

Ethnic, Elegant, Exquisite

The Mal family of Kenda, Pancha Block, Purulia developed its skill in Dokra craft. Dokra is a traditional craft of the Mal community and the members of the family learnt the skill from their ancestors.

At their family stall at the State Sabala Mela 2019, Piyaruddin Mal was talking about their forays in the craft of making Dokra items. He learnt the skill from very early childhood. Initially they used to make ghungur, ornaments for the goddess Lakshmi, lamps etc. When they saw a slump in the market for these products, they started producing jewellery made of Dokra.

They further diversified and in 2004 started making horses, elephants, different forms of the gods and goddesses. Not exposed to government events, they used to visit different village fairs with their merchandise. Then they got a chance to participate at the District Sabala Mela of Purulia where the representatives of the District Rural Development Cell and the District





Industries Centre encouraged them to participate at different state fairs. After two/three years, the big break came when they could display their products at the Handicrafts Fair at Milan Mela ground, Kolkata. State Sabala Mela at Central Park, Salt Lake followed suit. Sabala Mela not only helped them earn handsome profit, but also attracted the officials of the West Bengal Swarojgar Corporation Limited (WBSCL). Assistance under SVSKP was extended to Sk. Innat Mal, an elder in the family. An amount of Rs.1.5 lakh as loan attracted subsidy to the tune of Rs.45000. Taken four years ago, the loan is completely repaid.

In addition to the Sabala Mela, they could also sell their products at Saras, in Kolkata and several other places. Amongst the Indian cities, they took their products to Delhi, Chandigarh, Ranchi, Mumbai, Bangalore.

Dokra products of the Mal family have also been delivered to wholesalers for bulk sales. However, sales are always better at the Sabala Mela and the like. Twelve members of the family are engaged in Dokra crafting. In earlier days thirteen families of the village used to work in this field. However, when the popularity of ghungur plummeted, all families except three left pursuit. The Mals hope to generate fresh interest among the villagers so that the craft continues to flourish. When someone talks of Dokra, people generally think of Bankura, Bardhaman and Birbhum. But the Mals assert that the artworks created by the district of Purulia are no less attractive than those of the neighbouring districts.

