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Kidswear

SPECIAL ISSUE

Dear all,

If Quentin Tarantino were a fashion veteran in India instead of a Hollywood cinematic extraordinaire, his preferred domain of choice would no doubt have been kidswear retail – for this is where all the action is happening in India.

For it's true – the kidswear segment in the Indian Retail Industry has gained some serious traction over the years. While the sector was almost non-existent till a few years ago, it has now imprinted itself as the most propitious segment of the Indian fashion industry with even a dedicated annual fashion show to its name.

But honestly, in my opinion, the transition of kidswear retail from infancy to maturity was inevitable. As financial stability and purchasing power of modern parents grew in the last few years, an inevitable shift from 'need-based' to 'aspiration-based' manifested resulting in a boost hitherto irrelevant to the Indian fashion industry as a whole. Growth drivers included increased influence of social media, double income nuclear families and brand awareness and an increasing inclination towards high quality products of parents – the last of which trickled down to kids as well, who have now

emerged as an independent buyer group altogether. This evolution of kids as consumers has changed the way brands perceived and operated in this space, making way for newer trends.

According to India's leading management consulting firm Technopak Advisors Pvt. Ltd., the kidswear market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 9 percent from US\$ 11.7 billion in 2019 (20.8 percent of total apparel market) to approx. US\$ 19.1 billion in 2025. Industry sentinels expect a significant growth and even project predictions of it surpassing men's wear and women's wear in the near future.

As one of the youngest nations in the world with an estimated 29 percent of the total population in the age group of 0 to 14 years, India has today emerged as a global hotspot for kidswear. With such market potential, a host of players, both home grown and international, have sprung up to cash in on this gold rush.

The issue features exclusives on the market dynamics of the sector as well as details on the latest trends and consumption behaviour. As always, I hope you find this issue informed and useful.

Cheers!!



Amitabh Taneja

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SKECHERS INDIA FOCUSES ON STYLE, COMFORT & VALUE FOR MONEY IN KIDSWEAR SEGMENT

Betting big on India with plans to open about 500 stores in the country, Skechers aims to offer continuous innovation in its products. IMAGES Business of Fashion talks to Lakshay Nijhawan, Associate Director - Merchandising, Skechers to understand his opinion on the kids sportswear market in India...

IMAGES Business of Fashion



The growth in Indian fashion and lifestyle market has given an impetus to the footwear industry as well. From a basic need-based industry, it has become an evolving fashion and style category. Many Indian and international players, apart from introducing their performance wear collection have started paying equal attention to casual wear. One such player is Skechers India. Skechers India designs, develops and markets a diverse range of performance and lifestyle footwear for men, women and children. The brand has also recently launched apparel and accessories.

Skechers Performance is available in India and over 160 countries and territories worldwide via department and specialty stores with more than 2,305 Skechers company-owned and third-party owned retail stores, and the company's e-commerce websites. Furthermore, in India, Skechers is targeting about 500 EBO footprints covering all potential cities, markets and malls.

As more and more parents are getting inclined towards buying comfortable fashion footwear for their kids, Skechers focuses at offering value for money proposition. Lakshay Nijhawan, Associate Director - Merchandising, Skechers shares insights on how parents are moving up the price value ladder and upgrading to brands.

Excerpts from the interview...

Sports / athleisure wear is now a hot trend in the kidswear segment. Could you help us trace how the trend caught on, especially in India and the main influencers?

India today is at par with wider global fitness trends. The booming economy and changing lifestyle preferences have compelled Indian consumers to be more health conscious and add health and wellness routines to their

hectic lifestyles. This trend has largely benefited the sportswear industry in India, which now is among the top in demand fashion segments of the country. Research also indicates that technological developments - designed to improve comfort and performance - have also led to growth in sales of sportswear including in the kids category.



