



## IICD Alumni's Collaborative Pottery Presented to Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi

Handcrafted pottery by IICD alumna Shailly Sangal and artisan Shankar Prajapati, proudly presented to honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji.....

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## IICD Concludes Fourth Edition of the Crafts Business Accelerator Program

Strengthening India's craft-business ecosystem through innovation and entrepreneurship.....

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## Crafts, Camera, Culture: Celebrating Craft Stories Through Film

Five documentaries, three cities, one immersive journey into India's craft traditions.....

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# IICD Crafts Business Accelerator Program 2025



A session on "Importance of Business in Design" by Dr. Toolika Gupta at IICD, Jaipur

IICD continues to deepen its impact with a crafts business accelerator program fostering innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship in the craft sector across diverse regional contexts. This 2025 edition marks yet another leap forward, seeding enterprising talent, strengthening market readiness, and reinforcing the critical importance of business ecosystems tailored uniquely for Indian crafts.

The Indian Institute of Crafts & Design (IICD), in collaboration with IIM Udaipur Incubation Center, PIEDS, BITS Pilani, EDII Ahmedabad, iStart (Govt. of Rajasthan), NICEorg, NEHHDC Guwahati, and supported by the Kalhath Foundation, Lucknow, culminated its fourth edition of the Crafts Business Accelerator Program. This four-month initiative bringing together twelve early-stage craft entrepreneurs delivered immersive workshops, field visits, mentoring, and peer learning, all uniquely structured to scale craft-based businesses and foster long-term entrepreneurial resilience.

## Three Tailored Modules – Learning + Field Immersion

### Module 1 | 21–26 April | IICD, Jaipur

Participants kicked off their journey focusing on design thinking, sustainability, and innovation. Sessions on digital marketing, product photography, storytelling, and costing & positioning laid a solid foundation. Visits to Sanganer, Kanota Courtyard, and Tapri Ladu Store provided unique opportunity to enter process to connect theoretical framework with real-word craft environments.

### Module 2 | 25–31 May | IIM Udaipur

Second Module emphasized on legal compliances, financial modelling, and go-to-market strategies. Deep dives into distribution challenges, customer journeys, creative supply chains, co-creation, and business storytelling enriched entrepreneurial thinking. Field explorations included Tapri Niwas, Aavaran, and Mangalam Arts, highlighting compelling



A group photo with the IIM Udaipur Incubation Center CEO, Mr. Abhyudaya Goyal

craft-business models in action.

The second module of the Crafts Business Accelerator Program at IIM Udaipur provided participants with valuable exposure to a premier management and incubation ecosystem. The setting enabled meaningful engagement with experts on legal, financial, marketing, and scaling strategies, while field visits enriched learning through real-world craft and retail contexts. Hosting the module at IIM Udaipur strengthened industry-academia linkages and equipped craft entrepreneurs with practical tools to build sustainable, market-ready enterprises.



Participants of the IICD Crafts Business Accelerator Program 2025 during their immersion at IIM Udaipur

### Module 3 | 30 June–5 July | New Delhi

The final and concluding module equipped participants with advanced skills in negotiation, AI applications in craft, sustainable packaging, branding, and crafting a strong pitch deck. Field visits to the Crafts Museum and the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Centre for Design rounded off the curriculum, inspiring participants to incorporate culture, technology, and design into their enterprise strategies.

Throughout the program, participants received individual mentorship and handholding support tailored to their specific business needs.



Honoring the journey of 12 entrepreneurs and their vision for a craft-led future.

The program concluded with a vibrant valedictory session featuring a curated showcase attended by industry experts, faculty, mentors, and alumni. The showcase served not only as a culmination of their learning journey but also as a platform to pitch their refined business models, gain constructive feedback, and build meaningful industry connections. The celebration reflected the spirit of collaboration and innovation that defined the entire program, leaving participants energized and equipped to lead the next wave of change in the Indian craft ecosystem.



