

# ON TRADE®

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE RESEARCH JOURNAL OF MVIRDC WTC MUMBAI

For private circulation



## Cover Story

Gender Stereotyping  
during COVID-19 affects  
Women's Wellbeing

## In Conversation



**Ms. Andrea Kuhn**  
Consul General  
Consulate General of the  
Rep. of South Africa

## Viewpoint



**Mr. Anand Kumar Bajaj**  
Founder, MD & CEO  
Nearby Technologies Pvt. Ltd.



**Ms. Sharon Buteau**  
Executive Director  
LEAD



**Bharat Ratna Sir M. Visvesvaraya**  
(15 September, 1860 - 14 April, 1962)

# FIFTY YEARS AND COUNTING

M. Visvesvaraya Industrial Research and Development Centre (MVIRDC) is a non-profit company registered and licensed under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 (currently Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013). On 26 June, 2020 MVIRDC completed 50 years of continuous service to the promotion of trade and industry.

MVIRDC became a member of the World Trade Centers Association, New York, in 1971 and established the World Trade Center Mumbai, which is the first World Trade Center in India. MVIRDC, having spearheaded the movement of World Trade Centers in India with the establishment of WTCs at Bhubaneswar, Goa and Jaipur, is assisting MSMEs in these regions through various Trade Research, Trade Promotion, Trade Infrastructure including Commercial Offices, Business Center, Trade Facilitation Services and Trade Education Programmes.

## From the Editor's Desk

The development experience of many countries has lent credence to the maxim, "If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (nation)." Undoubtedly, benefits of education are directly proportional to global development, and as a result, women now have better access to opportunities which were once denied to her. This has led to greater contribution to various activities in the economy. Comprising more than half the world's population, women have empowered themselves through the spirit of entrepreneurship.

In India, increasing number of women are looking to be economically and financially independent. At the same time, India has miles to progress in gender equality as it is ranked 112th out of 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index. India, being the second most populous country in the world, has greater responsibility to show global and regional leadership in promoting women's empowerment. India is home to 17% of the world women population and 75% of the women in South Asia live in India.



COVID-19 has been the worst pandemic in living memory, and women in the informal sector were more vulnerable to the economic ill-effects of the crisis. The crisis, brought in its wake, a number of lockdowns which worsened women's plight, leading them to greater engagement on the home front, often neglecting their economic development. As school closures were imposed, progress made to educate the girl child over the years, weakened, with fear of them reluctant to get back to schools, once the lockdown was called off.

In keeping with UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 on Gender Equality, stress was laid on women's participation in building prosperous societies and economies through accessing opportunities. This would in turn alleviate poverty and fuel sustainable economic growth. The Indian government on its part rolled out a number of initiatives to support women during this pandemic in the form of cash transfers, increase in wage rates, financial assistance, public distribution system allocations, state-specific measures, etc.

The Cover Story in this edition of On Trade provides a status of women during COVID-19 and government's efforts to provide the much-needed relief, enabling them to continue on their path to make the most in terms of safety and security.

In support of the Cover Story, an interview with Ms. Sharon Buteau, Executive Director, LEAD, speaks of the need to promote women entrepreneurship by developing a gender-neutral ecosystem.

The 'Virtual Trade and Exhibition Platform' – worldtradeexpo.org which started in October 2020 with the Handloom Festival was well received by trade and industry and has since expanded in reach and size. Following in the goodwill that the exhibition has brought in over the months, the Center organised three on-going concurrent exhibitions namely, Handicraft Expo (January 26 – May 10, 2021), Healthcare & Wellness Expo – Promoting Sustainable Living (March 1 – June 10, 2021) and Celebrating the Spirit of Womanhood (March 8 – March 31, 2021).

With a view to building inroads for basic banking facilities across the country, an article on 'PayNearby' features this unique brand that provides seamless digital banking services to majority of the Indian population.

An article has been put together on India-Singapore relations which holds immense potential in areas such as banking, tourism and aviation.

We hope the articles and interviews featured in this edition of On Trade are insightful and thought-provoking, as we continue in our endeavor to bring the best of current affairs that impact trade and industry.

*Y. R. Warerkar*

**Y. R. Warerkar**

Director General

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## Gender Stereotyping during COVID-19 affects Women's Wellbeing

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the livelihoods of many, especially those in the informal sector. While men have been hit hard by the crisis, women have had the worst economic and social fallout. Even before the crisis, women's participation in the workforce in India had been falling. Gender discrimination exists despite the fact that more women now receive education than before. This is because literate women are considered to be better caregivers for the elderly, mentors for their children and are generally expected to manage household finances well. The COVID-19 crisis has accentuated women's plight as lockdowns increased their burden of taking care of their families, in the absence of enough support from men.

As published by UN Women in 'Plan for Equal: Gender Equality, Social Justice and Sustainability in the Wake of COVID-19', in March 2021, "Within countries, the spread of the virus and its impact has been exacerbated by inequalities along the lines of class, race/ethnicity, age and gender... Decades of feminist research has made clear that the impact of crises is not gender neutral. This is no different for COVID19. While mortality rates by sex so far indicate that men are more affected by the most severe direct health impacts, women are especially hard hit by the economic and social fallout: as the majority of frontline health workers, putting their lives on the line; as victims of domestic violence forced to 'shelter in place' with their abusers; as unpaid caregivers in families and communities, picking up the slack where schools, childcare and other services are scaled back; as workers in precarious jobs whose already fragile labour market attachment is being dealt a long-term blow in the context of lock-down and economic recession<sup>1</sup>."



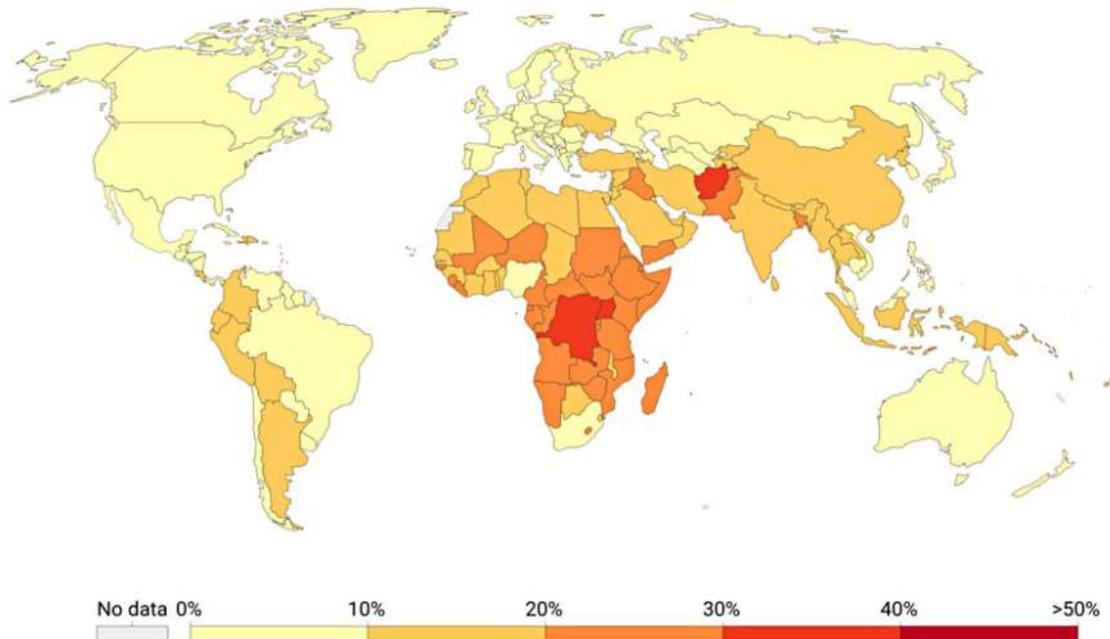
Data suggests that even in 2017, between 10 per cent and 20 per cent women in India suffered violence from an intimate partner in the previous year. This situation has only aggravated during the COVID-19 crisis. The crisis also has the potential to undo the progress made in girl-child education over the past few years.

UNICEF data on 'Gender equality and COVID-19', published in May 2020, suggests that school closures can have devastating effects on girls, "As schools close during the Covid-19 crisis, the gains girls have made in education over the last 25 years – particularly in enrolment and learning outcomes – are at risk of dissipating, especially if closures are protracted. Schools are often among the strongest social networks for adolescent girls, providing peers and mentors, and when girls are cut off from these networks, their risk of violence increases. In context where gender norms limit girls' access to the tools needed for remote learning – such as computers, smartphones and the internet – they may fall behind their male peers while schools are closed. And when schools do reopen, many girls may not return, as observed during the Ebola crisis<sup>2</sup>."

## Women who experienced violence by an intimate partner, 2017



Share of women, aged 15 years and older, who experienced physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the past year.



Source: Institute of Health Metrics & Evaluation (IHME)

Note: To allow comparisons between countries and over time this metric is age-standardized.

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### Gender Equality

Sustainable Development Goal 5 entails Gender Equality. The United Nations in India says, “Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful and sustainable world. The exclusion of women places half of the world’s population outside the realm of opportunity to partner in building prosperous societies and economies. Equal access to education, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision making processes are rights women should have as they benefit humanity at large. By investing in the empowerment of women, we not only make progress on Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, we also make gains on the alleviation of poverty and fuel sustainable economic growth<sup>3</sup>.”

However, women hold a much greater burden of household chores than men. These activities largely go unpaid and unappreciated, and lower the morale of



women. Gender stereotypes exist even in the workplace as women do not get equal opportunities and pay as their male counterparts. Thus, women’s contribution largely goes unnoticed, and the same has been amplified during the COVID-19 crisis.

An article by Dr. Vibhuti Patel, formerly working with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and SNDT Women's University, Mumbai, on 'Gendered Experiences of COVID-19: Women, Labour, and Informal Sector', published in the Economic and Political Weekly in March 2021 suggests, "The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Time Use Survey (2020) showed that during 2019, India's overall participation rate in unpaid activities was 63.6% and that the average time spent by a person on it was 289 minutes. The participation rate in unpaid activities for rural women was 85%, while that of urban women was 81.7%. In the same category, the

participation rate for rural men was 47.8%, while for urban men, it was 35.1%. An average Indian woman spends around one-fifth of her time every day in unpaid work including housework and caregiving as compared to just 2.5% of time spent by men. They also do over three times the amount of childcare as men. The unpaid care work of women in the informal economy has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as schools, balwadis, anganwadis of ICDS centres have been closed. This has also affected their paid and routine unpaid work resulting in very high physical and emotional stress, and domestic violence<sup>4</sup>."

### Government Initiatives

The government has taken several steps to support women during the ongoing pandemic in the form of social protection and initiatives to curb violence against women. The following table highlights a few of these measures:

#### Government Initiatives to Support Women during COVID-19 Pandemic in India

Social Protection
Cash transfers
Increasing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment (MGNREGA) wage rates
Financial assistance
Scaling up PDS allocations
Special provisions of cooking gas cylinders
State-specific measures

Violence Against Women
Emergency helpline number
Guidelines for One Stop Centres and Local Health Centres to ensure continuity of shelter and counselling facilities for women survivors of violence.
The Government shared National Legal Aid Services Authority's (NALSA) directory of Legal Service Institutions functional across the country along with NALSA Legal Aid Helpline and online portal with all the One Stop Centers and Women Helplines to facilitate legal aid and counselling to women facing violence.

## Violence Against Women (Contd.)

The national and subnational governments popularized Central and State-specific domestic violence helpline numbers through social media campaigns, webinars and twitter chats on addressing intimate partner violence, domestic violence and other forms of violence. The Ministry of Women and Child Development and national women's machinery collaborated with Twitter platform to identify keywords related to domestic violence and extend support to survivors of violence.

The Delhi State Legal Services Authority (DSLISA) announced specific measures such as collaboration with Mother Dairy booths (Milk Booths), pharmacists and chemists for information on survivors of violence and also launched an app to deliver legal aid to these individuals. DSLISA also tied up with anganwadi and ASHA workers who might come across domestic violence cases in their areas.

Source: COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker, UNDP<sup>5</sup>

## Gender Budget (Anomalies in Expenditure Profile FY22)

In order to mitigate the hardships of women during the pandemic, the government increased allocations to some sectors affecting the wellbeing of women during FY21. However, while the government increased allocation on Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme in its revised estimate for FY21 as compared to its budget estimate of FY21, allocation has been reduced in the budget estimate of FY22 compared to the revised estimate of FY21.

The government has also reduced allocation on National Livestock Mission, Scheme for Safety of Women on Public Road Transport, Upgrading Skill and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development, Scholarship for College and University Students and Schemes of North East Council in the budget estimate of FY22 as compared to the budget and revised estimates of FY21.

## Conclusion

Gender biases over the years have made the world an inequitable place to live. This is especially true of developing economies where women are ignorant about their rights and importance in the socio-economic sphere. While progress has been made in terms of empowering women and acknowledging their contributions to society, gender stereotypes still exist and the COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the same.

While the government is taking steps to reduce the plight of women that has intensified during this crisis, more efforts are needed to make ours a just society recognizing the role of women as not just caregivers and family supporters, but also as decision-makers and breadwinners. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the underlying fault lines in our value systems and calls for uplifting the status of women and their wellbeing in our society.



<sup>1</sup> PLAN FOR EQUAL: GENDER EQUALITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19 (www.unwomen.org, March 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Gender equality and COVID-19 (<https://data.unicef.org/topic/gender/covid-19>, May 2020)

<sup>3</sup> <https://in.one.un.org/page/sustainable-development-goals/sdg-5/>

<sup>4</sup> Gendered Experiences of COVID-19: Women, Labour, and Informal Sector (Dr. Vibhuti Patel, <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/gendered-experiences-covid-19-women-labour-and>, March 2021)

<sup>5</sup> (<https://data.undp.org/gendertracker>)

## South Africa – A Gateway to the African Continent

### South Africa looks forward to India's Chairship of the BRICS in 2021



“As head of mission, I can assure all the readers and Indian businesses that our Mission stands ready to assist Indian investors and importers in what can be a defining year, as we look towards recovering from the COVID pandemic and work towards economic normalcy... ” says **Ms. Andrea Kuhn, Consul General, Consulate General of the Rep. of South Africa**

**International Women's Day 2021 has been celebrated on the theme: "Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world." How have women-owned enterprises in South Africa overcome COVID-induced disruption and what are the lessons this holds for women in India and across the world?**

South Africa joined the world in celebrating International Women's Day on March 8, 2021 and also reflected on the progress made in achieving gender equality as we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. Since 1994, the Government of South Africa has made enormous strides in implementing policies and programmes aimed at advancing women's rights, and has remained committed to ensure that women are economically empowered.

South Africa suffered together with the rest of the world, the scourge of the global pandemic, with the most

vulnerable in society being impacted the most. Of the almost three million job losses reported in 2020, about two million were women. Added to this is the fact that two thirds of the households in South Africa are led by women, many of whom are active in the informal sector.

“Of the almost three million job losses reported in 2020, about two million were women. This is further to the fact that two third of households in South Africa are led by women, many of whom are active in the informal sector.”

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the South African Government adapted social protection and job programmes to support the vulnerable, including women, youth and persons with disabilities. In October 2020, President Ramaphosa announced

the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan. To ensure women were not disproportionately affected during the lockdown, mechanisms were put in place not just for social support, but also to assist women-owned businesses. A key focus area of the Economic Recovery Plan was small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) that make up 98% of the formal business. The Department of Small Business Development, together with Small Enterprise Finance Agency, reprioritised over R500 million (USD 34 million) to establish the SMME Debt Relief Scheme. As a result, with funds paid out under this scheme, over 23,000 jobs were saved. Of the SMMEs approved for support, 67% were black owned, 33% were female owned and 21% were owned by young people.

The Industrial Development Corporation also directed a significant portion of its funding approvals to supporting youth and women-empowered businesses. Black-owned and women-owned businesses were prioritised in the procurement of personal protective equipment.

There have been a number of success stories of women either starting businesses to produce personal protective equipment or modifying existing business operations. Ms. Nelly Shezi, Durban based owner of Elegant Line, who has received multiple international awards for entrepreneurship, in response to the global pandemic, expanded her chemical business to manufacturing hand sanitisers.

Women were also forced to venture into male dominated services and industries. One such an example is Ms. Unathi Mguye, the owner of Storky Consulting and Projects, a training and consultancy business. As this sector came to a standstill she shifted her focus to expand and grow in the construction and plant-hire businesses. This new work stream has encouraged her to pursue a business that will be sustainable regardless of lockdown or COVID.

Ms. Yashmita Bhana from Nihka Technology Group is now providing temporary free access to tech platforms for business owners, which includes access to finance and a proposal writing tool that is integrated in WhatsApp. She has in addition reached out to early childhood development centres to complete on-line training.

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, pre-existing inequalities were intensified and vulnerabilities in the social and healthcare systems were revealed. It also called attention to the importance of inclusive policies and well-functioning universal social and health care systems. Women-owned businesses that had overcome the strict lockdown were those that diversified and expanded their product/service

“As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, pre-existing inequalities were intensified and vulnerabilities in the social and healthcare systems were revealed.”

offerings to include what is critically essential for the current state of the economy.

### **How does South Africa perform in terms of women's economic empowerment in the entire African continent?**

A dedicated Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities was established in the Presidency to accelerate socio-economic transformation and implementation of the empowerment and participation of the above mentioned category of people. This was carried on through oversight, monitoring, evaluation and influencing policy. The priority of this Ministry is to ensure that socio-economic empowerment and rights of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities are mainstreamed across all sectors of society.

South Africa's National Development Plan 2030 highlights the critical role of women in the economy as key elements of South Africa's strategy to boost exports and improve skills development. The strategy also aims to lower cost of living for the poor, invest in a competitive infrastructure, reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses, facilitate private investments and improve the performance of the labour market. The role of women is thus critical to achieve this Plan by 2030.

Women are equitably represented in the South African Government. Under the leadership of President Ramaphosa, the Sixth

Administration inaugurated in 2019 achieved 50/50 parity in Cabinet, and 47% of the Members of Parliament are women. According to the World Bank, South Africa is in the top 10 countries with the highest proportion of women holding seats in national parliaments and exceeds the global average of 24.4%, with Rwanda taking the lead with 61.1%. South Africa continues striving to ensure sufficient gender representation in key sectors such as judiciary and the armed forces. The private sector is actively being engaged to ensure that women are better represented in positions of management.

A key priority for South Africa's participation in multilateral spheres is to provide strategic support for the African development agenda, encapsulated in Agenda 2063. As the Chair of the African Union (AU) in 2020, President Ramaphosa prioritised education, economic empowerment and financial inclusion of women in Africa. This was further to the celebrations of 'Decade of African Women (2010-2020)' by the African Continent, whose purpose was to re-invigorate commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment. President Ramaphosa highlighted that the global pandemic exposed entrenched inequalities between genders. He encouraged the right and access of women to contribute and meaningfully participate in decision-making and policy development. This is to ensure a gender responsive approach that is appropriately budgeted for in

programmes, targeting the development of women and girls and also including women into the mainstream of economic activity. During its Chairship South Africa also encouraged member states to develop policy guidelines to include women in public procurement processes.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which will establish a common market of over 1.3 billion people with a combined GDP of USD 3 trillion was launched on January 1, 2021. The ambition of the AfCFTA is to fast track continental economic integration, promote inter-Africa trade, stimulate economic growth and advance industrialisation and

“ South Africa is in the top 10 countries with the highest proportion of women holding seats in national parliaments and exceeds the global average of 24.4%. ”

digitalisation. The members of the Africa Union are committed to the successful implementation of the AfCFTA as a practical contribution to economic development of the Continent that will also contribute to women empowerment.

**What is the strategy adopted by the Government of the Republic of South Africa to promote sustainable development through women's empowerment?**

South Africa continues to work to broaden the participation of women in the economy. In his 2020 State of the Nation address, President Ramaphosa stated that the economic empowerment of women would be a priority to the Government. In executing this, the

South African Cabinet in 2020 approved a policy of 40% public procurement from women-owned businesses. Several departments have started implementing this policy and are making progress.

A key objective of Government is to provide support to women who operate small or micro businesses, including the ones in the informal sector. The lack of access to financial services and digital identification limit their ability to conduct business, and the Government has committed to engage the financial sector to make financial services accessible and affordable for women.

The SheTradesZA platform was introduced to assist women-owned businesses to participate in global value chains and markets. Over the next five years, the Industrial Development Corporation has set a target of providing R10 billion (USD 670 million) of government and partner funding for women-empowered businesses. To create a larger market for small businesses, the South African Government also plans to designate 1,000 locally produced products that must be procured from SMMEs.

Government has also stated its commitment to speed up the process of giving women access to productive assets such as land.

Programmes on gender equality and women empowerment are cross-cutting in all government depart-

ments. There are various initiatives by the private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations for working towards empowering women and girls, including the Motsepe Foundation, Women's Empowerment Volunteers' initiatives and the programme by the Education Department to advance science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) faculties in girls.

The Employment Equity Act looks at the racially discriminated from South Africa's Apartheid policies and also towards gender discrimination and women in the workplace. Other programmes are implemented to ensure licensing arrangements in mining, telecom and broadcasting; preferential procurement legislation BEE charters, the codes and the BEE scorecard; Development Finance Institutions which either specifically seek to broaden black ownership or generally seek to grow new sectors.

**Can you share the current status of ties between women-owned enterprises in India and South Africa? Also explain how does the trade mission of South Africa in India promote ties between women-owned enterprises in both the countries?**

Previously, exclusive events were held with the women's wings of the Indian Chambers of Commerce to promote collaboration between women entrepreneurs, where delegations travelled from South Africa led by the then Deputy Minister of Trade and Investment Thabethe.

One of the tools of enhancing trade and investment is the facilitation of

trade and investment missions. In the past, government funded delegations have visited India, consisting of Small Middle and Medium Enterprises (SMME) women owned businesses. As the Covid pandemic eases and international travel restrictions are lifted, we expect these types of interactions to continue.

However, in the interim we have facilitated and formed part of online business seminars and webinars, where market information has been shared and companies from both countries are encouraged to interact.

### **Apart from trade, how can India and South Africa empower women-owned enterprises through greater collaboration in tourism, healthcare, education, skill development, agriculture and sustainable development goals?**

Bilateral relations between South Africa and India are long standing and have matured into a Strategic Partnership. During the State Visit by President Ramaphosa to India in 2019, a Three Year Strategic Programme of Cooperation (2019-2021) was signed. The Programme is an outcome driven plan set within specific timeframes that identified key priority sectors. These include, inter alia, skills development & skills transfer, agro-processing, renewable energy, mining, information technology, tourism and healthcare. The legal frameworks for cooperation in these sectors have been concluded and there is an annual review of the implementation of programmes and projects at senior official level. The Tenth Round of the

“South African Cabinet in 2020 approved a policy of 40% public procurement from women-owned businesses.”

Joint Ministerial Commission, co-chaired by Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr Pandor and the Minister for External Affairs, Dr Jaishankar was held in New Delhi in January 2020. The meeting reviewed the Strategic Programme, and acknowledged the enormous potential to grow economic relations between South Africa and India. The review of the Strategic Programme is scheduled for 2021 and South Africa encourages greater participation by women in these discussions.

