

NER benefits from workshops/motivational programs/ awareness camps

With an objective to educate crafts persons/artisans, NGOs/SHGs, entrepreneurs and primary producers, EPCH reached out to craft clusters in NER state, Assam and conducted motivational programs and workshops at Nagaon, Lakhimpur, Hajo and Sipajhar, Assam. Exporters, crafts persons and designers from the region as well as senior officials from the Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) made insightful presentations and interacted with the participants.

Motivational Program at Kaliabor(Nagaon), Assam; 3rd May 2019



Ms. N.L.Palai, Regional Director (NER), O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts); and Mr. Narendra Borah, designer and exporter from Assam, seen with artisans in the Kalibor cluster of Nagaon, Assam



The interactive session in progress with the artisans raising queries and gaining insights

Palai, Regional Director (NER), O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts); and Mr. Narendra Borah, designer and exporter from Assam.

The main objective of the program was to make the women artisans aware about the income and employment opportunities available for them under various schemes

This was organised in association with the RD & TDC (NER), O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), North East Regional Office Guwahati, Assam. Among speakers were, Ms. N.L

of O/o DC (Handicrafts). It was discussed in detail, how by engaging in handicrafts sector, women can enable themselves to earn livelihood and also become economically self-sufficient.

Promotion of Mishing Textiles & Market Linkages at Mori Dirgha Gaon(Lakhimpur), Assam; 13th May 2019

This one day workshop was organised by EPCH in collaboration with Women Development Centre, Guwahati, at village Moridirgha under Boginadi



Ms. Bhagyawati Bhuyan, Project Director, WDC inaugurated the workshop

Block in North Lakhimpur District in Upper Assam. Participants were from Telahi, Nowboicha blocks of N. Lakhimpur and Machkhowa Blocks of Dhemaji District.

The program began with a welcome address by Ms. Bhagyawati Bhuyan, the Project Director WDC. Present on the occasion were, Program Officer, EPCH North East Region (NER), Mr. Bhaskar Baruah; Designer EPCH, Mr. Dhurbo Jyoti Barman; as well as Mrs. Farahna Ahmed and her team from Assam Tribune (print Media), N. Lakhimpur.



Mr. Bhaskar Baruah, Project Officer, EPCH (NER) and Mr. Dhurjayoti Barman, Designer, EPCH, seen interacting with the artisans

The program focused to bring together and encourage women artisans as well as farmers who were looking to diversify their traditional crafts in order to get regular markets for increasing their income. This workshop offered them a common platform to ensure continuous income for their sustainable livelihoods with the

traditional skills in which they are proficient. The objective was to provide design support to the cluster artisans which will in turn help the Women Development Centre (Implementing Agency) to develop prototypes for placement in the market with the help of EPCH. It will help to generate income for the cluster artisans.

Awareness Programme under Project SFURTI at Silk Khadi Cluster, Kalita Kuchigaon (Hajo), Assam; 23rd May 2019



Mr. Santanu Mohan Deka, Faculty, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati, speaking on the occasion

EPCH in association with Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati and Pragatisil Khadi Sammittee (Implementing Agency) organised this awareness camp under cluster development programme - Project SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries under Ministry of MSME) at Kalita Khuchi Gaon, Hajo, Assam. Mr. Santanu Mohan Deka, Faculty, IIE Guwahati and Mr. Bhaskar Baruah, Project Officer EPCH (NER), interacted with the participants at this seminar.

Mr. Santanu Mohan Deka informed the participants about the objective and various provisions of SFURTI Project. Mr. Bhaskar Baruah informed the participants about the activities listed in Action Plan and also the role and responsibilities of all the stakeholders of the project i.e. Nodal Agency (NA - IIE Guwahati), Technical Agency (EPCH) and Implementing Agency (Pragotisol Khadi Sammittee).

