



## ODOP: Handicraft Sector

**For Prelims:** One District One Product, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Schemes Related to Handicrafts

**For Mains:** Significance of Handicraft sector and Related Initiatives, Government Policies & Interventions

### Why in News?

Recently, **the Ministry of Textile** inaugurated the 'Lota Shop' at National Crafts Museum, New Delhi.

- The shop was opened by **Central [Cottage Industries Corporation of India Limited \(CCIC\)](#)**, popularly known as the Central Cottage Industries Emporium.
  - It **showcases fine handcrafted curios, souvenirs, handicrafts and textiles** based on the traditional craft forms of India.
- The government also reiterated that it is working towards '**[One District One Product](#)**' which will give impetus to the **Handicraft sector as well as the Artisans**.

### What is One District One Product?

- **About:**
  - The 'One District, One Product' (ODOP) was launched by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, to **help districts reach their full potential, foster economic and socio-cultural growth**, and create employment opportunities, especially, in rural areas.
    - It was launched in January, 2018, by the Uttar Pradesh Government, and due to its success, was later adopted by the Central Government.
  - This initiative is carried out with the 'Districts as Exports Hub' initiative by the **[Directorate General of Foreign Trade \(DGFT\)](#)**, Department of Commerce.
    - 'Districts as Exports Hub' initiative provides **financial and technical assistance to the district level industries** so that the small-scale industries can be helped and they can provide employment opportunities to the local people.
- **Objectives:**
  - It aims to **identify, promote and brand a product** from one district.
  - To turn every district in India, **into an export hub through promotion of the product in which the district specialises**.
  - It envisions to accomplish this by scaling manufacturing, supporting local businesses, finding potential foreign customers and so on, thus helping to achieve the '**[Atmanirbhar Bharat](#)**' vision.

### What is the Status of Handicraft Sector in India?

- **About:**
  - Handicrafts are items **that are constructed by hand using simple tools rather than mass production methods** and equipment. While very similar to basic arts and crafts, there is **one key difference with handicrafts**.
    - The items produced as a result of the efforts are designed for a specific function or **use as well as being ornamental in nature**.

- The handloom and handicraft industry **has been the backbone of India's rural economy for decades.**
- India **produces** woodware, artmetal wares, handprinted textiles, embroidered goods, zari goods, imitation jewellery, sculptures, pottery, glassware, attars, agarbattis, etc.
- **Trade:**
  - India is one of the **largest handicraft exporting countries.**
  - In March 2022, the total handicraft export excluding handmade carpets from India was USD 174.26 million which **was an 8% increase from February 2022.** During 2021-22, the total exports of Indian handicrafts were valued at USD 4.35 billion; **a 25.7% increase from the previous year.**
- **Significance of the Sector:**
  - **Largest Employment Generator:**
    - It is one of the **largest employment generators after agriculture**, providing a key means of **livelihood to the country's rural and urban population.**
    - Handicraft is one of the most important sectors in the Indian economy employing more than seven million people.
  - **Eco-Friendly:**
    - The sector functions on a **self-sustaining business model, with craftsmen often growing their own raw materials and is well known for being a pioneer of environment-friendly zero-waste practices.**
- **Challenges:**
  - Artisans face challenges such as **inaccessibility of funds, low penetration of technology, absence of market intelligence and poor institutional framework** for growth.
  - In addition, the sector is plagued by implicit contradiction of handmade products, which are **typically at odds with scale of production.**

## What Factors Support the Growth of the Sector?

- **Government Schemes:**
  - The central government is actively **working towards developing the industry to maximize its potential.**
  - The introduction of several schemes and initiatives is helping craftsmen to overcome the challenges they face.
- **Rise of Dedicated Trade Platforms:**
  - Few platforms like Craftezy, have emerged that lend the much-needed support to Indian artisans in finding visibility in domestic and global markets.
  - These global handicraft trade **platforms come with a free supplier induction process and aim at giving it an organized image in the global market.**
- **Using Technology for Inclusion:**
  - Technology that can help cross boundaries has proven to be a boon for the handicraft industry.
  - **E-commerce** has opened **doors to seamless access to consumer goods, and this has enabled inclusive growth** as all manufacturers in any part of the globe can showcase their products through these online platforms.
  - Even social media platforms are helping immensely with marketing Indian handicrafts globally.
- **Exports Vs Imports:**
  - In the last five years, **exports of Indian handicrafts have gone up by more than 40%**, as three-fourths of handicrafts are exported.
  - Indian handicrafts are majorly exported to more than a hundred countries, and the US alone constitutes about a third of India's handicrafts exports.
- **Change in Behavior of Artisans:**
  - To **generate enhanced income, artisans adapt to new skills** and create products that meet new market demands.
  - Thus, on account of the introduction of technology and the ease it brings to their table, there is a significant change in the behaviors of sellers and buyers of handicrafts.

## What are the Related Government Initiatives?

#### ▪ **Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana:**

- To support artisans with their infrastructure, technology and human resource development needs.
- The objective of **mobilising artisans into self-help groups and societies with the agenda of facilitating bulk production and economies in procurement** of raw materials.

#### ▪ **Mega Cluster Scheme:**

- The objective of this scheme includes **employment generation and improvement** in the standard of living of artisans.
- This programme **follows a cluster-based approach in scaling infrastructure** and production chains at handicraft centres, specifically in remote regions.

#### ▪ **Marketing Support and Services Scheme:**

- This scheme **provides interventions for domestic marketing events to artisans in the form of financial assistance** that aids them in organising and participating in trade fairs and exhibitions across the country and abroad.

