

# Transforming local artisans into business managers

## Nehru Yuva Kendra, Madhubani

Bihar has a diverse and rich cultural heritage, and it's known for its handicrafts and traditional art of Madhubani Paintings. Mithila Sewa Samiti Youth Club, is taking advantage of that heritage to help support the craftsmen promote their art and fight against poverty. As part of that project, Smt. Urmila Devi and other women in the district were trained to improve their skills.

**“The design and quality of our handicrafts has greatly improved following our training”**

- Smt. Urmila Devi

The Mithila Sewa Samiti Youth Club was established in the year 1990. The youth club was also felicitated with many awards such as 'Mentor Youth Club', 'Man of Achievement Award', 'Chief Biography Award' and 'Bharat Jyoti Award' for the initiatives it undertook in the district.

Various training workshops in Madhubani Paintings are organized from time to time in the district. These have been appreciated and recognized by many organizations such as Mithila Sewa Samitii, Yuva Kriti Sangam, Dharbanga and Gram Vikas Yuva Trust. To promote art and craft, Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been created under which 1500 people were trained in traditional art of Madhubani Paintings, Gold and brass work, papier mache and stitching to sustain their livelihoods. Handicrafts sourced from 500 craftsmen across the country have been displayed in various places such as Allahabad, Ranchi, Jamshedpur, Varanasi and Mumbai in collaboration with the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The local artists have further been trained in technology development as well as design development in collaboration with the Ministry of Textiles depending upon the demand of handicrafts.

NYKS has been giving opportunities to participate in various national level exhibitions, Yuvakriti in different parts of the country. These exposures have not only created a lot of demand for the art, it has also helped generate orders from commercial establishments. NYKS further helped them to train other needy unemployed youth in this art of painting.

**“NYK provided a very good platform to artists like us to promote our work to the outside world. I got a bulk order from an exporter during the exhibition. This has given us a new lease of life. Now I take orders and develop the designs as per the customer's specification”**

- Anil Kumar, a local artisan.

Through these initiatives, the youth club reaches out to atleast 300 artisans every year including marginalized section as well as women.

The Youth Club has taken other notable steps to tackle the problem of hygiene and sanitation in the district through the construction of toilets. “Open defecation has been a problem in our area. Walking every day covering a distance of more than 4 kms to defecate has been difficult. More so, it had posed serious health threats to our community. Close to 200 people in each Panchayat suffered from malaria and diarrhea year after year. Thanks to NYK Youth Club, we now have toilets in our homes”, says Arun Kumar Jha, Village Marar.

Nehru Yuva Kendra, Madhubani has provided access to better hygiene and sanitation with the construction of toilets for more than 500 families in the district. Furthermore, by building the capacities of artisans and supporting them to set up viable businesses, NYK hopes to lay the ground for sustenance of institutions and transformational change.

**“The Club ventured into many activities such as safeguarding the Environment, Child Rights, Right to Education, Health and Sanitation facilities, handicrafts training as well as awareness activities and ensuring community dialogue for their active participation in the development process”**

**“Income generation through promotion of handicrafts, marketing, training, design development and overall development of artisans and handicrafts is the main area of focus for the Youth Club in the coming years”**

- Sunil Kumar Chaudhary  
Young Entrepreneur

