## **Technology Advancements & Export Opportunities in Stone Industries**

In a globalized world, today every industry aims to stay competitive, and technology has been the best partner for every sector to help cut costs, lean down, create tailor-made products and service portfolios for clients and also help to better channelize the energies of human capital.

With a view to deliberate on this subject, WTC Jaipur partnered with MSME-DI, Jaipur, Rajasthan, National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, New Delhi, Center for Development of Stones (CDOS), Jaipur, Rajasthan and Marble Gangsaw Association Rajsamand, Rajasthan and organized a webinar on 'Technology Advancements & Export Opportunities in Stone Industries'. The webinar discussed the recent technological advancements and export opportunities in the stone sector for entrepreneurs across the state of Rajasthan.

Speaking on the theme of the webinar, Mr. Pradeep Ojha, Dy. Director, MSME-DI, Jaipur informed the participants about the 'ASPIRE' scheme initiated by the Ministry of MSME, which is designed to provide necessary skill sets for setting up business enterprises as also to facilitate market linkages to entrepreneurs. He expressed that 'ASPIRE' will provide hand-holding during the critical period for businesses to maintain sustainability. 'It is noteworthy to mention here, that ASPIRE is launched to set up a network of technology and incubation centres to accelerate entrepreneurship and also promote start-ups for Innovations' informed Mr. Ojha.



Mr. V.K. Sharma, Director-MSME DI, Jaipur, in his speech recommended the utilization of the cluster development program designed by the Ministry of MSME, which can help in scaling up businesses during challenging times. Elaborating on the Cluster Development Programme Mr. Sharma mentioned, "when a group of establishments operates within a similar zone, produce similar goods using similar production know-hows, they can be identified as part of a cluster. As such they can enjoy financial prudence of scale, easier sponsoring through investors and together face all related challenges. At the same time, there exists healthy competition in clusters which is necessary to offer products at reasonable prices to end users."

Dr. H. Purushotham, Chairman and Managing Director, NRDC, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India, in his speech discussed about the changing scenario in the marble and stone industry in the context of the technological developments. Speaking about NRDC, Dr. Purushotham said that "National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) was established in 1953 with the primary objective to promote, develop and commercialize the technologies, inventions, patents and processes." He said that during the past six decades of its existence and pursuance of its corporate goals, NRDC has forged strong links with the scientific and industrial community in India and the world over, developing a

wide network of research institutions, academia and industry. "NRDC has licensed indigenous technology to more than 4800 entrepreneurs and has also helped establish a large number of small and medium scale industries. Besides being the torch-bearer in the field of technology transfer, NRDC also undertakes number of activities under its structured promotional programme for encouragement and advancement of research and promotion of inventions and innovations such as meritorious inventions awards, techno-commercial support, technical and financial assistance for IPR protection, value addition services, support for further development of technologies and much more. It is through these linkages and developments at NRDC the stone industry can stand to benefit immensely" Dr. Purushotham, said.

Mr. Pradeep Agarwal, Add. Director, Geology, Center for Development of Stones (CDOS-INDIA) Jaipur, while apprising the recent developments in technology for stone sector mentioned that CDOS had established a Dimensional Stone Testing Laboratory cum R&D Centre with the assistance of Ministry of Mines, Government of India, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Government of Rajasthan, and Rajasthan State Industrial Development & Investment Corporation Ltd. (RIICO). He informed that various tests as per American (ASTM), European (EN) and Indian (IS) standards are being performed on dimensional stones. Chemical analysis of dimensional stones are also conducted on a routine basis. "CDOS Stone Testing Laboratory has been NABL accredited since 2013 for Phyto-Mechanical Testing of dimensional stones covering the widest scope of 27 nos. of tests" highlighted Mr. Agarwal.

Mr. Vinod K. Bhati, Resident Engineer, Pedrini Spa, Italy, in his address dwelled on the technologies for Tile Manufacturing from Marble & Granite.

Mr. Sanjay K. Sharma, President, Sunrose Technocrats, Delhi, as an expert on the subject, elaborated on the Splitting Technology for stone waste recovery.

Participants gained industry insights from Chairmen and Presidents of over 12 industrial associations, which actively supported the webinar.

Vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur.

The webinar was held on July 16, 2020