

Thematic Display

Needlecraft & Artistic Expressions from J&K

Intricate, elegant, vibrant and thought provoking are some of the expressions that define handicraft products from Jammu & Kashmir. The speciality of these 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 Thematic display of J&K crafts at IHGF



Delhi Fair-Autumn 2019 included stalls of 20 entrepreneurs and exporters with their product ranges in rugs, carpets, shawls & stoles, home furnishings, woodcrafts and papier mache products.



Tariq Ahmed Mir has a two decades old family business with their manufacturing unit in Srinagar and brings out shawls and blankets made

from Pashmina. His stall featured a live demonstration of loom weaving for visitors to see. He said, "our products uniquely designed by our team of 30 artisans in Srinagar, value over other products available in the market. Another first time participant was **Waseen Hassan Jan** from his firm-Zaid Hashani. He felt, this platform is a good opportunity to showcase products and meet buyers. He informed, "our specialised products include Pashmina, silk and woolen shawl and stoles. This time we have products made of 50% silk and 50% wool in which our designs have thin lining as borders of the silk woven area."



Their manufacturing unit consists of 30 people. **Syed Aijaz Hussain**, specialising in clutches, handbags, back packs, pouches and carpets embellished with hook and chain



stitch work shared that they have a team of 400 workers and export their products to USA, UK and Europe. They also sell online on Amazon.

Royal Kashmir Crafts' representative, **Zuhaib** was participating in IHGF Delhi Fair for the second time. He is the third generation in his family business. Among other things, they manufacture blankets, shawls, stoles and scarves, mainly in Pashmina, offering value additions like embroidery and prints in their product offering. **Zuhaib** informed that they



already have local business in the country itself and are looking for export orders through this fair. "EPCH has helped us a lot from past 2 years including this one," he said and added that their manufacturing involves the hard work of 800 artisans including around 300 women artisans. "We also design our own products and have supplied our work to some famous and well-known brands as well," concluded **Zuhaib**. Kashmir Heritage Place, a firm dealing in cushion covers, stoles, shawls & carpets as well as sozni embroidery and print embellished products was represented by **Qaiser Beigh**. He shared, "we are coming to this fair from the past



10 years." He further informed that their unit is based in Srinagar and they have 5000

artisans including women. They presently export to UK, Germany and China. ■

Collective Participation & Display

Crochet & Lace and Jute Craft from Narsapur

Looking at the experience of EPCH in providing skill training to the artisans in different craft clusters, ONGC, a PSUNavratna, also engaged EPCH for providing design inputs under its CSR initiative wherein EPCH helped 50 women artisans produce lace and jute products as per latest designs and trends through a special training program. 5 of them were selected based on their work for participation at IHGF Delhi Fair-Autumn 2019. Their coordinator, Shiva said, the new lines include crochet & lace as well as jute products made using the lace craft technique.

The exhibited products included diversified and hybrid products like, toys, Christmas decor & ornaments, mosquito nets, apparel, crochet work on chunnis (long scarves), carpets and scarves. "We have also tried crochet technique over jute due to its strength. Besides, we have used yarn to decorate plain simple jute bags," informed Shiva and added that many of their items such as mosquito nets are hand washable and are made of pure cotton material. This training has given these women artisans confidence. They were all set to explore a global market through the fair.

For Telgamsetti Durga, this training brought in lot of awareness on product development and also honed her soft skills. Lokam Lakshmi is happy about the opportunity and has learnt the use of various sizes of crochet hooks for different designs. Kothapalli Nagalakshmi is feeling skilled, positive and confident. She has learnt stitching of cushion covers, blouses, shirts, etc. besides improving her crochet making skills. B Santha Rani has learnt how to make

furnishing with crochet & lace embellishments. She has also learnt to use power driven stitching machines and is able to make 100 cushion covers a day. M Madhulata can't stop raving about the new experience of working with different sizes of hooks from her new tool kit. She has learnt the use of colour combinations.

