



Support to Self-Employment Schemes: MSME

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Why in News

The **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** has announced expansion of and doubling of support to beneficiary oriented Self-Employment schemes aimed at contributing to **Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan**.

Key Points

- The government will provide assistance to artisans engaged in **Pottery Activity and Beekeeping Activity**.
- Previously, the Ministry of MSME approved a programme for the benefit of artisans involved in **manufacturing of Agarbatti under the Gramodyog Vikas Yojana**.
- **Pottery Activity:**
 - The assistance includes **technical knowhow, quality standardization of products, skill-development to Self Help Groups (SHGs), encouragement to the successful traditional potter to set up units under Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)** scheme, necessary market linkages by tying up with exports and large buying houses etc.
 - PMEGP is a **credit-linked subsidy scheme** which promotes self-employment through setting up of micro-enterprises.
- It also includes setting up of clusters in **Terracotta, Red clay pottery**, with new innovative value added products to build pottery to crockery/tile making capabilities under the **SFURTI scheme**.

The **Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)** aims to make traditional industries more productive and competitive by organizing the traditional industries and artisans into **clusters**.

Terracotta

- Terracotta is a type of ceramic pottery, made by baking terracotta clay.
- The word “terracotta” comes from the Italian words for “baked earth.”
- It is often used for making pipes, bricks, and sculptures.
- Recently, a **Terracotta Grinder** was launched at Varanasi by the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.
- The **Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh) terracotta** has been given the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- **Terracotta Figurines** were also made during the **Indus Valley Civilization**.
They were either used as toys or objects of worship and represented birds, dogs, sheep, cattle and monkeys.
The famous terracotta figure of the Mother Goddess was discovered in Mohen-jodaro which shows the Mother Goddess as the symbol of fertility and prosperity.
- **Beekeeping Activity:**
 - It aims to **create sustainable employment for the beekeepers/farmers**, help artisans adopt **scientific Beekeeping & Management practices**, utilize available natural resources; and **create awareness about the benefits** of beekeeping in cross pollination.
 - It involves distributing tools and equipment to migrant labourers in the **Prime Minister Gareeb Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyaan** (PMGKRA) districts and providing training to the beneficiaries, setting up clusters under the SFURTI Scheme.
PMGKRA empowers and provides livelihood opportunities to the **returnee migrant workers and rural citizens** who have returned to their home states due to the **Covid-19** induced **lockdown**.
 - Recently, the Ministry of MSME flagged off '**Apiary on Wheels**'.
'Apiary on Wheels' is a unique concept designed by the KVIC for the easy upkeep and migration of Bee Boxes having live Bee colonies.
 - A **Beekeeping Development Committee** was also constituted in 2019 under the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister** (EAC-PM) to give recommendations to enhance the contribution of the beekeeping sector for achieving the target of **doubling farmers' incomes by 2022**.
 - KVIC also launched a **Honey Mission** in 2017 under which it provides awareness, training and '**Bee Boxes**' along with **Bee Colonies** to the farmers.
The Honey mission was in line with the 'Sweet Revolution', launched in 2016 to promote beekeeping and associated activities.

- **Benefit:**

- The program will immediately benefit about 1500 artisans, in providing sustainable employment with increased earnings.
- Artisans living in **rural areas, Self Help Groups and Migrant workers** will particularly benefit from the program.
- In addition to enhancing employment opportunities locally, the programme will also help in **capturing the export market** in such products.

Way Forward

The MSME sector has been badly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the rural enterprise owners. In addition to these self-employment schemes, the government can provide tax relief (GST and **corporate tax**), give swift refunds, and provide liquidity to rural India (may be through **PM-Kisan**) to boost demand for MSME products.

Source: PIB