### **How can India and South Africa collaborate in multilateral and global fora such as BRICS, IBSA, G20 etc. to drive global action in women's empowerment?**

South Africa and India are both signatories of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 that changed the trajectory for the empowerment of women worldwide. South Africa is committed to the five-yearly reviews on progress in key areas such as women, education and training, gender-based violence, women's rights, women and the economy, and women in power and decision making. In the same year i.e. 1995, one of the first legislative acts of the first democratic Parliament was to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against

Women. In the most recent five-year report submitted to the UN in 2019, it is clear that South Africa has made significant advances in improving the lives of women in the social, political and economic spheres.

The current global environment is dominated by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has affected all facets of life and has the potential to erode the gains made by globalisation. South Africa will continue to participate in multilateral fora to promote the developmental agenda of the Global South. South Africa and India cooperate closely in these fora which include the BRICS, IBSA, IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) as well as the other multilateral fora including the United Nations and the G20, where we share common positions on climate change and sustainable development.

The BRICS partnership continues to promote the value of multilateralism as a response to global challenges within the context of the need to reform global political and economic governance. As the economic consequences of the pandemic are felt disproportionately in emerging markets and developing countries, economic co-operation among the BRICS partners will be indispensable for any post-pandemic recovery dispensation, because the issues of addressing the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment will remain. In this regard South Africa looks forward to India's Chairship of the BRICS in 2021.

Increased trade, investment and tourism are absolutely critical for South Africa's economic recovery. The BRICS Business Council and the BRICS Women's Business Alliance (WBA) are important Track II drivers

“The South African Government also plans to designate 1,000 locally produced products that must be procured from SMMEs.”

of commercial economic networks, and South Africa will again actively participate.

South Africa also participated in the IBSA Women's Forum Ministerial Meeting on March 16, 2021. The event is important for South Africa because President Ramaphosa had prioritised women empowerment, entrepreneurship and the fight against GBVF, while holding the Chairship of the African Union in 2020. This Forum provides a platform for South Africa to advance its policies and key issues that impact women. The upcoming event will take place within the context of country's recovery plans related to COVID-19.

IORA is committed to gender equality and women's empowerment, focusing on establishing Women's Economic Empowerment. South Africa will continue to support the IORA initiatives as an affirmation that these are essential for strong and sustainable growth. The Working Group on Women's Economic Empowerment is a key deliverable of the IORA Action Plan 2017-21.

**India's merchandise trade with South Africa has grown at a CAGR of 4%, broadly in line with the 5% growth in our overall trade with the world since 2015-16. However, 72% of our imports from South Africa comprise of mining products and precious metals. What are the potential sectors to**

**diversify the bilateral trade basket?**

As you will appreciate, South Africa is a diverse economy and as such the potential exceeds mining related products.

We are seeing strong demand for South African fruits; in 2020, we became the world's second largest exporter of citrus.

Other promising areas include mining machinery and expertise. South Africa has a long history in terms of mining production and innovation, which would be of

“South Africa will continue to support the IORA initiatives as an affirmation that these are essential for strong and sustainable growth.”

benefit to India as coal and diamond projects start to come online. Specifically, here we are referring to deep level mining, mining equipment and related services.

We also have a strong automotive sector that exports vehicles and components globally. The sector has recently been boosted by the announcement of a significant investment by Ford.

We also believe that the defence sector holds significant potential, as India modernises and equips its armed forces. South African companies have already established their presence in the market and are actively engaging opportunities.

**What is your message for micro, small and medium enterprises in India looking for trade and investment opportunities in South Africa?**

South Africa welcomes the interest of all Indian enterprises, looking for trade and investment opportunities in South Africa. As we seek to grow our economy through inclusive growth and create employment for our people, foreign direct investment becomes an important enabling element, complimented with access to export markets.

President Ramaphosa has held three investment conferences over the last three years that have received USD 52.7 billion in investment commitments towards our 5-year target of USD 81.8 billion. This

reflects that South Africa is an attractive investment destination for both local and offshore companies.

Like India, we have worked to facilitate investment by increasing the ease of doing business, including making it easier to start a business.

I urge Indian businesses to not just look at South Africa as one single market, but also as a platform into the African Continent. The AfCFTA which came into operation on January 1, 2021 following the adoption of the Johannesburg Declaration by the African Union is an emerging opportunity that should not be missed.



## “PayNearby envisions offering easy access to assisted digital and banking services, seamlessly to everyone, everywhere....” says Mr. Anand Kumar Bajaj, Founder, MD & CEO, PayNearby



An IIM-A alumnus and a Chartered Accountant, **Mr. Anand Kumar Bajaj is the Founder, MD & CEO of Nearby Technologies Pvt. Ltd.** With over 18 years of experience in Digital Payments and Mobility, Mr. Bajaj holds 5 patents in banking technology and worked earlier at YES Bank, ICICI Bank, and Ernst & Young. Previously he was the President and Chief Innovation Officer at YES Bank, where he steered several high-impact programs in digital payments. Anand has actively participated in the Steering Committee of NPCI shaping the IMPS and UPI industry and has been a member of RBI's ad-hoc committee on Mobile Payments and NUUP. At the Fintech startup named Nearby Technologies, Mr. Bajaj and his team are committed to enabling the reach of digital payments and financial services at the first mile by empowering retailers.

### Could you share the idea behind commencing PayNearby and what type of problem are you trying to solve?

PayNearby, the flagship brand of Nearby Technologies was set up with a vision to build inroads for basic banking facilities into the real India, where majority of the population resides. With 97% population remaining to be insured, 92% not having invested in Mutual Funds, and 78% not having access to finance, a large part of the country is still outside the realm of the formal economy with little or no access to basic financial services. PayNearby envisioned offering easy access to assisted digital and banking services, seamlessly to everyone, everywhere.

“At the moment, PayNearby app has 23+ services listed on it, and we are developing a one-stop-shop model to ensure that all individuals and organizations can access financial services within their targeted locality.”

However, we realized that India was largely tech-shy and needed to be handheld to the next stage of development. For a more inclusive growth, it was important that we not just create a cohesive ecosystem but offer financial services to the masses in a format that they can easily

access, trust and consume effortlessly.

At PayNearby, besides offering handholding to this tech-shy population in the rural masses, we are also customising existing digital and banking services to enable easy access. The traditional kirana stores have always formed the heart of every community and have an inexplicable understanding of their needs. We realized collaborating with these brick and mortar stores would enable us to make inroads into the pulse of the rural population while leveraging the unique relationship nurtured by these stores.

With this, in 2016 we formed PayNearby, a flagship brand of Nearby Technologies, to offer assisted financial services to the unbanked and the under-banked at

“ For our corporate clients, we offer better cash management services, it helps faster settlement and also minimises operational costs.”

the last mile and empower retailers to offer branchless banking services to local communities, thereby boosting financial inclusion. Today, we service close to 12 crore Indians on a range of products and services, earning a monthly revenue of around Rs. 5000 crores plus, clocking 10 lakh+ transactions daily, and we are leading the segment with 33% market share in Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS).

**Please explain the products and services offered by you to make India a financially inclusive nation?**

We are a B2B2C company and offer various financial and non-financial services to the masses across the country. Our range of services includes Aadhaar-enabled payment system, money transfers, utility bill payments, insurance, cash deposits, gold loan, access to government benefits and travel bookings amongst others. This is offered across 17,200 pin codes through our 10 lakh+ retail touchpoints. We have also added OTT (Over The Top), online gaming, e-commerce and e-learning amongst other services since the onset of Covid-19, as consumers strived for everything digital. At the moment, PayNearby app has 23+ services listed on it, and we are developing a one-stop-shop model to ensure that all individuals and organizations can access financial services within their targeted locality, and are steered towards a less-cash economy. We aim to offer branchless banking services to every citizen in the country at a store nearby.

**What are the other brands and products/services offered by NearbyTech?**

We expanded our network and forayed into launching multiple verticals and brands. Besides TravelNearby – to offer affordable travel solutions and InsureNearby – to offer insurance for the masses, in May 2020, we launched JobsNearby – a job registry for migrant workers who lost their livelihood during the pandemic.

For our corporate clients, we offer better cash management services, it helps faster settlement and also minimises operational costs. With our enterprise solution, corporates can digitise their cash collection service by simply harnessing PayNearby's extensive retail network.

We offer a whole bouquet of services through our business correspondent (BC) model and have roped in retailers at the first mile to offer both digital financial and non-financial services to the masses.

**How does your company judiciously use technology?**

PayNearby has an innovative and robust technology backend platform that reaches out to the deep pockets of our country. The entire focus of our technology team is to create user-experience based products that help our retailers to serve their customers better. We use advanced analytics, AI and machine learning to create simple and efficient micro

experiences for our retailers, that enable them in turn to provide a whole host of services to our end-consumers at the click of a button.

Besides, we carefully use our technology architecture to provide the highest success ratio in transactions whilst ensuring maximum efficiency in a retailer's daily life and convenience in a customer's life. The automation at the backend helps us to scale and handle volumes. We apply the mantra of "Automate or Eliminate".

“ The entire focus of our technology team is to create user-experience based products that help our retailers to serve their customers better.”

**What are the challenges your organization faces in promoting digitization in rural and remote areas of India?**

PayNearby offers financial products and services for the masses in India. The focus is primarily to provide financial services in the interiors and to the lower strata of rural India, which constitutes majorly to 93% of the population. We make these service offerings available to customers through our trusted retailer partners – the Digital Pradhans.

The unorganized retail market indirectly generates livelihoods for more than 20 crore people in the country. It is, therefore, crucial that this cohort seamlessly adapts to digital literacy thereby facilitating

ease of transactions. However, lack of digital skills and financial literacy has been a huge challenge for us especially in the rural and remote areas of the country. With the rise of e-commerce and global retail giants eyeing the Indian market, there is a dire need to empower them by upscaling their digital and customer servicing skills. This, therefore, needs to be supported with training and upskilling programs for retailers to ensure that they thrive in the consumption market against the disruption provided by online aggregators.

Furthermore, to be indispensable to the consumer, the local retailer must constantly evolve to accommodate the consumer's changing needs. Kirana shops are unlikely to grow beyond a point and invest in shelf space unless they are enabled with the expertise to draw insights based on consumer interactions. For example, if a Kirana store is offering money transfer, venturing into a new vertical such as insurance will only be possible if he is armed with the infrastructure and adeptness to gauge demand. This ensures that the retailers transform the shop beyond a mom-and-pop store and become a one-stop solution for an assortment of banking needs.

### What are the various awards and recognitions received?

We have been honoured and humbled to receive a range of awards for our tireless work over the years.

- CA Innovator Award - January 2019
- World Payments Congress - February 2019 - 50 Most Influential Payment Professionals

“To be indispensable to the consumer, the local retailer must constantly evolve to accommodate the consumer's changing needs.”

- SKOCH Order-of-Merit Awards - June 2019
- Category Leader for Fastest Growing Digital in Kirana Segment-April 2019
- DigiDhan Mission FinTech - October 2019 - Innovation in Digital Payments Acceptance Infrastructure in Rural India
- Best Fintech Innovation in Financial Inclusion - The India Finance Inclusive Awards - Dec 2019
- Best Fintech in Payments - Indian Banking Association - 2020
- Best Fintech enabling Financial Inclusion - India Excellence Awards - Jan 2021

### What is the future outlook of PayNearby and your message for aspiring Digital Pradhans across the country?

The Covid-19 pandemic has given a big boost to digital payment adoption in the country, and we have been fortunate to have been able to front-end this growth for the unbanked and underbanked masses across the country. Facilitating direct benefit transfer (DBT) disbursements worth over 9000 crores during the peak lockdown months (April-June) being a case in point.

We expanded our network and forayed into launching multiple verticals and brands like

TravelNearby, InsureNearby and JobsNearby. Additionally, we also managed to expand our online hyper local discovery and purchase application, BuyNearby to 2 lakh Kirana stores across the country.

We are set to make all basic financial and non-financial services available to customers through our Digital Pradhans. A major reason for our growth rate has been the aggressive goals the company has set for itself and aims to expand from 10,00,000 retailers as of now, to 50,00,000 retailers in the near future, in the hope to be the port of call for branchless banking in the country.

“We are set to make all basic financial and non-financial services available to customers through our Digital Pradhans.”

PayNearby has been working closely with retailers at the grass-root level to bring them to the forefront of financial inclusion. The company's mission to make 'Har Dukaan Digital Pradhan' is envisaged to empower the local retailer and create a thriving eco-system for the local community. Through our network, not only do we aim to bring financial services to the bottom of the pyramid, but also ensure that retailers stay relevant and are provided opportunities for an additional revenue stream. We urge aspiring retailers to join the digital movement to empower their surrounding communities while simultaneously expand their horizons to earn additional revenue.

We are determined to ensure our

“PayNearby has been working closely with retailers at the grass-root level to bring them to the forefront of financial inclusion.”

Digital Pradhans grow and prosper in this digital age and together we contribute to a stronger India. This determination to create a digitally forward and financially inclusive India forms the cornerstone of our brand DNA - *Zidd Aage Bhadne Ki*.

**What are the policy measures you suggest the regulators, government and other financial sector regulators to promote a less-cash economy?**

The fintech ecosystem in India has been privileged enough to have progressive regulators with a strong, steadfast vision to usher in extensive financial inclusion. Over the last few years, RBI has created policies to boost new forms of lending and payment institutions, such as mobile wallets, P2P lending and payment banks. It has also been making regulatory changes to encourage digitization of banking, credit and payment services. Regulatory bodies like NPCI have made India the prototype of digital payments through the extraordinary success of UPI and its monumental growth has caught the eye of major companies globally, putting India on the map as a digital innovator, rather than just an implementor.

The Digital India program envisioned an inclusive growth for the economy and the country. The pandemic proved to be a catalyst for India's fintech sector, accelerating its

overall growth and adoption. In fact, it highlighted the dire need for branchless banking and banking on the go. Going forward, the role of regulators will have a deep impact on the proliferation of digital payments.

Banking correspondents have served as the frontline warriors during the pandemic, working tirelessly to ensure people have access to financial services and have served as the point of disbursal for the government's direct benefit transfer (DBT) initiative. We hope to see continued focus and sector

“Regulatory bodies and the government must be urged to ensure the survival and financial viability of these agents, who are often underpaid for the selfless work.”

friendly policies implemented to boost more participation in this sector, especially for the business correspondent industry, that is truly the poor man's network and plays a pivotal role in ensuring financial access. Friendly taxation policies and booster packages will go a long way in driving more participation in agent banking programs across the country. Regulatory bodies and the government must be urged to ensure the survival and financial viability of these agents, who are often underpaid for the selfless work.

RBI's introduction of offline retail payments to facilitate the adoption of cashless transactions in areas with inconsistent internet connectivity is another great move. The limit increase on contactless payments without a PIN validation to Rs 5,000 from Rs 2,000 earlier is expected to level the playing field in favour of cards. This de-mystification of digital

payments through a simple one-tap mechanism should go a long way in digital payment proliferation in the country. This excellent initiative is likely to catapult a burgeoning move towards cashless payments. Similarly, encouraging more and more merchants on the ground to be a part of this digital movement while strengthening the country's acceptance infrastructure will go a long way in adding further momentum to the 'Digital India' movement.

The regulator has already created the sandbox environment for testing innovative ideas in a controlled live

environment. And now, initiatives by the government such as the development of a world-class fintech hub at GIFT, investor charter and a dedicated fund of Rs 1,500 crores for digital payments allocated during Budget 2021-2022 are extremely encouraging. This will augment innovation within the fintech industry and accelerate the pace of a financially inclusive, less-cash economy. ■

## India needs to make entrepreneurship ecosystem gender-neutral, says Ms. Buteau

Promoting women entrepreneurship is an effective tool to achieve overall socio-economic development. However, women face various challenges in starting and successfully running an enterprise. In an interview to ON TRADE, **Ms. Sharon Buteau, Executive Director of the Chennai-based non-profit research organization LEAD**, shares her perspectives on developing a gender-neutral ecosystem for women entrepreneurs. Ms. Buteau has more than 18 years of experience in research, international development, digital financial services and financial inclusion.

According to her, government agencies, financial institutions, research and academic institutions have a distinct role in empowering women in their entrepreneurial journey.

**Following is the excerpt of the interview:**

**(Ms. Sanjana Vijay, Research Assistant, LEAD also contributed to this interview)**

### **What are the unique business challenges women face in India?**

India has had a monumental growth story over the past decade. The growth in independent industries and services has been fuelled by an uptick in entrepreneurship. But despite this impressive growth story, women's participation in the business and economic spheres remains abysmally low. Despite the growth in the overall number of MSMEs established in India, as of 2018-19, the share of enterprises owned by women stood at only 21.5% (Source- MSME Annual report 2020). India ranked 49th in the Mastercard Index for Women Entrepreneurs (2020).

**Traditional norms and biases** continue to hinder women from exploring business opportunities and scaling up their enterprises.

### **Mobility and Time constraints-**

Time-use surveys used in mobility research literature have found that women's space-time constraints is the key impediment to their participation in the workforce and entrepreneurial growth. Results from NSS's time-use survey conducted in 2019 suggest that on average, women are only able to dedicate 5.8 hours a day to their home-based business that is interrupted by 6.6 hours of unpaid caregiving work. The Time Use Survey (TUS) conducted as part of the National Sample Survey looks to measure time spent by individuals on different activities. The primary objective of the Time Use Survey (TUS) is to measure participation of men, women and other groups of persons in paid and unpaid activities.

Lack of access to affordable seed and growth capital is also a major constraint. This gap is amplified by lack of assets and physical collaterals



“A recent report published by the International Finance Corporation highlighted that only 17% of women entrepreneurs in India are aware of financial schemes launched by the government.”

and technology. Unfavourable inheritance laws have been an impediment in access to property. Bankers are apprehensive of lending to MSMEs with limited documentation, despite prescribed gender friendly policies and programs. The most common challenge cited by bankers was identifying genuine women entrepreneurs. Male entrepreneurs often registered their businesses in their wives' names to benefit from women friendly schemes and laws. The bias usually stems from their socio-cultural

“ Around 45% of women-led businesses that faced permanent closure do not foresee starting another enterprise again, even if markets returned to normalcy.”

status and their choice of traditional areas of operation.

The estimated finance gap for women-owned MSMEs was Rs. 6.37 trillion (\$116 billion), or 73% of total demand (IFC, 2015). Additionally, a recent report published by the International Finance Corporation highlighted that only 17% of women entrepreneurs in India are aware of financial schemes launched by the government. Especially, during the current pandemic that has affected women entrepreneurs disproportionately more than their male counterparts, lack of awareness and knowledge to access government schemes and bank loans is a huge impediment towards reviving their business.

### Perceived Risks and apprehension of bankers-

#### Lack of networking opportunities, rather lack of an agency to explore networking opportunities

- While examining factors that prevent women from scaling up their business, one potential explanation is offered by a lack of incumbent female entrepreneurs in the immediate vicinity. Building on improving the effects from networks might help bridge the gender gap between entrepreneurship among men and women, either due to increased confidence, support from their social network, and potentially, through shifting norms.

### How has the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the challenges that women-run businesses are facing?

While the pandemic has adversely affected people across the globe, women have been more vulnerable to its effects, due to existing gender inequalities. The MSME sector is among the worst-hit segments, and enterprises led and run by women run the risk of closing down. In a survey of over 2,000 entrepreneurs that we conducted across Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, in June-July 2019, we found that one in three women-led enterprises were either temporarily or permanently closed. The short-term economic impact of business closures is predictable given the slump in the market. However, in the case of women-led enterprises, the closures have affected their business outlook and risk appetite. Around 45% of women-led businesses that faced permanent closure do not foresee starting another enterprise again, even if markets returned to normalcy. The findings on unpaid care work during the pandemic are consistent with increased burden of household responsibilities, including caring for dependents, household chores and primary production. Study shows that 59% of respondents are spending less time on their business activities. On the household front, most women reported that they did not have to allocate resources to support a family member's business

during this time (81.5%), and most women also reported that family members did not allocate any resources to their businesses to support them either. (82.3%) indicative of lack of family support and crucial pain point for helping their business ride the wave of this pandemic unharmed.

These findings are extremely important and require urgent attention so that women entrepreneurs can be provided a supportive ecosystem to thrive in the country. Understanding that in the short-run, an enterprise-owner's decision to not restart a business would mean loss of economic independence. In

“ The ecosystem players could invest more in increasing the number of gender-responsive and gender targeted incubators, as well as accelerators catering to the social and mobility constraints of women.”

the long-run, however, this could have implications on their household-level decision-making, freedom of movement and collective agency at a community level. Hence, immediate attention must be given to rejuvenate the women entrepreneurship ecosystem by providing nudges along the way to ensure a smooth transition back to business for a majority of them.

**How can we encourage more women to pursue entrepreneurship as a lucrative career path? What are the ways we**

## can create a gender-neutral environment for women to be better integrated in the entrepreneurial ecosystem?

We need a multi-pronged approach to encourage more women to take up entrepreneurial roles - to address the root causes of the various social, cultural, and economic challenges that they face.

### Role Models for young girls and women:

It is imperative to enable a change in thought process to enable a mindset shift for girls while in school and educate them that as women they must never hesitate to pursue their career and interests, in seemingly unconventional paths and not held back due to internalised beliefs of gender roles. Modules and immersive education (activities, exposure visits) should be introduced as a part of the curriculum to inculcate entrepreneurial and risk-taking attitudes early on in student life.

### Addressing mobility constraints:

In a recent study conducted by LEAD at Krea University on women entrepreneurs, the results of the study pointed that over 70% of the surveyed women entrepreneurs function in a closed communication channel by running piece-rate businesses. They work on a contractual basis, primarily to overcome mobility and travel-time constraints. While this set up gives a consistent and singular market access, it is not in the best long term interests of the businesses to explore this area of business. To this regard, the ecosystem players could invest more in increasing the number of gender-responsive and gender targeted incubators, as well as accelerators catering to the social and mobility constraints of women.

“Banks and financial organisations can look to promote networking opportunities for its women customers to meet regularly and provide training modules to improve their skill sets.”

### Response to constraints on women's safety:

Understanding the issue of safety plays an important role in determining the level of social mobility of women and so in response to this, the onus falls on ecosystem to create a safer environment and one that takes into account the lack of mobility. Thus, looking to increase the number of gender-responsive and gender targeted incubators, as well as accelerators catering to the social and mobility constraints of women.

### Enabling networking opportunities:

Due to inherent social biases in society, women lack the networking opportunities as their male counterparts. In response to this, the

“Banks should look to increase their portfolio of staff members to include more women – especially Relationship Managers.”

ecosystem of financial lenders and business operators should look to influence and create a conducive environment for these women. To that effect, banks and financial organisations can look to promote networking opportunities for its women customers to meet regularly and provide training modules to improve their skill sets. Many banks globally, offer a ‘women entrepre-

neur award’ to promote networking at an annual event and bring recognition to customers. Hosting a speaker series can also be an effective means to promote women-specific networking events.

### Creating financial tools for women:

As opposed to a product-led approach, financial institutions could look to adopt a customer-centered value proposition that combines access to financial services with information, education and networking opportunities to develop a bundle of products and services for women.

