3. A survey of artisans working in producer groups associated with MESH – personal details, income and expenditure and perception of quality of life; a comparison between 2011 and 2015.

Contents

Introduction

This report compares information regarding the status of artisans in producer groups associated with MESH. Comparisons are made using data collected by face to face questionnaire in 2011 and 2015 [See documents 1. *A survey of artisans working in producer groups associated with MESH – personal details, income and expenditure and perception of quality of life; 2011* (Click here). and 2. *A survey of artisans working in producer groups associated with MESH – personal details, income and expenditure and perception of quality of life; 2015* (Click here). The questionnaire may be viewed here.

Of the 13 groups surveyed in 2011 and the 12 groups surveyed in 2015, seven groups were surveyed in both years. These are: Khadi Gram Udyog (KUKA); Sartak Manav Kusht Ashram (SMK); Bharat Mata Khust Ashram (BMKA); Little Flower Khadi Village Industry (Little Flower); Anand Mahila Mandal (AMM); Bethany Colony Leprosy Association (BCLA); Hubli Hospital for the Handicapped Rehabilitation Unit (Hubli). For these seven groups, it was not always possible to survey the same individuals or the same number of individuals in both years: 202 and 95 individuals were surveyed in 2011 and 2015 respectively (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of artisans surveyed in producer groups in 2011 and 2015

	KUKA	SMK	BMKA	Little Flower	AMM	BCLA	Hubli	TOTAL
State	Uttar Pradesh	Rajasthan	Haryana	Bihar	New Delhi	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	
	Rural	Urban	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
2011	10	17	5	51	6	74	39	202
2015	9	11	5	25	10	21	14	95

It is therefore possible to compare the status of this population overall and as individual producer groups in 2011 and 2015.

Four groups are in urban areas (SMK, BMKA, AMM and Hubli) and three are in rural areas (KUKA, Little Flower and BCLA).

Of these, Hubli is a centre for treatment but artisans do not live at the centre, instead living elsewhere and attending for treatment and work. KUKA, SMK, BMKA, Little Flower, AMM and BCLA producer groups are leprosy colonies where artisans live, receive treatment and work.

MESH has been associated with these groups for many years: KUKA - 27 years, SMK - 17 years, BMKA - 27 years, Little Flower - 12 years, AMM – 12 years, BCLA – 27 years, Hubli – 27 years.

N.B. The numbers and percentages shown in this document will be different from those shown in the documents focussing on 2011 and 2015 because only seven groups are compared.

This report is in three sections which relate to the questionnaire:

1. Artisan personal details
2. Artisan income and expenditure
3. Artisan understanding and perception of their situation and quality of life

followed by a brief conclusion.

The 2015 questionnaire was almost identical to that used in 2011 but was refined to provide additional information: where changes occurred, they are explained in the text below.

Information about all matching producer groups is presented first to give a collective overview. The situation for individual matching producer groups is then presented.

Section 1. Personal details

Age and sex of artisans

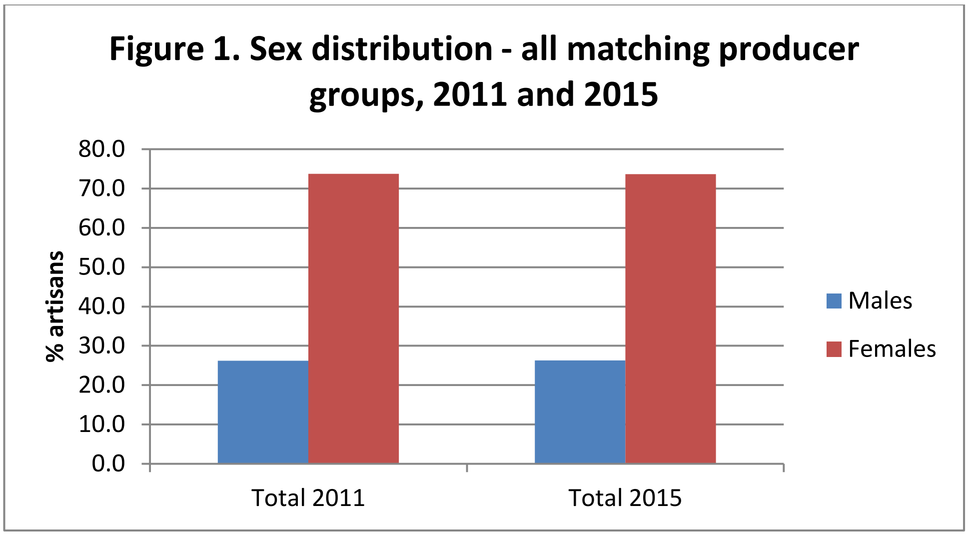


Figure 1 shows the sex distribution for all matching producer groups in 2011 and 2015. For both years, the majority of artisans are female with the proportion remaining **almost unchanged**.

Table 1 shows that between 2011 and 2015 there are few changes in the proportion of males and females per group. Although overall the majority of artisans are female, in some (mostly small) groups there are more males than females and this balance does not change between 2011 and 2015. AMM has no males and BCLA has only two or zero in 2011 and 2015 respectively. However, all producer group populations are dynamic with members joining and leaving for various reasons, for example, marriage into or outside the unit, ability to work, relocation or being able to work once children have grown up.

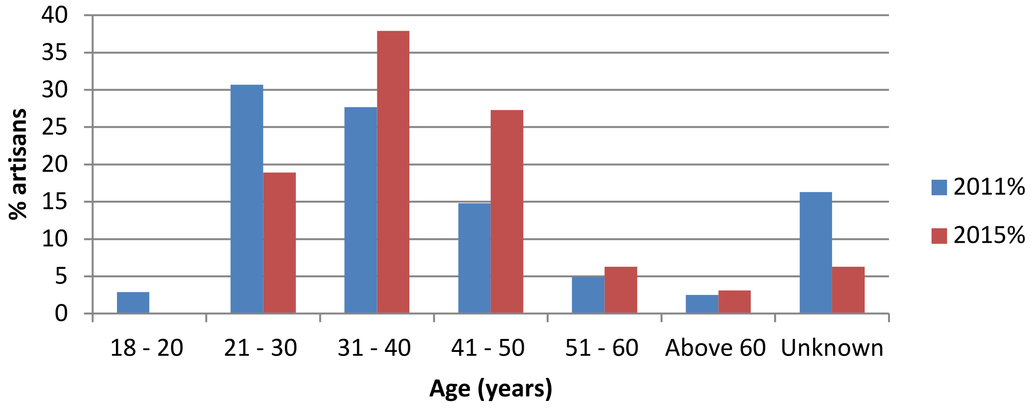
Table 1. Sex distribution - individual producer groups, 2011 and 2015

	KUKA		SMK		BMKA		Little Flower		AMM		BCLA		Hubli	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
Male	7	7	9	6	4	4	12	2	0	0	2	0	19	6
Female	3	2	8	5	1	1	39	23	6	10	72	21	20	8
Total	10	9	17	11	5	5	51	25	6	10	74	21	39	14

Predominately male group **Predominately female group**

Most artisans are in the range of 21 – 50 years of age for 2011 and 2015 (Figure 2). There is a **slight shift in age** in 2015 with a larger percentage of older artisans and none under 20 years of age. A future strategy for MESH may be to address low recruitment to groups thus providing opportunities for (especially) young people with disabilities not necessarily associated with leprosy.

Figure 2. Age distribution - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015



Figures 3 – 9 show the change in age for artisans in each producer group between 2011 and 2015. For some groups the category "unknown" represents elderly artisans who do not have a birth certificate and do not know their exact age. Changes over time at BCLA (Figure 8) represent an expected drop in numbers in each age category over time. However, some of the age progressions over the period in other groups do not appear logical: they may reflect changing populations, since not all artisans surveyed are the same in both years. Since age data for BMKA were not collected in 2011(and the group is only five strong), ages are simply extrapolated. AMM is a small group of friends who got together when they had small children and this is reflected in the very narrow age range for both 2011 and 2015 (Figure 7).

Figure 3. Age distribution - KUKA, 2011 and 2015

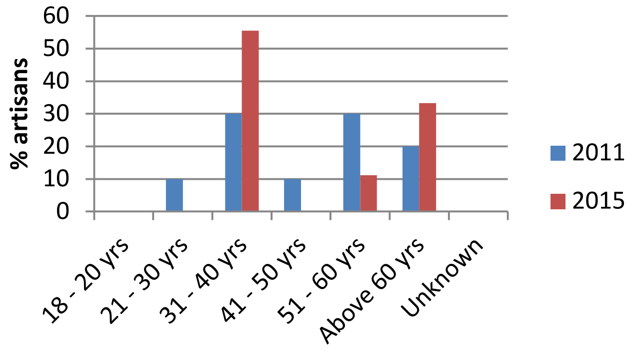


Figure 4. Age distribution - SMK, 2011 and 2015

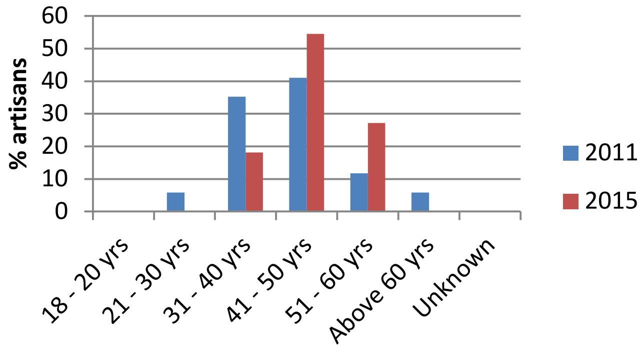


Figure 5. Age distribution - BMKA, 2011 and 2015

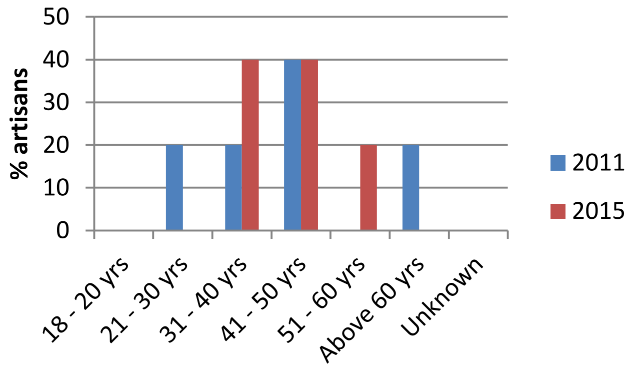


Figure 6. Age distribution - Little Flower, 2011 and 2015

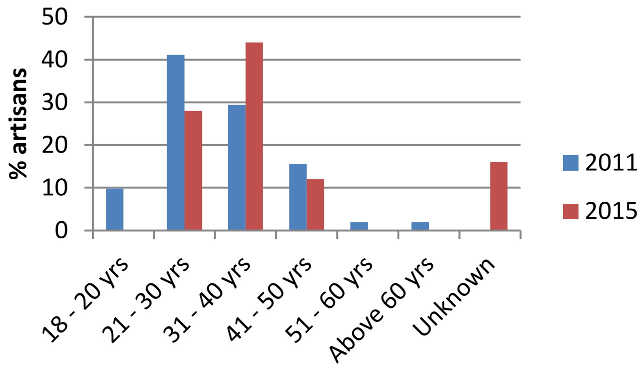


Figure 7. Age distribution - AMM, 2011 and 2015

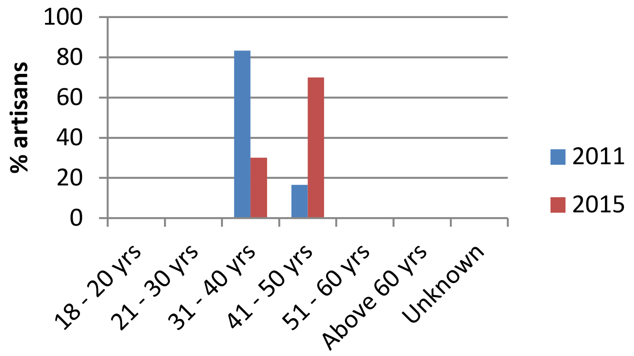


Figure 8. Age distribution - BCLA, 2011 and 2015

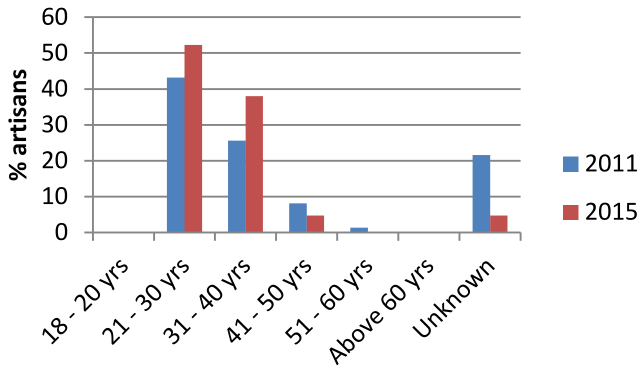
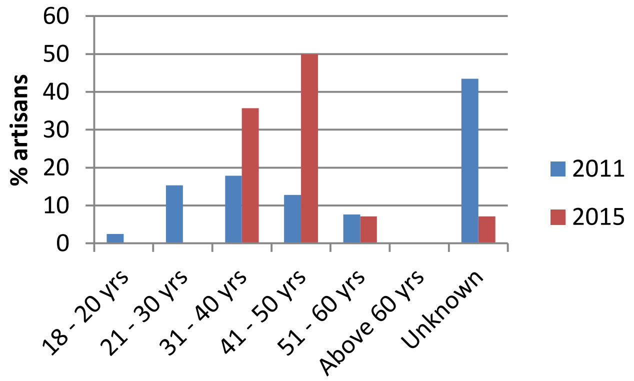


Figure 9. Age distribution - Hubli, 2011 and 2015

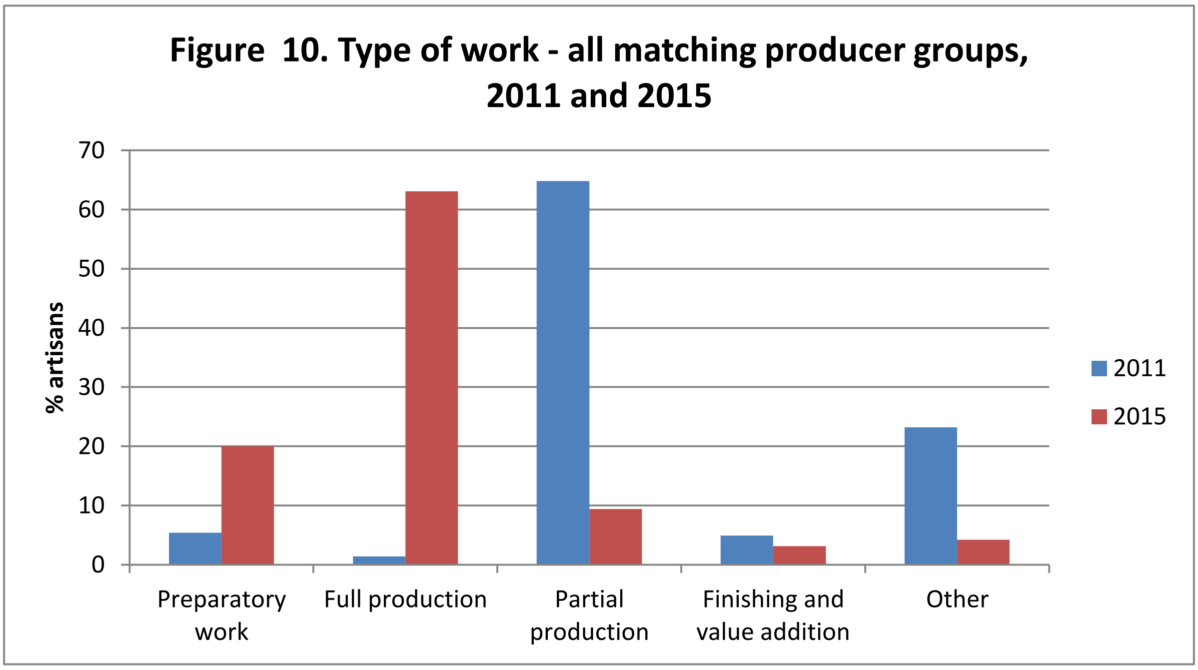


Artisan work profile

Type of work

As shown in Figure 10, comparison of the type of work undertaken by artisans in all production groups shows that by 2015 there has been **an increase (1.4% in 2011 to 63.1% in 2015) in the number of artisans who are able to fully prepare products and a reduction (64.8% in 2011 and 9.4% in 2015) in the number who partially prepare products**.

The number of artisans involved in preparatory work has increased from 5.4% in 2011 to 20.0% in 2015. The number of artisans involved in "other" tasks such as supervising/administration work, purchasing materials, finance and documentation work, has decreased from 23.2% in 2011 to 4.2% in 2015.



Figures 11 to 17 show how this pattern is reflected in each production group. Artisans in KUKA, BMKA, BCLA and Little Flower were not involved in full production in 2011 but by 2015 the numbers in **full production had increased**. This suggests an increased skills base in artisans and perhaps **more control** over the items produced. These improvements are linked to support from MESH. Four artisans from Little Flower attended the MESH Design Studio for training and discussion about their products. As a result, they extended the type of materials used for their weaving, enhanced quality and presentation of their products and increased the range of products offered. Between 2010 and 2014, MESH exported 9527 scarves from Little Flower. Similarly, BMKA and KUKA benefitted from design work (responding to changing demand in Europe) resulting in the export by MESH of 9209 kitchen linen products providing work for 14 weavers and 5 tailors from these two producer groups. Some groups, for example, BCLA have benefitted from collaboration with the MESH design team to create logos, brochures and labels to improve national marketing. Hubli and AMM artisans also showed an increase in the numbers involved in full production by 2015. At SMK artisans do very little full production (5.9% in 2011 and 9.1% in 2015) and by 2015 remain mostly involved in preparatory work or partial production.

