

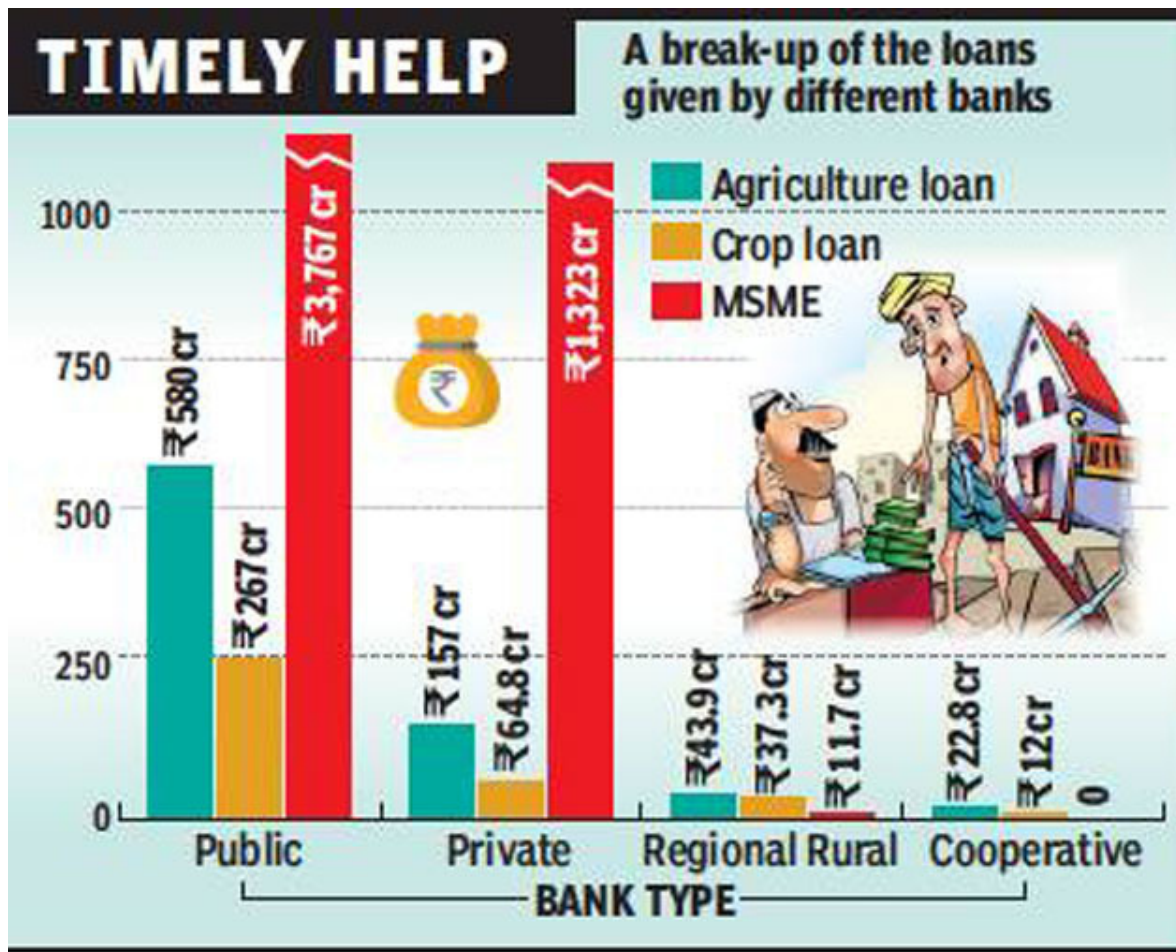
# After govt push, Lucknow MSMEs, agri sector got loan boost post-lockdown

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LUCKNOW: Ruby Fatima (32), a Faizullaganj-based small scale entrepreneur, is happy that she has finally been able to make her mark after a long struggle of 17 years.

Ruby, who runs a chikan embroidery startup, RF Creation, with at least two dozen employees, says her unit now fetches a turnover of Rs 1.5 lakh per month which used to be her annual income before coronavirus pandemic.



Crediting the success of her startup to easy loan access provided to her by the government, Ruby said, “There was a time when I was struggling to survive and expansion was the only solution. Fortunately, I came across the advertisement of state government’s one district, one product (ODOP) scheme and contacted the office of district commissioner of industries (DCI) last July after lockdown. The team helped me secure a bank loan and further guided me to expand my business.”

Similarly, three interior designers – Ruchi Srivastava, her cousin Ritu Vaish and Akhilesh Tiwari of Kalyanpur –started a joint spice manufacturing and packaging unit after lockdown.

The brand, Swaad Bhog, currently employs at least 10 people. “All this became possible due to easy loan sanctioned to us

under the CM Yuva Swarozgar Yojana. Local authorities and bank guided us in our endeavour,” said Ruchi (37), co-owner of Chinhath-based Shree Industries.

Like RF Creation and Swaad Bhog, there are many small scale startups in Lucknow which were provided loan worth Rs 5,103 crore, against the target of Rs 2,215 crore, by the consortium of 30 banks and their 957 branches in financial year 2020-21.

Talking to TOI, the lead bank manager of Lucknow district, Vinod Mishra, said: “A total of Rs 8,538 crore against the target of Rs 10,663 crore, was given as loan under various categories to revive the local economy of Lucknow after lockdown. The two stakeholders, bank consortium and the state administration, had a long discussion after which a roadmap was prepared and an understanding was developed to pump in capital in priority sectors, especially small and medium scale industries, so that employment can be generated and economy can be brought back on track again.”

Nearly 75% of the total loan to MSMEs (Rs 3,779 crore) was given by 13 public sector banks, while remaining Rs 1,323 crore was provided by 15 private banks.

Under MSME category, loans were given to chikan and zardozi embroidery startups, packaging, printing, food processing, furniture, rice and wheat mills, iron craft and plumbing.

Deputy commissioner of industries, Lucknow, Manoj Chaurasia said, “The entrepreneurs were provided 15-35% discount on loans under Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Srijan Yojana (Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme-PMEGP), Mukhya Mantri Yuva Swarozgar Yojana (MMYSY) and ODOP. Our team coordinated with entrepreneurs and banks to ensure easy access to loans. We further promoted small businesses by sending them to fairs to let them understand the market and inculcate new business trends. For Delhi hunar haat, we bore up to 75% expenses of entrepreneurs which included goods transportation, stall fee, food and hotel stay.”

“In 2020-21 financial year, our department helped 276 MSMEs to grow their businesses,” he added.

Apart from MSME, banks gave approximately Rs 804 crore for agriculture against the target of Rs 2,406 crore and Rs 381 crore for crop loan against the target of Rs 789 crore.

For other priority sectors like education, housing and loan for renewable energy, banks offered Rs 1,007 crore against the target of Rs 2,832 crore.