Regarding creating a more **gender-neutral environment** for women to get better integrated in the ecosystem:

### Gender sensitization of banking staff

is an important step to promote ‘gender-less lending’ and greater recognition of opportunities associated with the women entrepreneur segment. This ideally should look to include: Training, alongside developing and disseminating toolkits for loan officers on the lines of global best practices. Banks should look to increase their portfolio of staff members to include

more women – especially Relationship Managers. This would be crucial to send out a message to potential borrowers that banks are evolving to understand the requirements of the women demographic.

### Training frontline staff

to approach women customers differently will be critical to serving them better. It is important that

“ Maharashtra’s SRLM, Umed, has developed a partnership with Saheli, Karigar and the general Amazon platform through which it has facilitated the sales of 90 products worth Rs. 4.5 lakhs in just a span of two months in 2019.”

gender sensitive questions are asked to women about their personal goals for developing their business and not ones that push these women to bring in men and husbands to their business to instill a confidence factor. To do this effectively, financial institutions should focus on delivering a superior customer experience for women, as opposed to relying on a product-driven strategy.

**Alternative credit score models** are the future. Alternative credit scoring models are not new to the world of FinTechs, especially in India, with organisations like LendingKart and AyeFinance that work toward harnessing proxy data and indicators to assess creditworthiness of its applicants and connect them with the larger financial institutions to provide loans for their business. They are gaining traction with their ability to use proxy data and the need of the hour to jump-start more women to come forward to the frontline of entrepreneurship, Metrics that can value social networks, community connections etc. to value women and push them towards accessing equal opportunities of finance.

**What are the current tools in the market that encourage women-run businesses to reach out to new markets? How can we increase their presence in international markets?**

The current state interventions, besides the private ones harness the

power of e-commerce to stimulate women-run businesses to reach new markets and improve accessibility and market linkages. In terms of state initiatives, a few SRLMs have started their own digital platforms such as the ones in Kerala, Bihar, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have taken steps towards providing a platform to the SHG women that enable their women entrepreneurs to reach out to new markets and access a wider customer base. For instance, Maharashtra’s SRLM, Umed, has developed a partnership with Saheli, Karigar and the general Amazon platform through which it has facilitated the sales of 90 products worth Rs. 4.5 lakhs in just a span of two months in 2019. The SRLM allows products made by women who have individual and group enterprises to be onboarded on the condition that they have a GST certification, as this is a must for an e-commerce platform. Kerala’s state poverty alleviation program, Kudumbashree Mission, works with SHG women to start their own micro-enterprises. To promote sale of goods or products made by these

“ We have developed a Business Readiness Scorecard which can be used as a powerful policy tool to assess enterprise readiness and design targeted interventions for this segment.”

micro-enterprises, the Mission runs a brick and mortar supermarket. Additionally, they launched a digital platform enabling the sale of longer shelf life. These are encouraging examples of the role that governments and policy bodies can play in creating a more enabling environment for women entrepreneurs.

**Given your work in action research - what are some of the major knowledge gaps in understanding what works to enable women entrepreneurship and how can industry collaborate in finding solutions along with researchers?**

The current landscape of research on women entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurship in general, is limited by the **lack of reliable, high-frequency data on this segment**. Given the complexity of India’s business and social landscape, region-wise assessments can provide granular insights into the trends related to access or usage of financial products by women entrepreneurs. There is scope to improve the availability of administrative data collected through the MSME census and other surveys on a periodic basis, and integrate a gender lens in these efforts. Equally, there is little information on the complex barriers of access to finance, which often reflect the country’s socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions. A country-level diagnostic study of the demand and supply of finance for women-owned MSMEs is essential to provide a deeper contextual background

and to design sector-specific strategies. For instance, in one of our landscaping studies, we focused on understanding the challenges that home-based women entrepreneurs in the handicrafts and handlooms sector face, and the supply chains that they operate in. We found that even in this segment, there is a lot of heterogeneity in the background and motivations of entrepreneurs. Based on the insights from the study, we have developed a Business Readiness Scorecard which can be used as a powerful policy tool to assess enterprise readiness and design targeted interventions for this segment.

Capturing gender-disaggregated **data for lending:** Research indicates that women are likely to have a better repayment pattern than their male counterparts. However, this data is either not captured, or not highlighted by financial institutions while developing their credit appraisal frameworks. This insight could be helpful while developing alternative credit scoring models in order to enable women to finally start accessing cheaper loans.

The first step to addressing the research gap is to **unpack the market landscape of the supply chain.** The supply chain analysis of business models helps identify

“ Harnessing alternative data using psychometric analysis could enable lenders to make reliable predictions about the creditworthiness of potential borrowers.”

“ Possibly, the biggest inhibiting factor for women entrepreneurs are the gender norms that are established in society. Implementing policies and programs that are designed to work around these norms is one way to further female employment.”

appropriate thrust areas to optimise female entrepreneurs' access to markets and resources, and therefore, their potential to become sustainable, scalable, and visible.

Recently, A CERR (COVID-19 Enterprise Response Research) study was conducted by LEAD, to understand the financial, social and psychological impact of COVID-19 and its lockdown on women-led businesses. An important insight that was drawn from this study is that- Most businesses surveyed (81%) did not opt for business loans since the lockdown started. Even amongst the 19% who did, most (42.5%) chose to opt for loans from formal channels (Banks, SHGs, Village level organisations and cluster level federations (CLFs). This coupled with the fact that most businesses have a high level of awareness regarding government schemes, and prefer to dip into personal savings than opting for loans goes to show that these businesses have a penchant for non-debt monetary assistance. This creates a clear pathway to supporting these businesses financially, and research must be explored to create these tools for businesses that will help them in the long run:

- Creating instruments that offer short-term interest-free loans
- Continuing with the provision of schemes that give greater autonomy to the businesses through direct cash transfers

Possibly, the biggest inhibiting factor for women entrepreneurs are the gender norms that are established in society. Implementing policies and programs that are designed to work around these norms is one way to further female employment. Research could be conducted to pave a way forward to make the entrepreneurship ecosystem more gender neutral by:

- Creating gender neutral policies at banks that enable women to feel more welcome at branches. This involves a targeted approach of pushing banks to rethink their strategy of disbursing loans to women.
- Working in partnership with fintechs to develop new alternative credit scores for entrepreneurs who do not have a digital footprint or a history of digital transactions. The intention is to create an alternative credit score using data derived from non-traditional finance related information like mobile or internet transactions and payments, social media, web browsers, utility payments, and point of sale transaction devices. Harnessing alternative data using psychometric analysis could enable lenders to make reliable predictions about the creditworthiness of potential borrowers

## What policy measures and steps can states such as Maharashtra undertake to promote exports of products and services produced by women-owned enterprises in the state?

The initiatives that Governments can take are of two dimensions: Firstly, to promote women and women businesses to establish their enterprise. This involves improving their access to finance, awareness of schemes etc. And secondly, to improve the accessibility to market networks that can help promote and export their products to customers.

A few policy recommendations in the first dimension:

- Creating an exposure to non-traditional roles early on during school education so women do not hesitate in pursuing their career interests due to internalised beliefs of gender roles. Modules and immersive education (activities, exposure visits) should be introduced as a part of the curriculum to inculcate entrepreneurial and risk-taking attitudes early on in student life.

“Creating an exposure to non-traditional roles early on during school education so women do not hesitate in pursuing their career interests due to internalised beliefs of gender roles.”

- Policies and measures should be put in place to ensure that there are no gender-based segregations in skilling and vocational training, and concerted effort should be taken to ensure that women are encouraged in non-traditional fields.

- Digital literacy training, camps and facilities should be organised for women to have a higher market reach as well as to equip them to weather shocks like the one seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Tailor-made financial products for women enterprise owners should be designed and implemented through financial institutions. Additionally, this financial access should be bundled with financial management and mentoring support.
- Creating networking opportunities through digital means and social gatherings to meet industry players and sector contemporaries.

The past year has made it evident that access to technology and markets can be a game-changer for women-led enterprises. We have seen entrepreneurs pivoting their business models by producing masks, sanitizers and PPEs. This has been made possible by a rapid diffusion of information through technology and access to a supportive social network. The Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission can further amplify these efforts by bringing industry and private e-

commerce players on board as channel partners to enhance market access. Along with enhancing digital readiness, policy bodies can issue guidelines for leveraging e-commerce portals, private and public, for expanding the reach of products. As more women entrepre-

“The Ministry of Rural Development, having forged collaborations with GeM and SRLMs to onboard SHG products on the Saras Gallery, can forge a national-level partnership with these private e-commerce platforms.”

neurs get connected with the digital economy, they can also access information regarding market trends and consumer preferences.

- **Collaboration with Private sector e-commerce players:** The Ministry of Rural Development, having forged collaborations with GeM and SRLMs to onboard SHG products on the Saras Gallery, can forge a national-level partnership with these private e-commerce platforms. As the nodal agency, the Ministry can play an instrumental role in enabling standardization and reduction of the commissions charged by the platforms. An example of a nationwide partnership is that of NULM's partnership with Flipkart which is still in its early stages. A national level partnership would ensure better bargaining power for the SRLMs as some are not as active in comparison to others.

## Small, vulnerable economies' integration with global economy remains a challenge



**A**t a meeting of the Committee on Trade and Development dedicated to small economies on 2nd November, WTO members and international organizations highlighted the challenges faced by small economies in attracting foreign investment - particularly amid the COVID-19 crisis - and discussed ways to facilitate this investment.

Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVE) are a group of developing countries facing unique challenges related to their integration into the global economy. The group is mainly made up of Caribbean and Pacific small and island states, whose exports tend to be concentrated in a few sectors and are extremely vulnerable to volatile international markets.

Three members of the WTO's Small, Vulnerable Economies (SVE) Group - El Salvador, Guatemala and Saint Lucia - presented initiatives they have taken to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) in order to expand their trading capacity and support economic diversification. These include creating incentive packages, improving channels to attract investment, modernizing the delivery of governmental services through digitalization, collecting feedback from stakeholders, disseminating investment-related data and improving institutional coordination domestically. El Salvador highlighted success in attracting FDI in the aerospace industry and Guatemala outlined its National Programme for Competitiveness. Saint Lucia expressed concern with plummeting FDI as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The three countries also expressed concern about rising protectionist measures and plummeting FDI as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. They stressed the significance of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the WTO negotiations for a multilateral agreement on investment facilitation for development, in which 105 WTO members are participating. A number of participants stressed the importance of implementing WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). The United States drew attention to the recent joint communication by Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Japan and the United States on accelerating implementation of the Agreement in light of the COVID-19 crisis to help economies gain access to essential products. Reference was also made to the significant role the WTO-led Aid for Trade initiative can play in mobilizing resources to improve FDI flows into developing countries and least-developed countries (LDCs).

The WTO Secretariat noted the importance of FDI regulatory frameworks and investment facilitation policies. It was pointed out that enhanced cooperation at the cross-border and domestic level can help facilitate investment and generate more trading opportunities. Efficient authorization procedures are also very important, notably through the use of electronic processes.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) explained how the organization is helping Mongolia, Mozambique, Zambia and other developing countries identify and implement investment facilitation measures and strategies. The ITC referred to the challenges faced by small businesses in

terms of identifying and screening investment flows and their lack of access to finance. It also noted the significant revenue source that FDI represents for developing countries and LDCs.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said that small economies have only a 1.3 per cent global share of FDI inflows. It added that investment flows into SVEs declined by 17 per cent during the first half of 2020, dropping from USD 9.8 billion to USD 8 billion. Among the challenges faced by small economies, are connectivity issues due to geographical and infrastructure constraints, vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change, and the difficulty of attracting funding. UNCTAD also stressed the need to build partnerships with bigger economies and emphasized the important role played by investment promotion agencies.

Since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) 25 years ago, small and vulnerable economies (SVEs) have sought to gain special recognition and treatment within the multilateral trading system due to their unique characteristics. It is beyond question that structural and systemic constraints based on a host of internal and exogenous factors including geography, market size and structure, demography, and climate change, make SVEs distinct among WTO members.

In 2001, the Doha Ministerial Declaration established a Work Programme for Small Economies, under the auspices of the General Council, 'to frame responses to the trade related issues identified for the fuller integration of SVEs into the multilateral trading system, and not to create a sub-category of WTO members.' Discussions on the mandate have taken place since 2002 in the Committee on Trade and Development (CTD) meetings in dedicated sessions. The Ministerial Declaration at Hong Kong in 2005 reaffirmed the need to 'adopt specific measures that would facilitate their (small economies') further integration into the multilateral trading system, without creating a sub-category of WTO members.'

A number of ad hoc and discipline specific flexibilities have been negotiated and agreed in keeping with the mandate of the 4th Ministerial Conference in Doha in 2001. Notwithstanding the expansion of flexibilities, SVEs continue to face challenges in the expansion and deepening of their exports into global value chains. When considered as a group, they have been the slowest to return to trend growth in the post-crisis period and now confront a myriad of challenges, including deteriorating

fiscal and current account positions as well as elevated levels of external debt. While domestic policy interventions are critical elements within the policy toolbox required to respond to these challenges, the multilateral system can play a more meaningful role in this effort by moving beyond ad hoc and issue specific responses to systemic and cross-cutting solutions for SVEs.

It is undeniable that SVEs suffer from a combination of inherited and inherent characteristics that impede their ability to integrate into the global economy. They confront peculiar structural limitations, including: high production costs; small internal markets; a narrow range of export products and services; small and highly specialized labour markets; high transportation costs; and physical isolation from external markets. Moreover, high fixed costs of private sector activities imply cost disadvantages and a more concentrated market structure that is less competitive. In the public sector, these cost structures result in higher transactional costs and reduced service volumes. While it is accepted that international trade can assist in overcoming rigidities related to scale, the ultimate impact of international trade on SVEs is limited.

Lack of supply response following significant unilateral liberalization of trade regimes and market opening in developed and relatively advanced developing countries has prevented many low-income economies from taking advantage of the growth in world-wide trade and investment flows. Most of these countries lack basic infrastructures, skilled human resources and managerial capacity, and this inhibits trade-led growth and development. The absence of effective supply response in these economies has also meant their weak integration into the global economy. Trade capacity building has therefore become a major national and international concern in attempts to ensure beneficial participation by poor and vulnerable economies in world trade.

Financial and technical assistance from multilateral and bilateral donors aimed at facilitating the integration of developing countries into the global economy through initiatives that expand trade has been in operation since foreign aid was considered to be a means for supporting growth and development in developing countries. Under the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Doha Round of multilateral trade talks, technical assistance for trade capacity building became a prominent issue. In 2005 the Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration called for aid for trade (Aft) to help developing countries build the supply-side capacity and trade-related infrastructure that they

needed to help them implement and benefit from WTO agreements and more broadly expand trade. Aid for trade emerged during a period of increased aid commitments with the clear purpose of providing additional funding (i.e. on top of existing aid commitments) for developing countries' trade-related needs. A WTO task force identified six categories of AFT, building on the definitions used in the WTO/OECD trade-related and capacity building database: trade policy and regulations; trade development; trade-related infrastructure; building productive capacity (including private sector development); trade-related adjustment (including support for adjustment associated with changes in international trade regimes); and other trade-related needs.

Due to their small populations, the domestic market is small in these countries. As a result, most of the firms are small and medium-sized enterprises with limited opportunities for reaping the benefits of economies of scale and investing in research and development. In addition, most SVEs have a poor investment climate, weak institutions, remoteness and lack of skilled labour or adequate human capital, which limits access to external capital and constrains industrial development. Small states are also characterized by lack of competition in product markets. This leads to a misallocation of resources, inefficiencies in production and lack of incentives for innovation. Moreover, the small size of the domestic market often implies that in most sectors production cannot enjoy economies of scale. All these factors contribute to high unit production costs for firms in these countries. The high production costs are compounded by high transportation costs due to the remoteness and insularity of many small states. This implies that SVEs need to charge higher prices to stay in business or else accept lower returns on some part of their costs as compared with larger economies.

The vulnerability of small states to fluctuations in input and output prices is aggravated by their undiversified economic bases, which itself is in many cases an outcome of their limited size and the scarcity of human capital. For most economies in the Pacific and Caribbean regions, the combined share of the first and second commodity/service in total exports of goods and services is over 50 per cent. Many other small states in different regions exhibit a similar pattern, which indicates the higher vulnerability of these states to internal and external shocks.

Further, small states face systematic problems within the multilateral trading system despite acquiring significant influence in the system since the Uruguay Round. This is because of their limited bargaining power in trade negotiations and misalignment of their interests with those of the broader trade liberalization agenda. Importantly, the cost of doing business in small states seems to be generally higher than in other countries. A Commonwealth Secretariat study finds that business costs, particularly transport and labour, are significantly higher in small states. The study noted that small consignment size, poor infrastructure, lack of competition and weak institutions inflate the costs of trade and create strong economic disadvantages for these countries.

In this context, well-designed trade-related assistance may help SVEs face the challenges posed by their characteristics. This is particularly the case during a time when the prospects for small states have deteriorated further due to future preference erosion and the emergence of new and large competitors. Many small economies are critically dependent on trade preferences that they have enjoyed for a considerable period, but are now being eroded because of changing trade regimes in developed countries. There is evidence that some of these countries are likely to face severe consequences from further multilateral trade liberalization.

Given all this, a review of the small states agenda proposed in the Commonwealth/World Bank Joint Task Force Report (2000) suggests the need for small states to reposition themselves in the global economy and move further into knowledge-based and service industries. The report also calls for a renewed effort by the donor community to help small states address the challenges of adjusting their economies. It is worthwhile pointing out that the WTO's aid for trade agenda includes helping countries to adjust to trade shocks and that mitigating the loss of trade preferences through most favoured nation (MFN) tariff reductions by developed countries constitutes an interest of small states. Periodic and systematic monitoring of SVEs' domestic policies at the multilateral level along with timely readjustments in international institutional support mechanisms could mitigate the challenges faced by SVEs in their strive to accelerate trade and integrate with the global economy. ■

## India - Singapore economic cooperation remains robust and growing

India and Singapore have nurtured their close ties through commercial, cultural and people-to-people links across a millennium. Their shared bonds have been further strengthened through exchange of visits at the highest Government levels and through sustained efforts to increase their level of cooperation at various economic and social tiers. Over the years, Singapore has emerged as a prominent business partner of India and is reckoned to have gained the top position among all countries in the Asia Pacific region.

### Framework of the Bilateral Relationship

India-Singapore relations are based on shared values and approaches, economic opportunities and convergence of interests on key issues. Political engagement is regular. Defence relations are particularly strong. Economic and technological ties are extensive and growing. Cultural and human links are very vibrant. There are more than 20 regular bilateral mechanisms, dialogues and exercises and a number of inter-Governmental Agreements facilitating defence, political, commercial and people-to-people exchanges. There is great convergence on a broad range of international issues and both are members of a number of international forums, including EAS, G20, Commonwealth, among others.

### Defence and Security Cooperation

In the area of defence, India and Singapore have a longstanding and comprehensive partnership, which includes Annual Ministerial and Secretary level dialogues; Staff level talks between three wings of Armed forces; training of Singapore Army and Air force in India every year; annual exercises including India's longest uninterrupted naval exercise with any other country; Navy and Coast Guard ship visits. Singapore participates in IONS and multilateral Exercise MILAN by Indian Navy.

### Trade, Economic and Development Cooperation

Following the conclusion of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) of 2005 between India and Singapore, this robust relationship was elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2015 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of

diplomatic relations between the two countries. Further on, India and Singapore added new momentum and direction in their Strategic Partnership during the ASEAN India Commemorative Summit (AICS) in 2018.

Five areas of cooperation were agreed in August 2014 - (i) Scale up Trade & Investment; (ii) Speed up Connectivity; (iii) Smart Cities & Urban Rejuvenation; (iv) Skill development; and (v) State focus. In 2018, FinTech & Innovation was recognized as the new driver of bilateral relationship.

**Scale up Trade & Investment:** About 9000 Indian companies are registered in Singapore. More than 440 companies from Singapore are registered in India. The India-Singapore CEO Forum was launched in November 2018. Singapore is India's largest trade partner among ASEAN countries. Bilateral trade expanded after the conclusion of CECA from US\$ 6.7 billion in FY 2004-05 to US\$ 23.67 billion in 2019-20. Our imports from Singapore in FY 2019-20 were US\$ 14.75 billion and exports from India US\$ 8.92 billion. Total FDI inflows from Singapore into India were US\$ 105.97 billion (till September 20) which was 20% of total FDI inflow. Singapore has emerged as largest source of FDI into India with US\$ 8.30 billion in FY 2018-2019. More than 80% of listed offshore bonds by Indian issuers are listed on Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX) including several high profile Masala Bonds. Singapore-based investors have AUM valued at over US\$ 100 billion in India. Temasek Holding, a Singapore Government Fund, has invested in National Infrastructure Investment Fund of India. The outward Indian FDI to Singapore was US\$ 66.22 billion (till July 2019), making Singapore one of the top destinations for Indian investments. FDI during FY2018-19 was US\$ 4.491 billion.

**Speed up connectivity:** Singapore is directly connected to 18 Indian cities by 8 airlines. There are at present more than 500 weekly flights both ways. In 2018, about 1.27 million Indian tourists visited Singapore, making India the third largest source in tourism for Singapore.

**Smart cities:** Singapore companies are working on a number of projects in various states of India including Amaravati, new capital city of Andhra Pradesh and master planning of Pune Metropolitan Region. There is

also cooperation in capacity building in urban planning sector.

**Skill development:** Singapore is working with the Central and State Governments as well as Government organisations to establish skill development centres in various sectors. 3 international level skill centres have been established in New Delhi, Udaipur and Guwahati.

**State focus:** State governments are working with Singapore in the Smart Cities & Urban Rejuvenation as well as Skills Development initiatives. Singapore has established Joint Committees with Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. There are regular visits of state delegations to Singapore and vice-versa.

**FinTech & Innovation:** G-2-G interaction on FinTech is institutionalised through Joint Working Group on Fintech. APIX – a Singapore initiated global digital platform to connect Indian fintech companies and banks with ASEAN. There is ongoing cooperation between leading Indian and Singaporean institutions in Innovation. In 2018, Mission launched a startup engagement platform, India Singapore Entrepreneurship Bridge (InSprenneur).

**Science & Technology Cooperation:** ISRO has so far launched 9 of Singapore's satellites. There is ongoing collaboration including R & D between Government institutions, universities, private sector in the area including Industry 4.0., AI, machine learning, big data analytics, cyber security, mobility, smart energy and space.

**Cultural Cooperation:** Cultural exchanges including performing arts, theatre, museum exchanges, languages, youth exchanges are sustained through support of Government institutions of both sides and through a number of cultural societies of Indian diaspora. As an innovative mechanism for promoting Indian handicrafts, PM unveiled a platform to bring Indian artisans to Singapore on a regular basis. The 5th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in June 2019 through 200 yoga sessions. Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary celebrations were launched with a projection of Gandhiji's video on the world's largest HD video screen at Suntec Convention Centre.

## Indian Community

Ethnic Indians constitute about 9.1 % or around 3.5 lakhs of the resident population of 3.9 million in Singapore. In addition, among the 1.6 million foreigners residing in

Singapore, about 21 % or around 3.5 lakhs are Indian expatriates holding Indian passports, mostly serving in financial services, IT, students, construction and marine sectors. Singapore has the highest concentration of IIT and IIM alumni in any one city outside India. There are about 1.5 lakh Indian migrant workers in Singapore. Singapore, however does not feature in the ECR category. Tamil is one of the four official languages of Singapore. Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali and Punjabi are also taught in schools.

