

COVER STORY

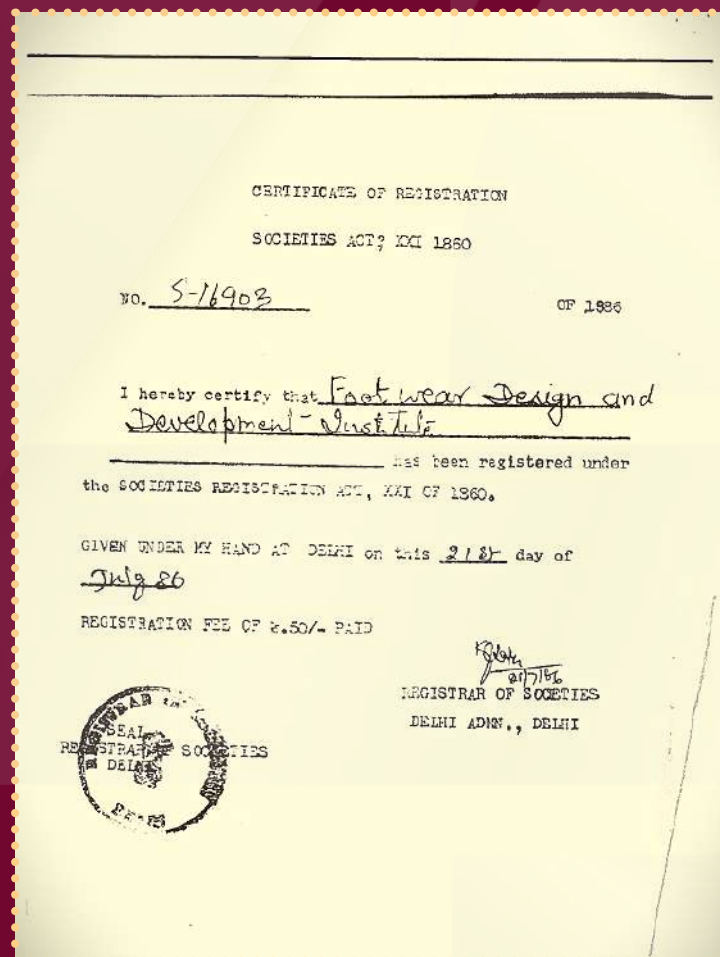
FDDI

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

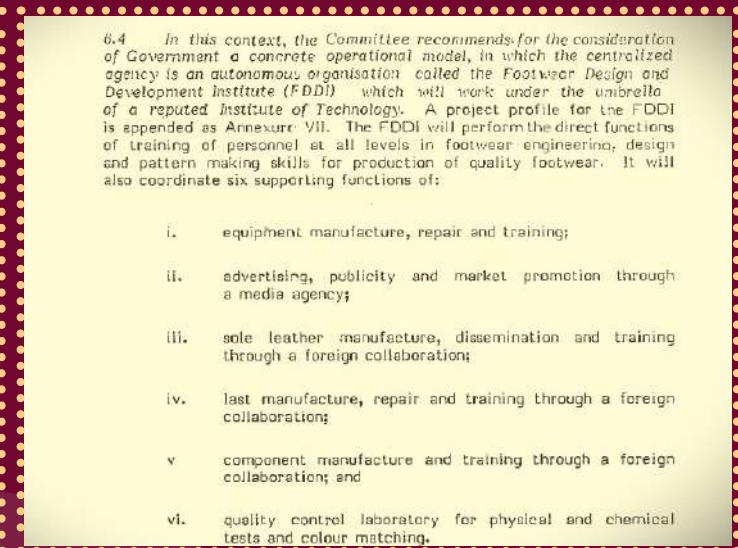
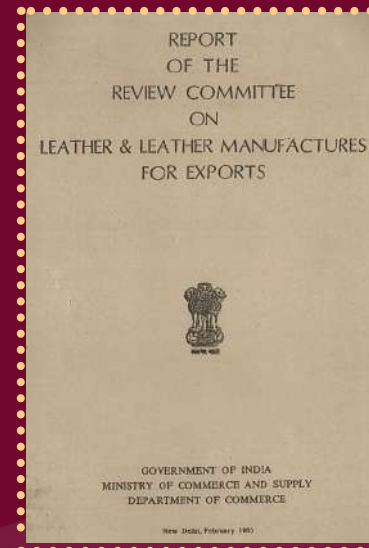
On **21st July 1986**, Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI) was registered as a Society under the aegis of the Government of India with a visionary objective to strengthen India's footwear sector through specialized education, training, technology and industrial development. At a time when 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, 21st July, 1986



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. Amarendra Sinha, IAS, first MD-FDDI interacting with dignitaries



