

Anant National University Celebrates the Successful Conclusion of ANUSHILP: Empowering Artists through Craft Revival, Design Innovation, and Technology Integration

Ahmedabad, October 17 2023: Anant National University, India's pioneering DesignX University is delighted to announce the successful culmination of ANUSHILP, a transformative project that signifies a remarkable commitment to reviving traditional crafts and empowering artisans in the Narmada district of Gujarat. This collaborative effort between Anant National University and the US-India Foundation (USIN) has emerged as a beacon of craftsmanship, innovation, and self-reliance.

ANUSHILP, a comprehensive initiative to understand, upskill, and upgrade the craft practices of the Narmada district, is a two-year project designed to be executed in three distinct phases, with the artisans' residency programme at its core. The project's objective is to empower the local artisans through a harmonious fusion of traditional craft knowledge, contemporary design thinking, and cutting-edge technology.

The inception of this visionary project took shape as the ANUSHILP core team ventured to Kevadia, where they engaged directly with local artisans to gain a profound understanding of their prevalent craft practices. In this immersive process, they identified bamboo, applique and crochet-work as crafts with untapped potential. A select group of artisans from these craft clusters were chosen to collaborate with a team of designers from Anant. Together, they embarked on a journey to create handcrafted products that seamlessly bridge the gap between tradition and the contemporary world.

During this second phase of the project, the artisans delved deep into the world of motif, pattern, and form development within their respective crafts. Significantly, they drew inspiration from their immediate surroundings, instilling a sense of cultural relevance into their work. The result of this creative endeavor is a collection of bamboo and applique-work products that are now poised for market testing.

The works of the artisans' residency programme were proudly exhibited during the visit of Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Government of India, to the Anant campus. The Honorable Minister not only interacted with the artisans but also admired the products they had crafted. Dr. Jaishankar selected two remarkable artifacts, a bamboo box and a foldable applique world map, to serve as souvenirs for the delegates attending the G20 Varanasi meet. A substantial order of 75 pieces of each artifact was commissioned to ANUSHILP artisans and completed in a mere seven days. This phase also served as an educational platform, offering insights into large-scale production and workflow management for the artisans.

As ANUSHILP journeys into its third and final phase, resident artisans will take on the noble responsibility of conducting workshops to train artisans from their own villages. This training model is carefully designed to proliferate the newly acquired skills among artisans and empower them to make

these skills their own. The ultimate vision is to foster independent explorers who rely less on external institutions and more on their intrinsic talents.

ANUSHILP stands as a testament to the spirit of reviving traditional craftsmanship, nurturing innovation, and fostering self-reliance among the artisans of Narmada. Anant National University's unwavering dedication to this cause continues to illuminate a brighter future where the past and present harmoniously coexist, creating timeless wonders.