Awareness Programme under Project SFURTI at Traditional Dress Making Cluster, Hazarikapar (Sipajhar), Assam; 27th May 2019



Mr. Santanu Mohan Deka, Faculty, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati, speaking on the occasion



EPCH in association with Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati and GRIB (Implementing Agency) organised this awareness camp under cluster development programme - Project SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries

under Ministry of MSME) at Hazarapar, Sipajhar, Assam. Dr. Abhijit Sharma, Director IIE; Mr. Santanu Mohan Deka, Faculty, IIE Guwahati; and Mr. Bhaskar Baruah, Project Officer, EPCH (NER), addressed the participants at the programme.

Awareness Seminars conducted across craft clusters

Globalisation and Positioning of Products & Services in Worldwide Market Segments
Mumbai; 3rd May 2019

Mr. Ashok Boob and Mr. Pradip Muchhala, eminent EPCH member exporters from Mumbai, initiated the program and welcomed guest faculty - Mr. Sudhakar Kasturae.

Mr. Kasturae informed the participants about the various steps of positioning products and services according to the market situation. He spoke about the omni-channel retail strategy approach to sales and marketing that provides customers with a fully-integrated shopping experience by uniting user experiences from brick-and-mortar to mobile-browsing and everything in between. Detailing on the term - omni-channel, he informed how it leads to a seamless experience where content and actions transfer from platform to platform. The session was punctuated with many examples leading to an interactive session thereafter. ■

Guest faculty - Mr. Sudhakar Kasturae, seen interacting with the participants



Mr. Pradip Muchhala, eminent EPCH member exporter from Mumbai, addresses the audience



India Customs Single Window - IceGate Portal (eSANCHIT)

New Delhi; 10th May 2019



Mr. Babu Lal Meena, Dy. Commissioner, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), being welcomed by Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH; and Guest faculty and leading expert from IIFT New Delhi, Prof. Ram Singh, being welcomed by Mr. Prince Malik, COA Member, EPCH

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has decided to introduce paperless processing under SWIFT (Single Window Interface for Facilitating Trade) for all types of exports in across the country. Once export documents are submitted online by the exporter or customs broker, the customs officer will be able to access the uploaded supporting documents for further processing. After filing of the documents, the authorised person can approach the designated authority for clearance. To help its member exporters in understanding the process, EPCH organised an informative session for its member exporters in the New Delhi region. Present on the occasion were, Mr Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Babu Lal Meena, Dy. Commissioner, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC); and Prof. Ram Singh, guest faculty from IIFT, New Delhi; Mr. Prince Malik, COA Member, EPCH and over 70 EPCH member exporters from the region. Prof. Singh informed the participants about eSANCHIT – Step-by-Step Procedure for electronic document upload. He enumerated the following steps:

Step 1: Prepare Supporting Documents in digital format: The document is rendered into a PDF/A format (ISO 19005-2). For example, the submitter may ask the document issuer (seller, exporter, airlines, shipping lines, regulatory authority etc) to render their documents in the PDF at source and deliver them to the submitter electronically, instead of sending a facsimile or a scanned image of the document. This should be possible if the document issuer uses computers to generate documents. In order to ensure that the document is legible and of proper quality, the submitter may also use automatic image quality assessment tools.

Step 2: ICEGATE Login : Only those who are registered on ICEGATE along with a digital signature certificate can upload supporting documents in electronic format.



Step 3: Click on eSANCHIT : (<https://icegate.gov.in/dms>) This link will take the submitter to a web page where the documents can be uploaded.

Step 4: Click on the Upload Document Button : At a time, the user can upload a batch of 5 documents.

Step 5: Click Validate Document button to validate the digital signature against each document. The user must verify the file in respect of digital signature affixed on it by pressing the 'validate' button on the screen.

Step 6: Using the dropdown, select the document type you wish to upload. Make sure that the document is in pdf and should be digitally signed by the same user who has logged in. Once the documents are uploaded, the system will prompt the user to select the document type from a dropdown list. This list is also published on ICEGATE as part of the 'Single Window Code-map Directory'.

