



Vithaigal Nagaigal Partnership Firm

Manufacturing Eco-friendly Jewellery!

Seed Jewellery was founded by Mr. G. Sundar, with an aim to create livelihood opportunities for women belonging to lower income groups and help them attain financial independence. They provide free of cost training to women on the entire process of creating eco-friendly jewellery made from seeds procured from farmers.

Mr G. Sundar, is a nature lover and a competent artisan with more than 15 years of experience in handicrafts. He specializes in crafting seeds into eco jewellery products and has built his firm's network at both local and global level.

Mr. Sundar, a native of Watrap, a village situated near Western Ghats, comes from an agricultural family. After completing his higher secondary education he had to drop out of school due to the financial constraint in his family. This incident stayed with him and was one of the decisive factor that led to the birth of Seed Jewellery.

"In my area I often saw young children scavenging along with their mothers. It really hurts me to see those children working like that. Once I went up to one of the child and asked him why he was not in school and working here instead.

To which the child replied that his family doesn't have the money to afford his schooling. I had gone through this and I did not wanted these young kids to be uneducated due to financial constraints. I was very much aware that there are hardly any income generation opportunities at the village level and so I decided to channelize my passion as an artisan to create livelihood opportunities at local level. I really wanted to help these women from poor socio-economic background to raise their living standards & pull them out of the vicious cycle of poverty", says Mr. Sundar.

With this as motivation, he aspired to set up a venture that will



provide permanent jobs to women. After having attended several arts and crafts workshops and with extensive research on natural dyes, Mr. Sundar founded Vithaigal Nagaigal, which translates as seed jewellers in English & hence the name.

His firm's products are known for their beauty and outstanding flamboyance. Since these are eco-based products, there is no chance of allergy to the users. His vision is to use newer technology and come up with novel designs and also to create awareness globally on avoiding the use of synthetic jewels.

About the startup

Seed Jewellery, a startup operating out of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, manufactures handmade seed jewellery and supply it to localities & city people. They also export the jewellery to other countries.

They are presently operating out of three areas: Watrap, a village situated near the base of western ghat, Virudhunagar district villages & Thiunagar & Thiruvalluvar nagar in Madurai District.

The startup secures seeds from local farmers & tribal people. The startup works by recruiting & training local women in the area in the jewellery making Business. Those who are interested to learn undergo a 15 day free training program where they learn the

basics of jewellery making right from identifying toxic seeds from non-toxic seeds, detoxifying seeds, cleansing seeds, maintaining and drilling seeds to making complete jewellery out of the seeds.

They also have work from home provision for women who due to many constraints find it difficult to come & work at the centre. After training these women are provided with the raw material and necessary equipment's. The finished products are then picked up & taken to the centre. The Jewellery made is then sold in spaces like colleges, schools, fairs and other such similar areas where there is a greater footfall of the customers.

Till date they have trained 25 women in Jewellery making & they have 10 full time women workers engaged in the business. The women worker on an average makes ₹15000 per month.

Talking about inducting women in the business Mr. Sundar says, "I go around the village demonstrating to women the business of seed jewellery making. Women see this as a great opportunity to become financially independent and support their household. We also have provision for women who can't work with us on a daily basis, these women are paid wages on a per day basis."

Seed jewellery is now registered with Export Promotion Council of Handicrafts. Their jewellery is in huge demand and is exported to countries like Germany, Italy, France, Canada, Australia and Nairobi Countries.

They are collaborating with state level organizations, local arts and craft dealers, agents from India and international market. Some of their valuable clients are Bombay store, VTI Chennai, Keystone Ooty, Sixth Sense Chennai etc. They have also partnered with Auroville Foundation.



Marketing Strategy

As a part of their marketing strategy they are approaching organizations that can help them market their innovative handcrafted products. They are planning to approach All Indian Artisans and Craft workers Welfare Association (AIACA), Star Hotels markets, World Crafts Council, Crafts Council of India, Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, Air ports shops, Handicrafts shop, Auroville, WFTO & Online markets.

Challenges

The biggest challenge in their journey was preserving the seeds, the raw material of their business. Initially they struggled to find a way out but they soon found a solution nearer home. Now they are using their ancient & traditional methods for preserving & safeguarding seeds.

Business operations during Covid-19

Pandemic affected their offline operations. Due to pandemic induced restrictions on people's movement they faced problems in securing seeds from the farmers & operated in a staggered manner.

With successive lockdowns in place, spaces like college, schools and other areas for the sale of jewellery were inaccessible with the consumer base being lost. They used this period to identify new designs in seed jewellery.

This also made them shift their operations online & create different revenue generating strategies. Now Mr. Sundar conducts online jewellery making classes for people residing in urban area. The participants are provided with jewellery making kit in advance and through the training they learn to make their own jewellery.

Achievements

"For us the greatest achievement is our ability to create job opportunities for women from lower income background. The tribal people are also getting a regular source of income by selling seeds to us. Those seeds that cannot be used for agriculture are sold to us by farmers & farmers get some reasonable income from this."

Association & Key take aways from MANAGE



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“You see, I am a handicraft artisan, I come from a rural background and was completely unaware of the nitty-gritty of business or being an entrepreneur. My entrepreneurial journey started with my selection for the RKVY-RAFTAAR Program.

MANAGE's two month training program took me through the entire gamut of business setup & exposed me to new ideas. At every step I was provided with valuable guidance & was given timely feedback. It is through MANAGE's training program that I was able to gather the required knowledge and increase my level of confidence. Now I can proudly say that I am a successful entrepreneur.”

- Mr. Sundar

Vision as an Entrepreneur

The larger vision is to make Seed Jewellery a global brand with outlets all over the world. They want to carve a space for eco-friendly jewellery both in the national & global market and bring in a shift in the trends from harmful synthetic jewellery to eco-friendly jewellery. They would be using advertisements to create awareness among women users for the same. The future plan is to create a web presence worldwide for their seed jewellers outlets.

“We want to ensure that traditional seeds are put to good use in this way. In the coming time we want to work on upgrading our jewellery making technology & bring in newer, attractive designs to garner a greater customer base & to market our products at competitive rates.

On the social side, we want our work to create more income generating opportunities for lower income group women, rural artisans & farmers,” remarks Mr. Sundar.



Company Name

Vithaigal Nagaigal Partnership Firm



Date of Incorporation

2019



Age of Company

3 years



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