India's crochet lace cluster is abundantly spread around Narsapur, East and West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh with the largest concentration of crochet lace artisans in the world with over 1,60,000 women home based lace makers. ■



Thematic Display

Home Lifestyle lines from North Eastern Region

An exclusive showcase of crafts from NER with 26 artisans and entrepreneurs was set up at a Theme Pavilion at IHGF Delhi Fair-Autumn 2019. The artisans and entrepreneurs shared 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 to an international audience.

Product offerings from artisan pockets spread over India's North Eastern Region connected one back with 'earth' as intrinsic styles emerged with the use of natural raw materials and derivatives. Many of these sustainable lines featured a contemporary twist and are especially suited to decor themes ranging from rustic to modern to traditional. **Priyom Hazarika** and her enterprise, Nature Trade have been associated with the IHGF Delhi Fair since 2005 and have **benefited from the market linkages** they have established here. A plethora of natural fiber products designed by Priyom, with new lines in bags and clutches embellished with shells, natural dyes and hand block printed fabric were at their glory at her stall. Primarily from water hyacinth, cane and bamboo runners, baskets, mats, purses, wallets, carry bags and much more were offered. Priyom shared, "we have a team of 100 artisans, especially underprivileged women from craft clusters. Some are already skilled and we polish their skills further. The not so skilled are trained by us towards improving their livelihood. Our export market spreads across Netherlands, UK, Switzerland and parts of Europe. I am targeting USA now. A major percentage of our trade is because of our participation in EPCH fairs."



Priyom Hazarika



Kaustav Varun Borbora

"This is my third year in this show and when I first came here nobody knew me and today after 2 years I am an established exporter and **EPCH has played a vital role** in making me into what I am today. Such participation allows us to diversify our work and encourages us to experiment more by providing market exposure," said **Kaustav Varun Borbora** from Silk Culture, Assam. His stall included silk scarves & stoles combined with traditional Assamese prints and embroidery. Informing of their specialisation in Muga and Eri silk, he said, right from cultivating the silk to making it into the final product, everything is done at their facility. "Buyers specially from Japan and Poland have appreciated our products. This time the footfall is great and I have already got orders from USA and China," he added.

Tamul Plates Marketing Pvt. Ltd. from Barpeta, Assam, was represented at IHGF Delhi Fair by **Arindam Das Gupta**. "I started my business back in 2010 with two very impressed points in my mind. First, that we should stop the use of plastic as it's not only affecting our health but also our ecology and secondly, that through this I will be able to generate employment for a lot of people," he said. So, with the raw material from the bark of areca nut trees that sheds



Arindam Das Gupta

from the tree naturally, Arindam created his own designs and set up this enterprise. Today, it employs around 50 workers working with them directly and around 3000 women working indirectly. They are shipping to USA, UK, Australia, Columbia, Argentina and many other countries. "Our hot sellers for exports are the square plates of all sizes and for domestic it is the round plates," said Arindam and added that the buyer footfall in this edition is great and they **got very good response**. EPCH has helped them interact with the buyers to know what exactly they expect.

Another regular participant was **Smita Rai** of Namchi Candles, Sikkim, who picked up candle-making as a hobby and now has over 30 women artisans from her village Namchi, making designer candles and selling them across the country to stores as well as online. Her venture is supported by the Office of the DC (Handicrafts) in her region. She shared, "it is always **very exciting to a part of this**



Smita Rai

colourful fair. EPCH helps us with everything right from our travelling to lodging, food, helping



Keisham Babita Devi

us generate business and employment for our people and we can't thank them enough for proving us with this platform." Her display at the fair included candles with carved wood accessories and garnered a lot of appreciation. Seeing the response she is hopeful to start exports soon.

Known as Manipur's pioneer manufacturer exporter of bags, baskets and purses made of water hyacinth and other natural fibers drawn from the river side, IHGF Delhi Fair regular, **Keisham Babita Devi** and her firm, through her firm-Natural Textile Collection, continued to gain attention with new lines in all kinds of bags. She has bags for practically all errands provided one has inclination for sustainable products. The natural shade of her bags have a striking effect when combined with embellishments which this time included fabric, tassels and pom poms. She works with women artisans, designing the products herself, and exports to a very receptive buyer base in South Asian and European countries. She expects to broaden her buyer base with the growing awareness about use of natural products, up cycling and recycling. "I am **very happy that my work is being recognised and appreciated** and I have got good business," she said.



