

# Annual Report (2019-2020): Gramshree & Craftroots



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## Background: Contribution of Gramshree and Craftroots



### About Gramshree

Gramshree was founded in 1995 by the first women CM of Gujarat Smt. Anandiben Patel with a prominent social entrepreneur Smt. Anarben Patel to empower and support marginalized women residing in rural and urban slums of Gujarat through income generation activities. The empowerment process was further strengthened and headed by Smt. Vandana Agrawal.

Gramshree aims to elevate the social stature of the women deprived of opportunities due to their geographical, family, and societal incompetence and make them self-reliable through teaching them skill-based jobs (e.g. handicraft, cooking, driving, nursing, and more).

With women forming more than 60% of the workforce in the handicraft sector, Gramshree significantly impacted the sector by employing vulnerable yet trained women to become artisans.

**In the past 25 years, Gramshree has worked with 75000+ women in slums, lower-income areas, and the rural stretches of the country.**



## Craftroots: Enriching the lives of Artisans

In 2001, The Gramshree Women Empowerment gave the world of Indian handicrafts a warm and profoundly rooted establishment termed Craftroots.

During the wake of the Gujarat earthquake, a significant portion of the state, especially Kutch and Bhuj, was wrecked by the catastrophe. The team of Gramshree with Manav Sadhna reached the barren yet beautiful rann and spent an entire year in the rural stretch of the state.

The underlying motive of the journey to Kutch and Bhuj was to revive the livelihood, rebuild the infrastructure and reinforce the zeal of the villagers. Volunteers from both organizations joined hands and worked in synergy to reconstruct roads, schools, homes, drainage systems, wells, dams, and toilets.

"Only by giving are you able to receive more than you already have."

That's what happened to us. Spending an entire year in Kutch and Bhuj and nearby villages such as Ludiya and Gandhi nu Gam serving, we were fascinated by indigenous people's lives, culture, and vibrant crafts. The divinity of the learning and experience sowed a thoughtful seed in our founder's heart that led them to advocate for the Indian Handicraft.

Hence, the establishment of a platform where various stakeholders co-create and promote India's treasures. Over the years, profits acquired from selling the handicraft products crafted by our artisans (the majority of which are women) support health, education, personal finance, and leadership training programs of the craft community.

**Today, Gramshree & Craftroots combined have over 25000 artisans spread over 45 crafts across 14 states through a circle of 15 NGOs enriched over the last 25 years.**

## Objectives

The core functions at Craftroots are vital to staying true to its ideals. A sustainable, empowering, and compassionate approach is a must while considering to include any craft or textile into the database.

1. **Survey and Documentation:** By being a part of Craftroots, many artisans are benefitted from resources that make them capable of having a stable income source. These bonds are kept for long, with each achievement documented for the villager's encouragement.
2. **Education and Awareness:** By education, Craftroots does not limit itself to just textbooks. It documents and presents stories of individuals who brought happiness back into their lives through their crafts.
3. **Design Development:** Craftroots is a platform that gives everyone a space to voice their opinions, challenges, and difficulties to come up with sustainable solutions. The design development aspect of Craftroots connects artisans with designers for the exchange of various ideas, leading to a unique outcome.

4. Sales and Marketing: The existence of craft traditions is dictated by the demand it has. Marketing the masterpieces as sustainable, traditional yet modern creations is the Craftroots way of engaging the audience of today.
5. Social Services: As per the feedback we receive through these programs, we cater to the particular issues unique to each village by creating initiatives for their betterment. These activities were also successfully conducted during the pandemic, maintaining the regulations and guidelines.

## **VISION**

To nurture the mind, body, and soul of marginalized women through various programs that strengthen their self-reliance, promote sustainability, and enhance their quality of life which further benefits society.

## **MISSION**

Encourage the holistic development of vulnerable women through vocational skill training, income generation activities, and education and awareness-centric ventures to foster women's self-reliance and integrity.

## **VALUES & PRACTICES**

We inspire our people to participate in practices that ignite a human's fundamental generosity, thus catalyzing inner and outer transformation.