# A Proud Moment: IICD Alumni's Collaborative Pottery Presented to Hon'ble PM Shree Narendra Modi



IICD alumna Shailly Sangal and artisan Shankar Prajapati, presenting handcrafted pottery to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shree Narendra Modi

On May 31, 2025, a handcrafted clay pottery piece symbolizing the fusion of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design was presented to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shree Narendra Modi .

This exquisite artifact was the result of a collaboration between renowned potter Shankar Prajapati and Indian Institute of Crafts & Design alumna Ms. Shailly Sangal. Their work celebrated the beauty of India's rich clay traditions while embodying IICD's philosophy of preserving heritage through modern design sensibilities.



Designed by Shailly and skillfully crafted by Shankar, the piece stands as a testament to co-creation where age-old techniques meet innovative ideas. Its earthy texture, elegant contours, and intricate storytelling motifs convey a deeper narrative of India's soil, spirit, and design evolution.

The honour of presenting this pottery to the Prime Minister highlights the significance of design interventions in bringing traditional crafts to national prominence. It also emphasizes the vital partnership between trained designers and traditional artisans, an approach that IICD actively promotes to sustain and innovate India's craft heritage.

# MoU with 200 Million Artisans to Co-Create Kula Conclave 2025 at Jaipur

An MoU was signed on 9th April between Dr. Toolika Gupta, Director, IICD and Ms. Priya Krishnamoorthy, Founder of 200 Million Artisans, establishing a strategic collaboration between the Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD), Jaipur, and 200 Million Artisans (200M) to co-create the Kula Conclave for India's Creative Manufacturing and Handmade sector.

Scheduled for 1st and 2nd December in Jaipur, the Kula Conclave 2025 will bring together craft-led enterprises, social businesses, policy leaders, and investors. The forum is envisioned as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and ecosystem-level impact.

As Knowledge Partner, IICD will play a key role in shaping the conclave through curated exhibitions, strategic workshops, and student-led engagements, fostering cultural entrepreneurship and inclusive growth.



MoU Signatories, Ms. Priya Krishnamoorthy and Dr. Toolika Gupta

# IICD and NICEorg Forge Strategic Partnership to Empower Creative Enterprises



A strategic partnership to empower craft-based entrepreneurship and bridge design with business innovation

On April 24, 2025, the Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD) and the Network of Indian Cultural Enterprises (NICEorg) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote India's cultural and creative economy. This partnership aims to empower emerging craft-based entrepreneurs through knowledge exchange and capacity building.

The MoU focuses on building sustainable creative enterprises by leveraging NICEorg's national network of mentors, entrepreneurs, and investors. Through joint workshops and mentoring programs, the collaboration will bridge traditional craft knowledge with modern entrepreneurial skills.

Dr. Toolika Gupta, Director, IICD, highlighted that the partnership will help students transition "from designers to designpreneurs." Anchal Jain, co-chair of NICEorg, expressed enthusiasm about supporting young creators in building culturally rooted businesses.



# Documenting Craft Heritage: A Collaborative Initiative by IICD and Crafts Council of Telangana

The Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD), Jaipur, under the visionary leadership of its Director, Dr. Toolika Gupta, has entered into a meaningful collaboration with the Crafts Council of Telangana to document the traditional crafts of Telangana. This partnership reflects a shared commitment to preserving India's rich craft heritage through research, field engagement, and academic documentation.

The project aims to create a holistic record of Telangana's craft traditions by exploring their historical evolution, contemporary practices, production processes, and the socio-economic realities of artisan communities.



IICD faculties and students exploring vertical loom weaving

As part of the pilot phase, a focused research and documentation exercise was conducted in Warangal from 22nd June to 4th July. The intensive field study was carried out by IICD students under the guidance of Dr. Bessie Cecil and Mr. Pronoy Kapoor. The team engaged closely with local artisans, documenting crafts including durrie weaving, handloom textiles, metal embossing, bobbin lace, tatting and embroidery, leather craft, and wood carving—each reflecting generations of knowledge, skill, and regional identity.

