



**CAD/CAM APPLICATIONS:
A DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY FOR
THE POTENTIAL FOOTWEAR
INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA**

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Abstract

The Sri Lankan Small and Medium scale Enterprise (SME) footwear industry is at crossroads. In order for the SME sector to survive and thrive in this competitive market, advanced technology needs to be introduced among other incentives. Developmental strategies for this industry are vital given the economic condition of these organisations and the global context of the footwear industry. The overall objective of this research is to identify the present state of technology usage in the SME footwear industry and to recommend pragmatic solutions to develop it.

Data was collected from the random sample ($n_x=14$) from the target population ($S_x=40$). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants during the "Footwear and leather fair in 2007", which was jointly organized by the IOB and the Sri Lanka Footwear Association held at Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall (BMICH) on 24th and 25th of November 2007. Further, unstructured interviews were conducted to collect data from the sample of experts ($n_y=4$) selected from industry to obtain the experts' view about the industry to set benchmarks for the Common Resource Centre (CRC) and to validate the information collected from semi-structured interviews. Comprehensive analysis of the data elicited through the semi-structured and unstructured interviews was carried out.

The main outcome of this study is a proposal with recommendations based on stakeholder and expert views for a CRC, which is to provide services to the footwear industry. Since the large-scale manufacturers may be able to maintain their own Computer Aided Design and Computer Aided Manufacturing (CAD/CAM) facilities, the proposed centre is to provide services especially to the potential SMEs. This CRC mainly will consist of CAD/CAM division, testing and laboratory services division, education, training and skills development division, research development (R&D) division, and administration and customer care division to provide services to the industry. The facts gathered suggest the immediate need of the establishment of CRC to uplift the potential SME footwear industry.