



### Co-creating Sustainable Livelihoods through Cluster Development

**C**hannapatna, a township in the Ramnagar district of Karnataka is known for its handcrafted wooden toys, popularly known as “Gombegala Ooru” or Toys Town in the vernacular language. The Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF) Toy Cluster was approved on 9 February 2021, during the 36th Scheme Steering Committee meeting of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India under SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries) initiative.

The ministry emphasised the uniqueness of the cluster for its eco-friendly and non-hazardous nature, as well as its interlinkage with lacware handicraft. The cluster manufactures toys made of wood, lac, palm leaves, bamboo, and fabric, which will focus on pushing sustainable alternatives to make toys. Moreover, this initiative will also enhance the incomes of more than 250 artisans and provide them with sustainable livelihood opportunities.

To provide due rights to artisans, the toy-making craft has been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI), and the toys are made from local wood, painted with natural dyes and finally finished with a natural lac resin. The products comprising of toys like dolls, planes, trucks, telephones, complete kitchen sets, jigsaw puzzles and a host of other items that are unique and exotic in nature as well as sustainable and eco-friendly.

The cluster has also received BIS Certification which guarantees the quality, safety and reliability of their toys. Through a media coverage in the Economic Times newspaper, this approval comprehended the need to reduce the dependency on imported toys and to improve local manufacturing of toys. The cluster is also a participant at the first India Toy Fair 2021 from 27 February–02 March 2021, to glaze

upon the wide range of products and explore the new opportunities for developing innovative toys and scaling through partnerships.

*Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF) is a special purpose vehicle of the Development Alternatives Group that accelerates the development of micro-enterprises at scale. It is also the nodal agency of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India for the development of clusters under SFURTI (Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries).*