

# State Crafts Representation

## Primary Producers from Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand, a North Indian State rich in natural resources specialises in production of woolen handlooms, cotton handlooms, silk products, products of other natural fibers, nettle fiber craft, lihai wood carving, copperware, ringaal based products, wax work, aipan art - ritual floor painting, lantana furniture, picchuara - painted textile, block printing, driftwood work, pine bark jewellery, papri wood work, ornamental candles, stone carving and many more innovative combinations. It is also home to over 40 kinds of natural fibres that are used to make a wide range of innovations.

Uttarakhand's Theme Presentation at Home Expo India included 50 participants - all primary producers from 11 craft towns and cities of this State like, Almora, Bageshwar, Chamoli, Dehradun, Haridwar, Nainital, Pithoragarh, Rudraprayag, Tehri Garhwal, Udham Singh Nagar and Uttarkashi, besides representation from Uttarakhand Handloom & Handicraft Development Council. Through Home Expo India 2017, the artisans, designers and entrepreneurs of the state got an opportunity to market their products not only to exporters but also to visiting buyers and get their invaluable feedback on their product propositions.

From Bageshwar there was therapeutic copperware for home utility as well as decor; crafts from Rudraprayag and Pithoragarh comprised ringaal(a kind of dwarf bamboo found in Uttarakhand) products like baskets, flower stands, pen boxes, hanging lamps and candle stands. Since they use natural raw materials, these products if saved from water, sun and fire can be used for a long time. Just a coat of polish on their natural colours is needed for maintenance and these have a good local demand too. Woodcraft came in from many areas of this State. And then there were artistic shawls, aipan craft and selections in table linen. Aipan is a traditional folk art specifically made by women of Uttarakhand.

Harsh Chandra Tamta from Bageshwar was on his first participation at the expo. He specialises in copperware like utensils and decoratives that he sells in the local market through his shop back home. "I am here with a desire to expand my business and earn more for my family," he said and informed that he works on customised orders as well. Among his bestsellers were



small souvenirs and plates. Home Expo India brought him closer to the international buying community and he received a few enquiries too. Based on recent learnings through buyer seller interactions, He plans to add toys and decorative cum utility boxes to his product range. Another copper specialist - Dulap Ram from Bageshwar said, "We have been given great opportunity to showcase our talent, otherwise our handicraft would just be limited to our village buyers", he says and



adds, "I hope that people from different countries would look at our work which would give our handicrafts a better future in world market." Namita Tiwari from Almora brought with her, the traditional folk art of aipan. She strives to keep it alive and take it to a wider customer base. Though this is art form used to adorn homes and festive essentials, enthusiasts are bringing this craft's application to contemporary products.



Namita uses aipan to embellish laptop cases, file folders, etc. and most recently artisanal apparel and

wood based products. "We are getting really good response from people and buyers have come with enquiries," she shared. Another



such aipan artisan at the show was Kirti Singh from Haldwani, Nainital. The initiative of EPCH to showcase regional crafts is going to help lost regional art to come out of confines and reach new generations, she feels and said, "my main focus is to retain the traditional elements in a product, mostly paintings, bags and apparel, while giving it a contemporary appeal."



Vandana Nagarkoti from Almora specialises in artistic shawls. This was her first participation and she was here to grow her 'fairly young' business. "We make all the products ourselves and they are all original designs. We don't copy from anyone," she emphasised, quickly adding about the buyer appreciation her shawls have gained at the expo. Deepa Sahni from Roorkee who specialises in



zarimala products feels, such initiatives of EPCH and the government have empowered women with gainful employment, making it possible for them to work from their homes.

Artisan Gaurav Bisht is of the opinion that such EPCH initiatives offer a promising platform for regional art to connect with the outside world. "My organisation makes woolen carpets using hand knotting techniques and



sustainable methods," he shared. He is concerned of the declining demand of handmade floor accessories as they are expensive than machine made products, owing to the labour and process involved. At Home Expo India, buyers, especially from Singapore and Europe liked their products, informed Gaurav and hopes for orders.



Kumari Bala from Udham Singh Nagar calls hand block printing her forte. She explained of using this method to adorn diaries, table covers and small boxes, besides sarees and traditional Indian suits, since over an year. "I think the platform of Home Expo will help my business and help me get new orders," she quipped. I have been doing this craft 1 year and connected to a small organisation that is working from 2 years and wants to preserve the traditional art.

"EPCH has given us a platform to elevate ourselves and has encouraged us to continue our craft traditions. Our products are sold all over the country and we are aiming at the international market now. We make cushion covers, file covers, laptop bags and many wood products. The response of the buyers during this fair has been positive," shared Kiran Shah from Uttarakhand Folk Art. An artisan for ringal baskets - Rahul Kumar shared a hope that people in remote craft concentration areas are getting work because of the Govt.'s and EPCH's intervention. He has attended many skill development seminars organised by EPCH and appreciates inclusion of designers (with practical approach) in most of them. "Now there's variety in our products and we are confident of making further variations," he emphasised.

Maheshwari Khati from Jai Nanda Utthan Samiti said, "through this fair we have learnt more about the demands of consumers and buyers from different countries." Sarita Bangiyal, a first time participant is elated at the buyer response to her "100% handmade" carpet range. ■