



a fair trade company  
manufacturing and  
exporting handicrafts



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2018 - 2019**



**source**  
**A FAIR TRADE  
GIFT SHOP**



**GUARANTEED  
FAIR TRADE**

**Buy our wide range of handcrafted  
products from two of our outlets at  
Asad Gate and Mohakhali.**

**Source-1**

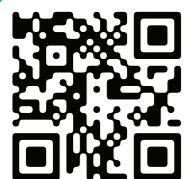
1/1, Asad Gate Road  
Mohammadpur

**Source-2**

SKS Tower, Shop- 59  
Mohakhali

**Online-**

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**Prokritee**

House# 1/1, Asad Gate Road, Block- A  
Mohammadpur, Dhaka- 1207  
Tel: +88 02 5815 3405  
[www.prokritee.com](http://www.prokritee.com)



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**Vision**

All rural women in Bangladesh live in dignity and are valued as contributing members of society.

**Mission**

To develop the social and economic capacity of poor, rural, disadvantaged women in Bangladesh by creating productive employment opportunities and sustainable linkages to world markets.

Cover Photo

**Usha Rani Kor**

Artisan, Biborton Handmade Paper

## MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



There is a Chinese proverb that says, “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.” Keeping that same saying in mind, we implemented some major projects this year (2018-19), all of which will be considered definitive milestones in Prokritee’s history in the years to come.

The first major milestone was achieving international recognition for the work we do. As many of you know Craft Village, one of the major platforms for Indian handicraft organizations, awarded us “The Brand of The Year” in November 2019. This award means a lot to us, as it validates the impact we have on the Handicraft sector in South Asia.

The second major project we undertook occurred in October 2019. As you know, we currently use a rented building to carry out our day-to-day operations in Dhaka. And, for a long time, we were in need of a place of our

own, which is why we have taken the initiative to buy a land (675 square meters) in Faydabad area of Dakshin Khan, Dhaka. We hope to have our own Head Office there in the next five years.

The third major project was undertaken to aid Hajiganj Handicrafts Basket Unit, a production unit of Prokritee. We finally had enough fund to build a storage facility for the unit. The building will also include a fumigation room equipped with a dehumidifier, which will ensure the production of high-quality baskets for our buyers.

The fourth project was undertaken to extend the reach of our local customer base. A lot of our local customers have to travel a long distance, specially from Gulshan area, to come to our Asad Gate shop. To aid them, we opened a new store in SKS Tower, Mohakhali, Dhaka.

The fifth and the most expensive project that we were able to complete this year was the first phase of Bagdha’s Building. Bagdha Enterprise is one of our biggest production units in Barishal district, and we were finally able to finish the 1st phase of the establishment.

Due to all these wonderful projects that have come together this year, I feel privileged to be a part of Prokritee right now, as my team and I get to plant the seeds for the future of our artisans.

