

# AO

APPAREL ONLINE

ALL ABOUT FASHION BUSINESS

INDIA

MARCH / 2024

PAGES 92 | INR 200

DL-(S)-17/3202/2024-26

POSTING DATE : 27-28th

RNI NO: 67969/98

VOLUME NO: XXVI

ISSUE NO: XII

[www.apparelresources.com](http://www.apparelresources.com)

# w o

## Sustainability

Are Organic Materials Living Up To The Hype?

P/16

## Minimising Returns,

Maximising Revenues

P/26

# m e n

## AO Debate

How To Boost Apparel Exports?

P/82

Women of Impact



# Stitching smiles by reducing the carbon footprint



Saved  
**190+ Mil**  
MJ of  
Energy

Avoided  
**4+ Mil**  
KG of  
Co2

Coats India  
recycled  
**180+ Mil**  
pet bottles  
to produce  
ecoverde



\*Over the last 3 years (2021-2023)



[www.coats.com](http://www.coats.com)  
[coatsindia@coats.com](mailto:coatsindia@coats.com)

**CONNECTING, PIONEERING, TRUSTED**

FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S DESK...



## Women transforming the industry!

This month's special edition holds a special place in my heart. We're shining the spotlight on the incredible women leaders in the fashion industry, celebrating their extraordinary achievements as they rock the vibrant apparel scene in India.

Whew, what a ride it's been getting this edition together! We received nominations from all corners of the industry, and let me tell you, the response was overwhelming! We received such an outpour of support and enthusiasm from these amazing women, showcasing their accomplishments and contributions to the apparel world. It's truly inspiring to see how they've defied the odds and carved their own paths to success. Given the fantastic response to this special edition, we're seriously considering making it an annual tradition.

I'm sure that despite our best efforts, we couldn't include many due to paucity of space. However, our commitment to women's empowerment, safety and well-being remains sacrosanct.

And, speaking of women leaders, did you know that *Apparel Resources* itself is led by a dynamic woman? Yep, that's right! Our very own boss lady (Renu Mohindra) is at the helm, steering us toward greater heights every day. Plus, did you know that almost half of our team here at Apparel Resources is made up of talented and hardworking women?

As we strive to take our economy from US \$ 3.18 trillion to US \$ 5 trillion, the role of women in the workforce becomes more vital than ever. Their talent, creativity and dedication are driving forces behind this growth and we're so proud to celebrate and acknowledge their remarkable achievements in this special edition.

In the last edition, I delved into the emerging markets - Tier-4, Tier-5 and Tier-6 cities. In the last nine years, nearly 25 crore people from such regions have

been lifted out of poverty and they are progressively becoming aspirational. Building on this, marketers also need to shift their focus to the next generation of consumers: Gen Alpha, the children of millennials. Gen Alpha, born between 2010 and 2024, are still kids relying on their millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and older Gen Z parents (1997 and 2012) to make purchases for them. And just like Gen Z has influenced older generations, Gen Alpha's interests and preferences have a big impact on their families' buying decisions. Therefore, marketers must understand and connect with this emerging generation to stay relevant in the future.

So, what are the characteristics of this generation? Well, they're the first generation born entirely in the 21st century, growing up with technology from day one. It's not uncommon for them to have over 100 social media photos before even turning one! And even though they're still kids, the older ones are starting to hit their teenage years. By 2030, Gen Alpha will make up about 11 per cent of the workforce, while Gen Z will be about 34 per cent.

As the understanding of new markets and newer consumers are emerging, so too are the narratives surrounding them. Count on us to explore the ins and outs of emerging products, consumer habits, AI advancements, in-store and online shopping experiences!

**Deepak Mohindra**  
Editor-in-Chief

e-mail me at [dmohindra@apparelresources.com](mailto:dmohindra@apparelresources.com)

■ Deepak Mohindra



**12 THOUGHT LEADERSHIP**

'Body Positivity And Self-Love Pushed Growth Of Plus-Size Clothing'

**16 SUSTAINABILITY// MATERIALS**

Are Organic Materials Living Up To The Hype?

**20 SUSTAINABILITY// NEWS**

Collaborations Abound For Sustainability

**26 RETAIL PULSE INDIA**

Minimising Returns, Maximising Revenues

**29 RETAIL PULSE INDIA//NEWS**

Foreign Apparel Brands Venturing Into India

**30 RETAIL PULSE GLOBAL//NEWS**

Global Luxury Brands See Profitable Quarter

**47 NEWS IN NUMBERS**

US \$ 3 Billion



**P54**

Gargee Designer celebrates traditional craftsmanship ensuring a connection to heritage



**22 THE AO INTERVIEW**

'We Have Set Rs 1,000 Crore Revenue Target In Three Years'

**48 TRENDS IN FOCUS**

Menswear Fall/Winter 2024: Understated Luxury And Practical Elegance

**53 NEW STORES**

Triumph International Plans To Roll Out Over 15 Indian Stores In 2024



**P16**

Fashion industry is exploring alternative materials to reduce environmental impact

— FABRIC 2.0

# COMFORT ALL YEAR LONG

Fabric technology that keeps you warm in winters and cool in summers.

Year long comfort, customised for all seasons.



Comfortable  
in all climates



Stay cool in  
hot weather



Keeps you warm  
in cold weather



Easy care



[www.r-elan.com](http://www.r-elan.com)

**R|Elan™**  
Fabric 2.0

AllClima

© [r.elan.official](https://www.r-elan.com) | [f RElanOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/RElanOfficial) | [t RElanOfficial](https://www.twitter.com/RElanOfficial)

To associate, kindly reach out to us on  
[r.elan.innovations@zmail.ril.com](mailto:r.elan.innovations@zmail.ril.com)

Product Development Support | Value Chain Support | Go-To-Market Support

March 2024 | AO India 5

# CONTENTS

## 54 DESIGNERS & LABELS

Innovation And Tradition Merge: Gargee Designer's Approach To Men's Fashion

## 58 AO COLLECTION TO WATCH

Classic Threads, Contemporary Silhouettes: Rooh by Shivani's Pashmina Collection Transforms Heritage Into Contemporary Chic

## 59 AO TREND WATCH

Chunky Knits

## 60 AO COLOR REPORT

New Neutrals

## 61 AO BRAND TO WATCH

Eeksha: A Kaleidoscope Of Colours, Textures And Tradition With A Touch Of Kolkata's Rich Heritage



## P48

Fall/Winter 2024 collections feature vibrant colour palettes, glitzy, embellished detailing and luxurious furs

## 66 MANUFACTURING

United Exim's Expansion Plan: Quality Alone Won't Make The Cut



## 76 BUSINESS INTEL

Interlining Companies Stitching Success Amidst Rising Demand

## 72 TRADE STATS

US Apparel Imports (January-December 2023): USA Concludes 2023 With US \$ 77.84 Billion Apparel Imports

## 78 | LATEST DEALS

Gokaldas Exports To Acquire Clothing, Apparel Business Of Matrix Clothing For Rs. 489 Crore

## 79 PEOPLE MOVE

Welspun Living Appoints Ex-CEO Of Dabur As Independent Director

## 80 INDUSTRY VERDICT

How Have International Disruptions Affected Organisations And Are There Plans In Place To Address Disruptions Like These?

## 82 The AO Debate

How Can India Boost Apparel Exports?

## 85 START-UP//NEWS

Snitch Set To Expand Retail Presence

## 86 AO SURVEY

Denim Mills Survey

## 89 AI In Fashion

New York-Based Designer Svasti Ujagar Explores The Fusion Of AI And Fashion

## 90 MY FASHION LIFE

Soumya Kant, Co-Founder And CGO, Clovia



## P62

Brands looking at India to diversify their supply chains

## 62 BUYING AND SOURCING

India Offers A 'Stress-Free' Supply Base: Nohar Nath, Executive Director, Kishco Group

## 70 MANUFACTURING //NEWS

Manufacturers Address New Payment Rules

# ICONS NEVER FADE.

COMING  
SOON TO  
INDIA

**American  
Apparel™**



SCAN HERE TO  
DISCOVER OUR  
ICONIC FASHION  
BASICS.

[WWW.AMERICANAPPAREL.COM](http://WWW.AMERICANAPPAREL.COM)

f j kmgpB i kf cpdtcpf u0eqo

March 2024 | AO India 7

# AO

APPAREL ONLINE

**Editor-In-Chief**  
**DEEPAK MOHINDRA**

**Editorial**

Editor  
DHEERAJ SHARMA  
Copy Editor  
PRIYANKA MISHRA  
Asst. Editor - News  
DHEERAJ TAGRA  
Asst. Editor - Fashion  
ANJORI GROVER VASESI  
Asst. Editor - Technical  
NITISH VARSHNEY

**Creative**

RAJ KUMAR CHAHAL  
POOJA ANAND

**Directors**

MAYANK MOHINDRA  
BHUMICA BANSAL

**Corporate Office**

B-32, South Extension-1,  
New Delhi-110 049 (India)  
Phone: 91-11-47390000

**Owner**

RENU MOHINDRA

**Printer**

ASK ADVERTISING AIDS PVT. LTD.

**Publisher & Managing Director**

RENU MOHINDRA & DEEPAK MOHINDRA

**Published from**

DELHI

**Date of Publication**

26th JANUARY 2024

**Printed at**

ASK ADVERTISING AIDS PVT. LTD.  
88, DSIDC, Okhla Indl. Area, Phase-I, New Delhi-110 020  
Phone : 26816824, E-mail: creativegrafix1@gmail.com

**Subscription**

**AO India**                      INR 2400.00              12 Issues

**Other Editions**

**AO Bangladesh**              INR 2400.00              12 Issues

\*This rate is valid only for subscription in India

**Subscription enquiry**

+91 98913 74725, 90509 90602  
subscribe@apparelresources.com

**Advertising enquiry**

+91-9810058986  
rmohindra@apparelresources.com

**Collaboration enquiry**

+91 9810611487  
mmohindra@apparelresources.com



**APPAREL RESOURCES PVT. LTD.**

All Rights Reserved © 2022 by Apparel Resources Pvt. Ltd.  
No part of this magazine may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, or by any information storage retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher.

**AO** EDITIONS  
INDIA  
BANGLADESH  
VIETNAM







**SUSTAINABILITY**

**RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTS  
EVERY SEASON**



**BIODEGRADABLE FUSIBLE COTTON  
SHIRT INTERLININGS**  
MAINTAIN GARMENTS' OPTIMAL SHAPE  
AND ARE EASY ON THE PLANET

*Freudenberg Apparel House of Sustainability*



For more information about our House of Sustainability, please visit our website:  
<https://apparel.freudenberg-pm.com/benefits/house-of-sustainability>

Freudenberg Performance Materials India Pvt. Ltd.

**BANGALORE**  
Indiranagar, Tel: +91 080 25262061

**MUMBAI**  
Vikhroli (East), Tel: +91 843 3981500

**CHENNAI**  
Ashok Nagar, Tel: +91 044 42165421

**TIRUPUR**  
Tirupur, Tel: +91 0421 4329171

**HARYANA**  
Gurgaon, Tel: +91 0124 4018623

**FREUDENBERG  
PERFORMANCE MATERIALS**

 **FREUDENBERG**  
INNOVATING TOGETHER

# Creating a Splash



- Decorative
- Quality
- Fashion
- Design
- Customization



**AERO  
ENTERPRISES**

MANUFACTURERS OF POLYESTER, UREA AND LASER BUTTONS

Plot No. 73, Phase-IV  
HSIIDC, Kundli Industrial Estate  
Sonepat-131028, Haryana (India)  
Ph.: 91-11-43158300  
E-mail: [info@aerobuttons.com](mailto:info@aerobuttons.com)  
Web.: [www.aerobutton.com](http://www.aerobutton.com)

# NEXT-GEN BRANDING TRIMS

THE LEADER IN SERVICE AND QUALITY

India's largest branding  
trims manufacturers with  
short lead time, best price  
and excellent service!



Design & Product  
Development Support



Dedicated Customer  
Service Teams



Latest Trims  
Technology And Design



Range Of Product  
Options



Woven  
Labels

Printed  
Fabric Labels

Tapes

Heat  
Transfer Labels

Woven  
Patches

Know More



LEADER IN SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTS

Contact Us :

Nimit Mardia (Managing Director): +91 96878 34711

Shreya Mardia (Executive Director and Marketing Head): +91 96878 34711

Siddarth Trivedi (BDM): +91 98792 27372

 @uniquetags

 unique-tags-pvt-ltd

 www.uniquetags.com

# ‘BODY POSITIVITY AND SELF-LOVE PUSHED GROWTH OF PLUS-SIZE CLOTHING’

**Chakshu Mohan**  
CEO and Founder  
Mamicha

*India, as a nation, has become progressive but there is still a long way to go! People have started prioritising and celebrating themselves!*

The plus-size revolution has made a notable impact on the fashion industry and community. It has constructively promoted body positivity, individuality, self-acceptance and self-appreciation. One instrumental development has been the emergence of several courageous plus-size people who have used the power of social media to challenge traditional beauty standards and promote self-acceptance and body positivity.

The significant shift in beauty standards has changed society’s perception about idealistic body types and glorified a certain size as a benchmark for women and men across the globe.

Being a plus-size woman and the founder of an Indian plus-size fashion brand, I’ve witnessed and contributed to the transformative journey of the plus-size fashion landscape in the country. Over the past few years, there has been a significant shift towards inclusivity and diversity within the industry. The fashion industry in India has always been focused on standard sizing, often neglecting the diverse body types and sizes that exist.

However, with increasing awareness about body positivity, the industry has begun to embrace a more inclusive approach. This shift is not only driven by consumer demand but also by the recognition of the importance of representing and celebrating all body sizes.

## Mindset shift and size-inclusive market

Brands have recognised the untapped market potential of catering to plus-size women, leading to the creation of specialised collections that prioritise both style and comfort. Previously, plus-size fashion was quite limited and brands came up with an uninspiring range of clothing with no options, designs or colours.

The fashion industry in India is gradually shifting towards a more inclusive mindset, with fashion shows featuring diverse models and campaigns celebrating body diversity becoming more common. Major fashion events are starting to showcase collections that are representative of a wider range of sizes, challenging the traditional norms that have prevailed for so long.

While the landscape is evolving positively, there is still work to be done. Challenges such as changing societal perceptions and overcoming ingrained biases within the industry persist. As a founder, I am committed to contributing to this evolution by providing stylish and empowering options for plus-size women, ultimately helping redefine beauty standards in India.

India, as a nation, has become progressive but there is still a long way to go! People have started prioritising and celebrating themselves!

Globally, the fashion industry has witnessed a great shift in recent years with many brands and designers moving towards inclusivity. For instance, we saw Miss Nepal, Jane Dipika Garrett, as the first plus-size model competing in Miss Universe 2023. The fashion industry needs to continue championing diversity, not only in terms of size but also in terms of ethnicity, age and abilities. Embracing body positivity is not just a matter of representation; it is a fundamental shift towards promoting



a healthier and more inclusive perception of beauty, fostering a society where every woman feels valued and celebrated for who she is.

### How social media turns out to be a boon for plus-size revolution

With the world going digital and increasing the significance of social media in everyone's life, media has been a powerful catalyst in driving the transformation towards body positivity and inclusivity.

For example, Influencer marketing has played a very important and crucial role in making fuller body women relatable with many body positive influencers. Gone are the days when Magazine Cover images were just as per societal standards. Thanks to some of the edi-

tors like Nandini Bhalla who played an important role in bringing this change!

Social media has played a transformative role in fostering a sense of community amongst plus-size individuals, promoting self-love and challenging stereotypes in impactful ways.

**Community Building:** Hashtags such as #BodyPositivity and #PlusSizeFashion have become rallying points for individuals to find like-minded people, fostering a sense of belongingness and community sharing.

**Body Positivity Movements:** From campaigns like Zivame's *har pal ko own karo* to designers like Sabyasachi, they all are using diverse models to showcase their unapologetic selves!

**Fashion and Style Inspiration:** Thanks to social media, plus-size

Brands are recognising the importance of reflecting the diverse body types of their consumers, breaking away from long-standing stereotypes. By featuring plus-size models in campaigns, brands are not only reflecting the reality of their consumer base but also contributing to a more inclusive and empowering narrative.

fashion influencers are a thing now! There is no more looking at cute outfits and wondering and wishing if they could be in one's size. Now people see plus-size models and influencers wearing versatile fits and can relate with them more!

**Real and Authentic Narratives:** Social media allows people to be themselves! People can share their journey and build connections with people with similar journeys.

**Positive Affirmations:** With social media interactions, people connect with everyone across the globe which leads to more words of positivity and encouragement from across the globe.

**Educational Content:** For instance, we at Mamicha use social media to educate our audience on the pain points that our designs and silhouettes cater to.

**Activism and Advocacy:** From challenging discriminatory policies to demanding better representation in media, these platforms empower individuals to collectively address systemic issues and work towards a positive change in the fashion industry.



### Accessibility impacts demand

The availability of fashionable plus-size clothing is a transformative force!

“For instance, I am someone who loves to express herself not only verbally but also through my appearance. There’s no colour I have not put on my hair!”

Awareness about body positivity and self-love has led to a new niche market in plus-size clothing which not only extends to designs but also lead to sizes that go up to 15XL! Such availability of plus-size fashion as well as its confident representation helps individuals



boost their confidence even more with non-verbal communication like dressing up and expressing themselves through style!

### Runway effect

Fashion events and runways are increasingly becoming more equitable, reflecting a positive shift towards diversity in the industry. Plus-size models and designers catering to a broader audience are gaining visibility, challenging traditional norms. In 2023, right from major fashion weeks to pageants like Miss Universe, we witnessed the participation of a diverse community.

### Development of niche market

Brands are recognising the importance of reflecting the diverse body types of their consumers, breaking away from long-standing stereotypes. This shift acknowledges that beauty comes in all shapes and sizes. By featuring plus-size models in campaigns, brands are not only reflecting the reality of their consumer base but also contributing to a more inclusive and empowering narrative. This movement is reshaping societal perceptions of beauty, promoting self-acceptance and inspiring a positive change in the way individuals relate to and appreciate diverse body types.

More and more brands entering this niche market show the ever-growing demand in this space. More brands mean more options and variety available to the Target audience as each brand has its own design aesthetics, language and signature styles. Gone are the days when big brands like M&S and H&M were the only brands available for plus-size basic clothing. Emerging home-grown brands like Mamicha, Sand by Shirin, Amydus, etc., have brought in a lot of innovation with their design aesthetics and language to the audience.

The future of plus-size fashion in the Indian market is surely exciting and bright. We can expect more innovative designs - experimenting with silhouettes, fabrics and embellishments; customisation - offering a more personalised shopping experience for plus-size people; inclusive runway shows and campaigns - making such events as normal and not historic; technology - advancements in sizing technology like 3D Body Scanning can play a pivotal role; and increased retail presence - more and more plus-size retail chains should be launched across the country.



Avery Dennison, India – Apparel Solutions  
Plot no. 6B,1st Main Road, Phase 1, KIADB Layout,  
Peenya Industrial Area, Bangalore – 560058

## IN-PLANT PRINTING SOLUTIONS<sup>®</sup>

Bringing speed, flexibility and visibility to the apparel,  
textiles and footwear supply chain. We enable you to  
print price tickets, RFID and care label at your doorstep.

[apparelsolutions.averydennison.com](https://apparelsolutions.averydennison.com)  
[sg.ind.sales.enquiries@ap.averydennison.com](mailto:sg.ind.sales.enquiries@ap.averydennison.com)  
Ph: +91 6364165698, +91 9611078822



# ARE ORGANIC MATERIALS LIVING UP TO THE HYPE?

*The fashion industry has been exploring alternative materials such as organic cotton, bamboo, hemp fabric, Piñatex, Soy Silk, Nettle, banana fibre, corn fibre, pineapple fibre and Kapok fibre amongst others.*

**T**he fashion industry is coming to terms with the stark truth — a significant portion, over 60 per cent of all fibres used are made from synthetic substances derived from fossil fuels. Seeking redemption, the industry turns to the allure of organic cotton, bamboo, hemp and a slew of other natural fibres championed as saviours of sustainability. Cotton, which accounts for about 20 per cent of all fabrics, is a natural material and is better

for the environment to some extent. However, cotton is water guzzler and has a huge pesticide count.

The extraction processes of these supposedly natural fibres often involve non-renewable resources like fossil fuels and entail the use of chemicals. Another concerning issue is deforestation, especially when some sustainable fibres require extensive agricultural spaces and, if mismanaged, can wreak havoc on

delicate ecosystems. It's also imperative to confront the fact that these alternatives lack the robust backing of industrial support. Certifying these fibres, a critical aspect of transparency, has stumbled and faltered in the past, casting shadows on the very eco-credentials they seek to embody. The fashion scene is at crossroads, not just talking the talk but needing a serious rethink of how it walks the walk.



## Fashion's quest for eco-friendly materials and fabrics

The fashion industry has been exploring alternative materials such as organic cotton, bamboo, hemp fabric, Piñatex, Soy Silk, Nettle, banana fibre, corn fibre, pineapple fibre and Kapok fibre amongst others to reduce environmental impact.

This shift to greener alternatives also makes economic sense. According to *Future Market Insights (FMI)* report, the global bamboo apparel market was valued at US \$ 2.24 billion in 2022 and is anticipated to reach US \$ 4.02 billion by 2032. Similarly, as per *Allied Market Research*, the global hemp clothing market, which was US \$ 2.29 billion in 2021, is projected to reach US \$ 23.02 billion by 2031.

Hemp fabric is derived from the *cannabis sativa* fibre, also known as industrial hemp, with a history dating back to 8000 BC. Hemp fabrics, in their raw form, offer an extensive range of possibilities. From hemp-woven flannels, lingerie and sportswear to everyday shirts, pants and even furnishings, they effortlessly showcase a vibrant spectrum of colours.

Moreover, hemp fabrics possess natural antibacterial properties and provide immediate UV protection. Additionally, they retain their colours for a longer time than other textiles.

Yet, beyond style and comfort, the true advantage of hemp fabric lies in its kindness towards the farmers, weavers and the environment. Hemp grows rapidly and naturally resists plant diseases, requiring minimal weeding and thriving in diverse climates. Remarkably, it enriches the soil it grows in, replenishing it with 50 per cent to 60 per cent of nutrients, unlike cotton, which depletes the soil. Hemp also consumes significantly less water, when compared

to cotton, thereby increasing farmers' profits by eliminating the need for costly genetically modified seeds.

Many home-grown fashion labels such as **B Label By BOHECO**, **SUI**, **Bhu:Sattva**, **Cannabie**, **Hemploom**, **Hempkari** and **ECENTRIC** amongst others are actively making use of hemp in their creations.

**Haneesh Katnawer** and **Sonam Sodha**, Founders of the start-up Himalayan Hemp, said they are using hemp plants to produce sanitary pad, shirts, T-shirts, designerwear, bags and shoes, besides protein powder, anti-aging and edible oils and other cosmetic products.

They claimed their start-up has used hemp plants to enable small farmers and women artisans to lift their income in the hill states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Some fast fashion brands claim to be environmentally 'conscious' by incorporating recycled polyester into their collections. However, this practice merely replaces one synthetic material with another, failing to address fundamental issues within the fashion industry. Despite being recycled, polyester lacks renewability, biodegradability and compostability.

"Recycled polyester has a limited number of times it can be reused. On the contrary, natural fibres like hemp banana, or other sources such as pineapple and paddy waste, stand out. When evaluating the entire lifecycle from production to usage, using natural fibres ensures biodegradation. Simply put, when disposed of, these fibres naturally break down within a year, unlike their synthetic counterparts which take years," said **Shreyans Kokra**, **CEO, CanvaLoop**, an alternative fibre and material science company that is focused on mainstreaming sustainability by creating alternative fibres, from hemp and other agricultural waste.

"Brands are the most powerful entities which can drive demand.

Anita Dongre (Fashion Designer) recently launched a hemp collection and a lot of other big brands are doing the same which will actually give the manufacturers a push,"

## Mousmi Sejpal

Business Head, Hemp Fabric Lab, BOHECO

He added, "Hemp and other natural fibres are at least 88 per cent more environmentally beneficial."

## Challenges in the adoption of greener options

Hemp and other alternative materials, unlike their mainstream counterparts like cotton, lack significant industrial support, leading to their limited growth. Due to lower demand, these materials are more expensive, further hindering their widespread adoption. **Mousmi Sejpal**, **Business Head, Hemp Fabric Lab, BOHECO** - an agro-based enterprise providing 100 per cent hemp fabric and blends with other sustainable fibres like organic cotton, tencel, wool, silk, yak hair, nettle, bamboo, lyocell - emphasises the crucial role of brands in driving demand.

Citing an example of hemp cultivation, **Mousmi** said that more states must be empowered to permit the cultivation of the eco-friendly crop. In 2018, Uttarakhand made history as the first Indian state to permit hemp cultivation for industrial use,

“We aim to avoid blending with recycled polyester, despite the high demand, as we don’t consider recycled polyester truly sustainable. However, market demands sometimes lead us to use it. We can blend any synthetic material, including MMCF (Man-made Cellulosic Fibre), or any other fibre, as long as it’s 38 mm in length,”

### Shreyans Kokra

CEO, CanvaLoop

with less than 0.3 per cent tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the permissible limit set by international laws and state parameters.

Brands must also move beyond superficial sustainability efforts and focus on a genuine commitment to create a meaningful impact.

“Levi’s has been promoting hemp since 2018, but you would only find one vintage denim in the 501 collection that has hemp. So, first and foremost, brands need to be serious in taking steps forward and inculcating these fibres on a larger scale and the rest of everything else will fall into place,” said Shreyans, while adding that all alternative materials can be blended. Currently, most commercial usage involves a 20 per cent blend because major brands are hesitant to modify their SKUs



(Stock Keeping Unit).

“When we asked the big brands in India about the composition of their fibres, we found 72 per cent -75 per cent of the fibre is cotton, 15 per cent is viscose and the rest is polyester but natural fibres are nearly negligible, so we would like brands to take this up more seriously and have more natural fibres in their collections,” opined **Ganesh Kasekar, Representative South Asia, GOTS**, recognised as the world’s leading processing standard for textiles made from organic fibres.

### Problems with certification of alternative fibres

Organic cotton is a step forward towards a more sustainable future, preventing the use of synthetic and toxic pesticides. The biodegradable fabric is a ‘like-for-like’ alternative to its conventional counterpart, cotton. India stands as the world’s largest producer of organic cotton, contributing to almost half of the global organic cotton market. However, the organic cotton indus-

try faces a significant issue rooted in an opaque certification system vulnerable to fraud. Brands assure consumers of the ‘organic’ status of their products based on certifications from external organisations. These certifications rely on reports from local inspection agencies, which conduct infrequent inspections—either annually for facilities or a few random visits to farms.

In 2021, the credibility of these inspection agencies had been called into question. The European Commission delisted five certification bodies (CBs) from India, namely Ecocert India, Control Union India, Indocert, Lacon India and OneCert International, which essentially meant that they wouldn’t be able to certify organic farm production (such as organic cotton) to the EU Organic Regulation.

To help certify fields growing organic cotton, the GOTS, the European Space Agency (ESA) and Marple (an AI company) announced a project in June last year to use satellite data to detect organic cotton fields across

India. The main objective of the initiative is to bolster the integrity of organic cotton and prevent fraud throughout the supply chain. The first results in India are expected to be released soon.

### Collective efforts are required

Addressing the challenges in sustainable fibre extraction, Ganesh highlighted the case of bamboo fibres. While bamboo is natural, the extraction process involves chemical treatments, negating its organic claim. Another challenge involves small-scale farmers, such as those producing Pashmina wool, facing hurdles due to disorganisation. Despite high demand, the lack of structured markets results in limited outlets, mainly local markets. Collective efforts are required to organise these processes and promote alternative fibres effectively to meet consumer demands.

