

## 'Hand Made in India' project to turn artisans into entrepreneurs

### OUR BUREAU

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After engaging with business professionals, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) will now look to develop entrepreneurial competencies in about 5,000 weavers, artisans and traders to promote hand-made art.

Named 'Hand Made in India' (HMI), the project will be implemented in three years and in the first phase, it has been extended to six centres. These handloom clusters include Bhuj and Surendranagar in Gujarat; Bargarh in Odisha; Kamrup in Assam; Maheshwar in Madhya Pradesh, and Salem in Tamil Nadu.

The Institute has developed a plan which involves upgrading the skills of the weavers, introducing new-age marketing strategies, ensuring increased credit availability, roping-in the younger generation to the weaving tradition. These measures are targeted to improve the income and quality of life of the weavers in the clusters.

Women empowerment will be given special attention in the weaving and allied activities.

"Traditional weavers and artisans in the handcraft industry have long struggled to survive due to the advent of powerlooms. However, the charm of a handwoven fabric has never faded and there is more awareness among people about such products. To calibrate these artisans to newer markets and to the shift in customer preference for sustainable products, we have initiated the Hand Made in India (HMI) project," said Raman Gujral, Head, Southern Region, EDII.

The aim of the initiative is to revive the lives of weavers by developing entrepreneurial competencies in them. The project would concentrate on product development to capture larger and high-end markets with a special focus on exports. New collections and clothing line through product diversification, in collaboration with well-known fashion designers and fashion institutes, will be introduced through this project.