

# Primary Producers & Exporters Meet

a connect programme to source new products from unexplored producers



11th & 12th July, 2015; India Expo Centre & Mart



Seen in the picture (from L to R) are Mr. Prince Malik, Vice Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Kuldeep Watal, Chairman, CEPC; Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, IEML & Executive Director, EPCH and Director, Mega Cluster Mission; Mr. Dinesh Kumar, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. S K Panda, Secretary, Textiles; Mr. Samir K Biswas, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts); Mr. R V S Mani, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Textiles; Mr. R K Srivastav, Executive Director, NCDPD and Director, Mega Cluster Mission; Mr. Rajesh Kumar Jain, Vice Chairman, EPCH



## Secretary Textiles inaugurates Connect Program

Secretary, Textiles, Mr. S K Panda, inaugurated the Primary Producers & Exporters Meet (Connect Program) on 11th July, the second day of the Indian Fashion Jewellery & Accessories Show (IFJAS). Under sponsorship from O/o the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), this Meet, held parallelly with IFJAS 2015, was organized by EPCH as a connect programme to give national and international exposure to untapped products and producers from six regions and four mega craft clusters of India. This was also an opportunity for established exporters to

reach out to artisans from these regions to add variety to their existing product lines. A two days Buyer Seller Meet was also conducted as part of this endeavour where primary producers & exporters met and interacted directly.

The inauguration ceremony saw the presence of Guest of Honour, Mr. Samir K Biswas, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts); Mr. R V S Mani, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Textiles; Mr. Dinesh Kumar, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Kuldeep Watal, Chairman, CEPC; Vice Chairmen, EPCH - Mr. Rajesh Kumar Jain and Mr. Prince Malik; Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Chairman, IEML & Executive Director, EPCH and Director, Mega Cluster Mission; Mr. R K Srivastav, Executive Director, NCDPD and Director, Mega

Cluster Mission; President and Vice President, Reception Committee, IFJAS 2015, Mr. K G Maheshwari and Mr. Brij Yadav; immediate past Chairmen, EPCH - Mr. L R Maheshwari and Mr. R K Malhotra; EPCH Convenor for Northern and Eastern Region, Mr. Arshad Mir and Mr. O P Prahladka; and other eminent exporters and members, EPCH COA.

In his inaugural address, Mr. S K Panda, Secretary, Textiles, said India produces a very wide range of multifarious products. Exporters source their requirements from all over the country with emphasis on products that are in demand in international markets. However, there are many products made by primary producers through their practice of generations old craft forms, which are not able to attract the attention of exporters. Such products need to be highlighted as these may not only bring newness to the products already being exported, but may also open up new avenues for sourcing.

Mr. Rakesh Kumar, Executive Director, EPCH, himself anchored this important meet, emphasizing the importance of this connect programme that would give the primary producers access and competence to cater to the export and organized retail market. The interactions that formed a significant part of the Connect Program between primary producers and exporters, proved to be an open forum to understand issues faced by both parties. Many representatives from self-help groups, artisan organizations and NGOs put forth their points of view and clarified about the help and assistance they needed from exporters. Exporters in their perspective came forward to describe the kind of difficulties plaguing them. There were presentations by many organizations that work closely with artisans.

Mr. S K Panda, Secretary, Textiles, expressed his happiness at the success of the Meet. Highlighting the encouraging growth in the handicrafts industry growing at the rate of 15-20% every year, Mr. Panda suggested that exporters should



*Mr. S K Panda, Secretary,  
Textiles*



*Mr. Samir Kumar Biswas,  
DC (Handicrafts)*

adopt product clusters in a time bound period and utilize the manufacturing and production facilities to their advantage. He also emphasized that such meets should be organized more frequently as exporters and primary producers will have to work together for growth of both the groups. He also announced that apart from the Mega Cluster Initiative, one day workshops for artisans could be conducted to guide artisans polish their skills and fine-tune products better. He assured of the government's support in helping producers to diversify their products.

Mr. Samir Kumar Biswas, Development Commissioner, Handicrafts, expressed his happiness at the outcome of the meeting and was spiritedly eloquent of the actions being taken to boost the Indian handicrafts industry. He addressed the problems raised by exporters and primary producers by guiding them through the extensive database that the government has created. He emphasized on the positives of the mega cluster programme and spoke of the importance for and need of encouraging budding entrepreneurs. He highlighted the Babasaheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojna that was introduced

to exporters and lists 750 craft clusters from India. He also informed of the training provided to artisans, through schemes of the Office of DC (Handicrafts). He sees a bright future for the handicraft industry, he stated emphatically.