Step 7: Click "submit document" button to submit up to 5 documents. The submitter should click the submit document button. If the document fails to meet the restriction on document size and type, the system will display appropriate comments instantly against each file indicating the exact error. The submitter should rectify the error and upload the file again. If the file upload is successful, the system will generate a unique number called IRN, which will be displayed on the web-page and also transmitted to the user as a structured message from ICEGATE. The submitter may incorporate the data including the filename and the unique number in his system of records (eg RES package). ICEGATE users can also view the documents uploaded by them. ■

Basic Regulatory Guidelines on Export Finance and Interest Equalization

New Delhi; 17th May 2019



Above Left : Mr. Ravi Passi, Chairman, EPCH, seen initiating the seminar; Seen next to him are Mr. VS Goel, Co-opted COA Member, EPCH; guest faculty from YES Bank- Ms. Mehak Keswani, Vice President, Business Banking Trade and Mr. Danish Zaheer, Senior Vice President, Strategic Business
Above Right : Guest faculty, Ms. Mehak Keswani, seen making a presentation

This seminar, organised at the Rajiv Gandhi Handicraft Bhawan, New Delhi, saw the presence of Mr. Ravi Passi, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. V S Goel, Co-opted COA Member, EPCH; guest faculty from YES Bank- Ms. Mehak Keswani, Vice President, Business Banking Trade and Mr. Danish Zaheer, Senior Vice President, Strategic Business. This was attended by over 40 EPCH member exporters.

The faculty informed the participants about basic regulatory guidelines on exports, finance and interest equalization. They informed the participants the steps/procedures involved in basic regulatory guidelines for exports, touching upon basics like, Need of export finance and its benefit to MSMEs; Types of export finance; regulatory timelines; Export data processing & monitoring system (EDPMS); Third party export transaction; Banking products available for exporters; Pre & post shipment finance; Eligibility under interest equalisation scheme; Comparison between export finance & cash credit; Financing against merchandising trade transaction; Export finance at forward rate; and FCTL & LCS.

The Guest faculty elaborated on Basic regulatory guidelines on exports; Need of export finance and its benefits for SMEs; What is better- export finance or cash credit; Types of export finance; Pre-Shipment/Post Shipment Finance; Interest Equalisation Scheme; Export LC Discounting; Financing in Merchanting Trade Transaction; FCTL; and Trade on Net - Digital Platform. She informed about the Export Financing and banking products available for handicraft exporters and added that paying heed to the long-standing demand by the trading community, merchant exporters can now avail of pre- and post-shipment

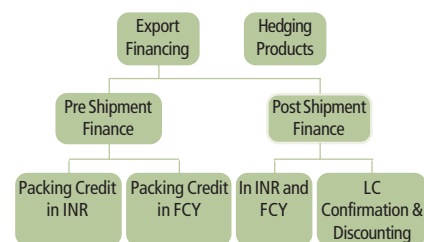
credit at lower rates through the Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES). The proposal will entail benefits of around Rs. 600 crore to exporters on interest equalization, for the remaining period of the scheme, set to end in April 2020. The IES allows small and medium exporters in labour-intensive sectors to avail of loans from banks at a lower rate of 3 per cent.

She further informed the participants that originally announced as a measure to boost exports for five years, the IES on pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit was revived in 2015 at a rate of 3 per cent for 416 specific goods categories (four-digit tariff). The sectors covered are mostly labour-intensive and include agriculture or food items, auto components, handicraft, electrical engineering items, and telecom equipment.

She informed the participants that the support to merchant exporters is most timely as interest rates are moving northward in the country and the 3 per cent subsidy will reduce their cost of operation significantly. Therefore, the benefit will push manufacturing in micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), creating job opportunities as well.