Swapan Kumar Das  
Executive Director

## FROM OUR BUYER



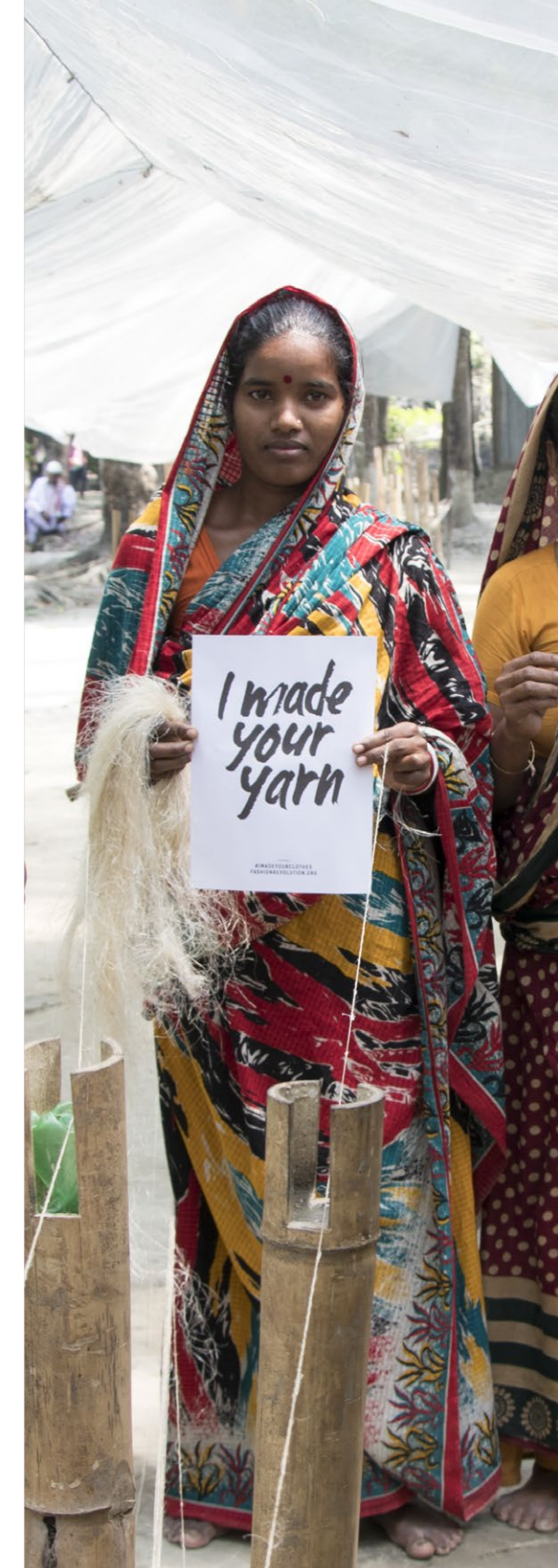
Prokritee is one of our very best trading partners and suppliers of fair trade product. We can count on easy and transparent communication and excellent product quality. The catalogue is extensive and there is never an issue for our buyers to find great product to purchase. The ability to work with our designers when required is very professional.

We are currently expanding the wholesale part of our business and Prokritee products have quickly become an important part of this initiative. Our