

How designers from India built careers in **mobility design**. And the pathway you can take.

For the student exploring a career in mobility design, and the parent making the call alongside them. Written by Ronit Singh, founder of TDI, ahead of the live session on May 16.



For most of the last decade, automotive design as a career meant going abroad. Pforzheim, Art Center, CCS Detroit. A handful of Indian students made it through the door each year.

That has changed. India is now the third largest automotive industry globally, behind China and the USA. Tata, Hyundai, Honda, Maruti Suzuki, Mercedes, KIA, Skoda and Renault all run design and engineering operations in the country. Indian mobility companies like Ultraviolette, Simple Energy and Sarla Aviation are launching products and hiring designers every quarter.

A junior automotive designer working in India earns ₹10–14 lakh a year out of college. Working outside India, the fresher bracket is ₹25–40 lakh.

The gap isn't talent. It's training and access. I started TDI to close it. The studio-led design education I wished existed when I was 22 and stuck in an engineering job I didn't want.

This guide covers what I'd want my younger brother to know before deciding. Share pages 10 and 11 with your family. Bring your questions to the session on May 16.

Ronit Singh

Founder, TDI · Engineer turned automotive designer turned founder

Table of contents.

Read top to bottom in 8 minutes, or skim by section. Pages 10–11 are written to be shared with family.

04 **The state of automotive design careers in India**

Why this industry is hiring designers, and what they're paid.

06 **Working in India: the Digital Design batch**

TDI's first batch, 100% placed at Tata, Technicon, Ampere.

08 **The faculty**

3 core mentors, 20 guest faculties from BMW Motorrad, Mercedes, Honda, Bugatti and more.

10–11 **For the parent**

The career math, ROI, and how this compares to traditional design programmes.

05 **Two programmes**

Digital Design (Indian placement) and Mobility Design (global schools). What each is built for.

07 **Studying abroad: mentor track record**

5 designers from India who got into CCS, Pforzheim, Art Center, NID. Taught by the mentors who now lead TDI's Mobility Design programme.

09 **The 12-month Mobility Design programme**

Four phases: conventional tools, digital tools, three industry projects, portfolio.

12–14 **What the live session covers, and your next step**

How to prepare for May 16. Where to go from here.

The next decade of automotive design will be decided **in India.**

India is now the **3rd largest automotive industry globally**, behind only China and the USA. Around 25–30 vehicle manufacturers operate in the country, and brands like Tata, Hyundai, Honda, Maruti Suzuki, Mercedes, KIA, Skoda and Renault all run design or engineering operations here.

For new designers, the salary picture is the clearest read on the opportunity. A fresher working in India typically earns **₹10–14 lakh a year**. The same role outside India pays **₹25–40 lakh**. This is the bracket designers placed after a top global school (Art Center, Pforzheim, CCS Detroit) typically enter.

The gap isn't talent. It's training and access. This guide is about both.

<p>3rd</p> <p>LARGEST AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY GLOBALLY</p>	<p>₹40L</p> <p>TOP-END FRESHER SALARY, OUTSIDE INDIA</p>	<p>25–30</p> <p>VEHICLE MANUFACTURERS IN INDIA</p>	<p>120+</p> <p>CANDIDATES FROM TDI FACULTY ALREADY IN THE INDUSTRY</p>
--	---	---	---

Two programmes. Two outcomes. Both proven.

Most TDI students arrive without knowing exactly what they want. By the end of the foundation phase, the question becomes clearer: start working as a designer in India, or study at one of the world's top design schools first? Different goals. Different programmes.

DIGITAL DESIGN

Start working as a designer in India

The 9-month **Digital Design** programme is built for this. Engineering or related-track graduates moving into digital design roles at Indian automotive companies.

PROGRAMME	9 months
COHORT SIZE	15 students
OUTCOME	Job in India
PROOF OF OUTCOME	100% placed (Batch 1)

MOBILITY DESIGN

Build a portfolio for top global design schools

The 12-month **Mobility Design** programme is built for this. Students applying to international institutes. Includes IELTS preparation, full-scale model project, and 1-on-1 mentorship from designers who have placed students at these schools.

