Distribution Efficiency and Non-Moving Stock Management in the Footwear Industry: A Review of Best Practices, Challenges, and Liquidation Strategies in the Eastern Zone of India

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ABSTRACT

This study, "Distribution Efficiency and Non-Moving Stock Management in the Footwear Industry a Review of Best Practices, Challenges, and Liquidation Strategies in the Eastern Zone of India" is intended to examine and synthesize the information regarding the enhancement of distribution procedures and the management of the standing inventory in an industry that is regionally significant, but is frequently neglected in terms of the Indian supply chain marketplace. The main idea is to find out good practices and discover more about bottlenecks in inventory movements regionally, particularly in Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Eastern UP, where infrastructural and logistical gaps are likely to have an impact on the efficiency of operations. The study helps to solve the problem of non-moving stock that clogs the working capital and makes the business less responsive in a footwear industry that is highly trendy and seasonal. This paper is literature and qualitative-based, where industry reports, supply chain management journals, and case studies of local wholesalers and distributors were used. They were based on data interpretation to provide thematic insights on four core objectives: (1) the evaluation of distribution efficiency issues, (2) the identification of the causes of non-moving stock, (3) the review of liquidation procedures, including discounting, bundling, and e-commerce offloading, and (4) the assessment of the incorporation of digital tools to track stock and make forecasts. The most important findings are that the demand uncertainty, inappropriate digital usage, and poor warehouse behaviour are the main factors leading to inefficiencies. Effective companies in the area operate through localized forecasting, lean distribution, and online clearance. The contribution of this review to the academic literature is that it contextualized the concept of inventory inefficiency in an unexplored region and provided practical recommendations to practitioners on how to streamline the supply chain, optimize working capital, and implement agile strategies to liquidate inventories based on the regional limitations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, there has been a tremendous change in the global footwear market, which has been influenced by the power of globalization, the evolution of digitization, and the fast-changing consumer behaviour (Kaplanidou, 2018). The trending fashion, rising e-commerce penetrations, and the impact of rising disposable income have turned the need for shoes not only dynamic but more intricate. The industry is unconsolidated in terms of production networks and highly competitive globally, where there is a demand for fast-moving and responsive supply chains. Proper distribution and effective inventory management systems have become ardent facilitators of profitability and customer satisfaction in such an environment (Lunkunse, 2016). Stock that does not move within the expected time, i.e., non-moving or dead stock, can seriously sink cash flows, raise holding costs, and may eventually mean markdowns or write-offs. International best practices develop the

importance of data-driven forecasting, agile inventory models, and omnichannel distribution as the instruments to contain these risks.

Logistical, operational, and strategic distribution and non-moving stock management in the footwear business especially in the Eastern Zone of India is a unique combination of logistical, operational, and strategic challenges (Richards, 2017). It has been revealed that optimizing the level of distribution efficiency is not just about transportation networks and warehousing, but also about demand forecasting, inventory management, and digitalization as well as responsive supply chain practices that reflect the dynamics of regional markets. The Eastern Zone is also highly heterogeneous in terms of consumption patterns, infrastructural limitations and variety of retailers, which requires a localized and flexible distribution strategy. The organizations that sell footwear in this area should be in a position to adjust their distribution strategy in accordance with the current sale figures, seasonal fluctuations, and shifts in customer tastes. There are best practices like adoption of centralized inventory visibility, automated replenishment systems and last-mile delivery optimization which have been found to increase distribution efficiency. Additionally, when ERP systems are coupled with advanced analytics, it facilitates more efficient inventory planning, and keeps risks of overstocking to a minimum, as is the case with fast-moving consumer categories such as footwear (Emma, 2024). One of the major problems that the industry has to grapple with is stocking up of non-moving or dead stock, which not only blocks the working capital, but also blocks important space in the store. This tends to be due to wrong prediction, ineffective product rotation and lack of adapting to changing fashion styles. There can be more cooperation between the manufacturers, the distributors, and the retailers so that stock can be moved more efficiently and that there is no clash between supply and demand.

