

# A Purposeful Talk by Experts from Custom, Concor & CHA

Seminar with Custom, Concor & CHA in Agra, Uttar Pradesh; 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025

On 5th March 2025, the Handicrafts Exporters Association (HEA), Agra, organised an interactive seminar in Agra titled “A Purposeful Talk by Experts from Customs, Concor & CHA” for handicraft exporters of the region. The session aimed to provide exporters with valuable insights into export procedures and effective logistics management.

The event commenced with a welcome address by Mr. Ashish Agarwal, Treasurer of HEA-Agra, who underlined the importance for exporters to understand various aspects of international trade, including customs procedures, risk management, and recent updates in regulations.

Mr. Shushil Kumar, Superintendent of the Customs Department, Agra, shared key information about the latest customs rules, regulations, and trade agreements India has entered into with various countries. He highlighted common errors made during the filing of shipment documents and stressed that the customs department has the authority to physically inspect shipments and request relevant documents from exporters. He also reassured participants that Agra Customs does not unnecessarily delay shipments.

Mr. Jagdish Prasad, Terminal Manager at Concor, informed attendees about the availability of Full Container Load (FCL) facilities in Agra. He pointed out that minor recurring errors in shipment documentation often cause avoidable delays and issues in transit. He urged exporters to adhere strictly to the guidelines issued by the government and ensure accurate filing of all required paperwork.

Mr. Sanjeev Sharma from Continental Carrier delivered an insightful presentation on the critical role of Clearing House Agents (CHA) in facilitating successful export operations. He shared practical

strategies for managing rising shipping costs and simplifying the customs clearance process. His guidance was especially beneficial for new exporters, as he outlined essential steps for initiating exports while remaining compliant with international trade regulations.

Mr. A K Gupta provided an overview of the ongoing activities of HEA-Agra and discussed the importance of the seminar. He emphasized that having accurate, ground-level knowledge of the importing country's regulations is crucial before dispatching any shipment.

The session concluded with a question-and-answer segment, which allowed attendees to clarify doubts and engage directly with the expert speakers. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from both seasoned exporters and new members, making it a highly informative and engaging session. At the end of the seminar, Mr. Ashish Agarwal extended a vote of thanks on behalf of HEA-Agra to all dignitaries and participants. Mementos were presented as a token of appreciation to the guest speakers. ■



*The seminar saw the presence of Mr. Shushil Kumar, Superintendent, Customs Department, Agra; Mr. Jagdish Prasad, Terminal Manager, Concor; Mr. Sanjeev Sharma, associated with Continental Carrier; Dr. S K Tyagi, Secretary, Handicrafts Exporters Association (HEA), Agra; Mr. Ashish Agarwal, Treasurer, HEA; and Mr. A K Gupta, representative, HEA-Agra*

# Design and Trends Forecast for Spring/Summer'26

Workshop for Furniture and Decorative Accessories in Jaipur; 10<sup>th</sup> March 2025



*EPCH COA Members - Mr. Girish Agarwal, Mr. Jaswant S. Meel, and Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari; Dr. Vandana Bhandari, Design Advisor, EPCH; Ms. Shweta Mewara, Co-Founder & Creative Director, Gulmohar Lane; Ms. Srishti Srivastava, Business Development Executive, Fashion Snoops participated along with member exporters from Jaipur*

On 10th March 2025, EPCH organised a Design & Trend Workshop on "Furniture and Decorative Accessories for Spring/Summer 2026" in Jaipur. The workshop aimed to provide valuable insights into the latest design trends, innovative product ideas, and market preferences for the upcoming season, with a specific focus on Furniture and Decorative Accessories.

The workshop was attended by several esteemed industry professionals, including EPCH COA Members - Mr. Girish Agarwal, Mr. Jaswant S. Meel, and Mr. Lekhraj Maheshwari; Dr. Vandana Bhandari, Design Advisor, EPCH; Ms. Shweta Mewara, Co-Founder & Creative Director, Gulmohar Lane; Ms. Srishti Srivastava, Business Development Executive, Fashion Snoops.

Mr. Girish Agarwal emphasised the importance of design-led innovation in the handicrafts sector and encouraged interactive discussions on global trends and market-driven designs. Dr. Vandana Bhandari highlighted the significance of design trends in product development and reiterated EPCH's commitment to continuous innovation.

