

Empowering Artisans Through Design and Technology: A Report on the Design and Technology Development Workshop (DDW) held at Dayalbagh Educational Institute

February to March 2025

Introduction



The Design and Technology Development Workshop (DDW) is an initiative under the office of the Development Commissioner of the Handicrafts, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, aimed at enhancing artisans' skills, design capabilities, and entrepreneurial potential, particularly from underprivileged backgrounds.



This 25-day workshop, conducted under Handicrafts Technical Training cum Incubation Centre of Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra, in their premises provided hands-on training in design principles, block printing, upcycling, and market-oriented product development. The program focused on sustainable and cost-effective methods to ensure that the artisans, all

women from scheduled castes, could apply their learning at home without requiring expensive resources.

Day-Wise Learning Breakdown

Week 1: Fundamentals of Design & Printing Techniques

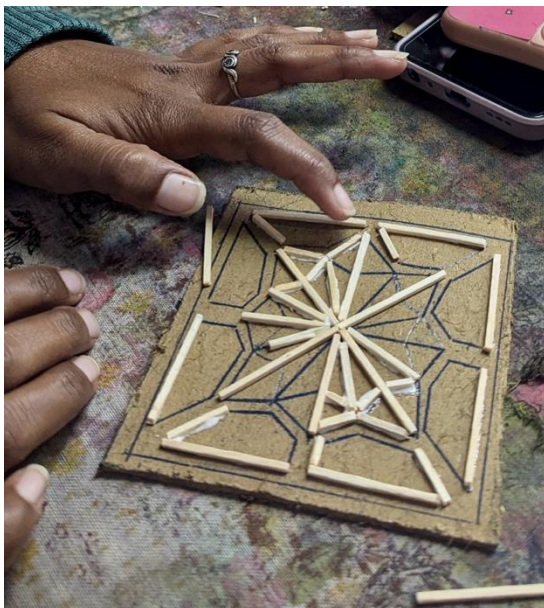


Each day began with an assembly, where a “Thought of the Day” and relevant news updates helped instil discipline and awareness. The first sessions covered theoretical aspects of design—its principles, evolution, and market importance. Participants explored dots, lines, shapes, patterns, textures, and colours. This foundation enabled them to develop balanced and aesthetically appealing designs.

Practical work commenced with paper croquis, where each participant created 10–15 designs, out of which one was selected for further refinement. A significant breakthrough in the workshop was the introduction of matchstick block

printing—a fresh approach that provided a cost-effective alternative to traditional wooden blocks. Since wooden blocks are expensive and time-consuming, matchsticks provided an

easily accessible medium for design creation, allowing artisans to experiment freely at home.



technique to real products such as diaries, calendars, file organisers, and greeting cards.

Week 2: Expanding Techniques - Vegetable Printing & Paisley Motifs

To further simplify home-based design opportunities, participants explored vegetable printing using potatoes, onions, carrots, and tomatoes. This approach reinforced their understanding of design placement, colour application, and print repetition. The method was chosen specifically due to the easy availability of vegetables, ensuring that artisans could refine their craft without significant investment.



By Day 8, the artisans moved on to paisley motifs, a traditional Indian design with strong appeal in export markets. The training emphasised blending contemporary styles with heritage-rich



Indian designs to create marketable products. The young women artisans explored block printing, focusing on geometric patterns. This phase marked a shift towards sustainable craftsmanship,

as they began working with repurposed materials.

Week 3: Sustainable Craftsmanship & Upcycled Textile Products



Sustainability remained a central theme throughout the workshop. Participants learned how to upcycle old textiles such as discarded sarees and school shirts into

valuable products. Training sessions covered block printing on upcycled textiles, hand embroidery, and kantha work (a running stitch technique). They created textile jewellery, handbags, and decorative home products using scrap fabric and repurposed empty thread reels. One particularly inventive approach involved braiding textile strips, similar to how women braid their hair, to create lampshades and jewellery.



To equip them with industry knowledge, the artisans were introduced to various types of printing blocks:

- **Rekh** – Outline blocks
- **Datta** – Filling blocks
- **Gadh** – Background blocks

Additionally, they learned how to prepare binders for textile printing, enabling them to reduce costs when working in a textile firm or setting up their own business.

Week 4: Product Development & Market Preparation



By the 18th day, the artisans started developing their final prototypes. They designed complete product collections, including:

- **Clothing Line:** A saree, suit length with dupatta, and matching textile jewellery and footwear in summer-friendly hues of blue and green, inspired by Mughal jail designs.
- **Home Furnishing Collection:** Cushion covers, bed covers with pillowcases, and dohars (light blankets), developed using geometric and paisley designs for European markets.
- **Minimalist Curtains:** Designed in soothing shades of light blue and moss green.

By the end of the workshop, the young women artisans demonstrated remarkable growth, producing refined, high-quality products. The products have been



copyrighted by the Ministry of Textiles and would eventually be made available to sustain future training programs. The artisans also gained experience in product presentation—displaying sarees on mannequins with matching accessories, organising home décor setups, and using professional presentation techniques to attract buyers.



Final Showcase & Program Impact

On the 25th and final day, the artisans exhibited their creations before officials the Ministry of Textiles. The showcase included an array of products—bookmarks, coasters, coin pouches, keychains, handbags, apparel, and home décor items. Ministry representatives were highly impressed with the

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resourcefulness, skill development, and inventive use of materials demonstrated by the participants.

Dayalbagh Educational Institute remains committed to supporting the artisans. Those who wish to continue their journey will receive guidance in establishing small businesses, thereby reviving traditional crafts and creating employment opportunities or entrepreneurship.

Conclusion



The 25-day Design and Technology Development Workshop successfully equipped women artisans with practical skills in sustainable design and printing techniques. By incorporating accessible materials like matchsticks, vegetables, and repurposed textiles, participants gained hands-on expertise that they can apply independently. By the end of the program, those who showed dedication and creativity were prepared for entry-level roles in the textile sector. Moreover, the broader vision of the ministry—to foster entrepreneurship and revive traditional handicrafts—was effectively reinforced.

This initiative stands as a testament to the transformative potential of skill development, providing not just vocational training but a foundation for self-reliance and economic empowerment.