PROGRAMME	12 months
COHORT SIZE	30 students
OUTCOME	Application-ready portfolio
PROOF OF OUTCOME	Mentor track record

The next two pages show the named proof for each programme: TDI's first Digital Design batch, and the global school admissions our core faculty mentored before joining TDI.

The first batch. 100% placed.

TDI's pilot Digital Design batch ran from August 2025 to February 2026. Every student was placed at an Indian automotive company. The current Digital Design programme runs nine months: three additional months built into the curriculum for portfolio depth and placement support.



Suraj Thorat

MAHARASHTRA



Tata Autocomp Systems

DIGITAL DESIGNER



Navneet Rana

HIMACHAL PRADESH



Technicon Design

JUNIOR DESIGNER



Harsha Vardhana

TAMIL NADU



Technicon Design

JUNIOR DESIGNER



Nishank Goundaje

MAHARASHTRA



Ampere

DIGITAL SCULPTOR

100%

Every student placed. Suraj joined from a Master's in Transportation Design at ADYPC Pune. The cohort came from a mix of design and engineering backgrounds; full student profiles are walked through in the live session.

5 designers from India. The schools they got into.

These five designers worked directly with the mentors who now lead TDI's Mobility Design programme. They came from Indian engineering and design backgrounds, built international-standard portfolios from India, and got in.



**Vara Prasad
Chintalapudi**



CCS Detroit
USA



**Vaibhav
Neekhra**



Pforzheim University
GERMANY



Srihari



Art Center
CALIFORNIA, USA



**Rahul
Nair**



NID Ahmedabad
INDIA



**Jagan
Muthuraman**



Pforzheim University
GERMANY

Designers who've worked on the cars and bikes **on the road.**

Every mentor inside TDI is a working designer or engineer at a studio that ships to global markets. Not full-time academics. Practitioners.

CORE FACULTY (3)

Shashank Shreekanth / 15 years · ISD France & IED Italy alumni

Vivek Kanteti / 10 years · IIT Delhi alumni · led Honda masterclass for Batch 1

Ronit Singh / 8 years · Founder, TDI · ex-Simple Energy / Ultraviolette consultant

GUEST FACULTY (20)

15 National + 5 International. Working designers and engineers from:

BMW Motorrad	Mercedes	Hyundai
KIA	Skoda	Bugatti
Honda	Maruti Suzuki	Cornell
IISc	DRDO	Technicon UK
Ducati Italy	+ 7 more	

Four phases. One full-scale 2-wheeler model. **An admissions-ready portfolio.**

<p>01 · FOUNDATION</p> <p>Conventional tools</p> <p>Months 1–4</p> <p>Drawing, ideation, form fundamentals. Learn to see the way designers see: silhouette, proportion, surface.</p>	<p>02 · DIGITAL</p> <p>Digital tools</p> <p>Months 5–6</p> <p>Industry-standard digital tools: Autodesk Alias, sub-D modelling, visualisation. The same software global studios use.</p>	<p>03 · PROJECTS</p> <p>Three industry projects</p> <p>Months 7–12</p> <p>Aviation (2 months) then 4-wheeler (2 months) then 2-wheeler full-scale 1:1 model (2 months). Real-industry constraints. Real-industry deadlines.</p>	<p>04 · PORTFOLIO</p> <p>Portfolio + IELTS</p> <p>Months 11–12 (overlap)</p> <p>Application portfolio reviewed with international admissions in mind. IELTS preparation alongside. Mentor-led 1-on-1 review.</p>
--	--	---	--

PROGRAMME LENGTH	COHORT SIZE	INVESTMENT	NEXT BATCH	FORMAT
12 months	30 students	₹4.99L	August 2026	Bengaluru · Studio-led

The live session walks through each phase in detail, including portfolio examples from past students.

The career math, **honestly.**

What does this career pay, and what does the path to it cost?

A junior automotive designer placed at an Indian company typically starts at **₹10–14 lakh** a year. The same role outside India pays **₹25–40 lakh**; this is the bracket designers reach after a top global school programme (Art Center, Pforzheim, CCS Detroit).

Going abroad has a wide cost range. German public universities like Pforzheim charge a nominal fee under €1,500 per semester. US schools like Art Center and CCS Detroit run roughly ₹1.7–1.8 Cr in tuition over 4 years. All of them admit students on the strength of a portfolio.