Throughout the fieldwork, students demonstrated commitment, sensitivity, and empathy while interacting with craftspeople. They documented techniques, tools, materials, and motifs, while also recording oral histories, narratives,

and lived experiences. These interactions provided insights into challenges faced by craft communities today, including livelihood sustainability, market access, and intergenerational knowledge transfer.



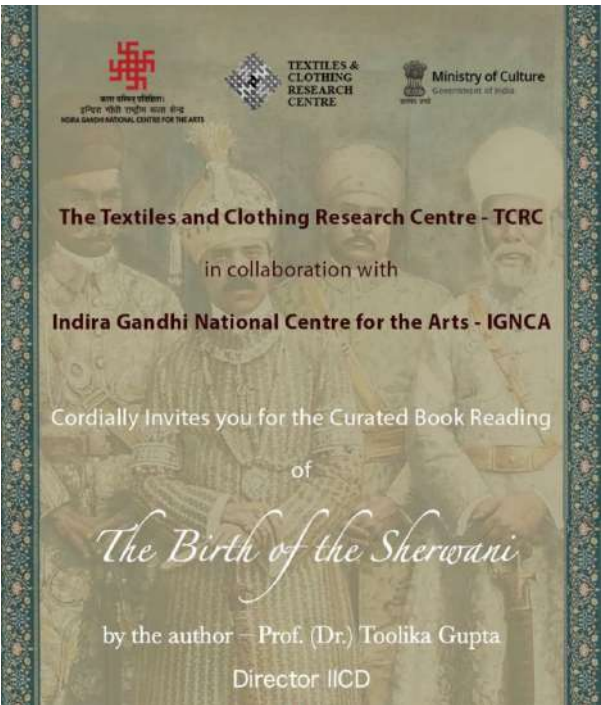
IICD students exploring various tools during field research work

This initiative will culminate in a comprehensive publication systematically documenting Telangana's traditional crafts. It is envisioned as a lasting academic and cultural resource for scholars, designers, policymakers, and practitioners, contributing to craft preservation, cultural sustainability, and artisan empowerment.



IICD faculties and students with members of Crafts Council of Telangana

# TCRC Lecture Series: Tracing The Birth of the Sherwani



Dr. Toolika Gupta, explores the rich history and cultural evolution of the Sherwani

On 3rd May 2025, the Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD) hosted a TCRC (Textile and Costume Research Centre) lecture by Dr. Toolika Gupta, Director, IICD, titled "The Birth of the Sherwani." The session brought together academicians, designers, researchers, and students to examine the historical, cultural, and political contexts that shaped one of India's most iconic garments.

Dr. Gupta traced the sherwani's evolution from its 19th-century origins, influenced by Persian attire and British tailoring, to its adoption as a marker of Indian identity, status, and modernity. Through visual references and historical narratives, the lecture highlighted how costume reflects social change and cultural exchange. The session strongly aligned with TCRC's mission of encouraging critical research and dialogue in textile history, costume studies, and design culture.

# Empowering SHGs through Sustainability

In a dedicated session, Ms Rashmi Pareek, Chief Manager (Project & Incubation) addressed the gathering on the occasion of a one-day workshop on World Earth Day, April 22, 2025, at the Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj & Gramin Vikas Sansthan Auditorium, Jaipur organized by the Directorate of Local Bodies, Government of Rajasthan. The event brought together Self Help Group (SHG) members from across Rajasthan under the banner of Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0, with a focus on environment protection and sustainable practices.

She emphasized the importance of waste recycling as a catalyst for innovation and livelihood generation. The address highlighted how discarded materials, when creatively repurposed, can yield handcrafted products that reflect both environmental consciousness and economic potential. The workshop underscored a shared vision of building resilient communities through informed design, sustainability, and collective action.