Ms. Srishti Srivastava delivered an insightful presentation on seasonal trends for Spring/Summer 2026, offering a clear explanation of



how to translate forecasts into design applications. She provided an in-depth understanding of seasonal patterns, colour palettes, and their geographical interpretations in trend forecasting.

Ms. Shweta Mewara elaborated on the practical adaptation of these trends into market-ready products. She discussed long-term trends such as Japandi and Art Nouveau, along with key elements like furniture accents, colour schemes, surfaces, and materials that are set to define the upcoming season.

The workshop concluded with an engaging Q&A session, where participants actively interacted with the experts. Attendees appreciated EPCH's efforts in fostering awareness about emerging design trends and forecasts for Spring/Summer 2026. The event successfully provided a platform for industry professionals to exchange knowledge, build networks, and explore innovative strategies for product development. ■



# Export Promotion, Documentation and Overseas Marketing Platforms for Handicraft Products - Awareness Program at Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu; 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025

The EPCH Southern Regional Office, in collaboration with IBN and Nirmala College for Women, organised a fully sponsored awareness programme in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The event focused on export promotion, documentation, and overseas marketing for handicraft products. Key speakers included Dr. Mary Fabiola, Principal of Nirmala College; Dr. Emelda; and Dr. K. Senthilkumar, Advisor to IBN and President of IMA. Both Dr. Fabiola and Mr. Senthilkumar emphasised the need for export knowledge and market awareness in the handicrafts sector. The Regional Officer then led a technical session with an in-depth presentation. Entrepreneurs from Kerala and nearby districts actively participated, with many expressing interest in joining the Council. The event saw strong engagement from members of IBN, IMA, and the college community, earning widespread appreciation. ■



*Dr. Mary Fabiola, Principal, Nirmala College for Women; Dr. Emelda; Dr. K. Senthilkumar, Advisor to IBN (International Business Network) and the President of the IMA Association were present, along with EPCH Regional Officer-South*

## 25-Day Design Development Workshop at Moran, Dibrugarh District, Assam 18<sup>th</sup> February to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2025



A 25-day Design Development Workshop was held from 18th February to 15th March 2025 in Moran, Dibrugarh District, Assam, with support from the Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. The workshop aimed to improve the design skills, technical know-how, and market readiness of local artisans while preserving traditional crafts.

Thirty artisans—mainly women involved in embroidery and textiles—received training in modern design, production techniques, and product diversification. Led by designer Mr. Pallab Kumar Misra and supported by local master craftsman Mr. Bapukan Payeng, the sessions covered design planning, motif development, finishing, packaging, and branding.



Participants created over 10 new market-oriented prototypes, including cushion covers, stoles, handbags, and wall hangings. Shri Shashikant Gupta, Assistant Director, HSC Jorhat, visited the workshop for official evaluation and interacted with the artisans.

Well-received by all stakeholders, the workshop is expected to boost innovation and entrepreneurship in the region. Continued support through advanced training, branding, and trade fair participation is recommended to sustain its impact.





## The Art of Attraction: Visual Merchandising Strategies for Impactful Booths

- Understanding Psychology of Attraction • Design Principles for Booth Impact • Storytelling Through Space • Interactive Elements & Digital Integration

**17th April 2024:** Gunnar Hoffrichter, Independent Consultant, Hamburg, Germany, conducted this workshop that centered on visual merchandising strategies for impactful booths and explored key areas including the psychology of attraction, design principles for booth effectiveness, storytelling through spatial design and the integration of interactive elements and digital tools.

With over 30 years of global experience, including 20+ years across Asia and a decade each in retail and wholesale, Mr. Hoffrichter brought deep insights from his work with brands like JOOP! Living and Lambert. He emphasized the importance of a design-led process that goes beyond mere product display.

### AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)

The session highlighted how strategic planning, thoughtful layout, and impactful presentation can significantly enhance customer engagement, boost brand visibility, and even increase turnover by up to 35%. Mr. Hoffrichter emphasized that visual merchandising goes beyond product placement—it's about storytelling and crafting a memorable customer experience. He introduced the AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) as a foundational framework for booth design, guiding participants on how to attract and retain customer interest effectively.

