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Issue No.

# BUSINESS OF FASHION

March 2018 | Volume XIX // No. 3 // ₹ 100

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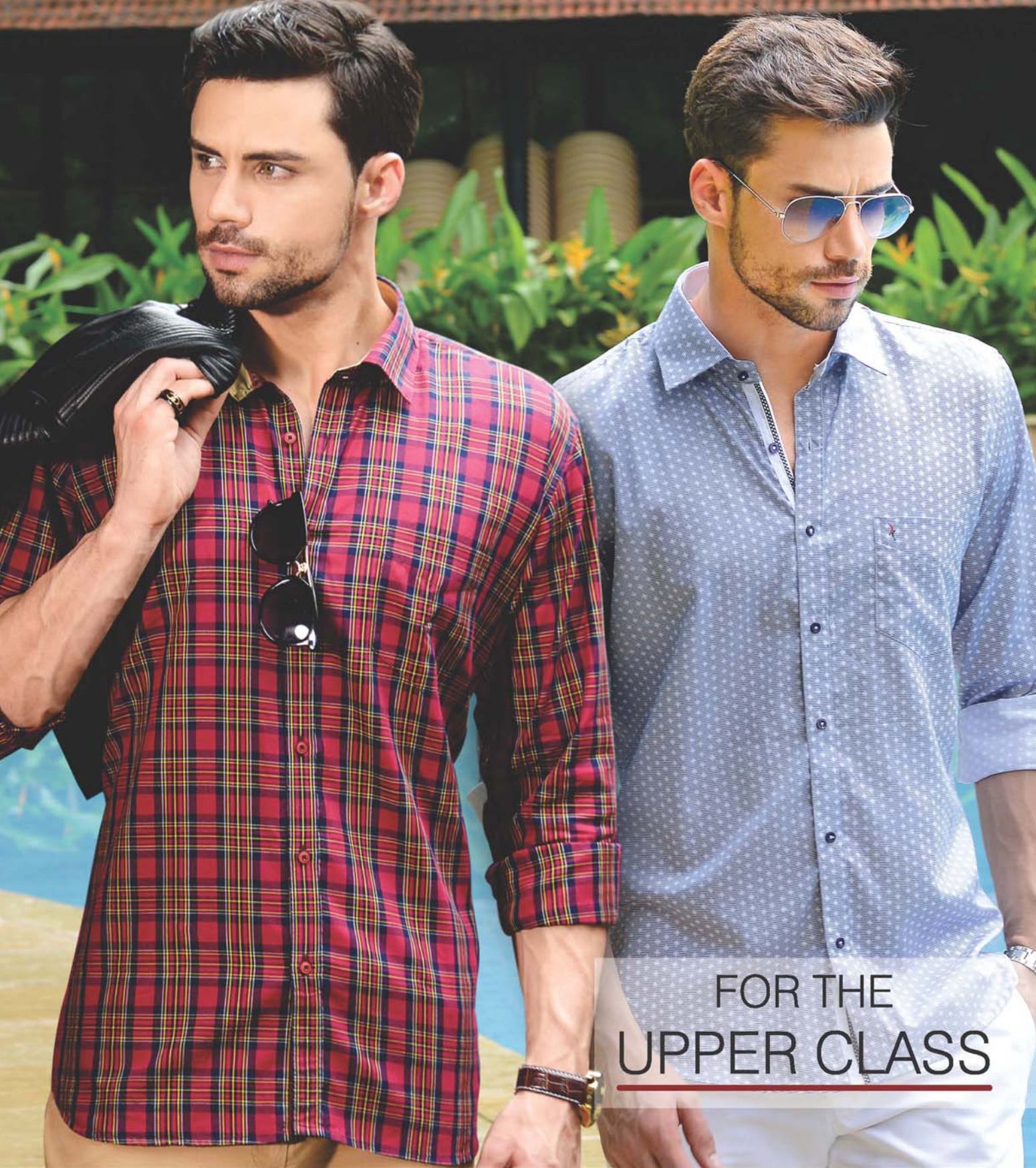
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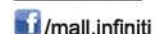
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Dear Readers,

*International Women's Day* on March 8th is the time to reflect on progress made, to call for change, and to celebrate acts of leadership and determination by pioneering women who have played an extraordinary role in lighting the road ahead for other women in the country. We have dedicated this issue to honour the many 'wonder woman' who have made their mark on different areas of the fashion sphere gallantly over the years. And while we know a lot about their brands, labels, awards, collaborations, collections, etc., it was more important to delve deeper into their uniquely feminine aspects and the belief systems that these women firmly believe to have been instrumental in propelling them to achieve the colossal stand that they enjoy today. We have a long and illustrious list of 33 of these women on board, right from Neeta Lulla, Rina Dhaka, Ritu Beri, to Nina Lekhi, Apeksha Patel, Shruti Behal and Swati Saraf, sharing with us their respective journeys, motivations and inspiration. As they open on the role of women in the fashion industry, gems from their journeys, the barriers they overcame, and the qualities intrinsic to become a successful woman entrepreneur, their words and wisdom, I am sure, will go miles in inspiring the next generation of women trendsetters in the fashion industry.

So as not to let the men feel left behind, (pun intended) this month's issue also carries forward

the second edition of Meet the Masters -- a singular feature we initiated last year that turns the spotlight on the visions and thoughts of the fashion leaders of the nation. The Indian fashion retail sector is prophesied for great days ahead. It is our conviction that it is our greatest fashion stars who will take a lead in not only steering the market to not just this predicted potential, but to even play a multiplier effect to make it scale even further heights. Carrying the legacy laid by the debut edition of this feature forward, we delve deep into the minds of the Titans, once again, and showcase insights into their innovative thinking, efforts and their vision for fashion in India.

The common thread in both the features is that they focus deeper into the thought set rather than the innovative retail strategies and high fashion creativity that we always focus on in the remaining 11 issues of the year. Consider this the "Soul" issue.

And, I guess it couldn't have been better timed as the Indian Fashion industry huddles together at its very own mega-congregation - the India Fashion Forum (IFF) 2018, on the 13th and 14th of March 2018, at the Renaissance in Mumbai.

I hope you spend time with this issue and I look forward to seeing you at IFF'18!

God bless!



**Amitabh Taneja**

>

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The 'kidswear' special was an interesting read, featuring in-depth market analysis and kidswear brands.

**- Rahul Gupta, Gurgaon**

I enjoyed reading the Images February 2018 issue on kidswear brands. The pages were very informative and inspiring.

**- Seema Sharma, Bengaluru**

I found your article on kids ethnic wear very interesting specially parts that included market study, styles in vogue and future trends.

**- Rekha Sarin, Chandigarh**

The emergence of infant wear, and branded fashion for this category has been superbly covered in your February'18 issue of Images Business of Fashion. A great study, very well written!

**- Mohit Baweja, Faridabad**

Highlights of the top trends for Summer 2018 showcased at the Lakme Fashion Week have been beautifully presented in your February issue. A very inspiring and informative section.

**- Roza Ahmed, Mumbai**

The February 2018 issue of Images Business of Fashion was packed with lot of knowledge and information on the current strategies and trends in kidswear. Great opinions and a deeper study of trends and market. Well done!

**- Shalini Singh, Delhi**



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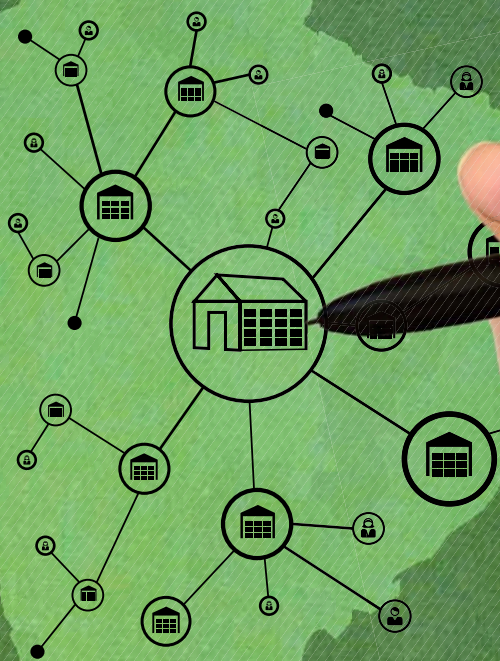
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BRAND EXCELLENCE  
**SUGAR CANDY A TALE OF LOVE & LUXURY**

Seema Kandelwal talks to BoF about the brand's exclusive offerings and the inspirations that fuel its innovative modus operandi.

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**TOMMY HILFINGER: PARTNERS WITH THE WORLD'S TOP TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES AND START-UPS TO DRIVE CROSS-INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS**

A glimpse of Tommy Hilfiger's new brand partnerships with Bose and e-Nowia at the 'Tommynow Drive', a runway event held during Milan Fashion Week on 25 February 2018.

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MY THOUGHTS  
**ORGANIZING ETHNIC APPAREL MARKET**

Arvind Saraf, Director, Triveni Sarees & Ethnics and the founder of Wishbook shares his thoughts on the characteristics that define organized branded apparel in ethnic wear and futuristic trends that will prevail in the apparel market.

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BRAND EXTENSION  
**BIBA GIRLS : SETTING TRENDS IN ETHNIC WEAR**

The kidswear market is evolving on a great scale. Team Images BoF talks to Siddharth Bindra, Managing Director, Biba on emerging trends in ethnic kidswear category.

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EVENTS  
**ILPA : LEATHER ON THE RAMP 2018**

A peep into one of the biggest fashion extravaganzas, "Leather on the Ramp 2018" which was held at ITC Sonar by the Indian Leather Products Association on 26 February 2018.

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Active Bra | Camisole | Tank Top | T-shirt | Shorts | Capri | Tracks | Leggings





**BRAND:**  
W

**PROMOTER:**  
TCNS Clothing

**LOCATION:**  
Mumbai (Infiniti Mall, Malad)

**SIZE OF THE STORE:**  
1,000 sq.ft.

# W

### **Collection**

On display at the new store is a vibrant collection with a comprehensive mix of styles featuring an extensive range of kurtis, fashion bottoms like palazzos, churidars, trousers, dupattas and accessories to match every occasion, mood and personality.

### **Store Theme**

The new store is located at a popular retail destination in the city. It will provide the latest designs and silhouettes, catering to a class of consumers who prefer buying quality products.

### **Store Interiors**

The highlight of this store is the new retail store design adopted by TCNS Clothing to display the new categories of merchandises differently. The most prominent feature is the usage of white as the principal colour that helps better focus on colours of the merchandise. The new format is likely to highlight the brand better within the store. The display of merchandise too has been enhanced and various means have been deployed to showcase the merchandise better through podiums of display fixtures, lighting fixtures, taller display units amongst other elements.





# BODYCARE

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# TED BAKER

## Collection

The store will be the latest home for Ted's menswear, womenswear and accessory collections.

## Store Theme

All of Ted's store interiors are bespoke to their location, taking into account the surroundings and local culture, and New Delhi is of course no exception.

## Store Interiors

Starting with the rich jewel tones in traditional Indian dress, Ted has juxtaposed these with inspiration drawn from the Crown Jewels for a uniquely British twist. Created using traditional and locally-sourced Indian textiles and embellishments, this is a thoroughly contemporary take on Ted's travels.

**BRAND:**  
Ted Baker

**PROMOTER:**  
Aditya Birla Fashion and  
Retail Ltd.

**LOCATION:**  
New Delhi (Chanakya Mall)

**SIZE OF THE STORE:**  
1,600 sq.ft.

A diamond formation timber floor welcomes guests to the space, whilst the ornate ceiling features brushed and polished brass three-dimensional diamond shapes. Fitting rooms have intricate printed wallpaper and are upholstered in regal purple with opulent gold trims with wall-hanging jewel pendants. Props referencing the British monarchy are displayed in ornate frames throughout the store. Red oak timber-topped tables with gold stylised legs make for majestic feature furniture, while the remaining pieces draw inspiration from royal jewels, enhancing the magnificence of the store and creating a jewel-box backdrop for Ted's wonderful new collections.





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Sugar Candy's story is an offshoot of Seema Khandelwal's foiled searches for distinctive and elegant clothing for her daughter, when she was growing up. These futile attempts culminated in inspiring her to team up with Nipul Panchal and launch what would eventually become synonymous with exclusive and tasteful fashion options for young girls.

Sugar Candy's main target base is young girls upto 14 years of age who desire to start early with fashion. The core competence of the brand lies in its design excellence and one-off bespoke services, developing dresses on a custom built method, centered around each consumer's specific taste and profile. Embodying the world of elegance and beauty, the brand believes in setting long lasting standards by being faithful to its identity of love and luxury.

# SUGAR CANDY

## A TALE OF LOVE & LUXURY

BY GURBIR SINGH GULATI

As an extended feature of the special International Women's Wear issue, team IMAGES BoF caught up with, Seema Khandelwal, who also functions as one of the key designers, about the brand's exclusivity and the inspirations that fuel its innovative modus operandi.





and western clothing for girls aged upto 14 years old. Spring 2018 was our most recent collection and it gravitated towards pastel colours and shimmers. This combination of styles and colours symbolizes the new energy that spring carries with it and also showcases elements from the colours of the rainbow.

**IBoF: Customised plus designer high-end kidswear in a rare niche you have carved for yourself. Tell us about the idea behind it and the main challenges in this strategy.**

**SM:** The lack of customized high-end kidswear served as an impetus for Sugar Candy's growth and since our inception, we have strived to carve out a niche in this market. We wanted to capitalize on the fact that people were inherently looking for such products and had to settle for less than exceptional products. They were looking for beautifully crafted clothes that had immaculate attention to detail bestowed upon them. They were searching for something better and we wanted Sugar Candy to serve this need. Hence, we developed a business model to first introduce the idea of bespoke kidswear and then convince our customers that our products represented something unique and valuable. Doing something brand new

**IBoF: Tell us about how you started with kidswear and a bit about your background.**

**Seema Khandelwal (SM):** I have been fortunate to be blessed with an amazing daughter, Radhika. While Radhika was growing up, I used to pick out the most elegant and comfortable clothes for her to wear. We started enjoying the process of creating aesthetic clothing for her. However, I found it challenging to find the perfect clothes for her since there was a scarcity of chic clothes for small girls. This represented a market opportunity where I believed that I could combine with my fondness for designing and this led to the inception of Sugar Candy.

Success in the fashion industry requires a sustained focus on originality of thought. Hence, I have turned myself into an autodidact over the years to hone my unique style.

**IBoF: Why did you choose the name Sugar Candy?**

**SM:** I believe that kids are the sweetest aspects of our lives and I wanted my brand to symbolize this idea. Hence, I chose the name Sugar Candy.

**IBoF: What is the USP of the brand?**

**SM:** We, at Sugar Candy, take pride in

ourselves for creating the most voguish and comfortable clothes possible without ever compromising on quality. Sugar Candy specializes in creating bespoke clothing for our little girls. At Sugar Candy, we realize that your little ones grow up very fast and so we have also incorporated their growth into our designs which means that your kids can wear their favorite clothes for much longer.

**IBoF: Tell us more about your key product lines and your latest collection? What are the main themes and stories of the collections?**

**SM:** Our key product is eclectic and includes Indo-western, Indian, fusion

### QUICK TAKES

**Nipul Panchal & Seema Khandelwal, Designers, Sugar Candy**

**Why are you working in the fashion industry? What excites you here?**

Our love for beautiful clothes.

**Why are you focused on kidswear?**

Kids are fun and designing for them is what we enjoy doing.

**What is your personal motivation mantra?**

Love and luxury.

**What are the 3 main issues that are slowing the growth of kidswear in India?**

Non user friendly online portals, lack of multi-designer stores for kids and financial constraints for designers as it is a growing industry.

**Predict the top 3 trends you expect to emerge in kidswear in next few years?**

Sustainable and eco friendly fabrics, technology of active fabrics and hand crafted products.

is always challenging and Sugar Candy was no different. One of our major challenges was to market the product effectively to the right consumer base which we solved by expanding our online presence through [www.sugarcandystore.com](http://www.sugarcandystore.com).

**IBoF: What are the other finer points that you keep in mind while designing kidswear?**

**SM:** Parents know what's best for their kids and treat their kids to the best things possible. I too share this feeling which is why I have focused so strongly on exceptional quality in every dress.

Kids prefer clothes that are truly comfortable and beautiful and will always speak out if they are not. Hence, we have been incorporating their feedback into our designs and we have been able to perfect the art of making stylish and comfortable clothes. Additionally, the ability of the clothes to grow with them adds to its functionality.

**IBoF: Do you think high-fashion designer kidswear is now gaining ground? How is the scenario changing and what are the future prospects?**

**SM:** There has been a significant gain in the popularity of high-end designer kidswear over the last few years which has been helped with the advent of globalization. This segment has picked up a multitude of new clients and it looks like there will be strong growth in this segment.

**IBoF: What is the kind of fabrics that you use that differentiates you from the rest?**

**SM:** Only the fabrics that are good enough to be used in my own daughters' clothes are good enough to be used at Sugar Candy. Hence, I have gone above and beyond to source the highest quality fabrics from the most reputed sources.



**IBoF: Kidswear is all about comfort, finesse and being exclusive. Tell us about the embellishments- prints, embroideries and detailing that you like to use in your creations.**

**SM:** Embellishments are an integral part of the clothes since it draws significant attention of the kids. We have our strengths in the art of hand embroidery and manual detailing that provides a finish that kids yearn for.

**IBoF: On the other side, we are sure that dealing with high end clientele has its own unique challenges. Can you share some interesting ones?**

**SM:** We have had clients from business houses and from the bollywood industry. These customers primarily know what they want and usually need the product to be ready in as little time as possible. This time constraint is challenge for us! Since every dress is unique, there are challenges in sourcing the fabrics, embellishments and the cut of the dress. However, such experiences are worth the challenges. One such instance was when one of our clients, who wished she had a girl, asked us to make the first dress that she would make her little girl wear once she was born.

**IBoF: Tell us about your online presence and how has the response been.**

**SM:** The online market has been growing rapidly since the past three years and hence we had initiated the process of improving our online presence. Online shopping trend is something we expect to grow at an even faster rate since more working parents opt for purchasing products online. We have received strong responses from other companies and from online portals. In addition to bespoke clothing, we also cater to readymade clothing requests.

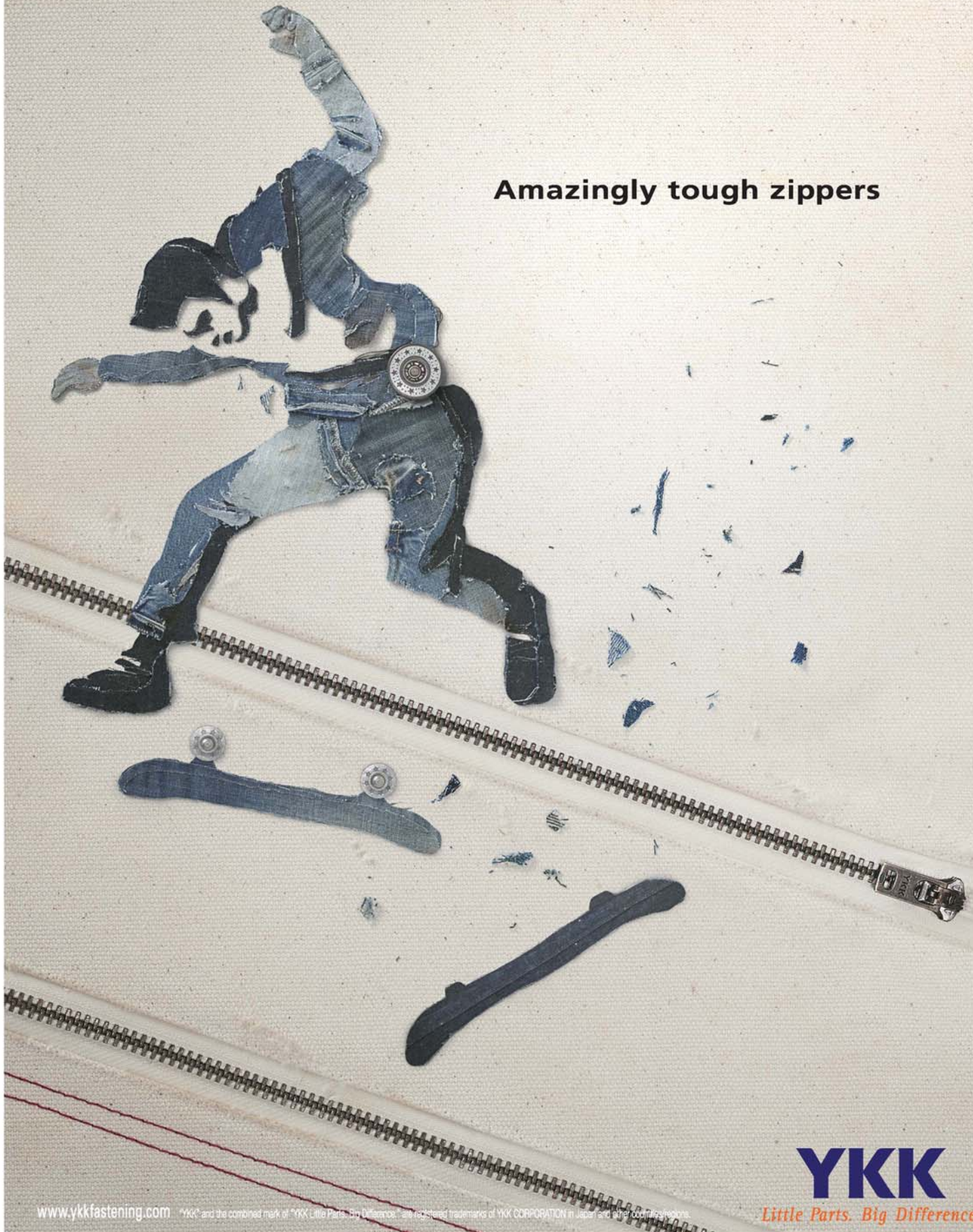
**IBoF: What next for Sugar Candy? How do you plan to take the concept forward—both in terms of product expansion and retail expansion?**

**SM:** We have stepped up our marketing campaigns to increase sales from all over India. With our rich experience of over a decade, we have gained vital information that will be crucial to our expansion plans. We hope to add a new age group, 14 - 19 years. and hope to eventually expand to international markets, primarily in France and England.

×

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# ORGANIZING ETHNIC APPAREL MARKET

**Arvind Saraf, Director, Triveni Sarees & Ethnics and the founder of Wishbook shares his thoughts on the characteristics that define organised apparel especially in the ethnic wear segment and some of the futuristic trends that will prevail in the apparel market, which the manufacturers, wholesalers or retailers are not yet equipped to address.**

Old Delhi's Nai Sadak is a very busy market. One part of the street starts from Chawri Bazaar with bookstores and publishers, and gradually makes way for women's ethnicwear retailers. These small stores have shimmering lehengas and sarees hanging outside attracting retail customers from Delhi and around. Often families come here for wedding shopping, and are if lucky seated on gaddis in these shops while being shown the samples. With some retailers, merely being able to get inside the store, identify and pick your garment, and get it billed would feel like an achievement. Wholesalers and agents have larger, sometimes multi-storey, offices and warehouses in the numerous sideways alleys and streets.

I was born in a Marwari trading family and my father moved to Surat when I was young to set up a saree trading business, Triveni. While pursuing high school in Delhi, I would visit the other side of Nai Sadak to pick up my IIT JEE preparation books. After years of training at IIT, MIT and Google and many entrepreneurial learnings, I returned to Surat to inject technology and processes in the traditional apparel sector. Last few months, I had also been meeting wholesalers and agents across the country - Mumbai (Kalba Devi & Dadar), Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Patna, Chennai (T Nagar & Godown street), Bengaluru (Chickpet) and Hyderabad.

India's apparel business is quite peculiar - a few characteristics define it:

1. Branded retail, in the form of known outlet chains, makes up only a small fraction of the the actual retail business. These brands are known by virtue of their presence in shopping malls or through their investments in above-the-line advertising.



2. Most of the retail is dominated by small retailers, often single store proprietorship firms, employing upto 5 people. Manufacturing hubs such as Surat, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Delhi, Jaipur, Tirupur, etc., typically supply their products to local wholesale hubs in most major cities or district hubs, and the retailers buy from these wholesalers.

3. Wholesale brands exist in these categories. These brands are typically family run, based in the manufacturing hub, have in-house design and product setup, and effectively leverage the production eco-system around their hub to create the highest quality products and sell to these wholesalers. End customers may not know them very well because they don't do retail themselves.

4. Throughout the semi-organised distribution channel - product freshness is high, communication channels on new products and old product inventory status are unorganised—often phone or Whatsapp based, and in absence of institutional credit—suppliers finance the retailers or wholesalers by selling on credit.

Closely watching this space over this decade, here the trends I predict for the next decade:

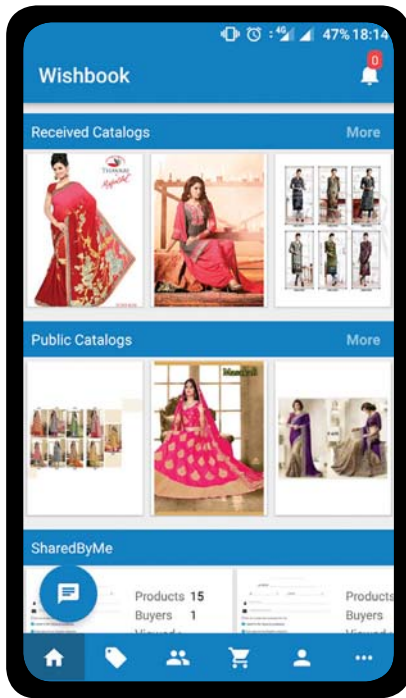
1. Retail brands are emerging from the wholesale brands. Ambitious second-generation is entering these family run businesses – and they are keen to upgrade technology, bring in external capital, learn from best practices in



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global retail and expand their reach directly to end customers. For top brands, their design and product quality is as competitive as any branded retailer. Combined with their strong control on design, production and ethos of frugality – some of these are well positioned to add this additional leg of the distribution chain and capture the market.

2. Emergence of independent tech-enabled horizontal industrywide platforms. Unlike branded retail, semi-organised retail is very low margin based. A wholesaler may work at 5-20 percent gross margin on his selling price, and a retailer between 15-30 percent. This leads to the following problems:

(i) Most transactions are on supplier credit. Excessive supplier competition further eats away the supplier's gross margin or forces the supplier to give unfavorable credit terms to his buyer.

(ii) Strong manufacturers and wholesalers require design and catalog freshness, constantly churning out older designs, and that further puts the pressure on them to sell out faster.

(iii) Retailers and wholesalers constantly look out for the cutting edge designs and catalogs, and manufacturers would like faster feedback on their catalogs to help plan inventory replenishment or liquidation.

Individual manufacturers, wholesalers or retailers are not equipped to address these problems. Instead, new mobile first technology enabled platforms, coming from experience in the industry, are already emerging addressing problems of B2B product discovery, credit verification, sales and process management.

I've spent more than 6 years expanding a 32 year old traditional saree brand, Triveni Sarees & Ethnics, and in the last 2 years on building Wishbook ([www.wishbook.io](http://www.wishbook.io)), a horizontal mobile first B2B app based product discovery and transaction platform in the apparel category. Both these efforts have been core technology driven. In a way, my trips to Nai Sadak have been symbolic of a larger circle of life that judiciously combining the world of technology and process is the way forward in the apparel industry.

✕



#### ABOUT ARVIND SARAF

Arvind Saraf, Director, Triveni Sarees & Ethnics and the founder of Wishbook is a graduate from IIT Kanpur (pursued B.Tech in Computer Science) and started off his PhD at MIT Massachusetts. He joined the family business in 2012 and today, manages the overall operations of Triveni Sarees & Ethnics. The company is a 29 year-old maker of sarees and Indian ethnic wear. Built on a solid foundation by Sakambari Silks Mills, Triveni Sarees & Ethnics has over 80 wholesale counters all over India with listings in all major online retailers as well.

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# TOMMY HILFIGER

**PARTNERS WITH THE WORLD'S TOP TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES AND START-UPS TO DRIVE CROSS-INDUSTRY COLLABORATIONS**

Tommy Hilfiger, which is owned by PVH Corp., announced its new brand partnerships with Bose and e-Novia to bring the world of Formula One to life at the Tommynow “Drive” experiential runway event held during Milan Fashion Week on February 25, 2018. The brand is hosting its fourth in-season runway show, which is inspired by Tommy Hilfiger’s love of motorsports. Combining speed and immediacy with a touch of vintage nostalgia, the event celebrates the recently announced partnership with four-time Formula One World Champions Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport.

“This is our most immersive Tommynow experience yet, creating a powerful fusion of fashion and motor sport that celebrates the dedication to innovation that we share with Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport,” said Tommy Hilfiger. “Tommynow remains our most powerful platform to deliver new collections to our fans around the world, and test the integration of big trends and innovative technology like Artificial-Intelligence and facial-recognition into our business.”

#### **The runway show stage**

A futuristic, high-octane tunnel and portrait station immerses guests into the high-energy world of Tommynow





Tommy Hilfiger's promise of instant gratification, global consumers were able to purchase styles from Spring 2018 men's and women's Hilfiger Collection lines and the TommyXGigi capsule collection the moment they hit the catwalk via the Livestream broadcast on [tommy.com](http://tommy.com). The post-show on demand video of the show on [tommy.com](http://tommy.com) was also shoppable.

#### Other tech initiatives

Tommynow Snap uses 2D and 3D image recognition technology that allows app users to take a photo of any item in-store, in an ad, on the runway (live or online), or on the street and shop it instantly through [tommy.com](http://tommy.com). This season, the app opened up the world of fashion, collection design, craftsmanship and passion with Tommynow "Behind the Drive," an additional storytelling layer developed in partnership with creative digital production company MediaMonks.

Upon recognising a Spring 2018 TommyXGigi or Hilfiger Collection men's or women's style, the Tommynow Snap app presents behind-the-scenes footage of the item's design process for an enriched shopping and brand experience outside the Tommynow runway event. Additional video content included the evolution of the Spring 2018 TommyXGigi collaborative capsule and a social media feed of celebrities wearing their favourite collection pieces. At the experiential runway show at MiCo, guests could access exclusive Tommynow "Behind the Drive" content that included the making of a Formula One Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport racing car.

This season, Artificial-Intelligence-powered Tmy.Boy and Tmy.Grl chatbots on Facebook Messenger to provide celebrity styling advice through video content of influencers at Tommynow "Drive" sharing their favourite Tommy Hilfiger Spring 2018 collection looks.



"Drive" at the Milano Congressi surrounded by real-life sounds of Formula One racing, courtesy of Bose speakers, and speeding LED lights. The Bose Virtual Race Garage features a virtual Formula One car being prepared for a race, with intricate racing soundscapes played through Bose QuietComfort 35 II headphones.

The collaboration with Bose follows Tommy Hilfiger's wider strategy to use Tommynow as an incubator for innovation to test, evolve and integrate new technology that ties pop culture together. This includes partnering with technology enterprises such as e-Novia, which introduces the

driverless delivery vehicle 'Yape' to the world of Tommy Hilfiger. As part of Tommy Hilfiger's campaign to partner with emerging talents who inject a cool twist into its campaigns, Yape delivered Spring 2018 looks to influencers, including music artist Christian 'King' Combs, before the show.

Over 2,000 guests, including consumers, press, VIPs, buyers, and industry influencers, were invited to attend the Spring 2018 Tommynow "Drive" experiential runway event, which was built on Tommy Hilfiger's signature "See Now, Buy Now" format. All runway looks were available across an ecosystem of immediately shoppable channels in more than 70 countries. To continue to deliver on



# BIBA GIRLS

## SETTING TRENDS IN ETHNIC WEAR

The kidswear market is evolving on a great scale with so many new trends and styles pouring in. Siddharth Bindra, Managing Director, Biba talks to Images BOF about Biba Girls and the emerging trends in ethnic kidswear category.

Today's kids are the new fashionistas who love to be in trend. The trend of preference for occasion specific clothing has started gaining momentum even among kids, which is making ethnic wear the most preferred choice among kids.

Biba (promoted by Biba Apparels Pvt. Ltd.), a well known women's ethnic wear brand in India launched its kidswear range in 2010 called, Biba Girls. The collection comprised Indo-ethnic outfits designed for girls aged between 2 to 15 years. Since then Biba has become the flag bearer and was seen as one of the major players in the category. States Siddharth Bindra, Managing Director, Biba, "Kidswear is a growing category in the apparel segment, however it is predominantly owned by the unorganised players. According to the Technopak Report released in 2013, the kidswear industry consisting of western and ethnic garments alone contributed 20 percent of India's apparel market and is expected to grow by 22 percent by 2023. Kidswear segment in India is a very niche category with few selective, organised players and kids ethnicwear segment had even lesser players. Seeing the void in the market, Biba created a separate kidswear segment."

### Product Array

Biba strives to provide trend setting and fashionable Indian attire at an affordable price. Like any other apparel category, the Biba kidswear range is divided into two segments - spring summer and festive wear ranges. Most popular and preferred looks for the festive season are beautifully designed lehengas, suits, anarkalis and gowns for the girls. For daily wear purpose, since kids prefer more comfortable and smart looking outfits, Biba has in its repertoire smart skirts and tops.





or festival, parents want to dress their little ones distinctively. Kids are more aware of trends than ever before. Biba is frequently seeking new ideas and ensures to provide updated design trends and a vast variety in its offerings. The product development goes through a metamorphic design change every season. Informs Bindra, "Biba offers a wide range of collection which has a perfect mix of ethnic, western and Indo-ethnic dresses reflecting Indian ethnicity through the designs, prints and silhouettes." According to him, the Indo-western trend is expected to dominate the kidswear segment as well. Mixing contemporary with traditional Indian designs, will be a popular choice amongst the kids.

Dresses with ethnic influences and printed ghaghras too will be a big hit this season. The use of 3D designs will be in vogue, specially in the kids wear segment. Bindra felt that quirky, whimsical prints against bright solid colours too would look great on the kids. Comfortable cotton wear with rich brocade accents and intricate thread embroideries in playful, vibrant colours would also be quite popular. "Even floral prints in soft pastel shades on skirts and lehengas will be one of the top trends this season," he adds.

Kids nowadays have their own way of style with personal dressing urges. They love to dress up like their parents and want to look like them. Biba Girls has been providing a vast selection of designs and styles for the little ones and has been doing very well. The brand is planning to now open exclusive outlets across cities.



***"Biba offers a wide range of collection which has a perfect mix of ethnic, western and Indo-ethnic dresses reflecting Indian ethnicity through the designs, prints and silhouettes."***

**-Siddharth Bindra,**  
Managing Director, Biba

### **Spring Summer 2018 Collection**

Biba offers a bright and joyous wardrobe for kids this season. Shares Bindra, "For Spring Summer '18, our colour palette consists of soft and soothing shades of pastels while for festive, bright shades like red, blue, pink are infused to make the collection look all the more vibrant. For kids, the Spring Summer '18 range has something for every occasion."

The brand has introduced various new cuts and styles in girls wear. According to Bindra, "In Biba Girls our lehenga sets are the most sought after. Anarkali suits in cotton and also for the festive occasions, do very well. A lot of girls like to wear them even for their dance classes and other school functions. Our floor length gowns are very popular amongst young girls as these gowns take them to a fairytale land in no time. These gowns are ideal to be worn for parties."