In the presentation by Uttarakhand Handloom and Handicrafts Dev. Council (UHHDC), their representative shared that since Uttarakhand has become a State and the government has offered financial aid, they can apply the best of resources to work and improve working conditions as well as training and skill development of





Mr. Raj K Malhotra,  
Member, CoA,  
EPCH



Mr. Arshad Mir,  
Convenor, Northern  
Region, EPCH



Mr. O P Prahladka,  
Convenor, Eastern  
Region, EPCH



Mr. Rakesh Kumar,  
Executive Director,  
EPCH

and using only vegetable ingredients). They recognized the need for training and financial assistance to artisans which could help boost the industry.

Among presentations by other mega clusters, the representative from Kachchh, Bhuj district, shared that Meera, an organization in Bhuj has an annual turnover of 300 crore through 26 crafts that they practice. Khampir, a platform for the crafts, heritage and

artisans in the State. In their presentation, SEWA that employs services of about 8,000 women who practice the art of Chikankari, thanked the government for helping with the mega cluster mechanism and technical assistance that has helped them increase their output manifolds. The presenter, Ms. Rama, made an earnest request for the need of designers and design inputs, as this is where their products face challenges in the international market. In its presentation on 'Sourcing & Connecting with Unexposed Artisans & Craft Products Producers for Domestic Markets & for Export', Bandhan Creation (Kolkata)'s Mr. Sudipta Saha shared, the major impediment faced by them - the right kind of designs. The organization is an example of self sufficiency and has helped change the lives of its employees vastly. Sabala Handicrafts from North Karnataka, established in 1986 and employing 350 women shared that they export to France, USA and Australia. They were awarded the best product award in Brazil for using eco-leather (sans chemical processing

cultural ecology of Kachchh region of Gujarat, instituted after the earthquake of 2001, is a space for engagement and development of Kachchh's rich creative industries. This representative had suggestions like copyright protection and infrastructural development for better output.

Mr. Arshad Mir, EPCH Convenor for the Northern Region spoke about problems faced by artisans in Jammu & Kashmir at the ground level, like lack of training, design innovation as well as lack of State level support. Mr O P Prahladka, EPCH Convenor, Eastern Region, exemplified how artisans could get a fairer value for their craft by innovating and aptly pricing their products. He showed how abundantly available and mostly wasted fish scales can be used to make beautiful, sellable innovative products.

Mr. Rakesh Kumar, praised the work of the artisans in the country and lauded the enterprising spirit of exporters. He said that the exporters can bring a whole lot of profit by recognizing



the "magic of gifted hands". He suggested some practical solutions to exporters to fight off the stiff competition offered by China, as the quality of our products is much superior. He concluded the meeting on a positive note, after taking cognizance of the situation that everything is possible and the industry will grow along with its stakeholders and all those who form a part of it. as well as NGOs/artisans from North East, Eastern, Western, Central, Southern and Northern regions of India.

The Primary Producers Meet brought together six regions of India with almost all major craft practicing clusters well represented at IFJAS 2015.

### Intricate needlecraft and jewellery from North



**Aijaz Ahmed Sheikh** and his associate-artisans from Baramulla in Jammu & Kashmir brought in Pashmina shawls, apparel and table cloths, with variety in needlework. All their products are

self-crafted right from thread to fabric and it takes around 5 months and sometimes 1 year for completion. The threads are also handmade by using looms. The raw materials used, i.e cotton comes from Ladakh. For them this program played a significant role as they never had the platform to engage directly with retailers or exporters. **Saqib Khan** from Chinar Valley Arts, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir had got along a striking range in Christmas ornaments, photo frames, table lamps, boxes and jewellery, mostly in papier machie. Saqib's company employs 30 artisans who carry out the painstaking handcrafted process that culminates in coating, painting and varnishing. Saqib appreciates the initiative taken by EPCH to promote regional artisans of the country through the Connect Program.



**Harvinder Kaur** is an example of an artisan who has kept up with her family tradition of Phulkari embroidery. She hails from Patiala and procures her raw material from Ambala. Her

products are mostly handmade, the process taking upto 10 days to finish a single piece. Her collection had dupatas, bedsheets, stoles, pajamas and suits. She has received bulk orders from UK buyers for dupattas and bedsheets. She seems pleased with the kind of recognition that her work has received. **Gurinder Pal**, a fashion jeweller based in Delhi was delighted to comment that this platform is really helpful to small entrepreneurs like him. He runs his business from his residence along with 3 artisans. To him this program is beneficial as buyers and sellers can exchange ideas, diversify product range and expand business for everyone involved.



