• Paper / Proposal Title:

PRISONS DO NOT RESTRICT LEARNING-Setting up of a Fashion Lab and development of training modules for prisoners in the field of Fashion Technology for their rehabilitation and gainful employment post release in garment industry

• Author(s) Name:

Bela Gupta

• University or Company Affiliation:

Pearl Academy, Rajouri Garden, Delhi, India

• Abstract (300 words):

Pearl Academy, in collaboration with the largest prison complex in Asia, Tihar Jail, started a Fashion Laboratory for helping female inmates to gain relevant skills, experience and mentorship opportunities through a new Fashion Technology program. The two groups hope that the inmates who participate and take training in Fashion Technology will gain more tools to build a holistic, independent life inside as well as outside prison. These programs also impact inmates in their rehabilitation as the program involves skills using their hands, mind and creativity. The paper highlights the setting up of a lab and also focusses on the development of modules. It would also discuss the challenges in this complex learning environment followed by the impact of learning and vocational training on employability of inmates post release.
A fashion lab in the prison is providing all the essential facilities and tools necessary for learning the basics of Design, Pattern making, Construction and finishing what enabled inmates to get ready for employment post release. Till then they start to get job work inside the jail as well. This kind of vocational training is required to fill the gap between designers and market. As an outcome of the program, the inmates got the opportunity to design and produce collections for various fashion shows. Additionally the trained inmates also got brilliant opportunity to produce costume for Bollywood movies. Jail authorities reported that such training has actually reduced the return cases almost to half. Inmates are more confident of themselves and emphasis is laid onto changing their mindset through skill development program. Scholarly education programs have helped inmates to change their IQ but vocational training programs have helped them at a larger extent to earn their lives better post release and rebuild a meaningful life. The objective of the paper is also to examine the effectiveness of the program to get employed post release and also aim to develop a follow up program.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Bela Gupta is an Associate Professor in School of Fashion, styling and Textiles in Pearl Academy, India. She is a postgraduate in Textiles and Clothing from Delhi University and has successfully completed Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education from NTU, London. She is an online Instructor with Laureate Online Teaching Courses. She is a keen motivator and mentor for Fashion Design students to participate and perform in National and International Competitions. Her key areas of teaching are Pattern Making, Draping, Construction and Embellishments. She has presented many research papers in National and International conferences. She has in all 23 years of academic and Industry experience. She has been awarded HERE FOR GOOD Award 2017 by Laureate University for training Tihar Jail Inmates in the area of Fashion Technology in order to rehabilitate and empower post release prisoners. She is also awarded Best Faculty in the Year 2015 and 2017 by Pearl Academy. She represented India in World Skills 2017 as a Fashion Technology Expert. She is a people’s person and like to explore new avenues and ideas in both professional and personal life.