

Strategic Horizons: Prof. (Dr.) Shekhar Chaudhury Leads a Two-Day Management Masterclass at IISWBM

Former Director of IIM Calcutta mentors MBA students across five landmark case presentations, bringing four decades of corporate and academic wisdom to the IISWBM classroom.

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EVENT DATES

April 20 – 21, 2026

CATEGORY

Academic & Industry Interface

The **MBA Department** of the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management (IISWBM) hosted a distinguished two-day interactive workshop on April 20 and 21, 2026, as part of its MBA Day celebrations. Anchored by Prof. (Dr.) Shekhar Chaudhury, former Director of IIM Calcutta and one of India's foremost authorities in Strategic Management, the sessions saw MBA (Day) Semester II students deliver five full-length group presentations on classical and contemporary strategy frameworks, followed by incisive expert feedback that elevated classroom dialogue well beyond conventional academic exchange.



Prof. (Dr.) Chaudhury with MBA (Day) students, IISWBM, April 2026.



Full batch during MBA Day sessions, IISWBM, Kolkata.

About the Guest — Prof. (Dr.) Shekhar Chaudhury: B.Tech. (Hons), IIT Kharagpur; Fellow, IIM Ahmedabad; Former Director, IIM Calcutta (2002–13). Visiting Professor at ESCP Paris & Southern Illinois University; Senior Fulbright Fellow, UC Berkeley; World Bank consultant on Industrial Technological Development. MIT-MAEER Bharat Asmita Best Teacher in Management Award, 2009.

"Strategy is not a plan written in a document — it is a lens through which managers must constantly read the world around them."

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS — TOPICS & CLASSROOM INSIGHTS

01 Porter's Five Forces — Competitive Industry Analysis

Prof. (Dr.) Chaudhury reframed the framework beyond mere rivalry: all five forces (buyer power, supplier power, threat of new entrants, substitutes, and competitive rivalry) together determine an industry's profit structure. Students learnt to treat rivalry as just one component, with the other four stakeholders equally shaping profitability. Real-world examples such as PACCAR exploiting weak entry barriers to become a focused differentiator, and Apple and Sysco reshaping industry structure through technology, showed how firms can strategically position against, or even redesign, the forces acting on them.

02 Porter's Generic Strategies — The Lenskart Case Study

The session opened with a classroom debate: how does Lenskart integrate cost leadership and differentiation, two strategies Porter considered mutually exclusive? Students explored how a pure cost leader avoids value-adding expenses, while a differentiator accepts higher costs to justify a premium. The Lenskart case, combining vertical manufacturing scale with a technology-driven omni-channel experience, challenged this orthodoxy and sharpened students' understanding of when digital business models can transcend traditional strategic trade-offs.

03 Product Market Strategies for Growth — Ansoff's Matrix & Blue/Red Ocean

Students examined Ansoff's four growth quadrants (market penetration, market development, product development, and diversification) alongside Blue Ocean Strategy. The key synthesis: Ansoff tells a firm *where* to grow; Blue Ocean tells it *how* to grow without being trapped in head-to-head Red Ocean competition. Together, the frameworks equip managers with both a growth map and a value-innovation compass.

04 Diversification Strategies at Cello — A Corporate Evolution

The Cello case traced a remarkable journey from PVC bangles to a pan-category consumer brand, across three generations of the Rathod family. Students analysed how related diversification into stationery, kitchenware, and furniture compounded brand equity and manufacturing synergies across each phase. The session also examined how disciplined generational leadership enabled strategic continuity without loss of competitive focus.

05 Amul: Defending its Turf — Strategic Analysis of India's Dairy Cooperative

The final session analysed Amul's response to the FSSAI labelling controversy, championed by then-MD R.S. Sodhi, arguing that plant-based beverages cannot legally be marketed as 'milk'. Students affirmed that Sodhi's stance was strategically correct: protecting the regulatory boundary of 'milk' directly defends Amul's brand equity and the livelihoods of 100 million dairy farmers. Prof. (Dr.) Chaudhury then pushed the discussion further, asking whether Amul should also diversify into adjacent health categories to remain sustainable long-term. The case illustrated the perennial strategic tension between defending existing advantages and building new ones.

The workshop reinforced the IISWBM MBA Department's commitment to bridging rigorous academic theory with real-world management practice. By analysing companies like Lenskart, Cello, and Amul through the lens of Porter, Ansoff, and Blue Ocean, students gained contextual strategic insight that no textbook alone can provide. The institute extends its deepest gratitude to Prof. (Dr.) Shekhar Chaudhury for the wisdom and inspiration he so generously brought to our campus.