### **Emerging Trends**

Both kids and parents are turning out to be highly fashion-conscious and the influence of the internet has had a major impact on their decision-making process. Be it any occasion, wedding



## ILPA: LEATHER ON THE RAMP 2018

The city of joy, Kolkata witnessed one of the biggest fashion extravaganzas with Indian Leather Products Association's (ILPA) 'Leather on the Ramp 2018' at ITC Sonar on February 26, 2018 at a gala show.

The event showcased the best of leather bags and accessories from brands like Rajda, Freya, Kompanero, Trio, Hunt and ASG giving the audience a glimpse of the upcoming trends in leather.

"Every year we come up with interesting ideas to showcase the brilliant collections from the participating brands. It has been a great year for us in terms of business and qualitative growth. We look forward to a fantastic year ahead with our participation in Mipel 114 and organise a buyer seller meet in 2019. The team has done a great job and the show was absolutely spectacular," said Adhar Sahn, ILPA President.

The highlight of the evening was actress Sayani Datta as the Face of ILPA Show 2018 who walked the ramp for Rajda.

Speaking about the show, she shared, "I have walked for ILPA before and I am really delighted to be the showstopper again. Like all women, I love bags and this event gives me a chance to see what the latest trends are!"

The models who dazzled the ramp included Ravi Shaw, Mohammad Iqbal, Shabbir Beig, Diti Saha, Jessica Aaron, Sonal Ravi Srivastava, Madhabilita Mitra, Arti Chowdhury, Tamori Chaudhuri, among others. The choreography for ILPA 2018 was done by Pinky Kenworthy and the garments for the models were designed by Tejas Gandhi.



# THE BETTER ISSUE



**CELEBRATING THE BETTER HALF  
OF THE INDIAN FASHION INDUSTRY:  
OUR WOMEN FASHION LEADERS**



International Women's Day

# The Better Issue

## WOMEN:

### THE RISING FORCE IN THE WORLD OF INDIAN FASHION

*In conjunction with International Women's Day, IMAGES Business of Fashion present a special feature on the better halves of our fashion industry. This the IMAGES BoF March 2018 is much privileged to have become THE BETTER ISSUE with the kind participation of some of India's Finest Women Fashion Leaders. Indeed, if you are a woman seeking success in fashion, or a believer in the force of women in fashion, peep into the minds and listen to the advice of these incredible women fashion pioneers.*

- 70. **Anamika Khanna**, Fashion Designer
- 72. **Apeksha Patel**, Owner, Even 2 Odd Fashion
- 74. **Archana Kochhar**, Fashion Designer
- 76. **Asha Kamal Modi**, Managing Director, Art Karat International Ltd.
- 78. **Chaitali Giri**, Designer, Butique Dishari
- 80. **Dinaz Madhukar**, Executive Vice President, DLF Luxury Retail & Hospitality
- 82. **Farah Malik Bhanji**, CEO, Metro Shoes
- 84. **Grishma Patil**, Founder & Director, Candour London
- 86. **Jacqueline Kapur**, Co-Founder & President, Ayesha Accessories
- 88. **Jagrati Shringi**, CTO & CMO, Voylla
- 90. **Jyotee Khaitan**, Fashion Designer & MD, Jyotee Khaitan Fashions Pvt. Ltd.
- 92. **Khushboo Parekh**, Owner & Designer, Vamas Fashion Pvt. Ltd.
- 94. **Krina Panjwani**, COO, Suditi Design Studio
- 96. **Mandira Wirk**, Fashion Designer & Director, Mandira Wirk
- 98. **Manisha Sanghani**, Director, Just Lifestyle Pvt. Ltd. (Aspen)
- 100. **Manjula Tiwari**, CEO, Future Lifestyle Lab
- 102. **Masaba Gupta**, Creative Director, House of Masaba
- 104. **Mohita Indrayan**, Co-Founder & Creative Director, Indian Clothing League (P) Ltd. (612 League)
- 106. **Nandita Mahtani**, Founder & Fashion Designer, Nandita Mahtani
- 108. **Neeta Lulla**, Founder, House Of Neeta Lulla
- 112. **Nina Lekhi**, MD & Chief Design Curator, Baggit India Pvt. Ltd.
- 114. **Payal Jain**, Principal Designer, A Design Indi
- 118. **Poonam Bhagat**, Director, Anaro Designs Pvt. Ltd.
- 120. **Priyanka Modi**, Creative Head, AM:PM
- 122. **Ranu Bathwal**, Founder & CEO, RBA Lifestyle (PopuGalleria)
- 124. **Reynu Taandon**, MD & Chief Designer, Mynah Design
- 126. **Rina Dhaka**, Fashion Designer
- 128. **Ritu Beri**, Fashion Designer, Ritu Beri Designs Pvt. Ltd.
- 132. **Riya Vipan Kalra**, Co-Founder, RVK (Candyskin)
- 134. **Shruti Behal**, Head - Product Design, PrettySecrets
- 136. **Soumya Kant**, Vice President, Purple Panda Fashions Pvt. Ltd. (Clovia)
- 138. **Swati Saraf**, President, Prive Luxury Ltd. (Les Petits)
- 142. **Vishakha Singh**, Founder, DOS Interactive Pvt. Ltd. (Red Polka)



e2o

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# WOMEN:

## THE RISING FORCE IN THE WORLD OF INDIAN FASHION

On the occasion of International Women's Day, IMAGES BoF presents a special feature on India's top women fashion leaders. In this feature we speak to these trailblazers to find out what it takes to be successful in the world of fashion. And, in the pages that follow, we showcase their individual joys, vision and thoughts to inspire the next-gen of women leaders in the Indian fashion industry.

By Bharti Sood, Zainab S Kazi & Rajan Varma



Fashion belongs to women! There is no point in arguing that fashion is a far bigger thing for the female kind. Just a look at the number of fashion magazines for women and the sheer number of programs with ladies telling women how to dress, is enough to validate this. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to say that men's fashion also takes its inspiration from women. The cuts, the colours and of course the styles, it's the women that stands at the vanguard of the fashion realm. But women are not just the highest consumers of fashion, they are increasingly embossing marks of unmatched excellence as illustrious creators and fashion leaders as well.

"I want people to see the dress but focus on the woman," American Fashion Designer Vera Ellen Wang once said, give an abstract of the deep hidden agenda of all of the women fashion designers. When a woman fashion designer gets to work, she takes on the responsibility of not just making another woman look beautiful, but also to make the woman feel beautiful for what she is. "Absolutely!" asserts Vishakha Singh, Founder and CEO, Red Polka, "Is fashion even possible without women shoppers? Women are the muse. Women are the designers. Women are the critics."

Truth be told, the Indian fashion industry is still largely a male dominated sphere, albeit as creators. But over the last few years, women fashion designers and entrepreneurs are prominently making inroads and imprinting their success stories for others to follow. It might prove to be a long and gritty journey, but the silver lining is that the journey has





***“Is fashion even possible without women shoppers? Women are the muse. Women are the designers. Women are the critics.”***

**-Vishakha Singh,**  
Founder & CEO, Red Polka



***“Collaborative nature is something that comes naturally to women and is in fact a better choice than competition. Fashion industry has enough room for multiple businesses to thrive. I believe in a policy of joint growth versus divisive failure.”***

**-Manisha Sanghani,**  
Director, Just Lifestyle



***“Successful women teach others and help mould the future women entrepreneurs. Integrity, charity and compassion must be the very core of your character.”***

**-Neeta Lulla,**  
Fashion Designer

already begun and the pace is getting phenomenal.

What does it take to be a successful woman fashion entrepreneur? Let's be honest, success itself is hard! And here we are talking about ruminating on being a successful woman, that too in a country like ours. Let's not complicate things. The truth is that success is within grasp. It is possible. It is available, to every person, at this moment. **“The key to unlock our greatest potential lay within ourselves. At the depths of it all, everything we seek, we already are. There is no energy that can mimic what is released when an optimistic woman enters a room. A positive attitude is the fuel needed to drive us from conception to realisation,”** reveals celebrity fashion designer Neeta Lulla.

Positivity is a key catalyst for success. **“To help you stay positive, surround yourself with people who will encourage, inspire and believe in you.**

Women who have struggled in their lives tend to have great inner strength by using adversity to their advantage. You do not need to step on others to be successful. By helping others, we grow as individuals. Successful women teach others and help mould the future women entrepreneurs. Integrity, charity and compassion must be the very core of your character.” She also goes on to attribute trust as an indispensable element to achieve success, drawing from the years of experience in the industry. **“As you gain respect and trust, your company will grow. People seek to do business with those they trust. It is important to lead a balanced life. Family and friends are as important as your career. It is always important to commit your goals and review them often. You need to be driven by a cause and pursue that cause with passion and confidence,”** she adds.

Echoing Lulla's thoughts on working together, Manisha Sanghani, Director, Just Lifestyle, shares, **“Most women possess the qualities required to achieve success as an entrepreneur**

in any field. It requires strength, confidence, gut instinct, passion and a collaborative nature. Collaborative nature is something that comes naturally to women and is in fact a better choice than competition. Fashion is a big industry and has huge growth potential; there is more than enough room for multiple businesses to thrive. I believe in a policy of joint growth versus divisive failure.” Apeksha Patel, Owner, Even 2 Odd Fashion minces no words to say, **“Women are always let down, demotivated and influenced by their closed ones. This eventually works against their wishes and dreams. But let no one pull you down. Prove your worth. Women who want to be successful always find opportunities to succeed rather than giving excuses to back out.”** Ace fashion designer, Nandita Mahtani adds, **“Even today, women have to prove themselves or reach a certain level to be taken seriously. Believe in what you do and continue doing**

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***“If you lack confidence in your own work then it is difficult to gain confidence from others too. Besides having confidence, a woman entrepreneur should not fear struggles. And one cannot say enough on the importance of hard work. There is no substitute to hard work.”***

**-Reynu Taandon,**  
MD & Chief Designer,  
Mynah Design

so despite the struggles.” Successful entrepreneurs, irrespective of their gender, have managed to carve a niche for themselves based on their talent, commitment to work and problem solving abilities. Without these three, the bubble of entrepreneurship is susceptible to burst. Iconic fashion designer, Ritu Beri shares, “For a successful career one should be self-motivated and confident, even if it includes breaking norms. In order to do so one might have to stand away from the rest.” Adding to this, Reynu Taandon, Managing Director and Chief Designer, Mynah Design, says, “If you lack confidence in your own work then it is difficult to gain confidence from others too. Besides having confidence, a woman entrepreneur should not fear struggles. And one cannot say enough on the importance of hard work. There is no substitute to hard work. Money

can help you have people to work for you but you have to be involved with your team as much as they are involved in their work.”

While, ace fashion designer, Masaba Gupta stresses on the importance of originality and integrity besides having a strong belief in the designs that one creates. Accentuating on the importance of ‘believing’ in ones own talent, Shruti Behal, Head - Product Design, Pretty Secrets says, “You have to believe in yourself and your art. Having confidence is the only way to win people’s respect and earn their trust.” Let’s consider an unquantifiable, though undoubtedly true, notion for some perspective – money is a great head-start for success. Let’s get to the academia behind it now. Desire to work hard is a mindset that everyone has but in terms of reality, money means power



***“I think it is the relentlessness of the industry that acts as a barrier to women climbing up the ladder. A job in the fashion world can potentially hinder you from having a strong personal life and women have to balance that with a family. They do not always have the support.”***

**-Shruti Behal,**  
Head - Product Design, PrettySecrets

and power means succession. Singh of Red Polka, does not hesitate to accept this. “Hard-work, great team, good product and money to build a scale are the factors that help any business stay afloat,” she shares. Sharing a practical mantra on what makes a women a successful entrepreneur, Ranu Bathwal, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, RBA Lifestyle, shares, “Think like a buyer, give attention to details and multi-tasking.” To this, Farah Malik, Chief Executive Officer, Metro Shoes adds, “Be decisive. Plan and make projections. Have a support system to fulfill obligations at work and at home. Have strength in your convictions. Feel free to experiment.”

Learning never stops and ideally should never be stopped. The person who fails to learn fails to grow and reiterating on this is ace fashion designer Mandira Wirk. She shares, “To be successful, it is imperative for anyone to evolve as a person. Do ample research to grow, learn more and study more. Knowledge keeps me going and I am not at all afraid of competition. In fact it helps me when I compete.” Nina Lekhi, the brain behind the popular accessories brand Baggit, adds, “Studying the retail trends internationally helps to have an overall retail experience which can be incorporated with the brand and products in depth. The understanding to balance financial flaws or errors and direct the expenses with a financial budget allotted to each department makes it easier to monitor the expenses.”

#### **Balancing the act**

We may have endless debates on how men and women are equal. But it would be foolish to deny the fact that women have on them the added responsibility (whether forced or chosen) of ensuring that their ‘family’ is taken care of – be it the children or the aging parents. Behal of PrettySecrets drives this nail right in when she points out,

“Fashion is an industry dominated by women but not all of them make it to the very top levels. I think it is the relentlessness of the industry that acts as a barrier to women climbing up the ladder. A job in the fashion world can potentially hinder you from having a strong personal life and women have to balance that with a family. They do not always have the support. It can get easier once you are at the top with a team of people helping you out but getting there is the challenge.” Another unpleasant fact is the striking gender gap in leadership positions. Women are much less likely to hold leadership positions than men, and they’re still having trouble gaining ground. It is a particularly ironic state of affairs for an industry where women make up the overwhelming majority of the consumer base. Mohita Indrayan, Co-Founder and Creative Director, 612 League, shares, “Worldwide in the fashion industry, women make up more than 70 percent of the total workforce, yet hold less than 25



***Women are, by far, the primary consumers of fashion, but more often than not, their point of view is not reflected in business decisions. Companies that exclude women from leadership exclude talent that can give them a competitive edge.***

**- Mohita Indrayan,**

Co-Founder & Creative Director, 612 League

percent of leadership positions in top fashion companies. They also hold a disproportionately low percentage of senior positions on the factory floor. Women are, by far, the primary consumers of fashion, but more often than not, their point of view is not reflected in business decisions. Companies that exclude women from leadership exclude talent that can give them a competitive edge. The industry needs more and continuous participation from women in all areas of work.”

Apeksha Patel, Owner, E2O Fashion, also brings up the role of gender parity and shares, “Gender parity is an elusive goal for many industries and fashion is no exception, with men disproportionately dominating top roles across all areas of business. But the time is changing now and although a handful of women are creating their success stories, I am sure the future is bright for women who want to mark their footprints into this industry.”

In spite of the challenges, women make their way and this is because they are gifted with an inherent capability of taking more on their plate. Ace fashion designer, Archana Kochhar shares, “Multi-tasking comes naturally to women; we learn to balance early on in life and that is an important key behind being a successful. Apart from that, resilience and strength along with great skill set goes a long way.” Iconic fashion designer, Rina Dhaka is modest when she shares, “To be honest many times I do not feel I am successful and at times I do feel I am. My biggest quality is that I chant as it helps me a lot and organises my day. Otherwise you get very nervous and anxious when you reach work and there are deadlines to meet and you feel control less. I am also the creator, owner and entrepreneur. To be one and all and then to have children I wish at some time that women could find ways to work with kids around. The biggest thing is strength – both physical and mental and one should have the ability to be able to transcend criticism and continue.”



***“The biggest thing is strength – both physical and mental and one should have the ability to be able to transcend criticism and continue.”***

**-Rina Dhaka,**  
Fashion Designer



***“Gender parity is an elusive goal for many industries and fashion is no exception, with men disproportionately dominating top roles across all areas of business.”***

**-Apeksha Patel,**  
Owner, E2O Fashion





***“One has to fight against all the odds in order to shape their dreams to reality. In this misogynistic society, you may have to prove yourself more just because you are a woman. Nonetheless, being fearless, strong-minded and being able to take those risks are some important aspects of this journey.”***

**-Soumya Kant,**  
Vice President, Clovia



***“The whole game has changed in the last 27 years that I've been in the business. You need equal measures of grit, determination and the ability to deal with labour besides creativity and marketing skills.”***

**-Poonam Bhagat,**  
Director, Anaro Designs

What would be the most common recurrence in inspiring success stories where people rise from anonymity and the depths of distress to become a pin up of success and inspiration? They all fight against odds to get to where they are! These people succeed when the odds are stacked against them when the chips are down and all seems lost. Soumya Kant, Vice President, Clovia, comes out strongly and admits, “One has to fight against all the odds in order to shape their dreams into reality. In this misogynistic society, it may be the case that you have to prove yourself more just because you are a woman. Nonetheless, being fearless, strong-minded and being able to take those risks are some important aspects of this journey.”

Behind the glamorous world of fashion is the day and night toiling of the designer and the karigaars to present that ‘perfect’ outfit. This by no means is a small task. The karigars need handholding at each step. Their art needs to be channelised and this responsibility lies with the designer. This ability of working with the karigars and empowering them is an important trait of a successful woman fashion entrepreneur. Poonam Bhagat, Director, Anaro Designs, shares, “The whole game has changed in the last 27 years that I’ve been in the business. You need equal measures of grit, determination and the ability to deal with labour besides creativity and marketing skills.”

### **Women and their contribution to Fashion**

What would fashion be without women? Hard to put down in words but fashion designer, Dhaka explains this from her heart, “Women have the biggest role because when we become designers, specially your creator, we have an innate inherent knowledge of what it

feels like when worn. Lot of times when I am testing my own samples, I try them myself and only after I really wear them, I understand the issues from a client’s point of view.” Taandon of Mynah Design adds, “The role of women in the fashion industry is important because most of the fashion industry work for women fashion wear. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that women run the fashion industry in one way or another. A women fashion designer understands the body of a woman, the difficulties that she faces while wearing certain clothes etc.” How can one underplay the role of the media – be it the magazines or social media. These two tools have a strong dominance of women and behind the scenes they have a stronger influence on the changing fashion dynamics as well. Fashion designer, Kochhar elaborates, “Women are the ultimate game changers in today’s world, especially in fashion. From becoming the editors to design directors at fashion houses and magazines, they are doing it all with grace and style.” Bathwal of RBA Lifestyle seconds this saying, “We have a woman-dominated industry; starting from fashion designers to influencers, we have some brilliant examples of women doing very well.”

Fashion designer, Beri brings forth the key role played by women in this field. She says, “In our industry, we have immense participation from women, from concept making to execution to selling and buying.” Dinaz Madhukar, Executive Vice President, DLF Luxury Retail & Hospitality adds, “Women today are taking a lead in different genres. Women permeate the fashion industry in all arenas from creative fashion designers, to models, to retail merchandisers, boutique managers, fashion journalists, photographers. There is literally no area that is difficult to imagine women in.”



*“In our industry, we have immense participation from women, from concept making to execution to selling and buying.”*

**-Ritu Beri,**  
Fashion Designer



*“Women today are taking a lead in different genres. Women permeate the fashion industry in all arena. There is literally no area that is difficult to imagine women in.”*

**-Dinaz Madhukar,**  
Executive Vice President, DLF Luxury  
Retail & Hospitality



*“Women are the ultimate game changers in fashion. From becoming the editors to design directors at fashion houses and magazines, they are doing it all with grace and style.”*

**-Archana Kochhar,**  
Fashion Designer

### Encouraging women participation

Creativity is what one is born with. But skills can be taught. Toughness can be acquired and so can self-discipline and commitment towards work. Fashion designer, Dhaka applauds designer Ritu Kumar for carving a niche for herself in the industry. She shares, “Fashion industry in India is not always driven by women. All over the world it is more driven by men. There are fewer women than men. Their role cannot be discounted. Leaders like Ritu Kumar give us hope in fashion. They think different.” She further talks about the importance of empowering women when she shares, “Craft can be taught. Right now Singer machines did a campaign with Lakme and taught sewing. Singer is also conducting a NGO training for women in sewing. I have women embroiderers, cutters, etc. A lot of these women I work with, each one of them is a leader. Trade brings out that skill in women.” Fashion designer, Beri sees a strong ray of hope in the future of women entrepreneurship. She says, “Today there is a high

level of confidence in the structural and transformational reforms that are taking place in India. Women entrepreneurs in India are bringing about a lot of development in the public and private sectors and likewise in the fashion industry.”

Lingerie is second skin to a woman and one may well expect women to take a lead role here. Zivame’s Richa Kar has set the ball rolling for women lingerie entrepreneurs and designers to enter into the field but there is a long way to go as yet before we have a balance of both the genders. Kant of Clovia shares, “In lingerie surprisingly, there are more men than women. However, we see that the trend is changing with institutes offering specialised courses in lingerie designing and so on. Women can contribute equally to any area and they will be good at it all. We are supremely organised and sharp, so there is no barrier on what we can do better than others.”

Lekhi of Baggit foresees a bright future for women’s contribution in the fashion education sector. The other fields where women can leave their mark is in the managerial position of a fashion brand.

Indrayan of 612 League shares, “What is required is a lot more women in decision making roles, this would entail moving from design into larger roles of brand management.”

The world of fashion is for women and both remain inseparable. The key to having more women in this industry is knowledge sharing, teamwork and though this may sound primitive but topping the list would be support from immediate family. Patel of E2O Fashion concludes, “Since a decade, women have stepped outside their boundaries and set their goals of achievement but still there is a lot of scope wherein women can share their contribution to this industry. Departments like designing, merchandising and management can definitely work effectively if there is higher contribution of women as these departments work closely with their target customers who are majorly women. So when a women works for a women, she knows her needs, wants and can give the most appropriate feedback.”



# ANAMIKA KHANNA

**Fashion Designer**



- > Company:  
ANAMIKA FASHION WEARS AND EXPORTS  
PVT. LTD.
- > Brand: ANAMIKA KHANNA
- > Website: WWW.ANAMIKAKHANNA.IN

## **Anamika Khanna on “why fashion”**

My career in fashion was a chance, just a few sketches sent to a fashion competition and it started there. I think I would not swap this for anything else in the world. It has made my life complete.

## **...on her early years**

I come from a traditional Jain family and discipline was a way of life. My mother being a perfectionist would not accept any less from us three sisters. Academics was at the top priority and I had a major interest in Indian traditional dance. I was a science student, moved to arts in college and landed up having a career in fashion! I have no professional fashion training but I can say that the biggest learning has been the experience. It is moreover a long journey of constant reading, experimenting, making mistakes and learning as we go.

## **...on her key moments**

My journey has been extremely adventurous, numerous moments have been super special. One such moment was my international label ‘Anamika’ being picked up by Harrods in the very initial stages. The biggest challenge was showing at the Paris Fashion week. While it all seems exciting and glamorous, it was indeed some task.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

While the journey is not even halfway through, I might say I am proud of being able to be a key contributor in changing the way Indian fashion is perceived. I’m proud of taking the risk and making the effort of globalizing ‘Indian Fashion’.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Inspirations come from anywhere and everywhere. I am extremely instinctive but a core source of inspiration remains the Indian textile heritage. I am easily bored and move on quickly. The motivation to dream of something new every moment is exciting.

## **...on balancing professional & personal life**

I am a mother of twin boys who graduate this year. Balancing professional and personal life is of course a challenge, but we are our own masters and choose circumstances for ourselves. I might say I don’t remember taking a break in 20 years now, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.

## **...advice to next-gen women**

Success is relevant and perhaps has no measure. My simple advice is to be true to yourself, find your own space, be relentless, work non-stop and love what you do. Failure and success is a part of the journey and not the end.

## **...top tip for young girls**

The world is changing and the only way to survive is to accept the change and move with it.





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# APEKSHA PATEL

**Owner, E2O Fashion**

## **Apeksha Patel on “why fashion”**

Having born to a businessman who had a strong presence in the garment industry, fashion has been imbibed in my genes. Since the age of 8, I used to visit my father's workplace. Everything there used to excite me and I always had uncountable questions to ask my father relating to the business. Eventually, with years passing by, when I grew to the age where I had to choose a field, I knew here is where I belong. I was exposed to the garment industry from a very tender age. It feels great to keep the legacy going and giving my contribution to this industry. Today, I feel fashion is in my DNA and all the energy and professional qualities I possess come from this industry.

## **...on her early years**

As I completed my schooling, I was quite sure about choosing this field so I pursued a Diploma in Fashion Designing along with college. After completion of Fashion Designing, I even cracked a job when I was in 12th. I managed to work simultaneously with my college and completed graduation in commerce from Mithibai College. During those days, my pocket money used to be as good as ₹500 and I got a job offering for ₹5,000 per month. I was on top of the world. I still remember that day when my friends were more excited than me for the offer. I took this job way seriously and put in all efforts I could—from designing, dispatching, merchandising to all other marketing tasks during that learning phase. And today that's what has made me an entrepreneur.

## **...on her key moments**

A lot of memories make me nostalgic of this journey I cherish today! We began with a small office in a slum area, which was compact and without proper interiors and all the departments were accommodated in that space. Hiring employees was a big challenge as nobody would really join us looking at the location and ambience of our office. As years passed and we grew, we bought a property well-furnished with interiors and structured our management. Today we are proud to have more than 150 employees under our roof and more than 350 employees across India.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

I think I hold a lot of pride in saying that I've created my identity in this industry, who is looked upon as a women leader and entrepreneur. I stood for what I wanted and worked for it. Despite all the hurdles I went through, I was still adamant on my decision to own a brand and I did it! My journey has been an inspiration to many women who surround me and my family.







“**Stay Confident!  
My confidence &  
determination  
kept me alive  
no matter what  
obstacles came  
ahead.**”

#### ...on her core inspirations

Any woman who thinks she should not and will not depend on a man for her survival inspires me. And with every achievement, the love and support I receive from others keeps me motivated to take a step forward from where I am today.

#### ...on the causes she feels for

Being a woman, I understand the difficulties women face to manage their work and family. Apart from their responsibilities, their lives bring a lot of changes like marriage, maternity, motherhood, health issues, etc. Women often tend to leave their jobs in such situations but I have always been a helping hand for my employees to go through with work and life.

#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

As a woman, you are assumed to be multi-tasking and creating a balance between personal and professional life. Whereas men are considered as only the bread earner of family. You are always expected to be strong and when you are strong, you are judged and labeled as arrogant and dominating. This is the most common problem faced by most of us. Most of the social barriers faced today are gender discrimination and stereotyping, lack of equal opportunities, sexual harassment at work and undermining women's ability to lead. We hope these barriers will vanish one

day and the world will start appreciating their abilities.

#### ...on balancing professional & personal life

We are blessed with 2 sons. The elder one is studying in a hostel, while the younger one stays with us. Although my husband and I work together, we have tough travel schedules for work and work commitments keep us tied up. But we always take short trips round the year with family to spend some time together.

#### ...advice to next-gen women

The best advice that I would have to pass to the next generation of women, and as I'm still learning myself, is to trust your gut and your light and don't dim your light for anybody. No matter how many 'nos' you get, look in the mirror and tell yourself 'yes I can' and you continue to push forward no matter what.

#### ...top tips for young girls

Trust your instincts. Seek mentoring from the best in the industry, and surround yourself with hard working individuals. Don't be afraid to stand out as there is a place for every niche aesthetic. There are other people around who feel just as passionate about something as you, and are willing to buy into it. Essentially, fashion is all about hard work, along with patience, focused steps towards a goal and a never ending search for the new.



- > Company Name:  
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# ARCHANA KOCHHAR

## Fashion Designer

“Everything beautiful has inspired me and motivated me to innovate. Real life and every day experiences have played important in my inspiration drawing process.”

> Brand: ARCHANA KOCHHAR  
> Website:  
WWW.ARCHANAKOCHHAR.COM



### Archana Kochhar on “why fashion”

I was fashion driven ever since I was young and it has never been merely about the clothes for me, it's a lifestyle. Hence, I developed my passion into a full-time career.

### ...on her early years

I completed my MBA, but fashion was always my calling. I am a self-taught designer and have learned from my experiences over the years.

### ...on her key moments

My journey as a whole has been a mirage of fond memories. One of them will always be when I represented my country at the prestigious New York Fashion Week and had an acid attack survivor as my showstopper.

### ...on things she is most proud of

I still have a long way to go in my journey, but in my tenure so far, I have believed in giving equal opportunities to women and empowering them in whatever way I can.

### ...on her core inspirations

I have derived my inspiration from my travels. Everything beautiful has inspired me and motivated me to innovate. Real life and every day experiences have played important in my inspiration drawing process.

### ...on the causes she feels for

I feel strongly about empowering women and educating the girl child. I have made my contribution towards both these causes I deeply feel for.

### ...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader

As a woman, I have faced my set of challenges but my determination has helped me overcome them. Never be intimidated because you're a woman, make it your strength. Women today still face the societal stigmas but a lot has been changing and it will continue to, with time.

### ...on balancing professional & personal life

I am a working mother and always have been. I have a daughter and I have managed to actively participate in her life, throughout her growing years. Maintaining a healthy balance between the two depends on your time management skill. If you do that, half the job is done.

### ...advice to next-gen women

Be disciplined and stay focused. Set your goals and work towards them consistently, until you achieve them.

### ...top tips for young girls

Work on your craft and skills. Always be humble and be ready to learn from your experiences. Create the best from your ability without expecting rewards in return.



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# ASHA KAMAL MODI

**Managing Director, Art Karat  
International Ltd.**

## **Asha Kamal Modi on “why fashion”**

It was sheer destiny. I always wanted to do something different in life. Jewellery always had a special place in my heart so this came to me automatically. Since I never wanted to borrow money from my husband at that time I started with ₹3,000 and I could not create gold but silver. I found one craftsman who made it and what came out was beautiful and that laid the foundation for my life. I had nobody to guide me, no background in jewellery but just the desire and fire in me which kick started my career. I did not know that it was a revolution that was taking place in Indian jewellery history. I was the first one who created designer jewellery in silver in India. It was a new concept as jewellery meant only gold and diamond but this was different. I am very happy I started this product as today lakhs of people have got a career and jobs and this type of jewellery is parallel to gold jewellery.

## **...on her early years**

I am the only daughter of a very traditional Gupta family. I studied at Presentation Convent School, Delhi and then did MA in psychology honours from Delhi University. With a son and a daughter, today my entire family is into the same business and it has expanded to a different level all over the world. I was a simple housewife and was happy in my own space but today I am doing better and no complaints.

## **...on her key moments**

When I started working it was considered bad that a woman was going out to work. Everybody in my family felt that I was doing something wrong but today everybody is proud of me. It was difficult changing their mindset but I overcame that with my persistence and genuine hard work.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

I opened the door for women to work outside the home with dignity and pride. I started a new career in designer jewellery in our country. Both men and women took it up as a career. Today we have a lot of institutes of jewellery designing and younger generations are studying there. Semi precious jewellery is today considered parallel to precious jewellery business. The exports of semi precious jewellery have increased in huge amount and they bring in business to our country. My efforts have helped in re-habilitating thousands of craftsmen of India. Today they have homes, better living conditions, greater facilities and can provide better education to their children.

## **...on her core inspirations**

My core inspiration has been to prove to myself that I can and will do something in life. I had to grow and work hard for myself without overlooking my family, friends, children and relationships. All were always very important to me with work. Later on it became a family business, which required a lot of responsibility as so many people were attached to us.





“ **Women are very important to the fashion industry. They understand the nerve of another women very well, whatever the age is. Creativity is natural to women. Hard work and focus are also key part of their personality.** ”

- > Company:  
ART KARAT  
INTERNATIONAL LTD.
- > Brand:  
ART KARAT
- > Website:  
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#### ...on the causes she feels for

The causes which are for men are also for women. Be it in educational field, medical, political, defense, or even to the extent of flying the plane, women are equally educated as men and they can do whatever a man can do.

#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

As a woman there was a lot of restrictions from my family. They felt that if a woman is stepping out of the house, she is doing something wrong and jewellery was not the right profession for her. They even felt that I was neglecting my family and my first priority was work and business. Everybody tried to take advantage of a woman during those days, and one had to really keep her balance and presence of mind intact to get the work done. Women were looked down upon if they were working outside the home. Now the acceptability is much higher and people have got used to women working

hand to hand with men. Infact in today's time, women get the priority in certain areas, which is a big change.

#### ...on balancing professional & personal life

At the moment everybody in the family is into the business and are taking care of each other because the priorities are very clear. So the professional and personal life is very well balanced. In fact we have become closer to each other being in the same business.

#### ...advice to next-gen women

Educate yourself to the best of your ability and facility. Decide your career immediately after school so that you follow the education afterwards accordingly. Take the training for the career in your educational vocational time only. Follow your dream sincerely and find out what you can do best. Total focus, persistence and a lot of hard work can lead you to success. Nothing comes easily.



# CHAITALI GIRI

**Designer, Butique Dishari**

## **Chaitali Giri on “why fashion”**

My childhood days were very amazing with my grandfather and my grandmother who first taught me how to draw and observe nature. My father used to purchase various newspapers and magazines which included a lot of leading fashion magazines. Travelling was a family culture during vacation in schooldays, which exposed me to different cultures. My inspiration has been my mother who taught me from childhood that “a woman needs to be self-supported”. Every afternoon my mother and neighbours used to gather to make hand crafted items (woollen products, hand embroideries in garments, crafted show pieces for interior decoration) for their own use and for the family members, which I could relate with the fashion magazines. This all led me to the path that I followed and am proud I chose fashion as my career.

## **...on her early years**

Fashion was in my blood and right from my childhood I was surrounded by it. This made me chase my passion and I pursued my B.Sc in Fashion Design from IIFT, New Delhi followed by Cutting and Tailoring from BSGSS, New Delhi and Fashion Clothing Technology from NIFT, Kolkata. Establishing a new brand is never easy and we left no stone unturned to make it happen.

## **...on her key moments**

The journey has been challenging but the hard work has paid off with some awards - Golden Fibre Award by National Jute Board and NIFT, Aspiring Designer Label by Fashion and Fitness, to name a few. Achieving the Nirman Award in fashion & Textile, both the sectors was when I felt that I could do it. In 2005, while pursuing my B.SC., all my fashion shows were a super hit. Luck favored me and my first collection was commercially successful and satisfied the buyers in 2006.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

My women workers and artisans provide me great support. They always gift me a satisfying smile when they earn from my company. Most of them always tell me that now they are happy to earn their bread and butter for their families. Now they can purchase food, medicines and manage better education for their children. They did not know that they could even earn money in their life as they felt that they were not qualified enough. Their satisfying smile is the biggest achievement and award for my journey in the fashion industry.

## **...on her core inspirations**

I get my inspiration from my parents. India has rich resources of art and crafts, culture, textiles and surface ornamentation, which has huge demand abroad. Being an Indian we should uplift our ancient and modern culture in the society, as a whole, which can also generate huge employment for the weaker sectors in rural area. How to overcome and solve problems has always been my focus and has helped my cause in self-supporting of women in our society.

## **...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

Since I do not belong to a business family, I faced a lot of problems while setting up the business but never as a woman, in my journey till now. Social barriers do exist in our





“ I think every woman possesses a good knowledge about basic fashion and a managerial capacity by birth. They need to exercise it properly and scientifically. ”

society and many women are basically confined to homes or at the most can take up safe services like - teaching, medicine, etc. but not business. Luckily I did not face any such problems from my family members.

**...on the causes she feels for**

Every woman has the right to be independent. I try to empower women from the weaker sections of our society with skills and give them job opportunities so that in any given situation of life they can find their own way out. I like to see the women in my organisation grow along with me and with the organisation.

**...on balancing professional & personal life**

For me, all my family members (my parents, my elder brother) are very supporting. That's why I can easily balance it. Now they are all strongly involved in my brand. My mother is the main and positive critic of my work. She helps me in various sections of grooming for design and manufacturing. My father controls the legal section of my company and manages the finance. My elder brother, a merchandiser, controls the marketing of my brand.

