

Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on Pashmina Held at KU



Srinagar, Sep 19: A Stakeholder Consultation Workshop on Pashmina was held at the University of Kashmir on Monday.

The day-long workshop titled ‘Developing Technologies for Diagnosing Impurities in Fibre Used in Pashmina Shawl Weaving Industry’ was organised by the varsity’s Centre of Research for Development (CORD) in collaboration with CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), one of the country’s premier research organisations working under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology.

In his introductory remarks, Dr Karthikeyan Vasudevan, Chief Scientist CSIR-CCMB, said the current workshop is part of a priority project for CSIR that aims to engage with the region of Jammu and Kashmir on different issues that confront its biodiversity conservation, an important aspect of which is the Pashmina Shawl Weaving.

“We have invited all major stakeholders including people from the Industry, scientific community, lawyers, association of Pashmina weavers, forensic science experts, and officials from J&K’s Handloom Department to deliberate on how we can facilitate this product (Pashmina) and its artisans to gain global recognition,” Dr Vasudevan said, adding that “we also intend to explore what we can do at CSIR to help the Industry to certify its product which remains free of any contamination”.

Prof Niamat Ali, Director CORD said the Centre is a UGC-approved institute having thrust on ecology and wildlife of Kashmir region. "It has been a partner and beneficiary in CSIR-CCMB's National Mission for Himalayan Studies ongoing

project on improving capacity and strengthening wildlife conservation for sustainable livelihoods in Kashmir Himalaya," he said.

Mr Mehmood Ahmad Shah, Director Handicrafts J&K, called for a fine balance between survival of the Pashmina goat and survival of the craft and livelihoods of craftsmen, underlining that it would be a "great loss" if we "lose these skill sets".

"We need to look at this issue from the prism of livelihoods because we have nearly 50,000 weavers engaged in weaving different fibre-based products, including Pashmina, in the unorganised Handicrafts sector that supplements income generations at the community level," he said.

Mr Shah called for "tripartite arrangement" between J&K CDI lab, which undertakes GI tagging of Pashmina, SKUAST-K and Wildlife Department to help get shawls tested locally for any kind of contamination so that both weavers and exporters do not face any hassles.

Several top-notch scientists including Dr Mahendra Darokar from CSIR also spoke on the occasion. Dr Darokar said CSIR has started another project on improving the existing fodder plants for Pashmina goats in association with the UTs of J&K and Ladakh.