

Thematic Display - Jodhpur Mega Cluster

Jodhpur Artisan Crafts put up in collective display at IHGF Delhi Fair

Jodhpur is one of the most renowned production clusters for internationally sought after furniture & accessories and home décor made out of different kinds of raw material like recycled wood, cast iron & wrought iron, stone, etc. To assist the stakeholders, the Govt. of India declared Jodhpur, a Mega Cluster of wooden handicrafts. The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles entrusted the task of promoting and enhancing exports from Jodhpur to EPCH. IHGF Delhi Fair-Spring 2018 featured a regional representation from this cluster with 10 participating artisans and entrepreneurs, mostly experiencing their maiden participation at IHGF Delhi Fair. In conversation with Team EPB, at the fair they expressed their enthusiasm at the prospect of getting direct orders and at learnings from interacting with overseas buyers. This display featured woodcraft, tie & dye textile products, rugs & durries, block printing, horn & bone crafts and leather items.

Woodcraft specialists, **Bheru Singh and Ganesh Suthar** from Jodhpur offered wooden furniture and home décor products like photo frames and serving trays, that



already enjoy a buyer base in USA. While 40% of their products cater to the local market, 60% are tuned for exports. Bheru has been in this business since the past twenty years and has a

team of 12 artisans working with him. He shared, "seminars and workshops by EPCH have been quite helpful as they have taught us about marketing and how to showcase our

products." Both Bheru Singh and Ganesh Suthar feel, "the fair has been good and we got some queries. Sometimes buyers think as our exhibitor stalls are small we may not be capable of exporting big orders, but this is not the case. We got a lot of queries for wooden boxes with colourful decorations." we have got business from USA the most.

A row of sturdy leather boots were displayed at the stall of **Sumit Tomar** who is keen to explore international markets.



He has a team of 78 artisans working with him. "Currently we are only

making boots, slippers and sandals but we are introducing new product lines like jackets, bags, purses, other accessories to

apparel and all of them are hand made using leather," informed Sumit and added, "at IHGF, the first day was really good. Buyers were interested in the designs that we are making and we got queries from many of them.

Hand carving on camel bone to bring out home décor and



gifting products is another craft Rajasthan's Jodhpur region is famous for. At this collective display area of Jodhpur mega cluster, it was represented in form of intricately carved decoratives, dresser items, utility boxes, etc. embellished with fine detailing by **Aarif Khan**. Excited at the buyer

traffic and magnitude of the fair, he said, "such initiative and exposure goes a long way in encouraging artisans towards a new recognition for their work and aim to make efforts to enter the global market. It was a good experience. I got buyers from Australia and USA besides some domestic buyers." Aarif Khan's entire family is involved in this work and they have been into this trade since 40 years now. They are already working with buyers in UK and Australia. This time they got teak inlay products among new lines alongside resin & bone combinations.

Another horn & bone entrepreneur, **Mohd. Sayeed** from Jodhpur, is very thankful to EPCH for this platform where one can showcase products and explore international markets. "We



have been attending their seminars and workshops quite often, they are of great help." He also informed that they have a team of 18

artisans working with them and they are into this business since 30 years. "We use camel bones and horns as raw materials to make boxes, dolls, jars, and utility decoratives," he added. "This is the first time I was coming to this fair so expectation were quite high. I can say that the fair has been very good. I am leaving with enquiries and expect them to materialise into orders," he concluded.

Rajasthan's globally acclaimed hand block printing at this display came from **Mohd. Iqbal**, a second time participant at



IHGF who has been in this business since two decades. His product range included cotton as the base material in their T shirts, shirts and bedsheets. He said, this is a "great opportunity given by EPCH to reach buyers from other countries. The fair has been really good. We have already got



queries and are going to ship some samples soon."

Women artisan, **Samjhu Devi**, adept in textile crafts like embroidery and crochet, works under a NGO called SURE (Society to Uplift Rural Economy) that works with around 2,500 artisans and supplies to Fabindia among other domestic volume retailers. She was busy absorbing experiences from her first presence at IHGF. She said, the seminars and skill development

workshops organised by EPCH are very helpful as they help them familiarise with international market demands, Govt. schemes and entrepreneurship. "At IHGF, we got a good response, buyers appreciated us and we got orders from Taiwan, Australia and some domestic buyers," she added.

