

# Case Study

## Reviving Dokra Art in Bikna Village in Bankura District, West Bengal through the WE-LEAD Project



**Location:** *Bikna Village, Bankura-II Block, Bankura District, West Bengal*  
**Project:** *WE-LEAD Project (SIDBI & AMFI-WB)*

### **Background:**

Dokra art, a traditional form of non-ferrous metal casting using the lost-wax technique, has a rich heritage in India, dating back to the Bronze Age. The art form is an integral part of India's cultural legacy, known for its exquisite craftsmanship. In the present day, however, many Dokra artisans face significant challenges, including limited access to markets, weak credit facilities, and financial instability. This is especially true in Bikna village, located in Bankura district, West Bengal, where around 80 families depend on Dokra craft for their livelihood.

The arrival of the WE-LEAD Project in Bikna village, launched by SIDBI and operated by AMFI-WB, brought new hope to the artisans. The project aimed to support these families by addressing financial, marketing, and business-related issues, helping them not only preserve their craft but also make it economically viable.

### **The Challenge:**

In August 2023, when the WE-LEAD Project team conducted a baseline survey in Bikna, they learned that the situation of the Dokra trade was dire. The artisans faced weak marketing networks, poor access to credit, and mounting financial difficulties, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the rich heritage of Dokra, many artisans were struggling to sustain their businesses.

At the time of the survey, only a few artisans had well-established businesses, while the majority operated modest enterprises that lacked proper resources or market outreach. Moreover, many families were facing issues with outstanding debts and low credit scores, making it difficult for them to expand their businesses or secure loans.

### **The Intervention:**

In response to these challenges, the WE-LEAD Project began working closely with the 55 families involved in the Dokra trade. The project provided training in Financial Literacy, Digital Literacy, Business Literacy, and E-commerce through the

Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP). This training aimed to enhance the artisans' business skills and improve their financial management.

**Overdue (OD) borrowers meet:**

Additionally, the project focused on increasing the income of the women artisans by helping them sell their products both online and offline. A significant part of this initiative was focused on addressing the financial constraints of artisans who were listed as

Overdue (OD) borrowers, due to their low civil scores and unpaid loans. The project facilitated meetings with financial organizations to negotiate repayment plans, which helped improve their creditworthiness.

**The Impact:**

Since joining the WE-LEAD Project, significant progress has been made in Bikna village. Among the 55 families supported by the project, the incomes of 15 women have increased substantially, thanks to the training and market outreach provided. These women are now selling Dokra products through e-commerce platforms and local fairs, helping them reach a larger customer base.

- Anjali Karmakar
- Sagarika Karmakar
- Rina Karmakar
- Tuntuni Karmakar
- Sumitra karmakar
- Kalyani karmakar
- Mala Karmakar
- Mala Karmakar
- Buli karmakar
- Sharmila karmakar
- Archana karmakar
- Manju Karmakar
- Mamata karmakar
- Rina Karmakar
- Monimala Rana
- Kobita Karmakar
- Rinki Karmakar
- Ruma karmakar
- Laxmi Karmakar
- Rekha Karmakar

The project has also helped a number of women repay their loans. After attending the financial literacy training and participating in meetings with financial institutions, five women successfully cleared their overdue loans, and others are on their way to repayment. Some of these women include:

1. Laxmi Karmakar
2. Mamata Karmakar
3. Ruma Karmakar
4. Rinki Karmakar
5. Kakoli Karmakar

**Buyer-Seller Meets:**

To further support the artisans, the WE-LEAD Project organized two Buyer-Seller Meets, which allowed the Dokra artisans to sell their products directly to buyers.

**First Buyer-Seller Meet (Online):** This meet generated a total sales volume of ₹31,900. Products sold included various Dokra idols and artifacts.

