

**Images
Business of
Fashion**

IMAGES
BOF
Established 1992

VOLUME XXV
NUMBER 4
APRIL 2024
₹100
www.imagesbof.in



CASUALWEAR & ATHLEISURE

Where Fashion Meets Comfort

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Printed & published by S P Taneja on behalf of Images Multimedia Pvt. Ltd. Printed at Modest Print Pack (P.) Ltd. C-52, D.D.A. Shed Okhla Industrial Area Phase-I, New Delhi-110020 and published by S P Taneja from S-61 A, Okhla Industrial Area Phase - II, New Delhi. 110020 Editor : Amitabh Taneja

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Dear Readers,

We live in a dynamic age where boardroom meetings blend into living rooms, work lives blend into lunches and long evenings and where style and comfort are synonymous. And our clothes are mirroring our lifestyle.

Fashion today is effortlessly transitioning from the gym to a leisurely day out, from office wear to dinner with friends. In the last few years, the casual wear and athleisure segments in particular have witnessed a massive growth spurt driven by growing income levels, changing lifestyles, increasing casualisation among professionals, emergence of start-ups and the entry of foreign players. Home-grown brands have also launched trendy casual wear products and repositioned the brand in to mirror global fashion trends.

IMAGES Business of Fashion's April 2024 issue is a curation of a diverse range of content. At the heart of our Casualwear & Athleisure special lies a celebration of versatility, functionality, and above all, self-expression because we understand that fashion is more than just clothing; it's a reflection of individuality and mood.

Our April issue has everything that brands and retailers need to succeed in this competitive environment. Research pieces, trend forecasts and exclusive interviews – this month's magazine is the ultimate guide for retailers as they wade through this ever-evolving landscape of fashion.

Join us as we embark on a journey to study the point where fashion and leisure intertwine, and empower brands and retailers with enough intelligence to reach there.

As always, we hope you find this issue informative. Don't forget to log onto our website, www.imagesbof.in for more in-depth information on all things casualwear and athleisure.



Amitabh Taneja

NEW COLLECTIONS

Duke launches 'Spring into Style' 2024 collection

Lifestyle brand Duke has unveiled its summer 2024 collection bearing the theme, 'Spring into Style'. The minimalistic collection includes t-shirts, shirts, trousers, bermuda, capri, lowers, denim, tops, jegging, activewear, sportswear, accessories, and footwear.

"Our main focus has always been to fulfill our customer's requirements and give them what they need for their wardrobe. Our team works tirelessly to provide you with the latest trends. Our new collection provides a vast variety of cotton, natural, and textured materials that give your body a cooling effect. Match your aesthetic with

the summer vibe this season. Our target audience is today's youth who are looking for a trendy and stylish range that is in sync with international designs, fashions, and quality. We see it as our duty to provide our customers with the inspiration they need to look and feel confident," says Kuntal Raj Jain, Director - Duke Fashions (India) Ltd.

The Ludhiana-based brand is renowned in the readymade garments segment and is hailed as a pioneer of the t-shirt culture in India. Its values are based on its authentic fashion understanding heritage, dating back to the launch of the brand in 1966.



Soch unveils Spring Summer 2024 collection

Soch, India's prominent evening and occasion wear brand, has rolled out its Spring Summer 2024 Collection-Summer Statements. The latest range offers a diverse selection of fabrics and styles, presenting a fresh take on ethnic wear tailored for today's modern woman. The Spring Summer 2024 Collection comprises several themed sub-collections, each

presenting a distinct aesthetic. These include: Indigo Hues, Schiffler Chic, Kota Couture & Breezy Threads, Ivory Elegance and Vivid Blooms.

The Spring Summer 2024 Collection features a vibrant palette of fabrics and embroidery, suitable for various summer occasions. Classic prints, detailed craftsmanship, and intriguing

patterns dominate the collection, enhancing the summer wardrobe of fashion enthusiasts. The collection is priced starting at Rs 1498 and is available at all Soch outlets and online.