wholesales customers are regularly purchasing their products as they are of high quality, fit well with the customers’ eco-conscious ethics and have a great fair trade back story.

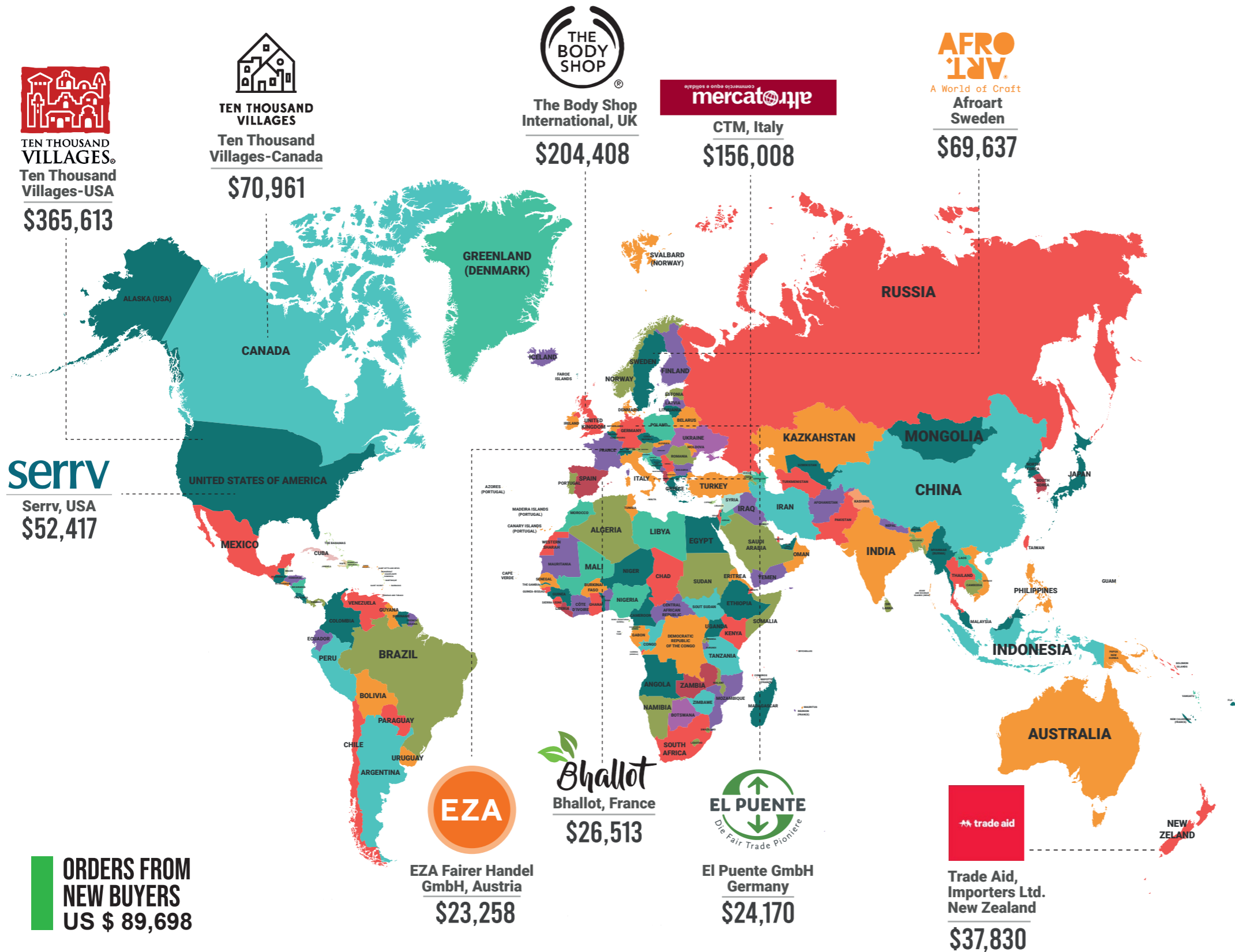
Baskets are a very big sales line for us and we have been expanding the number we source from Prokritee. Their baskets are very modern and beautifully finished and have very quickly become customer favourites. The hemp twine and decorative garlands have been very popular for a very long time and new products doing well are the recycled saree pot holders and the hemp twine bath mitt.

