

From Handmade to High-tech: Artificial Intelligence for Craftpreneurs

Awareness Seminar in Bangalore, Karnataka; 1st July 2025



Mr. K L Ramesh, prominent member exporter from Bangalore addressing the seminar that saw the presence of Mr. M G Balakrishna, President, FKCCI; Mr. Perumal, Chairman, Social Welfare Committee; Mr. Saravana Kumar, General Manager, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC); Dr. K Suresh, Branch Head, NSSHO; and Dr. Lakshmypriya, Professor, Christ University.

EPCH's Southern Regional Office, in association with the Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI), organised an awareness seminar titled, "From Handmade to High-Tech: Artificial Intelligence for Craftpreneurs" at the FKCCI Auditorium, Bangalore. The event witnessed the presence of Mr. M G Balakrishna, President, FKCCI; Mr. Perumal, Chairman, Social

Welfare Committee; Mr. Saravana Kumar, General Manager, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC); Mr. K L Ramesh, prominent member exporter from Bangalore; Dr. K Suresh, Branch Head, NSSHO; and Dr. Lakshmypriya, Professor, Christ University.

Mr. K L Ramesh highlighted the importance of boosting handicrafts exports to align with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of a robust and growing Indian export economy. He stressed the need to enhance the global presence of India's rich handicraft tradition.

FKCCI President Mr. M G Balakrishna emphasised on the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the handicrafts sector. He emphasised AI's role in enabling new design possibilities, colour trends and skill development to uplift the industry. Mr. Saravana Kumar, GM, NSIC, spoke about various schemes and support mechanisms available through NSIC, encouraging artisans and entrepreneurs to take advantage of them.

Dr. Lakshmypriya, Professor at Christ University's School of Business and Management, made an insightful presentation on the application of AI in the handicrafts industry, elaborating on how emerging AI technologies can benefit craft-based businesses and improve their global competitiveness. The programme was well-attended and received active participation from craftpreneurs and stakeholders in the handicrafts sector. ■

Awareness on Handicrafts Export - Awareness Seminar at Jamui, Bihar; 18th July 2025

On July 18, 2025, the EPCH Patna office, in collaboration with the District Industries Centre (DIC) Jamui, Bihar, organised a workshop on "Awareness on Handicrafts Export" at Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Jamui. EPCH officials provided an overview of the council's activities and its initiatives in Bihar, highlighting support available for artisans and exporter members. A key focus of the session was how EPCH can assist artisans with export marketing and skill development. The workshop saw active participation from 60 artisans representing a range of crafts, including crochet, embroidery, and bamboo work. Mr. Mitesh Kumar, General Manager of DIC Jamui, outlined various government schemes available for handicraft artisans through the Department of Industries, Government of Bihar. He appreciated EPCH's efforts in the region and urged artisans to pursue self-reliance and explore export opportunities. The event marked a significant milestone for the local artisan community. ■



Mr. Mitesh Kumar, General Manager of DIC Jamui, outlining various government schemes available for handicraft artisans through the Department of Industries, Government of Bihar.

European Union Deforestation Prevention Regulation (EUDR)

Awareness Webinar for PAN India; 11th July 2025

EPCH organised an online webinar with all stakeholders on PAN India basis to discuss the key issues and compliance requirements related to the European Union Deforestation Prevention Regulation (EUDR).

The meeting chaired by Dr. Neeraj Khanna, Chairman, EPCH alongwith Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General in a role of Chief Mentor, EPCH and Chairman, IEML; Mr. Sagar Mehta, Vice Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Avadesh Agarwal, Chief Convenor, EPCH ; EPCH COA Members - Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, Mr. O P Prahladka, Mr. Girish Agarwal and Mr. Hansraj Baheti; Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH; Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director, EPCH, along with EPCH officials including prominent exporters - Mr. Ausaf, Mr. Jaswant Meel, Mr. Radheshyam Rangga, Mr. Parminder Singh, Mr. Rajesh Gupta and many more.

The meeting was attended by more than 300 exporters from across India who participated online.