Figure 11. Type of work - KUKA, 2011 and 2015

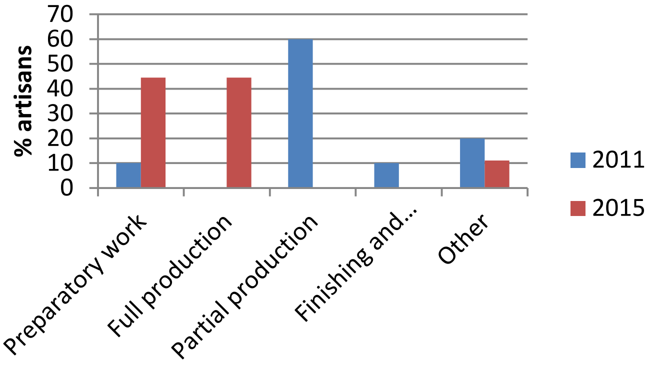


Figure 12. Type of work - SMK, 2011 and 2015

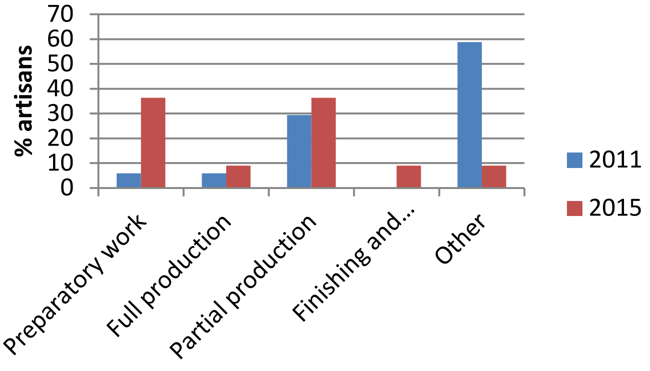


Figure 13. Type of work - BMKA, 2011 and 2015

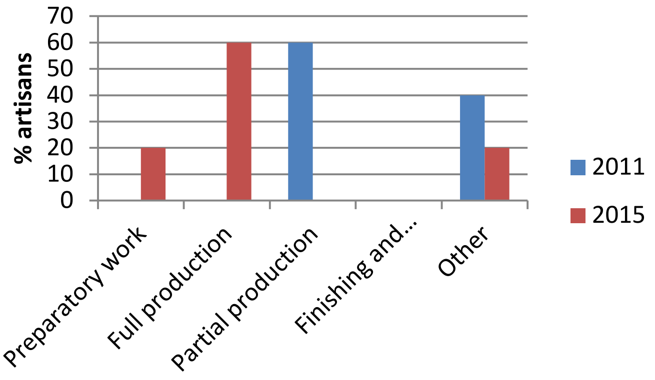


Figure 14. Type of work - Little Flower, 2011 and 2015

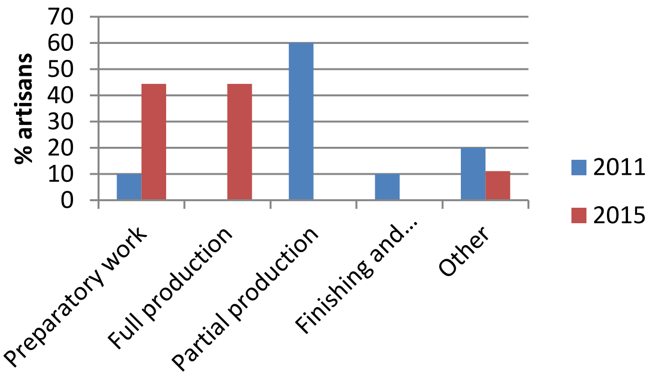


Figure 15. Type of work - AMM, 2011 and 2015

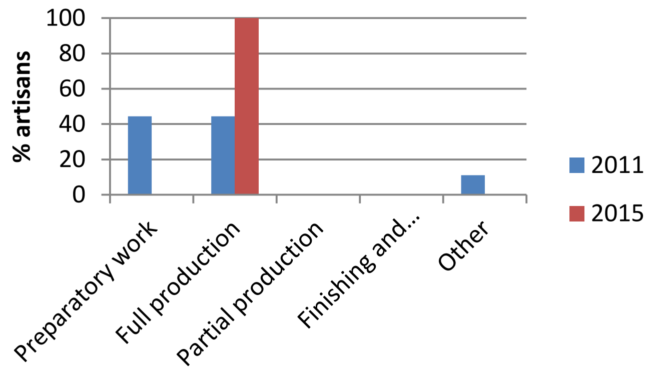


Figure 16. Type of work - BCLA, 2011 and 2015

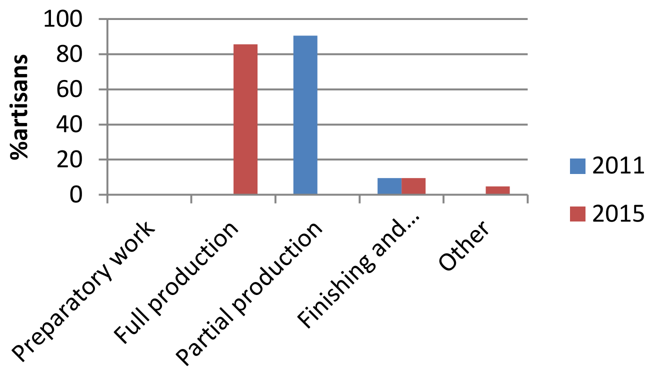
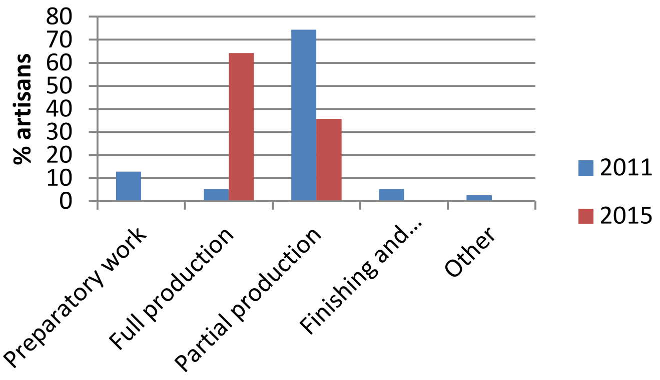
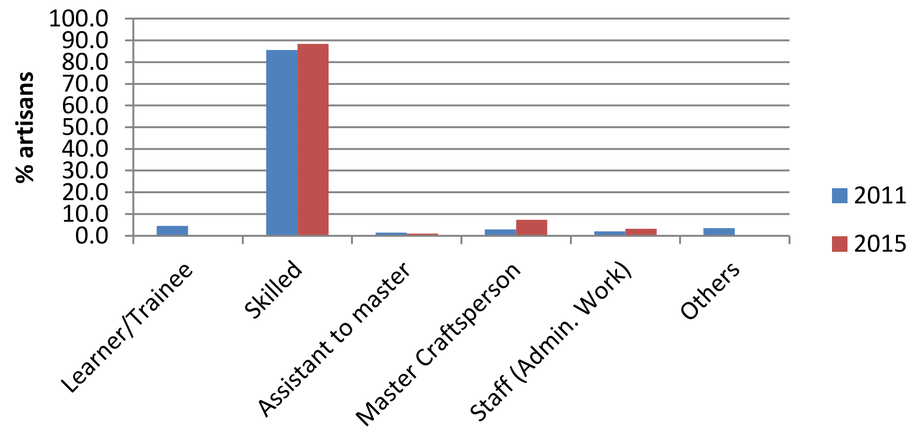


Figure 17. Type of work - Hubli, 2011 and 2015



Self assessment of skill and source of learning skills

Figure 18. Self assessment of skills - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015



For both 2011 and 2015, the majority of artisans (85.6% and 88.4% respectively) claim to be skilled indicating that they have learned at least one skill (Figure 18). **A possible concern is that in 2011 only 4.5% of all artisans claimed to be a learner/trainee and by 2015 no artisans were in this category.** This may link to the low recruitment issue mentioned on Page 3. However, usually new recruits are trained on the job by other artisans.

Table 2 shows the number of artisans (not percentage) in each producer group and how they described their skills levels in 2011 and 2015. For each group, the profile changes very little between 2011 and 2015. Most artisans assess their work as skilled although in reality, the divisions in skills levels are not clearly defined. However, this somewhat subjective view indicates artisan self-esteem and pride in their work which is entirely justified by the fact that artisan products are of sufficient quality to attract domestic and international sales.

Table 2. Self assessment of skills – individual matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

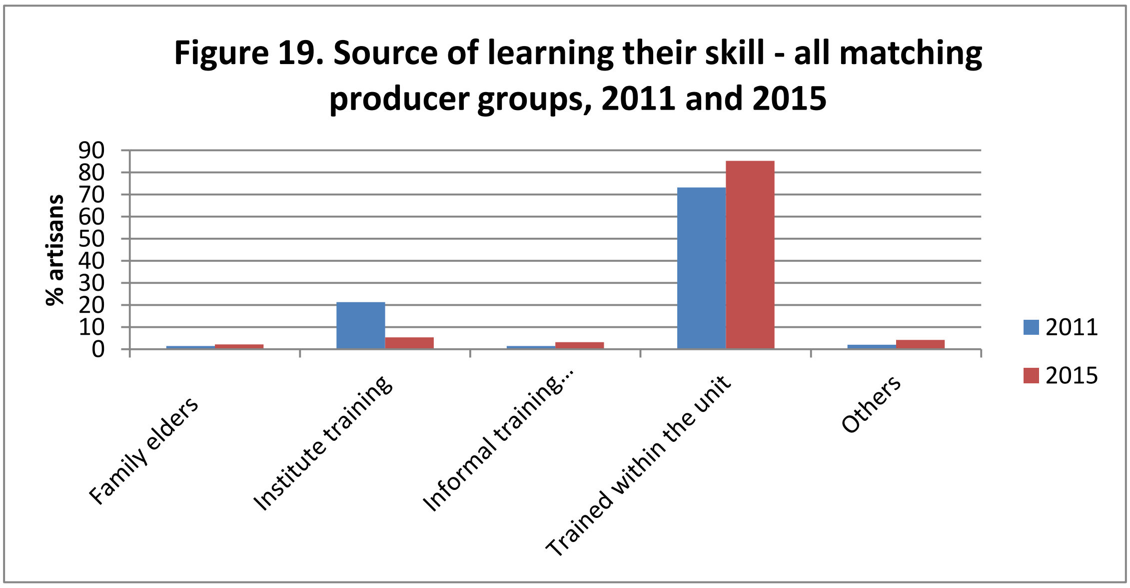
	KUKA		SMK		BMKA		Little Flower		AMM		BCLA		Hubli	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
Learner/trainee	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	3	0
Skilled	4	7	12	9	4	4	44	25	6	10	67	18	36	11
Assistant to master	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Master craftsperson	2	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Administrator	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other	3	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	**10**	**9**	**17**	**11**	**5**	**5**	**51**	**25**	**6**	**10**	**74**	**21**	**39**	**14**

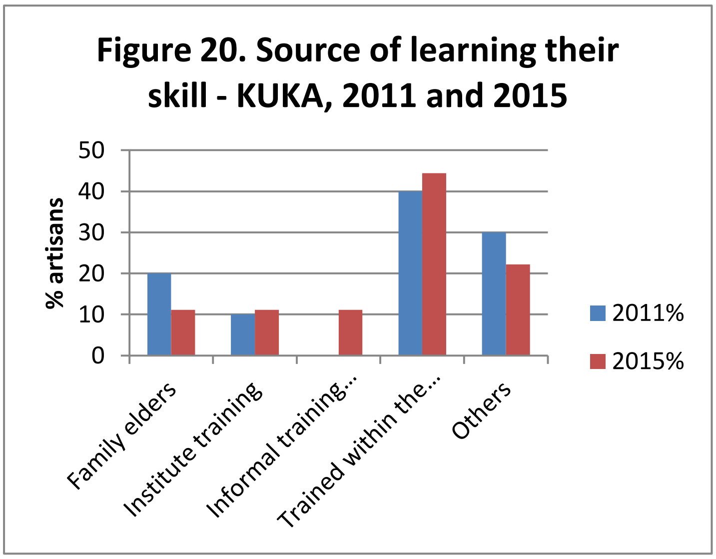
Figure 19 shows how artisans learned their skills. Between 2011 and 2015, there has **not been much change in overall profile** with the most important source of training being the unit itself.

Usually, MESH does not itself train artisans many of whom already possess skills such as weaving and block printing. There are exceptions such as the AMM artisans who were taught tatting by MESH as a way of providing work for women who could not go out to work. However, as a result of the design and product development work of MESH, in general, artisan skills and the quality of their products have improved.

Figures 20 to 26 show how skills are acquired in each group. There is a slight increase in those trained within the unit, especially in KUKA and SMK, and a decrease in those benefitting from institute training. A change is seen at Hubli where 100% of artisans in 2011 claimed institute training but none in 2015 when 85.7% of artisans were trained in their unit. However, it seems likely that since Hubli is a formal training centre, this difference is a result of a misunderstanding in 2011 of what institute training means and that both of these numbers (100% in 2011 and 85.7% in 2015) relate to training in the unit.

MESH itself also provides training, for example, in new production techniques, assistance with costing and pricing, Fair Trade issues, design development and education support. MESH also arranges annual Network Meetings focussing on a range of topics such as managing production and software for producer groups.





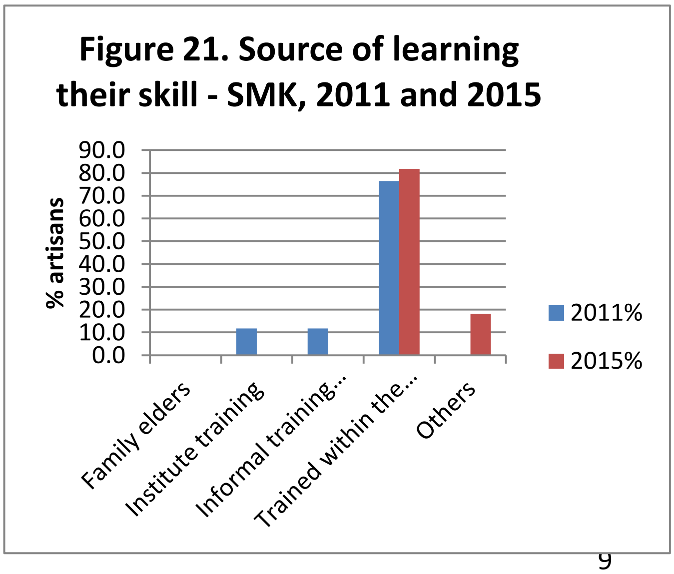


Figure 22. Source of learning their skill - BMKA, 2011 and 2015

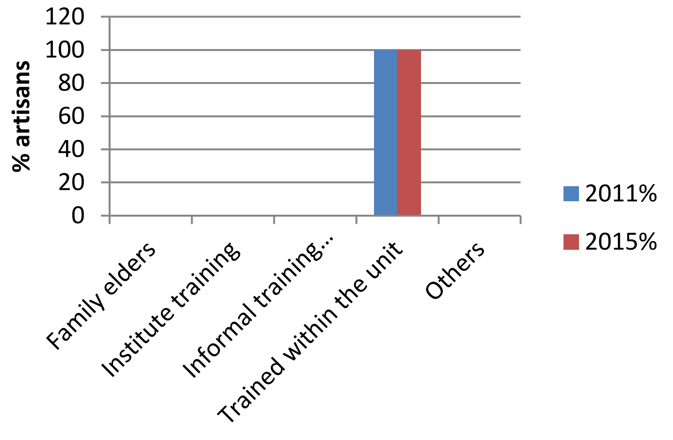


Figure 23. Source of learning their skill - Little Flower, 2011 and 2015

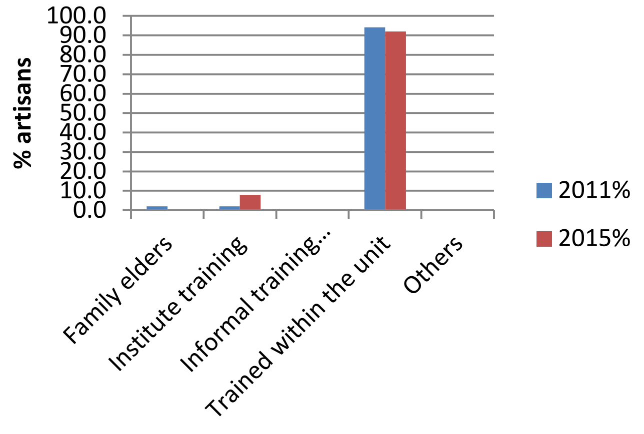


Figure 24. Source of learning their skill - AMM, 2011 and 2015

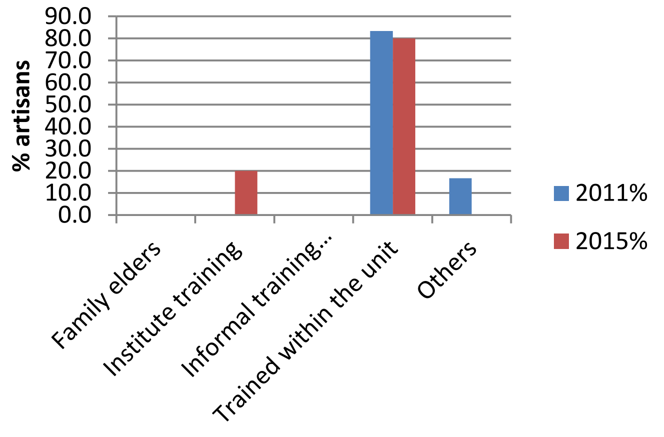


Figure 25. Source of learning their skill - BCLA, 2011 and 2015

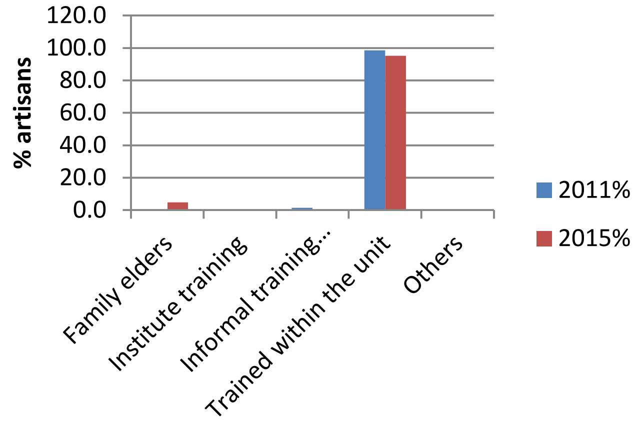
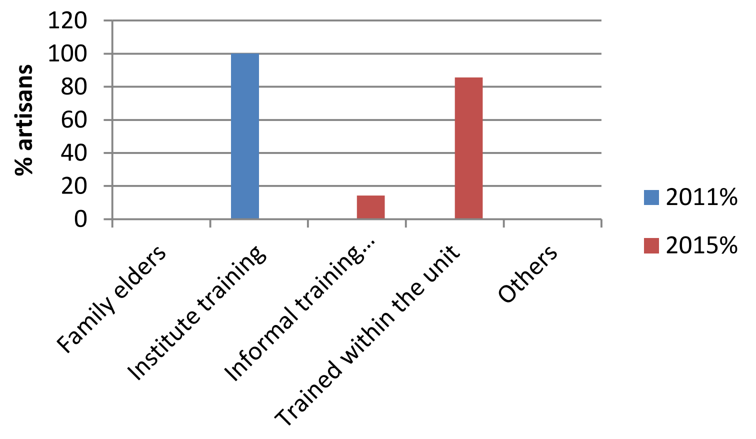


Figure 26. Source of learning their skill - Hubli, 2011 and 2015

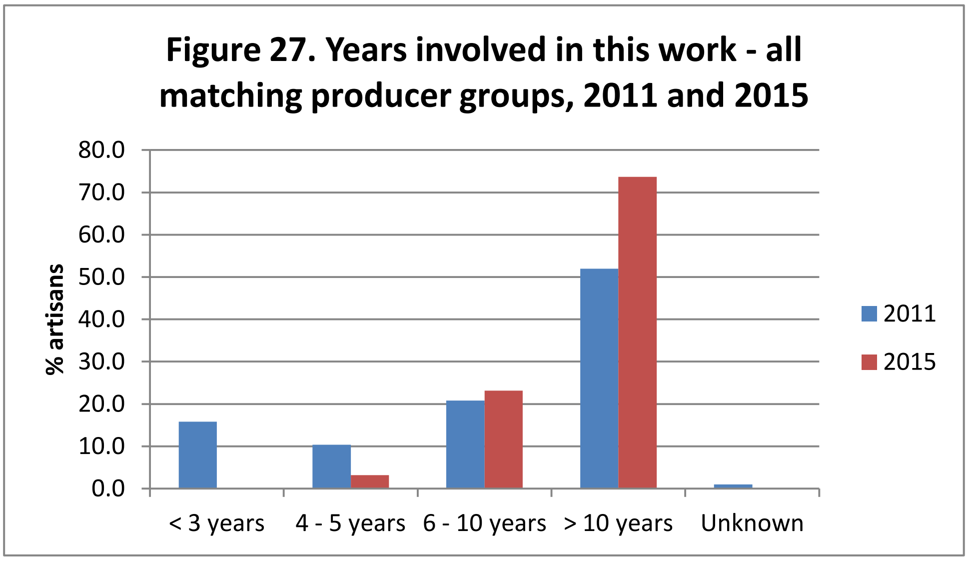


Years of involvement in this work

Most artisans have been involved in their work with the producer group for more than ten years as shown in Figure 27 and the number **has increased from 52.0% in 2011 to 73.7% in 2015**. This indicates that artisans are settled in their groups and suggests a level of satisfaction in their situation and stability within the group. This is supported by anecdotal comments from artisans as follows; SMK "We forget about our sickness and feel accepted in the community": Little Flower "We work together in the centre. We have good working conditions. Have good atmosphere and people to work alongside each other". BCLA "I just enjoy to work and thank MESH for the opportunity": AMM - artisans say they are proud of their work.

The number involved for 6 – 10 years has increased slightly from 20.8% to 23.2% over the period whilst **those involved for 4 -5 years has decreased from 10.4% to 3.2%.** This reflects to some extent, aging populations in groups that were set up between 12 and 27 years ago.

In 2011, 15.8% of artisans had been involved with the group for less than three years but by 2015, no artisan was in this category. This indicates **that new artisans are not joining the group** and this is of concern with respect to the longevity of the group. However, since all groups are autonomous, the role of MESH is limited to providing advice and support in the context of how groups might attract new members who would benefit the group and gain benefit for themselves.



N.B. The "unknown" category in 2011 represents just one artisan in each of SMK and Little Flower who did not know how long they had been working with the group.

As shown in Figures 28 to 34, for each producer group the number of artisans involved for more than ten years has increased when comparing 2011 and 2015 with very few or none being shorter term. The stability of these groups suggests that they are providing important support for artisans but the lack of new members may result in the groups declining in usefulness as artisans age and die. MESH aims to ensure that producer groups are maintained for as long as they are required by artisans. For example, currently (2017) in BMKA there are just four people working, only two are weavers and so their production capacity is low. MESH has met with the elders of the group to discuss their plans for the future and asked if they would consider looking for other disabled people in Faridabad town to join the group and train. They were not very interested in this option and the outcome is in their hands. In contrast, Hubli has now decided to sustain the group by bringing in new people including several without disabilities. At BMKA, where numbers are down to about five people, suggestions from MESH have not been taken up and this diminishing group may not survive. In general, wages in the producer groups are often low and so recruitment can be difficult. Improved diagnosis and treatment of leprosy means that infection need not lead to disability and disfigurement and so individuals can stay in regular society and employment. Additionally, it may be that for some people, the supportive role of the group is no longer required as alternative work becomes available to younger members, especially if they are better educated.

One of the aims of MESH is to provide more customers for artisans as this would lead to more income and thus better prospects for artisans.

