

THEME PAVILION

North Eastern Region



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



An exclusive showcase of crafts from NER with 23 artisans and entrepreneurs was set up at a Theme Pavilion at IHGF Delhi Fair-Spring 2019. The artisans and entrepreneurs share their stories and how they have benefitted from EPCH's guidance & assistance in enhancing livelihoods, creating gainful employment, empowering artisan lives and confidence building, as well as the platform of IHGF Delhi Fair that is integral to their business and helps them connect their sustainable crafts to an international audience.

A neat display of bamboo kitchen and houseware like containers, flasks, ladles & spoons, etc. greeted one at the stall of **Dhritiman Borah** who manufactures all kinds of bamboo products including furniture under his brand name- DB Industries, Assam. "Everything is made of locally procured bamboo and I design them all. Use of sustainable raw material and design aesthetics draw buyers to my products," he says.



Akaa Creations from Arunachal Pradesh with accomplished designer Nabam Aka at the helm of affairs was represented at IHGF by **Bem Nana**. Their expertise lies in handlooms and the product range boasts of kurtis, hand bags, traditional garments and local ornaments. They also make hand-woven traditional wedding dresses. Says Bem, "it is amazing how IHGF has brought us all here collectively and beautifully to showcase our work."

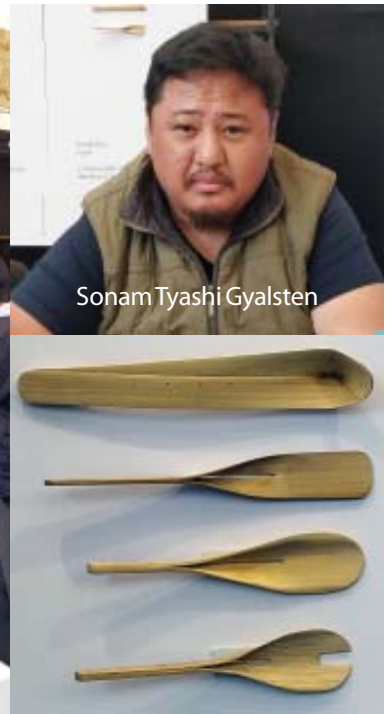




Shantanu Sutradhar



Shravanti Borah



Sonam Tyashi Gyalsten

Bamboo craft specialist **Shantanu Sutradhar** from Disha Enterprises, Assam shared, "we are from Silchar, the southern part of Assam that abounds in clusters with over 1000 families working with cane & bamboo since over a century, catering to demands of buyers of other places." So initially Shantanu started placing them in organised clusters, providing them with all necessary facilities required to produce quality products and tuned their skills for an international audience. "We were accordingly groomed by EPCH through training programs and designers," he added. The innovated products are often met with overwhelming demands. Disha Enterprises is working for big brands now. Their stall displayed customised cane bags, some embellished with wood and hand painting. "Right now, this craft is not being done by anyone else. We have fine arts university students back there and have also introduced carpenters to the production process. We've been evolving and growing," he concluded.

Shravanti Borah from Assam owns a firm- Enajori that means 'the thread of love'. She is fuelled by her passion for reviving and promoting the traditional silks of Assam. She deals in Eri and Muga, bringing out variations in stoles and shawls in different weaves; as well as home furnishing like cushions, pillow covers, table runners, etc. with an endeavour to extend their reach to an expansive global platform so that the weavers stay motivated and keep the tradition alive. The process is handmade and the colourants are natural dyes. The new lines on display at her stall

included digitally printed Eri products with cheerful spring summer patterns as well as block printed work. Shravanti said, "IHGF has been a great platform and I have received enquiries. A domestic buyer (architect) is keen on my furnishing range."

Sonam Tyashi Gyalsten from Sikkim and his firm LA got along, elegant bamboo crafts - kitchen and home products with a line-up including lamp shades, serving spoons, salad mixers, hooks and hangers, etc. in minimalist styles tuned for European markets that are passionate about eco-friendly products. Said Sonam, "I am a regular at IHGF fairs. Based on our experiences and buyer feedback, we have come up with collections that are more export friendly and also manufacturing friendly from the point of view that the products are collapsible, compact, stackable and easy to transport and, also in terms of pricing, these are much more market friendly this time. The fair has been good, I got my inquiries so totally expecting 3-4 deals signed."