Viscose, hailed as a more sustainable alternative to cotton or polyester, is a semi-synthetic fabric gaining popularity. “Viscose is gaining popularity now, and in the last five years, at Vardhman, we have made adjustments to our plant and equipment to enable it to run viscose, and at one point in time, 90 per cent – 95 per cent of our products were cotton based and now 25 per cent -30 per cent are non-cotton based, whether it be blends or 100 per cent viscose, modal etc.,” said **Mukesh Bansal, EVP Marketing, Vardhman Textiles.**

“As a retailer with Bestseller, we do almost one lakh pieces of shirts in viscose and it’s become a fabric in India which is selling even in menswear. And no other brand in India has done as much viscose as we do in shirts,” said **Rajiv Bajaj, Head of Design and Product, Jack & Jones India.**

## Sustainable fibre manufacturers

### Hemp Fabric Manufacturers

**Vritti designs:** Based in Malad, Maharashtra, the company creates organic fabrics including hemp fabrics.

**Hemp Fabs:** It is a premier 100% traditional hemp fabric manufacturer, catering to leading fashion brands and retailers, based out of Karur, Tamil Nadu.

**JcraftEco:** The company is an organic fabric manufacturer with GOTS certification which also manufactures hemp fabric.

**The Hemp Studio:** Based out of New Delhi, the company is a producer of hemp fabrics.

**The Cotton Country:** The company is sustainable natural hemp fabric manufacturer and wholesale supplier based out of Erode, Tamil Nadu.

### Bamboo Fabric Manufacturers

**Chandra Prakash & Company:** Based in Jaipur, the company is well-known for creating high-quality bamboo fibres.



**Organic & More:** Based in Noida, the company is a leading producer of bamboo fibres and bamboo apparel.

**Mittal Traders:** The company is a leading manufacturer and supplier of viscose bamboo fabric and is based out of Delhi.

**Balavigna Weaving Mills Pvt. Ltd. :** Based out of Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, the company is a producer of bamboo fibres.

**RJK Impex:** The company is based out of Ahmedabad and is a producer of high-quality bamboo yarn.

### Banana Fabric Manufacturers

**Eco Green Unit:** Based out of Coimbatore, this company provides complete choice of products which include brown banana fibre, banana fibre, banana fibre products.

**Champs Agro Unit:** Founded in 2003, the company is a well-known manufacturer of banana fibres.

**Go Green Agri Solutions:** Go Green Agri Solutions is a leading manufacturer, exporter and supplier of banana fibres in Dhule, Maharashtra.

**Jayadev Banana Fiber:** Sanctioned by the 32nd SSC of the Ministry of MSME, Government of India, this cluster in Odisha manufactures banana fibres

**Uniwell Trading Factory:** Organic banana fibre and fabric manufacturer in Alappuzha, Kerala India

## COLLABORATIONS ABOUND FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Organisations are collaborating to achieve better sustainability options in the apparel and textile industry.

To confront the water challenges faced by the global textile and apparel industry, Arvind Ltd., the Indian textile manufacturer and retailer and Gap Inc., the international clothing and accessories retailer, have jointly inaugurated a Global Water Innovation Centre For Action (GWICA) that will not only test industrial effluents, but will also be an innovation hub for apparel companies, amongst others.

This centre was formally opened by Richard Dickson, President and CEO of Gap Inc., and Punit Lalbhai, Vice-Chairman and Executive Director of Arvind Ltd. It is located at Arvind's Santej unit near Ahmedabad. "This centre has a state-of-the-art laboratory that will allow testing of all wastewater streams from anywhere in the world, or any part of our supply chain, to be analysed and prescriptions given for improvement. We will also be NABL accredited so that third party stamp of approvals can be given for results," said Lalbhai at a formal event held at Santej.

Also lifestyle retailer Anthropologie has teamed up with Cotton Incorporated's Blue Jeans Go Green program to launch a new denim recycling initiative. Customers of Anthropologie are welcomed to bring their



used jeans to any of the company's retail locations in the US. Following that, all used denim will be recycled into insulating material for use in Cotton Incorporated's consumer sustainability programme in a variety of applications.

Anthropologie has established a target to divert 10 tonnes of denim by the end of 2025 in order to further demonstrate its continued commitment to reducing and recycling. The recycling programme aligns with Anthropologie's A Greater Good platform, which emphasises the company's goal of promoting good change via its people and products and striving to become a more socially and environmentally conscientious business.

Additionally technology platform for branded resale, Archive has joined forces with Advanced Clothing Solutions (ACS), a UK circular and sustainable

fashion fulfilment hub, to offer cleaning, repair and second-hand item fulfilment on a branded resale market with global brands The North Face and Pangaia already leveraging this partnership.

Archive's proprietary resale software will precisely manage apparel, footwear, outdoor and luxury brands' product data which includes identifying, conditioning, photographing, pricing, cleaning, repairing (if necessary), listing for sale and fulfilling items on a branded resale marketplace.

Under the programme's expansion, brand-owned inventory is sent to ACS for renewal and resale on its branded recommerce platform, powered by Archive. Similarly, ACS and Archive will process, clean, repair and resell inventory from The North Face to launch their Renewed circularity programme in the UK.

### SNIPS

After meeting with loom owners in Malegaon, Yeola on a day's tour to Nashik, Textile Minister Chandrakant Patil stated that the State Government had granted the majority of their demands. He added that the loom workers would get pensions from the Government.

Uniqlo, the primary brand of Fast Retailing Co. Ltd., a leading Japanese apparel company, has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Banaras Hindu University (BHU), for educational advancement and internships for BHU students.

Latest research from the Better Buying Institute (BBI) shows the impact of Social & Labour Convergence Program's (SLCP) converged assessments – with 74 per cent of savings from reduced audits reinvested into the workplace and 24 per cent on higher wages.



# Vardhman

Delivering Excellence. Since 1965.

## Think of a Colour, We have it !

Visit our digital library with 3500+ colours @  
[www.vardhmanmelangeyarns.in](http://www.vardhmanmelangeyarns.in)



mail at - [melanges@vardhman.com](mailto:melanges@vardhman.com)

**YARNS** | **FABRICS** | **THREADS** | **GARMENTS** | **FIBRES** | **STEELS**

VARDHMAN TEXTILES LIMITED

Chandigarh Road, Ludhiana-141010, Punjab | T +91-161-2228943 | W [www.vardhman.com](http://www.vardhman.com)

March 2024 | **AO India 21**

# 'WE HAVE SET RS 1,000 CRORE REVENUE TARGET IN THREE YEARS'

**Anant Tanted, Founder and CEO,  
The Indian Garage Co.**

It's a tough target but not impossible, states **Anant Tanted, Founder and CEO, The Indian Garage Co.** Twelve years ago, a young and driven Anant, only 23-year-old at the time, embarked on an ambitious journey to create his own apparel brand. Armed with a loan of Rs. 10 lakh from a government scheme, he laid the foundation of The Indian Garage Co. (TIGC) in a modest office space in Koramangala, Bengaluru, with just four team members. Fast forward to today and TIGC stands tall as a powerhouse in the fashion industry. It clocked a gross merchandise value (GMV) of Rs. 300 crore in FY '23 and expects to double it to Rs. 600 crore in FY '24. Operating under the 'House of Brands' format, the company has three brands under its umbrella: TIGC (menswear), Freehand (womenswear) and Hardsoda (men's plus-size brand). Recently, it received a funding of Rs. 155 crore from TMRW, an e-commerce roll-up venture owned by the Aditya Birla Group. In a freewheeling chat with *Apparel Online*, Anant shares insights into design influences, the streetwear market's growth, the future of the apparel market and more.

**AO: Could you share your journey so far and highlight the key achievements along the way?**

**AT:** As the founder of TIGC, the journey has been exhilarating and full of challenges, but ultimately incredibly rewarding. TIGC was born out of the desire to cater to the unique fashion preferences and sensibilities of Generation Z in India. We noticed an imminent gap in the market for trendy and affordable clothing options tailored specifically for this demographic. Accordingly, we invested significant time and effort in developing a strong brand identity and a powerfully attractive range of clothing. From our logo and colour palette to our messaging and brand voice, every aspect of TIGC has been carefully curated to appeal to our target audience. Despite the fierce competition, we've managed to carve out a niche for ourselves in the Indian fashion market.



**AO: How does TIGC differentiate itself in the market and what unique value propositions does it offer?**

**AT:** TIGC stands out in the market through its unique blend of trendy and affordable fashion, tailored specifically for Generation Z consumers in India, influenced by streetwear culture, music, art and pop culture. TIGC also recognises the importance of affordability, especially for young consumers. Our products are competitively priced, making them accessible to a wider range of audience without compromising on quality or style of fashion. This commitment sets us apart from other fashion brands that often come with a higher price tag for their products. We also actively engage with our audience through social media, events and interactive campaigns to foster a connection beyond just transactional interactions. This also creates a space for us where we understand changing customer fashion trends as well as build long-lasting relationships and loyalty with them.

**AO: What percentage of your business revenue comes from men's products and from women's products in terms of percentage?**

**AT:** Around 90 per cent of our business revenue comes from men's products and 10 per cent of it comes from women's products. However, the ratios will completely change from FY '24-25 as we expand Freehand in a big way. Freehand is the exclusive womenswear clothing range of TIGC.

**AO: Leveraging an omnichannel strategy has become a trend amongst D2C companies. How do you see this approach contributing to the overall growth and customer engagement for The Indian Garage Co.?**

**AT:** I believe that by seamlessly integrating online and offline channels, we can create a cohesive and immersive shopping experience for our customers. Through our online platform, we can reach a wider audience, offer

convenience through features like online ordering and home delivery and provide personalised recommendations based on browsing and preferences. Although our physical stores are not active yet, we're hopeful that 2024 would be the year to start physical stores to serve as touchpoints for customers to interact with our products first-hand.

**AO: How does TIGC stay attuned to the fast-changing preferences of consumers and ensure that your product offerings align with current market trends?**

**AT:** First and foremost, we prioritise regular market research to gain insights into the latest trends, consumer preferences and evolving industry dynamics. This involves monitoring social media trends, analysing competitor offerings and actively seeking feedback from our customers through surveys. By leveraging these diverse sources of information, we create a well-rounded understanding of the market landscape.

Our product development process is characterised by agility and responsiveness. This allows us to swiftly adapt to changing trends and consumer preferences. Close and constant communication with our design team, manufacturers and suppliers enhances our ability to efficiently source materials and produce new designs. This collaborative approach ensures that our product line-up remains flexible and is able to meet the evolving demands of our customer base.

In addition to traditional methods, we leverage external fashion research tools to analyse what's trending currently and our in-house retail technology, 'Chanakya', enables us to assess consumer preferences and forecast demand accurately.

As for determining the quantity to order, we employ sophisticated data analytics tools that analyse historical sales data, market trends and customer behaviour.

**AO: The launch of 'TIGC Street' by The Indian Garage Co. marks an entry into the streetwear segment. Could you provide insights into how streetwear differs from casualwear and activewear?**

**AT:** The launch of 'TIGC Street' by The Indian Garage Company not only signifies a strategic foray into the burgeoning streetwear segment in India but also aligns seamlessly with the evolving preferences of the country's fashion-forward youth. The streetwear phenomenon, currently surging in popularity, is characterised by its distinctive silhouettes, fabrics, accessorisation and techniques that set it apart from casualwear and activewear.

In terms of silhouettes, streetwear embodies a laidback and effortlessly cool aesthetic, often drawing inspiration from urban culture and sportswear. Loose and oversized styles, such as baggy hoodies, oversized T-shirts and relaxed-fit pants, contribute to its signature look. This stands in stark contrast to casualwear, which typically features more classic and tailored silhouettes, ranging from jeans and polo shirts to simple dresses. Activewear, on the other hand, prioritises functionality with fitted and streamlined silhouettes designed to enhance movement during physical activities.

The choice of fabrics further differentiates these categories. Streetwear incorporates a mix of high-quality materials like denim, fleece and jersey, often featuring bold prints and unique textures that give it a distinctive edge. Casualwear, focusing on comfort and versatility, employs diverse fabrics such as cotton, linen and knit materials, emphasising softness and breathability. Activewear, designed for performance, relies on technical fabrics like moisture-wicking materials, spandex and breathable synthetics to support physical activity.

Accessorisation is a key element defining these styles. Streetwear embraces bold accessories like oversized hats, chunky sneakers and statement



jewellery, often featuring prominent logos and branding. Casualwear takes a more understated approach with classic accessories like belts, scarves and versatile footwear contributing to a relaxed yet polished look. In activewear, functional accessories such as sports watches, moisture-wicking hats and performance sneakers play an integral role, chosen for their practicality and support during physical activities.

Techniques used in garment construction further emphasise the distinctions. Streetwear embraces various printing techniques, including screen printing and embroidery, to create bold graphics and

logos. Distressing and unconventional dyeing methods are common.

Casualwear focuses on traditional garment construction techniques, emphasising quality stitching and finishing, often incorporating a mix of colours and patterns in a more subdued manner. Activewear utilises advanced construction techniques like seamless construction, flatlock stitching and strategic ventilation to enhance performance and durability.

### **AO: What are your future plans?**

**AT:** We have set a target of achieving a revenue of Rs. 1,000 crore in the next three years. This is a tough target but not impossible with the key strategies we are looking to work further on in the next three years. We want to expand our product range to cater to a wider audience and capitalise on the emerging trends. This includes introducing new clothing lines, accessories and lifestyle products that appeal to our target demographic.

TIGC will also be scaling its presence in existing markets while also exploring opportunities for geographical expansion. This may involve opening new retail outlets, expanding our online presence and entering into strategic partnerships to reach untapped markets. Leveraging an omnichannel approach will also be a crucial factor to create a seamless shopping experience for our customers. By integrating our online and soon-to-be offline channels, we can maximise convenience, accessibility and customer engagement.

As usual, prioritising customer experience will always be our main factor to drive repeat purchases and foster loyalty. This involves delivering exceptional service to customers, personalising recommendations for their shopping experience and creating seamless interactions across all touchpoints for them.

### **AO: How do you see the future of the Indian apparel market in the next five years or so?**

**AT:** India is on its trajectory to becoming the third-largest economy and is witnessing a surge in consumer activity, with more people purchasing goods in the country. The influence of Generation Z, particularly the young demographic, is notably shaping consumer trends and preferences.

Moreover, the Indian apparel market is on the cusp of a transformative journey in the next five years.

Technological advancements are propelling a substantial shift towards online retail, offering consumers unprecedented convenience and accessibility. This trend is set to redefine the way people engage with and purchase apparel.

Customisation and personalisation are taking centre stage as consumers increasingly seek unique, tailored experiences. This shift in preferences is not merely a trend but a driving force shaping the industry.

In this evolving landscape, Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) brands are disrupting traditional retail channels, establishing direct connections with their audience. Beyond streamlining the supply chain, this approach enables brands to cultivate deeper relationships with customers, fostering brand loyalty in an intensely competitive market.

Moreover, the industry is undergoing a significant cultural shift towards inclusivity and diversity. Brands are actively championing representation and catering to a broader spectrum of body types and identities. This commitment reflects the evolving societal values and acknowledges the diverse preferences and needs of the consumer base. With these dynamic changes on the horizon, the future of the Indian apparel market promises to be vibrant, diverse and exceptionally exciting.



Integrated Expo on Fabric to  
Finish Solutions for Garment &  
Textile Manufacturing



# GARTEX texprocess INDIA

## Incorporating



**Fabrics  
& Trims Show**  
PRELUDE

## Featured Zone

screen print  
INDIA  
textile

**DELHI**

**01 - 03 August, 2024**

YashoBhoomi (IICC), Dwarka  
Delhi, India

Organisers



MEX Exhibitions Pvt. Ltd.  
9 LGF, Sant Nagar, East of Kailash  
New Delhi-110065, India  
Mob: + 91 9818894973  
Tel: + 91-11- 46464848  
Email: info@mexexhibits.com

[www.gartexindia.com](http://www.gartexindia.com)



**BOOK YOUR  
BOOTH NOW**



messe frankfurt

Messe Frankfurt Trade Fairs India Pvt. Ltd.  
Gala Impecca, 5th Floor, Andheri Kurla Road,  
Chakala, Andheri (E), Mumbai 400093  
Tel: + 91-22-67575990

Email: priyanka.pawar@india.messefrankfurt.com



# MINIMISING RETURNS, MAXIMISING REVENUES

**T**he fashion industry faces a returns' crisis, with 80 per cent of online returns attributed to clothing purchases. In India, although apparel returns are less frequent, they still represent 26 per cent of total returns, making them the largest return category in fashion retail with one in four items sent back. Store managers and employees report that nearly 40 per cent of returns within a 30-45 day period involve items worn once and then returned.

## Is charging return fees a viable solution?

Returns represent a significant cost component for e-commerce

companies, contributing to increased logistics expenses. Online apparel sellers are adding extra fees to cover their costs. For example, Myntra charges Rs. 15 per order, Ajio charges Rs. 19 and Nykaa Fashion charges around Rs. 29.

Last year, the online fashion retailer Myntra started a new experiment involving fees for product returns targeted at customers with high return rates. This initiative, part of the 'return-as-a-service' project, follows the implementation of a flat 'convenience fee' ranging from Rs. 199 to Rs. 299 on all orders placed by customers exhibiting a high frequency of returns.

Typically, these customers engage in twice as many or more product returns compared to the average customer.

The company will test a fee structure of Rs. 15-30 per return for customers with high return rates after they have used up their allotted free returns. Myntra believes that the previous flat charge of Rs. 199 to Rs. 299 per order might influence user behaviour adversely, not only within this group but also among their broader network. Despite constituting a small portion of the total customer base, this group still represents a significant number of individuals.

Globally too, brands such as Zara, Macy's, Abercrombie & Fitch, J. Crew, H&M and others have added shipping fees for mail-in returns. Abercrombie is charging customers a US \$ 7 fee to return items while American Eagle Outfitters deducts a US \$ 5 fee from mail-in returns that do not qualify for free returns. In 2023, customers sent back almost 17 per cent of the total merchandise they purchased — totaling US \$ 816 billion, according to the *National Retail Federation*.

However, according to **Karam Singh Jaswal, Senior Manager at Monte Carlo**, which operates 356 Exclusive Brand Outlets (EBO) in India, implementing return fees could deter customers from shopping with the organisation altogether. “Our customers put a considerable effort in choosing the right fit, type and colour but if they know that they will have to pay a fee to return the clothing, for whatever reason, then they will be put off by that fact and may very well decide to not buy from that particular retailer themselves. So, while imposing return fees might appear beneficial, it ultimately decreases customer transactions.”

### Tackling the size challenge

Size was by far the main factor in clothing e-commerce returns last year, according to *Statista*. To tackle it, **Saikat Mitra, Senior Vice President of Design and Creative Director at Van Heusen**, emphasises that the brand ensures that all sizing options are clearly listed in the e-commerce space. Furthermore, in terms of fits, including newer ones, efforts are made to base them on existing options to minimise deviation from the current standard.

**KR Jayarajan, Product Consultant with ABFRL**, India's first billion-dollar pure-play fashion powerhouse with a bouquet of leading fashion brands and retail formats, highlights the significance of effectively communicating different fit options to customers. “For instance, a specific size may offer slim fit and regular

options.” He stresses the importance of providing detailed product descriptions alongside fit choices to ensure customers are well-informed.

Luxury lifestyle accessories e-commerce retailer Hard Graft does a great job describing its products. Its product descriptions are unique in that they give specific measurements, information about the materials used and more.

Saikat stresses on the importance of product descriptions, stating that they adhere to the best industry standards for e-commerce cataloging. He states, “Each brand has its own set of standards and the same models are consistently used, ensuring continuity in product presentation. Additionally, all measurements are clearly stated and the user interface and experience (UI/UX) provide easy access to all options for customers. Moreover, brands now include information about the models, providing another avenue for customers to consider.”

Furthermore, the reason for almost 22 per cent of returns globally is that the product appears different in person than it does online. This demonstrates how important it is to have precise product photos so that

buyers can understand exactly what they're purchasing.

With solutions like MySizeID, an AI-driven provider of apparel sizing and digital experience solutions, consumers are informed about the most suitable size for their body type, facilitating the discovery of the perfect fit and reducing retailers' returns by 30 per cent to 50 per cent. MySizeID has collaborated with over 100 retailers, including renowned brands like Levi's, Canali and Desigual to collectively minimise online returns.

### Focus on exchange rather than returns

Experts say focus should be more on exchanges rather than returns. “Exchanges offer a practical solution that encourages customers to reconsider their purchase instead of simply returning it. However, this approach must be supported by the brand and accompanied by certain conditions to make the process slightly more convenient, thus discouraging customers from returning products too easily,” says Jayarajan.

Outdoor Voice is a great example of a DTC apparel brand that promotes exchanging products instead of offering refunds. The brand goes a step further



## RETAIL PULSE INDIA

by offering a 45-day exchange period, while the return period is shorter, encouraging customers to exchange rather than return products.

### Bracketing and Wardrobing

While hygiene factors such as precise product information, size charts, images and content are expected and reasons like 'doesn't fit right, doesn't look good' are typical in the apparel category, one distinctive practice is bracketing. This involves customers filling their online carts with multiple sizes and colours of the same items. The intention is to try them on at home, decide what they prefer and return the rest. Bracketing results in more items being returned to the fulfilment centre, which in turn decreases its capacity to store other inventory.

Another challenge facing the fashion retailers is the rising trend of 'wardrobing', a growing type of return fraud. Wardrobing refers to the practice of buying an item, particularly in the fashion category, wearing it and then returning it to the store as unused to receive a full refund. Surprisingly, Diesel approached the issue uniquely by portraying it as normal behaviour.

Back in 2019, through a witty campaign, dubbed 'Enjoy Before Returning', Diesel encouraged customers to enjoy their clothes before returning them, demonstrating how to successfully engage in wardrobing in a 60-second spot.

The advertisement features a group of stylish young shoppers enjoying themselves in their new outfits, complete with visible tags. It humorously depicts these rebellious individuals straightening their clothes and meticulously ironing the labels before repackaging them for return to the store. The result? Diesel reported a 9 per cent decrease in both in-store and online returns, coupled with a 24 per cent increase in sales. Such unconventional solutions may inspire other brands to explore similar approaches.



### Need more research

In 2020, *Returnly*, a smart returns platform, released a study after analysing a sample of four million shoppers in the US, unveiling behavioural insights that led to the identification of six returner personas. These personas include the loyalist, the 'now' returner seeking instant refunds, the first-time returner, the lazy returner, the fitting room returner who purchases multiple options and the policy abuse returner. Returnly described the loyalist as the company's 'ideal returner', returning undamaged merchandise on time and deserving of recognition through rewards programs. Conversely, the policy abuse returner can incur costs for retailers and should be addressed by prioritising returns data and implementing fraud prevention tools.

"Our return personas give brands a blueprint to offer memorable return experiences that turn First-Time Returners into Loyalists," states **Eduardo Vilar, Founder and CEO of Returnly.**

Expanding on the discussion, Jayarajan says, "Understanding why returns are happening is a very important task that retailers must research. Brands in India do not seem to have the proper mechanisms to come up with proper research on that front. Since the process of return and the product getting back to the warehouse is tedious, data collection may be affected, especially if the customer themselves have not effectively contributed to the process, maybe by not giving a proper reply to queries. Things like these make data collection and analysis challenging for retailers."

It would be great for brands and the shopping system if customers were careful with their purchases and didn't make unnecessary returns as part of their regular shopping habits. However, this might not happen right away. With the rise in online shopping, it's a good idea for everyone involved to review their return policies. The e-commerce players can also look forward to improvements like virtual fitting rooms, AR-VR technology and AI-based solutions in future.

## FOREIGN APPAREL BRANDS VENTURING INTO INDIA

Foreign apparel brands are looking at expanding into India as a lucrative market.

British multichannel men's clothing retailer Charles Tyrwhitt has made its entry into India through a partnership with Reliance Brands. The brand's first store is now operational at Palladium Mall in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

"Charles Tyrwhitt arrived in India with the first store opening doors at Palladium Ahmedabad. Visit us to explore redefined premium menswear collection," said Monil Gheewala, Assistant Vice President – Leasing at The Phoenix Mills Ltd., in a LinkedIn post while sharing



images of the new store.

Reliance Retail has already forged long-term exclusive partnerships across multiple sectors with global and Indian brands such as Ritu Kumar, Bottega Veneta, Tiffany & Co., Valentino, Versace, Rahul Mishra, Armani, Balenciaga,

Boss and Zegna amongst others. Similarly, Ikasu, a UAE-based athleisure brand founded by entrepreneur Karima Karmouzi, has entered the Indian market with the launch of its product range. The product range includes leggings, sports bras, T-shirts,

outerwear, shorts, skirts and jumpsuits along with accessories such as yoga mats, fitness gear and pilates socks.

Commenting on the launch, Karima Karmouzi, Founder of Ikasu in a statement said, "Having previously explored India during a visit to Jaipur and learning through our collaborations with select Yogis and content creators from the country, India became a source of inspiration. Which is why we are thrilled to announce our presence in India."

In a similar vein, French value fashion brand Kiabi is gearing up to launch in the Indian market to bring its family fashion offering to shoppers in the country.

**krishna**  
LAMICOAT PVT. LTD  
An ISO:9001: AND GOVT. RECOGNISED STAR EXPORT HOUSE

**SPECIAL PAPERS AND FILMS FOR GARMENT INDUSTRY**

Our products are compatible to use on all CAD systems, including Bullmer, Eastman, FK, Gerber, IMA, Lectra, Morgan, Orox, Richpeace, Yin, etc.

- **Plotter and Marker Paper**  
Special paper in various grammage, for pen and inkjet plotters compatible on all CAD machines. Maximum width 80".
- **Heat Seal Plotter Paper**  
Adheres temporarily even using ordinary iron, elimination use of pins and staples. Maximum width - 64".
- **Graph Paper**  
One inch marked paper for pattern making, bias checking, stripes checking in rolls. Maximum width - 64".
- **Perforated/Micro Perforated/Notched-Underlay Paper**  
Paper with uniformly punched perforations at predetermined positions for vacuumising in automatic cutters, Maximum width - 120".
- **Over-wrapping Film**  
Specially developed low thickness high-strength, available in various gauges to suit your requirements for vacuumising on automatic cutters, Maximum width - 110".
- **Resealing Polywrap**  
High-density film for resealing after the cut, to prevent loss of vacuum in automatic cutters, Maximum width - 100".
- **Interleaving Tissue Separator**  
Uniquely formulated low grammage tissue paper with porous nature available in various colours. Maximum width - 72".
- **Underlay Paper**  
Recycled economy paper in various grammage for underlay to ease movement and avoid dust & stains. Maximum width 120".
- **Pattern Board**  
Various boards of different colours in rolls and sheets, for pattern making, manually and on automatic patterns cutters. Maximum width - 64" available in rolls of 100 mtrs/200 mtrs to avoid wastage.

Available in desired widths and length's/weights in custom made rolls packed in moisture proof laminate along with protective edge coreplugs.

Introducing most Economical Plain & Perforated Underday Paper

**Head Office:** # 13/14, HSMI Industrial Estate, Okalipuram, Bangalore - 560021  
**Factory:** Survey No. 98, Big Banyan Tree Road, Tavarekere Village, Magadi Road, Bangalore - 562130  
**Mr. Pawan:** +91 88844 40307, **Mr. Varadarajan:** +91 88844 40306, **Mr. Ashok:** +91-9845007725  
 E-mail: [exports@krislam.com](mailto:exports@krislam.com) / [domestic@krislam.com](mailto:domestic@krislam.com)  
**Delhi-Gurgaon:** Tel.: 0124-4257722/23 E-mail: [delhi@krislam.com](mailto:delhi@krislam.com)  
**Mr. Kamalji:** Mob. 09899037121, **Mr. Manish Tiwari:** Mob. 09899188995  
**Kolkata Unit:** Mr. Pramod Kumar Bardia: Mob. 09038798268  
**Sri Lanka:** Colombo Unit: Mr. Ashara Perera Tel / Fax: 0094-11-2742454  
**Bangladesh:** Agent Tel: +880-2-58951490, 58950476, 58952950, 58952151  
 Fax: +880-2-58951474 E-mail: [saleque@uniasia.net](mailto:saleque@uniasia.net), M.A. Salam Mob.: 01716-209493

**QUALITY MANUFACTURERS OF PAPER ROPES, HANDLES AND PAPER BAGS**

## GLOBAL LUXURY BRANDS SEE PROFITABLE QUARTER

International luxury brands have seen a lucrative quarter as sales increased, especially in the Chinese market as Chinese consumers opted for more luxury spending.