## India- Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement

CECA entered into force on August 1, 2005.

-CECA covers tariff reduction/elimination for 82 per cent of Singapore's exports to India. The second protocol (Upgraded CECA) reduces/eliminates tariffs for an additional 30 products.

-CECA safeguards market access and ensure a more predictable operating environment for service suppliers. The objective of CECA is to strengthen and enhance the economic, trade and investment cooperation between India and Singapore. CECA aims to liberalize and promote trade in goods and services. The Agreement seeks to establish a transparent, predictable and facilitative investment regime and to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of their manufacturing and services sectors and to expand trade and investment between India and Singapore, including joint exploration of commercial and economic opportunities in other countries. CECA envisages to facilitate and enhance regional economic cooperation and integration , in particular, to form a bridge between India and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region and serve as a pathfinder for the India-ASEAN free trade agreement.

## Vast opportunities in Services sector

According to a study 'India \_ Singapore CECA – an Appraisal of Progress' published by Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) , Singapore is a leader in Services trade ranking ninth in the world on its global exports of commercial services that were estimated at US \$ 139 billion in 2015. On imports it ranked ninth, with imports totaling US \$ 143 billion in the same year, while India ranked tenth with imports at US \$ 122 billion.

Being a major hub for both, sea and air transport, Singapore's trade in services is dominated by this sector. More than a third of its export revenues and about 30 per cent of its imports are attributable to transportation services. Singapore is also a major international banking and financial services center, with its low cost financing, large foreign exchange operations, assembly of wealth management companies and presence of major insurance and other firms.

Singapore's excellent connectivity vis-a-vis the Asia Pacific region and the fact that many companies both within the region and outside have preferred to have their global or regional headquarters located in the city have helped in boosting travel services. Its competitive tax regime and efficient infrastructure have also made Singapore a business friendly location for a variety of services ranging from arbitration services to trade and investment promotion events as a convention center. Another area of strength derives from the facility it has built up for repair and maintenance of aircrafts and ships that also brings with it substantial revenues. It is also a major re-export hub that makes available several trade related services.

Indian companies are closely involved in some form or other with these various services. Trade in telecom and computer service which is of particular interest to India, has a relatively small share in Singapore's trade but is substantial for its size. Its strong telecom and internet infrastructure and the English language strengths have been attracting several firms including Indian IT firms to locate their back end services. Other areas that Singapore is aspiring to build up are research and development, education, high tech manufacturing and health services. High end manufacturing including in some electronic and pharmaceutical products has also meant significant payments for charges for use of intellectual property.

### Cooperation in Banking

RIS study also noted that Indian banks have had a presence in Singapore for a long time, since 1941, when both Indian Bank and the Indian Overseas Bank began their operations with branches in Singapore. Eight Indian commercial banks have their presence today with the State Bank of India having the largest level of operations with six branches. The Development bank of Singapore (DBS) began its operations in Mumbai in 1994 and has twelve branches in different parts of the country. The

United Overseas Bank of Singapore also commenced its operations with a branch in Mumbai providing a whole range of banking services.

### Bilateral FDI

The Study further notes that Singapore's investment strategy in India has three key elements – promoting private investment from Singapore in India, encouraging countries like Japan to invest in India through Singapore, and exploring the possibilities of collaborative investment in third countries. Singapore has been a leading source of FDI to India for several years now, and third countries have also used Singapore for routing their investments.

As per the statistics maintained by the Department for the Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Government of India, in terms of cumulative FDI inflows into India during the period 2000-2020 (April 2000 - September 2020) Singapore with total FDI inflow \$ 105,970 million (Rs. 671,646 crores) ranked second after Mauritius as the top FDI source for India with total inflow of \$ 144,713 million (Rs. 810,960 crores). During this period, Singapore accounted for 1/5th of the total FDI inflows (in terms of US \$) to India. Mauritius remained the leading source with 29 per cent of the total FDI inflows. During 2020 – 2021 (April - September) Singapore surpassed Mauritius to be the top ranking FDI source with \$ 8301 million (Rs. 62,084 crores) as against \$ 2003 million (Rs. 15,019 crores) from Mauritius. Services sector, computer software & hardware, telecommunications, and trading were the top sectors attracting FDI equity inflows into India during this period.

### India's outward FDI to Singapore

Singapore has remained the top most investment destination for Indian companies. It has become a platform for Indian companies building their trade and investment ties with other Asian countries, notably other South East Asian nations. Some of the larger Indian business groups have also set up holding companies in Singapore that are used for investments in other Asian countries or globally, as it is an international financial centre with easier financing and refinancing schemes. There are reportedly over 6000 Indian businesses that are registered in Singapore (some reports suggest they now exceed 8000).

## India - Singapore Trade

India and Singapore have been prominent partners in trade and their trade basket remains diversified. According to the latest data released by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India's exports to Singapore during 2020-2021 (April to October) totalled Rs. 37,574 crores (\$ 5,010 million) reflecting a share of 3.34 per cent of India's total exports. In 2019 – 2020, the figure was Rs. 63,026 crores (\$ 8,923 million). In terms of India's imports, India during 2020-2021 (April – October) procured from Singapore goods worth Rs. 45,044 crores (\$ 6,040 million) accounting for a share of 3.29 per cent of India's total imports during the period. In 2019-2020, India's imports from Singapore were Rs. 104,394 crores (\$14,747 million).

## Tourism

According to India Tourism Statistics 2019, released by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Singapore is placed among the top 15 regions in respect of the number of foreign tourist arrivals in India during 2018. Tourist arrivals from Singapore increased from 163,688 in 2016 to 183,581 in 2018. The percentage share of tourist arrivals from Singapore in India's total inbound tourist during 2018 was 1.74, lower than 1.86 per cent in 2016. On the other hand, 12,72,077 Indian tourists visited Singapore in 2017, ranking behind Thailand which was the top destination for Indians in South East Asia region. There has been a steady growth of Indian tourists visiting Singapore since 2010 when the number stood at 828,994.

## Aviation

Cooperation between India and Singapore in the aviation sector has achieved a landmark milestone with Singapore Airlines and Vistara having signed a commercial cooperation framework agreement that will allow them to harmonise efforts in capacity, planning, sales, marketing, joint fare products, customer services, and operations. Vistara is a 51:49 joint venture between the Tata Group and Singapore Airlines. Strengthening partnership between Singapore Airlines and Vistara will allow both airlines to achieve further synergies on services between Singapore and India, as well as in the key regions of South east Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

## India : An attractive business destination

India is Singapore's 10th largest trading partner and 10th largest export destination (2017). Singapore sees India as an attractive destination for business. India's economy is huge and growing fast. It is the world's seventh largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the world's fastest major economy surpassing China in 2018.

Going forward, beyond 2020 India's GDP growth will recover and likely to remain robust. An increase in private investment, the push for infrastructure growth, and an investment – friendly climate are expected to fuel this growth. The Government's business friendly reforms have also paved the way with a harmonized Goods and Services Tax regime for a unified market, cutting of red-tape and easier access to credit.

Rising incomes and a swelling middle class in India will result in big shift in consumer spending and consumption patterns, presenting significant opportunities for business. Yet another significant dimension of India is the growing consumer class. Rising affluence and an increasingly digitally – savvy population are driving consumption in India. This opens up opportunities for Singapore businesses to meet the increasing demand of the Indian market. The middle- income group is projected to make up a sizeable market of US \$ 150 billion by 2020. Besides, an increase in consumption levels, rapid urbanization has changed consumer behavior and spending patterns. Consumers now have increasingly global preferences, which have led to a greater demand for good quality shopping malls, consumer products and lifestyle services. In particular, the young and more sophisticated Indian consumers are seeking foreign brands and imported consumer goods.

Online retail is expected to be at par with physical stores in the next five years (2019-2023), and Indian e-commerce sales is projected to reach US\$120 billion (\$162 billion) by 2020.

Accompanying the e-commerce growth is the rapid adoption of mobile payments. India is poised to become one of the fastest growing markets in the mobile payments space as an estimated 85-95% of all transactions are still conducted in cash.



## Canada can play a major role in realising India's aim of USD 5 trillion economy



**M**VIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai organised a webinar on Canada (British Columbia)-India Trade and Investment Opportunities with special focus on Infrastructure (Engineering) sector jointly with Government of British Columbia, Canada. BC-India Business Network, WTC Vancouver and Greater Vancouver Board of Trade also partnered in this initiative.

Speaking on this occasion, H. E. Mr. Ajay Bisaria, High Commissioner of India to Canada remarked, "Canada can play an important role in realising India's mission of USD 5 trillion economy in the next five years. Already, the size of bilateral engagement is USD 100 billion, including two-way trade, investment, education exchange and remittances. I expect this size to double in the next three years. India has an air bubble agreement with Canada and we have also launched flight connectivity between Vancouver and Delhi. Canada has also opened business visa for Indians. Currently, there are 1000 Canadian firms doing business with India and 600 of them have official

presence in India. Around 100 Indian firms are doing business in Canada, many of them in software and ITES sectors."

Ms. Selena Basi, Assistant Deputy Minister, Trade and Industry Development - Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, Govt. of British Columbia, Canada, also addressed the webinar. In her remarks, Ms. Basi said, "India and British Columbia can collaborate in promoting green economic recovery in the Post-Pandemic era, with focus on clean technology, renewable energy, smart city projects and others. Around 60 companies from British Columbia are already doing business with India, while 70 Indian companies have commercial ties with British Columbia. Engineering and architecture is one of the potential areas of collaboration between both countries and India can explore partnership with 11 lakhs engineering firms in British Columbia."

Dr. Harshadeep Kamble, Development Commissioner - Industries, Govt. of Maharashtra made a presentation on investment

climate in Maharashtra, focus sectors and policy incentives given by the state to new investors. He gave an overview of the Industrial Policy 2019, which provides 20% additional incentives for food processing, biofuel and technology oriented sectors such as AI, robotics, additive manufacturing etc.

The webinar was also addressed by Mr. Pratap Reddy Bhimireddy, Special Representative - Investment Promotion & Infrastructure Development, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh. He invited Canadian companies to invest in Andhra Pradesh and highlighted the conducive business climate in the state. He said, "Andhra Pradesh has second largest coastline in India and the state government is focusing on port-led industrial development. Andhra Pradesh has plenty of water resource and it offers cheap water supply to industry. The state has 300 industrial colleges, 500 Industrial Training Institutes and it ranks top in Ease of Doing Business. The state plans to set up a world class skill development centre in the constituency of every Parliament Member. The state has acquired more than 40,000 acre of industrial land for allotting to prospective investors."

In his remarks, Mr. Rahul Agarwal, Assistant Vice President, Invest India said, "India is the 5th largest economy in the world today and it is poised to be the 3rd largest by 2025. This opens a wide horizon of opportunity for bilateral engagement."

Mr. Vijay Kalantri, Vice Chairman, MVIRDC WTC Mumbai delivered

welcome address at the event. He said, "Government of India has ensured that it will sustain the momentum of public spending in infrastructure for sustainable economic revival. The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund is raising capital to support the development of critical infrastructure projects in India. The government plans to spend USD 1.4 trillion on infrastructure to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024."

The event was also addressed by Mr. Vishesh Chandiook, CEO, Grant Thornton Bharat, Mr. Sudhir Dhawan, Past President, Consulting Engineers Association of India, Mr. Harbs Bains Senior Manager, Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery and Innovation, Govt. of British Columbia, Canada, Ms. Caroline Andrewes, President & CEO, Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of British

Columbia, Mr. George Kondopulos, Partner, KPMG LLP, Mr. Andrew Wynn-Williams, Divisional Vice President, BC, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Mr. Cliff Mui, Industrial Technology Advisor - Pacific, National Research Council Canada, Mr. Fergus McDonnell, Associate, Fasken, Mr. David Curtis, Partner, Fasken, Mr. Austin Nairn, Vice President, Greater Vancouver Board of Trade and Mr. Vivek Savkur, President & CEO, BC India Business Network.

Ms. Rupa Naik, Senior Director, MVIRDC WTC Mumbai proposed Vote of Thanks.

The event was attended by representatives of trade and industry,

consular corps and other government officials from India and Canada.

**The webinar was held on January 21, 2021**



## National Land Bank to offer seamless access to land records

Highlighting that the Indian economy has reached pre-Covid levels in several sectors, with normalization of trade, investments and mobility, H. E. Mr. Ajay Bisaria, High Commissioner, India to Canada stated that India is set to be the "Vaccine Maker" of the world with 60 per cent of global vaccine-making capacity. While 2020 was a year of contraction, 2021 is poised for a V-shaped recovery, with IMF projecting India's growth to be in double-digits at 11.5 per cent in 2021. He made these remarks at the webinar on 'Doing Business in India's Manufacturing Sector', jointly organized by World Trade Center Mumbai, The Chamber of

Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal and Export Development Canada.

In his remarks, Mr. Varun Sood, Vice President, Invest India said that India is set to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025 with construction contributing USD 640 billion, food processing about USD 535 billion, electronics USD 400 billion, auto and auto components USD 500 billion and renewables about USD 180 billion to manufacturing GDP.

Mr. Sood further mentioned that India is the fourth-largest oil refiner in the world, and is expected to have USD 118 billion investment by 2024.

India has the fastest-growing e-commerce market in the world, poised to become USD 99 billion by 2024, growing at a CAGR of 63 per cent. He also pointed out that India is the second-largest steel producer with over 140 million tonne capacity, and is the sixth-largest producer of chemicals, projected to reach USD 304 billion by 2025.

Mr. Sood further shared that the growth drivers for manufacturing in India include Ease of Doing Business, infrastructure development, industrial land parcels, logistics (domestic/exports) and production linked incentives. The top sectors by FDI inflow between FY 2015-20 include computer hardware and



software, telecommunications, construction (infrastructure), automobile, chemicals (other than fertilizers), power, hotel and tourism and non-conventional energy, among others.

An amount of USD 1.4 trillion is being invested in infrastructure projects in the next five years, and projects such as Bharatmala, Sagarmala, Freight corridors and Udaan are aimed at reducing logistics cost by 5-6 per cent, increasing average speed of road network by 20-25 per cent and increasing port cargo handling capacity by over 100 per cent.

“The GIS-based National Land Bank digital platform will offer seamless access to land records and property registration, and 3,982 industrial parks over five lakh hectares have been mapped. The platform will act as a data repository of vacant lands, sectors, amenities and contact information, and six states are already providing district/sector/available land/state-wise reports with dynamic statistics for smarter analysis” highlighted Mr. Sood.

In his address, Mr. Vijay Kalantri, Vice Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai said that India recorded 13 per cent FDI growth in 2020, and ranked 63rd among 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 survey. It also ranked 48th in the Global Innovation Index 2020 among 131 countries. He revealed that the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme announced

by the government as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package, aims to position India as a global manufacturing hub, attract investment in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technology, create economies of scale and enhance exports.

Mr. Kalantri further suggested that the Canadian and Indian manufacturers can partner in areas such as aerospace, food and beverages, automotive, clean tech, life sciences and information and communication technology, among others. We need to collaborate in exchanging information and trade delegations between India and Canada from time to time in order to create business opportunities.

The event was attended by representatives of trade and industry, consular corps and other stakeholders from India and Canada.

**The webinar was held on January 27, 2021**

## Experts welcome progressive measures announced in Union Budget 2021-22

MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai and All India Association of Industries (AIAI) jointly organised an interactive webinar on 'Implications of Union Budget 2021-22'. The event was addressed by Mr. Himanshu Tewari, Partner, Trade and Customs, KPMG Assurance and Consulting Services LLP, Mr. M.S. Mani, Partner, Deloitte

India, Ms. Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist - ICRA Limited and Mr. Firoze B. Andhyarujina, Senior Counsel, High Court Mumbai.

Mr. Tewari welcomed progressive amendments in Customs Act to allow importers/exporters to rectify their returns without seeking permission from officers. He also

lauded the government for releasing, well in advance, new HS tariff codes 2022 that will be applicable from January 2022. World Customs Organisation has released the seventh edition of the HS Code for classification of globally tradable goods and the latest edition will be adopted by 211 countries from January 2022. With the Union Budget



**Mr. Vijay G. Kalantri**  
Chairman



**Capt. Somesh Batra**  
Vice Chairman



**Mr. Firoze B. Andhyarujina**  
Senior Counsel,  
Supreme Court of India



**Mr. Himanshu Tewari**  
Partner, Trade and Customs  
KPMG Assurance and  
Consulting Services LLP



**Ms. Aditi Nayar**  
Principal Economist  
ICRA Limited



**Mr. M.S. Mani**  
Partner  
Deloitte India

amending Customs Act to include the latest edition of HS Code, well in advance, the industry will have enough time to incorporate the same in their tax documents.

At the same time, he suggested that the government should adopt a two-lane approach to indirect tax compliance to improve ease of doing business for small enterprises, as it has already done for direct taxation, under which large firms can fulfill their compliance through self-certification, while small firms are assisted with pre-filled income tax returns. Mr. Tewari further added that through this two-lane approach small exporters and importers, who have limited financial resources to hire experts, should be assisted by Turant Suvridha Kendras on tax filing procedures. Also, the customs authority should spare small taxpayers from investigation or levy of penalty for non-compliance and the government may allow large

companies to comply with tax procedures through self-certification.”

In his remarks, Mr. Mani pointed out that the key budget proposals are reformist and progressive. The budget has addressed some of the long neglected issues and it will improve ease of doing business substantially. Some of the progressive steps taken by the government to improve ease of trading are: the proposed introduction of new customs portal to serve as a one stop interface between customs authority and industry, rationalization of customs duty exemptions and rollout of new customs duty rate from October 2021. He also welcomed the revised deadline for filing of Bill of Entry to reduce congestion in ports.

Also speaking on this occasion, Ms. Nayar said the increased allocation for capital expenditure and renewed

thrust on infrastructure augurs well for employment generation and demand.

Mr. Andhyarujina informed that the budget has carried out 79 amendments in Income Tax Act and has taken decisive steps to reduce disputes and litigation. Specifically, he welcomed the constitution of Dispute Resolution Committee to reduce litigation for small tax payers. He opined that the government’s move to include capital gains, dividend income and interest income in the pre-filled tax returns will improve ease of filing taxes for small tax payers.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, Mr. Vijay Kalantri, Chairman World Trade Center Mumbai and President, All India Association of Industries welcomed the increase in customs duty on certain products to discourage imports and promote local manufacturing. At the same time, he also suggested the government to take steps to reduce cost of raw materials for local MSMEs. He said, “The government should persuade local manufacturers of steel and other raw materials to supply these items to MSMEs at international prices so that local MSMEs can be globally competitive.”

Capt. Somesh Batra, Vice Chairman, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai proposed vote of thanks for the event.

The webinar was attended by representatives of MSMEs, consular corps, financial institutions and academia.

**This webinar was held on February 3, 2021**



## Virtual Workshop on ‘Mindset and Performance Mastery for Women Entrepreneurs’



With the objective of encouraging the right mindset to address day-to-day work-life challenges, among women entrepreneurs, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai organized a virtual workshop on ‘Mindset and Performance Mastery’ on the occasion of International Women’s Day.

The workshop was conducted by Dr. Meghana Dikshit, Founder and Director, De Mantraa. Dr. Dikshit is an Author, Trainer and a Life Turnaround Coach. Dr. Dikshit said she empowers people with her five-

step proven formula that rewires their brain to stop procrastinating and take massive action; so that they can attract more money, have better relationships, good health and freedom of time.

Dr. Dikshit said most people underutilize their potential, spend less time with themselves, have relationship issues that hurt them, carry past baggage of failures, regrets and traumas, and feel tired and fatigued. They hold on to past experiences and expectations, which act as an automatic cutoff point in their brains, and limit their speed of making progress.

She suggested happiness and success are an accumulation of experiences in every sphere of our life. The way we behave at any given time is what shapes up our attitude to behave every time. The biggest joy comes from sharing, and we should always try to enhance our sphere of operations, not shrink it.

Speaking about women empowerment, Dr. Dikshit said, women need gender-harmony. They should

reflect on their past mental and emotional conditionings, and try to break them. They should channelize their emotions in the right direction, and strive to become life-long learners in order to make progress in their lives.

She explained that the main resistance to learning comes from our mental constructs that we do not have enough time, money, opportunities, knowledge etc. We should nip this attitude in the bud and try to break the glass ceiling existing in our minds.

Ms. Rupa Naik, Senior Director, MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai encouraged women to keep improving themselves in every sphere of their operations and bring the necessary change in their mindsets to become successful. The workshop was attended by women entrepreneurs, working women professionals and students.

**The Workshop was held on March 10, 2021**

## IBCL joins hands with WTC Mumbai for webinar on EU India Trade Potential

The Indian Business Chamber of Luxembourg (IBCL) organized a webinar on ‘EU India Trade Potential – Measures to Unlock & Harness’. IBCL partnered with MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai and Partner Chambers in

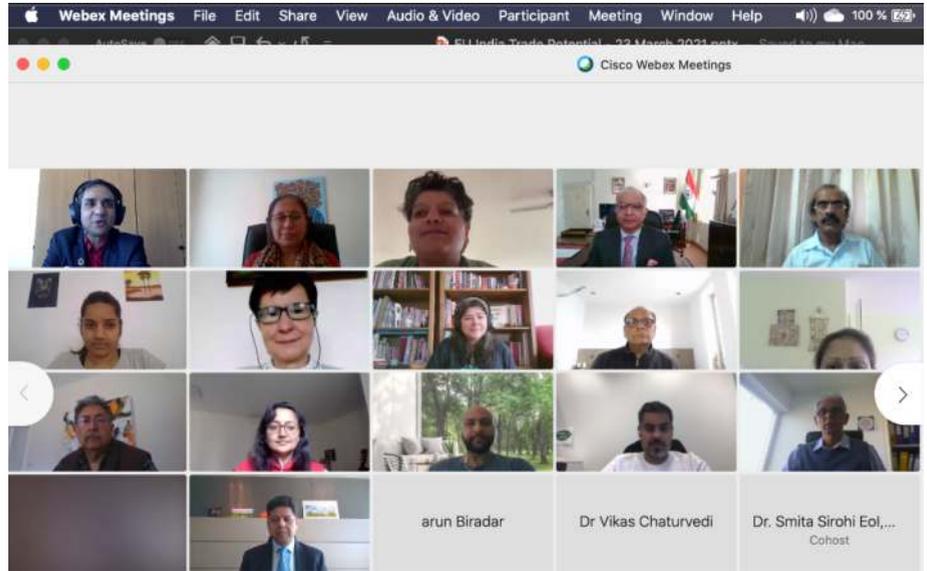
Poland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg to organize this session. H.E. Mr. Santosh K. Jha, Ambassador of India to the EU, Belgium and Luxembourg addressed the session. The event was also addressed by Mr. Mukesh

Dave, General Manager, Exports, Amul India and Mr. Sanjay Sharma, Vice President, Arcelor Mittal.