The session was very interactive and the participants shared their queries and got insights on the certain challenging issues which they were facing. ■

Banking Products Available for Exporters



Goods & Services Tax - How to File GSTR-9 Annual Return

Jaipur; 24th May 2019

EPCH organised a Business Conclave on "Goods & Services Tax - How to file GSTR-9 Annual Return" with support from HDFC Bank, for its member exporters on in the Jaipur region. This was graced by Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & Member COA, EPCH; Mr. Avindher Laddha, Additional Director, Dept. of Industries; Mr. Shiv K. Kedre, Asstt. Director (Handicrafts), O/o DC (Handicrafts); Mr. Girish Agarwal, member exporter from M/s Sankalp International; Mr. Navneet K. Chordia, Vice President, HDFC Bank and over 114 member exporters from the region. Expert faculty at the conclave were, CA A. K. Atolia and CA Deepak Goyal. Mr. Amit Bhargava, Regional Officer, EPCH, along with Mr. Anoop Saxena, Branch Manager, HDFC Bank, welcomed the participants and introduced the speakers.



CA A. K. Atolia and CA Deepak Goyal informed the participants about GSTR-9 form which is an annual return to be filed once in a year by registered taxpayers under GST. It consists of details regarding the supplies made and received during the year under different tax heads i.e. CGST, SGST and IGST. It consolidates the information furnished in the monthly or quarterly returns during the year. They informed the participants that the declaration of the information in the Annual returns has multiple implications. Any incorrect information can attract tax demands, interest and penalties on the same, leave alone the long-term litigations that follow years later. The principal source for preparing GSTR-9 will be GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B returns. All information must be cross-checked with the books of accounts before declaring in the annual returns. He further informed the participants that broadly, the form entails the declaration of annual sales, bifurcating it between the cases subject to tax and cases not subject to tax. On the purchase side, the annual value of inward supplies and ITC availed thereon, classified as inputs, input services and capital goods and the ITC to be reversed due to ineligibility. Primarily, certain transactions are not reported in the GST returns, but these affect the tax liability at the end of the annual period.



L to R: Mr. Navneet K. Chordia, Vice President, HDFC Bank; Mr. Shiv K. Kedre, Asstt. Director (Handicrafts), O/o DC (Handicrafts); Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & Member COA, EPCH; Mr. Avindher Laddha, Addl. Director, Dept. of Industries; and CA A. K. Atolia

The session concluded with a detailed Q&A. Excerpts follow: Form GSTR-9C is required to be filed by every registered person whose turnover has been more than Rs. 2 crores during the financial year. Such taxpayers are required to get their accounts audited by Chartered Accountant or Cost Accountant and need to submit a copy of audited annual accounts and reconciliation statement as specified under section 44(2) of CGST Act. The annual return needs to be filed even if the taxpayer has got his registration cancelled during the said financial year. Taxpayers who have opted for the composition scheme need to file Form GSTR-9 for the period during which they were registered as a normal taxpayer. Taxpayers who have opted out from the composition scheme during the relevant financial year are required to file Form GSTR-9 for the period they paid the tax at normal rates. Pre-conditions for filing of Form GSTR-9 are: Taxpayer must have active GSTIN during the relevant financial year as a normal/regular taxpayer even for a single day. Taxpayer has filed all applicable returns i.e. Form GSTR-1 and Form GSTR-3B of the relevant financial year before filing the Annual Return. Nil Form GSTR-9 can be filed for the Financial year, if you have: not made any outward supply (commonly known as sale); not received any goods/services (commonly known as purchase); no other liability to report; not claimed any credit; not claimed any refund; not received any order creating demand; and there is no late fee to be paid.



Jodhpur; 28th May 2019



Mr. Bharat Dinesh, President, Jodhpur Handicraft Exporters Association, addressing the audience; Mr. Pradeep Jain, providing information about GST; Mr. Jai Shekhawat speaks about HDFC Bank's various services for export enterprises



In Jodhpur, a seminar on "GST- How to file GSTR9" was conducted in the Common Facility Centre, Basni and was attended by 70 exporters, entrepreneurs and officials from Jodhpur Handicrafts Exporters Association along with SHGs/NGOs. Among speakers were, Dr. Bharat Dinesh, President, Jodhpur Handicraft Exporters Association; Mr. Jai Shekhawat, Vice President, HDFC Bank, Jodhpur; and Mr. Pradeep Jain, Chartered Accountant.

