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CREATIVE HORIZONS

40TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



FDDI

FOOTWEAR DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

1986 - 2026

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Walkaroo

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CREATIVE HORIZONS

Connecting Ideas, Craft and Innovation

July 2026

Issue No. 3

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Dear Readers,

The completion of 40 Years of the Journey of FDDI (1986–2026) marks a proud milestone in the history of the Institute.

This landmark occasion provides an opportunity to reflect on four decades of remarkable growth, institutional excellence and unwavering commitment to advancing India's footwear, leather, fashion, retail and allied sectors.

Established in 1986 and today recognized as an Institution of National Importance, FDDI has continuously evolved to meet the changing needs of industry and society. From a modest beginning to becoming a nationally and internationally respected institution, FDDI has created a unique ecosystem encompassing quality education, skill development, research, innovation, testing, consultancy and industry collaboration. Its twelve campuses, Centres of Excellence and internationally accredited testing laboratories stand as enduring symbols of its commitment to excellence.

Over the past four decades, FDDI has nurtured thousands of professionals, empowered entrepreneurs and artisans, strengthened industry competitiveness, and contributed significantly to enhancing the quality and global standing of Indian products. Through close partnerships with industry, academia, government agencies and international organizations, the Institute has consistently promoted innovation, sustainability and technological advancement while responding to the evolving aspirations of the manufacturing sector.

The Governing Council remains committed to further strengthening FDDI as a centre of excellence for education, research, innovation and capacity building. As India progresses towards becoming a global manufacturing and innovation powerhouse, FDDI will continue to play a pivotal role in developing future-ready talent, supporting industry transformation, encouraging entrepreneurship and contributing to the vision of Viksit Bharat through quality, sustainability and technological excellence.

On this memorable occasion, I express my sincere appreciation to the Government of India, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, our distinguished members of the Governing Council, industry partners, faculty, officers, employees, students, alumni and every stakeholder whose dedication and support have shaped FDDI's extraordinary journey over the past forty years.

I congratulate the entire FDDI fraternity on this landmark occasion and wish FDDI continued success in shaping future talent and contributing to India's growth and global leadership.



40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to present the Special Commemorative Issue of Creative Horizons, FDDI's quarterly magazine, celebrating 40 years of an institution that has grown with India's footwear and allied sectors. The milestone commemorates FDDI's registration as a Society on 21 July 1986 and its recognition as an Institution of National Importance in 2017

Forty years are more than a measure of time. They represent a legacy of vision, perseverance, institution-building and collective achievement. This legacy gives us pride, but it also places upon us a responsibility: to remain relevant, responsive and prepared for the opportunities of the future.

From its beginnings as a focused initiative for the footwear sector, FDDI has evolved into a nationally respected institution serving the footwear, leather goods, fashion, retail and lifestyle ecosystem. Its contribution is reflected in generations of graduates, skilled professionals, industry partnerships, research, testing, innovation, entrepreneurship and outreach across the country.

The most meaningful way to honour this journey is not merely to preserve what has been built, but to renew it.

FDDI is therefore steadily modernising its academic systems, curricula, laboratories, digital infrastructure, pedagogy, governance and student experience. Greater emphasis is being placed on interdisciplinary learning, experiential education, faculty development, technology-enabled delivery, research, innovation and measurable outcomes.

Vision 2030 provides the strategic direction for this transformation. Under the guiding theme 'Empowering Today, Transforming Tomorrow', FDDI is working to emerge as a globally recognised, future-ready institution distinguished by academic quality, industry credibility, innovation, sustainability, skilling, testing and sectoral leadership. The vision connects our proud inheritance with a clear programme of institutional renewal.

The programmes of the future must prepare learners not only for today's occupations, but also for careers that are still taking shape. FDDI is consequently developing and reimagining programmes around design and technology integration, digital product creation, emerging technologies, sustainable materials, circularity, advanced manufacturing, retail analytics, entrepreneurship and new business models, while retaining the strong domain foundations for which the Institute is known.

Industry relevance will remain central to this endeavour. Curriculum co-creation, live projects, internships, apprenticeships, industry-led studios, continuing education, applied research, consultancy, testing and cluster engagement are being strengthened so that learning remains connected with real production systems, markets and consumer needs. Our objective is to create graduates who are capable, adaptable, employable and ready to lead change.

We aspire to build an institution that is agile yet grounded, technology-enabled yet human-centred, nationally rooted yet globally connected. A futuristic FDDI must be student-first, quality-driven, inclusive, sustainable and continuously learning - an institution that anticipates change rather than merely responding to it.

This special issue of Creative Horizons celebrates the people, partnerships and milestones that have shaped FDDI, while also presenting the direction in which we are moving. I extend my sincere gratitude to our students, alumni, faculty, staff, industry partners, academic collaborators, government institutions, contributors, readers and well-wishers. Together, we will carry forward the legacy of the past four decades and build an FDDI worthy of the decades ahead.

Vivek Sharma, IRS
Managing Director, FDDI

EDITOR'S NOTE



Dear Readers,

Every institution has a story, but only a few create a legacy that continues to inspire generations. As FDDI commemorates 40 years of its remarkable journey, this Special Commemorative Issue of Creative Horizons celebrates not only the milestones achieved, but, also the people, partnerships and purpose that have shaped the Institute into a globally respected centre of excellence.

From its inception in 1986 with a vision to strengthen India's footwear industry, FDDI has evolved into an Institution of National Importance, making significant contributions across footwear, leather, fashion, retail, design, testing, research, skill development and entrepreneurship.

Over the past four decades, it has nurtured industry-ready professionals, empowered artisans and MSMEs, supported the sector through world-class testing and consultancy services, and strengthened India's position in the global footwear and leather ecosystem.

This commemorative edition brings together reflections on FDDI's evolution, landmark achievements, transformative initiatives, industry collaborations, alumni success stories, academic and research excellence, and the invaluable support extended by the Government, industry, faculty, students, alumni and other stakeholders.

Adding another feather to its cap, FDDI's quarterly magazine, Creative Horizons, has been assigned the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN: 3139-3926 – Online) by the ISSN National Centre, India. This significant recognition enhances the publication's authenticity, visibility and global discoverability, further strengthening its position as a credible platform for knowledge dissemination, academic discourse and thought leadership in the footwear, leather, fashion, retail and allied sectors.

As we celebrate this historic occasion, we express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has contributed to FDDI's growth over the last four decades. Their trust, commitment and collaboration have been instrumental in transforming FDDI into a vibrant institution dedicated to excellence, innovation, sustainability and nation-building.

We hope this Special Commemorative Issue serves not only as a celebration of FDDI's illustrious legacy, but also as an inspiration for the journey ahead.

Manoj Agarwal
(Editor-in-Chief)

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HEAD OFFICE

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Government of India
A-10/A, Sector -24, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
www.fddiindia.com

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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FDDI FOOTWEAR DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

A JOURNEY OF TRANSFORMATION, A LEGACY OF IMPACT

1985 — Vision Takes Shape

The V.C. Pandey Committee recommended establishing a national institution to modernize India's footwear sector and enhance global competitiveness.


REPORT
OF THE
REVIEW COMMITTEE
ON
LEATHER & LEATHER MANUFACTURES
FOR EXPORTS

1986 — FDDI Established



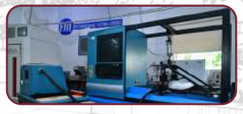
Established by Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. registered as socity on 21 July 1986. FDDI was founded to strengthen the footwear industry.

1987 — Building Strong Foundations

Specialized training programmes, international faculty collaborations, and industry-oriented curriculum laid the foundation for world-class education and technical excellence.



1993 — International Testing Centre (ITC)



Accredited testing laboratories at Noida established.

2005 — School of Retail & Fashion Merchandise

The School of Retail and Fashion Merchandise (RFM), established in 2005, offers programmes designed to enhance retail operations and overall performance.



2006 — School of Leather Goods & Accessories Design



The School of Leather Goods & Accessories Design (LGAD), established in 2006, offers specialized training programmes tailored to meet the diverse human resource requirements of the leather industry.

2009 — Pan-India Expansion

From one campus in Noida to a network of 12 campuses till 2018.



2012 — School of Fashion Design



The School of Fashion Design (FD) at FDDI, established in 2012, develops skilled professionals for the dynamic and fast-paced fashion and apparel industry.

2017 — Institution of National Importance (INI)

Parliament enacted the **FDDI Act, 2017**, conferring the prestigious **Institution of National Importance (INI)** status on FDDI.


भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

2020 — Digital Transformation



Virtual classrooms, digital laboratories, online showcases, and technology-enabled learning redefined education for the next generation of designers.

2023 — Centres of Excellence (CoE)

Under IFLADP and IFLDP, FDDI established Centres of Excellence to promote innovation, sustainable manufacturing, advanced research, and industry collaboration.



2026 — Vision 2030

"**Empowering** Today. Transforming **Tomorrow**."

- Governance and Strategic Planning
- Academic Transformation
- Research, Innovation and Knowledge Creation
- One FDDI- The Complete Service Compendium
- Business Development and Industry Engagement
- Skill Development and Capacity Building
- Quality Infrastructure and Testing Services
- Placement, Employability and Alumni Engagement
- Sustainability and Product Innovation
- Strategic National Projects
- India Design Language (IDL)
- Industry Membership Programme (IMP)

40 Years of Excellence....

Celebrating four decades of innovation, education, research, skill development, and nation-building while advancing Vision 2030 under the theme "Empowering Today, Transforming Tomorrow."

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE | 12 CAMPUSES ACROSS INDIA | INSTITUTION OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

COVER STORY

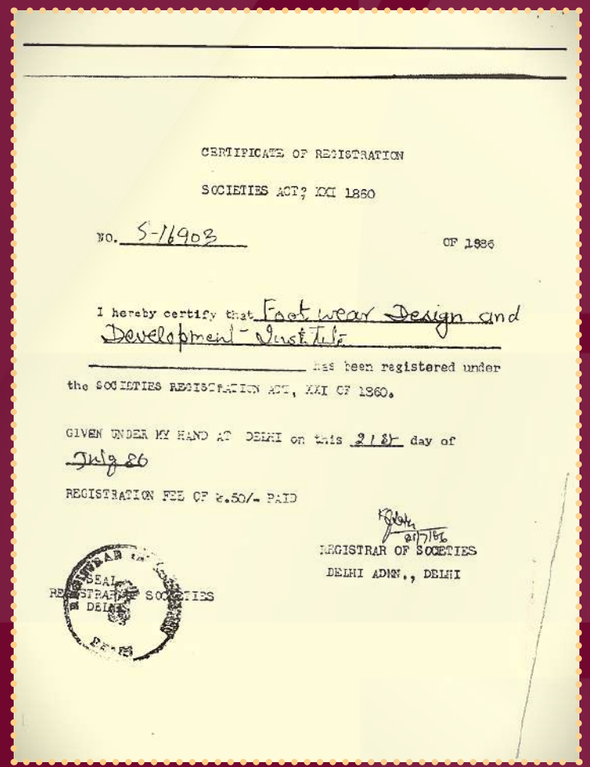
FDDI

Four Decades of Excellence, Innovation, Nation Building & Beyond...

On **21st July 1986**, Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI) was registered as a Society under the aegis of the Government of India with a visionary objective to strengthen India's footwear sector through specialized education, training, technology and industrial development. At a time when India lacked dedicated institutions focused on footwear design and manufacturing, FDDI emerged as a pioneering initiative to bridge the gap between industry requirements and skilled manpower.

The establishment of FDDI traces its origins to the recommendations of the Review Committee on Leather and Leather Manufactures for Exports, chaired by Mr. V. C. Pandey, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, which submitted its report on 28 February 1985. Recognizing the immense potential of India's footwear and leather sector, the Committee proposed a concrete operational framework centred around the creation of an autonomous national institution dedicated to driving growth, modernization and export competitiveness.

Conceived as a landmark initiative, FDDI was envisioned as a centralized agency that would support and strengthen every stage of the footwear value chain, from design, product development and manufacturing to skill development, technology adoption and market orientation. The institution was established with the larger objective of channelizing India's leather and footwear industry towards quality-driven, globally competitive and export-oriented production.



CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION

SOCIETIES ACT, XXI 1860

No. S-16903 OF 1986

I hereby certify that Footwear Design and Development Institute has been registered under the SOCIETIES REGISTRATION ACT, XXI OF 1860.

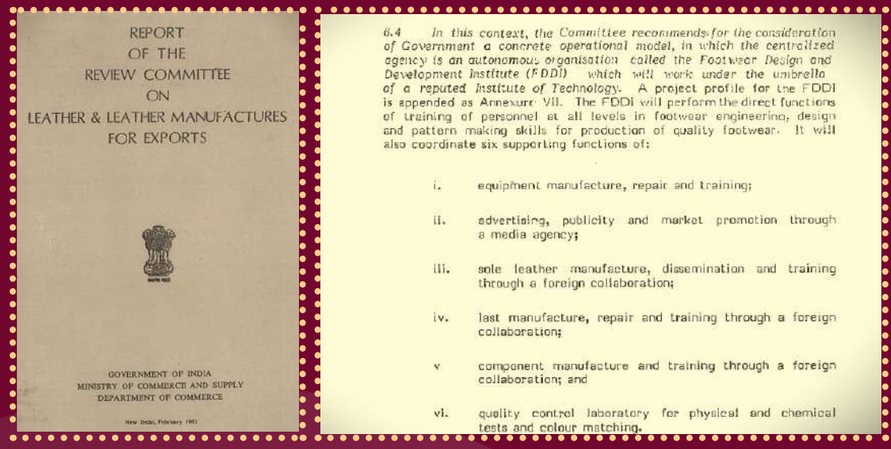
GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AT DELHI on this 21st day of July 86

REGISTRATION FEE OF Rs.50/- PAID

REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES
DELHI ADMN., DELHI

SEAL REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES DELHI

Certificate of Registration, 21st July, 1986



REPORT
OF THE
REVIEW COMMITTEE
ON
LEATHER & LEATHER MANUFACTURES
FOR EXPORTS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND SUPPLY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

New Delhi, February 1985

6.4 *In this context, the Committee recommends for the consideration of Government a concrete operational model, in which the centralized agency is an autonomous organisation called the Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) which will work under the umbrella of a reputed Institute of Technology.* A project profile for the FDDI is appended as Annexure VII. The FDDI will perform the direct functions of training of personnel at all levels in footwear engineering, design and pattern making skills for production of quality footwear. It will also coordinate six supporting functions of:

i. equipment manufacture, repair and training;

ii. advertising, publicity and market promotion through a media agency;

iii. sole leather manufacture, dissemination and training through a foreign collaboration;

iv. last manufacture, repair and training through a foreign collaboration;

v component manufacture and training through a foreign collaboration; and

vi. quality control laboratory for physical and chemical tests and colour matching.

Review Committee on Leather and Leather Manufactures for Exports

What began as a focused intervention for footwear education gradually evolved into a multidimensional institution contributing to fashion, leather, retail, research, testing and innovation while creating a lasting impact on India's industrial ecosystem.

Building Strong Foundations:

The initial years of FDDI were devoted to creating a strong academic and technical framework aligned with global standards. The Institute introduced specialized and short-term training programmes designed to meet immediate industry requirements while simultaneously creating a foundation for long-term educational excellence.

International experts and faculty members from countries including the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and Australia contributed significantly to curriculum development and institutional strengthening.



Mr. Thomas Bata at FDDI Noida

These collaborations exposed students and faculty to international practices and helped position FDDI as a trusted institution delivering quality education and technical competence.



3rd from left: Mr. Amarender Sinha, IAS, first MD-FDDI intrecting with dignitaries



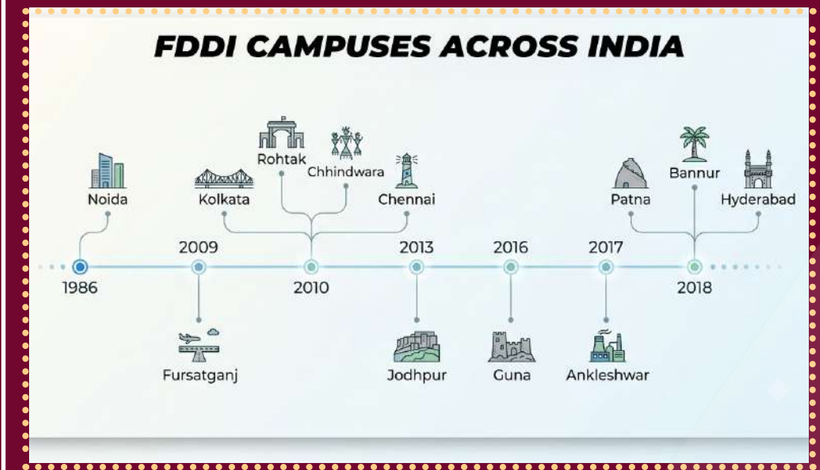
Mr. Thomas Bata interacting with students

Expanding Academic Horizons:

As industrial requirements evolved, FDDI responded by continuously broadening its academic portfolio and introducing programmes aligned with emerging sectors and market needs. Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes were launched with a balanced approach combining academic rigor with practical industry exposure.

Over time, the Institute expanded beyond footwear into Fashion Design, Retail & Fashion Merchandise, and Leather Goods & Accessories Design, reflecting changing market dynamics and preparing students to become professionals capable of contributing across multiple sectors of the design and lifestyle industry.

Creating a National Footprint, Journey from One Campus to Twelve Campuses:



From its founding campus at Noida, FDDI steadily expanded its reach to meet the growing demand for specialized education across India.

Between 2009 and 2018, the Institute undertook one of the most significant expansion journeys in its history, establishing campuses across multiple regions of the country.

Today, FDDI stands as a twelve-campus national institution, with campuses at Noida, Chennai, Kolkata, Fursatganj, Chhindwara, Rohtak, Jodhpur, Guna, Ankleshwar, Hyderabad, Patna and Banur.

A Journey Enabled by Government Support:



The remarkable progress and achievements of the institute as a testimony to the invaluable guidance, visionary leadership, and unwavering support extended by the Government.

Through progressive policies, strategic direction, and sustained encouragement, the Government has consistently fostered an enabling environment for growth, innovation, institutional strengthening, and excellence. This steadfast support has not

only accelerated developmental initiatives but has also empowered institutions to expand their capabilities, embrace emerging opportunities, and contribute meaningfully towards national priorities. The continued trust and encouragement from the Government remain a source of inspiration and a driving force behind the journey of transformation and impactful outcomes.

This support has also strengthened FDDI's role in driving the Innovate to Empower: Viksit Bharat 2047 Mission while contributing meaningfully to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's flagship initiatives such as Vocal for Local, Make in India, Skill India, and Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Stepping into the Industry:

Industry integration has remained one of FDDI's defining strengths. Recognizing that professional education must be supported by practical experience, the Institute developed an industry-linked learning model connecting classrooms with real-world applications.



Through internships, industrial visits, live projects, consultancy assignments and collaborations with leading organizations, FDDI ensured that students acquired practical exposure and industry readiness.

This approach strengthened employability and enabled graduates to contribute effectively from the beginning of their professional careers.







Technical Knowledge Dissemination Through Swayam Siddha Manuals:

Among FDDI's notable contributions to knowledge dissemination has been the development of the "Swayam Siddha" Manual Series, created to make technical education more accessible and learner-friendly. These manuals simplified footwear manufacturing concepts and provided structured guidance for students, trainers and artisans.



Published in English, Hindi and Tamil, the manuals gained recognition as an effective self-learning and vocational education resource. Supported by training videos and demonstrations, the initiative played a meaningful role in expanding technical knowledge and supporting skill development in India and beyond.

Advancing Quality Excellence through International Testing Centre

International Testing Centres (ITCs) have emerged as a cornerstone of industry support, delivering world-class testing, quality assurance and technical services for footwear, leather products and allied sectors. Operating from Noida (North India) and Chennai (South India), both centres are accredited by SATRA, UK, while the Noida facility is additionally accredited by NABL as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017 and approved for key BIS specifications, including Quality Control Orders (QCO) for footwear.

Specializing in testing footwear, leather, components, textiles and plastics, the ITCs provide reliable, timely and globally benchmarked quality assurance services. Over the years, FDDI's testing ecosystem has earned the confidence of leading national and international brands including Adidas, Nike, Puma, Reebok, Zara and Jimmy Choo, while also supporting quality assurance requirements for strategic institutions and public sector organizations.







