

Corporate Social Responsibility- Annual Action Plan

In compliance with Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Amendment) Rules, 2021, comprehensive annual action plan has been developed and approved as a part of Company's CSR initiative, details of which can be read as under:

Project E- Nurture - Capacity development of Artisans/ Micro Entrepreneurs over new age digital marketing platforms along with mentoring & Credit Linkage in select clusters.

Brief Background

Handicrafts play a vital role in the economic development of a country as they are a prominent medium for foreign exchange revenue, require low capital investments and offer employment opportunities. The global handicrafts market was worth US\$ 663.9 Billion in 2019. In addition, handicraft items are perceived as a symbol of status owing to their uniqueness, quality, usage of natural materials, and the essence of vibrant art and culture. Handloom Textiles constitute a timeless facet of the rich cultural heritage of India. As an economic activity, the handloom sector occupies a place second only to agriculture in providing livelihood to the people and providing employment to 7 million artisans from all across the country.

The handloom industry is one of the oldest and the largest cottage industry in India, representing and preserving the vibrant Indian culture. Indian artists are now distinguished worldwide for their hand spinning, weaving and printing elegance. The strength of the handloom industry lies in the fact that it involves hardly any usage of capital and power, is eco-friendly and suitable for innovation and transformation with respect to market requirements

However, artisans are unable to tap the market opportunities owing to their limited reach to customers. The weavers of handloom products do not have an opportunity to receive direct feedback from customers and are unable to assess the type of demand forthcoming from the market. As a result, they continue to produce traditional designs without having any incentive to attempt innovation in their style of production. Moreover, customers are unable to distinguish between the products produced by the handloom sector from those produced on power looms. This has been a major constraint in the development of handloom products, and it is of supreme importance to render knowledge to the customers about the exclusiveness of the handloom produce. The attempts towards advertising the handloom produce is done occasionally, which leads to periodic sales.

Lately, with the emergence of online retail and the proliferation of various ecommerce channels, the accessibility to artisanal products has become more convenient for consumers.

IEML and its enterprise

Expo Mart at Greater Noida Spread in 60 acres area which exhibits 1800 permanent export showroom for handicrafts producers. As our next big initiative, EPCH along with IEML has planned to market Indian Handicrafts products through E-Commerce based Export Infrastructure support at district level across cottage industry for products such as silk, jute, handicraft, handloom, and small medium enterprise across pan India. In recent years, with the emergence of online retail and the proliferation of various ecommerce channels, the accessibility to artisanal products has become more convenient for consumers. Digital/online marketing has enabled selling of products beyond the geographical boundaries. The recent clarion call by the Honorable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi of "Vocal for Local", digital marketing is going to be one of the major vehicles of business expansion in coming time to promote indigenous industries of Indian cottage sector.

E-market Channels already available in the market include:

- Government E – Market (Gem) facilitates online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organizations / PSUs. GeM aims to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement. It provides the tools of e-bidding, reverse auction and demand aggregation to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value for their money.
- Private E market channels like amazon, flipkart, many others have started selling artisanal products that can also be sourced from the artisans provided they have knowledge and technical knowhow to avail this opportunity and also right value added quality product.

Objective of the E-Nurture programme

IEML aims at undertaking an E-Commerce initiative to help on board artisans in the country at various craft cluster and to provide them market linkage through their SHG's and primary producer organisations to enter virgin market. It is envisaged to handhold and support artisans for on boarding over E-market platforms and build their capacity to make regular transactions over these portals through several adequate training programmes and developing digital literacy and awareness in this sector.

Broad mandate/ objectives of the project is as follows:-

- To generate employment opportunities in rural and urban areas of the country through setting up of new self-employment projects / micro enterprises in non-farm sector.
- To provide continuous and sustainable employment to all segments of traditional and prospective artisans and rural / urban unemployed youth in the country, so as to help arrest migration of rural youth to urban areas.
- To increase the wage-earning capacity of artisans and contribute to increase in the growth rate of rural and urban employment.
- Aim to create a globally recognized sustainable demand for Indian Artisan goods at competitive rates.

It has been observed that many times despite the better product the artisans / micro enterprises are not able to sell their product directly in absence of requisite documents, viz. PAN / Artisan Card / Bank Account, etc. In view of same it is envisaged to build the capacity of these artisans/ Micro Entrepreneurs over new age digital marketing platforms (including necessary documentation for the same).

The main challenge is not on boarding its handholding the artisans about usage of digital platforms, standardization of their products and ability to cater large orders.

The broad objectives of the Training programme are:

- To create digital literacy among Artisans / micro entrepreneurs
- To build the capacity and handhold Artisans / micro entrepreneurs for on boarding / sale of their products to organizations / end users directly on digital platform.
- To improve the sales and social standing of Artisans / micro entrepreneurs in the community

*** The above action plan can be altered by the Board based on the need of the hour and upon reasonable justification**