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ers carrying hazardous materials have to be given special scientific training to face emergency situations
Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, transport minister

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Industry-oriented Apparel Training and Design Centre courses ensure 100 p c placements

APPAREL PARK NEXT DOOR DOES GOOD BIZ

CYNTHIA CHANDRAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
APRIL 16

Thousands of men and women undergo short and long-term courses of the Apparel Training and Design Centre (ATDC) at the Kinfra International Apparel Park, Kazhakkottam.

But many do not know that India's largest vocational training network for the apparel sector is almost on par with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT).

Unfortunately, most of the passouts prefer to be self-employed than joining the existing firms.

The apparel manufacturing is considered to be one of the industries with both lowly and highly paid jobs in the country today. The minimum wages offered are so low that many prefer to work elsewhere.

Additional chief secretary P H Kurian feels that the best way to tide over the crisis is to shift focus on value addition so that they can offer better pay.

Entrepreneurs should also make efforts to set up units in rural areas with affordable manpower.

"Even though few industrialists from Mumbai and Bengaluru set up their units in Kerala they could not sustain. They were hugely impressed by the infrastructure. Malayalis are not keen to work for

prevalent wages," Mr. Kurian told DC.

The first ATDC was launched at the Kinfra park in 2005. It has since trained more than 1.57 lakh candidates, 75 per cent of them are employed in the apparel industry.

While 45 percent work in large and small and

Medium Enterprises (SME) sector, 25 to 30 percent are with domestic industrial units or self-help groups and the rest are self-employed.

Darlie G Koshy, the director general of ATDC and CEO of the Institute of Apparel Management, also feels the State has a dearth of manpower.

As managing director of Hanveer during 1986 - 87 and Hantex during 1987 - 88, Mr Koshy has seen the ups and downs of the industry in the State.

"Recently when I visited the Thiruvananthapuram sub-centre of ATDC at Pettah, I was astonished to see that majority of the 80 students of the fashion designing were graduates and postgraduates like M Com and M Pharms who were not keen to work in the industrial sector," he said.

A leading textile unit at Kinfra park, under the aegis of Apparel Export Promotion Council, he found 800 people working but only 200 of them were Malayalis. The rest belonged to Orissa and Bihar.

"It shows the sad state of affairs," said Mr. Koshy, a PhD from IIT Delhi.

A native of Chengannur in Alappuzha district, he has been the director of the NID Ahmedabad for close to a decade.

He rues the aversion of Malayalis to manual labour that provides immense opportunities in the apparel industry.

V.R. Susha, principal of ATDC Thiruvananthapuram told DC that apart from its main unit at Kinfra, it has centres at Kochi and Kannur and six sub-centres at Kollam, Kochi, Kozhikode, Malappuram, Palakkad and Kannur.

"If NIFT courses are more design-oriented, ATDC's courses are industry-oriented where 100 percent placement is assured. Most of our students prefer to be self-employed as these days if one knows how to stitch saree blouse and salwar kameez, they earn good money. If they are working under an employer, they make only minimal money," the principal said.

Experts feel that the ATDC should start incubation facility for start-ups at traditional centres of handloom industry Cooperatives Hantex and Handloom Development Corporation can support the initiative.

The ATDC can act as a consultant for setting up incubation units with vocational skill development programmes.

COURSES ON OFFER

- Advance Diploma in Apparel Manufacturing - 2 years course - Rs 52, 000 (Students need to pay only Rs 26, 000 due to the vocational training course)
- Advance Diploma in Fashion Design - 1 year course - Rs 52, 000 (same)
- Diploma in Apparel Manufacturing Technology - 1 year course - Rs 52, 000 (same)
- Diploma in Fashion Design - 1 year course - Rs 52, 000 (same)
- Certificate in Apparel Pattern Making - 6 months Rs 26, 000 (Students need to pay only Rs 13, 000 due to the vocational training course)
- Certificate in Production Supervision & Quality Control - 6 months Rs 26, 000 (same)
- SMART Sewing Machine Operator (Basic & Advance) - 2 months Rs 3500
- SMART surface Ornamentation - 2 months - Rs 3500
- SMART Quality Checker - 2 months - Rs 3500
- SMART Machine Technician - 2 months - Rs 3500

Entrepreneurs don't have to look back

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 16

Ms Femitha Lathief, 26, is indebted to Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam for the inspirational, "Dream is not the thing you see in sleep but the thing that doesn't let you sleep".

Armed with one-year diploma in apparel manufacturing technology from Apparel Training and Design Centre (ATDC) at Kinfra International Apparel Park, Ms Femitha Lathief launched her designer brand, 'Kalista' (meaning most beautiful in Greek) in 2009. She is already a successful entrepreneur with three boutiques at Oberon Mall, Centre Square Mall and Shobha Road at Palarivattom bypass in Kochi.

Ms Femitha Lathief belongs to Kundara in Kollam. She recalls how she started her business with little cash in hand. Thanks to a bank loan, her apparel business is going places.

"One cannot become a fashion designer just because he or she has learned the theory. One should work hard and have the aptitude and the passion. My karma is to be an entrepreneur and I could achieve that. Kalista takes pride in bringing the latest designs and offers the best designer garments all through the year", said Ms Lathief, who designs costumes for actors and VJs.

Mr Simon Antony, another former student of ATDC, is gearing to participate in Lakme Fashion Week later this year in New Delhi. Mr

Simon Antony

Femitha Lathief

Simon, 36, was working as an artist at a BPO when he decided to take the plunge in the apparel industry. He started his business in Balamangalam, Mr Antony pursued one-year diploma in fashion designing during 2013-14 and is now working hard to release his signature clothing line.

"I feel Kerala doesn't have a thriving signature clothing line. Initially I wanted to set up elsewhere in Mumbai or New Delhi to get a foothold and then set up a unit in my hometown. I have entered the LPFW under the 'Gen Next' category and if I get selected, I will be exhibiting my actual works there", said Mr Simon, a postgraduate in commerce.



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EVEN THOUGH FEW INDUSTRIALISTS FROM MUMBAI AND BENGALURU SET UP THEIR UNITS IN KERALA, THEY COULD NOT SUSTAIN. THEY WERE HUGELY IMPRESSED BY THE INFRASTRUCTURE. MALAYALIS ARE NOT KEEN TO WORK FOR PREVALENT WAGES

— P. H. Kurian, Additional chief secretary

RECENTLY WHEN I VISITED THE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM SUB-CENTRE OF ATDC AT PETTAH, I WAS ASTONISHED TO SEE THAT MAJORITY OF THE 60 STUDENTS OF THE FASHION DESIGNING WERE GRADUATES AND POSTGRADUATES LIKE M COM AND M PHARM WHO WERE NOT KEEN TO WORK IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR.

— Dr. Darlie Oommen Koshy, Director General and CEO, Institute of Apparel Management and Apparel Training and Design Centre