With 175 stores across 68 cities, Soch has established itself as a leading destination for stylish and elegant ethnic wear in India.

Lee® introduces denim collection for women by Suneet Varma

Lee® unveiled its latest collection titled 'Denim Beyond Definition,' exclusively designed for women by the renowned couturier Suneet Varma. Collaborating with ace turtle, the exclusive licensee of Lee® in India, this collection combines classic denim with elements of Indian couture, offering a unique blend of elegance and comfort to fashion enthusiasts.

The collection, which is now available at select Lee® stores across India and online, marks a significant departure from Lee's traditional styles for its Indian clientele. Bold and captivating, the pieces feature gold foil prints,

plaid patterns, and metallic riveting, bringing a fresh perspective to denim fashion.

Designed with a youthful audience in mind, Suneet Varma's signature style shines through with intricate embellishments, threadwork, and mirror detailing adorning wardrobe essentials such as corsets, bell-bottom jeans, and maxi skirts. This collaboration represents a fusion of contemporary style and timeless elegance, symbolizing a transformative narrative in the realm of fashion. "We look forward to launching more such exciting collaborations for our customers in India," said Nitin Chhabra, CEO, ace turtle.





Arrow unveils Spring Summer 2024 collection

Menswear brand Arrow is set to redefine sophistication with its latest offering – the Spring Summer 2024 Collection, a seamless blend of contemporary design, innovative fabrics, and timeless elegance.

Inspired by the vibrancy of the season, Arrow has introduced a palette featuring hues like Sage Green, Smoked/Dusty Pink, Olive, Beiges, Sun-baked, and Tan, injecting each garment with a burst of seasonal energy.

The collection includes the Autopress Flex range – a

fusion of cotton and spandex for wrinkle-free garments with built-in stretch, ensuring unrestricted movement from day to night, the Iconic White collection – which reimagines enduring classics for the contemporary wardrobe, boasting stretchable fabrics with superior luster, and the Elevated Interlock line which is crafted from supreme 60's cotton and features exclusive inner placket detailing and structured collars. Other innovative designs include the Zero Calorie Knit Suit, the Pastel Knits collection, Autopress Chinos, Summer Linen and Ceremony Suits.

“This collection seamlessly blends timeless elegance with contemporary style, catering to the discerning tastes of modern gentlemen. Through meticulous curation and a focus on innovative design features and fabric choices, we offer our customers a range of garments that epitomize our commitment to excellence,” says Anand Aiyer, CEO of Arrow.

With over 200 exclusive stores and availability in over 1000 multi-brand outlets across 109 cities in India, Arrow caters to the ever-changing sartorial needs of Indian professionals.

Reliance Retail launches Lee Cooper's women's footwear collection

Renowned denim brand Lee Cooper has stepped into the women's footwear segment with the launch Lee Cooper's SS'24 women's footwear collection, titled 'Shoes Don't Judge'. The collection was launched at a 'No Shoe Party' in Mumbai organized by the brand's parent company in India, Reliance Retail.

The event welcomed guests to experience Lee Cooper's latest footwear offerings – but with a catch. They had to come to the event without shoes. Attendees, including Bollywood actress Sanya Malhotra, embraced the unique theme by reaching the venue barefoot and trying on the new collection, getting immersed in the brand's world of comfort and style.

The collection features a diverse range of designs suitable for various styles and occasions. It emphasizes self-expression and celebrates individual choices.

Lee Cooper, a global fashion icon since 1908, blends tradition with modernity, offering timeless collections that cater to men, women, and children in both apparel and footwear categories.



Celio India collaborates with Mumbai Indians for a unique collection

Celio India has announced its collaboration with Mumbai Indians, unveiling a distinctive collection inspired by the spirit of Mumbai. The premium French menswear brand's new line is designed to resonate with cricket enthusiasts and the vibrant culture of Mumbai.