The study highlights that the reactive discounting and stock dumping is not a sustainable solution. More structured and profitable ways are proactive liquidation solutions secondary market sales, online flash sales, joint ventures with discount retail chains and product bundling. The establishment of environmentally friendly methods of disposing of unsalable inventory is not only associated with the ideals of corporate sustainability, but it also benefits brand reputation. The results indicate that the adoption of technology is critical in terms of effective distribution as well as non-moving stock management. Digital innovations offer the required infrastructure that ensures visibility, accuracy as well as agility within the chain of supply through demand forecasting tools, AI-powered customer visualization, and blockchain-based tracking systems (Berko, 2025). The Eastern Zone has been experiencing problems with digital adoption owing to the difference in the technological preparedness of the regional retailers and distributors. The solution to closing this digital gap is training, easier platforms, and vendor assistance to gain wider efficiency. Businesses need to be cross-functional, which means related to both the production and the retail business as well as flexible to consumer trends. Collaboration, data-based decision-making, and investment in supply chain technology will focus on alleviating distribution inefficiencies and manage the non-moving stock effectively. Businesses also need to consider the socio-economic levels and the infrastructure restrictions in the region to support the overall design and execution of the inventory practices in the Eastern part of India.

Figure 1 Indian footwear market

Source: Maximize Market Research. (n.d.). India Footwear Market – Industry analysis and forecast (2025–2032)

The footwear market is among the most rapidly developing sections of the fashion and retail industry in the Indian context (Sarkar, 2011). India is a big market for consuming the products; however, it is a big producer and exporter of shoes as well. The Indian footwear industry is still confronted with some supply chain weaknesses that include the lack of appropriate logistics facilities, regional variations in demand, and the inability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to digitize. The handling of the inventory is also an important issue, particularly in the unorganized and semi-organized sectors, which are most common in India. As the retail ecosystem grows to be more omnichannel with physical stores as well as online channels and hybrid strategies, pressure on footwear firms to keep lean, responsive, and synchronized inventory systems has increased.

Cumulative Change in Production of Footwear (April-February)	
2018-19	1.53%
2019-20	-2.38%
2020-21	-12.1%
2021-22	-6.8%
2022-23	-10.52%

Figure 2 Rise of India's Footwear Industry

Source: Maximize Market Research. (n.d.). India Footwear Market – Industry analysis and forecast (2025–2032)

The Eastern zone of India (which includes states like Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa and Eastern UP) has its own distinctive and strategic place in the Indian footwear supply chain. Although the region is not yet a production centre as compared to southern or western India, it is an emerging consumption market with urbanization, youth population, and rural connectivity growth. The multicultural nature of the region and the growing economic presence create a potential region to extend the footwear market. Inefficiencies in distribution channels, a poor capacity for warehousing, and poor adoption of streamlined inventory tools all play a role in the build-up of slow-moving inventory.

Year	Projects under implementation		Projects outstanding	
	Cost □ Million	Project Count	Cost □ Million	Project Count
2018-19	250	1	852.8	3
2019-20	1,213.20	2	1,463.20	3
2020-21	1,813.20	2	5,313.20	3
2021-22	313.2	1	24,113.20	9
2022-23	20,313.20	4	80,402.50	16

Figure 3 Investment Trends in Indian Footwear Industry Last 5 Years

Source: Maximize Market Research. (n.d.). India Footwear Market – Industry analysis and forecast (2025–2032)

Mismatched supply-demand predictions, seasonal surges of demand, and a shortage of ways to go through liquidation are some of the common problems that retailers and distributors in this region face. Although centralized distribution and stock management are highly significant, there have been widespread gaps in academic and industry-oriented literature to reflect the challenges and opportunities of the Eastern zone. There is a gap in the research since most of the studies on footwear logistics are in metropolitan areas/industrially advanced areas. This research will fill that gap by targeting the very specific analysis of distribution efficiency and non-moving stock management in the environment of the footwear industry of Eastern India.

