and KVIC
- >75 Lakh received as CSR Funding
- Used in over 100 clusters in over 4 years



# 365 DEGREES CHANGE MODEL

India has a wide repertoire of handlooms and weaving cultures. Tisser's unique model focussing on a 365-degree change ensures all facets of Indian Handloom Production and Traditional Weaving are enhanced and expanded. 6 key factors, all playing an essential role, are looked at in this model:

## 1. CONSUMER AWARENESS

Artisan stories, training programs and environment awareness.

## 2. END TO END CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Creating artisan groups, skills training, marketing and continuous handholding for all artisan clusters.

## 3. REGIONAL HUBS FOR OUTREACH

Regional hubs in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Bihar for extensive outreach to work directly with artisans.

## 4. DESIGN INTERVENTION

Dedicated team of designers work on incorporating traditional art form into utilitarian products.

## 5. TECH INNOVATIONS AND PLATFORM APPROACH

Depicting artisan's contribution and profit from a product, provide transparency, traceability, auditability, immutability, security.

## 6. PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION

Expansion of artisan's product portfolio, cataloguing and marketing of all products on various platforms.

## Addressing the problem

At the artisan level, markets were informal and disorganized. With limited design skills and poor finishing artisans were excluded from the value chain and exploited by middlemen at the market level. With limited enterprise capacity, artisans were forced to borrow credit and were unable to stick to timelines. Even for consumers there existed a risk of counterfeit products being sold which could be machine made.

## The Tisser Solution

Tisser's solution included both mobilization of artisans empowering local supply as well as creating demand by getting rid of middlemen and creating a seamless value chain for consumers to buy into. Networking with regional artisans and groups to create producer enterprises across South Asia through its GRAM project is one example of how Tisser aims to empower artisans and producer enterprise groups to be partners in value chain. By harnessing the transformative power of rural clusters, Tisser ensures every artisan gets social incubation support for creation of sustainable and scalable livelihood generation. Through its professional support, artisans can curate innovative and unique products and be upskilled in both design and product diversification. Tisser also strengthened the handicraft/handloom value chain through its ICT innovations (Digital Interventions) in the form of its web portal and mobile application which give consumers a direct access to eco-friendly, sustainable, and professionally designed products.



# CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT

Developing key enterprises in Clusters - an important aspect of Tisser's operations - is essential for developing partnerships and ensuring livelihood generation is possible for artisans across larger catchment areas.

Enabling end to end enterprise development and joint brand creation in stitching centres is part of the cluster development approach at Tisser. Its partnership mode focussing on a shared responsibility and revenue ensures sustainability and scalability.

Each stitching centre is brought on as a value chain partner with empowered capabilities. These long-term partnerships, ranging from a period of 1-3 years, empower centres to not just produce high quality products, based on market research, but also fulfil orders for other clients also with mutual consultations. The centres essentially focus on upskilling, production, and cost management. Their role in the partnerships include:



- 01.** MOBILISING WOMEN ARTISANS
- 02.** SAMPLE PRODUCTION TO ENSURE CATALOGUING
- 03.** RAW MATERIAL PROCUREMENT
- 04.** PRODUCTION AS PER ORDERS

- 05.** ORDER MANAGEMENT AND DISPATCH
- 06.** MANAGING CENTRE COSTS INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURE
- 07.** PROVIDING HONORARIUM TO DESIGNERS AND TRAINERS
- 08.** MAINTAINING WORKING CAPITAL FOR ORDERS

Presently, Tisser is upskilling and creating entrepreneurship opportunities for 2500 Women Artisans in 50 clusters of Maharashtra. It is also partnered with more than 50 producer groups and is a technical service provider (TSP) for SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) project by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises with a view to promote cluster development.

# CLUSTER INITIATIVES

## Raigad, Ratnagiri Clay Cluster

Tisser, with support from Maan Deshi, Mavin, and MSrn, led a project supporting artisans in pottery clusters as part of the "REVIVE" Project. With the festive season on and the government's focus on phasing out single-use plastic, the spotlight was on eco-friendly materials.

In the Maharashtra districts of Raigad and Ratnagiri, Tisser established relationships with some clay and pottery clusters. Professional expertise allowed artisans to create beautiful clay products including the eco-friendly 'Sadhu Ganapatis' and 'Diyas'



## Warli Tribal Painting Cluster

The project, as a part of 'REVIVE' and with support from CMRC, led Tisser India to scale the potential of Warli art with the help of women in rural communities. We provided all the raw materials to women along with training them in this skill which has resulted in the production of a variety of warli products, including clothing, home décor, fridge magnets, books, and stationary, etc, besides uplifting rural areas like Bhiwandi, Thane, and others throughout Maharashtra.



