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Ethnic wear

SPECIAL ISSUE

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the busiest time of the year!

This indeed is an exuberant time for all of us at the retail fraternity. This is the season that morphs India to its brightest and most jubilant avatar of the year with every calendar week dotted with festivals, celebrations and weddings. It is the time the entire nation comes together to feast, pray, share love and above all flaunt resplendent ethnic fashion.

Ethnic wear is an intrinsic part of the festive season. Infact, traditionally, ethnic wear was solely reserved for festivals. But, in the recent years, the category has evolved in massive proportions, especially the women's section. Keeping pace with India's massive strides towards modernization, the ethnic wear category has been resuscitated with keen focus towards the modern consumers penchant for comfort and practicality. Today, the category includes a wide spectrum of cuts, fits, silhouettes - from inherently classic to more contemporary avatars that are as comfortable for daily wear as they are appropriate for corporate boardrooms.

This evolution ensued an increasing preference of the young and consuming class towards Indian ethnic wear as well as boost the dynamics of the market like never before. Today, pegged at an estimated Rs. 112,893 crores and constituting approximately 32 percent share of the total Indian apparel market, the ethnic wear category in India holds a very promising future.

In this one-off issue on ethnic wear, we track the evolution of the category in the recent years as well as the shift in customer preferences. It was an uphill task for us to gather all this data for this fast growing market has not yet matured enough to prompt proper research documentation. Nevertheless, the IMAGES Fashion Bureau did an incredible job of delving deep and putting pieces together to give you all readers a slew of dedicated articles on the pervading trends and the immense opportunities teeming in this new market segment.

I hope you enjoy reading the issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Cheers!



Amitabh Taneja

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DECODING

UNIQLO'S

STRATEGY FOR THE INDIAN MARKET

The brand aims to enhance lifestyles in India by offering more innovative apparel that draws on the nation's distinct culture and traditions, and by contributing to India's economic development in the process...

Charu Lamba

Japanese lifewear retail brand Uniqlo made its debut in the Indian market with its first store at Ambience Mall, Vasant Kunj in New Delhi. Launched in India for the first time, UNIQLO offers a new shopping experience to Delhi customers that showcases LifeWear, the company's commitment to creating perfect clothing that meets the requirements of everyone's daily lifestyles.

Commenting on the opening of the store, Tadashi Yanai, UNIQLO Founder and Chairman, President

& CEO of the Fast Retailing Group, said, "Fast Retailing has long wished to open stores in India in view of the tremendous potential of such a large nation. We began recruiting here at the end of last year, and have been impressed by the exceptional talent, ambition and diligence of the young people we encountered and welcomed aboard."

He added, "In the years ahead, we aim to enhance lifestyles in India by offering more innovative apparel that draws on the nation's distinct culture and traditions. We wish to contribute



'FASHION IS AMONG THE TOP THREE CATEGORIES FOR AMAZON'

At present, the e-commerce giant has about 86,000 sellers who list close to 8.7 million different fashion styles across categories. In the past one year, Amazon has added 22,000 new sellers listing 2 million new products...

Charu Lamba

The festive season that begins with Onam, peaks at Diwali and culminates with Christmas and New Year celebrations is a period of hectic activities for retailers and e-tailers alike as they aspire to offer the most interesting products to attract the maximum number of consumers.

Consumer sentiments are also high during this season and one category on which customers don't feel shy about splurging is fashion. To make the most of this season of sale, brands like Amazon start preparing for the festive season months before it begins.

Highlighting what Amazon has introduced this year in a run up to the festive season, Mayank Shivam, Director - Category Management, Amazon Fashion India shares, "Fashion is among one of the top three categories

for Amazon. One out of every three new customers to Amazon comes through fashion. To attract more customers this festive season, we have introduced a Plus Size Store, a Designer Store and Premium Watches and along with this, we have entered into a strategic partnership with Max Fashion."

Amazon has also expanded its delivery network with a 2-day guarantee delivery to more than 200 cities in India. To bring alive the touch-and-feel factor alive in fashion, Amazon is offering 30-days return guarantee.

"Apart from this, we have made lots of improvements in our online fashion experience. For example, we have increased the size of the product images, information of the product is shared in a very detailed manner along with a video highlighting the features of the products," Shivam states.

BRAND ETHNICITY: A UNIQUE BLEND OF VINTAGE & NEW AGE



Ameet Panchal,
Director, Ethnicity

In a tête-à-tête with Ameet Panchal, Director, Ethnicity, IMAGES Fashion Bureau discovers all about the evolution of the ethnic wear market in India and the unexplored opportunities in the segment...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau



Tell us about current standing of the ethnic wear market in India. What is the market size?

Let's start by identifying ethnic wear as Indian wear to begin with. I personally feel it is a better suited term.