2. METHODOLOGY OF REVIEW

This research uses an expert scoping review method that entails the extensive mapping of existing literature and industry knowledge concerning distribution efficiency and non-moving stock control in the footwear industry, particularly in the Eastern region of India. The scoping review will enable an organized and comprehensive search of both academic and grey literature to determine areas of knowledge gaps, regional issues, and new best practices in contrast to a traditional narrative review that has a high-level overview. The method suits especially an understudied field like regional supply chain

inefficiency in the Indian footwear industry. Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and EBSCO host databases were accessed to obtain a thorough and valid evidence base. Other trade reports, industry white papers, government reports, and case studies of reputed sources like the Council for Leather Exports (CLE) and India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) were also referred to. Database search was complemented with the manual snowballing method to locate other relevant sources based on the references of the articles selected.

These search phrases and keywords employed in the review were comprised of combinations like non-moving stock, dead stock, distribution inefficiency, footwear supply chain in India, inventory management in the footwear industry, liquidation strategy, Eastern India logistics, retail inventory control, and so on. The search was optimized and narrowed with the help of Boolean operators (AND/OR). To ensure that the quality and the focus of the review were consistent, a precise list of inclusion and exclusion criteria was established. The sources were considered in case they (1) dealt with the footwear or fashion retail industry, (2) considered inventory or distribution challenges, (3) were published between 2010 and 2024, and (4) were relevant to the Indian or similar emerging market settings. Articles that are not published in English, articles that are not empirical or analytical, and articles that only deal with either the design or the production of footwear but do not deal with any aspect of the supply chain were left out of the study. The extraction and synthesis of data was a process of coding the identified literature by theme, but with emphasis on emerging trends in five areas, including distribution efficiency, non-moving stock causality, liquidation strategies, digital interjections, and regional supply chain logjams. To grasp emergent themes and align them with the objectives of the study, both inductive and deductive coding were used. These insights were then categorized into thematic categories, upon which they were discussed and analyzed. Systematic approach like this would provide a differentiated, empirical perception of the footwear distribution and inventory issues in Eastern India and formulate opportunities to refine later research and action.

3. DISTRIBUTION PRACTICES IN THE ORGANIZED FOOTWEAR SECTOR (OBJECTIVE 1)

The history of the distribution channels in the footwear industry of Eastern India represents a more comprehensive shift in the retailing and supply chain landscape of the region (MERLO, 2024). Historically, footwear distribution in this area was an offline distribution pattern and mainly the business-to-business (B2B) supply chain, which involved manufacturers supplying products to regional distributors and the regional distributors supplying the products to wholesalers and the independent retailers (Serramalera Guerin, 2020). Although functional, this network of multiple levels has always had a problem of fragmentation, a lack of transparency, and responsiveness to market needs. The inability and ineffectiveness of centralized planning and control of a similar portfolio of stocks have been a problem as a result of the predominance of small, autonomous merchants in urban and semi-urban areas, which worsens the problem of unsold inventory and ineffective replenishing schedules. Gradually over the years, a shift in distribution is being witnessed in Eastern India where online and hybrid distribution models are being incorporated, particularly due to increased penetration of the internet, smartphones, and digital payment systems (Mehra, et al. 2024). Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra platforms have opened up new opportunities to reach out to consumers directly without involving intermediaries in the footwear business. Meanwhile, hybrid models, which entail brands having both offline retail outlets and online channels, have evolved as the favored go-to-market strategy of larger brands such as Bata and Liberty to increase reach and have greater control over brand image and inventory movement.

