



VISHWAKARMA SCHEME: REVITALIZING TRADITIONAL CRAFTS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPOWERMENT

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Abstract:

The Vishwakarma Scheme is an important initiative by the Government of India aimed at empowering traditional artisans and craftsmen. This research paper explores the objectives, implementation, benefits, and challenges of the Vishwakarma Scheme. By analyzing the socio-economic impact of the scheme, the paper emphasizes how it helps preserve cultural heritage, promotes skill development, and provides financial assistance to artisans. This paper also identifies the key challenges in the implementation of the scheme and suggests measures to enhance its effectiveness.

Keywords: Vishwakarma Scheme, Traditional Artisans, Skill Development, Financial Assistance, Socio-Economic Empowerment, Government Initiatives, Cultural Heritage.

Introduction

India has a rich tradition of handlooms, handicrafts, and other artisan works, many of which have been passed down through generations. However, these traditional industries often face challenges such as low income, lack of recognition, inadequate access to markets, and limited technological advancements. The Government of India launched the *Vishwakarma Scheme* to address these issues and provide artisans with opportunities to enhance their skills, improve their financial condition, and sustain their livelihoods.

The Vishwakarma Scheme was introduced as part of the broader initiative to promote sustainable development for the artisans and ensure the preservation of traditional craftsmanship.

Objectives of the Vishwakarma Scheme

The Vishwakarma Scheme has several key objectives:

1. Preserving Traditional Crafts: To support and preserve India's rich heritage of traditional craftsmanship.
2. Skill Development: To offer training programs and workshops to artisans to improve their technical skills, including modern tools and digital practices.
3. Economic Empowerment: To provide financial assistance and subsidies to artisans, helping them enhance productivity and improve their income.
4. Market Access: To create avenues for artisans to showcase and sell their products in national and international markets.



Financial Assistance and Benefits

One of the core components of the Vishwakarma Scheme is the provision of financial aid and benefits to artisans. These include:

1. **Subsidized Loans:** The scheme provides low-interest loans for artisans to purchase raw materials, modern tools, and equipment.
2. **Skill Development Programs:** Free workshops and training programs are offered to improve craftsmanship, introduce new techniques, and familiarize artisans with modern trends in design and production.
3. **Product Marketing:** The scheme assists in establishing market linkages for artisans, offering a platform to promote and sell their products both locally and internationally.
4. **Tools and Infrastructure:** Subsidies for purchasing advanced tools and infrastructure for increasing productivity.

Training and Skill Development

Skill development is central to the Vishwakarma Scheme. Artisans receive specialized training in:

1. **Traditional Techniques:** To continue their traditional crafts with updated methods and new tools.
2. **Modern Business Practices:** Training in digital tools, marketing strategies, and e-commerce platforms to enhance the visibility and profitability of their products.
3. **Health and Safety Practices:** Educating artisans on using tools safely and efficiently to reduce injuries and improve the quality of work.

Several government and non-government organizations collaborate in organizing these training programs.

Implementation of the Vishwakarma Scheme

The Vishwakarma Scheme is implemented at both the central and state levels. Several stakeholders are involved, including:

1. **Ministry of MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises):** The primary body for overseeing the implementation of the scheme.
2. **State Governments:** Work on ground-level implementation by connecting with local artisans and providing support.
3. **NGOs and Civil Society Organizations:** Help in outreach, training, and providing market linkages.

The application process typically involves submitting proof of craftsmanship, followed by an evaluation of the artisan's needs, including financial and training support.

Impact Assessment

The Vishwakarma Scheme has shown promising results in enhancing the socio-economic conditions of artisans. Some of the positive impacts include:

1. **Increased Income:** Many artisans have reported a significant increase in their earnings due to the financial support and better market access.
2. **Improved Skillsets:** Artisans have learned new techniques and upgraded their traditional skills to adapt to modern market demands.



3. **Sustained Traditional Crafts:** The scheme has helped preserve several indigenous crafts by providing financial backing and technical support.
4. **Community Empowerment:** By improving the livelihoods of artisans, the scheme has contributed to the overall development of rural and marginalized communities.

Challenges in the Implementation

Vishwakarma Scheme faces some challenges:

1. **Limited Awareness:** Many artisans, particularly in rural and remote areas, are unaware of the scheme's existence or the benefits it offers.
2. **Access to Resources:** Some artisans face difficulties in accessing the resources or support available through the scheme, particularly in terms of technology and financial literacy.
3. **Implementation Gaps:** There is a lack of coordination between various agencies involved in the scheme, which sometimes leads to delays or inefficiencies in the delivery of benefits.
4. **Financial Barriers:** Although loans are provided, many artisans face challenges in repaying them due to their low-income status.

Suggestions for Improvement

To further strengthen the Vishwakarma Scheme, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. **Awareness Campaigns:** Government and NGOs should run awareness campaigns to ensure that more artisans are aware of the scheme.
2. **Enhanced Training:** Focus on improving digital literacy among artisans to help them take advantage of e-commerce platforms and online marketing.
3. **Better Financial Support:** Simplify the process for securing loans and offer more flexible repayment terms to ensure artisans do not face undue financial stress.
4. **Streamlined Implementation:** Strengthen the coordination between central and state authorities and streamline the application process for artisans to access benefits more easily.

Conclusion

The Vishwakarma Scheme plays a vital role in empowering India's traditional artisans. By offering financial assistance, skill development, and market access, it has the potential to uplift millions of artisans across the country. However, continued efforts are needed to overcome existing challenges, ensuring that the scheme's benefits reach its full potential and that the traditional crafts of India continue to thrive for generations to come.

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