

# Invest in biz steered by women, says Irani

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**Lucknow:** “If you are a smart investor, invest in women,” said Union cabinet minister for women and child development and minority affairs Smriti Irani while speaking at a session on ‘One District One Product - Empowering Traditional Industries in UP’ at Global Investors Summit on Saturday.

The non-performing financing of women-owned businesses is less than 2%, she said, adding that investors should ask about women entrepreneurs and invest in their businesses. “By investing in woman-owned businesses, we will benefit that village, society and family of which that woman is a part.”

ODOP was launched by the UP government in 2018. Today, there are 62 products under the scheme from 75 districts. The state government has taken several steps to improve ODOP clusters, like improving designs, improving packaging, encouraging use of technology, skill development, branding and marketing. MSMEs contribute about 80% of exports from the state and products covered under the ODOP scheme are the biggest contributors.

The state government, till now, has trained over 83,000 artisans under the scheme and given GI tags to 20 ODOP products. As many as seven common facility centres (CFCs) have been completed in the state. Another 21 are under implementation and 11 more proposed.

“ODOP helps percolate the benefits of commerce to the last mile,” said Irani, adding that ODOP is also unique in itself because today it is dedicated to Pt Deendayal Upadhyay who advocated the idea of benefiting even the last person of the society and ODOP fulfils this objective.

ODOP scheme is about connecting the legacy talent with commerce, said the minister. UP has more than 90 lakh



Smriti Irani addresses a session on ODOP

MSME units and over 70% of them are of ODOP products. “It is serious commerce. We need to recognize export potential of small ventures,” she said, adding that there is a need to align with units that can transform into mid-sized companies from small and marginal units.

She said it is only UP which can organize many international events simultaneously. On the one hand, where there are global leaders in the Investors Summit in Lucknow, on the other hand, in Agra, the people associated with the G-20 are learning from the achievements of India. “This process of debate and discussion is the foundation of building a new India,” she added. She also released two books, a compendium of ODOP success stories and catalogue of ODOP products. MSME, Khadi and village industries, handloom and textile minister of UP Rakesh Sachan said the PM is also branding ODOP. He said that due to the prosperity of road, water and air routes in UP, the MSME sector has also prospered. He also presented Irani with an ODOP product from Firozabad.

Shobhit Mathur, partner, Africa India Middle East (AIM) Consulting, Thampi Kosi, MD & CEO, ONDC, Dheeraj Kapoor, vice-president, Flipkart Group Government Relations, CMD, Lulu Group International were present.