

# World Bank supported Noorbagh Crewel Artisan Cluster gets registered

Heartening to see the Craft Clusters developing as Self-Sustaining Business entities: CEO JKERA/JTFRP

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In a significant step towards the self-reliance of the artisans of Jammu and Kashmir, many clusters were developed under the World Bank funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) with an objective of reviving the traditional crafts and providing gainful employment opportunities to youth.

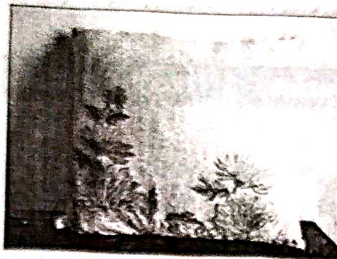
One such cluster, Crewel/Chain Stitch Artisan Cluster at Noorbagh, first artisan clusters developed under the project, has been registered as the "Producers Owned Company" by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

The artisan cluster has been issued the certificate of incorporation by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs under the name "NOORAARICRAFTSPRODUCER COMPANY LIMITED".

With the Artisan Craft Cluster obtaining the coveted registration from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, GOI, the artisans associated with the cluster now see a renewed hope in being associated with the traditional crafts of crewel/chainstitch.

About 600 artisans associated with this cluster see it as an achievement of one of the major milestones towards the development of the first artisan owned producer company in the Valley.

"For the holistic development of the artisans, craft clusters under JTFRP are designed in a



such a manner so as to bring a group of scattered artisans under one umbrella and to impart them with as much skillsets related to their craft as possible and also to develop their managerial capabilities", Chief Executive Officer, JKERA/JTFRP, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah said.

He added that such clusters would enable them to function as sustainable and profitable artisan owned business enterprises and uplift them economically.

Dr. Abid said that it is moment of pride and immense satisfaction to see the Noorbagh Artisan cluster registered as a "producers owned company".

He added that under JTFRP we have also taken up the development of more clusters for different traditional crafts like Papier Machie (Zadibal), Willow wicker (Ganderbal), Wool and Pashmina (Bandipore) to provide artisans skill enhancement, product development trainings and develop market linkages for their products with an objective of promoting the sustainable livelihoods under the traditional cottage industry

sector.

It has been conceived and developed under the component of the Restoration and Strengthening of the Livelihoods of the JTFRP with an objective of reviving the traditional crafts and providing the gainful employment opportunities to youth.

"Divorced with 2 kids, I was totally dependent on my relatives financially, but after having received the skill enhancement training at the Noorbagh artisan cluster, I am now able to earn 800-1000 per day which is enough for me to sustain a family of 3 without being dependent on any of my relatives," says Shaheena, one of the artisans at the cluster.

Another artist Maimoona associated with the cluster says, "I had given up the craft owing to its diminishing economic returns and exploitation of the middle men but after having received training in the product development which made artisans aware about the latest design trends in market and also with the assured market support for our products I see lot of hope in the craft".

The Artisan Cluster which is now in its 3 year of existence after initial skill assessment of the artisans associated with the crafts of crewel and chain stitch has been focussing on imparting the artisans with the much needed skill enhancement in the areas of the product development- developing the new prototypes, use of latest colour schemes, utilisation of newly developed good quality raw

materials, new techniques besides honing the managerial skills of artisans and providing the marketing linkages for their products.

JTFRP has engaged the services of the consultancy for the development of the crewel/ chain stitch cluster at Noorbagh which has been tasked with the responsibility of developing the capacities of the artisans in all the aspects of skill development, developing managerial skills and developing market linkages for their products and also undertake necessary formalities for the registration of cluster as "Producer Owned Company".

One of the significant aspects of the cluster has been the developing of market linkages to the craft cluster for marketing of its products and for that the consultancy has been set a target of providing the cluster with the business of at least Rs 1 Crore and to this end over the last one year the Noorbagh cluster has produced and sold products worth around Rs. 30 lacs approx. They are presently working on the consignment of products for FAB India and are also negotiating with another marketing giant IKEA group for marketing of its products.

Besides being instrumental the revival of crewel and chain stitchcrafts, the craft cluster at Noorbagh which comprises women in majority has become an agent of social change. The women associated with craft cluster now see themselves as the self-reliant and controlling members of the society.