The Noida ITC is approved by RITES and contributes to quality evaluation for defence and paramilitary requirements. Extending beyond India, FDDI's testing services reach international markets including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Strengthened by expanding global collaborations in research, technology and knowledge exchange, FDDI continues to reinforce its position as a trusted industry partner and a globally connected institution committed to excellence, innovation and future-ready growth.

Training and Empowering the Unorganized Sector:



FDDI has consistently worked toward strengthening traditional industries and empowering grassroots communities through structured skill interventions.
In collaboration with organizations including KVIC and under various development initiatives, the Institute implemented programmes focused on artisan development, production enhancement and livelihood generation.

KVIC–UNDP Leather Umbrella Projects, and cluster-based interventions created opportunities for training, productivity enhancement, quality improvement and market access.

FDDI's contribution under the Support to Artisans initiatives has been equally impactful in empowering traditional footwear and leather artisan communities. Through targeted interventions across multiple clusters, artisans were provided with skill upgradation, design and product development support, exposure to modern production techniques, market linkage facilitation, and capacity-building initiatives. The programmes promoted formation of community groups, strengthened production capabilities, and enabled artisans to access wider markets while preserving traditional craftsmanship.

Driving National Skill Development and Industrial Growth:

FDDI emerged as an important contributor to India's skill development ecosystem through large-scale implementation of workforce development programmes.



Under the Placement Linked Skill Development Programme (PLSDP) and Primary Skill Development Programme (PSDP), FDDI emerged as a key implementation partner in developing industry-ready manpower for the footwear and leather sector.



These programmes focused on imparting entry-level technical skills through structured training and industry exposure, ensuring direct linkage between training and employment opportunities.

By aligning curriculum delivery with evolving industry requirements, FDDI contributed significantly to creating a skilled workforce and enhancing employability across manufacturing clusters.

International Consultancy and Global Engagement:

FDDI's expertise has earned recognition beyond India through consultancy projects, international training programmes and academic partnerships.
The Institute has developed meaningful engagements in countries including Bangladesh, Ethiopia, South Africa, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Botswana and Vietnam.



Specialized initiatives such as training in Pattern Engineering and collaborations for student exchange, research and innovation reflect FDDI's growing role as an international knowledge partner and contributor to global skill development.



Stepping into the Industry:

Industry integration has remained one of FDDI's defining strengths. Recognizing that professional education must be supported by practical experience, the Institute developed an industry-linked learning model connecting classrooms with real-world applications.



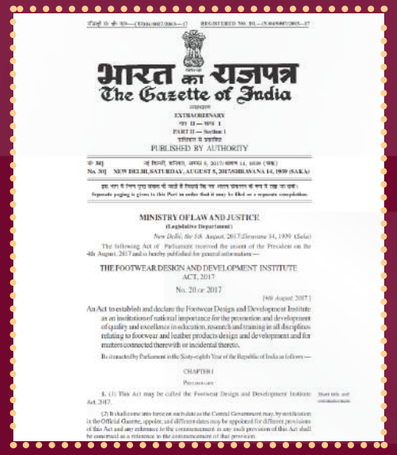
Through internships, industrial visits, live projects, consultancy assignments and collaborations with leading organizations, FDDI ensured that students acquired practical exposure and industry readiness.

This approach strengthened employability and enabled graduates to contribute effectively from the beginning of their professional careers.

A Historic Recognition. Institution of National Importance:

One of the most defining moments in FDDI's journey came in 2017, when Parliament enacted the FDDI Act, 2017, conferring upon the Institute the prestigious status of an Institution of National Importance (INI).

This recognition acknowledged FDDI's contributions in education, training, research and industry support and further strengthened its ability to drive innovation, academic excellence and national development.



भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

EXTRAORDINARY
PART II — Section 1
PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

No. 30] NEW DELHI, SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 2017/SRAVANA 14, 1939 (SAKA)

MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
(Legislative Department)

New Delhi, the 5th August, 2017/Shravana 14, 1939 (Saka)

The following Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on the 4th August, 2017 and is hereby published for general information :—

THE FOOTWEAR DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE ACT, 2017

No. 20 OF 2017

[4th August, 2017.]

An Act to establish and declare the Footwear Design and Development Institute as an institution of national importance for the promotion and development of quality and excellence in education, research and training in all disciplines relating to footwear and leather products design and development and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-eighth Year of the Republic of India as follows :—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. (1) This Act may be called the Footwear Design and Development Institute Act, 2017.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint; and different dates may be appointed for different provisions of this Act and any reference to the commencement in any such provision of this Act shall be construed as a reference to the commencement of that provision.

MoUs and Strategic Partnerships, Building Bridges for Growth and Innovation:

Over the years, FDDI has strengthened its growth journey through strategic MoUs and partnerships with academic institutions, industry leaders, research organizations, government agencies and international universities. These collaborations have created opportunities for student and faculty exchange, curriculum enhancement, research and innovation, entrepreneurship, product development and stronger industry integration.



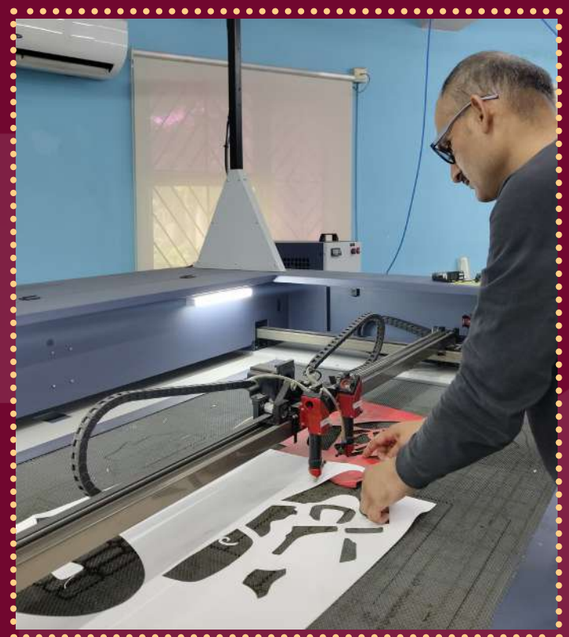


FDDI has also expanded its international footprint through institutional collaborations focused on knowledge exchange, joint research and academic cooperation in areas such as design, material science, technology and innovation.

Participation in global education initiatives and international student engagement programmes has further strengthened FDDI's position as a globally connected institution committed to excellence, innovation and future-ready education.

Driving Sectoral Advancement through Centres of Excellence, Innovation and Sustainability:

The implementation of the Indian Footwear, Leather and Accessories Development Programme (IFLADP) and its continuation through the Indian Footwear and Leather Development Programme (IFLDP) further reinforced FDDI's role as a catalyst for sectoral growth. These flagship initiatives supported large-scale skilling, modernization of manufacturing units, development of institutional infrastructure, establishment of Centres of Excellence, and promotion of technology-driven and sustainable growth practices. Through these initiatives, FDDI has contributed towards building a future-ready ecosystem that integrates education, innovation, industry collaboration, and inclusive employment generation, strengthening India's position as a competitive global destination for footwear and leather manufacturing.





FDDI has strengthened its commitment to sustainable and future-ready education through the establishment of Non-Leather Departments. This strategic initiative reflects the Institute's focus on advancing non-leather product development, promoting environmentally responsible practices, and fostering innovation-led design education, thereby equipping students to address emerging global sustainability challenges and evolving industry requirements.

Under the Integrated Development of Leather Sector (IDLS), modernization and technology upgradation of manufacturing units were promoted through support for advanced machinery and enhanced production infrastructure, improving competitiveness across the footwear and leather value chain.

Industry Connect and Career Excellence:

Over the past four decades, FDDI has emerged as a premier talent hub for the footwear, fashion, retail, leather and lifestyle sectors, consistently nurturing industry-ready professionals and enabling meaningful career pathways. Through its strong emphasis on design excellence, technical competence, innovation and experiential learning, FDDI graduates have earned the confidence of leading national and international employers.

FDDI's robust placement ecosystem has witnessed participation from a wide spectrum of global brands, multinational corporations, retail leaders, buying houses, manufacturing majors, luxury labels and renowned designers. Recruiters have included internationally acclaimed names such as Skechers, Uniqlo, Zara, Amazon, Adidas, H&M, Puma, Tommy Hilfiger, Louis Vuitton and Clarks; major Indian retail and business groups including ABFRL, Tata Trent, Reliance Retail, Reliance Brands, Lifestyle, Shoppers Stop and Westside; along with prominent footwear and leather companies such as Bata India, Metro Brands, Relaxo, Liberty, Woodland, Mirza International, Farida Group and Tata International.



The Institute's industry engagement has further expanded through collaborations with sourcing houses, diversified business groups and celebrated designers, creating opportunities across design, manufacturing, sourcing, retail, e-commerce and allied domains.

This enduring industry partnership reflects FDDI's continued commitment to shaping future-ready professionals and reinforces its position as a trusted institution driving India's next generation of footwear, fashion and retail leadership.

Alumni – Ambassadors of Excellence:

FDDI's greatest strength lies in its alumni community. Graduates of the Institute have gone on to establish successful careers across footwear, fashion, retail and lifestyle sectors while contributing to industry growth at national and international levels.

Their achievements reflect the Institute's commitment to excellence, innovation and industry relevance and continue to inspire future generations of students.

Leadership Through the Years, Guiding FDDI's Transformational Journey:

The remarkable growth of FDDI over four decades has been shaped by the vision, commitment and leadership of its Managing Directors who, at different stages of the institution's evolution, provided strategic direction and strengthened its foundation for long-term growth.

Through their leadership, FDDI expanded from a specialized institution serving the footwear sector into a multidisciplinary institution of national significance with a growing global presence. Their collective contributions supported academic expansion, infrastructure development, industry engagement, skill development initiatives, institutional reforms and strengthened national and international collaborations.

Under successive leadership, FDDI achieved several defining milestones including expansion from one campus to twelve campuses across India, enhancement of academic programmes, strengthening of testing and consultancy services through the International Testing Centre (ITC), promotion of research and innovation, establishment of Centres of Excellence, expansion of skill development initiatives and ultimately attaining the prestigious status of Institution of National Importance. Their vision and stewardship have enabled FDDI to continuously adapt, innovate and contribute meaningfully to education, industry and nation building.

FDDI MANAGING DIRECTORS

Sr. No.	Name	From	To
01	Mr. Amarender Sinha, IAS	15/06/1990	31/07/1994
02	Mr. Arvind Ray, IAS	16/08/1994	13/08/1999
03	Mr. Alok Sinha, IAS	11/11/1999	31/01/2005
04	Mr. Rajeev Lakhara, IRS	03/02/2005	02/02/2015
05	Mr. Ajay Kumar, IRS (Additional Charge)	04/02/2015	16/11/2015
06	Mr. Sameer Kumar Srivastav, IRS (Additional Charge)	23/11/2015	30/05/2017
07	Mr. Arun Kumar Sinha, IAS	11/07/2017	18/09/2023
08	Col. Pankaj Kumar Sinha (Additional Charge)	21/09/2023	19/07/2024
09	Dr. Sumeet Kumar Jarangal, IAS (Additional Charge)	20/07/2024	09/02/2025
10	Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS	10/02/2025	–

COVER STORY

Convocation, Celebrating Achievement, Inspiring Futures:

Over the years, FDDI's Convocation ceremonies have brought together distinguished dignitaries, policymakers, industry leaders, faculty members, alumni and graduating students to celebrate academic accomplishment and recognize outstanding achievement.





These occasions symbolize not only the conferment of degrees but also the Institute's contribution to nation building through creation of skilled, creative and responsible professionals.

Each Convocation reinforces FDDI's vision of empowering future generations to lead innovation, shape industries and carry forward the values of excellence and lifelong learning.

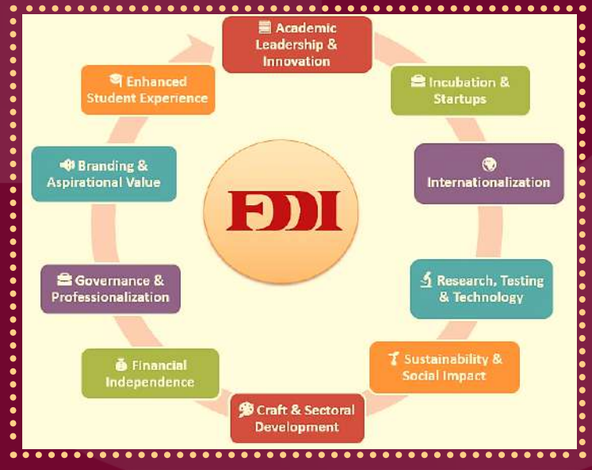
The Road Ahead, Designing the Future:

As FDDI celebrates forty years of excellence, the Institute continues to move forward with renewed purpose and a future-focused outlook anchored in innovation, research, sustainability and global engagement. Building upon decades of achievements and a legacy of transforming education and industry, FDDI remains committed to creating opportunities, nurturing future-ready professionals and strengthening its role as a catalyst for national and global development.

FDDI has embarked on an ambitious journey toward Vision 2030, a bold and transformative roadmap designed to position the Institute as a global leader in design education, innovation, sustainability and sectoral leadership.

Guided by the motto "Empowering Today, Transforming Tomorrow," Vision 2030 is more than a strategic plan; it is a collective movement that brings together students, faculty, alumni, industry leaders and policymakers under a shared mission of shaping not merely skilled professionals, but pioneers of change. Structured around ten strategic thrust areas, this roadmap reflects the evolving aspirations of students, industry, government and society and provides an integrated blueprint for institutional transformation.

From one campus in 1986 to twelve campuses across India today, FDDI's journey stands as a story of vision, resilience and nation building. Looking ahead, the Institute aspires to emerge not only as the leading force in footwear design and development but also as a globally respected centre for innovation, entrepreneurship, research and social impact, continuing to create meaningful change and shape the future of industries and communities in India and across the world.





ECHOES OF TIME

ECHOES OF TIME



First batch of footwear with Katiyar sir and Ratnakar ma'am
1992



Winter morning at FDDI Noida campus
- 17th November 2004



A glimpse of the old library at FDDI Noida
- 11th March 2005



Decoration of the campus on the occasion of Diwali
- 11th November 2012



FDDI Noida display room
- 15th March 2006



Students working in design department
- 28th November 2007



Mr. Rajendra Jalan, Chairman at IILF
- 5th July 2012



Students learning the Basics of Design
- 15th March 2006



Students & Faculties having a go at Volleyball
- 15th August 2006



Teacher's Day celebration
- 5th September 2011



FDDI display at India International Footwear Fair, Pragati Maidan
- 18th May 2007



Cutting Department
- 16th January 1993



Student Installation art of a Mojari shoe
- 18th November 2009



Gracious presence of Mr. G.K Pillai, IAS, Secretary,Commerce,
Govt of India, at students footwear display
- 14th January 2008

Amitabh Bachchan Launches VKC's "Zero Footmarks" Initiative for Responsible Footwear Waste Management

In a significant step towards promoting sustainability and responsible consumption, India's VKC has launched Zero Footmarks, a pioneering initiative aimed at creating a structured ecosystem for the collection and responsible disposal of post-consumer footwear across India.

The initiative was formally launched by the legendary actor and brand ambassador of India's VKC, Mr. Amitabh Bachchan, marking the beginning of what is being described as India's first Pan-India online footwear collection programme for end-of-life footwear.



The initiative is centred around the dedicated digital platform www.zerofootmarks.com,
enabling consumers across the country to responsibly dispose of their used footwear through a simple and convenient online process. The programme is also being supported through selected retail outlets in various cities, making responsible disposal more accessible to the public.

Zero Footmarks seeks to address one of the emerging environmental concerns associated with the footwear industry, the disposal of post-consumer footwear, much of which is non-biodegradable and eventually ends up in landfills. By encouraging consumers to return their used footwear for responsible processing, the initiative aims to reduce environmental impact while fostering greater awareness about sustainable consumption and waste management.

The concept was envisioned by Mr. VKC Razak, Managing Director, VKC,India, as part of the company's broader commitment to environmental responsibility and conscious consumerism. The project originated following discussions on footwear waste management with the Suchitwa Mission, Government of Kerala, and was initially introduced as a pilot initiative in Thiruvananthapuram in August 2025 by Mr. VKC Mammed Koya, Chairman, VKC,India

Describing the initiative, Mr. Amitabh Bachchan highlighted the importance of responsible living and environmental consciousness, emphasising that sustainable habits must become an integral part of everyday life.

The initiative seeks to encourage individuals, particularly younger generations, to become more aware of the environmental implications of consumer choices and adopt responsible waste disposal practices.

More than a footwear collection programme, Zero Footmarks represents a sustainability movement that integrates environmental stewardship with customer participation. Consumers can participate in the initiative by purchasing new footwear through www.zerofootmarks.com and handing over their used footwear to the delivery personnel at the time of delivery for responsible disposal.

By creating an organised mechanism for collecting discarded footwear, the initiative promotes the principles of circularity, resource conservation and responsible waste management while encouraging citizens to actively contribute towards a cleaner and greener future.

The programme also builds upon India's VKC's earlier social initiatives, including the nationwide ShopLocal campaign launched in 2021 to support neighbourhood footwear retailers. With Zero Footmarks, the company extends its commitment towards creating social and environmental value beyond its core business operations.

Through this simple yet impactful process, the initiative aims to build a culture of conscious consumption while contributing towards a more sustainable future for the footwear industry.



India–UK FTA

Unlocking New Opportunities for India's Leather and Footwear Sector

The India–UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA), scheduled to come into effect on 15 July 2026 along with the Double Contribution Convention (DCC), marks a significant milestone in strengthening bilateral economic relations and creating new growth opportunities across key sectors.

For India's leather and footwear industry, the agreement is expected to enhance export competitiveness in the UK market through the elimination of tariffs of up to 16% on leather and footwear products. The move is anticipated to improve market access, strengthen value chains and create opportunities for manufacturers, exporters, MSMEs and allied enterprises.

Beyond tariff advantages, the agreement is expected to support greater trade and investment flows, encourage innovation and facilitate stronger business partnerships between the two countries. With the UK extending tariff concessions on 99% of tariff lines, Indian industries are expected to benefit through improved ease of market entry and expanded global reach.

The agreement has been recognised as one of the UK's most economically significant post-Brexit trade arrangements and is projected to generate long-term gains for both economies. As implementation mechanisms are being finalised, focused outreach initiatives are underway to help businesses leverage the agreement from day one.

For India's leather and footwear ecosystem, the FTA presents an important opportunity to strengthen global positioning, accelerate exports and reinforce India's journey towards becoming a competitive manufacturing and sourcing destination.





Empowering MSMEs with more time to meet mandatory quality benchmarks.

In a significant move to support the growth and smooth transition of the domestic footwear industry, the Government of India has extended the compliance timeline for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) operating in the non-leather footwear sector under the mandatory Quality Control Order (QCO). The revised deadline, now extended up to 31 July 2027, provides smaller manufacturers with additional time to align their production processes and obtain certification from the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The decision is aimed at facilitating ease of compliance while strengthening the overall quality ecosystem within the sector. Recognizing the operational challenges faced by smaller enterprises, the extension is expected to enable them to upgrade systems, enhance manufacturing standards, and prepare for seamless adherence to quality norms.