Figure 28. Years involved in this work - KUKA, 2011 and 2015

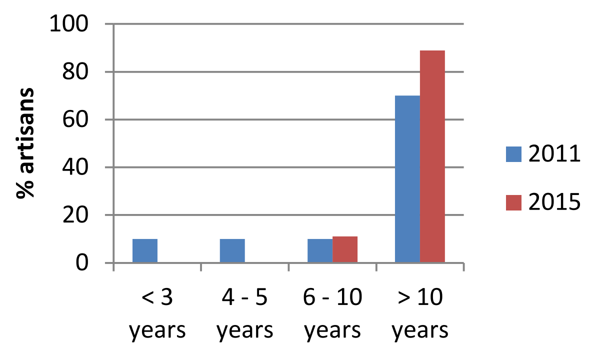


Figure 29. Years involved in this work - SMK, 2011 and 2015

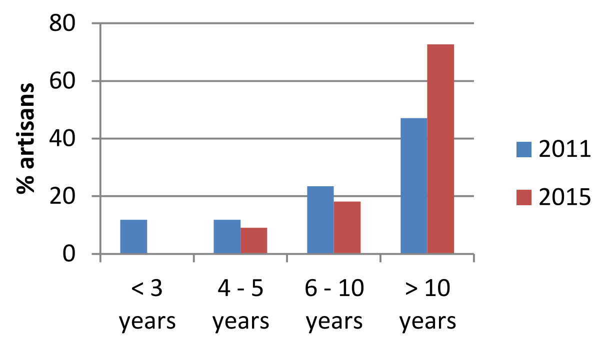


Figure 30. Years involved in this work - BMKA, 2011 and 2015

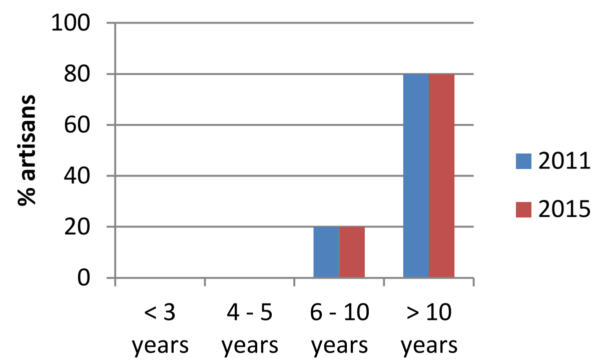


Figure 31. Years involved in this work - Little Flower, 2011 and 2015

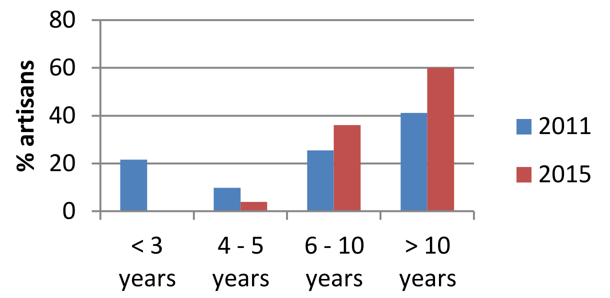


Figure 32. Years involved in this work - AMM, 2011 and 2015

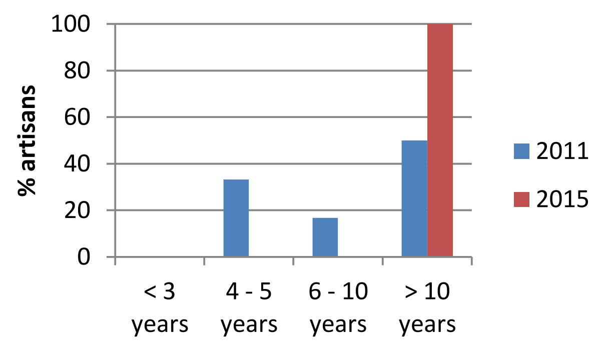


Figure 33. Years involved in this work - BCLA, 2011 and 2015

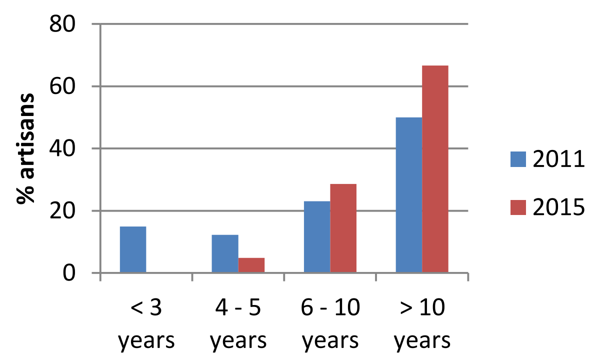
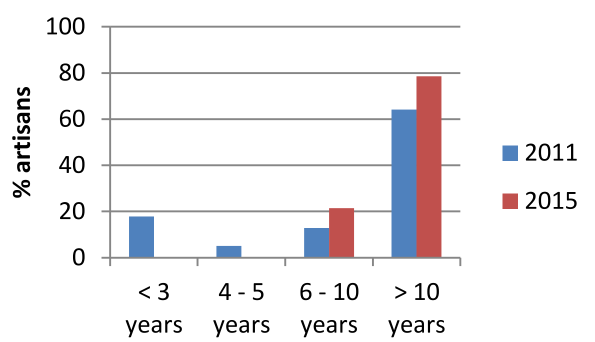


Figure 34. Years involved in this work - Hubli, 2011 and 2015



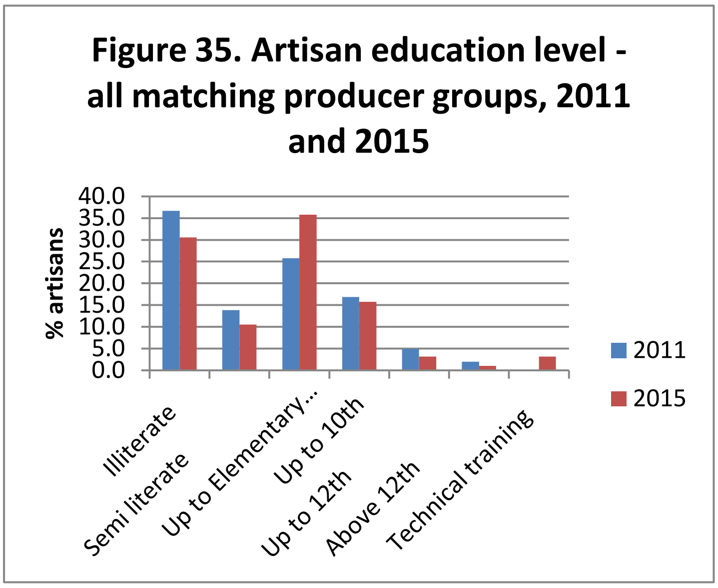
Education of artisans and their families

Artisan education levels have improved over the five year period of the survey (Figure 35) with fewer being classed as illiterate or semi-illiterate and more being educated up to elementary level. 3.2% had benefitted from technical training in 2015: none had this level of education in 2011.

Table 3 shows by group the percentage change in artisan levels of education at three points – illiterate, educated up to elementary level and educated up to 12th standard. Levels of illiteracy have dropped between 2011 and 2015, in some groups dramatically. Levels in SMK and AMM remain unchanged. For four groups, those artisans educated to elementary level remains virtually unchanged over the period but for KUKA, BCLA and Hubli, there has been an increase in artisans educated to this level. Very few artisans are educated up to 12th standard and numbers have declined in 2015 compared to 2011 possibly because those with better education leave the group for other work.

This picture is mirrored for artisan spouses (Figure 36) – although in 2015 slightly more artisans have spouses who are illiterate, there are fewer described as semi-illiterate and more who are educated up to elementary or tenth standard. There is a slight increase in those spouses who have received technical training in 2015.

Table 4 shows by group the percentage change in artisan spouse levels of education at three points – illiterate, educated up to elementary level and educated up to 12th standard. Levels of illiteracy have declined between 2011 and 2015 in all groups with the exception of AMM. There is either no change or an increase in the number of artisan spouses who are educated to elementary level. As with artisans themselves, very few spouses are educated up to 12th standard: Little Flower and BCLA show a drop in numbers whilst AMM and Hubli show an increase.



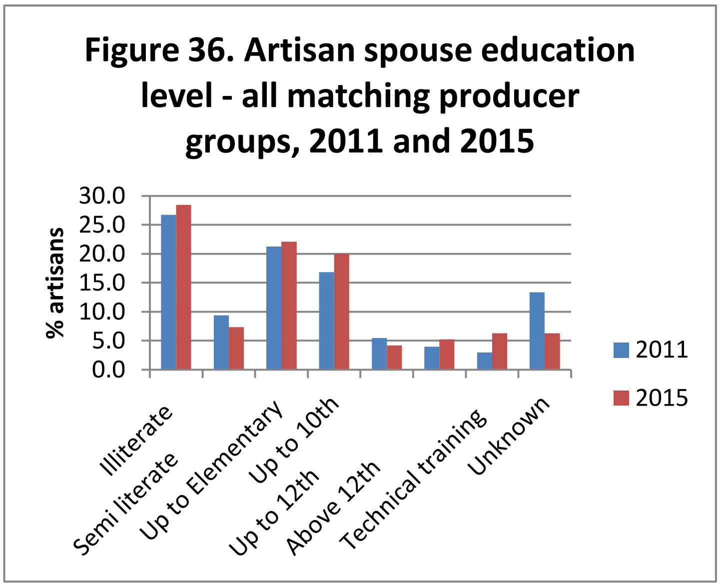


Table 3. Artisan education level - individual matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

	KUKA		SMK		BMKA		Little Flower		AMM		BCLA		Hubli	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
% illiterate	30	11	65	64	20	0	55	64	0	0	24	9	33	21
% up to elementary	20	33	18	18	80	80	20	24	17	20	36	62	13	28
% up to 12th	20	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	17	2	3	0	8	7

Table 4. Artisan spouse education level - individual matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

	KUKA		SMK		BMKA		Little Flower		AMM		BCLA		Hubli	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
% illiterate	30	11	59	18	60	40	39	32	0	10	11	9	26	14
% up to elementary	30	11	29	18	40	40	20	44	0	10	30	9	3	14
% up to 12th	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	30	11	0	5	7

Table 5 shows how artisan literacy compares to the state literacy rate as recorded in the 2011 census. It can be seen that for most artisans, literacy levels have improved over the period and compare well with state levels. The exceptions are SMK and Little Flower where for both 2011 and 2015, levels are well below state average. Noticeably, at Little Flower, literacy levels have dropped from 45% to 36% by 2015. This is unexpected since there is a free school in the colony.

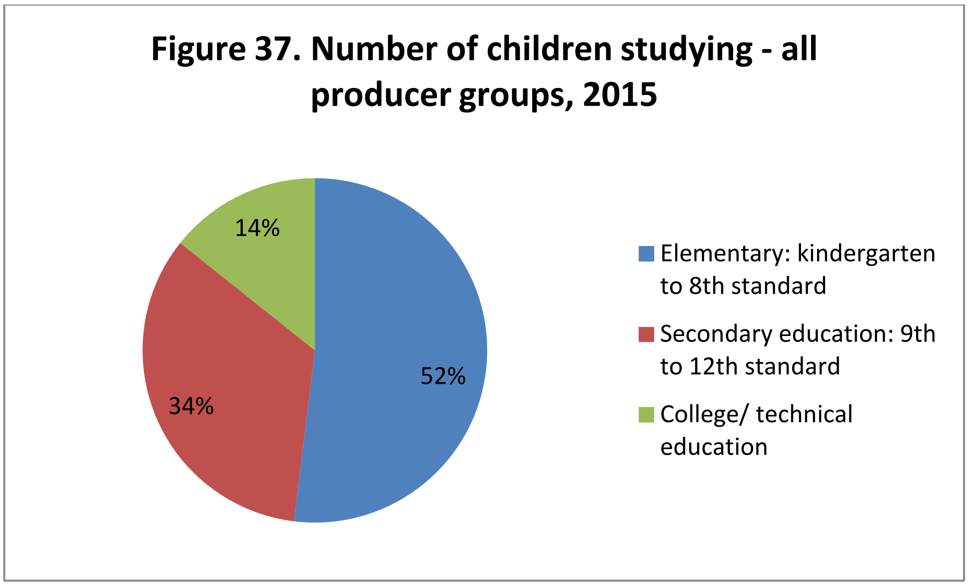
Table 5. Artisan literacy compared to literacy rate per state – individual producer groups, 2011 and 2015

State	Producer group	State literacy (%) 2011 *	Group literacy (%) 2011	Group literacy (%) 2015
Uttar Pradesh	KUKA	67.68	70	89
Rajasthan	SMK	66.11	35	36
Haryana	BMKA	75.55	80	100
Bihar	Little Flower	61.80	45	36
New Delhi	AMM	86.21	100	100
Andhra Pradesh	BCLA	67.02	76	91
Karnataka	Hubli	75.36	67	79

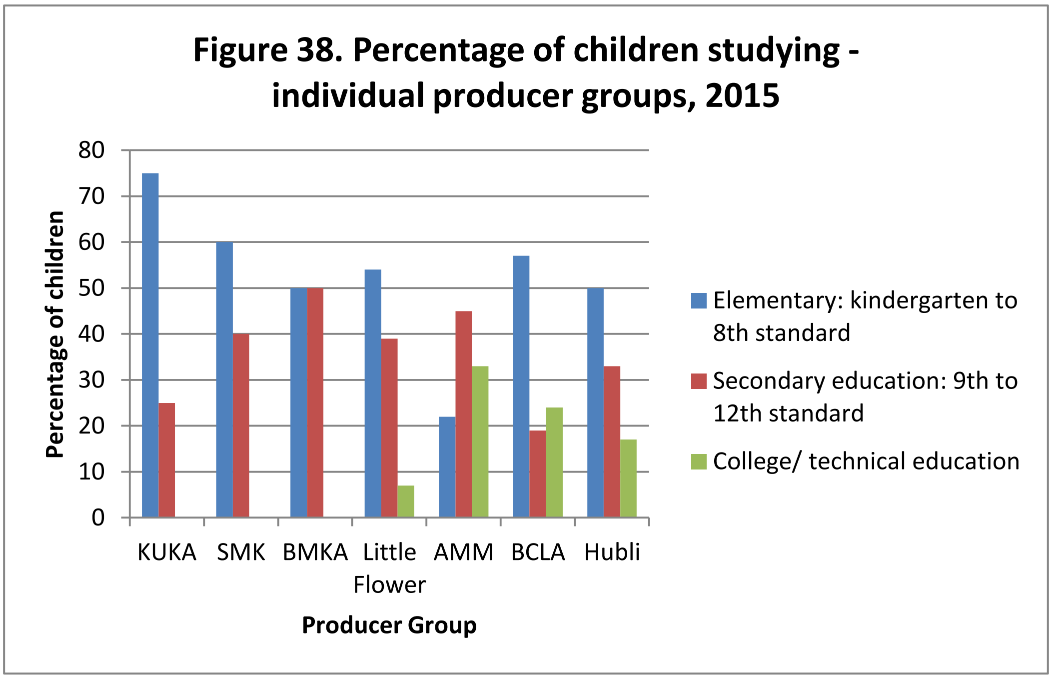
*** http://www.census2011.co.in/states.php**

In 2011, for all producer groups surveyed, there were 360 children of artisan families between the ages of four and 18 years of age. Data regarding the education level of these children was not sought in 2011 but was added as a feature of the 2015 questionnaire. Therefore, comparisons cannot be made in this document but a 2015 baseline **is now available for future studies.**

In 2015, in the seven producer groups compared in this document, 77 children of artisans surveyed were studying as shown in Figure 37. The majority, 52%, were in primary education with those studying at secondary or college level being 34% and 14% respectively.



As shown in Figure 38, for most producer groups, the majority of children were in primary education reflecting the age of the artisans in these groups. KUKA, SMK and BMKA had no children studying at college level because the children in the group were too young or too old for this level of education.



Costs associated with the children's education are considerable, however, anecdotal comment indicates that this is a priority for artisans and their ability to fund education is thus a key indicator of prosperity.

MESH has contributed to these costs since 2013 as follows:

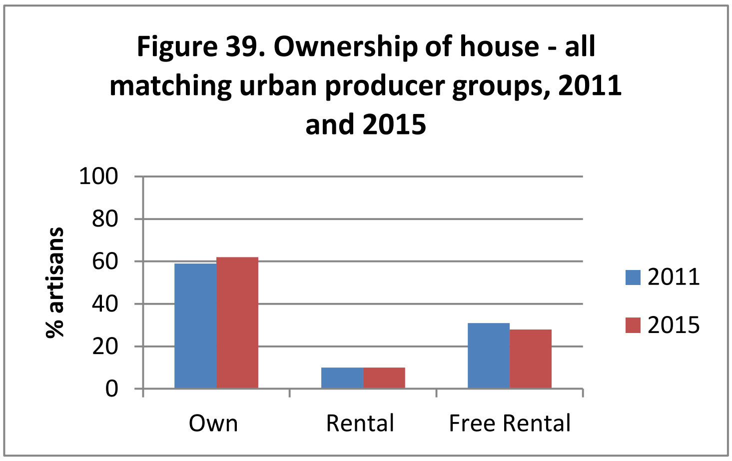
School sponsorship: at BMKA, nine children of weavers and tailors are funded by overseas grants mediated by MESH.

Higher education sponsorship: payments of college fees for one child from BMKA.

Further education loans: up to Rs 60,000 can be borrowed by students for post-school studies and nine children have taken up this opportunity in Little Flower (2), AMM (5) and BMKA (2) to assist with the costs of university nursing and commerce programmes: three of these have completed their course.

Artisan accommodation, possessions and banking

Figures 39 and 40 show home ownership for urban and rural groups respectively. For **urban groups, there is very little change** in home ownership between 2011 and 2015. **For rural groups, there is a reversal in ownership and free rental** these being 52% and 44% respectively in 2011 and 44% and 54% in 2015.



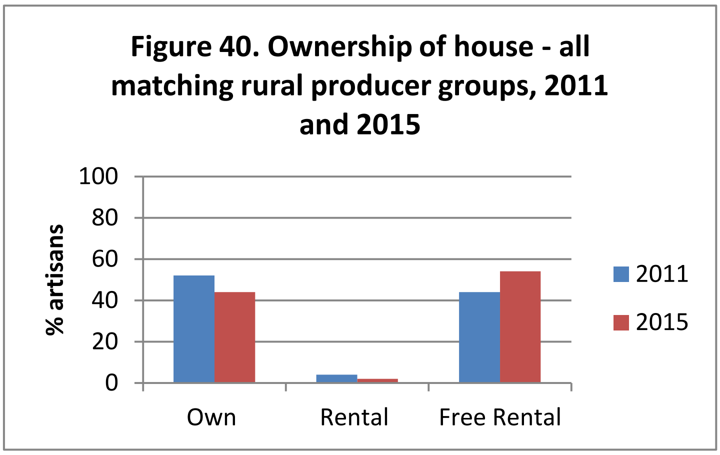
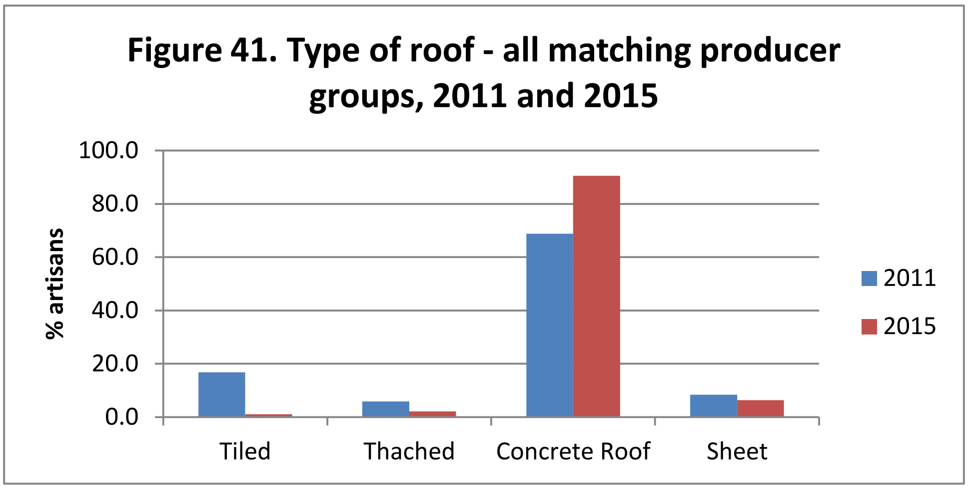


Figure 41 shows that in both years, the most common roof is made of concrete and the number of artisans with **concrete roofed houses has increased from 69% in 2011 to 90% in 2015** with other types of roof being less common. This suggests an improvement in both quality and permanence of housing over the period of the study.



Figures 42 and 43 indicate changes in home ownership between 2011 and 2015. In KUKA, SMK and Little Flower, almost all artisans benefit from free rental. The majority of BMKA, AMM, BCLA and Hubli artisans own their home. At Little Flower, there is an increase in home ownership (1.9% to 16% in 2011 and 2015 respectively). There has been a small increase in the number of artisans renting a home in Hubli and BCLA. Overall, Hubli shows the greatest change with figures for ownership, rental and free rental changing from 74.3 to 71.4, 17.9 to 28.6 and 7.7 to zero in 2011 and 2015 respectively and this reflects changes in this producer group under new management which is no longer able to provide free rental accommodation.