Another woman artisan, **Ghudi** who too was from Barmer also specialises in a similar craft. Mirror work and typical Rajasthani folk motifs are common in her 98% hand labour worked, with the sewing machine restricted to stitching and fortifying corners / borders of the products. She got along, cushion covers, bedsheets, bags and *kurtis* and Indian salwars. She shared that traditionally, they practiced this craft to bring out products of everyday use or to give away as wedding gifts to daughters. Gradually, this was used to earn livelihood as women set out to make these products for sale in local markets and places of tourist interest. "We are here due to Gramin Vikas evam Chetna Sansthan (GVCS) and its association with the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, she said, expressing gratitude for the grooming and fine-tuning of their



skills that are in turn making their products suitable for various international markets and as a result, empowering women in the region. ■

Thematic Display - Jammu & Kashmir Needlecraft & Artistic Expressions from Jammu & Kashmir



The Thematic display of J&K crafts at IHGF Delhi Fair- Spring 2018 was preceded by a performance area with music and live craft demonstrations. A team of musicians playing traditional Kashmiri music enticed the guests just as the crafts persons held visitors in rapt attention to demonstrations of kani shawl embroidery, art of papier mache, rug making and carpet weaving. J&K is famous for its scenic beauty and exclusive raw material base that inspires and shapes crafts in walnut wood, crewel embroidery, Pashmina shawls, Namdas cushion covers & other home furnishings, papier mache products, naquash silverware, willow baskets, copper and brassware, etc. The speciality of Kashmiri handicrafts also dwells on the use of antique techniques and age old traditions with potential to churn out various eco-friendly products that can be distinctly unique on the basis of their utility and quality. The overall display included stalls of 20 entrepreneurs and exporters with their product ranges in rugs, carpets, shawls & stoles, home furnishings, woodcrafts and papier mache products.

Shalimar Textiles' representative, Khurshid Ahmed was participating in IHGF Delhi Fair for the first time. They manufacture shawls, stoles and scarves, mainly in Pashmina, offering value additions like embroidery and prints in their product offering. Mr. Ahmed informed that they can cater to deadlines and complete orders prior to estimated time lines owing to the 150 power looms and 12 high speed looms in their unit. Shalimar Textiles has participated in many international fairs, said Mr. Ahmed and shared of meeting buyers interested in their displayed products. "We source our

raw material from a unit of Aditya Birla Group and Unilever Ltd. Some of it is from Kolkata and Raipur, while the Pashmina is from Mongolia. We use Korean wool," he concluded.



Another first time participant was Tariq A. Dar from **Pashmkaar**. He felt, this platform is a good opportunity to showcase products and meet international buyers. He shared, "I met some potential buyers already. I export to Europe, UK and Asian countries like Hong Kong and Taiwan." They offered a variety of shawls and scarves, handmade using 100% Pashmina. They had tried to bring in variations by including lighter embroideries alongside their traditional designs. Mr. Dar elaborated, "we have also tried to tweak our designs with



different colours and designs. We are also experimenting with a new line - men's mufflers and baby's scarves. We also have a new clothing line, where use different fabrics and designs merged with traditional Kashmiri embroidery."

Akbar Art Gallery, specialising in papier mache and enamelware was represented by Parvez Naqash. "We have



been in this business since 26 years now and have been participating in IHGF since the last 16 years," he informed and added that lately, they have extended their product periphery to include handmade steel products. Their product line includes antique reproductions,

boxes, candle stands, carpets & rugs, decorative objects, lamps, papier mache, picture frames and trays. They export to France, America, Germany and also supply to stores within India.

Baba Enterprises, a firm dealing in Pashmina shawls, rumals and embroidery as well as kalamkari embellished products was represented by Salman Hamid Baba. He shared, "we specialise in pure Pashmina woolen products and source our raw materials from the Himalayan regions, mainly Ladakh. They also offered selections in plain shawls. Added



Mr. Baba, "we can cater to buyers with different budgets. Our handlooms are woven and embroidered by artisans in Srinagar." This is the third year they were participating in this fair and their shawls generated good buyer queries.

Second time participant, Fayaz Ahmad Dar from

Kashmir Heitage Co. said, "our Pashmina products are uniquely designed and have antique value over other products available in the market. Some of them take over two years to make. Some buyers have already inquired about our products," and emphatically added, "at a time that production is declining in J&K, this effort of bringing J&K crafts in a thematic display by EPCH is appreciated."



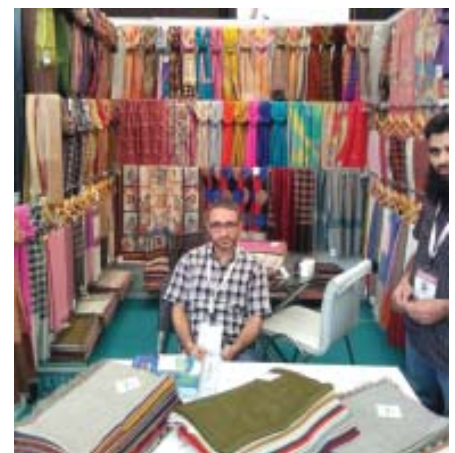
Gulam Mohd Khan from **RCO Arts Emporium** got



embroidered Pashmina stoles, leather bags and rugs in his stall. "Pure Pashmina is used in our products. Our major attractions are stoles this time," he said.