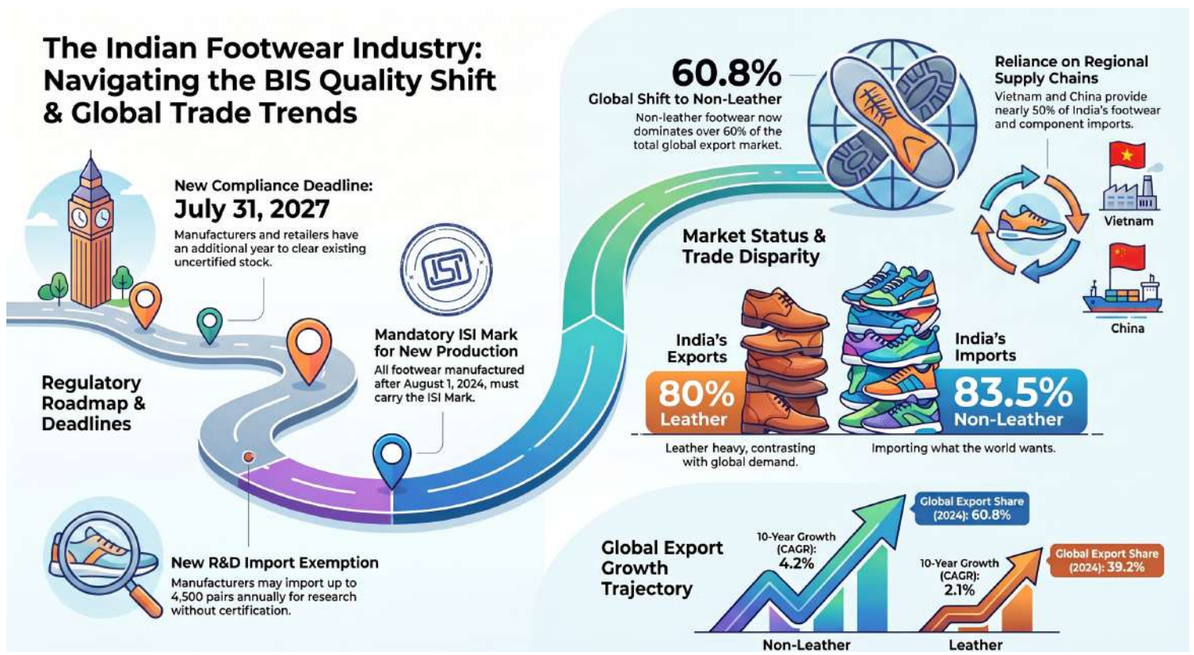
Additionally, the Government has introduced a special provision permitting footwear manufacturers to import up to 4,500 pairs of footwear annually for purposes such as research, design and product development, testing, and other non-commercial activities, without the requirement of QCO compliance.

As per the notification issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), such imported footwear must not be sold commercially and should be clearly marked and embossed with the words "NOT FOR SALE" before being disposed of as scrap after use.

It is pertinent to note that the leather footwear sector continues to remain under a separate regulatory framework governed by the Footwear Made from Leather and Other Materials (Quality Control) Order, 2024, which mandates BIS certification across 12 categories of footwear.

This progressive approach reflects the Government's commitment to promoting quality, encouraging innovation, and supporting the competitiveness of India's footwear manufacturing ecosystem.

01 More Year for Small Rubber Footwear Units to Align with Quality Standards



India's Footwear Component Industry:

The Quiet Revolution Behind Global Competitiveness

By Mr. Sanjay Gupta | President| IFCOMA

When discussing India's emergence as a major global footwear manufacturing nation, attention is often focused on footwear production and exports. Yet behind this success lies another story, one that has received far less recognition but, has been equally important. It is the story of India's footwear component industry and its transformation from a sector dependent on imported inputs into an increasingly sophisticated manufacturing ecosystem.

Four decades ago, the industry operated under very different circumstances. Domestic manufacturers had limited access to advanced materials, mould technologies and specialized chemicals. Components such as EVA sheets, polyurethane systems, synthetic uppers, moulds, toe puffs, counters and specialty adhesives were largely imported. This dependence increased production costs, lengthened lead times and constrained the ability of footwear manufacturers to respond quickly to changing market demands.

As India's footwear sector expanded and became increasingly integrated with international markets, the need for a reliable domestic component base became evident. Export-oriented manufacturers required higher quality standards, consistent supply, faster product development cycles and greater innovation. These demands encouraged component manufacturers to invest in technology, modern production systems, testing facilities and workforce development.

The results have been significant. Today, India possesses manufacturing capabilities across a broad spectrum of footwear components. PVC soles, EVA sheets, polyurethane soles, synthetic leather, footwear adhesives, insoles, footbeds, counters, toe puffs and numerous other inputs are produced domestically by a growing number of specialized manufacturers. Indian companies have also developed expertise in mould manufacturing, reducing dependence on overseas suppliers and improving responsiveness to market requirements.

The development of a stronger component sector has enhanced the competitiveness of the entire footwear value chain. Manufacturers benefit from shorter sourcing cycles, lower logistics costs and closer collaboration with suppliers during product development. This integration has become increasingly important as global brands seek greater speed, flexibility and resilience within their supply chains.

An equally important trend has been the rise of specialization. Many Indian companies now focus on advanced sole technologies, technical textiles, synthetic materials, footwear chemicals and performance-oriented solutions. Such specialization has improved product quality while helping the industry move beyond basic manufacturing into higher-value activities.



The industry's progress has also coincided with the growth of major footwear clusters across the country. These ecosystems have encouraged collaboration between manufacturers, suppliers, machinery providers, designers and technical institutions, creating an environment that supports innovation and continuous improvement.

Despite this progress, opportunities remain. Certain high-value segments continue to rely on imports, including advanced TPU compounds, specialized athletic footwear materials, high-performance technical textiles, select specialty chemicals and sophisticated machinery. Addressing these gaps will be critical if India is to strengthen its position within global footwear supply chains and capture a greater share of value-added manufacturing.

Sustainability is emerging as another defining priority. International brands and consumers increasingly expect environmentally responsible materials and manufacturing practices. Indian component manufacturers are responding through investments in cleaner technologies, recycled materials, resource efficiency and more sustainable production systems.

In the years ahead, environmental performance will become an important competitive differentiator alongside quality, cost and innovation.

Institutions such as FDDI and industry bodies like IFCOMA have an important role to play in this journey. Through industry-academia collaboration, skill development, technology dissemination and policy advocacy, they can help accelerate the next phase of growth and strengthen the industry's global competitiveness.

The transformation of India's footwear component industry demonstrates the power of entrepreneurship, investment and adaptability. From a sector once heavily dependent on imported technologies and materials, it has evolved into a vital pillar supporting one of the world's largest footwear manufacturing industries.

As global sourcing strategies continue to diversify and supply-chain resilience becomes increasingly important, India's footwear component industry is well positioned to play a larger international role. The achievements of the past four decades are substantial, but they may ultimately be remembered as the foundation for an even more significant chapter of growth and global recognition.



Mr. Sanjay Gupta
President
IFCOMA

Mr. Sanjay Gupta is an experienced entrepreneur in footwear components and accessories. He has been in this field for the last 30 years. He had been elected as president of IFCOMA during 2021. Also, Mr. Gupta is a Governing Council (GC) member of FDDI and is nominated to the regional committee of Council for Leather Exports (NR).

During his tenure with IFCOMA, several initiatives were undertaken, including the establishment of a display centre at the FDDI Complex and successful industry platforms such as Shoetech Agra and Kanpur, which received wide appreciation. Through these initiatives, he continues to support the growth of the SME sector and enhance India's footwear component industry presence in domestic and global markets.

Bairathi Shoes:
Advancing Engineering Excellence in Mass-Market Footwear

By Mr. Niraj Shah| Footwear Consultant

The evolution of India's footwear industry has been shaped by enterprises that combine innovation with accessibility, and Bairathi Shoe Company Pvt. Ltd. stands as one such example. Under the leadership of Dr. Saurabh Bairathi, Managing Director, the company has demonstrated how engineering excellence, product quality and large-scale manufacturing can together create meaningful value for consumers across diverse market segments.

From its base in Jaipur, Rajasthan, Bairathi Shoes has steadily expanded its footprint across the country through a growth model anchored in operational discipline, strong distribution and a deep understanding of consumer needs. The company's progress reflects a balanced approach that places equal emphasis on scale, consistency and product reliability.



At the core of this journey is a strong focus on engineering-led product development. By prioritizing fit, comfort and functionality through anatomically designed lasts and adopting advanced materials such as PU and EVA, the company has worked towards delivering lightweight, durable and performance-oriented footwear suited to Indian conditions. Its growing presence in the safety footwear segment further underscores its commitment to creating solutions that support protection, endurance and workplace efficiency.

Beyond manufacturing excellence, Dr. Bairathi has actively contributed to strengthening the footwear ecosystem through engagement with FDDI and participation in leading industry platforms including CII, CLE and MSME forums, supporting dialogue on quality enhancement, innovation and sectoral growth.

The journey of Bairathi Shoes reflects the aspirations of a modern Indian footwear industry, where engineering, accessibility and sustained innovation come together to serve millions while creating benchmarks for future growth.

Building the FUTWARE
Deep-Tech, Design & India's Innovation Moment

- Dr. Arijit Bhattacharyya | Founder, Virtualinfocom & DeepTechKnowledge

Deep Tech Is a Commitment, Not a Buzzword

After more than 27 years at the intersection of technology, business, and innovation, one truth has become increasingly clear to me: Deep-Tech is not a trend - it is a commitment.

It is a commitment to solving complex, fundamental problems through science, engineering, and long-term vision. These are not surface-level optimizations or incremental upgrades. Deep-Tech is rooted in real breakthroughs, technologies built to redefine industries rather than merely improve existing processes.

Deep-Tech asks a fundamentally different question from traditional startups.
Not ***"What problem can I solve quickly?"***
But ***"What problem is worth solving—even if it takes ten years?"***

The timelines are longer. The risks appear earlier. And the rewards, when they arrive, are generational. When you build Deep-Tech, you are not just creating a company—you are laying a foundation for the future.

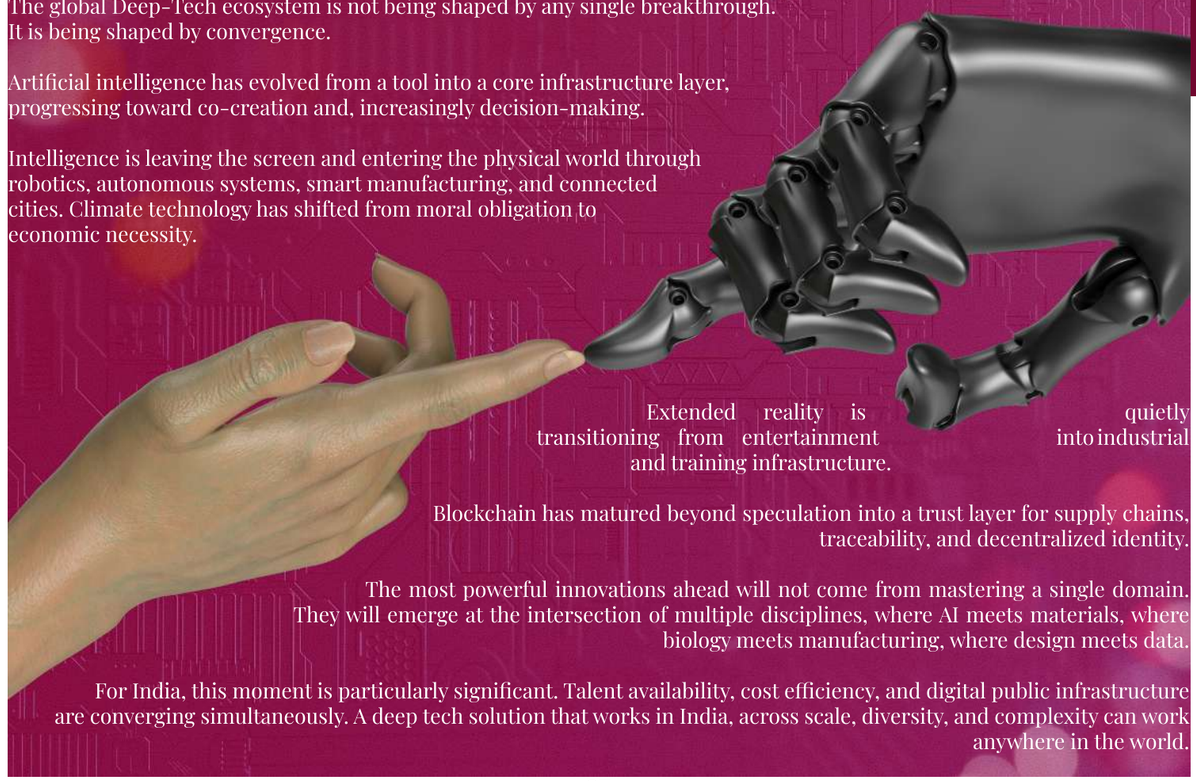
Technology builds the engine ◆ Design makes people use it ◆ Interdisciplinary thinking makes it impactful ◆

A World Being Reshaped by Convergence

The global Deep-Tech ecosystem is not being shaped by any single breakthrough. It is being shaped by convergence.

Artificial intelligence has evolved from a tool into a core infrastructure layer, progressing toward co-creation and, increasingly decision-making.

Intelligence is leaving the screen and entering the physical world through robotics, autonomous systems, smart manufacturing, and connected cities. Climate technology has shifted from moral obligation to economic necessity.



Extended reality is quietly transitioning from entertainment into industrial and training infrastructure.

Blockchain has matured beyond speculation into a trust layer for supply chains, traceability, and decentralized identity.

The most powerful innovations ahead will not come from mastering a single domain. They will emerge at the intersection of multiple disciplines, where AI meets materials, where biology meets manufacturing, where design meets data.

For India, this moment is particularly significant. Talent availability, cost efficiency, and digital public infrastructure are converging simultaneously. A deep tech solution that works in India, across scale, diversity, and complexity can work anywhere in the world.

Why Design Is Deep-Tech's Missing Link

This is where I want to speak directly to the FDDI community and to design-led institutions.

Deep-Tech does not succeed on technology alone. It succeeds when technology meets design, creativity, and interdisciplinary thinking.

Design is what makes complex systems usable, understandable, and scalable. No matter how powerful the underlying science, if people cannot adopt it intuitively, it fails in the real world. Creativity transforms what begins as a lab concept into a human experience. And interdisciplinary education produces builders who can see across engineering, design, business, and society, not just within silos.

In Deep-Tech, design is not decoration. It is translation.
No matter how advanced the technology is, if people cannot use it, it will never scale.

The Role of Intellectual Property

Intellectual property sits at the same foundation as design and technology. In Deep-Tech, long-term value lies not only in what you build, but in what you own.

Products can be copied. Business models can be replicated. But original technology protected through strong IP creates defensibility, longevity, and strategic advantage. This requires patience, rigor, and originality, qualities often overlooked in fast-moving startup cultures.

Build slowly where it matters.
Build deeply where it counts.
Build with intent.

Building What Endures

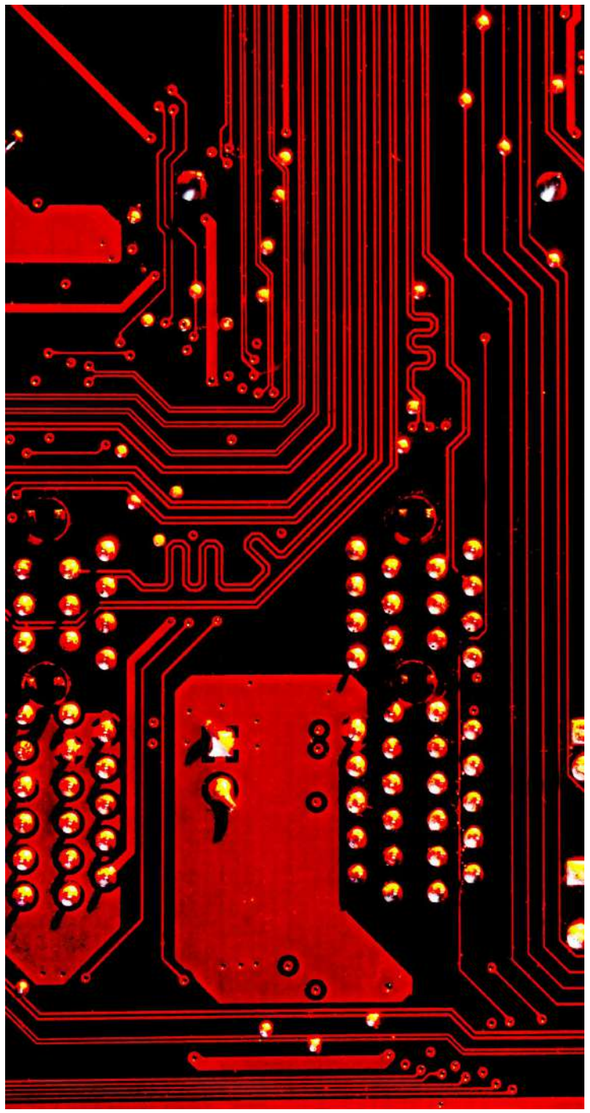
The ventures that endure are not those chasing momentum, they are those solving real problems with real impact. Deep-Tech demands conviction: the ability to stay committed when progress is slow, funding is cautious, and outcomes are uncertain. But when innovation is aligned with purpose, and technology is shaped by design and interdisciplinary thinking, the result is more than a product or a company. It becomes infrastructure for the future.

Deep-Tech is not a buzzword. It is a responsibility.

And for those willing to embrace its timelines and its discipline, it offers the rare opportunity to build something that truly lasts.



Dr. Arijit Bhattacharyya
Founder
Virtualinfocom and DeepTechKnowledge



Dr. Arijit Bhattacharyya is a technologist, entrepreneur, advisor, and mentor with over 27 years of experience spanning AI, XR, Blockchain, Smart Cities and Deep-Tech.

He has held leadership roles with global organizations including Intel, Nokia, Microsoft, McKinsey & Company, and the Asian Development Bank. He has also served as a jury member for prestigious platforms such as the National Startup Awards and the Smart India Hackathon. Founder of Virtualinfocom (Est. 1998), World Leader Summit, EntrepreneursFace, CoInnovate Ventures, and Glam World Face,Venture Partner at 1836 VC, USA.

How AI is Transforming the Leather & Footwear Value Chain

Md Sadiq
Leather & Footwear Professional
MAYTHREE



The leather and footwear industry, once driven mostly by craftsmanship and manual production is increasingly integrating AI across all stages of the value chain. Today, AI technologies are empowering better design, faster product development, smarter marketing, efficient operations, responsible governance, and forward looking leadership.

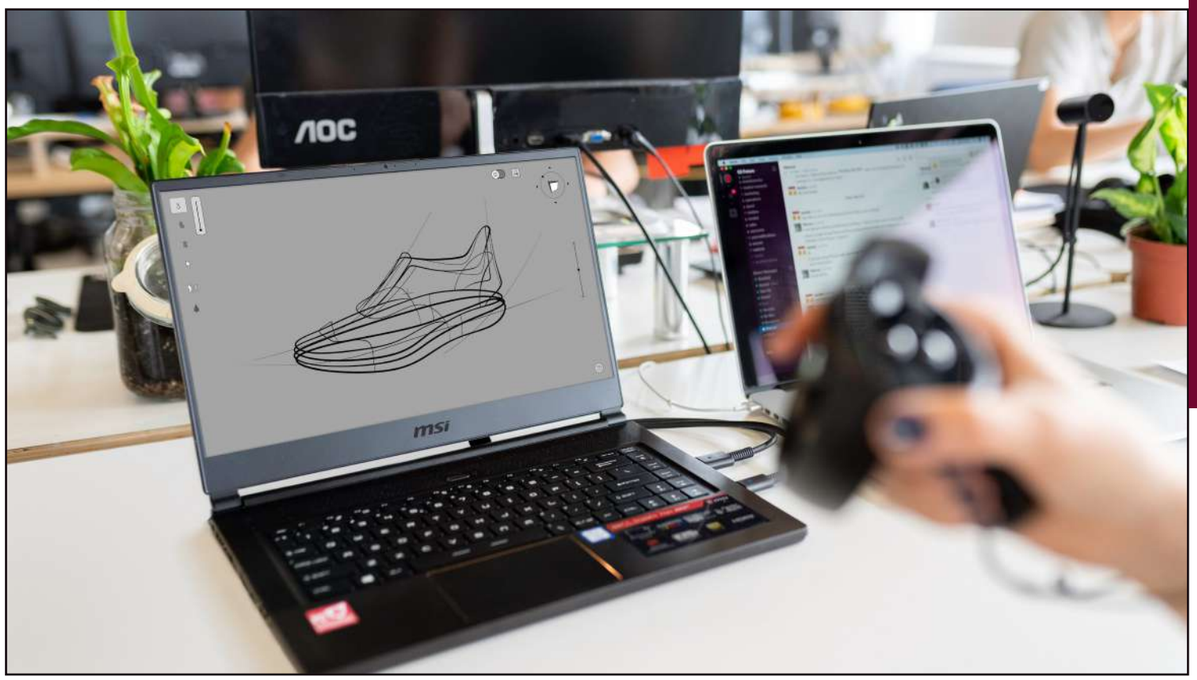
AI in Design & Product Development

AI Driven Creativity and Trend Intelligence

AI tools now help designers predict trends, explore styles, and generate new concepts based on massive data inputs (e.g., market preferences, social media signals, purchase history). These systems can convert sketches into predictive 3D designs, giving designers data backed insights while preserving creative control.

