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CLOTHING TRENDS AMONG THE INDIAN YOUTH

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Abstract: Clothing style is the reflection of the society's cultural, religious, social, and political structure. They reflect and give a clear picture of the prevailing trends and mindset of the people. A lot, that has been said about the social fabric of the Indus Valley civilization by historians, is through the study of the clothing styles discovered through the statues and figurines found in the remains of the civilization. Likewise, the changing clothing trends among the Indian youth reveals a lot about the prevailing conditions of the Indian society. This paper tries to study the historical aspect of clothing trends and its contemporary changing status along with the role played by Indian youth in propagating fashion styles.

Key Words: Indian Fashion and youth, Clothing Trends, Youth Fashion Trends, Indian Youth and Clothing Style.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian youth have a tendency to adopt fashion which is trendy and cool. They relate to changes very fast. A study of these changing trends is important as it is the reflection of the times we are living in. India has the largest youth population compared to any other country in the world. The average age of India population is just 29 years and more than 50% of its population is less than 25 years in age (Basu, 2007). India is also a big growing market for people all over the world. Being a land of diversity, it has a unique feature of giving birth to some kind of local handicraft and textile in every region of its vast sub-continent. Having an equally rich history of traditional textiles and crafts the Indian fashion scenario has always drawn upon these arts and crafts. Not only is the market big, but the resources are also immense. A lot can be drawn from these markets and resources. What is interesting to note is how the Indian youth balances its western look along with the Indian ethnic look.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the fashion trends of Indian youth
2. To examine factors influencing the fashion choices made by Indian youth

III. METHODOLOGY

A wide range of articles in academic journals and media were studied. It also included personal interviews with some college going students to understand the changing picture. A qualitative research methodology was adopted and the data thus collected has been analysed using thematic analysis.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Kashyap, R. (2004) says that fashion and clothing either make us self- confident, jolly and free, or self-conscious, shy, sensitive and restrained. Media has always played a role in shaping fashion trends. Youth is quick to adopt new changes. Fast communication has swept the globe and made easy contact with distant and exotic cultures making them part of the fashion world.

Parul Bhatnagar (2004) writes that clothes when worn to cover the body are beautiful and pleasing. Ancient paintings and sculptures reveal that the Indian woman was as fashionable as the European counter parts. History testifies that costume establishes individual social identity which is linked with social hierarchy. India has had a rich history of textiles. Embroidery, painting, dyeing, printing, weaving, and their various forms have been part of the traditional art of India. The vast geographical layout of India with its varied climate and topography helped in the development of various kinds of fibres and dyeing printing techniques. She also observes that, it is "costume" which establishes individual identity in the society, which in turn is linked with social hierarchy.

Pathak (2006) comments, that Indian costumes are nearly four thousand years old and have seen significant political, economic, social, and cultural upheavals and influences. Costumes are an integral part of Indian historical culture which has undergone regular and intensive transformations.

Yagou (2009) says that it is documented that civilizations and cultures have evolved through a continuous process of imitation and adaptation of creative understanding. In a society clothing habits become a fertile ground for this continuous exchange to evolve.

Chantha (2012) elucidates that comfort has been the hallmark of fashion in recent years. Stretchable leggings of the '80s are now trends of the fashion world's latest obsession. Fifty-five percent of Indian urban youth follow and keep a close track of latest clothing. Fashion trends impact the society in a positive and negative manner. Designers express themselves through new designs creating unending opportunities in the apparel sector which gives a branded modern look to the ordinary man. The negative impact of changing

clothing styles in India is that there is a bend towards western culture, forcing the Indian culture and traditions to take a back seat. Today's generation prefers western outfits.

Nithyaprakash Venkatasamy (2015) stated in research work on 'Fashion trends and their impact on the society' that fashion trends come and go. Fashion is reminiscent and has a refreshing concept which is worthy enough to be portrayed for society's appreciation that makes us even more instinctive. Today's youth choose clothing which suits their values and traits. Having moved from a pre-capitalist feudal social structure to a post-modern social structure, today the social behaviour is marked by self-image and self-expression paving the way for uniqueness and social conformation.