Ms. Rashmi Pareek addressing Rajasthan SHG members on innovative waste recycling and sustainable livelihoods



# Crafts, Camera, Culture 2025: A Cross-Cultural Filmmaking Journey



*Crafts, Camera, Culture 2025 Craft Documentaries Film Screening on 2nd July 2025 at Rajasthan International Center, Jaipur*

On 2nd July 2025, the five-week documentary film making programme held in June 2025 concluded with an inspiring and artfully curated screening at RIC; Rajasthan International Centre, Jaipur. Hosted by the Indian Institute of Crafts & Design (IICD) in collaboration with Michigan State University (MSU) and West Dean College, UK, the third edition of Crafts, Camera, Culture once again celebrated creativity, collaboration, and the living heritage of Indian crafts.

Designed as an immersive, field-based learning experience, the programme brought together students from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. Over the course of five intensive weeks, participants explored the intricate craft ecosystems of Jaipur steeped in histories of material culture, storytelling, and artisanal knowledge. Through guided research, field interviews, hands-on documentation, and film production mentorship, the student teams crafted compelling short documentaries that illuminated lesser-known aspects of India's craft traditions. The culminating showcase at RIC

featured five short films, each offering a distinct visual and narrative interpretation of a craft story. Rooted in observation and empathy, the films presented human-centered stories that highlighted the resilience, humour, labour, and lived realities of artisans.

Kahani Dhaagon Ki explored the world of traditional puppeteers, revealing how craftsmanship, performance, and oral storytelling come together to preserve a centuries-old art form. Through intimate interviews and behind-the-scenes footage, the film captured the joys and challenges of sustaining puppetry in a rapidly modernizing world.

The Roar, a favourite among audiences, turned its lens towards the cultural legacy of the Royal Enfield motorcycle—an icon woven into the texture of contemporary India. The film explored not only the machine's craftsmanship but also the emotional and cultural symbolism that has made it a generational heritage object.

In Achaar Vichaar, students travelled into kitchens and community spaces to document the art of pickle making. From ancient recipes to regional variations and the sensory richness of spices, the film highlighted how food, memory, and identity come together in this cherished domestic tradition.

The Nature of Things offered a quiet, contemplative study of handmade paper, capturing the tactile beauty of the material and the sustainable practices embedded in its making. The documentary foregrounded craftsmanship as an ecological act, prompting viewers to reflect on the relationship between industry, environment, and handmade knowledge.

Finally, An Indian Touch took a playful turn by following the "desi" evolution of momos, now a street-food favorite with local twists across India. The film celebrated culinary adaptation, showing how cultural exchange naturally shapes food habits and urban identities.

The event opened with a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony led by Chief Guest Dr. Pragya Paliwal Gaur, Director General of Akashvani News. In her address, she commended the program for utilizing film as a medium of cultural preservation and contemporary communication. She highlighted how storytelling through visual media offers new pathways to bring the voices of artisans to global audiences and ensures that heritage practices continue to find relevance among younger generations.



Adding depth to the evening was an artisan exhibition arranged alongside the screenings. Featuring craftspeople who had participated in the student research process, the exhibition beautifully reinforced the collaborative ethos of the programme. Visitors had the rare opportunity to engage



*Dr. Bessie Cecil taking a session on "Introduction of Craft"*

directly with artisans, view demonstrations, and explore the tangible materials and tools that appeared in the films. The presence of the makers enriched the experience, bridging the gap between cinematic storytelling and real-world craft practices. Faculty members and mentors from IICD, MSU, and West Dean College expressed pride in the students' achievements, particularly in the sensitivity with which they approached fieldwork. The programme encouraged students to step beyond the role of filmmakers and assume the posture of learners—listening, interpreting, and respecting the nuances of craft communities. This pedagogical shift is at the heart of Crafts, Camera, Culture, positioning film not merely as a technical skill but as a medium of inquiry, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding.

