

RPL Programme in various crafts continues successfully

Assam, Tripura, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, J&K and Punjab

RPL with Best in Class Employer, a new project of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 2.0) scheme under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has been introduced by MSDE and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). MSDE and NSDC through this project type aim to ensure wider outreach to large workforce across all the Sectors in the country through direct partnership with Sector Skill Councils (SSCs).

As handicrafts is an unorganised sector, artisans acquire their skills through informal channels such as family occupation resulting in their skills going unrecognised as they do not receive formal certification. In order to address the concern, **Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) in collaboration with Handicrafts and Carpet Sector Skill Council (HCSSC) initiated a drive to assess and certify over 81,500 artisans across the country, ensuring to link the artisans of various crafts with main stream.**

Under this project EPCH has enrolled a total 32,500 artisans of hand embroidery, art metal, wooden craft, crochet lace, bamboo craft, hand rolled agarbatti, carpets, ceramic craft, fashion jewellery, etc. The states covered are Assam, Tripura, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, J&K and Punjab. RPL -

Best in Class Employer Project provides a sense of pride, confidence and social recognition to the crafts persons and would help enhancing their livelihood in the near future.



Certificate Distribution to artisans at Karnataka



Certificate Distribution to artisans at Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh



Certificate Distribution by Mr. S L Paliwal, Joint Director, District Industries, Jodhpur; and Mr. Kiran V N, Assistant Director, O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts)



Practical assessment of artisans of wood carving at Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Practical assessment of artisans in Punjab



Theory assessment through mobile app of candidates (Punjab)



Practical assessment of artisans in Andhra Pradesh (West Godavari)

EPCH presents concerns of handicrafts sector to Hon'ble Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Railways

International Meeting of Board of Trade and Council for Trade Development and Promotion
New Delhi; 6th June 2019

The Govt. of India, Ministry of Commerce & Industry and Directorate of Foreign Trade convened a meeting to discuss various issues related to promotion of exports and domestic manufacturing, on 6th June, 2019 at New Delhi. Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Mr. Piyush Goyal chaired the meeting along with Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri and Mr. Som Prakash, Hon'ble Union Ministers of State for Commerce & Industry. Senior officials such as Secretary Commerce, Dr. Anup Wadhawan; CEO, Niti Aayog, Mr. Amitabh Kant; Secretary Revenue, Mr. Ajay Bhushan Pandey; Director General of Foreign Trade, Mr. Alok Vardhan Chaturvedi, and other senior officers of various Government departments were present during the meeting besides major industry representatives from CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, Exim Banks, ECGC and Chairmen of EPCs.



Mr. Ravi K. Passi, Chairman, EPCH, presented the concerns of the handicrafts sector at the meeting. These included:

- Enhancement in allocation of funds under MAI scheme based on export performance.
- Reimbursement of airfare and hotel accommodation to buyers from major and developed countries also be brought under the MAI guidelines rather than only from markets like LAC, CIS, Africa and South East Asian countries.
- Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies scheme which is available for textiles exporters should also be given to handicrafts exporters to compensate the duty drawback rates which have been reduced due to GST.
- Concessional rate of interest at 3% should also be considered in addition to present interest subvention.
- Sale to foreign tourist be considered as deemed export.
- Start-ups may be given support in terms of marketing, identification of new and emerging markets by allocating a separate fund to give boost to new generation.
- A strategy should be prepared to take advantage of US-China trade war.
- As handicrafts sector is a large employment provider to skilled and unskilled in the country and every less foreign exchange is used in the manufacturing process, handicrafts sector should be given special consideration for technology support and design innovation.

Mr. O P Prahladka, ex-Chairman, EPCH was also present during the Board of Trade meeting. ■



While speaking during the meeting, the Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce & Industry emphasised that for achieving high jump in exports, State Government and Central Government should make joint efforts. He stressed that State level export strategy should be prepared and meeting of Export Commissioners along with Central Government officers should be held periodically to address the issues pertaining to export.

The Hon'ble Minister further suggested to identify the products and markets for export so that a special status for a policy may be prepared. He also proposed to provide export credit in foreign currency through banks.

Awareness Seminars conducted across craft clusters

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

Agra; 1st June 2019



This was graced by Mr. Lalla Ram, Asst. Director, O/o DC (Handicrafts); Joint Commissioners, GST Dept. Agra - Mr. Ayyob Ali and Mr. Mithilesh Shukla; Mr. Vishal Pundeer, Deputy Commissioner, GST Dept., Agra; Dr. S. K. Tyagi, Coordinator, EPCH Extn. Counter - Agra; Mr Rajat Asthana, President of Handicrafts Exporters Association, Agra; and guest faculty, CA Deependra Mohan and CA Vivek Goyal

EPCH organised a seminar on "Goods & Services Tax - How to file GSTR-9 Annual Return" for its member exporters in the Agra region. This was attended by 35 participants. The seminar's proceedings were initiated by Dr. S K Tyagi, Coordinator, EPCH Extn. Counter - Agra. Mr. Lalla Ram, Asst. Director, O/o DC (Handicrafts) informed the participants about the policies of his department. Mr Rajat Asthana, President of Handicrafts Exporters Association, Agra, told the participants that GST norms are changing day by day and handicrafts exporters should keep an eye on these.