Vats and Pant (2015) has observed that the impact of social and cultural values is seen on the clothing trends in India. In sections, where aesthetic values are held high, clothing is chosen for its fabric, beauty, attractiveness, and a self-satisfaction of looking beautiful. But if economics is a big consideration, then utility, quality and cost are important parameters. Clothes represent lifestyles of human beings as extremely vivid and indicate the values which people hold dear to themselves. It helps them in projecting themselves in a particular way and win hearts and admiration from others.

Barkha Ravi Shende (2017) enumerates that garment depict personality is a well-established fact. The corollary is also true, that garments also have an impact on the society. Shende has done an exhaustive study on this and identified factors which influence fashion trends. The research concludes that social norms, fashion education, mass media, peer groups, social criticism, environment, customs, traditions, religion, work, and leisure activities, wealth or change in income, inspiration by friends, changing trends and values, influence by family members, education, and age are all influencing factors.

Bertola et al. (2017) say that fashion is like a mould of the contemporary culture, which can combine the individual and society. Fashion has always been multi-dimensional. It not only changes but sets trends also. By combining style, it portrays the spirit of times and is a complete expression of post-modern industrial culture, which finds its path through the field of designing.

Hassan et al. (2017) examined the validity of customer perception of youth towards branded fashion apparels in Jalandhar city and observed that the Indian customer has undergone a remarkable transformation. A few decades ago, Indians believed more in savings, purchased bare necessities, and rarely indulged themselves. With an exposure to the western shopping culture of higher income and credit cards, along with a desire to improve standard of living, the spending trends are unprecedented.

Linda Ray (2017) says that retail sales for clothing depends on fashion forecasting, which now-a-days is based on delivering the latest designs within a short period of three to six weeks. This is referred to as Fast Fashion which aims at instant consumer satisfaction and maximizing profits with increased sales. The youth have a major role to play in this.

According to Bajpai (2017) from the 1970s to 2000 there was a move towards non-gendered clothing, and large sizes were more acceptable, and the clothing industry included older and large sized women in their size charts, with designing moves towards intricacy.

Kapila (2017) has opined that world fashion is crossing borders and making its way onto the Indian style-streets. A definite western influence can be seen in the unique designs and styles. But the Indian cultural heritage weaves a common thread to keep the trends together.

Yashodhara Shroff (2017) has quoted Coco Chanel "Dress shabbily and they remember the dress; dress impeccably and they remember the woman." In her study, she says, fashion is all about style, elegance, and perfection. In India traditional beliefs and values prevented drastic clothing transformations. But after 1947 women clothing has a modified urban look. With fashion designers and Bollywood having played a constructive role. With rising social media presence, people are more connected with clothing trends. Unique, chic, personal and bold is the new style statement, which makes the wearer smart, confident, and independent.

Choudhary (2019) documents that Indian fashions have transformed and become popular due to its extremely rich cultural heritage which includes a textile, embroidery style, weaving patterns, colour combinations etc. from each region of this diverse land. The Indian fashion industry is still evolving and has a lot of tradition to draw upon from. To name a few it includes ajrakh, bhagalpuri silk, bhandhani, bomkai saris, brocade, chanderi, chikankari, ikat, ilkal saris, indigo dyed and printed bangru, jamdani, kalamkari, kanjivaram, khadi, kinnauri shawls, kota doria, lepcha, mangalgiri cottons, muga silk, mysore silk, narayanpeth silk, paithani saris, patola, sangneri prints, are some of the popular fabrics made in different parts of India. Each has a variety and variation of its own.

Tate (2021) in the book 'Inside fashion design' says that inevitably fashion is influenced by constant exposure to different cultures and the way people interpret fashion around the world influences fashion trends. Globalization, internet connectivity, online trading has influenced fashion all over the world. Indian clothing style are moving towards an amalgamation of traditional and the cosmopolitan look. Strong western influence on Indian culture is paving a way for a difference in style. The future of Indian fashion will be very different from its past. Indian fashion today is more about change, price, brand, confidence, and position.

