

Today's Paper » NATIONAL » KERALA

Bamboo lessons for Nigeria

Staff Reporter

Five youths from the African country being trained in Kerala



A team of youths from Ondo West local government in Nigeria giving final touches to a bamboo handicraft piece during a training programme of Uravu at Thrikkaipetta in Wayanad district on Sunday.

Five youths from Nigeria are preparing to wind up their five-week training programme at Uravu, an NGO at Thrikkaipetta in the district, after learning the basics of bamboo cultivation and how to make handicraft from the plant.

The programme is being organised in association with the Springboard Nigeria, an NGO at Ondo in Nigeria. Ondo West local government in Nigeria is the funding agency and has set aside Rs.6.5 lakh for the training programme.

Adejoke Adebayo, Akimruli Olufemks Henry, Atanda Orolabi Akeem, Ogumdelle Olamilekanu Idowu, and Kamali Sikru Stephen of Ondo West Local government in Nigeria along with Arare Alaba Lawrence, coordinator, Springboard Nigeria, reached here to learn modern techniques in bamboo handicrafts. They will now go back home to train the unemployed youths in Ondo West local government.

Unemployment of young people is a major issue in many African countries. Close to 60 per cent of the 1.8 million people, especially youths, in Nigeria are unemployed, Mr. Lawrence says.

Though different species of bamboo plants grow in their area, the people there are yet to understand the potential of it. The plant now is used to erect platforms or as fire wood, Mr. Akimruli Olufemks Henry, a diploma holder in Business Administration, says. The training stint here has taught them that there are various uses of the plant, he adds.

Experts at the Uravu has taught the visiting team modern techniques of cultivation, identification, and harvesting of bamboo plants as well as chemical treatment of bamboo poles, shaping, polishing and finishing of value-added bamboo products with modern machineries, M. Baburaj, president of the NGO, says.

The team has also been taught the basics of constructing bamboo-based solar panel, solar lamps and solar mobile. Mr. Baburaj says the programme aims to provide training to 90 youths in Nigeria. The second batch will reach the centre by mid April.

“We are planning to set up a livelihood centre in Ondo to popularise bamboo cultivation and provide training in bamboo value-added products in Nigeria with the technical support of the Uravu and financial assistance of the local administrative bodies to tackle the unemployment issue,” Mr. Lawrence says.

“Marketing will not be an issue as bamboo handicraft products have huge demands in big cities like Akure and Lagos in Nigeria,” he says.

The team will leave for Nigeria on Friday.