

Let there be lights

Nantu Roy is always regarded as an accomplished painter. His brother Mithun was not in any way associated with art. However, after graduating in 2005, Mithun could not find any job and turned upon his artist elder brother to learn using art to create exquisite designer table lamps. 'Earthen lamps with designer shades' was their speciality and this immediately caught attention of the people. As the products were eye catching, he started getting invitations to attend fairs. At the initial stage he was not aware of the government support available for the kind of work that he was doing. However, participation in Sabala Mela gave him an opportunity to interact with the senior officials of the West Bengal Swarojgar Corporation Limited (WBSCL) and he applied for loan and



subsidy support under Swami Vivekananda Swanirbhar Karmasansthan Prakalpa (SVSKP). He took SVSKP support on two occasions, first time the project cost was restricted to Rs.1.5 lakh, which included thirty percent subsidy. Once the initial loan was repaid he took a second support, this time Rs.3.50 lakh, again with thirty percent subsidy. Repayment for the second loan is still continuing.

Mithun is a regular at Sabala Mela and could not be sure about the year he started to participate in the fair organised by the SHG&SE Department. Sale figures are always impressive for his products at the State Sabala Mela. He also got several opportunities to participate in Trade Fairs organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Export Promotion Council and travelled to faraway cities like Chandigarh, Delhi.

Business growing, Mithun now employs 50 people, 20 of them women. His products are ordered by a famous exporter in Mumbai. Mithun is enthusiastic about participation in fairs and wants to attend more such events. However, he also finds it difficult to match the growing demand for his lampshades with increased production. The matchless entrepreneurial spirit comes out when he speaks eloquently about more opportunities in going places.

