

Honorable Mention

case 1-429-428

April 3, 2015

Chenetha Colour Weaves' Karghaa Brand: Social Impact with Commercial Success

"To generate equitable and sustainable livelihoods for handloom weaver communities by linking them with contemporary markets, through enhanced incomes, ownership, knowledge and skills."

— Chenetha Colour Weaves' Mission Statementⁱ

It was the morning of November 3, 2014, when Sudha Rani (Sudha), CEO of Chenetha Colour Weaves (CCW), arrived at the company's Karghaa retail store in the high-end neighborhood of Banjara Hills, Hyderabad. It was work as usual as the familiar cling-clang of a solitary handloom filled the store.

As she sipped her green tea, Sudha felt a sense of achievement and satisfaction. Just one week ago, CCW had elected its dream board. The new six-member board was predominantly composed of female handloom weavers from rural and semi-urban areas in the undivided state of Andhra Pradesh,ⁱ India. In just two years, Sudha had made CCW a weaver-owned enterprise, empowering weavers to break free from a vicious cycle of debt, poverty, hunger, and suicide.

Still, she wondered if she would be able to consistently provide employment to the rural artisans. Would she and her team be able to scale Karghaa to more Indian cities, generating enough money to sustain the business without external grants or funding? While some experts advised Sudha to expand using a company-owned-and-operated model, others suggested a franchise model. Which model would make Karghaa a brand to reckon with? Her vision was to make CCW not just a weaver-owned but weaver-managed enterprise. How would she achieve her goals?



ⁱ In 2014, the state of Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014.



Published by GlobalLens, a division of the William Davidson Institute (WDI) at the University of Michigan.

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