



2024 EDITION

# Hairakhandi Crafts





# New Age Learning Foundation

To create a society which progresses  
by adopting a balanced and conscious  
way of living which is sustainable.





# About us

At **New Age Learning Foundation**, we guide communities on a path to self-discovery and empowerment through modern, tech-enhanced education, environmental conservation, and skill development.

Rooted in Hairakhan, Uttarakhand, our programs focus on creating sustainable livelihoods. We focus on **skill development**, such as **Silai (stitching)**, **digital literacy**, and the **holistic empowerment of women and youth**.

Our approach begins by identifying local resources and enhancing the community's existing skills.

By leveraging these skills, we help individuals build sustainable livelihoods that can be nurtured from within their homes, enabling them to balance traditional roles with new economic opportunities.





# Our Founder

# Paromita Sarkar

Paromita Sarkar is an experienced social development professional with over 18 years in the non-profit sector. She has successfully led large teams, managing up to 55 members, in projects across India. Paromita's notable work includes leading the **Digital Shakti initiative** in Uttarakhand, transforming education through technology in government schools. She has also worked with the **Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, to develop peace makers for conflict resolution.

Her expertise spans microfinance, livelihoods, and women's empowerment, with a strong focus on sustainable community-driven development.





# Our Team

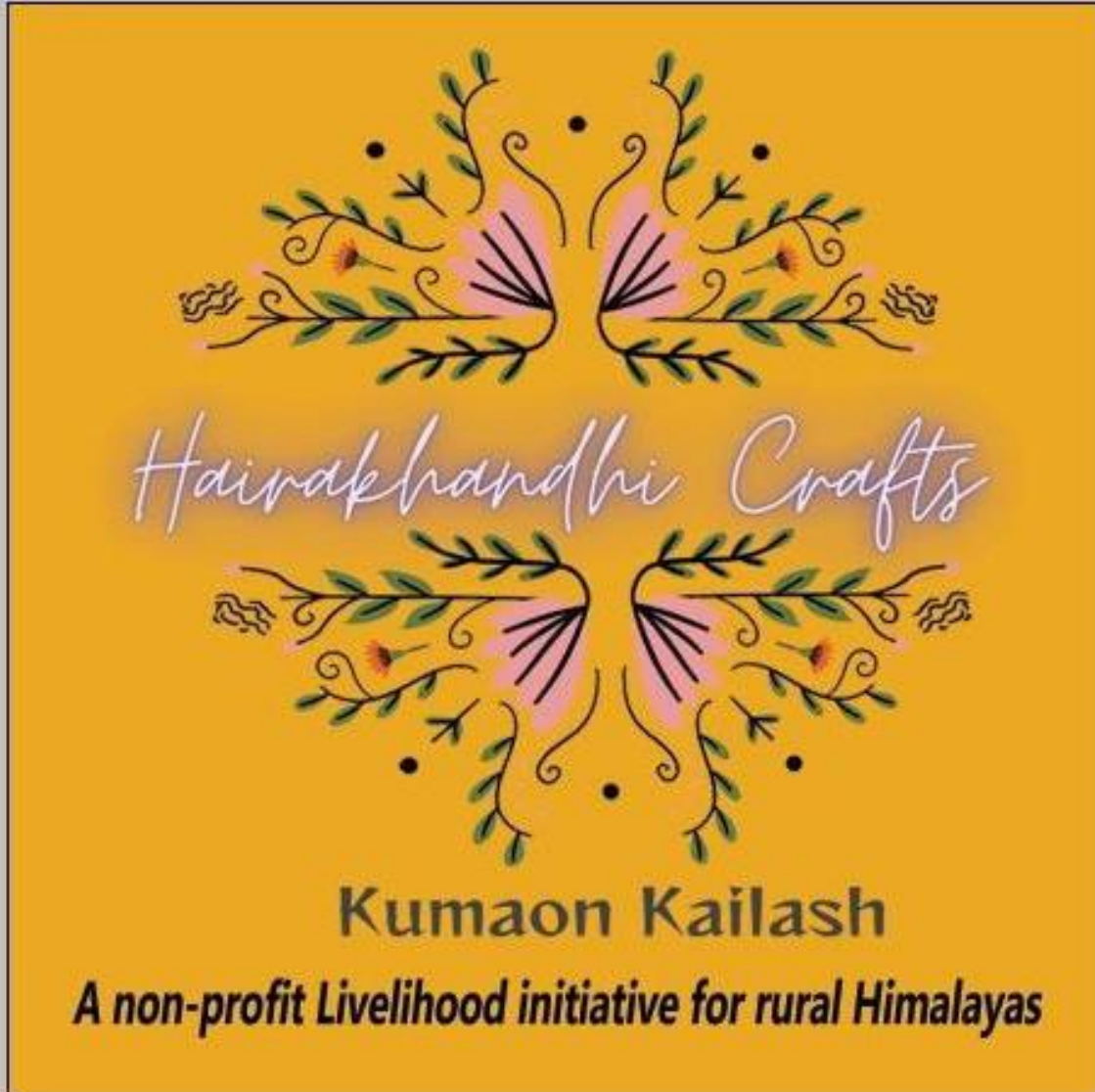


**Bhawana  
Sammal**

LOCAL POC and Program  
Manager Hairakhandhi Crafts

# Who We Are

Hairakhan is a secluded village of BHIMTAL BLOCK of Nainital district. It's the oldest Kailash region so that makes this region pre-historic and has been a favorite destination of seekers around the world since centuries. Haidakhan grew in prominence after the sudden appearance great timeless Himalayan mystic Hairakhan Babaji who left his mortal coil in 1984. Therefore the work is dedicated to the late Himalayan mystic and its named Hairakhandhi Crafts is an initiative by New Age Learning Foundation aimed at creating a sustainable platform for the women of Hairakhan to earn a livelihood while staying rooted in their village. Through skill development in sewing, fashion design, and product designing, we empower local women to turn their craftsmanship into a