

PROMOTION OF INDIAN FOLK ARTS AND TRADITIONAL CRAFTS

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To protect, promote and preserve various forms of folk art and culture including traditional crafts throughout the country, the Government of India has set up **seven Zonal Cultural Centres (ZCCs)** with headquarters at Patiala, Nagpur, Udaipur, Prayagraj, Kolkata, Dimapur and Thanjavur. These ZCCs organize various cultural activities and programmes on a regular basis all over India for which they engage folk artists to showcase their talents. These artists are paid honorarium, TA/DA, local transportation, boarding & lodging etc. to enable them to earn their livelihood.

To promote traditional arts & crafts of the country, these ZCCs organize a number of cultural programmes/ festivals like *Shilpgram Utsav, Octave, Chandigarh National Crafts Mela, Orange City Craft Mela, Rashtriya Shilp Mela, Salangai Naadam, Purbanchaliya Lok Mahotsav, Hornbill Festival, Lokotsav, Sangai Festival* etc.

Besides, Ministry of Culture also organizes **Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsavs (RSMs)** at national level through these ZCCs where a large number of folk artists including local artists from all over India are engaged to showcase their talents during the events. A number of stalls are also set up during these RSMs, where artisans from various parts of the country, including local artisans, exhibit and sell their handmade products, thereby earning their livelihood.

The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) under Ministry of Textiles, Government of India implements two schemes namely National Handicrafts Development Programme (**NHDP**) and Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (**CHCDS**) for overall development and promotion of handicraft sector across the country. Under these schemes, need based financial assistance is provided for end-to-end support to the artisans through marketing events, skill development, cluster development, formation of Producer Companies, direct benefit to artisans, infrastructural & technology support, research & development support, digitization, branding and marketing of handicraft products in domestic & international markets etc. which benefit the traditional crafts and artisans throughout the country.

The ZCCs play a pivotal role to preserve, document and disseminate the dynamics of our folk-art forms amongst the new generation of enthusiasts and practitioners. All the ZCCs undertake works related to Research & Documentation which supports the preservation and promotion of fading visual and performing arts across disciplines like music, dance, theatre, literature and fine arts. This initiative documents these traditions in both print and audio-visual formats, with the selection of art forms done in consultation with State Cultural Departments.

All the ZCCs also run **Guru Shishya Parampara Scheme** where traditional masters train young disciples to ensure continuity of cultural knowledge which helps artistes, researchers and community bearers of traditions.

This information was given by Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today.

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