As the third edition comes to a close, Crafts, Camera, Culture continues to establish itself as a transformative platform for experiential learning. By bringing together institutions from India, the United States, and the United Kingdom, it fosters a rare international dialogue around craft traditions, sustainability, and creative authorship. For students, the program becomes a formative journey—one that shapes their perspectives as designers, thinkers, and storytellers.

The 2025 showcase affirmed what the programme stands for: the power of film to illuminate hidden narratives, the importance of preserving living heritage, and the role of young voices in shaping a more culturally aware future. As the lights dimmed and applause filled the hall, it was clear that the stories told on screen would continue to resonate far beyond the walls of the Rajasthan International Centre.



## Rediscovering the Value of “Desi Oon”

Dr. Rena Mehta

A Varta session held on 7th May by Dr. Rena Mehta, who shared insights from her work on “Desi Oon” (indigenous wool). The session highlighted the diversity and potential of India’s pastoral wool traditions.



Prof. Mehta discussed wool from regions such as Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, and the Deccan, explaining how different climatic conditions produce fibres suited for uses ranging from fine textiles to carpets and industrial products. She emphasized the importance of revaluing indigenous wool as a sustainable material and a marker of cultural identity, encouraging eco-conscious design practices.

## The Eternal Maze: Chakravyuh

Mr. Rajesh Kumar

A Varta titled “The Eternal Maze – Unravelling the Chakravyuh,” was led by Mr. Rajesh Kumar on 14th May. The session took students and faculty through themes of mythology, strategy, and ethics.



Mr. Kumar began with an overview of the 10 Avatars of Lord Vishnu and the 8 Chiranjeevis, highlighting their relevance to values such as purpose, duty, and identity. He then focused on the 13th day of the Mahabharata war, explaining the Chakravyuh formation and the tragic sacrifice of Abhimanyu through engaging storytelling.

## Fostering Conscious Fashion

Dr. Abhishek Choudhary

As part of IICD’s Varta series, a session titled “Collaborative Consumption in Apparel” on 2nd April, led by Dr. Abhishek Choudhary,

The session addressed the environmental impact of fast fashion and introduced collaborative consumption as a sustainable alternative.



Drawing from his PhD research, Dr. Choudhary discussed consumer behavior, pre-owned apparel, and circular fashion models such as rental, swapping, and resale. He highlighted how these practices reduce waste and reshape ideas of fashion ownership, encouraging students to view sustainability as a key design principle.

## The Burmandising Impact

Mr. Anuraag Singhal

On 30th April 2025, IICD hosted an engaging session titled “The Burmandising Impact”, led by Mr. Anuraag Singhal, author, visual merchandiser, brand and communication designer, and musician. Inspired by legendary composer R.D. Burman,



Mr. Anuraag drew parallels between musical experimentation and creative thinking in design and leadership. Through stories, musical references, and design insights, the session offered a fresh perspective on visual merchandising, customer experience, and problem-solving, encouraging participants to view challenges as opportunities for innovation..

# IICD Jaipur Records Impressive Placement Outcomes Amidst a Vibrant Start to 2025

The Indian Institute of Crafts & Design (IICD) marked a dynamic beginning to 2025 with a successful placement season and an array of academic and cultural milestones. The first quarter witnessed over 30 organizations participating in the campus placement drive, offering opportunities to students across design disciplines.

Out of 76 eligible students, 35 appeared for placements, with many securing offers from leading names in the craft, fashion, and interior design sectors. Notable recruiters included Injiri, Rajesh Pratap Singh, Princess Diya Kumari Foundation, Mangalam Arts, Urbania, Life Space Interiors, and Citta India. Companies like Kesula and Samiir Wheaton also made impactful hires, highlighting the institute’s growing industry network.



