



# XXIII AIWEFA NINA SIBAL AWARD 2025



## Speech of the AIWEFA President, Ms. Rita Menon

Respected Dr. Karan Singh, eminent parliamentarian author, philosopher and poet,  
Shri Kapil Sibal, MP Rajya Sabha and Senior Advocate,  
Shri Lalit Bhasin, eminent lawyer,  
Members of Mr. Sibal's family,  
Prof Neelima Asthana, Director LIC  
Members of AIWEFA,  
Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you for being here this evening, as we come together to honour and remember Ms. Nina Sibal who meant much to a number of persons present today. She was, as I have gathered over the years, not merely a partner, parent, friend and colleague; she lit up the lives of those fortunate enough to know her. She lived with meaningful purpose, with a quality of heart and generosity of spirit that touched the lives of everyone she met.

Today, we reflect on her legacy and the causes she stood for, through the 23rd AIWEFA-Nina Sibal award to be conferred on an organization whose exceptional work and vision have converged with Ms. Sibal's dedication to the service of the underprivileged and disempowered.

The All India Women's Education Fund Association has been privileged to organise the AIWEFA - Nina Sibal Award since 2003. AIWEFA, established in 1929, is a 96-year-old organisation, established by visionary women freedom fighters like Sarojini Naidu, Srimati Aruna Asaf Ali, Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Lady Dorothy Irwin guided by Mahatma Gandhi.

He inspired them to set up a body that educates the women and girls of India groom them for a constructive role in a newly independent Nation. AIWEFA campaigns nationally and internationally for the causes of education, empowerment and social transformation through its field projects, seminars, workshops, conferences, publications and networking; to bring about sustainable and practical solutions to foster community development, inter-generational bonding and advancement of vulnerable groups through education, training and inclusion. AIWEFA has been conferred Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nation and member of the Informal Regional network of NGOs since 1999 and 2003 respectively.

This year, our projects include several programmes and Workshops on "Transition to womanhood for adolescent girls" for different segments such as blind, deaf and autistic: as also girls from slum clusters ensuring community handholding and involvement.

To empower women artisans and help the crafts persons across the country; we implemented a nationwide cataloging craft into categories of origin, region and design with basic audio visual and written material made available by the Development Commissioner Handicrafts, Government of India, who supported this project. Research, identification of new crafts and preparation of data base of almost 500 crafts was undertaken by the AIWEFA team. The project support was provided by Government of India.

A further project for easy accessibility of data, design classification and characteristics of each craft on a dedicated website / dashboard of 500 odd crafts is underway. This information will vastly help artisans aid designers and aid training and development. AIWEFA is supporting the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 by enabling



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internships for students in diverse fields to train and learn real life work situations to equip them for future employability.

AIWEFA selects the Nina Sibal awardee through a rigorous selection and evaluation criteria that is updated for its contemporariness every year to factor in technological advancements. A distinguished 9-member jury assessed the applications in qualitative and quantitative terms, based on outreach, numbers of beneficiaries, use of applicable technologies, skill building and job placements. Organizations were also judged on their success in mainstreaming persons with special needs for inclusion and financial independence.

As President of AIWEFA, I wish to express my deep gratitude of our organisation to Shri Kapil Sibal for reposing continued trust in us for the selection of the awardee and organization of this ceremony.

**I welcome you to the 23<sup>rd</sup> AIWEFA- Nina Sibal award ceremony.**