Mehraj from **Mehraj Crafts** offered Pashmina

stoles and mufflers with handmade embroidery. Totally handmade Kani shawls, towels and reversible products are their forte. Said Mr. Mehraj, "the art of Kashmiri embroidery is quite painstaking and is gradually dying. We are only trying to preserve it by promoting it more and more." Netherlands, Switzerland and USA are their main import markets.



BaBa Cottage Industries represented by Mubbashir got along completely handmade made-ups in wool, beautified



with needle work (Kani embroidery). Wooden sticks which look somewhat similar to the chopsticks are used for making this. "A lot of digital prints are coming in nowadays, he said and added that some of their products are machine made

also, to cater to a section of the market. Most of the products are Kani works. Pashmina is used as the primary raw material and their entire range includes stoles and fur items, jackets and stoles with lace work.

Showing his exhibited lines, Zameer Naqash from **Kashmir Valley Arts** said that this time they were showcasing stoles. "Merino wool is the main raw material that we use, at times blended with 15% silk," he informed and added that they also do jackets and shawls.

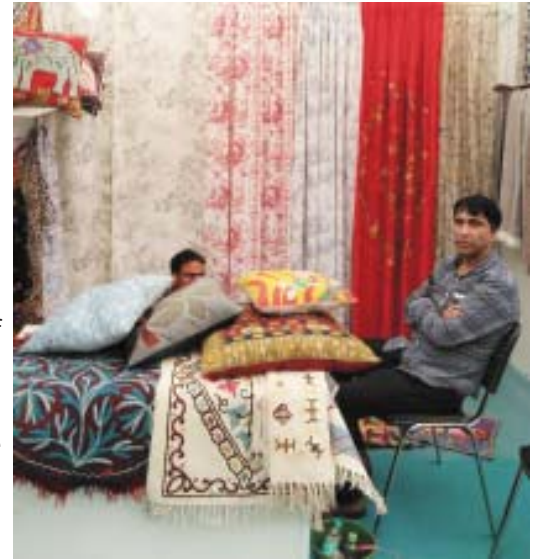
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GM Shawls represented by Sheikh Feroze have been IHGF participants since a decade now. Through this participation at a theme presentation, they have met some prospective buyers, he said. They primarily export to Middle East. They have their own production house, where they also make their raw material. "Our best selling products and hand-embroidered Pashmina products," informed Mr. Feroze.

Namdaz rugs are another traditional speciality from J&K and some exhibitors at this theme pavilion displayed selections in this product category. Mr. Bhatt from **Kabir International** that deals in home furnishing like curtains and

rugs had Namdas among their main attractions. "These are also considered to be the king of Kashmiri handicrafts and in this we have 3 to 4 qualities," he informed and



explained that one is cotton with embroidery, the other is 50% cotton+50% wool and the third is 100% wool. Another product that they displayed were small worship mats. Among their curtains there were screen printed and digital printed ones with some hand embellished. Their major importers are from the Middle East.

Jan Handicrafts was another flooring specialist represented at IHGF Delhi Fair by Wasim for whom this work is continuation of a family tradition. Their products are



handmade silk carpets and rugs, made by using looms. There are different variations that they have in these products. In one they use 100% silk, in

another the base is made from base threading and then it is layered on with cotton and silk. It's a family tradition. Their major importers are from European countries and USA. To keep their interest intact, new designs like those inspired by Persian designs and 3d designs are being introduced by this firm. ■

Thematic Display- North Eastern Region

Himalayan Fibers, Handlooms and Sustainable Crafts from NER

Ethical & Sustainable lifestyle statements from Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Nagaland

An exclusive showcase of crafts from India's North Eastern Region (NER) was set up at a Theme Pavilion at IHGF Delhi Fair-Spring 2018. With a team of 20 artisans and entrepreneurs as well as representation by welfare organisations like North Eastern Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation (NEHHDC); Bodoland Regional Apex Weavers & Artisans Co-operation Federation Ltd.(BRAWFED); and Poma Bamboo Processing Center, this collective display included crafts from states of the North East India.