IICD celebrates a strong placement season for 2025 graduates

## Swachh Bharat Mission Director IAS Shweta Chauhan visits IICD



IAS Shweta Chauhan going through student’s work

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025, Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD) had the honour of hosting IAS Shweta Chauhan, Director of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban). During her visit, Ms. Chauhan engaged in an interactive tour of IICD’s various departments and studios, witnessing how the institution integrates sustainability into design thinking and craft education. IICD showcased innovative work centred on upcycling, eco-conscious materials, and socially responsible design models—echoing the very principles of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Ms. Chauhan also held a meaningful discussion with Shri Giriraj Kushwaha, Secretary of IICD, focusing on craft-led initiatives in waste management and environmental stewardship to empower local communities. Ms. Chauhan emphasized the critical role institutions like IICD play in shaping a cleaner, greener India aligning with national sustainability goals. Her visit marked a significant moment of convergence between traditional craft practices and contemporary sustainable development efforts.



## Crafting Letter, Telling Stories: A Showcase of Artful Expression



Hand Lettering & Calligraphy Exhibition: A showcase of typographic expression and skill

The Craft Communication Department of IICD showcased the work of its 6th semester students through an exhibition on Hand Lettering and Calligraphy on 9th May, guided by Mr. Inku. The exhibition concluded a hands-on module where students explored scripts like Devanagari and Roman, learning how techniques such as pen angles influence form and balance.

The module highlighted how words alone can become powerful visual compositions, encouraging expressive and experimental approaches to lettering.

## Crafting Connections: Exploring Bengal's Heritage at Shantiniketan

From the 1st to 6th April 2025, UG Foundation students participated in an enriching crafts workshop held at the culturally vibrant Shantiniketan.



Students learning Tumba craft

A two-day intensive session was part of a longer five-day stay that gave students a window into the diverse and profound craft traditions of Bengal.

From Tumba and Sholapith to seed ornaments and brasswork, the crafts explored during the workshop were just the tip of the iceberg – each representing layers of Bengal's rich cultural and artistic heritage. The workshop, organized in collaboration with local artisan communities and hosted amidst the serene environs of Visva-Bharati University, allowed students to engage hands-on with materials, processes, and the philosophies behind each craft.



UG Foundation students, faculties & local artisans with the Tumba craft

Surrounded by the legacy of Rabindranath Tagore's educational ideals, they explored the interconnectedness of tradition, sustainability, and contemporary design thinking. The charm of the place was magnified through the presence of students like us – eager to learn, connect, and carry forward the legacy of Indian crafts with respect and innovation.

## Craft and Culture Immersion: A Journey Through Northern India

From May 4–9, 2025, 4th and 6th semester IICD Hard Material students undertook a field study across Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, exploring heritage crafts in Chandigarh, Hoshiarpur, Anandpur Sahib, and Bir through guided visits and local interactions.

They studied museum architecture, traditional metal and wood crafts, and Tibetan Buddhist metal embossing, engaging closely with artisans and communities through immersive field interactions, documentation, and reflective discussions.



Students interacting with artisans, learning traditional craft practices firsthand.

The visit deepened their understanding of craft sustainability, cultural preservation, and the role of traditional knowledge in contemporary design practice, education, responsible material innovation, and context-sensitive design thinking.

## Amrita Sudan's Work Showcased at "Flowering Heritage" Exhibition

IICD alumna Amrita Sudan's work was prominently showcased at the 'Flowing Heritage' exhibition in Delhi on 10th April, celebrating the revival of traditional Indian crafts.



Craftwork by Amrita Sudan displayed at the 'Flowing Heritage' exhibition.

Her practice beautifully blended contemporary expression with craft-rooted aesthetics, reflecting the impact of design education in nurturing future custodians of heritage.

Dr. Toolika Gupta, Director of IICD, visited the exhibition and appreciated the rich narratives presented across rare craft forms, including Ajrakh and Kavad. Amrita's display stood out as a highlight, demonstrating the creativity and cultural sensitivity fostered through IICD's education.

## Edufest 2025, Rajasthan Patrika

Indian Institute of Craft and Design participated in the Edufest 2025 event, organized by Rajasthan Patrika from 16th to 18th May at the Rajasthan International Centre (RIC), Jaipur.



