

Theme Presentation

Sustainable Crafts from NER



The thematic presentation of crafts from North Eastern Region (NER) showcased artistic tribal textiles, dry flowers, bamboo and cane products, home accessories, home furnishing & artistic textiles, made ups, fabrics, shawls, textiles, gifts, trimmings and embellishments, etc. A pleasant mix of bright as well as subdued merchandise here, instantly appealed, just like the attitude of exhibitors there. With a team of 19 artisans and entrepreneurs, this collective display included crafts from Assam, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Sikkim. The arts and crafts of this region are distinctively different because of the craft work, use of colour and techniques and raw material base. The states here are known for abundant natural materials such as cane, bamboo, timber, clay, natural fiber, etc. and take pride as land of craftsmen whose unique skills have passed down through generations and have gracefully incorporated modern eco-friendly technologies to appeal to the contemporary consumer and craft connoisseur alike.



Md. Shahid Ali from Nature Trade, Lakhimpur, Assam who specialises in cane & bamboo jewellery says, this process is tedious and the craft is entirely made by hand. "This is my family business and we've been doing this from generations," he informs and

adds that the best seller is "japi" necklace that is appreciated by Westerners. He looks forward to expand his business with new designs using pearls and even

gold. Buyer response at this fair has been good with enquiries. "Many don't believe my product is handmade," said Shahid. This entrepreneur finds EPCH's skill development seminars and workshops quite helpful.



Benney Lorin from a charity society from Nagaland and participant at Home Expo India said, "I have been doing this work since 9-10 years

and I am thankful that I have got the chance to share my society's craft products." Dr. Tika Prasad Sharma from a Sikkim based NGO is thankful for this platform as this brought him in direct contact with buyers. "I have not only got enquiries



but have benefitted from ideas to customise our products as per market requisites. Many buyers and designers came up to us and even gave their opinion on how we could improve our products," he said. His NGO is trying to nurture young artisans from rural areas by teaching as well as fine-tuning their craft skills. These products already enjoy a good demand in the local market, he added.

Amma Bagbi from Arunachal Pradesh too represents a welfare society. This was her first time participation at an EPCH show and she is grateful for this



opportunity. "This is a chance to showcase my craft at such a big scale," she said. She specialises in making dry flower decoratives using a combination of cloth, bamboo, flowers and other dried plant parts, and has been involved in this craft category since five years. "I sell these articles all over India and we also train others in the production of

these goods. People from various countries have come up here and seen our products and have liked them," detailed Amma.

Exhibitors Nita Gurung, Bicky Regmi and Jyoti Chettri represent a self-help group from Meghalaya. They deal mainly in jute and bamboo and are trying to expand their three year old enterprise by reaching out



to the international market. They commission women in rural areas to carry out their

manufacturing by offering them gainful employment. This was their second participation at this expo. They shared, "we find EPCH's skill development seminars and workshops really helpful. We are from a very small region. Some people don't even know about our craft but EPCH is helping us to communicate to buyers."

Neeiotpal Deka from Assam got along artisanal textile products like bags, table runners, small rugs, placemats, etc. He got a good response and his products generated enquiries.



Among regular exhibitors at this thematic NER presentation who are counted among EPCH show patrons

now is Puberun Sharma who deals in organically dyed, handspun Muga and Eri silk as well as cotton handloom stoles. Having been in this profession since 8 years, Puberun appreciates overseas buyers who value organic and natural products. He opines, "the response to our products has been good. We plan to bring more products to the market and showcase our regional crafts. I believe that we need more skill development workshops so that we develop our crafting and entrepreneur skills for better trade." Bapan Sarkar, representing Sarah Fashion Fabric has been participating in EPCH fairs since last four years. Handlooms are their forte with products like cushion covers and stoles. "The response has been good. I have recently been to the Hong Kong fair and buyers have responded well to my products. Buyers are interested in using our natural dye based products because they sustainable," he concluded.