Narendra Borah from Oi Qua LLP, Assam, has been in this business since the last three years. Informing about his product range, Narendra, an NIFT alumni elaborated, "this season, I have got along, eco-friendly printing; Eco print, and also natural dyes in different shades. This Eco print is done over Eri silk cloth." Talking about the buyer response he said, "I have got continuous buyer response which is actually fabulous. Way before I attended these fairs I had my permanent buyers already maintained through our instagram product page. Also since I have attended this fair and as I maintained a designer page officially, I have got

great exposure and buyers have come in real consistently. I had inquiries, orders and deals signed throughout the fair. My sets of new natural coloured tones and Eco printing have received great recognition through the Eco printing samples that I have displayed" He added that EPCH's IHGF platform is excellent. They are supporting new entrepreneurs in a well-organised manner.

Manipuri Longpi stone pottery specialist, **Mathew Sasa** has worked with buyers across the world. His work, also a family business dating back to over 3 decades, is based on a traditional art form of his village-the Longpi district of Manipur. At IHGF, he lined up products confirming to new trends and international market demands. Uniquely, Longpi pots are not crafted on a potter's wheel but shaped by hand with the help of molds and tools. Mathew's display at the fair included plates, pots, kettles, bowls, cups, etc. Commenting on the response he said, "about 6-7 buyers have shown their interest and made enquiries. I get both domestic and international buyers from here. I trade to almost every state in India. I have my own permanent international buyers who are interested in the type of pottery I offer."

Urta Design, Nagaland's representative, **Ram Yadav** shared, "this is my sixth time at this fair. My journey with IHGF has been really good so far. We have regular suppliers from Japan, UK and Jamaica. We have wooden products such as bowls, trays, mugs. We have bamboo ware as well. We make household products and provide bamboo training to new artisans and skilled laborer. I have 40 people working under me. The initiative by IHGF to showcase our art is very good for our marketing and expansion of our work." Abhi Craft Pvt. Ltd. specialising in cane products was represented by their designer+trainer, **Prabhat Saikia**. Describing their work said, "it takes 2-3 days to manufacture one product and there are about 20 of us working together. Our

trade has been domestic until now and through IHGF I look forward to expand it overseas. I have been recommended this platform by Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India," and adds that trade at the fair has already proved

to be beneficial as he has received one order from the US and another from the UK.

Surbala Weaving Unit, Manipur was represented by **Mayanglambam Surbala Devi** and offered a display of cotton textiles and tribal jewellery. Been in business since 5 years, they work with local weavers whom they give designs and raw material to work with. All the printing and weaving is done by hand (using fly shuttle looms). It takes one day to make three stoles, she informs. Their products at IHGF drew many enquiries right from the first day.

Baby Sarkar from Tripura and her firm, Sangita Handicrafts brought along, bamboo and cane products ranging from kitchen wares to lamps. She has been in business since decades and this was her fourth participation at this fair. "I am in this business since last 25 years. My parents were in this business and after





Baby Sarkar



Anindita Kalita

I got married, I brought this business along with me to my in-laws. I like to represent our tribes in my work as well. I have already got one order and I am looking forward to more,' she informed. Vasundhara Handloom from Assam was represented by **Anindita Kalita** who started this enterprise in 2016. With specialisation in home furnishings and Eri & Muga based artistic textile crafts, all products at Vasundhara are hand-made and use natural fibers. There was also a line in apparel made of organic cotton using natural dyes and men's wear. "Besides Eri slik, we have products made of Mulberry silk and Tussar silk. At IHGF, we have got a few inquiries from buyers and the experience has been great so far," said Anindita.

IHGF Delhi Fair regular, **Keisham Babita Devi** from Manipur, manufacturer exporter of bags, baskets and purses made of water hyacinth and other natural fibers drawn from the river side, offered a vibrant range in bags with vibrant detailing and embellishments, through her firm-Natural Textile Collection. This entrepreneur



Keisham Babita Devi



Alemla Temsu Miaao

working with women artisans, exports to Europe, Australia and USA. An established exporter today, Babita started working soon after college. She was inspired by her father who was working as a govt. handloom handicraft director. Informs Babita, "we have seen the traditional work really happening. I used to work in the IHGF as my floating job when I was in college. I first participated as an entrepreneur in 2007 and from then I have been in business. IHGF has been awesome to me. Even though I have traded small quantities to the buyers that found me at this fair, it has been a huge experience for me, providing me space to always evolve and learn." Babita engages clusters and crafts persons and even personally trains them. She has an office in Delhi. The basic production and manufacturing of her products are done in Manipur whereas the value addition is done in her Delhi based unit. "I have got a good response so far. My products have also been showcased by my buyers at German fairs. I have also received inquiries from these Germany buyers," she concluded.