In his remarks, H.E. Mr. Jha informed that India’s Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi will hold a historic

meeting at Portugal in May 2021, with the heads of states of member countries of the European Union to discuss roadmap for bilateral relations. He further added, "Discussion on India-EU free trade agreement, which was stalled in 2013 after 16 rounds of negotiations, was revived when both the sides agreed to deepen relations at the 1st High Level Dialogue (HLD) on February 5, 2021. Apart from trade & investment, there is huge scope for bilateral cooperation in infrastructure, science & technology, climate change mitigation, Industry 4.0 etc. India and EU will jointly hold Digital Investment Forum in September 2021 to support small and medium firms and start-up enterprises of both the countries."

Speaking about India's growing relations with Luxembourg, H.E. Mr. Jha informed, "State Bank of India has recently signed agreement with Luxembourg Stock Exchange for listing and trading of India's green bonds. Similarly, Invest India and Luxinnovation signed an agreement to promote and facilitate bilateral investment. To support innovation and incubation, both the countries are also planning to organize Hackathon for technology start-ups in the coming months." In his remarks, Mr. Dave informed about the dairy sector in India and the challenges hampering EU-India



trade in dairy products. He said, "Indian dairy products are not allowed in the European market because of non tariff barriers such as veterinary standards and strict

Speaking about India's position in the world dairy industry, Mr. Dave said, "India is the largest producer of milk in the world, with a share of 20% in world production, which is higher

**Join us for a Webinar on:**  
**EU India Trade Potential – Measures to Unlock & Harness**  
 Tuesday, March 23, 2021  
 from 12.30 to 13.45 hrs (CET), 17.00 to 18.15 (IST)

**Speakers**

- Mr. Santosh K. Jha**  
Hon'ble Ambassador from India to the EU, Belgium and Luxembourg
- Dr. R S Sodhi**  
Managing Director, Amul India
- Mr. Sanjay Sharma**  
Vice President, ArcelorMittal

The deliberations shall be in the context of - Union of India Budget 2021, EU India Declaration signed in July 2020 and Luxembourg - India State Level Summit of Nov 2020.

A Q&A session of 15 minutes is included. The event is being hosted in collaboration with The World Trade Centre, Mumbai and the Partner Chambers in Poland, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Please register at the earliest, before 18th March 2021, as the overall attendees shall be limited to 150. The Webex link with joining instructions would be sent by the Embassy of India, Brussels to the selected attendees.

**PARTNER CHAMBERS**

Logos for World Trade Centre, UNICCI, and other partner organizations are displayed at the bottom.

regulations on maximum permissible pesticide limit. Even though India's dairy sector follows CODEX quality standards, it is unable to get market access in EU because of these quality standards. European veterinary standards require every Indian dairy farm unit to hire a veterinary professional, which is not economically feasible by small scale dairy units in the country."

than 14% share India had in the year 2000. By 2033, India aims to enhance its share in world milk output to 30% and Amul India will play a major role in attaining this milestone. India is the world's fastest growing dairy market as the country's milk production has been growing at an average annual growth of 4.5% in recent years, compared to the global average growth of 2%. India's milk sector provides livelihood to 160 million dairy farmers and the country exports value added dairy products to USA, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, UAE and several other countries."

Mr. Sharma outlined how Arcelor Mittal was instrumental in the largest foreign direct investment

from EU to India when the company bought Essar Steel's steel manufacturing facility in Hazira, Gujarat in December 2019. He said, "Besides acquiring Essar Steel, Arcelor Mittal has also invested in ancillary facilities such as slurry pipeline, captive power plants and iron ore mines in India to support its steel manufacturing operation in

India. Arcelor Mittal has also committed to play a key role in India's mission to increase its annual steel manufacturing capacity from 100 million tonne today to 300 million tonne in the years to come. The company has committed to invest Rs. 50,000 crore in Odisha and Gujarat to strengthen its steel manufacturing capacity in India."

Mr. Aditya Sharma, Co-President, IBCL delivered vote of thanks for the event. The webinar was attended by members of trade & industry, academia and consular corps.

**The webinar was held on March 23, 2021**

## WTC Mumbai organizes webinar on Sustainable Living



**M**WIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai organised an interactive webinar on 'Journey towards Sustainable Living' on March 25, 2021 to create awareness about sustainable living through spiritual and traditional therapeutic techniques. The webinar offered a unique opportunity for the exhibitors of the Health and Wellness Expo, which is a unique digital initiative of World Trade Center Mumbai, to interact with prospective clients and stakeholders from the wellness industry

Speaking at this event, Ms. Manisha Anwekar, Founder, Spiritual Konnect explained about her organisation RISE which trains individuals to reconnect with their inner self through a unique meditation technique known as RISE. During the

session, Ms. Anwekar played a divine music and instructed the participants to meditate on their inner divine light, which resides in the body of every individual. While playing the meditation, Ms. Anwekar instructed the participants to visualize a holographic image of a candle that illuminates in every part of the human body. The purpose of this meditation is to de-stress our mind by releasing anger, stress and other negative feelings, by inhaling positivity and enhancing one's self-esteem. Ms. Anwekar suggested the participants to feel the radiance and peace that lies within us whenever we feel frustrated or stressed. She advised the participants to make this meditation activity part of their daily routine in order to lead a peaceful and sustainable life.

Ms. Nayana Surelia, Founder, Yaansh Yoga gave a detailed overview of the historic origin and key elements of Ashtanga Yoga. She explained that the eight limbs of Ashtanga yoga are yama (abstinences), niyama (observances), asana (yoga postures), pranayama (breath control), pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (absorption).

Ms. Surelia explained each and every limb of the yoga in detail by explaining how to practice these different steps. Yama and Niyama are the initial stages of Asthanga yoga, which a person needs to follow to progress to the next stage of this yoga. By following yama and Niyama, our body secretes hor-

mones in a balanced form. Ms. Surelia explained the four types of Pranayam, viz. rechan, poorab, keval kumb and chatush pranayam. If a person masters these four pranayam, she will be ready for the next stage of Ashtang Yoga, which is pratyahar. Pratyahar means controlling ones' sensory organs from wandering towards material affairs. The next stage is Dharana, which means to concentrate ones' thoughts on one point, either within or outside the body. Dhyana, which is the next stage of the yoga, refers to maintaining our thoughts on one point by sitting in one posture without moving our body for anywhere between 3 minutes to 3 hours.

Ms. Surelia advised the participants to practice Dhyana or meditation early morning between 3 am to 6 am, which is also known as Brahma muhurt, when the cosmic energy is closer to the earth.

Explaining the final stage of Ashtang yoga, Ms. Surelia said at the last stage of Samadhi, a practitioner loses her identity and attains true spiritual knowledge. She also informed the different types of Samadhi by explaining sattva, rajas and thamas Samadhi.

Ms. Surelia concluded her remarks by pointing out that Ashtang Yoga is an effective technique to balance the secretion of essential chemicals of brain, viz. dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin and endorphine.

Mr. Vinayak S, Research Officer - Siddha, Central Council For Research In Siddha, Chennai introduced the audience about Siddha medicine by clarifying some myths and misconceptions on this line of medicine. He said Siddha is a stream of AUYSH Medicine, which is popular in South India, especially in Tamil Nadu and

**Healthcare & Wellness Expo**  
Promoting Sustainable Living

**WORLD TRADE CENTER MUMBAI**

**Webinar on**  
**'Journey towards Sustainable Living'**  
Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 11.00 am

**Dr. Manisha Anwekar**  
Founder  
Spiritual Konnect

**Ms. Nayana Surelia**  
Founder  
Yaansh Yoga

**Dr. Vinayak S**  
Research Officer (Siddha),  
Central Council for  
Research in Siddha, Chennai

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World Trade Center Mumbai  
Email: bhupendra@wtcmumbai.org

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Tamil speaking countries such as Sri Lanka.

Speaking about the origin of this medicine, Mr. Vinayak said, "The origin of this Siddha can be traced to 10,000 BC when it was developed by Lord Shiva and passed on to his consort Parvathy and his son Lord Karthik. Later, the wisdom of Siddha medicine was passed on to demigod Nandi, Sage Agasthya and Sage Tirumular. Subsequently, this knowledge was transferred to 18 Siddhars or legendary gurus of Siddha Medicine, thereby paving the way for the evolution of Siddha lineage. The literature of Siddha is preserved in palm leaf manuscripts and stone inscriptions in ancient tamil language. Even now, 80% of Siddha medicine literature is undocumented as the classical Tamil language is very difficult to interpret."

Mr. Vinayak further explained four main categories, or pillars of Siddha,

some of which are chemistry, yoga, nyanam and the 18 disciplines or wisdom of Siddha, which include diagnostics, pathology, single herbal therapy, dietics, astrology, mystics, spiritual ethics, martial arts etc.

The webinar was attended by physicians and practitioners from medical, paramedical and traditional medicine community.

Mr. Anil Velde, DGM, Trade Promotion and Marketing, World Trade Center Mumbai delivered welcome address and thanked the speakers for sharing their valuable insights on sustainable living to the audience.

**The Webinar was held on March 25, 2021**

## Skill Development Series III Session 1: Creates awareness on legal regime for start-ups



**A** strong and appropriate legal framework is one of the most crucial foundations of an enterprise. World Trade Center Bhubaneswar organized the first technical session of the “Skill Development Series III - Starting a Start-up” based on the legal and regulatory framework applicable for start-ups. The series being organized in association with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India and Start-up Odisha was supported by Lex Protector LLP as the knowledge partner for this session in particular. Mr. Aurobinda Panda, Managing Partner and Founder, Lex Protector LLP moderated the session. In his brief address, he spoke about the start-up journey of Lex Protector and gave an introduction on the topics to be covered during the session.

Ms. Rituparna Acharya, Legal

Associate, Lex Protector LLP, in her deliberations spoke about the legal definition of start-ups in terms of various parameters such as age, entity type, turnover and nature of innovation. She shared insights on the legal compliances to be adhered to by a start-up and also explained about the required documentations. She further spoke about the various processes which stand simplified for start-ups with respect to government procurement, patents, tax benefits, compliance regimes and faster exit process.

Ms. Shilpa Chaudhury, Legal Associate and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) expert from Lex Protector LLP briefed about the definition, importance of Intellectual Property and the advantages of having the property registered for execution of legal monopoly rights over the created idea. She deliber-

ated on the uses of trademarks as a major player for effective execution of the marketing and promotion strategy of the firm. She shared insights on patent and copyrights as well. She explained the necessary quotients for creation of IPR for Start-ups and also spoke on the creation and termination of different types of employment as well as vendor agreements. She further elaborated by sharing a case study of BYJU's which is one of the major clients of Lex protector LLP.

Earlier, Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, in her address, spoke about the various initiatives taken by the Center during the unprecedented times of COVID 19. While speaking about the Skill Development Series, she shared the feedback received from the attendees for the earlier sessions of Series I & II and how the attendees have benefited from the program. While welcoming all, she took the opportunity to introduce the speakers and urged the attendees to acquire the best of information from the available resource persons.

An interactive question and answer session further added value to the discussions creating a good learning experience for the attendees.

**The webinar was held on January 13, 2021**

## Session 2: Start-ups mentored on Clearing Financial Hurdles

In its endeavour to hand hold and encourage start-ups, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar as a part of Skill Development Series III, held the second technical session on “Understanding Financial Basics” in association with ICICI Bank, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India and Start Up Odisha. The session aimed at providing insights on Understanding Financial Basics, Key Performance Indicators, Capex, Source of Funds (Bootstrapping, Angel Investors, Incubators, Venture Capitalist and Financial Institution), Margins of Safety, Projected Balance Sheet, Profit & Loss Statements, Sales Forecast and Risk & Contingency.

Mr. Pradosh Ranjan Rout, Zonal Head, Odisha & Chhattisgarh of ICICI Bank in his address, spoke about the categorization of MSME enterprises from the banking perspective. He explained about the need for business loan and the relevant business loans available. Mr. Rout further shared details about the loan schemes and instalment proce-



dures. He explained about ICICI One Globe Trade Account, turnaround time, export import solutions – trade online, cash management system, payment mechanisms and InstaBIZ which is an instant banking and instant business instrument. He also shared the key benefits available for start-up in specific.

CMA Shiba Prasad Padhi in his presentation spoke about financial statements, margin of safety, risk & contingency etc. He also covered essential topics such as basic provisions of taxation, financial statements including balance sheets and profit & loss statements etc. Further CMA Padhi showcased a case study explaining the basic

finance management structure and its crucial aspects.

Earlier Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar in her address took the opportunity to welcome and introduce the speakers and spoke about the upcoming initiatives of the center. She also welcomed start-ups to feel free to seek feasible assistance from the Center.

Ms. Asha Mohapatra, Asst Manager, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar proposed the vote of thanks

**The webinar was held on January 29, 2021**

■

## Session 3: Skill Development Program series draws overwhelming response

Developing skill sets of micro & small entrepreneurs is essential to enhance the global competitiveness of these enterprises. Towards this end, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar initiated and successfully concluded the third series on Skill Development which was organised in association with

Start-Up Odisha and Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII). A valedictory session was organised to mark the completion of the three programs viz. Textile & Fashion Technology, Food Processing, and Starting a Start-Up organized under this series. The session aimed to bring all

the partner organizations to an integrated platform for sharing their overall views and also suggest future course of action.

Chief Guest, Mr. Sujeet Kumar, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, in his keynote address, deliberated on the six key focus



Sujeet Kumar

areas of the State Government of Odisha which aimed at developing the state as the skill hub of India. While highlighting the various initiatives of the government, he spoke on the skill development councils which are being formed in order to not only enhance the domestic outreach but also increase the exports of various potential products and services from the State. Mr. Kumar also shared insights about the upcoming Start-up Policy of the State.

Dr. Subrata Kumar Biswal, Faculty & Regional In-charge, EDII (Eastern Region), speaking on the occasion, advocated for further strengthening the existing Start-up ecosystem. While lauding the efforts taken by

the partner organizations, he advised for more such programs to be structured and executed for the development of the MSME sector which would help pave the way for a healthy ecosystem for the entrepreneurial culture to flourish.

The respective resource persons for the three programs shared their views on the need for bridging the skill gap for an inclusive development and growth. These resource persons are: Mr. Ashok Juneja, National President, Textile Association of India, Mr. Pradosh Rout, Zonal Head, (Odisha & Chattisgarh), ICICI Bank, Dr. Bijay Kumar Sahu, Regional Manager, National Research & Development Corporation, Government of India, Dr. Nivedita Jena, COO, DBT-ILS Biocubator, the Institute of Life Sciences and Mr. Aurobindo Panda, Founder, Lex Protector LLP.

They also invited MSMEs as well as aspiring entrepreneurs and start-ups to come forward and avail assistance made available through

their respective organizations.

Mr. Ashwini Rath, CEO, Batoi Systems Pvt. Ltd. and Convenor of WTC Bhubaneswar Start-up, Innovation & Technology Think Tank, in his welcome address, spoke about the importance of innovation driven start-ups which according to him would add sustainability to an enterprise and also enhance the productivity of human life.

Speaking on this occasion, Ms. Nimeshika Natarajan, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar shared her experience of receiving an overwhelming response to the series from participants representing a wide range of sectors.

**The webinar was held on February 25, 2021**



## BUDGET CONCLAVE 2021

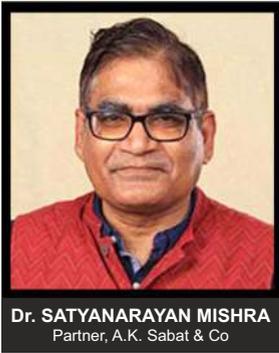
The COVID 19 pandemic has thrown many unprecedented challenges before the world and crippled the world's economy to a great extent. It is amid this challenging backdrop that India's Finance Minister tabled the Union Budget for the year 2021-22 on February 1, 2021. As the finance bill faced huge expectations from the citizens across all categories, World Trade Center Bhubaneswar in association with the Xavier Institute of Management (XIMB) organized a panel discussion on 'Union Budget

2019 & its implications" in order to gain an understanding about the budgetary provisions.

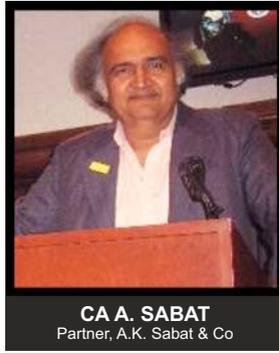
Prof. Shubhakant Padhi, Faculty, XIMB moderated the panel discussion. In his initial address he spoke about the significant clean up by the Government in this year's budget. While terming the budget as a conservative and preservative one, he lauded the Government for an impactful budget. He further introduced and invited the panel members for a discussion.

Dr. Soumyakanti Ghosh, Group Economic Advisor, State Bank of India, in his address spoke about the increased capital expenditure in the budget. While placing his views from the banking sectors perspective, he rated the budget quite high, as it well-capitalized the Indian banking sector and also positioned it well. Terming the budget as a reasonable and pragmatic one he highlighted its positive impact on the insurance sector and the stock markets.

CA. A. K. Sabat, Partner, AK Sabat &



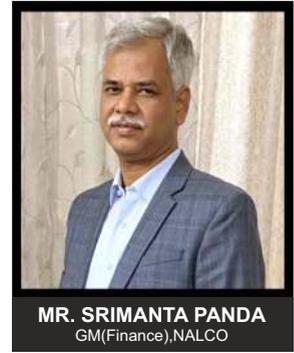
**Dr. SATYANARAYAN MISHRA**  
Partner, A.K. Sabat & Co



**CA A. SABAT**  
Partner, A.K. Sabat & Co



**Dr. SOUMYA KANTI GOSH**  
Group Chief Economic Advisor SBI



**MR. SRIMANTA PANDA**  
GM(Finance),NALCO

Co labelled the budget as one the best ones. Highlighting the features of the budget he discussed in detailed about the impact of the fiscal deficit management through borrowing, implication of nil COVID charges, disinvestments of RINL and LIC, privatization of banks and RBI's reserve policy.

Prof. (Dr.) Satyanarayan Mishra, (IES Retd.), Dean, KIIT School of Management, presented his critical view of the budget. He emphasized on the points such as education, skilling & health as the major sectors which have not received a markable allocation in the budget. While deliberating that a vibrant economy needs more consumption, he advocated for a distributive budget.

Dr. Mishra further insisted on a separate defence budget and increased spending on social infrastructure.

Mr. Srимanta Panda, General Manager (Finance), National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), interpreted the budget from the industry perspective. He spoke about the rationalization of the import and export duty. While citing the benefits being extended to the Start-ups in terms of allocation, he also highlighted the increased ease of doing business for non-resident Indian investors. Mr. Panda also lauded the announcements pertaining to reduction in customs duty as well as mega textile parks. Further, he shared insights on

faceless assessment, appeal and settlement system, capital utilization and industry spending in CAPEX. "There are no big bang announcements for the industry" he opined.

Earlier, Mrs. Nimeshika Natarajan, in her welcome address spoke in brief about the existing industrial scenario after the outbreak of COVID 19 pandemic and the importance of the budget amidst the unprecedented financial crisis. Speaking about the Conclave she sighted the success of this fifth consecutive edition

**The webinar was held on February 6, 2021**

## Odisha MSME Trade Fair 2021

**W**orld Trade Center Bhubaneswar participated in the 9th Edition of the Odisha MSME Trade Fair. The fair is an annual event jointly organized by Directorate of Export Promotion & Marketing (DEP&M), Directorate of Industries and Odisha Small Industries Corporation Ltd. (OSIC) under the Department of MSME, Government of Odisha, with an objective to provide a platform to

MSMEs for exploring new market opportunities and provide exposure on various technological and business advancements. The fair was virtually inaugurated by Mr. Naveen Patanaik, Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Odisha on March 5, 2021. The fair witnessed international participation from Mission Shakti for the Self Help Group and Mission Shakti Women Entrepreneurs, Odisha's MSME units

and food processing units, Start-ups, MSMEs working in the Engineering & allied sector and exporters. Large CPSUs like NALCO, MCL, various Banks, Paradeep refinery oil & corporate etc. also participated.

WTC Bhubaneswar organised a special pavilion of women entrepreneurs at the fair in which over ten women entrepreneurs showcased their products and services like like



handicrafts, handlooms, ayurvedic and wellness solutions, processed food, corporate services, travel and

tourism etc. The dedicated wing attracted more than 500 visitors including members of WTC, Government officials, general public as well as other entrepreneurs. The exhibitors were lauded for their initiatives and also succeeded in generating business leads for their products and services. The initiative provided

a much needed platform for boosting & encouraging the women entrepreneurs in their endeavours.

WTC Bhubaneswar also showcased its services by setting up an information kiosk at this event and provided Export guidance. The same generated interest amongst visitors for associating with WTC Bhubaneswar to enhance their business outreach.

**The webinar was held on March 5-9, 2020**

## WTC Bhubaneswar Celebrates International Women’s Day

The increasing presence of women as entrepreneurs has led to the change in the demographic characteristics of business and economic growth of the country. Women-owned business enterprises are playing a prominent role in society, inspiring others and generating more employment opportunities in the country. World Trade Center Bhubaneswar celebrated International Women’s Day by conducting a seminar on “Women’s Era in Entrepreneurship” in association with Department of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of Odisha.

In his inaugural address Mr. Satyabrata Sahu, IAS, Principal Secretary, Department of MSME, Government of Odisha, spoke about the various schemes & initiatives taken by the Government towards giving boost to women based Enterprises & Start-ups in the state.

Mrs. Nitisha Mann, Director, MSME Development Institute, Government of India delivered the key note address focusing on the theme ‘Choose to Challenge’. She spoke about the tremendous efforts by women and girls around the world, in shaping a more equal future and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. While highlighting the existing fissures in the eco system, she encouraged women in the forum to have an effective participation and leadership in of all areas of life.

Mrs. Manashi Mandhata, Joint Secretary, Department of MSME, Government of Odisha, spoke about the ground level efforts made by the



State in promoting the Self Help Groups as well as providing them with market linkages. Keeping in view the prospective contribution of Mission Shakti groups (the SHGs arm of the State of Odisha) in socio-economic development of the state, she highlighted the special emphasis being given for up-grading successful SHG members into micro entrepreneurs. She also shared that a MoU in this regard has been signed between MSME Department and Mission Shakti.



The seminar also witnessed experience sharing addresses by successful Women Entrepreneurs like Ms. Smaranika Mohapatra, Founder, Maavni Designs Pvt Ltd., Ms. Nazia Akhtar, Founder, Makma Designs Pvt. Ltd., Ms. Sanghamitra Jena, Founder, Eastern India Tours Pvt Ltd. and Dr. Chidatmika Khatua, social entrepreneur and educationist. Ms Smaranika Mohapatra spoke vividly about the importance of digital marketing & social media in today's market & how she utilised it during the pandemic & tried to sustain her business during these hard times.

Ms. Nazia Akhtar spoke about her passion towards promoting local artisans & how she made it despite financial hurdles in the initial days. She also narrated how Start-up Odisha (An initiative by MSME Dept, Govt of Odisha) helped her during her journey as an entrepreneur.

Ms. Sanghamitra Jena shared her journey of being the solo woman in the field of Tourism and how she was successful in placing herself in a field ruled by the opposite gender. Her journey not only encouraged women to break barriers in getting into diverse sectors but also

motivated them into thinking that nothing is impossible if we set our mind to it.

