

# BAMBOO CRAFTS

## Strength & Opportunity in Dzongu, a pilot site of KLCDI-India

Dzongu, 'the LEPCHA reserve', is located within the transition Zone of Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve, North Sikkim. The Lepcha community residing here holds knowledge of various traditional practices including the technical use of bamboo in making of articles for routine requirement such as Sumok Thyak Tuk (Lepcha hat), Dom (box), Kyuk (serving paddles), Tungar (rice cleaner), Taleung (baskets), Thungzyang (doko), Puthyut (container for millet beer), etc. to the occasionally used Tuksure (fish trapping tool), musical instruments such as, Pungtong (flute), Tungbuk (Lepcha guitar), etc. The use of these artifacts is restricted to the community, either for self-use or local exchange. However, this traditional knowledge of Lepcha community can be reinforced further to convert this strength into a viable livelihood opportunity. Based on these understanding, the G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development, Sikkim Regional Centre (GBPNIHESD-SRC) through Khangchendzonga Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KLCDI), India programme with the help of local partner organization - Mutanchi Lom Aal Shezum (MLAS), Dzongu, has taken an initiative to strengthen the bamboo craft based traditional knowledge in Dzongu. To promote innovation in traditional bamboo crafts, through various capacity building programmes, training programmes and exposure visits were organized.



# Initiatives under KLCDI India pilot village (Lingdem-Lingthem GPU)

## 1. Capacity Building on Commercial Bamboo Crafts Making

With an aim to maintain/ develop interest in bamboo crafts among the local people and to provide additional livelihood opportunities, skills development activities for local bamboo craftsmen and artisans were planned. The KLCDI-India, in collaboration with local partner - MLAS, organized a training programme. A total of six beneficiaries (artisans) having knowledge about traditional bamboo crafts were identified along with other interested participants. Training on making of commercial bamboo products viz. bulb cover, coffee pack, LED light cover, and pen stand was given. The locally available bamboo species, *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii* Nees & Arn. ex Munro (Nepali: Choya bans, Lepcha: Po puli or puli mat) and with Ruh (cane) were used to make these artefacts. The resource person, Ms Nimkit Lepcha, a professionally trained bamboo-based artisan said that *“these bamboo products have huge demand in the market and trained artisans are needed in order to fulfil the demands”*.

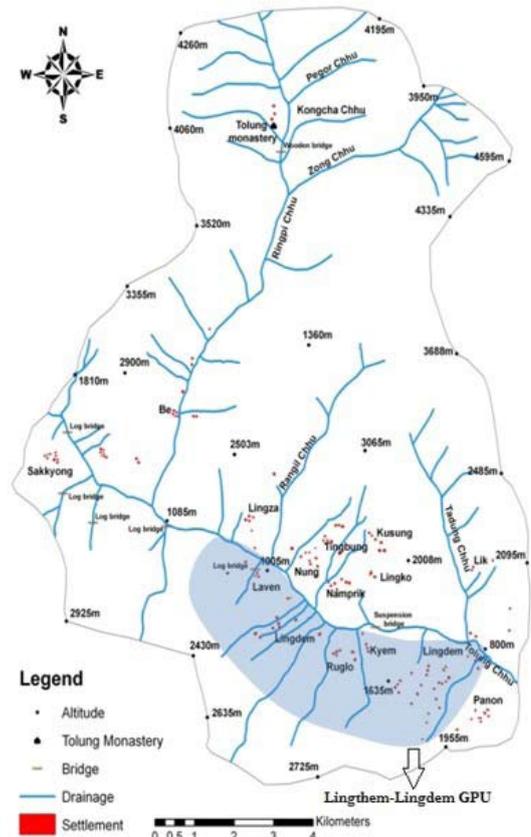


Photo showing participants from five Wards - namely Lingthem, Sungklong, Mantam, Ruklu Kayem and Laven. Training duration: one week (8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018).

## 1.a. Procedure of product making

### 1. Collection of bamboo material

Locally abundant Choya bans is the preferred material for craft.

### 2. Preparation of weaving material

After collection the bamboo is cut from the internodal segments, thereafter thin flakes of bamboo prepared. Thin flakes were smoothed with the help of local instruments and strips of similar size were prepared and used as weaving material.