American fashion company Ralph Lauren topped Wall Street expectations for revenue in its 12th straight quarterly beat, powered by steady demand from wealthier US shoppers for its expensive sweaters and shirts coupled with a strong rebound in China.

Despite economic uncertainties, wealthy shoppers in the US went on a luxury spending spree over the holiday season, propping up the luxury industry with solid sales reports from LVMH and Cartier-owner Richemont in recent weeks. While several brands have seen persistent weakness in their North American wholesale business due to cautious ordering from retailers, some companies like Ralph Lauren have doubled down on their direct-to-consumer business to offset the pressure.

Ralph Lauren also saw a strong recovery in China, with sales surging more than 30 per cent in the holiday quarter, building on the 20 per cent increase seen in the prior quarter. Net revenue climbed to US \$ 1.93 billion in the fiscal third quarter, from US \$ 1.83 billion a year earlier. Analysts on an average had expected revenue of US \$ 1.87 billion, LSEG data showed. Similarly, luxury company Richemont, owner



of Chloé, Alaïa and Dunhill, unveiled its Q3 results, showing a 4 per cent increase in sales to € 5.593 billion, rising to 8 per cent at constant exchange rates. While this marked a Q3 slowdown, the nine-month period showed a 5 per cent overall sales increase (11 per cent CER). The luxury sector is confronting ongoing challenges, yet affluent consumers persist in robustly purchasing luxury fashion, handbags, watches and jewellery.

Retail witnessed a strong performance with an 11 per cent increase (6 per cent CER) to € 3.942 billion. Online retail experienced a 5 per cent dip (9 per cent CER) at € 356 million and Wholesale and Royalty rose 4 per cent to € 1.295 billion. However, the 'Other' channel, including fashion and leather goods, dipped 1 per cent (4 per cent CER) to € 702 million.

Europe faced a 3 per cent drop (4 per cent CER) at € 1.226 billion, as a result of reduced tourist spending, especially from America's-resident

clients. Japan recorded an 18 per cent increase (8 per cent CER) at € 514 million and the Middle East and Africa recorded a 10 per cent increase (5 per cent CER) at € 449 million. Richemont noted challenges but highlighted mid-single digit retail growth, particularly driven by Alaïa, Delvaux, Dunhill and Peter Millar.

French luxury giant Hermes posted record annual sales and net profit, with plans to reward all employees worldwide with a bonus following strong growth in every region last year. With revenues up by 16 per cent at current exchange rates to € 13.4 billion, the business announced a better-than-expected profit of € 4.3 billion, up by 28 per cent from 2022.

The company said that as part of "its policy of sharing the fruits of growth with all those who contribute to it on a daily basis," its 22,000 employees globally would receive a 4,000-euro bonus early this year. It will also suggest raising shareholder dividends.

### SNIPS

Asos and Boohoo have ramped up nearshoring in light of the ongoing attacks on container ships on the Red Sea and Suez Canal routes. Due to the rerouting prompted by the assaults, the fashion giants have boosted their sourcing of products from Turkey, Morocco and the UK, as well as from domestic sources, in order to avoid the longer lead times and higher shipping costs from Asia.

Global online fashion and lifestyle retailer SHEIN has announced plans to open a new Seattle-area office in downtown Bellevue, acting as the main core for SHEIN's logistics and fulfilment activities in the US.

Hardly Ever Worn It (HEWI), a British company specialising in pre-owned designer resale, has teamed up with Amazon Europe's Luxury Stores to present a curated assortment of pre-owned fashion to Amazon customers in the UK, Germany, Spain and Italy.



## APPAREL RESOURCES

# AO WOMEN OF IMPACT

## Shaping Tomorrow



It's impressive how women are totally rocking the Indian fashion scene. With International Women's Day (March 8) right around the corner, we figured it was high time to give these amazing ladies the spotlight they deserve.

To keep things fair, we opted for the nomination process where women leaders from all corners of the fashion industry shared their accomplishments with us. The response was incredible! We were flooded with stories of grit, determination, and passion that just blew us away. Now, we couldn't showcase every single submission (bummer, right?), but we did our best to feature as many as possible.

Dive in to discover how these trailblazers defied the odds, conquered challenges and became driving forces of change in the fashion landscape.



↓ Anju Modi, Creative Head, Anjuman Brand Designs Pvt. Ltd.

### Fashion and textile leader

My journey into fashion was sparked by a profound love for our cultural heritage and a deep desire to revive its timeless crafts. Over time, my vision has evolved into a mission of reinvention, realising fashion as a narrative of empowerment and celebration of identity. Throughout my career span across three decades in the rapidly evolving Indian fashion industry, I've faced numerous challenges along the way but each taught me important lessons critical for my growth as a designer. My dedication to preserving traditional crafts has brought its own hurdles, from reviving forgotten techniques to supporting the communities through my artistic vision. As a fashion leader, I don't adhere to trends but respond artistically to the cultural zeitgeist. Drawing inspiration from our rich heritage, I integrated traditional techniques like weaving and embroidery into contemporary designs. This unique blend resonated with audiences, garnering praise and recognition, while also honouring our nation's artistic tapestry and supporting local artisans. When I began my journey, there were fewer examples of women shattering the glass ceiling. However, I've stayed true to my roots and simplicity which reflects in my personal style. On International Women's Day, I would like to extend my heartfelt message to all those aspiring women in fashion: *Embrace your uniqueness, trust your journey and never underestimate the power of your voice and vision.*



Chethana Anumolu, Founder, Notch Above Creations



### Proponent of sustainable clothing

Returning from Australia, I was struck by the dominance of western clothing amongst young Indian women. The options available, predominantly in fast fashion, made us disconnected from our rich textile heritage. Inspired by India's abundance of handlooms and woven crafts, I saw an opportunity to bridge this gap. Thus, Notch Above was born. We create modern designs using exquisite, handwoven Indian fabrics, empowering women to express their individuality with both style and cultural connection. While staying attuned to global trends is crucial, we at Notch Above believe true innovation lies in understanding our customers' unspoken desires. We strive to be one step ahead by anticipating their needs, crafting not just garments, but experiences. Even sustainability isn't just a buzzword for us. It's woven into the very fabric of our being. Women leaders in fashion influence society far beyond the trends and designs they create. They provide mentorship to the newcomers and always give opportunities to women who are often overlooked. Believe in yourself even if nobody else does. It's not easy being heard and seen, make sure you are! *Dream Big and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.*

↓ Divya Aggarwal, Creative Director, KAZO

### Creative and Product expert

Growing up, I practically lived and breathed fashion. Through my family's business ventures, I was fortunate to absorb invaluable insights into design concepts and manufacturing processes from an early age. Over time, my vision has evolved to encompass not only the creation of aesthetically pleasing garments but also the fusion of innovation and sustainability, ensuring our designs resonate with modern sensibilities. In navigating the leadership landscape at KAZO, I've been leading multiple departments in design, buying and marketing, facing various challenges along the way. Women leaders in fashion wield significant influence beyond their industry roles, serving as catalysts for social change and empowerment. By breaking barriers and challenging norms, they inspire countless individuals to pursue their passion fearlessly. Personally, power dressing has been a strong pursuit of mine, reflecting confidence, authority and authenticity. By embodying these principles in my personal fashion style, I aim to empower others to embrace their individuality and lead with conviction. I believe in fostering an environment where individuals, regardless of gender, are empowered to contribute their unique perspectives, driving innovation and progress in our society. On International Women's Day, I extend my heartfelt admiration to aspiring women in fashion and beyond. Embrace your unique voice, talents and aspirations with unwavering confidence. *Remember, your potential is limitless and your contributions are invaluable.*





↓ Kiruba Devi, Head-Category and Sourcing, Zivame

### Sourcing and Category Management leader

I hail from one of the textile cities of India-Erode in Tamil Nadu and everything around me was always related to textiles. Hence I had a passionate and strong inclination towards this industry, so I studied B-Tech in Textile Technology from a renowned college. Fresh out of college, I dived into the dynamic world of garment industry in Tirupur and engrossed myself in product development, and alongwith with my colleagues, we crafted world-class offerings with cutting edge technology in kids and activewear for the US market. I think that I was blessed with great colleagues and managers and hence I haven't encountered very big challenges but yes, challenges make one better mentally and professionally. I was fortunate to have got the opportunity to handle big roles in my younger age which was very challenging as I had to really compete or work with such seasoned experienced professionals, felt very little in front of them and scared too. Keeping constant touch with one's technology partners gives one a lot of innovative ideas. Close watch on one's customers makes one understand their needs and use the technology of the partners and to make a product which is a great success. We innovated a product called 'Saree Shapewear' way back in 2016 and this is a pure understanding of the customer pain point and use of the technology available to make a successful product and we have patent application on reversible saree shapewear. I was a proud leader in an organization which was launching one new concept or product everyday - 365 products in 365 days. I believe customer is everything. Upgrade with all technologies to succeed. Women leaders in the industry just don't shape up the industry but the entire society. They turn to be a role model for their circle and enable growth of many individuals. We see a lot of women leaders across all fields bringing in gender equality. Women aspire to be influential at home, work, in the community and in business because they desire to create a better world for themselves and future generations. Fashion is a form of expression and I am proudly Indian. Zest, Perseverance,

Hope, Belief are few important characteristic traits that should become like jewellery for a woman to achieve any success in life. *Approach life with full of excitement and energy and do things full heartedly and take pride and pleasure in it completely.*



↓ Dipna and Dipti, Co-founders, Love The World Today

### Champions of kids' ethical clothing

Love the World Today is founded by my sister, Dipna (an Educator and a Contemporary Dance Artist) and myself, Dipti (Consumer Insights professional with 15+ years of experience). We decided to make quality clothing for kids in a socially and environmentally responsible way. One saying that has stayed with us and is the basic premise with which we do everything at Love The World Today is 'We may not live to see the future but our children surely will'. We have been fortunate to be raised by parents who see no difference between genders and who always encouraged us to pursue our dreams and have a voice. Being feminists, certain value systems have been at the core of how we lead our lives and how we draw boundaries. As we build our own niche in this industry alongside growing our brand, the challenges change. With Love The World Today, we have always been ahead of the curve. Our design philosophy is simple - 'Let them be little' - and whatever we create, we always keep this in mind rather than following the ongoing trends. Simplicity, quality and clothes that last for years are at the core of our design process.

Women in the workforce across any industry are an inspiration for the rest. As per ILO (February 2022), the global labour force participation rate is about 47 per cent for women and 72 per cent for men with a 25 per cent point gender gap. By breaking barriers and becoming a heard voice in an otherwise predominantly male-dominated industry, they inspire many others to pursue their dreams, be assertive about what they want and lead by example. More female role models means a far more diverse and progressive society. Courage, Creativity, Authenticity and Resilience are key no matter what path you choose. If I had to give one message, I would say embrace the strength in your femininity and offer it to the world unabashedly. *As women, we should inspire, support and elevate each other in order to build a future of our dreams for us and for generations to come.*



↓ Ethel Christina,  
Merchandising Manager  
Sourcing, Landmark Group

### Sourcing and Merchandising specialist

I've always been an artist since I was a kid and created different kinds of stuff growing up from painting to clothing dolls in childhood to fashion. Fashion can be loosely defined as 'the art of creating fashionable apparel'. With the passage of time, the concept of 'fashion designing' has extended to other things such as fashion accessories like jewellery, bags, footwear, etc. Embrace a culture of innovation, stay informed about industry trends and invest in continuous learning and development. Fashion is not just about clothing; it's a dynamic cultural force that shapes and reflects the values, identities and aspirations of society. It influences how we present ourselves to the world, how we perceive others and how we engage with the broader cultural landscape. In an ever-evolving industry, it's crucial to invest in continuous learning and development. Encourage your team members to acquire new skills and knowledge through training programs, workshops and online courses. Provide opportunities for them to attend industry events and conferences. By fostering a culture of innovation, staying informed about industry trends, fostering collaboration and partnerships, experimenting and iterating, and investing in continuous learning and development, you can position your business to thrive in an ever-changing landscape. *Wishing you a day filled with all the strength, power and courage that makes you the amazing woman you are!*



Geetanjali Solanki, Global  
Director Values, Principles and  
Governance, CottonConnect



### Pioneer of environmental sustainability and responsible sourcing

The textile industry presents a unique opportunity to drive a positive impact on a global scale, particularly in women's empowerment and contribute to the ongoing efforts in environmental sustainability. My background in HR, working with real estate companies like CBRE and DTZ, gave me an in-depth knowledge of providing an organisational structure for effectively managing people and supporting them with opportunities to grow while meeting organisational goals. When the opportunity came to join CottonConnect, it resonated deeply with my values. Women leaders are often at the forefront of movements promoting environmental sustainability and diversity and inclusion within the industry. The impact of women leaders cuts across industries, influencing not just fashion. I believe that a woman's contribution should not be measured by how she looks but more by what she stands for. At CottonConnect, witnessing the strength and resilience, especially of our women cotton farmers, encourages me to work harder to create a more just and sustainable future for them. *Let's join hands to empower each other, and together, we can empower women, foster sustainability and shape a more equitable and responsible future for the fashion industry.*



Hema Kapoor, Co-Founder and Creative Director, IBA  
CRAFTS Pvt. Ltd.

### Design and Creative expert

My entry into the fashion industry was driven by a passion for innovation and a commitment to address environmental impact. Over time, our vision at IBA CRAFTS has evolved to prioritise sustainability, leading to the development of the Just-In-Time Garments Manufacturing technology. This reflects our dedication to revolutionising fashion by minimising waste, conserving resources and promoting responsible consumerism. As a fashion leader, navigating business challenges has been an integral part of my role. Some strategies I've employed include market research and adaptability, financial planning and efficiency and technological integration and brand differentiation. One standout example is the adoption of our copyrighted Just-In-Time (JIT) Garments Manufacturing process, a revolutionary concept in the industry recognised and protected by the Government of India. Women leaders in fashion influence society by inspiring empowerment, challenging beauty standards, advocating for social issues and fostering mentorship. Personally, my fashion style shapes a leadership approach centered on authenticity, inclusivity, creativity, adaptability and celebrating individuality. Happy International Women's Day! To all the inspiring women in fashion: your creativity is your superpower and your uniqueness is your strength. Don't shy away from expressing your individuality – it's what sets you apart. Remember, supporting each other is the secret sauce to success. *Here's to breaking barriers, chasing dreams and making waves in the world of fashion!*





Kalyani Singh, Business Head,  
Kapsons Group

### Fashion retail expert

Embarking on a journey in the fashion industry wasn't just a career choice for me, it was a calling fuelled by a profound love for self-expression and creativity. My journey into retail was catalysed by a desire to understand the alchemy behind turning a simple transaction into a memorable, seamless experience. Commencing my career within a buying team, progressing from buying to merchandising and eventually overseeing the operations of the retail sector and now evolving myself in the online platform, I have continuously refined my expertise within the dynamic landscape of the fashion industry. I believe that successful retail goes beyond transactions; it involves building relationships, understanding the pulse of the market and adapting to the ever-changing landscape to ensure that brands not only survive but thrive in the hearts and minds of consumers. As a woman of the retail industry, overcoming challenges has been a testament to my resilience, determination and unwavering commitment to breaking barriers. Facing these hurdles head-on, I've embraced a proactive mindset, focusing on highlighting the diverse talents and capabilities of individuals, regardless of gender. By doing so, I aim to challenge stereotypes and foster a more inclusive and equitable environment. Embracing unconventional ideas is a key aspect of this approach as it allows us to differentiate ourselves and capture the attention of consumers in new and exciting ways. Women leaders in the retail industry possess a profound influence that extends well beyond the boundaries of their professional roles. At the helm of retail enterprises, women leaders wield immense power to shape the very fabric of consumer culture and societal norms. Through their strategic acumen in buying, they curate collections that speak of their diverse tastes and preferences of consumers, while also championing inclusivity and diversity on the shelves. Women leaders in retail embody the essence of leadership in its purest form, transcending conventional boundaries to shape not only the industry but also society at large. To all the aspiring women in fashion, I want you to know that the world is your runway and your potential is limitless. In an industry that thrives on creativity, innovation and self-expression, your unique perspectives, talents and voices are not just welcomed but essential. Believe in yourself and your vision, even when others may doubt or underestimate you. *Your passion, determination and unwavering commitment to excellence will carry you through even the toughest of times!*



Kavita Jha,  
CEO and Co-founder, KiksAR  
Technologies  
Pvt. Ltd.

### Fashion technocrat

I faced issues while shopping and felt the need to improve the customer experience. I realised that what I was seeing wasn't what I was getting. More often than not, there was an issue with the way things fit, or the material and colours seemed different from what was shown. Upon further investigation, I discovered that it wasn't just me, over 40 per cent of products bought online are returned. Initially, my vision was to enable users and consumers to accurately try on items and test fit and fall for themselves. Eventually, this led to our team looking into the process of creating a garment. Not only was it labour-intensive, but it was also resource-heavy, using a lot of resources in the process of designing, sampling, manufacturing, selling and advertising. We aim to make the process more sustainable, not just environmentally but economically, by saving time and money. As a fashion leader, the process of learning never stops. There are always an endless number of concepts to be unlearned, learned and applied. The idea of digitising this whole process of sampling, prototyping, manufacturing and modelling a garment is one that initially seemed rather unconventional, but now it seems to be the right way to go. Our Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Try-On solutions and platforms are revolutionising the shopping experience by offering immersive experiences that provide customers with a more accurate depiction of how clothing items will look and fit before they buy. Additionally, Generative AI is being investigated as a tool to expand designers' creative possibilities and accelerate the design process. These advancements aim to enhance consumer satisfaction by delivering more personalised and realistic product experiences, ultimately reducing fashion waste. By embodying simplicity in my fashion choices, I aim to reflect a leadership approach that prioritises clarity, inclusivity and accessibility, ultimately resonating with a broader audience and facilitating meaningful connections. As women in the fashion industry, let us embrace the power within us to break barriers and consider ourselves equals. It's crucial to dismantle the obstacles in our minds and believe in our capabilities. *With self-belief as our guiding force, we can overcome any challenge and pave the way for our success.*

## AO WOMEN OF IMPACT



↓  
Sonalika Seth,  
Co-Founder,  
Dennison India

### Fashion lifestyle specialist

My entry into the fashion industry was inspired by my passion for creativity and self-expression through clothing. Over time, my vision has evolved to encompass not just creating beautiful garments, but also fostering sustainability and inclusivity within the fashion world. Witnessing the transformative power of fashion to empower individuals and communities has further fuelled my dedication to this industry.

As a fashion leader, staying ahead of trends and fostering innovation is essential. Embracing unconventional ideas often leads to breakthroughs and success. One instance of this was when our team decided to incorporate sustainable materials into our designs before it became a mainstream trend. This decision not only aligned with our values but also resonated with consumers seeking eco-friendly fashion options, leading to significant success for our brand.

Women leaders in fashion play a pivotal role in shaping societal norms and perceptions. Beyond industry roles, we can inspire and empower individuals to embrace their uniqueness and express themselves authentically through fashion.

On International Women's Day, I would like to encourage aspiring women in fashion to embrace their dreams with unwavering determination and resilience. Believe in your capabilities, stay true to your values and never shy away from voicing your ideas and perspectives. *Together, let us continue to break down barriers, uplift each other and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future in the fashion.*



Pinky Rai, Design Team Lead,  
The Indian Garage Co. (TIGC)



### Fashion alchemist

My love for fashion started early, playing with my parent's clothes and flipping through fashion magazines as a child. This enduring interest propelled me to pursue a career in fashion design. Successfully securing the 47th rank nationwide in the entrance exam for the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), I chose NIFT Bengaluru as the institute to further cultivate my skills and knowledge through a Bachelor of Design (B.Des) degree. Throughout my academic journey, particularly during my graduation, I found a platform to translate my creative vision into tangible garments that reflected my evolving sense of self. As a fashion leader, staying ahead of trends and fostering innovation are integral to my approach. I regularly engage in extensive market research, keeping a close eye on emerging trends, consumer behaviour and cultural influences. Additionally, I maintain a strong network within the industry, attend relevant events and collaborate with trends. In my world, we don't just follow trends; we set them. I believe in leading with a flair for fun, embracing creativity and creating a workplace where everyone's uniqueness shines. To all those women in fashion industry, embrace your exclusivity, amplify your voice and scale greater heights with unwavering confidence. *Cheers to your brilliance, resilience and the incredible impact you're destined to make!*

Kriti Tula, Founder, Doodlage



### Champion of sustainable fashion

My journey into the fashion industry was sparked by a lifelong interest in design, a realm I was drawn to from my earliest memories. Initially, my path to fashion was guided by curiosity and a desire to explore my design options. However, it wasn't long before I encountered the unsettling realities of overconsumption and overproduction prevalent within the industry. This realisation became a turning point for me, sharpening my focus and determination. My vision evolved from merely participating in the fashion world to fundamentally challenging its status quo. My personal style, deeply aligned with sustainable and ethical fashion, mirrors my leadership approach. By embodying the change I advocate for, I aim to inspire both my team and the wider community towards more conscious fashion choices. Women in leadership positions in fashion are not just shaping trends; they're crafting a more responsible and equitable world. My message to aspiring women in fashion is one of encouragement and a call to action. The industry calls for not just talent, but those who are passionate about making a difference. If fashion calls you, embrace it as a platform not only for creativity but for change. Learn deeply about the craft, the people behind it and the environmental impact of our creations. Your journey in fashion has the power to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable world. *Let's build a legacy in fashion that celebrates our artistry and respects our planet and its people!*





Udita Bansal, Founder, trueBrowns

### Leader of lifestyle products

My entry into the fashion industry was inspired by a deep-rooted passion to bring the Indian craft forward embraced in a contemporary way. Witnessing the transformative power of fashion boosted my confidence and self-expression that in turn fuelled my vision from the start. Over time, this vision has evolved to encompass a commitment to size inclusivity and conscious fashion choices made at trueBrowns. Our brand's journey has been guided by the belief that every woman, regardless of size or background, deserves to feel confident and empowered in her clothing choices. Navigating the fashion industry comes with its unique set of challenges. From breaking stereotypes to overcoming gender biases, each obstacle has served as an opportunity for growth and resilience. By fostering a supportive and inclusive work culture, we've created an environment where talent and creativity thrive, regardless of gender. As a fashion leader, staying true to the vision of the brand requires a constant embrace of innovation and a willingness to explore unconventional ideas. One instance where this approach led to success was our decision to prioritise size-inclusivity and conscious fashion practices. By challenging industry norms and embracing the idea that fashion should be accessible to all, we've not only expanded our customer base but also made a positive impact on the industry as a whole. Women leaders in fashion play a significant role in shaping societal norms and perceptions beyond industry roles. Our personal fashion style reflects our commitment to authenticity, inclusivity and conscious fashion choices, which in turn influences our leadership approach. By championing diversity, individuality and leading by example, we strive to inspire women to embrace their unique strengths and capabilities, both in fashion and in life. In celebration

of International Women's Day, I would like to remind all those aspiring women in fashion that the journey to success is paved with resilience, determination and self-belief. *Embrace your unique voice, dare to dream big and never underestimate the power of your vision.*



Ashmika Sadh, Founder,  
Zip Zap Zoop

### Curator of sustainable fashion

Over time my vision has evolved as I see through the lens of the customer. The consumer has evolved so much due to advent of growing technology, the access to fashion behind a mobile screen. It takes a good amount of time to carve yourself as women in business to be taken seriously. The back-end of fashion which is manufacturing is male-dominated. A major portion of the tech-world is male-dominated too. Hence to inculcate in the minds of people how serious we are about what we are doing is very challenging. In today's fashion, trends change within two weeks, while some styles are timeless. The cusp between the two is what one needs to crack. Because we are a manufacturing unit, it takes a week from design to the ready garment. So if we feel some designs are gaining popularity globally, we can hit to market within one week. Women leaders have a great impact on the society because of the message they send to other women. When a woman is passionate about what she is doing and is consumed by it, the energy around her also speaks a similar language. When a woman is passionate about what she is doing and is consumed by it, the energy around her also speaks similar language. And this energy along with smart outfit is an indicator of confidence in knowing who you are and what you stand for. My message for women: *Follow your dreams. Nothing comes easy. So never give up. There is no permanent low or a permanent high. And if you are talented, the fashion pool is big enough for you to swim.*



↓ Anushka Khanna, Fashion Designer

## Expert in bespoke creations and intricate embroidery

Entering the fashion industry was a natural extension of my lifelong passion for creativity and self-expression. Navigating challenges, including gender-related ones, has been an integral part of my journey. Especially, now as a mother, it has been a balancing act between personal and professional. I have overcome all my obstacles by staying true to my vision, surrounding myself with a supportive network and continuously learning and adapting. As a fashion leader, staying ahead of trends requires a willingness to embrace unconventional ideas and push boundaries. Women leaders in fashion play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions of beauty, empowerment and inclusivity. Beyond industry roles, our influence extends to challenging norms, championing diversity and fostering positive change. My message to all aspiring women in fashion is simple: believe in yourself, embrace your uniqueness and never underestimate the power of your voice and vision.



Shivani Aggarwal, Founder, ANI Clothing



## Feminine pretwear expert

The inspiration for entering the fashion industry was always there since I was a kid. I knew that this is what I wanna do. After my higher studies, when I pursued a career in fashion, I realised that fashion world isn't only about glamour but rather a lot of hard work goes into it and I was prepared for all hardships to be a part of this industry, which is why I did my undergraduation in womenswear fashion design from Parsons New York. I want to make India more renowned for westernwear clothes through my brand. Being a woman entrepreneur is definitely not easy but having a family that is supportive and my team who is super-supportive have helped me in overcoming all the challenges. In order to stay ahead of trends, we basically just need to follow our heart and creativity. Our team travels a lot and they seek inspiration from not just the more generic things but more of the things that go unnoticed. I feel 2024 is the year for women as we are more empowered. The message that I would like to share with inspiring women in fashion is that it's not just Women's Day today but it's Women's Day everywhere every day every time and I feel like having the power to be able to inspire people and encourage them for taking up leadership and be a part of the fashion industry. There is no end to no bounds and sky's the limit.



↓ Sridevi, GM, Design, Texport Industries Pvt. Ltd.