Sonam Tyashi Gyalsten and his firm - LA from Sikkim got along elegant lamp shades, created using the **nomadic weaving technique of 'Yakult'**. As part of this line, they also make bottle jackets, lamp shades, desk top utilities and tea infusers, in similar minimalist styles. They deal in handicrafts made of wood and bamboo. The tea infusers are made by a community called the Chunda, who live near the riverside. Their products are made by a machine which is powered by the river without any electricity. Their lamp shades are very popular in Norway and Netherlands, said Sonam. The NER Theme Pavilion is a great initiative



and the fair has progressed a lot in many aspects, besides giving us quite a few buyers, shared Sonam. He has been participating since the last three years. Brand LA, primarily focuses on making mountain made products and also happens to be a social enterprise connecting with communities in the mountains following a 'buy-back' system with artisans.

A regular participant at IHGF since 2008, Haider Ali, from Sivasagar, Assam started working with Muga and Eri silk in 2004, initially catering to boutiques in the local market and moving on to export markets like France, Germany and Russia. Though he deals in silk jackets, shawls, cushion covers, quilts and runners, his main focus is on silk stoles and king size



shawls that include use of natural dyes in the fiber stage and traditional hand spinning techniques thereafter. He informed, "this season, we have a wide variety of **shawls and Nehru coats made up of Muga silk and Eri silk.**"



Bamboo craft specialist firm, Disha Enterprises from Assam is represented by Shantanu Sutradhar, participating in IHGF for the fifth time in a row. He feels, "the idea of theme pavilion is very good as it gives us a

platform to showcase our traditional handicrafts in a theme display. This fair provides great opportunities both for buyers and sellers. While a buyer gets many varieties under one roof, exhibitors benefit from meeting buyers from so many countries. This excellent platform has helped us increase our client base, and as a result has increased production capacity back home." They have been in business since 1999 and have created an online store at Amazon named Green Lifestyle with assortments like baskets, trays and small pieces of furniture that are very popular in Europe, Middle East and Australia. Adds Shantanu, "Among our display products, our sling bags are extremely popular, so much so that it gets difficult to fulfill the demand at times. This time we have developed **leather combination cane bags.**"

"Assam is the only place where the world comes for silk," proclaims Puberun Sarmah, with an air of local pride. Based in Nalbari, Assam, he deals in **organically dyed, handspun Muga and Eri silk as well as cotton handloom stoles.** He



has a retail store and also caters to buyers in Singapore, New Zealand, Korea and USA. Having been in this profession since 8 years, Puberun appreciates overseas buyers who value organic and natural products. "Five

to six years back, the market for Eri silk had diminished but now it sees a promising revival with changes in the traditional usage," he shared and added about how shawls are modified into stoles to become user-friendly. As more colours are sought, natural dyes are mixed to attain new shades. This time they got along products in Assamese indigo dye and tea dye. He is concerned that as the products are handspun and artisan dependent, volumes are difficult to achieve in a limiting turnaround time. This at times, becomes the biggest hindrance in catering to seasonal international demands that also involve shipping time.

Narendra Borah from Oi Qua LLP, Assam, has been in this business since the last three years but this was a maiden participation under the Oi Qua banner. Informing about his



product range, Narendra, an NIFT alumni elaborated, "we have three major categories of products - home décor, fashion accessories and creative

products. We produce our own yarn and cocoons. All our material is **naturally hand spun and woven** by us. We are already exporting to USA, Korea, Japan, Peru and also supplying to buyers within India. All products we have are

unique and best-selling."



"We feel blessed to be here at this fair," said Keisham Babita Devi from Manipur, manufacturer exporter of bags, baskets and purses made of jute and other natural fibers, offered a vibrant range in bags with vibrant pom-poms, trims & tassels through her firm-Natural Textile Collection. This entrepreneur working with women artisans, exports to Europe, Australia and USA.

Heirloom Naga, manufacturers and exporters of **native artistic textiles and crafts** are based in Dimapur, Nagaland. With a seasoned woman manufacturer exporter of the region - Jesmina Zeliang at the helm



of affairs, they also deal in bamboo & cane home utility and home decor products. Their premium range in made-ups and other handlooms are 100% cotton, hand woven using heirloom traditions and dyed with eco-friendly colours. Catering primarily to the high-end market, they had put up a tastefully done stall with unique pieces attracting attention. The products carried many signature designs of the mother-son owner duo that also have domestic retail units in the North East. This time, their display had handloom home furnishing and made-ups presenting a contrast of sorts in the classical black & white, rich mustard & raven, reds & browns, etc.