TDI's 12-month Mobility Design programme is built to produce that portfolio. ₹4.99L. One year of focused, mentor-led work to make your application competitive at those institutes.

FRESHER SALARY, YEAR 1

Working in India	₹10–14L
Working outside India	₹25–40L

PATH COSTS (TUITION)

TDI Mobility Design (12-month portfolio prep)	₹4.99L
NID / Strate (4-year B.Des in India)	₹17–26L
Pforzheim, Germany (after admission, 4 yrs)	~€1,500 / sem
Art Center / CCS Detroit (after admission, 4 yrs)	₹1.7–1.8 Cr

How TDI compares to **traditional design education.**

NID, IISc, Strate India and MIT-ID serve a different goal: a full undergraduate design degree across multiple disciplines in India. TDI's Mobility Design programme is built to position students for admission to top international design schools. *Different paths, different decisions.*

	TDI MOBILITY DESIGN	NID / IISC / STRATE	INTERNATIONAL BFA / MFA
DURATION	12 months	4 years	3–4 years
ENTRY REQUIREMENT	Application + interview	NID DAT / Strate exam / portfolio	Portfolio + IELTS + entrance
BUILT FOR	Portfolio for admission to top global design schools (Art Center, Pforzheim, CCS Detroit, etc.)	Comprehensive 4-year design education in India	Global automotive design career
COHORT SIZE	30 students per batch	20–60 per batch	15–30 per studio

The 12-month Mobility Design programme is built to position students for admission to top global design schools (Art Center, Pforzheim, CCS Detroit). Students looking for a comprehensive 4-year multi-discipline design degree in India are better served by NID, IISc or Strate. Direct industry placement at Indian automotive companies is what TDI's separate Digital Design programme is built for.

What we'll cover on **May 16.**

45 minutes. Live with Ronit. Five segments, extending what's in this guide with portfolio examples, audience questions, and live Q&A. Replay is available for 48 hours; the Q&A only happens once.

00:00–09:00

The field

What automotive design actually is, who does it, and why India is now central to this industry.

09:00–18:00

The pathway

The designers from India who made it to the world's top schools. How they got there, what they had to build, and what changed once they got in.

18:00–27:00

The 8-stage design process

Every car goes through 8 stages, from a designer's blank page to a real production vehicle. With portfolio examples from past students.

27:00–36:00

The TDI 12-month programme

Conventional and digital tools, then three industry projects (aviation, 4-wheeler, 2-wheeler full-scale model). Live walkthrough of the curriculum.

36:00–45:00

Live Q&A with Ronit

Bring questions about your background, your timeline, schools you've been considering, conversations with parents. Anything.

How to make the most of **45 minutes**.

Three simple steps. None of them are mandatory, but they make the live session ten times more useful.

STEP 01

Add the session to your calendar now.

Saturday 16 May 2026, 7:00 PM IST. Block 45 minutes plus a 15-minute buffer for the Q&A. The link will arrive via email and WhatsApp 24 hours before.

STEP 02

Read this guide once, mark questions.

Anything in this guide you want to dig deeper into (the salary ranges, a specific student's story, the 12-month programme structure), write it down. The Q&A is the place to ask.

STEP 03

Discuss pages 10–11 with your family.

The "For the parent" pages are written to be read together. If your family has questions about cost, ROI, or how this compares to traditional programmes, those two pages are a starting point for the conversation.

The August 2026 batch closes admissions soon. **See you on May 16.**

This 45-minute session is the fastest way to understand if mobility design is the right path for you, and the right investment for your family.

FIRST

Attend the live session

Saturday 16 May 2026, 7:00 PM IST. The link will arrive via email and WhatsApp.

tdi.institute/mobility-design-webinar

THEN (OPTIONAL)

Book a 1-on-1 call

A 30-minute conversation with our admissions team. For the family that wants to discuss specifics: your child's background, timeline, or programme fit.

contact@tdi.institute

WHEN READY

Apply for August 2026

Online application, then 1-on-1 admissions interview, then a final conversation with the founders. 30 seats per batch.

tdi.institute/mobility-design

Transdisciplinary Design Institute (TDI)

India's first studio-led design institute · Bengaluru
contact@tdi.institute · +91 96860 05415