The collection features a variety of sweatshirts in blue and t-shirts available in grey, sky blue, and multi-colours. Each piece showcases the Mumbai Indians logo alongside artistic

designs representing different aspects of Mumbai's culture. Customers can purchase the collection through Celio's official website, select Celio stores, the exclusive MI Shop online, the Mumbai Indians Kiosk at Jio World Drive, major online marketplaces, leading departmental stores, and multi-brand outlets. Celio operates in 60 countries with 1100 stores worldwide. In India, the brand offers casual wear, denim, and smart workwear through its 63 standalone stores and over 700 points of sale in leading departmental stores.



THE INDIAN ATHLEISURE MARKET: Redefining Comfort, Style & Performance

Athleisure, initially perceived as a simple combination of athletic and leisure wear, has evolved beyond its origins to become much more than just that. It's no longer just about comfort; it's a full-fledged fashion revolution...

Ashish Dhir, Senior Director & Kashish Gupta, Senior Associate, 1Lattice



Imagine a world where your workout gear seamlessly transitions into your brunch outfit, and where a quick jog in the park doesn't necessitate a wardrobe change. A world where cutting-edge design and technical fabrics meet effortless style. This remarkable rise of athleisure has taken the world by storm, transforming the way we dress and redefining the concept of activewear.

Athleisure, initially perceived as a simple combination of athletic and leisure wear, has evolved beyond its origins to become much more than just that. It's no longer just about comfort; it's a full-fledged fashion revolution. It combines the functionality of athletic wear with the ease

and comfort of leisurewear, creating a new category that effortlessly bridges the gap between high-performance fabrics and everyday style. This dynamic industry has significantly influenced the global apparel market by harmonising comfort with style, offering versatile pieces that go beyond the confines of the gym. Projections suggest this growth will continue to skyrocket in the coming years, solidifying athleisure's position as a dominant force in the fashion world.

MARKET OVERVIEW

The 1990s Bollywood films like "Kuch Kuch Hota Hai" played a pivotal role in introducing Indian audiences to international sportswear brands like DKNY and Polo Sport. This

integration of fashion into popular culture helped spark a growing interest in athletic apparel.

Several factors are driving India's athleisure market towards greater heights. The work-from-home trend, coupled with the pandemic-induced focus on fitness, has given athleisure wear a significant boost. A surge in fitness enthusiasts has created a high demand for comfortable and functional clothing that can keep up with their active lifestyles. In addition, The Indian fashion scene is undergoing a dramatic shift, prioritising comfort above all else. Athleisure offers the best of both worlds—breathable, lightweight fabrics and flattering fits, allowing easy movement.

“CLOSE - TO - SEASON” FASHION TRENDS

An Insight into Casual wear by VisioNxt Trend Insight and Forecasting Lab

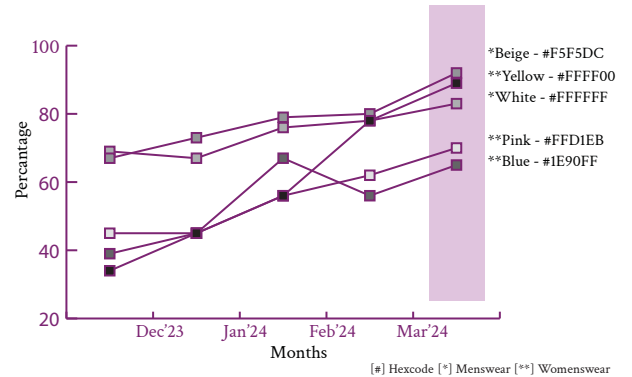


Insights from DeepVision

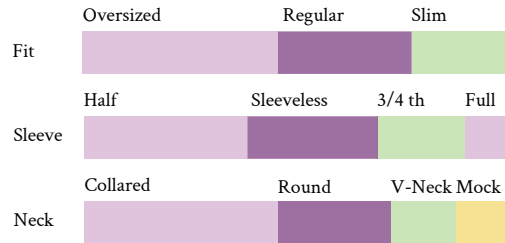
The global Casual wear market is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.2% from 2021 to 2028. Casual wear refers to clothing that falls outside formal, semi-formal, or informal dress codes in western fashion. In India, the casual wear segment has seen significant growth since the pandemic, with the increasing number of young people contributing to its popularity even in formal settings and events.

