

## Handicraft sector needs government support to overcome challenges

Rajasthan is a prominent Indian state in handicraft making, which is an age-old sector that supports livelihood and also generates foreign exchange to the nation through exports. The prolonged period of pandemic tested the resilience of handicraft units who faced several challenges such as lack of buyers, high cost of raw material, shortage of labour, dearth of finance and logistics issues. Despite these challenges, this traditional sector is showing signs of revival, in terms of manufacturing and exports of products across multiple categories.

World Trade Center Jaipur organized an online discussion on 'Export Potential of Handicrafts from Rajasthan' to discuss the opportunities in this sector and how it can lead to employment generation.



Mr. Paresham Modi, Director, Prakash Handicrafts Pvt. Ltd. & Founder, Hindustan Radiators and Heat Exchangers, Jodhpur was the key speaker at the event. He informed that Jodhpur - the cultural capital of Rajasthan, has lately emerged as a hub of wooden artistic furniture and handicrafts, retaining the leadership status in exporting wooden crafts

from India. He pointed out that these products are unique and sophisticated in design, besides representing our cultural heritage.

Mr. Modi continued, "Today, the handloom and handicraft sectors are of National Importance, providing employment to nearly 110 Lakh people in the organized and unorganized sectors. It also contributes to the economy in billions from its exports revenues. Despite this, handicraft artisans suffer from lack of training and development facilities, formal education, product marketing skills, lack of exposure to new age technologies, lack of market intelligence and the biggest challenge of flight of talent with inability to retain the newer generation to the trade."

To cope up with this problem, Mr. Modi suggested a few ideas viz. tackling the problem of middlemen, developing market linkages, skill upgradation, access to economic independence by providing flexible finance opportunities and last but not the least, the release of a comprehensive package by the Government which, according to him, would address the challenges and boost the artisans' morale.

Delegates from multiple states attended the webinar to understand the underlying opportunities in the rapidly emerging sector.

Mr. Modi addressed multiple questions from the participants on how to set up small handicraft stores with limited budget and raw material.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed the vote of thanks.

The Webinar was held on July 27, 2022.