

:Hansiba Museum:



SEWA stands for artisans and artisans stand for SEWA.

SEWA which is celebrating its 40 years of tireless women's empowerment this year, now brings to the people of Radhanpur in arid Gujarat the first ever community museum in Gujarat the 'HANSIBA Museum'.

The museum is of the women, for the women, and by the women.

With growing industrialization in the region, and changing aspirations of the new generation local and traditional craft faces the danger of being lost. Thus, to ensure ongoing community based preservation of motifs and techniques of traditional embroidery art the need for setting up a Community Museum was felt by SEWA members. The museum is also the first of its kind in Gujarat as being the only museum owned and maintained by women artisans themselves to preserve their own art and craft.

This museum would not only ensure the preservation of long lost traditions of the region but would also bring in a sense of pride and ownership in the traditional skills of women artisan who conceived this collection and display and use of items for their daughters and their generations.

The museum will also act as an inspiration for the new generation and inculcate Community values in them. The museum would serve as a resource center for researchers and designers, local and global. There will be a showcase of various artifacts and exhibits of embroidery arts on textiles from leading communities of Gujarat such as *Ahir, Rabari, Chamar, Baloch, Jaat, Darbar* and many others.

Each of these communities has a specific style, sensibility and motifs which distinguishes one from the other. There will not only be textiles but also display of the lifestyle products of these communities through wide range of articles such as utensils, furniture, and transportation means of all kinds of materials such as bronze, brass, wood and mud. The museum has received more 1700 such articles form across the region now over two decades. All the artifacts on display are from the women artisan as part of their heirloom most of which they have contributed or donated as a contribution for the formation of the museum.

Elaben calls this in Gujarati “Banasnaana” meaning mother Banasriver’s dowry to her thousands of daughters.

It as not very long ago when then Banaskantha District of Gujarat was effected by constant droughts and due to no other sustainable means of livelihood, people were forced to migrate to Ahmadabad, Rajkot and other regions of Gujarat for back breaking work. It was SEWA that came and joined hands with a small group of women and began their ordeal to fight what was said to be their fate: poverty and despair. SEWA helped them identify themselves with their roots and tradition through their native craft of embroidery.

The stitches stitched not only garments but a whole new women’s movement to come out of poverty in Gujarat.

The craft has been passed on through generations from mother to daughter as hand embroidered cloths as part of her wedding gift.

However these crafts were never considered as means of economic empowerment, and wherever it was the middle men exploited the rural women. With this new found hope in embroidery as a source of prosperity and with constant support from SEWA sisters the women established themselves into various associations and groups of more than one lakh members, of which fifteen thousand are excellent artisans.

Women from 12 states of India and 14 countries have witnessed the creation of this collection.

In words of Rambha Ben, an Artisan “*The lives of my family hangs on the thread with which I embroider.*”

Location :

Kamala sadan, satun rd.,
Nr. Shantidham, randhanpur
Pincode : 385340, gujarat, india

For more details please visit www.hansibamuseum.org or contact us at patan@sew.org