It's a big and growing market actually. India's apparel market is estimated to touch over ₹4 lakh crore in 2022, according to data from McKinsey's FashionScope. Indian wear is the biggest piece of the pie in today's day and time and it isn't showing any signs of slowing down. Women's Indian wear is estimated to contribute to a rough 80 percent, currently at USD\$ 18.6 billion and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.60 percent to reach US\$ 38.5 billion by 2027.

Demand for western wear will go up for sure. However, given India is a land of colour and festivals, Indian wear should still account for a sizeable market share.

How has the ethnic wear market in India grown in the last 10

years? What are the major drivers responsible for the change in the ethnic wear market?

There has been tremendous evolution. The last few years especially have seen rapid growth in the men's wear category. We now see some of the top international and Indian fashion retailers putting a spotlight on men's Indian wear, which has helped in growing the men's Indian wear market. I also feel that there is a large scope for making men's Indian wear more acceptable at workplaces, just like in the women's segment. For now, demand for men's wear comes as a mix of festive and weekend home wear.

The consumer too has evolved greatly. With disposable income in hand and a growing awareness about brands and current trends, people are making more informed decisions and you can see this being reflected in their purchase patterns. Design sensibilities among men and women are evolving rapidly thanks to the many influencing factors.

One of the biggest drivers is the Internet boom, which has opened up a plethora of avenues for the customer.



BRINGING TRENDY ETHNIC FASHION TO EVOLVING CONSUMERS

From being a pure ethnic player in the initial days, Soch has transformed into a stylish brand that retails trendy Indian fashion across categories at delightful prices. Backed by the rise in disposable income among consumers, the influence of social media in making buying decisions as well as easy accessibility through e-commerce, the brand is witnessing an influx of consumers who choose to showcase their individual style with ethnic wear.

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

In an age where brick-and-mortar retailers are wrestling with issues of creating lasting value and relevance, there are some homegrown retailers who are aiming for a pan India presence by offering the best to their customers.

One such retailer is Soch. From a humble start in 2005, when Founder & MD Manohar Chatlani started the brand with a store in Bangalore, the brand is today 180-store strong. From being a pure ethnic player in the initial days, Soch has transformed into a stylish brand that retails trendy Indian fashion across categories such as tunics, palazzos, fusion suits and stoles, apart from traditional staples such as salwar-kameez, kurtis, dress materials and sarees, at delightful prices.

Today, Soch finds a prominent place in the wardrobes of Indian women because of its exclusive designs that keep pace with the rapidly changing trends in ethnic fashion. Adding to its exciting array of styles, the brand has launched a new collection for the festive season for discerning women consumers. The collection offers stunning salwar suits in deep earthy shades of mustards and olives, fresh pastels with intricate gold and silver work and elegant embroidery that are ideal for evening ensembles. "This season, we are betting big on dupattas with elaborate gota work which are great style companions for the festivities," states Vinay M. Chatlani, Director & CEO, Soch.

"Our key difference from the competition is our range and variety, and how we respond nimbly to market needs across these categories. I believe we are unique in the spread of our offerings—sarees, salwar suits, kurtis,

MANYAVAR'S RAVI MODI ON THE INDIAN WEDDING TROUSSEAU INDUSTRY



Ravi Modi,
Director, Manyavar

The high growth wedding apparel industry is running on an aspirational engine that shows no signs of revving down or being affected by any market force. With an estimated 10 million weddings taking place each year in India, the industry is pretty much recession-proof...

Shivam Gautam

When it comes to nuptials, nothing quite rivals the opulence of an Indian wedding. Big Fat Indian Weddings, as they are notorious globally, are the epitome of flamboyance.

The wedding industry in India – worth almost \$50 billion as of today – is fuelled by a perceived compulsion to indulge in lavishness in a bid to celebrate, coupled with an inherited belief in immortal relationships. This high growth industry is running on an aspirational engine that shows no signs of revving down or being affected by any market force. With an estimated 10 million weddings taking place each year in India, the industry is pretty much recession-proof.

While the wedding engine in India benevolently bankrolls a plethora of industrial sectors with generosity, it is the apparel segment that takes centerstage – after all, isn't it what the bride and the groom are wearing that is under the scanner throughout the celebration? In spite of a snowballing market and abundant opportunities, the wedding wear market in India has

traditionally been dominated by the unorganised sector; at least it was until 1999 when Manyavar was launched, an event that would go on to change the whole template of segment in India.

Over the years, the brand has become synonymous with Indian wedding trousseau and has inspired a new generation of brands in this domain to follow in its footsteps.

In an exclusive interview, IMAGES Business of Fashion, talks to one of the most prodigious figures of the Indian wedding trousseau industry, Ravi Modi, MD, Vedant Fashions Pvt. Ltd., about the evolution of the market, and latest trends.

Excerpts from the interview...

How would you describe the wedding trousseau market in India now? How has it changed in the last 10 years?