**...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion**

One should possess a constructive innovative mentality; extra ordinary mental stability; positive family support; designing acumen; should be fond of newspapers, magazines in every section; should have tenacity to accept any challenge and possess managerial capacity.

**...on role of women in the fashion industry**

I think every woman possesses a good knowledge about basic fashion and a managerial capacity by birth. They need to exercise it properly and scientifically. We can also help in modernisation of the buyer - by making him an authorised, organised and fashion-educated one. Women are not meant to be only housewives. They need to be well balanced in every phase of life, personal as well as professional.

**...on participation of women in the fashion industry**

There is not enough participation of women in the industry . Participation needs be in every section of fashion business cycle, (pre-manufacturing and post-manufacturing). Women need to be more educated in fashion grammar

and should also be able to contribute effectively in the manufacturing sections as well.

**...advice for next-gen women**

Don't think that you are a woman, think that you are a personality. Success is sweet but it's secret is sweat.

**...top tips for young girls**

It's not only a glamorous or an artistic career, it is also a respective and serious business sector. Detailed knowledge about fashion grammar and cycle, design creation, manufacturing process are necessary. Do not copy your seniors or other brands. Get inspired from their work and make your new identity. Don't be lazy.



> Company:  
BUTIQUE DISHARI  
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# DINAZ MADHUKAR

**Executive Vice President,  
DLF Luxury Retail & Hospitality**

## **Dinaz Madhukar on “why fashion”**

After having worked for 25 years in hospitality with India's finest hotel chain – The Taj Group of Hotels, a visit to the DLF Emporio on the insistence of a dear friend meant ‘Love at First Sight’! The ambience, the atmosphere, the customers, the brands... it was exhilarating and I wanted to be a part of it. I was lucky to get the opportunity. Now it is almost 8 years with DLF and I have never looked back on my decision.

## **...on her early years**

I hold a corporate MBA and another Master's degree in general management from IIM, Bangalore. Whilst studying law, I walked into a temporary position at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai, on a whim. I loved it so much that I spent 25 exciting years with the Taj Group of Hotels, across cities, hotels and departments, eventually leaving as General Manager of Taj Connemara, Chennai, to join DLF in 2010 and head their Luxury Retail business.

## **...on her key moments**

My first assignment was very special. Working at the grand old lady – Taj Mahal Hotel Mumbai, in the International Travel Trade Department and being treated as the new kid on the block was an amazing learning and feeling. Being restless by nature, getting an opportunity every few years to change my department, hotel and city, meant a fresh start each time and added to my experience. Being part of the pre-opening team of the Chikmagalur Taj property was a life changing experience where I learnt crisis management first hand. My first posting as General Manager was another exciting experience as the canvas was huge. It was another grand old lady, Taj Connemara, with even more history than Taj Mahal Hotel, Mumbai. Cutting the umbilical cord with Taj and moving to DLF Emporio was initially apprehensive, because my whole life was hotels and luxury retail was still at a nascent stage. I didn't know if I would be able to survive. But, I left the comfort and assurance of my old job and joined this relatively new business concept and now love this industry and my organisation.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

My biggest achievement is yet to come. But smaller achievements are many, such as paying my own way through college by giving tuitions and doing summer jobs. Serving in a war zone (Yemen) during the Iraq-Kuwait war and the North and South Yemen civil war, when I was at Taj Sheba Sana'a; being the first person at the Taj to successfully move back to operations from a non-operations post and paving the way for others. I feel blessed to have been the first female general manager in a 5-star hotel in Chennai; and blessed for awards received whilst at the Taj and for those received by DLF Emporio and DLF Promenade on various occasions. I also feel proud for the success of those I have mentored. Currently, the launch of The







**“ Women today are taking a lead in different genres. Women permeate the fashion industry in all arenas from creative fashion designers, to models, to retail merchandisers, boutique managers, fashion journalists, photographers. There is literally no area that is difficult to imagine women in. ”**

Chanakya has consumed me and I am now awaiting the launch of MKT our newest food concept destination, again at The Chanakya.

#### **...on her core inspirations**

The three tenets of the Zoroastrian religion: good thoughts, good words, good deeds. And the unfailing belief my daughter Namrata has in my ability to come out successful in all I do. It's a role reversal and she talks me through all my problems.

#### **...on the causes she feels for**

The empowerment that comes from being a self-reliant woman. Women are leaders everywhere you look—from the CEO who runs a Fortune 500 company to the housewife who raises her children and heads her household. Our country is built by strong women, and we should continue to break down walls and defy stereotypes. Medical care and education are the two causes I believe in and I contribute consciously towards both these through crowd funding exercises.

#### **...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader**

Back in the days when I had just started my career, men were more in power as compared to women. Today the times have changed drastically and we see women gearing up and becoming equally at par with men in all walks of life. The challenge is to be at the top of your game and excel in the field you are in. I think it is actually quite natural for women to be attracted to this, as most of them tend to have a natural flair for luxury, travel and style. No other industry allows them to inculcate their intuition, attention to detail, and innate sense of style better than the luxury space.

Women managers are driven by a greater desire to build than to win and the key mantra to this is pure hard work. For me it is important to give your best shot in whatever you do and the success will follow. I do not believe in shortcuts. I have worked for many years in different departments and realized that it only requires dedication and hard work for you to be successful in any field of life. I have been truly blessed to have worked for two great organisations. The Tata Group and DLF and both organisations have a gender neutral approach to their teams.

#### **...on balancing professional & personal life**

Whilst both my husband and I have been hoteliers in the past and have lived a nomadic life moving from city to city and state to state, we have now grounded ourselves in Delhi NCR. For a long time my husband and daughter were based out of Bengaluru and I had the luxury of being a weekend mother and wife. My life gets consumed by my work as this is my passion and I truly enjoy it. My family understands this and completely supports me. I do however take out time for all things that are important for me, including special days as well as well deserved holidays where we spend quality time.

#### **...advice to next-gen women**

I believe that it is very important that you truly enjoy what you do. Nothing in this world can give you the joy that you would get from doing the work you are passionate about. If you do what you love, life will be a breeze.

#### **...top tips for young girls**

Just believe in yourself and don't be afraid to stand out. When you follow a trend, you are part of a group. When you create your own style, you are unique to yourself.



# FARAH MALIK BHANJI

**CEO, Metro Shoes Ltd.**

## **Farah Malik on “why fashion”**

To be honest, I chose a career in retail. Fashion was a by-product of that decision. The retail business is fascinating because you are constantly in touch with the consumers and their changing needs. Being able to adapt to quickly changing fashion trends is necessary to cater to today's demanding customer. I've never regretted the decision. Today, it is even more exciting, because with technology giving access to global trends and innovations in footwear, there is a massive opportunity for growth.

## **...on her early years**

I come from an entrepreneurial family. We were five sisters growing up and all of us studied in boarding school prior to going to the US for college. So my family has always been supportive of strong, independent women. This has been a major factor and the support system for my growth as an entrepreneur. I majored in Mathematics as that was my passion and Finance, which was a more practical choice.

## **...on her key moments**

I remember when I had just joined the company, in 1999, one of the first assignments I had was digitisation of our front-end operations. Many of our colleagues at that time had never been exposed to computers. This was a huge lesson for me both in people management and change management. Since then I have had the opportunity to launch two new brands - Mochi in 2000 and Walkway in 2009. While today, both are integral brands to our company, there were many times during the growth of Walkway that I thought we may not succeed. Walkway exposed us to a new market, new suppliers, new price points and a new way of doing business. One campaign I do remember with fondness is the launch of Metro's signature collection. We tied up with designers like Rohit Bal and Manish Malhotra to launch an exclusive range of footwear. Working with designers had its own challenges. More recently, I spearheaded the implementation of an auto-replenishment system in the company. It is incredible how technology and data analysis have evolved to aid business processes today.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

The biggest achievement is having two strong national brands that can span tier -I and -III markets holistically and our strong ability to adapt to varied Indian tastes.

## **...on her core inspirations**

My father has been my biggest inspiration. He is constantly learning and exposing us to the best potential we can be. He is always there to guide, motivate and berate depending on the situation. He is my rock.





**...on the causes she feels for**

I think education for children is paramount. Today there is a lot of encouragement for educating female children. They say if you educate a man, you educate one person. When you educate a woman, you educate a family.

**...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader**

I think when I joined the company, about 17 years ago, there was an inherent pre-conception that a woman would work for a couple of years until she had children and then family would be her first priority. Many of our suppliers at that time would not look at me while talking to me – women were not present in the

male dominated footwear industry. Even today, there are certain biases that you do face, however, it is also the responsibility to let your actions prove your worth, rather than using other peoples' biases as an excuse for failure. If you work well and are effective, there is no reason you can't succeed. We have also had many challenges incorporating women in the front-end of our business. In our industry, the sales person has to touch the feet of the consumer and be comfortable sitting on the floor. We have been working on this initiative and today about 6 percent of our front-end employees are women. Today there are many more women in the workforce and acceptance comes quite easily.

**“ I think there are more women entering all industries. The fashion industry, though, has always been kind to women entrepreneurs and we have many women who are top-notch Indian designers, fashionistas and fashion bloggers. ”**

- > Company: METRO SHOES LTD.
- > Brand Name: METRO SHOES, MOCHI & WALKWAY
- > Website: WWW.METROSHOES.NET

**...on balancing professional & personal life**

I truly do not believe that one can have a satisfactory work-life balance. There are always times when work takes priority and at times family does. However, I work fulltime during the day and the evenings and weekends are for my family and kids. It helps to have their grandparents as a super support system.

**...advice to next-gen women**

Work hard. Keep learning. Stop feeling guilty – remember quality time with your family is far more important than quantity. Falling down is inevitable. Keep getting up.

**...top tips for young girls**

Digital is the new frontier. Get a solid grounding in technology and the world is your oyster. There are many more opportunities now to work from home – make use of them.



# GRISHMA PATIL

**Founder & Director,  
Candour London**

## **Grishma Patil on “why fashion”**

It was more of a frustrated version of me as a customer not having enough options in the lingerie market in India. I absolutely stand by my decision to choose this line of business because there is so much to do and achieve in terms of revolutionizing the market. I have plans ready for further expansion in terms of size and product basket and it already sounds amazing to me!!!

## **...on her early years**

I did my Bachelors in Business Administration from the UK and Masters in Business Administration in Marketing from Mumbai University. I am currently preparing for Maharashtra state civil preliminary services (MPSC). Besides being an entrepreneur, I am a sports lover and run my own health club in the northern suburbs of Mumbai. Being from a family background where in we are involved socially, I wish to do my bit for the women in and around the rural areas. I am also currently researching and writing a research paper about the issues that women gravely face in these backward areas.

## **...on her key moments**

I recently received a Young Entrepreneurial Leadership award from the CM of Maharashtra, which has of course, motivated me to do even better. Moreover running a business and a startup is definitely not easy. I go through days where I tend to self doubt whether what I am doing is right or not. Being in the boss's chair it's very important to have the right team and keep them motivated all the time and its definitely not easy doing all that!

## **...on things she is most proud of**

The right team !!!

## **...on her core inspirations**

My entire strength and motivation comes from my father. Its not easy to have a father who is so passionate about what he does workwise and socially that I have to keep up with the energy of his. He does not take weekly offs and hence on my weekly offs I find something productive to do and all that energy, inspiration and dedication comes from him!! On the days I feel low or absolutely demotivated, I spend that day with dad. Moreover I also follow a few entrepreneurs of my age and seeing their energy and the way they do business; helps me to keep going.

## **...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

To be very honest, I have not faced any grave problems as such being a woman entrepreneur! We are now in the 21st century and our surroundings have very much accepted women doing exceptional in major fields.





“ **Being an entrepreneur is about being updated about the current trends not just within the country but with the international world. Its important to continuously be in touch with what the fashion gurus of the world do in terms of designs, concepts, thought process, reasoning and promotion tactics.** ”

- > Company: CANDOUR LONDON PVT. LTD.
- > Brand: CANDOUR LONDON



**...on balancing professional & personal life**

I belong to a family where we are very active socially, besides having a family business of real estate, mining and hospitality. When it comes to work, my father is the boss and does no exceptions towards me! I have to regularly update him about the business doings and I am very much answerable if anything goes wrong.

**...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion**

I believe its not just about fashion but being an entrepreneur is about being updated about the current trends not just within the country but with the international world. Its important to continuously be in touch with what the fashion gurus of the world do in terms of designs, concepts, thought process, reasoning and promotion tactics.

**...on role of women in the fashion industry**

Fashion industry was lead by men initially but with this time and age we have a lot of women leading the suit. Speaking of lingerie industry also, I was one of the first women brand owners in India of a female lingerie brand. Earlier the men owned the major ones. It is very important to have women in the fashion industry to understand the needs and emotions of the target market.

**...on participation of women in the fashion industry**

Yes we are definitely taking the lead in the industry! Promoting ourselves is something we should focus on.

**...advice to next-gen women**

Follow your dreams! They know their way.

**...top tips for young girls**

Put yourself out there, no matter what situation!



# JACQUELINE KAPUR

**Co-Founder & President,  
Ayesha Accessories**

## **Jacqueline Kapur on “why fashion”**

From a very young age I wanted to live in a warm country close to the sea, have horses, a husband with black hair and work in fashion. I must have been about 10 years old when I told my mother exactly this. However it wasn't a planned career move at all, (I studied Japanese and linguistics), it sort of happened, when I moved to India. I still enjoy every day of my work, especially when it comes to the creative aspect of running a fashion company.

## **...on her early years**

I studied in Germany and Tokyo and moved to India 28 years ago. I started working the day after I arrived and in the first year set up the Hidesign garment section and brought up the production to 20,000 jackets per month. I worked for about 20 years with Hidesign, managed the first multi-brand department store in Pondicherry and also supervised 2 hotels simultaneously until my separation from my ex-husband Dilip Kapur. My own company Ayesha Accessories was founded in 2010.

## **...on her key moments**

Winning the 'Images Most Admired Retailer of the Year' award in the category of Fashion Accessories (2017) was definitely one of the highlights! And every time young girls tell me how much fun our collection is, I still get as excited as they are. I am definitely most proud of overcoming the very difficult situation my business was in, after separating from Dilip. I was left with very little money and not much knowledge in financial and legal matters. Running the whole show all by myself with the help of my super motivated and loyal team makes me very proud.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

My two very level headed, compassionate children; the horse riding school I built in Auroville, Ayesha Accessories being a known brand in the market today and a team of people, who are happy to work with me.

## **...on her core inspirations**

I am most inspired by people, who have a do-not-give-up attitude despite the occasional downfalls. What keeps me motivated is a very deep knowledge of how lucky I am to be able to work in a field I love, with people I love.

## **...on the causes she feels for**

I believe women can do so much more if they believe in their capabilities and talents. We at Ayesha Accessories launched “Project Girl Power” two years ago, where we have developed a whole range of products, which we partly sell; partly give away with the sole purpose of boosting the confidence level of girls. Parts of the proceeds support a local orphanage.

## **...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

Whenever I go to a business meeting with a male partner, the attention shifts very



“ I believe women can do so much more if they believe in their capabilities and talents. Women need to be more confident and willing to be independent. ”



quickly to the man, even though everybody knows, that I am the president of the company. It is sometimes super annoying, but luckily I am quite capable of making myself heard. Women need to be more confident and willing to be independent. It is difficult to break that barrier, if our parents, our husbands and the society continue to think of a woman's career as less important than of a man.

#### **...on balancing professional & personal life**

I recently got divorced, which is a very good thing. I have two wonderful children, who both are grown up; I live in Auroville with 3 dogs, 13 cats and 30 horses. I ride my horse every morning at 6.30 a.m., I teach dressage, I love to cook for all my friends and I always squeeze a few days of personal travel time into every business trip.

#### **...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion**

To be passionate about the things you do, a sense of style and trends, a never give up attitude and compassion.

#### **...on role of women in the fashion industry**

I do not differentiate between women in fashion and men in fashion. It's not a gender-based quality to run a fashion business.

#### **...on participation of women in the fashion industry**

No, we don't have enough women in the industry. Any conference, I have been to, was attended by approximately 90 percent men. This is not due to lack of talent or creativity in women, but due to career and lifestyle choices. Understanding women fashion somehow seems to be challenging to me, if all you ever wear is a suit and a tie, so there is a lot of scope here.

#### **...advice to next-gen women**

I made a whole range of stickers for that "This Girl Can", "Unstoppable", "It's Me Who Decides" and "You Go Girl" are just a few examples.

#### **...top tips for young girls**

Try to be different, but still relatable. Always watch your surroundings and everyday people for inspirations. Be passionate and compassionate!



# JAGRATI SHRINGI

**CTO & CMO, Voylla**

## **Jagrati Shringi on “why fashion”**

I would say it was the other way round, fashion chose me. I belong to a generation where being fashionable was frowned upon. Even then I found myself doing a spot of modeling while in engineering college, because I was drawn to fashion and for me it was all about expressing myself. Later, as a hardcore techie who was busy writing machine language in the US, I was perhaps expected to dress down—almost like a librarian—to keep up with the geeky image. I was expected to play the part, but still managed to create my signature style.

Voylla really made a difference to my life because at last I could do work that was very soul satisfying. It was liberating to work as a CTO for a fashion jewelry brand, where I could be creative as well as push myself as a techie and marketing head.

## **...on her early years**

When I graduated as a software engineer in 1999, I became the first woman in my family to have acquired a professional degree. That too in what was considered to be a male domain. I was also writing, debating, playing volleyball and modeling during my college years.

I received a full scholarship from the University of Pittsburgh to research in the field of optical networks. The coveted position bolstered my confidence when I joined Laurel Networks, a high tech startup in the US. I moved to India, with my husband Vishwas Shringi who launched Voylla in 2013.

## **...on her key moments**

When we started off in the early years of e-commerce—orders were few and far between. We had a bell, which we would ring every time we received an order. The first one was just as memorable as the time when the bell wouldn't just stop ringing!

Later, when we designed and made our very own piece of jewellery, and I held the first piece that arrived from the workshop in my hands, it was a priceless feeling. It was a re-affirmation of our belief that we could do something that was beyond the kundan and polki flooding the market, and make it look beautiful. It was a statement piece.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Fighting against taboos and myths. Challenging convention and the male bastion.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Voylla is not just any business for Vishwas and me. Our bigger concern is not to fail the people who have put their trust in the brand and the company. We have 1,500 employees working for us and we take our responsibility quite seriously. We do not







“ **Our bigger concern is not to fail the people who have put their trust in the brand and the company. We have 1,500 employees working for us and we take our responsibility quite seriously. We do not want to fail them, or our customers.** ”

want to fail them, or our customers.

Besides, working with your spouse adds to the motivation. When you see how hard he works on building the business and the brand, you are inspired to put in your 200 per cent as well. In a way we push and inspire each other to be better than our best.

#### **...on the causes she feels for**

I feel strongly about abuse. In fact we work with NGOs that help survivors of abuse, train them and help them to reclaim their lives.

#### **...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader**

Whether it is in the US or in India, I strongly feel that modern workplaces still have a long way to go before they are gender sensitised. Sometimes it is subtle, sometimes, as in some of the recent and more public cases that we have seen, gender discrimination is on-your-face. With more participation of women in the work places, across segments, and more women acquiring skills that have been traditional male bastions, these things may change. Some policies and measures are already in place. We now need to hang our mindsets.

#### **...on balancing professional & personal life**

Two wonderful boys and husband that I work with. I try to set my priorities right - and most often I am able to juggle my multiple roles as I believe women are natural born multi-taskers.

#### **...advice to next-gen women**

Not sure if I can say 'great success' for my work yet! But one word to all my fellow foot soldiers out there - never let criticism bog you down. Focus on what motivates you and never lose sight of your goals.

#### **...top tips for young girls**

Choose technology, embrace it, ace it to get ahead in your professional life. Do not follow tons blindly or feel pressured to fit in. I have also tried to dumb myself down sometimes to be part of the crowd, but it is important to cherish your individuality.



# JYOTEE KHAITAN

**Managing Director, Jyotee Khaitan  
Fashions Pvt. Ltd.**

## **Jyotee Khaitan on “why fashion”**

Even when I was not a fashion designer, I would love designing and getting clothes made from the local tailor (who would be stationed at my house) for my friends, relatives and myself. Later I got a formal degree in fashion and opened my flagship store in Kolkata and started supplying to multi-designer stores in India. I am happy to have taken the right decision at the right time.

## **...on her early years**

I did my B.Com and helped my father in business. Once I got married, my husband and his family were very encouraging and wanted me to follow my passion for designing. I did my fashion design course and interned with JJ Vallaya in Delhi. Fashion designing is a line where you have to put in a lot of time and effort and there is a lot of competition and talent around. In the initial career years and even today a lot of time and planning goes into each collection for both men and women.

## **...on her key moments**

The key moments in my journey in fashion designing are - the opening of my flagship store in Kolkata, the first time when I participated in the Lakme Fashion week, Mumbai and then the following year in the Wills India Fashion Week, Delhi. Everyday brings in a new challenge and we have to face them and overcome difficulties that are bound to come up. If someone is not capable or afraid of challenges then it is not possible to survive in this industry.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Consistent stability, reliability and trust of our clients is what we have achieved and that is the reason that they come to us over and over again. We started off with our couture line and recently launched our pret line for men and women, which was highly appreciated. Style and elegance is our collection /brand forte and I am happy and proud that people desire to own or wear outfits with the label Jyotee Khaitan.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Appreciation and encouragement from clients and well wishers and people whom I look up to have motivated me to do even better with each collection!

## **...on the causes she feels for**

I believe each woman is talented in something or the other and I always encourage women to work on their talents rather than suppress them.

## **...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

Times have changed and there are so many woman leaders and entrepreneurs in our country today! Problems occur for both men and women during their journeys. It is the way you face the challenges and how you choose to respond and overcome any



“ **Women play a positive role in the fashion industry by their leadership skills. They are sensitive towards employees and maintain a positive employer-employee relationship, by motivating them and bringing in warmth at the work place.** ”

difficulty that comes your way, which makes you a business leader and sets you apart from others!

#### ...on balancing professional & personal life

I always take advice and suggestions from my husband who is a lawyer and my son who studies in Stern, New York University. I love to work and party and have a great set of friends who are very supportive. I believe every single woman in the country should get basic education. If the woman in the family is educated then the entire family is educated!

#### ...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion

You need to motivate your entire team so that each one delivers their best. New ideas and a lot of research as to what the clients want or expect from your fashion house or brand, introspection as to what is going right and not and hiring positive and energetic talented people are required.

#### ...on role of women in the fashion industry

Women play a positive role in the fashion industry by their leadership skills. They are sensitive towards employees and maintain a positive employer-employee relationship, by motivating them and bringing in warmth at the work place.

#### ...on participation of women in the fashion industry

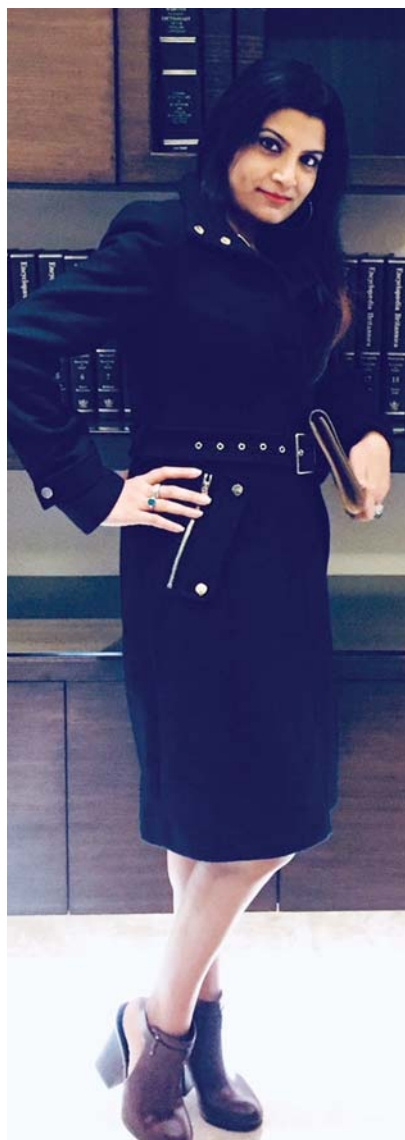
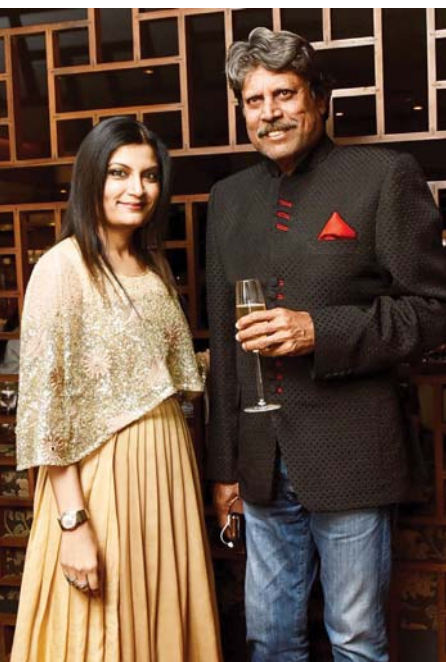
Yes fashion industry has enough women designers. A woman can very effectively excel and contribute in any area she is expected to perform. There is no area that she cannot contribute where a man can!

#### ...advice to next-gen women

Hard work and patience is the only way to succeed!

#### ...top tips for young girls

Fashion is a business and an industry! It is only glamorous for people who watch it from a distance. Join it only if you are fully prepared to slog it out 100 percent.



- > Company:  
JYOTEE KHAITAN FASHIONS  
PVT. LTD.; D STUDIO  
FASHIONS PVT. LTD.
- > Brand:  
JYOTEE KHAITAN
- > Website:  
WWW.JYOTEEKHAITAN.COM

# KHUSHBOO PAREKH

**Owner & Designer,  
Vamas Fashion Pvt. Ltd.**



- > Company:  
VAMAS FASHION PVT. LTD.
- > Brand:  
VAMAS
- > Website:  
WWW.VAMAS.IN

## **Khushboo Parekh on “why fashion”**

I was always inspired by fashion, primarily because it being my family background but never knew I would take it as my career. In Indian culture, usually it's a difficult journey for a fashion student as compared to an Engineer or Doctor or a CA for that matter. However, when the right time came, my family encouraged and supported me to go with my dream. Looking back, I am quite happy with the choice I have made.

## **...on her early years**

Academically, I have completed BSc. in Fashion Designing from B.D.Somani, Mumbai. I joined my family business at the age of 19 to gain some experience. It was my dad's hard work and dedication towards work that has shaped me and made me what I am today.

## **...on her key moments**

I remember our first big order in the initial days and the amount of hard work we had put in to achieve it. Since then there has been no turning back. I am always proud to see a happy customer and that has always been our goal.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Have just started my journey, too soon to talk about legacy right now.

## **...on her core inspirations**

My inspiration and motivation - both are my dad. I have always strived to make fashion affordable and wearable for the masses.

## **...on the causes she feels for**

I feel every woman should be able to stand on her own feet. There are a lot of rural areas in India where women are still unaware of her basic rights. We

are working on women empowerment programs in rural areas and teaching Adivasi women on how to stitch and make a living from it.

## **...on balancing professional & personal life**

Vamas is a family business and my entire family is involved in the business, which helps me a lot in balancing my personal and professional life.

## **...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion**

Just a word, “Believe” and things will fall in place accordingly.

## **...on role of women in the fashion industry**

I believe every woman has a distinctive sense of fashion in them, in-built. So may it be being a high-end fashion designer or a normal women designing her own clothes from a local tailor, women play a very important role in shaping our industry.

## **...on participation of women in the fashion industry**

Yes, there is a good participation of women in this industry. But, I would like to see more and more women leading the brand.

## **...advice for the next-gen women**

It's a never ending journey. Just keep working hard towards your goals with full dedication. You will not even know when you have arrived.

## **...top tips for young girls**

Practical knowledge is far way important than theoretical studies in fashion industry.





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# KRINA PANJWANI

**Chief Operating Officer,  
Suditi Design Studio**

## **Krina Panjwani on “why fashion”**

I always had a keen liking for the fashion industry but back then there were not many colleges offering the study in fashion or subjects that go with this industry. Today the scenario is very different wherein the students learn a lot during the curriculum, which we learnt the hard way on the job. Nothing was easy. I still continue my love for creativity and am happy being and doing what I am in this field.

## **...on her early years**

Coming from a commerce background along with a fashion degree in hand, the initial years were extremely tough. Starting the journey with an export company, things were not easy. But that experience and working from ground level gives you an understanding from the base start to the finish. It also helps in understanding work done at each and every level and also keeps you grounded, which is very important.

## **...on her key moments**

Each day is a memory and a challenge. The key is to overcome these challenges. Sometimes it gets done with ease and sometimes with great difficulty. The journey has not been very easy though. There have been lots of ups and downs and struggles. Till date, to match up with the demands of the consumer and yet keeping your creative side alive and making a business sense at the same time, definitely gets stressful. But in the end when things work out, it's a satisfying feeling and when they don't, it definitely pulls you down. But then, there's always a learning.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

That proudest moment is yet to come. There is a lot to achieve and much more to do in my career for me to be truly proud of myself. I shall always be striving to do much more and much beyond my capacities and cross many boundaries. All I hope is to be able to make some difference and add value to this industry.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Motivation is something we all look for outside us...but this is one thing which needs to come from within. Yes, it is difficult to be self motivated all the time but patience and perseverance is the key. And then each step onwards gives me the motivation to do more and more.

## **...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

It was definitely not easy being a woman leader back then and even now. Gender biasness continues to be a part of the social barrier although, of course, with times things have really changed. Power, access and opportunities continue to be





“ **The fashion industry is fast-moving, especially the developing domestic fashion market. If you choose to step into this field, you need to maintain a firm belief and unremitting efforts.** ”

- > Company:  
SUDITI DESIGN STUDIO
- > Brand:  
INDIANINK & NUSH

unequally distributed. Traditional perceptions of leadership are often associated as predominantly male qualities – a prototype of a leader is typically a masculine man. But things have definitely improved and we find many women in the work force at successful positions.

#### ...on the causes she feels for

Girl education, gender equality and safety for women. I strongly believe that for any country to be progressive, education and equality play a very important role. Safety for women is not a requirement but a dire need. Education plays a critical role in the development of a nation whether it is for social or economic growth. Low rate of literacy in women has a huge negative impact on the overall growth and development of the society, where women are majorly responsible for child care and development. I have been a part of a few NGOs wherein I try and contribute by sponsoring education fees and by donating books and stationery for the children.

#### ...on balancing professional & personal life

Striking a balance between your work and personal life is not an easy job for working women. Setting a priority in life post-marriage and kids is by far the most difficult thing for a working woman. Although I have a fantastic support system at home—a very supporting husband, in-laws and my 15 year old daughter who has been the most understanding, specially at times when work requires long working hours and travel keeps me away from home. Leaving your kid behind in safe hands is the biggest satisfaction a mother could get. I try not to bring work home but most of the times it is inevitable. Sundays I strictly stay away from office work and spend time with the family.

#### ...on participation of women in the fashion industry

The role of any senior position profile at a fashion house is so all-consuming even some men struggle for work-life balance. For women, it's harder still to balance such responsibility with family duties and face down sexist attitudes. The participation from women has definitely increased with more and more successful women finding and rising their way up in this field. There are a lot of excellent female designers in this industry. The fashion industry is fast-moving, especially the developing domestic fashion market. If you choose to step into this field, you need to maintain a firm belief and unremitting efforts.

#### ...advice for the next-gen women

I would just say that you do what you like to do and just give in your best. Be sincere, focused and honest to your work and the rest will follow.

#### ...top tips for young girls

On the personal front my advice would be not to follow trends blindly. Wear what you are most comfortable in. Self confidence is the key. On the career front know your customer well and that is the key. Although international trends are closely followed in India, so the right adaptation according to the Indian consumer is what is required. Constant learning and evolving in the field of fashion is a must.



# MANDIRA WIRK

**Fashion Designer & Director,  
Mandira Wirk**

## **Mandira Wirk on “why fashion”**

When I was in the second and third years at Jesus & Mary College, I started making my personal clothing. I created my own line, which was basically just for myself. I started creating at my own house with just one tailor and one master and it was appreciated by my friends and colleagues. A lot of my friends started saying that we like what you are wearing, and from there I started making clothes for my friends. That is when I was clear about what my future was. After my college I joined Pearl Academy of Fashion and then from there I went to the London School of Fashion.

I'm actually blessed and very happy for taking this right decision and choosing fashion as my career. I was very lucky to get that clarity very early in life, while many are always confused about which career to go forward with. It was a good decision and I'm very passionate about fashion.

## **...on her early years**

My journey has been pretty tough and full of struggles. I was not allowed to work under designers because I had a personal problem of some body stalking me. We never had any cyber laws nor any help as such. Since I could not do any industry training, a lot of times it became my biggest disadvantage. Though I was well qualified but I lacked practical knowledge.

My first job was with Rina Dhaka, which lasted only for one month. I was asked to discontinue because of this personal problem of stalking. She was the one who actually pushed me and told me that my only way of survival in this industry would be to start on my own. When I started my journey in 2000 I had no idea how to maintain accounts, on what a petty cash book was. I was clueless, yet very determined to continue.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

I am very proud of the fact that I could manage to create a good brand all by myself and with my parent's blessings and support of my husband and in-laws. I am very contented as a designer. I feel that I have been able to combine my work and my professional and personal life beautifully. I am blessed that my child is proud of me and that itself is a very big achievement. Whatever I have done - be it my multiple stores, my celebrity works, my style work, my export work, movie work or international work, I have been able to do it on my own strength.

## **...on her core inspirations**

My core inspiration is based on a very simple formula 'to never give up', and it has been a very strong strength in my work. My philosophy of design has been very feminine, timeless, classic and romantic. I love to travel as it helps me with







a lot of inspiration and to do my shows. I love to get inspiration by understanding different cultures, different arts and architectures of various places.

#### ...on the causes she feels for

I strongly feel for empowering women to stand on their own feet and to become independent. As a woman I could do that and would like to motivate and encourage women of all classes to do the same.

There are a lot of fashion designers who are women and are all doing fantastic work in their individual fields. I encourage women to be my tailors because I do not see much traction amongst fashion designers to have a lot of women tailors. We do have women tailors in export houses but not in the skilled kind of work. I just feel as women designers we can motivate others and make a difference in everybody's lives.

#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

It is difficult to negotiate your rents, deal with your male labour as men do not like to receive commands or instructions from women. That was always a bit of challenge for me. Basically it has been a very interesting start, with lots of challenges and thanks to my parents who had taught me to be determined and never give up.

#### ...on balancing professional & personal life

I balance my life very well. I'm an early riser and try to finish all my personal chores early and spend quality time with my daughter Kiara. After dropping her at the bus stop I go for my exercise and then to work and am back home by 5 PM. to be with my daughter. I am very happy that I have been able to balance my life with my family and professional work with tremendous support from my family, husband and in-laws.

It is not easy to be a woman entrepreneur, a working mother, and also a working daughter in law at the same time. I'm blessed to have been able to balance it beautifully.

#### ...advice to next-gen women

Fashion is often regarded as a glamour world, but it requires a lot of hard work. Many people take it on like a hobby. Get into this field if you are totally passionate and committed towards it. It does look very glamorous but at the same time requires a lot of dedication and hard work like any other industry. It is very important for the new generation to give their hundred percent to what they do. I do not believe in multi-tasking. I feel one should do one work, at one time and do it to perfection.