# KEY-VALUE CHAIN INTERVENTIONS

The Value chain interventions made by Tisser aim to improve the functioning of handloom value chains and/or the participation of artisans within these value chains by enhancing or forging vertical connections in these chains (in production, processing, or trade functions).

## **Market-Led Support:**

### **1. PROFESSIONAL DESIGNERS**

High-End Cataloguing, Designing and Printing support for Marketing purposes.

### **2. INDUCTION INTO ONLINE MARKET CHANNELS AND DIGITAL SUPPORT**

Inducting Artisans into online channels through Tisser's Web-Portal and Mobile Application.

### **3. SALES AND MARKETING SUPPORT WITH A NO-FEE MEMBERSHIP PLAN**

Without any membership fees charged, artisan products valuing ₹ 10,000 are taken as consignments and once sold through Tisser's huge marketing network, members are paid.

### **4. PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY SUPPORT**

Professional photography support to create a market-oriented brand focussing on a creative, simple, interactive and direct way for consumers to access artisan products.

### **5. HOLISTIC MARKETING THROUGH TISSER PARTNERSHIPS**

A holistic marketing approach for artisan product catalogues focussing on artisan and cluster development through Tisser's institutional partnership support.

## **Cluster-Led Support:**

### **1. END-TO-END CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS**

CSR partnerships enabling end-to-end cluster development and inclusion of artisans in the value chain.

### **2. FOCUS ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSIVITY**

An organisation for women, by women, focussing on involving local teams comprising rural woman artisans - building enterprises for increased inclusivity.

### **3. ICT INTERVENTIONS - MODERNISING CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT**

Mobile Applications, and QR Codes to help data tracking of products. Saving Time and Cost while modernising rural clusters.

### **4. PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE**

Creation of sustainable institutions at the artisan's end for growth of women entrepreneurs. Through professional guidance.

### **5. OFFLINE EVENTS TO UPSKILL ARTISANS**

Enabling Sustainable and Scalable institutions within rural clusters through offline activities that focus on upskilling rural artisans and producer organisations.



# PROJECTS

## Project Revival with SAMHITA

The partnership between Samhita and Tisser India was formed in order to assist the most vulnerable stakeholders in their recovery from the Covid-19 crisis. Rather than believing in the new normal, the project focusses on a better normal that is based on corporate responsibility and brand purpose. The national lockdown had an effect on the business, as well as on mobilisation, output, and the ease of doing business in Maharashtra, which was in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. An initiative such as the creative solution of returnable grant for social transformation ensures that the change we wish to see in rural people's ability to maintain their livelihoods is realised.

This project, which began in 2021, places a focus on increasing the resilience of stakeholders such as suppliers, retailers, contract workers, producers, and employees, as well as strengthening the supply chain and addressing the livelihood issue.



### **US General visit to Mazagaon Unit, Mumbai**

Our prestigious associations, and efforts to further the cause of women entrepreneurship makes Tisser what it is today.

Our humble gratitude to the U.S. Consulate General Mumbai, USAID and Samhita for their contribution towards helping women artisans come out of the economic slump caused by the pandemic.



# PROJECTS

## Women Artisan Skill Enhancement Project

The goal of the Women Artisan Skill Enhancement Project- 'WASEP' is to bring disadvantaged people to Maharashtra and upskill them via the resurrection of the Warli Art form. Larsen & Turbo Infotech financed the project, which was executed by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and FUEL (Friends Union for Energizing Lives)



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



Friends Union For Energizing Lives (FUEL)  
Enabling Students to Excel



Let's Solve



### Warli Product Catalogue Images

Throughout the initiative, craftsmen in Mumbai and Thane were contacted who were later upskilled and trained to establish their own company and create a sustainable economic environment. As a result, not only did the landscape for women in the rural clusters of Aarey, Ansoli, Thane, Chunapada, and Turnipada enhance, but 503 women saw a rise in income along with artist mobilisation. A large number of Warli painted clothing, Warli painting, Warli home décor, and other items were also created and catalogued throughout the project.

# PROJECTS

## GRAM (Grassroot Rural Artisan Movement)

GRAM is an abbreviation which stands for Grassroots Rural Artisan Movement. GRAM aids weavers and artisans who create goods utilising traditional methods, skills, and manual processes that are at the heart of India's culture and heritage. GRAM offers craftsmen with a platform through which they may communicate with people all around the world. Tisser's vision through this project was therefore to co-create with artisans / home workers through a globally recognized 'GRAM' brand known for designing innovative and unique products. Handicraft and handloom goods are environmentally benign and organic, and by purchasing GRAM products, we can all work together to improve rural livelihoods and conditions.