DISNEY:

HOME TO THE MOST LOVED CHARACTER & STORIES-BASED KIDSWEAR



Disney is a brand that parents trust and kids enjoy. Their timeless stories and charming characters have entertained and engaged kids and families everywhere. The brand offers a wide range of products across categories and across value and premium price points. As consumers become more and more brand conscious, Sanjeet Mehta, Executive Director & Head - Consumer Products, Disney India explains how licensing in India is becoming a booming business...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

Disney has been a pioneer in character licensing and offers products across varied categories including toys, fashion, stationery, home solutions, publishing, food, health & beauty and consumer electronics. Its kidswear segment cuts across apparel (t-shirts, shirts, dresses, trousers, caps, jackets), footwear (shoes, clogs, flip-flops) and accessories (jewellery, socks, watches).

According to Sanjeet Mehta, Executive Director & Head - Consumer Products, Disney India, character affinity is one of the key factors that drives buying decision among Indians for fans of all ages display great loyalty towards their favourite stories and characters. In a candid chat with IMAGES Fashion Bureau, Mehta explains how licensing in India is becoming a booming business.

Excerpts from the interview...

For licensing to succeed, organised retail is indispensable. With a majority of unorganised kidswear players in India, what are the challenges that you face?

India is a diverse market and we see a lot more opportunities than challenges. Disney has a wide range of products across brands (Disney, Pixar, Marvel & Star Wars) and categories and we focus on making them available across multiple distribution touchpoints including modern retail, general trade and e-commerce sites.

This gives us the opportunity to cater to a wide audience segment where and when they want the products at a price point appropriate to them.

Counterfeiting is big business and rampant in the kids' wear segment in India. What's your take on it? How are you trying to fight it?

Disney values and protects its intellectual property vigorously and actions suspected infringement very seriously. We work closely with law enforcement authorities and trade bodies to ensure that consumer rights to genuine branded products is





ORGANIC KIDSWEAR: NATURALLY REDUCING THE KIDSWEAR MARKET'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

With increasing health and environmental consciousness amongst educated Indian parents, the demand for organic kidswear is increasing. Parents are seeking apparel made of natural material, which are more gentle on their kids' skins. IMAGES Fashion Bureau talks to kidswear manufacturers who specialise in offering organic clothes to understand the market and how brands are delivering to discerning parents...

Rosy Sharma

Fashion is one of the most polluting industries in the world, responsible for 10 percent of the world's carbon footprint. The big names in retail are taking note, working towards sustainable fashion in a bid to reduce this carbon footprint. Consumers too are becoming more responsible, especially millennials, who opt for eco-friendly fashion in a bid to save the world, one garment at a time.

One segment whose target audience is a massively influenced by sustainability and moving towards more natural, organic fibres is kidswear retail, as both parents and young consumers look for fashions that are eco-friendly. One reason driving the sustainability trend within kidswear in India is that Indian parents place a higher degree of emphasis on quality for their children than for themselves.

According to Kavita Mallick, Head of Business, MiniKlub, "Sustainable and eco-friendly kidswear is the new fad which is picking up in the Indian market. Requirement for quality and safe products has increased drastically over the years. We feel that a similar demand for sustainable and eco-friendly fabric will increase in coming years in kidswear segment with increased awareness."

Indian consumers are getting increasingly concerned for the environment and about the impact of their fashion consumption on nature. They are also increasingly aware of their children's needs, and particularly of the sensitivity of their children's skin.

"With growing exposure to pollutants and toxins in most clothes available today, there is a significant rise in the number of children prone to allergies, skin rashes, respiratory

CONVENIENCE, ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY CATALYSING E-COMMERCE FOR KIDSWEAR:

ARUN SIRDESHMUKH,
BUSINESS HEAD, AMAZON FASHION



With the emergence of e-commerce, exposure to global fashion trends and rising disposable income of the working class, the kidswear segment has received a boost in India, says Arun Sirdeshmukh, while stressing on the fact that there is a pressing need to build a bridge between both brick-and-mortar and online spaces...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

The retail industry has undergone a significant transformation over the last decade, and it is continuing to evolve, according to Arun Sirdeshmukh, Business Head, Amazon Fashion. In a tête-à-tête with IMAGES Fashion Bureau, he talks about how online retail has helped amplify reach for kidswear fashion in regions that brands can't reach physically...

Tell us about the current standing of kidswear. What is the total sales coming from online markets?