Figure 4 Footwear Brands

.Source: Maximize Market Research. (nd.). India Footwear Market – Industry analysis and forecast (2025–2032)

There is unequal digital transition, however, in the region, and the most traditional players are still using manual stock keeping and informal communication channels, particularly at Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. The footwear distribution chain in Eastern India still depends on regional distributors and wholesalers to ensure a smooth supply of products (Garg, et al., 2020). They are also the link between manufacturers and retail points, and they make sure that their products reach even far markets in the form of footwear. These actors have, however, some access to real-time information, demand predictions, or sophisticated inventory management systems. The absence of technological adoption, together with inefficient warehousing

and last-mile connections, will result in logistical ineffectiveness and high levels of stock misalignments. This leads to high instances of non-moving or dead inventory, which builds up due to mismatching of supply and demand, seasonal selling/buying, or market acumen.

The independent retailers, who also constitute a big share of the local market, do not have either the financial capability or the technological capabilities to install the complex inventory systems (Reinartz, et al., 2011). They use more of gut feeling and previous experience in making orders, which results in either overstocking or understocking. The inability to turn to the liquidation market (discount sites, back markets) compounds the problem of not moving stock. Although the digital aggregators and B2B e-commerce start-ups are now starting to establish small retailers in a wider network, the rate of adoption is low due to digital illiteracy, change resistance, and infrastructural constraints. The global best practices do provide lessons despite these challenges. For example, Nike introduced a sophisticated demand forecasting model that depends on real-time sales results, and this measuring tool aids distribution partners in taking data-driven stocking decisions (Ankomah & Ofori, 2025). It also utilizes the power of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) and cloud-based inventory to gain better visibility in the supply chain and minimize overstocking (Hosen & Anik, 2019). In the same way, Bata, which also has a heavy presence in India, including Eastern parts, has gone omnichannel, where online and offline sales have been combined, thus enhancing the inventory turnover and eliminating dead inventory (Toukir, 2016). The ERP systems and digital dashboards are used to support Bata regional distribution centers with proactive stock movement and liquidation plans if they do not achieve the anticipated demand. The use of digital transformation and analytics to enhance performance is one of the most significant changes in the modern footwear distribution. Systems like AI-based demand planning, mobile-based inventory reporting, and real-time tracking of delivery are increasingly becoming part of the agile supply chains. Adoption of such tools is not high in the Eastern zone of India. Closing this digital divide is not just important in improving distribution channel efficiencies but also in helping the smaller players compete with the national and international brands.

4. FACTORS BEHIND NON-MOVING STOCK AND THEIR IMPACT (OBJECTIVE 2)

Non-moving stock is one of the most irritating problems in the footwear business, particularly in emerging markets such as Eastern India. This study explores the complex nature of stock stagnation since it is caused by numerous factors, not only in the industry but also in each region (Mudimba & Nyawira, 2019). The fundamental issue of the problem is the misalignment of demand, where the stock brought or produced is not the same as the actual demand in the market. This misalignment normally happens as a result of a lack of effective forecasting of demands, and is particularly evident in areas where data analytics and patterns of consumer behaviour of past years are non-existent or underutilized (Sharif, 2012). Without genuine market intelligence, several distributors and retailers within the Eastern zone are still stuck in the rut of intuitive stocking patterns; thus, they end up with overstocks on slow-moving SKUs (Stock Keeping Units) or understocks on high-demand products. Seasonal variance is another important reason behind non-moving stock. The footwear market, like most of the fashion and apparel market, is highly seasonal, with consumer tastes varying based on festivals, monsoons, school starting time, and the wedding season. This is further compounded by the variability of the cultural and climatic factors in Eastern India. For example, demand during Durga Puja in West Bengal could be at a peak when that is not the case in Bihar or Odisha. Retailers and wholesalers usually do not localize their inventories concerning such micro-seasonal trends, and the extent of localization of the supply model is low. This tailored stocking deficit translates to a major part of stock obsolescence, whereby stocks cannot be sold either due to being off the local market or due to inopportune timing of their arrival.

