



Artisan Sharda Neelu Pawar **Working with Sabala Handicrafts, Karnataka**

Sharada Neelu Pawar born in 1976 in Minchanal Tanda in Bijapur District of north Karnataka, brought up by her Parents in a traditional Lambani family was never sent to School. In fact, none of her siblings were educated as her Parents were badly knotted with the chains of poverty.

She was married at the age 22. It was all fair and good until her husband began torturing her for more dowries although a certain amount of money was paid to him during their marriage. Nevertheless, she tolerated all the violence without any complains for she already had three children by then. It was then that her fortune's wheels were punctured. Her husband divorced her complaining of her dark complexion and threw her out of the house along with the children. Here, it is very clear that the man just wanted to run away from the responsibilities that he had towards his wife and children. It was a disaster in her life. What would she do for her children's livelihood? What would she do for their education? She even began facing health problems too. She had then become very hopeless and had almost given up. She really wanted to educate her children and did not want them to face similar problems that she faced. But she did know what to do.

Then Sabala entered and enlightened her life. Sabala, according to its motto was surveying for the needy women. The NGO found her when they visited her village and appreciated her will to educate her children despite such calamities in her life. Her interest in the traditional Lambani art was immense and she could learn all the things very quickly. Soon her desperation turned out into work pleasure. Gradually, things started changing in her life. She could send her kids to school. She started living a completely different life. A life filled hope and will to evolve. In the process, she was even aided by sisters. Today, she is one among the expert workers associated with Sabala. She has represented Sabala in various exhibitions all over the country. She now aims to participate in the Gram Panchayat(local Govt. Body). Sharada says," Now I see life with a completely different perspective. My past has been traumatic. But, today I am confident that my future, my children's future will not be a pain-staking one. Thanks a lot to Sabala which my transformed me into a whole new human being with a better vision."

Her willingness to educate children is enormous and needs a round of applause. She has gained respect in the society in-spite of being divorced which is not seen much in the society. Sharada hailing from Minchanal Tanda in Bijapur taluk now supports her four children's education who once was dejected by her husband for dark complexion. She fought back strongly against all odds and obstacles that came her way. Her life is exemplary to many of her kind.

--Courtesy: Sabala Handicrafts, Karnataka

