

Capacity building in the chosen field of interest leads rural youths to become successful entrepreneurs and self-sufficient: Learning from IGDC project



Based on their chosen field of interest, 16 young boys and girls from six different villages of Ambassa RD Block were imparted 15 days training during May, 2013 on artificial flower making under the vocational training programme of IGDC project. The trainer was invited from Manipur, who is an expert practising artisan in this field. They received first hand practical training on the skill of artificial flower making using synthetic as well as locally available natural resources/materials. The complete package of information starting from the source of raw material procurement, marketing channels and skill to run the business of artificial flowers were provided to them. On completion of the training, one of the trainees Mr. Tapan Kumar Tripura formed a group with 2 other male and 9 female members who had also undergone training with him and named the group as *Naithok Khumber Bodal*, meaning “get a group making beautiful flowers”. All the group members are students, who have adopted flower making as a part-time work. Ms Laxmi Marak, one of the group members says, “I am getting around INR 1000-1500 a month out of flower making which is helping immensely to continue my study. On completion of my study I shall take it as a full time profession”.

With an initial investment of only INR 1000 and renting a production unit in Ambassa Bazar at INR 1000 per month, the group started the first batch of artificial flower production in October, 2013. The initial investment that was made by Mr. Tapan has been under circulation and with this investment he has already earned INR 30, 500 within 3 months period. The other group members receive INR 2 per flower as wage. Each member makes 35-40 flowers a day. A flower bunch with 25 sticks having 100 flowers in total, costs the group INR 260 i.e. INR 200 as wages and INR 60 being the cost of the material. The sale price of the whole bunch is INR 1250. Even if the flowers are sold on the basis of individual sticks, the group earns the same amount.

Though the group is yet to establish a permanent sales outlet, marketing of their products has never been a problem. The members sale the flowers through mobile stalls, put up on various religious occasions such as Durga Puja, X-mass, Kali Puja and various fairs/exhibitions organized by the

government in different parts of the state. Tapan says, “demand for flowers far exceeds the supply because of the limited production capacity of the group”. The group has now diversified a lot from what they learnt during the training, particularly in the design of flowers and raw materials used. For instance, now they make flowers using dried maize leaves and locally available floral inflorescences. The training imparted by the project has been able to bring out the hidden talents within the boys and girls.

In order to encourage the group and spread the artisan skill to other villages, the project would provide a seed money support of INR 50,000 as per Business Development Plan prepared by them. The business plan ensures the equitable distribution of 50% of the total profit among the members as per their contribution. The remaining income will be kept as future investment.

Mr Tapan is now so skilled that the project has been engaging him as a Master trainer in all its training programme instead of hiring from Manipur. The entrepreneurial skill and success of Mr. Tapan has motivated a considerable number of educated youths to take up artificial flower making as a profession, which will go a long way towards making these young men financially self- sufficient besides creating job opportunities for many others.