#### ...top tips for young girls

Be safe. Go back home on time and if staying late, get dropped. I take special care of my woman employees.



**“To be successful, one should have a very balanced life. Balance of mind, soul and spirituality and give 100 percent to one's work. I'm totally committed towards work and balance it with my family and my six and a half year old daughter.”**

- > Brand:  
MANDIRA WIRK
- > Website:  
WWW.MANDIRAWIRK.IN

# MANISHA SANGANI

Director, Just Lifestyle Pvt. Ltd.

## Manisha Sanghani on “why fashion”

In 2007 we launched Aspen watches and the Just Retail chain housing over 40 international fashion watch brands. I was always aesthetically inclined and everything I wore needed to have a feel good factor, but still reflect my own unique personality. I still love this industry as much as the day I started and stand by my decision to offer affordable luxury with great value, design and quality. The Indian population is aspirational and from middle income group- thus I wanted to create a watch for the Indian woman which will help her to express herself.

## ...on her early years

I had a very diverse beginning in life with finance and foreign languages being my forte along with a bit of sales. My experience in sales has especially assisted me in having a great eye for curation and has provided me with the tools to merge great designs with Indian aesthetics. I did my B.Com and 3rd level German and French. It was only after the age of 50 that I successfully pursued a 3 year management program at Harvard. My initial career was varied – at the age of 18 – German interpretation, social work, gourmet health meals, in 1995 launched M Square Italian silver jewellery, in 2000 launched and distributed 18 international watch brands with success (Fossil, Armani, Skagen, D&G, etc.). This was all of course pursuing my passion of Aspen watches and Just Retail working towards controlling our own destiny.

## ...on her key moments

One of the few moments I dearly remember is when at Basel World 2010 Show we had some of the top international brand owners impressed with our jewellery watch fusion collection and were surprised that the watches were not gold but steel. This gave us the confidence that our diverse design of merging Italian jewellery chains with watches was a success and well appreciated.

The passion and strength my team feels when they talk about Aspen, gives me great joy to see this business and my team move from strength to strength. In 2017 one of the biggest challenges faced was when the distribution business we built was undermined with the brands making a decision to enter the country based on the growth we had built. However this challenge was what helped us build both Aspen and our Just Retail chain in June 2007 with the support of our team.

## ...on things she is most proud of

I have built several businesses through my career, but Aspen, Just Watches and Just in Vogue will always be my crowning jewels. We have taken these from a small idea to having 72 retail stores across India! With a team of 350 people, I'm proud of the company I have built and the work environment we have established is focused on respect, recognition and responsibility.





“ **Women are playing a very strong role in the fashion industry. If we see any big fashion label or any fashion brand, there will always be few emerging names. They have made significant contribution with their strong sense in aesthetics, trends, decision making and their knowledge about the raw materials.** ”

#### ...on her core inspirations

My brand Aspen caters largely to women and if I'm being honest, the women I see all around me are my true inspiration. Indian women especially, take on so much and they do it with poise and strength! I see it in my mother as she is on her feet running a house even at 75 and I see it in my daughters who balance their start-up business with a home life beautifully. Women inspire me and give me my motivation to keep doing what I do. I have raised my daughters with the same respect and mind-set that I apply to my business.

#### ...on the causes she feels for

A woman is always a giver. She dedicates her whole life to her family. It revolves around her children, husband, and the extended family. I believe a woman must spend some time for herself doing what she likes. A career oriented woman can bring a perfect balance in her personal and professional life. She can be a better mother and home-keeper with delegating a lot and spending quality time with her child and family.

#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

I started working in 1981 and in a more financially driven field, there was definitely some discrimination for just being a woman, but as I learnt to navigate through the years, I have seen an improvement. I was the first woman entrepreneur in the organised watch industry and I faced my own trials and tribulations. However, in the last 10 years, I've seen that men and women both are less resistant to the idea of a woman boss, in fact as long as you lead by example I have found that no matter what gender you are, your team will respect you. Yes there is definitely still discrimination today, which is most obvious when you compare the pay gap. I think if we work together as an industry with respect we can solve this problem.

#### ...on balancing professional and personal life

I have a small family with my supportive husband and two wonderful daughters. Business and dedication to work runs in my family and each are an icon in their respective fields. My husband a very renowned name in the jewellery industry and my daughters run their own brand, Tipsyfly – an imitation jewellery brand.

#### ...advice to next-gen women

Strong passion, self-belief and hard work are the only things which will help you to make it big. To become a leader you need to win trust and support of your team. You need to make them believe in you and you need to believe in them.

#### ...top tips for young girls

In the current scenario of multiple brands with similar offerings, creating a distinct and unique style is rare and difficult. I think developing your own fashion personality and imbuing that into the business is a great way to distinguish yourself from others. The other thing is to keep up with technology and trends, make sure you are well versed with digital mediums.



> Company Name:  
JUST LIFESTYLE PVT. LTD.

> Brand Name:  
ASPEN

> Website:  
WWW.ASPENWATCHES.COM

# MANJULA TIWARI

**Chief Executive Officer,  
Future Style Lab**

## **Manjula Tiwari on “why fashion”**

I joined the National Institute of Fashion Technology in 1989 and was among the first batches. It was a very new field and not much was known then on what kind of careers would emerge. I chose this field because of an intrinsic attraction to fashion and commerce. My career shaped up organically. I was more interested in fashion retail and it still continues to excite me. Its an industry constantly undergoing changes and evolution.

## **...on her early years**

I spent my childhood in a boarding school, graduated in mathematics and did my post graduation in fashion management. I was always drawn to retailing hence chose a job in retail. The thrill of being very close to the end consumer is unsurpassable even today and I feel the same whenever we launch a new collection, or open up a store in a new city.

When I started my career in fashion retail, the industry was in a very nascent stage. Each day was a new learning. My various roles gave me ample international exposure and great knowledge of the field.

## **...on her key moments**

I have been fortunate to be part of launching brands and businesses right from the beginning. On the whole, creating and setting up brands, formats, concepts is what I remember fondly and am most proud of.

## **...on her core inspirations**

When we create something, be it a format, a value proposition or a wonderful collection, which is liked and bought by our customer, it serves as a driver and an inspiration to do more. Stories of legendary retail entrepreneurs like Kishore Biyani, Anita Roddick, Ortega, Luciano Benetton and Sam Walton inspire me immensely. I love reading about their journeys and try to emulate some of their qualities of passion, vision and drive.

## **...on the causes she feels for**

I stand for gender equality in all forms. I generally disagree with any kind of stereotyping based on gender. Withholding opportunities, be it investment in a woman backed startup or in considering a woman to lead a large organisation on account of gender makes very little sense to me. I believe that leaders are created with thought and purpose, and an organisation would benefit from a much larger talent pool, by keeping women in mind for leadership roles. In my own organization I want to mentor and build a team of next generation leaders comprising men and women.





“ **Understanding the new digital world would be the key. The consumer today is visible, interactive and communicating all the time. However with this access to social media, the customer is also more demanding.** ”

- > Company:  
FUTURE STYLE LAB
- > Brand:  
COVER STORY
- > Website:  
COVERSTORY.CO.IN

I would like to see more work being done for the education of the girl child and to support organisations that are working in this field. Well-educated women not only benefit themselves and their families but also the society at large. Unfortunately in our country girl children do not get the same treatment as male children and this has to change fundamentally.

#### **...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader**

I have personally not been conscious of any barriers as such. I just chose to ignore them and went on doing my job. If any barriers came my way at all, I regarded them as an attribute of corporate and professional life. I have been quite lucky to have found mentors and support system to help me navigate my way.

More than any social barriers, I believe that the infrastructure in the companies to support women in balancing work and family does not exist in our country. This is the reason many talented women are forced to choose between motherhood and careers. I strongly believe that this should not be the choice. We should structure work and our places of work in such a way that women are able to thrive professionally, while bringing up their children and looking after their families.

#### **...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion**

I think the qualities that make an entrepreneur successful, are not gender specific. An unshakeable belief in one's own vision, tireless drive to achieve, carry the team and flexibility to adapt quickly when things don't fall in place, are on the top in my list .

#### **...on role of women in the fashion industry**

I think the industry employs lot of women at entry level and mid-level positions. Areas such as design, product development and merchandising benefit a lot from the detail oriented qualities that young women have. However I feel that women should not shy away from operational roles such as logistics, retail operations and finance. It is rare to see many women in such roles in the industry. I believe they are critical experiences to shape tomorrow's women CEO's. Organisation HR departments must also consciously ensure that women are entrusted with these roles and groom C-level women leaders of the future.

#### **...advice to next-gen women**

Find the work that inspires and excites you, not for short term but in a more sustainable way. Stay curious and open to learn. Genuinely care for people who work with you and remain grounded.

#### **...top tips for young girls**

Understanding the new digital world would be the key. The consumer today is visible, interactive and communicating all the time. However with this access to social media, the customer is also more demanding, has multitude of choices and staying relevant to them is more challenging than ever before.



# MASABA GUPTA

**Creative Director,  
House of Masaba**

## Masaba Gupta on “why fashion”

I chose a career in fashion because it's my passion. The best thing about the fashion industry is the huge platform it gives you. Through my label I get the opportunity to reach out to so many people and make a positive impact on society.

## ...on her early years

I've been a designer for the past 10 years but I never actually completed my diploma in fashion. I just always knew that playing around with colors and prints was what I wanted to do. My first collection was launched in 2010 and since then I've never looked back.

## ...on her key moments

I've had a lot of stand-out moments in my career. One that really stands out was last year in May when we dressed Sonam for Cannes. Cannes is a big event for the fashion industry and dressing up Sonam for this momentous occasion was a big achievement for me. Another key moment was my collaboration with Titan for a line of watches. It was such an honor to be working for such a well-reputed brand. I have also opened my first flagship store and with the Good Cow Café in Hyderabad recently I have stepped into a new market and zone and so far it's been a great experience.

## ...on things she is most proud of

I think it's too soon to say that I have a legacy but I'm proud of the fact that I've been able to stick to my signature style.

## ...on her core inspirations

I'm so inspired by the modern Indian woman and my each garment and design is made keeping her in mind. I love keeping Indian traditions in mind and contemporizing them and I think it's become a recurring theme in every collection of mine. The Indian culture is so vibrant and multifaceted that you can never run out of inspiration. I feel there's still so much for me to do!

## ...on the causes she feels for

I really feel for women who are forced to stay at home and aren't given the opportunity to work and follow their dreams. I also support causes that fight against domestic violence.

## ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

I don't think the problems one faces are as a result of being a woman, rather I think they're more concerned with age. When you are young, people don't take you as seriously, so you have to work much harder to prove yourself.

## ...on balancing professional & personal life

Maintaining a healthy balance between my professional and personal lives can get really tough sometimes especially during super stressful crunch periods like when a new collection is launching. But I make it a point to limit my screen time once I'm home. I love relaxing at home and catching up on my Netflix binges with my husband and pet Beagle.

## ...advice to next-gen women

I can't stress enough how important it is to be original and be yourself. I think in life and in this industry, it's very important not to lose yourself and the process of working hard and trying to live your dreams.



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# MOHITA INDRAYAN

**Co-Founder & Creative Director,  
Indian Clothing League (P) Ltd.**

## **Mohita Indrayan on “why fashion”**

I have always had a keen interest in art and fashion. After graduating in Economics I joined NIFT, Delhi for a Masters in Fashion Management as it was a perfect blend of creativity and business. I think joining NIFT was one of the best decisions of my life and those 2 years helped me to get a more holistic view of the fashion industry and understand my own strengths.

## **...on her early years**

I did my schooling from Delhi Public School, RK Puram, New Delhi and Maharani Gayatri Devi School, Jaipur. I did my BA (Hons.) in Economics from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi and then Masters in Fashion Business Management from National Institute of Fashion Technology, New Delhi.

I started my professional journey as a visual merchandiser and also took up a few retail consultancy and sales training projects in association with NIFT. I was member of the guest faculty at NIFT, Mohali in retail marketing and merchandising, visual merchandising and product development. I introduced a one-year Fashion Retail Management course at NIFT, Mohali. Promoted a range of women's fusion wear 'Mad Designs'. I have also been involved in the current assignment (612 League) since 2009.

## **...on her key moments**

Some of my key moments were the entry of 612 League in organised retail through Shoppers Stop in 2010. Winning the prestigious 'Pinnacle Award' as the best brand under the kidswear category for two consecutive years in 2012 and 2013. Being honoured by the Images Fashion Forum Award for the 'Best Performing Partner' by Reliance Trends for 3 years consecutively. Winning the Images 'Most Admired Kidswear Brand' award in 2017. Launching product extensions in the form of 612 League Baby, Candy Pop (partywear for girls), Spring Soul (ethnic wear for boys and girls).

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Creating a brand which offers a complete range for infants and kids and seeing it grow steadily in a short span of time has been a very satisfying experience. I feel very excited even today when I see a child dressed in 612 League products. On a personal level I feel that this journey has been a joyous one for us as a family as my older daughter Tanisha too feels inspired enough to take up fashion as a career.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Being the creative director of 612 League, my belief right from the beginning has been that each child is a star in his or her own capacity and all we need to do is to give them the confidence to do things right. Clothes play an important role in building this self-confidence from an early age. The core inspiration has always







“ **Each child is a star in his or her own capacity and all we need to do is to give them the confidence to do things right. Clothes play an important role in building this self-confidence from an early age.** ”

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been learnings from everyday life and observing kids and families around me. In the early years thinking like a mother helped me in shaping the right product and my daughters have been my biggest inspirations.

**...on the causes she feels for**

Women empowerment and promoting the cause of the girl child. We as a brand started a campaign #Unlabeled, which is broadly against stereotyping ranging from gender stereotyping to child labour.

**...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader**

I have not faced any specific problems because of being a woman. I think our industry has a very inclusive environment for all. Team building and finding people with the right approach and skill-set has been a continuous challenge as the attrition rate is very high in this field.

**...on balancing professional & personal life**

I have had the good fortune of staying in various parts of the country as my father was a senior bureaucrat in the Government of India. I am married to Manu Indrayan, Co-Founder and CEO of Indian Clothing Pvt. Ltd. and we have 2 daughters Tanisha (17) and Kaavya (13).

I have been able to maintain a healthy work life balance as my husband and I started this venture together. We often fill in the gaps and contribute towards managing household chores and spending time with the children by taking turns. The challenging part of doing a business with your spouse is that usually there is no “switch-off” time from work. Most of the work discussions do get carried to the dinner table and one has to consciously restrict these especially when you want to spend time with the children. We both often travel together and this gives us some quality time together as a couple. The extended family has been very supportive.

**...advice to next-gen women**

Believe in yourself and your venture, always learn to look at the larger picture as the short term pains will lead to gains in the long run and most importantly love your work!

**...top tips to young girls**

Understand the different career options within fashion and accordingly make a decision based on your skill set and interest. Communication skills and an eye for detail is always an advantage. Understanding your customer is the key to success in our industry.



# NANDITA MAHTANI

**Founder & Fashion Designer,  
Nandita Mahtani**

## **Nandita Mahtani on “why fashion”**

Fashion chose me. While staying in Delhi, I realised there was a gap in the market for western wear designers so I curated a store to get designers from Mumbai to Delhi. It was such an exciting venture, I decided to design a collection and then I never looked back and launched my label in 2003! It all happened very naturally, and before I knew it, I was invited to showcase my label across the world at various fashion weeks. Now I'm a member at the FDCI and often collaborate with universities to motivate young girls in this field.

## **...on her early years**

I graduated with a business degree and I don't actually have an academic background in fashion designing and that seems to be my biggest strength. Everything I have learnt has been through working. From spending time in fabric stores and mills to sitting for hours at my workshop with my master, embroiderers and designers to execute my vision. It's been a great learning curve, feeling constantly challenged to grow. Having no inhibitions and guidelines to follow, my imagination ran wild. I like to believe it's the reason why I began my career as one of the first few designers to bring resort wear to India; merging two completely different worlds - beautiful Indian hand work embroideries with very western, easy to wear silhouettes.

## **...on her key moments**

My first fashion show, 15 years ago is one of the most memorable times of my career. I can still feel the excitement and nervousness I felt seeing the collection on the ramp for the first time in front of all my friends and family. It's the moment you know all the stress and sleepless nights were worth it. I still have the picture of Malaika Arora strutting down the ramp in a nude postcard, which ended up becoming a classic piece at my label. As far as overcoming any challenges, I would say my fear of stage fright and public speaking! Both of which is a must when you are in the forefront of a fashion label.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Chasing every dream and making sure I believe in myself at all times. I've got a couple of feathers in my hat from starting my designer label by myself to interior styling, celebrity styling and now having a high street label. I've never looked at my work as a job or task, more as creative tasks that help me grow as an individual and make me happy.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Travel, music and the creative industry itself. Traveling really inspires me to create something new each time. There's so much in the world to see and borrow from. Whether it's fashion or interiors or events, I like mixing my work - taking an inspiration or design from one realm and applying it to the other.





“ At a point of time, women were only appreciated for the beauty and ability to model down a ramp. While today some of the top designers, editors, photographers, fashion stylists, CEO's at fashion houses, are all women. ”

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**...on the causes she feels for**

Right now I've been trying to do something with a close friend who has been working with acid burnt victims for a while now, to help them and bring awareness to the cause. It's a very serious topic and issue in our country that needs to be addressed.

**...on the problems faced as a 'woman' business leader**

Being asked about dating and marriage. No matter what I achieved in my professional life, people always wanted a scoop from my personal life, which had no relevance to my work. That is the biggest social barrier for a woman till date, to be defined by a man.

**...on balancing professional & personal life**

My family has been my biggest strength and support in every endeavour I have ever taken. I'm a workaholic, so I tend to choose my professional commitments over personal ones. But luckily for me my family or friends have never held that against me. This year I've promised myself to be more balanced!

**...advice to next generation women**

Believe in yourself and chase all your dreams no matter what!

**...top tips for young girls**

Hardworking!! Trends are constantly changing, what's relevant today might not be tomorrow in fashion. It's important to have an undying love for fashion, enjoy it and get inspired by everything around you. If you're sincere, there's no reason you wouldn't be successful!



# NEETA LULLA

**Founder, House of Neeta Lulla**

## Neeta Lulla on “why fashion”

I am glad to have contributed to over 300 international and national films. I never focused on the nepotism, I just didn't let any of those concepts affect me professionally. I focused on the quality of my work and let my products be the show stopper. Hardwork and focus is the only code of success and I think I mastered that somewhere.

## ...on her early years

No one would ever believe that a tomboy who dropped out of school and got married at 16 years just to avoid education would be running her own enterprise today. It was sheer focus and dedication that made it happen. I grew up in Hyderabad and studied at St. Anne's High School. As a child my disinterest in studies was evident with my terrible grades, which led to my being grounded time and again and then being a school dropout. Being more of a tomboy I was always inclined towards outdoor activities like throwball, table tennis, javeline throw, bike racing, horse riding and swimming. My mother was always worried about my grades and whether I could ever be the perfect daughter who could cook and stitch but my father always encouraged my interest in sports. He would buy me the then popular bi-annual magazine, Seventeen or Cosmopolitan available only in a couple select stores. I got married at 16 predominantly thinking it was an escape from education, without realising that with two MD DPM psychiatrists that too gold medalists and BSC graduates and MA English in the husband's family legacy, my genius idea was far from being what I thought would be a cake walk. My in-laws decided I should study further and pursue a career in cooking or tailoring. With my brief advent to magazines I opted to do what I thought was a hobby course in tailoring, which in fact was a Diploma in Pattern Making and Garment Manufacture at SNDT University's Premlila Vithaldas Polytechnic in Juhu. Academics again here was not my strength but styling and coordination interested me as I had a brilliant guru in Hemant Trivedi who saw my talent and groomed me in the art of make-up, fashion choreography and styling shows.

I was intrigued by the history behind world costumes but I could only grasp through listening. Textbook knowledge never fascinated me. Jeanne, our guest lecturer noticed my interest in fashion choreography and I found myself working with her as her assistant for almost two and a half years assisting her on her shows. In the meanwhile my college asked me to double up as a lecturer in fashion coordination. I did take it up but it took me over a year to get used to it and my teaching pattern was more interactive than academical.

I started with just one kaarigar and one sewing machine operating out of home with only ₹500 and today after 3 decades my CAGR is 15 percent per year with more than 10 lakh happy clients. I always focused on the mantra “be your own bride” which means every outfit is never a replica of another and the bride is more important than the outfit. This worked very well for my brand. In spite of having only one standalone store, as a brand we are very integrated in the DNA of the bride and hence business has been good. I am the only fashion designer to have won 4 national awards. I have not restricted my brand to only fashion designing. I have done ad films, television serials, costume designing and weddings. I was one





“ **I draw my inspiration from everyday life. Life is the best teacher and if you pay close attention, there is a teaching you can learn every single day. Growth and inspiration starts with yourself.** ”

of the first brands to foray into the online retail space. I introduced ready to wear saris in 2001 and the concept of fiber optics in 2017. I supported homegrown fashion before it became a trend with every collection having Banarasi, Kalamkari and Kanjeevaram.

#### ...on her key moments

Struggle is an experiential learning process to better your craft. When we work hand in hand with challenges of projecting glamour to be documented in history, the pressure on everyone involved was huge. The foundation of education teamed with organisational skills and a passion to do something different with every project I worked on, was what motivated me. My first film was Tamacha, where I helped putting the look and clothes together for Kimi Katkar and South Indian actress Bhanupriya but Chandni benchmarked it for me. My creative genius got appreciated and when

I got an opportunity to work with the reigning queens Juhi Chawla, Aishwarya Rai and Sridevi, more work fetched in.

#### ...on things she is most proud of

Inspiring others. I feel successful people are those who help others to succeed along the way. Success isn't selfish.

#### ...on her core inspirations

I draw my inspiration from everyday life. Life is the best teacher and if you pay close attention, there is a teaching you can learn every single day. Growth and inspiration starts with yourself. I'm inspired by tough individuals. Oprah Winfrey, Obama, Mother Theresa, Stephen King and Frida Kahlo.

#### ...on the causes she feels for

Neeta Lulla as a brand always has a deeper purpose than just being a runway





brand. Fashion needs to always promote a social message because fashion is a mass concept. #SheIsMe was my personal tribute to tell the women of the world that despite their flaws and limitations, they are beautiful, magical and strong. It was an inspirational showcase. People around the world were fed up with violence against women, with the lack of accountability for abusers, and with politicians and others who normalize abuse or fail to combat it. I was quite emotionally disturbed after hearing about foeticides and later Nirbhaya and feel that we as women who stand up for their own right in our industry should combat these issues in raising our voice or creating awareness in some way. Thus a lot of my shows addressed these issues through inspired collections.

#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

Women entrepreneurs are never taken seriously and unfortunately we do live in times which are more skewed towards men at large.

#### ...on balancing professional and personal life

I believe both need to complement one another. I have a great support system in my family, which has encouraged me to take on new challenges constantly. Now when I look back I don't think I could ever be only a homemaker. My family is also involved in my business in some way or the other. However I always make it a point to take family holidays and cut away from work every 6 months.

#### ...advice for the next-gen women

Never say no and take advantage of all

opportunities and step out of your comfort zone. There is nothing like a man's job or a woman's job, those demarcations are just in the mind.

#### ...top tips for young girls

Find your passion and a mission you believe in. When you feel like you make a difference in people's lives, it becomes so much more than a job. Belief and positivity can move mountains. To be at the top, mental and physical health are both crucial to success; I always make sure to give myself a set amount of time a day to do what I feel my body needs, whether that be taking a yoga class, meditating in my apartment, or treating myself to an extremely healthy meal. Always be creative and innovative and don't follow the herd, don't believe in rat races and don't give in to peer pressure.





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# NINA LEKHI

**Managing Director &  
Chief Design Curator,  
Baggit India Pvt. Ltd.**



## **Nina Lekhi on “why fashion”**

I took up my passion, got into the fashion industry and started designing and selling my own bags. I feel great about the decision, since despite the ups and downs I could make a mark of my own.

## **...on her early years**

I was the youngest brat of a nuclear Sindhi family. My dad moved to Mumbai from Pune in the 50s and made it big here. I have done my Commercial Art and Design course from Sophia Polytechnic. Before designing and selling my own bags, working in retail space for some time helped me in learning the dynamics of retail and also to have an understanding about the customer as well as business perspective.

## **...on her key moments**

One of the key moments was the decision to launch the first Baggit exclusive business outlet where the call had to be taken regarding volume, reach, value and business growth. Since it was the initial and experimental phase and there was no benchmark to be looked upon, everything was risky and we successfully overcame the challenge with the overall growth in the business.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Some of the proud achievements are going into organised retail through shop-in-shop formats, opening our own exclusive business outlets and also launching my own label, Nina Lekhi, recently.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Anything that is new inspires me and I take it up. One of the motivating factors in my success has been my perseverance, determination and a lot of discipline, which I've learnt along the way. It gave the business a chance to grow into the admired brand that it is today. Hence, I believe that it is this journey that has motivated me to become a successful entrepreneur.

## **...on the causes she feels for**

In India, women are not given the front seat as far as career is concerned. We need to take effective steps in creating entrepreneurial jobs for women and create an ecosystem where she can thrive and succeed.

## **...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

Being a business leader, every woman goes through the tough time of balancing her personal and professional life. One of the common challenges/social barrier faced by her is the male prejudice in the industry as well as the whole eco system.

## **...on balancing professional & personal life**

I have divided my week into two halves. I visit Baggit head office from Wednesday through Friday. Saturday mornings are allocated for retail store visits and for customer interactions. This perfectly takes care of my work front. Saturday evenings, I drive up to the hills of Katarkhadak, Pune and stay there until early Wednesday morning. This gives me ample time to spend with my daughter Vedoci and my husband, Manoj Lekhi.





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“ **One of the motivating factors in my success has been my perseverance, determination and a lot of discipline, which I've learnt along the way. It gave the business a chance to grow into the admired brand that it is today.** ”

### ...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion

International exposure to retail - Make your brand raise its bar and come on the scale of International standards. It is a must to travel and gain international exposure.

Capacity to travel and experience retail - Studying the retail trends Internationally helps to have an overall retail experience which can be incorporated with the brand and products in depth.

Financial and technology understanding - The understanding to balance financial flaws and errors and direct the expenses with a financial budget allotted to each department makes it easier to monitor the expenses.

### ...on role of women in the fashion industry

A woman needs to be self dependent and possess decision making capabilities and become a role model for other budding entrepreneurial talents.

### ...on participation of women in the fashion industry

There are many women in the fashion industry at leading roles, across the globe. But the core team i.e. designers, is a healthy mix of men and women. One of the areas where women can effectively contribute is the fashion educational sector.

### ...advice to next-gen women

In order not to get too complacent, one needs to always be with younger people so that the learning and experimentation continues. Don't play safe, start taking risks because it will help you explore new dimensions. Such kind of risk will always help one to make one stronger both spiritually and physically.

### ...top tips for young girls

It is important to understand the global Indian consumer, specially when the world is shrinking in terms of customer reach. Being abreast with the technology across the value chain also holds utmost importance. The brand also has to follow the market trends and delight the end consumer.



# PAYAL JAIN

Principal Fashion  
Designer, A Design Indi



## Payal Jain on “why fashion”

I have had a childhood steeped in painting, sculpture and music, with parents who were passionate about the arts! My mom painted and did ceramics before my birth but, switched completely to Indian classical music and took to playing the sitar once I was born. My dad is a consulting engineer by profession yet he also possesses a strong inclination towards art and classical music. I went for every art exhibition and every musical concert that happened in the city. My sense of proportion, aesthetics and design all evolved from this point onwards, growing into a passion for art and architecture. I was very keen on pursuing architecture as a profession, when a close friend of my father's suggested fashion as a career. Once I discovered my love for fashion and textiles, there was no looking back. Most of my collections over the years speak of art forms and artists as inspirations.

## ...on her early years

I studied at Modern School, New Delhi and was a fairly good academic student. I always loved art, but opted to pursue science in school in order to pursue architecture. Then I did B.Com (Hons.) from Jesus and Mary College, as I was sure I wanted to work for myself and needed to understand the basics of finance. During my college years, I chased my love for fashion and worked through summer breaks at various export houses, trying to get hands-on experience of the apparel business. I also tried my hand at creating a small collection, which was successful amongst close friends and helped crystallize my thoughts to pursue my passion wholeheartedly.

I started exploring fashion colleges in the US, but there was no internet at that time and all correspondence happened through post and letters. After a series of telephonic and personal interviews, I joined FIDM, San Francisco.

I returned to India armed with a degree in Fashion Design from FIDM, San Francisco having graduated summa-cum-laude. The fashion industry was in its nascent stages at that point. Nobody understood the very specialised skill and education required to follow a career in fashion. I started my studio in Hauz Khas Village, beginning my label by creating outfits with ‘A western body and an Indian soul’. However, there was no understanding or appreciation for a western way of dressing at that time, even by working, career-oriented women. Everyone wanted a saree or a salwar-kameez, willing to spend lakhs for Indian wear, but refusing to pay a few thousands for a well-tailored and immaculately cut business suit. Fashion designers were treated as glorified tailors, very unlike the celebrities they are considered today, with huge fan followings! Such was the scenario in those days, a far cry from today's fashion awareness, when every woman is wearing western clothing in small and big cities across India. Fashion has evolved beyond anyone's imagination, and it is my absolute privilege to have been a part of this revolution!

## ...on her key moments

My very first show in Delhi was to collect funds for Tamanna Special School in October, 1994 and it changed the way I began looking at my professional education. Ever since, I have worked with several NGOs for cancer prevention, educating slum children, income generation for women, blind relief and more, collecting funds



over the years. I truly believe that I must put my education to good use and give back to society, in some small way, through my education and experience.

#### ...on things she is most proud of

My love for India and its glorious past, rich culture, vast textile heritage, incredible costumes, musical legacy, art and architecture have all come together to inspire my work in fashion. My team and I take painstaking care of each phase of design realisation. I am deeply involved in all the textile development that goes into each collection; from approving every fiber to the actual processing of the weave itself. I feel that each garment is an heirloom, to be passed down generations with pride and it takes the wearer on a resplendent journey of heritage and textile, telling a unique story. My creations speak a global language yet possess a strong Indian soul. I try to marry the East and West in my designs. "I believe my designs have a western body and an Indian soul".

#### ...on her core inspirations

My fashion label is an extension of my personality, as is the case for any artist or designer and their expression through a creative medium. My deepest joy lies in being able to see what I have envisioned, come alive on a weavers loom or embroiders. It takes a lot of time, patience, love and passion to wait and watch each collection slowly take shape... the process can take anywhere from 10 to 24 months and every step of the way is magical and full of gratification. In the final result, however this may never be visible to an on-looker but the pleasure of creating it from a simple thought is absolutely unparalleled.

>



“**You must love, live, breathe, sleep and dream your work and each creation must be like a part of you, which needs to be given a lease of life! Work hard with sincerity and integrity. There are no short cuts to fame and success.**”

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#### ...on the causes she feels for

Women related causes have always been close to my heart, be it working with women from slums for income generation, teaching life skills to mentally and physically challenged women, working with craft women who continue to promote age-old traditions of hand embroidery, weaving and block printing, etc. I spend a large part of my time working with these talented women to create my fashion collections, season after season and it is my constant endeavour to work with different clusters to help promote fast-vanishing traditions and techniques each season. A percentage of funds from sales go back to these village women and help improve their daily lives, bringing education, nutrition and basic amenities to their families. I feel blessed to have been born an Indian and have the opportunity to be able to work with this endless heritage of textiles, embroideries and crafts.

#### ...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader

I don’t feel there have been any challenges for me as a woman in the industry, beyond those faced by every other working, professional woman. I felt my initial working years were a struggle, more so because I was considered to be too young to run a business and not because I was a woman. I have always believed that women are equal and nothing can come in the way, if one is confident of one’s path. The fashion industry is very liberal and non-judgemental, discrimination on the basis of sex really does not exist here.

#### ...on balancing professional and personal life

Family is paramount for me and they come before everything else in the world. My parents, my husband and twin boys complete my family and fill my heart with endless joy. I am an only child and have no siblings, hence this nuclear family makes up my world. My parents are my closest allies and best friends, supporting every step of my journey unconditionally.

#### ...advice to next-gen women

In today’s time of extreme competition, it is becoming harder and harder to start one’s own label. Even if you manage to get it off the ground, you need a lot of funds and support to set up proper infrastructure, machinery, equipment, production standards, government compliances and human resource skills to employ and keep satisfied people. Besides this, you need to be equipped to be your own marketing manager, PR person, sales rep, creative director, production manager, designer, socialite, finance manager, etc. It is a tough and challenging job and one that can only be done if there is immense passion and commitment. It is a big high each day, but comes with stiff competition, unfair trade practices, staff poaching, design thefts, copyright challenges and many more challenges. The risks are many and rewards are few in the beginning. But it is a hugely gratifying and creatively satisfying profession, where everything you imagine in your wildest dreams can take shape and form in a matter of months. You can also create substantial income for many people from embroiderers to tailors, weavers, craft persons, and that I believe is the biggest gift you can possibly give back to the society.

#### ...top tips for young girls

There is much more to the fashion industry than Indian bridal and couture. My advise to the youth would be to foray into accessories, footwear, bags, lingerie, menswear, kidswear, women’s sports and leisure wear, home furnishings, lifestyle products and much more. There is far too much competition and too many players in the women’s wear segment and its time for young people to experiment into other spaces and make successful brands, which will reach out to the world!





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# POONAM BHAGAT

Director, Anaro Designs Pvt. Ltd.

## Poonam Bhagat on “why fashion”

I got into fashion by accident and not by design! Having always had a penchant for fabrics and colors, I was continuously helping friends put their clothes together so when some one suggested I have an exhibition I jumped at the idea . TAIKA was born in January 1991 and I hotfooted to Gwalior, picked up chanderis, went scouring the emporia for natural fabrics from various states , slogged over designs for 4 months and was ready for my debut in April, which was an instant sell out. There was no looking back from then on. With no design qualification under my belt I learnt through trial and error on the job.

## ...on her early years

I graduated from Lady Shri Ram college, New Delhi, in Psychology (Hons). I wanted to become a psychiatrist but was daunted at the prospect of dissecting cadavers to acquire the requisite MBBS degree so instead of pursuing counseling I turned to advertising and marketing.

As soon as I finished my education in 1980 I started working for a company that was an advisor to General Electric, Babcock and Wilcox, Ballast Nedam, etc . Three years later I switched to the Taj Mahal Hotel, Mansingh Road , and became their Public Relations Officer where I had the honour and privilege of meeting luminaries like Jackie Kennedy Onassis, Alec Guinness, David Rockefeller, Walter Cronkite, Pierre Cardin and others. It was a very rich learning experience.

## ...on her key moments

I fondly remember my very first show, hosted by Melange - an eclectic multi designer boutique - at the Royal Opera House in Mumbai in October 1994 . It was my biggest accomplishment as it came close at heels to my biggest challenge, which was walking out of my husband's home one month before with just one bag and a label that was only 3 years old.

## ...on things she is most proud of

Jumping off the deep end and becoming self sufficient and economically independent. That is my biggest legacy to myself.