## Designing expert

I come from an artistic family. I grew up in Chennai, surrounded by art, music, tradition and culture. I learnt to appreciate and embrace the value of craftsmanship, art and social contribution. My first childhood recollections are filled with colour, crafts, temple arts. These memories escort me wherever I go ever since. They are an important part of my personality. They are present in the way I do things and motivate me in my work. The combination of my culture and zest together with today's urbanisation has dramatically influenced and formed my perception and my identity both as a designer and as a human being. In my heart and soul, I live, breathe and dream clothes, fashion and anything related to it. So stepping into fashion was the natural development in that direction. I believe if there are no challenges, then there is no moving forward. Handling all those challenges, moving forward and growing further lead us to greater positivity. Adopting new strategies and embracing the importance of diversity in fashion and trend forecasting are essential. Innovation is the key driver of change, playing a vital role in bringing creativity and efficiency to the fashion trends. The core values that I possess is what reflects as my fashion strength and always moving with the current trends inspires me and the people around. *My message to all the aspiring women and my fellow beings is to dream and work towards fulfilling each of their dreams. Your dream will come true when you pursue it with honesty and integrity.*





Arya Giri, Founder, Arya Giri

### Pioneer in luxury pretwear

The inspiration behind my entrance into the industry formulated at a very tender age when I visited weaver villages with my mom on trips to India. Looms became the background noise of a lot of my memories of India and quickly flourished to become an integral part of my identity. The AG vision has remained the same since its inception, but the medium in which we communicate this has further refined as we learn and explore our clientele and formats to share these ideas in the most accessible and authentic manner possible. While the fashion industry is one charged with female energy and empowerment, there are indeed moments where shifts in the workshop environment occur. Personally, leading a team as a young female entrepreneur has been incredibly insightful, but of course there is growing pain when you are a much younger female leader for a team of male-dominated artisans. I think female leaders in the fashion space also function as role models for women in other workforce environment. Fundamentally, fashion doesn't just represent the superficial layer of vanity and materialism, but in fact denotes political climate, pulse of the nation and the globe and much more. It represents what we are, what we were and what we can be. My personal fashion is much like AG wherein you are marrying comfort and functionality with narrative, emotion and a sense of pride in culture. It's most definitely not the easiest for the industry to crack and I wouldn't say I'm anywhere near to cracking it myself! But with all the trials and tribulations, it is also one of the most rewarding spaces to exist. *I would say that to be 1000 per cent sure of the story you have to tell, go out there and share it in the most authentic and personal manner possible. The rest will follow.*



Usha Patel,  
Director-Academics,  
Indian Institute of Art  
and Design



### Arts and Design educationalist

I found my way into the fashion industry through a culmination of factors. Initially, it was my creativity that pulled me towards the industry, driven by a love for design, fabrics, colours and the overall artistic expression that fashion provides. This inclination evolved over time, shaped by personal experiences, emerging trends and industry influences. As my vision matured, I cultivated a unique personal style, motivated by a desire to share it with others, while also adopting a more market-driven perspective. In summary, an individual's entry into the fashion industry is often fuelled by personal passion, style, cultural influences, entrepreneurial aspirations or ethical considerations. To stay ahead in the realm of fashion, one has to regularly engage in industry research networks and with other professionals within the industry and also try to encourage a culture of innovation and creativity by embracing new technologies within one's research domain. Another important aspect is to remain open to unconventional approaches within one's discipline. This may mean disrupting traditional ways and means of functioning and always being ready to offer fresh ideas that resonate with changing mindsets and changing markets. It's interesting to trace the trajectory of the fashion industry while navigating challenges specific to gender. The focus needs to be on fostering inclusivity while promoting diverse representation in design and challenging traditional norms, embracing gender-neutral designs, collaborating with diverse talents and advocating for equal opportunities in the education and design industry. The shift towards inclusive design has catered to a wide range of body types and gender expressions while avoiding stereotypical gender norms and embracing designs that are versatile and adaptable. Designers have embraced this shift, incorporating elements from men's and women's wear, including choices of fabric, cut, details and styling. Unisex clothing has transcended the design vocabulary and challenged the traditional gender norms. To truly celebrate International Women's Day, it is essential to empower women to make them feel confident and persevere to break barriers. Embracing their unique voices in the fashion industry is crucial. To all the aspiring women in fashion, the message is clear: *don't feel overwhelmed by the multitude of brands. The power lies in your hands to choose; it's about your personal style.*



↓  
Divya Mehta, Country  
Manager-South Asia,  
Varner AS

### Merchandising/ Sourcing expert

I came into the fashion industry as a young professional. From an early age, I had an aptitude for fashion, which one might say as being 'fashion-conscious'. When I joined the fashion industry, I had an initial sense of disillusionment when I found out that it was not all glitz and glamour which is generally exposed to the layman. However, the industry certainly grows on you and I quickly found out that there are areas of the business where I might be able to make significant contributions in my own capacity. Now, after spending two decades in the industry, it still amazes me how every piece of every style comes together like a giant jigsaw puzzle in order to place it in the hands of the end consumer at the right time. Once an individual transcends into a position of leadership, strategic thinking becomes an imperative. As an industry, the fashion world itself is unique and unconventional, complete with its innovative and experimental nature. If you happen to have a collage of the fashion trends across decades, not even centuries, it will be easily apparent that the fashion industry has always had a progressive approach and driven the same approach through the masses. During the last century, women have proven themselves to be capable leaders across all industries, wherever given a chance. I would implore to all women to be non-judgmental towards themselves. It is important that we understand ourselves as a person first - our virtues and vices, our capabilities and our dreams. *It is necessary to strive to be successful and then each one of us can have our own mic drop moments.*



Garima Bhat, President, Beone Inc.



### Specialist in high-end womenswear design and sourcing

My inspiration is India. I aspire our heritage textiles and artisanal techniques to be taken to the world and even to bring back to the youth of India. The glory that our textiles industry has witnessed 4-5 centuries back is what I am passionate about creating again. My own vision is to ensure that Banarasi brocade, Maharashtra's Patola, Bengal's Jamdani, Kanjeevaram silk, Kashmir's Sozni and dozens of other such GI-worthy specialties become a symbol of modern elevated fashion globally. When I started the journey, the image of India in our 'affordable luxury' segment of womenswear needed a lot of work. In the last 27 years, we have made significant impact in three different areas - delivery/performance, innovation and training more women in the areas of floor-in-charge, supervisors, pattern makers, which was a gap earlier. My travel to distant, artisanal villages is a continuous practice and the discovery of this remote village near Rajamundry in AP has resulted in consistent business of over a crore for each of the past six years for many of the 800 crochet craftswomen who live there and have made the area a flourishing place with their financial independence. In my experience, women leaders are bringing a lot more empathy, collaborative working by being shining examples themselves. *Just love yourself and let your potential unleash.*



Rimple Narula, Co-Founder and Director,  
Rimple and Harpreet Couture

### Queen of opulence

For every girl, the first fashion icon is always the mother. A girl child always looks up to the women in their family. In my case also, my mother had a role to play, at a very young age. I started getting fascinated by all things luxury like my mother's hand embroidered sarees and suits as well as my grandmother's beautiful shawls from Kashmir. My mother has always been a very impeccably dressed woman and my introduction to fashion was also my mother's choice of clothing, jewellery and all things fashion. When it comes to Harpreet and me as designers, cinema has a vital role to play in our journey. We were very fortunate to work with some of the best in the world of cinema like Mr. Bhansali who have had a great influence in our life and designs. As a fashion leader, staying ahead of trends and fostering innovation is crucial. One way to achieve this is by embracing unconventional ideas that challenge the status quo. Women leaders in fashion have a profound impact on society, extending beyond their industry roles as people tend to take reference from our choices. I believe women in the fashion industry serve as beacons of empowerment, challenging norms and fostering diversity and inclusion. My personal fashion style is very bold and expressive. My advice to the younger generation would be to just focus. *Not just in fashion but in any creative field, clarity is power, be clear about what you want and just strive for that.*







Bhawana Jadwani, Head of Design,  
Sharman Udyog

## Style Architect

The inspiration that led me into the industry wasn't a single moment, but a tapestry woven from childhood sketches, stolen fabric scrap and a fascination with how fashion tells stories. Additionally, growing up while seeing my mother adorn handlooms and attires rich in Indian textiles and embroidery had a profound impact on me. Witnessing the intricacies of these fabrics and the stories they conveyed through their patterns and designs ignited within me a deep appreciation for the craftsmanship behind fashion, particularly the rich heritage of Indian fashion. Over time, my vision has evolved. It's no longer just about aesthetics; it's about sustainability, ethical practices and using design as a force for good. While fashion is often perceived as a predominantly female industry, the reality can be different, especially within leadership roles. As a Head Designer, I've encountered challenges, not necessarily rooted in gender, but focusing more on proving my competency and earning respect in a position. I've tackled these challenges by developing a strong work ethic, honing my communication skills and building meaningful relationships with colleagues across all levels. This not only allowed me to overcome initial hurdles but also fostered an environment of collaboration and mutual respect. Each obstacle became a learning experience, shaping me into a more confident and empathetic leader.

Women leaders in fashion are powerful change makers. We challenge norms, champion ethical practices and inspire future generations. I prioritise collaboration, open communication and empower my team to express their unique voices. Dear aspiring women in fashion, dream big and don't be afraid to push boundaries. Embrace your individuality, challenge the status quo and use your voice to shape the future of fashion. Remember, we are more powerful together. *Let's create a world where self-expression knows no bounds and where women lead the way towards a more inclusive and sustainable industry!*



Nupur Kanoi,  
Fashion Designer

## Luxury clothing specialist

My love for fashion, craft, culture and art coupled with my constant appetite for experiment to create unique designs that reverberate with global audience steered me towards my journey in fashion. Over time, my vision has evolved as I've explored different techniques, experimented with fabrics and found inspiration in diverse sources. For me, fashion is a form of self-expression and a way to empower individuals. In the initial years, when you are young and from a considerably sheltered orthodox family, setting up a male labour dominated manufacturing unit was quite daunting and even nerve wrecking at times. To find your own, in that space, where you drive the decisions vs. the other way around was the biggest personal challenge as woman entrepreneur. I believe that talent and hard work should be the driving factors in any industry, regardless of gender. Surrounding yourself with a strong support system, including mentors and colleagues who uplift and encourage, is also crucial in navigating these challenges. When you're deeply immersed in fashion, and genuinely passionate about fashion in general, I think following trends becomes very secondary. It comes very naturally because of the exposure and constant love and study of global fashion. It requires less bookish knowledge and a more world view of evolving trends. I've never been a fan of fast fashion trends. A firm believer of classics, a modern twist to traditional techniques and crafts has always been the quiet mantra for me. Global street style from around the world has always inspired me, glimpses of which always appear in our design sensibility. When it comes to women leaders in fashion, their influence goes far beyond just their industry roles. We have the power to shape society and inspire change. Fashion has the ability to break boundaries and challenge norms, and as a leader, I strive to use my personal sense of fashion and style to inspire others to express themselves fearlessly. Fashion can be challenging, even daunting, especially when it comes to gender-related obstacles. The key to success lies in self-belief and not letting anyone's opinion define your worth or limit your potential. Embrace your unique perspective and let your work speak for itself. Surround yourself with a supportive network of like-minded individuals, who encourage and empower each other to push boundaries. *Always remember there are no short cuts to hard work.*





↓ Rajeswari Mavuri,  
Founder, Label RaMa

### Pioneer of slow fashion

My journey into the fashion industry really stems from a deep-seated love for textiles that goes way back to my childhood. I remember those days of tagging along with my family, exploring Indian handloom clusters and being utterly captivated by the sheer beauty of it all. Watching my mother and grandmother gracefully drape those exquisite *sarees*, it was like witnessing magic unfold before my eyes. Back then, I didn't fully grasp the intricate artistry behind the craft. It wasn't until later, when I started engaging with weavers and eventually joined my family business that I truly began to understand the profound significance of their work and the challenges they faced. That's when it hit me and I felt this profound calling to champion Indian handlooms. As the founder of a slow fashion brand, I'm deeply rooted in the philosophy that true style transcends seasons. Celebrating International Women's Day is a powerful reminder of the progress we've made and the journey ahead. For aspiring women in fashion, my message is simple: entrepreneurship is the base camp and the world of fashion is a trek to the summit. The note to self is to *surround yourself with a supportive network and personal board of advisors, seek mentorship from those who've walked the path before you and never underestimate the power of perseverance and consistency.*



Niharika Bhasin, Costume Stylist



### National film award winner

Style is a language of self-expression and I have always been fascinated by all the unique ways people choose to express themselves through style, especially street style. I don't see gender. The way I was brought up, I was never made to feel like I was any different. I navigate challenges that life throws at me as an individual, as an Indian and as someone who is strong and capable of handling whatever life dishes out. In films we are fighting fires every day, so each day has its own set of challenges and the best ways to navigate that is by knowing what you are good at, playing to your strengths, adapting to overcome your weaknesses and always being ready to roll with the punches. The fact that I am in films in spite of never studying fashion is very unconventional for me. I was deeply entrenched in getting higher education and ended up in a strong corporate culture. When films came to me, I just took the risk and pushed myself in this entirely new territory of creativity and freelance culture. I don't follow trends. I believe in having a personal style. I was one of the first people in the country to have blue hair, I've had piercings and tattoos when my parents and the country perceived it as down market. Women leaders have the power to build a judgement-free safe space at work, allowing the younger generation to truly flourish and be fearless. *Just be true to yourself! And be whoever you want to be! Don't let age or social norms come in the way.*



Ruchita Chhabra, Country Program Manager,  
The Sourcery

### Pathbreaker in material sourcing

A Journey of Creativity, Ethics and Evolution while growing up, my love for creativity and recycling paved the way for my journey into the fashion industry. After pursuing a Post Graduate Diploma in Knitwear Design and Technology from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, I discovered my passion for the business side, venturing into merchandising, marketing and sourcing. Working in manufacturing exposed me to the stark contrast between labour wages and supply chain profits, prompting a desire for change. My inspiration lies in bridging the gap between creativity and ethics, dreaming of a fashion industry where responsible practices enhance creativity. It's an ambitious vision, inspired by countless women changing fashion with conscious choices. As a woman leader, I believe fashion goes beyond trends. It's a powerful tool for change, reflecting our values and choices. For me, this extends to my personal fashion choices, where I prefer traditional Indian craftsmanship, valuing the quality and durability of natural materials like cotton. My personal style is simple and understated, focusing on quality over quantity. This aligns with my leadership approach of valuing authenticity and ethical practices. As a woman leader in the ever-evolving world of fashion, I have a message for all those aspiring to leave their own mark on this vibrant industry: *dream big and lead with your heart.*





Sanjana Bhatia, Founder, Align Off

### Innovative activewear expert

My journey into fashion was inspired by the urge to redefine activewear, transforming how it's perceived and experienced. Initially, I was fascinated by the interplay between functionality and style in women's fashion. It was about creating something that wasn't just aesthetically pleasing but also imbued with purpose for the performer. This inspiration is based on observing the everyday woman, her challenges, her victories and her multifaceted lifestyle. Align Off has become more than an apparel brand; it is a brand that embodies empowerment through innovation. Navigating the fashion industry as a woman, especially at the helm of a bootstrapped venture like Align Off is both inspiring and instructive. Starting out in a field traditionally dominated by men, the road has been fraught with skepticism and underestimation. Yet, the inception of Align Off was not just the beginning of a business but a step towards challenging the ironic status quo in the women's lingerie and sportswear sectors. We live in an era where design has evolved significantly, fashion progresses at an unparalleled pace and unprecedented advancement has been made in science and technology, especially in textiles and manufacturing. Yet, amidst this rapid advancement, many emerging activewear brands struggle to carve out a distinct identity, often blending into the crowd with little more than their logos to set them apart. Many overlook the potential for innovation in the activewear segment. Women leaders in fashion often set trends that are not just about aesthetics but also reflect broader societal changes. They have the power to champion diversity, inclusivity and body positivity, challenging traditional beauty standards and promoting a more inclusive representation of beauty and style. As leaders, they often serve as role models for empowerment and entrepreneurship. They break barriers in what has traditionally been a male-dominated field, showing other women and

girls that it is possible to reach top positions and create successful businesses. Their success stories inspire others to pursue their dreams and ambitions, contributing to gender equality and empowerment. In celebration of International Women's Day, I would like to share a message of empowerment, resilience and innovation with aspiring women in the fashion industry: Embrace your individuality, stay true to your values and let your passion drive you towards achieving excellence. *Let's celebrate the diversity of thought, creativity and leadership that women bring to the fashion industry and beyond!*



Lisha Malhotra,  
BDM, Sharman  
Udyog Pvt. Ltd.

### Strategic planner

I started as a textile designer and today I'm working in brand and product development in the fashion trim industry. I find immense inspiration in the ever-changing world of style and self-expression. Being a textile designer in brand and product development, my role requires me to be involved right from the ideation stage of envisioning and sketching designs to selecting qualities and sample development. This allows me to witness my ideas coming to life. Working in this industry has allowed me to be surrounded by talented individuals who share the same passion and drive. To stay updated, relevant and in sync, I choose to network through events and exhibitions while in my leisure time, I like to stay up-to-date by reading articles, magazines and blogs. While on work trips to my clients, I also try to catch up with my colleagues from the industry to understand the latest buzz. These meetings provide me with an understanding of the current and future trends and allow me to have a fresh perspective when I'm back to work in the office. I firmly believe to get the creative juices flowing for which one needs a broader perspective to understand the audience and cater to their needs. The time we are living in has provided equal opportunities to all genders and promoted inclusivity, thereby reducing challenges. As a leader, I practise a transformational style of leadership. I strive to go above and beyond the roles to empower the voices in my company and challenge stereotypes. Through regular interaction with my co-workers, I address social and cultural issues and try to bring positive change. I shape perceptions of beauty and style, promoting body positivity and self-expression. The ultimate aim is to use leadership and approach as a catalyst to broaden the conversations about inclusivity, empowerment and fashion's role in social and personal progress. Dear women of the world, you are doing incredible, keep up your creativity, resilience and leadership and inspire everyone around you every day. Together we can break barriers, challenge the norms and shape the future of the upcoming generations. Celebrate your achievements - the size of it doesn't matter, what matters is the journey and evolution that got you there. *Keep shining bright and make your mark on the world.*





↓ Alpana Razdan,  
Country Manager,  
Falabella

### Pioneer in Sourcing and Merchandising

Fashion has always fascinated me, not just for its aesthetic appeal but as a reflection of societal dynamics and the evolving portrayal of women. It's a powerful tool for empowerment, allowing individuals to express their unique identity while keeping pace with changing trends and styles. In my journey as a fashion leader, I've embraced values like diligence, adaptability and the pursuit of fairness, irrespective of gender. I owe much to my supportive partner/ husband, Vimarsh Razdan, who shares my belief in gender equality. Together, we've balanced parenthood and family obligations without sacrificing our professional ambitions. Our experience underscores the importance of shared values in overcoming challenges and achieving success. Innovation is key to staying relevant in the fashion industry. I stay abreast of new developments by analysing innovations, participating in seminars and organising training sessions for my team. Embracing creativity isn't just a strategy; it's a mindset that fuels innovation and ensures our competitiveness. Women leaders impact society: women leaders in fashion wield influence beyond the industry. Through authenticity and inclusivity, we inspire others to challenge stereotypes and embrace diversity. On International Women's Day, I celebrate the achievements and resilience of women in fashion and beyond. To aspiring women in our industry, I encourage you all to embrace your uniqueness and stand tall. *Let's continue to celebrate diversity and uplift one another as we shape the fashion landscape!*



Sunaina Khanna, Managing Director, Methods Apparel Consultancy Pvt. Ltd.



### Fashion leader with manufacturing excellence

I hail from a very small village and a humble family. I grew up with the dream of being an independent woman and I was lucky to have a family that believed in me. The fashion industry was picking pace at that time and a young girl with dreams and aspirations could not see it as a great opportunity to turn them into a reality. After spending over two decades in the industry, if I look back, I realise that I had the privilege of working with the best people, whose teaching form the core principles of what Sunaina Khanna is today. I have been driven by the vision to make a positive difference in the industry and with Methods Apparel Consultancy, we have been able to make numerous meaningful contributions, driving the business and its stakeholders across the globe. Reading various informative sources, primarily Apparel Resources, meeting existing and potential clients and other stakeholders from the industry on a day-to-day basis and searching on LinkedIn have been my constant sources of information. When I meet the women on the shopfloor, during training or implementation of our products, I see the love and respect these women have for the leader in me. I believe in the power of fashion and feel proud to say that simplicity is my fashion. To all the women aspiring to be a leader in the fashion Industry, I just want to say that time has come, this is your stage. The industry is one of the most women-friendly one, where you will have enough opportunities to explore and become a better version of yourself!! *The time has never been more perfect to turn your dreams into a reality!*

Srividya Varchaswi, Business Head, BYOGI



### Pioneer of ayurvedic clothing

BYOGI started as a platform of sustained business opportunities after the rehabilitation and skill development of women who came from extremely difficult and challenging backgrounds like domestic violence, war widows, single earners. It has been quite an adventure, from building a management team of women from down up, to being taken seriously as a growing brand in the sustainable natural fabrics category. I think we always wanted healing as part of the fabric development process. I'm happy to share that BYOGI is one of the front runners in the ayurvedic fabric space. Development of such an age old practice to suit modern aesthetics and requirements was an exciting journey that I will cherish for life! Empathy, clarity, passion and sincerity are default settings for women in my experience. My personal fashion code is comfort and sustainability. That reflects across all our products. *Love your entire self, body and mind. We move from one perfection to another!*





Rakhi Handa, Consulting  
Projects (Freelance)

### Quality Assurance specialist

My entry into the world of apparel/garment manufacturing was accidental. I was pursuing academics from Delhi University. That year, the teachers union went on indefinite strike and my father suggested I work while classes were suspended. He spoke to a friend who ran a factory and I joined as a trainee. The rest, as they say, is history. I would truly describe my journey as one where I have evolved through constant learning. My career of 30+ years has taken me from manufacturing to sourcing/buying companies to working with brands and retailers. The breakthrough came for me when I did my Six Sigma Black Belt certification at the age of 37. My focus was always on working with organisations where my knowledge continuously grew, organisations and brands that focused on excellence in their fields – Ralph Lauren, Orient Craft, Levi’s and then Target. I have always tried to tackle challenges head on. All individuals face obstacles in their lives. True character shines through those who face them and work through the issues. Working in a male dominated function, of course, there were gender related challenges, particularly back in the '90s when the masterjhis used to rule. People were sometimes dismissive about my opinion. However, my approach has always been to present my perspective with logic and fact. It usually works. Good ideas can come from anywhere and when I see one, I try and see how it can be innovated to fit my area of work. As a leader, whether you are a man or a woman, your actions and words are always being watched, observed and dissected. As a woman, I believe I have the unique opportunity to influence and inspire other women. My personal fashion style is simple and clean. Not fussy. That’s how I also engage as a leader. My style of working is simple and direct. I believe every woman is a superwoman as we juggle multiple roles. You are strong, independent and powerful. *You can do anything you put your mind to. Only you are your own greatest barrier.*



Manjula Tiwari, MD and CEO,  
Cover Story

### Leader in Fashion Retail

The business of fashion is an exhilarating one. Constant change and newness is intrinsic to this industry. The need to evolve continuously and keep up with consumer and product trends and expectations appeals to me personally. Creating products that delight and serve our customers is my true inspiration. The business of fashion has its specific set of challenges, like any other industry, there are unique problems to be solved in this category too. I do believe that one has to be very highly focused on the consumer and the larger societal trends to be an effective fashion business leader.

To persuade some associates that product and consumer is key to win, took up a lot of effort in the earlier days. Knowledge of trends is a structural analytics and observation-driven activity, which as a fashion company, we follow rigorously.

I see myself as a student of society, our customers and try not to confuse my personal style to influence business or leadership decisions. We serve a variety of consumers, therefore creating a diverse team and valuing their inputs has helped to create collections that are loved by our customers.

I would say the success in this business demands a collaborative and inclusive environment and requires the leader to foster this deeply in the company. My message to all my young colleagues, male or female, is, “This is a very exciting and challenging business. It requires tremendous hard work but also rewards uniqueness and differentiation immensely. *Find your unique point of view and stay true to that.*”



Kirti Poonia, Co-Founder, Relove

### Entrepreneur and Corporate Strategist

I loved fashion at a really young age. When kids drew mountains and lakes, I drew fashion models and tried colour combinations. As time passed, I started to tailor my own clothes for movies in school. When I grew up, I became an engineer, like all good Indian kids. When Okhai came into my life, I recalled that I have always wanted to work in fashion. I have never had the bandwidth to notice challenges specific to gender, or never paid heed to them. I realised that if I could solve the business challenges, they will end up softening the blow of most others. I have been privileged to have been surrounded by people who put me up rather than pull me down because of my gender. I try to maintain a stance ahead of the normal trend curve. For example, currently I am focusing on how AI is about to change the fashion industry. Only if one is early can they really ride the curve, otherwise you only hop on when it's going down. Case in point is people entering D2C right now. Talking about my personal style, I like to keep it powerful yet simple. I like the garment to be toned in one colour for my personality to be in focus. I enjoy power suits to convey that I mean business. Fashion influences the life around us so much that I can tell the difference simply as a traffic signal like when my outfit is great, the cars don't squeeze my space, some outfits command that pause. I always dress for the job I want and not for the job I have right now. I'd say be fearless, without being influenced by opinion. Fashion is a subjective industry, if you believe it, you can build it! *You are not just selling clothes but selling dreams!*



Sumedha Jain, Head-Marketing Communications and E-commerce, Jain Amar House of Fashion

### Marketing and Communications Specialist

My entry into the fashion industry was fuelled by a profound passion for creativity and an insatiable curiosity to explore the limitless realms of fashion. The urge to learn new things and enhance my calibre has been a driving force, pushing me to continually evolve. Shaping an impactful brand image through the integration of innovative marketing strategies has been a core motivation. Furthermore, my aspiration is not merely limited to fashion. It extends to creating a positive impact on the world through my endeavours. Over time, my vision has evolved to prioritise self-expression and inclusivity in fashion and to embrace empathy in leadership. In navigating challenges, resilience has been my steadfast companion and I have diligently built a supportive network. Confronting gender-specific obstacles, I approach them with determination and confidence, advocating for diversity and equal opportunities in the fashion leadership landscape. The unwavering support from my family has been a source of immense strength in overcoming various hurdles. Remaining at the forefront of trends involves fostering a culture of innovation and inclusion, coupled with an openness to learning from anyone. Embracing unconventional ideas through platforms like social media has been instrumental. An instance where embracing a unique idea led to success was the strategic decision to transition to an online store, glamly, just before the pandemic. This foresight and swift executive-level decisions during the pandemic played a crucial role in ensuring the business thrived. Women leaders in fashion extend their influence beyond industry boundaries by shaping cultural narratives and championing social causes. Personally, my leadership style aligns with an approach focused on collaboration, empathy, and fostering a positive societal impact. I believe that the influence of women leaders should not be confined to boardrooms; it should radiate into society, bringing about positive change. On International Women's Day, my message to aspiring women in fashion is to believe in your capabilities, continually seek knowledge and embrace confidence as your armour. Uplift those around you and create a culture of empowerment. Success is sweeter when shared. Together, we can redefine and reform the future of fashion. *Empower others along your journey, and in doing so, create a legacy that transcends individual success, a legacy of collective empowerment and inspiration.*





# US \$ 3 billion

The 2024-31 global bamboo clothing market report suggests that bamboo-based clothing is expected to grow. The market size grew to US \$ 1.2 billion in 2023 and can reach up to US \$ 3 billion by 2031, growing at a CAGR of 9.1 per cent. This report offers insights into market trends, growth drivers, technological advancements and changes in the investment structure of the global bamboo clothing market. Key players such as Cariloha, Terrera, tasc Performance, HARA The Label, Bamboo Clothing Ltd., Cozy Earth, Royal Apparel, Free Fly Apparel, Ettitude Holdings, Spun Bamboo, Boody and Thought Clothing are profiled in the study. The report presents detailed information segmented by gender (women, men and kids) and product types (T-shirts, innerwear, bottoms, socks and others) across 18+ countries. It also provides insights on emerging and major players in the industry. Customisation options are available for analysing companies within the bamboo clothing industry based on specific objectives or geographical areas.

# 600,000

Luxury firms leased 6,00,000 square feet of space in 2023, up from 2,30,000 square feet the previous year and the largest in six years, reflecting strong demand in the premium consumer category in India. According to CBRE research, luxury brands' proportion in overall leasing increased to 9 per cent in 2023 from 3 per cent in 2018. "Growing customer ambition for global brands, along with a rise in the percentage of discretionary money, are two of the primary reasons why luxury companies are increasing their footprint. Furthermore, an increasing percentage of organised retail locations in major cities has pushed businesses to develop a presence in important cities," said Anshuman Magazine, CBRE's Chairman for India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The luxury sector, which increased more than twice as much annually in 2023, is showing a positive trend with the introduction and expansion of foreign companies. La Vie en Rose, a Canadian lingerie boutique, partnered with Apparel Group India to open its first store in Noida in July 2023. It then extended to Pune and Bengaluru.

# 23%

Page Industries, one of India's leading apparel manufacturers, the exclusive licensee of JOCKEY International Inc. (USA) for manufacturing, distribution and marketing of the JOCKEY® brand, announced its financial results for the October-December period (Q3 of FY '24). The company reported a 23.1 per cent year-on-year growth in profit after tax (PAT), amounting to Rs. 152.4 crore. For Q3 of FY '24, sales volumes of the company increased by 4.6 per cent Y-o-Y to 55.2 million items. Revenue was Rs. 1228.8 crore, up by 2.4 per cent from the previous year. With robust margins of 18.6 per cent, the quarter's EBITDA of Rs. 235.2 crore represented a 19.1 per cent increase over the same period last year. Positive input costs and optimised operating expenses more than offset the effects of marketing campaigns and investments in digital transformation.



# Menswear Fall/ Winter 2024: Understated Luxury and Practical Elegance

In the midst of economic challenges and escalating geopolitical tensions, designers and high fashion brands alike have embraced a low-key approach this season, shifting their focus to essentials with understated luxury. The recently concluded men's fashion shows in Florence, Milan and Paris emphasised a return to classic styles with impeccable cuts and luxurious fabrics for Fall/Winter 2024-25 season.