Surbala Mayanglamban

Surbala Mayanglamban and her firm, Surbala Weaving Unit from Manipur were on their second participation at the fair. Their product line included shawls made with a traditional Leirum technique, jewellery with glass beads and cushion covers made of cotton and wool (their highest selling product at present). She has been in business since over 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). USA and Europe are their export markets.

Jibon Ch. Paul from Assam in this second participation at IHGF Delhi Fair, offered a range in terracotta serveware and decoratives. They were initially only into decorative pieces but gradually included house ware like cups, glasses and containers. This time he got along water bottles that **got a lot of attention**. The products are made of *Kummad mitti*-an organic material that benefits the user. Colours used to bring in shade variations are all organic as well. Jibon and his artisans are based in village of Khoridagossaigaon, Chapar, Dist. Dubri. The entire village is involved in the art of pottery. At present he exports to Nepal and Bhutan.



Jibon Ch. Paul



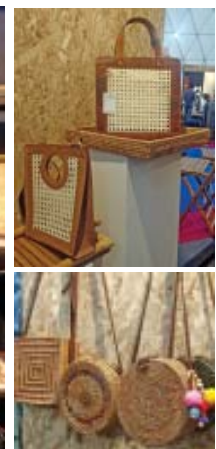
Narendra Borah

Narendra Borah, an NIFT alumni with years of experience & knowledge edge in regional textile crafts of Assam as well as eco-friendly printing & dyeing techniques on Muga and Eri silk, set up a stall for the cooperative he has recently started by the name of 'Silk & Handicraft Cooperative Samabai Sammittee Ltd.' and was extremely thankful to team EPCH for funding them through SFURTI (Scheme for Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries). EPCH is helping the cooperative with guidance and this platform of **IHGF is helping them grow everyday** as well as generate employment for the artisans associated with it. Said Narendra, "we basically deal in natural dyed fabric which is woven in our production house. Our products are loved by buyers in European countries because of the distinctive colour scheme with the natural dyes we offer," and added that the buyer response has been good so far. He has a domestic buyer base too, with vibrant products and traditional Assamese embroidery.

Bamboo craft specialist **Shantanu Sutradhar** from Disha Enterprises, Assam shared, "I started my small venture back in 1999. After some years I got an opportunity



Shantanu Sutradhar



to showcase my products in this fair. EPCH has provided us with designers, educated us about the market, taught us product development and helped us enter the international market." Shantanu is from Silchar, the southern part of Assam that abounds in clusters with several families working with cane & bamboo since over a century, catering to demands of buyers of other places. The innovated cane products in the form of trendy bags are often met with **overwhelming demand**. Disha Enterprises is working for big brands now. Their stall displayed customised cane bags, some embellished with leather slings and borders. "Right now, this craft is not being done by anyone else. We are doing well in the international market and are exporting to European countries. The buyer response is good this year and I hope to get some great orders," he concluded.



initiated by his entrepreneur mother and now has a workforce of 400 people. They export to US and France. "EPCH has helped us a lot in our journey to become an export firm. I have been participating in this fair from six editions and besides Kauna products I also do semi-finished goods for further customisation with leather or other bamboo or cane made items," shared Lucky and added that their mats for daily use are washable, sustainable and can last for 7-8 years and are washable. Baskets are their best selling products.



Saroj Dey from Guwahati, Assam based National Award winner, Nava Ayush Fragrances has been participating in this fair since many editions and has "**always been blessed with good buyer response**". They specialise in naturally made incense sticks with their holders, burners and in gift sets as well. This time they introduced naturally made garden freshners. "Every bit of material we use is cruelty free and reminds buyers of our tradition," said Saroj. Their manufacturing unit consists of 50 women workers and 20 male workers. They have a strong domestic market and also export to Germany, Spain, UK, Mauritius, Palestine and UAE. "EPCH has helped us set up this trade base," he concluded.