Figure 42. Ownership of house - individual producer groups, 2011

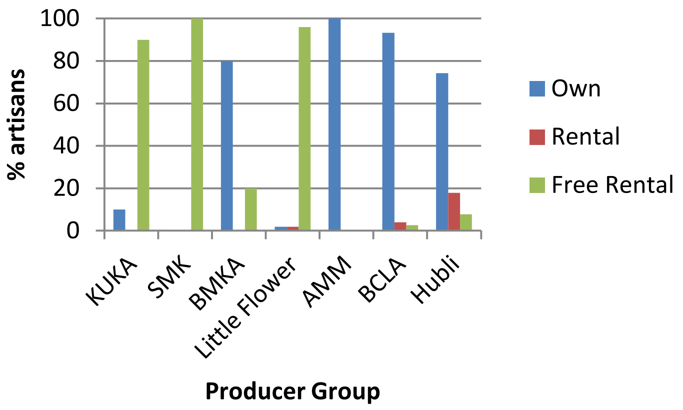
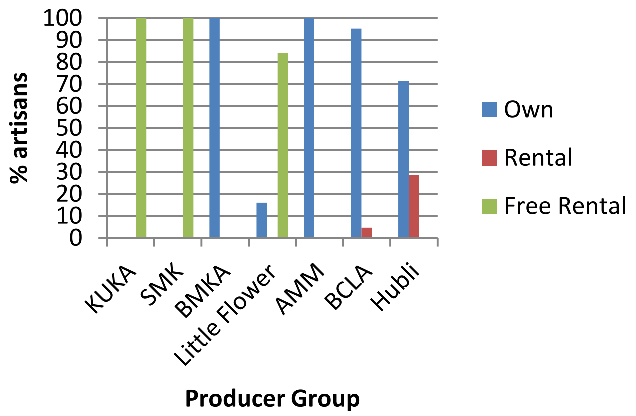


Figure 43. Ownership of house - individual producer groups, 2015



Figures 44 and 45 show how utilities are distributed between matching producer groups in urban and rural areas and how provision has changed between 2011 and 2015. It can be seen that LPG gas is more commonly used in urban areas **but its use has increased in both urban and rural areas** between 2011 and 2015. Figures 46 and 47 show the detail per producer group. Apart from KUKA where usage has reduced from 50% to 44% and BMKA where usage is the same for both years, all groups have increased their usage of LPG and at AMM, all artisans have this facility in both 2011 and 2015. Use of LPG is beneficial in that it is less polluting both to individuals in their homes and to their environment. It also reduces the need to forage for fuel for cooking. However, it is costly and thus the increased usage **suggests an improvement in artisans' financial circumstances.**

Electricity is available to all urban artisans and most rural artisans in 2011 and in both urban and rural areas**, by 2015 is accessible to all**. However, although the infrastructure may be in place, power outages are common.

The availability of running water is variable but, as shown in Figures 44 and 45, **has improved in both urban and rural areas** between 2011 and 2015. However, even in 2015, a mean of 97% and 65% of artisans has access to this facility in urban and rural areas respectively – **running water is not available to all.** Figures 46 and 47 show that it is Hubli and particularly, Little Flower that are poorly provided for in this respect. However, by 2017, 95% families at Little Flower have a water pipeline connection to their house provided by the Indian government (G.R., personal communication).

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Figure 44. Availability of utilities - matching urban producer groups, 2015

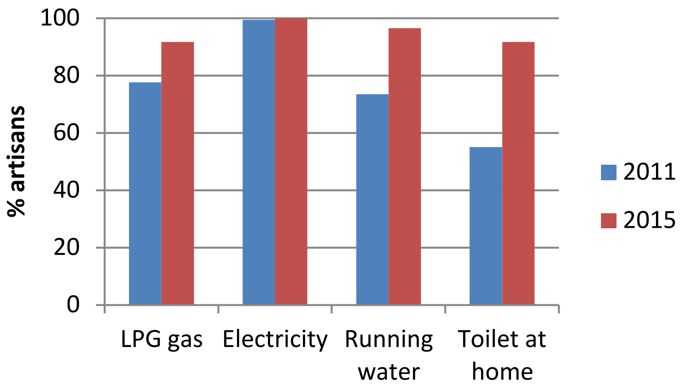
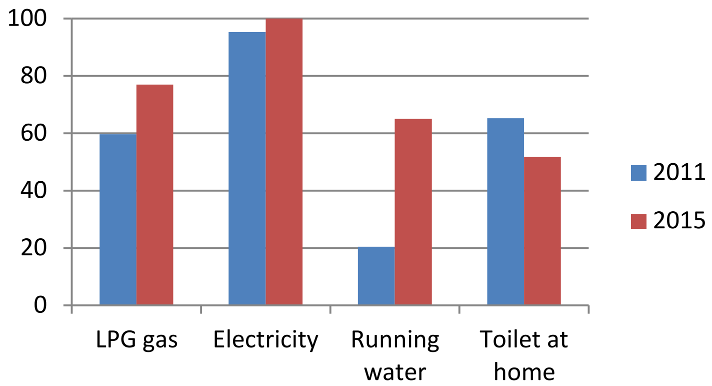
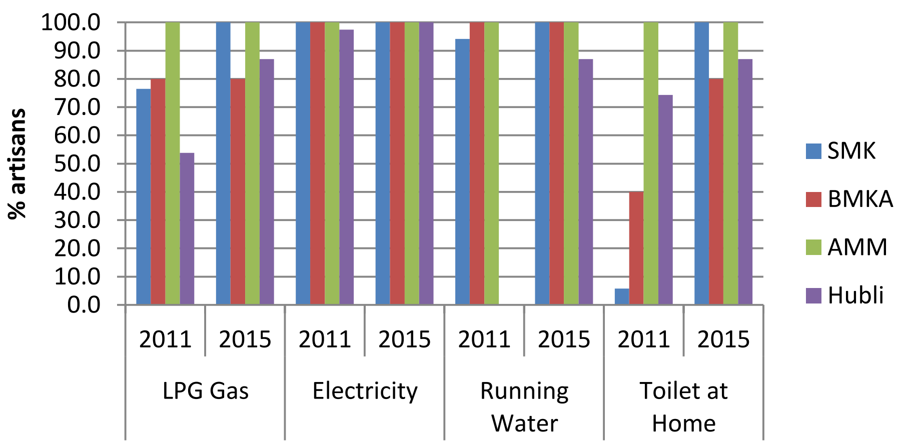


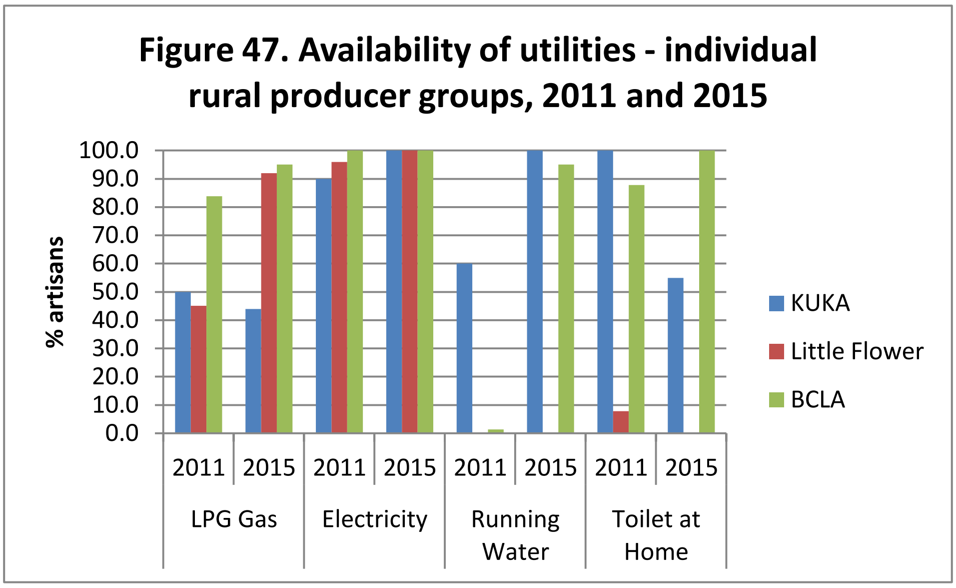
Figure 45. Availability of utilities - matching rural producer groups, 2015



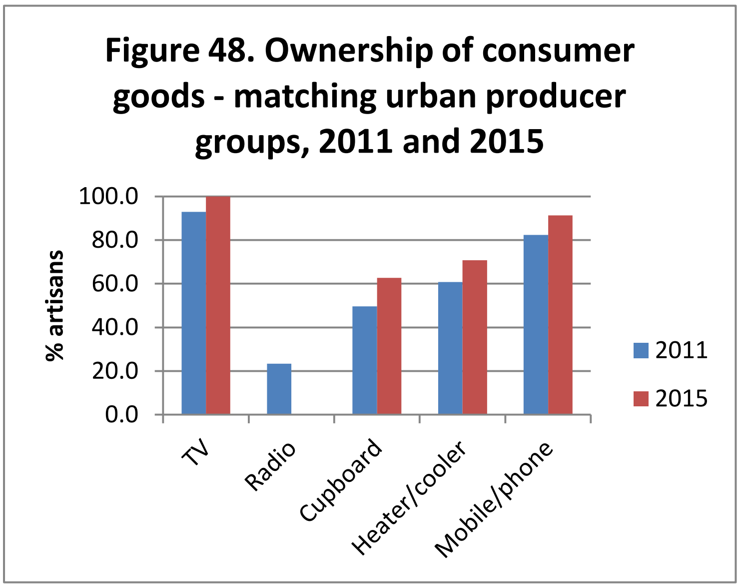
The number of artisans having a toilet at home has increased between 2011 and 2015 with more urban (92%) than rural (52%) artisans having this facility by 2015. In some producer groups, (SMK, AMM and BCLA), all artisans have a toilet at home but none in Little Flower have a toilet and this is a slight reduction from the 2011 figure of 7.8%. In the general population, 46.9% of homes have an indoor toilet (Census 2011) but there are considerable regional variations. By 2017, artisans at Little Flower have one toilet shared between two or three families (G.R., personal communication).

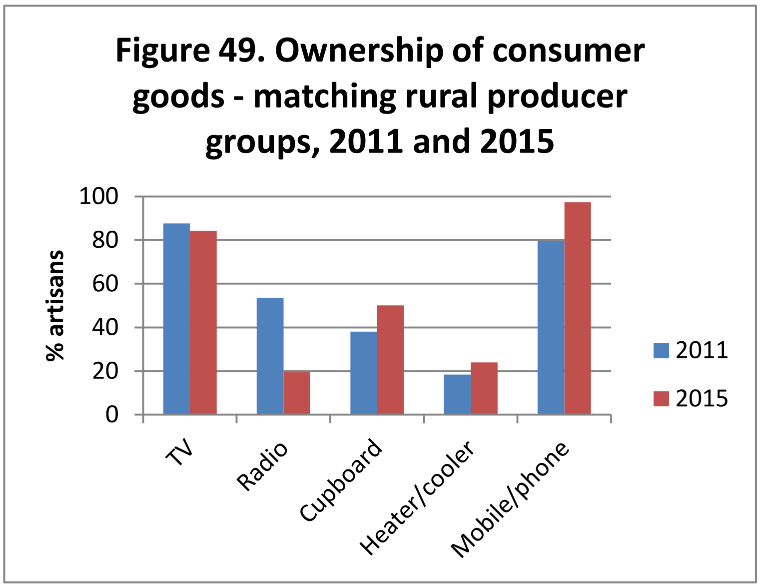
Figure 46. Availability of utilities - individual urban producer groups, 2015

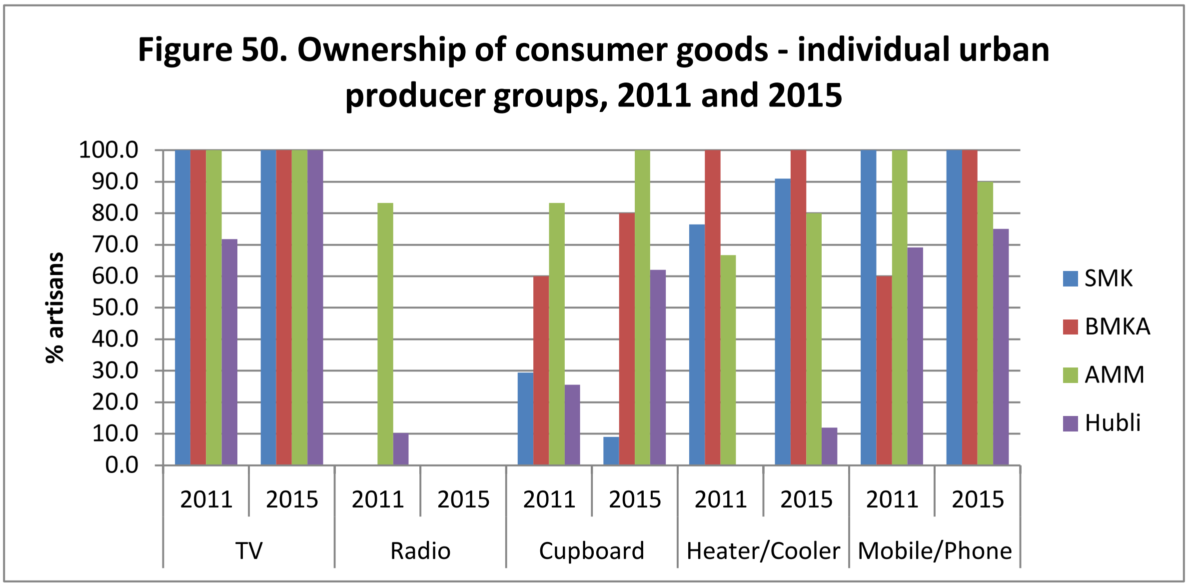


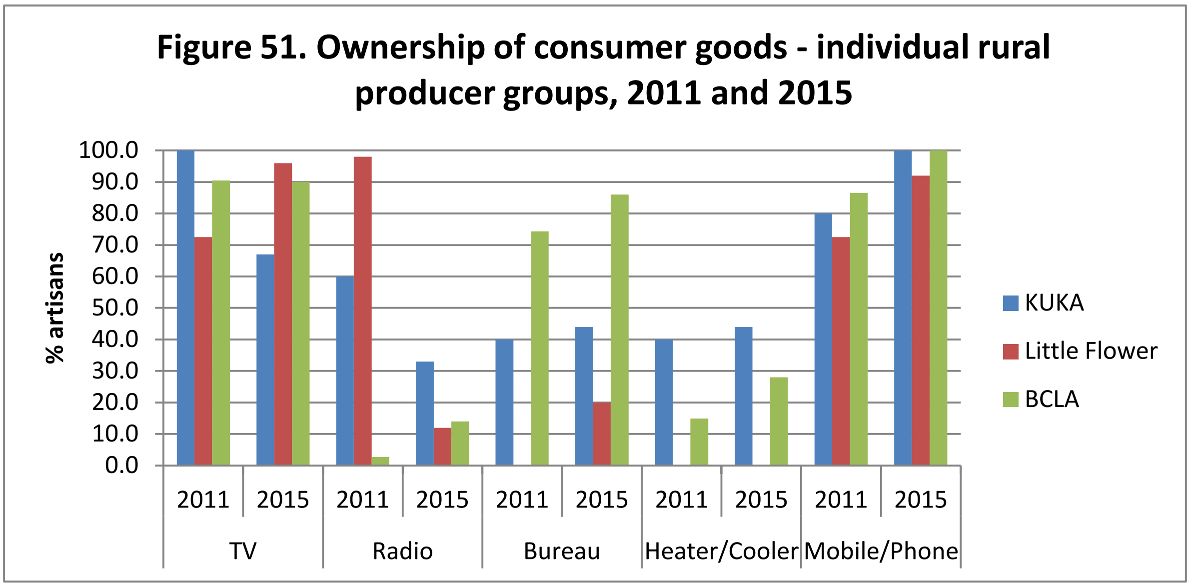


Figures 48 and 49 show how ownership of consumer goods has changed between 2011 and 2015 in urban and rural areas. **Ownership of goods has increased in both urban and rural areas** in all cases except that the use of radio has decreased, especially in urban areas where no artisan has one by 2015: in rural areas, there is a slight decrease in the percentage of artisans possessing a television. Figures 50 and 51 show the detail per producer group and indicate that of the urban groups, Hubli has least possessions although all artisans by 2015 have a television. In rural areas, **Little Flower again stands out as having least possessions**. For all groups, acquisition of a cupboard seems to have the least priority. Possession of a heater/cooler is dependent upon climate and need as well as affordability - people in South India tend not to use coolers which do not function well in the prevailing atmosphere of high humidity whilst in other areas cooler temperatures prevail.









As shown in Figures 52 to 55, **ownership of a vehicle has changed over the period** of the study. In urban areas, there has been a 4.4% increase in scooter ownership and a reduction of 7.6% in cycle ownership. In rural areas, ownership of both scooters and cycles has increased. **Hubli and Little Flower stand out as the producer groups in which the percentage of artisans having a vehicle is lowest.** However, overall, these figures suggest enhanced prosperity.

Figure 52. Vehicle ownership - all matching urban producer groups, 2011 and 2015

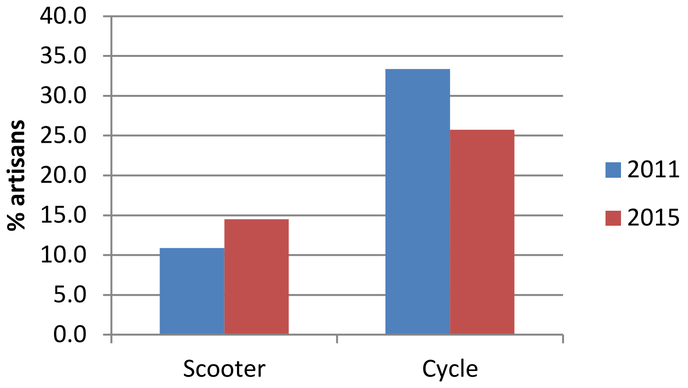


Figure 53. Vehicle ownership - all matching rural producer groups, 2011 and 2015

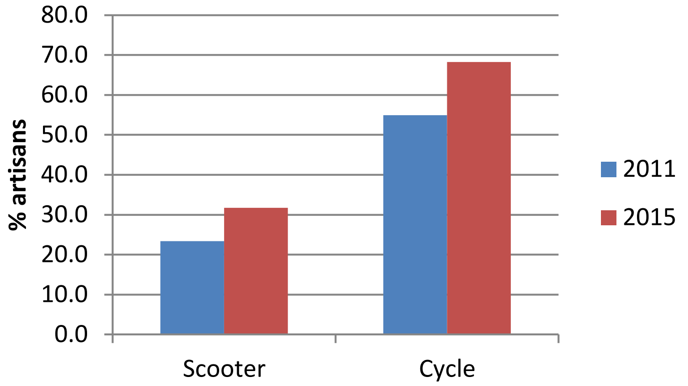


Figure 54. Vehicle ownership - individual urban producer groups, 2011 and 2015

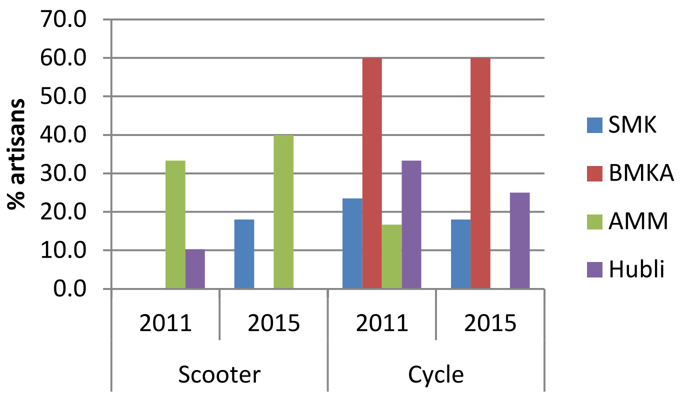


Figure 55. Vehicle ownership - individual rural producer groups, 2011 and 2015

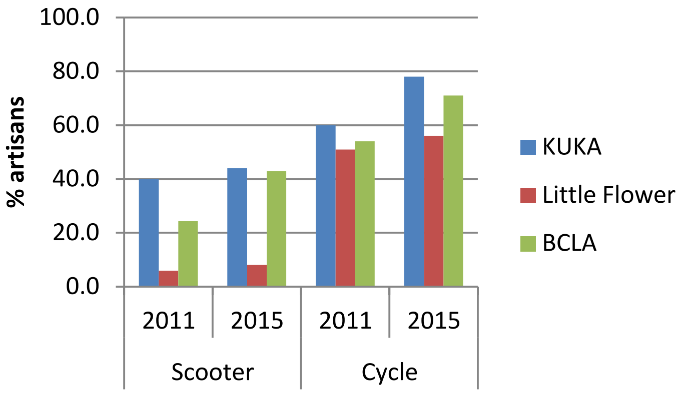
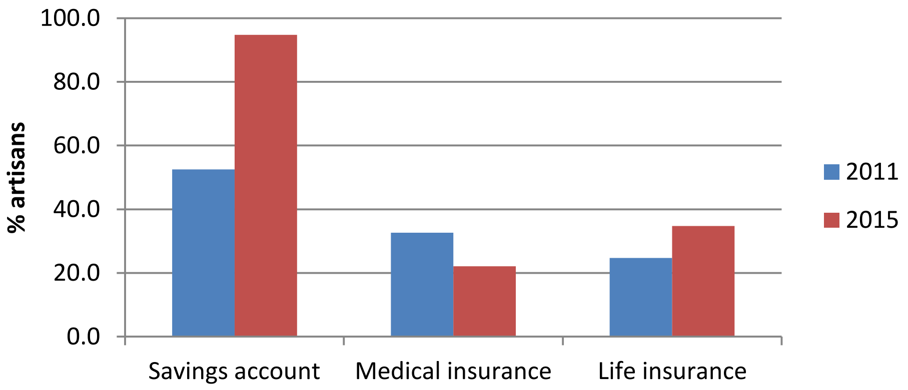


Figure 56. Artisans possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015



As shown in Figure 56, artisans surveyed in 2015 are **more likely than in 2011 to possess a savings account** (ie a bank account) and Figures 57 to 63 show this to be the case in all producer groups reflecting some success in a government strategy to make this easier to do. These accounts may often be empty and are not necessarily indicative of wealth but are associated with identification and status: they are also a vehicle for the payment of government benefits which helps to ensure that all benefits are received by the correct person.