source of income without having to migrate for work. Our vision is to provide opportunities for these women to thrive economically while preserving the unique cultural and natural beauty of Hairakhan. By connecting their traditional skills with modern markets, we aim to build a self-sufficient community where women can contribute to their household income while staying close to their families and maintaining their connection to their homeland.





# The Scope: Hairakhan Village

50% of  
the work  
force

are not engaged in  
active employment  
half of the year.

5 SHGs

Women Self Help  
Groups (SHGs) in the  
village with over 30  
active members

Global reach-  
untapped  
global market

100+ countries

Hairakhan is an  
internationally recognized  
spiritual place with seekers  
visiting from **100+ countries**



Bhawna, Geeta D, Aradhana, Rekha, Geeta A, Neema

# Our Local Talent

These talented apparel makers from Hairakhan have demonstrated exceptional skills in crafting garments and have the potential to become remarkable designers. Through their dedication and hands-on experience in the New Age Learning Foundation's programs, they have honed their abilities in both traditional and modern fashion techniques.

We are planning to approach **Usha International** and **NIFT (National Institute of Fashion Technology)** to support their product design journey and provide them with advanced training, ensuring their continuous growth and professional development in the fashion industry.





A lush garden with a stone path, potted plants, and a shrine. The path is made of irregular grey stones and is lined with numerous terracotta pots containing various green plants. In the background, there is a small shrine with a red roof and a green sign that reads "ॐ नमः शिवाय". The garden is surrounded by dense green foliage and trees.

# The Beginning

We don't want Hairakhan to face the same fate as the ghost villages in Garhwal, where entire communities have migrated to cities, leaving their ancestral homes and farmlands behind. Our goal is to create a model village of Hairakhan that can be replicated across the Himalayan region, fostering sustainable livelihoods which is resilient adopting a sustainable way of living rooted communities for generations to come.

With  
Haidakhan  
Baba's  
Blessing who  
is followed by  
people  
globally  
irrespective of  
their  
background



Walk on with courage and  
bravery. Go on working to  
improve humankind and the path  
of Truth.