#### ▪ **Research and Development Scheme:**

- This initiative was introduced to **generate feedback on economic, social, aesthetic and promotional aspects of crafts and artisans** in the sector, with the objective of supporting implementation of aforementioned schemes.

#### ▪ **National Handicraft Development Programme:**

- The important component of this programme is carrying out surveys, upgrading design and technology, developing human resources, providing insurance and credit facilities to artisans, R&D, infrastructure development and marketing support activities.

#### ▪ **Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme:**

- The approach of this scheme is to scale up infrastructure and production chain at handicraft clusters. Additionally, this scheme aims to provide adequate infrastructure for production, value addition and quality assurance.

#### ▪ **Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts:**

- The main objective of the **council is to promote, support, protect, maintain and increase the export of handicrafts.**
- The other activities of the council are knowledge dissemination, providing professional advice and support to members, organizing delegation visits and fairs, providing liaison between exporters and the government and carrying out awareness workshops.

## Way Forward

- Indian craft sector has the **scope to become a billion-dollar marketplace with the right support and business environment.**
- Developing **a systematic approach, which nurtures the intrinsic value of craft skills** and opens avenues for product design and manufacturing will increase access to new markets.
- Alongside, capitalising on e-commerce **for online visibility and operational efficiencies will prove to be a critical success factor** as the sector evolves and gains further traction.
- The present time of **globalization, the handicraft sector has massive opportunities** in the domestic and global markets. While the **precarious condition of artisans needs careful interventions for their upliftment**, the government has already been making great strides by adopting measures that will make handicraft products competitive globally and improve the conditions of our craftsmen.

**Source: PIB**

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# Indian Railway Innovation Policy

**For Prelims:** Indian Railway Innovation Policy, Headquarters of the Zones of Indian Railways

**For Mains:** Issues in Indian Railway, Indian Railway Innovation Policy, Government Interventions and Policies

## Why in News?

Recently, the Minister of Railways has launched **Indian Railway Innovation Policy- “StartUps for Railways”**.

## What are the Key Highlights of the Policy?

- **About:**
  - Grant up to **Rs. 1.5 Crore to innovators on equal sharing** basis with provision of milestone-wise payment.
  - The complete process from floating of problem statement to development of prototype is online with defined time line to make it transparent and objective.
  - Trials of prototypes will be done in Railways.
  - **Enhanced funding will be provided** to scale up deployment on successful performance of prototypes.
  - **Selection of Innovator/s will be done by a transparent and fair system** which will be dealt through an online portal inaugurated today by the Minister of Railways.
  - Developed **Intellectual property rights (IPR)** will remain with innovators only.
  - De-centralization of complete product development process at divisional level to avoid delays.
- **Issues Identified:**
  - **Eleven problem statements such as rail fracture, headway reduction, etc.**, have been taken up for this program’s phase 1 out of the more than 100 problem statements received from various divisions, field offices or zones of Indian Railways.
- **Expected Benefits:**
  - This policy will **bring scale and efficiency in the field of operation, maintenance** and infrastructure creation through participation of a very large and untapped startup ecosystem.
  - It also aims to **leverage innovative technologies** developed by Indian **Startups/MSMEs /Innovators/Entrepreneurs** to improve operational efficiency and Safety of Indian Railways.
  - It will Promote **“Innovation Culture” in the country for co-creation** and co-innovation in the Railway sector.

## What are the Key Facts about Indian Railways?

- **About:**
  - The Indian Railways network is **one of the longest in the world.**
  - It **facilitates the movement of both freight and passengers** and contributes to the growth of the economy.
  - The Indian Railway was introduced in **1853**, when a line was constructed **from Bombay to Thane** covering a distance of 34 km.
  - Indian Railways is the **largest government undertaking in the country.**
  - The length of the Indian Railways network was 67,956 km (Railway yearbook 2019-20).
- **Zones:**
  - In India, the railway system has been divided into 16 zones.

Railway Zone	Headquarters
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Central	Mumbai CST
Eastern	Kolkata
East Central	Hajipur
East Coast	Bhubaneswar
Northern	New Delhi
North Eastern	Gorakhpur
North East Frontier	Maligaon (Guwahati)
North Western	Jaipur
Southern	Chennai
South Central	Secunderabad
South Eastern	Kolkata
South East Central	Bilaspur
South Western	Hubli
Western	Mumbai (Church Gate)
West Central	Jabalpur

- Indian Railways is the proud owner of **four UNESCO accorded World Heritage Sites** namely **Darjeeling Himalayan Railway** (1999), **Nilgiri Mountain Railway** (2005), **Kalka Shimla Railway** (2008) and **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus**, Mumbai (2004).
  - There are two more in waiting or in the tentative list namely **Matheran Light Railway and Kangra Valley Railway**.

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

**Q. With reference to bio-toilets used by the Indian Railways, consider the following statements: (2015)**

1. The decomposition of human waste in the biotoilets is initiated by a fungal inoculum.
2. Ammonia and water vapour are the only end products in this decomposition which are released into the atmosphere.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (d)**

**Exp:**

- Bio-toilet project of Indian Railways is an innovative and an indigenous development of technology. This technology is the first of its kind and is being used for the first time by any railroad in the world for onboard accelerated digestion of human waste.
- These bio-toilets are fitted underneath the lavatories and the human waste discharged into them is acted upon by a colony of anaerobic bacteria that convert human waste, mainly into water and a small amount of bio-gases like Methane, Ammonia etc. **Hence, statements 1 and 2 are not correct.**
- The gases escape into the atmosphere and waste water is discharged after chlorination onto the track.
- Human waste, thus, does not fall on the railway tracks, thus improving cleanliness and hygiene at platforms, and facilitate track and coaches maintenance staff to perform their work more efficiently.
- Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.

**Source: PIB**

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