CA Deependra Mohan and CA Gaurav 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.

Mr. Ayyob Ali, Joint Commissioner, GST Dept., Agra and his team informed the participants about the benefits of GST regime. He said that the govt. is trying to amend GST according to suggestions received from the business community from time to time. Dr. S K Tyagi made an emphatic mention of the mass job oriented nature of the handicrafts industry where a number of entrepreneurs are running their business with limited capital. It is not easy for them to file GST or even to update with the GST process. Dr. Tyagi request the GST department to organise regular camps for these small entrepreneurs and provide some relaxations to them. The session concluded with a detailed Q&A.

Moradabad; 11th June 2019



Guest faculty, CA Abhinav Agarwal seen addressing the attendees at the Moradabad seminar

In Moradabad, this awareness seminar was organised with guest faculty, CA Abhinav Agarwal. He briefed the attendees about the GSTR9 Annual Return and how to file it correctly. He also explained the procedure step-by-

step. He further informed about the late fees for not filing the GSTR 9 within the due date. This session ended with a Q&A.

Mumbai; 14th June 2019



Left above: Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH being welcomed by Mr. Ashok Boob, Regional Convenor - West, EPCH. Left Right: Mr. Ravi K Passi, seen addressing the gathering; also seen in the frame is Ms. Amla Srivastava, Head Designer, EPCH

In Mumbai, this session had two topics. The one on GST was addressed by guest faculty, Chartered Accountant Parita Shah and the one on Designs, Trends & Forecasts was addressed by Ms. Amla Srivastava, Head Designer, EPCH. The occasion was graced

by Mr. Ravi K Passi, Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Ashok Boob, Regional Convenor - West, EPCH; and Mr. Pradip Muchhala, COA Member, EPCH. In course of the session, the process on GST filing was elaborated while clearing doubts of the exporters on the topic. The design presentation focused 2020 on probable market situation and designs on jewellery, furniture and decoratives.



Narsapur; 22nd June 2019

In Narsapur, this session was conducted at the International Lace Trade Centre and was attended by 55 participants. The occasion was graced by Mr. MSRK Somesh, Commissioner O/o State Tax, Palakol; and Mr. K N Tulasi Rao, COA Member and Convenor (Southern Region), EPCH. The presentation on GST was made by CA Uma Maheswararao. Mr. MSRK Somesh during his address to participants, said that EPCH is undertaking various activities as per the need of market on marketing, skill development, etc. and that people in the industry must participate and take benefit out of these activities.



Mr. MSRK Somesh, Commissioner O/o State Tax, Palakol



CA Uma Maheswararao



A commemorative group photo at the end of the session

Export Promotion & Marketing

Pune; 6th June 2019



Guest speaker and expert faculty, Mr. Ashok H Sharma seen interacting with the participants at the seminar in Pune

The guest speaker and expert faculty, Mr. Ashok H Sharma, shared his views on handicraft development in Pune with focus on traditional skills and contemporary designs, and how the sector can benefit from design development and institutional support. He made a very informative presentation on how to understand the market suitability for the exports and its need of promotion.

He spoke on different market situation and merits in understanding the demand and market of handicrafts. He also shared how knowledge on political stability, economic standards and evaluation of business in the market can benefit exporters. Mr. Sharma also made a presentation on "Packaging" and "Documentation & Procedures of Export".

Importance of Quality Control and Necessary Compliances

Jaipur; 7th June 2019

This was conducted at the Handicrafts Productivity Centre, Jaipur, with an objective to create awareness among entrepreneurs, manufacturers and crafts persons/artisans on importance of quality control and necessary compliances. Present on the occasion were Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & Member COA - EPCH; Mr. M S Meena, Handicraft Promotion Officer, O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Jaipur; Mr. Neeraj Yadav, Director, Qualicon Consultancy Co., prominent exporter members, export unit personnel and artisans. The seminar was attended by 34 participants.

Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari informed the participants about EPCH and his various activities towards the overall growth of handicrafts. Guest faculty, Mr. Neeraj Yadav, Director, Qualicon Consultancy Co., addressed the participants on the topic with focus on the process of Quality control (QC) and its significant contribution to long-term revenue and profitability as well as a competitive edge in the international market. Mr. Yadav detailed on quality control, health and safety measures and other important compliances required in the handicrafts sector.