We are planning on doubling sales in the next 3-5 years and Prokritee will play a big part in achieving this.

Geoff White  
Chief Executive Officer | Trade Aid Importers Ltd  
New Zealand



At Bagdha Enterprise



## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



Here is our financial status for 2018-19:

### Income July 2018 - June 2019 (USD)

Sales Export	1,179,386
Sales local	177,941
Income from Cash Incentive	122,081
Interest Income on Investment	32,719
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,512,127</b>

### Expenses (USD)

Cost of Goods Sold	712,561
Administrative expenses	651,287
Marketing expenses	31,161
Development expenses	7,504
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>1,402,513</b>

**Net Income (USD) 109,614**

1 USD = TK. 84.5160653557  
Source: www.xe.com

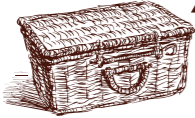
Kutub Zilani  
Deputy Manager- Accounts

# MAINTAINING CONSTANT GROWTHS

HAJIGANJ HANDICRAFTS BASKETS UNIT, HAJIGANJ, NILPHAMARI



BASKET



BASKET

34,973 Pcs

HAJIGANJ HANDICRAFTS CROCHET UNIT, SAIDPUR, NILPHAMARI



CROCHET ITEMS  
10,158 Pcs



RECYCLE SARI KANTHA  
3,500 Pcs

JOBARPAR ENTERPRISE, JOBARPAR, BARISHAL



JEWELRY  
6,240 Pcs



ORNAMENT  
54,400 Pcs

BIBORTON HANDMADE PAPER, KALURPAR, BARISHAL

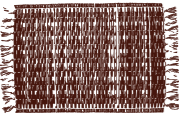


BASKET  
6,240 Pcs



HANDMADE PAPER PRODUCT  
2,36,230 Pcs

TORULOTA HANDICRAFTS, NAGARBARI, BARISHAL

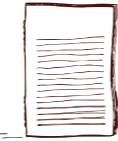


PATIGRASS PLACEMAT  
910 Pcs



JUTE/COTTON/HEMP ORNAMENT  
5,535 Pcs

BONOFUL HANDMADE PAPER, MUKTAGACHA, MYMENSINGH



HANDMADE PAPER PRODUCT  
90,304 Pcs

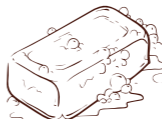


BATIK FABRIC  
2,601 Pcs

SACRED MARK ENTERPRISE, MYMENSINGH

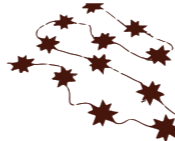


RECYCLE SARI PRODUCT  
11,971 Pcs



HANDMADE SOAP  
25,235 Pcs

KEYA PALM ENTERPRISE, BOROMOGRA, BARISHAL



PALM LEAF ORNAMENTS

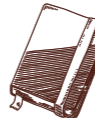


LAMP SHADE  
37,231 Pcs

SHUKTARA HANDMADE PAPER, CHARIPUR, FENI

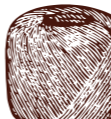


BAG  
15,871 Pcs



HANDMADE PAPER PRODUCT  
89,163 Pcs

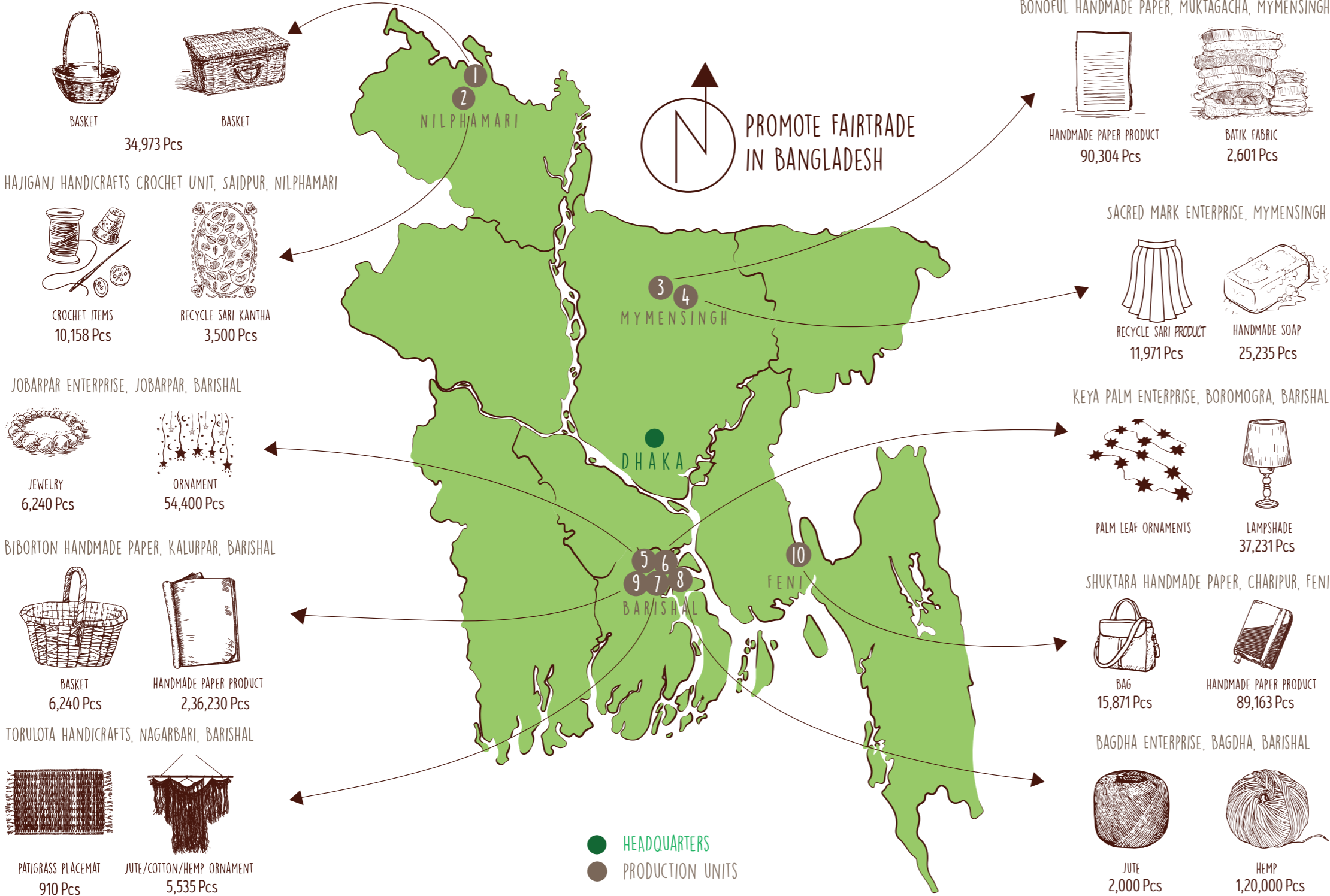
BAGDHA ENTERPRISE, BAGDHA, BARISHAL



JUTE  
2,000 Pcs



HEMP  
1,20,000 Pcs



Bangladesh exports approximately 20-million-dollar worth of handicraft goods each year. Out of those 20-million, we handle about 2-million dollars. The image on the left shows you how many of each item we exported in order to reach that big goal last fiscal year.