Dr. Chidatmika Khatua, spoke widely about the SHGs & how they have been pivotal in socio-economic development. She urged the need of change in the mindset of the women preparing themselves for bigger challenges and achievements in life. From breaking barriers to creating new milestones, she encouraged all women to be immensely proud of what they are & work hand in hand to uplift each other.

Ms Meena Kumari Behera, Additional Director Industries, Directorate of Industries, Odisha proposed the vote of thanks.

The seminar was attended by 200 delegates & was followed by a Q&A session.

**The Seminar was conducted at IDCO Exhibition Ground, Bhubaneswar on March 8, 2021**

## WTC Bhubaneswar partners for Start-up Boot Camp

**W**orld Trade Center-Bhubaneswar associated with AIC-Nalanda Institute of Technology Foundation, Bhubaneswar and Odisha Corporate Foundation, to organize a Start-up Boot Camp for women-led start-ups at IED, Odisha. The programme was supported by Start-up Odisha and held in partnership with TiE-Bhubaneswar, We Collective and EDII.

Mr. Durga Prasad, Incubation Manager, AIC-NITF, welcomed the

participants to the boot camp and briefed on the activities to be conducted during the programme. Mr Guruprasad Choudhury, Founding Secretary, OCF and Mr Gautam Mohanty, Industry Advisor, OCF, encouraged the participants to submit nominations for Ananya Women Entrepreneurship Awards 2021, an initiative by Odisha Corporate Foundation to recognize successful women entrepreneurs and start-ups in the state.

Los Jovenes Cinillogic, Vinssi, Cha

Haat, Xreative, Agri Heroes & Aroma symphonies were among the many participants that were part of this BootCamp.

This two day event witnessed multiple sessions of co-learning, and sharing of success stories from start-ups in the ecosystem.

Mr. Rashmi Ranjan Sahu, Senior Mission Associate, Start-up Odisha, Ms Asha Mohapatra, Manager, World Trade Centre, Bhubaneswar and Mr Manas Kumar Samantaray,

Program Associate, AIC-NITF also enriched the sessions with their presence and deliberations.

The event received 42 registrations from start-up enterprises which are at various stages such as ideation, prototype or early traction and operational across multiple sectors of industry. Dynamic and enthusiastic participation from women led start-ups made the boot camp interesting and successful.

The participants went through intensive learning sessions for working on their business ideas and represent the same through ideation canvas, customer persona canvas, product development canvas and business model canvas.

Mr. Vishnu Nagaraj, CEO & Founder, Carve Start-up Labs was the mentor for this boot camp. He conducted six sessions on various topics such as idea validation, understanding the



customer, product development, marketing strategy, business management and pitch presentation.

The start-ups were also trained on how to prepare a pitch deck and the art of pitching before an audience. A mock pitch presentation was organized on 17th March, 2021 at AIC-NITF incubation centre which

helped the start-ups to share their problems during the one-on-one session with the mentor and other experts.

**The Workshop was held on March 13 and 14, 2021 at Conference hall, Start-up, Odisha**



**OBJECTIVE**

- Facilitates Trade & Investment Promotion of Odisha
- Assist local businesses to foray in to global markets

**TRADE SERVICES**

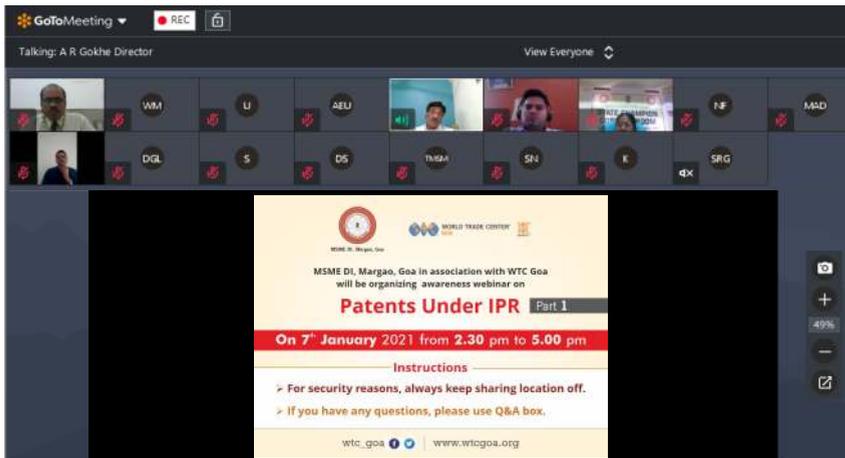
Trade related Programmes | Export Counselling | International Market Connections  
Education & Training Programmes | Opportunity to participate in International Trade Shows

**World Trade Center Bhubaneswar  
Facilitates Businesses to Access Global Markets**

Administrative office  
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## WTC Goa creates awareness on patents among MSMEs



Post COVID -19, many nations are looking to set up manufacturing facilities in India and thus the Indian economy is in the process of becoming a leading player in International Trade. However, with 'Make In India' and other schemes, it is understood that Global Manufacturers will set up facilities in India and hopefully Indian companies ramp up their strategies to make their presence felt. In light of this, Intellectual Property of each entity would have to be closely guarded and keeping this in mind, World Trade Center Goa along with Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Development Institute, Goa, organized an awareness programme on Patents under the Intellectual property rights umbrella.

Mr. A. R. Gokhe, Director, MSME DI, in his keynote address, explained that IPR can protect the ideas and business activities of entrepreneurs, and organising webinars on IPR would definitely bring about a sea of changes in the thinking of entrepreneurs. He revealed that for registered MSMEs, the Ministry of MSME

has provisions for reimbursing certain expenditures involved in registering under the Intellectual property rights. Also, they can avail the benefits of various other schemes. Concluding his speech, Mr. Gokhe announced that a sustainable Zero Defect Zero Effect scheme is in the process of being launched by The Ministry of MSME shortly.

Guest of Honour, Mr. Ashton Souza, Proprietor, Ashton Souza Consultancy, in his speech, gave specific statistics and comparisons of patent applications in India versus other countries. He shared that applying for patents in India is comparatively lower than other countries. Mr. Souza was of the opinion that the culture of patent registration in India should be encouraged and one should avoid disclosing their idea before filing for application.

Guest of Honour, Mr. Gautam Kharangate, Social worker, in his speech, stressed the importance of promoting IPR among various self help groups to safeguard their produce from being copied by others. This will not only benefit the

individual self help groups but can also benefit our economy at large, pointed out Mr. Kharangate.

Mr. Deepak Parab, Nodal Officer, Goa State Patent Information Center, in his speech, spoke about the importance of IPRs, registration facilities for various IP generated within the state, and promotion and branding of Geographical Indications for the state of Goa. Goa State Patent Information Center, he said, plays the role of a facilitator for the inventors and helps in creating awareness relating to IPR in Goa

Advocate Mr. Eeshan Usapkar, spoke about 'Patents' in detail. He emphasised on the list of things that cannot be patented as it consist of sixteen categories. He also elaborated about the criteria of patentability, types of applications, correct time and procedure for applying of a patent etc

Ms. Deepa GL, Deputy Director, MSME DI, Goa, spoke briefly about the ministry organising programs to increase more awareness on IPR, how MSMEs could have competitive advantage in global market and how to face technical issues

Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director - Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa, in his address, expressed his hope of having been able to help participants have a clear understanding of Patents under the IPR regime as it would assist them in safeguarding their business and be profitable in the long run.

**The Webinar was held on January 7, 2021.**

# Goa explores the concept of Each District being an Export Hub

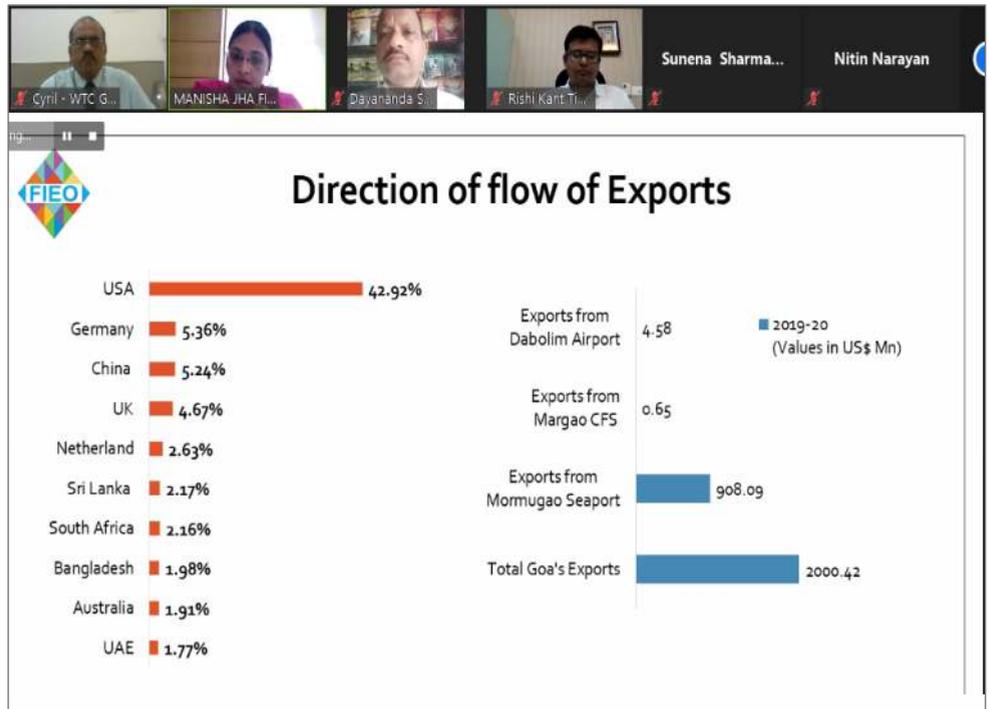
Exports from Goa have progressively expanded over the years; however the COVID-19 pandemic slowed things down considerably. It is thus imperative that corrective measures are taken and bold initiatives introduced to get Exports from Goa back on track.

In this backdrop, World Trade Center Goa was invited to participate in a unique Virtual Conference with the objective of understanding the current set up, identify bottlenecks prevailing in Panaji, North Goa and also identify the potential products that can be exported.

Mr. Ramesh Holeyachi, Joint DGFT, in his address mentioned that this project was the initiative of DGFT in response to Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of making each district an export hub. Mr. Holeyachi also mentioned that Goa has many Industrial Estates and the industries that are located in these estates have the capacity to substantially contribute to exports from Goa.

Ms. Manisha Jha, Assistant Director, FIEO, in her presentation, highlighted the export potential of Goa. She pointed out that in relation to exports, Goa stood at the 18th position among all the states in India. Ms. Jha also mentioned that Pharmaceuticals, Cashew, Marine Products along with IT and Tourism are some of the key areas of attention that Goa needs to focus on.

Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director



- Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa, in his speech informed the delegates that WTC Goa is a member of World Trade Centers Association, which has a network of 319 WTCs in over 92 countries, thus connecting over a million businesses. This network according to Mr. Desouza would help the members of WTC Goa find ready overseas buyers world over.

Mr. Mangurish Salelkar, President, Goa Technology Association, highlighted the lack of good internet connectivity in Goa and said that co-working spaces for 10-15 people can be created so that good network connectivity can be made available to them.

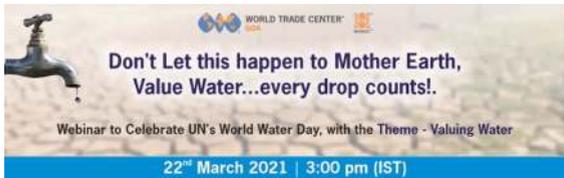
Speaking on behalf of the Pharmaceutical sector, Mr. Praveen Khuller, President, Goa Pharma Manufacturers' Association emphasized that there is an urgent need to

enhance logistics efficiency from Goa. He also suggested the need for introducing Subsidies and Tax Benefits that would attract more Pharmaceutical Manufacturers to Goa.

Mr. Satyajit Bhattacharjee, Founder cum Secretary, Goa Air Cargo Association, in his address updated on the progress of the Multi Modal Logistics Park that is being set up at Balli in South Goa. He spoke on the Pharma Village concept that is under consideration be set up at the upcoming Mopa Airport in North Goa. Mr. Bhattacharjee also called for more feedback as this would help them make best use of the facilities which are presently available at Dabolim Airport Goa.

**The Webinar was held on February 25, 2021.**

## A future scenario - We may have more oil reserves than portable water!



“Wars of this century are fought over oil, and the wars of the next century will be fought over water,” this was predicted by the World Bank way back in 1995, and almost 25 years later this still resonates with a dire possibility. The United Nation’s World Water Development Report of March 2020, warns that currently 2.2 billion people do not have access to safely managed drinking water, and 4.2 billion or almost 55% of the world’s population, are without safely managed sanitation. Thus, water resources are an essential part of the solution to climate change and for our very own survival and that of planet Earth.

The United Nations has declared 22nd of March each year as ‘World Water Day’ and this year the theme was ‘Valuing Water’. WTC Goa organized a webinar to celebrate this day and highlighted the theme of valuing water in terms of industrial development, future mobility, rain water harvesting and state government policy.

Dr. Pradip Sarmokadam, Member Secretary, Goa State Bio Diversity Board, in his address quoted the findings of his flood vulnerability analysis which shows that 14.73% of land is under 15 meters, and much of it is in the coastal zones, which are severely vulnerable to flooding from both, extreme rainfall events and sea level rise. Amongst these, Salcete, Tiswadi and Bardez talukas are the most vulnerable. Mean

annual rainfall in Goa has increased by 68% over the period 1901-2018 and with increasing rainfall. Dr. Sarmokadam said that the communities living

in low lying areas, the tourism sector, existing migrant labourers, riverine ecosystem creeks and backwaters are the most affected. Further, Dr. Sarmokadam highlighted the need for doing water audits; this he said would help in understanding water consumption patterns and preparing an action plan.

Mr. Gaving D'Souza, Director, Lila Digital and Environmental Solutions Pvt. Ltd, while speaking on valuing water through rain water harvesting, mentioned that a water crisis was on the horizon, where one third of world’s water will run out in a few years, and 1 out of 3 people will lack basic sanitation due to water scarcity. He also added that portable water will run out, before oil does. Mr. D'souza further made a presentation highlighting the irresponsible use of water and the careless attitude of citizens toward this vital resource. He also explained the entire process of rain water harvesting systems and informed the delegates about the costing for setting up a rain water harvesting system.

Ms. Sucheta Chendvankar, Senior Executive - Human Resource & Systems, Pyro Electric Instruments Goa Pvt Ltd, spoke on the best practices of using water at their plant and factory premises. She highlighted the practices of in house awareness which is done by word of mouth, banners and slogans placed

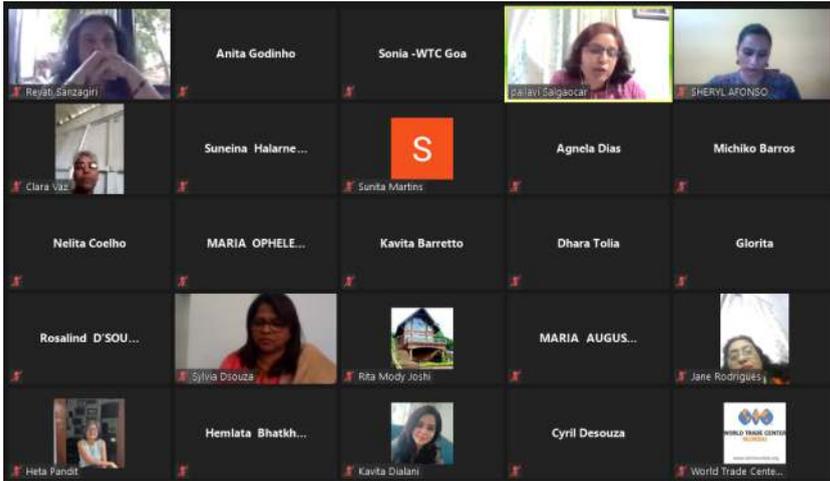
at various notable places in the factory unit. She further shared that in her factory, water is classified into two categories, one for industrial use and the other for domestic use. Ms. Chendvankar also informed delegates about installing rooftop water harvesting system where the groundwater is recharged by collecting water from the rooftops of a premise.

Mr. Jocelyn Britto, Independent Business Consultant, spoke on valuing water for future mobility. He pointed out that electric vehicles are gaining a lot of ground today and he sees that this will progress to hybrid systems of propulsion. This will then graduate to a system that converts oxygen available in water to hydrogen that will propel the vehicles of the future. Mr Britto revealed that this will be a gradual up-scaling in the technology available which will lead us from electric vehicles to vehicles that run on water, where in pollutants from this class of vehicles will be minimum, in turn protecting us and mother earth.

Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director, Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa, in his address, expressed confidence that the event would promote awareness about the different aspects of valuing water. He also urged delegates to put into practice where ever possible, to help conserve water to make available important water resources for our use and the use of future generations to come.

**This webinar was held on March 22, 2021.**

## Virtual Panel Discussion with Women Entrepreneurs from Goa



With the objective of encouraging budding women entrepreneurs to develop a leadership attitude and guide them towards harnessing their true potential, World Trade Center Goa organised a Virtual Panel Discussion with Goan Women Entrepreneurs.

Breaking the myth that women can only undertake household chores, Ms. Pallavi Salgaocar, Chairperson GCCI, Women's Wing, CA and Entrepreneur, suggested that for a long time, women have been perceived as homemakers, and have had little formal participation in the workforce. This norm is changing as women are well-balancing motherhood with their work life, although entrepreneurship is a challenging role and the journey is tough. The dynamic nature of the pandemic makes the future uncertain and calls for sustainability in business. We need to, therefore, relook at our challenges and plan appropriately.

Sharing tips on mitigating the adverse impact of the crisis, Ms. Salgaocar emphasized that women

entrepreneurs should start tracking their revenue expenses monthly, check the financial viability of their business every quarter, be patient towards garnering new investments, maintain healthy relationships with vendors and clients, and well-manage employees.

She explained that today businesses should adopt the policy of "Adapt or Perish", and one should seek opportunities globally. Trade facilitation bodies such as the World Trade Center can help women in networking globally, and scale up their businesses. However, in order to grab upcoming opportunities, women should know where to invest their time, seek help if needed, not be afraid of failures, be committed, believe in themselves, know their clients, upskill themselves, learn from their mistakes, innovate, learn to handle adversities and endeavor towards uplifting each other.

Ms. Sheryl Afonso, Clinical Nutritionist (Norbert's Fitness Studio) and Department Head (M.Sc. Food Technology Carmel College) opined that the best way to predict

anybody's future is by creating it. One needs to be constantly in search of opportunities, and should diversify his/her business at the right time. The shift should not come owing to lack of work satisfaction, but with the objective of encashing the opportunity.

Ms. Afonso said, the male-dominated society will question women's financial acumen and judgement; however, entrepreneurship for women is a rewarding experience, and women should not only get involved in running their businesses, but should also look for ways of expanding it.

Ms. Revati Sanzgiri, Founder, Proprietor, Reva's, said that women venturing into any kind of business are usually skeptical about who will buy their products. She explained that despite the COVID-19 crisis, she has been receiving a huge response for her traditional toys, and is providing employment to artisans, thereby supporting their families. She is also providing indirect employment to delivery boys during this pandemic.

"In order to succeed, women should have a vision backed by support from family and friends" concluded Ms. Sanzgiri.

Ms. Hemlata Bhatkhande, Managing Partner, Wondereat Food Products LLP, expressed her passion of providing healthy food such as millets to people, as these have very good nutritional value. She highlighted that there are very few value-added food products available in the market. She, therefore, makes ready-to-eat millet products with the objective of improving people's

dietary patterns and keeping them strong and fit.

The programme also featured a Panel Discussion where Goan women entrepreneurs shared their success stories and advised the participants to not get unnerved by competition, create their own niche, love what they do, and continue their efforts even if they have to devote their time partially towards other revenue-generating activities. They encouraged women to use social media, flyers, hoardings, websites, customer-feedback and 'word of mouth' strategies to market their business.

In his welcome address, Mr. Cyril Desouza, Assistant Director - Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Goa, briefed that COVID-19 has changed people's outlook towards accepting challenges and has opened up newer forms of opportunities for



**Virtual Panel Discussion with Goan Women Entrepreneurs**  
30<sup>th</sup> March 2021 | 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm

**Chief Guest**  
**Ms. Pallavi Salgaocar**  
Chairperson GCCI, Women's Wing CA and Entrepreneur

**Guest of Honour**  
**Ms. Sheryl Afonso**  
Clinical Nutritionist (Norbert's Fitness Studio) & Department Head (M.Sc. Food Technology Carmel College)

**Invited Speakers:**

**Ms. Sylvia Dsouza**  
Proprietor  
Truffles and The Sugarflower

**Ms. Carla Alvares**  
Proprietor  
Plush Art and Décor

**Ms. Clara Vaz**  
Creative Portrait Artist and Networker

**Ms. Revati Sanzgiri**  
Founder  
Proprietor, Reva's

**Ms. Hemlata Bhatkhande**  
Managing Partner  
Wondereat Food Products LLP

them. World Trade Center Goa is helping women entrepreneurs sail through this crisis by organizing programmes that help them grow from local to global.

The programme was attended by women entrepreneurs, leaders, students and women officers.

**The Webinar was held on March 30, 2021.**



**World Trade Center (Goa) Association**

A part of World Trade Centers Association, New York, which is an unparalleled Network of 319 WTCs in 92 Countries connecting 1 million businesses across the world, now in Goa.

**Connect Locally Trade Globally**

**OBJECTIVE**

- Facilitates Trade and Investment
- Provides Training and Educational Programmes
- Promotes Competitiveness through Research and Trade Promotional Activities

**SMEs, Corporate Houses, Institutions and Professionals with a focus on International Trade are invited to join this global network**

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## Geographical Indications - Redefining the Export Potential of Rajasthan Products



administered namely, Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, The Madrid Agreement for the repression of misleading Indication of source, and The Lisbon Agreement, for the protection of Appellation of origin and International Registration. "One must familiarize themselves with all the

and ultimately lead companies to monetize their ideas.

Distinguished Guest, Mr. C.K. Mishra, ITS, Joint DGFT, Udyog Bhawan Jaipur in his address pointed out that GI increases the brand value of a product, which is purchased with a greater sense of pride and quality assurance by a consumer. He also mentioned that products covered by GI command a premium price, thus giving the local economy a boost.

Today, Geographical Indication (GI) has become the subject of widespread interest although it is one of the oldest forms of Intellectual Property (IP). GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. Products are marked with a special sign, to be identified as originated or manufactured in a given place.

The Department of Industries-Government of Rajasthan and World Trade Center Jaipur organized a webinar on "Geographical Indications and I.P.R.: Potential and Implementation in Rajasthan" to expand the knowledge and spread awareness on GI amongst the manufacturers of Rajasthan.

Delivering the theme address, Mr. P.R. Sharma, Joint Director, Department of Industries, Government of Rajasthan informed that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is the umbrella organization for the safeguarding of GIs. Under the flagship of WIPO, three multilateral treaties have been

above for a better understanding of the subject." advised Mr. Sharma.

Chief Guest, Mrs. Archana Singh, IAS, Commissioner Industries, Investments and NRI's, Udyog Bhawan Jaipur said "I.P.R. and GI are indicators of India's deep knowledge and skills in various crafts. Protecting this knowledge will inspire people to think creatively, encourage original work, and ultimately lead to sustainable development." Mrs. Singh further added that if appropriate conditions are met GI's can contribute to development in rural areas, create employment and ultimately lead to retention of talent in the state.

