



“Our Indian weavers and their skills will weave the new story of tradition and culture of India” – Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy

- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) partners with Ministry of Textiles to bring a new paradigm shift in the handloom industry
- Chalk out a new strategy for promoting production and marketing of high value quality handloom products
 - Key objective of enhancing the earnings of handloom weavers; establishing “*Bunkarka Hunar*”

August 7, 2016, Varanasi: “Our conversation about skills have always been focused on learning the art of working with our hands. Who would know and value this more than our own weavers and loom craftsmen in our country who have retained the culture and tradition of our country with their works,” said **Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon’ble Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** and the Guest of Honour at the celebrations of National Handloom Day at Varanasi, where his Ministry signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Textiles to promote skill development and entrepreneurship in the handloom industry.

The MoU was signed in the presence of **Smt. Smriti Irani, Hon’ble Minister for Textiles** who is steering the vision of scaling the handloom and textile sector to new heights. The partnership assures that the two Ministries will collaborate and cooperate jointly, to undertake various skill development and entrepreneurship development programmes for handloom weavers through knowledge sharing, resource optimization and synergy of institutions.

“Spinning, dyeing, *beembharai*, Designing, weaving - all these are traditional skills which are there from decades but have never been realized formally. We must revive interest in these skills and make them viable, paying and valued. This will bring about entrepreneurial and managerial capability and skills of IT and financial planning which will change the way how young loom craftsperson organise their traditional skills into aspiring businesses and bring about the true *bunkarkahunar serojgar*. As our Hon’ble Prime Minister said in his speech yesterday at the MyGov town hall, only optimal utilization of natural resources and human resources will boost the economy of our nation. Our weavers and their skills will



weave India’s new story of culture and tradition for handloom in the country,” he further added.

“Skills has a multi-level role to play in our handloom industry. Whether it is learning the art to weave, to use technology to increase weaving production or to connect loom craftsmen to the market – everything needs learning of a new skill or up-grading what we currently have.” said Shri Rudy.

MSDE and Ministry of Textiles has chalked out a new strategy for promoting production and marketing of high value quality handloom products with the key objective of enhancing the earnings of handloom weavers.

Skill up-gradation of handloom weavers is one of the critical inputs to realise the vision of empowered, happy and prosperous handloom weaver. Presently 28 Weaver’s Service Centre (WSCs) across the country are providing technical assistance to handloom weavers by carrying out Design development and Research and development in handloom machineries and equipment including processing. WSCs are the nodal agency for carrying out skill up-gradation training in the areas of weaving, designing, dyeing/printing, managerial functions and use of technology in handiworks. The importance of skill up-gradation in this sector has increased because of coverage of large number of handloom weavers under Block Level Clusters as a part of new strategy

Additionally, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, through the NSQF, has institutionalized the entire framework and the Government of India awards nationally recognized certificates to these skills. Textile and Handlooms Sector Skill Council has already been formed to address the skill gap in the sector which has already initiated developing National Occupational Standards for job roles such as Weaver, Warper, Winder and Hank dyer.

The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has been undertaking skill development in handloom sector already. The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD) and Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) under MSDE are engaged in promotion of Entrepreneurship Education, Entrepreneurship Development and Cluster Interventions through training, research and consultancy services. A special focus has been on reviving the handloom clusters in the North Eastern States.

Following are the areas which will be the key focus of this MoU:

- Linkages and collaboration of WSCs with other training institutions in the States through a hub & spoke model
- Training programme in technical areas like weaving, designing, dyeing/printing



- Development of courses, curriculum and alignment of courses with National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF).
- Assessment and certification of trainees through technical expertise from WSCs
- Review and necessary augmentation of training capacity at institutional level
- Recognition of Prior Learning.
- Creating awareness about Entrepreneurship and inculcating entrepreneurial competencies through soft skill training tools and IT
- Convergence of resources available under schemes of various Ministries
- Facilitation of producing companies/units
- Creation of pool of Trainers, Designers/Product Mix Experts

About the sector:

Handloom sector is part of Textile industry which is the largest economic activity after agriculture. Close to 43 lakh people are engaged in hand weaving and allied activities. Handloom fabric attracts huge consumer interest due to its unique designs, exquisite artistic value and traditions involved at each different location known for handlooms. Geographically, workforce distribution is highly concentrated with 60.5 percent (16.83 lakhs) of Handlooms/weaver households located in northeast India.

As per 3rd Handlooms Census, carried out in 2009-10, more than 43 lakh people are engaged in weaving and allied activities which were 65.5 lakh as per 2nd handloom census conducted during 1995-96 – May link it to the fact that we need to save/preserve our culture and traditional artforms in handloom sector.

However, share of full-time weavers to total weavers increased to 64% from 44% and share of idle looms decreased to 4% from 10% in third handloom census as compared to second handlooms census.

Out of the 38.47 lakh adult weavers and allied workers in the country, 77% are women and 23% male weavers, 10% of the weavers are from scheduled castes (SCs), 18% of the weavers are from scheduled tribes (STs), 45% are from other backward classes (OBCs) and 27% are from other castes.

Most of the people in this sector are self-employed, hence, this requires a more holistic approach that is not limited to just training but helping build an ecosystem where training is one of the aspects among others, such as developing markets, products and means of financing these enterprises to improve productivity.