First time exhibitor at IHGF Delhi Fair, **Alemla Temsu Miaao** and her firm, Lem Boutique Craft from Nagaland got along home decor and lifestyle products in macramé. She explained, "it is different from crochet as you use sticks and hook in crochet but macramé is purely hand-made, as all knots are tied by hand." Macramé has been in existence since 13th century. Women started doing macramé and empowered themselves by working for a living. Then macramé faded away in history and was revived during the 60's and 70's. Alemla added, "I have been doing macramé for 3 years now, having learnt it on my own through internet, books, YouTube and getting ideas. You can make endless products with macramé. I have a small team of 10 right now but am on my path of growth & expansion." Speaking about IHGF she said, "I already got enquiries from various buyers. In Nagaland, people are every creative but the exposure and awareness about commercial viability of these products is missing. IHGF is a good platform for exposure."



Kangkana Haloi

Namita Abang,

Fristly Joy

Sruti Baruah

Another first time exhibitor, **Kangkana Haloi** from Vacavani, Assam echoes this women empowerment sentiment. Her firm aims at uplifting women from a village called Hathiutha in Assam. The motive is village development via entrepreneurship. She explained, "there are already skilled weavers in the village. We took this a step further by organised them through our awareness campaigns. These weavers had the skills but couldn't do anything about it as they couldn't access requisite raw material or find markets for their produce. We tried to tap all the problems and provided solutions. We brought them under our umbrella and started production." Their products use only natural fibers (Eri silk) and dyes. The range includes shirts, kurtas, shawls, fabrics, jackets, cushion covers and other apparel. "The initiative of IHGF to bring artisans from NER region is very good and we get a great international exposure," she added.

Another first time participant at IHGF, **Namita Abang**, proprietor of her enterprise-Jayshree from Assam, got along naturally dyed Eri silk shawls and stoles. Working with Self-Help groups, they have traditional handloom weavers and people who manually cut the yarn. Everything is handspun. It takes round about 3 days to make one piece. All the shibori floral pattern is dyed on to the cloth by a meticulous process of tying & dyeing, she explains. Buyer response to these products have come in the form of enquiries from Canada, Europe and domestic regions (India). While they already have a domestic market, they are here to establish connections with international buyers. "The exposure here is also helping us learn," said Namita.

Fristly Joy of Prashanthi Crafts Pvt. Ltd. too was on a maiden participation at IHGF. "The first day of the fair was good. I got to meet some international buyers. It is a good platform, I am happy that I am here," she joyfully shared. They deal in artisanal apparel and hand carved bamboo jewellery. With a team of around 20 weavers she started this enterprise in October last year. "I had to

work very hard so that I could be a part of this fair and represent my artisans here as well as take back work," she exclaimed.

NE Croft, Assam, led by **Sruti Baruah** too was a first time entrant at the fair. Hers is a start-up working towards utilising natural waste products like water hyacinth, banana fibre, areca nut leaves and more and turning them into lifestyle products. "Through our work we create livelihood for many communities. We work in artisan clusters. I have one cluster working on natural dyes in Assam, another working on water hyacinth mats and rugs in Marizaon and the third cluster is working on Eri and Muga silk. I started working on this because I noticed artisans doing it regularly but with the same designs over and over again. I decided to add value and variety. Nobody in Assam has the kind of yoga mats that I offer. The sale of these mats in domestic market is good but the volume is low so the production is low as of now. Through a buying agent, I have supplied my products to Korea and Japan," she informed and added that she tries to create an edge for her products by using only hand crafting skills and natural dyes. About the response at IHGF she said that her yoga mats drew a lot of interest and enquiries.

M Lucky Singh's Lucky Manipur Handicrafts works with bamboo, cane and kouna grass (primarily) to make bags, mats and other home decor products. This work was initiated by his entrepreneur mother and now has a workforce of 500 people.



M Lucky Singh