During the meeting a detailed presentation was made by Mr. Sachin Raj Jain, Convenor, NCCF (Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests) and informed that the European Union is going to implement a new regulation - European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) from 1st January, 2026



The meeting chaired by Dr. Neeraj Khanna, Chairman, EPCH alongwith Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Director General in a role of Chief Mentor, EPCH and Chairman, IEML; Mr. Sagar Mehta, Vice Chairman, EPCH; Mr. Avadesh Agarwal, Chief Convenor, EPCH ; EPCH COA Members - Mr. Raj Kumar Malhotra, Mr. O P Prahladka, Mr. Girish Agarwal and Mr. Hansraj Baheti; Mr. R K Verma, Executive Director, EPCH ; Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director, EPCH, along with EPCH officials including prominent exporters - Mr. Ausaf (Guddu), Mr. Jasmeet Meel, Mr. Radheshyam Rangga, Mr. Parminder Singh, Mr. Rajesh Gupta and many more.

onwards, which aims to prevent deforestation and forest degradation associated with commodities such as cattle, soy, palm oil, cocoa, coffee, rubber, wood and wood products and aims to promote "deforestation-free" markets in Europe and globally.



Ms. Ruma Malik, President BAA and Mr. Pramod Rana, GB Member, BAA also brainstormed with the experts. Everyone expressed their views on this topic and discussed the matter in detail.

Mr. Suneel Pandey, Secretary NCCF and Vice President, ITC (Retd. IFS) and Mr. Arun Kumar Bansal, Former Additional Director General, MoEFCC (Retd. IFS) were also present during the meeting and shared their inputs to meet the compliance requirements of EUDR. ■

From Maker to Market: End-to-End Strategies for Brand Building and Visual Merchandising - Awareness Seminar at New Delhi; 19th July 2025

An awareness seminar on “From Maker to Market: End-to-End Strategies for Brand Building and Visual Merchandising” was organised at New Delhi on 19th July 2025. Present on the occasion were, Mr. Simrandeep Singh Kohli, COA Member, EPCH; session expert, Ms. Aartee Roy, Brand Strategist & Founder, The Creators Guild (TCG India); Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director, EPCH and a large number of member exporters from Delhi/NCR. The seminar's objective was to provide in-depth understanding of brand development tailored specifically for handicraft products.

Ms. Aartee Roy, Brand Strategist & Founder of The Creators Guild (TCG India), in her detailed presentation, shared 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 represents the promise made to consumers and is cultivated through consistent storytelling, distinctive design and memorable experiences. In today's global market, where authenticity, ethical sourcing, and transparency are in high demand, building a strong brand is essential. She further discussed case studies from China and India, highlighting successful transitions from anonymous OEM suppliers to recognisable lifestyle brands. Chinese manufacturers like ZENS and LOFTER moved beyond bulk production by creating strong retail identities. Similarly, Indian brands such as Ellementry and The House of Ekam demonstrate how storytelling, design innovation, and control over packaging and pricing can unlock profit margins of 60–70%, compared to the typical 10–20% achieved by white-label exporters. These examples show that consumers are willing to pay premium prices for products that offer cultural significance, traceable origins, and consistent brand aesthetics.



The seminar saw the presence of Mr. Simrandeep Singh Kohli, COA Member, EPCH; session expert, Ms. Aartee Roy, Brand Strategist & Founder, The Creators Guild (TCG India); and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Additional Executive Director, EPCH.

She outlined key strategies such as defining and registering a brand name, curating 30–40 signature products, investing in strong packaging and visuals, building an e-commerce presence, and launching on select marketplaces. To drive growth, she stressed the importance of social media, influencer partnerships, and proactive PR. With this structured approach, Indian handicraft exporters can transition from anonymous suppliers to premium, authentic brands. She urged exporters to adopt a comprehensive brand-building strategy, starting with defining a clear purpose, such as empowering artisan communities or preserving traditional crafts. This should be followed by identifying a specific target market, establishing core brand values like sustainability or inclusivity, and crafting a compelling brand story. A niche focus is critical; brands specialising in particular craft forms or regions tend to outperform

generic sellers. Innovation also plays a key role, blending traditional techniques with modern utility (e.g., handwoven laptop sleeves) creates both differentiation and emotional connection.