NIFT VisioNxt is the first trend forecasting initiative for India. It is backed up by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Emotional Intelligence (EI). The fashion signals collected by our 800+ trained Trendspotters across the nation are processed using the robust, ethically certified deep learning model (DeepVision) developed with 100+ product categories. A unique taxonomy with 100+ product categories is specially developed for India to analyse localised trends. The results are further visualised as infographics, closer-to-season trend reports, micro trend reports, mindset reports, and trend books to share accessible insights with the fashion, retail, manufacturing, startups and weaver community of India.

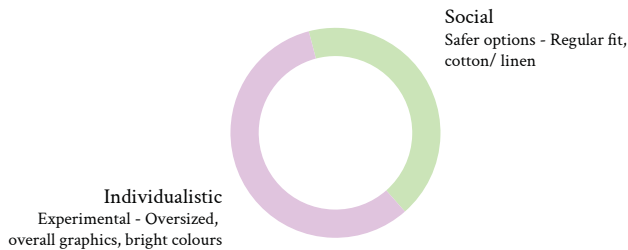
POPULAR IN COLOR



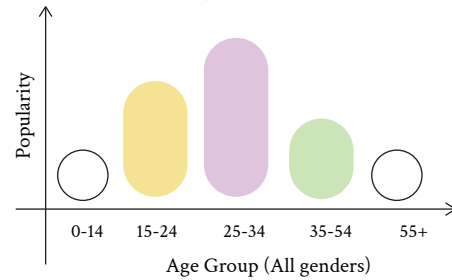
ATTRIBUTE POPULARITY DEC'23 - MAR'24



CONSUMER INSIGHTS



POPULARITY INDEX



Trends Spotted by VisioNxt



Trained trendspotters across India have gathered data about the signals that are up and coming.

Casualwear & Athleisure Markets in India

WITNESS MASSIVE GROWTH SPURT

In the last few years, the market has witnessed a massive growth spurt driven by growing income levels, changing lifestyles, increasing casualisation among professionals, emergence of start-ups and the entry of foreign players

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H&M Move Offers Functional 'Movewear' To Empower Individuals Of All Skill Levels:

Yanira Ramirez

Country Sales Manager, H&M India

In conversation with IMAGES Business of Fashion, Ramirez spoke about how H&M's activewear brand, H&M Move, aims to inspire global movement in a more sustainable manner...

IMAGES Business of Fashion

International retailer H&M India is known for fashion and quality at the best price in a sustainable way. The Swedish clothing giant embarked on its journey in India in 2015 with a mission to make fashion accessible to everyone, irrespective of geographical boundaries. Since then, the company has rapidly expanded its presence across the country, leveraging its strategic focus on expanding into new cities, particularly tier I & II locations. Today, H&M India proudly stands at 62 stores across 29 cities.

In conversation with IMAGES Business of Fashion, Yanira Ramirez, Country Sales Manager, H&M India spoke about how H&M's activewear brand, H&M Move, aims to inspire global movement in a more sustainable manner.

Excerpts from the interview...

Tell us about H&M Move.

H&M Move concept is an innovative addition to H&M Family, which was launched in August 2022. As an activewear brand, H&M Move aims to inspire global movement in a more sustainable manner. We offer a range of stylish and functional 'movewear' designed to empower individuals of all abilities and skill levels to move comfortably and confidently. Our products cater to various activities, from gym workouts to yoga sessions, and encourage an active lifestyle for everyone.

What sets H&M Move apart from other similar brands in the market?

H&M Move embraces the concept of movement for all. Instead of focusing solely on traditional sports or fitness activities, we celebrate movement in its various forms, making our active wear accessible to individuals of all abilities and backgrounds. Through our 'Move Together' community program, we actively engage with individuals to enjoy all the

benefits of moving together - movement is not just encouraged but celebrated. By breaking down barriers, sharing resources, and igniting collective energy, we strive to contribute to a more inclusive world.