# Timeline

A journey of growth and empowerment, highlighting key milestones in our mission to uplift rural women through sustainable livelihoods



## First Meeting

An introductory meeting to understand the pulse and feedback from the local women. This laid the groundwork for tailoring the program to the community's needs.




Dec '23

Feb '24



## Silai Training Beginning

Sewing training commenced at the newly launched center in Hairakhan. Women began learning the basics of stitching to build their skills.



## First Assessment

An evaluation was conducted to assess the participants' grasp of basic stitching techniques. This helped identify strengths and areas needing improvement.



May 24'

June 24'



## Sewing Machine Training

Focused on understanding the parts of the sewing machine, and how to operate and maintain it. This technical training ensured the women could work independently.

## Kainchi Field Visit

The visit aimed to present their work to the public and gain real-world exposure.



June 24'

July 24'



## Reassessment

A follow-up assessment where participants created finished products. This helped gauge their progress and readiness for the next steps.



## 2 Day Workshop

Held in Haldwani, this workshop aimed to enhance existing skills and conclude the basic training after six months. It marked a significant milestone in their learning journey.



Aug 24'

Aug 24'



## Revision and Practice

Participants were encouraged to revise and practice their skills. Some were given sewing machines to continue honing their craft at home.

## Fellowship Launch

The fellowship was launched to support the best-performing students by connecting them with mentors. The goal is to help them start their own businesses and become self-reliant.



Sept 24'

Upcoming



## Online Selling Launch

We are preparing to launch online sales, where products made by the women will be available for purchase on various e-commerce platforms. This will help provide a sustainable income stream for the artisans.





# Program inception

In early December 2023, the first meeting took place at the new Panchayat house in HairaKhan. Around 40 women, registered under NABARD, gathered to discuss potential livelihood opportunities.

Most of them expressed a desire to learn stitching, as it would allow them to work from home while managing their household and farming duties.

At NALF we divided on a decentralized income model with a training fee of ₹100 per month. This small fee was feasible for them, matching their existing SHG savings.





## Second Meeting At old Panchayat House

On the Second meeting at the Old Panchayat house at Hairakhan, the date, time, fees and venue for the training was finalized.





# Opening of Sewing center



On 14th February 2024, Sewing training began at Basant Homestay, with local trainer Meenakshi leading the program. Sewing machines and materials were provided, marking the start of their stitching journey.







# Training and Assessment

Lalitha Negi from Bhowali came down and started the training, she also conducted the assessment after 3 months of training.



# Kainchi Field Visit

We took 12 Trainees on a field  
trip to Kainchi Dham.



# Kainchi Visit

On our visit to **Kainchi Dham**, the sacred ashram of Neem Karoli Baba, we immersed ourselves in the spiritual energy of the place. The group explored the serene surroundings and spent time reflecting on the teachings of Neem Karoli Baba, which deeply resonate with simplicity and devotion.



We also visited the local market, interacting with vendors and artists. This gave us insight into the local crafts and entrepreneurial spirit, connecting with individuals who shared their personal stories and the challenges of preserving traditional skills.

This visit was not only a spiritual journey but also a learning experience, helping us understand the cultural and economic dynamics of the region.





NEW AGE LEARNING FOUNDATION

# सिलाई कार्यशाला



तारीख - 4TH AUGUST  
समय - 9 AM TO 5 PM  
स्थान - उड़ान प्रशिक्षण केंद्र,  
HALDWANI

# Sewing Workshop

Due to the challenges of the monsoon season, our trainer could not travel to Hairakhan to complete the training sessions. To ensure the completion of the program, we organized a **two-day extensive workshop** spread across two Sundays, held in Haldwani, led by a seasoned trainer in the field.



# Two Day Workshop at Haldwani

1st Workshop:

- **Blouse with Lining:** Focused on essential techniques for stitching blouses with proper lining, providing hands-on experience in professional blouse-making.
- **Plazo Suit:** Covered designing and stitching stylish plazo pants, focusing on measurements, cutting, and sewing for a polished, professional look.
- **Neck Pattern:** Taught various neck pattern designs, equipping the women with skills to create versatile necklines for different outfits.