He stressed the significance of logo placement and lighting, using space effectively and creating visual balance through methods like pyramid shapes, symmetry, repetition and focal points.

Encouraging exhibitors to plan ahead, he recommended building mock-ups, curating product categories carefully, and creating thematic displays with cohesive colour schemes.

"Less is more," he advised, cautioning against cluttered setups or overwhelming audio effects. His practical tips from layout planning to unpacking strategies highlighted how good visual merchandising leads to higher customer engagement and business growth.



Gunnar Hoffrichter, Independent Consultant, Hamburg, Germany, being greeted by Mr. Nirmal Bhandari, President, Reception Committee, IHGF Delhi Fair-Spring 2025.



# AI in Product Design: Redefining Trends for Tomorrow

- AI in industry • Generative AI in Design Ideation and Realization • AI-powered Technologies for Products • Ethical Considerations and Creative Control • Case Studies and Future Outlook • Opportunities for Designers in an AI-integrated Future

**17th April 2024:** Dr. Kaustav Sengupta, Futurist, Color Behaviourist, AI Analyst & Academic Leader, made an insightful presentation on the evolving role of AI in the creative industries. He began his presentation by highlighting the greatness of India's culture and history, emphasizing key innovations such as the first potter's wheel, the first chessboard, and the first bricks, all of which were created in the Indian subcontinent. He also mentioned the Indian invention of the catamaran. Dr. Sengupta then shared some statistics, revealing that India is ranked fourth on the Stanford Global AI Power List.

## AI Applications in Daily Life

Shifting to artificial intelligence, Dr. Sengupta explained how AI enables computers to think and learn like humans, helping machines solve problems, understand language, recognize and create images, predict outcomes and make decisions, all faster



Dr. Kaustav Sengupta, Futurist, Color Behaviourist, AI Analyst & Academic Leader

and often more accurately than humans. He gave examples of AI applications in daily life, such as AI-powered laundry services, massage chairs, and products designed for elderly individuals, including AI-powered wheelchairs and utensils that detect shaking in patients with Parkinson's disease. He also discussed the "loneliness epidemic" and how AI companions are being used to assist people who feel isolated or disconnected from their families and friends.

Dr. Sengupta introduced several innovative AI-driven products, including a lamp that can read books and generative AI used for predicting trends and designing products. He explained how generative AI helps brands and individuals in the early stages of prototyping by generating



Dr. Kaustav Sengupta, being welcomed by EPCH COA Members: Mr. K N Tulasi Rao and Mr. Ravi K Passi; Mr. Nirmal Bhandari, President, Reception Committee, IHGF Delhi Fair-Spring 2025; and Mr. Rajesh Rawat, Addl. Executive Director, EPCH

AI-created images for product planning, which reduces costs associated with QA and prototyping. The speaker then delved into the concept of prompts, describing them as natural language instructions or questions given to an AI model to generate responses. These prompts can be as simple as a sentence or as complex as a paragraph or even a block of code. He outlined the six components of a prompt: 1) Task, 2) Context, 3) Example, 4) Person, 5) Format, and 6) Tone, noting that the quality of the prompt directly impacts the quality of the output.

Dr. Sengupta also introduced the 5P design process, which integrates AI and human intelligence. This process includes: 1) Adding input to generate concepts via text prompts in AI-enabled platforms like Dream Studio, Midjourney, or DALL-E; 2) Selecting a concept from AI-generated options; 3) Modifying the selected concept; 4) Enhancing the concept manually with functional detailing; and 5) Taking the final design to software like Gravity Sketch for 3D rendering.

Next, Mr. Sengupta introduced VisionNxtTrend Research & AI Lab, a research lab in Chennai that is India's only ethically certified trend insights lab. The lab integrates AI and NEI to forecast emerging



trends using proprietary tools like Depression and Foresight Cube. The lab leverages data from over 800 trends and expert insights for a data-driven approach to trend forecasting.

