

Institute to carry out a field survey

# NID to assist 17 cluster industries in Gujarat

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The Ahmedabad-based National Institute of Design (NID) has been given the task of assisting 17 cluster industries in different parts of Gujarat to develop and become competitive.

Largely ignored for the past few decades, the government of Gujarat has now decided to revive traditional crafts with the assistance of NID.

The institute will carry out a field survey and prepare a 'needs assessment' report, develop designs for artisans and craftsmen, hold workshops and develop prototypes, and will even assist them in marketing these goods by holding buyer-seller meetings.

While 17 cluster industries have been identified by the government under its cluster development programme, 10 such clusters will be developed in the first phase. A cluster industry is one where a large number of persons, staying together, produce the same product.

Amarjeet Singh, secretary, small scale

industries, Gujarat, said that Rs 12,000 crore worth of handicrafts were exported from India in the past fiscal, which is a huge amount.

"The state government has identified clusters and the NID has been given the charge of helping artisans produce goods that buyers actually want," he said. He added that the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development is ready to finance three of the projects, while talks are on for the others.

While the initial payment for carrying out a needs assessment study is being released by the state government to NID within a week, officials declined to disclose the project cost.

"While cluster industries have always been there all over the country, they have largely remained ignored over the decades as a sustainable cycle. These traditional craftsmen invariably lose touch with the developments outside, because they remain isolated," said NID executive director Darlie Koshy.

The NID is now waiting for the government to release the initial funds so

that it can get on with the needs assessment study. "As far as the NID is concerned, we have already begun working on the project. After a needs assessment study is done and other works are complete, it will be for the government to fit these into various welfare schemes so that the artisans finally get benefits of the entire exercise," said Himadri Ghosh, NID activity chairperson, integrated design services.

The NID will take a year to complete field surveys, need assessment studies, design development and prototype development once the project gets underway. The clusters that will be developed in the first phase are pichhivai (printing on cloth), bamboo, wooden toys, terracotta, khadi, lacquer work, leather embroidery and coir, said Praveen Nahar, co-ordinator, product design, NID.

It may be stated that NID has done considerable work in all these segments earlier and has a database already of the socio economic conditions of artisans from project reports of students, who have carried out field visits.