Guest of Honour Mr. Vishal Tomar, Scientist and Head, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Jaipur Branch, explained how IPR promotes foreign direct investment (FDI) and technology transfers in developed and developing countries, and effective increases funding for research and development. He also explained how IPR also promotes broader dissemination of innovations through publication and licensing

Guest speaker Dr. Rohit Jain, Director, Trade Innovations Services, Jaipur, made a presentation on Certification marks. "Certification marks are given for acquiescence with defined standards, they may be used by anyone who can verify that the products involved meet certain established standards. In most countries, the main difference between collective marks and certification marks is that the former may be used only by a specific group of enterprises, while certification marks may be used by anybody who complies with the standards defined by the owner of the certification mark." Explained Dr. Jain.

The webinar was attended by delegates from all major business districts of Rajasthan representing all various trade sectors.

Vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur.

**The seminar was held on January 28, 2021**

## Exports from Rajasthan: On the Cusp of a Logistics Revolution



From (L-R) Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, WTC Jaipur, Mr. Inderpal Singh, Director, JIMS Jaipur, Mr. Manish Balani, CA, Business Head, Vayana Network, Mr. Puran Singh Shekhawat, Joint Secretary, Income Tax Gazetted Officer Association, Jaipur, Mrs. Shweta Agarwal, (FCA, FCS, CMA, LLB), Shweta Agarwal & Company, Mr. Arpit Airun, (CMA, CS, LLB), a SAP financial analyst.

India's Finance Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman tabled Union Budget 2021-22 in the Parliament on February 1, 2021. On this occasion, Hon'ble Minister announced several economic reforms and outlined the government's renewed policy thrust on infrastructure, healthcare and education. Whether it is small and medium enterprises, start-up firms, large corporations, exporters or importers, the union budget had some policy measure for every segment of the economy. In order to discuss the implications of the budget on trade and industry, World Trade Center Jaipur, in association with Jaipur's leading management institute JIMS, organised a Panel Discussion Implications of Union Budget 2021-22.

The event was addressed by Ms. Shweta Agarwal, (FCA, FCS, CMA, LLB), Shweta Agarwal & Company,

Mr. Arpit Airun, (CMA, CS, LLB), a SAP financial analyst, Mr. Inderpal Singh, Director, JIMS Jaipur and Mr. Manish Balani, CA, Business Head, Vayana Network.

In her remarks, Ms. Agarwal outlined the impact of the budget on Agriculture, Infrastructure and Auto sectors. She said, "It seems that the Government is reassuring commitment to MSP and APMCs. In FY22, Agriculture Credit is targeted at INR 16.5 Lac Crore, Agriculture Infrastructure Fund has been augmented to INR 40,000 Crore and Micro Irrigation corpus has been allocated INR 10,000 Crore. Also, the government intends to Develop five major fishery hubs across India. The government will also bring another 1000 mandis under the national digital agriculture marketing network E-NAMs."

Ms. Agarwal further mentioned that

on the infrastructure and transportation front, the Government has an objective to complete a total of 11,000 km National Highway under Bharat mala for which INR 1,18,000 crore has been allotted to MORTH (The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways). There are also discussions on the Vehicle Scrappage Policy to phase out old and unfit vehicles. Under this proposed policy, the life for private vehicles has been set at 20 years, while for commercial vehicles the life is set at 15 years.

Mr. Airun, who is an expert on financial services sector, lauded the budget for raising FDI limit on insurance from 49% to 74% and proposing the setting up of a bad bank (in the form of ARC-AMC) for resolving the bad loans in the banking sector. Pointing out another salient feature of the budget, Mr. Airun said, "The loan size eligible for debt recovery under SARFAESI Act 2002 is reduced from Rs. 50 lakhs to

Rs. 20 lakhs and FY22 disinvestment targets is set at INR 1.75 lakh crore compared to INR 2.2 lakh crore (Budget estimate) in FY21.”

Speaking on this occasion, Mr. Singh lauded the Finance Minister for providing thrust on infrastructure and economic reforms in the budget.

Mr. Balani, who is an advisor on risk

mitigation, informed that the incentives announced for the start-up sector in the budget are likely to stimulate entrepreneurial activities in the campuses of the country's premier engineering and management colleges. “Hon'ble Finance Minister proposed an extension of the tax holiday to start-up firms by another year i.e. till March 31, 2022. The minister also extended the period for claiming capital gains

exemption against investment in start-up firms by one more year (i.e. till 31st March 2022).”

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director-WTC Jaipur proposed vote of thanks for the event.

**The Panel Discussion was held on February 3, 2021**

## Global linkages to pave way for growth in biotechnology sector



(L-R): Mr. Navneet Agarwal Assistant Director- Trade Promotion, WTC Jaipur and Apoorva Rana, Jr. Scientist, B. Lal Institute of Biotechnology Jaipur.

Rajasthan today has huge potential to create immense business opportunities in the biotechnology sector and contemporary biotech products. Today, a key part of industrial process in Biotechnology deals with advance research and development, leading to the production of drugs, vaccines, biofuels and pharmaceuticals on a commercial scale.

To further explore opportunities in the sector, Dr. B. Lal Institute of

Biotechnology Jaipur, MSME DI Jaipur and World Trade Center Jaipur came together for an interactive session to discuss trade promotion activities and business facilitation measures of WTC Jaipur. The programme was attended by more than 75 aspiring inventor entrepreneurs from the biotechnology sector. The objective of the program was to sensitize the group about various events and exhibitions, research and development activities, and trade education programs

that are organized and promoted by World Trade Center Jaipur and how the participants can benefit by leveraging the global connectivity of 319 WTCs in 92 countries, provided by World Trade Center Association's robust network.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director-Trade Promotion, WTC Jaipur, informed the participants that “WTC Jaipur enables active industry engagements by bringing together local and international

governments and sector leaders under one roof for business interaction. This is done by undertaking activities such as inbound and outbound business missions, workshops and seminars on one side and education, training and skill

development programmes on the other. WTC Jaipur also provides trade information about importers and exporters through its online platform. This is done using the WTCA's global network that connects millions of businesses"

**The programme was held on Friday, 5th March 2021, at Seminar hall, Dr. B. Lal Institute of Biotechnology, Malviya Nagar, Jaipur.**

## Honouring Inspiring Women Achievers in Art and Craft Industry



(L to R): Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director- Trade Promotion, WTC Jaipur, Ms. Sunita Meena, Additional DCP, Police Commissionerate, Jaipur, Ms. Purvi Patel, Bangalore, Ms. Girija Sharma, Director, Dream World Production, Mr. Brij Ballabh Udaival, Director, Craft Council of Weavers and Artisans

In yet another landmark event organized to mark International Women's Day, World Trade Center Jaipur, Craft Council of Weavers and Artisans (CCWA) and Dream World Production came together to create a platform for women entrepreneurs in the field of art and craft to come forward and tell the world that the modern women has a bigger role to play in global development, as an educator, a dependable resource in any multinational or an entrepreneur. Above all, women have also proven their excellence in managing the traditional tasks of being a home-maker.

Chief Guest Ms. Sunita Meena, Additional DCP, Police Commissionerate, Jaipur, Guest of Honour, Ms. Purvi Patel, Art Connoisseur, Bangalore and Special Guest, Padma Shree Gulabo Sapera motivated the delegates with their own experiences and challenges faced by them in their own line of work. 'To have perseverance toward one's goals' was a message given by all speakers to the delegates present.

The event also created a platform for women entrepreneurs to step forward and discuss important issues such as cyber security, robust law and order administration in

Rajasthan, trends in handicraft sector and various business opportunities in export of Art and Craft products.

Earlier, Mr. Deepak Sankit, Director, CCWA and Mr. Nitesh Dadich, Director, Dream World Production welcomed all the participants and distinguished guests on the dais.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director- Trade Promotion, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The programme was held on March 8, 2021**

## World Trade Center Jaipur Commemorates International Women's Day



(L to R): Ms. Deepika Sharma, Director, Blackwood Design Inc., Jaipur, Ms. Shweta Agarwal, FCA, Shweta Agarwal & Co., Dr. Yogesh Kumar, Deputy Director, Training, NSTI (W), Mrs. D. Subhashree, Deputy Director, RDSDE, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Mrs. Jyoti Bhardwaj, Comptroller Finance, Rajasthan ILD Skill Development University (RISU), Jaipur, Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur, Ms. Prateeksha Mahavar, Branch Manager, Union Bank of India, Jaipur, Ms. Shipra Goyal, Director, Chrisalis India, Jaipur, Ms. Amreen Khan, Advocate, High Court Jaipur

Observed on March 8th each year, International Women's Day is the celebration of the societal, financial, and educational achievements of women over the ages. This day brings together people of every race, religion and ethnicity to create a united world. To celebrate this day, World Trade Center Jaipur and National Skill Training Institute (Women) (NSTI) organized a panel discussion on 'Empowering Women for Sustainable Development'. With the presence of over 100 participants from various fields and luminary guests on the dais, the event became a platform for all young women aspirants to discuss their ambitious plans for their future and take guidance from sector experts which assured their maximum support to the group at any point of time in future as well.

Mrs. D. Subhashree, Deputy

Director, RDSDE, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Directorate General of Training welcomed the dignitaries on dais and delegates. He also briefed upon the activities of NSTI.

Guest of honor, Mrs. Jyoti Bhardwaj, Comptroller Finance, Rajasthan ILD Skill Development University (RISU), Jaipur, motivated and encouraged delegates citing various examples of women, who despite humble backgrounds, through skill development are now successful entrepreneurs globally.

Dr. Yogesh Kumar, Deputy Director, Training, NSTI (W), Jaipur, in his speech gave details about "National Skill Training Institute (Women) Jaipur. He shared that NSTI was established in October 1994, under the aegis of Directorate General of Training (DGT). He highlighted that

the institute which is expanded in 7 acres of land has well equipped workshops and classrooms, as well as hostel facility for trainees and residential facility for staff. Dr. Kumar informed that NSTI organizes regular training programmes in trades having high employability. He explained that training programmes are designed on industrial pattern, which include 8 hours of regular training each day.

He further informed that the Vocational Training facilities have been established through a network of 14 NSTIs and 16 NSTI (W) at Noida, Mumbai, Bangalore, Trivandrum, Panipat, Kolkata, Tura, Indore Allahabad, Vadodara, Jaipur, Rajpura, Shimla, Agartala, Patna and Trichy.

Distinguished panelists, Ms. Prateeksha Mahavar, Branch Manager, Sanganer Branch, Union



(L to R ) Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur with program coordinator Ms. Rinku Soni, Training Officer, NSTI (Women), Jaipur

Bank of India, in her speech explained in detail how banking system is ready to support new initiatives for new initiatives by young entrepreneurs.

Ms. Shweta Agarwal, FCA, FCS, CMA, LLB, Shweta Agarwal & Co., Chartered Accountants, Jaipur, recommended all participants to apply for pan card and GST registrations when starting their ventures.

Ms. Shipra Goyal, Director, Chrisalis India, Jaipur, one of Rajasthan's leading garment exporter invited the partakers to visit their manufacturing facility to gain hands on experience.

Ms. Amreen Khan, Advocate, High Court Jaipur, spoke on women's rights and urged all to stand up for any inequalities and discriminations faced in personal and professional life.

Ms. Deepika Sharma, Director, Blackwood Design Inc., Jaipur, shared the nuances of modern architecture and the career opportunities that the sector has created.

Ms. Rinku Soni, Training Officer, NSTI Jaipur, coordinated the program and provided the necessary knowledge support to the joint initiative.

Vote of thanks was proposed by Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur.

**This programme was organized at the seminar compound, NSTI, Jhalana Doongri, Jaipur on Monday, March 8, 2021.**

## New Domestic & Export Opportunities for Indian Handicrafts to strengthen economy



World Trade Center Mumbai and World Trade Center Jaipur, in an attempt to explore newer markets with potential for the consistent growth of the artisans, organized a webinar on "Exploring Domestic &

Export Opportunities for Indian Handicrafts". The webinar was attended by more than 100 participants from all over India. The objective of the webinar was to create awareness about government schemes and market

opportunities among exhibitors at the Handicraft Expo, which is a unique digital initiative of World Trade Center Mumbai.

The webinar provided a platform for artisans to come forward and discuss with sector experts and officials from Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, about various issues that emerged post pandemic and required expert guidance and leadership vision.

Guest of Honour Mr. P. Mallikarjunaiah, Regional Director (western region) O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, in a detailed presentation, illustrated multiple schemes offered by Ministry of Textiles through which

an artisan can develop his / her art and reach out to maximum buyers. While interacting with the participants, Mr. Mallikarjunaiah gave special emphasis on explaining National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP), Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS), Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY), Design & Technology Upgradation scheme, and several Direct Benefit to Artisans (Welfare Scheme).

Adding further Mr. Mallikarjunaiah said, "there are also provisions for financial support to artisans under indigent circumstances for awardee craftsman below 60 years of age, having annual income below Rs. 50,000 @ Rs.3500/- p.m. Till date 303

artisans are being provided financial support. Life insurance is also provided through Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) /Pradhan Mantri Surksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Modified Aam Admi Bima Yojana (MAABY). Additionally, Mudra Loans have been sanctioned amounting to Rs.39.68 crores. Margin Money up to Rs.10,000/- per artisans with 6% interest subvention are provided under MUDRA loan."

Mr. Raviveer Choudhary, Assistant Director, O/o Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, HSC, Bhuj-Kutch, Gujarat, responded to several queries raised by artisans and ensured that all necessary support shall be provided

for promotion of Handicrafts.

Mr. Atul Poddar, CEO, Poddar Associates and General Secretary, FORHEX Jaipur, Mr. Brij Ballabh Udaiwal, Director, Craft Council of Weavers and Artisans, Jaipur and Mr. Deepak Sankit, Founder, Emporia DR, Jaipur, also joined the panel as eminent guest speakers and deliberated upon various international opportunities coming up for young entrepreneurs in Rajasthan.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks.

**The Webinar was held on March 10, 2021**

## Kishangarh Marble exports to strengthen Rajasthan's economic development



(L to R): Mr. B.P. Mathur, Jaipur, Mr. Sita Ram Poonia, GM, DIC Ajmer, GOR, Mr. J.P. Sharma, Sr. Regional Manager, RIICO Ltd., Mr. Sampat Sharma, General Secretary, Kishangarh Marble Association and Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur.

**K**ishangarh has come to be known as the marble city of India due to the abundant

availability of marble granite and stone industrial material. Among popular quarries, the Makrana

quarry is very well known as it provided marble for the construction of the iconic Taj Mahal of India.

Despite its robust presence, Kishangarh is left to face challenges due to the COVID19 pandemic. To address the new developments and to explore profitable export markets for manufacturers in Kishangarh District Industries Centre Ajmer, Government of Rajasthan and World Trade Center Jaipur organized a two-day seminar on Export Promotion Process and Documentation.

Subject matter experts Mr. Onkar Sharma, State Head-Infrastructure Finance Group, HDFC Bank Jaipur, Mr. Jai Singh Shekhawat, Deputy Vice President-Foreign Exchange Department, HDFC Bank Jaipur, CA. Ajeet Agarwal, President, Laghu Udhog Bharti, Ajmer, Mr. B.P. Mathur, Consultant-International Trade, Jaipur, Mrs. Dhvani Mishra, Visiting Faculty, MDS University,

Ajmer and Mr. R.S. Choyal, Executive Director, Choyal Industries deliberated upon how to explore international markets in the current scenario, logistics issues, documentation supply chain management and soft skills for excellence in exports, best trade practices, risk management and forex issues in international trade, tax and legal compliance in international trade and how to expedite exports through Infrastructure development.

Earlier welcoming the dignitaries on dais, Mr. Sita Ram Poonia, General Manager, District Industries Centre Ajmer, Government of Rajasthan reiterated Government's commitment to support all manufacturing activities in

Kishangarh.

Special guest Mr. J.P. Sharma, Sr. Regional Manager, RIICO Ltd., invited all manufacturers to make maximum utilization of infrastructure facilities provided for boosting exports. Mr. Sampat Sharma, General Secretary, Kishangarh Marble Association, welcomed the support extended by District Industries Center and RIICO.

Mr. Navneet Agarwal, Assistant Director, World Trade Center Jaipur proposed vote of thanks for the event.

**The programme was held on March 15 and 16, 2021 at Seminar hall, Kishangarh Marble Association.**



**WTC Jaipur is a member of the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA), New York which represents an unparalleled network of 319 WTCs in over 92 countries connecting one million businesses across the world. WTC Jaipur is promoted by M. Visvesvaraya Industrial Research and Development Centre (MVIRDC), which is also the promoter of WTC Mumbai, the premium World Trade Center in India. WTC Jaipur will facilitate trade and investment promotion in the state and will assist local businesses to foray into global markets and help enhance competitiveness of Rajasthan.**

### Join the Network

MSMEs, Exporters/Importers, Consulting Agencies, Institutions/Organisations, Trade Associations, Corporate Houses, Corporations and PSUs can join with WTC Jaipur to promote businesses globally at an annual membership fee.

### Membership Benefits

Enables active engagement by bringing together local and international governments and businesses on a single platform by undertaking activities to promote international trade, investment, tourism, technology and exchange of information through the services on offer.

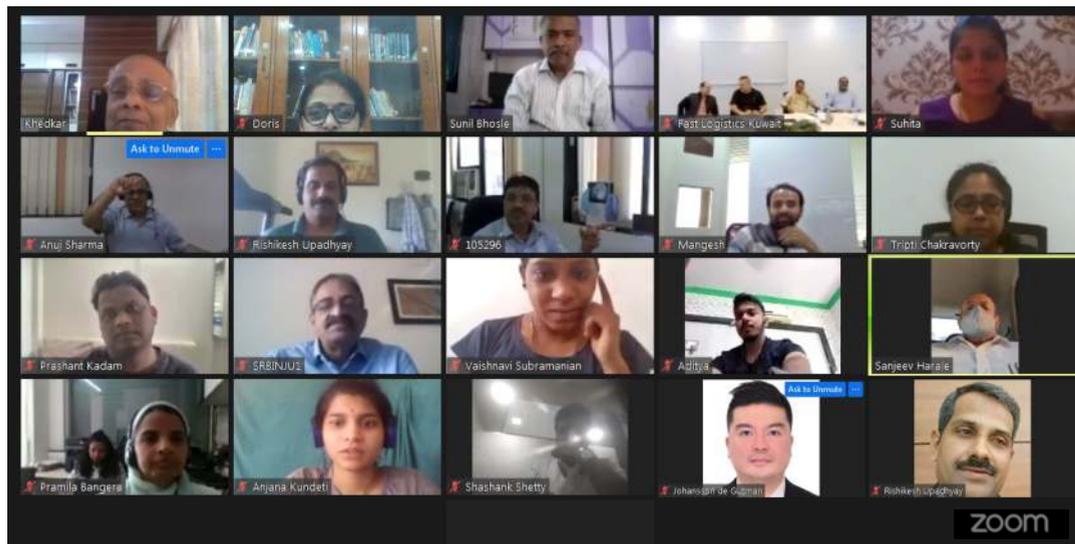
### Services Offered

- Export Counseling • Seminars / Workshops / Panel Discussions on trade-related topics • Networking Events
- Online Information on trade and investment opportunities • Providing International market connections
- Trade Missions to explore overseas markets • Access to World Trade Centres Association, New York network
  - Promoting inbound trade delegation from overseas • Promoting members online
- Free Registration with Trade Point Mumbai India (Member of World Trade Point Federation, Geneva) for generating business contacts • Participation in International Exhibitions • Access to publications of WTC Mumbai • Access to WTCA Card

Administrative office:  
**WORLD TRADE CENTER JAIPUR (RAJASTHAN) ASSOCIATION**  
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## Management Development Programme on Global Logistics



waterways; selection of shipping lines; world ocean routes; types of maritime cargo; selection of port; challenges in shipping as a result of COVID-19 and ways to overcome them and Incoterms – export costing and pricing.

The logistics industry is an important sector that facilitates international trade. Digitalisation and globalisation have aided the industry with newer, innovative and advanced technologies providing increased services and minimizing costs. COVID-19 has disrupted supply chains and global logistics is gearing to overcome these challenges.

Considering this evolving scenario, World Trade Center Mumbai Institute of Education, the trade wing of MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai organised a virtual Management Development Programme (MDP) on 'Global Logistics' jointly with World Trade Center Pune over four Saturdays. The MDP was designed to provide information on all aspects of Logistics Industry and ways to overcome these challenges faced on account of the pandemic.

The course was conducted by the

Institute's faculties namely, Professor Mr. Arvind Khedkar who is an Expert on International Trade and Mr. Shailendra Binju, Head – International Logistics, HEG Limited. The faculties are professionals with rich industry knowledge and having years of hands-on experience.

The participants were from varied backgrounds namely, entrepreneurs; business developers; professionals; logistic firms; warehouse, logistics and EXIM executives; custom house agents; freight forwarders; 3rd party logistics and management students etc.

The course curriculum covered topics namely domestic and international business; concept of logistics, agencies involved in EXIM trade, export logistics planning, pre and post-shipment stages; shipping services; warehousing and containerisation; modes of transportation; importance of

The course was well received by all stakeholders and in view of the success, the Institute announced the virtual Post Graduate Diploma in Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management which is a six-month course over 80 sessions, starting from March 9, 2021. The course curriculum includes topics such as effective planning to overcome challenges in a pandemic scenario, material management, distribution management with linkages to channels, transactional logistics, foreign trade policy including RoDTEP and international business. The course will be held thrice a week (Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday).

**The course was held on January 16, 23, 30 and February 6, 2021.**

■

## Virtual Course on ‘Women Entrepreneurship: Adapt Business Skills to New Normal’



COVID pandemic has posed a challenge of epic proportion across trade and industry, especially to women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs have borne the brunt of it, having to spend more time towards family care in the absence of domestic help or daycare facilities amidst lockdown. Many women entrepreneurs have seen possibilities in this pandemic and have taken advantage of the crisis as new opportunities for business unfolds. In such a promising scenario, World Trade Center Mumbai Institute of Education, the trade wing of MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai, reaffirmed its commitment to stand by women entrepreneurs by designing a virtual three-week course to help them take advantage of these opportunities during this challenging time.

The course was designed to help women entrepreneurs to review their business models and adapt to the new reality and further grab opportunities thrown by the crisis.

The topic for the first week was ‘How to Start a Business’ which provided the necessary skills and tools for entrepreneurial success. The second week sessions was on ‘International Trade’, providing tools required to carry out domestic and international trade. The third week dealt with ‘International Marketing’ which provided information on domestic and international marketing and how best digital marketing can aid in strategising business. Women entrepreneurs could choose the topic(s) of interest by opting for any one, two and/or three weeks.

Considering the current shift in business climate, through the courses, women entrepreneurs could sharpen their business acumen by enrolling for the course to learn and understand the changing dynamic of business in the new normal.

