

TAI, Mumbai Unit Activities

Press Report of

Industry | Academia | NGO Interaction Meet

held on Monday, 3rd December 2025, at TAI, Mumbai Unit Office

Industry | Academia | NGO Interaction Meet was held on 3rd December 2025 at the office The Textile Association (India), Mumbai Unit. The meeting was curated by Dr. Ela Dedhia, Founder Director of Anveshanam Foundation. The collaborators were The Textile Association (India), Mumbai Unit and Textile Value Chain. 4 from non profit, 8 from Industry, 5 from Academia were gathered for the interaction.

The meeting brought together representatives from academia and the textile and fashion industries to address the widening gap between institutional education and real-world industry expectations. Participants expressed shared concern that graduates entering the textile sector often lack foundational knowledge, hands-on skills, and professional readiness required by employers.

The discussion began with reflections on the responsibility of individuals and institutions to contribute to society by preparing future generations with relevant skills. Speakers stressed that while funding can support infrastructure and growth, the more significant need is knowledge exchange, mentoring, and industry engagement.

A recurring point was the role of curriculum design. Autonomous colleges are able to revise curricula more frequently and adapt to emerging industry trends, whereas affiliated institutions face lengthy approval processes through university governing bodies, delaying updates for years. With rapidly evolving technologies and market shifts in textiles, this misalignment contributes to students graduating with outdated knowledge.

Speakers pointed out that curriculum revision alone is not enough—implementation must include practical learning, exposure visits, and real-time industry insights. Many noted that students often lack understanding of basic textile terminology, machinery, production processes, sustainability frameworks, and supply chain realities. The panel agreed that experiential learning must become central rather than peripheral to education.



The New Education Policy (NEP 2020) was acknowledged as a strong framework promoting flexibility, interdisciplinary learning, soft skills, elective pathways, and social responsibility. Examples were shared of institutions integrating open electives, sustainable design principles, internships, rural craft documentation modules, and industry placements. However, participants emphasized that the policy's strength lies in thoughtful application aligned with industry needs—not superficial compliance.

Speakers also highlighted a gap in student expectations and motivation. Many students enter fashion and textile programs with idealized, glamorous perceptions shaped by media, without understanding the technical and operational depth of the field. Counseling and structured guidance must help students recognize the broad ecosystem behind fashion — from yarn and fiber innovation to manufacturing, distribution, sustainability, and entrepreneurship.

The industry representatives underscored that in the workplace, attitude, discipline, willingness to learn, and problem-solving mindset matter just as much as technical knowledge. Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, time management, and accountability must be intentionally built during the academic experience, not left to post-graduation learning.

A shared sentiment emerged that meaningful change requires partnership—not isolated effort. Institutions need access to working professionals who can provide guest lectures, mentorship, project feedback, and internship opportunities. Industry needs graduates who are competent, adaptable, and prepared to contribute from day one. Both sectors must co-create solutions rather than work independently.

The meeting concluded with a collective agreement to move beyond discussion and toward structured, actionable collaboration. Participants expressed commitment to exploring internships, expert-led modules, site visits, curriculum advisory roles, and knowledge-sharing programs to strengthen the ecosystem and empower the next generation of textile and fashion professionals.

ACTION PLAN

PHASE 1: FOUNDATION (0–3 Months)

1. Establish a Joint Working Group

Responsibility: Lead faculty representatives + Industry members

Tasks:

Identify 5–7 core members (balanced academia–industry representation)

Define meeting frequency (monthly/bi-monthly)

Assign roles: Curriculum liaison, internship coordinator, guest expert coordinator, documentation coordinator

2. Industry Needs Mapping

Responsibility: Industry working group members

Tasks:

Share a list of essential competencies required for entry-level roles

Categorize into:

Technical skills (fabric science, machinery basics, GSM, materials)

Soft skills (communication, discipline, timelines, reporting)

Applied skills (sustainability, digital tools, costing, compliance)

Share a knowledge priority list with institutions

3. Academic Gap Review

Responsibility: Academic curriculum teams

Tasks:

Compare current curriculum with industry needs

Identify outdated modules

Highlight missing or underrepresented areas

Share findings with the working group

PHASE 2: CAPACITY BUILDING (3–9 Months)

4. Develop a "Mini-Module Series" with Industry Experts

Responsibility: Joint Working Group

Structure:

8–12 short modules (2–6 hours each)

Delivered online or in-person

Topics may include:

- Textile machinery basics
- Sustainability and SDGs
- Emerging technologies

Industry work culture and expectations
Pricing, costing & sampling

5. Strengthen Internship Framework

Responsibility: Institutional Internship Cell + Industry partners

Tasks:

Create a standard internship guideline (duration, evaluation, learning outcomes)

Ensure internships include supervised exposure (not only admin tasks)

Develop reflection reports or project-based output formats for students

6. Industry Exposure Programs

Responsibility: Institutions with industry support

Activities: Mill visits Factory tours

Process demonstrations (spinning–weaving–finishing)

At least two exposure activities per semester

PHASE 3: INTEGRATION (9–18 Months)

7. Curriculum Alignment

Responsibility: Academic leadership + working group advisors

Steps:

Update curriculum content based on Phases 1–2 learnings

Add electives, lab work, and applied modules

Integrate sustainability and digital literacy

Ensure flexibility through NEP frameworks

8. Industry-Backed Student Projects

Responsibility: Mentors from both sides

Examples:

Material innovation

Repurposing waste/responsible production

Local craft-based design

Technical R&D projects

Small applied research papers

9. Faculty Development

Responsibility: Industry trainers + academia coordinators

Activities:

Annual masterclasses

Short industrial training

Peer learning sessions across colleges

PHASE 4: CONTINUITY & SCALE (18+ Months)

10. Create a Digital Repository

Responsibility: Consortium IT + knowledge management team

Content:

Case studies

Recorded expert sessions

Industry updates

Glossary and standards

Best practices in textiles and sustainability

11. Annual Symposium / Showcase

Purpose: Review progress, share research, display student industry projects, announce new collaborations.

12. Monitoring & Evaluation

Responsibility: Working Group Secretariat

Metrics may include:

Number of trained students

Internship to job conversion rate

Industry modules delivered

Curriculum innovation index

Student performance and feedback

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

✓ Industry-ready graduates with practical understanding

✓ Stronger continuity between academic theory and industrial practice

✓ Shared responsibility in shaping the next generation

✓ Reduced skill and expectation gaps

✓ Sustainable long-term collaboration ecosystem