For the last few years, we were lucky enough to maintain the 2-million-dollar export targets. But, we believe our best work is still ahead of us, and for that we need to maintain that constant growth.

So, if you wish to help us grow, email us at [contact@prokritee.com](mailto:contact@prokritee.com), and we will find a way to reach out to you.

Afzalun Nessa Chowdhury  
Chairperson, Prokritee Board of Director

## STORY OF HAJIGANJ BASKET UNIT



Sk. Ahmed Ullah, Unit Manager

With a mission to serve and learn from the vulnerable people living around the world, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the parent organization of Prokritee, came to Bangladesh in the year 1970.

Since then, they have started many income generating projects in Bangladesh that have elevated the living standard of thousands of artisans from vulnerable backgrounds. And, one of those projects was the Hajiganj Handicrafts (Basket Unit).

It was the year 1998, and MCC Bangladesh assigned Mr. Sk. Hafiz Ullah with the task of finding out and filing a report on the skill-sets of the artisans living in the Lakshibazar Village, Hajiganj. Mr. Hafiz, who was living in Saidpur, was delighted to hear that MCC Bangladesh wanted to start a project near his area.

Mr. Hafiz knew that the local artisans were skilled at making baskets. To make the baskets, the artisans used Kaisa, a local grass. Most of the artisans were women

from poor families, and they depended on their husbands, most of whom worked as day laborers and earned around 20-30 BDT (less than \$1) per day. Each family had around 2-3 children and would probably end up not going to school.

This was an ideal project for MCC, and the local officials back then believed Mr. Hafiz was the perfect man to carry out their vision to serve and learn from these vulnerable, underprivileged artisans living in the Hajiganj area.

Time went by and Mr. Hafiz tried his best to establish the basket project. Orders were hard to come by and the ones that came their way were small in quantity. To keep Mr. Hafiz determined, MCC Officials told him that serving requires sacrifices and learning requires patience. MCC also tried to help the artisans through their aid, but Mr. Hafiz knew MCC wouldn't be able to do that forever.

In 2001, MCC Officials realized that they need to create an independent organization to carry out their legacy here in Bangladesh, and thus Prokritee was born. During this transition, Hajiganj Handicrafts Basket Unit also came under Prokritee's organizational setup. But, nothing changed.

Orders were still hard to come by. Mr. Hafiz, who had the weight of age upon his shoulder by then, couldn't go from house to house anymore to ask the artisans to keep making baskets and remain hopeful. His dear son, Mr. SK. Ahmed Ullah, saw his father's dream of establishing the basket unit fade slowly. But, the legacy of serving and learning had to be carried out by someone.

In 2003, Ahmed stepped up and wanted to carry out his father's work. He had already seen his father coordinate with the artisans and knew how the whole operation worked. Prokritee was delighted to have this young man on their side. But still, the orders were nowhere near.

In 2005, Hajiganj was on the verge of shutting down due to the lack of orders. The artisans, who were making a few baskets each month, were losing their interest. Mr. Ahmed was also losing hope and started looking for other job opportunities. But, he couldn't let go of the legacy of serving and learning that had been carried out by his father.

In 2006, a buyer named Melissa T. Hand came to visit him and his lady artisans. Ahmed was not expecting a lot from

Melissa, as he had seen a lot of foreigners come and go. But, after seeing Ahmed's perseverance and the artisans' willingness to work, Melissa was willing to give this unit a shot.

After that visit, Melissa put in her first order for 900 Baskets. At first, Ahmed couldn't believe that this was an actual order, but as the confusion faded—dread took hold of him, because Ahmed was given only 3 months to produce 900 baskets. And, with the existing set-up then, it was nearly impossible.

Ahmed talked with the artisans and came up with an idea of hiring a rickshaw van and going from house to house and training new artisans around the village.

It was a daunting task: the rickshaw puller was struggling to navigate through the rural village roads which were often unfinished; the summer heat was beating down on Ahmed every day; and most disheartening of all, the families in the village were refusing to let their wives work outside. But, Ahmed didn't give up. With his health in jeopardy and dark circles around his eyes, he pushed forward with his small team of artisans.

"Delivering the first order to Ten Thousand Villages was like having a baby," Ahmed still recalls. "But, I learned and wanted to serve the artisans loved by my late father."

