



Saras Food Festival-2022

Why in News?

Recently, Saras Food Festival, 2022 has been organized in New Delhi to promote ethnic and home-made handicrafts, paintings, toys, etc., prepared by women of [Self-Help Groups \(SHGs\)](#).

What is the Saras Food Festival?

- It is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Rural Development as an effort to **empower women on a large scale**.
- Women from self-help groups, formed under the flagship program '[National Rural Livelihoods Mission](#)' of the Union Ministry of Rural Development are participating in this festival.
- This event will give women SHGs an opportunity to **showcase their skills in the field of food making and introduce people to the food culture** of our country.
 - These SHG women are **proficient in making rural products and preparing traditional dishes of their states**.
- The Ministry also launched the **e-commerce portal for better and more effective marketing of Saras products** prepared by women of self-help groups.
 - There are about 8 crore 62 lakh women who are members of SHGs and they have presence in 97% of Blocks, while 85 % of them are directly connected with the network of the Ministry.
- Efforts are on to have at least 25% of all sales by women self-help groups through e-commerce portals annually.
- The Ministry will take steps to establish **Saras stalls by women SHGs** in all State capitals, major cities and metros, airports and railway stations for widening the reach of marketing.

What are Self-Help Groups (SHGs)?

- **About:**
 - **SHGs are informal associations of people** who choose to come together to find ways to improve their living conditions.
 - It can be defined as a **self-governed, peer-controlled information group of people with similar socio-economic backgrounds** and having a desire to collectively perform a common purpose.
 - SHG **relies** on the notion of "**Self Help**" to **encourage self-employment** and poverty alleviation.
- **Objectives:**
 - To build the functional capacity of the poor and the marginalized in the field of employment and income generating activities.
 - To resolve conflicts through collective leadership and mutual discussion.
 - To provide **collateral free loan with terms** decided by the group at the market driven rates.
 - To work as a collective guarantee system for members who propose to borrow **from organised sources**.
 - The poor collect their savings and save it in banks. In return they receive easy access to **loans with a small rate of interest to start their micro unit enterprise**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. How does the National Rural Livelihood Mission seek to improve livelihood options of rural poor? (2012)

1. By setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries and agribusiness centres in rural areas
2. By strengthening 'self-help groups' and providing skill development
3. By supplying seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment free of cost to farmers

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is a poverty alleviation project implemented by the **Ministry of Rural Development**. This scheme is focused on promoting self-employment and organization of rural poor. The basic idea behind this programme is to organize the poor into SHGs (Self Help Groups) and make them capable for self-employment.
- **Pillars of NRLM**
 - Enhancing and expanding existing livelihood options of the poor;
 - Building skills for the job market outside;
 - Nurturing self-employed and entrepreneurs. Hence, 2 is correct.
- The Mission neither focuses on setting up a large number of new manufacturing industries, nor agribusiness centres in rural areas. Its objective is not to supply seeds, fertilizers, diesel pump-sets and micro-irrigation equipment. Hence, 1 and 3 are not correct.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

[Source: PIB](#)

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