### 3. Weaving of different products

Based on the demand, various artifacts can be woven.

### 4. Knotting the end points

To finalize the product, the rattan flakes are used along the bamboo flakes.



## 1.b. Prepared products

- i) **Coffee/ tea packaging box:** Market price is Rs. 30 per piece, demand in local market.
- ii) **Bulb Cover:** Based on design market price are more than Rs. 200 per piece; it has huge demand in hotel industries
- iii) **Pen Stand:** High demand in commercial market and price ranged between Rs. 200-250 per piece.
- iv) **LED bulb cover:** Market price Rs. 30 per piece; it has high demand during festive seasons especially during Diwali. This product has great potential to replaced plastic covers in future.



Coffee packaging box



Bulb cover



Pen stand



LED bulb cover

## 2. Promotion of Bamboo crafts

- ❖ In various events such as Hot spring festivals 2017, Dzongu, exhibitions at MG marg, Gangtok, these Dzongu based bamboo products were promoted/ showcased.
- ❖ Bamboo made dustbins were prepared and installed along the trekking corridors in Dzongu to avoid plastic and support Swachh Bharat mission.



## 3. Future possibilities

- ❖ At present all the products are being prepared manually in Dzongu, however, analyzing the market demand some mechanical support to the community can be provided.
- ❖ Skill and capacity building, and inclusion of the new generation especially unprivileged youths through various training programmes and exposure visits.
- ❖ Branding, patent of specific products and value-chain development.
- ❖ Market survey and linkage of bamboo based products with ecotourism



## About KLCDI-India Programme

The KLCDI is a long-term transboundary programme, supported by International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal. Khangchendzonga Landscape (KL), the study area of KLCDI, represents a part of global biodiversity hotspot and with unique bio-cultural and geo-climatic assemblage it covers a total area of 25,085.8 km<sup>2</sup>. The KL is shared by three partner countries under KLCDI viz. India (56%), Bhutan (23%), and Nepal (21%) offering life support systems to over 7.25 million people (87% in India, 11% in Nepal and 2% in Bhutan). The KL-India part covers 14,061.7 Km<sup>2</sup> area including the whole state of Sikkim and four districts, viz. Alipurduar, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Jalpaiguri of West Bengal state. Indian part of KL has 16 protected areas, including Khangchendzonga World Heritage Site of Sikkim. KLCDI-India has three unique pilot sites, i) Dzongu (a Lepcha reserve), ii) Bandapani and iii) Barsey-Singalila (Transboundary between Bhutan and Nepal respectively) for the implementation of programme for the welfare of mountains and peoples.

### KLCDI, India Programme

**Guiding Agency:** Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Govt. of India

**Facilitating Agency:** International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal

**Implementing Agency:** G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development (GBPNIHESD), India

**National partners:** Forest, Environment and Wildlife Management Department, Govt. of Sikkim and Directorate of Forests, Govt. of West Bengal

#### KLCDI-India Research Team

**GBPNIHESD, Sikkim Regional Centre:** Kailash S. Gaira (Investigator); Aseesh Pandey (Project Manager); Shiela Sinha (Senior Field Researcher); Nyindo Lepcha (Junior Field Researcher); Milan K. Rai (Secretariat/Field Assistant)

**KLCDI-India Partner at Dzongu:** MLAS, Dzongu Mr. U.P. Lepcha (Executive Director), Mr. P. Lepcha & Mr. T.T. Lepcha (Field Researchers)

**Photo credit:** U.P. Lepcha, A. Pandey and N. Lepcha

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### For further information contact

#### At Head Quarters:

Dr. R.S. Rawal, National Coordinator (KLCDI, India) & Director, GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development, Kosi-Katarmal-263643, Almora, Uttarakhand, India

Tel +91-5962-241015, 241041 ; Email: psdir@gbpnihed.nic.in

#### At Sikkim Regional Centre:

Dr. Rajesh Joshi, Nodal Scientist (KLCDI, India) & Scientist in-charge, GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment & Sustainable Development, Sikkim Regional Centre, Pangthang-Gangtok-737101, Sikkim, India.

Tel +91-3592-237328; Email: headsrc@gmail.com