

Indigo Project

August 2020

The project moved from Bundi in Rajasthan to Tejgarh in Gujarat in 2018 where Madan is honorary director of the Adivasi Academy. For the last two years indigo has been grown successfully by a local farmer, and has been extracted and used as dye by weavers.

Madan's documentation project has been completed, but the indigo growing, extracting, dyeing and weaving will continue and provide a sustainable livelihood for people around Tejgarh.

October 2018

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After an unsuccessful attempt to grow *indigofera tinctoria* in 2017, this year the plants were strong and healthy.

Ramzani Pathan lives in Badodia Village near Bundi and is over 90. He is holding some locally grown indigo for the first time for 80 years. He remembers how his family used to extract indigo from locally grown plants and sell it in the form of indigo dye cake at the village indigo market to dyers and printers. It used to be harvested twice in September as the dye concentration is greatest in young leaves. Nevertheless, Madan has begun soaking some in a barrel in November as the first stage in extracting the dye and is following Ramzani's instructions.

The man on the left is also Pathan and the man on the right is going to repair a set of three old indigo dyeing vats which are on the margin of the field where Madan is growing indigo. There are several sets still there and the mason will repair one set. Old people such as Ramzani remember indigo vats in other villages too but most have been filled in as they were mostly circular masonry structures dug into the ground.

The dried leaves of the plants will be stored as indigo can be extracted from them too.

Madan Meena is trying to document the local indigo dyeing craft and associated block printing before the last people with this knowledge are not around anymore.

For research purposes he has bought natural indigo dye from Tamil Nadu, and unbleached handwoven cotton from Kala Swaraj Foundation of Madhya Pradesh. He has also bought *indigofera tinctoria* seeds and is planning to grow some for dyeing purposes and for seed this 2017 summer.

Hadoti used to be an indigo growing area and there is a huge upsurge of interest in natural dyes with customers abroad willing to pay more for a natural dyed indigo fabric.

Madan has found printing blocks which are no longer used and evidence of traditional designs.

We would welcome funding for this project.