## ...on her core inspirations

Inspiration hits like a lightening bolt when you're least expecting it. Any stimulus can trigger it. Mostly for me it's art, architecture , tapestries and nature. Motivation comes along with inspiration. They are soul mates and walk hand in hand. As long as you're inspired you're motivated and vice versa.



# TAIKA

POONAM BHAGAT



- > Company:  
ANARO DESIGNS PVT. LTD.
- > Brand:  
TAIKA BY POONAM BHAGAT
- > Website:  
WWW.TAIKABYPOONAMBHAGAT.COM

“*Inspiration hits like a lightning bolt when you're least expecting it. Any stimulus can trigger it. Mostly for me it's art, architecture, tapestries and nature. Motivation comes along with inspiration.*”

#### ...on the causes she feels for

Women need to be respected, educated and made to feel equal to men. They need to stand on their feet and become economically independent. The objectification and subjugation of women by men has to stop by creating awareness at grass root levels. I have been associated with White Ribbon Alliance, which takes up the cause of Safe Motherhood and Earth Foundation, which supports the girl child. Both are wonderful causes.

#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

The only thing one needs to be able to do more effectively as a woman is to manage the labor and manage the finances. Rest is a catwalk!

#### ...on balancing professional and personal life

As long as you want to make time for both you do. It's as simple as that. Short little holidays also help.

#### ...advice to next generation women

Be your own. Be individualistic. Be different. Be strong. There is nothing women cannot do better than men if they apply their minds to it.

#### ...top tips for young girls

One of my favorite quotes from Oscar Wilde, "Be yourself, everyone else is taken". Do not copy other designers. Create your own style and stick to it. Keep evolving that style as you go along and never get bored of it. Boredom equals death of creativity. Be curious, read, paint, write and do other creative stuff that keeps you alive.



# PRIYANKA MODI

**Creative Head, AM:PM**

## **...Priyanka Modi on “why fashion”**

Since childhood, I was always interested in clothes, their construction. I remember that I used to design lots of outfits for all my Barbies and I guess the fascination never faded. Even today, I don't think I can imagine myself doing anything else, so I feel great about the fact that I could pursue my dream!

## **...on her early years**

I was born into an affluent business family from Kanpur and did my initial schooling there itself. Later I went on to study at the Mayo College Girls School in Ajmer and completed my schooling. Since I always wanted to pursue fashion design, I enrolled into the Pearl Academy of Fashion in New Delhi after which I went to the London School of Fashion for my higher education.

After my graduation I was offered to work with a Parisian label run by an Indian couple called 'Nitya'. It was subtle, with a beautiful aesthetic and I immediately took a shine to it. After a few years I got engaged to Ankur and even worked with my mother-in-law, Anju Modi, for a short stint, before eventually starting AM:PM.

## **...on her key moments**

Our first show in 2009 and the opening of our first exclusive store in 2010 were defining moments. Starting your own business and running it always has numerous challenges, big or small. What I'm most proud of is that even after all the ups and downs, we've managed to remain true to our values and our customers, and find ourselves on sound footing.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

It has been fabulous 15 years working in this industry. Since the brand's inception, Ankur and I have worked together seamlessly, constantly working towards complementing each other's skills and areas of expertise. We have managed to retain the essence of the same in everything we've created till date. When we started, fashion on-the-runway or in-real-time meant either Indian or Western clothing. There was no in-between. We came to realise that there was an untapped demand for clothing that didn't have to be a part of the Indian or Western dichotomy - and AM:PM wonderfully fills that gap. Having created a subtle, unique language is by far the legacy we hope to leave through our work.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Everything from nature, art styles, people, to architecture and interiors can drive me. The truth is, inspiration is everywhere. But India and everything Indian has been a constant inspiration for us and it is astounding how every season we can still find so much more to be inspired from!







> Company: AM:PM  
> Brand: AM:PM  
> Website: WWW.AMPM.IN



### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

I don't think I faced issues as a business leader because I was a woman per se. It was probably more because I have a creatively bent brain and you need one that balances it with logic and reason. Hence the stress on collaborating with people who have different strengths yet share the same vision.

### ...on balancing professional & personal life

Well AM:PM for starters is a family business! My husband Ankur, and me, and my brother Anirudh is the third part. I also have two beautiful boys and my mother-in-law, who complete our little family. It can sometimes become very difficult to balance both, but I've kept strict timelines for myself at work and home, so that I can give my best to both.

### ...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion

It's easy to put on the shoes of an entrepreneur. But in order to be successful, one needs to be able to take risks, prioritise work above all else, and have the courage to face failure. There will be lots before you succeed. Creativity is the essence of fashion, but without a good understanding of the business side, it is difficult to sustain a fashion brand and make it profitable.

One of the most important things I have learnt over the years is that you can't do it all. You need to inculcate the art of delegation in your daily life. You can't run a successful business all by yourself, you need people who believe in and share your vision.

### ...on role of women in the fashion industry

Fashion is one of the rare industries, which give women equal or higher footing. Be it designers, models, photographers, make-up artists, magazine editors, journalists or stylists, women have reached the pinnacle in all these

fields. It is also women as customers that drive the fashion industry and it is again celebrities that are women, who impact its course time and again.

### ...on participation of women in the fashion industry

There is enough and more participation of women in the field of fashion and they can and are contributing effectively in every area of the industry.

### ...advice for the next-gen women

Be true, be unique, be fearless.

### ...top tips for young girls

Fashion should be both comfortable and stylish in equal measure. One should never compromise on exemplary quality for the sake of staying in-trend. Avoid imitating others and stay true to your own, unique style.



# RANU BATHWAL

**Founder & Chief Operating Officer, RBA Lifestyle**

## Ranu Bathwal on “why fashion”

It happened simultaneously when I started a new phase of my life post marriage, having shifted to an absolutely new city where I knew no one. Switching from banking to fashion happened like a natural transition but it had its own challenges. When we shifted to Ahmedabad, I felt the need to curate a store that would have more dynamic inventory and do more of trunk shows to get and showcase fresh talent in the city. Now after launching a multi-designer website which works on the lines of an online exhibition, I look back at the journey and feel so happy when I see so many new things happening in the city. People are more fashion conscious and experimental than before and more receptive to new ideas.

## ...on her early years

I passed out from Welham Girls High School. Being the only child, I was called back by my parents to my hometown where I finished my graduation and then went to Delhi to pursue an MBA degree. Post that I was campus placed at Kotak, which happened by chance and worked in Delhi in the banking sector for 5 years.

## ...on her key moments

In June 2017, when PopupGalleria.com went online, it was an overwhelming moment. Working on the website from scratch without having any technical background was a challenge initially but I did overcome it by focusing on my involvement in the user interface. Another biggest challenge was managing work alongside my year-and-a-half old daughter. There were times when I almost gave up, however, time management and support from my husband helped me get through it.

## ...on things she is most proud of

The goodwill and trust of vendors, designers and customers.

## ...on her core inspirations

My core inspiration was to make a technically sound and most user-friendly and interactive website with unique curations, be it fashion or lifestyle, over a period of two years. I want to build a mutually beneficial platform for designers to help the fresh talent grow and sustain in the competitive fashion industry. The main issue is of trust and co-dependence in this industry.

## ...on the causes she feels for

Education for all and emphasis on personal hygiene is what can give us a better future.





“ Think like a buyer, give attention to details and do multi-tasking, in order to be successful. ”



#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

I belong to a very traditional business family, wherein none of the women had entered the family business. However, I grew up seeing women supporting and contributing to business from the outside in one way or the other. I saw the similar story at my in-laws place too. I was fortunate enough that there was always support for me when I started working first from my father's place and then at my father-in-law's. Somehow, I still do feel women need to put in more hard work and multi-task in order to be taken seriously.

#### ...on balancing professional & personal life

I have been married for six years and have a two-year-old daughter. The biggest challenge when I was setting up the venture was to manage work and my daughter at the same time. I wouldn't say it's been very easy and I do get guilty at times to the extent that I almost gave up, however, I also draw strength from my family to keep doing what I strongly believe in.

#### ...advice to next generation women

Be yourself and express yourself freely. If you strongly believe in something then go all out and get it.

#### ...top tips for young girls

Image consultants, stylists and personal shoppers as career options have a huge potential and also sustainable fashion as an industry has a huge potential.



- > Company:  
RBA LIFESTYLE
- > Brand:  
POPUYGALLERIA
- > Website:  
WWW.POPUGALLERIA.COM

# REYNU TAANDON

Managing Director & Chief Designer,  
Mynah Design

## Reynu Taandon on “why fashion”

Fashion has always been my passion and when your passion becomes your dream, it is the best thing for anyone. I feel truly blessed because I get to follow my passion, my dream. And I am honored to be a part of our dynamic fashion industry.

## ...on her early years

I did my schooling from Salwan and my graduation (Bachelor's in Business Administration) from Delhi University. I was given complete freedom and independence, to pursue whatever I felt was best for me. My parents thought educating their daughter was of utmost importance. In the initial year of my career I worked with my husband in our export house and designed for many international brands for few years and later on in the year 1999 I started my own label Mynah's Reynu Taandon. In the beginning when I started my label, I had 5 workers and now I have a manpower of more than 200 people.

## ...on her key moments

There have been so many! The very first one was when I showed the self-confidence of being the only woman in the family to work and build her own business. It was an achievement in itself whether I would have found success or not. Today, it's heart-warming to see that my brand has been appreciated by people. I will always remember the year 2006 as that was the year I became a part of FDCI. And I am honored to be one of the board members of the organisation. I am deeply appreciative of the fact that the FDCI has recognised my efforts in the field of fashion, textile and craftsmanship.

## ...on things she is most proud of

My journey has been a rollercoaster ride that I truly can say that as much as humble the beginning was, equally challenging were the days ahead. Success indeed came, but it came after immense struggles! Being the senior couture designer is the most wonderful part of the journey. It pleases me to see that people have accepted me as one of the couture designer and appreciated my designs and craftsmanship.

## ...on her core inspirations

I travel a lot, it inspires me to create something different every time. All my creations are inspired by different cultures. But the most important thing that keeps me motivated to create more is the happiness of my clients when they wear my outfits. The smiles of brides when they wear my creations for their big day. The gleam in their eyes is like a breath of fresh air that you need to keep going and keep creating new designs.





“**Being the senior couture designer is the most wonderful part of the journey. It pleases me to see that people have accepted me as one of the couture designers and appreciated my designs and craftsmanship.**”

- > Company:  
MYNAH DESIGN
- > Brand:  
MYNAH'S REYNU TAANDON
- > Website/Social Media Handle:  
@TAANDONREYNU (INSTAGRAM)

### ...on the causes she feels for

I have always worked towards empowering women in the society by providing them much needed help, job, etc. I wanted them to have the same opportunity I had, to fulfill their family necessities, dreams and hopes. I wanted them to stand for themselves and not depend on anyone else. I also support 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' cause because educating women help educate the whole family and not just one person.

### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

The fashion industry is extremely demanding and women still often have to make a choice between a family life and a career. They don't always have the support to make their career as their priority and then, there is the inevitable tension for a woman conflicting between her role in society and her role in her family. Women entrepreneurs continue to face challenges today and I hope they will find a firm support system and follow their dreams, as I did.

### ...on balancing professional & personal life

I am blessed with two wonderful kids Nikhita and Rahil and my support system my husband, Sunil Tandon. These 3 are the pillars of my life that help me keep going and balance my professional and personal life. And I wouldn't want this any way around.

### ...advice to next-gen women

Sometimes people run after only success and are not able to hold that success for long. In my opinion if we pursue our dreams with passion, then we will be able to enjoy the journey towards success and will be able to hold that for long.

### ...top tips for young girls

One tip I want to give to the young girls is that whosoever wants a career in fashion, there is no substitute to hard work. I am very particular about my time and schedule. I work six days a week, morning to evening sometimes even late at night. If young girls want to have a career in fashion they need to give their 100 percent. Also you need to have confidence in what you are designing because it's all about you, how you see the world.



# RINA DHAKA

**Fashion Designer**

## **Rina Dhaka on “why fashion”**

The time when I chose fashion as a career, there was no fashion in India as such. There was no organised fashion that time. After my schooling I went to a fashion institute, called Polytechnic, which was the only one that time. I did rest of my studies by correspondence. One thing led to another. I wanted to get away from home, so I did a training project with Inter Raft and even trained under Evan Grandhall. I worked hard, even on Sundays, which is the nature of this work.

## **...on her early years**

I entered the Indian fashion scene around the late eighties. When I joined the industry, life was not that expensive, pots and honey. It was a very simple time. There was no concept of money or trade and the world of Indian fashion was a different one altogether. We lived from one show to another. It was all about great energy. There was no divide between Mumbai and Delhi. And today it has really paid me off because some of those people who I coordinated or worked with during that time, were pioneers and leaders from the glamour industry. Today, the concept has really changed, it's all about business and some designers have done extremely well.

## **...on her key moments**

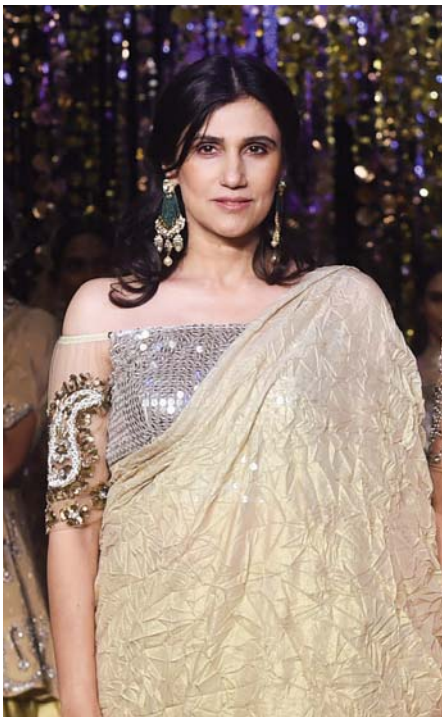
Every day was so much fun. I remember, Late Prabhudda Dasgupta, a very talented photographer, once tried to shoot me for a magazine cover. But I never wanted it as I believed I was a designer and not a model. So in the end he told me to stop posing and go wash my face. I washed off my face and with my wet hair he just took my picture. That picture was used by Oberoi Hotel in Mumbai. It even became the room key of Oberois. There were many amazing moments. It was nice watching Milind Soman and Arjun Rampal backstage trying to hang their clothes at one of our shows in Singapore with Rohit Bal, as male models never had a changing room. It was great to see Aishwarya Rai doing the catwalk when she was a model and also Namrata Shirodhkar.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Lycra churidar, which is worn by everybody today, is truly my invention. I was getting married in 1990's. I was so used to tights as I was young, so I made a lycra churidar and that has truly been a legacy of mine to this country.

## **...on her core inspirations**

It is a constant challenge and every day is a struggle. Right now I have barely any time. I have a show to do as Amazon Fashion Week is coming up and so I have to struggle constantly. Sometimes the ideas you have may do not conform to what is going to be the trend of the period, which you uniformly follow in a way.





**“I feel it is a male centric response system in India. When they hear the same thing from a man, they pay heed faster than to a woman.”**



**...on the causes she feels for**

I love the ‘Me-too’ campaign. I love equal work, equal pay for men and women. Since I’m a girl I do not want to be treated differently also. Safety of women is one of the biggest issues. I work with Smile Foundation and I am also one of their brand ambassadors. Whenever I do a fashion show which involves high cost in glamour, we pitch in such a way that they benefit more and then all proceeds of the show go for educating the girl child. The Smile Foundation has its centres all over India and that is one way I am contributing to the society. Right now I’m also designing 300 sarees, without any charges, for them to sell and raise funds.

**...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

If you are dealing with male labour, you can have issues leading them. You can have problems in making them listen to you. Women labourers face problem of toilets as some factories and buildings do not have the facility. As a female employer I feel it is a male centric response system in India.

When they hear the same thing from a man, they pay heed faster than to a woman. But they do improve over the time. When I was really young people used to tell me, “Where is Rina Dhaka?”. Since I used to look like a small girl, be in trousers and people would not take me seriously at times. Younger generations have come up now and they are not trying to change. I never wore shorts, low necklines, etc., to work and gradually it became a habit, as I never wanted to distract the workers. Today things have changed and they have adjusted to styles and fashion.

**...on balancing professional & personal life**

It was always hard. That was a working women’s challenge where in you are torn to run to work for 24 hours. You are travelling and have shows or are working late. My children were small and I really feel they too sacrificed as I did. I was really fortunate to have a husband who had both mothering and fathering skills. We hired a nanny. My mother too pitched in and I managed to go to work. But after 3.30 pm you do want to see your children. It is not that easy.

**...advice to next-gen women**

It is not an easy road out there. Be it male or female, just don’t give up. Learning is a continuous process and age is just a number.

**...top tips for young girls**

You should not hold yourself back because you are a girl. For younger girls who are in fashion I would say just be sensible. I always carry a wrap, a shrug or a man’s shirt like a layer, depending upon the locale. For a night wear I might take off my layer, but during the day, when out, I do wear my layer. I’m not saying it is required. But sadly a lot of society people don’t view you correctly. If while modeling, models are wearing bikinis or tank tops, that is fine. But for hitching a bus or walking on the road they need to carry a shrug or a top shirt. Though it does not bother me, but I don’t want anybody getting into any sort of harm.



# RITU BERI

**Fashion Designer & CEO,  
Ritu Beri Designs Pvt. Ltd.**

## **Ritu Beri on “why fashion”**

I am a dreamer I enjoy impossible situations, I put all my efforts to bring challenges to reality. My work is greatly influenced by my personal state of mind. I love to explore new possibilities and work in an inspired mode while mostly designing to satisfy myself. I am inspired by life! I believe that every new day comes with new ideas, aspirations and dreams. At a very early age I started handling my business, exploring all the impossibilities the world had to offer. When I started out, fashion was not considered a serious business, just a creative indulgence. Slowly, everybody began realising its scope; today there are so many new facets to fashion. One could be an embroidery designer, a textile specialist, a footwear designer, a makeup artist or even a stylist. Today, everybody wants to be associated with the glamour of fashion.

## **...on her early years**

I come from a Defense background. Army parties are very formal, structural and British in their approach to dressing. The environment encourages you to be fastidious about your appearance. My mother is beautiful and is always stunningly dressed. I remember as a child, she lit up the army evenings with not just her looks, but her intrinsic style. I always love to watch her dressing up. Her pastel chiffons that floated around her, her elegance in pearls and diamonds were her trademark. My father, too, is an immaculate dresser and has a great sense of colours. With such fine examples, around me, I had to be influenced and I ended up wanting to dress up everyone like that.



Further, I was amongst the first batch of the National Institute of Fashion Technology. Many will know, that back then NIFT was affiliated to FIT New York. My days at NIFT were amongst my most memorable days and they led me to my destiny. It was in the late nineties, a time of massive change came in India and a sort of social revolution began. I feel privileged to be part of the prestigious first batch of 22 fashion graduates and at the other end we were totally lost. Back then fashion was not considered a serious business - it was a play thing for a small elite.

## **...on her key moments**

I am very proud to be the first Asian to head a French fashion house beyond my dreams. Back then not many Indian designers had even considered doing a show in Paris and for an Indian designer to be heading a French fashion house was a dream come true. A heady feeling! There was a lot of pressure from all around the world. In 1997, being featured in one of the best international fashion forecast magazine ‘Promostyl’ was truly memorable for me back then, each opportunity brought along incredible experience. Every tough situation teaches a lesson and makes one grow. Sure, I learnt a lot through every tough bottleneck and came out much stronger. But I would not change a thing that I had done. I have no regrets, just cherished lessons.





### **...on things she is most proud of**

Faith makes the world go around, 'one must give back and thus replenish the source one receives everything from' I endorse that belief wholeheartedly. 'The Luxury League' was born of that belief; to promote our heritage of culture and creativity through luxury. My desire is to open the Indian doors to luxury brands from various countries. To learn from the masters. To bring them on board. To make the voice of India dependable abroad. To create an increased pool of knowledge and competence. To eventually strengthen the influence of India in the global luxury industry. I have also been appointed as the Advisor to KVIC in 2016. Khadi is the oldest and a traditional form of hand-spun fabric of India. The endeavour is to give khadi a makeover to set its foot in the global scenario.

### **...on her core inspirations**

My muse is every woman who looks inside for inspirations. I thrive to take every still moment and transform it into a pulsating giant wheel.

### **...on the causes she feels for**

Since the birth of my daughter, I became more and more sensitive to children and I created 'The Blessed Heart Foundation', a charity for children. The mission of the foundation is to support the less privileged children and to create awareness about autism. Baby Beri, an occasion wear line for kids, is pre-disposed towards supporting the under privileged children of India. The funds received from this show go towards supporting children suffering from autism through 'The Blessed Hearts Foundation'. Autism is a complex, lifelong disability affecting a person's communicative, interpersonal behaviour, imagination and social abilities. What's heart rendering is that the awareness of autism in India remains abysmally low. So, the idea is to have a gala time with the kids, spread awareness and at the same time doing our bit for charity.

>



“ **The government has been trying to break down the male-centric mindset moving more to women empowerment. A large and increasing number of middle and upper-class women with higher education have blazed a shining trail through the Indian economy.** ”

- > Company:  
RITU BERI DESIGNS PVT. LTD.
- > Brand:  
RITU BERI & BABY BERI
- > Website:  
WWW.RITUBERI.COM



#### ...on the problems faced by a 'woman' business leader

My creations are versatile and are influenced by my personal state of mind. I love to explore impossibilities. I have done many collections taking inspiration from different cultures. The past twenty-seven years I have chased my dreams and worked on ambitious projects. I want to explore the impossibilities and work in an inspired mode only to satisfy myself and my passion. I love taking risks and like to follow my own path. I'm a perfectionist and aim at achieving the impossible, always.

#### ...on balancing professional & personal life

I, as a person, am very family and friends oriented. I am more of a home-bird, love my own space, am very chilled out and relaxed. I am a warrior. I am guts. I love taking risks and like to take my own path instead of following any. Life is short. Take the juice out of it and enjoy all you do.

For me family has always been a priority and there is no compromise on work either. It's all about striking the balance and we get there sooner or later. When working for yourself, I am working 24x7. I try my best to find a balance between achieving all at work and spending time with my daughter, Gia and family. Sometimes I take Gia to office with me. The key is to give your best to whatever you are doing at a certain point in time. It is about rather than quantity.

#### ...advice to next-gen women

My vision for the future of the Indian luxury industry is infinite! I urge our talented craftsmen, designers and artisans to develop corporate houses and establish strong brand identities by focusing on niche aspects of Indian culture.

A case in point is that several Japanese designers who have today established successful international brand names whilst respecting the spirit of the Japanese culture in their design. This has enabled them to carve out a niche for themselves in the competitive international world. And this dream I see, with open eyes, everyday!

#### ...top tips for young girls

Success is the outcome, as such I don't dwell on it... I stop at perfection. Having said that, I think a successful woman should know how to put a handle on the universe.



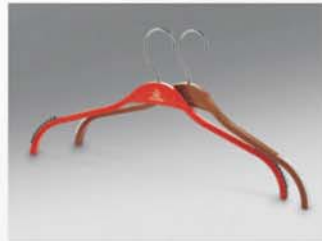


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# RIYA VIPAN KALRA

Co-Founder, RVK



“**We have achieved a lot in the past one-year with the help of our team and their hard work. Our brand is now available in most of the marketplaces online and in about 65 Multi Brand Outlets pan India.**”

- > Company:  
RVK
- > Brand:  
CANDYSKIN
- > Website:  
WWW.CANDYSKIN.COM

## Riya Vipán Kalra on “why fashion”

My sister and I always wanted to start our own brand. We have both done our post graduation from fashion schools and then worked for a while to gain some experience in the fashion industry. I think we have made a good decision to start our own brand as we have learnt a lot since we first started and are still learning something new everyday.

## ...on her early years

I have done my under graduation in Business Administration and my post graduation (Masters) in Fashion Brand Management. I have been working since the age of 16 with my father, even when I was studying I would work with him every summer. I also did an internship with a jewelry brand called Maria Francesca Pepe. I also had the privilege to work with them during London fashion week, which enabled me to learn and gain more knowledge.

## ...on things she is most proud of

I think we still have a long way to go, as our brand is only 1 year old. We however have achieved a lot in the past one-year with the help of our team and their hard work. Our brand is now available in most of the marketplaces online and in about 65 Multi Brand Outlets pan India.

## ...on her core inspirations

To always think positive and keep hustling.

## ...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader

Thankfully we haven’t really faced many problems, however social barriers will always exist, regardless of whatever it may be we are women in a man’s world.

## ...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion

Discipline, integrity, persistence are a must. Also always be focused and be decisive while making decisions.

## ...advice for the next-gen women

Always be positive and keep hustling.



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# SHRUTI BEHAL

Head - Product Design,  
PrettySecrets

## Shruti Behal on “why fashion”

I have always been very strong headed and opinionated about fashion, be it what I want to wear or what looks good on others. I believe clothing has a transformative power and a language of its own. I always wanted to be a part of this powerful community. I feel lucky that I had it figured out all along and I am actually doing something that makes me feel so fulfilled. It makes me happy that I create art that can make other people feel good and empowered.

## ...on her early years

I studied fashion design from Pearl Academy of Fashion. Once I graduated I began working as a Senior Fashion Designer and Merchandiser for a buying house in Delhi, where I got an opportunity to work with famous International clients such as Zara, H&M, Springfields, to name a few. Then I worked for Ritu Beri as a Senior Fashion Designer, and this is where I was able to learn how to run a business and develop skills that I needed to start my own label. After I left Ritu Beri, I started designing couture bridal ensembles and once it started gaining momentum I started my label “Montage”.

## ...on her key moments

There have been so many key moments that it is very hard to narrow it all down. But I guess I could say I have enjoyed creating lingerie that has the power to make women in even the remotest corners of India feel good. Another key phase that I find extremely fulfilling yet overwhelming at times is being a mother of a 1 year old and being a modern day entrepreneur at the same time. My son Kabir comes with me to office everyday and it feels empowering and liberating at the same time to be doing what makes me happy without having to compromise on taking care of my baby boy.

## ...on things she is most proud of

I believe the best is yet to come. But what will always hold a special place is my first step towards my entrepreneurial journey when I started Montage and now being adept at not only understanding the engineering behind it, but also designing a product like the bra that is so technical in nature.

## ...on her core inspirations

I find my inspiration in everything from things in my daily life, my surroundings, the people around me to global trends, cinema and art. But most of all it's the feedback I receive from my customers.

I've also been inspired largely by the nuances of the diversity of things I've come across during my travels. My biggest motivation has been my incessant desire to achieve enough so that I can play my part in giving back to this world.

## ...on the causes she feels for

I strongly feel for gender equality and women empowerment. PrettySecrets consists of 70 percent female employees and that includes women in managerial posts and top level positions. We as an organisation make sure that the women in our company are given the exact same opportunities, considerations and are equal stake holders in making decision as men in the company. We are breaking



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“**PrettySecrets consists of 70 percent female employees and that includes women in managerial posts and top level positions. We as an organisation make sure that the women in our company are given the same opportunities, considerations and are equal stake holders in making decision as men in the company.**”

stereotypes here by creating an environment of men and women working together for a collaborative leadership. I also feel strongly about child adoption and about animal welfare.

#### ...on the problems faced by 'woman' business leader

Honestly I have not faced many challenges since I started out. Currently, my main challenge is catering to the diverse Indian women and making every one of them feel good in the lingerie I design. The other challenge is keeping up with the trends given the restrictions at hand and with the high volume of competition it can become difficult.

#### ...on balancing professional and personal life

I live in Mumbai with my husband who is the Founder and CEO of PrettySecrets, and my 15 month old baby boy. As women, we naturally have this ability to balance a lot of things. We just make it happen. I would say having a baby now has made me efficient. Of course it changes a lot of things but it has made me aware of what is really important in life. Earlier I could go on working all night but now I've learnt to balance even better. I work equally hard or maybe even harder now but with a more focused and far more efficient approach. I am incredibly lucky that I get to work with my husband and my baby is with me at the office most of the time.

#### ...advice to next generation women

Go for it! However, before you start out on your own, try working with organizations / inspiring people even if it be for a very brief period. Always be open to feedback, even if it is coming from someone who might have nothing to do with fashion. It gives a real world perspective because these are the people who are actually consuming what you create. Lastly, never give up on your dreams, always keep your end goals in mind, and remember why you started in the first place.

#### ...top tips for young girls

Try and keep an industry perspective when consuming information that might interest you and is relevant to your interest in fashion. Use the latest social media channels; follow industry insiders and influential people. Start a blog and network a lot.

×



# SOUMYA KANT

**Vice President, Purple Panda  
Fashions Pvt. Ltd.**



## **Soumya Kant on “why fashion”**

I come from a finance background. This transition from the geeky world of finance to fashion has been fantastic. It was a stark change. But my knowledge in finance has helped me a lot in understanding fashion in terms of data. I was able to apply analytics to fashion. Getting a chance to use my past skills to elaborate my current work profile, makes me happy and content.

## **...on her early years**

A small town girl, born and brought up in Haridwar, I completed my schooling from Delhi Public School and further became a Chartered Accountant. Prior to working for Clovia, I've worked with PwC and Amex in my initial years as a consultant.

## **...on her key moments**

Overcoming the challenge of setting up the most robust supply chain in this industry is one challenge that indeed takes the cake. The fact that we have been able to achieve the operational efficiencies is commendable, and the memory of how we got here is to be cherished.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

I'm proud of all of us as a team for having generated over 3000 jobs in the industry and being consistent with our approach on every product.

## **...on her core inspirations**

Motivation comes from customer feedback. Everytime we manage to populate 100 percent of a girl's underwear drawer by just Clovia products, we are motivated and that keeps us going. Also, this is the first thing that we put on everyday and for me to feel beautiful in that split second is very important. It sets the tone for my day and that inspires me to bring joy to women across the country by bringing them a beautiful and comfortable product.

## **...on the problems faced by a ‘woman’ business leader**

It's not really about men or women leaders. One must stop thinking oneself as a “woman” entrepreneur. You are just an entrepreneur, who also happens to be a woman. Gender bias is a common theme in many discussions today. You have to handle it like all the other problems that come in your business' way. People come around over time. So if as an entrepreneur, you fall in a situation where you have to work harder to earn people's respect just because you are a woman, then there are two options - can you change the people who think like that? If yes you can (and should) change the people you work with! If no, then make sure you keep doing the right thing. If they're smart enough, they'll fall in line with time.





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#### ...on balancing professional and personal life

I stay with my parents who are both 60 plus years old. Most of the days I feel like I am an old age home manager and not their daughter. But, they understand the work I do and the hours I keep. So more than me, they ensure to maintain the balance. This keeps me going in the right direction.

#### ...on the causes she feels for

I strongly believe in gender equality. Women are in no way less than men. They are equally capable, more so actually. However, common the concept of gender bias is, one should not really consider women to be the weaker gender because we really are not. Men and women should get an equal access to all kinds of resources and opportunities. We as a team, work on equal grounds. Every team member has their individual voice and opinion and we value each other's aspirations, decisions and needs. Treating everyone with equality and kindness can create a lot of difference.

#### ...advice to next-gen women

All I would like to tell them is that everything starts from nothing, so have the courage to chase your dreams and take baby steps towards success. Also, do not get discouraged by the bad days. There is always a good, bad and ugly phase for everything we do and it will pass. Hang on!

#### ...top tips for young girls

Data driven approach is the way forward. Take decisions based on the data available as much as you can. Talk to the customers. They are the ones you are doing everything for.



# SWATI SARAF

President, Prive Luxury Ltd.

## **Swati Saraf on “why fashion”**

The word ‘fashion’ in any aspect has always fascinated me. And, I have been fortunate to be exposed to some of the latest trends in the industry, both internationally as well as in India. My long cherished dream of doing something in the fashion space was finally given a shape by setting up of the first kids’ luxury fashion business in India. While, fashion had not been a planned decision as a career option, my venture into the niche segment has definitely been fulfilling. I am pleased the way it has shaped up. It is gratifying to be involved with something that is so close to my heart.

## **...on her early years**

Fortunate to be born in a successful business family and now a part of a well known family in the corporate world, I have had a wonderful upbringing. I feel lucky to have families who have always supported and encouraged me to fulfill my ambitions.

## **...on her key moments**

Les Petits, a super luxury clothing, accessories and furniture outlet for kids launched in 2011 has been a major milestone – the beginning of my journey. By being multi-brand, the offering to a client is much wider than being a single brand store. It houses brands such as Young Versace, Fendi Kids, Paul Smith Jr., among others.

It has been a challenge to satisfy an elite clientele base, who is spoilt for choice, is widely travelled and has exposure and access to the international markets. Reaching out to this niche, discerning customer base has not been a cakewalk, but has been extremely rewarding.

## **...on things she is most proud of**

Having established a business in the area of super luxury segment for the kids, an area where nobody had ventured into has not only been satisfying but a learning curve as well. With the growing segment of sophisticated consumers in India, there is a lot of opportunity in the luxury kids wear market. Parents today are well travelled and aspire to dress up their children in the brands they admire. With Les Petits, the parents have the luxury to shop from their favourite brands, under one roof.

We are proud to share that from a single store we have launched our second store in Mumbai and have also ventured into the online space. Very soon we plan to launch a premium ethnic wear range for kids.

## **...on her core inspirations**

My core inspiration has been my father, who runs his business empire based on quality and innovation. It is inspiring to see how he has built such a large conglomerate based on these values. I have been brought up in an environment, which had these in abundance and I try to imbibe the same in my entrepreneurial journey.

## **...on the causes she feels for**

I feel that education empowers a person. As a woman myself I see the benefits of being educated and I would advocate that we support the education of a girl child.





“**Women have always had an important role to play in fashion since the ancient eras. Today, they are more independent, well-travelled and knowledgeable than ever before and want to make their own choices about fashion.**”

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An educated girl not only empowers herself but also empowers the family she takes care of later in life.

#### **...on the problems faced by 'woman' business leader**

Women still represent a minority of the entrepreneur community, which speaks of their discrimination against the possibility to become successful entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs need to work much harder than their male counterparts to establish and prove themselves. This is not so with the fashion industry only, but across businesses. Women are under-represented in leadership positions across the industry. It has also been observed that when men are ambitious, it's celebrated; it is not seen in the same light if women are dynamic and go-getters like their male counterparts.

That is not all, socially women go through challenges like a dual role of taking care of their work and family, opposition to late working hours and travelling to name some. While the trend is changing in the urban scenario a lot still needs to be done before the women can be at par with the male entrepreneurs.

#### **...on balancing professional and personal life**

As a mother of two, one of them being just a year old, it has been a handful to strike balance between personal and professional life. My key focus has been to identify and prioritize the tasks and manage them accordingly. Professionally I am meticulous about identifying the right talent so that the task can be delegated and managed effectively.

#### **...on qualities required to be a successful woman entrepreneur in fashion**

I personally believe and have practiced the following qualities and have had no complaints – self belief, ambition, passion, confidence, assertiveness and persistence.

#### **...on role of women in the fashion industry**

Women have always had an important role to play in fashion since the ancient eras. They are the trend-setters as well as consumers. Today, they are more independent, well-travelled and knowledgeable than ever before and want to make their own choices about fashion. We have many successful women who have launched their own brands in the fashion world and created their own story.

#### **...on participation of women in the fashion industry**

Women are, by far, the primary consumers of fashion, but remain under-represented in top creative positions. The fashion houses are still helmed by male designers both at in India and abroad. The fashion industry comprises of various aspects like fashion photography, pattern making, garment construction, accessory designing, make-up, modeling, fabric weaving, textile research and development, fashion journalism and manufacturing, etc. and fashion designers are perceived to be at the top. Fashion as a term is getting a wider acceptance with women making their presence felt in many of them. The future would be to see more women participate in the multi-facets of the business.

