



### Enabling handicraft skills through training on Ringal craft

**D**evelopment Alternatives (DA) in collaboration with the National Mission of Himalayan Studies organised a training programme on Ringal (*dwarf bamboo*) handicraft skills from 21-25 January 2020. 16 young men from villages Thatta, Lagshal, Bhanuthi and Kalang in Mandi (Himachal Pradesh) and Kamad-Thandi in Uttarkashi (Uttarakhand), gained exposure and hands-on-experience in creating this handicraft.

Ringal handicraft industry is the oldest small scale industry of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. It is the only home scale industry which is based on local resources, both in terms of human and natural resources. The community involved in this craft is facing marginalisation due to the changing agricultural patterns and practices, leading to reduced demand for traditional Ringal based items.

The objective of the training was to generate livelihoods through a revival of Ringal handicraft skills and local knowledge. The training focused on design diversification and value addition to Ringal handicrafts to enhance income returns from this craft for the community. The training introduced the beneficiaries to new and improved designing skills for making diverse products, and link the artisans to the markets.

AAGAAS Federation, a community-based organisation based in Chamoli, Uttarakhand working towards promoting the craft, collaborated with DA as the training partner to build capacity and enhance the technical skills of the craftsmen for making Ringal products. These skills include wire making, Ringal dyeing, use of sandpapers, making of the base, varnishing and finishing of the product.

A crucial aspect for reviving and promoting the craft is the marketing strategy, for which the artisans were sensitised towards low consumption of raw material by making a small marketable product for better economic returns.

The participants were trained on a range of five products essential for setting up a homestay with new contemporary designs; multi-purpose baskets, pen-stand, lampshade, jewellery box and flower vase. The products developed in the training will be displayed in the International Shivratri Fair in February 2020. A multipurpose basket designed in the training has been identified suitable for gift

purpose and will be given to the key speakers in the Green Economy Coalition (GEC), Global Annual Meeting, hosted by DA – the India partner of GEC from 4-6 February 2020.

A certificate of participation in the training programme was awarded to the participants on the last day of the training.