### **Raigad & Ratnagiri Clay Cluster under GRAM**

The Project aims to integrate underutilised rural hands into the organised labour force and provide opportunities for sustainable livelihood. Tisser India served as a facilitator for market linkages, capacity building, and production for the Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSIS) on this project. It recruited rural poor and vulnerable people into self-managed federated institutions and supported them in forming livelihood collectives over the course of the programme. As a result of combined efforts, Tisser recruited 252 women and trained 5 clusters of women earning between Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 10,000 per month on average.



**Maharashtra  
State Innovation  
Society**



**Unimed**

**Maharashtra state rural  
livelihood Mission**



# PROJECTS

## Kosala Livelihood and Social Foundation

The project's goal was to promote and develop Kosa silk-related sericulture and weaving activities in the cluster in order to support and improve the livelihood of Beneficiaries who are involved in Kosa silk-related activities in one way or another. This was accomplished by creating a sustainable ecosystem and thereby improving the socio-economic condition of the beneficiaries. Tussar Fabric and items made from Tussar Yarn were created as works of art by 200 beneficiaries as part of the project. Chattisgarh was determined as the state in which the project would be conducted.

**kośalā**  
TIMELESS ARTISTRY



## Mahila Arthik Vikas Maha Madal (MAVIM)

In a joint effort with Tisser India, the Mahila Arthik Vikas Maha Madal (MAVIM) Project offered skill development training classes in tailoring at a community stitching facility in Nagpur, Maharashtra. It also facilitated the development of market linking possibilities for goods made by female craftsmen. During the duration of the project, MAVIM assisted in the mobilisation of 50 women by providing infrastructure, training hours, and raw materials, all of which were made possible by the organisation. Women were compensated for a skill they learned, were certified, and had the opportunity to produce goods at the conclusion of the project. An initiative like this has an effect on the subsistence of women in rural areas who come from economically challenged backgrounds. They are empowered not just by financial resources, but also by the network they have built, the vocational training they have received, and the additional possibilities they have created for themselves.

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# PROJECTS

## Tata Power Community Development Trust

The Tata Power Community Development Trust is critical in the upliftment of the local community via skill development interventions. Tisser India made it possible for fair trade to take place, as well as the promotion and selling of goods created by women and farmers on their respective online marketplaces. Tisser India provided end-to-end assistance, assisting with everything from product design to product marketing. In the project lifecycle, the market connection of products produced by women and farmers with initiatives such as Anikha Dhaaga, Samriddhi, and Saheli World, the promotion and preservation of local businesses, as well as earning and skilling opportunities for women and farmer groups, were explored to the fullest extent possible,



## Pidilite Toy Project

When we collaborated with Pidilite on this project, we brought together handloom and sewing units, as well as the novelty of creating fabric toys with the women artisans. To help women artisans in the Kalsar area of Gujarat earn a consistent income, Tisser India organised two workshops where they were taught how to make fabric toys from recycled materials. During the course of the project, 32 women were taught how to play with a variety of toys, including a sparrow, a fish, a beetle, a mouse, a goat, an elephant, a crocodile, and a cow, among others. This initiative introduced the concept of environmentally friendly fabric toys to the market, which had previously been dominated by synthetic and fur products.



# PROJECTS

## Save The Children Project

The Save the Children NGO collaborated with Tisser India to train women in self-help groups in a variety of market skills that are necessary for them to earn a living and support their families. It was transported through Mumbai's Bhandup area, where it linked different industrial hubs with entrepreneurial opportunities. Aware of how to run Self-Help groups, women were instructed in the art of stitching and networked into a pool of production centres, and they were required to adhere to the commercial obligations of a unit during the project's duration. By the end of the project, we had a group of women who were now confident enough to engage in economic activities with the purpose of generating a stable income in a group business. Such efforts are important in transforming the possibilities available to women in our nation.



**Save the Children®**



# AWARDS

- Winner of **South Asia for 'IT Innovation' award** in the category of Entrepreneurship & Outreach #eNGOChallenge Awards.
- Winner of **Action for India (AFI) 'Best Indian Social Enterprise' Award**.
- Winner of **Rani Laxmi Bai Bhushan Puraskar** on 15th October International Rural Women Day 2019.
- Winner of **Priyadarshani Award for Outstanding Women Entrepreneurs** awarded by Federation of Indian Women entrepreneurs (FIWE).
- Winner of **Impact award at NAFW, Seattle 2019**.
- Winner of **Times She UnLTD. Entrepreneur Awards 2019** at Mumbai.
- Winner of **Nari Shakti Awards 2018 – Business and Entrepreneurship** on 15th October International Rural Women Day 2019.
- **National Finalist - Ipreneur** - the flagship event of E-cell under the auspices of the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship, School of Management and Labour Studies, **Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai**.
- **Selected** in 2nd edition of **Women Entrepreneurship Development Program (WEDP)** in promotion by WalMart and WEConnect International in partnership with TTC Global and Amity University.
- **Selected in the list of top 100 social innovators** - Action for India 2017.
- **Tisser Mobile App** - Selected for **Manthan Award – Digital Inclusion for Development**
- **Awarded Indira Gandhi Memorial Award** at The Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Awards by the **All India National Unity Conference**.
- **Awarded Shakti Achievement Award** at 11th National Women Excellence Awards 2018 awarded annually by **Ministry of Women and Child Development**.