Mr. Bharat Dinesh initiated the session and spoke about GST from an exporter's point of view, sharing his experiences with the audience. Expert faculty, Mr. Pradeep Jain, offered information about GST, starting with the basics and moving on to the details and benefits for the industry. Mr. Jai Shekhawat informed the participants about trade and foreign exchange products of HDFC Banks and its various services for the export sector. ■

Bangalore; 30th May 2019

This was graced by Mr. Sharath Babu, President, All India Agarbathi Manufacturers' Association, Bangalore; Mr. K L Ramesh, ex Regional Convenor - Southern Region, EPCH; and guest faculty,

Mr. M V Sridhar, an eminent expert retired from Central Excise and Custom department.



Mr. K L Ramesh, ex Regional Convenor - Southern Region, EPCH, initiates the session

Mr. K L Ramesh initiated the session and informed the participants about the role of EPCH in promotion and export of handicrafts from India to the world market as well as its trade events like IHGF Delhi Fair. Mr. Sharath Babu urged the participants to

benefit from the various seminars and workshops conducted on a regular basis by EPCH. Mr. MV Sridhar explained in detail about GSTR9 and the various steps involved in the process.

The participants raised several queries like: Can they revise

the GSTR9 which has been already filed? Is it required to file even if they cancelled the registration in 2017-18? GSTR 9 required to be filed at the entity level or GSTIN level?, etc. during the seminar and the expert answered them all satisfactorily. ■

Global Online Selling through amazon.com

Moradabad; 28th May 2019

This was organised to help participants understand the potential of the emerging digital platforms in fuelling the growth of the small and medium enterprises. The seminar was addressed by representative from Amazon India - Mr. Sourav Chatterjee, Category Manager, International Expansion.

The highlight of the seminar was to educate exporters and manufacturers on B2C exports via the e-Commerce route and enable them to sell across international marketplaces. The session deliberated on every aspect and value chain of e-Commerce and provided insight on how MSMEs from the handicrafts sector can leverage the platform of amazon.com to reach out to the global market by using a "marketplace" model, a familiar retail concept in India. In course of his interaction with the participants, the representative from Amazon India highlighted about India's growing e-Commerce market. He also explained the different benefits of Prime Amazon



Mr. Sourav Chatterjee from amazon.com seen making a presentation; Also seen in the frame are Mr. Abdul Azim, COA Member, EPCH and Mr. Naveen Gaur, Assistant Director, EPCH

and regular membership as well as the logistics partnership with Amazon. He also touched upon the new logistics, warehousing and shipping services offered by Amazon Services and options available for members. It was also informed that amazon.com is assigning one account manager to each supplier to manage their accounts and inventory of their products. At the end of the session, Mr. Sourav Chatterjee also informed that Amazon has launched its first officially branded Arabic website in the United Arab

Emirates (Amazon.ae), and is set to expand in the Middle East. Visitors to Souq.com are now redirected to an entirely new website, Amazon.ae. Souq, which was bought by Amazon in 2017, is the largest e-Commerce platform in the Middle East. This program attended by 40 EPCH member exporters, concluded with a Q&A session. ■



e-Commerce Led Exports-Challenges and Opportunities

Jaipur; 31st May 2019

This was organised at the Handicrafts Productivity Centre, Jaipur. Present on the occasion were Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & COA Member, EPCH, who presided over the proceedings; and guest speakers - Mr. Rahul N. Duggal from M/s Aravali; Mr. Mayank Agarwal, Regional Manager, eBay India; and Mr. Gaurav Passy, Territory Manager, DHL IN. This was attended by 47 delegates from different export houses of the region.