#### **...advice to next-gen women**

There is no fixed formula that works for all. However, there are a few habits, which can be cultivated and are bound to bring success. I would like to share some of them, which I follow – stay focused, don't take no for an answer, never stop learning, try and fail and try again, be resilient, learn from your mistakes and question boundaries and break them down.

#### **...top tips for young girls**

Hard work and persistence is directly proportion to success. An eye for detail with innovative ideas always works well in the long run is the mantra I have practiced.





# THE WOOLMARK COMPANY INDIA PROJECTS -17/18

The Woolmark Company, in its efforts to empower and promote both the wool and the handloom industries in India has been working on the following projects in India:

- Grown in Australia, Made in India
- Raymond: Khadi Wool
- Collaboration with Tata CliQ Luxury
- Collaboration with Manish Malhotra: Merino Wool Collection-Inaya
- Trade and Education Activities
- Wool Runway

## Grown In Australia, Made In India

The Grown in Australia, Made in India project highlights the farm to fashion journey of Australian Merino wool, positioning the natural, renewable and biodegradable fibre as the ultimate ingredient in luxury fashion. It also honours India's traditional, artisanal craftsmanship and promotes the importance of the wool industry within this country. This being the second year of the initiative, it continues to feature wool's journey and aims to drive wool consumption along with manufacturing in India.



## Raymond- Khadi Wool

The Woolmark Company, in association with Raymond, launched 'Khadi Wool' at an exclusive ceremony at the Australian High Commission. The main objectives of the initiative were to highlight the first of its kind collection in pure Merino wool and blended wool collections and showcase cross-country linkage and the Grown in Australia, Made in India initiative. There was also a stellar fashion show that showcased the startling new collection of designs crafted from this latest Khadi Wool collection.

## Collaboration with Tata CliQ Luxury

Tata CliQ Luxury and The Woolmark Company associated with 10 of India's leading designers - Manish Arora, Rahul Mishra, Rajesh Pratap Singh, Abraham & Thakore, Aneeth Arora, Amit Aggarwal, Pankaj & Nidhi, Nachiket Barve, Raghavendra Rathore and Zubair Kirmani. Each of the designers created one unique shawl, using a minimum of 80 percent Merino wool, that speaks of their individuality, creativity and signature aesthetics. The first edition of this project, called the The Shawl Project, will showcase the revival of one of India's most valued textile traditions — the shawl.

## Collaboration with Manish Malhotra: Merino Wool Collection- Inaya

The Woolmark Company and couturier Manish Malhotra unveiled a capsule collection using the natural fibre Merino wool. Launched at Lakmé Fashion Week Summer/Resort 2018, the 'Inaya' collection is Manish Malhotra's first Merino wool line which presents this fibre in a way like never before. Capturing the essence of the ongoing sustainable fashion dialogue, 'Inaya' presents wool sarees for women and bandhgalas and sherwanis for men, throwing the spotlight on Merino wool as a natural, biodegradable and renewable fibre.



## Wool in Sportswear

The Woolmark Company is encouraging sportswear manufacturers and brands to adopt Merino wool in their athleisure and active ranges, as Merino wool comes with exceptional properties like breathability, wicking, high strength, resilience, softness, natural UV, odour and static resistance making it an ideal fibre for sportswear and athleisure.

## Trade and Education

The Woolmark Company promoted wool and its position in the fashion and retail segment at The Middle East Retail Forum (MRF) 2017. It also partnered with Intex South Asia to showcase the latest innovations in Merino wool and The Wool Lab trend forecast kit at Colombo, Sri Lanka. The Woolmark Company Country Manager Arti Gudal presented a seminar on how Merino wool works to connect luxury with innovation. A trade booth displaying The Wool Lab Spring Summer 19 and Merino innovations at Lakme Fashion Week Summer Resort 2018 led to interaction and education of the design and buyer fraternity attending the week.

## Wool Runway

After the success of last year's Wool Runway, a design challenge for university students, The Woolmark Company has successfully completed the second edition on another high note. Envisioned as a celebration of tertiary fashion designers, the competition also educated young designers from three fashion institutes, viz. National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Pearl Academy and National Institute of Design (NID), on working with Merino wool. Wool Runway was an exciting way to kick-start a career; it provided the top four finalists with great exposure and financial support.



# VISHAKHA SINGH

Founder, DOS Interactive Pvt. Ltd.



“ Women are the muse. Women are the designers. Women are the critics. ”

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- > Brand:  
RED POLKA
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WWW.REDPOLKA.COM

## Vishakha Singh on “why fashion”

Red Polka curates home boutique designers. The purpose to bring their story out is the reason behind Red Polka.

## ...on her early years

I have worked in the media industry with ventures like CNBC TV 18 and Times Now (launch of the channel) and Future Media (a Kishore Biyani venture) in the past and then worked extensively in the field of shopper marketing.

## ...on her key moments

One of the most memorable moment has been a father of a designer coming and thanking me for instilling confidence in her designer daughter's work.

## ...on things she is most proud of

The journey has just begun, many milestones are to yet be achieved.

## ...on her core inspirations

My strength comes from the beautiful works that many designers are capable of creating. The stories that they have is, what keeps the brand alive. Vishakha Singh on the causes she feels for: Equal respect – Many designers who work from home do not get the same respect as another lady from the same house leading a corporate work life. The designers' work is often taken as a hobby. The limit is in the mind – Women tend to draw boundaries of their abilities keeping their family responsibilities in head. This becomes limiting.

## ...on the problems faced by ‘woman’ business leader:

I don't treat any problem as a woman problem.

## ...on balancing professional and personal life:

I am a mother of two active children. Like any parent, I have tough and easy moments but so far we-my husband and I--are sailing fine. I believe in planning in detail and that helps me achieve more everyday.

## ...top tips for young girls

Plan and plan well. God lies in details.





# MEET THE MASTERS

VISION AND VIEWS OF  
FASHION THOUGHT LEADERS

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# VISION & VIEWS OF FASHION THOUGHT LEADERS

*In this special feature, we speak to some of India's finest fashion leaders who have revolutionized fashion. We take a look at their innovative thinking and present their vision for fashion in India.*

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- 192. **Sunil J Pathare**, CMD, VIP Clothing Ltd.
- 194. **Vineet Gautam**, CEO, Bestseller India
- 196. **Vivek Mehta**, CEO, MAS Brands India







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# MEET THE MASTERS

## THE SECOND EDITION

### VISION AND VIEWS OF FASHION THOUGHT LEADERS

By-Rajan Varma, Gurbir Gulati and Rosy Sharma

Throughout our journey, we have constantly striven to share significant thought in fashion business to the retail fraternity and to support them in smart thinking and creating meaningful offerings to their customers. The next pages of the magazine align aptly with this philosophy.

According to the latest edition of the **India Business of Fashion Report 2018** it is estimated that the current fashion retail market was worth ₹ 3,22,209 Crores (US\$ 56 billion) in 2017 and is expected to grow at a promising CAGR of 7.7 percent to reach ₹ 6,74,037 Crore (US\$ 103 billion) by 2027. With such strong indicators projecting some great days ahead for fashion businesses, it is our conviction that it is our greatest fashion stars who will take a lead in not only steering the market to not just this predicted potential, but to even play a multiplier effect by sheer dint of their innovation and effort to make it scale even further heights.

Welcome to the second edition of the **“Meet the Masters”** feature. We pick up from where we left last year, and once again pick the minds of some of the greatest fashion leaders of our time. These Masters of The Game—this club of fashion stalwarts—that we have handpicked is a small and selected group of visionaries that will drive the fashion revolution in India soon. These leaders are entrepreneurs who not only had the audacity to dream big but also the perseverance to see it through to reality. In the next few pages we present a treasure trove of information and insights, that we hope will aid you re-evaluate and reshape your retail aspirations and pave the next way forward.

What makes these stalwarts masters? Their deep understanding of fashion and their sensitivity to its subtle nuances; their willingness to try new trends, their acute sense of appreciation of fashion, there in depth understanding of the materials and design that make fashion. While we begin with fashion fundamentals and go on to trace the current trends and key drivers, we also seek a better definition for fashion in India in this feature.

*A trade show designed to*

*Connect*

*South Indian Market*

### EXHIBITOR PROFILE

Apparel brands from across the men's, women's and kid's wear segments who wish to reach the ever growing retail sector of south India comprising primarily States of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala.

### VISTOR PROFILE

Conventional retailers including large format multi-brand chain stores, department stores, specialty stores; wholesalers, distributors, buying houses & agents, online retailers.



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**Amit Jain, Managing Director, Shingora is a Bachelor of Science in Merchandising, Apparel & Textiles and a Minor in Business Studies from the University of Kentucky, Lexington (USA). After completing education, Jain joined the family enterprise as a product development head. He single-handedly set up a modern weaving, dyeing and printing facility for migration of family handloom shawl business to a technology and system driven modern enterprise. Today, Shingora is a market leader in fashion accessories especially in women's wear segment. Currently he looks after the development activity in terms of future strategies, plants, machineries, products, markets, etc.**

# AMIT JAIN

**MD, SHINGORA**

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Amit Jain (AJ):** Fashion to us is an ever evolving and growing experience. It is an exciting field to be in as it is the inherent part of everyone's lifestyle today. Fashion is the expression of an individual creativity enmeshed by current trends of design and lifestyle. The sensibility of the people of the region governed by various cultures give image to the outward appearance to the inhabitants and this is what creates fashion.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**AJ:** Being in the fashion industry fulfills the pleasure of adornment. Shingora means ornament and the brand was created by the desire of its founder Mridula Jain (my mother) to create an accessory to enhance the attire of the evolving Indian woman. The vision was to provide a fashionable yet affordable accessory to match and balance the traditional and modern wardrobe of women. So from the very beginning Shingora has been synonymous for a premium fashion accessory label in the category of shawls and scarves.

## ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**AJ:** The Indian fashion market has been facing a sea change with the internet making the whole world a connected globe with every trend being absorbed by every culture and region. The visibility of trends of all evolved regions and markets have created a huge impact on the current fashion scenario. The future, which is just becoming an extension of the present, there will be trends that will be shown simultaneously in India as in the rest of the world. The world has become one huge drawing board with trends reflecting from all angles and regions.



**The customer of today is evolved and more aware of current trends, and follows it with tenacity. Everything showcased worldwide is created simultaneously. The customer is totally attuned and her demands is met at an entirely new pace.**

**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**AJ:** Technology is the biggest influence and fashion is becoming more and more governed by online presence and e-com portals that showcase it. Influence of technology on fabrics and construction techniques have given a whole new outlook to the meaning of fashion. The entire evolving platforms of social media have created a very different yet a very responsive playground for conducting the fashion business.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**AJ:** The customer of today is more evolved and aware of current trends and follows the same with tenacity. Everything showcased worldwide is created simultaneously, so fashion is visible in all parts of the globe. The customer of today is totally attuned and demands to these trends are created and met at an entirely new pace.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**AJ:** The product is the answer to the demands of a user's lifestyle. With the evolving lifestyle of travel leading to various requirements based on climatic geographical and socio-economic factors the product has to cater to various markets and this is definitely a huge change in the last 20 years.

**...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**AJ:** The focus should be on our core competence of laborious handwork whether it is in weaving or embellishment. We have a huge skilled population that has learnt the craft from generations and they apply the skills after honing them with modern techniques to meet the current demands of the industry. The designs are also continuously improvised to suit the current fashion trends. The western countries also get inspired from our heritage and designs, as ours has been the earliest evolved civilisation that created benchmarks in history with creativity, artisan skill set and scientific technology.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**AJ:** India has a skilled population which has competence in all these fields. In manufacturing, IT and technology, it is very capable of creating more strength and capability. Design has started to be a mainstay of the west and most of the trends are created from there. So India should use its large strength of population and harness the same for manufacturing and IT-hubs.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**AJ:** Quantum growth in fashion will be accelerated by more and more awareness of trends and education that builds awareness. The internet and current development of technology has made the world one whole global landscape which feeds on all developments simultaneously. This whole chain reaction is making all aspects grow by leaps and bounds in every field of fashion.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**AJ:** Regulations are always for improving structure and focus, and are not roadblocks. The whole process has to evolve by absorbing these developments and applying the same to improvisation and further development.

**...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**AJ:** Our environment is the real legacy we have inherited. It becomes our responsibility to conserve its sustainability for our future generations. Fashion that is good and sustainable contributes to the lifestyles without damaging the merits of the environment. Companies will always gain by sustainable policies of growth and development. Measures to coordinate with these policies is always going to increase and ensure that we do not destroy our beneficial habitat and environment in any manner.





**Anupam Bansal, Executive Director - Retail, Liberty, is an economics graduate from Shri Ram College of Commerce (Delhi) and also holds a background in footwear designing from Ars Sutoria School (Italy). Bansal has played a pivotal role in building and introducing the new image of Liberty from a family footwear to a complete lifestyle brand. He has been responsible for spearheading and creating a strong retail team for the footwear brand. His marketing initiatives such as re-christening of the dealers as channel partners and establishing interactive periodic meets with channel partners gave the brand a big boost.**

# ANUPAM BANSAL

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR-RETAIL, LIBERTY

### ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Anupam Bansal (AB):** I am an adventurer at heart. And the fashion industry appeals to my sense of adventure because it is so unpredictable. Here the 'Game of Thrones' translates into a 'Game of Ideas'. And that's what excites me the most of being in an industry that is in a constant state of flux.

### ...on the role and impact of fashion

**AB:** The French have a saying, "la mode c'est la vie". In a nutshell, it means, 'fashion is life'. Its impact on people is all pervasive. Indeed for some it is the raison d'être because it is so inextricably linked with their existence. In India globalisation and economic boom has resulted in fashion coming to the fore like never before.

### ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**AB:** Indian fashion was once very inward. This situation no longer exists. Global trends are now de rigueur. And that has helped us evolve. A cross fertilization of ideas is taking place. The Indian fashion is today on a much firmer footing in the global market.

### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**AB:** Technology especially the Internet is a game-changer in the fashion business. It has given companies like ours an unprecedented access. Going online has opened up new markets at the click of a mouse. Social networking sites have changed the idiom of fashion marketing.



*More important than a great product is an appealing idea because an idea is what gives your brand an edge in the mind of the consumers and in the marketplace.*

#### **...on the changing fashion consumer**

**AB:** Today the average customer is more aware than he or she was 10 years ago. And therefore has become more demanding. The cross-current of fashion has led to attitude taking precedence over dressing. Living the dream is today the new mantra of fashion.

#### **...on the changing fashion product**

**AB:** Earlier a lot of people believed in dressing over the top. But today the show stoppers are those who make you stand apart using minimal variation in dressing. And that's why I rate minimalism as one of the best trends of the current times where less is more. Crisp, clean lines, solid colours and zero embellishments - it all feels so fresh.

#### **...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**AB:** More important than a great product is an appealing idea because an idea is what gives your brand an edge in the mind of the consumers and in the marketplace.

#### **...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**AB:** Our greatest core competency that can give 'Make in India' a competitive edge vis-à-vis others in the global fashion arena is our design sense. That's what brought the world to our doorstep in the past and that's what will bring them flocking to us for more.

#### **...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**AB:** Naturally India should focus on being a design centric hub.

#### **...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**AB:** Workmanship is the skill set that can and will generate maximum employment for Indian manpower in the future.

#### **...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**AB:** I believe that expansion and

diversification can serve as growth multipliers leading to a quantum growth in fashion.

#### **...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**AB:** It will be excessive tariff barriers and the red-tapism that exists in the regulatory procedures.

#### **...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**AB:** Good fashion will always be the sine qua non for a happening future. But fashion companies that make it a point to go green will be the ones that will thrive most as the rules are going to be increasingly stricter, and rightly so, to protect the environment. In fact we all need to work in unison to protect our fragile eco-system. 'Grow responsibly' is what we should all strive for.



# DEEPAK AGGARWAL

MD, KAZO

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Deepak Aggarwal (DA):** For me fashion is passion. Working in a fashion industry is always exciting since fashion is happening 365 days in a year. Anything can make me connected to fashion anytime. It helps you to set new trends every season and its never ending. It's always creating something new to be loved with passion.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**DA:** Fashion is about expressing your identity by the way you dress and carry yourself. It reflects your personality and attitude. It's not just about choosing the right garment, but also carrying it with confidence. It gives you confidence to represent yourself better in this ultra-competitive world.

## ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**DA:** I feel that the Indian fashion market is a seller-led market and is moving towards buyer-led gradually. The conversion will take time. As a brand you need to be very strong in the market to be followed and that is what our aim remains always.

## ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**DA:** Fashion industry is becoming digital centric. Retailers have started e-commerce retailing by setting up visually appealing online versions of stores with integration of payment gateways and offering efficient delivery of goods. So now a consumer can shop anytime anywhere.

There are virtual fitting rooms, which makes a customer's journey easy in choosing the

Deepak Aggarwal, Managing Director, Kazo, holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce in Retail. Aggarwal has been instrumental in positioning Kazo as one of the finest market leaders in women fashion apparel. His initiative of ensuring backward and forward integration to have a control over the entire supply chain for Kazo has helped to carve out a niche as an international brand within a short span. He has been conferred the "Outstanding Performer as a Young Entrepreneur" at the AEPC Achievement Awards.





**Independent designers, buyers and fashion brands will be in great demand as they will create value through innovations in product and delivery services which will differentiate one product from another and one brand from another.**

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**DA:** India should focus to be a design-centric hub since the cultural diversity in India provides it a lot of opportunity to understand and adapt international fashion. Also being design centric gives an advantage of earning margins and competing with other manufacturing hubs.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**DA:** The availability of organised markets will hugely impact in getting the quantum growth because e-commerce will always remain as a value retail channel which will never bring in bottom line.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**DA:** The logistics and infrastructure development will act as a roadblock to efficient supply chain. The value for infrastructure should be real so that the business becomes viable.

**...on why being “good” does and will matter a lot**

**DA:** In India right fashion at right time is very important. Supporting causes would be the attributes of or traits of a good fashion brand. A fashion brand would be looked in a holistic manner along with these characteristics. India has still 5 to 10 years to build that kind of support from such causes.



garments fitting them the best. There is now kiosk based shopping instead of shopping from a store for staple products and commodities. Technology has changed the whole idea and technique of shopping. But personalised service would still remain relevant in a category like ours wherein the intricacies of design and fit can only be experienced through personalised interaction.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**DA:** Today's customer is more connected than ever before. They are well aware of fashion trends and are clear of what they are looking for. With the entry of the smartphones in market, consumers can review products, check prices and purchase products. They have option to shop round-the-clock by just being at one place.

The relevance of social media on retail is untapped and is growing rapidly which is affecting a customer's shopping behaviour as they get influenced by the reviews and trends in their social groups.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**DA:** Though fashion repeats over a period of time but the customers of today have become more affable towards the latest trends. The approach has become more professional.

**...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**DA:** India is a country with an ancient clothing design tradition, yet an emerging fashion industry. Indian traditional fashion is all about embroidery, folklore, etc., and 'Make in India' for fashion should focus on what India is known for and has expertise in. And that is what we should develop more.



**Harkirat Singh, Managing Director, Woodland holds a degree in a Marketing from Harvard Business School and Philology from Moscow University. Singh comes from a family of industrialists and took over the responsibilities of the business at a very young age, 30, and concentrated on the exports of Woodland to Europe and the US. His passion lies in learning the art of making the perfect footwear. Due to his significant contribution towards the brand, today Woodland is identified as “the maker of tough shoes”. He firmly believes that the most important factors that contributed to Woodland’s success have been adherence to strong values and vision of the company.**

# HARKIRAT SINGH

**MD, WOODLAND**

## ...on what’s exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Harkirat Singh (HS):** Fashion is about change, which is necessary to keep life interesting. It’s also a mirror of sorts to the society. It’s a way of measuring a mood that can be useful in many aspects, culturally, socially even psychologically. Fashion means different to different people, varies from personal tastes and is so versatile, which is the most exciting part of it. Fashion’s ever changing and ever challenging aspect keeps me glued to it.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**HS:** Fashion is a language; it’s a state of mind. A spirit, an extension of one’s self, which tells a story about the person who wears it. Clothes create a wordless means of communication that we all understand. Most of all fashion is about being comfortable with oneself, translating self-esteem into a personal style.

## ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and it’s implications

**HS:** The Indian fashion retail market has witnessed several fascinating changes and challenges in recent years, which are indicators of the country’s evolving fashion retail market. You probably can relate to the practice of taking a picture of yourself in the changing room and having your friend or partner tell you whether they like what you’re wearing or not. A lot has changed in the fashion world in the last several decades; accessibility to favourite fashion or brand has broadened more than ever imagined – from mobile technology to social media and more.



*The meshing of fashion and technology will ultimately result in huge gains for both as they adapt to consumer's pursuit for better, more efficient, innovative product offerings.*

Customers are also changing, demanding better prices, more convenience and a personalised experience that fits their mobile-first lifestyle. And technology continues to advance, with e-commerce platforms growing in importance for fashion and all beginning to have a real impact on merchandising, supply chain and marketing activities.

**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**HS:** Fashion and technology already intersect with the focus on elevating both design and experience. The meshing of fashion and technology will ultimately result in huge gains for both as they adapt to consumer's pursuit for better, more efficient, innovative product offerings.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**HS:** Customers have become more fashion conscious and aware of new and up-coming global trends. Many savvy consumers now follow their own fashion rules, inspired by what they see on the fashion-animated streets, the internet and in the live-streamed fashion shows that are becoming a staple channel for fashion lovers. A decade ago, you couldn't order a cab on your phone.

You could not surf the web on Google Chrome. You could not rent a place to stay on demand with a hotel.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**HS:** Over the last 2 decades, the product offering has changed quite a lot. There has not only been an evolution, but a drastic shift as well. The fashion is directly related to trends, which see a change on almost daily basis. Technological innovations over the years, has made many tedious processes simpler and also more efficient. Planning has evolved owing to the changing demands, manufacturing because of improvement in production techniques. The main driving factor for all these segments has been innovation.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**HS:** Absolutely. In fact I believe that the product is the epicenter of fashion. Regardless of the ongoing trends, the product is what sells -- its comfort, its style and its durability.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, a design hub or a fashion tech-IT hub**

**HS:** All the things are important to become value based but if technology meets manufacturing and deigning hub then the growth will be tremendous and sellers can match themselves.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**HS:** To create maximum demand in fashion we need to have people with innovative thinking and creative minds to experiment and explore fresh designs in wearable technology. It would be exciting to see how fashion industry and

brands would integrate technology in fashion in coming years.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**HS:** The industry provides a realistic opportunity to implement and sustain the 'Make in India' program in true spirit. To realise this potential, there is an urgent need to encourage investment in the industry to tide over the diseconomies of scale and loss of competitive edge in the Indian footwear industry.

Also to increase its share in the global footwear export market the industry would need to transform itself through a combination of structural changes, as well as government incentives.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**HS:** The recent 5 percent increment in the duty charges for footwear components will affect the production cost for the footwear players, however Woodland is still evaluating whether to hike the price or absorb the cost.

**...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**HS:** "Good" fashion or sustainable fashion is in fact trending, not only amongst the brands but also amongst the customers. Owing to the depleting condition of mother earth, there are various elements that have gained popularity for its betterment. Not just individuals but government bodies too have realised its importance and have taken the necessary steps to ensure that everyone contributes and gives back to the society, which is only fair in all honesty.





**Hetal Kotak, Chief Executive Officer, Lee Cooper and aLL, is a Textile Engineer with certifications in Strategic Leadership Program from Michigan's Ross School of Business, Finance for Decision Making from IIM-Bangalore and Brand Management from the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad. Kotak is responsible for driving the exponential growth of the business. With over 20 years of experience, he has worked across various textile and retail companies such as Raymond Ltd., Arvind Mills and Indorama Synthetics. He has been recognised several times by the retail fraternity for his remarkable work and extraordinary contribution to the industry.**

# HETAL KOTAK

**CEO, LEE COOPER & ALL**

**...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry**

**Hetal Kotak (HK):** The fashion industry is extremely dynamic and is growing at an exponential rate. Trends keep changing, the voices driving the industry have also changed in the recent years and all this makes the environment challenging and exciting.

**...on the role and impact of fashion**

**HK:** Fashion is being trendy and wearing your expression on your sleeve. Global trends dominate high street fashion and it has changed the landscape of India. The consumer is looking to be fashionable these days.

**...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications**

**HK:** The Indian fashion market has evolved over the years. Technology has enabled awareness and acceptance of newer trends. Adaptation of the trend at the same time at which they are prevalent globally would be the key to success for an international brand like ours.

**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**HK:** Technology has enabled to make the world a smaller space. Consumers have become extremely receptive to adapting newer trends. Social media has changed the game of the fashion industry. Influencers on social media are the new voices in fashion. We also use our social media channels to engage with our audience through looks they can emulate.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**HK:** The Indian consumer has growing aspirations and a disposable income to satisfy the same. Today, he is very informed and aware.



Social media has changed how we consume fashion and these consumers know the trends and are keen to adapt it.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**HK:** Today, due to technology we can experiment with so much more in terms of washes, colours, etc. Some 20 years back a collection probably had a relative limited variety, however, today the range has wider variety with many micro-concepts in form of collections. The time for a theme to hit the store has been radically reduced.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**HK:** Yes, the product has to be great but in today's day and age merely having a good product doesn't always work. You have to work on a 360 degree approach, be social media savvy, have a strong marketing campaign, be able to push your product to your market. If the proposition of your brand is to be "Trend Right" then along with having a great product, being "on time" to bring the trend for the consumer is equally critical.

**...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**HK:** India's strength lies in being a major manufacturing hub, a strong design and technology hub. Although

*Fashion business is about keeping up with the trends, be it the manufacturing, design or technology. It's also about understanding the audience and how they consume and use information and who drives them to make a decision.*

we've acquired licensee for Lee Cooper, our products are created by our design team in India (with design inspiration from London team) and manufactured in India. We understand the audience and know well what works and what doesn't, as per the Indian market.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**HK:** I think India can accomplish all three with great aplomb as we have expertise in all of them. Future Group has under taken a resolution to blend technology with offline retail to offer an all new retail experience where customers can either walk-in to the brick-and-mortar store, send texts (including on Whatsapp), order online using the app, or just call the store. Future Group has also tied up with Facebook and Google to aid with data analytics and social media engagement.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**HK:** Creating a fashionable product requires one to have skills in designing, getting a quality product manufactured in a cost efficient manner, making the right product available in stores at the right time, visual merchandising, planning, marketing & brand building, sourcing, etc., all hold equal importance.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**HK:** Definitely it's about keeping up with the trends, be it the manufacturing, design or technology. It's also about understanding the audience and how they consume and use information and who drives them to make a decision. We're focusing a lot on digital media whether it is working with influencers or marketing the products or even engaging with the customers to help create a niche voice for Lee Cooper in the market. Tier-II and -III cities are also getting very excited about fashion in a big way and with a huge chunk of our audience going digital due to low-cost data, they will help boost fashion as an industry.

**...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**HK:** Fashion is not just about making trendy clothes! It also ensures that we are up-to-date with technology and thereby increasing our footprint in eco-friendly processes or products. We are very focused on building sustainable processes which fosters growth in a positive manner. In Lee Cooper also, a lot of our denims are created using laser wash compared with earlier years when it was done manually.





Jattinn Kochhar launched his label at the age of nineteen in 1991, without any formal training in fashion. His ability to amalgamate his soulful Indian heritage with true urban influences has been the foundation of his design ideology. Minimalist simplicity with absolutely clean and fuss free lines have been the hallmark of his creations. Jattinn creates ready to wear and formal wear both for men and women. He has been conducting workshops on various aspects of fashion with some of the best Fashion Institutes across the country. Jattinn also has to his credit several popular television shows and has had a short stint on radio as well.

# JATTINN KOCHHAR

## FASHION DESIGNER

### ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Jattinn Kochhar (JK):** The thrill of creating drives my entire existence. Every day is a brand new day full of excitement and potential. What one can do with a piece of fabric, thread and needle is simply infinite.

### ...on the role and impact of fashion

**JK:** I prefer to define fashion as a sum total or a reflection of the technology, politics, entertainment, social structure and lifestyle that a particular era depicts. We no longer wear clothes to cover our bodies. Clothing serves a far more complex task in today's day and time. Through our choice of clothing we subconsciously share about our current state of mind, our ideologies and our social status.

### ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**JK:** India as a nation has gone through a massive metamorphosis in the recent times. From local our perspective has blossomed to global now. We are the number one emerging markets of the world. Every international retail player wants a piece of the Indian retail scenario, that by default puts us in the pole position in the world.

### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**JK:** Technology has changed every thing and every one in the way they operate the fashion business. More accurate market analysis helps make better profits.



**MACHO**

*Bade aaram se*

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**India as a nation has gone through a massive metamorphosis in the recent times. We are the number one emerging markets of the world. Every international retail player wants a piece of the Indian retail scenario, that by default puts us in the pole position in the world.**

#### **...on the changing fashion consumer**

**JK:** The customer of today is far more exposed and far more educated about the trends and the products available from the ones 10 years ago. Due to the advent of internet, there is far more awareness.

#### **...on the changing fashion product**

**JK:** With the steady input of technology, the fashion product of today is far more superior, more efficient and more customer focused. The main focus is on the experiential aspect of the product.

#### **...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**JK:** If one has done their homework on creating the right product and getting it across to the customer in an appropriate fashion then it surely makes it a so called 'Great Product'.

#### **...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**JK:** Using 'Made in India' raw material to fashion international quality product in terms of design and finish would make us shine in the global arena.

#### **...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**JK:** I don't see why we can't target both the aspects. We are a treasure trove of raw material and talent.





**Kamal Khushlani, Founder and Managing Director, Mufti, aims to make Mufti India's first international fashion brand. It is this vision that has always kept the brand ahead of times and competition. He is possibly the least-visible personality in the fashion fraternity and has influenced more new fashion than one could imagine. His knowledge about the industry and its requirements ensures that he is always the first with new fashion and trends that later get adopted by the industry, sometimes a season later, sometimes a year later. He can aptly be described as a self-taught fashion designer, brand strategist and futurologist.**

# KAMAL KHUSHLANI

**FOUNDER & MD, MUFTI**

## **...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry**

**Kamal Khushlani (KK):** I lost my dad at 19 and I could not pursue my studies further. I had no money but I always wanted to do something big in life. I worked with a videocassette recording company for a few years. I always had a flair for fashion. I felt that there was a huge gap for fashionable clothing in menswear segment at the time. So I borrowed ₹10,000 from my aunt and took the plunge.

The trade and consumers have rewarded me by loving whatever I have proposed to them and that is what has kept me motivated and excited to have done nothing else but this business all my life.

## **...on the role and impact of fashion**

**KK:** Fashion is an expression of one's inner personality and a way of realising one's self-worth. The global Indian is conscious about his looks and wants to wear clothes and use accessories that reflect his personality. Fashion in my book is not restricted to clothing; it's about the communication of one's personality to one's peer group.

## **...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications**

**KK:** As India develops into a more self-confident nation, the fashion business will naturally become a buyer-led market. However, the role of fashion leaders and role models will also increase. The fashion business will have to cater to the consumer trends and be responsive to fashion changes across the world and that too quickly.



### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**KK:** Technology in production, designing and retailing is enabling companies to adjust quickly and to deliver better than ever before. The technology for fabric manufacturing being used is the best. We can see how stretch jeans today have become the norm for men and they have evolved to look exactly like authentic denim having the comfort of stretch. Also technology has helped us improve consistency in the manufacturing of our garments.

As far as IT is concerned we are real time connected right from procurement of yarn to weaving, processing and finishing right to the cutting of garments to manufacturing and so on. We are real time connected with the movement of goods, sales, replenishment and the e-commerce platform.

### ...on the changing fashion consumer

**KK:** The customer of today responds more to his peer groups than to his elders or accepted leaders. The customer was never easy to handle and if anything is an even greater enigma today. Having said that, we believe we have “measured” our customer and achieved the ability to satisfy him despite the plethora of choices that he is faced with.

### ...on the changing fashion product

**KK:** As disposable incomes have grown in the hands of younger people the products have to provide a greater element of fashion than mere utility. We cater to this demanding fashionista and strive to give him a little more than what he expects. We believe in adding the Mufti touch in everything we do, we love to surprise our consumers with something they didn't expect and that is what drives the creative team at Mufti.

### ...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion

**KK:** Naturally a great product is the most important thing in fashion but, there is no clear definition of what a great product is. In our view, a great product has to have an element of vision, contemporariness and individuality.

There's a lot of research that goes into creating fresh fashion every season. There are sources that forecast global trends to the fashion world and every designer interprets these trends in his own way and takes cues to create his own fashion statement for the season. Then the trends get validated on the catwalk. The design team at Mufti travels extensively to catch new trends and translate them for the Indian consumer.

### ...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry

**KK:** India has the capabilities of becoming all of the above and

different companies will achieve value differently. Thus, there will be value created in manufacturing hubs, design centric hubs, fashion tech hubs and certainly IT hubs.

India has been a manufacturing hub for international brands for the last 50 years. Mufti has used this manufacturing base to create a designed Indian brand that is standing shoulder to shoulder with the big boys in the Indian market.

### ...on the fashion skills that will matter in future

**KK:** The fashion industry in India will grow on the basis of internal demand as well as export possibilities. Thus, the whole range of skill sets required in the fashion industry will be in demand.

### ...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry

**KK:** The major factors to accelerate growth in this sector will be income levels in India for consumption growth, friendly labour laws and government's support for export growth and GST that will ease transportation and movement of goods for retailing. Negative factors will revolve around high interest rates and consequent high rents in India vis-a-vis the rest of the world.

### ...on why being “good” does and will matter a lot

**KK:** Any company which makes a significant contribution to environmentally friendly processes will find that its connect with its consumers will become stronger and the minor costs incurred will be amply rewarded by its customers.





**Kuntal Raj Jain, Director, Duke, joined the family business in 2003. After joining, Jain took charge over the development and design element of the product categories.**

**Simultaneously he did remarkable changes with respect to technological advancement in the company. With his sheer dedication, he has been successful in making Duke a popular lifestyle brand, which is not only trendy and comfortable but also affordable.**

**He is a Bachelor's in Business Administration from GGNIMT, Ludhiana; has studied Production Technology from NIFT, New Delhi and holds a master's degree in Business Administration from De Mont Fort University, Leicester (UK).**

# KUNTAL RAJ JAIN

## DIRECTOR, DUKE

### ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Kuntal Raj Jain (KRJ):** The world of fashion is an incredibly competitive place and anyone who succeeds here should be proud of their achievements. Fashion is certainly an industry where it's necessary to start at the bottom and work your way to the top, and this isn't necessarily a bad thing. I am that sort of person who enjoys a challenge, requires a certain amount of pressure in order to perform and excel, so the fashion industry provides the ideal environment for me to thrive. With trends rotating and fading in and out of fashion, the industry is ever changing, and as a part of this industry I am always ready for that constant change.

### ...on the role and impact of fashion

**KRJ:** Fashion, it's how we express ourselves and it's our way to show the world who we are. People can dress up, dress down, wear jeans, dresses, or any type of clothing that allows them to share their individuality. Today's society is in love with brand names and whether we acknowledge it or not, we let fashion influence us. As long as we live in a society, fashion will matter to people.

### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**KRJ:** Fashion industry has transitioned to become digital centric. In coming years, there are several areas where technology will help ease online business. Technology will make it easy for consumers to go from inspiration to purchase. Technology is not new in fashion industry, but it is finally going mainstream using visual search in apps and websites. With real time analytics they give actionable data that many companies currently use to make purchasing and



merchandising decisions. At Duke, we utilise the latest technologies and we work hard to always achieve and deliver the very best.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**KRJ:** A lot has happened in the past decade, fashion bloggers rose to prominence, the amount of apps usage has quadrupled. Fast fashion has given more options than ever; this has given customers immense options and great platform to choose their respective products. Each platform is providing a constant stream of new information. Along with the designer's notes, you'll find the appropriate social media handles and hashtags to use when sharing your snaps throughout the spectacle. This has given a huge variety and an open market to customers where they are able to indulge in many fashionable sources.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**KRJ:** Great branding can help in larger profits. There are a lot of identical items in the fashion industry. Often, people purchase more for the label than for the actual product. For emerging brands and designers, widespread recognition is an unattainable goal. It encompasses

values, voices and design choices that run like a continuous thread through product, packaging and presence. Good branding is like a storytelling – a consistent and continuous message.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**KRJ:** The time has come for India to emerge as a value based manufacturing hub, design centric and fashion tech hub. Customer in India wants value-for-money products with latest styles and designs. Duke is a value-for-money brand and our mission is to make available the international designs and styles at highly reasonable prices. We see it as our duty to provide our customers the inspiration they need to look and feel confident.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**KRJ:** The fashion industry is a very competitive field. It's important to have an understanding of current trends so you can pinpoint what will be the next big thing. In fashion, detail is everything. In short, one should have a passion for fashion in order to succeed, as the days can be very long and the hours grueling. If you don't love what you do, you're likely to burn out quickly.

These are the important skills one should have to be successful in future and to stand out of the crowd. One has to be competent and possess a set of emotional and intellectual skills besides the technical skills to survive.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**KRJ:** The Indian fashion industry is transforming rapidly due to increased penetration of brands in the country and awareness of fashion trends among consumers. The future for the Indian fashion industry looks promising, buoyed by both strong domestic consumption as well as export demand. With consumerism and disposable income on the rise, this sector has experienced a rapid growth in the past decade with the entry of several international players into the Indian market. High economic growth has resulted in higher disposable income. This has led to rise in demand for products creating a huge domestic market. Nevertheless, the long-term outlook for the industry is positive, supported by rising incomes, favourable demographics, entry of foreign players, and increasing urbanisation.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**KRJ:** Despite of growing at a promising rate, Indian fashion industry is facing its own challenges of lack of trained work force. In today's business environment, consumer is the king. It has become imperative for the manufacturers to cater to the consumers according to their taste and preference. With mass media penetration and growing disposable income, Indian consumers have become more demanding and adaptable to change in fashion. It has become challenging for retailers to keep up with shifting demands and to cater their customers with changing preferences.



# MANISH MANDHANA

**CEO, THE MANDHANA RETAIL VENTURES LTD.**

**...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry**

**Manish Mandhana (MM):** The whole point of being in the industry is due to its ever-growing and changing nature. One can continue to explore and enjoy the fact that it is never going to repeat itself and you can blend different cultures. What keeps me plugged is the fact that fashion has become a global phenomenon and a manufacturer has to keep in mind both, the diversity of regions in India and the change in international trends.

**...on the role and impact of fashion**

**MM:** I think fashion is a basic commodity that represents your uniqueness. It is way to self-expression and has become extremely important at least for the millennial generation. It is no more an individual activity but a unanimous culmination of different people, different religions, castes, etc. So it can't be restricted to one person, it has to be a combination of society at a larger scale.

**...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications**

**MM:** Yes, the Indian fashion market has undergone great transformation and it is because of the influx of digital technology and international brands setting shops in India and bringing in latest trends and concepts. This has become a tremendous source in connecting with the audience and engaging them in a conversation. Customers are today influenced by trendsetters who showcase the latest fashion. The retail industry is working today for these customers in providing what they want, with good quality and affordable pricing.

**Manish Mandhana, Chief Executive Officer, The Mandhana Retail Ventures Ltd., holds a degree in Commerce and Textiles. The company owns the global license to design, market and distribute the clothing brand for celebrity Salman Khan and his charity 'Being Human - The Salman Khan Foundation'. Mandhana has witnessed successful international launches with over 500 point-of-sale in France, India, Mauritius, Nepal and the Middle East. Formerly, he was heading Mandhana Industries Ltd., a vertically integrated company pioneering textiles and garments. Under his leadership, Mandhana Industries Ltd., became a pioneer in the Indian textile and apparel industry and was also listed in the 'Fortune 500 Companies'.**



India, it will generate good employment avenues for the consumers in the fashion sector as the crux on both sides of this industry are the youth. Not only the back office employment including IT, marketing and designing but also well-groomed and well-educated fashion consultant and managers at the store level.

#### ...on the fashion skills that will matter in future

**MM:** Skill sets such as design, innovation with research and development, supply chain improvisation will be in demand.

#### ...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks

**MM:** Political scenario, digitalisation, information exchange and use of big data could accelerate the demand. Lack of skilled labour force might act as roadblocks.

#### ...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry

**MM:** There are basic growth drivers and will continue to do so however, digitalisation will contribute further. Moreover internet of things and opening of new trajectories such as the union of fashion and technology will be factors in cutting costs as well.

#### ...on why being “good” does and will matter a lot

**MM:** “Good” fashion is where people want to be associated with not just buying clothes but at the same time being associated with something good. I strongly believe business based on sustainability factors such as social, economic and environmental impacts will always have more share of respect in the long run as it will earn them more goodwill and credibility from its core customers. Being Human is working on this model where every customer contributes to the twin causes of education and healthcare with every purchase he makes.



#### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**MM:** I think technology has become the essence of any business function and even fashion. Retailers are using technology to understand customer profiles and their journey to the point-of-sale. This helps companies to capture the data at POS level and bring it bit back at the head office to crunch, analyse and predict the customer behaviour and preferences.

#### ...on the changing fashion consumer

**MM:** Customer today is well educated and well aware of the choices around him. He is like an explorer who looks at both physical and online retail to see what is the latest trend and where should he buy from. The companies too are looking at the shopping preferences and conveniences and are trying to be omni present with their products. The digital media is the new avatar of this modern trade and is directly influencing the millennial and the Y-Generation which was not evident 10 years back. The physical stores also have undergone a big transformation wherein visual merchandising and store ambience plays a key role in influencing the decision making for a customer.

#### ...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion

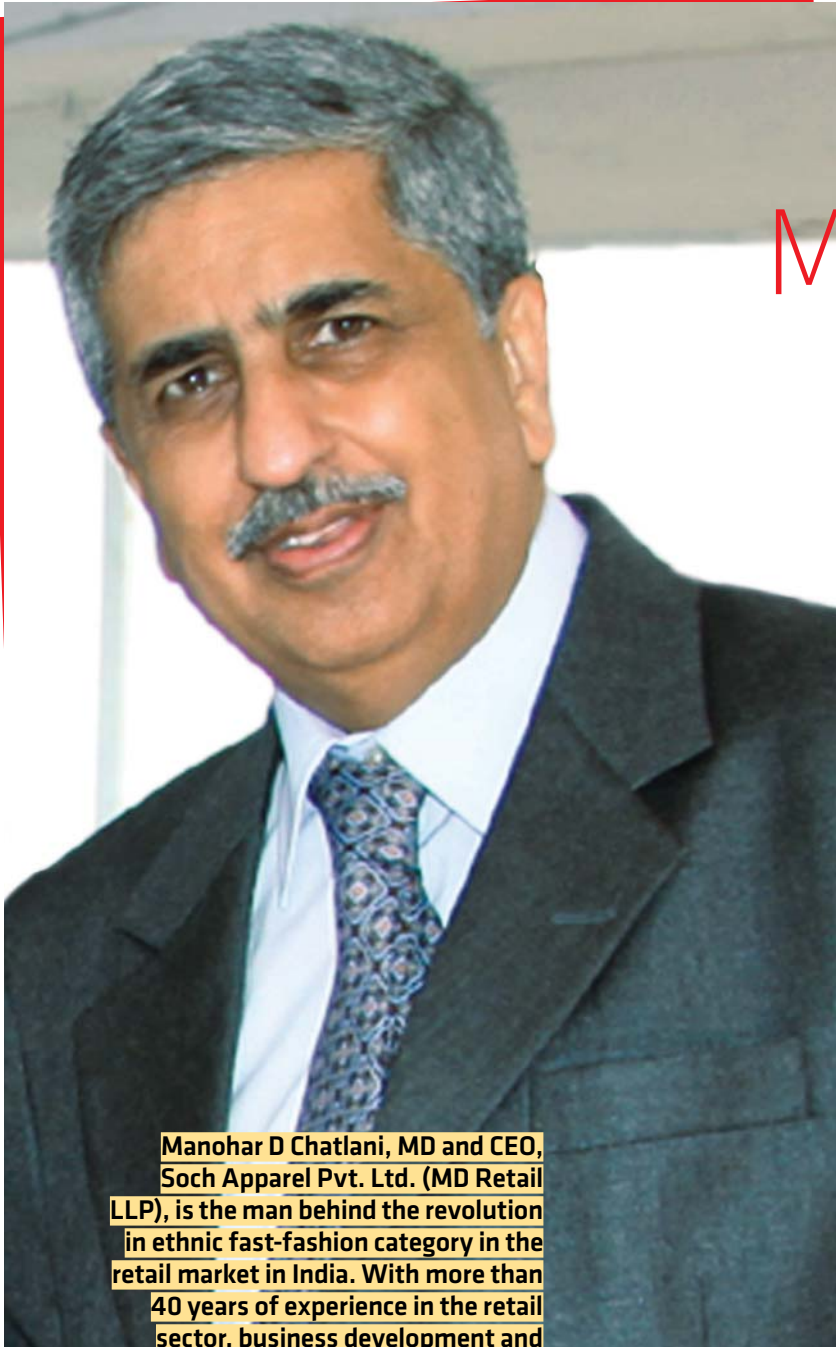
**MM:** For me, a great product must include quality, pricing and more importantly fit. This is what makes you competitive enough in the market with multiple brands.

#### ...on the ‘Make in India’ vision for the fashion industry

**MM:** India is a well-known manufacturing destination due to its cost effective labour compared to the West; has invested heavily in technology and machinery in textile and apparel industry. The fashion industry at the global level has made inroads into the market where Indian designers and their design sensibilities have been appreciated due to various fashion institutes and schools set up in the country.

#### ...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub

**MM:** India excels in IT technology and if this is integrated with fashion along with the cost effective labour, it will prove to be a great combination for growth. The country can become a good option for brands to choose their production capabilities which will boost up our employment. Textile industry is the largest employer in India. With organised retailing taking a big leap in



**Manohar D Chatlani, MD and CEO, Soch Apparel Pvt. Ltd. (MD Retail LLP), is the man behind the revolution in ethnic fast-fashion category in the retail market in India. With more than 40 years of experience in the retail sector, business development and leadership roles, Chatlani has grown the its brand 'Soch' from being a single 800 sq.ft. store to an enormous chain. Soch today is one of the most loved women's ethnic wear brands in the country. Besides, he was the first to have launched a departmental store (multi-brand) in Bengaluru catering to the entire family. He was also the first to manufacture fiber glass mannequins in India.**

# MANOHAR. D. CHATLANI

**MD & CEO, SOCH APPAREL PVT. LTD.  
(MD RETAIL LLP)**

## **...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry**

**Manohar D Chatlani (MDC):** My family has been in the fashion retail industry since three generations now, starting from my father who entered it right after partition in the 1950's. It gave me immense pleasure to work under him and then take over and grow the business. My two sons joined me later and have picked up my passion for fashion retail but within their own rights. Fashion by definition means constant change, and this fluidity requires the industry to be in constant change too. Nothing is static and evolution is the name of the game, which excites me the most.

## **...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications**

**MDC:** The Indian fashion market, much like the rest of the world, is definitely seeing a shift. To begin with, the widespread availability of the internet is making the consumer a lot more discerning. There used to be a time when the supply was the only thing that influenced the demand.

Now people are spoilt for choice, and the lines between influencers and buyers are blurring and many times the people who buy or use are also the people who influence, such as bloggers and celebrities. I think it has forced the industry to be a lot more nibble. There will soon be a point when the relationship between supply and consumption will have to be a lot more holistic than simply a transactional one, and morph into one of synergy between desire and design.





*The consumers are used to being able to access information and products both offline and online, and brands have to adapt to being able to offer the consumers a seamless experience.*

### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**MDC:** The fashion industry has to be available across channels. The consumers are used to being able to access information and products both offline and online, and brands have to adapt to being able to offer the consumers a seamless experience. Omni-channel seems to be something that is thrown around a lot these days in the fashion retail industry. But if effectively used by each brand in the way in which it should benefit that particular brand's consumers, omni-channel can greatly enhance the brand and purchase experience, create loyalty and eventually lead to a stronger bottom line for the company.

### ...on the changing fashion consumer

**MDC:** Customers of today have a plethora of choices. They have a higher disposable income and also spend a larger part of it on apparel than those of ten years ago. They tend to know what they want most of the times before even entering a store. Web rooming and show rooming are part of their purchasing process, and they utilise the internet to support their buying like never before. They are price aware but also brand conscious.

### ...on the changing fashion product

**MDC:** Fashion today, especially ethnic wear, is a blend of the East and the West. Due to the penetration of TV and

Bollywood, the product mix has become more important due to the huge number of options available and the intense competitions.

### ...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion

**MDC:** Yes, I do agree. As far as fashion goes, a great product is paramount to a designer, however we are in the fashion retail space so all other aspects that lead to a successful retail brand also come into play. Placement, pricing, packaging, location and marketing are all pillars of success but obviously they all come in second to having a great product.

### ...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub

**MDC:** I think fashion is seeing a huge growth across the country. To a large extent, e-commerce has opened our eyes to how far reaching fashion demand really is. People in the most remote regions previously thought of as unreachable or not even viable markets are suddenly relevant. Remote work will also slowly allow us to harness talent across a large country such as ours. Like mentioned before, the pure awareness growth and rising disposable incomes will make the potential for fashion as an employment and income generator incredibly large.

### ...on the fashion skills that will matter in future

**MDC:** For the foreseeable future I look

at both the creative side (design and marketing) coupled with the science side (data analytics and forecasting) to be the two pillars of growth for fashion in India, and these are the two areas in which demand for manpower will be the highest.

### ...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry

**MDC:** At the end of the day, our country is really seen as a group of countries put together. When you take into account regional seasons, languages and even slight changes in taste, it does make rapid national growth trickier than it would be in some other large countries.

Our government of late has been very supportive of the industry and hopefully will continue to do so. The more the bureaucratic and legal roadblocks are removed, smoother the growth will be. Technology of course will be used as our greatest tool both in rolling out across the country and understanding our consumer and thereby being able to adapt to their needs via data.

### ...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot

**MDC:** I think "good" fashion and sustainable business practices are simply things on our industry's part to undertake. And in a more collective role that mankind has to take, in order to fix our planet.





**Manoj Mehra, Chairman and Managing Director, Study by Janak is a graduate from Ripley School of Fashion in London (UK). A front-runner with holistic approach and optimistic entrepreneurial spirit, Mehra laid the foundation of Study By Janak in 1986 and opened its first flagship store in Delhi at Karol Bagh. He used all his knowledge and expertise in building the brand and has since redefined the Indian fashion couture. His burning desire is to take the fashion luxury segment to the next level by defining new standards of service. Today, the brand is reckoned for its capability to come up with stylised wear each season as well as tailoring finesse.**

# MANOJ MEHRA

**CMD, STUDY BY JANAK**

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Manoj Mehra (MM):** When I was completing my fashion studies in London, I realised there was a huge demand and supply gap in the Indian market, especially about stylised men's occasion wear. That's when the idea of making a difference to the fashion scene came. My father was already in the ready-to-wear business, but then I added designer wear and made-to-measure range to the business which caught everyone's attention. I am talking about 3 decades ago, men's wear was conservative--styles, silhouettes, cuts--detailing were restricted to the silver screen, young college crowd or the ones who travel abroad.

What has always been exciting is the innovation we work on. At SBJ, our focus is not only to strengthen our base but also spiral new innovations every year. When clients, some of them coming to us from generations, say that when they have to go for stylised occasion wear and no one does it like us, it really adds fuel to my passion.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**MM:** Fashion has its own definition for every one, some see it as trends, some see it as comfort, some see it as an identity. For me, fashion is something that is ever evolving yet stays in the same circle. What you see today, will come back later but in a new 'avatar'. As a nation, India is quite diverse and so we see various portrayals of same garment as you keep travelling. When a global trend comes to our land, there is more display interpretation to it than the entire world can see. For example, if zardozi is in fashion, you will see it on a bandhgala, on a salwar kameez,



**Today with the information and the retail scenario transformation, the entire working has changed. The product offering is more and people are looking at more global trends in the Indian silhouettes.**

anarkali, lehenga, sherwani, sarees and so many other things.

**...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications**

**MM:** To a large extent the market has changed. The way the consumers shop today, the way the choices are available to a client and the rapid influx of information from around the world, have definitely changed the buying behaviours. These implications suggest a brand's product mix, the communication channel and the customer engagement. All of these need greater detailing and care to meet the market expectations.

**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**MM:** Technology is the basic factor that is churning the fashion business. Technology has always played an important role in product development and production. The kind of products we made when we started our business to what we bring out today, there is a huge difference. International standards in production and quality check are now in place. We have the best of world's machines to churn out beautiful garments.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**MM:** Customers are the same, I would say, but the demands have seen a seismic shift. The customer 10 years ago did not bother about the service standards they get at a store, but today a client is not only concerned about what kind of products they are getting, but the kind of service they are getting. They want to be properly greeted when they enter, well guided on the product, etc. Moreover, an after-sales service plays a make-or-break relationship scenario to a brand. So today the level of expectations of clients have really seen a shift.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**MM:** The way the fashion products have changed, it also has witnessed a great shift. For example, 20 years ago the influx of information was not that much. The phenomenon of global trends was not there. People were not as well travelled as they are today so the entire thing was on a plateau. Today with the information and the retail scenario transformation, the entire working has changed. The product offering is more, people are looking at more global trends in the Indian silhouettes, and that's how we plan our product mix now. Of course we do not get into competition

>



with international brands, we have made a niche for ourselves. Even in our prêt range, the kind of detailing, fabrics and silhouettes we offer, they are not available with any international brands. We give the same level of detailing, finish and made-to-measure range like any other top of the line brand.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**MM:** I completely agree, but I think today it is not the only thing that suffices. The customer service is a very important deciding factor along with

pricing. There are many players who have tried giving average products at low prices or a very good product at exorbitant prices, both did not work. So it has to be a complete package, good product and even better service.

**...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**MM:** I would say, we should be taking a U-turn and go back to our basics in textiles. There is so much to learn and inspired from, that can set new standards of fashion in the global fashion arena. The kind of embroidery, detailing, use of fabrics and silhouettes that we have, if we could start looking inward, there is a lot that can be done with the product that is produced.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**MM:** I think the focus should be a mix of design and technology. We have immense handicraft skill and of course the world knows about the technology mavericks we have. So a blend of both will take us on to the next level.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**MM:** Artisanal embroideries and well trained tailors, is one of the skill sets that can generate a lot of employment.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**MM:** There has to be awareness among retailers that fashion is not just about opening fancy stores and putting up stuff, there is lot more to it. You need to make a difference with your products and with the service. If we want to see a quantum growth, there has to be a systematic expansion plan with trained man power to handle the stores.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**MM:** The seismic turnaround changes in taxation, accounting, etc., makes a lot of difference and acts as a deterrent to the fashion industry.

**...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**MM:** With the kind of atmosphere we are in eco-friendly fashion and re-usability is something that we must strive to work on. Of course its not only to the final product that sustainability implies, it's the process of production that also needs to be more environment friendly. Whether it is using solar energy or treatment and reuse of water; the retailer also has to have responsibility towards greener planet.

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Nachiket Barve is a celebrated fashion designer, award-winning costume designer and the regional winner of the International Woolmark Prize last year.

His eponymous label stands for progressive design that's creative yet commercial, timely yet timeless. His signature look has unusual use of colour, innovative surface treatments, timeless silhouettes that are wearable and inclusive. The label is favoured by top celebrities and retails at select top-end boutiques in India and worldwide. In his off duty hours, Barve is an avid wildlife photographer, trekker, traveller and chef. When not at the studio, he is happiest in the forest or by the sea.

# NACHIKET BARVE

## FASHION DESIGNER

### ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Nachiket Barve (NB):** Fashion is challenging, exciting and constantly changing. It mirrors life, lets me be as creative as possible and allows me to bring happiness to the wearer. I can tell stories through textiles and garments and make the process of living easier and more enjoyable.

### ...on the role and impact of fashion

**NB:** Fashion is a way of being. It is identifying with a mindset and bringing an interpretation of it to your own life. It can be liberating, educational, transformative and wonderful. Especially in a rich and diverse country like ours, it plays a role in social change and messaging.

### ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**NB:** Indian fashion market has changed enormously. More people are interested in fashion than ever before. They are embracing it, adapting to it and society is getting shaped with it. The medium can be a change-maker as far as the influence of culture and societal thought process are concerned. The amount of employment it generates is enormous too!

### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**NB:** The internet has exploded the old model. Social media allows consumers anywhere in the country or the world to access a brand, whether to admire or buy. Technology has also made production and design processes more streamlined and really shrunk the world.



*Indian fashion market has changed enormously. More people are interested in fashion than ever before. They are embracing it, adapting to it and society is getting shaped with it.*

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**NB:** Economies of scale that let designers make superb product at an accessible price point for a larger audience.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**NB:** So many... even now all sectors are not working together in sync... Industry and designers are on different islands. We also need easier laws and support to grow.

**...on why being “good” does and will matter a lot**

**NB:** Fashion is a culprit in the area of environmental degradation for sure. The key I feel is to design good products that don't become outdated and end up in a landfill but last seasons and years. There has to be a newer way of looking at clothes that is not disposable but sustainable. The collection I designed for my Gen next show still gets ordered and worn. I don't think we have to forsake glamour or style to create “sustainable” clothing, if it will anyway be discarded quickly.



**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**NB:** The fashion consumers (male and female) are more opinionated, well informed and really keen to be individualistic. Their willingness to spend on themselves is more than ever before.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**NB:** I didn't have a brand 20 years ago... but even a decade ago when I began, the product was different. Today it is more specific... festive wear is the biggest market, but people want chic clothes for everyday too!

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**NB:** I agree... The product has been the focus of my brand always!

**...on the ‘Make in India’ vision for the fashion industry**

**NB:** Diversity and authenticity is our strength. That coupled with a global exposure and a strong economy have given a fillip to the fashion sector. It is important we understand and cater to our market than trying to take on the world in one go.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**NB:** All are important... design is a multi pronged beast. It all has to work in sync.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**NB:** I think we have too many designers, but not enough professionals who are trained to handle production, merchandising, technology in fashion or even business of fashion.



**Nitin Mohan, Founder and Director, Blackberrys, has an educational background in Garment Technology & Manufacturing from NIFT, Delhi. Mohan hails from a family lineage of over 130 years of clothing business by the name Sriram & Sons.**

**In 1991 together he and his brother Nikhil, envisioned the menswear brand Blackberrys. He has been instrumental in crafting the product and design strategy from the very initial stage of Blackberrys. He has been involved in functions across supply chain, retail operations and is transforming the business from category to brand led, which today stands with a turnover of in excess of ₹900 crores.**

# NITIN MOHAN

## DIRECTOR, BLACKBERRYS

### ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Nitin Mohan (NM):** The origin of the brand Blackberrys is from a family run fabric store-- which is more than a 100 years old--by the name Sri Ram & Sons in Chandani Chowk, Delhi. In the early days, we would go straight to the store from college which in no time garnered our fascination with mills and appreciation towards the fabrics. Our family has a track record of every generation starting something new. It was definitely our inclination towards the industry, probably that started from our family lineage.

### ...on the role and impact of fashion

**NM:** Fashion for me is the creative outlet of empowerment that showcases one's aspirations to grow and succeed. It is an individual's identity, what he is and what he dreams to become.

With the changed lifestyle where everyone is engaged in a fast moving life, the role of fashion has become more prominent than ever before. This is impressive and mesmerising.

The amalgamation of the creative ideas and technology is shaping fashion for every individual's personality and comfort needs. With the changes in lifestyle, everyone is engaged in a fast moving life with dynamic personalities, which require convenience and comfort.

### ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**NM:** Fashion market is a dynamic place that constantly changes. Moving forward, we are going to see the trend shifting towards an amalgamation of transactional and functional





*The amalgamation of the creative ideas and technology is shaping fashion for every individual's personality and comfort needs. With the changes in lifestyle, everyone is engaged in a fast moving life with dynamic personalities, which require convenience and comfort.*

trends. Multi-purpose, lifestyle oriented spaces are going to be created to focus on more than one aspect of lifestyle.

**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**NM:** Technology has broadened the geographic reach of the fashion business. The country is now inspired, educated and provided with what places and occasions need and what their lifestyle needs.

With technology we can connect with our customer to the last mile and speak to them in their language. The two-way communication platform tells the brands too, what the customer has in mind.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**NM:** Purchasing power, I feel, is the core factor that identifies the difference. The difference primarily doesn't focus on the consumption but also on exploring what the industry has to offer.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**NM:** Fashion is a cycle. What was there 20 years ago is still there, but with a different play of colours and advancement in fabrics. It is like old wine in new bottle.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**NM:** Sure. The product does matter most but when it covers the 360 degree focus to meet the customers need.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**NM:** With the advancing scenario, trend analysts could play a major role in contributing to the industry. The trends that add, that change needs the fashion enthusiasts that read, evaluate and add to what the audience seeks.

**...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**NM:** The industry not wholly but for sure is moving with eco-friendly processes, with components like sustainable trims and processes. It however couldn't be taken as a blanket rule understanding the core needs of garment manufacturing. Speaking futuristic, if and when raw becomes sustainable there will be a drastic addition to this emotional need.





**Praveen Bafna, Managing Director, Cool Colors has made his mark in the Indian fashion industry and is a constant source of direction and strength for the company, Bafna Clothing Company. With over 20 years of experience, he has garnered an intense understanding of fashion across the nation, which lies at the heart of the three brands under Bafna Clothing i.e. Cool Colors, iBlues and Walker. This experience has provided him with key insights into the working of the MBO markets enabling the expansion of the company's reach from India to Singapore and the Middle East.**

# PRAVEEN BAFNA

## MD, COOL COLORS

### ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Praveen Bafna (PB):** The fashion industry is filled with creativity. There are no limits to its reach, with new possibilities being unlocked every minute.

### ...on the role and impact of fashion

**PB:** Fashion is a reflection of the society we live in. And just like a cultural landscape, it is always changing and re-inventing the identity of the individuals and the nation as a whole.

### ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**PB:** Today, fashion has become a global phenomenon. It goes beyond boundaries, with different styles from far corners of the world drawing inspiration from each other. This trend of fusion is a glimpse at the future of fashion.

### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**PB:** Technology has played a key role in connecting us with the global fashion forum. It has changed our perspective of design and has given us a way to connect with the consumers, in a way that was not possible before.

### ...on the changing fashion consumer

**PB:** In this new age of information the consumers have the necessary exposure to be more aware of what they want and the options available in the market. We have always worked towards adapting, making sure that we are always in line with our consumers.



*Today, fashion has become a global phenomenon. It goes beyond boundaries, with different styles from far corners of the world drawing inspiration from each other. This trend of fusion is a glimpse at the future of fashion.*

**...on the changing fashion product**

**PB:** Each season brings new ideas, new thoughts and with it a fresh way of looking at designs. There will always be a range of classic designs, but the product mix and themes are the elements that are carefully planned as per the season.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**PB:** Yes. A great product is a result of good design and good quality which never fails to create an impact in any industry.

**...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**PB:** India is well known for its rich heritage in fashion and design and the aspect of adhering to our core strengths has made the world well aware of our unique style and our effort in maintaining our distinct identity.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**PB:** The focus needs to be on all three, as they are all equally integral to the country's progress.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**PB:** There are many fields in fashion that help in creating a new fashion line but out of all those, design stands as a

particular skill set that has maximum demand and generates higher employment in India.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**PB:** The Indian fashion industry flourishes through its variety and the influx of new designs and ideas. Hence globalisation becomes one of the main factors in making the Indian market an ideal place for global fashion.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**PB:** While the growth of the fashion industry in India has been rapid, it is still in its early stages. So there are bound to be short term legal and ideological roadblocks along the way.

**...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**PB:** Good fashion in any context of time is how it manifests the ongoing trend. Creating sustainable and eco-friendly processes and products has become the main cause across many industries, and fashion is no exception. Governments have been quick to adapt to this idea and have already created regulations that support this cause.





# RAGHAVENDRA RATHORE

**FASHION DESIGNER**

**Born and brought up in the epicentre of heritage and culture of Rajasthan, Raghavendra Rathore is India's foremost name in bespoke luxury men's wear. Trained in Manhattan at the Parsons School of Design, Rathore has worked with DKNY and Oscar de la Renta before launching his own label in 1994 under brand, Rathore Jodhpur. His reputation for the classic tailored look and a sharp cut instantly gave him access to a sophisticated clientele. His metamorphosis of the Jodhpur Bandhgala jacket and a "new cut for the classic Bandhgala Suit" has given him a respectable place in the Indian fashion history.**

**...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry**

**Raghavendra Rathore (RR):** The passion required to be an aggressive part of the textile and fashion industry in India, had the right challenge, encouraged opportunity to make a brand and most importantly was a perfect fit with my newly garnered talents in the early 80s. The tenacity with which the industry requires constant evolution, tests human patience, which indirectly gives me the opportunity as an individual to grow and enrich my existence.

**...on the role and impact of fashion**

**RR:** Fashion to me is a philosophy, a satire of sorts, an understanding of society. It is a science about people and society. It is also the perfect barometer of culture and its impact on the social fabric of the social order in a particular part of the world. It is also the best expression of our personality.

**...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications**

**RR:** Change in fashion is constant. The market and the designer must evolve as society develops season after season. The implication of change can be seen as culling and letting the new and better products survive through the plethora competing businesses and brands. It is healthy but devastating, a double sided sword that assures and guarantees that new trends evolve.

**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**RR:** Technology has been the biggest asset and a disruptor for many businesses and how clients interact with their choices of products. From the invention of the fax machine, which transported ideas from one corner of the world to the other,

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to the internet and now apps and the mobile, everything has to change with the times and those who don't understand technology regretfully will have to bear a heavy price in the long run.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**RR:** With more choices available, and armed with the mobile phone, the modern customer is more aware and certain about what he or she wants to procure from a global market, as everything is now available with a touch of a screen.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**RR:** Seasonal cycles are showcasing that product lines have given rise to



shorter replenishment cycles. The methodology of presenting a collection too is undergoing a change. The customer expects a product mix and wants to interact with fresh and new products more frequently rather than waiting for seasons to change.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**RR:** No doubt product is the king but one also needs to know the reality of the market and the threshold of the consumer. A well designed product priced incorrectly by a couple of thousand rupees can have an ill-fated experience despite its aesthetics being in place.

**...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**RR:** Just as ancient Indian architecture, the essence of what is created in India must stand out in comparison to its western or Asian counterparts. With the rich heritage and the diversity, 'Make in India' has the potential to change the perception of quality and take us closer to an impression that India is an ideation nation rather than a production factory of the world.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**RR:** A balance of culture, design, product generation and technology

are the key ingredients in creating the image that we so necessarily must seek.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**RR:** The ability to visualise, design, sample, produce, market and re-invent are the key skills that the workforce, in different hierarchy, will be the driving force of the change in the industry.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**RR:** Investing in good education and training centers, creating a fluidity for entrepreneurship are key parameters that can start the ball rolling.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**RR:** The high price of real estate, complicating bureaucracy, lack of financial confidence at different levels of fuelling start-ups can act as roadblocks.

**...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot**

**RR:** Sustainable and eco-friendly demand must come from the consumer. Government and the design fraternity will automatically adapt to. This may take a longer time in the luxury segment but will have faster momentum in the mass market arena.





Designer duo Rohit Gandhi and Rahul Khanna have completed their 20th year of creative partnership. They have been awarded the 'Best Pret Collection' for men and women apparel on numerous platforms and also the prestigious "GQ-Designers of the year" title. The duo is the only Indian designer label with a reach of over 80 stores all over the globe. The designers have made their mark in contemporary prêt wear for men and women who wish to break the stereotype in clothing and experiment with distinct textures and engineered design. With two standalone stores within India, they specialise in bespoke men's couture.

# ROHIT GANDHI & RAHUL KHANNA

## FASHION DESIGNER

**...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry**

**Rohit Gandhi & Rahul Khanna (RG & RH):** We love it! Fashion is exciting and keeps you on the edge. Each season brings with it a new beginning; new set of challenges. It's constant re-invention which is super exciting for us.

**...on the role and impact of fashion**

**RG & RH:** There's no way to singularly define it, it has multiple dimensions to it. It's highly impactful, people live and breathe it. It's a definite conversation starter and way to represent personal state of mind.

**...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications**

**RG & RH:** The market in India has definitely become more mature, one can see it in the evolution of the buying behaviour of the quintessential luxury Indian consumer. Their awareness of global brands and fashion on the world stage as a whole has increased. Keeping the future in mind, the industry will have to dedicate time, effort and money into deeper research and development in order to keep the consumer intrigued and interested.

**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**RG & RH:** Technology in fashion has brought about some significant changes in techniques





*The fashion market in India has definitely become more mature, one can see it in the evolution of the buying behaviour of the quintessential luxury Indian consumer. Their awareness of global brands and fashion on the world stage as a whole has increased.*

like 3D printing and digital printing. It has aided in the construction of newer varieties of fabrics. But at the same time it's extremely difficult to replace handwork in India.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**RG & RH:** The consumer of today is price conscious and understands value for money. They are well aware of the amount of choices that they have in the market.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**RG & RH:** Quality consciousness is the number one priority. One is more stringent in the process of choosing vendors and raw materials. Theme planning is still the same for us, we draw inspiration from our environment and things around us. Fashion is all about being current and relevant, so we like to go with the creative flow of things instead of pre-planning.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**RG & RH:** Definitely! The product speaks volumes, all other aspects are in the periphery.

**...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry**

**RG & RH:** India is rich in fabrics and heritage, in fact most of the big international design houses are conducting their production in India because of the craftsmanship and techniques used. India and its culture is a big inspiration to the world.

**...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub**

**RG & RH:** Design centric for sure, the rest follows. India has a rich past in technique and versatility of fabrics which should be honoured.

**...on the fashion skills that will matter in future**

**RG & RH:** India excels when it comes to textile and hand embroideries. Our weavers and hand craftsmen will have the most to gain in the future with the increase of exports in fashion.

**...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry**

**RG & RH:** Concentrating on being a design hub and taking inspiration from our rich past.

**...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks**

**RG & RH:** Good fashion is the way to go forward and will play an important role in the future. The government is creating policies that concentrate on controlling environmental harm. We look forward to being a part of this initiative and seeing sustainable fashion grow in the country.





