
ARTISON: LIVING THE BAMBOO EXPERIENCE

Artison Agrotech Pvt Ltd

Building A Green Sustainable
Economy

Contents

Why I wrote this document2

Doing it a Different Way3

Simplicity3

Fear of Making Mistakes.....4

Will Power4

Never Say Never4

The Many People5

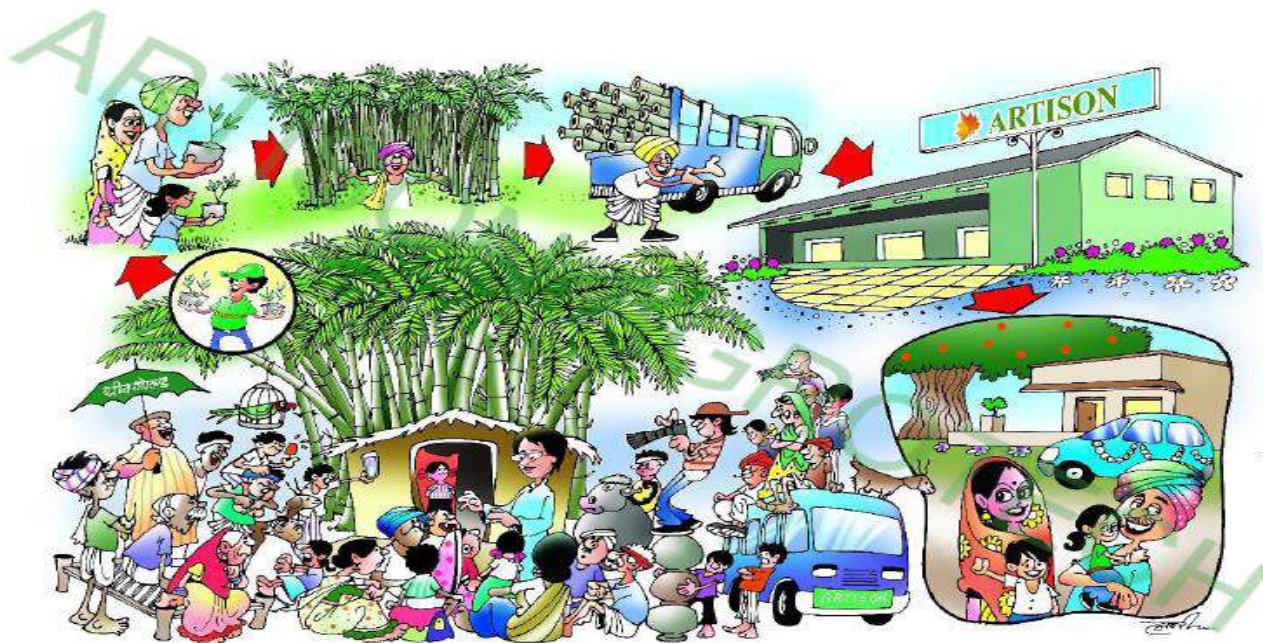
Making Do5

Experience5

Status.....6

Humbleness.....6

The Artison Way6

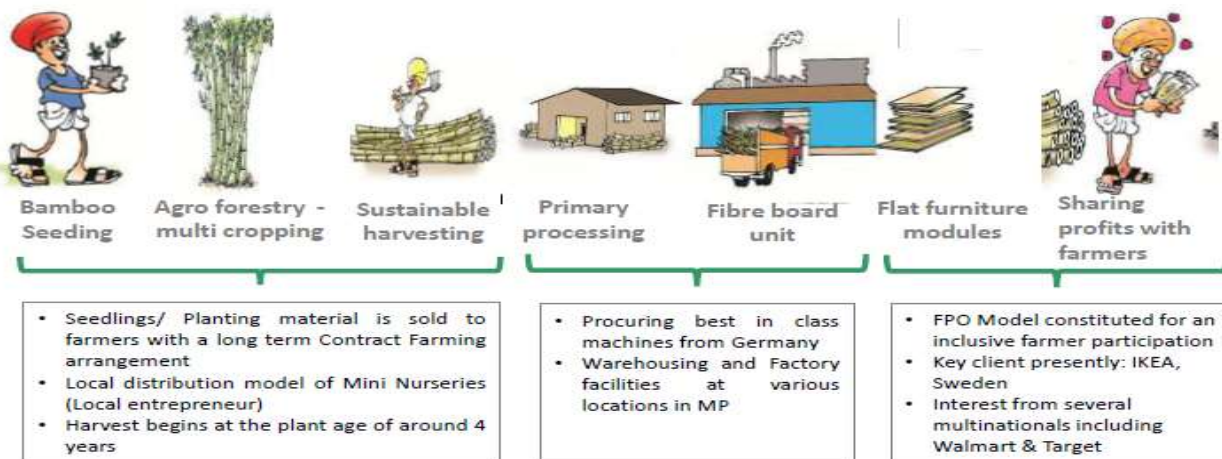


ARTISON AGROTECH PLANTATION MODEL

Fully Integrated Bamboo based Particle Board



Setting up the world's first "Eco Friendly" bamboo-fibre based particle board unit, and with Zero Emission



ARTISON AGROTECH BUSINESS MODEL – FROM SEED TO BOARD TO FURNITURE

Why I wrote this document

There is an old saying - Great men think alike. I was going through the Ikea website, when I came across a document named “The Testament of a Furniture Dealer: A Little IKEA Dictionary” written by Mr Ingvar Kamprad, the founder of IKEA. As I went through the words Ingvar explained, I started believing that Dave’s karma has given Ingvar’s words a fitting meaning. From my experience, I shall try to explain Ingvar’s words through the journey of Debopam (Dave) Mukherjee and Artison Agrotech, started in 2009. For the sake of story-telling, though a real-life one, I have taken the liberty of changing the order of the words Ingvar explained.

– Prabal Banerjee (Director Technical, Artison Agrotech)

Doing it a Different Way

Doing it a Different Way is a truth that Artison is living. When all other board manufacturers in the world are manufacturing their boards from timber, Artison is all set to make the boards from bamboo. In doing that Artison is **selflessly building Environmental, Social and Economic (ESE) wealth for others – as you are also a part of the eco-system.**

The environmental and social benefits of bamboo based board manufacturing are (1) prevention of deforestation – creation of permanent green (2) increase land utilisation (3) prevention of top soil erosion (4) carbon sequestration (5) rural employment generation (6) increase farmer’s income multi-fold.

Simplicity

All great solutions start with a simple plan. **All successful businesses are built on a simple linear model – not complex structure.** For example take Artison’s mission which is to replace timber with bamboo.