Dr. Sengupta concluded by showing how AI is not here to replace human jobs but rather to assist in human endeavors, making tasks easier and more efficient. He encouraged seminar participants to experiment with prompts themselves, highlighting how AI can quickly generate concept sketches and modify existing ones in just minutes. He emphasized that AI has made design accessible anywhere, eliminating the need for a studio, professional camera, or perfect lighting. With AI's capabilities, photo shoots and design tasks have become simpler and more efficient. He urged designers to embrace AI to reduce laborious tasks and focus on more creative endeavors, which, in turn, could help humanity achieve greatness.



Dr. Sengupta is Faculty and Link Chairperson at NIFT and Director of the VisioNxtTrend Research & AI Lab. He has consulted for global brands and contributes to shaping design education through various academic boards.

He is a prolific author and sought-after speaker at TEDx, ThinkEdu Conclaves, and global forums, widely respected for his trend forecasting tools and AI-driven insights that continue to influence both industry and academia.

## Safeguarding Business Transactions through Cyber Security Services in Digital Era

- Cyber Threats in Current Landscape - From business to communication & devices • Threats, redressal and Securities • Email Threats, Digital Money Threats and Securities • Mobile Devices Safety & Security • Proactive Securities for Digital Infrastructure at Business • Cyber Hygiene



The speaker at the seminar, Rakshit Tandon, Cyber Security Evangelist & Risk Advisory Leader, being welcomed by EPCH COA Members: Mr. K N Tulasi Rao, Mr. R K Malhotra and Mr. Ravi K Passi

**18th April 2024:** Mr. Rakshit Tandon, Cyber Security Evangelist and Risk Advisory Leader, delivered a compelling session on the evolving cyber threat. He opened the seminar by introducing three fundamental concepts crucial to personal and organizational cybersecurity: Cyber Hygiene – Practicing safe behaviors and habits while using digital devices; Digital Quotient (DQ) – A measure of how well one understands and navigates the digital world; Cybersecurity Proactiveness – Taking preventive steps to secure oneself against cyber threats rather than reacting after damage has been done. To emphasize the growing need for robust cybersecurity practices, Mr. Rakshit showcased a series of news headlines about recent cyberattacks and data breaches. These included incidents involving major institutions such as AIIMS, Google Chrome, Star Health, Big Basket, Zomato, Domino's, etc. These breaches often resulted in the leaking of sensitive user data, including passwords.



Phishing via QR codes, Vishing - Phishing via video or voice calls; and USSD Exploits: Refrain from entering unfamiliar USSD codes, as these can activate call forwarding and compromise OTP-based security. Mr. Rakshit recommended avoiding storage of personal documents (e.g., Aadhaar, PAN) in phone galleries. Instead, use secure platforms like: DigiLocker: A government-backed app for safely storing digital documents with masking options.

If your phone is stolen, immediately block your SIM card to prevent the misuse of OTPs or incoming calls. File an FIR at the nearest police station and reissue your SIM with the help of your telecom provider. Use Google's Find My Device or Apple's iCloud to track and erase your phone remotely. You should also block the stolen device via the Sanchar Saathi porta. Any suspected fraud or cybercrime must be reported using official government portals or by calling the cybercrime helpline at 1930, he advised and added, when it comes to cybercrimes involving children, extra vigilance is essential, as minors are particularly vulnerable to online abuse and fraud. Prompt reporting through official channels is strongly advised. Mr. Rakshit issued a strict warning against giving smartphones to children under the age of 13. He emphasized that a phone today holds sensitive information, like a wallet, bank account, and investment portfolio and should never be handed to a child. He also highlighted global best practices, applauding countries such as Australia and Norway for enforcing strict regulations on teen access to social media. He suggested that India should consider adopting similar protective measures. To conclude the seminar, Mr. Rakshit provided a practical demonstration of Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), which enhances digital security through one-time passwords (OTP), physical security keys, authentication apps, or biometric verification.

## Key Takeaways and Recommendations

It is essential to keep all your devices—phones, laptops, and tablets—regularly updated, as updates often include critical security patches. Use strong, unique passwords for each platform, ensuring they are complex and not based on easily guessed information like birthdays or anniversaries. Utilize tools such as HavelBeenPwned.com to check if your credentials have been compromised in data breaches, and VirusTotal.com to scan suspicious files or links for malware. Be cautious of scams and fake calls, especially from individuals impersonating government authorities like TRAI or customs officers—always verify their identity before sharing any information. Stay alert to deepfake-based scam ads that use celebrity faces to promote fraudulent or illegal schemes. Finally, never download files with extensions like .apk or .iso from unknown sources, as these may contain malware.

