



**Maina Lakhar**  
Tribal Artist  
**Warli Artwork**

### In search of a better life

Maina Lakhar does what most tribal women in her area do. She makes *Warlipaintings* in her free time. But this art acquired from her mother is turning out to be a source of financial income for her. It helps her take care of her two daughters and support her family. For artisans like her, the Tribal Entrepreneurship Development program is turning to be a game-changer.



Maina, 30 is from the Palghar district of Maharashtra and lives with her husband and two children. She makes *Warlipaintings* on cloth, canvas, murals, wooden products like mobile stands, tissue boxes, etc. “After I am done with my household chores, I sit down to paint. It is a stress-buster as well as helps me support my family financially. Her husband is a laborer and does odd jobs which are few and far in between.

She learned to make *Warli* paintings by watching her mother draw chawks during marriages. Chawks are holy paintings made during weddings to invoke the blessings of the family goddess for the bride and groom. This tradition fired up a young Maina’s imagination who would paint *Warli* art in her drawing book and even school walls.

“The *Warlipaintings* my mother impacted me deeply and everything from my books to blank walls became a canvas for me to paint,” she says. She perfected her art under her mother’s guidance but never made it her vocation.

It was after marriage that she started painting commercially. “I have been making these paintings for the past 10 years to have an extra income as my husband does not have a regular job,” she says





Maina sells her products at various exhibitions organized by the government and private organizations. She also takes custom orders which are not regular. "Then there are traders who take bulk orders and pass them on to us. They pay us the labor charges and this helps," she says.

She earns around Rs 10,000 per month from her artwork which goes a long way to sustain her family. But the lockdown from 2020 to date deeply affected families like her. "It was the toughest of times we have been through. There was no work, but we still managed to feed ourselves by selling the paintings," she says.



Maina was recently selected under the TEDP to be trained to upgrade her skills. TEDP is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MOTA) and national industry body ASSOCHAM. Apart from additional skills, artisans were also trained to use digital marketing to further their business.

Her participation has made her eager to get a smartphone to promote her business. "I do not have a smartphone to post my products online. These days people order everything online and it is a huge market for people like us," she says.