2nd Workshop:

- **Collared Kurti:** Training on diverse Kurti styles, including precise cutting, stitching, and measurements.
- **Bag:** Introduced bag-making techniques, enabling them to expand their product range.
- **Fancy Blouse:** Focused on intricate designs and stitching techniques for fashionable blouses.

Afterward, the women practiced these skills over the following week, ensuring they could confidently apply what they learned.





# Silai Workshop

One of our Trainee Neema also created a Youtube vlog of the workshop. She is a budding vlogger.

[See Vlog Here](#)





# Portfolio





# Handmade Blouse

This hand-stitched blouse, crafted by the women of Hairakhan, reflects their dedication to traditional skills while incorporating modern design elements. Made from soft, breathable fabric, this blouse is both comfortable and stylish, perfect for casual wear. The intricate detailing on the fabric highlights the artisan's precision and craftsmanship, offering a blend of heritage and everyday fashion. This piece exemplifies the artistry of the women in the region, who are creating sustainable livelihoods through their craft.







By

Geeta Arya leading  
apparel maker of  
HairaKhan





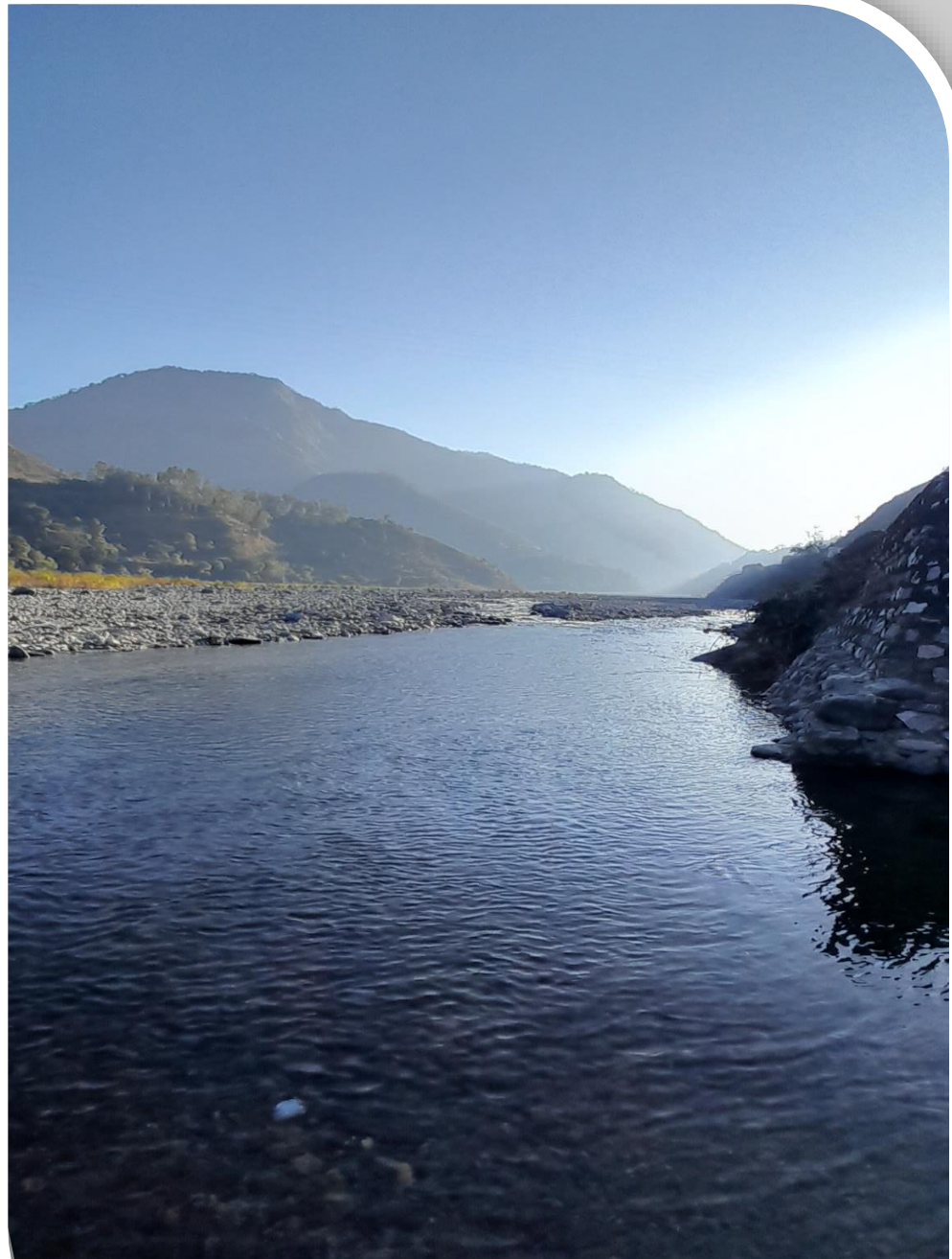