## Emerging Cyber Threats

Trusted Contact Attacks: Criminals pose as known contacts to deceive victims; Advanced Phishing Techniques: Quishing -

# Leveraging AI-Powered Software for Optimizing Export Operation

- Export Challenges & Technical Compliance • Limitations of Traditional Software • AI's Role in Modern ERP • DiracERP: AI-Powered Export Optimization • Real-World Benefits: Efficiency, Accuracy, Cost Savings • The Future of Export Operations

**18th April 2024:** Mr. Lakshman Das, Director, DiracERP elaborated on the evolving landscape of export operations, addressing key topics such as export challenges and compliance, limitations of traditional software, AI's role in modern ERP, and real-world benefits of AI-powered solutions like DiracERP, including improved efficiency, accuracy, and cost savings.

## Export Management

In today's global economy, export management is more complex than ever, with evolving regulations, intricate documentation, and unpredictable logistics. Exporters must work with speed, accuracy, and efficiency while reducing errors, cutting costs, and meeting shifting global demands. Despite these growing demands, Many





exporters still rely on outdated or manual systems that can't handle the complexities of modern global trade. These systems lack real-time updates, automation, and adaptability, leading to errors, compliance issues, delays, and higher costs. To stay competitive, businesses also need better-trained staff and access to reliable market data.

### Technical Acceptability

Technical acceptability is key to export readiness. Exporters must meet global standards, adapt quickly to disruptions, and manage costs effectively. Success depends not just on product quality and packaging, but also on the ability to adjust production methods and timelines to fit each country's requirements. Well-trained personnel and strict compliance with international norms are essential for staying competitive.

Traditional ERP systems, though effective at managing core transactions, often fall short when it comes to handling dynamic, real-time decision-making. These systems typically lack predictive capabilities, intelligent automation, and the ability to process large volumes of unstructured data. In today's fast-paced business environment, what is needed are intelligent systems that do more than just record data—they must learn from it, generate insights, and initiate timely actions.

### AI as a Game-changer

This is where Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes a game-changer in ERP systems. AI significantly enhances the functionality of ERP by introducing automation, predictive analytics, and actionable insights. Repetitive and rule-based tasks such as generating invoices, managing shipping documents, and monitoring compliance requirements can be automated with a high degree of accuracy. Predictive tools use historical data to forecast potential

delays, demand shifts, or inventory shortages, allowing companies to stay one step ahead. Furthermore, AI-powered ERP systems offer real-time insight into potential risks or opportunities, helping exporters make informed and timely decisions.

### Role of DiracERP

DiracERP is one such innovative solution that leverages AI to optimize export and manufacturing operations. It automates critical documentation such as invoices, packing lists, and certifications, reducing manual errors and saving time. It performs intelligent compliance checks tailored to destination-specific trade rules and alerts users to regulatory changes. Additionally, DiracERP provides predictive logistics support, offering detailed insights into shipment routes, costs, and timelines, ultimately streamlining the process.

In the context of manufacturing, DiracERP delivers a unified platform that connects various departments including supply chain, production planning, inventory control, and customer relationship management (CRM). This integration ensures smooth operations and clear visibility across all functions. The system offers industry-specific modules tailored to sectors like automotive, electronics, textiles, and heavy machinery. Manufacturers benefit from streamlined production planning, which ensures optimal resource allocation and timely order fulfillment.

Real-time inventory management helps prevent overstocking or stockouts by keeping accurate track of materials and finished goods. The quality control module, supported by DiracERP's mobile application LookOver, helps monitor product quality at each stage of production and ensures compliance with national and international standards. The platform also supports data-driven decision-making through robust analytics, enabling businesses to track key performance metrics and gain actionable insights.

With its scalability and flexibility, DiracERP caters to both small manufacturers and large enterprises, adapting to evolving business needs and expanding alongside organizational growth. The implementation process is supported by a dedicated team that ensures seamless integration and ongoing system optimization. As global trade evolves, exporters and manufacturers must adopt advanced systems like DiracERP.