IICD at Edufest 2025, Showcasing Craft-Centered Design Education

IICD's interactive stall stood out as a creative hub, showcasing the institute's unique approach to craft and design education. The team shared information about IICD's undergraduate and postgraduate programs, highlighting the institute's commitment to nurturing design thinkers rooted in traditional Indian crafts.

The event provided a valuable platform for IICD to engage with prospective students and their families, generate awareness about its distinct pedagogy, and strengthen its network within the academic community.



# IICD Announces Entries for the Craft Design Awards 2025



IICD Craft Design Awards 2025

The Indian Institute of Crafts and Design (IICD), Jaipur on 8th April announced the opening of entries for the IICD Craft Design Awards 2025, a prestigious platform celebrating innovation and excellence in Indian crafts. The annual awards invite designers, artisans, craft-based entrepreneurs, and students from across India to showcase their creative synergy of tradition and contemporary design, highlighting work that preserves and uplifts the country’s rich craft heritage.

Entries are open across multiple categories, including Product Design, Textiles, Sustainable Craft Practices, and Social Impact through Craft. IICD looks forward to inspiring submissions that reimagine traditional techniques or foster meaningful collaborations with artisan communities, with winners to be honored during the Sangoshthi at the IICD campus in Jaipur in the first week of November.

## Clay Workshop at India International Design Conclave 2024

IICD conducted a hands-on workshop titled “Morphology in Miniature: Designing Furniture Forms” during the India International Design Conclave 2025, organized by IIID Jaipur Chapter at the Rajasthan International Centre on 1st June 2025.



Ar. Srushti S. Pathak and Mr. Ravinder Kumar at the conclave

Facilitated by Ar. Srushti S. Pathak and Mr. Ravinder Kumar, Assistant Professors at IICD, the workshop engaged Architecture and Interior Design students in exploring furniture form development using clay. Through miniature models and guided experimentation, participants gained insights into morphology, material-led thinking, and innovative design processes.

## Educational Exposure Visit for Empowering Women

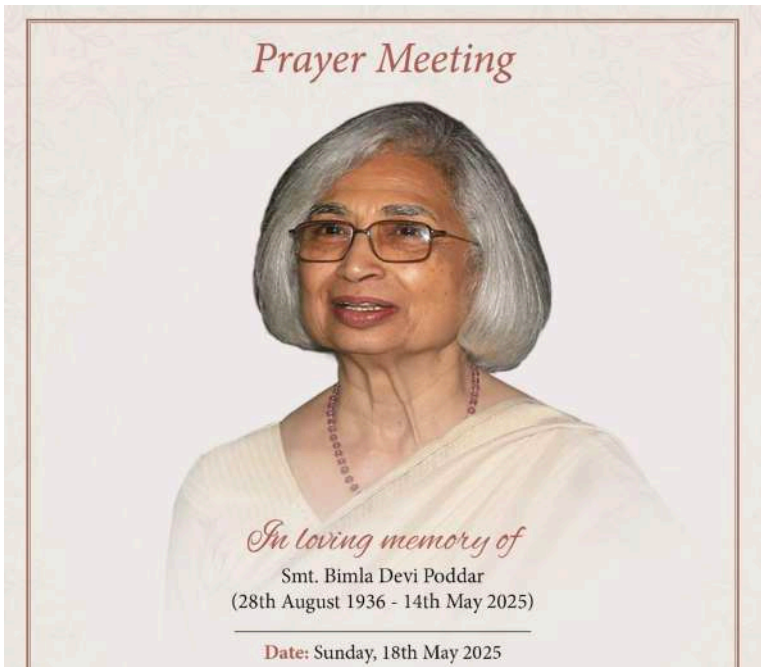
IICD hosted an educational exposure visit on 6th June for 30 women participants from Shahpura under Jagriti Sansthan’s Life Skills Training Program. The visit offered hands-on exposure to traditional and contemporary crafts through live demonstrations in stitching, block printing, and embroidery. Interaction with design professionals introduced income-generating opportunities, motivating participants towards self-employment and entrepreneurship in the craft sector.