Possession of **medical insurance has declined** (Figure 56) but since medical insurance is not promoted in rural areas, some artisans may not be aware of such products. Additionally, in some cases, medical insurance is not needed since free provision may come from the group or the state.
As shown in Figures 57 to 63, the number of artisans having medical insurance varies between groups with artisans in KUKA, Little Flower, AMM and Hubli not having insurance in either year. Since in some groups, medical care or medical costs, at least to some extent are provided, insurance is not needed and this is the case in SMK, Little Flower, Hubli and BCLA. However, the picture is not clear in part because there was no differentiation between medical insurance that is provided and that which is bought At BMKA, some artisans had medical insurance in 2011 but none in 2015. Only BCLA shows an increase in purchase of medical insurance in 2015 compared to 2011.

Artisans who have bought life insurance, a system for saving for retirement, education and other major costs, are to be found in all groups by 2015. The Life Insurance Corporation of India is the most common provider. As shown in Figure 56, possession of insurance, an indicator of wealth, has increased by 2015. Figures 57 to 63 show the situation for individual groups. KUKA and AMM artisans have **purchased life insurance in 2015 but none had done so in 2011**. There is a small **increase** in possession of life insurance at SMK and Hubli but a **decrease** in BCLA (possibly because these artisans have to bear their own medical costs).

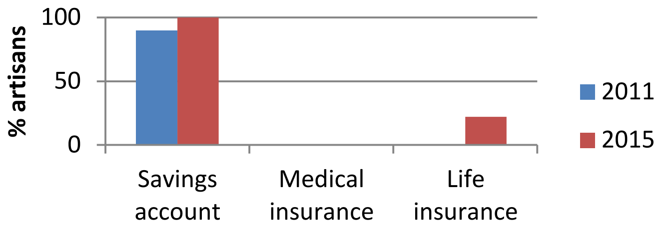


Figure 57. Artisans in KUKA possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - 2011 and 2015

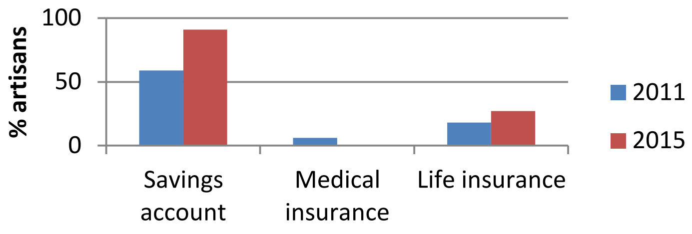


Figure 58. Artisans in SMK possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - 2011 and 2015

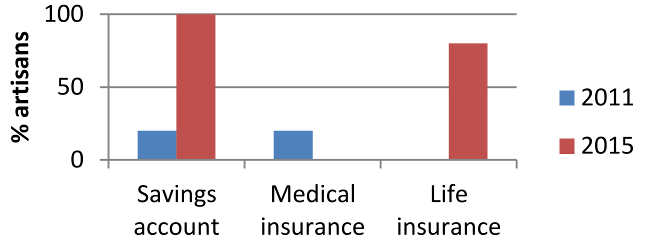


Figure 59. Artisans in BMKA possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - 2011 and 2015

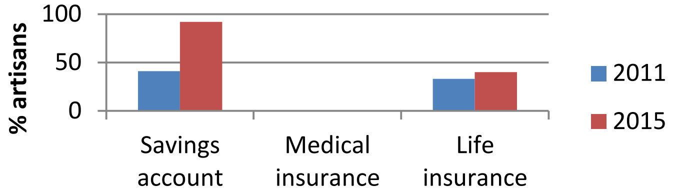


Figure 60. Artisans in Little Flower possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - 2011 and 2015

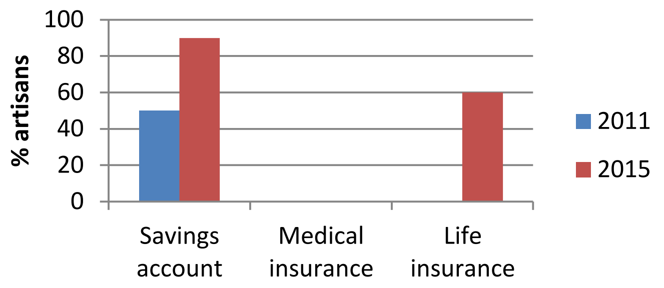


Figure 61. Artisans in AMM possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - 2011 and 2015

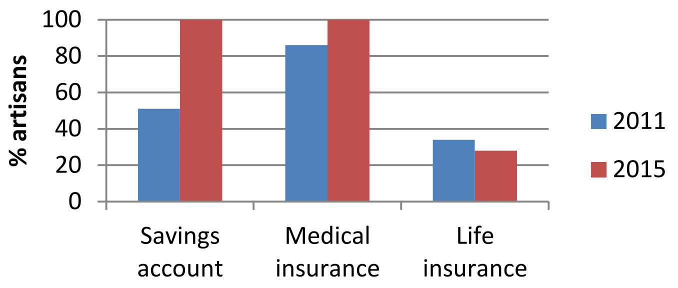


Figure 62. Artisans in BCLA possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - 2011 and 2015

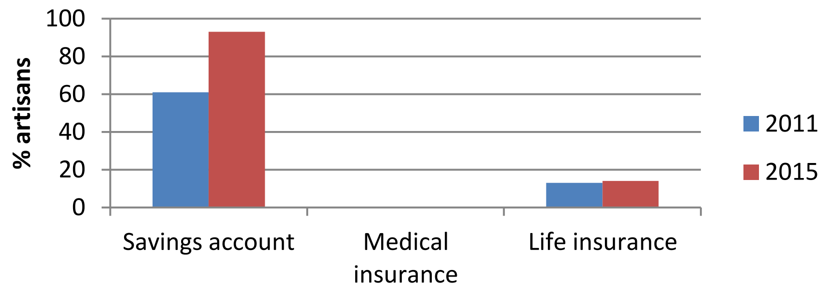
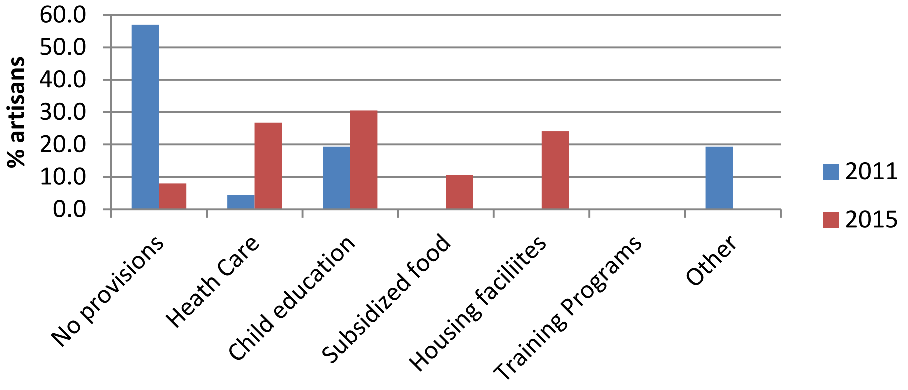


Figure 63. Artisans in Hubli possessing a savings account, medical insurance and life insurance - 2011 and 2015

<u>Facilities provided by the producer group</u>

In 2011, most artisan employers provided no facilities for their artisans (Figure 64). However, by 2015, although 8% of artisans still had no facilities provided, the **remainder enjoy a range of facilities**. The category "other" includes provision of spectacles, footwear and interest free loans: some producer groups were able to provide these benefits in 2011 but by 2015**, they are no longer affordable**.

Figure 64. Facilities provided by the employer- all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015



Facilities provided by individual producer groups are shown in Figures 65 to 71. For most groups, there has been an **improvement in the facilities provided** by the employer between 2011 when all but Hubli and BCLA had no provision at all, and 2015 by which time a range of provisions is in place. However, for **BMKA and AMM this is not the case**, no facilities being provided in 2011 or 2015 – both these groups are small (< ten artisans): however, KUKA (ten members) does have subsidised food and housing. Hubli has a change in provision: in 2011 death compensation fund, shoe purchase, loans for housing and clothes (listed as "other") were in place but were no longer available in 2015.

Artisans do also receive support from other sources. MESH itself provides education support and in some groups, for example BMKA, money, clothes or food are donated by outsiders.

Figure 65. Facilities provided by the employer- KUKA, 2011 and 2015

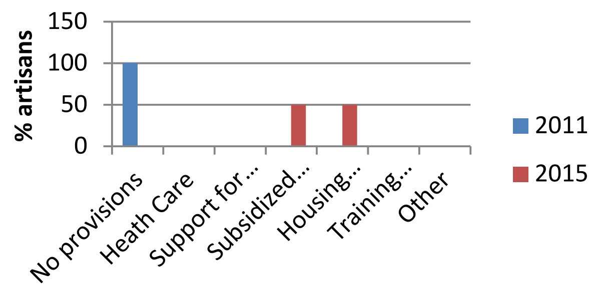


Figure 66. Facilities provided by the employer- SMK, 2011 and 2015

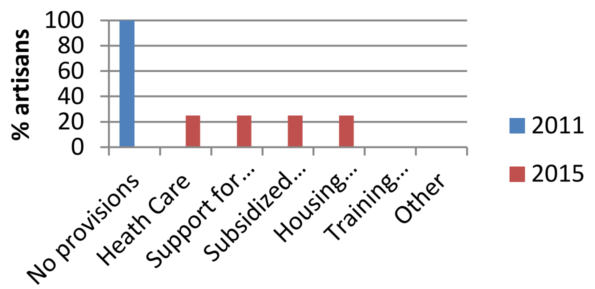


Figure 67. Facilities provided by the employer- BMKA, 2011 and 2015

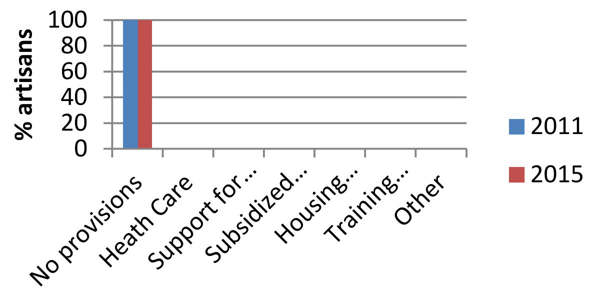


Figure 68. Facilities provided by the employer- Little Flower, 2011 and 2015

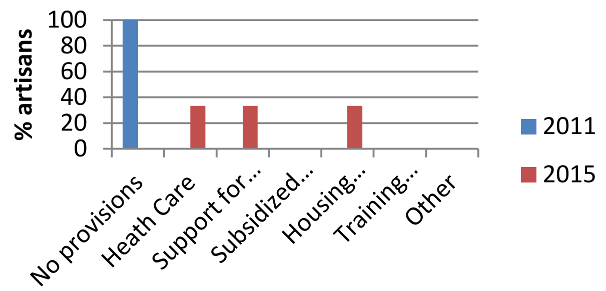


Figure 69. Facilities provided by the employer- AMM, 2011 and 2015

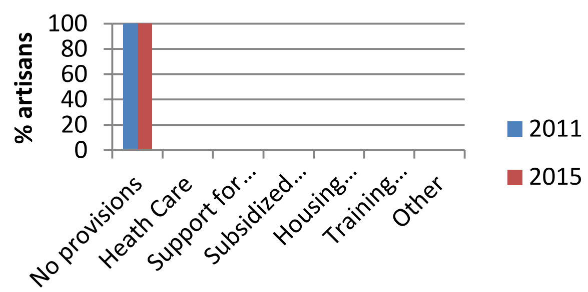


Figure 70. Facilities provided by the employer- BCLA, 2011 and 2015

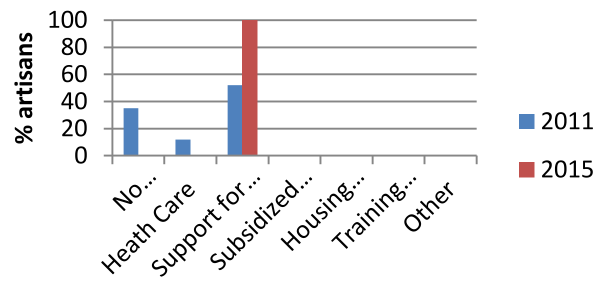
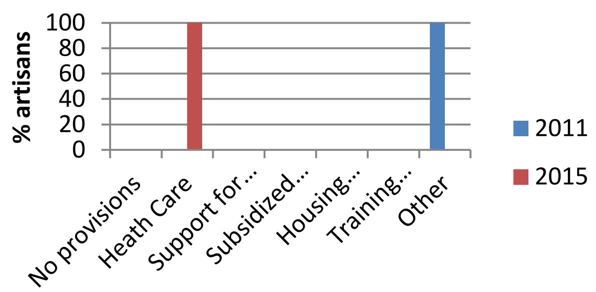


Figure 71. Facilities provided by the employer- Hubli, 2011 and 2015



Section 2. Artisan income and expenditure

Figure 1. Artisan wage per month - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

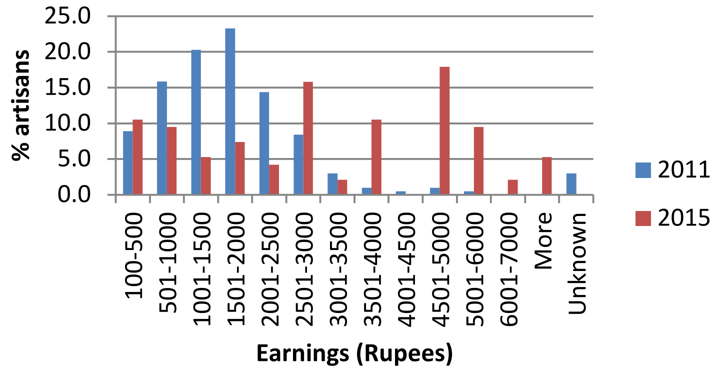
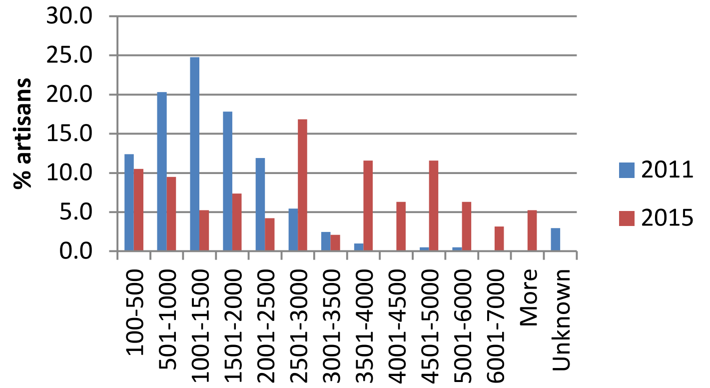


Figure 2. Take home wage per month - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015



Figures 1 and 2 show artisan wages and take home wages respectively in 2011 and 2015 for all matching producer groups. Deductions are made for items such as milk, kerosene and life insurance (Little Flower) and these deductions account for the difference between wage and take home pay.

There is an overall **improvement in both wage and take home pay** between 2011 and 2015. In 2011, 97.6% % of artisans earned less than Rs4,000 and by 2015 this figure has reduced to 55.6%.

Figure 2 shows that artisan take home wage per month **has increased, and for some, doubled** or more, between 2011 and 2015.

Figures 3 to 9 show the take home wage of artisans in matching producer groups and indicate that this has changed between 2011 and 2015 with a general trend towards an increased wage. This is in part a reflection of the requirement for producer groups to pay the government/state defined minimum wage which increased over the period. The situation at AMM (a small group of women) is unclear since in 2011, artisans did not wish to disclose their wage and so it is not possible to evaluate any change in this producer group.

It is not always possible to attribute the observed general improvement in income to MESH activity since some groups also produce work for other organisations. However, BMKA and AMM work only with MESH and the majority of BCLA production is associated with MESH: for each of these groups income has increased over the survey period. In addition **to increased hours of work, better costing, better quality products and a broader range of products as a result of MESH support** are contributing factors. It is likely that in general, real income has increased since 2011. However, it is also the case that there is considerable disparity between groups in terms of wage which ranges from Rs792 to Rs3,330 in 2011 and Rs1,045 to Rs6,500 in 2015: in both years, SMK artisans are the lowest and KUKA artisans the highest earners. This is explored further in Tables 1, 2 and 3 below.