Impact:

AI tools can cut design and development time by up to 40–50% and drastically reduce waste through optimized pattern planning.
Designers can produce many more iterations per hour than with traditional tools.



Generative Design & Rapid Prototyping

Platforms that combine AI with 3D modeling help generate optimized design alternatives, allowing teams to evaluate hundreds of variants quickly. This accelerates iteration cycles and reduces reliance on multiple physical prototypes. AI can even recommend best fit materials based on performance data.

Material & Biometrics Integration

AI systems evaluate material performance (e.g., leather durability, flexibility) and integrate biomechanical data (e.g., foot shape and motion) into design decisions. This advancement creates designs that are both stylish and ergonomic.

AI in Marketing & Customer Engagement

Personalization & Virtual Try On

AI powered systems enable personalized shopping experiences from smart product recommendations to virtual try on tools that let customers see footwear styles in real time online or in stores. These technologies can also reduce returns by *making accurate size and fit recommendations.*

Predictive Customer Insights

AI analyzes consumer behaviour, purchase histories, and trend signals to segment markets, tailor campaigns, and forecast demand at the SKU level. This helps brands align collections with customer expectations and launch targeted promotions.

Content & Campaign Automation

Brands increasingly use generative AI for marketing visuals and copy — drastically reducing the time and cost of producing creative assets, especially for ecommerce and social channels. AI can even optimize campaigns in real time based on performance data.

Impact:

- Reduced product returns and increased conversion rates through improved fit and recommendation systems.
- Personalized campaigns that resonate with distinct customer segments.

AI in Operations & Supply Chain

Smart Forecasting & Inventory Management

AI models ingest sales history, economic indicators, and trend data to forecast demand with high accuracy, helping brands maintain balanced inventory levels and reduce both *stockouts and overstock.*

Automated Manufacturing & Quality Control

From computer vision based defect detection to robot guided assembly, AI is reshaping production lines. High precision systems can inspect leather surfaces and component quality far faster and more accurately than manual inspection.

Robotics & Automation

Factory operations today increasingly blend robotics with AI, enabling automated cutting, sewing, and assembly processes that improve consistency and speed production.

Sustainability & Waste Reduction

AI helps optimize cutting patterns and springboards on demand manufacturing, which reduces material waste and unsold inventory. This is critical in an industry where leather and textiles are premium, environmentally sensitive resources.

Impact:

- AI systems reduce production defects and waste by up to 25–30%.
- Inventory management using AI reduces overstocking issues by more than 20%.

AI in Governance, Ethics & Compliance

Traceability & Responsible Sourcing

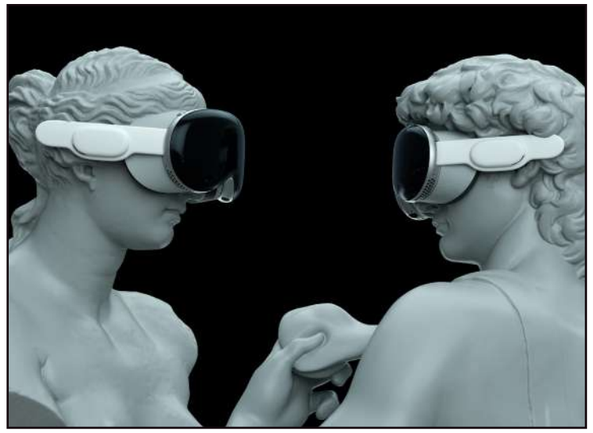
AI combined with blockchain can track materials from tannery to customer, ensuring ethical sourcing and compliance with environmental and labour regulations, especially critical for leather supply chains.

Quality Monitoring & Risk Management

AI monitoring tools continuously assess supplier performance, production quality metrics, and logistics risks, helping companies proactively address issues before they escalate.

Ethics & Fairness

Organizations are developing AI governance frameworks to avoid bias (e.g., in marketing personalization) and ensure transparency in decision models. These governance structures enable both innovation and accountability.



AI in Leadership Adoption & Organizational Culture

Strategic Integration

Forward looking leadership in the leather and footwear sector treats AI not as an experiment but as a strategic pillar. This means aligning AI initiatives with corporate goals such as faster product cycles, sustainability targets, and enhanced customer experiences.

Cross Functional Teams

Successful AI deployment often involves interdisciplinary teams, combining data scientists with designers, supply chain experts, and marketers to ensure solutions are practical and scalable.

Talent & Skill Development

Leaders invest in upskilling existing workforce, from learning AI tools to integrating machine learning outputs into day to day decision making. This evolution transforms roles rather than replacing them.

Future Outlook: AI in Leather & Footwear

AI adoption in the leather and footwear industry continues to accelerate:

- **Mass Customization:** Predictive AI and digital production will make personalized footwear at scale a reality — from bespoke fit to individual style preferences.
- **Digital Twins & Simulation:** Creating virtual replicas of products and operations helps test scenarios before committing real resources.
- **Circular Economy Support:** AI will enable lifecycle analysis and recycling pathways, improving sustainability and value recovery.

In the leather and footwear industry, AI is no longer a futuristic concept, it's a practical, deployed technology reshaping how products are designed, marketed, manufactured, and led. From intelligent design tools to predictive supply chain analytics, and from ethical governance structures to strategic leadership adoption, AI is helping companies innovate faster, operate smarter, and compete more effectively in a dynamic global market.

MOBILITY REIMAGINED

Sustainability, Communities, Design.

In such communities, one often notices how elderly people continue to lead active lives walking to local markets, visiting neighbours, attending social gatherings, and participating in agricultural activities. For many of them, a walking stick is more than a support aid; it is a trusted companion that provides confidence, stability, and independence.
Observing these everyday realities inspired me to explore how design could contribute meaningfully to the lives of senior citizens in rural Bengal. The objective was not simply to redesign a walking stick, but to create a product that reflects the needs, aspirations, and context of the people who would use it.

Bamboo: A Material Woven into Community Life

At the heart of the concept is bamboo one of the most familiar and widely available materials across South 24 Parganas and many parts of Bengal. For generations, bamboo has been woven into the fabric of rural life, finding applications in homes, agriculture, handicrafts, and community infrastructure.
Its strength, lightweight nature, renewability, and accessibility make it an ideal material for designing products that are both sustainable and practical. The project explores how this traditional material can be transformed into a contemporary mobility aid that supports elderly users while remaining connected to its cultural and geographical roots.

Design Features: Responding to Rural Realities

Rather than relying on imported materials or complex manufacturing systems, the design embraces local resources and the possibility of decentralised production, creating opportunities for community participation and regional value creation. Each feature has been considered in direct response to the realities of rural living:

Design Features: Responding to Rural Realities

Integrated Lighting- Village roads and pathways are often used well into the evening. An embedded LED light improves safety during low-light conditions, addressing one of the most common hazards for elderly walkers.

Emergency Alert Function- A simple alert mechanism assists users in situations where immediate attention may be required, offering peace of mind to both the user and their family.

Foldable Structure- Many elderly residents regularly travel between villages, local markets, healthcare centres, and nearby towns. A foldable design allows the stick to be carried and stored conveniently without compromising strength or usability.



- *Growing up in South Sangur village of Prasadpur in South 24 Parganas, I have always been surrounded by a close-knit rural community where daily life is deeply connected to local resources, traditions, and shared experiences.*

Affordability- By utilising bamboo and focusing on essential functionalities, the concept balances quality, durability, and cost-effectiveness ensuring the product can realistically reach rural households.

Beyond the Product: Design as Community Empowerment

This project reflects a broader belief that design has the power to strengthen connections between innovation and local identity. When design draws inspiration from local contexts, it becomes more relevant, more inclusive, and more impactful. This project is therefore not merely about mobility. It is about recognising the value of indigenous materials, celebrating the resilience of rural communities, and designing solutions that honour both people and place. Inspired by the landscapes and lives of South 24 Parganas, it represents an effort to create a product that supports independence while remaining firmly rooted in the spirit of Rural Bengal.

The designer is a native of South Sangur village, Prasadpur, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal. This project was developed as part of his coursework in Design for Society and Special needs.



Mr. Rupam Mondal
School of Leather Goods,
2023-27, FDDI,Kolkata

"Sustainable development does not always begin in large factories or advanced laboratories; it can emerge from villages, traditional materials, and a deep understanding of community needs."



A Brief explanation of the Product & it's Design features.

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Navigating the Unseen

Designing Independence Through Haptic Rings

One such challenge affects millions of elderly and visually impaired individuals who rely on multiple medications as part of their daily routine. Medicine strips, bottles, and packages often look remarkably similar, making it difficult to identify the right medication at the right time. For many users, this can lead to confusion, dependency on caregivers, and in some cases, dangerous dosing errors.
This observation became the starting point for Haptic Ring, a simple yet inclusive design solution aimed at transforming the way medicines are identified and organised.



The Concept: Touch as a Universal Language

The concept is built around a universal tactile coding system that requires no literacy, digital interface, or technological assistance. Instead, it relies on one of our most intuitive senses: **touch.**

The system consists of elastic silicone rings that can be attached to ***medicine bottles, syrup containers,*** or ***blister packs***.

Each ring carries a distinct tactile form associated with a specific time of day:

◖ Half-circle - Morning medication, symbolising the rising sun.
⬣ Hexagon - Afternoon dosage, inspired by the fully formed midday sun.
◖ Crescent — Nighttime medication, evoking the moon at rest.

Universality & Practical Application

The objective is simple: enable users to identify their medicines independently through touch, creating a structured and reliable medication routine. What makes the concept particularly meaningful is its universality. The rings are reusable, durable, and transferable from one medicine package to another. They can be applied by pharmacists at the point of dispensing and remain effective regardless of language, literacy level, age, or technological familiarity.

The Haptic Ring system adapts across bottles, blister packs, and cartons.

" Good design is often measured not by how much it adds to our lives, but by how effectively it removes barriers."

" Some of the most meaningful innovations emerge not from complex technology, but from a deep understanding of everyday challenges faced by people around us."



Haptic Ring in use (coded silicone rings on everyday medicine packaging)

"Design carries a deeper responsibility which is to create products that promote dignity, accessibility, and inclusion."

Design as Responsibility

As designers, we often focus on aesthetics, functionality, and market trends. Yet projects like Haptic Ring remind us that design also carries a deeper responsibility to create products that promote dignity, accessibility, and inclusion.
The future of design lies not only in smart technologies but also in thoughtful solutions that address real human needs. Inclusive design is not a specialised category; it is a mindset that recognises diversity and seeks to empower every individual.

A Small Intervention, A Lasting Impact

Haptic Ring is a small intervention, but its impact may extend far beyond product design. It represents confidence restored, independence preserved, and a reminder that meaningful innovation is often found in simplicity.

When design begins with empathy, it has the power to transform everyday experiences into opportunities for greater autonomy and wellbeing. In that sense, Haptic Ring is more than a product concept, it is an example of how design can help people navigate the unseen with confidence.



Ms. Chinmayee Dash
School of Leather Goods,
2023-27, FDDI Kolkata

Circular Silhouettes:

Fashion's Next Frontier



Ms. Indu Gupta
School of Footwear Design
FDDI Noida

This garment is developed using the subtraction method combined with a zero-waste pattern-making approach, emphasizing sustainability, minimal intervention, and innovative surface detailing. The design explores form creation through controlled removal rather than conventional cutting, resulting in a fluid, sculptural silhouette with minimal fabric loss.





The pattern is engineered using two circular cuts, one from each khadi fabric, carefully calculated to achieve the complete diameter required for the garment. To maximize fabric utilization, five joints are strategically introduced in each fabric, meticulously aligned and finished so that the seams seamlessly merge into the design and are visually indistinguishable. This construction method significantly reduces fabric wastage while maintaining structural and aesthetic integrity.

Khadi fabrics have been selected to reinforce the sustainability ethos of the garment, celebrating indigenous textiles that are eco-friendly, breathable, and rooted in Indian craftsmanship.

The design incorporates handcrafted macramé detailing, adding an Indian craft sensibility while enhancing texture and visual interest. This macramé overlay introduces a bohemian aesthetic, creating a balance between traditional craft and contemporary form.

Further reinforcing the zero-waste philosophy, the headgear is constructed entirely from leftover fabric generated during garment cutting, ensuring complete utilization of resources. A belt is developed using a braiding technique, crafted from bias strips derived from fabric waste, serving both functional and decorative purposes.

Overall, the design is inspired by the principles of subtraction, minimal cutting, and minimal stitching, demonstrating how thoughtful pattern engineering and craft integration can create a sustainable, aesthetically rich garment. The outcome is a harmonious blend of innovation, tradition, and responsible design, aligned with contemporary sustainable fashion practices.



Acknowledgement

Julian Roberts, the inventor of the **Subtraction Cutting/Draping Method**. His pioneering work has provided valuable inspiration and foundational knowledge for this work.

From FDDI to FOUNDER

Turning Design Education into Entrepreneurship

From Design Education to Building a Sustainable Leather Goods Brand

As Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) marks forty years of shaping design professionals, I reflect on how my own journey—from student to entrepreneur—has been shaped by education, industry exposure, and a clear design philosophy.

Strong Foundations in Design Thinking

Pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Leather Goods & Accessories Design (SLGAD) at FDDI was a decisive step. The institute trained me to approach design as a structured process rather than a purely creative exercise. Equal emphasis was placed on research, material science, construction, functionality, and user needs.
Through intensive hands-on projects, I gained a working understanding of the complete product lifecycle—concept development, material selection, pattern engineering, prototyping, and manufacturing. This foundation instilled a discipline that continues to guide my decisions as both a designer and a business owner.

Industry Experience and Global Perspective

After graduation, I joined ASG Leather Ltd. as a Senior Designer, working closely with international markets. This phase exposed me to global buyer requirements, commercial product development, quality standards, sourcing systems, and large-scale production environments.
Working with international clients strengthened my ability to align creativity with cost, timelines, and manufacturability—ensuring that design intent translated seamlessly into market-ready products.



Transition to Entrepreneurship

In 2025, driven by the desire to build a brand rooted in my own design values, I founded Rinks Design Enterprise and launched RINKS DESIGN.
Establishing a brand from scratch demanded capabilities beyond design—strategic sourcing, vendor coordination, quality control, branding, marketing, and customer engagement. Each product represents not only design intent but also accountability for consistency, durability, and brand trust.



A Clear Design Philosophy

RINKS DESIGN focuses on premium handbags and accessories crafted using sustainable vegan leather materials. The brand is guided by a philosophy of conscious luxury—where aesthetics, functionality, and responsible material choices are integrated rather than treated as trade-offs.

This journey from structured design education to global industry exposure and finally entrepreneurship—has reinforced a simple belief: strong design is built on knowledge, discipline, and purpose, and sustainability is most effective when embedded at the core of the product, not added as an afterthought.



Ms. Rinky Das
Founder,
RINKS DESIGN
Specialising in Sustainable Vegan Leather Goods & Accessories
Alumnus, FDDI Kolkata , 2014-2018

From Classroom Concepts to Retail Experiences

My Journey from FDDI to H&M and Reliance Brands Limited

Every Thoughtfully Arranged Display Is a Conversation Between a Brand and Its Customer

Every store begins speaking long before a customer steps inside. The language may be visual windows, lighting, layout, material choices—but the intent is strategic. Behind every effective retail display lies a careful balance of creativity, consumer psychology, brand strategy, and design discipline.

My journey into Visual Merchandising did not begin on a retail floor; it began at Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI). As the institute marks forty years of excellence, I look back with gratitude at an environment that taught me not just how to design, but why design matters in shaping customer experience.

The FDDI Years: Learning to Think Beyond Products

My time at FDDI was defined by exploration and critical thinking. Classrooms, studios, workshops, and industry interactions consistently pushed us to look beyond the product and focus on the end user. Every assignment demanded observation, intent, and clarity of communication.
One of the most enduring lessons from FDDI was this: design is never only about aesthetics—it is about meaning and message. This principle became the foundation of my career in Visual Merchandising. A successful retail display is not accidental; it is designed to guide movement, influence perception, evoke emotion, and strengthen the relationship between a brand and its customer. What appears effortless on the shop floor is the result of research, planning, collaboration, and precise execution.

A Decade Witnessing Retail Transformation

Over the past decade, India's retail ecosystem has undergone a fundamental shift. Consumers today expect engagement, not just transactions. Physical stores have evolved into experiential spaces where storytelling, sustainability, technology, and brand identity converge.

Working with organisations such as Reliance Brands Limited and H&M, I have experienced firsthand how global retail practices adapt to changing consumer behaviour, digital integration, and omnichannel strategies. While online retail has redefined convenience, physical retail continues to offer something irreplaceable—the sensory, human connection with products and spaces. The future of retail lies in seamlessly integrating digital innovation with immersive in-store experiences.

"FDDI taught me that great retail is not simply about displaying products—it is about creating experiences that connect people with brands."

Beyond Technical Expertise

With experience comes a clear realization: technical skill alone is not enough. Visual Merchandising demands curiosity, adaptability, teamwork, commercial awareness, and continuous learning. Retail is among the fastest-evolving industries, and professionals who remain observant and open to change are best positioned to grow.

A Message to the Next Generation

To current FDDI students, my advice is simple—observe relentlessly. Every store visit, display, customer interaction, and spatial decision carries insight. Learn design principles, but also study human behaviour, sustainability, technology, and business. It is the integration of these perspectives that shapes confident, future-ready design professionals.

Forty Years: A Living Legacy

As FDDI completes forty years, it stands not merely as an institution but as a legacy—of education, innovation, industry relevance, and alumni impact. Thousands of graduates today contribute across design, retail, manufacturing, and entrepreneurship in India and globally. I am proud to be one among them.

My journey from FDDI classrooms to the retail floors of Reliance Brands Limited and H&M—reflects the institute's enduring vision: nurturing professionals who combine creativity with purpose. The lessons learned at FDDI continue to inform every project, every display, and every customer experience I create.
Forty years is not just a milestone. It is a legacy in motion.



Mr. Harsh Manash
Visual Merchandising Manager
H&M

Harsh Manash is a Visual Merchandising Manager at H&M and an alumnus of Footwear Design and Development Institute. With over a decade of experience across Reliance Brands Limited and H&M, he has played a key role in shaping contemporary retail and visual merchandising practices in India.

From FDDI to Industry Leadership:

The Entrepreneurial Journey of Mohammad Yunus

Mr. Mohammad Yunus, Promoter, East West Group, Owner, East West Tanners and Proprietor, Lee Craft India, represents a compelling example of how technical education, entrepreneurial vision and industry expertise can contribute to enterprise growth and sectoral development.

An alumnus of FDDI (Diploma in Footwear Technology, 2009–2012, with specialization in Merchandising), he has established a strong presence in India's footwear and allied manufacturing ecosystem.

After completing his Diploma in Footwear Technology from FDDI and graduating in Commerce from Kanpur University, Mr. Yunus began his professional journey with Tata Group and later worked with JJ Tradelink Pvt. Ltd. as a Merchandiser.

In 2013, he joined the family enterprise, East West Tanners, at a stage when the business operated with modest production capacity and a limited product portfolio.



Leveraging his technical knowledge and industry understanding, he contributed significantly towards expanding the footwear division through product innovation, manufacturing excellence and strategic market outreach. His efforts led to the development of more than 200 products across fashion and safety footwear categories and strengthened the company's presence across institutional and government sectors.

Over time, the enterprise substantially enhanced its production capabilities, diversified its product range and expanded into footwear, leather goods, textile garments and allied manufacturing segments while generating employment opportunities.

A defining feature of this journey has been the emphasis on quality, customer satisfaction, innovation and timely delivery. Exposure to international markets and continuous engagement with evolving industry practices further contributed to strengthening the organization's growth and business outlook.