A significant shift in the men's fashion landscape is seen in the celebration of femininity seamlessly blending with menswear. This theme was evident in co-ed shows like Dsquared2 and JordanLuca, as well as in the overall gender fluid mix-and-match approach to wardrobes, creating sophisticated looks.

Milan also witnessed this evident shift, as Gucci embarked on a fresh chapter in its menswear journey with Sabato De Sarno at the helm. While Alessandro Michele, the predecessor, was known for pushing the boundaries of campy fashion, De Sarno is focused on creating clothing that not only resonates with his personal taste but also appeals to a wider spectrum of clients, thereby underling

wearability as a core focus. Paris also witnessed a departure from recent years, with big houses presenting less editorialised collections and embracing more wearable silhouettes. The reign of streetwear took a backseat this season, as designers drew inspiration from the timeless art of tailoring rather than street influences.

The runways featured vibrant colour palettes, glitzy, embellished detailing and luxurious faux furs, setting the tone for the upcoming season in men's Fall/Winter 2024 collections. The season also saw many new Creative Directors making their menswear debuts, while introducing bold and fresh approaches to classic styles. A large number of designers embraced unisex/gender-fluid clothing, with Balenciaga leading the way with genderless offerings. Furthermore, a departure from oversized styles in favour of familiar straight-leg, slim-cut trousers further emphasised a move towards more practical and accessible fashion choices.

Read on to discover the key fashion trends shaping the upcoming Fall/Winter 2024 season.



## FAUX FUR ➤➤

Faux fur maintained a dominant presence on the fashion runways, manifesting in the form of coats and oversized chapkas for the Fall/Winter 2024-25 season.

Designers showcased the warmth and style of faux fur in diverse ways, from Gucci's tailored contemporary coats to Todd Snyder's oversized '70s-inspired creations. While the colour palette for faux fur pieces ranged from cool tan to honey brown, classic black and charcoal gray, a common thread among designers this season was the adoption of the double-breasted coat, a style that made an appearance across runways globally.

At Milan, Giorgio Armani showcased furs adorned with leopard prints that graced the linings of coats and zipped jackets. Paris also embraced this trend with appearances at the Drôle de Monsieur fashion show and KidSuper, where Brazilian soccer icon Ronaldinho sported luxurious faux fur.



## ◀◀ COWBOYS CALLING

The Fall/Winter 2024-25 season sees the American West aesthetic emerge as a prominent trend - think fringe, single-point pockets and boots, particularly highlighted by Louis Vuitton's collection designed by Pharrell Williams.

The show featured iconic cowboy elements such as fringed pants, cowboy boots and Stetson-style hats, bringing the cowboy trend back into fashion. The collection played with masculine clichés, featuring fringed pants, cowboy boots, workwear jackets, Stetson-style hats and Timberland work boots.

The trend was also spotted on Achilles Ion Gabriel's runway at Pitti Uomo in Florence, where the prevalence of cowhide patterns on bags and pants was unmistakable.

# GRANDPACORE ➤

Dubbed 'grandpa-core' on TikTok, Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and other prominent online platforms, Granddad style is all the rage. This fashion aesthetic embraces elements like sweater vests, coloured cardigans, high-waisted trousers with belts and classic loafers, all of which were prominently spotted on the recently concluded fashion runways.

While colourful knitwear often takes centre stage, many brands this season have opted for a more subdued approach, layering neutral tones such as beiges, browns and whites to create effortless cosy and coordinated looks.

The runways showcased an abundance of old-fashioned cardigans and jumpers, often styled tied around the neck or waist. Essential grandpa-core pieces for next winter include quilted waistcoats, slightly worn tweed jackets with visible elbow patches, corduroy trousers and woolen checked shirts.



# SHARP TAILORING

Tailored looks, particularly featuring suits, vests and trousers, tend to be a staple in the world of menswear, but it seems that in the upcoming Fall/Winter 2024 season, more than ever before, designers are presenting looks with sharp, structured silhouettes that breathe new life into the runway staple.

With a crisp-looking line of suits and vests from Dolce & Gabbana and a layered gray number by Giorgio Armani, tailored suiting is looking fresher than ever.

## THE COLOUR RED

Named the standout colour for It girls last fall, cherry red dominated the fashion scene, leaving its mark on runways, red carpets and street-style moments.

In the current Fall/Winter 2024 season, this vibrant and bold hue has transitioned to menswear.

Even though Cherry red continues to maintain its prominence, it shares the spotlight with burgundy and other related red tones, often featured in sultry silks or luxurious leather. This rich spectrum of red shades adds a touch of sophistication and style to the season.



## GENDER-FLUIDITY

The current fashion landscape emphasises the growing trend of incorporating feminine elements in menswear to elevate traditional wardrobes, blurring gender boundaries on the runway. This season, men's fashion shows have embraced references borrowed from women's closets, promoting a runway that transcends gender barriers, as highlighted by Silvia Venturini Fendi, the Artistic Director of Fendi's accessories and menswear who underscores the idea that "a collection is just a collection," encouraging a gender-neutral approach.

Fendi envisions the upcoming winter featuring wide pleated Bermuda shorts with a kilt-inspired aesthetic, contributing to a functional and luxurious Scottish weekender style.

Designers such as JW Anderson and S.S. Daley have disrupted the norm by introducing skirts, dresses and sheer stockings on the runways, where they play around with juxtapositions of texture, colour and forms to create dynamic looks. Skorts, a fusion of skirts and shorts, has gained prominence, evident in Pharrell's American West-inspired style for Louis Vuitton men's collection and the 'attitude of liberation' in Silvia Venturini Fendi's vision for Fendi's menswear collection. The result is a refreshing and inclusive approach to men's fashion.

# ELONGATED »» OVERCOATS

Top luxury fashion houses, including Hermès, Fendi and Dior, prominently showcased overcoats that gracefully draped from models' shoulders to knees at the recently concluded international fashion runways.

Designers and high fashion brands alike spotlighted these overcoats in elegant shiny blacks, refined heather-grey and suave shades of charcoal, ingeniously paired with the timeless Chelsea boots and trendy chunky sneakers.

The versatility of overcoats, perhaps, lies in their ability to transition seamlessly into streetwear. With practicality at its core, these overcoats become a daily essential, adapting to various climates.

That being said, the era of oversized styles is fading, as we see proportions scaling back. The trend embraces a minimalist chic vibe infused with a touch of British sophistication, presenting numerous options of tone-on-tone total looks in neutral or autumnal palettes. These refined ensembles, crafted from the finest fabrics like cashmere, tweed and superb wools, mark a notable return to the timeless classics of men's fashion.



# «« POLISHED LEATHER

The Fall/Winter 2024 runways were abundantly adorned with leather, a material well-regarded for its craftsmanship by many participating fashion houses. Though a common occurrence in the colder months of the year, what sets the leather of this season apart is the prevalence of polished leather looks.

Designers and high fashion brands were seen featuring pieces that reflected a simple, subtle sheen, while others achieved patent leather perfection. Showcased in a vibrant spectrum of colours from red and yellow to green, alongside traditional neutrals, designers exhibited leather in diverse shapes and forms.

Notable examples include Gucci's ultra-polished, deep yellow leather blazer and trousers ensemble and JW Anderson's emerald green patent leather mini-trench that adds a striking dimension to the fashion landscape.



## Triumph International plans to roll out over 15 Indian stores in 2024

Premium Swiss lingerie brand Triumph International unveiled its 18th franchise store in India by opening its newest store in Hyderabad. The new store covers a landscape of 642 sq. ft. which boasts a collection of 150+ unique styles in innerwear and loungewear. The group has further plans to open 15 more in 2024.

Ankur Damani, Commercial Director of Triumph Group (India and Sri Lanka) shared his excitement and plans to keep building on this momentum, “The unveiling of our 18th franchise store marks a strategic milestone in our ambitious pan-India retail expansion. With 15 more franchise stores planned across Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities by 2024, this is a testament to our unwavering commitment to growth and exceeding customer expectations.”

## Kate & Oscar reveals store expansion plans, to open 30 stores in next three years

Kate & Oscar, a premium Indian kids’ apparel brand, has opened its latest store in Gurugram marking the brand’s debut in north India. This venture marks Kate & Oscar’s sixth store and its retail expansion into North India. The brand envisions opening 30 stores across major metro cities at premium locations, within the next three years, cementing its presence in the Indian kids’ apparel market.

Looking at the future, Kate & Oscar is poised for further growth, actively expanding its bricks-and-mortar presence in major metro cities through Exclusive Brand Outlets (EBOs) and Large Format Stores.



## Amazon India takes over 10,000 local stores online through ‘Local Shops’ initiative

E-commerce giant Amazon India has taken over 10,000 local stores from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi online through its ‘Local Shops’ initiative. With its Local Shops initiative, Amazon will offer its customers the option to browse and buy products from a range of offerings from India’s traditional markets on its platform.

Bricks-and-mortar stores of Mumbai’s Zaveri Bazaar; Delhi’s Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazaar, Lajpat Nagar and Karol Bagh; Kolhapur’s Mahadwar Road and Gujarat’s vibrant markets will have their digital stores on Amazon’s e-commerce platform.

Through the Local Shops initiative, Amazon India aims to transition one million local offline retailers and neighbourhood stores to online platforms by 2025. Fashion and beauty are one of the fastest-growing segments of Amazon India and the platform in the last few months has seen a surge in sale of expensive clothing and premium fashion products.

## Louis Philippe and Peter England partner with Jetha Tulsidas to open their first exclusive store in Mauritius

Louis Philippe and Peter England, menswear brands owned by Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd. (ABFRL), have announced their entry in Mauritius in partnership with Jetha Tulsidas. These brands have opened their first-ever exclusive stores in the Republic of Mauritius, bringing their products to the island nation.

Louis Philippe has opened an exclusive 1,668-square-foot store in Tribeca. A large selection of formal and semi-formal clothing and accessories are available in the flagship store. Peter England has established a 1,884-square-foot store in Curepipe. A wide assortment of shirts, T-shirts, pants, jeans, loungewear, occasionwear (blazers, suits) and accessories (belts, ties, handkerchiefs, deodorants, caps, innerwear, wallets) are available at this exclusive location.



## INNOVATION AND TRADITION MERGE: GARGEE DESIGNER'S APPROACH TO MEN'S FASHION

A contemporary menswear brand known for its bespoke formal and wedding attire, Gargee Designer's is renowned for its immaculate tailoring, keen attention to detail and commitment to premium craftsmanship. The brand curates its collections in an effort to celebrate life's beautiful moments.

Founded in 1980 by Shyam Gupta with a modest investment of Rs. 1000, Gargee Designer's today has evolved into a symbol of quality and innovation. The brand's legacy, inspired by the vision of its Founder, is faithfully maintained by his son and current Designer and Director of the brand, Ravi Gupta, who not only

upholds the commitment to quality but also injects it with his own innovative design sensibilities which are in tune with the evolving consumer base of the present day.

The brand offers a range of products tailored for diverse occasions. In the wedding segment, it offers *bundis*, *kurtas*, *sherwanis*, tuxedos, *Jodhpuris* and Indo-Western attire, whilst the lifestyle category features bandhgallas, blazers, bomber jackets, down vests, shackets/safaris, formal suits and shirts. Retailing onwards of Rs.8,000 and above, the pricing of each product is reflective of the intricate craftsmanship invested in its creation.

“We aim to offer a range of price points within our collections to ensure accessibility while maintaining the quality and uniqueness synonymous with the Gargee brand,” **Ravi Gupta, Designer and Director of Gargee Designer’s**, told *Apparel Online India* in an exclusive interview. He further added, “The focus on bespoke formal and weddingwear stems from a dedication to crafting garments that reflect not just elegance, but also the individuality of each wearer on their special occasions.”

Prior to stepping in to his father’s shoes, Ravi acquired a BA in Design and Technology and also participated in prestigious competitions like ‘WOW’ in New Zealand, ‘The Debut’ in Delhi, ‘Haining Warp Knitting Fashion Design Competition’ in China and ‘Swatch Alternative Fashion Week London’. Previously, as an assistant designer at Shahi Exports Pvt. Ltd., he also accrued valuable industry insight that have aided in taking Gargee to new heights.

**TARGET MARKET AND DECODING THE CONSUMER PSYCHE**

Gargee aspires to resonate with men of various age groups and diverse body shapes, emphasising inclusivity in its designs. Its target market expands globally, serving both Indian and international audiences with the designs catering to a wide spectrum, appealing to young professionals seeking contemporary styles as well as individuals who appreciate timeless elegance.

“We’ve noticed a significant shift in consumer perception, with a growing preference for quality over quantity in the clothing industry. The current cost of living challenges, coupled with heightened sustainability concerns related to fast fashion, are steering individuals towards a mindful approach. Consumers are now opting for fewer, but higher-quality garments, driven by the desire for longevity in their wardrobe choices. At Gargee Designer’s, we celebrate this shift and continue to prioritise craftsmanship and sustainable practices in response to the evolving preferences of our discerning clientele,” Ravi emphasised.

**TECHNIQUES AND DETAILS**

The brand intricately weaves tradition and modernity into its business. Gargee celebrates traditional craftsmanship in its designs, ensuring a connection to heritage while it stays abreast of contemporary trends, infusing modern elements to cater to evolving tastes. This fusion is not just reflected in its formalwear and



We employ strategic measures to ensure accessible pricing without compromising on quality in our menswear fashion. First, we prioritise the use of natural fabrics like cotton, linen and silk, steering clear of less sustainable materials. Embracing upcycling, we incorporate pre-consumer and post-consumer wastes into our manufacturing process, giving new life to old garments without relying on traditional recycling. Additionally, we actively reduce overproduction by aligning our manufacturing with demand, minimising excess inventory and waste.

**Ravi Gupta**  
Designer & Director of  
Gargee Designer’s



## DESIGNERS & LABELS



**What sets Gargee apart from other menswear brands in the market is its comprehensive fashion approach. Unlike others, Gargee offers a diverse range of products that span from casualwear to occasionwear, seamlessly blending classic elegance with contemporary aesthetics.**

weddingwear lines, but also guides its business strategies.

What sets Gargee apart from other menswear brands is its comprehensive fashion approach. Unlike others, Gargee offers a diverse range of products that span from casualwear to occasionwear, seamlessly blending classic elegance with contemporary aesthetics.

“What truly distinguishes Gargee is our emphasis on customisation and bespoke orders, enabling clients to personalise garments, reflecting their unique style,” Ravi stated.

### **MATERIALS, MANUFACTURING AND SOURCING**

Today, Gargee Designer’s comprises 100 individuals, with 30 dedicated employees in various roles and 70 skilled artisans contributing to its intricate designs. Ravi believes that the heart of their creative process lies in their in-house manufacturing unit located in Delhi, where every piece comes to life. This centralised approach ensures meticulous attention to detail and quality control.

In terms of fabrics, the brand offers a diverse range, including linen, cotton, denim, poly silk, cotton silk, poly viscose and more. “While we source fabrics from well-known Indian mills, we also believe in offering the finest quality,

and thus, some fabrics are procured internationally from renowned sources like Scabal (Italy), Loro Piana (Italy) and Dormeuil (England). This strategic mix ensures a rich variety and superior quality in our collections, aligning with our commitment to providing our clientele with meticulously crafted and distinctive menswear,” Ravi stated.

Gargee Designer’s outsources threads from the renowned German brand Gütermann. Additionally, for materials essential in crafting coats, such as padding and fusing, Gargee trusts the exceptional quality provided by the German brand Freudenberg.

### **COLLECTION AND RANGE PLANNING**

The brand mostly releases two-three collections annually, primarily following a season-based schedule. Each collection is thoughtfully curated to align with the evolving fashion landscape, ensuring its clientele has access to fresh and





relevant designs. This approach allows it to stay attuned to seasonal trends while maintaining the brand's commitment to timeless elegance.

Commenting on the replenishment procedure, Ravi said, "Our stock is regularly replenished online and in-store to ensure a consistent and updated offering for our customers. We strive to maintain a dynamic inventory, reflecting the latest designs and meeting the evolving preferences of our clientele. This approach enables us to provide a seamless shopping experience, whether online or in our physical stores, with a fresh selection of bespoke formal and weddingwear."

## THE FUTURE

In future, Gargee Designer's aims to establish itself as a prominent force, not only within India but also on the global fashion stage as a go-to destination for versatile and sophisticated menswear. The vision is to create a lasting impact by offering a unique blend of tradition and modernity, uniting a diverse community that values timeless elegance.

"With plans to collaborate with the esteemed multi-designer store Aza Fashion this year, we aim to establish our presence in metropolitan cities like Hyderabad and Mumbai. This move is part of our commitment to reach a wider audience and offer our distinct menswear collections to discerning clientele in key fashion hubs. Our future vision includes not only retail expansion but also the continuous evolution and diversification of our product lines to stay at the forefront of the dynamic fashion landscape," Ravi stated.

Currently, Gargee Designer's collections are available across India, prominently at its flagship store located at New Friends Colony in New Delhi as well as online via its official website, ensuring its clientele is able to explore and acquire their designs as part of a convenient and comprehensive online shopping experience.

The brand also stocks its products at well-established multi-designer destinations, both in-store and online, such as Aza Fashion and Pernia's Pop-Up Shop.

### **AOI: What strategies does Gargee employ to make menswear fashion more affordable for a broader audience at an accessible price point without compromising on quality?**

**RG:** We employ strategic measures to ensure accessible pricing without compromising on quality in our menswear fashion. First, we prioritise the use of natural fabrics like cotton, linen and silk, steering clear of less sustainable materials. Embracing upcycling, we incorporate pre-consumer and post-consumer wastes into our manufacturing process, giving new life to old garments without relying on traditional recycling.

Additionally, we actively reduce overproduction by aligning our manufacturing with demand, minimising excess inventory and waste. In designing our products, we strategically choose cost-efficient materials without compromising quality, optimising features and reconsidering packaging to streamline production and distribution costs. This comprehensive approach allows us to offer high-quality menswear at an accessible price point.

### **AOI: What, according to you, is driving consumption in fashion categories in the Indian market?**

**RG:** With India's rapid economic growth and heightened consumer sentiment, weddings serve as a significant factor for the fashion and luxury goods sector. As wallets expand, there's a natural inclination to invest in clothing.

Moreover, the influence of digital disruptors is undeniable, especially amongst the younger demographic, driving them towards new and innovative brands. While affordability plays a role, the dichotomy between fast fashion and sustainable choices remains, with cost-effective production driving consumption and emerging awareness of the environmental impact steering preferences in the market.

### **AOI: What unique business strategies have you implemented to stand out in the highly competitive industry?**

**RG:** Our success in the highly competitive fashion industry stems from a commitment to innovation and customer-centricity. By seamlessly blending cultural heritage with contemporary designs, we differentiate ourselves by creating a unique and recognisable aesthetic.

Furthermore, our emphasis on sustainability, from natural fabrics to upcycling practices, resonates with environmentally conscious consumers. We prioritise a lean production model which helps us avoid overproduction and optimise costs. Lastly, our dedication to quality, cultural storytelling and embracing cutting-edge technologies positions us as a standout brand in the fiercely competitive fashion landscape.

### **AOI: Does Gargee incorporate the use of technology and AI (database management etc.)?**

**RG:** AI has significantly enhanced our operations at Gargee Designer's. It plays a crucial role in our design process, pushing creative boundaries and expediting tasks. Tools like ChatGPT 4 have proven invaluable, aiding in the creation of unique designs, content generation and research tasks. This not only streamlines our workflow but also opens up new possibilities for innovation. We see AI as an ongoing exploration, envisioning a future where it acts as a virtual assistant for our customers, enhancing their shopping experience with efficiency and enjoyment. Embracing technology has become integral to our commitment to both creativity and customer satisfaction.

# CLASSIC THREADS, CONTEMPORARY SILHOUETTES:

## *ROOH BY SHIVANI'S PASHMINA COLLECTION TRANSFORMS HERITAGE INTO CONTEMPORARY CHIC*



**T**his month, we are shining the spotlight on the latest collection from Rooh by Shivani – The Pashmina Collection. Known for its unwavering commitment to luxury and craftsmanship, Rooh by Shivani has set a new standard, yet again, in the realm of couture with this latest drop.

The Pashmina Collection is a poetic fusion of tradition and modernity, where each garment tells a story of timeless elegance. The soft embrace of pure Pashmina is meticulously transformed into statement coats and scarves that redefine sophistication.

What sets The Pashmina Collection apart is its harmonious blend of traditional designs and contemporary aesthetics. The collection features delicate embroidery, vibrant hues and intricate details that converge to create a visual symphony that transcends the boundaries of fashion. In that respect, Rooh by Shivani's latest offering is not

merely apparel; it is wearable art, a manifestation of the brand's dedication to capture the warmth and sophistication inherent in Pashmina.

"The Pashmina Collection is a labour of love, a fusion that marries the rich heritage of traditional designs with the modern allure of contemporary fashion. Each piece is meticulously crafted, unveiling the timeless elegance of Pashmina and providing our patrons with a luxurious

and distinctive experience," Shivani Sohal, the creative genius behind Rooh By Shivani, explained.

This collection is more than just a fashion statement; it is a celebration of heritage and a steadfast commitment to

unparalleled quality associated with premium craftsmanship.



# CHUNKY KNITS



Chunky knits are stealing the spotlight with a strategic embrace of an array of textures and prints, ushering in a new era of experimentation in knitwear.

As we transition seamlessly from autumn to spring, knitwear becomes a trusty sidekick for layering up in style. The current trend highlights chunky sweaters making a prominent appearance in both men's and women's collections with designers and brands unmistakably favouring this style of pullover as the leading contender in their seasonal offerings.

The trend has spurred brands to embrace greater experimentation in their designs, providing customers with a more extensive range of pieces that exude a nearly one-of-a-kind charm due to their distinctive appearance.

This season, chunky knits have undergone a transformation, adopting more voluminous formations with rounded sleeves and bodies that challenge the conventional idea of oversized fashion. Despite utilising compact knit techniques and a departure from the usual cable knit and weighted yarns, the resulting silhouettes remain attention-grabbing, making bold statements in their own right.

Additionally, cropped iterations featuring puffed-up sleeves take centre stage, as designers go all out to showcase exaggerated features that greatly enhance the prominence of these items. These designs transcend the conventional notion of a 'basic' staple for cooler seasons, injecting a sense of vibrancy into knitwear.

On the collection front, designers and brands infused a distinctive touch into exaggerated limbs, whether through unique embellishments or innovative styling. Loewe, Sacai and Dries Van Noten showcased pullovers featuring voluminous sleeves by introducing rounded shapes to sweaters adorned with intricate yarn designs. Another prevalent style showcased sleeves that extended past the fingertips, a favoured choice by Rokh, Michael Kors and Etro.



# NEW NEUTRALS

The New Neutrals trend draws inspiration from the subdued mood of the social and political backdrop of the '90s, which aligns with its nostalgic influence amongst Gen Z consumers.

The trend embraces tranquility with calming beiges and winter whites while combining hints of copper and gold with foundational shades such as stone grey, gentle greens and earthy browns that emphasise minimalism and exceptional quality for a quiet luxury aesthetic. It is characterised by a balanced and harmonious approach, emphasising a middle ground in various aspects, while promoting a sense of equilibrium, simplicity and inclusivity, steering away from bold contrasts.

Brands and designers on a global scale have embraced this trend, with Max Mara's Resort collection presenting a lengthy mohair coat with oversized, rounded shoulders, broad lapels and a cinched waist featuring a drawstring belt. The addition of playful pom poms brought a touch of whimsy to the coat, highlighting creative expression within the realm of tranquility. Ferragamo presented an ivory-toned tunic dress paired with a sash belt and a matching wool gabardine shawl, embodying the elegant essence of the trend. On the other hand, Atlein featured a cream-hued suit with a mini skirt with side bow and matching jacket, paired with a one-shouldered sheer nude draped bodysuit and peep-toe silver slides, whilst Iceberg unveiled a colour-blocked trench coat and cargo pocket pants in beige, cream and oatmeal tones, complemented by a beige bra top.

These neutral tones effortlessly harmonise with both finely tailored and casually laid-back outfits, striking a perfect balance between relaxation and refinement.

The use of all-over colour applications introduces softness to outerwear and tailored silhouettes, offering a modern twist to essential wardrobe pieces. Contrasting fabric textures in tonal variations enhance the edgy aesthetic reminiscent of the '90s.

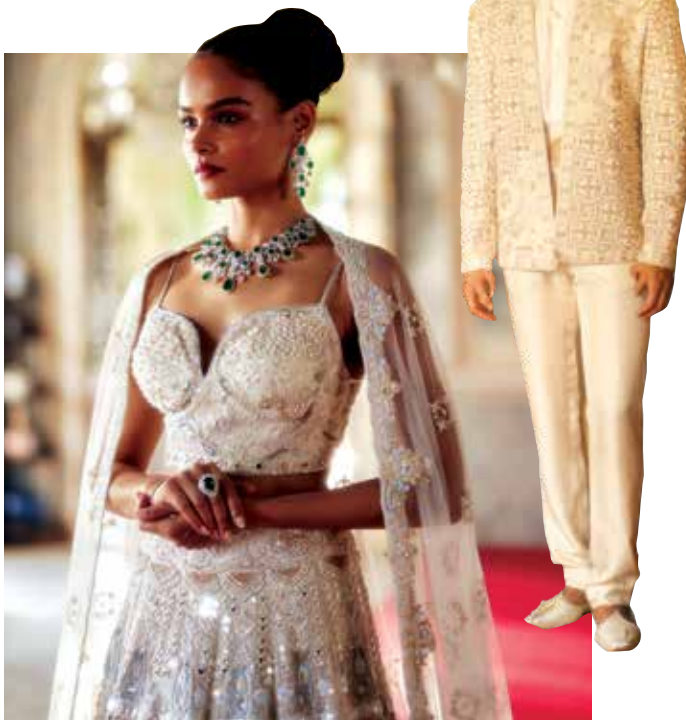
The emphasis on refined brilliance, muted materials and deliberate shades highlight the trend's commitment to a more sustainable approach in fashion. The colour palette is well-suited for investment pieces, sustainable purchases and the creation of timeless pieces or classics in fashion.





# EEKSHA

## A KALEIDOSCOPE OF COLOURS, TEXTURES AND TRADITION WITH A TOUCH OF KOLKATA'S RICH HERITAGE



Step into a world where the rich cultural tapestry of India intertwines seamlessly with modern-day glamour, to give rise to Eeksha – a homegrown couture brand that captures the essence of a cultural fusion where modern glamour meets timeless tradition.

Established in 2022 by Ashwin Agrawal, Eeksha emerges from the vibrant streets of Kolkata, echoing the city's rich cultural tapestry in every stitch and embellishment. At Eeksha, the ethos is clear: 'redefine the boundaries of traditional couture, by infusing it with a contemporary flair that resonates with the spirit of today's consumer'.

On offer are a wide variety of *lehengas*, *sarees*, co-ord sets, *sharara* sets, jacket sets, *bandhgalas*, capes and *palazzo* sets that are a symphony of colours, textures and silhouettes, meticulously curated to cater to the diverse tastes and preferences of the modern bride.

Each creation is a testament to Ashwin's dedication to preserving heritage while embracing the allure of modernity. Key techniques include masterful explorations with time-honoured *Chikankari* and *Zardosi* embroidery that weave stories of tradition and luxury into each meticulously crafted piece.

Drawing inspiration from Kolkata's vibrant culture, the brand weaves together a narrative that speaks to the heart of every modern bride, offering a fresh perspective on timeless Indian couture.

What sets Eeksha apart is its unwavering commitment to craftsmanship. Every garment is meticulously handcrafted, imbued with the expertise of skilled artisans who pour their soul into each intricate detail. As Ashwin describes it, "It's more than just clothing; it's a labour of love, a celebration of diversity and a homage to generations of artistic tradition."



# INDIA OFFERS A 'STRESS-FREE' SUPPLY BASE:

Nohar Nath, Executive Director, Kishco Group

**T**here's a positive shift in how global brands perceive India, according to **Nohar Nath, Executive Director at Kishco Group**, a four-generation old business house with an extensive network of suppliers and buyers worldwide, dealing in diverse textile products. There has been an increasing buzz about India because of its economic growth, political stability and its rapidly growing youth population. Its economy is set to grow by 6.5 per cent in 2024 and 2025 as per *IMF*. This growth rate is more than double the global average and positions India comfortably ahead of China. Nohar, boasting over 21 years of experience in the textile

industry, stresses that this is India's moment to shine.