**Shailesh Chaturvedi, Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer, Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein, has over 25 years of work experience in apparel retail industry. Chaturvedi has launched and developed some of the biggest brands in India including Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Louis Philippe, Van Heusen and Allen Solly. The assignment with Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein has given him opportunity to demonstrate methods of rapidly scaling up premium, imported businesses of very high standard profitably. He has worked with Benetton Plc., of Italy as the head of its wholesale business in Asia Pacific region with responsibility of business in Australia, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines and Malaysia.**

# SHAILESH CHATURVEDI

**MD & COO,  
TOMMY HILFIGER & CALVIN KLEIN**

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Shailesh Chaturvedi (SC):** There is a constant pressure for newness in this industry and only the most alert minds can thrive. That's what excites me about fashion industry where I have been working for the past 25 years after completing my Engineering and MBA.

Fashion has a very positive effect on people as it imparts a sense of confidence. One feels good when one looks good.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**SC:** Fashion is constantly changing and evolving. What was a hit yesterday is a miss today.

Convenience is a big driver of fashion today where industry is making use of technology to offer solutions on convenience to consumers. New consumers are also socially conscious and are expecting sustainable fashion. Use of technology, focus on sustainability and direct approach to reach consumers are some of the big changes seen in the industry.

## ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**SC:** In garment and retail business, there has been a higher disruption due to technology. We are all working with more alertness, with more speed and are looking directly at consumers due to reach and access provided by technology.

Technology will finally solve our industry search for the right size of garments. I hope there



*Convenience is a big driver of fashion today where industry is making use of technology to offer solutions on convenience to consumers.*



will be no loss of business due to size unavailability in near future.

#### ...on the changing fashion consumer

**SC:** The consumer today has a younger mindset, is more fit, more demanding and is impatient. The biggest focus is on consumer set called millennials and there is lots of literature on what makes millennials different.

#### ...on the changing fashion product

**SC:** In the last 20 years, product has changed beyond expectation. We see more use of knits v/s woven, slimmer fits and clean lines are preferred. Also there is a use of technology in products. Athleisure is a big trend across the world. Also accessories are growing faster and are more main stream.

#### ...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion

**SC:** I agree wholeheartedly. The only thing a consumer carries in a carry bag is the product. A constantly evolving product is at the heart of our business.

#### ...on the fashion skills that will matter in future

**SC:** I feel business is moving more towards a focused storytelling approach and functions like visual merchandising, digital marketing and omni-channel functions will be much sought after going forward.

#### ...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry

**SC:** Industry needs capital infusion for growth. Also, it requires build up of infrastructure. Use of technology, scale brought through bigger distribution

in smaller towns, access to media that is influencing minds of consumers towards fashion, better size availability through use of technology, better knowhow and transfer of knowledge while working with global giants will be some factors that will fuel growth.

#### ...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks

**SC:** Our industry is still in “invest and grow” phase. Needs capital for growth. Investors don’t like surprises. Constantly changing government policy framework with inbuilt surprises along with steep rise in input costs, any slowdown in GDP growth, slow upgradation in skill sets of employees in this trade, slow increase in quality retail spaces (offline as well as online) may act as road blocks.





**Siddharth Bindra, Managing Director, Biba, holds a Masters of Commerce from Sydenham College, Mumbai. Bindra pursued higher studies in Futures, Options and Financial Derivatives, and Capital Markets & Investments from Harvard. He joined the family business in 1997, with a primary objective to convert the 'home grown' product to a national 'brand', capitalising on the retail boom in the country. He has over 17 years of experience in the textile and apparel industry. In a country where ethnic wear is predominantly unorganised, it has been his keen understanding of the Indian consumer and of the prevalent retail scenario, which has transformed Biba into the country's most loved ethnic wear brand.**

# SIDDHARTH BINDRA

**MD, BIBA**

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Siddharth Bindra (SB):** At the age of 24, I joined the family business and enjoyed the job. The huge gap in branded and unbranded ethnic wear was quite prevalent. Sensing this gap, I started working towards evolving Biba from a home grown Indian brand to an aspirational national brand. I am happy that we have managed to create a category and have been a part of Biba's journey from growth to challenges and what motivates me is the fact that I have been able to overcome them and have emerged as a winner. The continuous innovation with our offering and the overall impact it has had on the Indian women's dressing is heartening and overwhelming.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**SB:** Fashion is what an individual likes to wear and feels comfortable in. Fashion defines and enhances one's personality. Change in fashion sensibilities is a reflection of the country's evolving socio-economic development. With the increasing number of independent and confident women, immense changes in the dressing style of Indian women have been noticed. The revival of Indian handloom in the last few years has led to a major economic boost to the textile and the handloom industry and it brought back fabrics and designs which became obsolete.

## ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and it's implications

**SB:** Intense competition and emergence of e-commerce platforms have led buyers spoiled for choice. Today, potential customers influence the brand's pricing strategy. With increase in

disposable income, customers are now more inclined to buy branded products hence intensifying competition. To retain customers, brands are tactfully pricing their products without compromising on the quality. Digital platforms have also enabled brands to reach potential customers across countries. Apart from metropolitan and tier -I, -III and -IV cities have also emerged as potential markets for the fashion industry.

#### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**SB:** Technology has been playing a pivotal role in the expansion of the Indian fashion industry. With real time analytics technology is giving actionable data that companies currently use to make purchasing and merchandising decisions. Social media engagement, influencers' involvement and showcasing of collection through virtual medium have become an important platform for designers to reach out to a large number of people at a short span of time.

#### ...on the changing fashion consumer

**SB:** Modern day customers are very fashion conscious, confident of their style and experiment a lot with their

looks. The urge to look trendy and beautiful has compelled modern day women to try new styles, bold colours, fabrics and prints, which were mainly missing in women ten years back. There is a significant change in the thinking, dressing style and taste of today's customers.

#### ...on the changing fashion product

**SB:** Fashion landscape has undergone major transformation over the last few decades. Brands have been constantly curating new designs and trends owing to the consumers fast changing fashion preferences. For instance, Biba, in 1988 started with designing salwar kameez dupatta (SKD), which became extremely popular. Today Biba offers a complete ethnic wear range which includes formals, semi formals, mix-and-match as well as heavy occasional wears. In 2010, we launched Biba Girls, a dedicated range for young girls aged between 2 to 12 years old. Owing to increase in demand, the brand decided to cater to slightly older girls within 15 years of age group. Biba has also expanded their bottom line range which includes leggings, skirts, different types of pants and palazzos.

#### ...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry

**SB:** With 'Make in India', the Government of India has put a lot of focus on handlooms and has taken a host of measures to free up production. Our country has a rich textile heritage and such initiatives will popularise Indian handloom products, which will in turn help the weavers and local artisans' showcase their works on a wider platform and help provide a fashionable outlook to the product.

#### ...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub

**SB:** Indian fashion has carved a niche position for itself in the global fashion arena and has got the potential to become a manufacturing and design-centric hub in future. Many global fashion houses draw inspiration from Indian traditions and cultures. Our attires are not only fashionable but also carry a rich cultural heritage which helps them to leave a mark.

#### ...on the fashion skills that will matter in future

**SB:** I think anything which needs human intervention and human craft will always need manpower and will create employment opportunities. Hand work will become aspirational and luxurious in the coming years.

#### ...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks

**SB:** Lack of adequate infrastructure and the high cost of real estate are deterrents in the growth of the fashion industry.

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# SUNDEEP K CHUGH

**MD & CEO, BENETTON INDIA**

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Sundeeep K Chugh (SKC):** To begin with, it was not an intentional decision. It just happened and I can say without a doubt that it was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. Fashion industry is dynamic, agile, constantly evolving and extremely rewarding. The fact that, fashion is largely inspired by art is what excites me the most about this industry. Every season has something new to offer that excites both brands and consumers and therefore you're constantly thinking, evolving and innovating.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**SKC:** In my opinion there is no hardcore definition of fashion. Fashion is more about how every individual perceives it. For some it is following the trends and dressing in tandem with it and for some it's all about being comfortable in whatever they wear. As a brand, we cater to both as we make apparel and accessories based on the ongoing trends and also lay focus on creating a comfortable and high quality collection. We take pride in defining Benetton as a brand that has something for every individual.

Technology has been a real game changer in revolutionising the fashion fraternity. No matter what country you are in you have visual access to the trends in other countries through social media platforms like Instagram, which has led to accelerated adoption of global trends, which in turn has shrunk the turnaround time for manufacturers. Consumers expect whatever they are witnessing on the runway should be made available by the brands in a short span of time.



**Sundeeep K Chugh, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Benetton India, has been a catalyst in developing Benetton's distribution strategy in India, moving the company to a more balanced retail model. Chugh has been serving as the Commercial Director of Benetton India since 2011. He has been successfully attracting new partners and expanded the sales network, creating the largest network of stores and retail space in India. Prior to joining Benetton, he has held positions in Adidas India Marketing and LG Electronics India. Throughout his career, he has won several performance-related awards for sales, regional management, team performance and business management.**



### ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**SKC:** Yes, Indian fashion market has drastically changed over the recent years. Influx of multiple global brands in the country, government being supportive in imparting the license, recent FDI policy are some of the key factors that has led to this change. As a result, there is cut-throat competition in the market and the consumer is completely spoilt for choice. Brands are constantly innovating to offer clutter breaking, unique value proposition to the consumers. The industry is sure to witness interesting times ahead. Also, technology and customer experience are playing a pivotal role in establishing consumer stories. They look forward to more technologically enabled brand and stores along with an appalling retail experience.

### ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**SKC:** As mentioned above, technology has been a real game-changer in revolutionizing the fashion fraternity in India. Earlier a particular trend was followed for long, nowadays trends come and go in no time. Every season, consumers demand something new given the access to global trends through social media. Technology gets customers 'accessibility' in a few clicks. Customers have access to what celebrities wore on a red carpet night or what happened at fashion week. The trends are right there on their phones. It puts a great responsibility on the brands therefore to retain a novelty factor in their collection while being in vogue.

### ...on the changing fashion consumer

**SKC:** Consumers are far more informed today and have access to global trends more than ever. Mode of exposure has evolved tremendously. The journey from print to social media and offline

to online shopping has made the consumer very demanding. Also, the consumer these days is more confident and experimental with colors, trends, silhouettes. They are willing to embrace bolder fashion intelligence. Most millennials, on the other hand- look at fashion as a means of expression. They look for brands that are closer to their own personalities.

### ...on the changing fashion product

**SKC:** One thing that has not changed over the years is the product mix. While the product turnaround time has changed, product planning continues to be the same. Both brands and consumers, continue to draw inspiration from art. Needless to say, consumers have become bold and experimental. They are more willing to explore different styles, colours and trends as against before.

### ...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion

**SKC:** I completely agree with the statement. Eventually it's the product that can make or break the brand. Product is the only thing that the consumer takes back home and stays with him for long. Product is what connects the brand to its consumers. Besides this, brand ethos also play an important role in creating goodwill among consumers that creates a positive sentiment.

### ...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry

**SKC:** Our country is doing a great job in manufacturing great products and therefore the exports have also gone up. However to propel growth, the whole idea of 'Make in India' has to be supported by skilled labor and appropriate technology.

### ...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry

**SKC:** Manufacturing will continue to play a big role. India has great institutes imparting effective knowledge to fashion enthusiasts. This needs to be further fuelled with greater vigour that can prepare people to take the design language a notch higher.

### ...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot

**SKC:** We are operating in a very sensitive era. Problems like ozone depletion, ecological imbalance, and increasing carbon footprint are spread nationally. It's imperative for each and every industry to contribute in addressing these issues. Consumers are more aware than ever and strongly support brands that are eco-friendly. Therefore, brands must strive to adopt ecologically sustainable process and practices. We take pride in enunciating that and Benetton has a strong legacy in that regard.





**Sunil J Pathare, Chairman and Managing Director of VIP Clothing Ltd., has been associated with the company for more than two decades. The company owns brands like VIP, Frenchie, Feelings, Leader, Brat and Eminence. With sheer vision, Pathare has completely given a new dimension to these brands. He has always driven the company to become a benchmark for others to follow. A strong believer in concepts like JIT (just-in-time) and 5S, he has been instrumental in improving the overall productivity. He has an extensive experience in marketing, production operations, sales, finance, advertising and business start-ups in various markets.**

# SUNIL J PATHARE

**CMD, VIP CLOTHING LTD.**

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Sunil Pathare (SJP):** Fashion is an ongoing trend, which should be wearable, looks good and also carries a great idea with innovation. It is a way to express one self, it is more than designer whims.

## ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**SJP:** Consumer will always remain the king, whether it's a buyer or seller-led market. You can't influence against his choice. There is always clarity in his mind while making a decision of purchase. The consumers in today's world are demanding which is clearly due to availability of information and options.

## ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**SJP:** Technology has a direct impact and is rapidly changing the model of fashion business to a fast paced one. It has influenced a fast track revolution from mom-and-pop stores, big stores, to malls, to brand stores and then from offline to online. The entire technology advancements have developed in a very short span of time in India. The consumer today enjoys shopping on a particular mobile app, which makes the traditional business model outdated.

## ...on the changing fashion consumer

**SJP:** The consumer today is more demanding with the continuous exposure to different forms of media. Nevertheless he is continuously upgrading his fashion knowledge and would like to make a statement with his dressing style. He has moved from a saving economy to a spending economy.

## ...on the fashion skills that will matter in future

**SJP:** India is demographically a vast country and democratically strong. It totally depends upon the consumer's economic purchasing power whether he will choose a brand accordingly.

## ...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks

**SJP:** Fashion retail can accelerate the growth for brands rapidly but because of infrastructure issues, quality standards, designer's sensibilities and economical scales in the retail center are causing the roadblocks.

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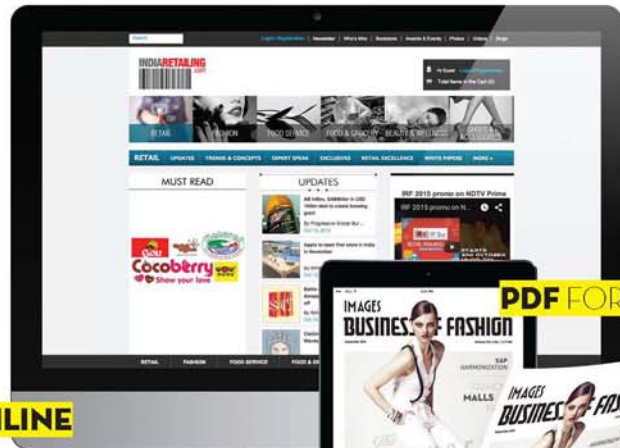


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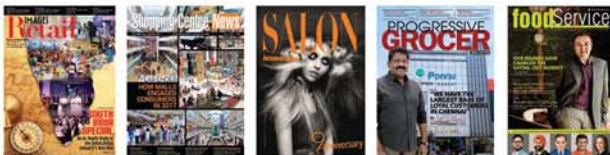
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**Vinnet Gautam, Chief Executive Officer, Bestseller India, holds a degree in Hotel Management from IHM, Delhi. Gautam joined Bestseller in January 2010 and is leading the business and strategy for the brands in India. In a short span, he has been able to take the company from 15 doors to 750 doors. Prior to assuming his current role, he has led the team at United Colors of Benetton and handled retail and business development for all brands under UCB. He has also worked for Idea Cellular, Wills Lifestyle, Café Coffee Day, Domino's Pizza and Nirula's. His forte includes operations from marketing to brand management to business development.**

# VINEET GAUTAM

**CEO, BESTSELLER INDIA**

**...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry**

**Vineet Gautam (VG):** The fashion and retail industry in India is constantly evolving to create newer growth opportunities for all stakeholders involved. It's a business that is continuously growing thereby making room for brands to explore an array of opportunities.

**...on the role and impact of fashion**

**VG:** Every individual prefers to have his or her own interpretation of fashion. This is what allows fashion as an industry to flourish as it caters to individuals with varied tastes and preferences. For us at Bestseller, fashion is about ensuring that the consumer has access to latest trends and collections that provide value for money shopping while product quality being at par with global standards.

**...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and it's implications**

**VG:** Over the last few years, there have been significant number of brands that have made their way into the country. The entry of new brands coupled with the growth of social media has contributed to consumers being more aware of the choices at their disposal. The power now completely lies in the hands of the consumers. This development has resulted in brands investing heavily in consumer insights and product innovation to provide new and improved solutions to consumers.



**...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India**

**VG:** Technology plays a critical role in all functions of the retail business. Over the years, e-commerce has allowed brands to connect with consumers at a much faster pace and allowing brands to make their presence felt despite not having physical stores. In order to provide consumers with a holistic shopping experience, brands in India have started focusing on incorporating technology into in-store and online experiences and are making a headway in the right direction.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**VG:** Owing to the technological penetration, consumers today are more informed about trends that are popular on a local as well as global level. Hence, the consumers of today are very

different from that of 10 years ago as they are very cautious about the brands they choose to associate with.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**VG:** Parameters like value for money, global relevance, accessibility, longevity of the product, etc., play a critical role in influencing consumers choices. Sustainable fashion is increasingly becoming the need of the hour. Brands are increasingly educating consumers about the fabrics, manufacturing techniques that are used in creating the final product. Product mix is constantly getting adapted to offer more options to the consumer. Brands today are constantly in the process of expanding the categories and styles that they have to offer, in order to reach out to bigger consumer base.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

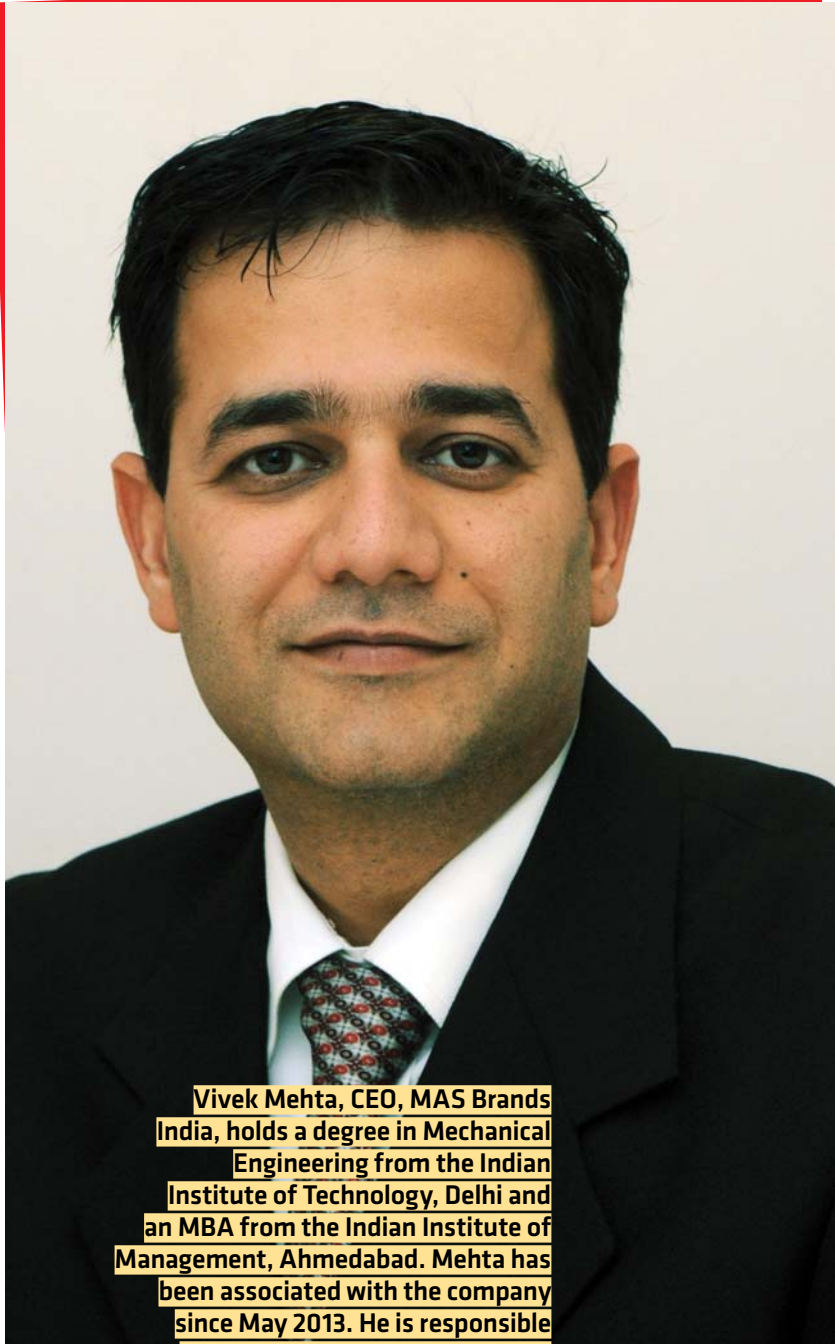
**VG:** Absolutely. Products are always

at the centerstage. Consumers are on the look out for products that not only serve the immediate purpose but also can become a part of their everyday life. While brands invest their resources in marketing, packaging and promotions, product and pricing are the factors that are most relevant to the consumers.

**...on why being “good” does and will matter a lot**

**VG:** Consumers are beginning to be more aware on the impact of their fashion choices on the environment. This has resulted in companies investing in sustainable and environmentally friendly manufacturing processes. At Bestseller, we comply with a globally standardised code of conduct that ensures liaison with world class manufacturing units and the use of superior quality products.





**Vivek Mehta, CEO, MAS Brands India, holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi and an MBA from the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. Mehta has been associated with the company since May 2013. He is responsible for developing and executing the company's strategy of expansion in India and his role includes oversight and leadership for carrying out the country's overall performance and alignment with the brand's vision and goals. He has held roles with increasing responsibility over the last 20 years in different functions – strategy, sales, marketing, operations, business development and consulting.**

# VIVEK MEHTA

**CEO, MAS BRANDS INDIA**

## ...on what's exciting about working in the fashion industry

**Vivek Mehta (VM):** The ever-evolving nature of the fashion industry makes it an interesting industry to work in. With the globalisation and the growth in the number of players in the market, competition has intensified. The rising demand from the consumers for newer, better, and improved styles pushes us to innovate. This calls for agility making the industry exciting to be part of.

## ...on the role and impact of fashion

**VM:** Fashion is an agile concept and constantly changing. To express it simply, fashion is a blend of the international trends and domestic consumer profile. Fashion makes consumers embrace their personal choices and express themselves outwardly, which is great for consumption to grow.

## ...on how the Indian fashion market is changing and its implications

**VM:** The Indian market has gone through many changes in the past few years. Growing globalisation, has changed the landscape of the industry. The Indian consumer is increasingly aware of the global trends. This has led to many international brands making their way into the country, and this trend will continue in the years to come. With this the domestic brands will continue to take cue from the international players and improve their product offering.

## ...on how technology is changing the way companies do fashion business in India

**VM:** Technology has contributed to many changes in the fashion business in India.



With digital mapping and big data, the industry is no more only into pushing consumer trends, but also pulling information about consumer preferences in advance. Consumer insights and trend predictions are the next big thing in the industry, and technology will change way products are launched, sharpening the offtake of every new style introduction in a brand.

**...on the changing fashion consumer**

**VM:** With the penetration of internet and social media today's consumer is well-informed and more demanding than ever before. They are aware of the global trends and offerings and the brand that can cater to these requirements is the one which will eventually capture the audience.

Even in the intimate wear industry the consumer has changed from few years back where they looked at the category only for basic need and coverage, today they are looking at products which match with their outerwear and acquiring number of styles to suit their wardrobe choices. In terms of colours, earlier black, white and nude ruled the category, however it is fashion colours now which are more popular with the modern woman.

**...on the changing fashion product**

**VM:** Fashion trends decades ago used to come to India much later, almost at the time of its life cycle end. Today no brand can take the discerning Indian consumer for granted, as they are fully aware of the trends. The mix available in the country currently in terms of trends is similar to the global trends.

At amanté we have a team of international designers across geographies bringing the latest trends at a value for the Indian consumer. To match the feasibility of trends, we ensure we put sufficient on ground effort and technology behind consumer research, fit trial and feedback processes before getting the design into the market. There needs to be a marriage between trend and consumer need for a product to be successful.

**...on whether the product is the most important aspect in fashion**

**VM:** Product is the core of fashion, and basic hygiene to any brand is it's the transactional offering. However today the consumer is associating with a brand of their choice due to an emotional connect. Its very important for a brand to stay relevant and provide an emotional angle, with the success mantra being on how it engages with the consumer.





### ...on the 'Make in India' vision for the fashion industry

**VM:** The labour arbitrage and cost advantages that India has enjoyed in the past for apparel manufacturing will slowly erode away as Bangladesh and nearby markets provide cheaper options. We would need to look at innovation and agility to win over other markets for 'Make in India' to be a competitive advantage in the industry.

### ...on whether India should focus on being a value-based manufacturing, design hub or fashion tech-IT hub

**VM:** India could potentially have a play in all of these. Depending on the maturity of the category, the role of the

market as a hub will be chalked out. Design and technology are areas where India could strengthen as a provider in future, due to its fast gaining knowledge share in these areas.

### ...on the fashion skills that will matter in future

**VM:** Design, production and merchandise planning are critical skill sets as a backbone for the industry and will continue to generate employment. In future sufficient employment would also be generated in areas of consumer insight and data mining to create predictions for consumer offerings which are tailor made to the market, and thus reduces probabilities of non-moving styles.

### ...on how quantum growth can be achieved in the fashion industry

**VM:** On the supply side the entry of new brands and introduction of fast fashion will grow the business, and on the demand side consumer will continue to move up the value stream as the economy grows. Trends that are wearable, tested with the audience through research and trials, fit in the value and need hierarchy of the consumers are ones which will drive growth for any brand.

### ...on the factors that may or will act as roadblocks

**VM:** We seem to be on the right track with GST implementation and other measures the current government is taking. However the timing needs to be in line with the amount of measures the industry can absorb. The government needs to stay the course, as any changes in government at the center and fickle mindedness, as knee jerk reactions towards policy making will be roadblocks.

### ...on why being "good" does and will matter a lot

**VM:** The future consumer is not just buying a product, but will buy into a brand purpose which they associate themselves with. Brands which have an objective of standing for a cause which benefits the ecosystem at large will start seeing acceptance. We have already seen some of these causes being successful in the mature markets internationally. Companies need to start working towards this to be able to relate to their audience. amanté is a brand owned and made by MAS Holdings, where sustainability is at the core of our DNA. Our factories are world class and have been certified to practice numerous process which reduce carbon footprint, waste management and recyclable sources of input, social rehabilitation and many such innovations, which help the global eco-system. We truly believe that as fashion providers it's our duty to be sustainable and focus on efforts which are eco-friendly.





# ★★★★★★ IFF PRIVILEGE MEMBERSHIP OFFER ★★★★★★

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

The Indian fashion industry is today a very fast-moving, challenging category. Technology and consumer behaviour are forcing fashion retailers to constantly evolve and adapt to these changes.

And that is where India Fashion Forum (IFF) comes in. It is India's largest fashion market intelligence hub, and its members have unparalleled access to every connection, information and research that they need to ensure informed and profitable growth of their businesses.

**Membership of India Fashion Forum Privilege Club** – India's largest fashion retail network – offers:

- Pan-India networking and business development openings for top leaders and industry influencers.
- Multiple routes to optimise brand visibility and marketing reach.
- Instant access to IFF's multiple knowledge platforms and a broad network of top-level decision makers and business owners.
- Connecting them to the entire value chain (designing, buying & sourcing to manufacturing, merchandising, branding, marketing & retailing) round the year.
- Privilege access to **India Fashion Forum** annual fashion retail intelligence event, including an exciting blend of Conference sessions, CEOs Roundtables, workshops and masterclasses, zoned exhibitions and industry awards.

## HOW TO ENROLL?

Choose your Membership category/ies from below:

- Prelim
- Bronze
- Silver
- Gold
- Platinum

A group operating in more than one category may enroll its different companies in their respective categories. To know the applicable fee and entitlements please refer to the table IFF Annual Membership Fee & deliverables. GST will be levied as applicable which at present is 18%. A proforma invoice can be mailed on request.

IFF Annual Membership Fee may be paid by draft/ cheque payable to Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. or bank transfer (details below).

**Current Account No:** 02482000004779 | **Account Title:** Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. | **Bank:** HDFC Bank Ltd.

**Branch:** S-355, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110 017 | **RTGS Code:** HDFC0000248 | **MICR:** 110240029

## MEMBER INFORMATION

Company Name	
Category	
Address for communication	
Name of the person responsible for IFF communication and coordination	
Designation:	
Ph:	
Cell:	
Email Id:	

### OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

- Please send brand / organization logo along with high resolution pictures of key people, products & services. The pictures can be sent through yousendit or wetransfer. All visuals should be of 300 dpi.
- Please send a separate Company Backgrounder of about 350 words. This should be in PDF or MS word format.
- Please send a separate note on outstanding achievements. This should be in PDF or MS word format. All visuals should be of 300 dpi.

### IFF CONTACTS FOR MEMBERSHIP:

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- **Priti Kapil**, +91 9868801869  
E: pritikapil@imagesgroup.in
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**F:** +91 11 40525001  
**W:** www.indiafashionforum.co.in

### NAME/S OF AUTHORISED REPRESENTATIVE/S TO AVAIL IFF PACKAGES

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MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY	PRELIM MEMBERSHIP	BRONZE MEMBERSHIP	SILVER MEMBERSHIP	GOLD MEMBERSHIP	PLATINUM MEMBERSHIP
<b>RETAILERS</b>	A. Fashion Retailers	A. Fashion MBOs/ Independent Retailers	A. Regional Chains - 3 or more stores/ Brands with Owned Brand Outlets/Shop-in-shops	A. National Department Stores/Large Format Fashion stores B. Online Retailers	A. Groups with Multiple Retail Formats + Franchise/ Distributor/ Licensing/Own Brand Operations
<b>NON RETAILERS</b>	B. Fashion Startups in manufacturing/ processing C. Fashion Startups Support & Enablers	B. Exporters, Manufacturers & Buying Houses of Fashion Lifestyle Products C. Trims & Embellishments D. Fashion Franchisees & Distributors E. Fashion Startups Support & Enablers	B. Fashion & Lifestyle Brands (without own stores/SIS) C. Fibres Fabrics & Finishes		
<b>All Inclusive Annual Fee (GST extra)</b>	<b>₹10,000</b>	<b>₹30,000</b>	<b>₹50,000</b>	<b>₹1,00,000</b>	<b>₹1,50,000</b>
Advertorial in Member's special issue	NA	NA	NA	1 Page, PR value worth ₹75,000	2 Pages, PR value worth ₹1,50,000
Feature/s, editorial coverage subject to Editorial guidelines in relevant Images Publication/ Research Books/ coffee table books print/online (Data & information to be provided by members)	Subject to editorial approval	1 Page, PR value worth ₹75,000	2 Pages, PR value worth ₹1,50,000	5 Pages, PR value worth ₹3,75,000	8 Pages, PR value worth ₹6,00,000
Promo Banners in Indiaretailing.com portal /EDM (applicable as per category)	NA	Up to ₹30,000	Up to ₹50,000	Up to ₹1,00,000	Up to ₹1,50,000
Entry Pass for India Fashion Forum Conference, Master Classes, Workshops, Exhibitions, Trend Arenas & India Brand Show	1 Pass free worth ₹15,000	1 Pass free worth ₹20,000	2 Passes free worth ₹40,000	4 Passes free worth ₹80,000	6 Passes free worth ₹1,20,000
Special Invite for Power Breakfasts & Networking Lunches	NA	1 Pass	2 Passes	4 Passes	6 Passes
Awards & Gala Dinners	NA	1 Pass	2 Passes	4 Passes	6 Passes
a. Research Reports & Publications-Print & eReport b. Publications Subscription - Print & eMagazine (Business of Fashion & Images Retail)	E-Subscription : ₹3,000	a. Research Reports worth ₹5,000 b. Subscription : ₹1,800	a. Research Reports worth ₹10,000 b. Subscription : ₹1,800	a. Research Reports worth ₹20,000 b. Subscription : ₹1,800	a. Research Reports worth ₹35,000 b. Subscription : ₹1,800
Business connects	NA	10 connects, worth ₹5,000 per connect	15 connects, worth ₹5,000 per connect	30 connects, worth ₹5,000 per connect	50 connects, worth ₹5,000 per connect
CEO's picture & profile in 'Who's Who' page on indiaretailing.com website	NA	Yes, PR value worth ₹1,00,000	Yes, PR value worth ₹1,00,000	Yes, PR value worth ₹1,00,000	Yes, PR value worth ₹1,00,000
Speaker / Panel discussion opportunities (Subject to availability of slots)	Subject to board approval	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Presence at India Fashion Forum website	Member's logo with URL Link PR value worth ₹1,00,000	Member's logo with URL Link PR value worth ₹1,00,000	Member's logo with URL Link PR value worth ₹1,00,000	Member's logo with URL Link PR value worth ₹1,00,000	Member's logo with URL Link PR value worth ₹1,00,000
Images Fashion Awards processing fee	2/3rd waiver on awards processing fee (in applicable categories)	2/3rd waiver on awards processing fee (in applicable categories)	2/3rd waiver on awards processing fee (in applicable categories)	2/3rd waiver on awards processing fee (in applicable categories)	2/3rd waiver on awards processing fee (in applicable categories)
Lounge Access at India Fashion Forum	Space for business meetings	Space for business meetings	Space for business meetings	Space for business meetings	Space for business meetings
Catalogue wall at India Fashion Forum	Display & distribution of catalogues/ company brochures (Quantity 50 worth ₹5,000)	Display & distribution of catalogues/ company brochures (Quantity 100 worth ₹10,000)	Display & distribution of catalogues/ company brochures (Quantity 150 worth ₹15,000)	Display & distribution of catalogues/ company brochures (Quantity 200 worth ₹20,000)	Display & distribution of catalogues/ company brochures (Quantity 250 worth ₹25,000)
<b>Deliverables worth</b>	<b>₹1,23,000</b>	<b>₹3,91,800</b>	<b>₹5,41,800</b>	<b>₹10,21,800</b>	<b>₹15,31,800</b>

\*Deliverables are subject to submission of inputs/ confirmations/ approvals/ additional charges wherever applicable by specific dates/ deadlines as communicated to members. Deliverables are subject to change without notice.

**Additional Benefits:** ▶ Special Packages to join IFF delegations for national & international retail trade shows. ▶ Special Packages for members for Print Ads in relevant magazines ▶ Priority in processing of your application for 'Trusted Mark' Certification.

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**THE FABLED FASHION SYMPOSIUM OF THE YEAR  
THE INDIA FASHION FORUM 2018  
THE IFF BULLETIN  
NEWS AND INTELLIGENCE!**



The sleuths at IMAGES BoF chronicle the BIGGEST Annual Fashion Congress – the concepts, ideas, debates, knowledge, data and research presented at IFF'18. Even if you missed the conclave, you cannot afford to miss the mammoth wealth of information and insights that the **IFF SPECIAL** issue promises.

**And, who are India's best in fashion?**



Meet the winners of the **IMAGES FASHION AWARDS 2018**



**MILANO UNICA, 2018**

An exhaustive report on the legendary Italian textiles and accessories trade show.

**EXCLUSIVE REPORT:**

**KANTAR'S ABOVE & BEYOND THE 'MILLENNIALS'**

While youth will continue to be the growth engine for the Indian Fashion Industry as they have been in the past, there is likely to be improved contribution from across the Age Spectrum.



Section presentation and advertising participation options available.  
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