Livelihoods (contd.)

The Thar region in the western state of Rajasthan, similar to Kachchh in many ways, also has a family of organisations - together called URMUL - with shared beliefs of community-driven development through programmes that are devised, strengthened, sustained and finally owned by the communities.

Such programmes are not limited to civil society. Jharcraft (below) - an initiative of the Jharkhand government - attempts to conserve tribal skills of working with bamboo, cane, mud, lac, jute, grass and metalwork among other art and craft forms. It has enhanced or created livelihoods for over 3 lakh families in just 10 years.

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The ideas of localisation of both production and consumption, are not limited to the ‘cottage industries’, but also to products considered ‘industrial-scale.’ In Kuthambakkam village of Tamil Nadu, the former panchayat sarpanch Elango R. envisions a regional collection of villages to be self-sufficient in producing everything from soap to electric power.