

Press Release

Vedanta revives traditional ‘Dhokra’ artform to create sustainable livelihoods

- *Reviving Dhokra, mural and tribal paintings and artforms in Odisha and Chhattisgarh*
- *Supporting artisans with raw materials, technical expertise, micro-finance, and marketplace*

New Delhi, 15th April 2021: Vedanta, India’s largest producer of aluminium and its value-added products, is reviving traditional artforms like Dhokra, mural and tribal paintings in the regions where it operates. On 15th April 2021, i.e., World Art Day, Vedanta launched advanced product design training for artisans of Dhokra, a beautiful metalworking artform with origins dating back to the Indus Valley civilization, in Lanjigarh, Odisha. The company also organised an exhibition and competition of tribal arts for local artists to encourage adoption of arts & crafts as a means of sustainable livelihood in the region.

Mr. Ajay Kapur, CEO - Aluminium & Power Business and Managing Director - Commercial at Vedanta Ltd., says, “These art forms are a cultural heritage of our nation. We strive to patronize these indigenous art forms and nurture the creative potential of the rural artisans which remains unexplored with the mainstream world. Vedanta strives to enable communities in, around and far beyond the areas where it operates, to become empowered and self-reliant participants in the economic progress of the country. Our endeavours have brought not just recognition for the Dhokra artisans of Kankeri but also created a new market for them, resulting in more business and increased household income. Even today, we continue to upskill these naturally gifted artisans and help them get the recognition they deserve at national and international platforms.”

The village of Kankeri, nestled deep within the forests of Kalahandi district in Odisha, is home to artisans skilled in the ancient metalworking art form of Dhokra, which has been a part of India's rich handicraft repertoire for nearly 4000 years. This skill that has been handed down to them for generations, was limited to making rudimentary trinkets for their own use and for selling in the nearby village markets, which was not enough to make their ends meet. Looking at the potential of Kankeri village becoming a vibrant hub of Dhokra, Vedanta organized professional training to keep up with contemporary design trends and produce commercially viable sculptures and art pieces that would have immense market value. The company provided the initial seed capital for procuring metal and other raw material and helped organize the first exhibition for them to get better prices for their craft.

After initial efforts started bearing fruits, Vedanta helped the artisan community create a raw material bank that would enable them to work seamlessly, open a Self Help Group bank account to provide adequate financial support, assist each of the households to open bank accounts where they can keep their hard-earned money and earn an interest on their deposit, organize an artisan’s card in collaboration with the Government of Odisha that would give the artisans of Kankeri village public recognition and also access to government-held exhibitions to participate, demonstrate and commercialise their works.

Kailash Kansari, a Dhokra artist and resident of Kankeri village says, “Our people have been involved in the Dhokra craft for years now. Vedanta has helped us get trained on various facets of the trade, like design, development, etc. Earlier our skillsets were not very refined, but with Vedanta’s help, now we have trainers who conduct regular training for us, and we are able to develop our skills. Thanks to the company, we are able to nurture this beautiful art in our hearts and through our hands.”

At Chhattisgarh, Vedanta is working with rural women to skill them in the art of mural paintings, one of most expressive handicrafts of Chhattisgarh that aesthetically encapsulates the various facets of life, tradition, and culture of the region’s tribal people. These paintings are a means of preserving the rich cultural heritage and legacy of these tribal people. Through its subsidiary Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO), India’s iconic aluminium producer, Vedanta’s Nari Shakti Kendra in the nearby village of Dondro, functions as the hub for training and other developmental initiatives. From skills training to market linkage, BALCO continues to support local womenfolk in furthering their enterprises.

Vedanta Aluminium & Power Business, a division of Vedanta Limited, is India’s largest producer of Aluminium, producing almost half of India’s Aluminium or 1.9 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) in FY20, and is also one of the largest private power producers in the country. Vedanta is a leader in value-added Aluminium products that find critical applications in core industries. With its world-class smelters, power plants and alumina refinery spread across India, the company fulfils its mission of spurring emerging applications of Aluminium as the ‘Metal of the Future’ for a greener tomorrow.

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About Vedanta Limited

Vedanta Limited, a subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Limited, is one of the world’s leading Oil & Gas and Metals company with significant operations in Oil & Gas, Zinc, Lead, Silver, Copper, Iron Ore, Steel, and Aluminium & Power across India, South Africa, Namibia, and Australia. For two decades, Vedanta has been contributing significantly to nation building. Governance and sustainable development are at the core of Vedanta’s strategy, with a strong focus on health, safety, and environment. Giving back is in the DNA of Vedanta, which is focused on enhancing the lives of local communities. Under the aegis of Vedanta Cares, the flagship social impact program, Nand Ghars have been set up as model anganwadis focused on eradicating child malnutrition, providing education, healthcare, and empowering women with skill development. The company has been featured in Dow Jones Sustainability Index, and was conferred CII-ITC Sustainability Award, the FICCI CSR Award, Dun & Bradstreet Awards in Metals & Mining, and certified as a Great Place to Work. Vedanta Limited is listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange in India and has ADRs listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

About Vedanta Cares

Vedanta is committed to reinvest in the social good of its neighbourhood communities and the nation. The Group’s flagship CSR project, Nand Ghar, is a network of model anganwadis where the thrust is on inclusive development of women and children at the grassroots level. The Group CSR initiative comprises of seven key verticals – Education, Healthcare, Water and Sanitation, Sustainable Livelihood, Skilling, Sports & Culture and Employee Volunteering. Vedanta Foundation, a philanthropic initiative of Vedanta Group is focused on skill development and vocational training programmes for the



underprivileged to make them employable. A key healthcare specialty CSR project is the Balco Medical Center, a 200-bed state-of-the-art Cancer care hospital located in New Raipur, Chhattisgarh. The company supports grassroots level sports through their Football academies in Goa and Udaipur.

About Vedanta Aluminium and Power:

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For more information, please log on to <https://www.vedantalimited.com>

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