

PANEL DISCUSSION

Investment Opportunities in the Handicrafts Sector

15th October 2017

India is regarded as one of the fastest growing economies of the world, ranked among the top 10 attractive destinations for inbound investments, courtesy its economic reforms and relaxation in FDI norms being undertaken by the successive Governments. The strength of the Indian handicrafts industry is low capital investment, high ratio of value addition, negligible import content and very high export potential with complementing



aspects like skill availability and wide raw material base to produce wide range of handicrafts. Foreign equity investment would be useful in upgradation of existing product designing, packaging and in subsequent product innovations as well as capacity building by technology input and skill upgradation of artisans and production & management personnel. The handicrafts sector may also be able to diversify into new trade channels and into new markets in a more robust way, thereby increasing its global market share.

This panel discussion organised by EPCH on 15th October, 2017, at the India Expo Centre, aimed at addressing issues like scaling up production of handicrafts by tapping foreign investment by capturing multitude of opportunities to collaborate with

investors/ organisations across the value chain which include raw material sourcing, designing & crafting, packaging & marketing linkages, etc. Panelists were, Mr. O P Prahladka, Chairman, EPCH; Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi, Professor and Chairperson, Research and International Collaborations, IIFT; Ms. Shivina Dixit, Investment Advisor, Textiles Sector, Invest India; Ms. Ruma Malik, CEO, Something Else; and moderator, Mr. Sanjay Nagi, Founder & CEO, Market Insight Consultants.

Mr. Sanjay Nagi, the moderator, introduced the panel and opened the discussion stating the need to bring all the issues to table, as the first step.

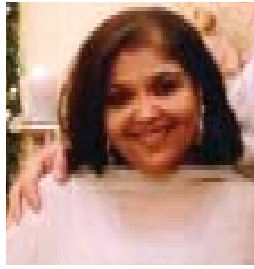
Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi through numbers & figures, illustrated India's economic performance and handicraft exports potential to grow and international competition



Mr. O P Prahladka
Chairman,
EPCH



Dr. Rakesh Mohan Joshi
Prof. and Chairperson
R&IC, IIFT



Ms. Ruma Malik
CEO,
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Ms. Shivina Dixit
Investment Advisor,
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Mr. Sanjay Nagi
Founder & CEO,
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and comparison. A distinguished academician, eminent author and a renowned management expert, Dr. Joshi has authored books like, "International Business" and "International Marketing" besides research papers and case studies that were awarded by London Business School. He has been involved in conducting training programmes for corporate executives, govt. officials and diplomats besides customised programmes for Indian Civil Services and foreign diplomats.

Ms. Shivina Dixit outlined the steps taken by the Govt. She said there is lot which is being done and in the mid to long term we are on a road to growth. Based on infrastructure and policy developments she was hopefully of robust growth. She looks after the Textiles Sector at Invest India and works on strategy and policy support provided to foreign investors from this segment. Invest India is the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of the Govt. of India, mandated to facilitate investments into India. It is promoted by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It is envisaged to be the first point of reference for potential investors.

Ms. Ruma Malik started by asking, if India is less competitive why do people come to India? "Because, Indian products have got a soul," she shared. While the Chinese mass produce, Indian products have their own niche but their bench mark is not set. So the Chinese products have predictable value whereas India's distinct

products have the potential to command a higher price. "we are uniquely adaptive and people in our handicrafts field remain innovative," she emphasised.

Initiated into this domain by her mother, late Mrs. Malik, a doyen of the Indian handicrafts industry, Ms. Ruma Malik, a graduate from Parsons School of Design, Paris in 1988, started her firm - Something Else, with her mother. With combined experience, skills & expertise they created an agency that provides services combining international design with traditional Indian materials & skills to create products for global consumers. They work with 150 factories across India with a team of 40 professionals.

Mr. O P Prahladka, Chairman, EPCH, stated that the handicrafts sector needs investment, wherever it comes from - government, private sector, a foreign national, or a partner. He said, EPCH had already taken initiative as it needs to address the need of the sector on a national level. He said "we want the production to grow, we invite inputs from all of you – what you want to do! What you can do! and what you need from us". He emphasised that the mission is to increase production for which the sector doesn't have mechanism to train artisans or the required technology to harness resources or process raw materials. He encouraged members to come forward and assured of all possible support from the Council, at all possible fronts. ■