



Revitalising Mangalagiri's Gold Jewellery Cluster through Collective Livelihoods



Mangalagiri, a town in Guntur district, has long been known for its gold jewellery craftsmanship. Skilled artisans have always been at the heart of this tradition, but the ecosystem around them was missing.

Despite their expertise, artisans depended on nearby Vijayawada for quality manufacturing. This added time, cost, and limited their control over production. The skills stayed local, but the value did not.

This began to change when the cluster was developed under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises through the SFURTI scheme. The Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation acted as the Nodal Agency, while implementation was led by the

Sri Viswakarma Gold Ornaments Manufacturers Industrial Co-Op Society Ltd. The Sri Dhanalakshmi Society Mangalagiri Goldsmith Cluster functioned as the Special Purpose Vehicle, ensuring community ownership.

At the centre of this shift is Y. Rama Rao, a 27-year-old artisan with over 10 years of experience. Coming from a modest background and having completed his Secondary School Certificate, he entered the trade early to support his family and gradually built strong technical skills in crafting intricate gold ornaments.

The turning point came with the establishment of the Common Facility Centre.

The CFC created a shared, centralised production hub equipped with modern and semi-automated machinery. This includes casting machines, rolling mills, wire drawing machines, laser soldering and welding tools, polishing units, hallmarking and testing equipment, and basic CAD-supported design interfaces.

With this, production became local, faster, and more reliable. Dependence on Vijayawada reduced, and more value stayed within the Guntur district. Artisans gained access to advanced tools that were otherwise unaffordable, improving productivity, precision, and product standardisation.

The shift was not just technical. Artisans began moving from fragmented, low-margin job work to collective production and enterprise-based models. Working conditions improved with safer, more organised spaces. Managed through the SPV, the CFC

enabled shared ownership and collective decision-making, while linking with skill development, design, and market interventions.

The impact is clear. Monthly earnings increased to approximately INR 15,000 to 17,000. Financial stability improved, along with confidence and social recognition. The cluster also strengthened solidarity among artisans, encouraging knowledge sharing and collective growth.

Rama Rao now aspires to set up his own jewellery unit and become an independent entrepreneur. To get there, he seeks financial support, advanced training, and stronger market linkages.

The Mangalagiri Gold Jewellery Cluster shows how a structured, institution-backed approach can transform traditional livelihoods. By bringing infrastructure closer to artisans and linking it with skills and markets, it has reduced dependency, strengthened incomes, and reinforced dignity of labour.

For artisans like Rama Rao, this change is visible in how they work, earn, and plan their future.