IICD Hosts Educational Visit for Women Participants from Shahpura

# Remembering ‘Bari Ma’, Smt. Bimla Devi Poddar

## A Life rooted in Grace, Culture, & Values



Honoring Mrs. Bimla Poddar

On May 14, we lost a visionary social worker and philanthropist in the passing of **Smt. Bimla Devi Poddar** in Varanasi. Recipient of the **Padma Shri** in 2015, and founder of **Jnana Pravaha**, a distinguished centre for cultural and civilizational studies in Varanasi, Bimla ji’s work stands as one of India’s most profound contributions towards the preservation of cultural heritage.

Beyond the accolades and institutions she built, were her values of devotion, perseverance and a refined sense of beauty. Her museum at Jnana Pravaha, housing textiles, antiquities, ritual objects, and art from the Poddar–Neotia collection, stands today not just as an archive, but an affirmation that heritage has a purpose only when it is consciously preserved and meaningfully shared.

Over the last 25 years of her life, Jnana Pravaha became her calling. She poured into it not the urgency of ambition, but the devotion of Seva. It was an offering to culture, to scholarship, and to its future scions. Her passing marks the end of an era, but not the extinguishing of her light. The quintessence of her values lingers gently in the institutions she created, the family she nurtured, and the countless lives

“I was not born to her, but she was more than a mother to me. After the passing of Badi Dadi in 1991, Bari Ma became the family’s matriarch, and the moral centre around whom every decision, divide, and dilemma would find clarity. She was our final word, because she was fair, wise, generous, and deeply kind. We surrendered to her guidance not out of obligation, but from love and trust.”

“Your loving gaze will forever be upon us. And we will carry your essence within us, always.”

Shri Harshavardhan Neotia  
Chairman, Ambuja Neotia Group

Lovingly known as Bari Ma in the Poddar–Neotia family, her anchoring presence shaped generations as her warmth nurtured the young, wisdom guided the adults, and her spirit infused the home with heritage. Her association with Appaji Girija Devi, one of India’s most revered classical vocalists opened a new window of artistry and rigor. It was this relationship that brought music into the Poddar–Neotia family home and eventually blossomed into Gulab Bari, the annual musical Baithak that became a cherished cultural tradition.

For IICD, Bimla Ji’s legacy is a reminder that institutions are ultimately made of human sensibilities comprising grace, discipline, kindness and cultural expressions. In many ways, her stewardship shaped cultural consciousness of the Neotia family, and therefore, by extension, IICD. Smt. Madhu Neotia, Chairperson of IICD, continues to uphold the philanthropic values of tradition and preservation, a connection between Bari Ma and IICD that resonates deeply.

“At IICD, we cherish the Bimla Devi ji as a custodian of India’s cultural spirit believing in her values. Her work at Jnana Pravaha continue to inspire our own commitment towards crafts and design education. We offer our heartfelt homage to Bari Ma and honor her legacy with deep respect and gratitude.”

Prof. (Dr) Toolika Gupta,  
Director, IICD Jaipur





# EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

The second quarter at IICD has been a remarkable journey of creativity, learning, and connection. These past few months have witnessed a dynamic blend of academic excellence, design innovation, and community collaboration that continue to define our institution's unique spirit.

This quarter, we launched exciting new programs, celebrated impactful research, and strengthened partnerships that expand the boundaries of craft and design. Our students embraced opportunities to engage with global artists and cultural organizations. The campus has been alive with festivals, thought-provoking discussions – all echoing IICD's commitment to inclusive and sustainable creativity.

Through our Varta sessions, we've ignited meaningful conversations, and through grassroots skill development initiatives, we continue to empower rural communities, reinforcing our mission to champion design-led solutions that honor heritage and foster growth.

As you explore this issue, we encourage you to immerse yourself in the stories of innovation, perseverance, and collaboration that fuel IICD's journey forward.

Warm regards,  
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