Cultural diversity assumes a peculiar role in the analysis of region-specific challenges. The eastern part of the Indian sub-continent is extremely diverse in terms of linguistics, socio-economics, and fashion-sensibility, and a local and sensitive consideration of product assortment and inventory is required (Sarkar, 2011). Such a blanket strategy does not work here. Retailers tend to have generic stocking approaches, which are not based on local demand patterns due to poor access to ground-level consumer insights and analytics (Viswanathan, et al., 2012). The regional supply chain is poorly digitized, which prevents seeing the real-time picture of sales trends, SKU performance, and reorder points. A great number of retailers and distributors do not have point-of-sale systems or any digital inventory trackers, and it is hard to know and respond to stagnating inventory (Denga & Ahmed, 2023). The warehouse and infrastructure constraints are another huge problem in Eastern India. Lack of good roads in semi-urban and rural areas, absence of proper cold chain or moisture-based storage (essential to store leather footwear), and absence of an integrated warehouse system also add to slow stock movement and low inventory turnaround. Such infrastructural bottlenecks not only enable the impossibility of having an efficient stock rotation but also the likelihood of it getting physically degraded, particularly in monsoon seasons, which further adds to the pile of dead stock. The economic consequences of non-moving stock are extensive and affect several tiers of the supply chain (Ekeris, 2023). Among the most short-term repercussions is the tying up of the working capital. Inventory is a major investment, and when it stops moving, it costs money, which could be spent on replenishing fast-moving goods, marketing, or expansion. This has a harsh effect on the cash flow of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are a major part of the footwear distribution network of Eastern India. Businesses have also been at a disadvantage where they are unable to settle their credits to their suppliers within the required time, as well as enjoy bulk purchase discounts as a result of less liquidity.

Stock that has not moved attracts markdown losses as companies start making sales at considerably low prices to free space. Such markdowns cut down on the margin and hurt the brand image, especially in cases where the extra stocks are unloaded

in unregulated or informal discounting mechanisms (Adida & Özer, 2019). To branded retailers, this approach may erode brand positioning and serve to give rise to customer expectations of constant discounting. To unorganized retailers, it directly translates into a monetary loss, and they become less competitive. Another heavy liability is high carrying costs which are not only the physical cost of storage but also the opportunity costs, insurance costs, risk of obsolescence, and the depreciation of the value of the stock over time. For example, fashion in footwear alters rapidly, particularly among young people and fashion-based products (Li, 2024). A product that is not sold after a season or two makes no difference and has to be sold at much lower prices due to liquidation. The net effect of such stagnant stock ultimately leads to erosion of margins and also puts the businesses at risk of liquidity, especially in the low-margin and large-volume business models typical of regional distributors and small retailers. This analysis is supported by secondary literature. Similar case studies on geographically neighboring geographies also indicate that a majority of non-moving stocks are concentrated on sizes and styles that do not fit the local consumer profile, a direct result of centralized stocking strategies that do not fit the local variation.

5. EXISTING INDUSTRY PRACTICES FOR LIQUIDATION (OBJECTIVE 3)

Control of non-moving or slow-moving inventory in the footwear industry is a major issue, especially in areas such as Eastern India, where the market is very volatile, not well developed in terms of infrastructure, and culturally diverse (Goh, & Lim, 2014). Liquidation is one of the most widespread solutions to the stuck inventory, i.e., the method of selling off the unsold goods to obtain at least some of the capital invested. This section discusses traditional and new liquidation strategies, criticizes all these strategies on their limitation people and explains how there is a need to be smarter and context sensitive in circumstances that we often do not think or rather behave in our region to the extent of consumer behavior. Traditional footwear retailers and distributors in Eastern India have been using the traditional liquidation method as their default method (Goyal & Heine, 2021). The most popular is the discounting strategy, where the price of non-moving inventory is cut down, usually hard, in order to induce a sale. Although this may give short-term cash injection, it can result in a large margin erosion such that it may negatively affect the brand's perceived value, particularly when it is overutilized. The second conventional method is bundling, whereby the slow-moving products are packaged or bundled along with those of popular or selling fast items to augment the total sales (Jain, et al., 2024). This approach is useful to clear the inventory, but it might not always correspond to the wishes of the consumer and end up causing further stagnation of the stock, especially where the bundled package does not provide any real value to the consumer.