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



Export Procedure, Documentation, Marketing Platform and Schemes of NSSH for Handicraft Entrepreneurs

Awareness Seminar at Athani, Belgaum District, Karnataka; 21st July 2025



The seminar saw the presence of Mr. K N Tulasi Rao, Southern Regional Convenor, EPCH; Dr. D K Suresh, Branch Head, National SC-ST Hub (NSSH), Bangalore; and Mr. Ramesh Kumbh, KVIC, Athani

A seminar on "Export Procedure, Documentation, Marketing Platforms, and NSSH Schemes for Handicraft Entrepreneurs" was organised on 21st July 2025 by the Southern Regional Office of EPCH at LIDKAR Bhavan, Belgaum, Athani, with sponsorship from LIDKAR Association and NSIC. Distinguished attendees included Mr. K N Tulasi Rao, Southern Regional Convenor, EPCH; Dr. D K Suresh,

Branch Head, National SC-ST Hub (NSSH), Bangalore; Mr. Ramesh Kumbh, KVIC, Athani; along with respected community leaders such as Mr. Narayan Honakande, Mr. Shekar Sondeggar, Mr. Sundar Saudagar, Mr. Gajanan Marathe and Mr. Shivraj Soudagar, Secretary of the Athani Leather Cluster. EPCH's Regional Officer presented an overview of the Council, highlighting its growth, membership benefits, marketing platforms and participation in fairs and e-commerce. Detailed guidance was provided on export procedures, documentation, and promotional opportunities.

Dr. D K Suresh spoke about the initiatives of the National SC-ST Hub, including schemes, subsidies and support available for artisans. A presentation by Mr. Dastagir of Unnati Handicrafts, Mekalmardi, showcased market-ready products from the local cluster. Designer-maker Mr. Manmath Shetty also addressed the audience. Mr. Shivraj Soudagar expressed gratitude to EPCH and NSSH for the session. Artisans also displayed some of their products during the event.

Athani is known for its Kolhapuri chappals, a GI-tagged product, and is home to over 10,000 artisans, with a growing base of exporters. The seminar aimed to create awareness about export-related procedures and opportunities for artisans in the region. ■

Concor's Incentives and Initiatives for Exporters of Jodhpur and Future Plans

Awareness Seminar at Jodhpur; 25th July 2025

An awareness seminar was organised to highlight the incentives and initiatives offered by the Container Corporation of India (CONCOR), on 25th July 2025, for exporters in Jodhpur, along with its future plans to support the handicrafts and furniture sector.

The programme was inaugurated by Mr. Hansraj Baheti, COA Member, EPCH; Mr. Kamal Jain, Principal Executive Director, CONCOR, New Delhi; Mr. Pankaj Bhandari, President, Laghu Udyog Bharti Mahanagar, Jodhpur; prominent member exporter like,



Mr. Radheshyam Ranga and Mr. Ashish Mehta (Coordinator, Jodhpur Handicrafts Exporters Federation); as well as Mr. Vijay Singh, Rajasthan Cluster Head, CONCOR; and Mr. Amit Yadav, Terminal Manager, CONCOR Dry Port, Bhagat Ki Kothi (BGKT), Jodhpur. The session saw active participation from over 70 attendees.

Mr. Kamal Jain welcomed the gathering and reiterated CONCOR's commitment to making exports more accessible and cost-effective. Mr. Hansraj Baheti commended CONCOR's exporter-friendly initiatives and encouraged continued dialogue to enhance global competitiveness. Mr. Vijay Singh shared that the seminar aimed to inform exporters about CONCOR's cost-saving logistics solutions, user-friendly services, and volume-based discount schemes.

Mr. Amit Yadav presented detailed information on special measures for handicraft and furniture exporters, including logistics cost reduction and future plans for expanded services. Mr. Pankaj Bhandari, Mr. Radheshyam Ranga, and Mr. Ashish Mehta also addressed the audience, offering valuable

guidance and insights to fellow exporters. The seminar concluded with an interactive Q&A session, where exporters shared feedback and suggestions, acknowledging CONCOR's responsive approach to their evolving needs. ■



Mr. Hansraj Baheti, COA Member, EPCH addressing the audience in the seminar in the presence of Mr. Kamal Jain, Principal Executive Director, CONCOR, New Delhi; Mr. Pankaj Bhandari, President, Laghu Udyog Bharti Mahanagar, Jodhpur; prominent member exporter like, Mr. Radheshyam Ranga and Mr. Ashish Mehta (Coordinator, Jodhpur Handicrafts Exporters Federation); as well as Mr. Vijay Singh, Rajasthan Cluster Head, CONCOR; and Mr. Amit Yadav, Terminal Manager, CONCOR Dry Port, Bhagat Ki Kothi (BGKT), Jodhpur.

Export Schemes & Benefits, Export Marketing, and Export Credit Insurance (ECGC) Awareness Seminar at Saharanpur; 26th July 2025

This seminar was held on 26th July 2025, at the Common Facility Centre, Saharanpur. The event served as a crucial knowledge-sharing platform for 55 member exporters and entrepreneurs, aiming to equip them with essential information

and strategies for navigating the complexities of international trade.