How many stores does H&M Move currently operate from and in which regions and markets?

There are no separate stores for H&M Move as it's a concept. The concept is available in 19 existing H&M stores, and these stores are strategically located across various regions and markets, ensuring accessibility to our customers across India.

What are the primary fabrics used in your activewear, casual wear, and athleisure wear lines?

Our primary fabric is DRY MOVE, a blend of polyester and elastane.

What sustainability initiatives does your brand undertake?

H&M's mission is to make it possible for everyone to look and feel good. We



“H&M Move embraces the concept of movement for all. Instead of focusing solely on traditional sports or fitness activities, we celebrate movement in its various forms, making our active wear accessible to individuals of all abilities and backgrounds”

**Yanira Ramirez,
Country Sales Manager,
H&M India**

ENHANCING IN-STORE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE: The Role of Technology & Personalisation

Embracing technological innovations not only guarantees enhanced customer satisfaction but also fosters unwavering customer loyalty, thus paving the way for a thriving future for Indian retailers...

Siddharth Dugarwal, Founder, Snitch

The retail landscape in India has undergone a significant transformation over the years. The rise of online shopping has been a game-changing event for the industry, leading to a dramatic shift in what consumers expect. Nowadays, customers seek enhanced convenience and personalisation when they go shopping in physical stores.

A key report by Shekel suggests that 75% of consumers are more inclined to shop with a retailer that offers a personalised shopping experience. Needless to say, many brick-and-mortar stores in the country have accelerated their pace of technology adoption, aiming to create engaging and exciting physical retail spaces – ones that surpass conventional shopping experiences. The establishment of experiential retail stores is becoming more prevalent, aiming to engage customers at every step of their retail shopping journey.

New-Age Technologies

Data Analytics and AI: Notably, new-age technologies such as Data Analytics and AI are playing a pivotal role in driving this change. These tools are being effectively utilised by retailers to understand the distinct preferences and buying behaviours of individual customers. Armed with this information, they are able to provide personalised recommendations, offers and promotions to each one of them. Apart from driving sales, this also enables brands to establish meaningful connections with their customer base through targeted email marketing, ultimately leading to enhanced loyalty and customer satisfaction.

AR & VR: Furthermore, retailers are increasingly adopting Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies to create highly engaging and immersive retail environments. These technologies allow consumers to creatively visualise products, virtually try them out, and even receive personalised recommendations based on their preferences. Some brands have also integrated cutting-edge digital displays and intelligent touch screens





INDIA IS ONE OF MY TOP 10 MARKETS

Sean Ashby,
Founder & CEO, aussieBum

aussieBum has grown from a modest dining table project in Drummoyne to a globally triumphant success story. Today the company manufactures over 1 million underwear and swimwear garments...

Surabhi Khosla

Marketing head-turned-herbalist-turned-fitness trainer-turned-retailer – that is how impressive Sean Ashby’s resume is. The Founder & CEO, aussieBum – an Australian beach wear brand, Ashby’s concept underwear was initially rejected by Australian retailers. Despite that, he ploughed on and today, aussieBum has grown from a modest dining table project in Drummoyne to a globally triumphant success story. Today the company manufactures over 1 million underwear and swimwear garments, along with fresh lifestyle apparel lines. Each and every aussieBum garment is still designed by Ashby.

It is with a certain degree of irony that many of those Australian retailers are now proudly stocking the homegrown brand following the seal of approval from overseas.

Surabhi Khosla, Editor, *IMAGES Business of Fashion* met Sean Ashby on the sidelines of the India Fashion Forum held in Bengaluru in February 2024 and walked her through his brand’s journey and his plans for India.

Excerpts from the freewheeling chat...

How was aussieBum born?