When the supply of timber is decreasing world over, the demand for board and board products are increasing. Therefore, the world must find a timber substitute in order to cope up with the high demand of board products yet prevent deforestation. Bamboos are abundant in the forest, but the question is - if we keep on harvesting the forest bamboo, whether the replenishment plantation will be done meticulously. Who will take care of the bamboo saplings in the deep of the forest? Will not the cycle of harvest and plantation end in encroachment of the land dedicated for the wild animals? The alternative is to harvest bamboo as an ordinary crop. A simple yet practically implementable plan.

Fear of Making Mistakes

We believe in the philosophy that Ingvar mentioned: We only don't do mistakes while we are sleeping. Dave knows that he is pursuing a great cause, his intentions are honest. We do agree that Artison does not have previous experience of board manufacturing, so mistakes are bound to happen. But when the intentions are honest and one pursue a cause with passion and conviction, then the end result is bound to be positive.

Will Power

Will power is a question of taking responsibility, making decisions and having the courage to act. Artison is fortunate to have Dave as its leader. He has personally witnessed the result of deforestation.

Dave was also concerned about the condition of the rural Indian farmers. Left to the vagaries of the Mother Nature and to the mercy of the loan sharks, a farmer facing a poor crop is left with no option to maintain the dignity of his family. We have often read the heart rendering stories of the farmers succumbing to the pressure and committing suicide – sometimes alone, sometime with the whole family. So once two noble causes came hand in hand ie Dave believed that bamboo can replace timber as in the board making process and that the bamboo plantation will benefit the poor farmers, there was no looking back.

Never Say Never

Initially it was not easy motivating the farmer to cultivate bamboo. And they are quite justified: Why would they do so? Most of the farmers are marginal farmers and their livelihood depend on the income from the piece of land he cultivates. Then why would he cultivate bamboo in his field? What is the guarantee that he will be able to sell those bamboos once they are ready for harvest? Many times the naïve farmers of rural India have been befooled by the greedy salesmen. Then why would he believe in what Artison says? The obstacles on Dave's way were numerous. There are villages where he has been even warned of dire consequences, if he dares come back. Fortunately none of the obstacles could dent Dave's determination. The result is mesmerising – the villages where once he was unwelcome, are now leading the other villages in bamboo plantation.