Fourth time IHGF participant, Shravanti Borah's passion for reviving the traditional silks of

Assam, brought her into this field and this time she brought in handlooms with typical **Assamese motifs drawn from the traditional attire-Mekhala Chador** and woven into cushion covers in pinks, browns, blues and a dominant indigo across her display. "People actually want to see something from the North-East because we deal with natural products, natural native silk which is not found anywhere else. Some buyers have already contacted me before the fair, to come and meet me," informed Shravanti. Also displayed at her stall were stoles in florals against a white base as well as a line in solid tones. Her firm-Enajori that means 'the thread of love', took shape in Guwahati and she deals in Eri (ahimsa silk) and Muga silk sarees, mekhala chadors and stoles as well as fabrics, home

furnishings, home linen and made-ups that are embellished with prints, digital designs and block printing. Shravanti added, "IHGF has been a great platform in terms of trade as without it we would have never imagined multiple buyers and sellers meeting at a common place."

Priyom Hazarika of Nature Trade, Assam, has been associated with the IHGF Delhi Fair since 2005 and has benefitted from the market linkages she has established here.



A plethora of natural fibers from the hills were at their glory at her stall in the form of bags, baskets, yoga mats and even hats. **Bags made primarily from water hyacinth** in many sizes and to serve many purposes, runners, baskets, mats, purses, wallets, carry bags and much more offer a varied range at the stall of Nature Trade. Among attractions were her laundry baskets with interesting and colourful embellishments.



Nirman Fabrics by Sarah Fashion from Guwahati, Assam, was represented by Bapan Sarkar and Twarita Das, regulars at EPCH fairs since over five years. **Handlooms are their forte with products like cushion covers and curtains.** This time their theme was natural off-white with subtle handloom motifs, including some in pleasing shades of ochre, green, brown, blue, etc. with selections in shibori dyeing techniques. Their stall looked awash with soothing off white and egg shell white, emitting a very cool and summery feel. They have their export market in Thailand, Australia and France and domestic market in Delhi, Mumbai and Guwahati. This time they got three confirmed orders from buyers based in Switzerland, Australia and Indian brand-Fab India.



"This is a great platform given to us for a good start in the international market and I also got a good response," said Jahnabi Phookan of Tribal

heritage. They displayed a line of **vibrant handlooms made of Eri and Muga silk**. They also cater to the local market.



"I am glad to be here again in this fair," said second time participant Tamie May, representing Looms of Changmha, Mizoram.

Their work has been a family tradition since past 12 years with a

strong local market base. They had on display, **bamboo decoratives, handloom stoles, jackets and casual bags**. In course of the fair they were approached by 8 international and 10 domestic buyers. "It was a wonderful experience," concluded Tamie.

Kaustav Varun Borbora from a fairly new firm-Silk Culture, Assam, got good buyer traffic to his stall with one from Japan and one from Fab India. Kaustav feels, for a place like North

East that is not covered by all, EPCH has provided a really good platform to showcase our products. "It allows us to diversify our work and encourages us to experiment more by providing market



exposure. We have moved from fabrics to shirts, cushion covers and bags since our last participation at this fair," he said and informed of their specialisation in Muga silk. "They buy and process muga cocoon and treat it at their production facility. Silk Culture also hosts its own handloom unit that manufactures mainly Assamese design Mekhela Chadors, sarees and stoles. They are **hand woven in Muga, Pat, Tassar and Eri**, either plain or with different motifs.

Bamboo home decoratives and human figurines inspired by daily life adorned the stall of Kanak Kanti Dhar from Dhar



Industries, Tripura - a firm set by Kanak's elder brother in 1968. IHGF participants since 2006, they have an export base in South Africa. "Some of our products are made up of bamboo roots," informs Mr. Dhar.

First time participant, Dharya Mehta from firm, Green Basket, Nagaland, got visitors

from both India and overseas. "this experience is an eye opener for me. I also enjoyed seeing products of co-exhibitors," she said and informed that theirs is a new



enterprise and started as a backyard business. IHGF has guided them to reach an international clientele. This firm

deals in **home utility products, mainly made from bamboo, wood and water reed**. Another first time participant was Regional Design and Technical Development Center, Guwahati, represented by MUR Kishore Kumar. "I am glad to be a part of this fair. Their stall displayed a collection of



handwoven scarves and handloom cushion covers. Kishore informed, "the base material used is pure cotton and the designs on them are commonly called The Missing Tribe and The **Miri Tribe techniques** that are being revived now".



Bodoland Regional Apex Weavers and Artisans Cooperative Federation Ltd. (BRAWFED), Assam, was represented at IHGF by Ansumai Brahma.

Their colourful display comprised a rich collection of handicrafts and handloom products like stoles and shawls, primarily made of Eri silk with traditional 'hill/pahari designs' as well as cane and bamboo decoratives. ■