In an off-the-cuff interview with *Apparel Online*, Nohar sheds light on crucial industry aspects, including the growing importance of specialisation in buying houses, the necessity to bridge the gap between brands and manufacturers on sustainability, the significant potential that Middle East holds for India and more.

**AO: Do you agree with the notion that due to the advancement in technology, the role of buying houses will significantly reduce by 90 per cent in the future?**

**NN:** I think first and foremost how we define buying houses needs to change before we talk about their

future. If we segment buying houses into two categories, there are those small, intermediary entities—often resembling more of brokers or agents—that have faced considerable challenges over the past two decades or so due to advancements in technology.

Looking ahead, it's evident that these smaller entities may face further diminishment. Many have already vanished in the wake of these changes. However, the larger, more robust buying houses are poised to endure and even thrive. Their value proposition extends beyond mere coordination between buyers and suppliers. They bring substantial added value to the table.

However, to continue to stay relevant, the big buying houses must focus on two key aspects. First and foremost is

leveraging available technology. The last decade has witnessed a dramatic shift which makes it essential to stay at the forefront of technological advancements. Secondly, expertise is a critical factor. Unlike earlier years when merchandisers served as intermediaries with limited knowledge, today's buying houses need to offer more. Expertise in areas like design and forecasting is indispensable. The days of being mere conduits between two parties are over; value addition through knowledge and specialised skills is the new currency.

**AO: What is the structure of a typical buying house in terms of teams and departments?**

**NN:** A typical buying house can have departments such as design and product development; technical team (pattern making and fit approval); merchandising team; quality assurance team; textile testing lab; sourcing of fabric and trims; factory compliance audit team; shipping and documentation; and other administrative departments. However, buying houses also break themselves further according to the products they manage, given that they handle a diverse range, each requiring specific expertise.

For example, you can't expect the same team to deal with a US \$ 1 promotional T-shirt and a US \$ 30 value-added luxury item for a brand – it's just too diverse. So, having expertise in different product categories is essential to give you an edge in the long run. Another example is like having one team of experts for woven products and another for knitted products. The days when everybody in a buying house set-up were doing everything are over; specialisation is the way forward.

**AO: Are domestic and international brands showing an inclination to increase their sourcing activities from India?**

**NN:** I see a welcome change as to how India is viewed politically and economically. There's a positive perception of our country. This is crucial for brands looking to diversify their supply chains. Even if we are slightly pricier compared to other countries, our reliability and trustworthiness matter to these brands. Brands don't want stress (political instability, economic uncertainties, supply chain disruptions) and there's a lot of stress they've been facing in other regions of the world for various reasons.



I've observed a significant rise in demand for products involving recycled fibres. However, integrating recycled fibre into yarn and various end products involves a careful selection process. You can't simply recycle fibre into every product without compromising quality.

**Nohar Nath**  
Executive Director,  
Kishco Group

Many brands have bought the idea that India is moving in the right direction and offers a stable supply base. Of late, India has experienced a resurgence, as there was a time around five years ago when business was moving to countries like China, Bangladesh and other regions in South America and the Middle East, taking away a substantial portion of our business. We are now reclaiming a lot of our business.



## BUYING AND SOURCING

### **AO: How has your buying house adapted to meet the increasing demand for eco-friendly and ethically produced clothing?**

**NN:** I can tell you that sustainability is much more than just a buzzword these days. In the past, sustainability initiatives made up a small percentage, maybe around 1 per cent to 3 per cent of what a brand aimed to achieve. However, looking ahead, sustainability will likely constitute around 50 per cent of a brand's focus by 2040. While ethical considerations such as fair wages and benefits have always been present, the sustainability aspect, including responsible water usage and recycled materials has gained prominence in recent times. Better buying houses have identified this need and have actively engaged with brands and manufacturers to address these concerns and find sustainable solutions. It becomes crucial because brands are often disconnected from what is happening on the manufacturing side, unaware of the harsh realities under which manufacturers operate. Therefore, the idea is to bridge the gap and figure out what sustainability efforts or tasks are practical to achieve. Once you identify them, put them into action, set timelines and consider the associated costs. After that, you move forward with the plan.

### **AO: How do you address the unique requirements and expectations of clients in different regions, considering the diverse cultural, regulatory and market dynamics?**

**NN:** Stepping into different markets is like entering a whole new ballgame, each with its unique quirks and styles. To navigate that, you need a good understanding and expertise. Sure, tech lets us have virtual team meetings, but there's no beating the good old face-to-face interactions. Sharing a table with customers – that's where the real magic happens. Every market has its vibe and it's not just about the geography; it's about the brands too. Companies in the same country can be worlds apart in their cultures – one might be all hustle, while



another takes it slow. Understanding our clients goes beyond the balance sheets; it's about what they want from the relationship. Are they all about the bottom line or are they gunning for the title to be the world's most sustainable brand? Therefore, as I mentioned before, it boils down to having team members who are experts in that specific market and making sure they spend as much time on the ground in those areas as they can.

### **AO: Please mention specific product categories and materials that have witnessed a surge in demand from both domestic and international brands.**

**NN:** I've observed a significant rise in demand for products involving recycled fibres. However, integrating recycled fibres into yarn and various end products involves a careful selection process. You can't simply recycle fibre into every product without compromising quality. The key is identifying suitable products like jeans, T-shirts and sweaters where recycled fibre enhances sustainability without sacrificing quality. Clients then evaluate the percentage of recycled content we can incorporate. We aim to perfect the integration of recycled fibres into working products, creating patterns almost indistinguishable from those made with 100 per cent virgin materials. But brands have long grappled

with a dilemma – how to set prices for recycled products. The logical inclination has been to price them lower due to the sustainable nature of recycled production. However, on the flip side, most brands make a case for re-pricing this higher because of the niche aspect as well as the sustainability narrative associated with these products. It's a dilemma that brands have found themselves battling over an extended period.

### **AO: Which emerging markets do you believe hold significant potential and why?**

**NN:** For me, the Middle East is a big upcoming market. People usually talk a lot about European and North American markets and brands; that's where the buzz and big numbers are. However, I've noticed a significant change happening in the Middle East. It's not just the UAE; other places like Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Oman etc., are opening up to fashion like never before. With its proximity and cordial relations with these countries, India holds a lot of potential for their supply chain. I believe paying attention to these regions has become important. These markets offer growth in different types of products such as abayas and kaftans for women and thobes for men in addition to the usual westernwear products for both men and women.



Organised by  
**CONSORTIUM OF TEXTILE  
EXPORT PROMOTION  
COUNCILS (EPCs)**

Supported by  
वस्त्र मंत्रालय  
**MINISTRY OF  
TEXTILES**



**NARENDRA MODI**  
PRIME MINISTER

# THE LARGEST GLOBAL TEXTILE EVENT IN INDIA

INSPIRED BY THE  
**5F**  
VISION  
FARM TO  
FIBRE TO  
FACTORY TO  
FASHION TO  
FOREIGN



## Bharat tex 2024

Global Textile Expo  
New Delhi | Feb 26-29

TEXTILES  
FASHION  
SUSTAINABILITY

### VENUES

**BHARAT MANDAPAM AND YASHOBHOOMI**

**NEW DELHI, INDIA**

**10,000+**  
TEXTILE  
PRODUCTS

**3,000+**  
OVERSEAS  
BUYERS

**50+**  
CONFERENCES  
& SEMINARS

**3500+**  
GLOBAL  
BRANDS

**50 Countries | 28 States | 350 Speakers**

Partner States



Supporting State Partners



Get your **free**  
**registration**  
badge now



# UNITED EXIM'S EXPANSION PLAN: QUALITY ALONE WON'T MAKE THE CUT

**I**t's challenging to objectively prove superiority in quality, claims **Gurveer Singh, Director, United Exim**, a Noida-based company, founded in 1995, currently working with all the top Indian brands like Raymond, Aditya Birla Group, Arvind, Blackberrys, French Connection, Park Avenue and more and targeting the overseas market with expanded capacity. Currently it has a manufacturing capacity of 800 waist coats, 3000 blazers and 5,000 trousers per day. Having an annual turnover of Rs. 250 crore, the company is expecting multi-fold growth after the expansion. In a candid interview with *Apparel Online*, Gurveer shares insights into the company's investment plans, market outlook and strategies for staying ahead in the competitive landscape.

**AO: How does United Exim plan to utilise the Rs. 300 crore investment for its expansion project? How will it enhance the company's operations and market presence?**

**GS:** Our upcoming project is scheduled to be completed within the next one-and-a-half to two years. We've successfully acquired nearly 10 acres of land in Greater Noida for this. It's expected to cover around one million square feet of usable area. As for the production capacity, we're planning to produce approximately 11,000 blazers, 15,000 trousers and 2,000 waistcoats per day. Presently, the bulk of our business comes from the domestic sphere. However, to propel further growth, we've realised the importance of

venturing into exports. To facilitate this transition, we're heavily investing in our upcoming plant, strategically positioned to meet the needs of the export market. Our focus extends to key regions such as the US, UK, Europe, Australia, Russia and Japan. We aim to replicate the success we've experienced domestically by prioritising quality, timely delivery and exceptional service in the export arena. With developments like FTA agreement signed with Australia and the UAE, the proposed FTAs with the UK and the EU, we are planning for long term and as India is lacking on capacities, we want to have good capacity. We have strong know-how and with the support of capacity, we will be able to compete with the countries having stronghold on overseas buyers.

**AO: Do you think the foreign market will improve soon, even though they are sluggish right now?**

**GS:** Our decision to expand was taken in 2022 based on the sudden market boom post-Covid. It was a unique time when we saw two distinct scenarios unfold: some manufacturers closed their doors, while others experienced unprecedented growth. Thankfully, we fell into the latter category. However, over the past year, the market has slowed down considerably. This slowdown can be attributed to the peculiar spending patterns seen in 2022, where consumers splurged on discretionary items to boost their morale after the hardships of the pandemic. Unfortunately, this trend didn't continue into 2023, resulting in an oversupply situation for both brands and retailers. At United Exim, we prioritise financial prudence and strategic planning to weather such market fluctuations just like in the stock market where it's crucial to be prepared for downturns and seize opportunities when they arise, rather than waiting for peak times to take action. This principle applies not only to the garment industry but also to any sector.

**AO: How do you scout potential foreign customers?**

**GS:** The bases for our strategy aren't too complex. Firstly, we gather import-export data to track the top 10 customers buying suits and blazers from each country. Secondly, if the volume is high, price isn't usually a challenge due to economies of scale. Premium customers are also considered. Then, we use online platforms to identify the top-selling brands and their longevity in the market. We approach these customers through zoom calls or one-on-one meetings to onboard them to our company profile.

**AO: Which regions within our own country are the biggest contributors to your business?**

**GS:** Our focus isn't so much on distinguishing between Tier-1, Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets because that largely depends on the sales strategies of the brands we supply to. From my

discussions and experience with these brands, they've indicated that while Tier-1 markets performed well in the past, they're now seeing significant growth opportunities in Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets. The appeal lies in the aspirational nature of products, where purchasing them provides a sense of luxury and prestige. In Tier-1 markets, where these brands are more established, consumers have become accustomed to them, resulting in less excitement and novelty. However, in Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets, where these brands are relatively new, there's a greater sense of novelty and excitement amongst consumers. As a result, brands are expanding aggressively into these regions by opening new stores.

**AO: How do you distinguish yourself from your competitors? And in your opinion, is quality a significant differentiator?**

**GS:** Firstly, I want to address the common belief that quality is the primary differentiating factor. According to me, quality alone isn't enough to stand out because it's challenging to objectively prove superiority in quality. Instead, what sets us apart is our commitment to service excellence. We've implemented various systems and automation to streamline processes, ensuring faster communication and seamless operations. This enhanced service level significantly contributes to our customer satisfaction.

Secondly, we focus on on-time delivery. When we make commitments to our customers regarding delivery timelines, we strive to fulfil them punctually. Our customers appreciate reliability and we've found that they are willing to pay a premium for timely deliveries.

Lastly, new product development is another crucial aspect. While quality may be subjective, we focus on meeting our customers' specific requirements and preferences. We measure our success in this area by the percentage of shipments dispatched successfully on the first inspection. For example, if we have 100 shipments scheduled for this month and 95 per cent pass inspection on the initial attempt, then our



“We measure our success by the percentage of shipments dispatched successfully on the first inspection. For example, if we have 100 shipments scheduled for this month and 95% pass inspection on the initial attempt, then our shipment success rate stands at 95%.”

**Gurveer Singh**  
Director, United Exim

shipment success rate stands at 95 per cent. This metric provides a tangible gauge of our efficiency and adherence to quality standards.

**AO: Please discuss the average efficiency levels achieved on your shopfloor and how you tend to improve it going forward?**

**GS:** Our production efficiency typically ranges between 60 per cent to 65 per cent, although this can vary based on factors like the scale of customer orders and the complexity of colour/style variations. Higher order volumes tend to

# MANUFACTURING

improve efficiency by an additional three to five percent.

Regarding our technological advancements, we've been actively transitioning towards a more tech-savvy approach, continually updating our systems month by month. For instance, we've developed an in-house system aimed at reducing downtime. With this system, when a machine breakdown occurs, supervisors or floor managers can quickly report the issue by scanning a QR code and providing relevant details. This triggers an automatic message to the designated mechanic, who then has a maximum of 30 minutes to address the problem.

To monitor the effectiveness of these initiatives, we hold weekly executive meetings every Monday, where we evaluate performance based on metrics such as the percentage of work completed and timeliness. We also recognise that efficiency isn't solely determined by machine performance. For instance, we've noticed instances where machines, ranging from 30 per cent to 5 per cent, remain idle due to delayed loading. These are the losses that we are trying to address. They can stem from various reasons, such as delayed buyer approvals or trims not being readily available. Moving away from outdated reliance on individuals, we're transitioning to real-time data-driven operations.

**AO: What emphasis are you putting on software and hardware technology to improve productivity and efficiency?**

**GS:** Our software arsenal includes AccuNest (Lectra), streamlining marker making processes autonomously. We use automatic cutters and spreaders from Gerber and Bullmer for precise cutting procedures. Additionally, we employ automatic machines to cut hard patterns, eliminating the need for manual methods. Regarding machinery, we have the latest models from Duerkopp Adler, PFAFF and MACPI, facilitating various tasks such as sleeve setting, automatic pocket welting, plaque making, flap pressing and lapel edge cutting.



**AO: Share with us the employee engagement programs implemented within your organisation, particularly focusing on training and technical know-how development.**

**GS:** We've established a dedicated team focused on training and upskilling both our existing workforce and new hires before they join the shopfloor. Each department undergoes periodic evaluations, with 10 per cent of workers randomly selected to take a short test, assessing their performance and identifying areas for improvement. We prioritise cross-training workers on multiple critical operations to mitigate the impact of absenteeism or turnover on our production lines. Our Industrial Engineering and Planning (IEP) team closely monitors individual efficiency levels and sets internal targets to enhance productivity. As the market becomes increasingly competitive, efficiency improvements are essential for managing costs amidst regular wage hikes, which occur approximately every six months. Unlike in Bangladesh, where wage increases are less frequent, we face the challenge of maintaining compliance

with these hikes while remaining competitive in pricing negotiations with buyers. However, there are limitations to how much efficiency can be improved within a given timeframe, especially as technological advancements and new machinery set certain benchmarks for worker performance. This presents another significant challenge for us to navigate.

**AO: What sustainability initiatives have you undertaken within your manufacturing operations and how do they align with your business goals?**

**GS:** We have a clear strategy centred around sustainability, recognising its growing importance globally. Textile production has historically been a major contributor to unsustainable practices. To address this, we've undertaken several initiatives over the past six years. One significant step was the installation of solar panels covering the entire rooftop of our current factory, generating up to 30 per cent of our electricity from solar energy. Additionally, we've obtained Sedex (Supplier Ethical Data Exchange) certification along with Higg FSLM. Furthermore, our upcoming new factory is planned to achieve Green Platinum certification, with the necessary requirements already incorporated into the building design. While we strive to use sustainable materials like recycled polyester fabrics and buttons, customer acceptance and willingness to pay play a crucial role in our implementation efforts. Despite challenges, we continue to advocate for sustainability measures and propose them to our customers.

**AO: Are there any plans to diversify your product offerings?**

**GS:** Yes, we're open to expanding our product range. Looking ahead, custom tailoring is a category we're interested in exploring, along with premium half and full canvas blazers, which cater to a niche market. Additionally, government tenders for uniforms present a high-volume opportunity, ensuring consistent business throughout the year and bolstering our profit margins.

## 100% Recycled Polyester Embroidery Threads



**RECYCLED - BRILLIANT - PREMIUM**

### CONTACT US

Madeira India Pvt. Ltd.  
Plot No. 895, Udyog Vihar Phase 1  
Sector 20, Gurugram  
Haryana - 122016

[www.madeira.com/en-in](http://www.madeira.com/en-in)  
Email: [info@madeiraindia.com](mailto:info@madeiraindia.com)  
Tel: 0124 4994684



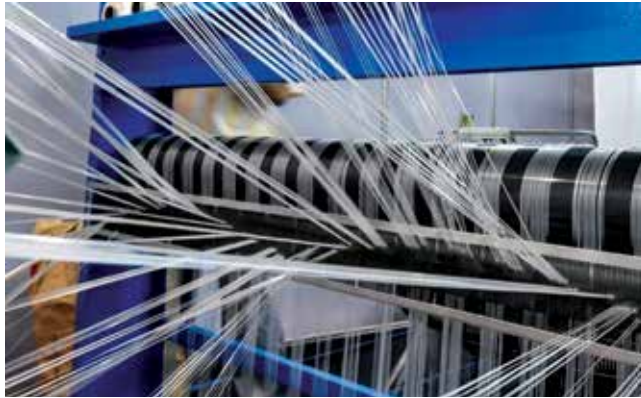
THREADS STABILIZERS ACCESSORIES

## MANUFACTURERS ADDRESS NEW PAYMENT RULES

Apparel manufacturers across various hubs in India are looking at the amended Income Tax Act in terms of payments with some apprehension. The South India Garment Association (SIGA) expressed its concern about the new payment rule for MSMEs, describing it as detrimental to the growth of the garment industry. SIGA, which represents a number of textile units throughout the nation, wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi requesting the repeal of the new law, namely Income Tax Act law 43B(H).

Clause (h) of Section 43B of the Income Tax Act stipulates that any sum payable to the assessed, pertaining to a micro or small enterprise, beyond the time limit specified in Section 15 of the MSMEs Development Act, 2006, shall be allowed only in the previous year in which such sum is actually paid. The clause makes it mandatory to make payments to micro and small manufacturers and traders within 15 to 45 days for the goods bought from them before 31st March 2024.

The new rule makes it clear that if this deadline is missed, the outstanding contribution would be treated as income and subject to taxation. SIGA has voiced concerns, claiming that many clothing companies will suffer as a result of the new rule's adoption. This is due to the fact that clothing stores and dealers normally don't get



paid until after 90 days.

"It will be a big blow to the garment industry which is already in trouble due to competition from corporate companies. I appeal to the Prime Minister to repeal the new rule in the interest of the garment industry that provides jobs to lakhs of people," said SIGA President Anurag Singhla.

Meanwhile, the revised payment time limit stipulated in the amended Income Tax Act has had a notable impact on textile production in south Gujarat. Textile traders have refrained from placing orders for clothes due to the 45-day payment window. Conversely, weaving units have expressed support for the new regulations. As per the updated guidelines, buyers are required to settle payments for purchases from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) within 45 days, failing which the unpaid amount will be treated as the buyer's profit. These amendments

took effect from April 2023 that is, from financial year 2023-24.

Chetan Maniya, President of the Rapier Jacquard Weavers Association, acknowledged the benefits of the rules in expediting payments, but highlighted the delay in receiving orders and the suspension of earlier ones. Market insiders revealed that textile traders in the city typically extend credit to buyers across the country for up to 180 days, making it challenging to fulfill the 45-day payment requirement to cloth manufacturers. Some manufacturers have reported a significant decline in new orders and noted that numerous traders have ceased acquiring greige cloth or are demanding it at significantly reduced prices.

Despite the challenges faced, Government Ministries maintain that the rule aims to improve the financial conditions of MSMEs and must be adhered to by all parties, emphasising its long-term benefits.

### SNIPS

A Parliamentary Committee has emphasised the need for a comprehensive National Textile Policy to enhance the global competitiveness of the Indian textile industry.

The UP Government has allocated a substantial sum of Rs. 400 crore for the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Powerloom Vidyut Flat Rate Yojana, to revitalise the looms sector. Additionally, a mega textile park has been approved under the PM Mega Integrated Textiles Region and Apparel Scheme, with a generous provision of Rs. 400 crore.

Workers from the northern states, who were employed at the garment export units in Tirupur and went home in the last six months due to slowdown in orders, are returning to work, said Kumar Duraiswamy, Joint Secretary of the Tirupur Exporters Association.



# AMANN GROUP PARTICIPATES IN INDIA INTERNATIONAL LEATHER FAIR 2024

AMANN Group, a global leader in high-quality sewing threads, showcased the latest innovations and solutions tailored for the leather industry at India International Leather Fair (IILF) 2024. The company's booth at the event was inaugurated by Consul General Michaela Kuechler from The German Consulate in Chennai.

AMANN Group has also opened its state-of-the-art production facility at Ranipet, Tamil Nadu with production having already started on 22nd January 2024 and its official opening ceremony will take place in April 2024.

The 32,000 square metre facility boasts of advanced resource conservation and sustainable processes and will have over 200 employees. It

will produce high-quality sewing and embroidery threads for leather and other applications.

In terms of sustainability, the plant will have Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD), 100 per cent renewable energy, gender equality in the workplace, AMANN kindergarten/creche and a primary health centre. It will be also equipped with a complete closed-loop water system which will enable 100 per cent of the extracted water to get purified and remain in the cycle. Only 9 per cent of freshwater have to be replenished due to evaporation.

A photovoltaic power plant will cover the biggest share of electricity demand; the balance will be supplied from the nearby wind and solar park. The latest

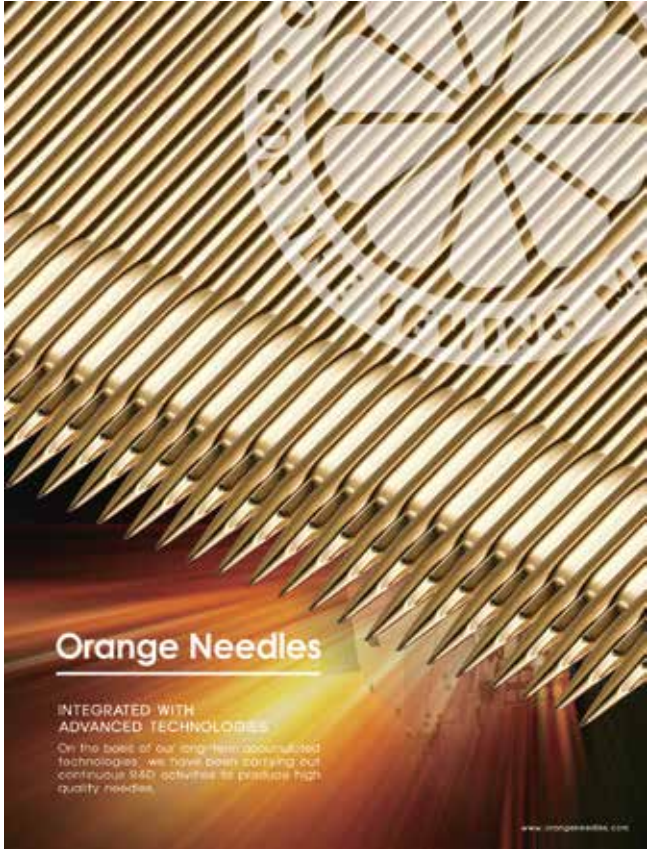
technology boiler for steam production will be operated with biomass with minimum pollution emission into the environment.

With its Recycled product line, AMANN offers sewing and embroidery threads that are certified according to the Global Recycled Standard (GRS). With its Lifecycle product line, AMANN offers sewing threads which are Cradle to Cradle Certified®.

Sanjeev Grewal, Regional Business Director, South West Asia and Middle East and Managing Director, AMANN India, emphasises, "Success is always the result of a trustful collaboration. Our global brands and Indian

customers are key to our success. We are very grateful for our long-term business relationships which form the foundation for our today's role in the Indian sewing thread industry as quality and innovation leader."

"The IILF serves as a crucial platform for fostering collaboration, exchanging ideas and exploring opportunities in the leather industry. With AMANN's longstanding commitment to excellence and innovation, we are confident that our participation will contribute to the success of the event and strengthen our relationships with stakeholders in the Indian market," he adds.



# TRADE STATS

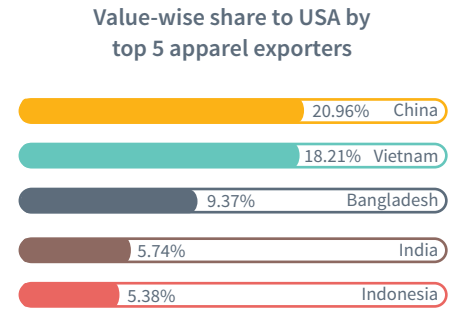
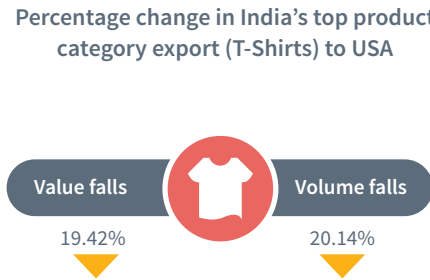
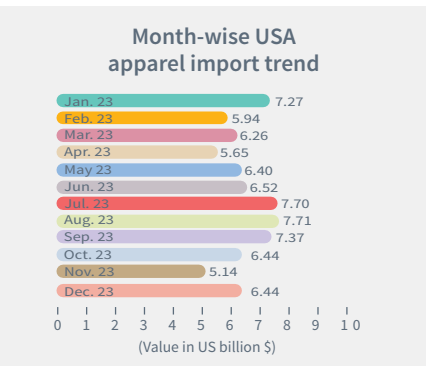
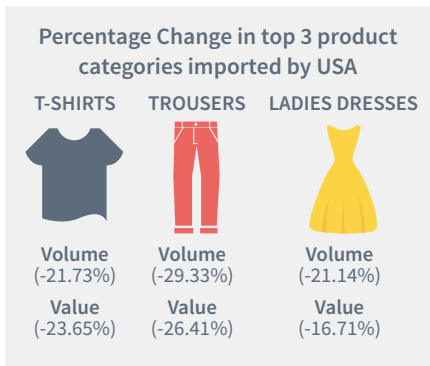
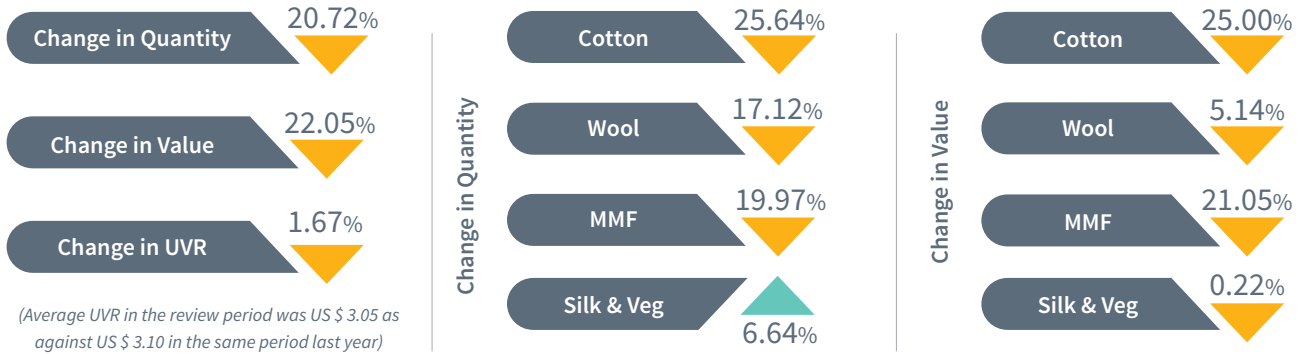
## US APPAREL IMPORTS (January-December 2023)

### USA Concludes 2023 With US \$ 77.84 Billion Apparel Imports

USA has concluded 2023 with US \$ 77.84 billion worth of apparel imports, noting 22.05 per cent yearly decline. The country has witnessed a loss of US \$ 22 billion as imports in 2022 had valued US \$ 99.85 billion. It's worth noting here that 2023 was considered as the most impacted

year for global economies post-COVID, impacting trade scenario worldwide. All major Asian manufacturing destinations saw significant decline in their exports to the US including India, Bangladesh, China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Pakistan.