Beyond business achievements, Mr. Yunus has remained committed to social contribution and community development. Through initiatives focused on employment generation, skill development and social welfare, he has supported livelihood creation and capacity building. In collaboration with FDDI, workforce skill development programmes were undertaken to strengthen employment opportunities in the footwear sector.



Major Achievements

2020 Uttar Pradesh Mahotsav - Award for Blood Donation & Management in Uttar Pradesh.

2017 Recognition by FDDI as Guest of Honour

2017 Council for Leather Exports – Participation Recognition at Russia Expo

2015 NSIC Award for Excellence: Best Manufacturing Unit

2014 MSME Award for Best Five Very Fast-Growing Industries

He has also contributed towards charitable and community initiatives aimed at supporting underserved sections of society and promoting inclusive growth.

His journey reflects the values of innovation, perseverance and inclusive development, demonstrating how technical education and entrepreneurial leadership can contribute to strengthening India's footwear and manufacturing landscape.

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

FDDI Student Showcases Innovation at Global Sustainability Challenge Finals in Germany

Ms. Anneasa Manna, a student of School of Footwear Design & Production (FDP), (B.Des. 2023–27) from FDDI Kolkata Campus, brought laurels to the Institute by representing FDDI and India at the prestigious Global Sustainability Challenge Finals, held at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), Garching Campus, Germany, from 28–30 April 2026

The Global Sustainability Challenge was organized by the Stanford Doerr School of Sustainability in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay), the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT Hyderabad) and the Maker Bhavan Foundation. The international platform brought together students, researchers and innovators from across the world to develop technology-driven solutions addressing sustainability, climate resilience and global environmental challenges.



Ms. Anneasa Manna at the **Technical University of Munich,** Germany

During the three-day programme, Ms. Manna actively participated in orientation sessions, poster presentations, networking engagements and interactions with leading researchers, innovators and sustainability experts from around the world. She also attended a specialised innovation and entrepreneurship workshop conducted by former Google professionals, gaining valuable insights into product innovation, scalable business models and sustainable entrepreneurship.

The international exposure provided an enriching learning experience by strengthening her research aptitude, innovation capabilities, presentation skills and intercultural understanding. Her outstanding achievement reflects FDDI's growing emphasis on fostering innovation, research excellence and global engagement while empowering students to develop sustainable solutions for contemporary societal challenges.



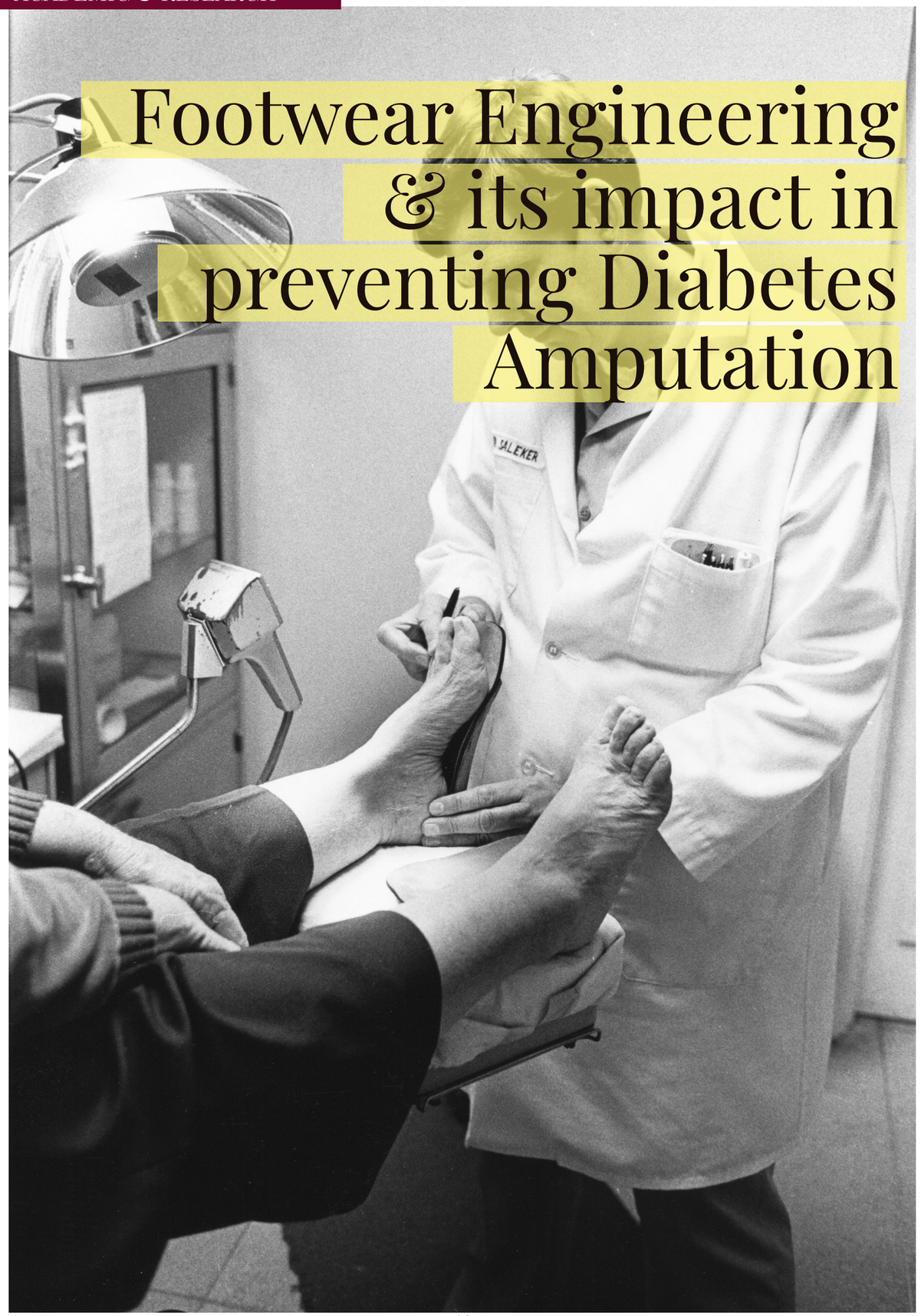
A view of the Global Sustainability Challenge

A significant milestone of the event was Ms. Manna's selection among the Top 20 Global Finalists in the Adaptation & Resilience category. She presented her innovative project titled "Atmospheric Water Generator Integrated with Air Purification System," which proposed an integrated three-layer cylindrical system combining atmospheric water generation with advanced air purification technology. The project was widely appreciated for its innovative design, technical integration and potential to address the critical challenges of clean air and safe water accessibility.



Participants attending the innovation and entrepreneurship workshop

FDDI FOOTWEAR DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
On 21 July 1986
Footwear Design & Development Institute was established by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India
Celebrating FOUR DECADES



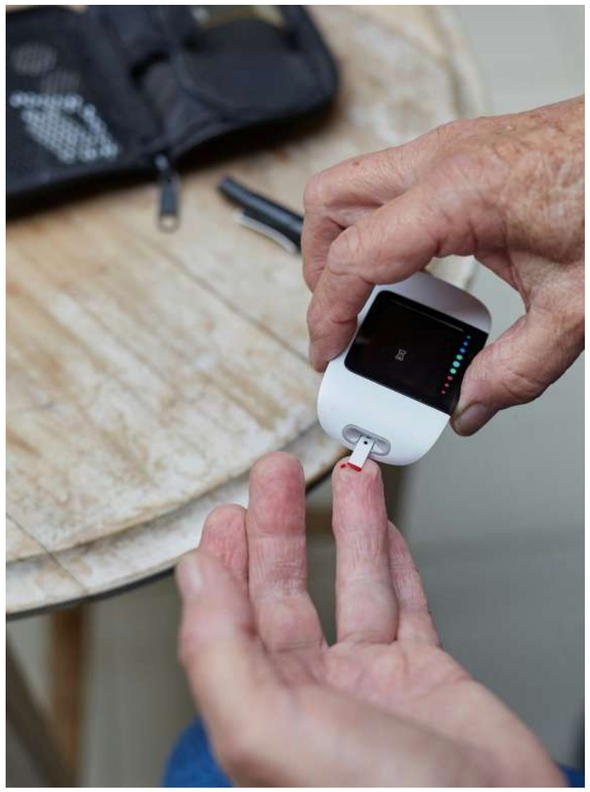
Footwear Engineering & its impact in preventing Diabetes Amputation

When we think of cutting edge technology our minds usually think of latest smartphones, artificial intelligence based chatbots, machine learning, data science, AR/VR and what not. But what if the most life changing technology that we are discussing does not lie in our hand but something that we put our feet into everyday? What if the future of life-saving medical device is waiting right under your feet? Yes, we are talking about footwear.

Diabetes mellitus which is one of the most prominent disease quietly escalated as global health crisis which is affecting almost more than 300 million individuals across every continent. This is a type of epidemic which is quietly spreading in a way that it is estimated that it will get doubled among people by 2030. While most of the public manages diabetes mellitus (grade 1 and grade 2) both with strict diet control, blood glucose monitoring, oral medicine/ insulin intake; they are extremely unaware about a completely different background associated with human lower limb deformity.

As per data reported in literature it has been found that almost 15 to 25% of people suffering from diabetes mellitus will develop a foot ulcer commonly known as DFU in medical terminology at some point of time after being diagnosed.

The root cause of this life threatening disease lies in **chronic hyperglycemia** (persistent elevated blood glucose level usually over an extended period of month/weeks as diagnosed in HbA1c test taking three month of blood glucose average, average blood sugar ~ 154 mg/dL or above), which causes damage to both vascular and nervous system both.



The damage caused to nervous system otherwise known as diabetic peripheral neuropathy (DPN) slowly numbs the lower end extremities resulting in development of diabetic foot ulcers which gets unnoticed for a long period of time. Due to this numbness, patient usually notice no change in their walking pattern losing their protective sensation developing initial blisters that too without pain or discomfort. An addition to this deformity is also development of peripheral arterial disease (PAD) resulting in plaque formation and restricting the vital blood flow to the lower limbs. When these tissues are deprived of essential oxygen and nutrient due to both DPN as well as PAD, consequently their healing mechanism stalls entirely resulting into diabetic foot ulcer (DFU).

Today, diabetes related foot infections are the primary causes of hospitalization and subsequently leading to foot amputation which at the other end is the extreme consequence of the same. Thanks to the intersectional alliance of footwear engineers, designers and medicals podiatrists that we are turning the waves by providing solution to these critical problems & by translating a basic everyday shoe into a protective armor against these catastrophic injuries before they even start.

The process of shoe development in a way preventing this diabetic foot ulceration lies in the core of “plantar pressure offloading” process. In a normal healthy person not affected with diabetes mellitus, high impact stress naturally occurs under the heel and ball of the foot.

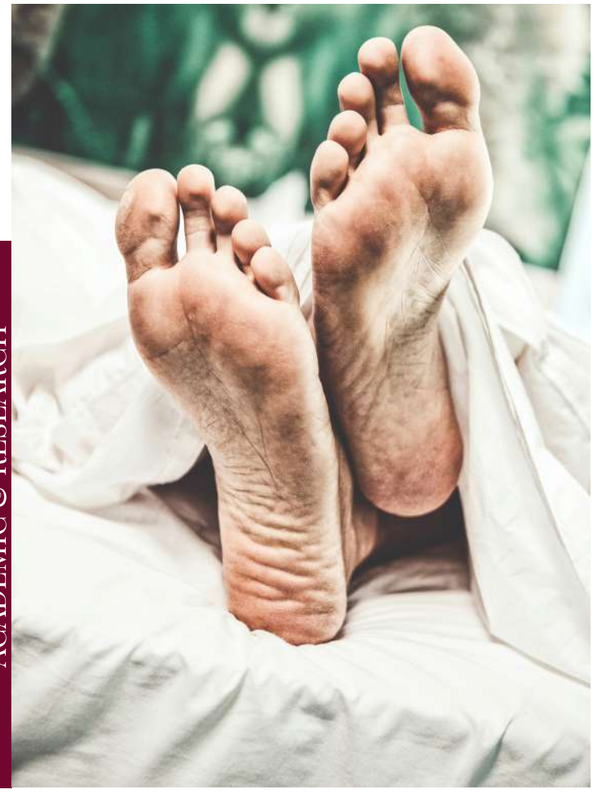
However, in a diabetic patient when their gait pattern is closely analyzed it is observed that these patterns gets altered due to neuropathy and various structural deformity like hammertoe get developed due to which these high impact stress get concentrated and dangerous. The medical community focuses on redistribution of these concentrated stresses evenly across the foot entire biological surface. This reduces entire foot stress thus ensuring that foot deformity gets avoided. This successful offloading of pressure lies in utilizing the different types of material including multi density material arranged in a strategic layout pattern. The footwear often developed for solving this issue is therapeutic footwear. The choice of material for this therapeutic footwear varies according to the part of footwear being developed. For shoe uppers and linings, stretchable materials like fabrics, elastane bends, soft stretchable mesh can be used for treating bunions, hammertoe deformity and swelling without causing friction. High quality breathable leather can also be used which conforms to foot’s shape while allowing for air circulation.

For Insole and footbed, EVA, Polyurethane, microcellular rubber (MCR), multi density layered material are also some of the options for developing the insole. However, for outsole and modifications, stiffed curved outsole from durable polyurethane along with slip resistant rubber material are mostly used.

Apart from material selection, it has also been found that walking speed also significantly affects the changing underfoot pressure. *Walking speed of 4 km/h is suggestive of dropping tissue strain to its lowest possible values.*

Also tools of Industry 4.0 like integrating smart technologies, automated manufacturing and digital design are used to creative an adaptive type of footwear which could be used on a day to day basis.

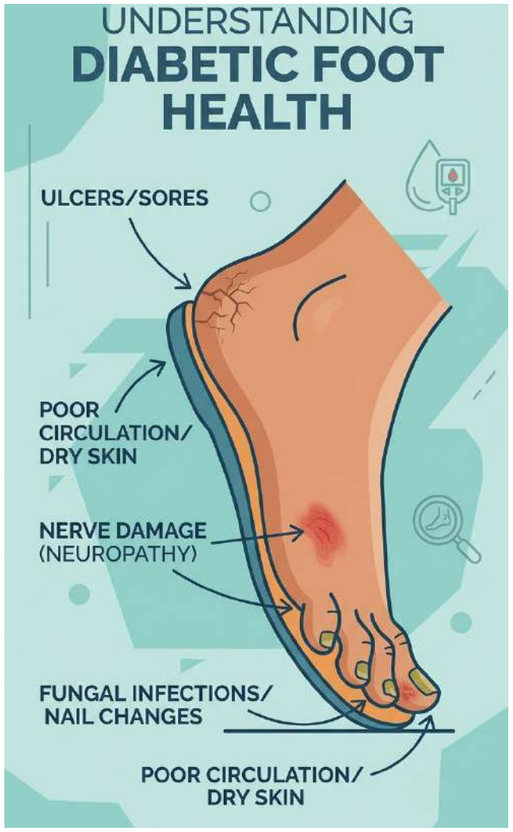
By utilizing magnetorheological fluids or tunable mechanical cells footwear can alter the physical properties while being used. The moment an unsafe accumulation of localized pressure under a patient's toe occurs, the sole itself adjust its internal firmness on its own, automatically shifting the physical load away from the forefoot area and redistributing it back towards the heel part. Also, customized insoles developed using 3D captured data of foot using digital scanners and CAD tools also help develop the footwear specifically as per patient need.



ACADEMIC & RESEARCH

All these interventions suggest that foot protection for a diabetic patient is no longer a niche specialty rather it is an absolute necessity in modern critical disease management. Leaving diabetic foot ulcers in an unmanaged way is a ticking clock for some severe complication later on resulting into deep tissue infections or in worst case into amputation. Beyond the severe emotional and physical toll faced by patient it also results in severe drop in quality of life as well as creates a destructive health cycle that place a financial burden over the patient and their families.

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION



So, by bridging a gap between the three different domains as discussed above i.e. engineers, designers and medical professionals, the exploration in this will definitely help culminate ever-changing novel solutions to upcoming complications faced by diabetes patients and will change the orientation as well perspective that long term healthcare is not just about medical and pharmacy rather it is equally forged in design studios and engineering intellects. Through this continuous interdisciplinary collaboration brought about by these three different domains, footwear industry will definitely step up to a situation where these footwear articles will save lives one step at a time.



Siddharth Vikram
B. Tech, M. Tech (IIT Guwahati), JRF (IIT Delhi)
Faculty
Manufacturing Excellence Department
School of Footwear Design & Production, FDDI Noida

Walking towards Better Health:

Why Ergonomics is Shaping the Future of India's Footwear Industry

For decades, the footwear industry has largely been driven by three factors: style, durability, and cost. Today, however, a fourth factor is rapidly becoming equally important—ergonomics. Whether it is a factory worker standing for ten hours, a healthcare professional constantly on the move, a delivery executive covering kilometres every day, or a student walking across a campus, people are beginning to expect their footwear to do much more than simply cover their feet. They expect comfort, support, and long-term health benefits.

This shift is changing the way footwear is designed, manufactured, and evaluated across the world, and India is no exception.

As one of the world's largest footwear producers and consumers, India has an opportunity to position itself not only as a manufacturing powerhouse but also as a leader in ergonomic and user-centric footwear innovation.

"A shoe should not merely protect the foot, it should support every step we take."

More Than Comfort

Ergonomics is often mistaken as a synonym for comfort, but the concept goes much deeper. It is the science of designing products that work in harmony with the human body. In footwear, this means understanding how the foot moves, how body weight is distributed, and how different occupations and lifestyles influence walking patterns.

A well-designed ergonomic shoe works in harmony with the natural biomechanics of the foot. It supports proper posture, distributes pressure evenly, absorbs impact during walking, and minimizes stress on the joints and muscles. Additionally, it enhances GAIT by encouraging a more natural walking pattern and helps prevent over-pronation (the excessive inward rolling of the foot), reducing the risk of foot, knee, and lower back discomfort. The result is not just greater comfort, but improved mobility, better posture, and long-term foot health.

Considering that an average individual walks 6,000–10,000 steps every day even minor improvements in footwear design can significantly influence overall physical well-being.

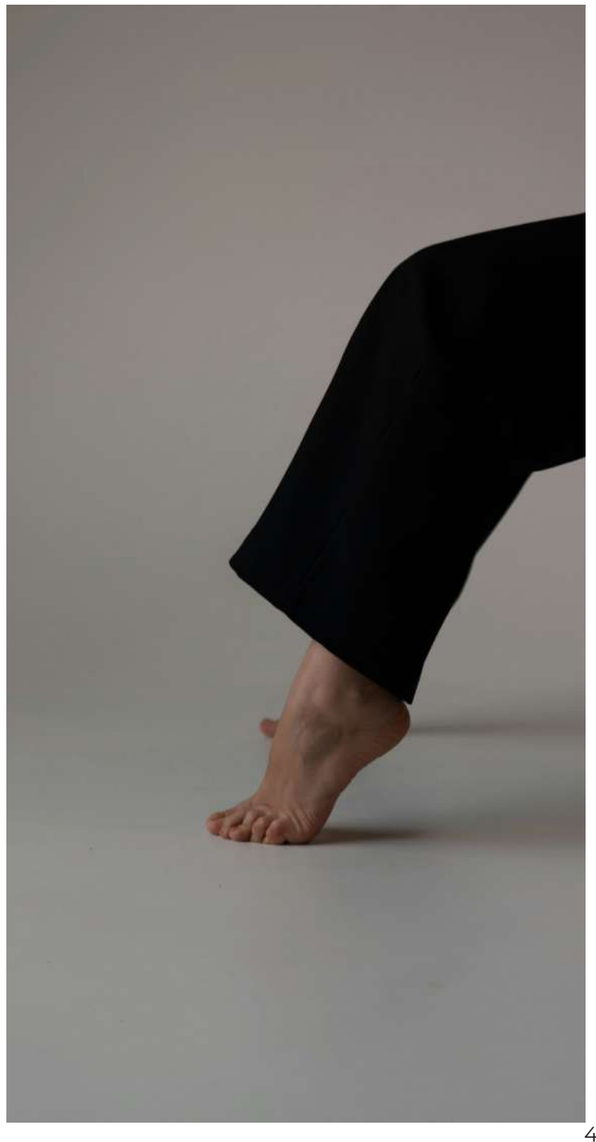


Why India Needs Ergonomic Footwear

India's workforce is remarkably diverse. Manufacturing units, construction sites, hospitals, warehouses, retail establishments, educational institutions, and logistics companies employ millions of people who spend long hours either standing or walking.

