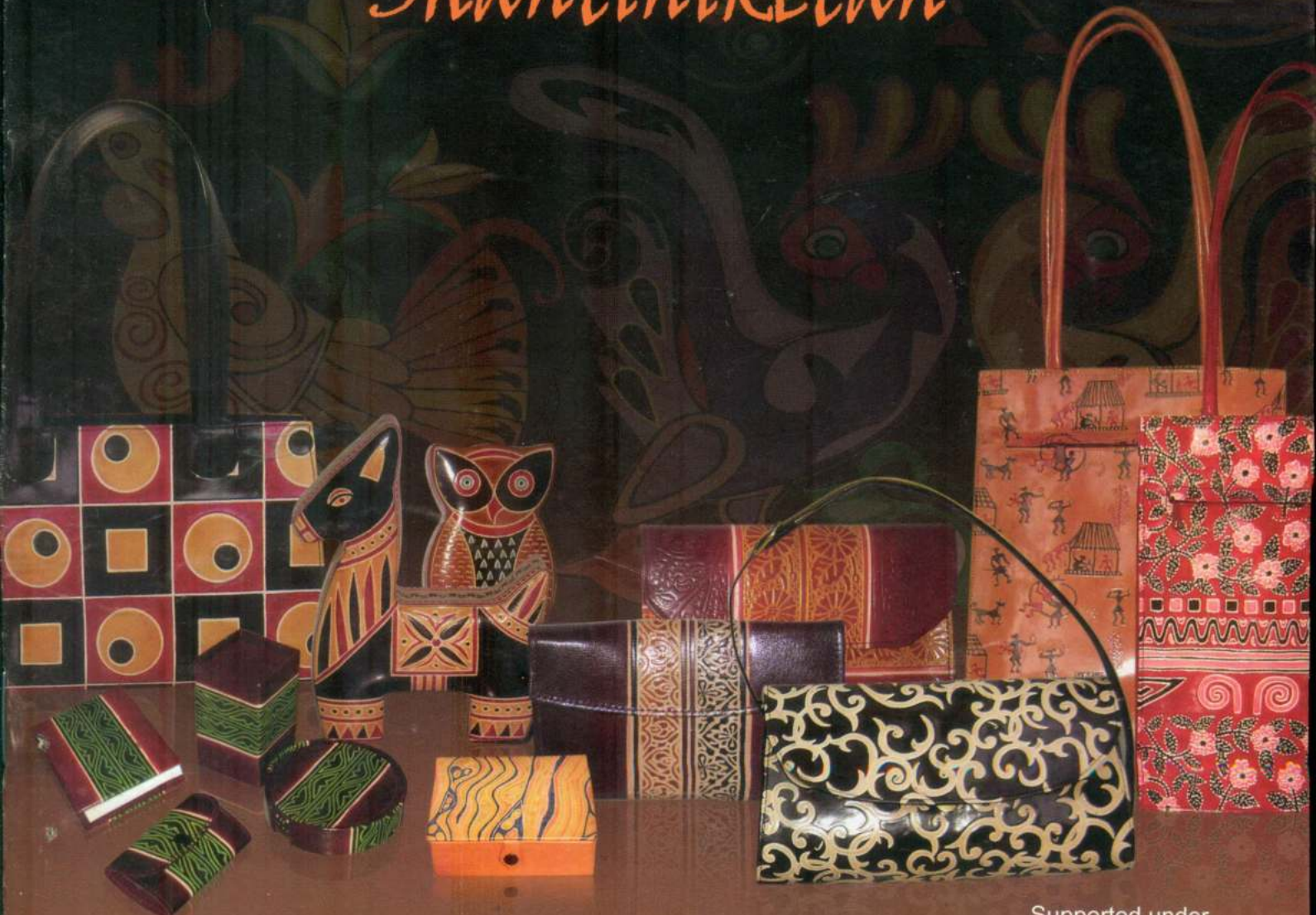


Artistic Leather Craft from *Shantiniketan*



Implementing Business Development
Services in the Shantiniketan
Leather Cluster

MSME Financing & Development Project (MSMEFDP)



Entrepreneurship
Development
Institute of India



DFID
Department for
International
Development

Supported under

Artistic Leather Craft from Shantiniketan

The artistic heritage of Shantiniketan Leather Products traces its roots to the efforts of Shri Rabindranath Tagore, a Nobel laureate poet, noted philosopher and humanist, and a social reformer. The reformation of *Shantiniketan* Leather Craft began some eighty years ago by Rabindranath Tagore and later continued by the Visva-Bharati University, the University Tagore founded at Shantiniketan, West Bengal, India. Tagore, his son Shri Rathindranath Tagore and Rathindranath's wife Smt. Protima Devi, along with Andrew Karpele initiated a craft wing at the aforesaid University. It was the cradle of the reformatory efforts of *Shantiniketan* Leather Craft, as well as the Art-deco style of *Shantiniketan*.

The uniqueness of the *Shantiniketan* Artistic Leather Craft is in the inimitable Art-deco style, a confluence of the Bengal School of Art and the traditional '*Santhal*' look. This style was improvised among the artisanal leather cluster of Shantiniketan by stalwart-artists like Shri Nandalal Bose, Shri Suren Kar, Sri Ramkinkar Beij, to name a few. Blending the intuitive folk style of the artisans with the modern styles, the local artisans have created an identity of their own, appreciated by the discerning art lovers worldwide, and have been identified as the generic *Shantiniketan* art form truly valued, cherished and collected by the intelligentsia.

Profile of the Shantiniketan Artistic

Leather Goods Cluster

Geographical location:

The Shantiniketan Artistic Leather Goods Cluster is located in the district of Birbhum in the state of West Bengal, 150 kms from Kolkata, the state capital of West Bengal, India. It is well connected by surface transports. The artisanal units are scattered across several villages like Surul, Ballavpur, Suripara, Hetampur, etc.