Figure 3. Take home wage per month - KUKA, 2011 and 2015

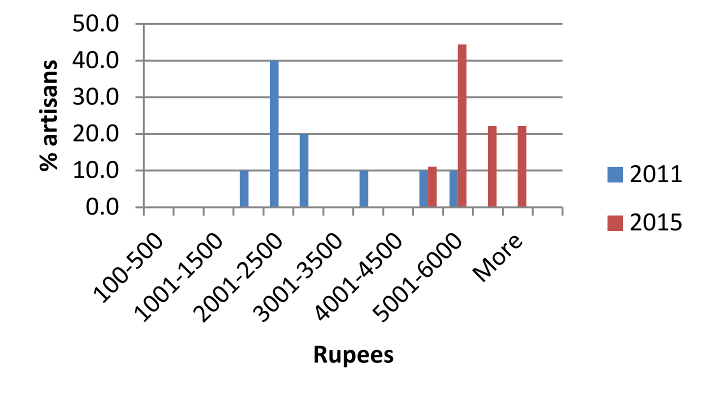


Figure 4. Take home wage per month - SMK, 2011 and 2015

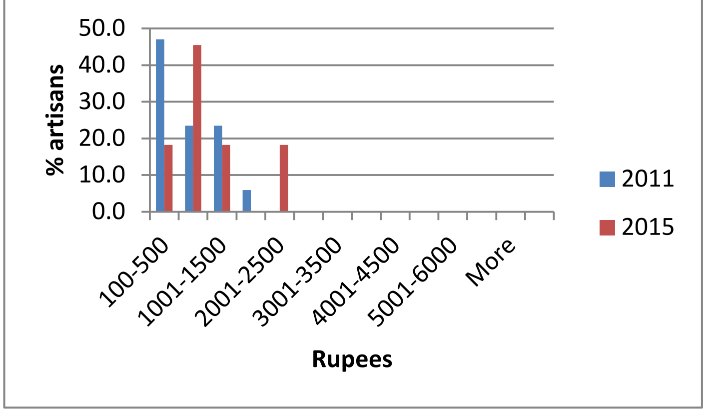


Figure 5. Take home wage per month - BMKA, 2011 and 2015

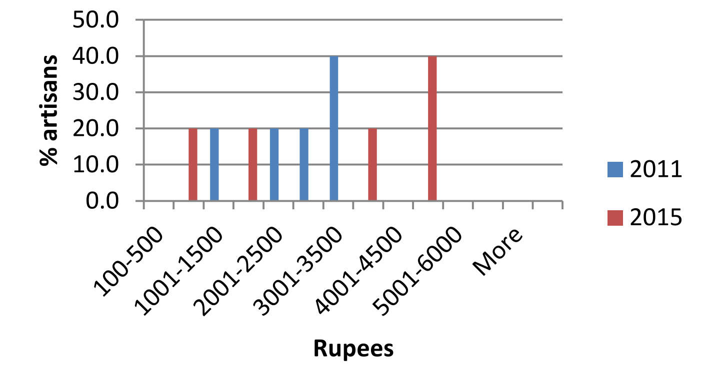


Figure 6. Take home wage per month - Little Flower, 2011 and 2015

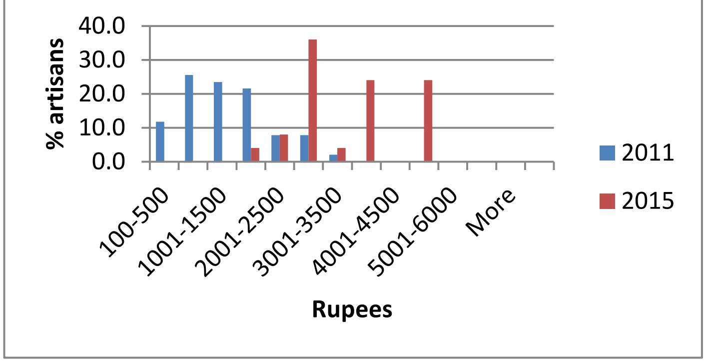


Figure 7. Take home wage per month - BCLA, 2011 and 2015

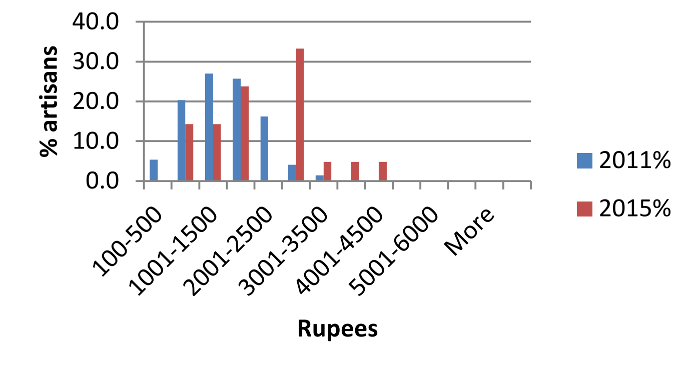


Figure 8. Take home wage per month - AMM, 2011 and 2015

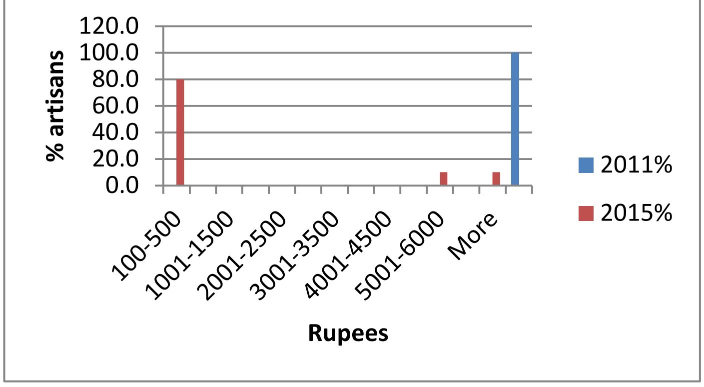
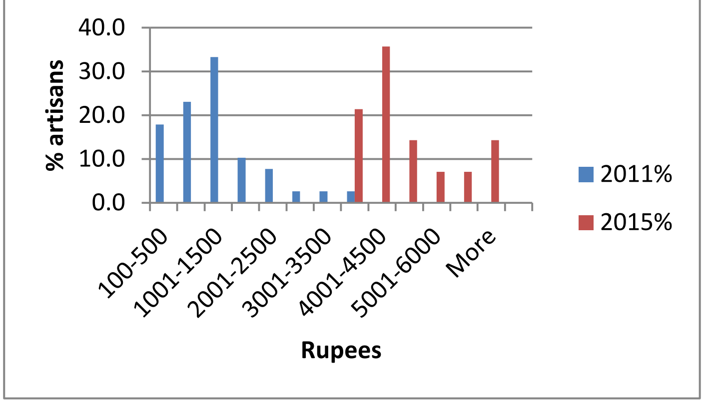
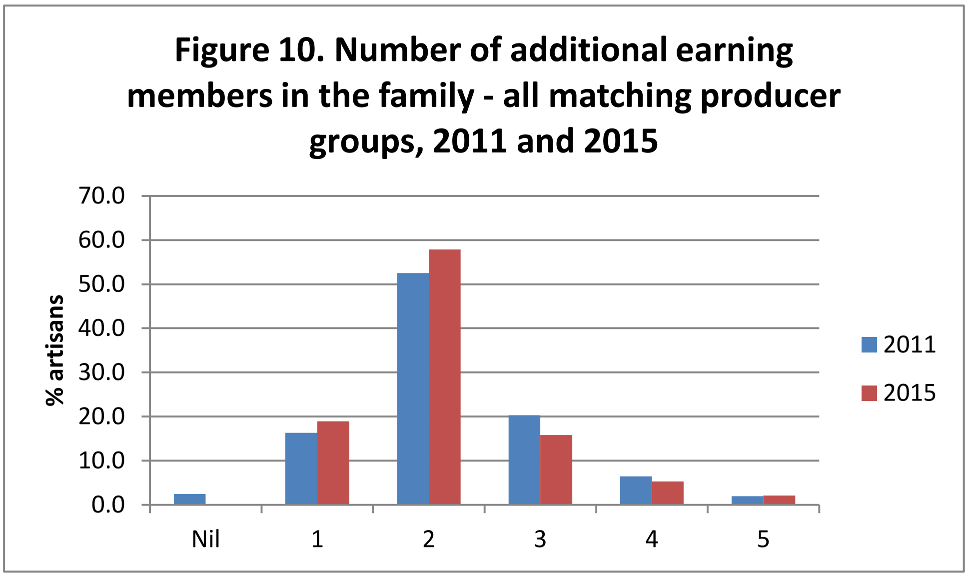


Figure 9. Take home wage per month - Hubli, 2011 and 2015



As shown in Figure 10, only 2.5% (five people) had no other earning member of the family to boost their income and this was the case **only in 2011**. 15 – 20% of artisans had one or three other earning members of the family and most artisans (50 – 60%) had two other earning members of the family; these figures did not change greatly over the five years of the survey period.



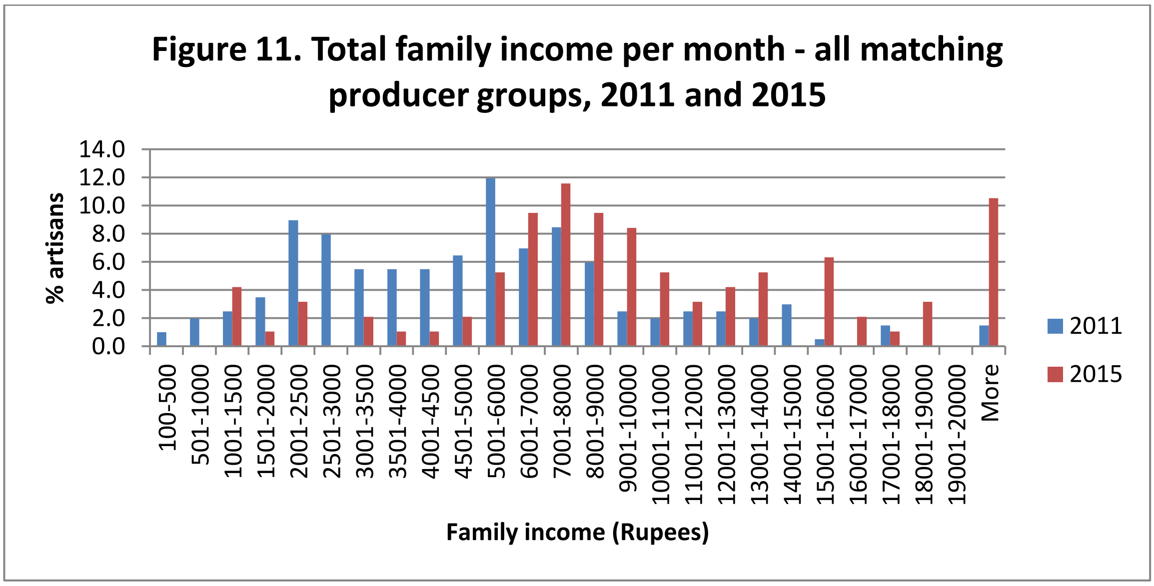


Figure 11 indicates that total **family income for artisans has increased** between 2011 and 2015 with the majority of families having between Rs6,000 and Rs11,000 per month in 2015. In 2011 most artisans had a family income of Rs9,000 or less. In 2011, 48.7% of artisans had a family income of less than Rs5,000 but by 2015 those in this low earning category had reduced to 14.7%.

It can be seen from Figure 12 that between 2011 and 2015, artisans have seen an increase in their expenditure per month. In 2011 for urban producer groups, mean expenditure was Rs5,575 and this increased to Rs12,794 by 2015. Corresponding increases are seen in rural producer groups - Rs5,866 in 2011 and Rs8,114 by 2015 (see also Table 3). Some of these increases are a result of compliance with minimum wage regulations, for example, at Little Flower and Hubli.

Figure 12. Artisan expenditure per month - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

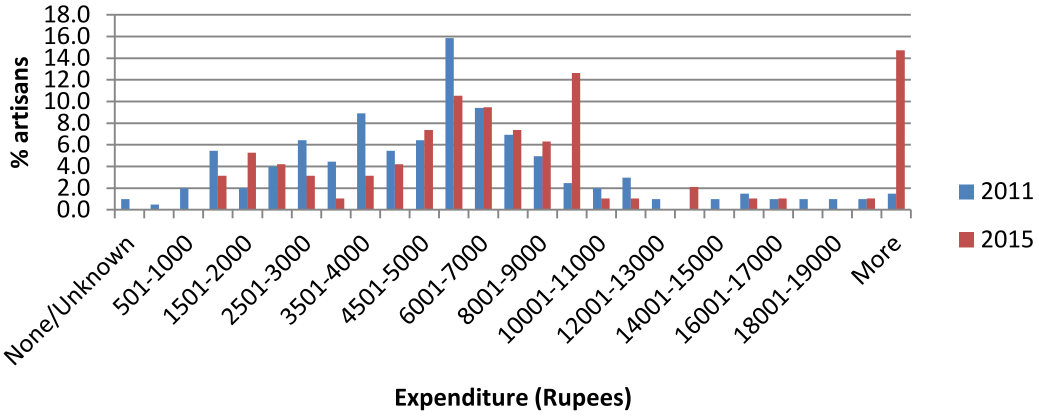


Figure 13. Artisan income, total family income and expenditure per month - all matching producer groups, 2011

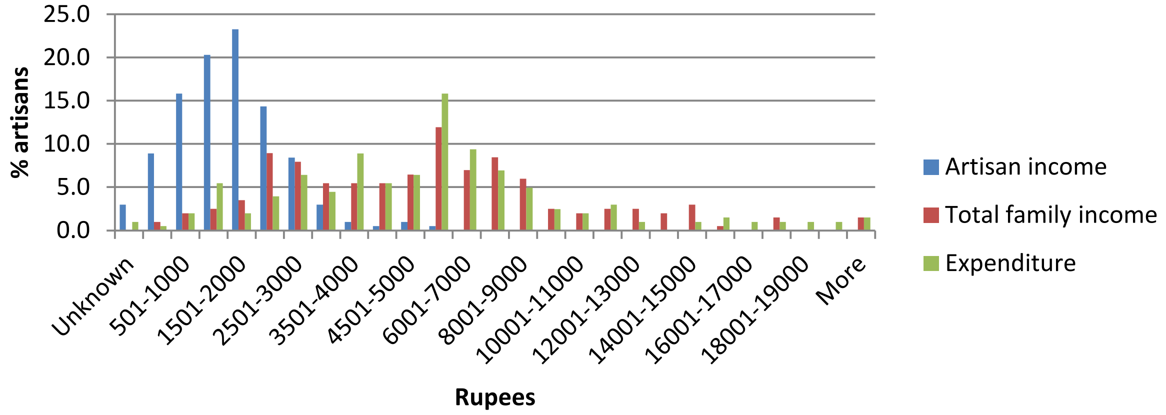
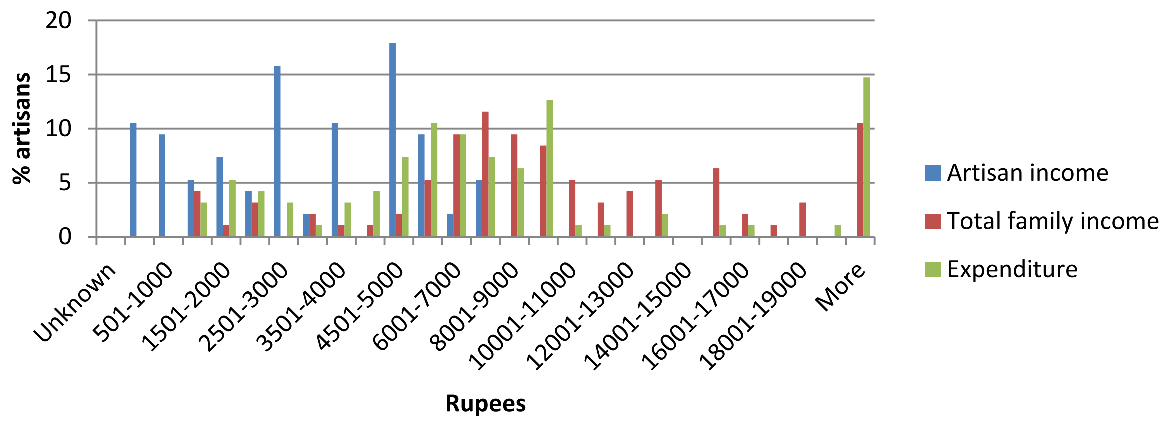


Figure 14. Artisan income, total family income and expenditure per month - all matching producer groups, 2015



Figures 13 and 14 show the percentage of artisans together with their income (total, not take home, since expenses are deducted from some and not other artisan wages), their total family income and their expenses for 2011 and 2015 respectively. It can be seen that **artisan income has increased over the period. Total family income has also increased but so too has expenditure**.

Tables 1 and 2 show more detail - mean artisan wage per month for individual producer groups together with any income from a spouse, mean total income and mean total expenditure. **Artisan wage has increased** between 2011 and 2015 (this is also shown in Table 3) and much of this increase is associated with increased hours of work. AMM were not prepared to disclose their wage in 2011 and so comparisons cannot be made for this group.

Artisan **spouse income has also increased** in most producer groups, particularly in rural areas: spouses at AMM, a small urban group, have seen a doubling of income. However, income from spouses has decreased in SMK and Hubli. The percentage of artisans with spouses providing an income has **changed slightly:** for 2011 being 52% and 15% of artisans who have spouses providing income in urban and rural groups respectively and for 2015, 55% and 13% in urban and rural groups respectively.

For all groups, **mean total income has increased** between 2011 and 2015 and with the exception of SMK, the increase is significant. However, expenditure has also increased with three producer groups not having sufficient income to meet costs in 2011 and one, BMKA, in 2015.

Table 1. Mean income and expenditure per month (rupees), – individual matching producer groups, 2011.

	Artisan wage per month	**Spouse income (number with no spouse income)**	**Total income**	**Total expenditure**
Urban Groups				
SMK	792	1,069 (0 of 17)	2,302	1,675
BMKA	2,720	800 (4 of 5**)	3,460	5,270
AMM	None declared*	9,083 (0 of 6)	11,833	10,855
Hubli	1,785	382 (31 of 39)	4,686	4,503
Mean urban	**1,760**	**2,833 (total 35 of67)**	**5,570**	**5,575**
Rural Groups				
KUKA	3,300	980 (5 of 10)	5,870	3,658
Little Flower	1,493	2,064 (3 of 51)	3,946	4,696
BCLA	1,761	4,344 (9 of 74)	8,914	9,245
Mean rural	**2,185**	**2,463 (total 17 of 135)**	**6,243**	**5,866**

*Mean urban wage does not include AMM. ** total income for this group is less than the sum of artisan and spouse income since only one artisan has a spouse income

Table 2. Mean income and expenditure per month (rupees), – individual matching producer groups, 2015.

	Artisan wage per month	Spouse income (number with no spouse income)	Total income	Total expenditure
Urban Groups				
SMK	1,045	436 (6 of 11)	2,755	2,191
BMKA	3,340	1,120 (2 of 5)	7,300	10,867
AMM	1,633	20,800 (1 of 10)	28,216	25,785
Hubli (14)	5,458	321 (13 of 14)	8,337	4,710
Mean urban	**2,869**	**5,669 (total 22 of 40)**	**11,652**	**10,888**
Rural Groups				
KUKA	6,500	1,500 (7 of 9)	9,347	6,543
Little Flower	3,660	3,720 (3 of 25)	9,588	8,050
BCLA	2,409	9,036 (2 of 21)	13,854	9,750
Mean rural	**4,190**	**4,752 (total 12 of 55)**	**10,930**	**8,114**

Table 3 shows how artisan wage has contributed to total family income and total family expenditure in 2011 and 2015. It can be seen that although artisan wage has increased over the period of the study, for **some artisans (SMK, BMKA and BCLA), their contribution has decreased.** However, in 2011, all artisans with the exception of those at AMM (where information was not provided) make a meaningful contribution to family income. In terms of expenditure, by 2015 **most artisans are better able to contribute to family expenditure than they were in 2011** and for Hubli, mean artisan wage is in excess of mean total expenditure. The exception is **BMKA where artisan contribution to expenditure has decreased.** This may be because artisans are including expenditure for school fees which, in fact, are paid by MESH.

Table 3. Mean artisan wage per month as a percentage of total income and total expenditure – individual producer groups, 2011 and 2015.

	Mean wage per month		% of total income		% of total expenditure	
	2011	**2015**	**2011**	**2015**	**2011**	**2015**
Urban Groups						
SMK	792	1,045	34.4	37.9	47.3	47.7
BMKA	2,720	3,340	78.6	45.8	51.6	30.7
AMM	None declared*	1,633	-	5.8	-	6.3
Hubli	1,785	5,458	38.1	65.5	39.6	115.9
Mean urban	**1,760**	**2,869**	**50.4**	**38.7**	**46.16**	**50.7**
Rural Groups						
KUKA	3,300	6,500	56.2	69.5	90.2	99.3
Little Flower	1,493	3,660	37.8	38.2	31.8	45.5
BCLA	1,761	2,409	19.7	17.4	19.0	24.7
Mean rural	**2,185**	**4,190**	**37.9**	**38.3**	**47.0**	**56.5**

*Mean urban wage does not include AMM.

Table 4. Increase in mean artisan income between 2011 and 2015 – individual producer groups.

	Mean wage per month		% increase
Urban Groups	**2011**	**2015**	
SMK	792	1,045	31.9
BMKA	2,720	3,340	22.8
AMM	None declared*	1,633	-
Hubli	1,785	5,458	205.7
Mean urban	**1,760**	**2,869**	**86.8**
Rural Groups	**2011**	**2015**	
KUKA	3300	6,500	96.9
Little Flower	1,493	3,660	145.1
BCLA	1,761	2,409	36.8
Mean rural	**2,185**	**4,190**	**92.9**

*Mean urban wage does not include AMM.

There are various indicators of cumulative rate of inflation for the whole of India for the period 2011 – 2015. Two sources estimate 35.68% (http://global-rates.com/economic-indicators/inflation/consumer-prices/cpi/india.aspx) and 33.36% (based on consumer price index (CPI) per year for urban workers) (http://calculatorstack.com/inflation-calculator-india.php)
Table 4 shows how artisan wages map to this estimate. It can be seen that, as mentioned above, all artisans have experienced an increase in wages (more so in rural groups) and some exceed the cited indices but the percentage change is very variable. This variability could be linked to income variations in different states (https://data.gov.in/) and to different levels of work. Also, as hourly rates were not directly investigated, artisan income is difficult to compare with indices.
The CPI based estimate of cumulative rate of inflation for the period is borne out by anecdotal evidence relating to the cost of food items in Delhi, December, 2010 and September, 2016. This is shown in Table 5 and represents an overall increase in costs of 32.75% (JB, personal communication, 2016).

Table 5. Cost of consumables, 2011 and 2015

	Item	2010	2016
Arhar Dal	1 kg	72	120
Sunflower oil	1kg	92	98
Sugar	1kg	33	43
Urad dal	1kg	82	82
Rajma	500g	25	58
Salt	1kg	11	17
TOTAL		**315**	**418**

For 2011 and 2015, 24% and 30% of artisans had a provident fund – little change over time (no figure for this). It is expected that this number will continue to rise since the law requires this provision when there are more than ten employees in the group.

Section 3. Artisan understanding and perception of their situation and quality of life

Figure 1. How is the wage paid - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

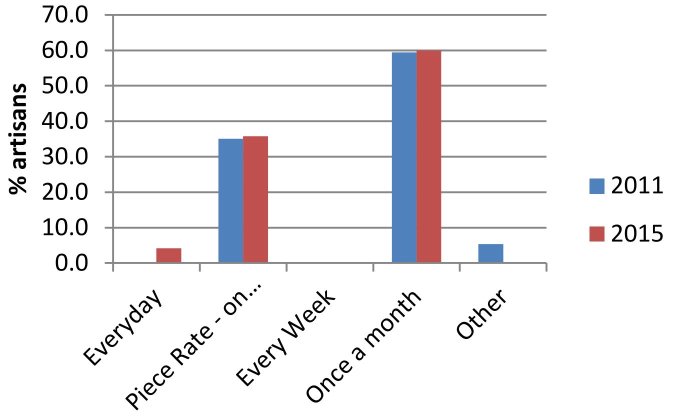


Figure 2. Who pays your wage - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

There is **very little change in how wages are paid** to artisans, the majority for both 2011 and 2015 being paid piece rate or once per month although some artisans are paid every two weeks. (Figure 1). Wages are usually paid by a manager or accountant or, in 2015, by a supervisor (Figure 2). In general, who pays the wages provides an insight to the management infrastructure of the producer group since in larger groups wages tend to be paid by an accountant but smaller groups cannot employ such a person and wages are paid by a cashier or senior member of the group ("other" in Figure 2).