The kidswear category in India is fast becoming one of the most profitable retail segments. There is a miniature version available for every new style that is launched for kids, in keeping with current trends. Modern parents have opened up to the idea of investing in clothes that are best suited for their children. In addition to this, today's kids are much more aware than the previous generations and like to make their shopping decisions themselves. Exposure to the latest fashion trends through various avenues has led kids to become more brand conscious.

Convenience, accessibility and affordability have catalyzed

e-commerce as one of the most preferred mediums for kidswear retail. The kidswear category accounted for approximately 20 percent of total sales in apparels on e-commerce. The rising popularity of shopping kidswear online is evident from the growing demand from customers. Both metropolitan as well as Tier II and III cities have shown great enthusiasm for online shopping and this will only grow in the coming years.

A growing number of parents are becoming familiar with and comfortable buying kidswear online. Do you feel that the online medium has an edge over traditional retail in kidswear?

Aided by the strong economic growth in recent years, disposable incomes in India have been witnessing a continuous growth. This has further resulted in an increasing spending on kidswear by parents. In contrast to the belief that children grow out of their wardrobes rapidly, millennial parents are willing to make the most of the moment and dress their kids in the trendiest of styles. To add to that, the impact of new media, celebrity culture and social media is a massive influence on kids' fashion choices.





KIDSWEAR TRENDS

ALL THAT YOU NEED TO STOCK IN 2020

If you are looking for a way to amp your new kids wear collection, we have got you covered. Read on to know what the industry stalwarts have to predict for the upcoming season.

Shivam Gautam



The kidswear market has come of age in India and just like in other fashion segments, kidswear too witnesses a slew of new trend themes, colours, prints, graphics, materials and key items that influence the market every year.

For the kidswear market in India, the change has been drastic in the past few years. The exposure to mass media, peer pressure, a growing sense

of awareness about fashion trends, etc., have ensure that kidswear is increasingly getting trend oriented. Today, kidswear is being steered into the same trend cycle and kid's lines have their own long-awaited collections just like adults' fashion.

Change in Consumer Behaviour
Awareness through rampant penetration of media, growing disposable income of parents, double

STARTING FASHION EDUCATION,

Pretty Young

AS IF TO PROVE STYLE RUN IN THE GENES, A LOT OF CELEBRITY KIDS ARE HEAD-TURNING TRENDSETTERS EVEN WHILE THEY ARE IN DIAPERS. WHETHER IT IS BLUE-BLOODED TAIMUR ALI KHAN PATAUDI OR THE SCION OF BOLLYWOOD'S BADSHAH, ABRAM KHAN - THE FASHIONABLE TODDLERS AND YOUNGSTERS MAKE PAPARAZZI GO INTO A TIZZY TO GET THAT PRIZED PICTURE...

AARTI KAPUR SINGH



Their parents are usually top of the pops in fashion charts. It is no wonder then that some celebrity kids are redefining kids' couture and setting standards for others to follow - just like their star parents.

The 'star kids setting the course for kids' fashion trends' is a phenomenon that happens globally, and not just in Bollywood. Whether it is Suri Cruise and her world-famous collection of footwear (including bespoke Louboutin heels), or Harper Beckham in her glorious sundresses, many A-list offspring start their style education early - they sit front row at catwalk shows, attend red carpet events, wear designer clothes and walk in custom-made shoes. Their wardrobes could easily rival those of most established fashion editors. UK brand Burberry has even made Romeo Beckham the face of their catalogue. Their parents get top billing at the box office and set the style charts ablaze with their sartorial choices.

As if to prove style run in the genes, a lot of celebrity kids are head-turning trendsetters even while they are in diapers. Whether it is blue-blooded Taimur Ali Khan Pataudi or the scion of Bollywood's Badshah, AbRam Khan - the fashionable toddlers and youngsters make paparazzi go into a tizzy to get that prized picture.