The rural India has welcome Artison, leading to thousands of hectares of plantation accepting bamboo as a crop in agro-forestry model.

The Many People

Standing on the side of the many people means representing the interests of ordinary people. Through his words Ingvar captured the extract of Indian philosophy. In *Sanskrit* (the ancient Indian Language) we call it “*bahu jana sukhaya, bahu jana hitaya*” that means for the good of the people. And when you want to do good for the people you need to listen and understand their needs. The best way to learn this is through personal experience, not as tourists. Then only the people will think you as one of them and share their concerns. Dave has done exactly the same. Now even with a small team, Artison feels itself the part of a bigger family.

By 2025 Artison will have more than 3.5 Million farmers planting bamboo in over 200,000 hectares, enabling more than 5000 MT FSC certified raw material available that can replace timber.

Making Do

Making Do means a small compromise to increase the usage a bit longer or to avert the investment for a short time. In any case the meaning transcends to increased utilisation. In essence Artison is doing the same. Planting bamboo on the demarcation area of the field, on the fallow/unutilised land increases the land utilisation. A farmer could not think of putting regular crop on the river banks but he can easily do it otherwise with bamboo because planting bamboo on the river banks prevents soil erosion. In all cases the land utilisation grows, resulting in increased yield per unit area. The final result is that the farmer earns more money and is better off.

Experience

The word Experience is like a double-edged sword. If used without action it portrays a pompous attitude and can do more harm than good. In Dave’s word – “Experience is gathered by working on the ground”. And Dave has done that. He believes in learning from the mistakes. Artison never had an experience of agro-forestry. So it was good to hear from people, experienced in agro-forestry, that “I have learnt agro-forestry model in the books, but now I can see the agro-forestry model actually in practice”.

Status

We completely agree with Ingvar that status means setting up a good example. Here in Artison we always want to be recognised by our work. Business will be business after all, so the element of profit will be always there. But the question is - In the way of doing business, how much can I do for the society that brought me up, how much can I do for the Mother Nature that nourishes me every single day of my life?

Under the leadership of Dave, the Artison team has done a wonderful job that even the farmers also recognise. This is possibly the biggest recognition of the Artison team. Day by day the bamboo plantation movement is growing so big that even the honourable Prime Minister of India in his address to the nation, acknowledged the benefit of the bamboo plantation to the society.

We dream of that day when no farmer will feel helpless to commit suicide and instead will join the bamboo movement of India. That will be the biggest status that we can achieve.

Humbleness



What do you expect of a successful entrepreneur when he sells his software company in the USA for multi-million US\$, sets up another successful software company and sells that too. Many will say that it's time to retire and enjoy life. Would you believe that the man, after achieving such a high in life, will come back to India, will make rural India his home, spend long time travelling on the dusty roads,

sometime spend the night without a proper bed on the floor of the small temple in a remote village, will eat a meagre meal, go on the fields to convince the farmers. This is Dave. And when Artison has started getting state and national level recognition, you can still find him grounded – discussing the benefit of plantation at new villages with new farmers.

The Artison Way

Artison wants to create a sustainable supply of raw material so that through its manufacturing unit the “Make in India” brand can be promoted word-wide. However, at the same time Artison is watchful that the farmers get fair price for their proceeds. As a part of this initiative, Artison has guaranteed the farmer to buy back the bamboo at existing market price (2017) of “Sugar Cane”. In addition Artison

ARTISON AGROTECH Document

intends that the farmers also feel themselves a part of the Artison family. This is only possible when they feel themselves as shareholders of the Artison group. Therefore Artison has promised that 24% of the profit from the manufacturing unit will be ploughed back to the farmers, as bonus which will create wealth for the marginal farmers and tribal.

Artison has already created some employment in the rural areas in the form of “service providers”. To cater for logistics of raw material and agro-waste, a number of Village Units (VU) will be set up in the villages. The VUs will generate further employment for the rural people. In future, there will be other initiatives to generate additional revenue and employment in the VUs.

In sum, the idea is to create low cost Particle Boards so that the buyers feel happy, to create employment in the villages so that the villagers are happy, to firmly establish a fair price model so that the farmers are happy, to create an efficient business model so that the personal business objectives are fulfilled and to set up a global movement against deforestation that can feel pride of its Indian origin. This is only possible when the business model is an inclusive one and Artison is doing exactly the same.



Building A Green and Sustainable Economy