Yet, footwear selection often remains an overlooked aspect of occupational health.
Many workers continue to experience fatigue, heel pain, knee discomfort, lower back problems, and foot-related disorders simply because their footwear does not adequately support their daily activities.

The economic implications are equally important. Physical discomfort contributes to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and higher healthcare costs. Investing in ergonomic footwear, therefore, should not be viewed merely as an employee welfare initiative—it is a strategic investment in workforce efficiency and organisational performance.



Designing with the Human Foot in Mind

The human foot is a complex structure consisting of 26 bones, 33 joints, and more than a hundred muscles, tendons, and ligaments. Designing footwear for such an intricate system requires far more than selecting attractive materials or fashionable silhouettes.

Modern ergonomic footwear begins with achieving the right fit. Footwear must accommodate different foot widths, arch profiles, and toe shapes without restricting natural movement. Proper arch support plays an equally important role by maintaining alignment and reducing excessive strain during prolonged walking or standing.

Cushioning has also evolved considerably. Materials such as EVA compounds, polyurethane foams, memory foam foot beds, and energy-return midsoles help absorb impact while maintaining stability. Rather than making shoes excessively soft, designers now aim to create an optimal balance between cushioning, flexibility, and support.

Breathability is another essential consideration, particularly in India's varied climatic conditions. Lightweight mesh fabrics, moisture-management linings, and antimicrobial treatments improve comfort by reducing heat and perspiration during extended wear.

Ultimately, good ergonomic footwear is almost invisible to the wearer. It performs its function without demanding attention, allowing individuals to focus on their work rather than their discomfort.

Technology is Changing the Design Process

One of the most exciting developments in footwear design is the integration of digital technologies into ergonomic product development.
Three-dimensional foot scanning enables manufacturers to capture highly accurate measurements instead of relying solely on traditional sizing systems. Pressure mapping technologies identify areas of excessive stress under the foot, helping designers optimise cushioning and support.
Artificial intelligence is increasingly assisting designers in evaluating multiple design alternatives, predicting user comfort, and accelerating product development cycles. Combined with computer-aided design software and rapid prototyping through additive manufacturing, these technologies enable faster innovation with greater precision.
Customisation, once considered a luxury, is gradually becoming commercially viable. As digital manufacturing advances, personalised footwear solutions may soon become accessible to a much wider consumer base.

Technology is Changing the Design Process

Safety footwear has traditionally prioritised protection against mechanical hazards, often resulting in heavy and rigid designs. While protection remains non-negotiable, today's industrial workforce also expects comfort throughout long working hours.
Manufacturers are responding with lighter composite toe caps, flexible sole constructions, advanced cushioning systems, anti-fatigue insoles, and slip-resistant outsoles that enhance both protection and mobility.
This evolution reflects an important shift in design philosophy. Safety and comfort are no longer competing objectives—they are complementary aspects of effective product design.



The Road Ahead

India possesses all the ingredients required to become a global leader in ergonomic footwear—strong manufacturing capabilities, skilled designers, advanced educational institutions, and a rapidly growing domestic market.

The next step lies in strengthening collaboration between industry, academia, healthcare professionals, and research organisations. Greater investment in anthropometric studies specific to the Indian population, biomechanical research, digital design technologies, and user testing will enable manufacturers to create products that genuinely address the needs of Indian consumers.

The future of footwear will not be defined solely by aesthetics or price. It will be shaped by how intelligently products respond to human movement, health, and comfort.

In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, ergonomics is no longer an added feature—it is becoming a defining measure of quality. Companies that embrace this philosophy today will not only produce better footwear but also contribute to healthier workplaces, happier consumers, and a more innovative Indian footwear industry.
Every step begins with the foot. Ensuring that every step is supported through thoughtful ergonomic design is perhaps the industry's most meaningful stride towards the future.



Nikhil Katiyar
Faculty
School of Footwear Design & Production,
FDDI Noida

CREATIVE ROOTS

DIY, Décor & Sustainable Living

In an era where digital platforms shape influence and identity, Aishi Tasmim has cultivated a space that feels both personal and purposeful.

Through her Instagram platform @green_decorzone, she, along with her mother Tanu, has built a thriving community of over 280K followers, all drawn to their shared passion for DIY decor, gardening, and mindful living.

What began as a creative pursuit between mother and daughter has steadily grown into a recognized digital presence rooted in authenticity and collaboration. Based in West Bengal, @green_decorzone showcases innovative DIY ideas made from waste materials, along with aesthetic home décor setups, balcony gardens, and simple plant styling. Each post reflects a thoughtful blend of creativity and sustainability, transforming everyday spaces into visually pleasing and functional environments.

At the heart of their content lies a strong creative partnership. Tanu brings ideas to life on camera, crafting DIY projects and demonstrating each step with clarity and creativity. Behind the scenes, Aishi manages the technical and strategic aspects from videography and editing to content planning, brand collaborations, and audience engagement. Together, they conceptualize unique ideas and transform simple materials into compelling visual stories.



For Aishi, creativity began with her mother's love for making things by hand, especially transforming everyday waste into something meaningful. Watching her mother repurpose materials and also nurture plants inspired Aishi to explore both DIY and gardening. Over time, this shared interest grew into a strong bond, and today, both mother and daughter work together, creating décor pieces, styling spaces, and maintaining small green corners side by side. Experimenting with textures, forms, and natural elements has refined her visual sensibility, while also shaping her perspective, seeing value and beauty in both discarded materials and living elements.

Managing a platform of this scale highlights Aishi's entrepreneurial mind-set. From maintaining visual consistency to understanding audience preferences and handling brand collaborations, she ensures that creativity is supported by strategy. Through @green_decorzone, she demonstrates how passion, when paired with clarity and consistency, can evolve into meaningful influence.

Sustainability lies at the core of their work. By promoting DIY from waste, encouraging reuse, and incorporating greenery into everyday spaces, they inspire their audience to adopt more responsible and creative lifestyles.

Their message is simple yet impactful: beautiful homes don't require expensive materials, just creativity, care, and intention.
Balancing academics with a rapidly growing digital platform, Aishi represents a new generation that blends creativity, responsibility, and entrepreneurship. At the same time, her journey highlights the power of collaboration, showing how shared passion across generations can lead to something truly meaningful.



"Creativity grows where you nurture it; sometimes all it takes is imagination, patience, and the courage to see potential in the simplest things."

-Aishi Tasmim







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Behind the Spotlight: Lessons from Lakmé Fashion Week

The transition from academic training to industry exposure is a defining moment for any design student. That transition became tangible for me while volunteering at Lakmé Fashion Week, an opportunity facilitated through Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI) in collaboration with the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI). It marked a shift from studying fashion as a discipline to experiencing it as a living, operational ecosystem.

I am Tanishka, a third-year Fashion Design student at FDDI. Over two years of academic training, I had engaged with design development, trend analysis, and garment construction in a structured environment. Lakmé Fashion Week provided the practical context for these learnings, revealing how concepts translate into collections, brand narratives, and consumer-facing platforms.

The five-day experience unfolded at a demanding pace. The scale of operations required adaptability, attention to detail, and an understanding of how creative and logistical systems intersect. Designers, models, buyers, students, technicians, and consumers operated within a tightly coordinated framework, offering a real-time view of how the industry functions under pressure. While intense, the environment underscored the level of precision and collaboration required to execute a fashion week successfully.

From a learning perspective, the role extended beyond assigned tasks. As a student volunteer, there was an implicit responsibility to observe critically—how designers express identity through silhouettes and materials, how collections are positioned within the market, and how runway presentations can influence broader industry trends. The experience reinforced an important lesson: design exists within cultural, commercial, and operational contexts, not in isolation.





A key highlight was witnessing runway shows up close. On the opening day, The Boy's Club featured Country Made, Dhruv Vaish, Sahil Aneja, and Vivek Karunakaran, alongside Kartik Research—a label I had previously studied as an academic case study. Seeing a collection transition from analysis on paper to movement on the runway provided valuable insight into scale, styling, and audience response. Subsequent presentations by Payal Pratap, segments of Rahul Mishra's show, Line Out Line by Deepit Chugh, JAJAABOR, TRUNE by Prasoon Sharma, Bhumika Sharma, and Ritika Mirchandani highlighted the diversity of contemporary Indian fashion, ranging from craft-led narratives to experimental design languages.

Equally instructive was working across designer stalls and backstage coordination, particularly with the teams of Ritu Kumar, Anurag Mishra, & Shruti Sancheti. My longest engagement was at the Ritu Kumar stall, where I interacted directly with customers. Assisting clients with selection based on fit, occasion, and personal style brought into focus the importance of customer understanding and commercial sensibility. Unlike the imagined consumer in classroom exercises, here the audience was immediate and discerning, requiring clear communication of design intent in real time. Brief exposure backstage offered another dimension of learning. The controlled urgency, teamwork, and discipline behind the scenes highlighted the operational rigour that supports creative output.

Ultimately, Lakmé Fashion Week offered more than volunteer experience. It provided clarity—about industry expectations, professional conduct, and the importance of perspective beyond one's own design viewpoint. Opportunities enabled by institutions like FDDI and FDCI play a crucial role in bridging education and industry, preparing students to engage meaningfully with the realities of fashion practice.

Tanishka Solanki
School of Fashion Design
2023-27,
FDDI Chennai



AI AND DEATH OF CRITICAL THINKING

Here's something you might not want to hear: humans and apes have almost the same DNA. You can train both to follow instructions, respond to cues, and perform tasks. So what changed? How did one group of primates grow to 8.1 billion, build cities, write constitutions, and invent democracy, while the others stayed in the trees?

The easy answer is resources. Or opposable thumbs. Or fire. But none of that fully explains the gap. I'd argue the real answer is something far less visible: spatial awareness, paired with critical thinking. The ability to model a problem in your head, question the obvious answer, and reason your way to a better one. This is what eventually let us outperform every other species and eventually gifted us federalism, democracy, and everything we'd point to as the definition of a good human society.

Here's what might make you uneasy: this difference isn't something you can see. It won't show up on an X-ray, and you can't point to it like a muscle or a language you know. It's the hidden force behind every opinion, every moral choice, and every decision about who you are and how you act. That's why it's so easy to lose without realising it, and that's what this piece is about.

As Socrates once said, critical thinking is not just thinking.

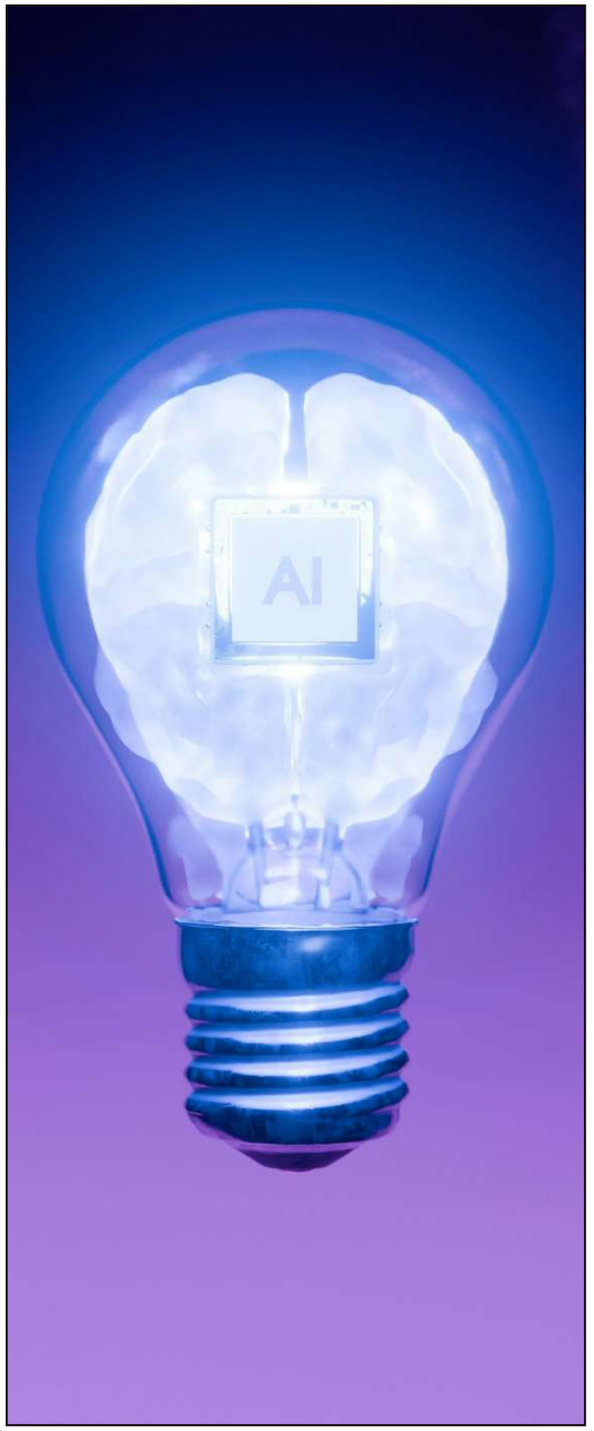
It is the deliberate, often uncomfortable act of scratching beneath the surface of a belief, a claim, or a decision to see what actually holds it up. It is the discipline of reflectively questioning common beliefs and explanations, of carefully separating what is reasonable and logical from what merely feels true — because it flatters our ego, serves our interests, or is simply easier to accept than to interrogate.

Take away everything else- the tools, the technology, the institutions, and this is the one capacity that got us here.

Which raises the real question of this piece: what happens when human beings abandon the tool that got us here.

Imagine you walk into a shop for a pair of leather shoes. Thinking here picks the pair that looks good and fits the budget. But critical thinking (what kind of leather this is, how it was sourced, whether the tannery treats its workers fairly, whether the price reflects the quality or just the brand name stitched onto the tongue) is what makes the purchase truly memorable. It gets stitched into the small, invisible decisions that make up a life.

Tragically, in the last few years, a quieter shift has happened. We went from sitting with a problem, cross-referencing sources, weighing conflicting accounts, tolerating the discomfort of not knowing yet. To a single prompt and a confident paragraph of output. convenient sure, but it cost us the friction of learning.





The quiet part of struggling with a problem, getting it wrong, and correcting, leading to understanding, is actually built. and the boost of "I actually did it "

Within the past century, there has been a slow and mostly unnoticed migration. From books that demanded patience, where you had to find the right one, read it, reconcile it against another to learn; birth of the internet and Wikipedia: faster, broader, still requiring you to read, click through citations, and occasionally doubt what you were reading, only to be replaced by AI, which asks for almost nothing at all.

In each step in this progression, we traded a little more effort for a little more speed, and each trade felt reasonable in isolation. But stacked together, the trend line is clear: we have been steadily lowering the amount of independent verification required to "know" something, until now, the machine does not just supply the information but also the phrasing, and sometimes the confidence, too.

How many times in the past month have you asked Gemini, ChatGPT, or Claude a question and taken the answer as settled fact — or worse, copy-pasted it without reading it all the way through? That moment, right there, is the absence of critical thinking. It is the failure to reflectively question a claim before accepting it, simply because the source sounded authoritative and the process was fast.

This same absence shows up everywhere else in our information diet. It is the forwarded WhatsApp chain message that nobody bothers to check. It is the exaggerated headline shared because it confirms what we already believed.

It is the social media personality who states an opinion with enough conviction that it gets mistaken for a fact. We are forgetting that fact-checking is one search away — and increasingly, we can't be bothered to take that one step, even as the tools to take it have never been more accessible.

What makes this more troubling is the next generation growing up entirely inside this environment. AI is not a phase of their childhood the way it was a late addition to ours — it is the default. And if the adults around them are themselves losing the habit of distinguishing a credible source from an unreliable one, who is left to teach that distinction at all? A skill that isn't modelled rarely gets learned.

This drags us back to the opening question: what separated us from the apes we share almost all our DNA with? If the answer really is spatial awareness and critical thinking, then that capacity isn't a fixed trait we get to keep no matter what : it's a muscle only as strong as we train it to be and the harsh reality is that are, quite possibly, devolving in the one capacity that made us different from every other species we share this planet with — and doing it so comfortably, so conveniently, that almost no one is going to notice until it's too late; disappearing the way muscle disappears from a limb kept still for too long gradually, painlessly, and almost invisibly, until the day it's needed and simply isn't there.

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The good news is that the fix doesn't require rejecting AI or retreating to books alone. It requires something much smaller and much harder: pausing before we accept an answer, asking one more question, checking the source we were about to trust blindly. It requires treating critical thinking the way we'd treat any other muscle, as something that only stays strong if we actually use it.



Ms. Sofia Shazad
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Uttar Pradesh Footwear, Leather and Non-Leather Sector Development Policy - 2025

- **46%** of India's leather exports come from UP
- Up to **80%** land subsidy for Mega Anchor Units & Clusters
- Up to **35%** capital subsidy on eligible capital investment
- Incentives up to **₹1500 Cr** for Mega Anchor Units & Clusters
- **100%** stamp duty exemption for eligible units
- Plug-and-play leather parks, ready infrastructure

THINK BIG
THINK U.P.

FDDI Signs Landmark MoU with Government of Punjab to Drive Skill Development and Industrial Growth

FDDI signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Directorate of Industries & Commerce, Government of Punjab, on 15 June 2026, marking a significant step towards advancing collaboration in higher education, skill development, innovation, testing infrastructure, entrepreneurship, research and industrial capacity building.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, and Mr. Jaspreet Singh, IAS, Director of Industries & Commerce, Government of Punjab and Director General, NIIFT.



A view of the MoU signing ceremony

The occasion was attended by Ms. Sarita Duhan, Executive Director, FDDI, Banur; Mr. Prashant Kumar Saxena, Head – Business Development & Skilling Projects, FDDI Head Office; Dr. Kanu Thind, PCS, Joint Director, Industries & Commerce, Government of Punjab and Director, NIIFT; Mr. Ramandeep Singh, Registrar, NIIFT Mohali; and Dr. Simrita Singh, Principal, NIIFT.

The partnership aims to develop industry-ready talent, strengthen MSMEs and startups, enhance quality assurance mechanisms, and accelerate growth across Punjab's footwear, leather, sports goods, fashion, retail and allied sectors.

Through this collaboration, FDDI and the Government of Punjab reaffirm their shared commitment to building a future-ready ecosystem that integrates academia, industry and government. The initiative is expected to promote innovation-led development, support sustainable economic growth, generate employment opportunities and strengthen the overall industrial ecosystem of the region.

Driving Excellence:
FDDI's Industry Impact

Reaffirming its commitment to strengthening India's footwear ecosystem and advancing industry excellence, Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI), in collaboration with the CII Institute of Quality (CII-IQ), organized the Leaders' Town Hall on "Transforming the Footwear Industry for Global Competitiveness."

The Town Hall was chaired by Mr. Razak, Managing Director, VKC Group, and attended by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, and Mr. Neil Castelino, Chief Executive Officer, CII-IQ.

The Leaders' Town Hall witnessed the participation of distinguished leaders representing diverse segments of the footwear, leather, manufacturing, quality, and allied industries including Mr. Vishal Saxena, Senior Consultant, CII IQ; and Mr. Biju K. Raj, Principal Counsellor, CII IQ, Mr. Nikhil Dua, Whole Time Director, Relaxo Footwears Ltd.; Mr. Ashish Nigam, AVP, Relaxo Footwears Ltd.; Mr. Arush, Superhouse; Mr. Arvind, Managing Director, Arvind Gramodyog; Mr. Nalin Gupta, Managing Director, Infinity; Mr. Parimal Bajpayee, Director, Amit Gramodyog; Mr. Imran, Managing Director, S.G. Exports; Mr. C. Govindraju, Vice President, Bata India; Mr. Saurabh Bairathi, Managing Director, Bairathi Shoes India; Mr. Sushil Agarwal, Managing Director, Derpa Industrial Polymer; Mr. Pawan Agrawal, Managing Director, Bansal Industries; Mr. Yunus, Managing Director, East West Tanners; Mr. Tauseef Mirza, Director, Mirza International (Unit–VI), Noida; Mr. Pradeep Sharma, Managing Director, Abros Sports; Mr. Madan Sharma, Managing Director, Dharamveer & Sons; Mr. Sanjay Gupta, President, Indian Footwear Components Manufacturers Association (IFCOMA); Mr. Ajay Gaur, Deputy Director, IFCOMA; Mr. Rohit Bansal, Managing Director, Sumanglam Footwear Pvt. Ltd.; Mr. Vipan Seth, Managing Director, Versatile;; Mr. Dharmender Narula, Managing Director, Guru Kripa Footwear Industries Pvt. Ltd.; Mr. Raj Kumar Gupta, Managing Director, Action; and Mr. Praveen Sharma, Plant Head, Roorkee, Mallcom (India) who shared valuable perspectives on quality excellence and industry transformation for enhancing India's global competitiveness and accelerating sectoral growth.



