

# Activities in NER - November 2024

EPCH, serving as a Technical Agency under the SFURTI Project supported by the Ministry of MSME, has been actively providing technical and handholding support to Implementing Agencies (IAs), Members of Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs), and artisans across various clusters in the North Eastern Region. EPCH designers regularly engage with artisans, offering innovative and market-oriented design inputs to foster new product development within the clusters.

The primary aim of these interactions is to showcase diversified products at national and international marketing events organized by EPCH, nurturing artisans into entrepreneurs and eventually into exporters. As a Technical Agency, EPCH is committed to enhancing capacities, building brands, and developing skills among artisans, thereby creating employment opportunities and improving livelihoods in the region. In November 2024, EPCH implemented various programmes in the North Eastern Region to support these objectives, reinforcing its dedication to empowering the craft community and driving sustainable growth.

## Field Visit to the Readymade Garment Manufacturing Cluster, Moran, Dibrugarh, Assam

On 4 November 2024, Mr. Rakesh Bhuyan from EPCH visited the Readymade Garment Manufacturing Cluster in Moran, Dibrugarh, Assam, as part of the SFURTI project review. The visit aimed to evaluate the cluster's progress, engage with Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) members on developmental strategies, and interact with artisans to understand their achievements and challenges.

During the visit, a comprehensive assessment of the ongoing initiatives and the operational status of the Common Facility Centre (CFC) was conducted. The cluster demonstrated significant progress in production, with artisans effectively utilizing the provided resources. Efforts to diversify products and develop market-relevant

garment designs highlighted the artisans' commitment to skill enhancement and market readiness.

A meeting with SPV members focused on the cluster's progress and key challenges. Discussions centered around optimizing resource utilization, addressing marketing challenges, and outlining future strategies. SPV members emphasized the need for improved branding and packaging to increase product visibility and appeal in competitive markets. They also highlighted the importance of expanding market linkages beyond the regional level for sustained growth.

Interacting with artisans revealed valuable insights into their experiences and needs. The artisans expressed satisfaction with the skill development programs and appreciated the opportunity to work with modern machinery at the CFC. However, they identified areas for improvement, such as advanced training in garment-making techniques and design innovations. Challenges like limited exposure to broader markets and optimizing the use of new machinery were also noted.

Based on these observations, several recommendations were proposed to support the cluster's growth. Advanced workshops on design development and machinery usage were suggested to address skill gaps. Strengthening market linkages through participation in EPCH trade fairs at national and international levels was recommended to enhance visibility. Additionally, improving branding and packaging strategies was advised to establish a unique identity for the cluster's products and attract a wider buyer base.



## Design support to artisans of the Sellsela Cane and Bamboo Cluster, Tura, Meghalaya



On 15 November 2024, Ms. Chesira D Sangma, Designer, EPCH, visited the Sellsela Cane and Bamboo Cluster in Tura, Meghalaya. The visit aimed to introduce innovative and market-oriented designs to diversify the cluster's product range and to verify the proper installation and

functionality of the machines at the Common Facility Centre (CFC). During her interaction with the artisans, Ms. Sangma conducted a design development session, sharing contemporary design concepts that blended traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics. She emphasized the creation of functional and decorative products such as lampshades, baskets, trays, and furniture to cater to both domestic and international markets. Artisans were encouraged to adopt innovative techniques while maintaining eco-friendly practices, enhancing the market appeal of their products. She also inspected the machines installed at the CFC to ensure they met technical and operational standards. She confirmed that the machines were fully functional and ready to support production activities. Additionally, she provided suggestions to streamline workflows for improved efficiency and recommended regular maintenance and advanced training for artisans to improve product finishing. Her visit was instrumental in equipping artisans with actionable design inputs, confirming the readiness of the CFC for scalable production, and ensuring the cluster's overall operational efficiency.



## Verification of machines and interaction with SPV, IA members and beneficiaries of Chenga Traditional Dress Making and Embroidery Cluster, Barpeta, Assam

On 25 November 2024, Mr. Kaushik Borkakaty and Mr. Rakesh Bhuyan from EPCH visited the Chenga Traditional Dress Making and Embroidery Cluster in Barpeta, Assam. The visit aimed to verify the delivery and installation of machines, engage with members of the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and Implementing Agency (IA), and assess the impact of the distributed machines through visits to beneficiaries' homes.

The inspection at the Common Facility Centre (CFC) revealed mixed progress. While some critical units, including Advanced Jacquard Handlooms, Eri Spinning Machines, and Warping Drums, had been delivered and installed, other key components, such as the Calendaring Machine and Yarn Dyeing Unit, remained undelivered, significantly impacting the cluster's productivity. Additionally, defects in some machines, particularly the Jacquard Handlooms, had not been resolved, hampering operational efficiency.

Discussions with SPV and IA members highlighted delays in machinery delivery, unresolved defects, and a lack of regular maintenance support. Visits to beneficiaries in villages such as Xaldiya and Muslimpara revealed that distributed machines were

operational and positively impacted production. Beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with improved productivity but emphasized the need for regular technical support and additional training to enhance efficiency. The visit saw progress in operationalising the cluster but also highlighted critical areas needing urgent attention. Timely delivery of pending machinery, resolution of quality issues, and provision of enhanced technical support are essential for improving production capacity and artisan livelihoods.



Latitude: 26.288915  
Longitude: 91.15468  
Elevation: 97.4748 m  
Accuracy: 17.0 m