The course was conducted by Institute’s faculty namely, Mr. Arun Sehgal, Chairman and Managing

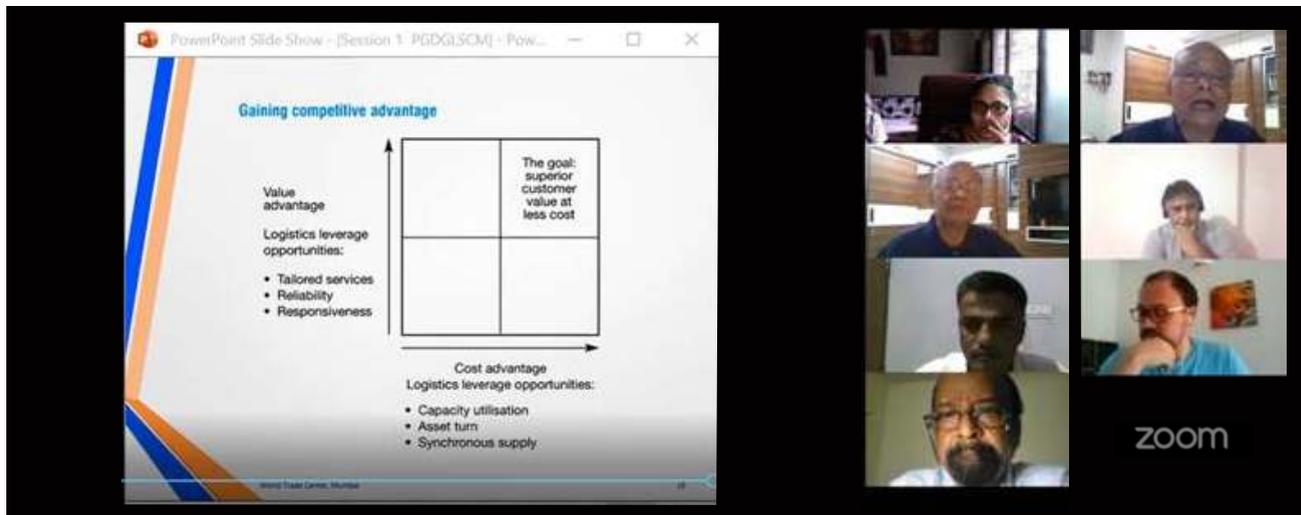
Director, Chempro Group; Professor Arvind Khedkar, Expert on International Trade; Mr. Eknath Birari, Consultant and Banking Professional; Mr. Virendra Gupte, Former Head – Trade Services, Tata International and Chief Ethics Counsellor, besides guest faculty Mr. Sumeet Mehta, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Paradigm Advisors and Mr. Viresh Vazirani, Founder, GrowGravy and SkillsStudio.online.

Certificate of participation was given to all the women entrepreneurs.

Going forward, the Institute will be conducting a number of workshops on various topical issues faced by women entrepreneurs throughout the year.

**The three-week course was held from January 25 - 30, 2021; February 8 - 13, 2021 and February 22-27, 2021.**

## Virtual Post Graduate Diploma in Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management



India's logistics sector is at an inflection point with growth in e-commerce sector, policy thrust on logistics parks, emergence of dedicated freight corridors and implementation of the Sagarmala project. According to Niti Aayog, jobs in the logistics sector may almost double to 40 million by 2022-23 from about 22 million in 2016. Considering such a scenario and coupled by the effects of the ongoing pandemic, World Trade Center Mumbai Institute of Education, trade wing of MVIRDC World Trade Center Mumbai, announced its first batch of six-month Virtual Post Graduate Diploma in Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management (PGDGL&SCM). The course focuses on international business, under its trade wing, World Trade Center Mumbai Institute of Education. The course curriculum will be covered over 80 sessions and held thrice a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday) from 6.00 – 8.00 pm (IST). The faculty of the course are industry professionals having

several years of hands-on experience. The course features orientation programme, six taught modules each assessed by written examination, industry case studies and project assignment.

The course curriculum covers topics such as procurement, storage, transportation, distribution, operations planning, support to company strategy, negotiation, logistics and trade finance, enhancing competitiveness, etc. which are critical focus areas for firms aspiring to globalise their operations.

Post Graduate Diploma in Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management (PGDGL&SCM) is focused on developing world-class professionals in the field of supply chain and logistics to cater to the ever-growing demand for skilled manpower in the sector. The course will address need for procurement and operation managers both at the domestic and international levels

which is on the rise, besides imparting skills essential to overcome the challenges posed by the crisis.

It is noteworthy to mention that World Trade Center Mumbai has been awarded by World Trade Centers Association, New York for its superior performance in trade education services which sets it apart. The courses on offer are well recognised by trade and industry. This has enabled MNCs and businesses across all verticals worldwide to approach the Institute for placements in logistics management covering procurement, distribution, documentation, transportation, warehouse and material management managers besides, professionals in international marketing and trade promotion, who have been skilled through our courses and have risen to become leaders in their field. Placements are as per acquired skills and capability.

**The online course commenced on March 16, 2021.**

## WeTrade

World Trade Center Mumbai has developed an 'Online Trade and Exhibition platform – 'wetrade.org' to promote MSMEs, Start-Ups and Women Entrepreneurs across sectors. This online platform offers greater returns on investment with low cost of participation, enhanced online presence, and high reach and engagement with the targeted visitors and buyers. This substantially outperforms traditional physical exhibition format.

This initiative is aimed to promote **#DigitalMSME**, **#SustainableLiving** and **#Vocal4Local**.

Having organized the first virtual exhibition on Handlooms in the month of October 2020, currently there are 3 online exhibitions active on this platform.

### Handicraft Expo

26th January – 10th May 2021



This online Expo is organised in partnership with World Trade Center Jaipur to help create an online and social marketplace where authentic handicrafts products can be purchased directly from exhibiting craftsmen, and thereby help

them in earning direct benefits. The display categories in Handicraft Expo are Leather Crafts, Pottery & Glass Crafts, Textile Crafts, Jewellery Crafts, Wood Crafts, Metal Crafts, Paper Crafts and Handmade Accessories.

Currently there are more than 135 exhibitors, showcasing 100+ products from India and countries like Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and Iran.

### Healthcare & Wellness Expo – Promoting Sustainable Living

1st March – 10th June 2021



This online exhibition is organised in partnership with World Trade Center Goa, at a time when the post pandemic world is exploring new dimensions in healthcare and wellness. Today, people are increasingly trying to understand how to optimize their nutrition, exercise habits, recovery, sleep, mental

health, emotions and stress management to lead a wellness-focussed and holistic lifestyle. This has created a huge demand to cater to the emerging requirements in healthcare, wellness, organic, nutraceutical and several other means and products that promote sustainable living.

The Healthcare & Wellness Expo is supported by Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India.

Currently we have more than 60 exhibitors, showcasing 80+ products from India and the USA

### Celebrating the Spirit of Womanhood

8 March 2021 - 31 March 2021



On 8th March 2021, an International online art exhibition was inaugurated in celebration of 'International Women's Day', where 38 women artists from across the globe showcased their artistic talent and expression. This unique art exhibition aimed at celebrating their huge contribution towards the upliftment of society, worldover. This one of its kind attempt to bring strong, unconventional and creative women together was nothing short of a landmark event, which opened doors to new thinking and ideas. The displayed paintings include oil paintings, mix media on canvas, acrylic and water colour paintings.

'Celebrating the Spirit of Womanhood expo' was organised in association with La Aartemisia, a Mumbai based art group to promote and encourage women artists.



## Sai Adarsh Traders



**Name of the Company -**  
Sai Adarsh Traders

**Brand Name -**  
AHOMA

**Name of the Founder -**  
Ms. Reena Behera

**Description of the Company -**  
Under the brand name AHOMA, Ms. Reena Behera, Founder of Sai Adarsh Traders, manufactures 100 percent pure and natural essential oils which are undiluted, vegan and chemical, synthetic and cruelty-free.

With the aim of helping customers overcome their problems with her products, Ms. Behera not only manufactures essential oils but also hair, skin and body care, aroma teas, rose water and reed stick diffusers. In future Ms. Behera plans to diversify the AHOMA brand by manufacturing home and personal care products.

**Product / Services offered -**  
Health & Wellness (Essential Oils ,  
Perfume & Housekeeping)

**Achievements -**

Best Women Entrepreneur 2019 & 2020 by MSME Department, Govt of Odisha

**Company looking for -**  
in the Hospitality, Beauty and Wellness sector

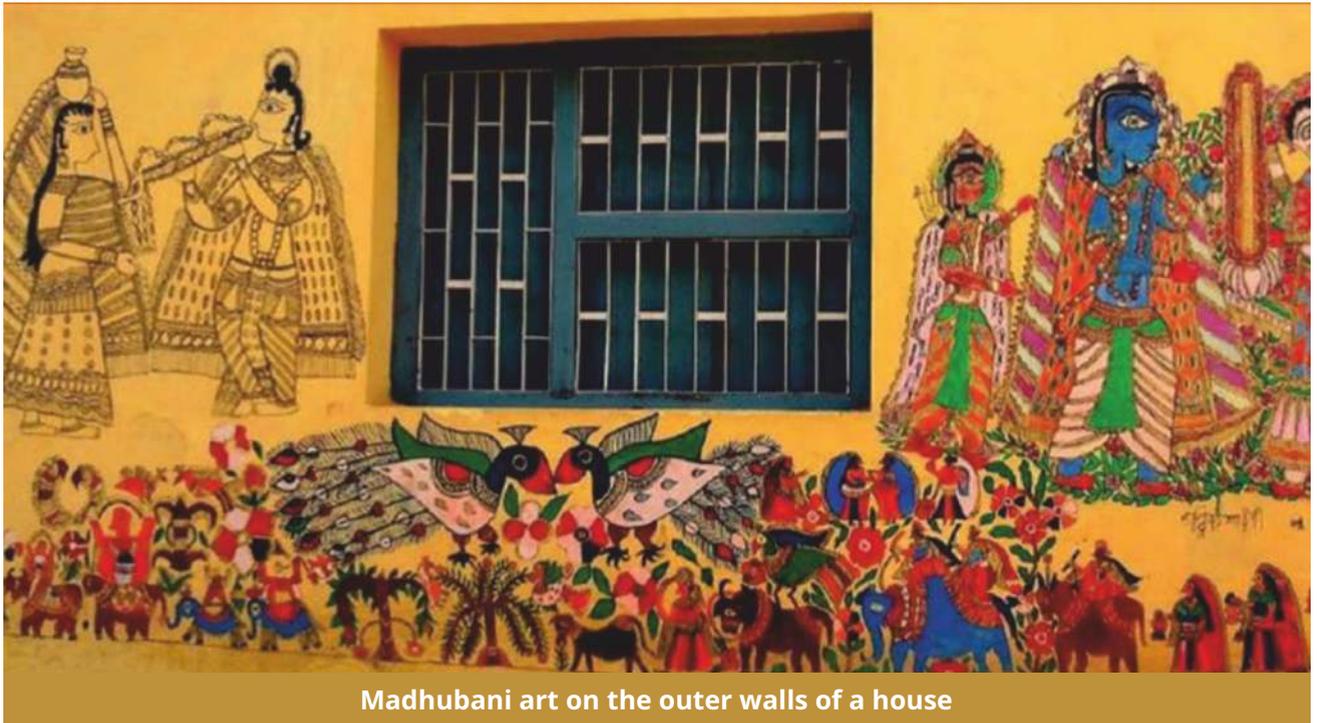
**Already exporting to countries -**  
Not exporting yet

**Countries you are looking to export to -**  
Singapore and Dubai

**E-mail -** reena.behera9@gmail.com



## Madhubani Art



Madhubani art on the outer walls of a house

**M**adhubani, which means Forest of Honey ('Madhu'-honey and 'Ban'-forest or woods), is an ancient style of painting originated from the Madhubani district of the Mithila region of Bihar. Legend has it that King Janak of Mithila, had first commissioned rural artists to paint the palace walls on the occasion of his daughter Sita's wedding to Lord Ram. Since then, women have been painting mesmerising patterns of Madhubani art on the walls (known as Bhatti Chitra) and floors (known as Aripana) of their homes to celebrate occasions such as religious festivals, births, marriages etc.

The main feature of this art form is the line drawings filled in by bright colours, which have high contrasts and very intricate details and patterns. A unique thing about the Madhubani art is that there isn't any empty space in the painting, and if there is any gap left, artists fill the void by painting dazzling flowers, birds, geometric patterns and animals.

The themes and designs of Madhubani art are mainly inspired from mythological stories depicting scenes from Puranas, Ramayan, Mahabharat and other Vedic literature, representing Hindu deities like Shiva-Parvati, Rama-Sita, Lord Ganesh, Vishnu-Lakshmi, etc. Other

popular motifs and subjects painted are Indian rituals and social events such as weddings, festivals etc., local flora and fauna such as elephants, peacocks, parrots, leaves, flowers trees etc., heavenly bodies like the sun and moon, stars, nature etc., auspicious yantras and aspects of the daily life of the women of Mithila region.

Typically, there are different kinds of Madhubani Paintings like the Bharni style, Kachni style, Godhana style, Tadoo Style and the Tantric style. However there are a few attributes that are common in nearly all Madhubani paintings, such as, all Madhubani paintings have a double line border, ornate floral patterns, abstract-like figures of deities, bulging eyes and a pointed nose of the faces of figures.

Madhubani paintings are characterized by the vibrant and bold use of colours and traditional geometric patterns that support the main theme. Following traditional methods, artists till date mix cow-dung and rock-salt glue to the paints. While cow dung is used for the shine it imparts to the colored patches, glue helps the paint to bind well with the special handmade paper used for these paintings. Raw materials such as satin cloth, fabric cloth, cotton cloth etc. are also used in these days to be painted on.

To draw the outlines of the images, Nib Pens and brushes of various sizes are used. Further, these drawings are filled with colors using brushes, twigs, matchsticks and fingers.

Colors are made from tree bark, flowers, leaves, and other natural sources. For example, the colour black which is used to make borders and outlines, is made by mixing soot with cow dung, yellow is made from turmeric, white from rice powder, green from the leaves of a wood apple tree, blue from indigo, red from kusum flowers or red sandalwood, orange from the tesu flowers of the palash tree, so on and so forth. In recent times, natural colors are being replaced by ready-made paints, markers and fabric colours as they are long-lasting. However, there are many artists who still follow the traditional ways of making Madhubani paintings.



Madhubani art on a necklace

Though this folk art has been practised for centuries and passed on from one generation to another, it started to gain national recognition only in the last few decades. Mithila region which primarily has an agricultural economy, was severely damaged by the drought of 1966 to 1968. The All India Handicrafts Board encouraged the women of Mithila to make paintings on paper for commercial sale. Since then, the women of the region have started making paintings on handmade paper and created a new source of income. Men are also involved to meet the growing demand, as the modern day

have requested the Indian railways to provide them a set of Mithila artists who can decorate their trains as well. Apart from this, Madhubani art has succeeded in making a place for itself in the international house of fame and is currently recognized world wide. It has also received a GI (Geographical Indication) status. Additionally, the Government of India is paying its tribute by beginning coaching programs for educating folks on Madhubani paintings. In simple words, the Madhubani paintings are the depictions of true India.



Madhubani art on a purse

Madhubani artists now enjoy a wider audience and increased commerce, as designers and interior decorators have used Madhubani style embroidery to adorn apparel and home furnishing products too.

Recently, this art form got wheels of its own, since a few Indian trains have been adorned with Madhubani paintings, it has helped to take this art form all around the country. But that's not it; as Madhubani art has found its fan base abroad as well. Impressed by the artwork on the Indian trains, the Government of Japan and Canada



Madhubani art on a pillow cover

have requested the Indian railways to provide them a set of Mithila artists who can decorate their trains as well. Apart from this, Madhubani art has succeeded in making a place for itself in the international house of fame and is currently recognized world wide. It has also received a GI (Geographical Indication) status. Additionally, the Government of India is paying its tribute by beginning coaching programs for educating folks on Madhubani paintings. In simple words, the Madhubani paintings are the depictions of true India.

**Reference:**

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## Makar Sankranti

### An occasion to welcome the summer solstice.



Uttrayan - Also known as kite festival of Gujarat

India is a land of rich culture, traditions, customs, art and festivals that are treasured by its diverse population over centuries despite multiple invasions and cultural dominance by foreign rulers in the past. The Indian Hindu calendar is filled with many religious and cultural festivals that are unique to the cultural, religious and economic life of the local population. Festivals are an occasion to venerate nature, divine forces and also strengthen bonds among family members, friends and communities.

Makar Sankranti is one such festival which is celebrated by diverse linguistic communities in India in different ways to underline its religious, culinary and economic significance. Cultural fair, bonfire, worship of cattle, delicious sweets etc. are the key highlights of this festival. This is one of the rare Hindu Festivals which is celebrated on a fixed date of every year. i.e. January 14, although it is also observed on January 15 in some years.

The festival acquires religious significance because it marks the beginning of Uttarayan or summer Solstice. According to the Hindu calendar, a year is equally divided into two Ayans of six months each, viz. Dakshinayan and Uttarayan. During Dakshinayan, nights are longer than days, while during Uttarayan, days are longer than nights. Makar Sankranti is celebrated in the middle of January

every year to mark the beginning of Uttarayan, which is considered to be more auspicious than Dakshinayan. According to the Hindu sacred book of Baghwat Gita, one day of a demigod is equal to one year on earth. While the six-month period of Uttarayan is considered the day time, the other six month of Dakhshinayan is the night time for a demigod. It is believed that a person who dies during Uttarayan is said to attain Moksha, or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Spiritual significance: From taking a dip in the holy waters of Gangasagar to performing special rituals for the Sun God, and from observing fast to donating clothes and



Worshipping the Sun God while taking a dip in the Ganga river

food to the needy, this day holds special significance for Hindus to connect with the divinity.

Makar Sankranti also has huge astrological significance as the planet Sun enters the Zodiac sign Capricorn, (also called Makar Rashi), from Sagittarius (or Dhanush Rashi according to vedic astrology). Every month, the planet Sun leaves one Rashi or Zodiac sign and enters another Rashi and this movement is called Sankranti. On January 14, every year, the planet Sun enters Makar Rashi, which gave rise to the name Makar Sankranti for this festival.



Sweets made out of grains and jaggery

Culinary significance: A common practice across the country is to make sweets out of grains and jaggery which symbolises living together in peace, despite the uniqueness and differences between individuals.

Makar Sankranti is celebrated in almost all parts of the country with different names, traditions and rituals. Here are a few of them:



Lohri celebrations in Punjab

'Maghi' in Punjab – is celebrated a day after the popular harvest festival named Lohri. On the night of Lohri, a bonfire is lit, around which people do the bhangra (Folk dance of Punjab) and sing traditional Lohri songs. A

special festive sweet dish called Kheer (rice cooked in sugarcane juice) is prepared on the evening of Lohri which is then kept to cool throughout the night. It is served on Maghi (Makar Sankranti) morning with red-chilly mixed curd. People in Punjab also cook delicacies out of sugarcane juice, jaggery and mixed lentils on this occasion. Fairs are held at many places to celebrate this festival.

'Maghi' in Himachal Pradesh – is popularly referred to as Magha Ra Saza in some parts of Himachal Pradesh where Agni Dev (God of fire) is worshipped, as Magh is the coldest month in the hills and agriculture comes to a standstill. Similar to Punjab, Lohri night which is also referred to as Masant, is a part of the Maghi celebrations. A popular ritual observed alongside Maghi is Madraison Puja when the houses are cleaned and decorated.

Pongal in Tamil Nadu – Pongal which means 'overflow' in Tamil, is a harvest festival celebrated for four days by the Tamil Diaspora all across the world. The first day is known as Bhogi Pongal which marks the last day of the Tamil month Marghazi. On this day, people clean their houses to discard all the old and unwanted belongings and celebrate new possessions. These old and unwanted possessions are then burnt in a group lit bonfire. Special prayers are offered to the God of rain 'Indra' with hopes of abundant rains in the year ahead.

The second and the main day is known as Surya Pongal which coincides with Makar Sankranti. It is the first day of the Tamil calendar month Tai. On this day, men pray to Surya (Sun God) and bow in front of the celestial god with a namaskaram posture before continuing the celebrations with family and friends.

As a custom, the entire family gathers together and prepares a special sweet dish called Pongal, which is



A family making pongal

made from freshly harvested rice and cane sugar mixed in boiling milk.

Traditionally, this sweet is prepared in an open space in an earthen pot, the mouth of which faces the sun. The family members blow the traditional conch known as *sangu* when the boiled milk oozes. The members of the family also cheer out loud with the words 'pongalo pongal' which means "may this rice boil over". This is symbolism of great fortunes in the year ahead. The dish is first offered to gods and goddesses especially *Surya* (Sun God) and *Ganesh* (elephant headed God). It is also offered to cows in the rural areas, as they are considered to be holy in the Hindu culture. Once the offerings are made, Pongal is then consumed by the family and also shared with loved ones.



**Kolam at the entrance of Homes**

Festive decorations of banana and mango leaves are hung in homes. Special artistic patterns called *kolams* are created on the floor at the entrance and corridors of homes using colored rice flour.

The third day of pongal is known as *Mattu* ("cow, bullock, cattle") Pongal – where cattle are decorated, worshipped and given special meals. This custom is observed because Tamil Hindus consider cattle as a source of wealth because they provide dairy products, fertilizer, transportation and agricultural aid, and celebrating *Mattu* pongal is a way of showing gratitude to these speechless helpers.

The fourth and the last day is known as *Kanum Pongal*, also called as *Kanu Pongal*. The word *kanum* in this context means "to visit." And hence family reunions and social events are organised by families and communities on this day for relatives and friends to gather, meet and greet.

'*Uttarayan*' in Gujarat – Also popularly known as the Festival of Kites, *Uttarayan* is celebrated with great enthusiasm over two days known as '*Uttarayan*' and '*Vasi-Uttarayan*'. Young children as well as adults spend hours basking under the sun rays on their terraces while flying kites. According to some beliefs, the tradition of kite flying on *Makar Sankranti* is being carried out so that people are exposed to the sun rays which are believed to cure skin infections and illnesses associated with winter.

The Hindi Cinema world of Bollywood popularised the kite flying festival of *Makar Sankranti* by featuring special songs in movies revolving around this ritual. The song *Dheel De* from the movie *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, *Manjha* from the movie *Kai Po Che* etc. portray the relevance of kite flying in Indian tradition.

Special delicacies like *Undhiyu* and *Chikki* are prepared on this day. *Undhiyu* is prepared by combining all the winter vegetables and spicy curry. Whereas, *Chikki* is a sweet that is prepared from sesame seeds, peanuts and jaggery. The entire state of Gujarat comes alive during this festival. There are kite flying competitions held in every nook and corner of the state, preparations for which start days in advance.

Apart from the above mentioned states, *Makar Sankranti* is also celebrated in other parts of the country with the same or different names and traditions. A few of them are mentioned below.

In Karnataka, the festival is popularly known as *Suggi Habba* or *Makara Sankramana*, while in the northern state of Uttarakhand, it is well known as *Ghughuti*. Similarly, Odisha observe the festival as *Makara Mela*, Tripura as *Hangrai*, Kashmir as *Shishur Saenkraat*, West Bengal as *Push Sangkranti* etc.

Both Bangladesh as well as the Hindu Kingdom of Nepal celebrate *Makar Sankranti* as *Poush Sangkranti* and *Maaghe Sankranti* respectively, with great fanfare and culinary extravaganza.



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