**Second Buyer-Seller Meet (Offline, Fair in Bikna):** Held at a local fair in Bikna village, this meet was a resounding success. Six stalls were set up, and total sales reached ₹93,000. The following products were sold:

- - 10 Durga idols (₹2,000 each)
- - 20 Sinhabahini Durga idols (₹1,300 each)
- - 13 Durga idols (₹3,000 each)
- - 13 Radha Krishna idols (₹550 each)
- - 1 Ganesha idol (₹300)

**E-Commerce Sales:** Through the AMFI-WB official website, a total of ₹13,200 worth of Dokra products were sold, including:

4 Large Durga idols (₹2,000 each)

4 Sinhabahini Durga idols (₹1,300 each)

.	Name	Total Agreed Women OD	Payment Done	Business Started	Attended Online Buyer-Seller Meet	Attended Offline Job Fair	Income during Buyer seller meet /Job Fair	Income from Web Portal	Total Income
1	Khushi karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			9000
2	Sumitra karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			12000
3	Pinki Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			11000
4	Mandira Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			13000
5	Adori Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			12000
6	Sumitra karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			12000
7	Sharmila karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			10000
8	Rekha Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	29000		18000
9	Purnima Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes			12500
10	Sonali Patra	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes			15000
11	Mamoni Singha	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			12500

12	Alo Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			9000
13	Mina Singha	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			12000
14	Sonali Patra	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No			14000
15	Sima Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15000
16	Menoka Roy	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			12500
17	Manan Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15000
18	Sima Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15000
19	Barnali Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			5000
20	Kalyani karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			17000
21	Anjali Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			17600
22	Sagari Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	2300		16500
23	Mukta Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			17000
24	Rina Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	2500		15000
25	Dulali Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			9000
26	Bulu Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			11000
27	Sampa Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes			10000
28	Manju Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	28000		39200
29	Shraboni Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes			15000
30	Champa Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15000
31	Namita Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			16000
32	Mangala Jana	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			18000
33	Lila karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			16000
34	Mala Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	16000		18000
35	Mandira Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes			18000
36	Mamani karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			18000
37	Lakhi Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	11200		40000
38	Kakoli Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			9000
39	Mukta	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			11000

	karmakar								
40	Barsha Guin	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			9000
41	Laxmi Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes			35000
42	Laxmi Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No			16000
43	Modhumita Mohanta	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			13000
44	Rituparna karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15600
45	Piyali Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15000
46	Arati Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15000
47	Mamata karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	9000		25000
48	Shibani Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			15000
49	Rinki Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes			26000
50	Tumpa Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	42100	7000	60000
51	Rina Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			12000
52	Ruma karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		1000	14000
53	Tumpa Karmakar	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes			12000
54	Bulti Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	No			11000
55	Putul Karmakar	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	5000		25000

### **Empowering Women Entrepreneurs:**

Thanks to the support of the WE-LEAD Project, the women artisans in Bikna are now more empowered than ever. They have gained new skills in digital literacy, e-commerce, and financial management, which has not only improved their incomes but also given them the confidence to expand their businesses. The ability to sell their products online has opened new markets, and the buyer-seller meets have enabled them to directly interact with customers, building long-term relationships and increasing their market reach.

### **The Future of Dokra Art:**

The WE-LEAD Project is playing a vital role in revitalizing the Dokra art in Bikna village, ensuring that this ancient craft continues to thrive in the modern world. By connecting traditional artisans with new business opportunities, the project is preserving India's rich cultural heritage while empowering artisans to become financially independent.

The future looks promising for the Dokra artisans of Bikna. With continued support and training, these artisans are now well-positioned to sustain their craft and expand their businesses. The success of the project in Bikna serves as a model for other rural artisans across India, demonstrating how skill development, financial literacy, and market access can help preserve traditional crafts while providing economic opportunities for rural communities.

**Conclusion:**

The WE-LEAD Project's success in Bikna village is a testament to the transformative power of skill development and market access for rural artisans. By supporting the growth of Dokra art businesses, the project has not only helped preserve an important part of India's cultural heritage but also empowered women artisans to become self-reliant entrepreneurs. This initiative will continue to ensure that the legacy of Dokra art is passed on to future generations while providing sustainable livelihoods for artisans in rural areas.