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

Baby Sarkar from Tripura and her firm, Sangita Handicrafts brought along, bamboo and cane products ranging from baskets to lamps, showpieces and jewellery. Her showpieces were all **hand carved from Gamhar wood** and polished, retaining their original shade. She has been in business since years and this was her sixth participation at this fair. "There are 50 people working in my unit in which few are women as well. I generally supply domestically and I get help in carrying out exports from people at EPCH's regional office in Agartala," concluded Baby.





Namita Abang

Another second time participant at IHGF was **Namita Abang**, proprietor of her enterprise-Jayshree, from Assam. She got along naturally dyed Eri silk curtains, stoles and *dupattas* as well as bamboo bags. Working with Self-Help groups, they have traditional handloom weavers and people who manually cut the yarn. Everything is handspun. The entire shibori floral pattern is dyed on to the cloth by a meticulous process of tying & dyeing, she explained. While they already have a domestic market and have started exports to France since their first participation at IHGF Delhi Fair, they were here to establish connections with more markets and buyers. "The **exposure here is also helping us learn**," said Namita.



Alemla Temsu Mia Ao

Another second time exhibitor at IHGF Delhi Fair, **Alemla Temsu Mia Ao** from Lem Boutique Craft from Nagaland got along home decor and lifestyle products like wall shelves, hanging planters, clock frames, etc. 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." "**Our products are appreciated** because of their beauty and different style. All colours used are natural or kept in their natural state," shared Alemla and added that they sell their products within India and also export to Canada, USA and Japan.

Nengneithem Hengna from Runway Nagaland was on her maiden participation at this fair and offered jewellery and embroidered pouches made from various natural



Nengneithem Hengna

recycled materials, glass beads, jute and cotton. The styles were reminiscent of Naga culture, especially the earrings. "We follow an ideology of banning plastic and promote it through by our items. Our jute jewellery goes very well with sarees," said Nengneithem and added that the passion to take her region's traditional crafts to a commercially viable space as well as popularise them, made her start this enterprise. She exports



to Holland and France besides supplying to brands in India like Vajor. "**Thanks to EPCH, we are getting a lot of buyers** at the fair and my stall is getting good buyer response as well," she concluded.

John Paleng from JP Handicrafts (his family business in Arunachal Pradesh) too was here for the first time. Their product line included bamboo and cane products such as pots, magazine boxes, wall flowers, baskets, spoons, pen holders, etc. besides **tradition inspired textiles** and a jewellery line that they sell online. The products are exported to US, Sri Lanka and Nepal.



John Paleng

Another first time participant was **Rebika** from Eastend Women and Child Development Organisation, Manipur, with a display of **bamboo and cane laundry and picnic baskets**, small bags, jewellery boxes, etc. "We also decorate our products using *lasi* thread work," said Rebika and informed that their unit comprises 100 plus people, women mostly. They export to Colombia and Argentina. Chennai in South India is their domestic market.

K. Lalmuanpuii representing Lenbuang Handloom & Handicraft, Mizoram, was on her first time participation too.



K. Lalmuanpuii

Established in 1992, her enterprise specialises in a wide variety of bamboo and wood made products such as bowls, pen holders, frames, key chains, table mats, trays, etc. The most popular

are trolley bags that are decorated with traditional cloth to give it a hint of the **Mizo culture**. This regional flavour was also evident in their cushion covers.

First time participant, **Moidun Nilufar** from Guwahati, Assam and her enterprise NIFABS had a stall displaying home furnishing and stoles. Sharing about her journey, she said, "I have studied design, then I got an opportunity to



Rebika

work with artisans in our region and that's how I decided to start my own venture. So, I am a cluster designer and Office of DC (Handicrafts) in our region saw my products and helped me with this opportunity," and informed, "I do all kinds of textiles using different kinds of silks and cotton to make yardage and then it is used in different products. **Only natural dyes and cruelty free silk are used.**" Nilufar has been exporting indirectly to Russia, Sweden and US. The first two days of the fair got her enquiries from buyers from Australia, China, USA and also domestic buyers from India. She thanks EPCH for the encouragement and help.



Moidun Nilufar