

# **Report on Awareness Seminar on “From Maker to Market: End-to-End Strategies for Brand Building and Visual Merchandising”**

Organized by: Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH)

Date: 19th July 2025

Venue: Hotel The Grand, New Delhi

## **Introduction**

The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts organised an Awareness Seminar on “From Maker to Market: End-to-End Strategies for Brand Building and Visual Merchandising” at New Delhi on 19th July, 2025. The seminar aimed at equipping handicraft exporters, entrepreneurs, and stakeholders with comprehensive knowledge on building compelling brands and enhancing product presentation for improved marketability.

## **Objective**

The seminar's objective was to provide in-depth understanding of brand development tailored specifically for handicraft products. Additionally, the seminar provided valuable insights into storytelling, identity design, and product positioning in shaping compelling brands. The program also offered strategies on visual merchandising principles, covering aspects like product arrangement, color theory, lighting, signage, and display aesthetics, to enhance product appeal across touchpoints.

## **Key Highlights**

During the seminar Mr. Simrandeep Singh Kohli, Member CoA- EPCH; Session Expert - Ms. Aartee Roy, Brand Strategist & Founder – The Creators Guild (TCG India); Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director – EPCH and large number of member exporters from Delhi/NCR were present.

Ms. Aartee Roy, Brand Strategist & Founder – The Creators Guild (TCG India) in her detailed presentation share that a brand is far more than just a logo or a product label; it is fundamentally about the emotional resonance and trust a company builds with its customers. For Indian handicraft exporters, branding is the promise made to consumers and is cultivated through consistent storytelling, distinctive design, and memorable experiences. In the current environment, where the global market is trending towards authenticity, ethical sourcing, and transparency, building a strong brand is crucial.

She further discussed case studies from China and India highlighting successful transitions from anonymous OEM suppliers to recognizable lifestyle brands. Chinese manufacturers like ZENS and LOFTer grew beyond bulk production by creating retail identities, while Indian brands such as Ellementry and The House of Ekam show how storytelling, design innovation, and control over packaging and pricing can unlock 60–70% margins—compared to the 10–20% typically achieved by white-label exporters. These brands demonstrate that consumers are willing to pay premium prices for products that carry cultural significance, traceable origins, and consistent brand aesthetics.

She guided participants strategies which includes defining and registering the brand name, developing 30–40 hero SKUs, investing in packaging and visual assets, building an e-commerce storefront, and launching on select marketplaces. Brand growth should be supported by a robust social media presence, influencer collaborations, and proactive PR campaigns. With this structured approach, Indian handicraft exporters can evolve from being anonymous suppliers to market-leading brands known for authenticity, creativity, and premium value.

She urged exporters to adopt a structured brand-building strategy. This begins with defining a clear purpose—such as empowering artisan communities or preserving traditional crafts—followed by identifying a specific target market, establishing values like sustainability or inclusivity, and crafting a compelling brand story. Niche focus is critical; brands specializing in specific craft forms or regions tend to outperform generic sellers. Innovation also plays a key role: blending traditional techniques with contemporary utility (like handwoven laptop sleeves) creates differentiation and emotional resonance.

The session was followed by Q&A and speakers addressed the queries received from the members and concluded their interaction on a positive note