Memento and Certification Distribution Ceremony

Participants deliberated on key priorities including quality excellence, productivity enhancement, operational efficiency, sustainability, innovation, export readiness and emerging growth opportunities.

Through insightful discussions, exchange of best practices and industry perspectives, the Town Hall fostered meaningful collaboration and reflected a collective commitment towards building a quality-driven, innovation-led and globally competitive footwear ecosystem.

Representing FDDI, Mr. Prashant Kumar Saxena, Head – Business Development; Ms. Rashmi Asthana, Head – International Testing Centre (ITC); Mr. Sharad Srivastava, Joint Director – Centre of Excellence (CoE); and Ms. Shraddha Tripathy, Head – Placements & Alumni Connect, actively participated in the strategic deliberations.

As part of the event, FDDI also organized a Memento and Certification Distribution Ceremony to recognise its Gold, Silver and Bronze Members for their continued commitment to quality, compliance, testing excellence and industry best practices. Mementos and certificates were presented by the dignitaries in recognition of members' valuable contributions towards strengthening the quality ecosystem of the footwear and leather industry.



The ceremony highlighted the impact of FDDI's Business Development initiatives and the International Testing Centre (ITC) in promoting testing, certification and quality assurance practices aligned with national and international standards.

Mementos and certificates were presented by Mr. Vivek Sharma, Managing Director, FDDI; Mr. Razak, Managing Director, VKC Group; and Mr. Neil Castelino, CEO, CII Institute of Quality, in recognition of the members' valuable association and contribution towards strengthening the quality ecosystem of the footwear and leather industry.

The ceremony reflected the strong industry partnerships nurtured through FDDI's Business Development initiatives and the dedicated support extended by the International Testing Centre (ITC) in advancing testing, certification, and quality assurance practices across footwear, leather, and allied sectors. Through its state-of-the-art testing and certification infrastructure, ITC–FDDI continues to support industry in meeting national and international quality benchmarks while enabling enhanced competitiveness in global markets.

Extending its commitment beyond industrial excellence to environmental stewardship, FDDI also marked World Environment Day 2026 through a meaningful plantation drive under the Government of India's "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative.



Rooted in sustainability, FDDI's World Environment Day initiative

Bridging Borders: FDDI × University of Northampton

A delegation from the University of Northampton (UoN), United Kingdom, visited FDDI on 22 May 2026 to strengthen academic collaboration and explore new avenues of engagement. The delegation comprised Ms. Debra Hinds, Director of Global Engagement; Ms. Nouhaila Jouibi, International Officer – India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, Department for Global Engagement; and Mr. Puneet Malhotra, Principal Representative, North India & Nepal Region.

The visit followed the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed between FDDI and UoN last year, establishing a framework for academic partnership aimed at introducing international academic opportunities, including dual-degree and joint programmes, to enhance global exposure and academic mobility for students.



During the visit, the delegation met Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, in the presence of Mr. Sharad Srivastava, Joint Director, Centre of Excellence (CoE). Discussions focused on strengthening institutional engagement, expanding the basket of academic programmes and identifying new areas of collaboration aligned with emerging industry needs.

The interaction also explored opportunities for faculty and student exchange, collaborative research and development, and knowledge-sharing initiatives to foster innovation and address evolving industry challenges.

The visit reaffirmed the shared commitment of both institutions towards building globally connected and future-ready academic ecosystems.



FDDI Signs MoU with the Indian Institute of Packaging in Presence of Hon'ble Minister Shri Jitin Prasada Ji

In a significant step towards advancing academic excellence, research, innovation and industry engagement, FDDI exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Packaging (IIP) during the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of IIP held in Mumbai on 14 May 2026.

The MoU was exchanged between Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, and Mr. R. K. Mishra, IRS, Director, IIP and Additional DGFT, Mumbai, in the esteemed presence of the Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Electronics & Information Technology, Shri Jitin Prasada Ji.

The collaboration brings together two premier institutions under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry with a shared vision of promoting excellence in education, research, innovation, training and capacity building.



A view of the MoU Exchange

During the celebrations, senior officials of both institutions deliberated on avenues for collaboration aimed at strengthening industry-academia linkages, promoting interdisciplinary learning and developing future-ready talent to address emerging industry requirements.
The partnership envisages cooperation across joint research, innovation and product development, skill enhancement programmes, faculty and student exchange, industry-oriented training, expert interactions, workshops, seminars and collaborative academic initiatives. It will also facilitate knowledge sharing, consultancy, testing, incubation support and the development of specialised programmes aligned with evolving industry needs.



FDDI Signs MoU with UPAY to Promote Inclusive Education & Social Innovation

On 17 April 2026, FDDI signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UPAY, an organisation committed to providing quality education and holistic development opportunities to underprivileged children.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, and Ms. Yashvi Sharma of UPAY, in the presence of Mr. Varun Shrivastava, Founder & Chairman, UPAY.



The partnership reflects a shared commitment to leveraging education, skill development and innovation to create sustainable social impact. Under this collaboration, FDDI will contribute its expertise in design, innovation and industry-oriented training, while UPAY will bring its extensive community outreach and educational experience, benefiting over 10,000 children across India.

The initiative aims to promote skill development among underserved youth, encourage grassroots entrepreneurship and support community upliftment through integrated education and vocational training. It will also focus on fostering sustainable and affordable product innovation.

A key extension of the collaboration will be driven through the FDDI Entrepreneurship Cell (E-Cell), strengthening linkages with the broader innovation ecosystem through engagement with leading entrepreneurship cells and incubators, including IIT Delhi, IIT Bombay, IIM Ahmedabad and NSRCEL.



FDDI Signs MoU with CII-IQ to Strengthen Quality and Competitiveness in the Footwear & Leather Sector

On 09 April 2026, FDDI formalised a strategic partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry – Institute of Quality (CII-IQ) through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding b(MoU).

The MoU was signed by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director, FDDI, and Maj Neil Castelino, Chief, CII-IQ.



The collaboration aims to strengthen quality standards, productivity and global competitiveness across India's footwear and leather ecosystem through focused industry engagement and capacity-building initiatives.

Key areas of cooperation include industry outreach and cluster development, enabling greater engagement with MSMEs and OEMs to promote quality-led industrial growth. The partnership will also facilitate structured training programmes on Operational Excellence and Total Productive Maintenance (TPM) for FDDI professionals and industry stakeholders.

Additionally, CII-IQ will provide consulting support to drive operational improvements, periodic performance reviews and continuous improvement practices across industry clusters. The initiative will further promote the development of a robust quality ecosystem through model excellence clusters, certification pathways and dissemination of industry best practices.

This collaboration marks a significant step towards building a future-ready, quality-driven and globally competitive footwear and leather industry in India.



Graphene:

Future of Sole Technology in Athletic Shoe

The footwear industry is rapidly evolving beyond traditional expectations of cushioning and durability. Modern consumers and performance-driven markets now demand lightweight construction, energy return, superior comfort, sustainability, and intelligent functionality from footwear products.

In this transformation, graphene has emerged as one of the most promising advanced materials capable of redefining the future of footwear sole technology.

Graphene possesses extraordinary physical and mechanical properties. It is only one atom thick, yet nearly 200 times stronger than steel while remaining exceptionally lightweight, flexible, and thermally conductive. These unique characteristics make graphene highly suitable for enhancing modern footwear sole systems.

Conventional sole like EVA, PU, TPU continue to face limitations related to abrasion resistance, cracking, weight, heat retention, and long-term durability. When incorporated into these traditional compounds, graphene acts as a nano-reinforcement material that significantly improves performance without increasing overall weight.

The exceptional strength of graphene originates from its two-dimensional hexagonal honeycomb structure formed by tightly bonded carbon atoms. Each carbon atom forms strong covalent sigma Σ bonds with three neighbouring atoms, creating one of the strongest molecular structures known in material science. Its sp^2 hybridized atomic arrangement further enhances stability, flexibility, and stress distribution, allowing graphene to withstand extremely high mechanical loads without structural failure.

Graphene is generally blended in small quantities, typically between 0.1% and 5% with rubber, EVA foam, PU, or TPU compounds. Even in these low concentrations, graphene delivers substantial improvements in sole performance. One of the most significant advantages is enhanced abrasion resistance.

Graphene-infused soles demonstrate greater durability, improved wear resistance, and reduced cracking, making them highly suitable for running shoes, trekking footwear, and industrial safety shoes. In addition, graphene improves traction and grip performance across wet surfaces, rocky terrains, and uneven outdoor conditions, offering improved stability for trail running and high-performance sports footwear.



Graphene composites also contribute to lightweight footwear construction while maintaining structural integrity and flexibility. Reduced shoe weight directly supports faster movement, lower fatigue, and improved athletic efficiency. At the same time, graphene-enhanced midsoles can improve energy return and responsiveness during dynamic movement. Graphene efficiently transfers heat, it can help regulate internal shoe temperature and reduce heat build-up during prolonged physical activity. This opens new possibilities for advanced comfort-oriented footwear systems. Researchers and global footwear brands are now exploring bio-based graphene composites and environmentally responsible manufacturing methods that combine high performance with circular design principles.



Leading footwear Brands are actively exploring graphene and related nanomaterial technologies for future product development. **inov-8**: The British brand, in collaboration with the University of Manchester, remains a pioneer, introducing the world's first graphene-enhanced rubber outsoles and midsoles. **Flux & Versarien**: These companies are collaborating to develop shoes using Graphene-Wear™ technology to enhance endurance and reduce wear.

Safety Footwear: Companies like **Steel Blue** have utilized graphene in safety boots to improve durability and slip resistance. Under Armour is exploring intelligent performance footwear where conductive materials such as graphene may play a major role.

Graphene is expected to become one of the key materials shaping the next generation of footwear soles. Its ability to combine strength, flexibility, lightweight performance, thermal management, and durability positions graphene as a transformative material for the future of the global footwear industry.



Prashant Nanda
Senior Faculty
School of Footwear Design & Production, FDDI Kolkata

Mr. Prashanta Kumar Nanda, Head of Department (FDP), FDDI Kolkata, is a seasoned academician and industry professional with nearly three decades of experience across footwear design, manufacturing, and education. He has demonstrated expertise in driving organizational transformation, business process re-engineering, and developing market-oriented academic initiatives aligned with industry needs.

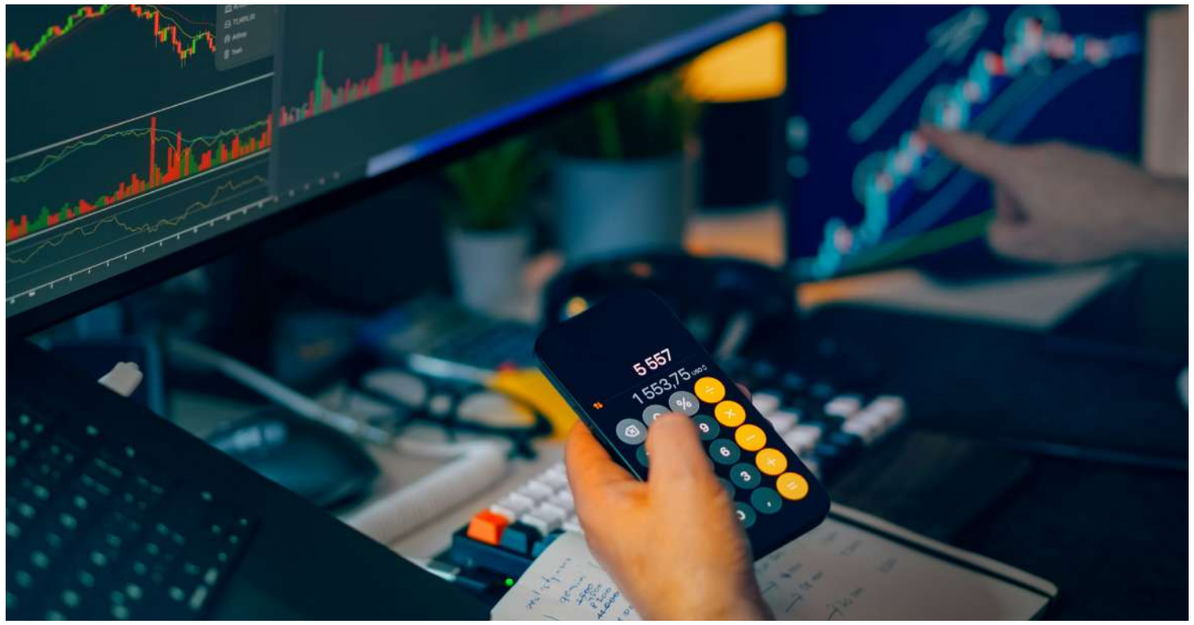


Dr. Ashok Sahai
Senior Faculty
School of Footwear Design & Production, FDDI Kolkata

Dr. Ashok Sahai holds a B.Sc., M.B.A., DFD, M.Phil., Ph.D, Product and Brand Management from IIM Rohtak. He brings with him rich and diverse experience across leading organizations such as Mirza International Ltd., Crew BOS Products Pvt. Ltd., Creative Home Fashions, and Apollo International Ltd., where he was closely associated with product development, branding, and market-driven strategies.

40 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Navigating Forex Risks in the Footwear Industry



The footwear industry operates in a highly interconnected global ecosystem, with significant exposure to foreign exchange (forex) fluctuations arising from international exports, imports of raw materials, global supply chains, and cross-border banking transactions. Effective treasury management has therefore become a critical component for safeguarding margins, enhancing financial efficiency, and ensuring long-term business stability.

To support footwear manufacturers, exporters, and industry stakeholders, comprehensive treasury advisory solutions are being developed to help organizations manage forex exposure, optimize banking relationships, strengthen internal controls, and establish robust financial risk management frameworks.

Forex Risk Management Policy & SOPs

Forex Risk Management Policy & Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): A structured forex risk management framework enables organizations to effectively manage export receivables, import payables, hedging approvals, and treasury operations. Advisory support in developing comprehensive policies and SOPs helps footwear companies establish disciplined processes, improve governance, and enhance transparency in forex-related activities.

Treasury Audit & Control Review

A detailed assessment of treasury operations, banking arrangements, forex execution practices, and internal controls helps identify process gaps and mitigate financial risks. Such reviews enable footwear companies handling multiple export transactions and international collections to strengthen operational efficiency and treasury governance.

Foreign Exchange Hedging Advisory

With exposure to USD-INR volatility and fluctuations in the cost of imported inputs such as leather, rubber, chemicals, components, and packaging materials, footwear businesses require effective risk mitigation strategies. Exposure-based hedging advisory helps companies protect profit margins, improve cash flow visibility, and manage uncertainty in global markets.

Bank Margin & Cost Optimization

Efficient treasury management also involves optimizing banking costs. Support in evaluating forex pricing, negotiating competitive exchange margins, obtaining improved pricing structures, and identifying hidden transaction costs helps businesses reduce financial overheads and enhance profitability.



New Bank Onboarding Support

Expanding banking partnerships can provide greater flexibility and competitive advantage. Assistance in onboarding suitable banking partners for export-import transactions, treasury operations, and forex execution enables companies to enhance service efficiency and strengthen financial operations.

Forex Transaction Execution Support

Timely and efficient execution of forex transactions is essential in a dynamic market environment. Support in forex deal execution, export realization management, and coordination with banking partners enables treasury teams to make informed decisions and improve foreign exchange realization.

ERP-Based Treasury Integration & Customization

Technology-driven treasury management enhances visibility and control over financial operations. Integrating treasury requirements into ERP systems enables better monitoring of export receivables, hedge positions, banking exposure, and treasury reporting, resulting in improved automation and decision-making.

Through these specialized advisory services, footwear companies can build stronger treasury frameworks, reduce forex-related costs, improve banking efficiency, and enhance financial resilience in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

Effective treasury management is not only about managing currency fluctuations, it is about creating financial agility and enabling businesses to confidently navigate global opportunities.



Charandeep Singh Kohli
Founder Partner
FX Tracker Financial Consultants

Mr. Charandeep Singh Kohli is a finance professional with over 18 years of experience in financial markets, corporate treasury, foreign exchange risk management, and treasury advisory. He holds an MBA, a Post Graduate Diploma in Financial Management (PGDFM), and the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation.

As Founder Partner of FX Tracker Financial Consultants, he advises organizations on forex risk mitigation, treasury optimization, and strategic financial management. With extensive experience across treasury and advisory functions, he specializes in treasury governance, risk management frameworks, market execution, financial policy development, and strengthening organizational treasury capabilities through advisory, training, and banking relationship management.