## Geeta Arya- a budding entrepreneur

In the charming village of Tilwari, across from Hairakhan, lived Geeta Arya, a woman of many talents and aspirations. Despite holding a Masters in Hindi and Economics, Geeta chose to focus on her role as a homemaker, while her true passion lay in sewing. However, Tilwari's isolation, due to the treacherous GAUTAMI Ganga river, made travel to Hairakhan for sewing practice and business challenging.

Recognizing her struggle, the local organization NAL stepped in with a sewing machine, a gesture that became a turning point for Geeta. This gift transformed her home into a bustling sewing hub, allowing her to create and sell garments within her village. Her work quickly gained a reputation for quality, and she also became known for her woolen clothes.

Inspired by her success, plans are underway for Geeta to train other women in Hairakhan in sewing and woolen garment production, potentially creating new opportunities for them. Geeta's journey from homemaker to entrepreneur illustrates the power of support systems and the broader impact of a single act of kindness in fostering resilience and community growth.





# By Bhawna Sammal



Our Star performer-  
Hairakhandhi crafts  
program manager





*BHAWNA' s creation for a local Anganwadi worker who had approached her and was impressed by her work. She also received her making charge from her.*





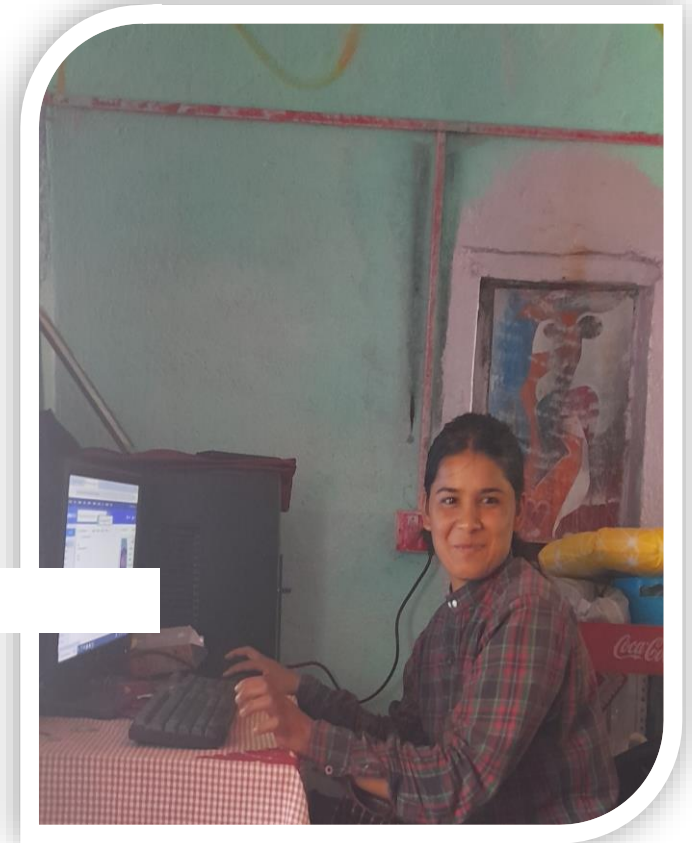
### **Bhawna's Journey: From College Dropout to Program Manager at Hairakhandhi Crafts**

