

NIFT International Conference 2026 Concludes with Focus on Inclusive Design, Craft Heritage and Global Collaboration

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The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) successfully concluded Day 2 of the NIFT International Conference 2026 on “Design for Inclusive Futures” at its Mumbai campus on Friday, 23 January 2026. The second day further deepened critical conversations around equity, accessibility, usability, and inclusive innovation through a thoughtfully curated programme of keynote addresses, technical sessions, invited papers, and a high-impact panel discussion.



As part of the two-day conference, a Craft Demonstration-cum-Awareness Programme was organised by the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT). The programme featured live demonstrations by master artisans from diverse craft clusters across the country, showcasing India’s rich craft heritage, indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable practices. It provided a platform for meaningful interaction among artisans, designers, scholars and students, highlighting the role of traditional crafts in fostering inclusive, culturally rooted and future-ready design ecosystems.

The event facilitated the participation of 32 handloom and handicraft artisans from various craft clusters across India, including master weavers and master craftsmen. Artisans representing crafts such as Gond painting, Paithani sari weaving, Ikat textiles, Maheshwar textiles, appliqué and Kutch Bandhani, among

others, demonstrated their skills, underscoring the importance of indigenous craftsmanship, cultural continuity and artisan-led sustainable design in shaping inclusive futures.

In her key address, Prof. (Dr.) Noopur Anand, Dean, NIFT, underscored the need to embed accessibility as a core design principle, viewing disability as an opportunity for sensory-inclusive and age-friendly innovation. She emphasised dignity in design, ethical responsibility and the importance of human-centric education to advance inclusive futures.

The day commenced with a keynote address by Shri Jalaj Hora, CEO, Synthegrate and Global Chair, Manchester Metropolitan University, who highlighted the need for meaningful integration of AI in fashion to enhance human creativity. This was followed by a keynote address by Shri Arman Ali, Executive Director, NCPEDP, who stressed universal design as a foundational principle and drew attention to the social and economic costs of exclusion of persons with disabilities, particularly in digital and financial access.

The conference concluded with an inspiring valedictory session by Prof. Dr. Rupa Agrawal, NIFT, Conference Chair, marking the successful culmination of the two-day international event. The NIFT International Conference 2026 decisively reaffirmed the Institute's global leadership in advancing inclusive, sustainable, and socially impactful design education and practice, while charting a bold and future-oriented direction for international collaboration and design excellence.

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