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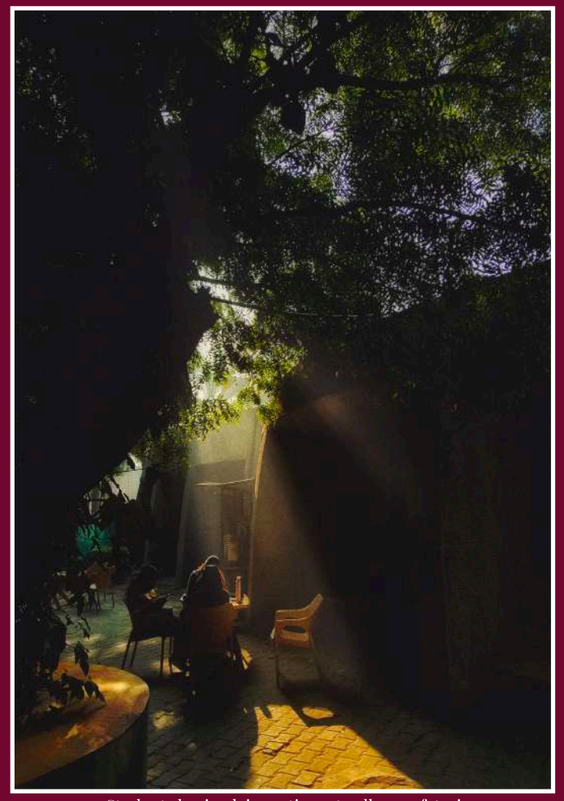
"Your Shield Against Forex"

Charandeep Singh Kohli

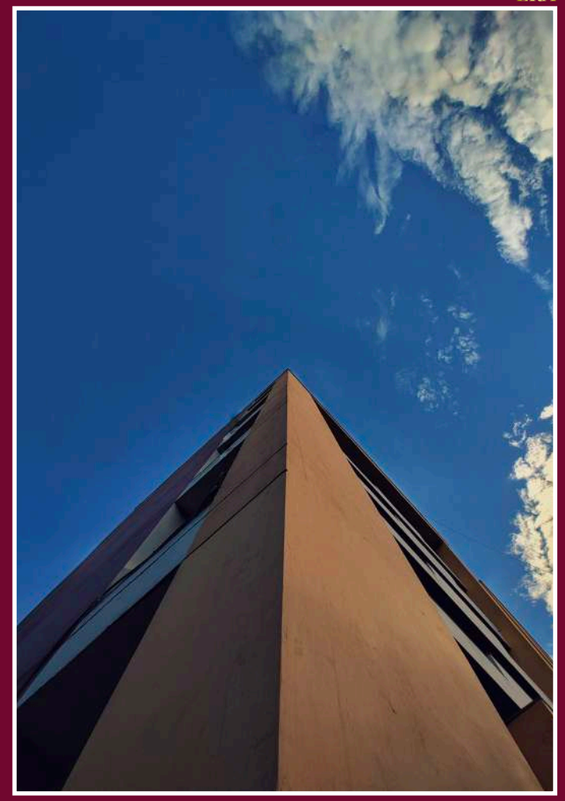
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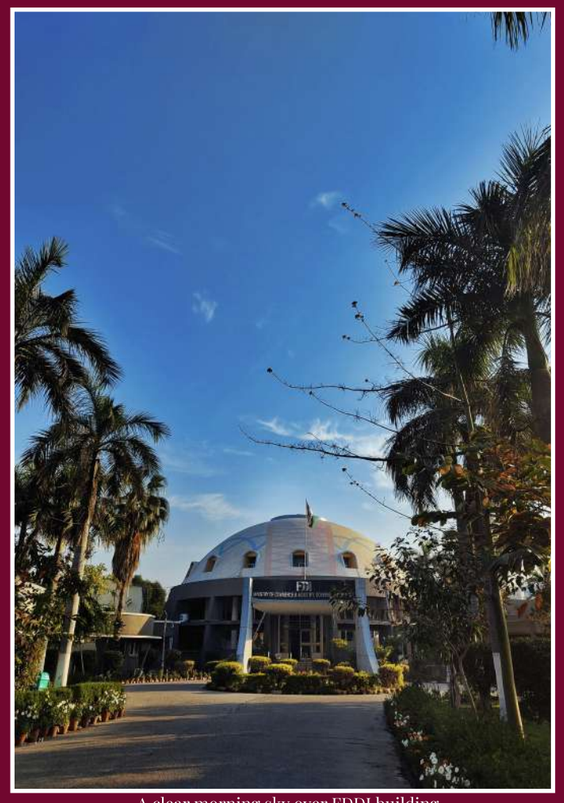
THE CONTEMPORARY ERA



Students having leisure time at college cafetaria
- 16th December 2025



Worm's eye view of the FDDI building
- 29th August 2024



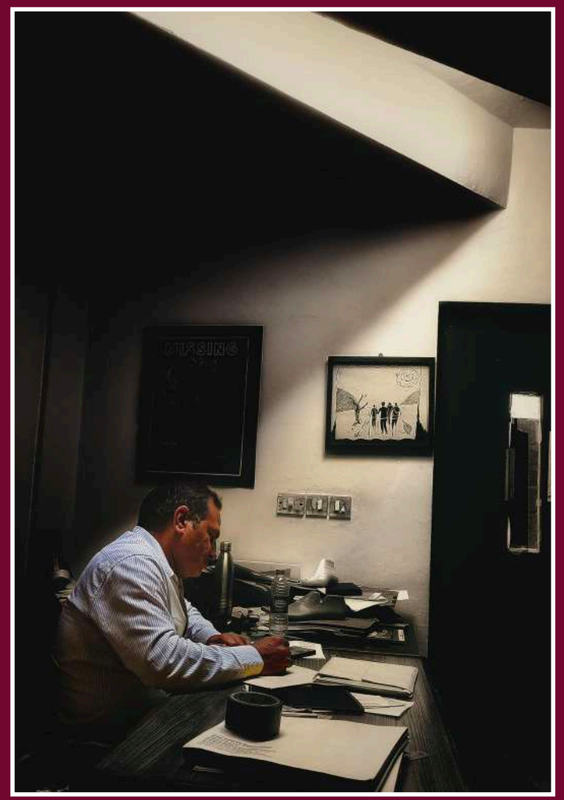
A clear morning sky over FDDI building
-5th March 2024



Academic staff playing carrom during Annual sports week
- 29th August 2025



A Glimpse of the Fashion show during Founder's Day
- 14th January 2026



A Faculty working on design in his office
- 24th April 2026



Sneaker Design Workshop
- 09th August 2024



Students Design Display
- 14th January 2024



Footwear students jury display
- 30th May 2024



Students at India Art Design Biennale
- 14th March 2024



Silhouette of FDDI Noida building at night
- 7th January 2024



Students working for an Event Display
- 12th January 2024

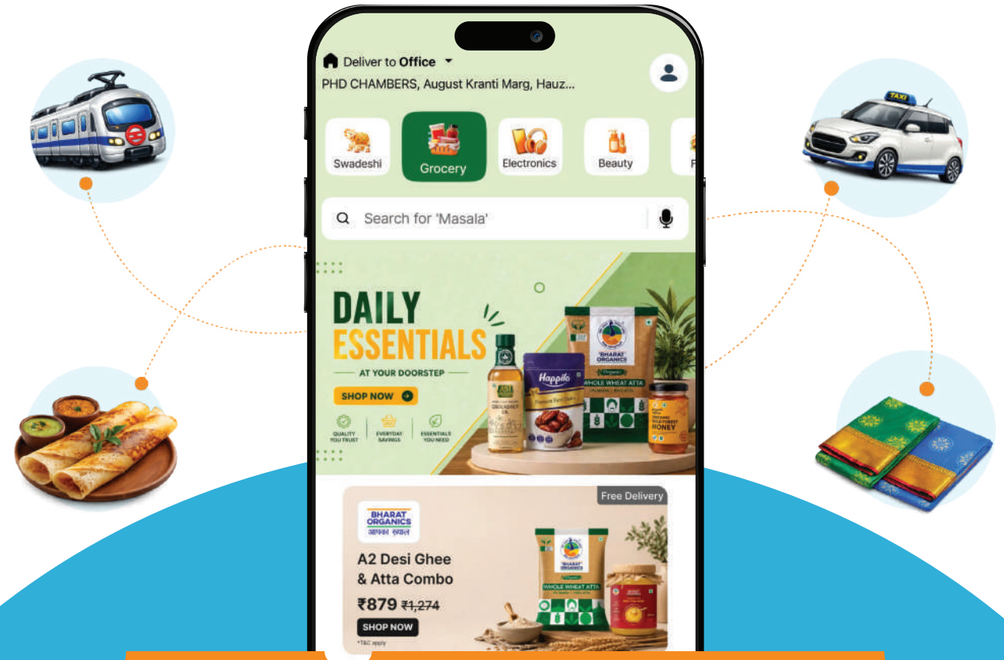
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- General Purpose Footwear as per IS 17043
- Safety Footwear as per IS 15298 Part-2
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- Knitting Shoes Upper Designing

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
रक्षा मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
पूर्व सैनिक कल्याण विभाग
DEPARTMENT OF
EX-SERVICEMEN WELFARE

DIRECTORATE GENERAL RESETTLEMENT

EMPOWERING EX-SERVICEMEN FOR A SUCCESSFUL SECOND CAREER

DGR ACTIVITIES for resettlement of Ex-Servicemen through Employment, Training and Self-Employment Schemes for a Dignified and Prosperous Life.



OUR MISSION

To facilitate smooth transition of Ex-Servicemen into meaningful civilian careers by providing employment assistance, skill development and self-employment opportunities.

WHO CAN BENEFIT?

EX-SERVICEMEN | WIDOWS OF DEFENCE PERSONNEL | ELIGIBLE DEPENDENTS

KEY DGR INITIATIVES

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE: Facilitating placement in Government Departments, PSUs, CAPFs, State Governments and reputed Private Sector Organizations.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING: Industry-relevant training programmes and certification courses to enhance skills and employability.

SELF-EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
Sponsorship and support for the following schemes:

- Security Agency Scheme
- Oil Product Agencies & LPG Distributorship
- Coal Transportation Scheme
- Mother Dairy & Safal Outlet Management
- COCO Outlet & CNG Station Management
- Technical Services Scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Scheme
- Common Service Centre

INFORMATION & OUTREACH: Regular notifications, job alerts, scheme updates and publications to keep stakeholders informed and empowered.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

TRAINING SCHEMES: Details of DGR sponsored training schemes are available on the official website.

SEMINARS & JOB FAIRS: Employment Seminars and Job Fairs are organised in collaboration with CII, FICCI and Corporates.

PUBLICATIONS: Information brochures and leaflets are published for wider awareness and outreach.

ONLINE REGISTRATION: Eligible ESM can register online and apply for schemes on the DGR website.

REACH US

Directorate General Resettlement
Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare
Ministry of Defence, West Block IV,
R.K. Puram, New Delhi-110066

011-26100266
dgr@desw.gov.in
www.dgrindia.gov.in

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SCAN TO EXPLORE DGR SCHEMES

★★★ SERVING THE NATION BEYOND UNIFORM – BUILDING SUCCESSFUL SECOND CAREERS ★★★

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

"Partnering for Quality. Enabling Innovation. Delivering Excellence."

In a significant step towards strengthening industry engagement and delivering integrated technical solutions, FDDI launched its Associate Membership Program in February 2026, a comprehensive and forward-looking initiative designed for manufacturers, exporters, and allied sectors.

Positioned as more than just a service offering, the program brings together testing, Centre of Excellence (CoE) services, training, and expert consultation into a single, value-driven platform. Since its launch, the initiative has received an exceptional response from the industry, with enthusiastic participation across sectors, reaffirming FDDI's position as a trusted partner in quality and innovation.

What Makes This Program Stand Out

Exclusive Testing Advantages – Special pricing structures designed to optimize cost while maintaining the highest standards of quality assurance.
Access to World-Class CoE Facilities – Enabling innovation, product development, and technical validation.
Skill Enhancement Opportunities – Discounts on specialized training programs, workshops, and knowledge sessions.
Audit & Compliance Readiness – Laboratory Audits
Priority Services – Faster turnaround time with dedicated support.
Expert Technical Guidance – Direct access to domain specialists.

With this initiative, FDDI is not just offering services, we are building long-term partnerships and empowering the industry to achieve higher standards of quality, innovation, and global competitiveness.

MEMBERS

GOLD Membership Strategy Partner	SILVER Membership Strategy Partner	BRONZE Membership Associate Partner
Relaxo Footwears Ltd.	Arvind Gramudyog	XO Footwear Pvt. Ltd.
Footwear (Klick) India Pvt. Ltd. (Lancer)	Derpa Industrial Polymers Pvt. Ltd.	Abros Sports International
Infinity	Bansal Industries	AS Leather Works
Superhouse Ltd.	Prosafe International Pvt. Ltd.	Dharamveer & Sons
Amit Gramodyog Sansthan	East West Tanners	
S.G. Exports	Enkay (India) Rubber Co. Pvt. Ltd.	
Manjeet Plastic Industries		
Bata India Ltd.		
Bairathi Shoes Co. Pvt. Ltd		
Liberty Shoes Ltd.		

An Overwhelming Industry Response

The program has quickly gained traction, with industry stakeholders recognizing its strategic value and practical benefits. Members have particularly appreciated the integrated service model, which enhances efficiency, strengthens compliance, and supports continuous improvement.

GOLD Membership

Growth Partner

Industry Membership Program

Package features

Complimentary tests worth Rs.1.0L including CE tests on safety footwear /REACH tests/ basic physical tests on FDDI approved base prices. (Details of tests and prices in Annexure A)

Inter-laboratory testing on forty basic tests between industry in-house laboratories and FDDI, to validate internal testing results.(List of tests in Annexure A)

Two days (8hours per day) OR Four days (4 hours per day) structured training program on testing for two persons.

One annual audit of your industry laboratory. Includes advisory recommendations.

Twenty five percent fee concession on industry sponsored seats. Applicable to bachelor's and master's programs.

Flat 30% discount on the base price on all testing services (Valid for one year from the date of membership). This discount is applicable to all chargeable testing services. This offer will operate exclusive of the complimentary testing benefit as per Sl. no 1 above.

Five-year subscription to the FDDI magazine.

Complimentary ergonomic assessment of one article at COE of FDDI.

Access to 3D scanning facilities during the period of membership (Prior booking intimation with details of duration of access required and subject to a maximum of 20 hours cumulative in the entire membership period).

20% discount on specific paid training programs conducted by FDDI from time to time, including on industry premise training programs.

Dedicated SPOC

Enhanced Value Additions

1. Priority testing and audit scheduling with faster turnaround time (TAT).
2. Early access to campus placement drives and internship engagement.
3. Featured listing on FDDI website as a Strategic Industry Partner.
4. Preferential invitation and protocol to FDDI events.
5. Opportunity to participate as a preferred industry speaker at FDDI conclaves and events.
6. Gold Category Plaque and Gold Category Membership certificate.

Annual Fee: Rs. 2,00,000 + 18%GST

SILVER
Membership
Growth Partner
Industry Membership Program

Package features

Complimentary tests worth Rs.50,000 including CE tests on safety footwear /REACH tests/ basic physical tests on FDDI approved base prices. (Details of tests and prices in Annexure A)

Inter-laboratory testing on Thirty basic tests between industry in-house laboratories and FDDI, to validate internal testing results.(List of tests in Annexure A)

Two days (8hours per day) OR Four days (4 hours per day) structured training program on testing for two persons.

One annual audit of your industry laboratory. Includes advisory recommendations.

Twenty five percent fee concession on industry sponsored seats. Applicable to bachelor's and master's programs.

Flat 30% discount on the base price on all testing services (Valid for one year from the date of membership). This discount is applicable to all chargeable testing services. This offer will operate exclusive of the complimentary testing benefit as per Sl. no 1 above.

Three-year subscription to the FDDI magazine.

Complimentary ergonomic assessment of one article at COE of FDDI.

Access to 3D scanning facilities during the period of membership (Prior booking intimation with details of duration of access required and subject to a maximum of 10 hours cumulative in the entire membership period).

20% discount on specific paid training programs conducted by FDDI from time to time, including on industry premise training programs.

Dedicated SPOC

Enhanced Value Additions

1. Priority testing and audit scheduling with faster turnaround time (TAT).
2. Early access to campus placement drives and internship engagement.
3. Featured listing on FDDI website as a Strategic Industry Partner.
4. Preferential invitation and protocol to FDDI events.
5. Opportunity to participate as a preferred industry speaker at FDDI conclaves and events.
6. Silver Category Plaque and Silver Category Membership certificate.

Annual Fee: Rs. 1,00,000 + 18%GST

BRONZE
Membership
Associate Partner
Industry Membership Program

Package features

Inter-laboratory testing on Twenty basic tests between industry in-house laboratories and FDDI, to validate internal testing results.(List of tests in Annexure A)

One days (8hours per day) OR Two days (4 hours per day) structured training program on testing for two persons.

One annual audit of your industry laboratory.

Twenty five percent fee concession on industry sponsored seats. Applicable to bachelor's and master's programs.

Flat 30% discount on the base price on all testing services (Valid for one year from the date of membership). This discount is applicable to all chargeable testing services. This offer will operate exclusive of the complimentary testing benefit as per Sl. no 1 above.

One-year subscription to the FDDI magazine.

Access to COE facilities. Available at special member rates.

20% discount on specific paid training programs conducted by FDDI from time to time, including on industry premise training programs.

Enhanced Value Additions

Preferential scheduling subject to availability

Eligibility for cluster-based group benefits.

Bronze Category Plaque and Bronze Category Membership certificate.

Annual Fee: Rs. 25,000 + 18%GST

For membership enquiries and onboarding support, industry partners may contact.

Mr. Prashant Kumar Saxena
Head Business Development and Skilling Projects
Footwear Design and Development Institute, Head Office
Role: Industry partnerships, membership onboarding, service integration, and strategic collaborations.
Email: pks@fddiindia.com **Contact No.: 9088813242**

Ms. Rashmi Asthana
Head International Testing Centre
Footwear Design and Development Institute, Head Office
Role: Testing services, laboratory audits, compliance support, and technical service delivery under membership.
Email: hoditc@fddiindia.com **Contact No.: 9899559113**
For registration and details, visit: www.fddiindia.com

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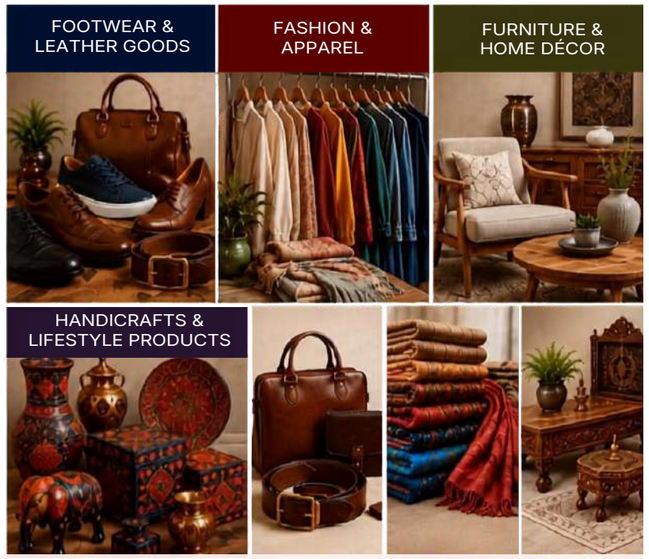
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- Global Sourcing Excellence
- Business Networking & Collaboration
- Export Promotion & International Trade
- Policy Advocacy & Best Practices



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To build a globally connected sourcing community that promotes innovation, responsible practices and sustainable growth.

OUR MISSION

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Text Block	**9.8 X 7.6**	**250X195**

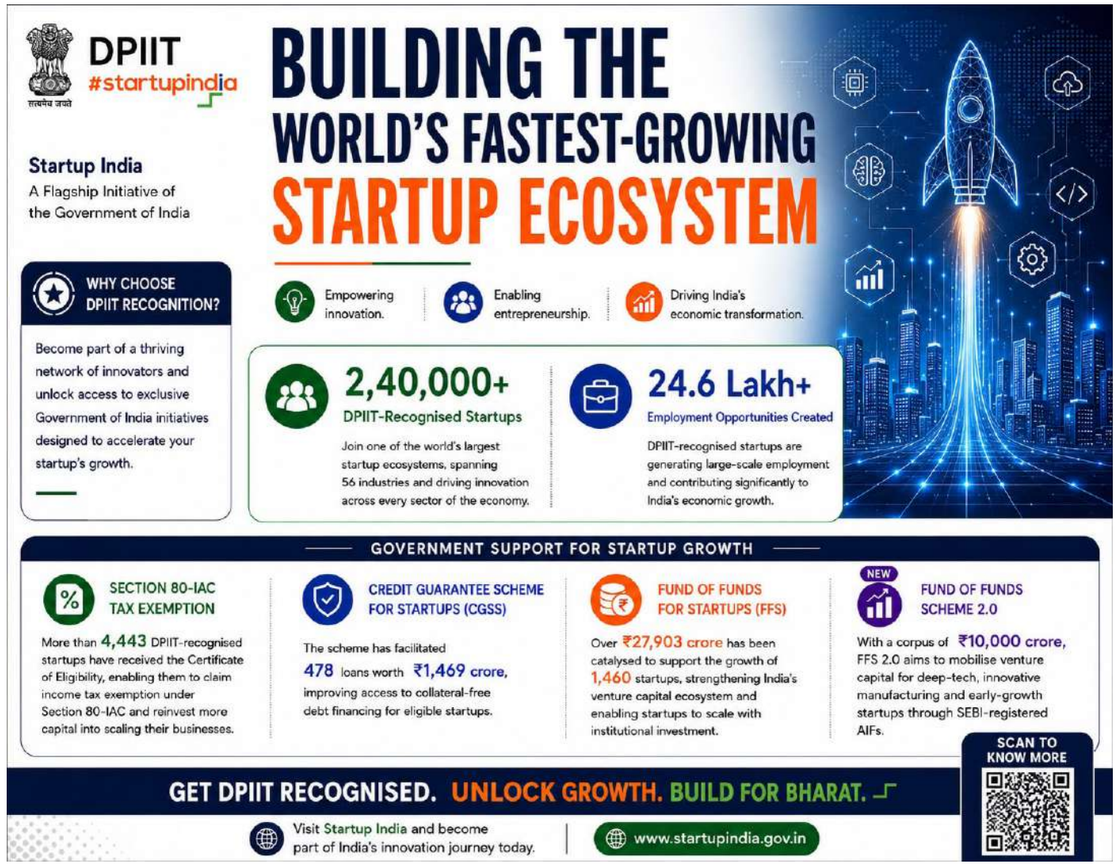
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Email: varun@fddiindia.com	Email: prince@fddindia.com	Email:karan.singh@fddiindia.com

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Asst. Manager, Accounts & Finance, FDDI
Email: rajesh@fddiindia.com





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