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PRESS RELEASE

Handicrafts constitute an important segment of the unorganized sector of our economy. Originally, started as a part time activity in rural areas, it has now transformed into a flourishing economic activity due to significant market demand over the years and sustains livelihood of millions of artisans. Presently, handicraft sector being unorganized suffers with additional constraints like lack of capital, poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence and poor institutional framework. In order to overcome these constraints, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastashilp Vikas Yojana [BAHVY] was launched in 2001-02 wherein the main thrust is on a projectised, need based approach for integrated development of potential handicrafts clusters.

For Tamil Nadu under this Scheme 37 clusters have been developed benefiting 15,386 artisans consisting of about 750 Self Help Groups.

Total financial assistance extended under this scheme for Tamil Nadu is Rs. 6.72 Crores which in turn was utilized for implementation of various components viz. skill upgradation training, design related interventions, marketing interventions, distribution improved tools of handicrafts artisans, setting up of Common Facility Centres, Setting up of Raw Material Bank, etc.

One Raw Material Bank for Metal craft has been established benefitting artisans around Swamimalai metal craft cluster of a total Government assistance of 2.00 crores of which Rs. 1.00 crore has already been released. Eight common facility centres, improved tool kits for 150 artisans & Margin Money for three cluster artisans' federations have also been provided in Tamilnadu.

In order to provide marketing linkage to the products developed through Cluster Development Programme and also by the other handicrafts artisans Gandhi Shilp Bazar is being organized daily in one or other part of the country with view to provide direct marketing platform to the handicrafts artisans of various parts of the country. Such events are also being organized at prominent cities/historical places/places of tourist interest. This will enable craft lovers of that area to source their requirement through these events organized at a fixed venue and time. Recently a roster for inauguration of Gandhi Shilp Bazar at metro cities was released by Shri Dayanidhi Maran Hon'ble Minister of Textiles.

In compliance with the roster, the inaugural Bazar has been organized at Chennai. The Hon'ble Minister of Textiles, Shri Dayanidhi Maran inaugurated the Gandhi Shilp Bazar on 09.04.2010 at Valluvarkottam. Over 150 artisans from all over the country have exhibited different craft for 10 days at Chennai. On this occasion, Shri Dayanidhi Maran, distributed improved tool kits to 150 cluster artisans and inaugurated one Common Facility Centre sanctioned to Integrated Women Development Institute, Villivakkam, Chennai to benefit the Zari Cluster artisans. The Common Facility Centre will be functional at Gummidipoondi, Thiruvallur District.

Cheques for death claim amounting to Rs. 1 lakh each will be provided to the legal heir of the beneficiaries covered under Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana.

வெளியீடு, இயக்குநர்.
செய்தி, மக்கள் தொடர்புத் துறை,
கலைமைச் செயலகம், சென்னை-3