

Agri Business Incubation Centre

at ICAR-NINFET

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India is one of the important suppliers of Agri-Business products including handicrafts items to the world market. The Indian Agri-Business industry is highly labour intensive farm and cottage based industry and decentralized, being spread not only in the eastern part, but all over the country in rural and urban areas. Numerous entrepreneurs /artisans are engaged in crafts working on full-time and part-time basis. The industry provides employment to over six million artisans, which include a large number of women and people belonging to the weaker sections of the society. In addition to the high potential for employment, the sector is economically important from the point of low capital investment, high ratio of value addition, and high potential for export and foreign exchange earnings for the country. Located in the gate way to the entire eastern India, West Bengal specially Kolkata and suburbs is considerably having great opportunity to create and extend business opportunity. Located in the transit place on the way to Bangladesh and Nepal, Kolkata is bordering with Jharkhand, Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh. Thus, people from various cultures gather over here for many purposes. From the angle of exporting the agri-business products including handicraft items to other countries also, the place has also been considered viable.

Key words: Agri-business products, Artisans, Handicrafts, Handlooms

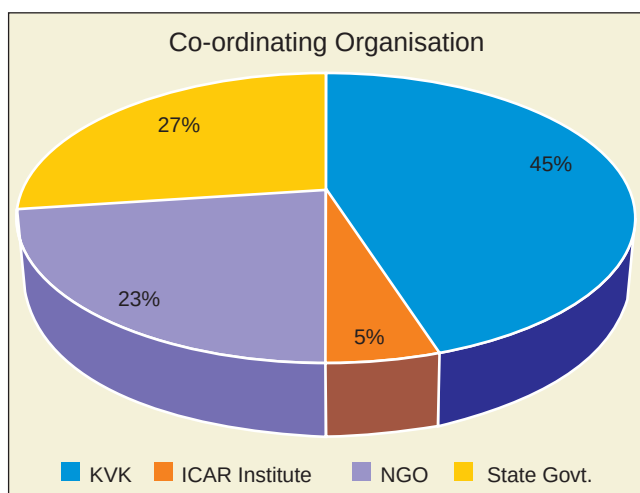
ICAR-NINFET (erstwhile ICAR-NIRJAFT) is unique of its kind in India as no other institute in Public sector or private sector is involved in R&D activities related to natural fibre specially lignocellulose fibres and its byproducts. Hence the products and technologies developed in this institute have high potentiality of generating business. The institute has both scientific manpower to provide all scientific, technical support and consultancy related to the technology commercialization and highly skilled technical manpower to provide operational facilities of pilot plant and laboratory.

The journey of ICAR-NINFET (erstwhile ICAR-NIRJAFT) in the area of Agri Business Incubation started with sanction of World Bank sponsored BPD project under NAIP Component I and with the launching workshop on 14th August 2009.

ICAR-NINFET is one of the first five ICAR institutes where BPD project was launched. Enormous experience was gained in ABI during the execution of NAIP-BPD project and commercialization of technologies. Setting up of BPD unit at NINFET has helped in setting up different facilities and performing different activities for agribusiness and its incubation. Establishment of pilot plant was successfully made to provide pilot/lab scale production facilities of jute stick particle board, handmade paper and decorative jute fabric to the registered incubates. Business Incubation Centre of total 335 sq. mt. carpet areas were established to provide fully furnished, air conditioned office space to 13 incubates at a time with facility of internet, fax and xerox. In addition to all these NINFET has well equipped pilot plant spinning mill with

machine, which are scares in jute mill, training and farmers' hostel for accommodation of 40 persons at a time, conference room, meeting room, air conditioned dining hall for 200 persons, which are rented to incubates at a reasonable charge. Since many of the technologies developed at NINFET are for the benefit of small scale and cottage industry, small and marginal farmers and rural artisans, we are constantly doing our efforts to find out suitable entrepreneurs who are really interested to establish manufacturing units specially at village level.

Handicrafts and handlooms are two such industries in India that have their special identity. With a mode of expressing one's mind, soul, traditions and modern outlook, these two industries have created magic all over the world. The variety and expertise of handicrafts speaks



Coordinating organisations of training programmes.

through pottery, metal work, different fibre based products, jewelry, wooden art, marble or stone work, handmade paper items, toys etc. On the other hand, the glory of handloom industry can be stated in the form of designer clothes with a variety in fabric, printing styles, designs, patterns and specialized embroideries. In fact, almost every state in India has their own style of handicrafts and handlooms to boast their distinctiveness.

During last four years, ABI, NINFET conducted a number of Institute-industry meet, Agri-investors meet for technology transfer and fund mobilisation through signing of MOU and MOA of NIRJAFT technologies. Promotion of entrepreneurship by providing hands on training in well equipped “jute diversified product manufacturing” laboratory as well as consultancy services to stakeholders including women and unemployed youths has become a regular activity. Outreach training programs on the manufacture of jute and some other natural fiber (viz. banana, pineapple and yak fibre) based diversified product has been conducted in West Bengal and other eastern and north eastern states.

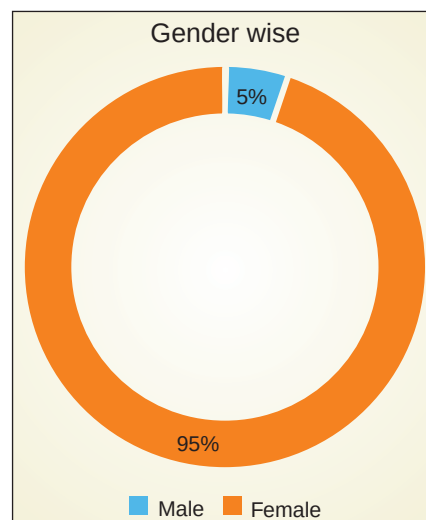
The trainings organised were coordinated through various government and non-government organizations. The trend shows that, highest percentage (45%) were organised by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVKs) followed by State Government – 27%; Non-Government Organizations (NGO) -

23% and ICAR Institute – 5%. It clearly shows the accessibility of trainees through Krishi Vigyan Kendra. Ninety five percent (95%) of the trainees are female showing that more and more female are interested in taking up entrepreneurship in jute handicraft sector.