### Central Region offers jewellery, embellished textiles and fine carving

**Aman Vaish** from Aasman Development Society, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, says, they deal in practically all types of zari items like suits, sarees, dupattas, purses and caps. The raw material used for the product in line is Dana, Sartan (fabric), moti and Kasab. For making the products the workers are brought from local villages and provided requisite training. They are already working with buyers from Australia, USA and do not sell in the local market because of lack of demand.



**Meenakshi** from Agra in Uttar Pradesh had on display, women's jewellery like toe rings, earrings, necklaces, etc. She was quite surprised at the scope

of this platform and looked forward to learn a lot from her interactions with exporters and visitors here.

Design consultant, **Susan Mantosh** was not just looking for material to buy but was also looking to collaborate with artisans. She owns several stores across the country and likes to work on innovative designs with local artisans, while also experimenting with raw material from across the country. She has worked with weavers from Bengal, Gujarat and Odisha. She believes that the artisans must feel inspired to create better and should be provided with a platform like the Connect Program.



**G A Zaidi** has kept up his family tradition of calligraphy and antique Mughal handcraft art of bone earrings and rings. His intricately carved jewellery

box line has been in special demand among overseas buyers. Zaidi is also a State awardee for calligraphy which is a dying art and he has done much to preserve it in his city.

**Sarfaraz Alam** had got along saris, suits, dupattas and stoles,



made from the finest silk and cotton-silk mixture in Varanasi. His clothing lines are a national award winner in 2009 for the best Mughal Patka. This has been a family business for

generations but the next generation is not enthusiastic enough to continue and Sarfaraz hopes that platforms like this will prove to be a gateway to better economic opportunities which will heartened the next generation.

**Nizakat Hussain** is a partner in their family business based in Bareilly, UP. Their stall

constituted products made of only bamboo show pieces like ship models, lamps, clothes hanger, baskets of different sizes and shapes. At the meet he managed to get an Irish buyer who made an order of 500 pieces.



### West brings in colour and festive cheer

Ahmedabad's **Chetan Kumar Soni's** family has been



immersed in the tradition of creating jewellery especially for festive occasions such as Dandiya, Marriages or Dance parties. He says European buyers generally prefer necklaces which aren't heavy

and are on a black base rather than golden or silver which is what he exports to non-resident Indian customers generally. Girls especially love the decorative aspect of his collection, which adds to the festive cheer.

**Sushma Meshram** from Nagpur, Maharashtra, took to designing quite late in life, looking for more meaning after her kids had grown up. She taught herself how to design and now specializes in Indo-



Western artificial jewellery. Visitors to her stall seemed to like the versatility of her collection and tried them on. She says, this participation and platform will encourage her to innovate more and price her collection competitively in future. From a distance, mirrors stitched into some textile products could be seen gleaming from **Gurva Kanti Lal's** stall. Yes, he is a mirror



work artisan who employs in his products, different techniques of stitching like Aher work, Jat work and Mutwa work. Kanti employs 500 workers who dye the

cloth, make drawings on them, embroidery and finally the small round mirrors are stitched into the cloth. He brings in innovation by making 'cool accessories' such as purses, wall hangings, iPad bags, mobile pouches, etc.

**Somabhai Buddhilal** from Khambat in Gujarat got along exquisite agate stone jewellery. He shared, "we are involved in the entire process of procuring to production till finishing of the products." This involves oiling, crafting and drilling. Somabhai shared that his district has around 7 to 8 clusters. They have a workshop and from there they sell the finished products, directly to retailers and distributors.



**Daksha** from Bhuj had a wide range of products inspired by traditional "Kacchi tribal Jewellery". This is an art that a girl learns right from the age of 5 so that by the time she gets married, she accumulates as part of her wedding trousseau, she said.

**Anwar Husain Khatri's** stall exhibited saris, stoles, dupattas, purses, bedsheets, etc. made with Bandhani technique. He shared the laborious process that involves women in tying the knots on fabrics with dexterity while the men dye or draw patterns on them. They use different kinds of fabric from simple cotton to expensive pure silk.



### North East explores rich tradition



**Kevi Nakhro** from the Western Angami tribe in Nagaland that makes shawls, scarves, traditional jewellery such as brass bangles, Naga beads bangles, neckwears, etc.

This collection, is a result of community effort as the entire

village collectively works to prepare orders for markets and buyers. **Pabitra Bania** is an Assamese jewellery designer from Nagaon, whose colourful jewellery easily catches attention. His family has been engaged in this work for three generations.



