

CHAKRI FOR UNDER PRIVILEGED

Bhanu Kumar

Privileged are those who support the less privileged at Chakri. *Chakri* means "seva" in Hindi. The small organisation Chakri has a registered office at S N Road and a distribution depot at N S Road, opposite to Navbharat High School, Mulund West.

Set up by Shramik Naari Sangh, Chakri was formed in the year 2004 to create a bond amongst women who are committed to exchange their art, skill and talent so that they help each other and themselves. It is a socio-economic development initiative operational as a charitable society. The society is focused to create employment opportunities for needy women through skill identification, motivation, capacity building, innovation, self-reliance and self-direction.

The fares displayed are of a useful variety. Artistic envelopes, spacious cloth and jute bags, craft boxes, table mats, intricate jewelry, incense sticks, key chains and many such useful items besides household consumable items like pickles, chocolates, mouth fresheners, *masala* and eatables.

"It is not just a social work venture but an attempt to promote women empowerment. It aims to bring about a sense of oneness amongst the needy and the less privileged, to reach the urban to the ru-



Chakri office in Mulund

ral and vice versa. This will enable understanding of life on the other side," details Simi Thapar, Trustee.

The two brands are Chakri and Udaan. Chakri works towards integrating the unique talent of every participant member.

Udaan aims to bridge the talent between urban and rural and thus generate employment. *Diyas* and decorative pottery, eco friendly bags, pouches to pack coins, *torans* and garlands are some of the products.

Women, they assert are not the weaker sex. The goal is that every woman should at the mental level become self reliant, confident, strong and independent. "The belief is that an independent, healthy and progressive mind will naturally bring cultural and progressive change to her

family and thereby the future generation," adds Thapar.

"Our activities began with a single product, home made *Khakhras*. Encouraged by the immense response the brand of Chakri was launched in the year 2004," says Thapar.

Home made tasty Indian delicacies, *khakhras*, *pa-pads*, cookies, syrups, tea time snacks, dry fruits preparations, chocolates and sugar free delicacies are sold.

Gift hampers that are exclusive and elegant enhance the value of the gift. Hand made handicraft boxes, trays and baskets that are ideal for corporate and social gifting are displayed.

Chakri promotes entrepreneurship of women. Personal supervision and inspection ensures adherence to quality and hygiene standards. The products

are made at their *ashram* at Parli village near Khopoli.

"Our procurement and production team is always on the move. Research is on to improve taste, quality and packaging methods. Our sales team reaches products to the corporate and social world. We have been successful in selling to Reliance Infocom, Shoprite, NSCI and other corporate entities," adds Thapar.

"Public response is very encouraging. Once they taste the quality of our fare they come again and again. We have a set of regular clientele," says Dhara Dedhia, store manager. Quitting a lucrative executive profile at a multinational, she has opted to work as a volunteer.

"We supply to different stores and also have corporate clients like Godrej who buy our bitter and sweet chocolates for gifting to their clients," adds Dedhia.

"Our aim is not to capture the retail market but to reach out to good clients," says Thapar.

"Our efforts bring a change in the life style and personality of the adivasi women. The thought behind the product is important," feels Dedhia.

"Our services cover all aspects of micro-enterprise from conceptualization to planning, designing, manufacturing, packaging, logistics, branding, marketing and expansion," briefs Thapar.

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