Bhawna, a vibrant young woman in her 20s, embodies the power of second chances and community support. Once a college dropout, her life took a positive turn when she joined the sewing center at Hairakhan. Her enthusiasm and quick learning stood out as she excelled in the program, crafting unique apparel and utilizing resources like the USHA Silai app to enhance her skills.

Her proactive approach, including sharing knowledge with the NAL WhatsApp group, set new standards and showcased her leadership. Bhawna's dedication extended to training other women and even led her to discuss resuming her college education with the founder, Paromita.

This conversation proved transformative, aligning with the launch of the Nayi Disha fellowship. Through the fellowship, Bhawna gained advanced skills and English training, reigniting her dreams and paving the way for a career in fashion design.

Now, as the local point of contact for the NAL Foundation and Program Manager for Hairakhandhi Crafts, Bhawna bridges the community and foundation, promoting local craftsmanship and empowering artisans. Her story is a testament to how determination and support can reshape lives and inspire others.





By  
Rekha Belwal



LOCAL HOME STAY  
OWNER –A PERFECT  
ALL ROUNDER





## Rekha Belwal- A versatile community leader!

Rekha is a versatile artisan from Hairakhan, Uttarakhand, known for her hand-stitched garments like this beautiful kurta set. Her attention to detail and passion for traditional craftsmanship are evident in every piece she creates. Rekha supports her family and community through sustainable, handcrafted clothing. She also manages a homestay with her husband, experiments with fabrics, and is pursuing advanced stitching and English communication skills through the Nayi Disha fellowship. Actively involved in farming and poultry, Rekha is an exceptional host to international visitors despite her limited English, and she eagerly embraces new learning opportunities.



# Blouse, Petticoat, Frock & Maxi Collection

This collection of handmade garments, including blouses, petticoats, frocks, and maxi dresses, showcases the skilled craftsmanship of the women artisans from Hairakhan. Each piece is designed with comfort and style in mind, reflecting the traditional and modern fashion sensibilities of the region. These outfits are perfect for everyday wear or special occasions, offering a blend of elegance and functionality.







# Casual Wear

This range of outfits is designed for everyday comfort without compromising on style. Featuring simple yet elegant patterns, these garments are perfect for daily use, whether at home or while out running errands.

With breathable fabrics and easy-to-wear cuts, these casual pieces provide both functionality and fashion for any occasion.





## Handmade affordable Girl's Frocks for all classes

These adorable, hand-stitched girl's frocks, created by the talented women of Hairakhan, showcase their creativity and skill in making comfortable, stylish clothing for children.

Each frock is crafted with love and precision, using vibrant, playful fabrics like polka dots that bring a cheerful and youthful appeal.

The Red Polka dots frock by Bhawna, Blue polka dots frock by Aradhana, Blue and green printed frock by Rekha, our top apparel makers.





# Handcrafted Bags for Every Occasion

These beautifully handcrafted bags, made by the women of Hairakhan, offer both style and functionality. The small red bag is designed for holding malas( chanting beads bag) , commonly used by spiritual practitioners for meditation. The red side bag with the "Om" symbol is perfect for carrying essentials, combining functionality with a spiritual touch. Lastly, the handbag offers a stylish, traditional design that's both practical and comfortable for everyday use.



# ***Traditional meets Modern***

*Aradhana, our class topper posing in her own creation. Aradhana is Masters in Hindi literature and wants to become apparel designer.*

This comfortable, hand-stitched outfit showcases a perfect blend of traditional patterns and modern style.

The loose-fit top with flared sleeves paired with printed red bottoms provides both comfort and elegance.





