



FAIR TRADE CONSUMER-Mr. Arghya Ghosh **Professional Designer from Kolkata**

I am a livelihood professional in hand skilled based creative industry and self employed. I am a Fair Trade consumer who has been buying Fair Trade products for the last 22 years from Sasha shop, Kolkata. Sasha shop has always been much more than a shop or a retail space. Their careful selection of products that supports small producers (sometime vulnerable) from across India, their story of various practices including crafts, the region and origins and the spacious display with a friendly, helpful and informed shop assistants are rare in Kolkata. Sasha shop's regular cultural events, talks, launch of various product ranges and seasonal surprises are unique to the city. Sasha shop will always keep being "the destination" for the Kolkatans and the visitors who look out for more than just a craft shop at the City of Joy. To me Sasha shop is a stress reliever. The moment you enter the space, there is a sense of welcome and looking through delightful objects that are beautiful, that smells good and has an impact to make. Sasha shop therefore is a total package.

The Rasa spices are my favourite products from Sasha. This wonderful initiative of Sasha has paid tribute to the flavour of the local region and has very successfully blended to fit the taste buds of the global audience. I will always go back to Sasha for stocking my Rasa spices that I often use for gifting.

I am a design practitioner in the craft industries. My first encounter with the Fair Trade was when I took some design consultancies with Sasha. It was an opportunity to actually experience the real practice of "Fair Trade" while working with one the producer group of Sasha. For me it was the Sasha's engagements with their vast network of producer groups across the subcontinent and their ways of working was the first real explanation to "Fair Trade". I have been involved with many producer groups in various design diversification programmes and have encouraged and documented the Fair Trade practice amongst them. I also have been associating myself in recording innovative and yet grass root technical up gradations that encourages practicing Fair Trade principles amongst producers. I have also volunteered for Fair Trade as design consultant with various craft cooperatives and guilds.

I was also part of "Fair Support Programme "project for the Fair Trade practitioners of Eastern and Northern India. The programme was funded by the Ford Foundation and managed by Sasha Association of Crafts Producers.

I try to spread the message of Fair Trade in my community by encouraging community members to purchase products and gifts that are Fairly Traded. I have received encouraging responses in my community. I have suggested and have escorted members from my community, which includes friends, relatives and neighbours to the Sasha shop. Since their first visit, they have become regular to the shop.

I think Sasha shop can promote the concept of Fair Trade better in the domestic market by telling stories that help consumers to connect and are more relevant in daily lives.

I wish to be more pro active in using Fairly Traded products. I would also like to encourage people around me to do the same and I will aspire to achieve this by informing people about the benefit of it. I would like to see how effectively Fair Trade can be made popular as a mass movement.