

# Management students hit the streets

Sameera Kapoor • BELAPUR

To acquaint themselves with the problems and issues faced by artisans and village entrepreneurs, over 20 students from ITM's Institute of Financial Markets are visiting the Sharvan Mela currently underway at the Urban Haat in Belapur. The mela, organised by Cidco, was inaugurated on August 11 and will continue till the end of this month.

The students have been compiling data on the problems faced by the artisans and village entrepreneurs at large. Artisans from khadi gramodyog, rural development department of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and DC handicrafts, western region are participating.

ITM is associated with the Mela as a part of nationwide campaign for financial inclusion of artisans and village entrepreneurs. The interaction with the participating artisans in regional language is a means to prepare for a seminar that the students and faculty of ITM-IFM will be hosting on August 29. The seminar titled 'entrepreneurial development pro-



A visit to Urban Haat in Belapur is routine for ITM-IFM students —Umesh Pawar DNA

gramme for the artisans and village entrepreneurs' will try to find out solutions to the problems mentioned by the sellers.

"The nationwide financial inclusion campaign of the institute has to do with the empowerment of artisans and village entrepreneurs with requisite skill sets like marketing, production, designing etc. Another aim is to promote creativity and entrepreneurship among the artisans and village entrepreneurs as

well link the budding entrepreneurs with government schemes and rural markets," said director of the institute KS Murthy.

Faculties and concerned authorities of development agencies like NABARD, commercial banks, DC Handicraft, KVIC too are expected to impart the necessary inputs and knowledge to the student groups for conducting the programme. The data will be processed for probable

solution that is to be explained in regional language to the seller during the seminar.

Accordingly, students have identified an array of problems mostly pertaining to lack of marketing skills and adequate financial support. Both of these issues are leading to the downfall of the sector and reluctance on part of new generation to take up the profession as well. "Essentially it's the lack of awareness on the various finan-

cial schemes available in the market that's proving to be the biggest issue. There are organisations willing to give funds amounting to Rs 50 lakh if artisans can form a society, but they are not aware of it. With little marketing skills and restricted funds the problems faced by artisans are multiple," said Manit Singh Rekhroy, a student.

This unique concept is expected to give students a feel of entrepreneurship as well as a chance to do value added service for the community. The probable solutions chalked out include forming a cluster of artisans and then approaching organisations for financial assistance. "The probable solution that we could work out is to form a cluster of artisans selling similar goods and then approach organisations to provide finance at lesser interest rate. In addition to this sellers will have to work on their soft skills while interacting with customers and improve their marketing strategies to boost their sales," said another student, Suseem Dhaneshwar.

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