This awareness seminar concluded with a RPL Certificate distribution ceremony.



Seen L to R: Mr Neeraj Yadav, Director, Qualicon Consultancy Co.; Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & Member COA - EPCH; and Mr. M S Meena, Handicraft Promotion Officer, O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Jaipur



FTP as a boon & beeps (benefits - exemptions - export promotion schemes

Bangalore; 10th June 2019

EPCH organised this seminar at Karnataka State Agarbathi Manufacturers Cooperative Society Limited. This was graced by Mr. Sharath Babu, President, All India Agarbathi Manufacturers' Association, Bangalore; Mr. K L Ramesh, ex- COA member, EPCH; and expert faculty, Prof. K R Nath, a well known speaker on the subject. This was attended by 35 member exporters of EPCH.

Prof. Nath made a detailed presentation on the topic and the Foreign trade Policy 2015-2020. He informed about the basics of exports and the recent schemes of the Foreign Trade Policy, emphasising on the importance of understanding it and abiding by its provisions, in order to enjoy all the benefits, exemptions and export promotions schemes available in it to export organisations. He further mentioned the important scheme of the Foreign Trade Policy 2015-20, under Export from India Schemes - (i) Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) and (ii) Service Exports from India Scheme (SEIS). Prof. Nath explained about these schemes and their objectives. Further he added, as per Trade Notice No. 11 dated 30.06.2017 under GST Regime, no exemption from payment of IGST and Compensation Cess would be available



Expert faculty, Prof. K R Nath, seen making a presentation on the subject

for imports under EPCG. However, as per Notification No. 35/2015-20 dated 26.09.2018, Capital goods imported under EPCG scheme for physical exports are also exempt from whole of the Integrated Tax and Compensation Cess leviable thereon up to 31st March, 2019. The participants raised several queries at the end of the seminar and the faculty answered them all satisfactorily.

Team Management and Motivational Skills

New Delhi; 21st June 2019



Expert faculty, Ms. Radhika Khanna, seen interacting with the participants at the seminar in the presence of Mr. Ravi Passi, Chairman, EPCH; COA members, EPCH-Mr. Lekhraj Maheswari and Mr. Prince Malik

Present on the occasion were, Mr. Ravi Passi, Chairman, EPCH; COA members, EPCH-Mr. Lekhraj Maheswari and Mr. Prince Malik; and guest faculty, Ms. Radhika Khanna. The seminar was attended by 45 member exporters of EPCH. This session aimed at helping

the participants to understand the importance of team work and motivation at the workplace. Ms. Khanna informed, of the most valuable skills one can have as an entrepreneur, is the ability to engage and challenge the people one employs. "When one hires the right team and manages them well, the result is a workforce characterised by outstanding performance and growth. Failure to motivate employees can lead to unwelcome turnover and generally lead business to a state of flux and chaos," she emphasised. She informed that there are 5 main factors responsible for the successful performance of any team and they are - S.C.O.R.E i.e. Strategy, Clear roles and Responsibility, Open Communication, Rapid Response and Effective Leadership. A goal cannot be achieved only by following the problem solving process. There needs to be interaction, strategizing, bringing alternatives on the table and after a lot of brainstorming only, can a goal be accomplished. Hire team players; be empathetic towards each other in brainstorming sessions to resolve conflicts; make sure you give a constructive feedback every time; motivate to ignite sparks; focus on training, etc. are other points she elaborated on with examples.

Export Documentation and their Objectives

Bangalore; 26th June 2019



Expert faculty, Prof. KR Nath, EPCH representative in Bangalore and Mr. K L Ramesh, ex- COA member, EPCH

Present on the occasion were, Mr. K L Ramesh, ex- COA member, EPCH; and expert faculty, Prof. KR Nath, a well known speaker on the subject. This was attended by 13 member exporters of EPCH. This session aimed at helping the participants identify and understand the functional aspects of each and every document in the export process and make sure that they create and use error free documentation. Prof. KR Nath addressed the

participants on the topic and urged them to be thorough with the basic documentation system required to be generated and transmitted between the parties of transaction. He further said that just like in India, all import export trade activities are effected legally as per the guidelines of Foreign Exchange Management Act, each country has a government regulatory authority, so complying with the regulations is a must.

Design, Trends & Forecast for Spring Summer 2020

Jaipur; 28th June 2019

This was conducted at the Handicrafts Productivity Centre, Jaipur. The seminar was graced by Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & Member COA - EPCH and was attended by over 30 member exporters.

