

'Divya Kala Mela' – Transforming Lives, Empowering Diversity, and Driving Economic Growth

(The 'Divya Kala Mela' in Surat, organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, showcased the talents of Divyang entrepreneurs, fostering economic empowerment, celebrating diversity, and promoting a more inclusive society on a national scale.)



(Source: UI Newz)

The 'Divya Kala Mela,' organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD) in collaboration with the National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC), emerged as a groundbreaking event aimed at showcasing the talents and products of Divyang entrepreneurs and artisans. Held in Surat, Gujarat, from December 29, 2023, to January 7, 2024, the event not only fostered economic empowerment but also celebrated diversity and creativity on a national platform.

Economic Empowerment through Diversity:

1. Fostering Financial Independence for Persons with Disabilities (PwD)

The core mission of the 'Divya Kala Mela' was to contribute significantly to the economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) or Divyangjan. By providing a unique platform for marketing and exhibiting a diverse array of products and skills, the event played a pivotal role in fostering financial independence and inclusivity.

2. Unique Initiatives for Economic Empowerment

The 'Divya Kala Mela' series, inaugurated in 2022, has been a driving force behind the economic empowerment of Divyangjan. Each edition has successfully brought together Divyang entrepreneurs, creating a spirit of 'vocal for local' by endorsing products crafted by individuals with extraordinary determination.

Nationwide Representation:



(Source: News Makhani)

1. Diverse Showcase of Skills and Products

The Surat event witnessed the participation of around 100 Divyang artisans, artists, and entrepreneurs from approximately 20 states and Union Territories. The products on display ranged across several categories, including Home Décor & Lifestyle, Clothing, Stationery, eco-friendly products, packaged food, organic products, Toys & Gifts, and Personal Accessories like Jewellery and Clutch Bags.

2. The Journey of 'Divya Kala Mela'

The Surat edition marked the 12th in the series that began in Delhi in December 2022. Subsequent events were held in Mumbai, Bhopal, Guwahati, Indore, Jaipur, Varanasi, Secunderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, and Patna. Each edition has successfully brought together Divyang entrepreneurs, showcasing the diversity and rich cultural heritage of various regions.

Showcasing Extraordinary Determination:

1. Resilience and Creativity on Display

The 'Divya Kala Mela' in Surat presented an engaging experience for visitors, featuring vibrant products from regions like Jammu and Kashmir, the North Eastern states, and more. The event aimed to highlight the resilience and creativity of Divyang artisans, offering attendees the opportunity to witness and purchase exceptional products crafted with extraordinary determination.

2. A Platform for Inspiration

Beyond being a commercial platform, the event served as an inspiration for people with and without disabilities. It showcased that determination and talent know no bounds, breaking stereotypes and fostering a sense of inclusivity.

Cultural Extravaganza and Culinary Delights:

1. Beyond Commerce: A 360-Degree Experience

The 10-day 'Divya Kala Mela' in Surat went beyond being just a platform for commerce. Open to the public from 11:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M., the event featured cultural activities and performances by Divyang artists and well-known professionals. Additionally, visitors had the opportunity to savor regional cuisines from across the country, adding a flavorful touch to the overall experience.

2. Promoting Cultural Exchange

The inclusion of cultural activities not only added vibrancy to the event but also promoted cultural exchange. Attendees were exposed to the rich cultural tapestry of various states and UTs, further reinforcing the message of unity in diversity.

National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC):



(Source: insamachar.com)

1. A Pillar of Support

The National Divyangjan Finance and Development Corporation (NDFDC), an apex organization under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment's DEPwD, played a pivotal role in co-hosting the 'Divya

Kala Mela.' Operational since 1997, the NDFDC, being fully owned by the Government of India, serves as the apex institution for the welfare of people with disabilities.

2. Nationwide Assistance

The NDFDC provides assistance through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs), appointed by the State Government(s), Selected Public Sector Banks (PSBs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), and other organizations. This extensive network ensures the widespread reach of financial and developmental support for Divyang entrepreneurs.

Future Endeavors:

1. Expanding the Reach of 'Divya Kala Mela'

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities has ambitious plans to expand the reach of the 'Divya Kala Mela.' As part of this vision, similar events will be organized in other cities across the country during the 2023-2024 period. This expansion is crucial in ensuring the sustained economic growth and empowerment of Divyang entrepreneurs on a national scale.

2. Building a Sustainable Ecosystem

The 'Divya Kala Mela' is not just an event; it is a stepping stone toward building a sustainable ecosystem for Divyang entrepreneurs. The continued organization of such events nationwide will contribute to creating a market for Divyang products, thus ensuring a steady income and growth for these individuals.

The Impact Beyond the Mela:

1. Strengthening Social Fabric

Beyond economic aspects, the 'Divya Kala Mela' has played a significant role in strengthening the social fabric. By fostering inclusivity and celebrating diversity, the event has contributed to breaking down societal barriers and promoting a more accepting and understanding community.

2. Policy Implications

The success of the 'Divya Kala Mela' series has broader policy implications. It underscores the importance of creating an enabling environment for the economic and social inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Governments and policymakers can draw inspiration from this initiative to formulate policies that support and promote the entrepreneurship and artistic endeavors of Divyang individuals. The 'Divya Kala Mela' in Surat stands as a beacon of hope and progress in the journey toward empowering Persons with Disabilities. It goes beyond being a mere exhibition, turning into a celebration of diversity, determination, and creativity. The economic empowerment achieved through this initiative is not only impactful at an individual level but also contributes to the larger goal of creating an inclusive society. As the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities looks forward to organizing more such events, the 'Divya Kala Mela' becomes a catalyst for positive change, breaking barriers and paving the way for a more inclusive and economically empowered future.