The guest speakers touched upon the advantages of exporting as well as e-Commerce led exports. They said, companies that export are 17% more profitable than companies that stay domestic. Exporting can help smooth over seasonal slowdowns and improves business skills by adding new domains of expertise. Adding new international markets can help use production capacity to its maximum. By integrating into foreign markets, one can help defend one's domestic market. Competing globally means one will reach more than just 5% of the world's population. Exporting allows one to improve the value of intellectual property by claiming it internationally and if one decides to sell one's business, exporting adds more value to it. Thereafter, the speakers described the process, challenges and opportunities, step-by-step.

To start with, it's important to know as much as one can about the target market, its culture, its laws and customer profile, use of different communication strategies and how one can edge over existing competitors and have a completely different way of life. Knowing the profile of target customers is key to being able to reach them. A step-by-step business plan of how one will go about emerging in the target market, including even the smallest of details will help one understand what one needs to tweak in one's domestic business in order to streamline the international one. Thereafter the speakers touched upon the logistics of getting one's company overseas. Outsourcing customer service team to offer service in the target language is a great idea for guarantee



Mr. Gaurav Passy, Territory Manager, DHL IN addressing the participants; Seen seated are, Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & COA Member, EPCH; and Mr. Mayank Agarwal, Regional Manager, eBay India

of quality, they said and added that a legal entity abroad to handle legal affairs and make sure that the business is operating within the law is advisable.

The next important aspect is having an informative and regularly updated website that can act as one's storefront. Automatic translation features in the local language of the target country, will be of added value. Then comes marketing and building a successful international strategy based on a local perspective. Social media can be a great tool for communicating cheaply and effectively. It's important to have one's social media managed by someone who understands the given target culture to help avoid faux-pas.



Successful candidates of RPL Process receive Certificates from Mr. Rahul N. Duggal from M/s Aravali

In conclusion, the speakers emphasised, "once you have started marketing your e-Commerce abroad, it's time to start testing your business. Try offering free samples of your product to certain customers to get relevant feedback, or sell your products under a local marketplace to gain visibility. These test results need to be analysed to better optimise your international business.

The awareness seminar concluded with a RPL Certificate distribution ceremony. Successful candidates of RPL Process received their Certificates from Mr. Rahul N. Duggal from M/s Aravali. ■



Launch of Certificate Course by Centre for Handicrafts Exports Management Studies (CHEMS)

Handicrafts Productivity Centre; Jaipur; 26th May 2019

As part of its education initiatives for the sector, EPCH inaugurated a three months part time certificate course in Handicrafts Exports Management on 26th May 2019 at the Handicrafts Productivity Centre, Jaipur. This was graced by Chief Guest, Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman and Member COA-EPCH; prominent exporters from the region - Mr. Sanawar Mal Jangir (M/s Indian Art); and Mr. Rajendra Jangid (M/s Indian Art Furniture Pvt. Ltd.); Mr. Rahul Ranjan, Project Officer, EPCH; Mr. Deepesh Sharma, VRIKSH Incharge, EPCH; and Mr. Amit Bhargava, Regional Officer, EPCH.



Mr Rajendra Jangir, member exporter, EPCH; Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & Member COA, EPCH; Mr Sanwar Mal Jangir, member exporter, EPCH; and Mr Amit Bhargava, Regional Officer, EPCH



Mr. Rahul Ranjan, Project Officer, EPCH, interacting with the students

This programme comprising contents like, Export Documentation and Government Policy; Export Marketing; International Marketing; Export Finance; Shipping and Packaging; Banking Transactions; and Insurance and Inspection in Foreign Trade, is designed to upgrade skills of existing workforce and train new work force for the handicrafts exports sector. A total of 13 students enrolled. This course is already in session in Delhi, Moradabad and Jodhpur.

Following the inauguration, the students had the opportunity

to attend sessions on Introduction to Handicrafts Exports; and International Handicrafts Market & India's Opportunities in the International Market, wherein they were addressed by all the prominent exporters present on the occasion. ■



A commemorative picture with the batch of students for the program