## Showcasing Local Talent

This collage features hand-stitched garments by the women of Hairakhan, blending traditional styles with modern designs. From vibrant children's frocks to elegant kurta sets, each piece reflects the artisans' craftsmanship and creativity, supporting sustainable livelihoods in their community.





# Promotion of Traditional Art Forms

Aipan & Alpana Art Showcase



# Aipan & Alpana Design

Himanshu, a talented 9th-grade student, is honing his skills in traditional **Aipan design**, a decorative art form from Uttarakhand. In this slide, he meticulously works on creating intricate patterns, reflecting both patience and creativity. His dedication to learning this heritage craft at such a young age highlights the ongoing effort to preserve local traditions and pass them on to future generations.





# Chakra Kamal

(Wheel of the Lotus) – This circular Aipan design features bold, symmetrical patterns symbolizing balance and unity. The intricate paisley-like shapes at the center are surrounded by delicate dots, adding elegance. The outer border ties the design together, creating a striking piece of traditional decoration.







# Pahadi Phool

(Mountain Flower) – This rectangular Aipan design showcases detailed traditional motifs framed within an ornate border. The flowing curves and intricate shapes in the center are complemented by a balanced use of lines and dots, creating a harmonious and symbolic piece of Aipan art.





# Aipan and Alpana Artwork by Himanshu, Neeraj and Dheeraj

Neeraj and Dheeraj are seen here working meticulously on their **Aipan art** pieces. Neeraj is focused on a circular design using embroidery techniques, blending traditional patterns with precision. Dheeraj is crafting a geometric Aipan pattern, showcasing intricate latticework with fine detailing. Both artisans demonstrate the deep cultural connection to Uttarakhand's Aipan tradition, adding their own unique touches to this vibrant art form





## Cultural Symbols in Art

This collage showcases a variety of traditional **Aipan and Aipan designs**. The **top left design** features a detailed mandala with intricate human figures, symbolizing unity and balance. The **top right** is a vibrant circular piece with layers of traditional patterns radiating outward. The **bottom left** depicts Lord Ganesha, surrounded by auspicious symbols such as the Om and Swastik, blending religious significance with artistic flair. The **bottom right** design focuses on the Swastik, a symbol of good fortune, framed with delicate border patterns. These pieces reflect the cultural richness and spiritual depth of Uttarakhand's traditional Aipan art.





*Alpana, Aipan, and Warli painted frames by talented village youth showcase their incredible skills. However, these young artists would greatly benefit from formal training and guidance from professional mentors. We invite volunteers to come to Hairakhan, stay with us, and help nurture and develop these traditional art forms. Your support will make a meaningful difference in their artistic growth.*





## Up coming products:

***HEMP Bags and recycled bags from fabric waste.***

*Uttarakhand: Only Indian state to legalize Hemp farming*

*Naturally, it is now the largest hemp producing state in India. Hairakhandhi crafts skilling center produces large quantity of wasted fabric which will be creatively developed into reasonable recycled bags. We are exploring the best whole seller for the hemp fabric within Uttarakhand.*





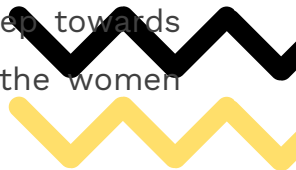
# Additional Work



# Menstrual Hygiene Workshop

In a session led by Hema Sammal, the women participated in an informative discussion on **menstrual hygiene and sanitary practices**. The session aimed to raise awareness about the importance of maintaining hygiene during menstruation, dispelling myths, and promoting open discussions on this often taboo topic. She spoke about the increasing number of cases of PCOD amongst the teenage girls due to poor appetite and preference for junk food. PCOD or polycystic ovarian disease is a reproductive health issue in females and occurs due to hormonal imbalances and genetic tendencies.

Following the session, sanitary pads were distributed among the participants to encourage the adoption of healthy practices, ensuring that they have the necessary resources for menstrual care. This initiative was a vital step towards improving the well-being and empowerment of the women in the community.





Thank you!



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