## Global Apparel Imports by the US (January-December 2023)



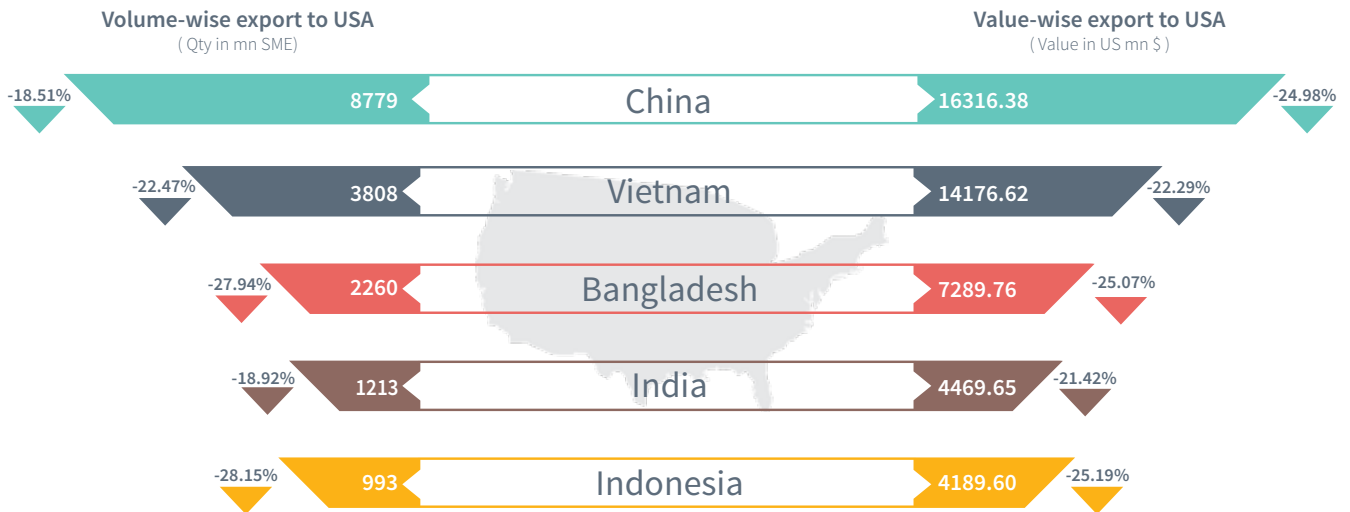
According to industry, apparel imports of the USA is projected to see normalcy from April/May '24.



(The information has been extracted from US custom site and further analysed.)



TOTAL APPAREL EXPORTS TO THE US BY 5 MAJOR MANUFACTURING DESTINATIONS  
(January-December 2023)



Overall apparel imported by USA was worth US \$ 77.84 billion in the said period with 22.05% decrease (Y-o-Y)

ITEM-WISE QUANTITY INCREASE/DECREASE IN APPAREL IMPORTS BY THE US: JAN.-DEC. 2023  
(Qty in doz, legwear in dpr, babieswear in kg)

APPAREL TYPE	Total Imports by USA			Exports to USA														
	2022	2023	% Change	China			India			Bangladesh			Vietnam			Indonesia		
				2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change
Babies Wear	135899898	96174898	-29.23	4,54,21,812	3,24,22,266	-28.62	1,75,30,385	1,20,78,550	-31.10	1,65,75,731	1,16,06,757	-29.98	1,69,71,921	1,28,73,477	-24.15	28,20,100	22,69,778	-19.51
Foundation Garments	57765800	41741532	-27.74	2,62,88,147	1,90,96,128	-27.36	8,55,329	5,84,275	-31.69	48,95,696	35,49,928	-27.49	85,49,020	63,93,990	-25.21	61,41,386	40,55,339	-33.97
Jackets & Blazers	53126116	44758842	-15.75	2,11,96,400	1,80,40,768	-14.89	10,82,781	8,32,149	-23.15	52,08,683	43,12,840	-17.20	1,19,33,757	1,03,80,036	-13.02	24,46,023	20,12,991	-17.70
Ladies Blouses	41981331	33475758	-20.26	1,27,72,677	1,00,51,171	-21.31	75,61,348	60,44,847	-20.06	37,67,976	27,23,661	-27.72	81,35,068	67,68,783	-16.80	45,58,286	36,82,428	-19.21
Ladies Dresses	57274548	45165450	-21.14	2,29,78,443	1,85,43,363	-19.30	74,89,127	59,64,718	-20.35	26,47,918	20,77,113	-21.56	1,13,53,051	89,22,994	-21.40	41,42,089	30,46,094	-26.46
Ladies Skirts	21928234	19184319	-12.51	94,95,234	79,74,062	-16.02	14,59,846	12,16,663	-16.66	18,00,964	12,79,883	-28.93	41,76,769	41,93,910	0.41	13,12,444	10,99,083	-16.26
Legwear	36965414	335486112	-9.17	26,09,23,742	22,47,33,527	-13.87	28,40,158	44,34,139	56.12	2,08,238	1,45,207	-30.27	1,13,20,972	1,31,85,136	16.47	5,83,706	7,36,201	26.13
Men's Shirts	36945402	32010242	-13.36	53,55,023	43,85,082	-18.11	42,04,915	38,67,176	-8.03	1,17,79,857	1,03,10,701	-12.47	53,74,394	42,17,111	-21.53	21,17,322	18,92,465	-10.62
Nightwear	84862934	58249783	-31.37	3,51,92,935	2,49,28,893	-29.17	80,10,828	73,60,094	-8.12	48,57,256	23,89,034	-50.82	1,25,63,378	90,84,060	-27.69	34,52,917	17,78,536	-48.49
Suits / Ensembles	11214665	10743143	-4.20	64,62,687	62,74,608	-2.91	4,12,165	3,39,339	-17.67	4,44,833	3,77,810	-15.07	12,45,376	10,99,318	-11.73	3,14,752	2,69,889	-14.25
Sweaters	17716833	17168474	-3.10	1,20,58,721	1,07,26,315	-11.05	1,07,921	1,04,119	-3.52	14,44,445	17,33,813	20.03	8,73,827	9,32,144	6.67	7,86,328	8,41,154	6.97
Trousers	336503700	237792915	-29.33	6,45,60,296	4,81,19,844	-25.47	87,42,828	61,48,632	-29.67	6,44,42,838	4,35,17,213	-32.47	6,47,92,937	4,71,07,384	-27.30	2,21,52,115	1,53,07,783	-30.90
T-Shirts	639708058	506675451	-21.73	8,35,54,197	6,95,94,706	-16.71	3,18,17,620	2,54,10,856	-20.14	4,94,55,676	3,48,61,639	-29.51	8,22,02,318	6,19,82,389	-24.60	2,85,89,722	2,04,71,186	-28.40
Undergarments	270275017	216972700	-19.72	5,46,78,623	4,77,22,144	-12.72	2,03,03,572	1,67,56,749	-17.47	3,36,27,662	2,59,50,396	-22.83	5,91,65,755	4,73,06,507	-20.04	32,51,677	27,63,932	-15.00

ITEM-WISE VALUE INCREASE/DECREASE IN APPAREL IMPORTS BY THE US: JAN.-DEC. 2023 (Value in US mn \$)

APPAREL TYPE	Total Imports by USA			Exports to USA														
	2022	2023	% Change	China			India			Bangladesh			Vietnam			Indonesia		
				2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change	2022	2023	% Change
Babies Wear	2,703.94	1,850.89	-31.55	642.25	431.85	-32.76	458.23	302.45	-34.00	289.89	216.38	-25.36	409.46	289.44	-29.31	86.76	69.87	-19.47
Foundation Garments	2,840.85	2,001.25	-29.55	800.66	504.50	-36.99	57.89	32.83	-43.29	149.33	105.27	-29.51	645.54	490.66	-23.99	363.52	247.62	-31.88
Jackets & Blazers	8,270.57	6,994.12	-15.43	2511.27	1918.44	-23.61	224.86	162.69	-27.65	684.50	594.30	-13.18	2254.14	1936.20	-14.10	432.66	360.77	-16.62
Ladies Blouses	2,928.16	2,459.71	-16.00	651.02	513.28	-21.16	659.83	544.56	-17.47	208.64	171.56	-17.77	484.52	414.71	-14.41	363.98	303.13	-16.72
Ladies Dresses	5,219.88	4,347.82	-16.71	1717.59	1353.13	-21.22	875.58	730.72	-16.54	138.12	100.56	-27.20	855.94	699.36	-18.29	379.76	293.73	-22.65
Ladies Skirts	908.98	865.25	-4.81	264.01	241.61	-8.48	87.66	75.99	-13.31	65.47	48.71	-25.60	185.26	179.17	-3.29	63.10	50.09	-20.62
Legwear	2,417.27	2,021.06	-16.39	1416.01	1130.01	-20.20	51.40	27.43	-46.64	0.63	0.40	-37.04	83.48	85.57	2.50	6.86	5.47	-20.26
Men's Shirts	3,239.37	2,945.94	-9.06	330.20	264.86	-19.79	343.50	322.30	-6.17	770.21	679.96	-11.72	560.69	447.92	-20.11	205.52	194.06	-5.58
Nightwear	3,336.10	1,703.63	-48.93	1367.76	406.70	-70.27	229.31	180.69	-21.20	158.98	90.25	-43.23	647.30	467.51	-27.78	162.76	106.46	-34.59
Suits / Ensembles	1,207.11	1,188.56	-1.54	276.70	229.78	-16.96	54.72	57.65	5.37	40.91	35.85	-12.37	164.11	159.53	-2.79	73.59	59.34	-19.36
Sweaters	7,15,361.27	5,70,983.85	-20.18	184429.42	142653.52	-22.65	61808.69	50492.93	-18.31	50,601.72	37,688.78	-25.52	101001.49	78520.34	-22.26	32003.96	24413.33	-23.72
Trousers	23,555.69	17,333.80	-26.41	2923.99	2155.11	-26.30	608.87	434.91	-28.57	4,208.55	2,948.73	-29.93	4821.92	3553.89	-26.30	1407.20	1028.20	-26.93
T-Shirts	27,633.94	21,098.46	-23.65	3306.88	2460.14	-25.61	1364.30	1099.36	-19.42	1,604.22	1,154.42	-28.04	4465.21	3329.50	-25.43	1449.04	1024.73	-29.28
Undergarments	4,459.50	3,468.00	-22.23	871.45	680.44	-21.92	427.61	315.21	-26.29	445.50	365.69	-17.91	917.96	706.37	-23.05	99.00	72.08	-27.19

# AO

APPAREL ONLINE  
ALL ABOUT FASHION BUSINESS

Our Editions  
AO INDIA  
AO VIETNAM  
AO BANGLADESH



**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

Please call Customer Service at  
**+91 98913 74725, 90509 90602**

or email at [contact@apparelresources.com](mailto:contact@apparelresources.com)

[www.apparelresources.com](http://www.apparelresources.com)

## CANADA APPAREL IMPORTS (Jan.-Dec. '23)

### Canada apparel imports decline 12.78% in 2023

In 2023, Canada witnessed a substantial 12.78% decrease in its imports of apparel, with values dropping to US \$ 10.85 billion from the 2022 figure of US \$ 12.44 billion. The decline in exports was more pronounced in knitted garments compared to woven garments, suggesting a decent trend for woven garment imports in Canada that year. It is noteworthy that all major nations exporting apparel experienced a decrease in their annual shipments to Canada.

▼ **12.78%**  
**Canada Imports**

The knitted apparel reported decline of 18.35% during the review period, whereas the woven segment fell by 5.36% in value terms

▼ **12.26%**  
**Vietnam Exports**

Knitted garment exports from Vietnam to Canada dropped by 18.97%, while export of woven garments decreased by 4.38%.

▼ **17.15%**  
**B'Desh Exports**

Bangladesh's shipment to Canada declined by 24.08% in knitted segment, while woven garment exports decreased by 10.10%.

▼ **12.28%**  
**India Exports**

Bangladesh's shipment to Canada declined by 23.64% in knitted segment, while woven garment exports decreased by 10.76%.

## JAPAN APPAREL IMPORTS (Jan.-Dec. '23)

### Japan wraps up 2023 with marginal increase in value-wise imports amidst clouds of recession!

In 2023, Japan recorded a slight 0.84% rise in apparel imports, amounting to a value of US \$ 22.21 billion. However, the quantity of incoming shipments experienced a 5.23% annual decline. It's important to highlight that Japan's economy showed signs of weakening in the last quarter of 2023, marking the second consecutive quarter of such a trend – a characteristic that aligns with one common definition of a recession.

▲ **0.84%**  
**Japan Imports**

Japanese apparel imports decreased by 5.23% in weight, while values increased by 0.84% in the review period.

▲ **9.83%**  
**Vietnam Exports**

Vietnam got a boost of 0.12% in weight-wise exports to Japan, while values increased by 9.83% on Y-o-Y basis.

▲ **0.14%**  
**B'Desh Exports**

Bangladesh's garment exports to Japan saw degrowth of 3.76% in weight-wise exports and values increased marginally by 0.14%.

▲ **5%**  
**India Exports**

Indian apparel exports to the Japan declined by 3.46% in weights and increased by 5% in values.

**SUSTAINABLY** **SOFT**  
with **STRETCH**



**WILDCAT®**

**ECO100**

**100% RECYCLED, TEXTURED  
POLYESTER SEWING THREAD**

ELASTICITY AND SOFTNESS • 100% RECYCLED • EXCELLENT SEWING PERFORMANCE



**Central Marketing Office:**

1st Floor, Palm Court, Sector-16, M.G. Road, Gurgaon, Haryana 122001

Phone: 0124 4981600-04 | Fax: 0124 4981605

Email: amefird@vardhmanthreads.in | www.vardhmanthreads.com





## INTERLINING COMPANIES STITCHING SUCCESS AMIDST RISING DEMAND

Interlining, normally a non-woven fabric, remains hidden in a garment. It adds more structure and body to garment components and is highly important as it prevents wrinkles and creases, making ironing and pressing the garment easier. At the same time, it helps prevent shrinkage or distortion when washing. Interlinings are mainly used to enhance the formal appearance in shirt collars, cuffs, coat lapels, winter coats, pants amongst others by providing thickness, firmness and extra strength and enhancing their overall presentation.

It's not a product which can be easily produced, and therefore, only a few of the leading global and Indian companies are engaged in its manufacturing and offer a wide range of variety, besides serving the industry with their technical inputs. The increased thrust of these companies on innovation, sustainability and quality is contributing to their growth path.

### Wide portfolio

The wide portfolio of materials being offered by the interlining companies

is designed to meet the demands of customers in various segments like womenswear, menswear, childrenswear, shirts, activewear and outdoor sportswear.

The German interlining pioneer Freudenberg Performance Materials provides a large range of interlinings in Asia, including PS non-woven; water entangled non-woven; binderbonded non-woven; wet-laid non-woven; adhesive web; functional; stitch reinforced; knit; weft; woven; woven shirt (cotton, PES stable, PES bi-elastic, PES/rayon, PES/cotton) interlinings; and service line/tapes.

Similarly, in response to the rapidly evolving apparel industry, **Supreme Nonwoven Industries** has strategically expanded and diversified its range of interlining products under the Terca brand. This ensures its interlinings seamlessly complement a variety of fabrics and wash care requirements, offering flexibility and reliability for an extensive range of apparel styles and segments.

“Our portfolio encompasses a comprehensive array of products designed for formal, casual and activewear in men’s, women’s and kidswear categories. These enhance garment performance, durability and appeal. Additionally, we offer soft, breathable padding for thermal insulation in jackets, sleeping bags and soft home products,” says **Gourav Sarin**, **Head of Sales & Marketing** of the company.

**Shubh Swasan**, an interlining major, already has a strong thrust on innovation and is coming up with new product offerings.

Currently, the Chennai-based company offers mainly non-woven and TRP Fusible interlinings. TRP is an innovative interlining coating technology that increases the performance of fusible interlinings. **Kirthi Kumar Baheti**, **Director** of the company informs, “We have applied for a patented product for formal shirts specially. Our new product will not only reduce the process, but will also save costs by almost 25 per cent. Soon we will launch this product in the market.”

### Companies distinguish on quality and service delivery

Service is core to interlining as it is an engineered product and requires scientific solutions for its use. Though all interlining companies have high-quality standards offering shrinkage control, good hand feel, tear-proof material, high body strength and good resistance and longer life expectancy, it is primarily the service and solution which matter the most.

“While prioritising product performance, we also emphasise top-notch quality, ensuring our customers receive unparalleled value,” says Gourav.

Freudenberg too adheres to the highest level of quality standards in every aspect of its business operations, from R&D, sourcing and manufacturing to product management and technical consultation.

The company’s service is what



**T.Boopalan**

Director, Freudenberg Performance Materials India



**Gourav Sarin**

Head of Sales and Marketing Supreme Nonwoven Industries



**Brijesh Sharma**

GM Marketing, Talreja Textile Industries

differentiates it in the market. Its professionals provide tailor-made support to customers at both brand and factory levels. Its experienced technical studios offer a range of services to customers, from interlining recommendation reports, technical consultation, technical workshops and quality assurance seminars to fusing process audits, trend collection mockups and sample books/yardage.

Freudenberg has received ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 50001 certifications at the factory level and conducts regular quality monitoring standard inspections during the production process. All its products are OEKO-TEX® Standard 100 Class 1/Class 2 certified.

“We have company-wide product standards on a global level to ensure that our globally-available interlinings deliver consistent performance, no matter from which country our product is delivered,” says **T.Boopalan, Director, Freudenberg Performance Materials India.**

### **Sustainability: a major concern for interlining companies**

Focusing on a holistic plan for sustainability by using its Freudenberg Apparel House of Sustainability platform, the company provides more than 500 sustainable products to customers globally from seven categories, including recycled general interlinings;

recyclable; energy-saving; biodegradable; sustainable cotton; nature-based; and recycled thermal insulations and linings.

All this is underpinned by energy harvesting, ZLD, energy efficiency audits and monitoring systems while Freudenberg is committed to reducing its production footprint worldwide and reducing CO2 emissions by 25 per cent by 2025. At the raw material level, it has a thrust on recycled, nature-based or biodegradable and is free from environmentally harmful substances like Azo, APEO and PFC.

Terca’s sustainable collection known as **Circuline** is a significant step forward in its journey towards environmental responsibility. Circuline is meticulously crafted with eco-friendly materials and manufacturing processes, designed to minimise waste and environmental impact while maximising performance and durability. Circuline is certified by leading industry standards certifications such as Oeko-Tex (Class 1) and GRS. “We have implemented energy-efficient technologies and waste reduction programmes, significantly reducing our carbon footprint. These initiatives embody our commitment to quality and environmental stewardship,” shares Gourav.

### **Strong future plans**

With all the positive aspects mentioned above, nearly all leading companies are on an expansion path and geared up for good growth.

Freudenberg Performance Materials is further investing to expand production capacity and to provide its own locally produced polyester interlinings to shirt, womenswear and menswear segments in India.

Currently, it manufactures non-woven, woven stable and bi-elastic interlinings in a factory located in Chennai.

The long-term growth prospects for interlining look encouraging, with the government of India’s various promotional steps, including the PLI schemes. “Our additional capacity and investment in India will enable us to take advantage of the growth of the apparel market, particularly the domestic business,” says T.Boopalan.

Mumbai-based **Talreja Textile Industries**, a more than seven-decades-old company, is known for a large variety of interlinings including Arabic Thobe, Cotton Fusible, Non Fusible Interlining and Dyed Interlinings. Enthusiastic about market demand and initiatives like ‘Made in India’, the company last year invested in its new state-of-the-art plant and doubled its capacity which is now more than 25 lakh metres per month including interlinings and fabrics.

“There is good demand within India and our focus on exporting to countries like the Middle East, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has also motivated us to expand capacity. We are optimistic about good business ahead,” states **Brijesh Sharma, GM Marketing** of the company.



Gokaldas Exports Vice Chairman & Managing Director Sivaramakrishnan Ganapathi

### **Gokaldas Exports to acquire clothing, apparel business of Matrix Clothing for Rs. 489 crore**

Gokaldas Exports Ltd. has signed a definitive agreement to acquire 100 per cent equity in Matrix Design & Industries Pvt. Ltd., for an enterprise value of Rs. 489 crore, it said in an exchange filing. Out of this Rs. 489 crore, Rs. 247.5 crore is being paid by way of preferential allotment of shares of Gokaldas Exports through a share swap. The board also approved an issue of 2.73 million equity shares of the company at Rs. 901.14 per share to MCPL. The Matrix Clothing Group produces knitwear for men, women, and kids for well-known companies with significant geographic exposure to North America, Europe, and the UK. With five production facilities—four in Gurgaon, Haryana, and one in Ranchi, Jharkhand—the group is based out of Gurgaon, Haryana.

With its proven track record of success, the management is confident that Matrix will broaden the company's product range, strengthen its position in the Knits category, attract new clients, improve its geographic reach throughout Europe, and enhance its investment in fabric processing. The company's growth strategy, according to the management, will provide a strong basis for a prosperous and long-lasting future.

Gokaldas Exports Vice Chairman & Managing Director Sivaramakrishnan Ganapathi said that the acquisition of Matrix is an important step towards the company's goal of adding production capacity at strategic locations and enhancing value propositions to customers. "It is strategically relevant, possesses a good complementary customer base, operationally strong and above all, a leader in its own sphere," he said.

### **S.P. Apparels Ltd., announces strategic acquisition of Young Brand Apparel Pvt. Ltd.**

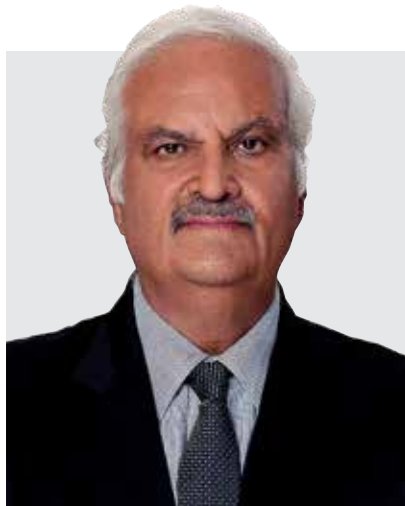
S.P. Apparels Ltd., (SPAL), a leading apparel manufacturer and exporter, has signed a definitive agreement to acquire 100 per cent stake of Young Brand Apparel Private Limited (YBAPL), the subsidiary of Bannari Amman Spinning Mills Limited along with the garment unit situated at Palladam of Bannari Amman Spinning Mills Limited and land and building situated at SIPCOT (The State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited) for a value of Rs. 223 crore. SPAL intends to purchase a 51.33 per cent stake in Young Brand Apparel Private Limited from Bannari Amman as part of the strategic acquisition initiative. Additionally, SPAL seeks to purchase a 49 per cent stake in YBAPL from joint venture partners. SPAL intends to finance this acquisition using a well-balanced mix of borrowed funds and internal accruals. Through this acquisition, SPAL will be able to further broaden its target markets and customer base while using each other's capabilities to diversify its product offerings.

### **JD Sports completes acquisition of Marketing Investment Group**

JD Sports has announced that it has completed its acquisition of the 40 per cent minority stake in Marketing Investment Group SA (MIG) and is now the 100 per cent sole owner. It had first purchased a 60 per cent share in MIG in 2021 and the deal was finalised when the European Commission ruled that it was consistent with the domestic market.

### **Lucy & Yak partners with True Fit for AI sizing options**

Lucy & Yak has partnered with AI size-decoding platform True Fit. The independent UK clothing brand said it selected True Fit in a bid to reduce returns and build product loyalty. Lucy & Yak looked to collaborate with a size and fit solution that had the global scale and dataset to support its goals, since it was planning to expand into the US and add petite and tall sizing to its fit options.



## Welspun Living appoints ex-CEO of Dabur as Independent Director

Welspun Living, a prominent figure in the home textiles and advanced textiles industries, has declared the appointment of Sunil Duggal as an Independent Director. Sunil will commence his initial term as an Independent Director for four years, concluding on 30th January 2028.

Dipali Goenka, CEO and MD of Welspun Living, welcomed Sunil Duggal to Welspun's Board of Directors saying his extensive experience, particularly in steering Dabur's success, aligns seamlessly with their commitment to elevating Welspun's B2C journey. She emphasised the potential synergy between Duggal's consumer-centric perspective and experience and Welspun's vision, highlighting the instrumental role his insights into consumer behaviour and market dynamics will play in driving innovation and meeting evolving audience needs.

Upon joining Welspun Living as an Independent Director, Duggal conveyed his excitement about the company's dedication to innovation and sustainability. He expressed eagerness to collaborate in further elevating Welspun Living's impact on the industry.

## Spanx names new CEO

The women's shapewear and apparel brand's board of directors has appointed Caroline Whitton as Chief Executive, promoting her from the position of President and Chief Growth Officer, where she led all revenue and growth efforts globally.

Caroline led digital growth at retail companies before joining Spanx in 2017. She held positions as General Manager of AllModern.com at Wayfair and Head of Digital Marketing and E-commerce at Design Within Reach. Spanx said that in her role as CEO, she will collaborate with the company's all-female board to carry out the ambitious expansion ambitions of the brand. As Spanx's CEO, Caroline will collaborate with the company's all-female board to carry out the ambitious expansion goals of the brand.



## Mayur Ashtekar to lead Snitch's business development and offline expansion

Snitch, a renowned D2C men's fast fashion business, has appointed Mayur Ashtekar as the Lead Business Development and Offline Expansion Head.

Snitch's Founder, Siddharth Dugarwal stated, "We are delighted to welcome Mayur Ashtekar to the Snitch team. His exceptional skills and passion for transforming the retail landscape make him the ideal candidate to lead new business acquisitions and strategic offline expansion."

Ashtekar's new job as Lead Business Development and Offline Expansion Head will involve supervising all aspects of Snitch's retail business development. His key objective will be to drive the company's offline expansion throughout various areas of India.

Ashtekar said that he is excited to embark on his new journey with Snitch which will give him the chance to manage the pioneering start-up's business growth and offline expansion activities. He expressed his happiness at being given a chance to use his skills to expand Snitch's offline presence and provide unique shopping experiences that exceed customer expectations.



# Q&A

*There have been continuing disruptions to the supply chain due to international unrest, wars and economic uncertainties with the latest being the attacks on ships on the Red Sea. These disruptions have led to delays in shipments and increasing costs for companies.*

*How have these international disruptions affected business in your organisation?*

*Are there plans in place to address disruptions like these? If so, please elaborate.*

*What must retailers keep in mind for the future since similar events might keep happening?*



**Sanjeev Rao**  
*CEO, Being Human*

Regarding global disruptions affecting the domestic market, I am of the opinion that there is nothing currently in the Indian story or the Indian market that is getting affected. Being Human is a brand which completely has its manufacturing based in India. As an Indian brand, we are opening stores in Canada, Dubai, Bangladesh, Nepal, Australia, Singapore and more, but, currently, the India story is working for the brand and we do not see any disruptions, moving forward at least as of now, since the brand is Indian and the Indian market is quite robust.

Regarding plans or contingencies in place, I am of the opinion that post-Covid, every brand

in India is playing the game of contingencies but that does not stop everyone from being optimistic, at this point of time. As far as our brand is concerned, we are extremely positive of the way the future looks, and of course, any company should be prepared for any eventualities. So, we are also prepared in case anything happens. For now the demand is good and the company is catering to the demand and working as per the demand and supply paradigm.



**Sartaj Singh Mehta**  
*Senior Director, Design and Product, Pepe Jeans London*

The disruptions happening around the world are creating

a global impact that we can see, but these disruptions haven't really caused a localised impact on the industry as such. Even though disruptions like these play a role when we look at long-term prospects, but the industry will have to wait and watch to see whether these will affect the domestic industry or not.

