

FICCI-FLO to help Covid-hit artisans get back on track

Two-day event will coincide with National Handloom Day, bring stakeholders together to create biz opportunities for artisans and help them find their feet

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Artisans and weavers have suffered the worst during the Covid pandemic with their livelihood under threat due to extended lockdowns. The FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), Ahmedabad chapter, will assist them get back on track by circulating the list of artisans and their products with businesswomen across the country.

To mark National Handloom Day (NHD) on August 7, FLO has organised a conclave where dignitaries from the government, private sectors, designers and industry to popularise and innovate hand-woven products made as part of the traditional cottage industry.

The two-day event will have a fashion show on day 1, August 5. Event coordinator Shilpa Patel said, "We want to reach out to customers and handicraft enthusiasts to popularise handicrafts. We also want to create new business opportunities for the artisans."



The lesser known weaves will be presented in their modern avatar

She added, "We have identified lesser-known weaves like Sujli, Kasota, Tangalia, Mashru, Ashavali and Khadi from different parts of Gujarat, which will be presented in modern avatar with the help of students of five fashion design institutes in Gujarat."

The textile and handcraft conclave will be held on August 6, which

will evaluate the strategies needed to preserve and reinvigorate the crafts of Gujarat.

FLO Ahmedabad chapter chairperson Nandita Munshaw said, "We will also be presenting a knowledge report to the government, proposing policy changes to uplift the spirit of Gujarat's weavers and our dying crafts."

Rakesh Shankar, Commissioner of Cottage and Rural Industries, told Mirror, "Gujarat already has an ecosystem for artisans from different segments. We are already running a programme in collaboration with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India wherein we are training these artisans to become entrepreneurs and expand their base."

He added, "In the upcoming event I look forward to creating synergy between all stakeholders for inclusive growth and global reach."

EDII Professor Satya Ranjan Acharya, who is the coordinator of Gujarat government's 'Hastakala Setu' project, said, "So far, we have opened 13 rural incubation centres in Gujarat to train and help different types of artisans to become entrepreneurs."

He added, "They know their art but in the 18-month programme they are exposed to the domain knowledge of technology, accounts, newer designs, government subsidy schemes etc. The upcoming event will give good exposure to artists who have suffered losses due to Covid."