

## FDDI Signs MoU with Wadhvani Foundation to Enhance Career Readiness

FDDI has entered into a transformative collaboration with the Wadhvani Foundation (WF) to enhance the career readiness and employability of its students. An MoU has been signed to implement an AI-powered application that will support final-year students across all 12 FDDI campuses for a period of three years, from 2025 to 2028.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Vivek Sharma, IRS, Managing Director (MD), FDDI and Mr. Sunil Dahiya, Executive Vice President (EVP) - WF.

The signing ceremony was conducted in the esteemed presence of Col. Pankaj Kumar Sinha, Secretary, FDDI, Mr. Manoj Agrawal, CAO, FDDI, Mr. Prashant Saxena, Head - Business Development, FDDI-HO, Col. Santosh Jha, Vice President - WF, Mr. Raman Handa, Director - WF, Ms. Priyanka Panwar, Consultant - WF, and Ms. Sheetal Bhandari, Program Manager - WF. The initiative is designed to sharpen soft skills, enhance communication, build confidence, and provide AI-driven mock interviews

and provide AI-driven mock interviews with personalized feedback.

By combining structured training with cutting-edge technology, the program aims to prepare students effectively for placement opportunities and align them with evolving industry expectations.

This partnership underscores FDDI's commitment to equipping its graduates not only with strong technical expertise but also with the employability skills required to succeed in today's competitive global market.

## Shaping Standards: Manak Manthan on Therapeutic Footwear

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Hyderabad Branch Office, in collaboration with FDDI, Hyderabad Campus, organized a Manak Manthan session on the Draft Indian Standard "Therapeutic Footwear (Specification)" - Document No. MHD 09 (27829) WC.

Mr. Rakesh Tanneeru, Scientist E & Director, BIS Hyderabad, opened the session by welcoming represen

tatives from the footwear industry, faculty members from FDDI and GILT Telangana, and student participants. He provided an overview of the draft standard formulated by the Assistive Products Including Rehabilitation Appliances, Orthotic and Prosthetic Items Sectional Committee (MHD 9).

This was followed by a detailed technical presentation by Mr. Aditya Das, Scientist E & Head, Medical Equip

ment and Hospital Planning Department (MHD), BIS New Delhi. He explained that the draft specification defines general and safety requirements for therapeutic footwear designed for individuals with diabetes, neuropathy, at-risk feet, and those vulnerable to foot ulcers. The document also elaborates on material requirements, testing parameters, and test methods, while excluding footwear categories already covered under other standards.

wallets, and portfolios.

The exhibits received high appreciation from dignitaries and visitors alike for their quality, creativity, and craftsmanship. The stall also drew strong interest from international visitors and technical experts from countries including Sri Lanka, Dubai, and Singapore.



## FDDI Hosts National Seminar & Exhibition on India's Footwear Heritage

FDDI Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Pleach India Foundation (PIF), successfully organized a three-day national seminar and exhibition titled "Tales Below the Heels: India Design Language - Footwear Series" from 28-30 November 2025. The event brought together scholars, designers, artisans, academicians, policymakers, and students to explore India's rich and diverse footwear heritage—from sacred Padukas to Juttis, Mojari, Kolhapuris, and other regional traditions.

The initiative aimed to document, revive, and globalize India's indigenous footwear traditions by developing a unified design vocabulary rooted in heritage, while reinforcing commitments to craft preservation, artisan empowerment, and the national vision of Vocal for Local.

The seminar was inaugurated by Mr. Jishnu Dev Varma, Hon'ble Governor of Telangana, in the presence of senior dignitaries including Mr. Jayesh Ranjan, IAS, Special Chief Secretary; Dr. Raghavendra Rao H. Kulkarni, Keynote Speaker; Dr. Narasimhugari Tej Lohit Reddy, IAS, Executive Director, FDDI Hyderabad; and representatives from the Archaeological Survey of India, Pleach India Foundation, and FDDI.

A booklet featuring sculptural evidence of Indian footwear and the Book of Abstracts was released on the occasion. Through multiple offline and online sessions, experts examined historical references to footwear in sculpture, coins, literature, and folk traditions, alongside



A view of the inaugural session

in-depth studies of regional styles such as Mojari, Jutti, Pulla, and Kolhapuri. Discussions highlighted the use of AI and CAD tools for documentation and revival, sustainable and vegan materials, and the fusion of heritage arts with modern ergonomic design. Contemporary perspectives included reinterpretations of traditional forms, embroidery-infused modern footwear, and global fashion insights.

A notable highlight was an intricately carved pair of shoes designed at the FDDI Fursatganj campus, which garnered widespread admiration for its seamless blend of traditional craftsmanship and contemporary design.

The two-day exhibition witnessed participation from nearly 2,000 entrepreneurs, with over 80 footwear component and machinery manufacturers from across India, reaffirming SHOETECH Kanpur's significance as a major industry platform and underscoring FDDI's strong industry engagement and design excellence.

A parallel public exhibition and artisan workshops showcased traditional footwear from across India with live demonstrations by master craftsmen. Dedicated panel discussions addressed craft sustainability, evolving techniques, and challenges faced by artisan communities, alongside a special session on sustainable and circular footwear practices featuring industry leaders.