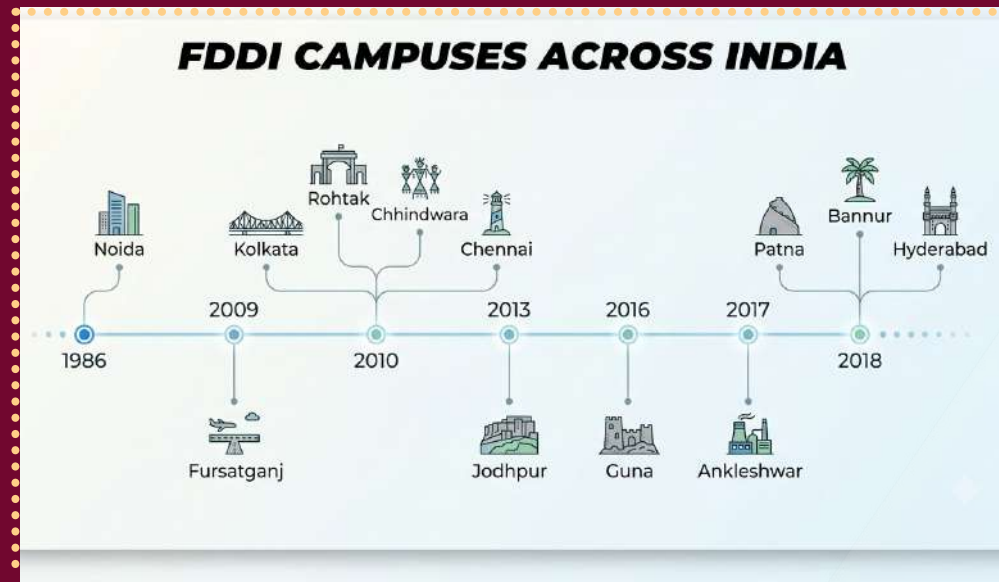
Mr. Thomas Bata interacting with students

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.

Training and Empowering the Unorganized Sector:



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.

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.



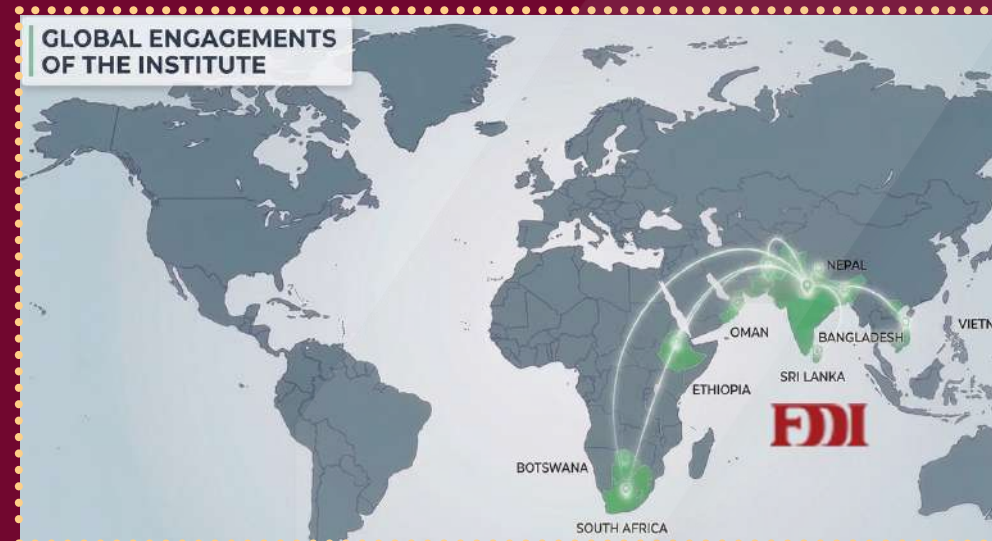
These programmes focused on imparting entry-level technical skills through structured training and industry exposure, ensuring direct linkage between training and employment opportunities.

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.



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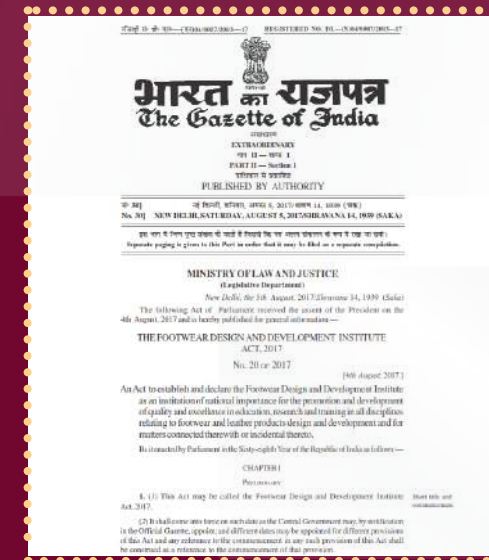
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A Historic Recognition. Institution of National Importance:

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.



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. Amarendra 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	—

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.

