



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
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From Dreams to Destinies

Divya Kala Mela 2024 redefines Inclusion and Heritage

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Art and empowerment come together in the inspiring stories of individuals who use creativity to uplift themselves and their communities. From traditional crafts to innovative artistic expressions, these narratives highlight the transformative power of local art and inclusivity, fostering resilience, empowerment, and cultural preservation.

The Divya Kala Mela serves as a remarkable platform for these stories, celebrating and amplifying the voices of talented artists who break barriers and redefine possibilities. This unique initiative not only provides persons with disabilities an opportunity to showcase their skills and entrepreneurial ventures but also plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting India's rich local art, culture, and heritage.

This document presents an array of powerful and inspiring stories of artisans who believe in being the architects of their own destinies, shaping their journeys on their terms.



Harish and Priya

Harish Aiyer and his wife **Priya** exemplify how traditional culinary practices can blend with entrepreneurship to create something extraordinary. Starting with a small-scale venture making homemade traditional snacks in Kerala, the couple has built a thriving business over ten years. Their offerings, such as banana chips and jackfruit chips, not only promote healthy snacking but also keep them connected to Kerala's rich culinary heritage. Participating in the Divya Kala Mela provides Harish and Priya a platform to showcase their culinary skills and share Kerala's authentic flavours with a diverse audience



Hinali (middle) with her colleagues from IDEA

In Delhi, **Hinali**, a Divyang businesswoman associated with IDEA, has turned her passion for local hand-woven clothes into a successful business. Her journey toward independence reflects the transformative power of platforms like Divya Kala Mela. Hinali has been able to hone her craft and bring her beautiful hand-woven garments to a broader audience. She highlights how the **Divya Kala Mela serves as a platform for both art and the artist**, ensuring that Divyangjans receive the visibility they deserve.



Arav and his mother

Art finds its expression in the most unconventional canvases, and for **Arav Mahajan**, this canvas is footwear. Suffering from Down Syndrome, Arav defied all odds to pursue his passion for painting with remarkable creativity. Supported by Feet Me Up, Arav customizes **hand-painted shoes, hats, and other items that are quirky, fashionable, and unique**. His live shoe-painting performances at the Divya Kala Mela radiate positivity and captivate visitors. His work not only showcases his exceptional talent but also challenges societal stereotypes surrounding disability. Arav's story inspires others to follow their passion, no matter the challenges.

The **22nd Divya Kala Mela from 12th December to 22nd December, 2024 at the iconic India Gate, New Delhi** showcases the extraordinary talent, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit of Divyang artisans, entrepreneurs, and artists from across the country. Since its inception in 2022, the **Divya Kala Mela** has brought its empowering vision to **21 cities, including Mumbai, Bhopal and Bengaluru, with the 2024 edition in Delhi marking its 22nd chapter**. This initiative celebrates equal opportunities, recognizing talent, fostering independence, and empowering Divyangjans as custodians of culture and community. Through inspiring stories like **Hinali, Arav, and Harish**, the Mela showcases the transformative power of inclusion and redefines empowerment.

References

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Santosh Kumar/Sarla Meena/ Madiha Iqbal