# TEAM PROFILE

## 1. ADVISORY BOARD

An Advisory team looks over the macro of our activities and mentors for the whole team to stay close to the vision and mission in all our pursuits.

## 2. CORE MANAGEMENT

A core management team comprises the founder and other highly professional and committed team members.

## 3. CLUSTER & PROJECT TEAMS

A Cluster Team includes coordinators who provide a link between Tisser's vision and the regional coordinators of rural clusters. They chalk out activities, plan training sessions, assign responsibilities on the work-site and ensure a smooth run with partners and artisans. They are the real providers when it comes to ensuring comfort to artisans to be able to participate and benefit.

## 4. DESIGN & PRODUCT TEAMS

A design team does an integral part of understanding the cultural background of an art form, translate it into product designs in accordance with the market and communicate it to our artisans. With a mix of established architects and design graduates, they are a credit to the craft and aesthetic of our products.

## 5. OPERATIONS & ADMIN TEAM

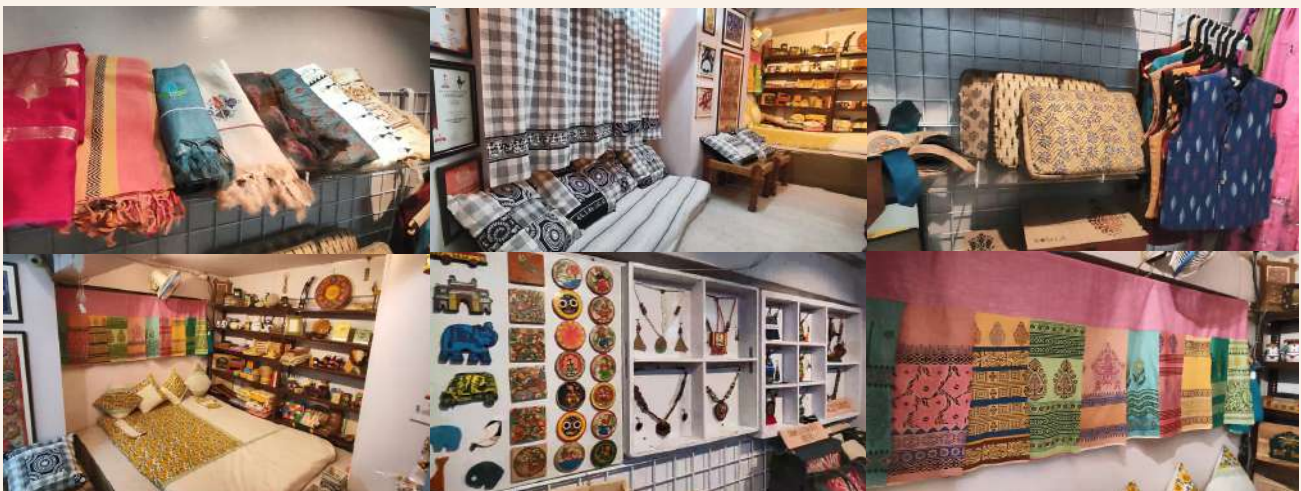
An Operations team, looks over the meticulous task of managing funds in the long and short of it, from the pay of artisans to the funding from partners, investors, brands, etc. Despite being in the challenging business of sustaining livelihoods for a young company, the details of sheets and the statements always tally to its T.

## 6. REGIONAL TEAMS

A Regional Coordinators team, our first touch base with the artisans fill the gap between the needs of artisans and the vision of Tisser India. They are the best friends of our artisans, for they get the chance to interact most with them for fun or for an addressal. While sharing laughs with the artisan team, they also document their stories of impact with pictures, videos, or by lending a compassionate ear.

## 7. MARKETING & SALES TEAMS

A Marketing & Sales team which finds and audience for our products. With a mix of online and offline strategies, word-of-mouth and curated campaigns, the marketing team swooshes its wand to scale the love and labour of our artisans.



## VISIT TISSER MUMBAI UNIT

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