Regarding any plan in place for our organisation, I am of the opinion that the intensity of conflicts like these has actually gone down, whether it be the conflict in Ukraine or the recent one in Gaza and since they are not really affecting domestic businesses, there's not much need to worry since the disruptions are not very serious.

Of course, companies will have to have a watchful eye on the market and how it reacts to disruptions like these and what directions it takes regarding those. We will have to see how robust the market is regarding these disruptions and conflicts and how it acts accordingly for specific aspects like inventory management.





**Bidyut Bhanjdeo**  
*Chief Business Officer-Ethnix, Raymond*

Disruptions in the domestic market have been non-existent and it's more to do with the global market as a whole. Our garmenting business, supplying to Europe and the US, as of now, are not affected.

We have expanded our international business in garmenting which is most likely to get impacted by global events, if at all. We even added some new customers to our base like Uniqlo, Hugo Boss and more. So by increasing the number of customers, we can create buffers in case global events impact a portion of the market, say the European market, then we can rely on our US market to help us tide over. So right now, there is a plan which is already underway as we speak.

As of now, whichever brand has exposure in the Middle East, they should think about diversifying their business into parts of Europe or some other part of the world because that is the area which is under stress, and going forward, that's where something in the future might happen which will affect the market. Otherwise, there has been no domestic impact since the market is strong and we have good demand. There might be a chance of some inflation in commodity prices, so

for that we keep re-engineering our products and looking at better areas of sourcing so that costs can remain under control. That is the only impact I can see since even this year, there was a commodity price hike where fashion companies were impacted but we are hopeful that it will eventually cool down.



**Himanshu Ratnakar**  
*Assistant General Manager, Sales and Marketing, Woodland*

Regarding the disruptions caused by international conflicts, our organisation is not overtly affected due to a pre-planned approach, forecasting based inventory management, multiple options for sourcing goods, contingency quota model like tools used to avoid any disruptions in ongoing business.

Governments and businesses often implement contingency plans to address supply chain disruptions. These may include diversifying suppliers, enhancing logistics flexibility and investing in technologies like predictive analytics to foresee potential issues. Collaborative efforts between nations and international organisations can also play a crucial role in stabilising global supply chains during times of unrest or economic uncertainties.

Retailers should consider diversifying their supplier base to reduce reliance on specific regions prone to unrest. Building resilient

supply chains with multiple sourcing options helps mitigate risks.

Implementing advanced risk management strategies, staying informed about geopolitical developments and fostering agility in logistics can enhance the ability to adapt swiftly to unforeseen disruptions. Similarly, collaborating with industry peers, investing in technology for real-time monitoring and maintaining a proactive communication strategy are crucial elements for navigating future uncertainties in the global market.

You have to react as per the market situation and companies look at the wider market and always have the information they need to stay ahead and work within the confines of how the market is reacting.

---

### NEXT INDUSTRY VERDICT QUESTIONS

*Dynamic retail tech like AI, AR, VR and more are revolutionising the industry for both retailers as well as customers. By 2025, it is projected that an astounding 80 per cent of customer interactions will be managed by AI.*

*What do you think has been the transformative impact of the new technology on the industry? How is your organisation making use of this tech? Looking ahead, what kind of future do you see for the industry regarding the evolution of this technology?*

**SEND YOUR COMMENTS**  
[contact@apparelresources.com](mailto:contact@apparelresources.com)



**'PM MITRA scheme needs additional support'**

**Tapaswi PVN**

Senior GM, EXIM and Commercials at Arvind Limited which focuses on smooth procurement, purchase and logistics in its supply chain

India is one of the world's largest producers and exporters of textiles and apparel in global trade. However, India

faces stiff competition from countries like China, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Cambodia, which have lower costs and preferential access to key markets making our exports 10 per cent to 15 per cent more expensive.

To boost its apparel exports, India can adopt various strategies such as pursuing trade agreements and partnerships with key markets like the US, UK, EU and UAE and resolving trade barriers and disputes; diversifying its product portfolio and market destinations, especially in the fast-growing segments of man-made fibre (MMF) and technical textiles; improving the quality and productivity of its apparel sector by adopting modern technology, innovation and skill development; enhancing its competitiveness by reducing the cost of capital, power, logistics and compliance and providing tax incentives and subsidies to exporters; and leveraging

its strengths in design and creating a strong brand image for 'Made in India' products.

**Need to improve the infrastructure and logistics facilities**

The PM MITRA scheme is a recent initiative by the Ministry of Textiles to set up seven Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel Parks with a total outlay of Rs. 4,445 crore. These parks aim to create an integrated textiles value chain right from spinning to garment manufacturing at one location and reduce the logistics cost, wastage and environmental impact of the sector. The scheme also provides financial support and incentives to the park developers and investor units and facilitates convergence with other government schemes. The PM MITRA scheme is

expected to boost the textile exports of India by enhancing its competitiveness, quality, productivity and innovation.

However, the scheme needs additional support to be effective as few primary factors are instrumental in making it a grand success. Key factors include improving the infrastructure and logistics facilities such as dedicated freight corridors, inland container depots and textile parks and ensuring uninterrupted power and water supply. All are interconnected to reduce the cost of raw materials and production. Rationalising the duty structure and providing a level playing field for the domestic and imported raw materials, especially man-made fibres and technical textiles would help in supporting the scheme. Industries have to also focus on technology and innovation such as digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence, blockchain and government support is required to enhance the skill development and capacity building of the workforce.

## Need to capitalise on our strong areas

Key pillars of our core strengths include abundant access to raw materials, especially natural fibres like cotton, jute, silk and wool. With its young population as the backbone, India has low-cost and skilled labour and strong entrepreneurial abilities. Due to the vast geographical spread and population, there is adaptability and flexibility of the small-scale manufacturing units to cater to specific and smaller orders. Also as a traditional textile manufacturing country, we have strengths in design, craftsmanship and sustainability and the potential to create a strong brand image for 'Made in India' products.

India is looking at new markets such as Latin America, Australia and Israel to push its apparel exports, which are expected to record healthy growth in the current fiscal. These markets have a high demand for quality and value-added products. However, we cannot ignore

the existing and traditional markets such as the US, the EU, the UK and the UAE which account for about 75 per cent of India's apparel exports. These markets are also growing and offer opportunities for diversification and innovation, especially in the segments of man-made fibres and technical textiles. India should also pursue trade agreements and partnerships with these markets to enhance its market access and resolve trade barriers.

## India must increase use of man-made fibres

We must also explore new products to remain competitive and adaptable in the volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) world. Man-made fibre (MMF) apparel, which is the fastest-growing segment in the global textile and apparel trade, accounts for about 70 per cent of the total trade. India has a low share of MMF apparel in its exports, which is about 10 per cent compared to China's 55 per cent and Bangladesh's 40 per cent. But the country has a huge potential to increase its MMF apparel exports by improving its raw material availability, quality and competitiveness. Technical textiles are functional fabrics used for various applications such as medical, hygiene, agriculture, defence and sports. The global market for technical textiles is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.5 per cent from 2020 to 2027, reaching US \$ 250.6 billion by 2027. India has a huge potential to increase its technical textiles exports by enhancing its technology, innovation and skill development. Arvind has ventured into this segment and is creating products in MMF and technical textiles catering to defence forces, electric vehicles and oil and gas companies. Therefore, I think India should look at these new developments in apparel exports, MMF apparel and technical textiles, to boost its growth, competitiveness and diversification in the global market.



**'We need a plug-and-play model for faster result'**

**Pallab Banerjee**

Managing Director at Pearl Global Industries Limited, which started in 1987 and is an end-to-end resource for all kinds of apparel with a presence across the globe

If you look on paper, India holds immense potential with abundant raw materials, a huge labour pool and a sizeable market. However, that potential is yet to translate on the ground. The main reason behind this is that we don't have more industry clusters like Tirupur in Tamil Nadu which is home to over 10,000 garment manufacturers and employs over 6,00,000 workers. This one location accounts for more than 50 per cent of India's knitted apparel exports. The need for such clusters is particularly required in states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal where there is high population density and a significant pool of skilled labour.

Our neighbouring countries such as China, Bangladesh and Vietnam have witnessed significant growth in their ecosystems for apparel manufacturing and exports, whereas India has been left behind. This underscores the importance of stable government policies to attract necessary investments and create a thriving industrial ecosystem.

## We must prioritise the export of RMG

We need to tap our strengths, especially those related to raw materials. We are the world's largest cotton producer (23 per cent of global production) with the highest cotton cultivation area (39 per cent of the

At its best, a modest expenditure of Rs.30-35 crore from the government on factory sheds with all required amenities for apparel manufacturing can create jobs for two thousand people. This can also be scaled down for smaller players and scaled up for larger ones.

world's total). India also stands as the second-largest producer and exporter of man-made fibres and textiles, particularly polyester and viscose. Our policies and infrastructure should be such that instead of exporting raw materials like cotton fibre or fabrics, we should prioritise the export of finished apparel.

However, the irony is that fabric suppliers receive better incentives for exports rather than catering to the domestic manufacturing market, even if this manufacturing is meant for exports. More the value addition happens in our country, the better it is. We have the ability to design for international markets and have a big domestic clothing market, thus now we are capable of generating fashion trends.

### **The case for Plug-and-Play model**

Another point that deserves discussion is the role of PM Mitra textile parks. It's encouraging to see that textiles and garments are getting serious attention. These parks should attract investments, but if we have to focus on the apparel part, we need more of a plug-and-play model - pre-constructed facilities with all necessary infrastructure. These facilities should be made available for lease and thus can significantly lower industries' initial investment, allowing them to

allocate more funds towards technology and innovation.

Countries like China and Vietnam had a similar push in their initial days and we saw good results. The aim is to reduce the turnaround time, from project approval to the commencement of operations for industries and to attract fresh investments including the foreign ones. The government may construct these factories through project tenders or engage builders for the task. Through plug-and-play mode, an industrial park can be developed and factory sheds can be set up by state governments. This means that new entrepreneurs or existing companies can set up or expand their businesses with minimal cost and effort on a fast track basis with basic infrastructure being ready.

For sustainable growth, the key is to quickly create an ecosystem where trims, accessories, fabrics and garment factories are located next to each other, resulting in efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Tirupur cluster today has a very effective ecosystem and generates substantial business. We can draw inspiration from such examples where fabric, trims and garment manufacturing ecosystems are in one location. While strides have been made in this direction through the planning of PM Mitra and PLI, we can speed things up by exploring plug-and-play initiatives for quicker results.

### **Labour policies and productivity**

When we export fashion apparel to major retailers across the globe, it is important to provide excellent service, on-time delivery of the full ordered quantity and with required quality parameters. These should be made in a safe, healthy and sustainable environment and with each worker and employee getting all benefits as required by country's laws. Each of these is non-negotiable.

While maintaining the highest of standards, the industry has to compete with both low-cost countries like Bangladesh and high-cost and highly efficient ones like Vietnam and China. Manufacturing efficiencies and cost competitiveness play an important role here. As a manufacturer/exporter, we

have to keep investing in automation and process improvements all the time. So we need a workforce which needs to be high on productivity and should possess the willingness to learn new skills.

The challenge also lies in addressing the work culture amongst the first-time factory workers. India is a country of diverse religions and witnesses multiple cultures and regional festivals, resulting in too many local holidays and high absenteeism. Attrition levels are high. This affects apparel manufacturing set-ups as they employ a large number of first-time factory workers. Many families in rural areas are sending their youth for the first time to work in factories and more so the young women. To make manufacturing efficient, we are focusing on providing soft skills in addition to technical training. Similarly the need is there to update our labour policies to make it more productivity-oriented which will help in a big way.

### **Bilateral agreements with countries with large consumer base**

India's fast-growing market and economy are attractive to many countries, leading to discussions about free-trade agreements (FTAs) with nations like Oman, Peru, Europe and the UK. Currently, India has signed 13 FTAs. There is further scope to increase exports and India's participation in the global value chain by exploring more bilateral agreements with big consuming countries. However, it's essential to note that success isn't guaranteed with FTAs. Despite having an agreement with Japan, Indian apparel exports have not increased much.

Another big category where India lags is in case of synthetic textiles and garments. The reason being both the lack of raw material and higher import duties in countries like the USA, Taiwan, South Korea and China have done maximum textile developments in synthetics as these fabrics have become more comfortable to wear and used for all kinds of apparel now. Hopefully, a recent push from the Government in the form of PLI incentives will bring down this barrier and make India an affordable source for synthetic clothing.

## SNITCH SET TO EXPAND RETAIL PRESENCE

Men's fashion brand Snitch, recognised for its strong foothold in Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities, is set to expand its retail presence into smaller cities and towns. As part of the brand's plan to build 7-8 stores in the current fiscal year, this expansion will start with the inauguration of new offline locations in Surat and Bengaluru. The idea would eventually come to encompass important cities like Hyderabad and Mumbai, hence expanding Snitch's reach.

Under the leadership of Snitch's Founder, Siddharth Dungarwal, the business is concentrating on expanding into Tier-3 and Tier-4 areas. Using the robust customer



bases in major cities like Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Pune and Mumbai, this approach seeks to expand the brand's reach into new markets and geographies

while strengthening its team's competencies.

Snitch plans to increase the number of its stores to 22 by the end of the following fiscal year. From its start

as a B2B business in 2019 to its current position as a major industry player with revenue projections of Rs. 250 crore for the current fiscal year, this represents a remarkable evolution.

"Our financial journey has been remarkable. We started with Rs. 11 crore in net revenue in FY '21, climbed to Rs. 44 crore in FY '22 and reached Rs. 110 crore in FY '23. This year, we are set to close at Rs. 250 crore," stated Siddharth. He also highlighted the success of Snitch's app, introduced two years ago, which has amassed over two million downloads and contributes to 55 per cent of their revenue.



A quality product by -  
**NEELAM THREAD PVT. LTD.**

Manufacturers of: All kinds of Embroidery and Stitching Yarns / Threads  
Corporate Office : 374, F.I.E. Patparganj, Delhi - 110 092,  
Phone : 91-11-22144287, 22141060, Telefax: 91-11-22160040  
E-mail: info@neelamthread.com

AVAILABLE AT ALL  
LEADING STOCKISTS  
• Amritsar • Delhi (NCR)  
• Jaipur • Kolkata  
• Mumbai • Panipat  
• Surat • Varanasi





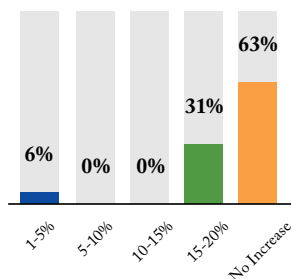
# DENIM MILLS SURVEY

India's denim industry is on a roll for the last few years. According to various studies, it will skyrocket to US \$ 9.15 billion by 2026, up from US \$ 6.15 billion in FY 2023. The February edition of *Apparel Online's* Cover Story unravelled the dynamic Indian denim market. Whether it's global denim giants like Levi Strauss, Pepe Jeans or domestic players like Arvind Fashions Limited, Killer Jeans or Spykar, each one of them is witnessing impressive growth in India with a drastic shift in consumer behaviour and preferences influenced by factors like comfort, versatility in formalwear, focus on women denimwear, rising urbanisation and a tilt towards eco-friendly innovations. To gain further insights into this thriving sector, we conducted an extensive survey amongst denim mills in India, aiming to understand the industry's current status and its future trajectory. Our survey has revealed quite interesting findings.

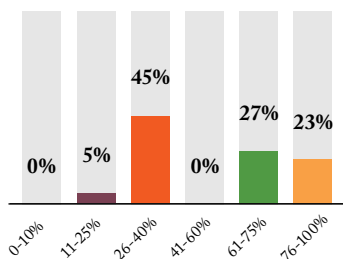
## Production Capacity

Though the denim industry is growing but surprisingly a majority of denim mills, comprising 63 per cent, express a conservative stance with no planned increase in production capacity over the next two-three years. However, a notable 31 per cent hold a bullish perspective, eyeing a significant 15 per cent – 20 per cent expansion. It's worth noting that many of these mills are small to mid-sized and are primed for growth.

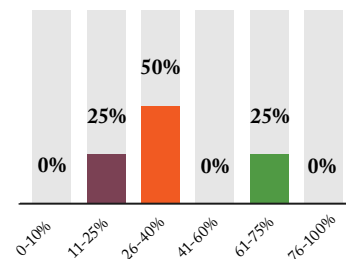
**What percentage increase in production capacity do you envision for your denim mill in the next two-three years?**



**What percentage of your denim production is designated for the domestic market?**



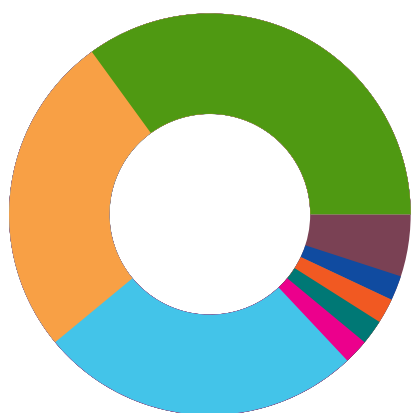
**What percentage of your denim production is designated for export markets?**



**Market Focus**

India's denim production is over 1600 million metres per annum, making it the second-largest producer of denim fabric globally, right after China. According to the survey, nearly 65 per cent of this fabric is used within the country itself, including for making jeans that are exported abroad. The remaining 35 per cent fabric is sent to countries like Bangladesh, Colombia, Venezuela, Egypt, Sri Lanka and the UAE, amongst others. This distribution highlights the denim mills' ability to effectively meet both local and global demands.

**In which country do you primarily export your denim products?**

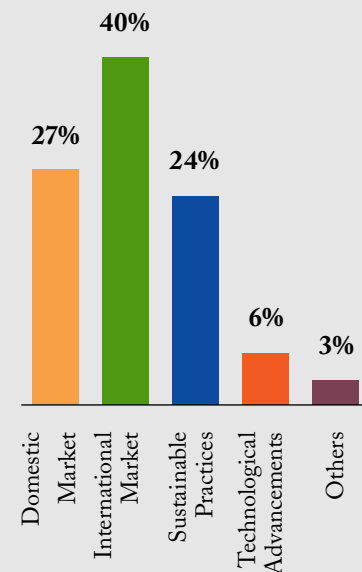


- Bangladesh - 35%
- Colombia - 26%
- Venezuela - 26%
- Egypt - 2%
- Sri Lanka - 2%
- US - 2%
- UAE - 2%
- Others (please specify) - 5%

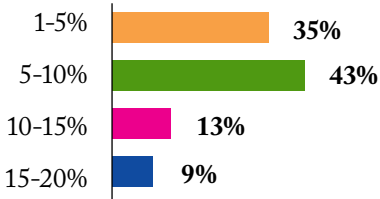
**Export Destinations**

In 2021, denim fabric exports reached US \$ 354.54 million, followed by a decline to US \$ 291.84 million in 2022, marking a 17.68 per cent decrease year-on-year. From January to November 2023, exports further decreased to US \$ 154.45 million, representing a significant 44 per cent decline compared to the same period in 2022. Among the destinations for denim exports, Bangladesh continues to remain a prominent hub, capturing 35 per cent of the market share, closely followed by Latin American markets commanding 26 per cent. There was a consensus among the respondents to look for newer markets especially considering the declining trend in exports over recent years.

**What are the primary growth areas for your denim mill in the next five years? (Select all that apply)**



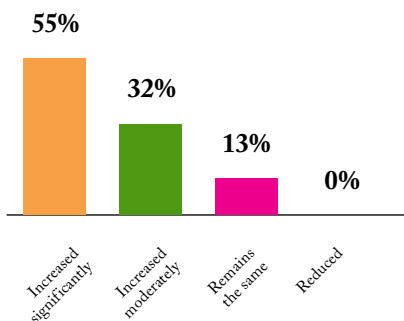
**According to your projections, what is the anticipated Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for the Indian domestic denim market over the next five years?**



**Colour trends and sustainability**

In response to shifting consumer preferences, denim mills are attuned to emerging colour trends. Apart from indigo or blue which dominates the market, black (43 per cent) emerged as the next hot hue in demand, followed by grey (20 per cent). Moreover, the survey underscores a rising demand for sustainable denim fabrics, with a significant 46 per cent acknowledging either a significant or moderate increase in demand. Responding to market dynamics, denim mills are also embracing innovation and product development, with 55 per cent reporting a significant increase in their approach to product development.

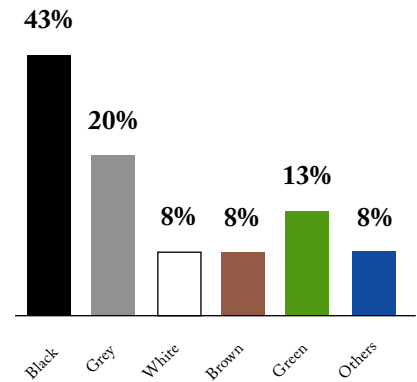
**How has your denim mill's approach to product development (PD) evolved in response to the changing market conditions and increased focus on innovation?**



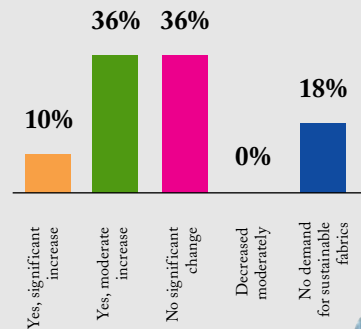
**Future Growth Areas**

Though global economy is on track but it's not yet out of the woods. The World Bank's latest report predicts that global growth will slow to 2.4 per cent in 2024 before edging up to 2.7 per cent in 2025 and going from strength to strength in the years to come. This sentiment is echoed by denim mills in India as well. Looking ahead, the survey respondents identify international markets (40 per cent) as the primary growth area, trailed by domestic markets (27 per cent). Remember, Indian economy is expected to grow close to 7 per cent in FY '25 and will hold the momentum going forward.

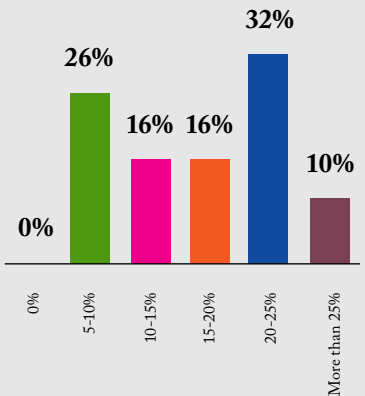
**Which colours, apart from Indigo or blue, are currently in demand by retailers?**



**Is there an increasing demand from retailers for sustainable denim fabrics?**



**What portion of your denim fabric production is categorised as sustainable?**





# NEW YORK-BASED DESIGNER SVASTI UJAGAR EXPLORES THE FUSION OF AI AND FASHION

**F**ashion and architecture share many design similarities. They both focus on construction, albeit in different areas, with a priority on form and comfort for the users. As craftsmen, they aim to convey their vision through textures, colours and shapes. Ultimately, their goal is to create outputs that are both beautiful and durable, constantly evolving and challenging convention. French fashion designer Coco Chanel famously stated, 'Fashion is architecture, it's a matter of proportions'.

Fashion designers, drawing inspiration from architecture, utilise materials as their building blocks to craft wearable shapes, much like architects use concrete, cement and glass to build structures. Fabrics are manipulated in various ways – pleated, folded, twisted and layered – to give garments a three-dimensional, architectural flair. The fusion of architecture and fashion is often referred to as Architectural Fashion or Wearable Architecture. With architecture becoming a subject of critique and admiration, architectural fashion has become a popular avenue for experimentation.

It may sound unbelievable but it is a fact that for years, AI art was not widely recognised as a legitimate art form until it received acclaim in prestigious competitions like the Art Prize at the Colorado State Fair's annual art competition or after it received exhibition space at renowned institutions like the MOMA museum in New York. Some designers now collaborate closely with cutting-edge

AI technology without compromising their roles as professional designers. By allowing artificial intelligence greater creative autonomy, they can draw inspiration for innovative and unimaginable ideas.

New York-based designer Svasti Ujagar too has been exploring the world of AI art by redesigning shoes, clothes and bags, inspired by magnificent architectural wonders. Her exploration includes iconic architectural beauties like Antoni Gaudi's La Sagrada Familia, where curvilinear Art Nouveau forms and Gothic elements converge with Catalan Modernism. Motifs from the Taj Mahal, Hawa Mahal and the Palace of Versailles are also explored, allowing the marriage of traditional and contemporary.

Her most recent venture is a conceptual collection inspired by blending the beauty of architecture with fashion. In a constant shifting panorama of artificial

intelligence, each of these creations attempts to pay homage to the elegance and craftsmanship of some of classic architectural wonders and encapsulates its timeless beauty.

Blurring the lines between real and unreal to create a thread between parallel worlds, the result is a combination of delight and progress. Through history, Artificial Intelligence, architecture, art and fashion could all be seen as sewn together through a single thread: innovation. The juxtaposition of these different motifs highlights the richness of human nature and progression.

Svasti holds a degree in Communication Design from Parsons School of Design and completed her schooling from Mallya Aditi International School, Bengaluru. Currently, she is working at Avery Dennison where she continues to explore the apparel space through research on new-age AI technology.





# SOUMYA KANT

Co-Founder and CGO,  
Clovia

**S**oumya Kant is a qualified chartered accountant and a passionate bra seller by profession. As a Co-founder, she scaled Clovia to serve five million women and sells one bra every two seconds. Clovia has given investors one of the most significant cash exit the industry has ever seen. In 2022, Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd., acquired 89 per cent equity stake in Purple Panda Fashions Pvt. Ltd., which owns and operates the innerwear brand Clovia for Rs 950 crore. Soumya aims to serve 50 million women and personally drives part of sales at Clovia in both online and offline space. She also acts as a bridge between sales and production for effective merchandising, inventory management and product price proposition put forward for each sales channel.

### Passion and Hobbies

I love to read and almost feel sad when a story ends. Recently learnt how to solve a Rubik's cube and now trying to reduce the solve time to less than a minute. Quite passionate about constant learning and unlearning to grow as an individual. Love meeting new-age entrepreneurs and contributing to the booming start-up ecosystem in India.

### Travel

In my head, I am always planning a vacation with full itinerary and research. And then I do take up some of them!

### 3 Must Watch Movies

*Air, Notting Hill and Top Gun*

### 3 Must-Read Books

All three books by J.R. Moehringer - *The Tender Bar* and his ghost-written books like *Open: An Autobiography for Andre Agassi* and Phil Knight's memoir *Shoe Dog*.

### Bucket List

Learning surfing and deep sea diving, running a marathon, taking my parents on a Euro trip.

### Define Success

A state of mind! Success is a relative concept and one should find what it means to them rather than chasing the societal definitions of success.

### Favourite Car

I currently drive a Tiguan by Volkswagen that performs beautifully!

### Favourite Cuisine

I am a foodie by heart and choosing one cuisine is impossible. However, my go-to comfort food is gol gappe and grilled chicken.

### One Superpower I Wish I Had

At Clovia, we believe in 'Happy is my Superpower' and I truly believe I have it. My constant is a happy state of mind which reflects in all aspects of my being.

### Thoughts On AI

With great power comes great responsibility, and with AI, this thought must be at the forefront in all its uses. With all the new technological breakthroughs, there are endless debates about it being good, bad, ugly. However, I firmly believe that it's for us to make the most of it and make it work constructively.

### Advice to Young Professionals

Getting started is the only way to get somewhere. Stop procrastinating, execute that thought, learn from mistakes and move forward.

### Thoughts on Work-Life Balance

One must be happy with what they are doing at work to be happy in personal life and vice versa. Choose your happiness on both fronts and that's the only balance you will ever need.

### Life's Mantra

I find joy in all I do and the only way to live is to constantly grow, evolve and move upward and onward!



# Ask How to Reduce Trim Waste

*Integrated Approach for 6 mm or less Trim Waste*



## Tandematic

A Brand by



**Navis TubeTex World Headquarters**

113 Woodside Drive Lexington, North Carolina 27292

Tel: 336-956-6444

[www.navistubetex.com](http://www.navistubetex.com)

# Are You A Total Quality Fashion Manufacturer?

Are you in need of a one-stop science-based digital platform that seamlessly manages testing processes from start to finish, from sample to result, 24/7?

Then you're going to love

intertek  
icare

Coming Soon to South Asia!

**TOTAL QUALITY  
IN A FEW CLICKS**