Back in the day, men's ethnic wear did not even exist as a category in the organised sector. Slowly, over time, the category has grown and established itself in the psyche of the consumers. Today, the men's ethnic wear category





THE 'DAPPER MAN' LEADS TO RISE OF THE OCCASION WEAR MARKET IN INDIA

Owing to a highly penetrated and competitive market, men's occasion wear is gaining significant traction in India. Brands and designers are now focusing on customisation and personalisation at competitive prices along with improving their footprints by penetrating newer markets. This is expected to propel overall market growth in the coming years. IMAGES Fashion Bureau talks to renowned brands to understand the market dynamics...

Rosy Sharma with inputs from Gurbir Singh Gulati

The rise in fashionable wear for men, along with increase in awareness related to dressing sense and looks, has propelled the participation of men in the fashion industry. These emerging fashion conscious men are expected to drive the occasion wear market over the next few years, which will propel the demand for suits, tuxedos and bandgalas.

Cashing on this opportunity are indigenous men's wear brands who are providing customised and innovative designs, while many fashion designers are creating special designs for the male segment to increase product offerings and improve participation.

Men's designer wear brand, Studio H-2 offers suits, blazers, tuxedos, sherwanis, bandgalas and innovative men's safaas. "We are into ready-to-wear and customised fashion for men. Studio H-2



WEDDING TROUSSEAU BRAND SASYA FOCUSES ON PERSONALISATION OVER EXTRAVAGANZA

Offering services in ethnic wear, wedding clothes, bespoke tailoring and prêt couture, Sasya is a one-stop-destination for occasion wear.

The multi-designer label store not only offers unique collections but displays exquisitely rare designer collections for men and women.

IMAGES Fashion Bureau talks to Rachit Agarwal & Mayank Agarwal, both of whom are Directors of Sasya, to understand fashion dynamics in wedding trousseau...

Rosy Sharma



Rachit Agarwal,
Director, Sasya

Over one crore weddings take place in India every year spanning all sections of society. The wedding industry is estimated to be worth \$50 billion, a large percentage of which comprises of the apparel segment. Half of India's 1.3 billion population is under the age of 30, with high disposable incomes. This assured section of the population, so influenced by social media, want to plan their weddings and the frills that go with it - including clothes. Aiding these fashion conscious men and women in their wedding planning are e-commerce, social media influencers and fashion magazines.

In a freewheeling chat with IMAGES Fashion Bureau, Rachit Agarwal talks about the wedding wear market in India. The chat covers a myriad of topics including how weddings - and by default wedding clothes - are becoming so all-encompassing and how the Indian fashion retail industry is gearing up, revamping itself to cater to the growing demands of the Millennial generation with fashion, accessories and product innovation.

Excerpts from the interview...

How would you describe the wedding trousseau market in India today? Has it changed over the years?

The Indian bridal wear industry is growing at a rapid rate and has the potential to become the largest wedding market in the world. Millennials aspire to look their best on their wedding day, and it is the retailer's

job to ensure they go the that extra mile to realise the shopper's vision of a dream wedding.

The wedding trousseau market has changed and evolved over the years. It has become more structured with people being more focused about buying things they want and need rather than going on an endless shopping spree. The bride and groom



KOMPANERO

Launches New Autumn-Winter Collection 2019

Its new and exciting range flaunts clutches, wallets, handbags, messenger bags, sling bags and cross-body bags in the brand's signature chic yet vintage and weathered look...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

Premium leather bags and accessories brand, Kompanero has launched its Autumn-Winter Collection 2019. Its new and exciting range flaunts clutches, wallets, handbags, messenger bags, sling bags and cross-body bags in the brand's signature chic yet vintage and weathered look.

Contemporary, modern and classy, the premium brand's new Mandala line is inspired by Mandala art, an ancient art form based on complex, abstract circular designs. The bags in this range are hand-painted, premium Italian leather (₹6,000 to ₹13,000). The Macrame range boasts an elaborate woven pattern of lace-like webbing and is entirely handcrafted (₹6,000 to ₹10,000).

Kompanero's Tessere bags are also woven, with a two-tone effect and embroidered shoulder straps (₹12,999). Amalfi mirrors the fun vibe of the

colourful, pretty and petite coast in Italy. The bags here have a minimal design with a pop of colours, all studded around the corners and are perfect for casual occasions (₹4,500 to ₹10,000). Finally, the brand's Coachella range embodies the spirit of the Coachella music festival and celebrates youth. These bags have special eyelet weaving and are a perfect accessory for concerts and outdoors events (₹4,500 to ₹6,000).

Inspired by the Spanish word that means 'companion', Kompanero reflects the closeness of the arm-in-arm representation. The premium brand's bags are made from naturally tanned leather and are a modern version of traditional leather designs. The brand's special appeal also comes from its penchant for natural, sustainable materials and preference for handcrafting.

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