

# Mulberry silk cluster planned in West Bengal's Murshidabad

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The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) on Monday said there is a plan to set up Mulberry Silk Cluster in three villages of Murshidabad district in West Bengal and over 550 artisans would be trained as a part of the programme. An autonomous and not-for-profit institute, the EDII is sponsored by financial institutions such as the IDBI Bank, IFCI Ltd, ICICI Bank Ltd and the State Bank of India.

The project in Murshidabad district was undertaken under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), launched by the Ministry of MSME in 2005 with the view to promoting Cluster development, an EDII statement said. The district of Murshidabad is traditionally known for its silk production.

Most of the artisans working in this area are socio- economically poor and traditionally engaged in reeling and weaving. The EDII said it is reviving the silk cluster by providing technical support to more than 550 workers to produce silk garments and sarees. Of those artisans, 226 are women and more than 40 per cent belong to Scheduled Castes.

"The project aims at empowering rural artisans through capacity building programme and establishment of Common Facility Centre in the areas of designing, printing and diversification into fashion garment making facilities, apart from reeling, twisting and weaving," EDII cluster development manager Subir Roy said. It is estimated that the turnover of the cluster would reach more than Rs 8 crore per annum in the next five years, Roy said..

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