## East shapes heritage into modern options



**Mahamaya Sikdar** from

Kolkata won the State (West Bengal) and the national awards for the best embroidery handicrafts, respectively. She trains and

employs 200 embroiderers, 100 weavers and 10 others who help to run her business of Nakshikantha style embroidery. Her beautifully crafted embroidered products such as saris, stoles, bedspreads, cushion covers, scarves, etc. are sold with the brand name Maya.

**Aditi Chakraborty**, a young designer from West Bengal, who took up designing for passion this very January, shares, she is inspired by folk traditions from all over the country. Her collection of terracotta jewellery has bright and colourful designs borrowed from the Chitara tradition of Karnataka to Orali from Gujarat to Dobra from West Bengal and Madhubani from Bihar. She also dabbles in abstract designs designed especially for teenagers, in the tradition of Indo Western jewellery. Her raw material of natural paint and artificial clay is procured from Kolkata.



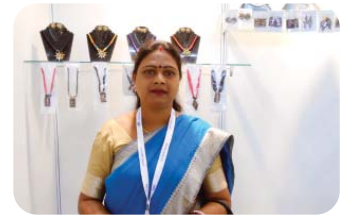
A very skilled artisan from Midnapore in West Bengal, **Soma** trains unemployed local women in the technique of hand-batik printing. Her stall exhibited beautiful and

colourful shawls, stoles and, scarves designed with tie & dye patterns.

**Buddhadeb Ghosh** was handling a display for his friend while managing his own. There



were clay ear rings with festive designs and a collection of cotton bags made from poly fibre and wood procured locally. Another designer from Kolkata, **Chetali Roy**, working mainly with bamboo and cane, is fond of transforming her raw material to beautiful necklaces and earrings. Her collection also included select imitation jewellery since she feels they are in demand.



**Sandip Mukherjee** is an entrepreneur who deals in jewellery made of oysters, raisin laminated, mixture of brass and polyester, dhokra, terracotta as well as oxidized

ones. Other products include miniature paintings, wall hangings and crochet work. He is based in Kolkata and sells his products mainly in the same state. He is glad to be a participant here and emphatically adds that he has learnt a huge lot about other markets.

**Moumita Dey** put up an interesting stall with beautiful products made of paper that interestingly look like terracotta. She had earrings made using ply and wood as well. Moumita has been in the business for about 15 years now and she sells products online as well. She procures most of her raw material from Kolkata, but the paper she uses has to be bought from Chennai.



**Subir Chakraborty** represented Shristi Welfare Society and their stall displayed vibrant earrings made of fish scales, handmade and painted. The products'

shelf life is about 12-14 months, he said. This was his first time at this platform and the response has been good for him. They procure the raw material from around Kolkata and have been in the business for about 4 years with the help of 8 dedicated artisans. Their stall also displayed artifacts made of fish scales which was greatly admired by all visitors. He says he has received a lot of enquiries which look like promising deals.

## South unfolds inspirational traditions



A stall dedicated to textile handicrafts with warm shawls, luggage tags, key chains, coin purses and patches of sleeves which can be sewn onto any dress stood as an elegant

representation of Toda tribal women, a pastoral tribe from the Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu. **Sheela** from Shalom Welfare Society, that organised this display shared that they work with 150 women of the Toda tribe who live in the Nilgiri Reserve Forest Area. Interestingly, the pattern of embroidery is a gift of Scandinavian colonizers which stays alive among the Todas till date, while the tradition has died out in its country of origin. The tribe people have kept it alive and boast of producing embroidery patches with each design being unique. The raw material for the shawls and other handicrafts is obtained from the plains, however, weavers go and procure it from farmers directly, engaging them in the tradition as well. Sheela has taken the work of these talented artisans to other exhibitions but was glad to have been invited by EPCH for the Connect Program.



Kerala's **Sujamol's** stall caught attention with its dull gold brilliance and with the variety of her collection that is traditional, borrowing inspiration from Kerala and

Tamil Nadu. She brought along totally handmade necklaces, anklets, rings and earrings. The necklaces had intricately carved figurines from Indian mythology such as Mahalakshmi and Vishnu. She had also created anklets in the Kingini Mala (Kerala gold ornament) tradition, while her necklaces were characteristically temple necklaces.

**KG Sujata's** stall displayed terracotta products along with some wooden products as well. Her figurines are inspired by Hindu mythology.



Interestingly, her terracotta beads are natural and not painted for its black colour. She has several certified degrees from Khadi and Village Udyog apart from the Department for the Development of Handicrafts. The most interesting of all her products were the figurines of Ganesha. She has moulded the God in different, more contemporary poses and boasts of 2500 such figurines. She has received a good response.

