

MSDE launches pilot projects to revive and catalyze the traditional Namda Craft and upskill the Artisans and Weavers of Kashmir

These projects were announced just two months back during the visit of MoS Rajeev Chandrasekhar to J&K

Narendra Modi Government is working with a laser focus for J&K's development and is delivering on all promises to ensure strong growth of local economy : Rajeev Chandrasekhar

- + Focus on increasing carpet exports from 600 Crore to 6000 Crore and to create employment opportunities.
- + PMKVY RPL project aims at upskilling 10,900 artisans and weavers of Jammu & Kashmir



Jammu & Kashmir, November 27, 2021: Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; and Ministry of Electronics and IT, today launched two projects— (i) Revival of Namda craft of Kashmir as a special pilot project under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 3.0 and (ii) upskilling of artisans and weavers of Kashmir under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), component of PMKVY. The objective of these projects is to boost and preserve the traditional Namda craft of Kashmir and upskill the local weavers and artisans to enhance their productivity through RPL assessment and certification. The Namda project will benefit 2,250 people of 30 Namda Clusters from 6 districts of Kashmir (Srinagar, Baramulla, Ganderbal, Bandipora, Budgam and Anantnag) and RPL initiative targets to upskill 10,900 artisans and weavers of Jammu and Kashmir.

Namda craft is a rug made of sheep wool through felting technique instead of normal weaving process. Due to low availability of raw material, lack of skilled manpower and marketing techniques, the export of this craft has declined almost 100 percent between 1998 and 2008. Therefore, through this special project under PMKVY, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has designed short-term training curriculum to preserve this endangered craft. The project will be implemented in 25 batches in 3 cycles of training. Each training program will be of approximately three and half months, which results in the cycles being completed in approximately 14 - 16 months.

The Namda project will be an industry-based training program with beneficiaries involved in Namda Crafts Production who will contribute towards preserving and reviving the rich heritage associated with Namda craft in Kashmir. This will also improve the access of existing artisans of Namda crafts cluster in Kashmir and will improve their prospects of employability.

Launching the initiative, **Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of State, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; and Ministry of Electronics and IT**, said “India has a rich heritage and is home to several traditional art forms. It is an article of faith for the Narendra Modi Government to revive and promote traditional & heritage skills and to give them support to make them economically sustainable. Not only that, we should strive to offer them exposure to the international markets so that the world becomes aware of our vibrant culture. When I travelled to Jammu and Kashmir, people of J&K sought support to boost the local economy through customised skill training programmes. This prompted the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship to come up with this programme in a bid to meet the economic aspirations of the local youth and take them on the path of development. I am confident that with the local industry coming on board with us, we will be able to increase the carpet exports from 600-crore to 6000 crores and create employment for 8 lac people.”

He further added, “The programme will also focus on continuously skilling, upskilling and reskilling local youth to create a ladder of career progression and make them strong pillars of Hon’ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. He further added that the Modi government is invested in increasing export and making artisans financially independent by boosting the traditional art. “The Government is working with a laser focus towards J&K’s development and is delivering on all promises” said Rajeev Chandrasekhar. He appreciated the efforts of officials at MSDE, National Skill Development Corporation and Sector Skill Councils as this custom designed programme was conceptualised, processed and sanctioned within a record time of just 2 months. The custom designed programme is symbolic of the New Approach which the Government is mulling for its skill development programme. It is based on the principle of continuous skilling/upskilling/Re-skilling, employment as an assured outcome, industry as an important stakeholders in skill training ecosystem

Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, said “Our team at the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is working with new zeal on this special project under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has designed a short-term training curriculum to preserve Namda and I am confident that we will not only be able to revive this endangered craft, but also make it economically viable and generate jobs to help local artisans. The ministry is committed to upskilling the weavers and artisans’ clusters of Jammu and Kashmir. This project is an endeavour to uplift the tribal community and preserve the heritage and we will ensure that it is being implemented diligently. I wish all the stakeholders, including teachers, students and industry partners, all the very best.”

Further, the upskilling project under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is expected to improve the competencies of the unorganized workforce of the Handicrafts and Carpet Sector. The artisans and weavers shall be aligned to the standardized NSQF (National Skills Qualifications Framework). It will also improve the access of existing artisans and weavers to sustainable livelihoods and lead to increased skills and technical knowledge among them. Additionally, the pilot project will enhance the marketing skills and techniques that will promote traditional and local crafts by artisans and weavers. It will help them in making designs to match the current market demand. The initiative will be a value addition to the traditional handicraft products through Upskilling Bridge Module through Government of India certification. The training delivery partner for the upskilling initiative are Mir handicraft, Srinagar Carpet Training and Market Centre and there is special value addition for 10% high performers.

The entire programme will be implemented in different phases, which includes- Selection of Artisans and Weavers, Training of Trainers (ToT), and Upskilling of Artisans and Weavers through RPL with Bridge Module. First, the artisans and weavers shall be selected from the traditional crafts clusters of Jammu and Kashmir. Based on the crafts and existing experience and skills the selection shall be made. Secondly, trainers will be selected either from the SSCs database or a Training of Trainer (ToT) program shall be conducted for the existing artisans and weavers from the proposed clusters. The TOT will ensure focused skills in standardization techniques, soft skills, financial planning and other aspects of Enterprise Building along with crucial development of new markets. Lastly, the artisans and weavers shall be trained in innovative and upgraded techniques of making handmade products. Post training all the artisans and

weavers will work in the micro units set up in their respective clusters. During this time the beneficiaries shall be encouraged to participate actively in external deliberation so that at later stage they are able to manage market linkages by their own self. Each batch shall run for 12 days with 12 hours' orientation and 60 hours Bridge module.

Further, after the orientation program along with bridge module, the artisans and weavers shall be certified with the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Type-1 (Bridge Module Certification). Handicrafts and Carpet Sector Skill Council (HCSSC) in close association with MSDE will monitor the day-to-day progress of the overall project.

The abrogation of the Articles 370 and 35A has put Kashmir on the same footing as the rest of India by infusing new life to all the projects across various sectors that were ignored during the previous political regimes. Under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, there are now 77 ministers working round the clock to put the Union Territory (UT) on the path of development. The Indian government is firmly committed to skilling, reskilling and upskilling the youth and has already forged a strong relationship with the private sector. In the field of Information Technology (IT), several initiatives like providing subsidies on rent to outside investors and building two mammoth IT parks in Jammu and Srinagar have been undertaken. Concerted and technology-based efforts have also been made to promote the agriculture sector for young startups in the region. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), under the guidance of the Modi Government, has also decided to train youth in the Valley in filmmaking, opening up new job roles for them.

Last month, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar visited Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir. Post his visit, he expressed the need to organise a project for the preservation and revival of dying traditional crafts of the region as the handicraft sector is the major employment generator there. It was observed that the heritage and traditional skill clusters required skilled artisans from villages to meet the demand for traditional crafts in Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir. This initiative aims at industry and market linkage, encouraging micro-entrepreneurship.

A similar pilot project will also be launched next month in Nagaland to skill and upkill over 4,000 artisans and weavers to generate local employment opportunities and strengthen the craft clusters.