The session commenced with a warm welcome extended by Mr. Mohd. Ausaf, Convenor, CFC Saharanpur and General Secretary, Saharanpur Wood Carving Manufacturer Association, to guest speaker, Mr. Sandip Vyas, Branch Manager, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) and prominent figures from Saharanpur's handicraft industrial and business landscape, including Mr. Ravindra Miglani, Chairman, Chamber of Industries and Services, Mohd. Shahzama, Mr. Anwar Ahmad, Mr. Umesh Sachdeva and other key exporter members and entrepreneurs.



Mr. Sandip Vyas, Branch Manager, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC), making an insightful presentation



An EPCH representative providing an update on the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)

Mr. Sandip Vyas from ECGC addressed key challenges faced by exporters, particularly the risk of non-payment by international buyers. He explained how ECGC's credit insurance policies help mitigate commercial and political risks, ensuring exporters receive payments even in cases of default. He also outlined ECGC's various schemes, including credit risk covers and bank guarantees that support better financing options for exporters. An EPCH representative provided an update on the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), emphasising its implications for exporters to the EU and the need for due diligence in trade practices. ■

PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana - Awareness Seminar at Moradabad; 28th July 2025



The seminar saw the presence of Dr. Neeraj Khanna, Chairman, EPCH; Chief Convenor, EPCH, Mr. Avdhesh Agarwal; Mr. Najmul Islam, Patron, MHEA; Mr. Vishal Agarwal, National Chairman, YES; Mr. J P Singh, Chairman, YES; Mr. Anil Kumar, Regional PF Commissioner, Bareilly; Mr. Manoj Kumar Gupta, Regional PF Commissioner, Moradabad; and Mr. Vijay Kumar, Enforcement Officer, Moradabad.

EPCH organised an awareness seminar led by Dr. Neeraj Khanna, Chairman, EPCH, in Moradabad on the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (Developed India Employment Scheme) to promote job creation and inform participants about various government schemes, including the Society Security Schemes, EPF Registration and Special Facilities provided to handicraft manufacturers.

The key speakers of the program were Mr. Anil Kumar, Regional PF Commissioner, Bareilly; Mr. Manoj Kumar Gupta, Regional PF

Commissioner, Moradabad; and Mr. Vijay Kumar, Enforcement Officer, Moradabad. They provided detailed information about the incentives available under the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, Social Security Schemes, EPF Registration and Special Facilities provided to the manufacturing sector.

The seminar also saw the presence of Chief Convenor, EPCH, Mr. Avdhesh Agarwal; Mr. Najmul Islam, Patron, MHEA; Mr. Vishal Agarwal, National Chairman, YES; Mr. J P Singh, Chairman, YES, along with prominent members like, Mr. Vinay Gulati, Mr. Hasnain Akhtar, Dr. Hamid, Mr. Nadeem Khan, Mr. Vikas Arora, Mr. Raj Yadav, Mr. Gagan Duggal, Mr. Vishal Khanna, Mr. Anuj Garg, Mr. Narendra Chaudhary, Mr. Harvinder Singh, Mr. Rajat Singhal, Mr. Zeeshan Ali, Mr. Vivek Agarwal, Mr. Ankit Singh, Muhammad Shumail and a large number of handicraft exporters, entrepreneurs and youth, who participated enthusiastically.



Role of Digital Marketing and Social Media Promotion in Business Growth Awareness Seminar at Kolkata; 30th July 2025

On 30th July 2025, EPCH Eastern Regional organised an awareness seminar on the Role of Digital Marketing and Social Media Promotion in Business Growth at the EPCH Meeting Hall in Kolkata. The session was inaugurated in the presence of Mr. G D Kothari, Mr. Sunil Malu and Mr. Jitesh Jain, members, Eastern Regional Committee, EPCH.



Dr. Dibyendu Bikash Datta, Associate Professor and Campus Coordinator at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), led the session. He explained the importance of digital marketing in the handicrafts sector and discussed various forms of digital marketing that are suitable for this industry. Dr. Datta also addressed



Dr. Dibyendu Bikash Datta, Associate Professor and Campus Coordinator, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), leading the session.

the new era of social media marketing, covering topics such as creating websites, online advertisements, developing product catalogs, and utilising various digital tools to promote handicrafts on a global platform. ■