

Activities of EPCH in North East Region during May 2023

EPCH, as a Technical Agency operating under the SFURTI Project, which is supported by the Ministry of MSME, has played a crucial role in providing handholding and technical support to the Implementing Agencies (IAs), Members of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), and cluster artisans situated in various clusters of the North Eastern Region (NER). This support aims to empower and uplift the artisans by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their craft.

EPCH designers actively engage with the artisans on a regular basis, collaborating with them to develop new and innovative products within their respective clusters. By providing designs and technical expertise, EPCH assists in the creation of unique and marketable products that represent the rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship of the NER. The primary objective of EPCH's interaction with artisans is to showcase the diverse range of products at national and international marketing events organized by EPCH.

Through these events, artisans can present their creations to a wider audience, including potential buyers and exporters. EPCH's goal is to nurture these artisans, enabling them to transition from artisans to entrepreneurs and ultimately become exporters, thus contributing to the economic growth of the region. EPCH, as a Technical Agency, is dedicated to enhancing the

capacity, building the brand, and developing the skills of the artisans in the NER. By providing training programs and skill development initiatives, EPCH equips artisans with the necessary tools to improve their craftsmanship and entrepreneurial abilities. This focus on capacity enhancement and skill development leads to increased employment opportunities within the region, thereby positively impacting the livelihoods of artisans and their communities.

To facilitate closer collaboration and knowledge sharing, EPCH has conducted several cluster visit programs across different clusters in the NER. These programs serve as platforms for artisans to exchange ideas, learn from each other, and gain exposure to new techniques and market trends. The cluster visits also enable EPCH to assess the needs and challenges of artisans first-hand, allowing them to tailor their support and interventions more effectively.

Through its role as a Technical Agency, EPCH has been instrumental in fostering the growth and development of artisans in the NER. By focusing on capacity enhancement, brand building, and skill development, EPCH creates a conducive environment for artisans to thrive, leading to improved employment opportunities and ultimately enhancing the livelihoods of artisans in the region.

Awareness Programme under Niryat Bhandhu Programme organised at IIE Guwahati, Assam; 30th May 2023



On May 30, 2023, EPCH collaborated with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) to organize a Niryat Bandhu program at the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) in Guwahati. The program aimed to support and guide entrepreneurs associated with the handicrafts sector in enhancing their export capabilities and fostering a conducive environment for international trade.

The event was attended by key officials and representatives from various organizations. Mr. Amit Sharma, Joint DGFT,

Kolkata, played a significant role in the program, sharing his expertise and insights on export-related policies and regulations. Dr. SM Deka, Associate Faculty at IIE Guwahati, Shri Romit Roy, Handicraft Promotion Officer, O/o Development Officer (Handicrafts) also contributed to the program, providing valuable knowledge and guidance to the participants.

EPCH officials, with their knowledge expertise in the field of handicraft exports, were present to share their experiences and offer assistance to the entrepreneurs. They shared information on various aspects of the export process, including documentation, trade facilitation measures and market insights. The EPCH officials leveraged their industry knowledge to guide and mentor the participants, helping them navigate the complexities of the export sector.

A total of 25 entrepreneurs associated with the handicrafts sector attended the Niryat Bandhu program. These individuals represented a diverse range of handicraft businesses and were keen to explore export opportunities and expand their market reach. The program provided them with a platform to learn about export procedures, understand trade policies, and gain insights into global market trends.

Visit to Mirza Cluster, Kamrup, Assam; 19th May 2023

This visit was part of EPCH's efforts to ensure the quality, functionality, and adherence to standards of the looms used by artisans within the cluster. During the visit, Mr. Dhruba Barman, being a seasoned designer, leveraged his expertise to carefully inspect and evaluate the looms present in the cluster. His objective was to assess their condition, ascertain their suitability for producing handicrafts, and identify any potential areas for improvement or maintenance. This verification process, EPCH aimed to enhance the overall production capabilities and output quality of the artisans within the cluster.



The presence of officials from EPCH, DGFT, and IIE, along with the participation of entrepreneurs from the handicrafts sector, created a conducive environment for knowledge-sharing, networking, and collaboration. The program facilitated interactions among the participants, enabling them to exchange ideas, share experiences, and establish valuable connections within the export community.

By organising the Niryat Bandhu program at IIE Guwahati, EPCH and DGFT demonstrated their commitment to supporting and empowering entrepreneurs in the handicrafts sector. The program aimed to equip participants with the necessary skills, information, and resources to enhance their export capabilities and seize opportunities in the global market.

Overall, the collaboration between EPCH, DGFT, IIE, and the participation of entrepreneurs in the Niryat Bandhu program served as a valuable initiative to promote the growth of the handicrafts sector and foster a vibrant export ecosystem. It provided a platform for knowledge exchange, mentorship, and networking, ultimately contributing to the development and success of entrepreneurs associated with the handicrafts sector in the region.

Accompanying Mr. Dhruba Barman, Mr. Kaushik Borkakaty, as a Project Assistant, assisted in the documentation, data collection, and coordination aspects of the visit. This ensured that the process was thorough and systematically recorded.

The visit involved engaging with the artisans and closely observing the functioning of the looms. Mr. Dhruba Barman and Mr. Kaushik Borkakaty interacted with the artisans to gain insights into their experiences, challenges, and feedback regarding the performance of the looms. This direct interaction with the artisans helped understand their specific needs and requirements, enabling them to provide targeted support and assistance. EPCH's visit to verify the looms also aimed to promote continuous improvement and skill development among the artisans.

This approach ensured that the artisans could effectively utilise the looms and improve their productivity, leading to enhanced craftsmanship and higher-quality handicraft products. The verification process facilitated the optimisation of production processes and the promotion of sustainable practices within the cluster.

Visit to Selsella Cluster, Meghalaya; 26th- 27th April, 2023



On May 16, 2023, a joint visit was conducted by officials from the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) in Guwahati, serving as the Nodal Agency, and the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), acting as the Technical Agency. The purpose of the visit was to review the progress of the Balijana Dress Making Cluster in Goalpara and verify the machines that were distributed to the artisans associated with the cluster.

During the visit, the officials from IIE Guwahati and EPCH assessed the overall development and functioning of the Balijana Dress Making Cluster. They evaluated the progress made by the artisans and examined the impact of the interventions and support provided by the project. This review aimed to gauge the effectiveness of the initiatives implemented and identify areas

where further assistance or improvements were required.

Additionally, the visit focused on the verification of the machines that were distributed to the artisans through Bosco Reachout, the Implementing Agency of the project. The officials carefully examined the machines, ensuring their proper installation, functionality, and suitability for the specific needs of the artisans. This verification process aimed to validate the effectiveness of the equipment in enhancing the productivity and quality of the artisans' work. The joint

visit was a collaborative effort between IIE Guwahati and EPCH, combining their respective expertise and resources to support and monitor the progress of the dress making cluster. By engaging in dialogue with the artisans, IIE Guwahati and EPCH could gather valuable insights and feedback, enabling them to tailor their support and interventions to the specific requirements of the cluster and its members.

Overall, the joint visit served as an important step in monitoring the progress, evaluating the impact, and ensuring the effective utilization of the machines provided to the artisans. Through their collaboration, IIE Guwahati and EPCH aimed to contribute to the growth and development of the cluster, supporting the artisans in livelihoods and empowerment.