In addition, one of the core practices of our ecosystem is that we commence our day with an all religion prayer and meditation to spur inner peace. Finally, our value-established ecosystem encourages our team to spread kindness by doing various acts of kindness.

## **Notable Milestones of 2019-20**

India Design Confluence: Unitedworld Institute of Design

Initiated by Craftroots, India Design Confluence (IDC) welcomed the creative community devoted to design to gather and celebrate three days of thinking, exploring, and collaborating.



The event aimed to assemble designers, developers, innovative thinkers, and leaders to promote creativity, create opportunities for innovation, and share design knowledge. The event was dedicated to inspiring talks, experiential workshops, paper presentations, networking, and innovative thinking.

### Sabarmati Festival Foundation

Sabarmati festival gave employment to thousands of women associated with Gramshree who handcrafted the clothes worn at the fashion show. It made the dreams of the slum women come true by giving them a platform to perform and act.



Sabarmati Festival was celebrated as an international cross-cultural extravaganza, fuelled by a vision to create moments of joy for each and every participant, belonging to any and every walk of life.

The festival became a showcase of events ranging across varied segments like Handicraft, Art, Craft, Music, Literature, Theatre, Dance, Cinema, Spirituality, Culinary Arts, Heritage, Awards, etc. This celebration is a sister event of Gramshree, and it is a culmination of contributions from artists, citizens, institutes, and academia, all of which results in living documents of cultural diversity.



### Love India Fellowship

Gramshree Trust proudly presented Love India Fellowship, a 12 month committed residential service program matching bright and passionate minds that are eager to contribute towards building a better India. Through Love India, we are merging the concepts of Volunteerism and Urban Migration among rural youth by diverting their energy towards sensitizing them about their local issues.

The fellows work on innovative and sustainable development projects covering seven Focus Areas, namely:

- Education
- Sports
- Preventive Healthcare
- Sanitation, Agriculture
- Animal Husbandry
- Holistic Development

Individuals tied to the Love India Program are an accumulation of brains and work. the 'Heads' are the creative minds of the organization, always looking forward to the next initiative, while the 'Hands' bring fresh ideas to life through their hard work and practical approach. Together, the team is set out on a mission to 'Be the change you wish to see in the world'.

## 2021 and Beyond: Future Plans

### Retail Outlets in Airport Kiosks

The organization has a robust forward linkage program. With an objective to maximize returns for craftsmen and to maintain direct access to consumer needs, Craftroots has developed a top-class retail establishment. Currently, it has three stores operational and the organization is planning to enter into e-commerce soon.

Craftroots also envisions hosting Fashion Shows to uplift traditional weavers and artisans in near future and taking the famous Craftroots exhibition to pan India level.

### Khakhra Project

The centers of Gramshree are given holistic development opportunities through education and skill development. One such initiative was conducted with the goal to financially empower women of the village through a skill they would be comfortable with. Their skills in basic cooking helped them in the Khakhra Project. Gramshree ensured that the program taught them the process of making khakhra thoroughly.

Kada is one such village where stories of success have come up through the Khakhra Training Program. The project also focused on workshops and weekend activities relating to cancer awareness, menstrual health, and yoga and acupuncture.

The villages were benefitted greatly through the program, and many individuals even took the next step to sell their khakhra and earning a stable income. Khakhra making communities of women were formed in these villages to continue this practice of being financially self-sustained.

### Saree Library

A cultural embodiment of our traditions is showcased by no other than the Indian saree. Being a mandatory outfit in every Indian naari's wardrobe, the six yards of fabric becomes more than just a garment. Thus, the Saree Library initiative lends sarees to the underprivileged women at no cost, with the sole obligation to return the attire once it's cleaned.

With 10 such libraries and counting, 830+ women are benefitted in rural and lower-income regions of Gujarat. Our generous donors donate well-in-condition sarees to these libraries, bringing a sense of happiness in the lives of women who cannot otherwise afford the saree crucial to every Indian woman.



