



**FDDI**  
HYDERABAD

  
**PLEACH**  
Connecting the Roots

Pleach India Foundation  
&  
Footwear Design and  
Development Institute (FDDI), Hyderabad

presents

# Tales Below the Heels

Three-Day National Seminar & Exhibition on the **Footwear Heritage of India**  
(India Design Language – Footwear)

Date: 28–30<sup>th</sup> November, 2025

Venue: FDDI, Hyderabad Campus



# Concept Note

India's design traditions have long transcended borders, shaping global aesthetics in textiles, jewelry, and decorative arts. Today, this influence is visible on international runways, where luxury brands reinterpret Indian forms.

**Prada's recent sandals, reminiscent of the traditional Kolhapuri chappals,** are one such example bringing to light both the enduring appeal of Indian craftsmanship and the debates around cultural appropriation and authorship.

**"Tales Below the Heels"** positions Indian footwear within this wider conversation. Far more than functional objects, shoes in India are carriers of meaning: the sacred padukas referenced in mythology and sculpture, the finely embroidered juttis and mojris of royal courts, and the rugged Kolhapuris woven into everyday life. In alignment with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of **"Vocal for Local"** and **"Atmanirbhar Bharat,"** FDDI's event is also a part of the **"India Design Language – Footwear"** initiative, celebrating indigenous design sensibilities and craftsmanship. Each form embodies regional artistry, social identity, and ritual value, while continuing to inspire contemporary designers across the world.

This exhibition and seminar invite visitors and participants to trace the remarkable journey of Indian footwear—its histories, its living practices, and its global resonances. By doing so, it connects the story of what we wear to the larger narrative of India's design heritage: **inventive, resilient, and ever relevant.**







We invite **scholars, researchers, designers, and practitioners** to contribute papers and presentations on the themes listed below. Selected contributions will be showcased during the National Seminar & Exhibition Tales Below the Heels, offering a platform to share original research, insights, and creative perspectives on India's footwear heritage.

### Key Themes

Historical Trajectories of Indian Footwear

Regional Styles, Materials, and Craftsmanship

Footwear & Society

Cultural, Socio-Economic & Ritual Significance of Footwear

Footwear in Literature, Performing Arts & Visual Culture

The Future of Footwear Heritage – Preservation, Documentation & Revival of Footwear Traditions

Footwear as Cultural Heritage: Bridging Past and Future

Contemporary Design Innovations Inspired by Tradition

**Last Date for Abstract Submission:**  
23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

**Accommodation:** Provision of accommodation will be extended to all outstation paper presenters.

**Link for Submission:**  
<https://pleachindia.org/tales-below-the-heels>

### Coordinators

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# About



Pleach India Foundation is a registered non-profit organisation with 12A, 80G, and CSR approvals, dedicated to preserving and promoting India's rich cultural heritage. The name "Pleach" means "to entwine and create a hedge" symbolising our mission of weaving together the many strands of India's legacy. It also stands as an acronym: Preserve, Learn, Educate, Art, Culture, Heritage the values at the heart of our work.

From documenting Deccani miniature paintings and curating India's journey through a Mini Museum, to mobilising communities through our Preserve Heritage for Posterity (PHP) program, to supporting restoration of historical structures such as The British Residency in Hyderabad to hosting Pleach Talks with experts to creating thematic brochures on monuments and traditions- Pleach aims towards creating an ecosystem for all stakeholders in heritage spaces.

This is integral to our conviction that historical heritage is not just about the past, but is a living resource that inspires sustainable development of our country.



The Footwear Design & Development Institute (FDDI) was established in 1986 under the aegis of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. Its primary objectives are to develop skilled human resources for the footwear and allied industries, provide world-class infrastructure, and support India's growth as a leading hub for quality footwear production and export.

Over the years, FDDI has played a pivotal role in bridging the skill gap in footwear, leather accessories, and lifestyle products, while promoting innovation and excellence. In recognition of its contribution, FDDI was conferred the status of an "Institution of National Importance" under the FDDI Act 2017.

As part of its continued efforts to strengthen India's design ecosystem, FDDI has launched the "India Design Language – Footwear" initiative – an ambitious program aimed at defining and celebrating a distinctly Indian design identity in footwear.

The Hyderabad campus is one of FDDI's premier centres, imparting education and training in Footwear, Leather Products, Retail and Fashion Merchandise, and Fashion Design, thereby shaping the next generation of professionals in the industry.

*"A civilization's footprints are best studied by what it wears beneath"*

HYDERABAD