Figure 3. Is the payment regular - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

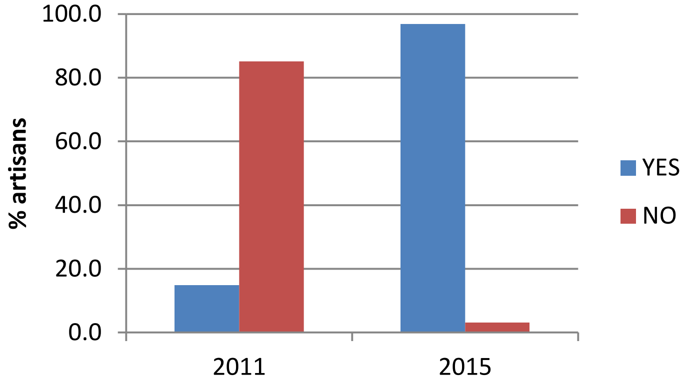


Figure 4. Is the payment regular - individual matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

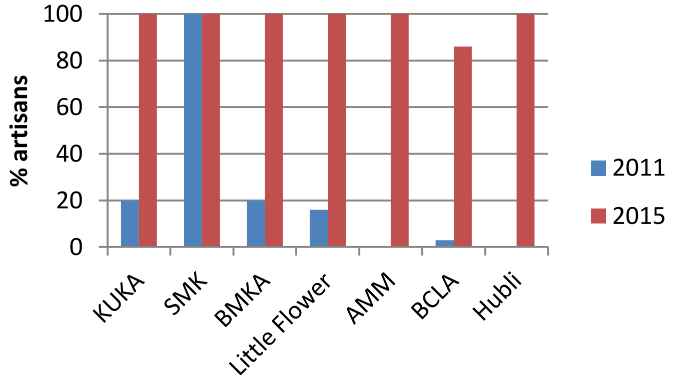


Figure 3 shows that by 2015 there has been an **improvement in regularity of payment**, 14.9% claiming that payments are regular in 2011 compared to 96.8% in 2015. This is associated with an increase by 2015 in the number of days work available to artisans as shown in Figure 7 below. Figure 4 shows that this improvement is significant for all producer groups as in 2011 regular payment was claimed by 20% or less of artisans but is now 100% in all but BCLA where 86% of artisans were paid regularly by 2015. SMK shows no change with all artisans being paid regularly in both 2011 and 2015.

There is a **slight drop** in the number of artisans who say that wages are paid on time – 100% in 2011 and 92.6% in 2015 (Figures 5 and 6). This drop is entirely due to the situation for artisans in BCLA where, possibly due to a cash flow problem with the group, 100% of artisans were paid on time in 2011 but only 67% in 2015.

Figure 5. Is the salary paid on time - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

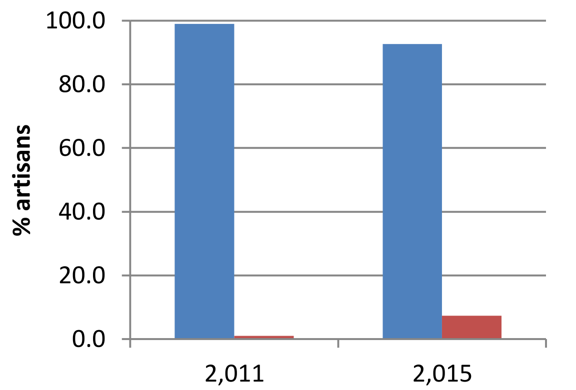
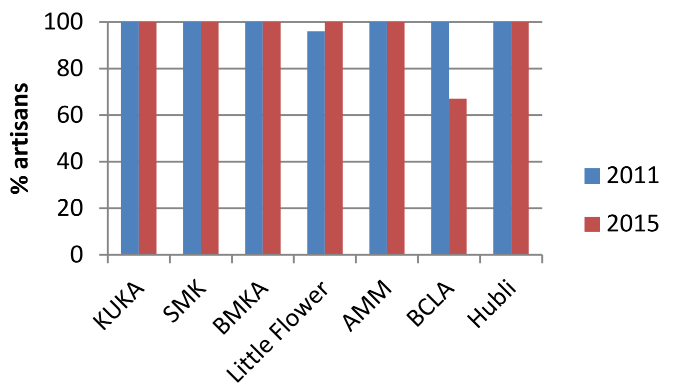


Figure 6. Is the wage paid on time - individual matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015



Figures 7 and 8 indicate **an increased awareness of the wage** an artisan should be able to command (all artisans are able to do this by 2015 compared to 76.7% in 2011).

Figure 7. Are you able to calculate your own wages - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

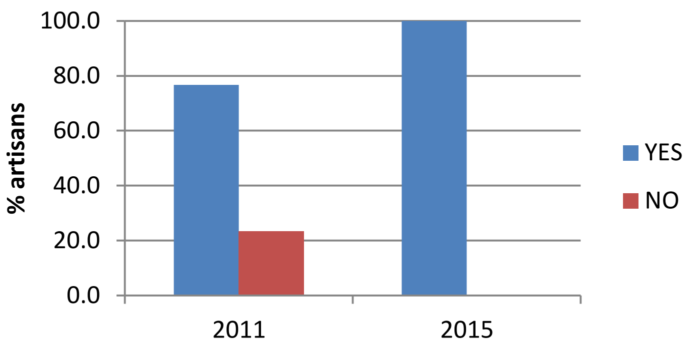
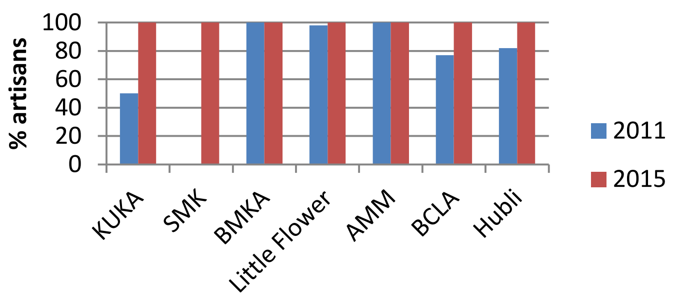
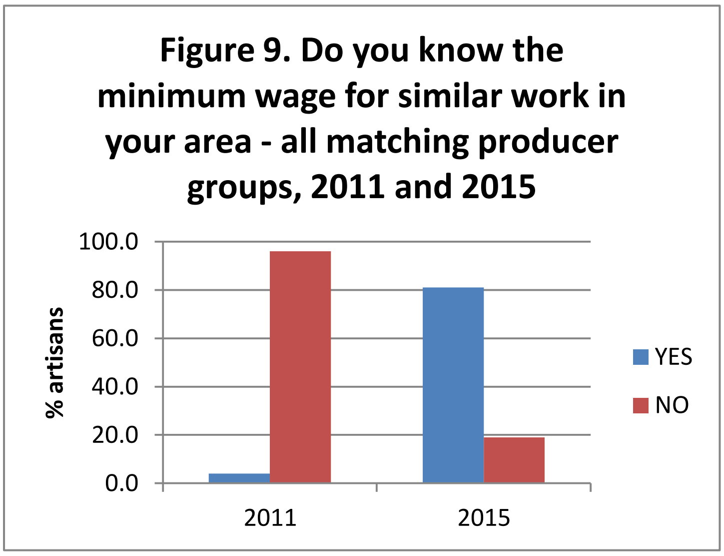


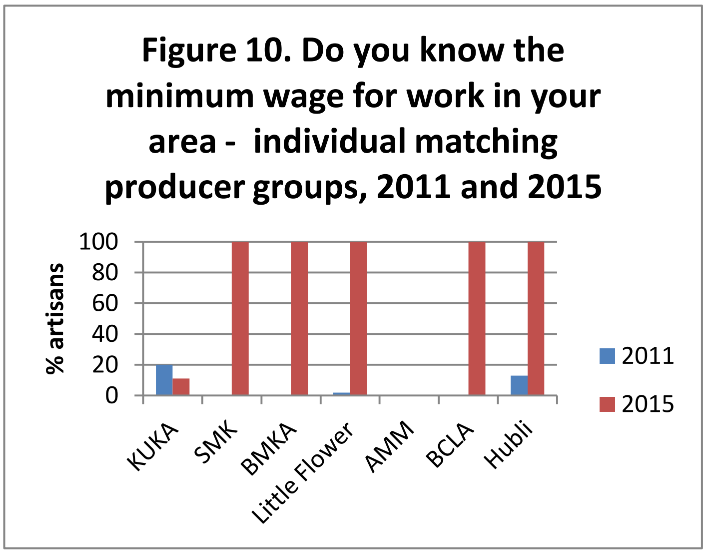
Figure 8. Are you able to calculate your own wages - individual matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015



Artisans are also much **more aware of the minimum wage** that would be paid for similar work in the area as shown in Figure 9 (81.1% of artisans in all matching producer groups claim to know this in 2015 compared to only 4.0% in 2011). However, Figure 10 shows that this is the case in only five of the seven producer groups studied: **artisans at AMM do not have this insight in either year and those in KUKA have dropped from 20% in 2011 to 11% in 2015.**

The overall improvement in awareness is likely to be at least in part due to a number of **Fair Trade workshops provided by MESH** as part of an LSMA project (2012 – 2014), during which groups were given training on the importance of fair price and fair wages. This has helped to raise understanding in artisan populations of the value of their work. For example, three workshops were conducted at Little Flower to help them prepare for WFTO membership during which it was agreed to bring wages to up to the minimum level and this is reflected in the response shown in Figure 10. This awareness is so important since it reduces the possibility of underpayment and increases the ability of artisans to argue for their entitlement.





By 2015, there is **an increase in the number of days that artisans are able to work** with those working more than 270 days per annum increasing from 23.3% to 48.4% between 2011 and 2015 (Figure 11). **This is a reflection of the work of MESH** – in 2014/15 there was an increase in purchases as a result of understanding and responding to buyer requirements and travel by MESH personnel to meet buyers in order to discuss demand and showcase artisan products.

Figures 12 to 18 show the percentage of artisans per producer group and the number of days worked. For some groups (Little Flower, AMM and Hubli) there has been a clear increase in the number of days worked. SMK artisans have seen their working days reduced with all artisans working less than 90 days in 2015 compared to more than 270 days in 2011. This group had no business with MESH for 2013-14 and 2014-15 suggesting that a low level of orders account for reduced hours. Anecdotal comment indicates that artisans would like more hours of work as a way to increase income and this is one of the aims of MESH – to make more work available to artisans.

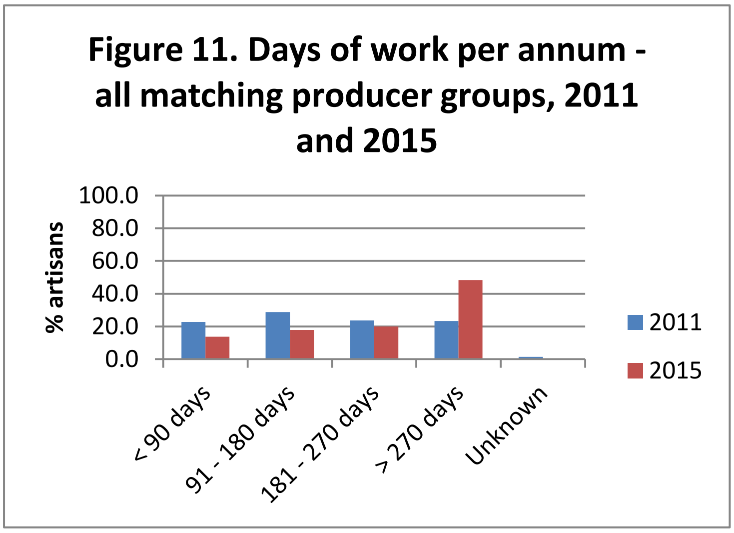


Figure 11. Days of work per annum - all matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015
% artisans
100.0
80.0
60.0
40.0
20.0
0.0
< 90 days
91 - 180 days
181 - 270 days
> 270 days
Unknown
2011
2015

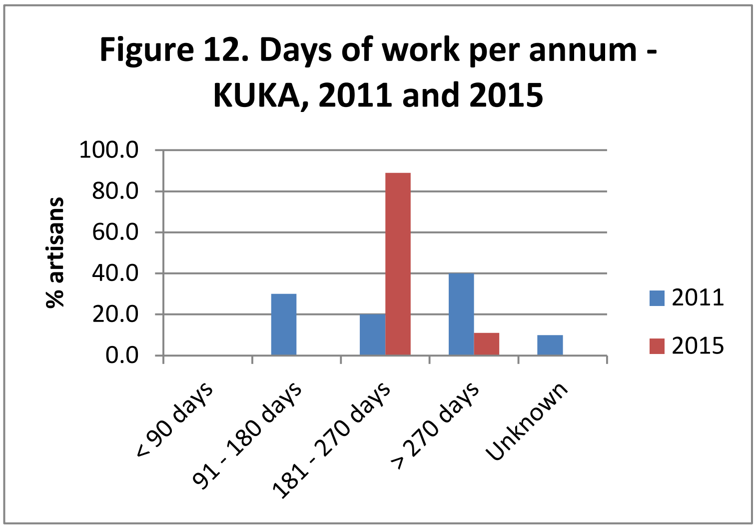


Figure 12. Days of work per annum - KUKA, 2011 and 2015
% artisans
100.0
80.0
60.0
40.0
20.0
0.0
< 90 days
91 - 180 days
181 - 270 days
> 270 days
Unknown
2011
2015

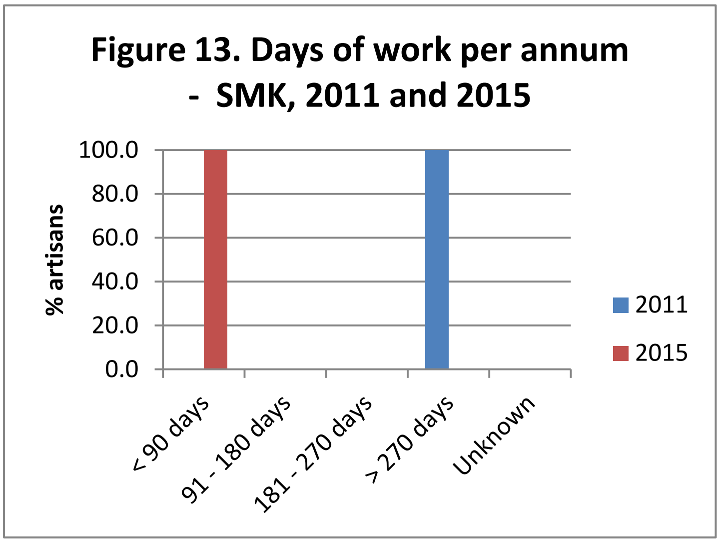


Figure 13. Days of work per annum - SMK, 2011 and 2015
% artisans
100.0
80.0
60.0
40.0
20.0
0.0
< 90 days
91 - 180 days
181 - 270 days
> 270 days
Unknown
2011
2015

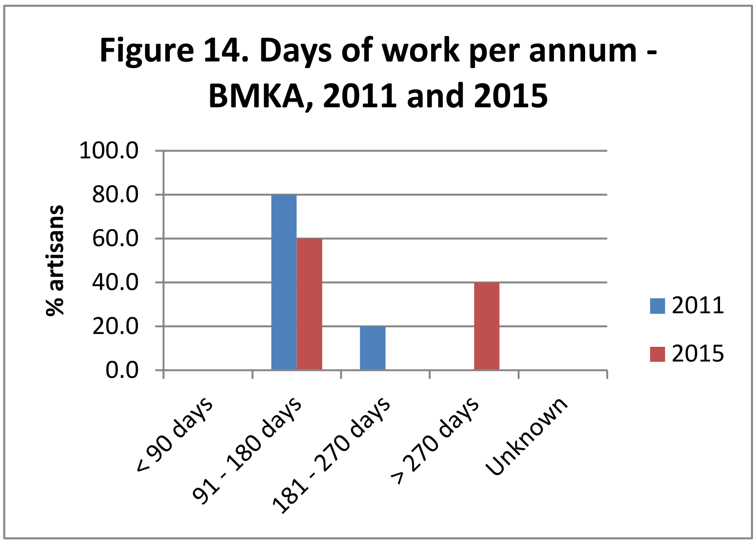


Figure 14. Days of work per annum - BMKA, 2011 and 2015
% artisans
100.0
80.0
60.0
40.0
20.0
0.0
< 90 days
91 - 180 days
181 - 270 days
> 270 days
Unknown
2011
2015

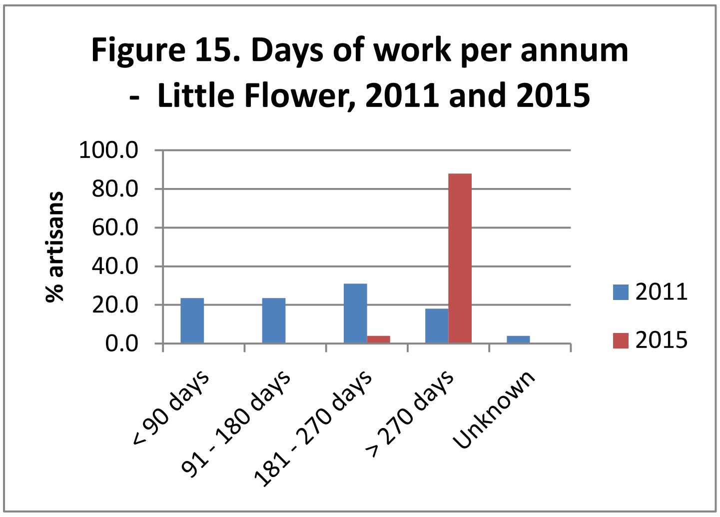


Figure 15. Days of work per annum - Little Flower, 2011 and 2015
% artisans
100.0
80.0
60.0
40.0
20.0
0.0
< 90 days
91 - 180 days
181 - 270 days
> 270 days
Unknown
2011
2015

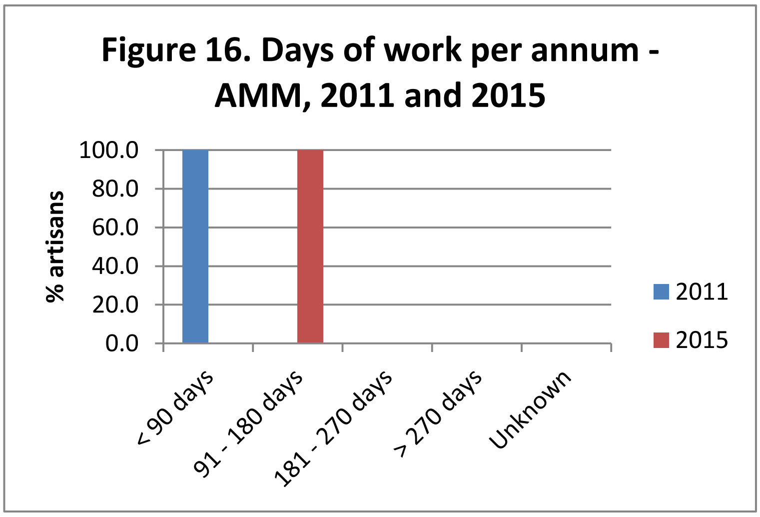
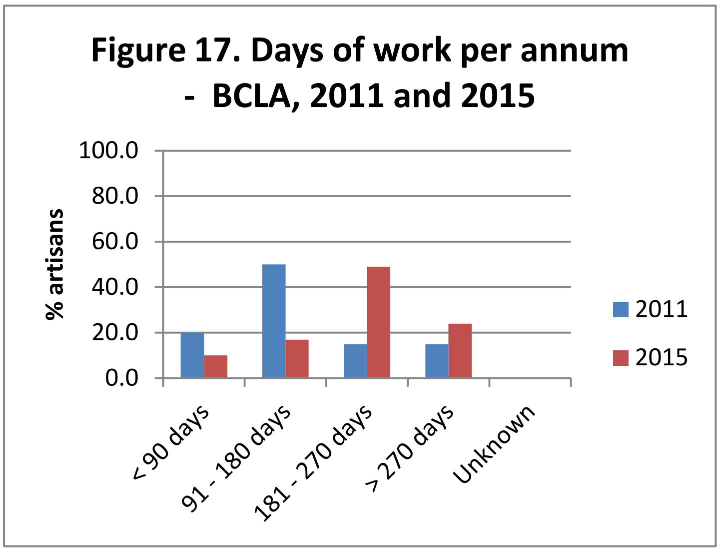
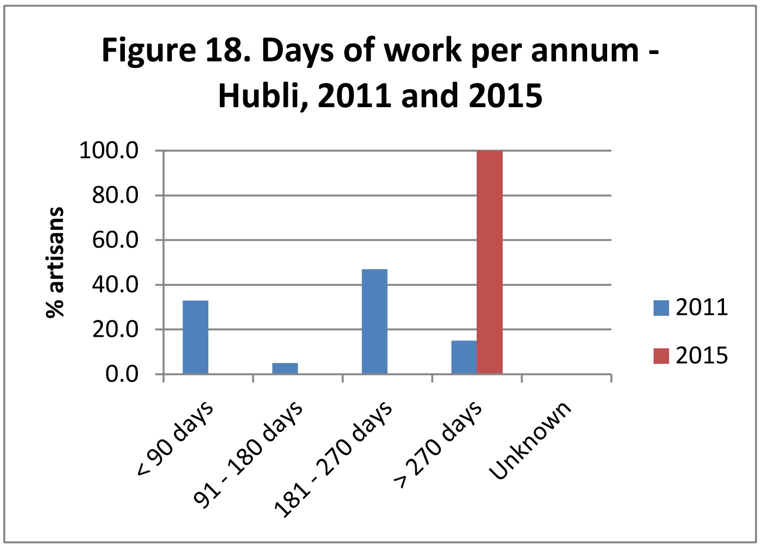


Figure 16. Days of work per annum - AMM, 2011 and 2015
% artisans
100.0
80.0
60.0
40.0
20.0
0.0
< 90 days
91 - 180 days
181 - 270 days
> 270 days
Unknown
2011
2015





Where an increase in days of work has been achieved, this is because MESH has worked to develop and increase customer base, especially in the international market. Specific measures have been the provision of specific design input to the groups to meet customer demand and training some groups in domestic marketing in order to enhance regional sales. Data in Figure 11 also reflect the fact that MESH sales increased over the period. The majority of these sales relate to the international market and a concern for MESH is the inability to sustain domestic sales growth. This has been unresponsive to a variety of efforts including advertising, events in MESH's Delhi shop, Divali gifting and approaching wholesale buyers. A problem is that artisans are not in a position to respond to late, large quantity orders.