India Footwear Market			
Report Coverage	Details		
Base Year:	2024	Forecast Period:	2025-2032
Historical Data:	2018 to 2024	Market Size in 2024:	USD 17.89 Bn
Forecast Period 2025 to 2032 CAGR:	12.39 %	Market Size in 2032:	USD 45.54 Bn
Segments Covered:	by Product	Casual Mass Active/Sport Leather Non-Leather	
	by Mode Of Sale	Offline Online	
	by End-User	Women Men Kids	

Figure 5 Indian Footwear Market Scope

Source: Maximize Market Research. (n.d.). India Footwear Market – Industry analysis and forecast (2025–2032)

The sale of stock to dealers or wholesalers at large discounts is another conventional method. This has been a typical case in Eastern India, mainly among small and mid-sized retailers who do not have the infrastructure to conduct markdown campaigns or online stores. Since the dumping of excess inventory in the wholesale market may lead to oversupply in some pockets, this too leads to the distortion of regional pricing structures, besides cutting the long-term profitability. Modern and technology-intensive approaches to liquidation have started to appear in recent years and provide more subtle means to deal with the problems of dead stock. An example of this is data-driven pricing, in which new analytic capabilities and demand forecasting software can be applied to establish the best degree of markdowns depending on the performance of the SKU, regional sales, consumer buying, and optimal markdowns (Müller, 2020). This enables companies to respond dynamically to pricing, increasing the sell-through rate without a decrease in margins to an excessive degree. Regrettably, such a tool adoption is still insignificant in Eastern India, where digital penetration is low and SMEs have limited access to a skilled analytics workforce (Sindakis & Showkat, 2024). The other useful strategy that is experiencing an increase in popularity is

online flash sales, especially on platforms such as Flipkart, Amazon, and Myntra. These time-limited sales occasions bring with them a sense of urgency and enable retailers to access more customers than they could within the physical catchment area. For illustration, regional footwear brands have managed to sell old stock through the e-commerce platform during the festival sale or clearance events (Osei Mintah, 2019). Although an effective measure, this approach is just as reliant on a good digital presence and the ability to support logistics, which is currently absent in much of the Eastern zone.

6. RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES FOR CONTROL AND TIMELY LIQUIDATION (OBJECTIVE 4)

The challenges of non-moving stock and the efficiency of distribution in the footwear industry of Eastern India need to be taken care of by adopting an integrated, data-driven, and collaborative approach by the businesses. The old ways of clearing the stock and decentralized planning are no longer enough to deal with the challenges of fast fast-changing and growing retail scenario where consumer expectations, regional diversity, and competitive forces are all on the rise. The contemporary supply chain management requires the incorporation of predictive technologies, regional customization, improved visibility, and synchronized organizational processes to match supplies with instantaneous demands and flexible liquidation measures (Wolniak, 2024). Integrated demand planning and forecasting with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) is one of the most powerful technologies in contemporary inventory management (Sajja, et al., 2025). These technologies allow companies to process big amounts of data (historical sales, point-of-sale (POS) analytics, seasonal trends, and such external factors as festivals, climate, and economic changes). In Eastern India, where demand can be quite different in states such as West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, and Jharkhand, because of cultural and climatic variations, AI/ML-based forecasting creates micro-level or region-specific insights. These insights can be useful to retailers and distributors to make the most of purchases and distribution patterns and therefore lessen the concentration of sitting merchandise. It also enables more responsive markdown planning so as to be able to know when a product is bound to stagnate and then take necessary action, like promotion or re-distribution.