EPCH's designer, Mr. Sunil made a detailed presentation on Design, Trends & Forecast for Spring Summer 2020 and also interacted with the attendees on the same. Mr. Sunil spoke on Home Decorative & Interiors trends with focus on 4 relevant macro

themes, with the help of inspirational images to support the segment's key categories comprising textiles, bed, bath, kitchen, furniture, packaging, prints & graphics. He briefed the participants about trends in the global market and insights, updates and forecasts to help the participants to develop a confident approach



Designer from EPCH, Mr. Sunil seen interacting with the participants in the presence of Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari, former Chairman & Member COA - EPCH

to colour, trends, design and forecast and chalk out export strategies for retail, customer communications and business. He further emphasised on the visual merchandising process, that is integral to attract attention of prospective buyers towards ones' products.

Effective use of Social Media

Jodhpur; 28th June 2019



Mr. Naresh Bothra, President, Jodhpur Handicraft Exporters Federation addressing the audience

This was organised at the Common Facility Centre, Jodhpur and was attended by 50 exporters, officials from Jodhpur Handicrafts Exporters Federation; and SHGs/NGOs. Present on the occasion were, Mr. Naresh Bothra, President, Jodhpur Handicraft Exporters Federation; Mr. Rakesh Jain, Business Consultant; and Ms. Prachee Gaur, Founder & CEO, Remarkable Education Pvt. Ltd. Jodhpur. Mr. Naresh Bothra initiated the program and spoke about the growing relevance of social media in business communications. Expert Faculty Ms. Prachee Gaur first explained

the usage and aspects of Social Media including their built-in data analytics tools, which enable companies to track the progress, success, and engagement of ad campaigns. "On a strategic level, social media marketing includes the management of a marketing campaign, governance, setting the scope and the establishment of a firm's desired social media culture and tone," she emphasised.

EPCH's Jodhpur office representative informed the audience about the various events of EPCH as well as its upcoming major activities and procedure of participation.

Skill Development Training Program for Crochet Lace Artisans under the CSR initiative of ONGC

Program inaugurated at Narsapur, Andhra Pradesh on 13th June 2019

With an objective to enhance the skill level of crochet lace artisans EPCH started a Skill development program under the CSR initiative of ONGC, at International Lace



Mr. P Babu Rao, Deputy Manager, O/o ONGC, Rajahmundry, addressing the gathering

Trade Centre, Narsapur on 13th June 2019. The program was inaugurated by Mr. P Babu Rao, Deputy Manager, O/o Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, Rajahmundry, in the presence of Mr. K NTulasi Rao, COA Member and Convenor, Southern Region, EPCH; Mr. GVK Rama Rao, President, All India Crochet Exporters Association; and Mr. KV Swamy, General Secretary, All India Crochet Exporters Association. On the occasion, a presentation was made by an EPCH representative about the activities of Council.

The duration of the training program is 50 days. A total of 25 artisans are part of the program. Major components of the program include: Skill Development of Crochet Lace Artisans; Formation of Self Help Groups; and Participation of Artisans in IHGF Delhi Fair. Mr. Babu Rao appreciated the efforts of EPCH in setting up the International Lace Trade Centre (ILTC) at Narsapur.

The inaugural program ended with the tool kit distribution to the artisans followed by a one-to-one interaction session between the dignitaries and the participants.



Distribution of Tool Kits to the artisans

EPCH participates in Special Camp organised by COHANDS, New Delhi & DC(H), Jodhpur for benefit of SC artisans

Shanti Vatika, Soorsagar, Jodhpur; 21st & 22nd June 2019

The Handicraft Service Centre, Jodhpur organised a two days Special Camp for the benefit of "SC" artisans, jointly with COHANDS, New Delhi at Shanti Vatika, Soorsagar, Jodhpur, Rajasthan on 21 & 22 June 2019. The inauguration ceremony on day 1 saw the presence of Mr. Jeetaram, Industry Extension Officer, District Industries Centre, Jodhpur; Mr. Ajay Vardhan Acharya, Regional Director, IGNOU, Jodhpur; Mr. Kiran V N, Assistant Director, O/o DC (Handicrafts), Jodhpur; Mr. Harsh and Mr. Amit, in-house designers of NCDPD, Delhi; and EPCH representative, Jodhpur. Approximately 200 SC handicraft artisans from in and around Soorsagar, Jodhpur, participated in the event. The camp was organised with an objective to sensitise the artisans about the various welfare schemes of Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). Awareness on various welfare schemes available for handicraft artisans in other departments like EPCH, IGNOU, DIC, etc. were also made available.

Besides, demonstration and display of craft was also made in the camp. Around 300 applications were mobilised under PECHAN initiative and assistance was also given to avail loans



under MUDRA. Applications from young crafts persons for Kamla Devi Puraskar 2019 was also mobilised in the camp. Mr. Kiran V N, Asstt. Director, DC (H), informed the participants about activities of DC (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India for promotion of handicrafts exports. EPCH Jodhpur representative informed the participants about the role of EPCH and international marketing assistance to the handicrafts sector and also informed about multifarious activities of EPCH for handicraft export promotion. ■