

A stitch in time for local lace manufacturing

Irangika Range

PARTNERSHIP: The Sri Lanka Handicraft Board (SLHB) in partnership with of the Tourist Hotels Association of Sri Lanka (THASL) and the Sri Lanka Association of Inbound Tour Operators (SLAITO) have tied up to promote the local lace manufacturing and handicraft industry among tourists.

Under this partnership, a new lace manufacturing centre which was destroyed by the tsunami will be reconstructed in Dikwella. A new Handicraft Displaying Centre will also be set up in the area.

This is aimed to get women back to lace weaving and to train newcomers to the business.

Women will train under the various segments including manufacturing of more-value added lace products focussing tourist market.

An agreement on this, was signed by the Minister of Rural Industries and Self-Employment Promotion S.B Nawinne and the SLHB's Chairperson Somakumari Tennakoon, THASL's President Hiran Cooray and SLAITO's President Wasantha Leelananda at the Ministry recently.

Dikwella is a famous area for traditional lace manufacturing. Women in the area have been engaged in the industry from the past. But most of them earn very little in their business because they sell their products

through middle men. The Government has understood this situation it would facilitate local industrialists to sell their products directly.

This would also assist local craftsmen to get the real benefits from the tourism industry.

The Travel Foundation in UK has offered Rs. four million in the first stage. Many outbound tour operators from UK and UK tourists provide financial support to make this project a success. Minister Nawinne said this would create many job opportunities in the area and will also enhance women's livelihood. This will provide a good opportunity for tourists to purchase high quality local handicrafts as well.



TIE-UP: Minister S. B. Nawinne, SLHB chairperson Somakumari Tennakoon, THASL President Hiran Cooray and SLAITO President Wasantha Leelananda after the signing ceremony.