ABI NINFET

has got a very good success in micro entrepreneurship development through establishment of value chain in jute based handicraft manufacture where a large group of village people, especially women, who have easy access to the raw jute fibre, converts the raw fibre into ‘braids’. These breads in raw form or after value addition through bleaching and dyeing is used by another group of people (artisans) who do not either have the easy access to jute fibre or having better skill than making breads, to produce finished beautiful handicraft item like table and floor mats, pen stand, decorative carry bags, rakhi, dolls, different models, hats and numerous other item. These handicrafts are marketed by these artisans in different fairs or supplied to different agencies that have their own marketing channel.

ABI-NINFET is constantly working to create new group of artisans through hands-on training not only on handicraft but also other products like jute based bags, file, folders, slippers, ornaments, specialty garments, handmade paper and paper items, bleaching and dyeing and supporting them after completion of training through supply of raw materials (jute yarn and braids – natural, bleached and colored, decorative and ornamental fabric etc.) through a ‘raw material bank’ set up for the purpose, providing information and help to participate in different fairs, and limited support of marketing through its ‘Product Display cum Sales Counter’. During last four years ABI-NINFET has



Gender of trainee participants.

provided free of cost training to 440 number of unemployed women (419) and youth (21) and supported more than 231 artisans with raw materials worth ₹ 4.5 lakh from its raw material bank. Total revenue generated during these four years is approx. ₹ 27.52 lakhs.

ABI-NINFET has also stressed on the development of entrepreneurs in the area of jute and some other fibre based decorative and ornamental fabric production in handloom and its product. We are regularly supplying unique jute based fabrics from our pilot plant to our incubates and also guiding them with supply of new designs to produce different types of bags, file folders, slippers, dress materials including sarees etc. Thus the endeavour towards the establishment of small and micro entrepreneurship lead to different success stories.

Few Success stories

Success Story 1

ICAR-NINFET has provided advanced training on Jute and Handicrafts to Smt. Smita Mitra, proprietor of M/s. SMITA HANDICRAFTS. After receiving the training, she became a member of ABI and a Start-up under the ICAR-NINFET. She has become a regular master trainer of NINFET and NJB (National Jute Board). She is receiving all the specific and specialized raw materials from the Raw Material Bank of ICAR-NINFET from time to time. This year



Products prepared by M/s Smita Handicrafts.



Bag prepared by M/s. Quality Exports supplied to Bihar Agricultural University.

(2019) she has received an order through ICAR-NINFET for making 250 pieces of jute dolls, 200 pieces of jute coaster, 100 pieces of hanging chain and other decorative items from the organizer of Durgotsab Committee, Tollygunge, Kolkata, to decorate the Puja Pandals of Durga Puja. The theme of the Puja is to create awareness of utilizing natural products in our daily life. She is employing around 40 women artisans of SHG groups from Village Bargachia, Howrah District; Village Canning, Piyali and Sonakhali from South 24-Parganas District. These artisans have also received the training from ICAR-NINFET and now living their livelihood with this occupation.

Success Story 2

Mr. Sumantra Roy, MD, M/s. Quality Exports, one of our

Incubatees, has become a member of ABI NINFET on 03/08/2018 and hired an office space in BIC NINFET on 02/11/2018. He is manufacturing jute bags of different design. Since August 2018 he has made business of approx. ₹ 55.0 lakhs with a net profit of around ₹ 11.0 lakhs and created around 3,100 man days of skilled labour. Recently ABI NINFET has helped him to get an order of 850 Jute conference bags which he has supplied to Bihar Agricultural University, Sabour, Bhagalpur for International Conference for a total order value is ₹ 3,27,500/- (pre GST). ABI NINFET provided the design of bag and arranged specially designed Juco and Jute canvas fabric, from its pilot plant facilities to manufacture these bags. The fabric was not available anywhere in the

market and without this active support of ABI, they could not have executed this order.

Success Story 3

Mrs. Sabita Paul Roy, Secretary, Preetilata Jute Manufacturing (REH) Industrial Co-Operative Society Ltd. has taken training programme on Manufacture of Jute Handicrafts from ICAR-NINFET along with 20 other village women. She has formed a co-operative Society with them and they are engaged with production of jute handicrafts and bags. After receiving the training all of the members of the Society have registered themselves under Udyog Adhar Registration under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. They have participated at least 6 Exhibition cum Mela at various parts of West Bengal. Recently they have also participated Sabala Mela at Karunamoyee Area of Salt Lake, Kolkata during 29th November to 8th December, 2019.

Conclusion

ABI, ICAR-NINFET is playing a pivotal role in developing entrepreneurship through hands-on training programmes on "Jute based diversified products", viz. handicrafts, bags, ornaments and hand-made paper. These programme are gaining popularity among the rural mass particularly the women community. The required facilities i.e. raw material supply and market linkage are also provided by ABI NINFET for the sustenance as well as growth of the entrepreneurs.



Preetilata Jute Manufacturing (REH) Industrial Co-Operative Society Ltd. products displayed in Sabala Mela, Kolkata.

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