Many A-list offsprings start their exposure to what it means to be in the public eye really early - whether they become sensations on social media or have paparazzi stalking them on every outing - whether it is the airport or park. So, they wear designer clothes and walk in custom-made shoes. Their wardrobes could easily rival those of their famous parents. As Karl Lagerfeld succinctly said, "It's never too early to care about fashion." These kids were born with an innate early ability to simply rock style even in their designer cribs or to simply rock style even at a playground. "It is always nice to see parents making an effort when it comes to baby style and as long as kids look like kids, it is pleasing to the eye. Stylish clothes make a cute baby look cuter!" says designer Namrata Joshipura.

Joshipura, says, "It's cute to see that the parents are having fun with the baby's look and they are experimenting. It really sends out a cool message."



QUALITY, PRICE, RANGE & SERVICE HAVE HELPED COTTON CASUALS GROUP OF COMPANIES STAND THE TEST OF TIME

Pradeep Arora, Director, Cotton Casuals Group of Companies talks about the journey of his kidswear brands and retail in a freewheeling chat with IMAGES Business of Fashion. He shares insights on the kidswear market, how it has grown over the years and the only challenge is to maintain this...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau

India offers a lot of potential to the kidswear market, one of the most lucrative segments in the garment industry today. It is expected that kidswear will significantly surpass the growth of men's wear and women's wear by growing at a CAGR of 10.8 per cent to reach ₹1,65,120 crore in 2025. And retailers and stores are paying heed, giving this segment more and more importance and floor space. A growing population, increased disposable income, rising spending per child are some of the reasons that this segment is recording magnificent growth over the years.

One of the pioneers in the kidswear segment in the East is Cotton Casuals Group of Companies. Established in 1990, the company is a leading manufacturer of the 100 percent cotton

kidswear brand, Zero. With its head office in Kolkata, West Bengal, the company operates nationally and is gradually expanding its presence to global shores as well. The company takes pride in its dedicated team of curated specialists who ensure that the entire production process – which is done in-house from start to finish – meets international quality standards and benchmarks. “We have the best-in-class machines purchased from all over the world and we make an unbeatable range of fabrics and colors using an extensive variety of yarns to suit the needs of children,” says Pradeep Arora, Director, Cotton Casuals Group of Companies.

Cotton Casuals India Pvt Ltd was formed with a combination of exceptional technical know-how of



season wherein they provide end-to-end services to both parties, thus helping them bond and build trust, resulting in healthy booking every season.

“Along with the buyers-sellers meet, our team works persistently through regular visits to introduce new products and brands along with adding new distributors to our portfolio,” Harmilapi explains. “We have reached a milestone in 2016 with the introduction of five major brands that made our portfolio stronger than ever before. It was the first time that we organised a fashion show during the buyers-sellers meet showcasing the latest collection of brands in our portfolio, which was highly appreciated by both buyers and sellers.”

Harmilapi recently launched five multi brand stores in Odisha, selling only brands from his portfolio and aims to multiply the number pretty soon. He further plans to open a premium kidswear MBO with the name ‘F3’, to be launched in near future.

Currently, Kidzania Kids has a good mix of brands that aids distributors with a complete range of kidswear to suit retailers’ demand. “We keep ourselves open to new brands who are looking to kickstart their retail journey with our vast network of over 100 distributors and hassle free trading. We also look forward to support from the brands with morality and transparency in work,” he concludes.



KIDZANIA KIDS LAUNCHES 5 MULTI BRAND STORES IN ODISHA

After the foray of Kidzania Kids - a marketing agency which helps bridge the gap between kidswear manufacturers and distributors - into Odisha, Rajeev Harmilapi plans to launch F3, a premium kidswear MBO...

IMAGES Fashion Bureau



The brainchild of Rajeev Harmilapi, Kidzania Kids was established in 2008 as a marketing agency to bridge the gap between kidswear manufacturers and distributors. Over the years it has developed a huge network of distributors across India all due to Harmilapi’s innovative marketing skills and in-depth knowledge of partner brands.

At present, Harmilapi is associated with over 100 distributors across 82 cities in India with North India being his strongest market. “We are working hard in South India so as to penetrate deeper there since it is an immensely potential market,” he states. Kidzania Kids organises a buyers-sellers meet every

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