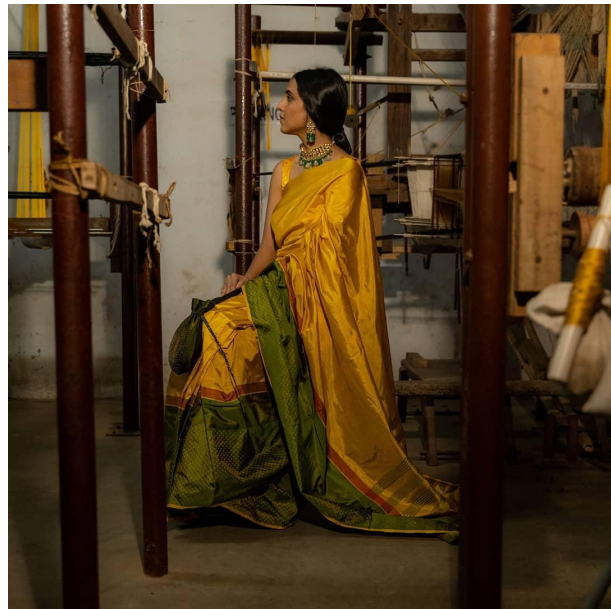
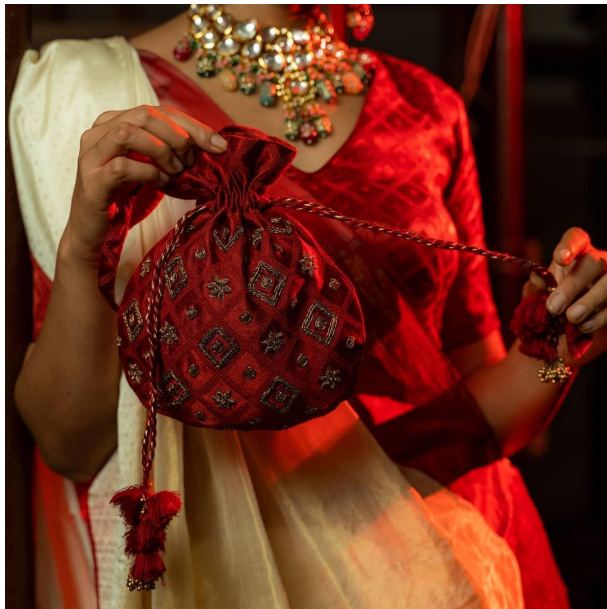
## Craftroots Collections

### Tangaliya: Woven Beads (February 2021)



Reflecting the prolific grace of Indian crafts, Tangaliya is a quintessential handloom untouched by machinery. A skill still practiced all by hand, the process is taken into consideration for the Tangaliya Collection. Artisans from the land of Saurashtra, Gujarat have revolutionized contemporary fashion by blending Tangaliya weaving into urban style upbeat fashion.

### Pravalika (July 2021)



The Pravalika Collection added the factor of nostalgia to cherish the beautiful things of life in the gloomy times of the pandemic. Silk sarees with subtle dotted Mashru embellishments and accessories such as potli purses were a major standpoint in the collection. “Pravalika” is a statement collection that urges you to liberate yourself into the world of colors and grandeur. The treasure trove of Indian handicrafts is unfathomable, and Pravalika sheds light on a part of this tradition.

### Rangmala (August 2021)



The colors, the diversity, the people, and the craft altogether make the land of India, and this diversity and vividness are crafted into the Rangmala Collection. The pop-color striped kurtas and embroidered sarees are reminiscent of the colorful spectrum of Rangoli. The collection reflects traditions, folklore, and practices deep-rooted in Indian culture.

### Maya (September 2021)

When we say, 'Oh! This is a new era' we are forgetting that what we call new is the old and sustainable way of living that our ancestors taught us. The Maya Collection has a fresh perspective on what we call 'new' through the age-old civilization ahead of its time, Maya. The collection digs deeper into the realms of the past to unveil the ancient crafts of India. Being the latest collection, it also focused on individual takes of the designers who worked with the artisans to successfully create the collection.