I used to hear marketing for Warner Music in Australia, but then decided to study medicine and became an herbalist. Soon after I realized that people wanted a therapist more than a herbalist so I switched lines and decided to focus on my fitness. It was at this time that I was on the beach a lot and I suddenly realized that the swimwear I was wearing – classic nylon, which was very iconic

COOL COLORS: Redefining Mid-Segment Fashion for Modern Men

Praveen Bafna, MD, Bafna Clothing Pvt Ltd, speaks on Cool Colors' growth since its inception and expansion plans in a freewheeling chat with IMAGES Business of Fashion



Praveen Bafna,
Managing Director, Bafna Clothing Pvt. Ltd

Kajal Ahuja

In a country like India where a large chunk of the population belongs to the middle class, the need for an affordable, value-for-money brand is essential. Cool Colors, the flagship brand of Bafna Clothing, has been thriving as a mid-segment brand since its inception in 2002.

As a men's casualwear brand, Cool Colors understands what it truly takes to be a man. It has imbibed perfection and style in its products, creating masterpieces for modern men.

BRAND PRESENCE

Cool Colors has grown its business across the nation, thriving with a pan India as well as international presence. The brand is present in over 25 cities in the country, with 3500+ menswear and family outlets.

HIGHLIGHTS

The brand has more than 20 years of business experience with 300+ modern trade stores pan India. It is also present in International markets such as Middle East, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

In conversation with IMAGES Business of Fashion's Kajal Ahuja, Praveen Bafna, Managing Director, Bafna Clothing Pvt. Ltd. talks about Cool Colors' growth since its inception and further expansion plans as a mid-segment brand.

Q. Please tell us about the journey of Cool Colors and Bafna Clothing.

A. My family has been in the clothing business since 1979 with our third having taken over the business now. We started Bafna Clothing company in 2002 and soon launched our own brand, Cool Colors. It started out with only shirts but the collection soon expanded to include multiple categories like t-shirts, blazers, etc. Today, Cool Colors is a complete men's wardrobe brand. It has been 22 years and we are still growing.

Q. What sets Cool Colors apart from other clothing brands in its category?

A. There are three segments in the clothing market - premium, mid and economy. We call ourselves a mid segment brand. 75% of the population in India is middle class who can afford mid segment brands because they want to wear a good product at a reasonable price. We cater to that 75% population as we provide value for money at Cool Colors.

Q. Please tell us about your growth strategy and your expansion plans for FY 25.

A. If you look at India, it is growing at 7%. And if you see the overall industrial growth, it is not more than 10%. So year-on-year, we cannot grow more than 10% organically, but we can grow if we add more products.

This is why we started another segment called the Export Division. We are now expecting 2% additional growth compared to 2020, which translates to 10% year-on-year organic growth. Further looking at our expansion in categories and area, I am assuming that we may grow at a 20% rate.

Q. Tell us about the range of products that you have?

A. We offer shirts, trousers, denims, t-shirts, blazers - a complete men's wardrobe collection. In shirts, we offer all the categories including twill, Oxford, Copley, cotton by linen, filafill. So, a complete fashion brand, basically.

Q. What geographies is your brand most popular in?

A. We are very strong in South India - Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Pondicherry as well as other

cities in the South are where we doing very well. We are also very strong in Maharashtra, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Our main focus is now to expand in the Eastern belt of India.

Q. What are your plans for opening exclusive brand outlets in tier I and II cities?

A. Since last year, we have been focusing on EBOs. We have around 8-10 stores but we are not planning to open any in tier I cities anytime soon. We are only focusing on tier II and III, where the demand for our products aka value-for-money products is high. And the ROI based on the expenses per store will always be flexible in tier II and III, since rent is too high in tier I cities.

Q. And how will this contribute to your brand's visibility and growth?

A. For any brand, having EBOs is a must. Without them, even if you are doing good business, no brand will not be visible. Along with EBOs, a good online presence is a must. We have been focusing on both these areas for the last two years and we are looking to grow very fast in the next 2-3 years. **80%**



FOR THE
YOUNG & RESTLESS