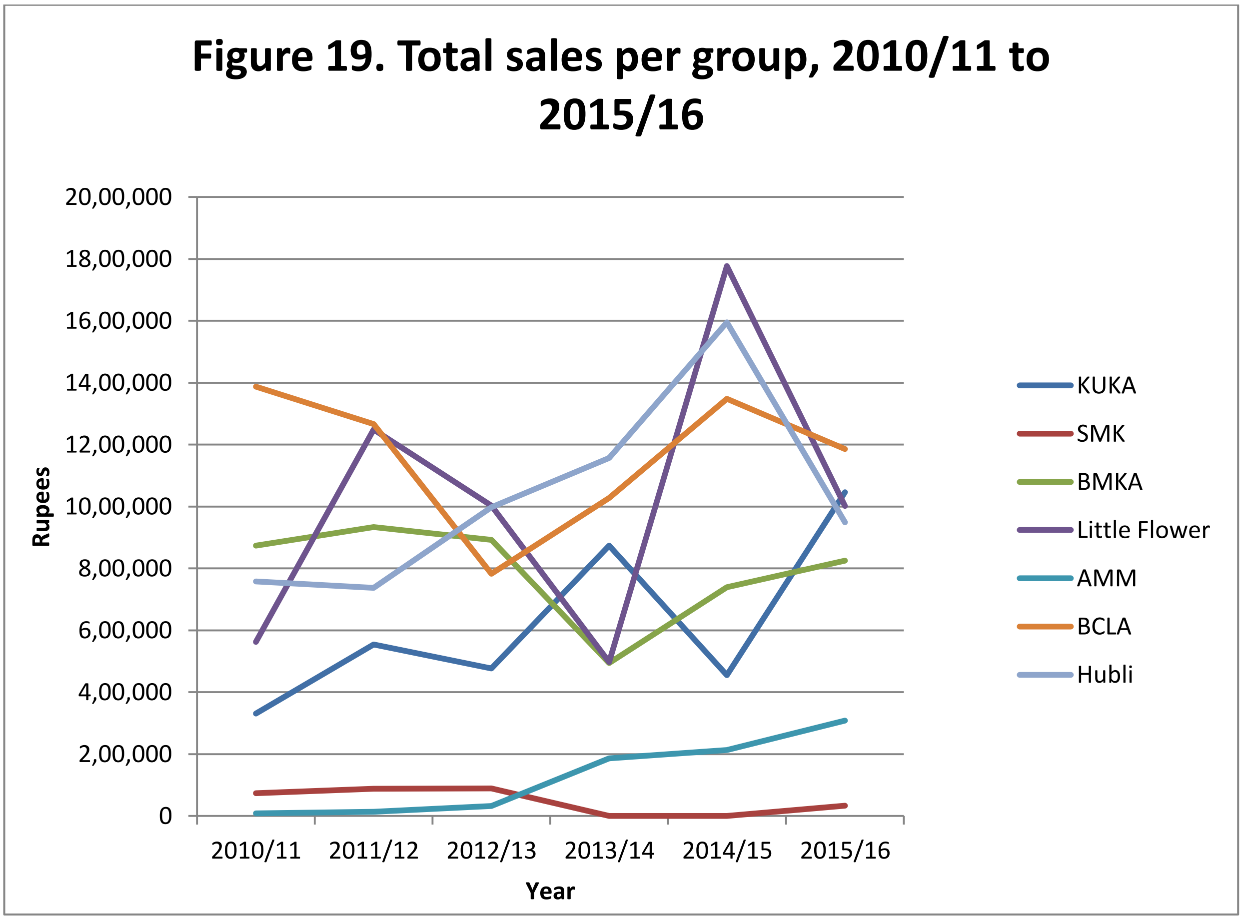


Table 1. Group sales to MESH, 2010/11 to 2015/16

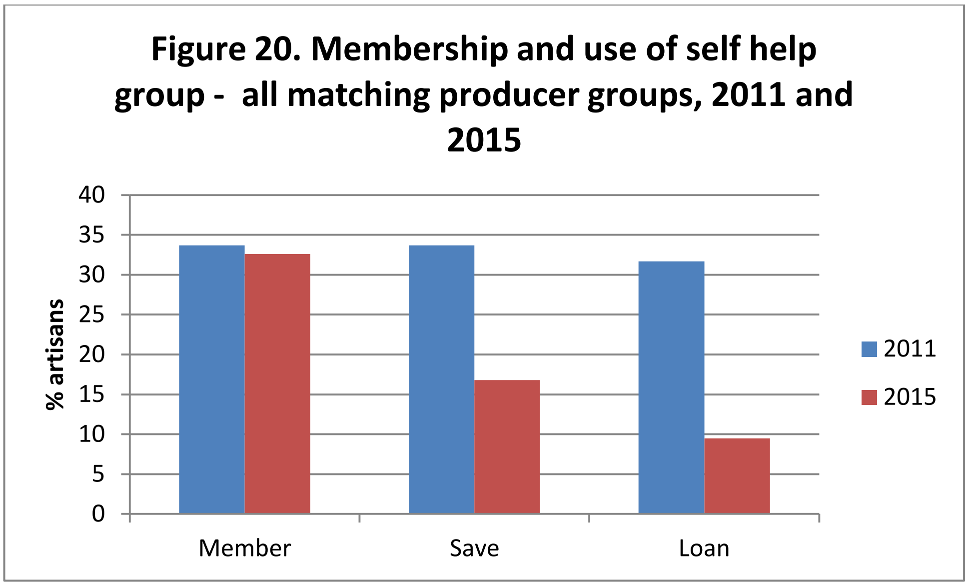
	Sales (Rs)						No. artisans
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	
KUKA	330,665	553,870	476,751	873,287	454,822	1,046,674	9
SMK	73,950	88,100	89,250	0	0	33,704	11
BMKA	873,892	933,184	892,646	493,941	739,258	825,070	5
Little Flower	562,989	1,248,435	1,002,900	497,310	1,776,689	1,002,205	25
AMM	8,188	13,490	32,500	186,155	213,159	308,657	10
BCLA	1,387,759	1,266,259	782,409	1,027,981	1,348,165	1,186,144	21
Hubli	758,220	736,779	997,788	1,156,307	1,595,435	948,592	14

Table 2. MESH sales, domestic, export and on-line, from all producer groups

	Sales (Rs)					
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
MESH	12,155,588	12,542,638	11,407,350	17,152,486	19,428,108	16,488,460

Figure 19 and Table 1 shows how sales per group have changed over the period of the survey. Unsurprisingly, those groups with the highest sales (Hubli, BCLA and Little Flower) are also the largest although BMKA, with only five artisans has done well. SMK and AMM have ten or eleven artisans but sales are very low being non-existant for SMK in 2013/14 and 2014/15 – this group has suffered reduction of orders from one source and failed to adjust to the requirements of local demand – **further guidance may be needed**. Sales at AMM have shown a gradual increase but artisans have not felt it worthwhile to engage with Fair Trade training or network meetings which might have led to greater increases sales. For all groups, it can be seen that volume of sales fluctuates reflecting both successes and difficulties, support provided by MESH and a variety of problems. For example, the MESH shop in Hyderabad focussed on BCLA products but the shop closed down in late 2014 with a concomitant drop in sales. This group is highly dependent on MESH and although they have the capacity to sell more, they are not promoting their products to other buyers and thus not benefitting fully from the design work done by MESH. A visit from an Australian buyer in 2013/14 boosted sales for Hubli but this group has undergone several management changes in the period of the study and turnover could be increased if production organisation could be enhanced. Hubli does, however, sell to buyers other than MESH. Little Flower and KUKA also benefitted from increased sales following design development and meetings with buyers arranged by MESH in 2013/14. Little Flower has the disadvantage of poor internet and telephone connections but takes up any orders from MESH as long as there are not many variations to their standard offering. In 2013/14, MESH carried out a major international journey promoting artisans' products and this resulted in an increased in sales for many (Table 2). **A re-occurring**

theme is that groups focus mainly on production: more could be done at group level to fully exploit training provided by MESH, to optimise production and to promote their products.
A future strategy for MESH is to further assist with optimising production, and to help artisans to diversify and develop buffers and responses to change.



Membership of a self help group, saving, or taking a loan with the group **has declined** between 2011 and 2015 as shown in Figure 20. This does not necessarily indicate improved wealth because having more money usually means that people save more so that they can get bigger matching grants from the government.

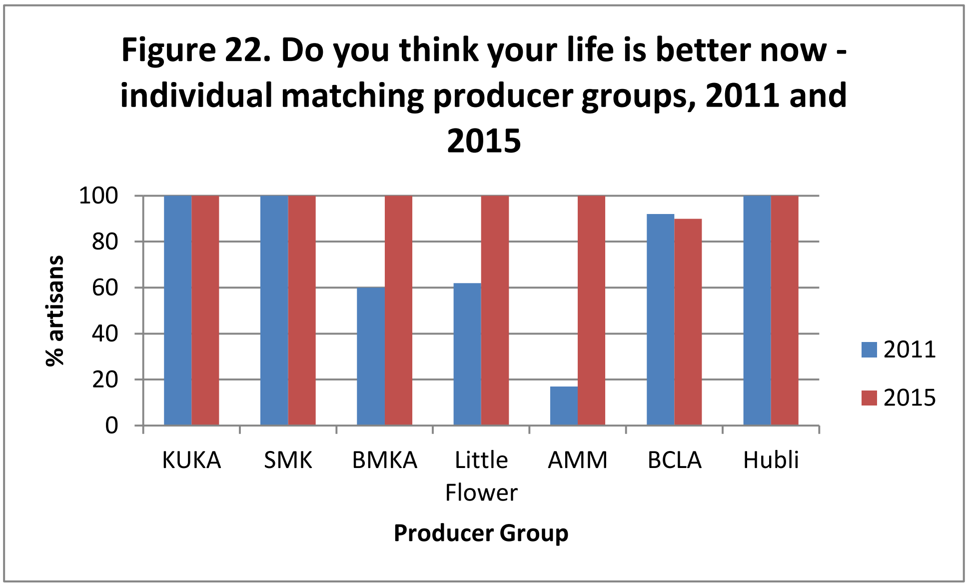
Table 3 shows the change in the percentage of each producer group that has membership of a self help group and saves or takes a loan from the self help group. No artisans in KUKA and SMK belong to a self help group. KUKA is too small to make it worthwhile and at SMK many basic needs (for example, schooling) are provided by the group. BMKA and Little Flower had no artisans belonging to a self help group in 2011 but by 2015 this has changed although BMKA artisans do not appear to be using the self help group for saving or borrowing. AMM artisans also appear not to be using their self help group membership fully. Only in **BCLA and Hubli** can it be seen that, although numbers have changed between 2011 and 2015, artisans are using self help group membership and this is particularly the case for BCLA. This is of significance since it enables artisans to save and these funds may be used to attract matching government funding.

Table 3. Membership and use of self help group – percentage of artisans in individual matching producer groups, 2011 and 2015

	KUKA		SMK		BMKA		Little Flower		AMM		BCLA		Hubli	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
% member	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	8	33	100	88	76	2	7
% save	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	33	0	88	62	3	7
% loan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	85	38	2	7

As shown in Figure 21, the majority of artisans in all matching producer groups think that their life is better than it was before they joined the producer group and **the number who feel that way has increased** in 2015 compared to 2011.

Figure 22 shows the percentage of artisans who say their life is better than it was before they joined the producer group in both 2011 and 2015. For **KUKA, SMK and Hubli, there is no change** with all artisans in both surveys saying that their lives have improved since joining the group. At **BMKA, Little Flower and particularly AMM, in 2015 more artisans feel that their life is better** within the group than they did in 2011 and for AMM, the change is from 17% in 2011 to 100% in 2015 – unsurprising since this group saw their business with MESH grow over the period from Rs8,188 in 2010/11 to Rs2,13,000 in 2014/15. There is a small **decrease in the number of BCLA** artisans who feel this way (92% in 2011 and 90% in 2015) – 2014/15 saw a drop in sales for this group. Overall, Figure 22 indicates that for all producer groups, artisans feel that being a member of the group is beneficial and this feeling has increased between 2011 and 2015.



Many of the supportive activities of MESH over the study period have **potentially targeted all groups.** For example, annual network meetings in which all groups are invited to participate during which training relating to issues such as production management, marketing and World Fair Trade Organisation requirements is provided. MESH also advertises artisan products on its website, arranges meetings between artisans and potential buyers and promotes international sales. Design support and advance payments are also provided.

Other MESH activities have specifically **targeted individual producer groups**. For example:

- a one-day Fair Trade Guarantee System Training for Little Flower attended by 38 artisans
- input on issues relating to BCLA production activities
- design of brand labels and promotional brochures for BCLA, Little Flower and KUKA
- Capacity Building Broadloom Weaving Workshop for nine days in BCLA for 11 artisans
- educational support for families in BMKA and Little Flower

The impact, in 2013/14, of design work has been significant for several groups:

- BMKA and KUKA - 9209 linen products exported by MESH providing work for 14 weavers and five tailors
- Little Flower - an order for 9527 scarves provided work for 48 weavers, spinners, dyers and tailors
- BCLA - an order for 8182 bags provided work for 80 weavers, tailors and finishers.

Many of these activities have been made possible because of successful **funding applications** made by MESH to organisations such as The Leprosy Mission (2012 - 2014) and Livelihood Security Through Market Access (2012 – 2014).

2014/15 was a good year for MESH artisans and at the point of the 2015 survey most artisans had experienced increased work for MESH. Several buyers during that period buy for shops and so look for a wide variety of products and not just large volume for mail order or online sales. Variety is good for the varied producer groups associated with MESH. Although volume sales are attractive, there is a limit to how many items producer groups are able to produce in a short time.

Section 4. Summary and conclusions

MESH as an organisation does not directly employ people in the producer groups/producer organisation. The producer groups work independently and employ artisans based on their capacity. MESH helps such producer groups to attract customer orders and sell their products nationally and internationally in order to improve their livelihood. The surveys carried out in 2011 and 2015 were undertaken in order to evaluate the impact of MESH on the lives of these artisans.

Analysis of the surveys carried out in 2011 and 2015 provides a broad overview of the data obtained by MESH and this may be retained as a general resource for MESH. It may be tailored as required. For example, it will provide information useful for:

1. MESH annual reports.
2. Evaluating the impact of MESH intervention.
3. Future focus of MESH activity and strategic aims.
4. Compliance with WFTO.
5. Information for buyers and customers.
6. Publications (for example, academic, web site).

It may be that the report simply provides information of which MESH is already aware or suspects from anecdote and experience. However, the report provides an objective overview of the current situation and how it has changed over the period since 2011 when the first survey took place.

Overall, the report highlights many changes between 2011 and 2015 although these are very variable between producer groups and between rural and urban populations.

Broadly, the findings are as follows:

- There has been an increase in the number of artisans who are able to fully prepare products suggesting an increased skills base and thus independence.
- There is a concern that in 2011 only 4.5% of all artisans claimed to be a learner/trainee and by 2015 no artisans were in this category. This indicates that new members are not being recruited to the group and thus the longevity of the group is at risk.
- On the other hand, the fact that most artisans have been involved in their work with the producer group for more than ten years, and the number in this category has increased between 2011 and 2015, suggests that artisans consider being involved with the group an advantage compared to alternative lifestyles.
- Artisan and spouse education levels have improved over the period of the survey with fewer being classed as illiterate or semi-illiterate and more being educated up to at least elementary level.
- For urban and rural groups, some 60% and 50% of artisans respectively, own their home. The most common roof is made of concrete and the number of artisans with concrete roofed houses (as opposed to tiled or thatched) has increased. This suggests an improvement in both quality and permanence of housing over the period of the study.
- Availability of LPG, electricity, water and a toilet at home has improved for all groups but not all artisans have these utilities and although for water and electricity, infrastructure may be in place, supply is not constant.
- Ownership of goods has increased in both urban and rural areas indicating an improvement in disposable income.
- The number of artisans possessing a bank account has increased. Medical insurance is variable with some groups providing health care or costs, others having to fund (or not) their healthcare. Those artisans possessing Life Insurance has also increased and this is an indicator of improved wealth. The provision by employers of facilities has improved for most producer groups. However, although in 2011 some groups were able to provide additional items such as protective footwear and spectacles, by 2015 these are no longer affordable.
- Both artisan wage and total family income for artisans has increased as has, for many artisans, the amount they are able to contribute to total expenditure. The increase in wage is highly variable between groups and difficult to reconcile with state minimum wage and national CPI indices.
- Although by 2015, there is an increase in the number of days that artisans are able to work, more than half of artisans still had less than 270 days per year of work. Since artisans clearly articulate a need to work more hours, this is an important improvement reflecting the work of MESH in securing orders but more is required.
- There is an increased awareness of the wage an artisan should be able to command within their producer group and an increased understanding of the value of similar work in the area.

This is an important change since it reduces the possibility of artisans being underpaid and increases their ability to argue for their entitlement.

- Importantly, the majority of artisans in all matching producer groups think that their life is better than it was before they joined the producer group and the number who feel that way has increased in 2015 compared to 2011. This perception is a result of the improvements in their situation over the study period and is reflected in their anecdotal but revealing comments (listed in the separate reports for 2011 and 2015).

There are some limitations to the study as follows:

- We can only describe the situation for employees in 2011 and then compare it with 2015. We do not know the situation for employees before they were employed by MESH (and it would be good to know this but the question "What was your situation prior to being employed by MESH?" was not asked).
- Since health related questions were asked of artisans in 2015 but not in 2011, it is not possible to evaluate whether being employed by MESH is linked to improved health status. Although chronic illness/disability may not have changed over the years, incidence of acute/minor illness may have changed, because, for example, with employment, an individual has money to buy over the counter medicines, or can afford to take time off work to recover. <u>The 2015 questionnaire does not specifically ask participants about their own health status and this should be explored in future surveys.</u>
- We do not know the status of a similar, non-disabled population. Thus we cannot make a comparison with a population which otherwise may have very similar features. This is important to recognise but is not a major flaw because we can compare status within producer groups with time.
- The questionnaire has developed between 2011 and 2015 to examine more detail regarding artisans' lives. This will provide a baseline for future surveys. <u>Further refinements to the questionnaire should be reviewed.</u>

This report demonstrates how personal situation, income and expenditure, and understanding and perception of their situation and quality of life has changed for artisans with whom MESH has been associated during the study period of 2011 and 2015. Findings are linked to MESH activities that support producer groups and demonstrate how MESH and the associated producer groups comply with the requirements of the World Fair Trade Organisation and how MESH meets its stated aims.

MESH activities are broad ranging both in scope and target. This report demonstrates how MESH has contributed to producer group prosperity: for most artisans, there is an improvement in:

- skills and understanding of market issues
- number of days worked and income
- housing, amenities and ownership of goods
- awareness of their entitlements
- sense of self worth and quality of life

The artisans that contributed to the surveys of 2011 and 2015 are a vulnerable group since they suffer from leprosy or other disabilities which affects their ability to work. MESH continues to support these artisans, striving to sustain and improve their livelihoods.