Products from Shantiniketan:

- * **Bags-** shoppers' bag, clutch bag, umbrella bag, pouch bag, file cover etc.
- * **Small leather goods-** wallet, coin pocket, purse, mobile cover, spectacle case, etc.
- * **Pasted items-** ornament box, pencil box, photo frame, piggy-bank, etc.

Manufactured from goat or sheep skins, that are made by EI tanning a pioneering tanning process developed by erstwhile "the East India Company" in the 18th century, the products are of superior quality and are completely environment friendly. Colourful use of earthly shades, especially red, brown, green and orange manifests the vitality of human nature and endeavour. Beautifully coloured graphic designs, typical 'batik' prints, appliqué, stencil, modelling, poker, embossing, and relief works are special features of these products which are also popularly called '*Shanti-leather products*'.

Annual Production in Shantiniketan:

Domestic Sales/Turnover:

* INR = Rs. 40,000,000 (US\$ = \$ 900,000)

Export:

* INR = Rs. 15,000,000 (US\$ = \$ 350,000)

The cluster products have tremendous potential; with concerted effort on marketing and export this figure can witness a sea change. The cluster has already taken GI certification.

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Vital Statistics of the Shantiniketan

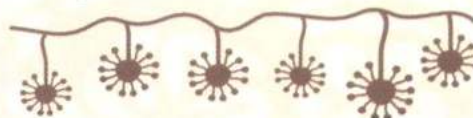
Leather Goods Cluster

Presently about 80 firms are operating in this cluster 15 are principal firms and the rest are either job-working entity or working as artisanal/cottage units.

Number of Micro & Small Enterprises	Indirect Export	Local/National market	Sub-contracting
	8 units	52 units	30 units

Employment:

About 1200 people are employed in the existing units.



Raw Materials:

Shantiniketan leather products are manufactured from goat or sheep leather. The leather which is in use here is called EI vegetable tanned leather. This is mainly procured from Chennai, India. Two different types of leather are used in Shantiniketan 'Binder' (paper) and 'TC' leather which is of superior quality. Other materials like accessories, adhesives etc. are sourced from Kolkata, India through traders.

Production process and Technology:

The artisans of Shantiniketan are world renowned for their excellent handcraft-based, traditional methods of production which retains the essence of human ingenuity in every product "created" by them. Each product is a hand crafted creation and not an output emanating from line-manufacturing production system. Cutting, skiving, colouring, and polishing are all meticulously done manually by highly skilled workers with remarkable aesthetic sense. The skill is acquired after persistent learning, experience, and gets conveyed from one generation to other.

Design

A distinctive Art-deco style is the unique feature of Shantiniketan leather products. The design encapsulates the traditional *Santhal* art with a fusion of western style. The products depict graphic images, batik, relief, embossing, modelling, poker, and appliqué works, created using the exquisite earthly shades with brown, orange, red and green variations. Most of the design motifs are inspired by the Indian mythology blended with modern arts.

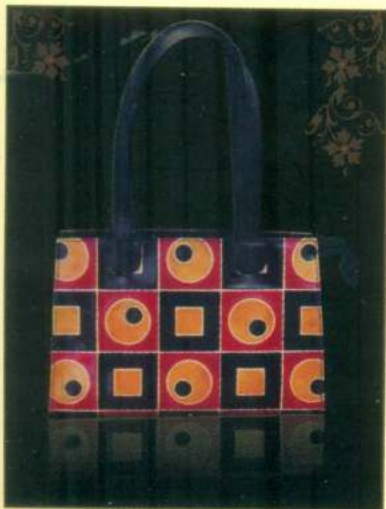
Quality

Use of superior quality leather as raw material and the adoption of traditional manual techniques and application of vegetable colour ensure that the final products conform to all quality standards. The USP of the products boasts its competitiveness in the national and international market.

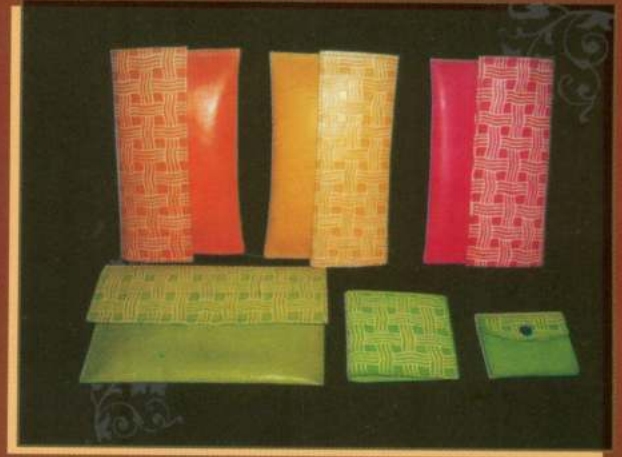
Cluster Deriving Benefits of Holistic Intervention:

The cluster has witnessed implementation of two projects namely (a) Consolidated Project for SME Development in India and (b) Cluster Development Programme. The first intervention was supported by the United Nations Industrial Development Organizations (UNIDO) with the objective of cluster twining and adoption of 'best practices' from learning of leather products cluster in Italy. The second programme was implemented with the objective of ensuring cluster's holistic development and improving its competitiveness.

The currently perused 'Implementing Business Development Services (BDS) in the Shantiniketan Leather Cluster' project is being implemented with the objective of developing the BDS market so that cluster firms/ MSMEs get quality services from the BDS. This would ultimately improve competitiveness of the MSMEs and BDSPs. The project is supported by the SIDBI, World Bank, DFID and implemented by the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI).







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