

The Desi Oon Project

India is the world's fourth-largest wool producer, yet nearly 95% of its indigenous wool is confined to carpets or discarded due to its coarse, medullated structure. *The Desi Oon Project* challenges this perception by reimagining Patanwadi desi wool as a contemporary apparel material through a material-led design approach.

Rather than treating the fiber's coarse nature as a limitation, the project embraces its inherent properties. Extensive material analysis, felting experiments, and performance validation revealed that Patanwadi wool possesses exceptional felting affinity, structural stability, and promising mechanical properties, making it well suited for non-woven apparel applications. A zero-waste pattern development process was established by experimentally determining a 30% felting shrinkage and incorporating this allowance directly into the pattern, minimizing material waste while achieving accurate garment dimensions.

The outcome is a handcrafted felted vest that celebrates the raw beauty of indigenous wool while demonstrating its relevance in contemporary fashion. More than a garment, this project presents a new perspective on India's overlooked wool resources—showing how local materials, traditional techniques, and research-driven design can create sustainable, culturally rooted alternatives for the future of apparel. It is an invitation to rethink desi wool not as a low-value by-product, but as a valuable natural material with untapped potential.