In addition to forecasting, product customization and dynamic replenishment in the regions are also essential to match the inventory with regional tastes (Bernstein, et al., 2015). The consumer behavior in Eastern India is very much dependent on the geographical factors, climate, and social/cultural preferences. For example, lightweight sandals can be more needed in coastal towns in Odisha in summer, whereas formal leather shoes can sell more in job fair seasons in urban cities like Patna or Kolkata (Sarkar, 2011). A generalized model of stocking does not summarize these nuances, resulting in mounting surpluses or the occurrence of stockouts. Pos-based information and regional demand analysis enable dynamic replenishment, where the inventory is balanced based on current conditions and keeps the right products in the right places (Raza, 2016). This will reduce both the understocking and the overstocking, thereby facilitating the improvement in sell-through rates as well as customer satisfaction. Such strategies can be effectively implemented through geo-tagged inventory monitoring that enables real-time visibility into the movement and location of stock throughout the supply chain. This is particularly useful in Eastern India, where the distribution can be a challenge to navigate through tough terrain and poor infrastructure. Placing geolocation data on the stock allows the business to know the bottlenecks in the supply chain, improve delivery routes, and monitor the inventory status across various nodes, whether it is the central warehouses, regional hubs, or retail stores. Such visibility allows easy judgments, including redirecting stock to where it is in demand or beginning transfers of stock in surplus locations, thus minimizing stagnation.

7. LITERATURE GAPS AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Although the concept of supply chain management (SCM) and inventory efficiency has gained more attention in recent times (Frazzon, et al., 2019), there still seems to be a major gap in conceptualization and interventions regarding footwear distribution in India, especially in the Eastern part. The urgent gap areas are related to a lack of region-specific distribution models that consider the socio-economic diversity and infrastructural constraints and consumer preferences within states like Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand and Eastern UP. The literature and industry reports available are inclined towards providing a blanket solution or are confined to discussing metro cities/ production centers, thus failing to generalize the complicated equations of semi-urban/rural markets in the eastern region. That leaves a gap between theoretical frameworks and on-ground realities, and policymakers, practitioners, and researchers find it hard to come up with contextually relevant solutions to non-moving stock and ineffective distribution practices. The other outstanding deficiency is the poor empirical basis of the Indian Academy's works, particularly those that discuss the interrelation between distribution effectiveness and inventory management in the footwear industry. A lot of the available research is either theoretical or case-based, with no strong data sets, field-based knowledge, or geographically broken-down information. In addition, the SCM literature has not gone deep enough in understanding the conflict that exists between the B2C and the B2B channel, especially in the era of the growth of e-commerce and the established dealer networks (AKULINICHEV, 2023). With footwear brands growing preference in hybrid models that merge online and offline channels, it is important to examine the impact of the change on inventory distribution, stock flow, and liquidation policies, particularly in markets with no balanced digital preparedness.

The potential of future confirmation through empirical methods with sophisticated quantitative methods like Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), fuzzy logic systems, and predictive models is high (Albahri, et al., 2022). These techniques are applicable in developing causal relationships between variables like regional customization, stock performance, consumer behaviors, and liquidation efficiency. They also make it possible to make more accurate forecasting, risk-based decision

making, and intervention planning using real-world data. Cross-sector comparisons, such as to the apparel or consumer electronics sectors, may yield interesting insights into how other industries handle comparable issues of distribution and inventory. The apparel retail industry, especially, has several similarities with the shoe industry, including seasonality, advanced size/style complexity, and ever-changing demand due to fashion changes. Such sectors can serve as a source of learning for footwear brands to be more agile and efficient in the distribution environment in Eastern India by adopting tested strategies from other sectors.

8. MANAGERIAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Indian footwear brands, regional distributors, and policymakers need to be more integrated and regionally adaptive to optimize distribution productivity and minimize non-moving inventory in the footwear industry of Eastern India. Footwear companies must focus on data-informed prediction and sub-channel assortment planning, and they can use AI-based tools and POS analytics to align their supply with local demand trends. Making investments in scalable digital inventory tracking with distributors' collaborative planning can greatly decrease the rate of stock stagnation and increase channel responsiveness. To coordinate inventory, the regional distributors should abandon reactive liquidation and adopt proactive inventory management techniques through shared dashboards, dynamic replenishment systems, and coordinate the movement of stock with regional sales. To increase accessibility to the market and quicken the turnover of the stocks, they ought to consider omnichannel sales practices like liaising with local e-commerce networks and discount stores. Policymakers, on the other hand, can act as facilitators by offering incentives to adopt digital in the Tier-2 and Tier-3 footwear markets via technology grants, GST exemptions, and logistics assistance. The easy means of simplifying return and redistribution protocols under GST can aid the ease of movement of excess stock, thus preventing the leakage of tax through informal trade. Infrastructure development and capacity-building of small retailers can also be funded through a relationship between the government and the private sector. Strategically, such concerted efforts can enhance consumer access to affordable products that are relevant to their regions, as well as lead to profitability in the supply chain. A tight, region-sensitive system would not only save on the inventory holding cost and markdown loss but would also facilitate the ability to maintain higher tax compliance and superior supply chain visibility.

9. FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This review paper has highlighted key issues, challenges, and research gaps in the area of distribution practices and the management of non-moving stocks within the footwear industry, particularly in the eastern zone of India. While this study has laid a strong theoretical foundation through the evaluation of existing literature, the next step will involve the collection of primary data from various stakeholders in the supply chain—including manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and consumers.

The forthcoming phase of the research will focus on detailed data analysis to examine the real-world practices and bottlenecks affecting distribution efficiency and stock movement. The insights derived from this analysis will be used to design practical and targeted solutions that can be implemented within the industry.

Ultimately, a comprehensive research paper will be developed and submitted for publication. This paper will not only validate the theoretical gaps identified in the current review but also offer actionable recommendations and strategies to improve distribution networks, reduce inventory stagnation, and support the overall growth and responsiveness of the footwear supply chain in the region. The future study aims to contribute meaningful solutions that can enhance operational effectiveness and align industry practices with modern supply chain demands.

10. CONCLUSION

This review aimed to discuss four major objectives: distribution efficiency issues, reasons for non-moving stock, liquidation options, as well as suggesting future invulnerable inventory management processes in the footwear industry in Eastern India. The results indicate that the area experiences a multiple-faceted infrastructural inadequacy, disjointed retail channels, and low levels of digital connectivity, which all disfavor effective stock turnover. The mismatch of demand, weather unpredictability, and inability to regionalize were determined to be significant determinants of dead stock. In addition, conventional liquidation strategies like discounting and bundling are still prevalent but tend to have the opposite effect of eroding margins with no real improvements to the root of stock inefficiency. The review also indicated that although contemporary concepts such as data-driven pricing, flash sales, and outlet conversions hold potential, their effect is minimal because of the infrastructural and digital constraints in the area. The discussion of the best practices, such as the world case studies, analytics-driven planning models, points to the necessity of searching for more sophisticated and team-focused practices by Indian footwear businesses. The results support the aspect of a contextual approach. The variation in culture, demographics, and the maturity of markets in Eastern India warrants the need to implement localised interventions instead of a standardised and national-level supply chain model (Gupta & Gupta, 2019). Whether it is geo-tagged inventory tracking or region-specific assortments, the way to go is to customize distribution and liquidation strategies to create products based on local demand realities. With regionally adaptive and technology-empowered solutions, stakeholders along the value chain can also access a higher level of efficiency, profitability, and create a stronger, more inclusive ecosystem of the footwear

distribution. Future research can focus on developing region-specific supply chain models that address the unique cultural, climatic, and economic conditions of Eastern India. There is significant scope for exploring the integration of AI-driven demand forecasting tools tailored for small and mid-sized retailers to minimize non-moving stock. Additionally, studies could evaluate the impact of hybrid distribution systems combining online and offline channels in improving inventory efficiency. With increasing digital adoption in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, localized solutions for real-time inventory tracking and dynamic replenishment hold promise for transforming footwear supply chains into more agile and demand-responsive systems.

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