

Media Release

88 percent of artisans struggle on account of minimal market connect

.....The Hast Kala Setu Yojana Steps in as a Saviour

EDII, in association with iNDEXT-c, organized a one-day **Skill Development Program for Artisans (State Awardees) under the Hastkala Setu Yojana, beginning 2020**. The objective of the one-day program, which was a supplement to the Hast Kala Project, was to bridge the information asymmetries and upgrade skills of artisans so that they could function in line with the market trends and demands.

Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad is the implementing agency for the project Hastkala Setu Yojana, which is supported by the Commissionerate of Cottage and Rural Industries (CCRI), Government of Gujarat.

EDII, as implementing agency for the Hastakala Setu Yojana strives to develop an entrepreneurial ecosystem to strengthen rural and cottage industries of Gujarat. Empirical evidences and experiences reveal that more than 85 percent of the artisans struggle to survive despite their unique expertise. It was felt that lack of awareness and a disconnect with the market was leading to such a dismal situation. Hast Kala Setu Yojana envisions altering their conditions on the premise of skills and knowledge. As part of the programme, EDII is bridging knowledge and skill gaps among rural artisans and helping them adopt newer practices to enhance their business prospects. The project is being implemented in **13** districts (*in Phase 1 & 2. Gradually more districts will be brought in the fold*) of Gujarat wherein Training Programmes, Need-Based Domain Training, Promotion and Market linkages are being implemented to support entrepreneurs and bring them in touch with the market demands. Over last almost 2 years, EDII has

successfully sensitized and trained 19,361 artisans, out of these 7605 have been imparted advanced skill training and mentorship support. These artisans have notched a revenue of Rs. 4.98 crores. Their business prospects have improved visibly with development of new designs, new networking options, outreach to newer markets and registration on online platforms (including some especially created for artisans)

The one-day event was attended by 38 (State Awardees) Artisans & around 130 other artisans, also enrolled under Hastkala Setu Yojana being implemented by EDII. The event was an effort to upgrade the skills of artisans, make them aware about existing schemes & policies and promote networking among them. The sessions, therefore, focussed on Entrepreneurship, Online Marketing, Market Trends and Approaches and Guidance on Government Schemes. The event also marked the announcement of development of an Artisans' Directory of close to 40,000 artisans. This will be a one-stop platform to know about an artisan, his/her products/ expertise and other details.

Shri Jagdish Panchal, Hon'ble Minister, Cottage & Rural Industries, Gujarat graced the event and interacted with the artisans over Chai pe Charcha and discussed the issues and challenges which they face in running their units at a one-to-one level. He also brainstormed over possible solutions that could be implemented and talked about policy level interventions for the benefit of artisans. He informed, "Government has been working closely towards upskilling the weavers, artisans and entrepreneurs of cottage and rural industries, with the help of Institutes, like EDII and such training is helping them break free from the barriers of outdated designs, limited accessibility to new platforms of business, lack of awareness and distribution networks and restricted product innovations. Artisans are getting trained well so that they can own viable units by making products according to the taste and preference of the market."

Shri Pravin Solanki (IAS), Secretary & Commissioner, Cottage & Rural Industries, Govt. of Gujarat, looked into the concerns of artisans and individually sought to address

their problems. Addressing the artisans, he said, “You all give the state its identity and deserve to be handheld by all means, to ensure immortality of our age-old crafts. Improve your skill level so that your ability to imagine and innovate improves, and you learn to look beyond your restricted area of business, thus expanding your client base.”

Shri D. M Shukla, Executive Director, iNDEXT-c, “ I am happy to see the state awardees on this platform which is a celebration of the unique crafts of the state. You all have a significant role to play in terms of ensuring the perpetuity of your art form. While you all must imbibe the modern day rules of entrepreneurship, you must also ensure that the younger generations walk on your path with improved knowledge of doing business.”

According to EDII Director General, Dr. Sunil Shukla, "With e-commerce and social media completely transforming the business landscape globally, it is imperative for rural entrepreneurs to remain abreast of these technological advances and the massive opportunities these alone can bring to them. It is equally important to ensure that rural artisans keep pace with these changes and equip themselves to remain sustainable, EDII is handholding entrepreneurs, under the Hast Kala Yojana Project, for the same. Today, they are making innovative, marketable products with high demand.”

Across Gujarat, the implementation of the Hast Kala Setu Project is helping in boosting rural entrepreneurship ecosystem in the domain of traditional art and craft. The project is a commendable move towards reviving the age-old crafts of Gujarat which were almost on the verge of extinction.