

Report

Workshop : ‘Mendh ki Chappai’ on 2nd-3rd March 2019

A two-days workshop on ‘Mendh ki Chappai’ was organised by the Textile and Clothing Research Centre (TCRC), in collaboration with the **Indian Institute of Crafts & Design (IICD) at IICD, Jaipur, Rajasthan on 2nd-3rd March 2019**. The experience of this hands-on workshop was overwhelming, as fifty-four persons of all age groups from student, teaching faculty and art enthusiasts participated and worked together to learn and appreciate this distinctive technique.

Mendh ki Chappai is one of the age-old printing techniques practiced with natural colours on cotton textiles in the town of Sanganer, Rajasthan. The purpose of the workshop was to understand the traditional process of Mendh Printing and to reach out to more and more people to make them aware of this heritage craft. It included presentations, film screening and demonstrations by research scholars and artisans.

The workshop was divided into lecture and demonstration sessions. And then time was given for the hands- on experience to the participants.

Resource persons for the workshop were Ms. Sonal Gaur, who has undertaken a Ph.D. on ‘Mendh Printing’ from Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi; Mr. Awdhesh Kumar, who has carried on this unique handcrafted textile in traditional ways since generations; and Ms Shalu Rustagi, research scholar from IICD, Jaipur.

The Inaugural session began with Dr. Toolika Gupta, Director, IICD, Jaipur, who welcomed all the resource persons, participants on the day 1 of the workshop. She expressed the importance of this unique art form, need for preservation, efforts of IICD and Rajasthan government in promotion of crafts.

Dr. Anamika Pathak, Chairperson of TCRC enlightened the audience with the progress and contribution of TCRC in conservation, preservation, and promotion of textile crafts and histories. This workshop being one such effort in achieving the goals. She thanked IICD for collaborating with TCRC in organising the workshop. Such collaborations will create links with many communities across country. She presented background of the present workshop and discussed the theme in brief.

An exhibition of Mendh printed pieces was also put up at IICD. The artisans associated with the craft were felicitated by Dr Anamika Pathak and TCRC Founder members were felicitated by Dr Toolika Gupta.

Then, the session began with the introduction on “*Mendh ki Chappai*”, which was commenced with an address by Ms. Sonal Gaur. Her presentation focussed on the technique, and its various aspects and a documentary prepared by her was also screened. She expressed that this printing style is more complex in comparison to other resist printing techniques that are practiced in Rajasthan. The beeswax used as the resist material is the major component of

the Mendh Printing. This also provided fragrance of the fabric and this pleasant aroma was retained by the fabric for several washes. The session was followed by Q & A session.

Practical Session

Participants were introduced to a practical session by Ms. Sonal Gaur and Mr. Awadhesh Kumar. Introduction about the material and procedure/ outlines to be followed were given and participants were provided fabric for hands-on activity. This interactive session was followed during the whole length of workshop. Mr, Awadhesh Kumar and Ms. Shalu Rustogi, demonstrated preparatory steps, 'Scouring and Harda Mordanting', besides explaining 'Printing with Begar' in detail. This session was followed by Lunch.

After lunch, session was resumed by Ms. Sonal Gaur and Mr. Awadhesh Kumar, where they demonstrated and explained different steps like 'developing red with *Aal*', preparation of mendh and printing with *Mendh*. All the participants closely observed the procedures.

On day-2, March 3rd 2019, the resource persons Mr. Awdhesh Kumar, Ms. Shalu Rustagi and Ms Sonal Gaur continued with demonstrations on dyeing. "Dyeing with *haldi & Aanar chilka*", "Indigo dyeing, Ukala, & Washing". All the participants followed the steps by working on their samples. The work done by participants and craftsmen were put on a display for half an hour. It was a real display of experience and learning altogether, giving an idea about its future as a continuity of a tradition.

All the participants were given certificates for attending the workshop on the concluding day.