Now, Hajiganj Handicrafts (Basket Unit) is one of the biggest production units of Prokritee, giving jobs to over 120 artisans in the Hajiganj area.

In 2010, Prokritee purchased a piece of land for the unit, and now a two storey warehouse is being constructed on it. Ahmed and his artisans now work with pride in that area.

Ahmed and his artisans have come a long way and produced thousands of baskets, but they still nurture that same legacy taught by MCC: serving and learning. And even today, when a big order comes in Ahmed sits with the artisans and asks them for ideas, because he knows and believes that - to serve, you must first learn. That is the legacy taught by MCC, and now that legacy is being carried out by all the production units of Prokritee.



At Hajiganj Handicrafts Basket Unit



Kaisa and Recycle Sari Baskets

## Hajiganj Basket Unit

**Founding Year:** 1998

**Location:** Hajiganj, Nilphamari

**Unit Manager:** Sk. Ahmed Ullah

**Total Artisans:** 30 regular; 96 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Baskets made from recycled saris, Kaisa grass, Palm leaves, Hogla (sea grass).

## Hajiganj Crochet Unit

**Founding Year:** 2005

**Location:** Saidpur, Nilphamari

**Unit Manager:** Sk. Ahmed Ullah

**Total Artisans:** 35 regular; 52 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Crochets made from recycled sari.



## Bagdha Enterprise

**Founding Year:** 1982

**Location:** Bagdha, Barishal

**Unit Manager:** Kalipada Adhikary

**Total Artisan:** 45 regular, 158 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Bath mitts made from hemp and jute.

## Sacred Mark Enterprise

**Founding Year:** 2009

**Location:** Mymensingh

**Unit Manager:** Richard J Sarkar

**Total Artisan:** 28 regulars, 31 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Soap made from coconut/ palm oil and essential oil, and recycled sari blankets.



Hogla Baskets and Handmade  
Paper Stationery

## Bonoful Handmade Paper

**Founding Year:** 1995

**Location:** Muktagacha, Mymensingh

**Unit Manager:** Richard J Sarkar

**Total Artisans:** 50 regulars, 22 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Paper and Stationery items made from jute, hemp, wheat straw, pineapple leaves, coconut fibers, recycled newspapers, cotton waste, etc.

## Torulota Crafts

**Founding Year:** 2011

**Location:** Nagarbari, Barishal

**Unit Manager:** Jagannath Datta

**Total Artisan:** 15 regular, 17 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Baskets made from pathi grass. Other products: table mats, jewelry boxes.



Handmade Christmas  
Decorations

## Jobarpar Enterprise

**Founding Year:** 1984

**Location:** Jobarpar, Barishal

**Unit Manager:** Papri Mondal

**Total Artisans:** 43 regular, 35 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Christmas decors  
and ornaments made from handmade paper.

## Keya Palm Handicrafts

**Founding Year:** 1987

**Location:** Boromogra, Barishal

**Unit Manager:** Jaganath Datta

**Total Artisans:** 40 regular, 30 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Home decor and  
jewelry made from Palm and Keya leaves.



Handmade Wrapping Paper and  
Recycled Newspaper Notebook

## Biborton Handmade Paper

**Founding year:** 1993

**Location:** Kalurpar, Barishal

**Unit manager:** Sajal Krisna Datta

**Total artisans:** 51 regular, 46 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** Paper made from  
jute, water hyacinth, and silk.

## Shuktara Handmade Paper

**Founding year:** 1989

**Location:** Charipur, Feni

**Unit Manager:** Muhammad Abul Kalam

**Total artisans:** 32 regular, 15 seasonal

**Best Selling Products:** , Paper made from  
water hyacinth, jute, cotton waste, banana  
fiber, bags made from jute and recycled sari.

# Prokritee Board of Directors



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Director



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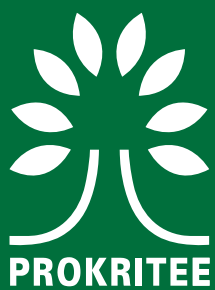
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Ms. Sufia Akhtar Rahman  
Director

# CATALOGUES





Prokritee Headquarters

House # 1/1, Asad Gate Road, Block-A

Mohammadpur, Dhaka 1207

Bangladesh

+88 02 58153405

+88 01715 040669

[contact@prokritee.com](mailto:contact@prokritee.com)

[www.prokritee.com](http://www.prokritee.com)

