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An indigenous innovation that challenges the cheap rakhis being dumped in the Indian market by the Chinese, these green bamboo rakhis fund a day's meal for the tribals of Melghat.

Aptly named 'Shrushti Bandha' – to signify the human bond with nature – these rakhis use wafer thin bamboo shavings cut into stars, triangles, pyramids, etc., as a base, which is then combined with other locally

sourced decoration material. These are prepared by the tribals – the adivasis – of Melghat, the Korkus, the Gond, Bhilalas, and even other communities such as the Bhosari and Buddhists.

The rakhis are priced at a very affordable Rs. 25 to Rs. 40.



For decades, Melghat in Maharashtra has always been portrayed before the rest of India as a malnourishment prone and malnutrition affected area deep inside the jungles of the Satpura range. But this Shrushti

Bandha rakhi has demonstrated and in fact symbolizes the capability, potential and skills of these adivasis.

“Contrary to the popular perception of being a pleading class, these tribals are people who preserve the environment, humanity and traditions,” says Sunil Deshpande, founder secretary of the NGO Sampurna Bamboo Kendra.

It was this NGO that encouraged the tribals of Lawada, Melghat to come together to form the Venu Shilpi Industrial Cooperative Society.

**“It is a simple method using hand held tools. Just five days of training can get any tribal to produce beautiful rakhis, using locally sourced natural materials,”
Deshpande says.**

This artisans’ cooperative was started in 1998 with just 15 tribals. Now, the society works

with 450 people and the turnover has increased manifold as the production increases. What Venu Shilpi Industrial Cooperative Society is trying to do is basically link 'man', 'method' and 'materials' for a respectable livelihood. Biomaterials are one of the critical yet sustainable sources of energy.

“These kinds of rakhis are the best examples as to how a natural renewable resource such as bamboo can be best utilized to come up with a livelihood plan. Every single hand-made rakhi bought by city dwellers will contribute to the sustenance of a tribal forest dweller,” says Sandeep Theng of the Indian Federation of Green Energy, an organisation that drives and endeavours to deliver an integrated approach for establishing a sustainable energy ecosystem.

The Federation is promoting bamboo in a big way as the “change agent for poverty

alleviation and climate change,” perfect for the tribals of Melghat.

These rakhis can be directly ordered from Sampoorna Bamboo Kendra, Lawada, Melghat.

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