EKAM Fest

**Syllabus subtopic:** Welfare Schemes for Vulnerable Sections of the population by the Centre and States and the Performance of these Schemes;

**Prelims and Mains focus:** about the fest and its objectives; about NHFDC

**Context:** Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment will inaugurate the week long Exhibition-cum-Fair “EKAM Fest” organised by National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) under M/o Social Justice & Empowerment in New Delhi.

**About the fest**

EKAM Fest is an effort for

1. promoting entrepreneurship and knowledge among Divyangjan community,

2. generating awareness among society about potentialities of PwDs, and

3. providing a major marketing opportunity to PwDs entrepreneurs.

- **NHFDC Foundation** is making efforts for development of a brand and platform for marketing of products of these determined entrepreneurs. Accordingly, name of the brand has been arrived at **Ekam (Entrepreneurship, Knowledge, Awareness, Marketing)**.

- The word **Ekam** also represents the inclusiveness, oneness and unity which appropriately describe the efforts being put in by NHFDC to develop the marketing platform and aggregation of the products through
promotion of entrepreneurship, knowledge sharing, awareness creation and marketing initiatives amongst the Divyangjan.

- The week long Ekam Fest will also **host a number of activities like cultural extravaganza including performances by Divyang artists** and well known professionals. Additional highlights of the event will be **astrological consultations** and foot massage by Divyang professionals.

- In the **first Ekam Fest**, Divyang Entrepreneur and Artisans from all over the country have been invited with representation from J&K to Puducherry and from Nagaland to Gujarat. The fest will see vibrant products of from J&K and NE with products ranging from handicraft, handloom, Embroidery work and dry fruits. During the Fair, around 80 Divyang Entrepreneur/Artisan and organizations from 18 States/UTs shall display their skills represented through their beautiful products, services and demonstration of skills. It will be an **opportunity for all to encourage these products made with extra ordinary determination** by the **divyang craftspersons and entrepreneurs**.

- NHFDC also plans to **start online marketing platform** to **promote online sales** and **roping in the big corporate houses**. The Ekam Fest stalls will see the following broad products category:

  i. Home Décor and Lifestyle

  ii. Textiles

  iii. Stationery and Eco Friendly products

  iv. Packed Food and Organic Products

  v. Toys and Gifts
vi. Personal Accessory – Jewellery, Clutch Bags

The **new initiatives of NHFDC** will be showcased in the Fest. A few are highlighted below:

- **NHFDC Swavalamban Kendra (NSK):** NHFDC has taken an initiative to establish PWD owned micro skill training Centers throughout the country for skill training of PwDs. These NSKs will have a capacity to provide quality skill training to around 120 PwDs per year NSK. The PwD owner of the NSK is expected to earn around Rs 20,000 per month.

- **Safe Cabs in Delhi and Indore:** NHFDC has made arrangement with Sakha Cabs where the PwD owned commercial vehicles will be driven by the Women drivers to provide safe taxi option for the women, children and senior citizen commuters. Such Safe cabs are already in operation at New Delhi and Indore Airport. The vehicles here are financed by NHFDC under its scheme.

- **Safe Drinking Water E Carts:** NHFDC has recently agreed to finance E-carts fitted with RO water dispensing vending machines. These carts will sell water in paper glasses maintaining the hygiene. The carts will be supported in operation by Bharat Jal. The PwD owner is expected to earn Rs 10,000/- to Rs 15,000/- per month in the operation of these carts.

**About NHFDC**

- NHFDC is an **Apex corporation under the aegis of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan),** Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and is **working since 1997.**

- It is **registered as a company not for profit** and provides financial assistance to the Divyangjan/Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan/PwDs) for their economic rehabilitation and provides
number of skill development programmes to empower them to grow & sustain their enterprises.

- To empower the Divyang and marginalized groups of the society more closely, NHFDC has taken a step forward and established **NHFDC Foundation**, this year.

- Recognizing the absence of a connect with the market which hinders fair prices and volumes in sale of the unorganized tiny Divyang entrepreneurs, NHFDC Foundation is making efforts for **development of a brand and platform for marketing of products of these determined entrepreneurs.**