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GETTING A LEG UP

In Bharat Shoes' case, the revival has been crafted by its own original family members. The shoe retailing brand has been reborn as Touristor – a name change forced by circumstances, when in 2002, the company failed to get the name “Bharat Shoes” registered.

“I still use the name Bharat Shoes on my visiting card. The brand has a huge recall and some people still recognise us by that name only,” says Ved Vyas Chhabra, pointing to his visiting card. Bharat Shoes still exists (one shop in Kolkata), but currently, Touristor appears to be the focus area of the Chhabras.

Set up in 1952, Bharat Shoes tasted blood in the East during the pre-Sreeleathers and Khadim's days. After an initial fragmentation amongst family members around the Seventies, the four Chhabra brothers – Vijay, Ashoke, Chandra Mohan and Ved Vyas – decided to consolidate the existing business, and focus on one shop in Central Kolkata.

“Each one of us now looks after a division with the next generation helping us out in building the business,” Chhabra says, adding that plans are afoot to grow the Rs 18-crore ‘Touristor’ brand to other parts of the country. The three male heirs of the family are already assisting their parents.

Following its re-entry through the sprouting malls in the region, stores on the high street are the next step. “In terms of marketing and ad-spends, we look to grow through the Touristor brand now,” he added.

They may have been faded, but these brands were certainly not jaded – perhaps that also explains their second lease of life. Now to see how their second innings' pan out.