IV. CLOTHING TRENDS AMONGST INDIAN YOUTH

Study of cultural history has always included the study of clothes and it's style as clothes have served as a mirror which has reflected the socio-economic, political and cultural aspects of the society. In recent years, the fashion industry in India has undergone significant transformation, particularly in terms of the youth and changing fashion trends. India is a multidimensional country with a huge population spread across various regions with different traditions and rituals. Special costumes and traditional dresses have a long enriching cultural continuity worldwide. Costumes establishes the personal identity of the person in society.

Indian youth as we see them today draw their inspiration for clothes from a mixture of regional, cultural, and historical influences. Bollywood is the driving force of Indian contemporary fashion, as, the influence and fan following is massive and blind. Indian clothing has adopted global fashions which makes it versatile. During the past few decades revival of ethnic wear amongst youth has been witnessed. International trends along with British domination played a defining role in the way Indians dressed. For women to make their own independent choices and shift from a very understated shy traditional looks to modern bold choices a lot had to be sacrificed.

The late twentieth century saw a surge in fashion schools in India. Women workforce increased. Disco of the 1980's with shimmering costumes, denim, and leather jackets, varied coloured chiffon saris was altering the Indian clothing scenario towards a cosmopolitan multi-cultured society. On the fashion ramp the 60s saw heavy chunky ornaments, embroidered saris while the 70s saw bright colours, polka dots, bell-bottoms, and oversized sunglasses. During the 1990's the Indian scene became more westernized - bold and stylish. The one-piece dresses, sportswear, halter tops, skirts, and floral gowns have become a common choice of clothing since the 1990s. Fashion in India is not just a mix of tastes with trend, it is a blend cultures and creativity. Western influence has changed Indian fashion ideals. In the twentieth Century Indian garments were judged by the fabric and style, not by who has designed it and what

brand it is. The twenty first century has changed this altogether. Epoch trends like bell bottoms, frills and trousers have made a new look comeback in the form of plazzos. By the beginning of the twenty first century regressive, conservative, and traditional Indian practices were on their way out and women started getting a secured position in society to a large extent and became more independent and free-thinking.

In recent years several reasons have played an important role in changing clothing trends among Indian youth. The emergence of the mall culture and family stores has become popular amongst the middle classes. Boutiques and fashion houses are another concept which is gaining popularity. The Indian consumer is fast becoming brand conscious and goes in for branded clothes as they offer quality assurance. Fashion on the ramp displaying the latest designs is common in India now. Beauty pageants are gaining popularity. Budding designers have started experimenting with fashion trends and styles. Fashion is now taught as a subject in schools and colleges.

The traditional sari has also undergone tremendous changes, due to which its popularity has risen. Modern contemporary saris are known for their colours, prints, weaves, laced and netted fabrics. Half stitched saris make it extremely easy to drape and wear for the youth. The fashionable denim jeans are available in stretchable fabric. Jeans have gradually replaced the salwar and the kameez was replaced by tops and t-shirts. Salwar evolved into a palazzo style pant. Westernized materials have overtaken the traditional handloom even for the male youth. Latest trends and styles are adopted and bolder and more comfortable clothing like shorts, capris, jackets, shirts, and pants as against traditional ethnic clothes are finding more acceptability. A uniquely Indian style, the Indo-western fusion dresses, which combined beauty with comfort and practicality has come into existence. This has become the trend for the youth from all spheres. The cut and the silhouette of ethnic wears are all western, while the designing, fabric, embellishment, patterns, weaves, prints, and style are totally Indian. The scope of fashion for youth is limitless. It has no boundaries. It has no beginning and no end. It is something we deal with every day and will exist if humans exist. Designers pick up forecast elements and blend it with their ideas to create trends and the youth are eager to follow it.

The Indian handloom fabric is also becoming popular as it is well suited to the climate. The government is supporting it and popularising the fabric. The Indian markets clearly depict this through the variety of clothes available for the youth. Indian clothing has gone through a lot of ups and downs and the clothing we see today is totally transformed from what it started with. From ethnic to western, salwar kameez to Haute couture, the Indian clothing has gone through a sea of changes, with its advantage of an extremely rich heritage and the knowledge of weaving and stitching and becoming the second largest exporter of textiles in the world. Favourable demographics and rising income levels are the key growth drivers of the Indian clothing sector in recent years.

In India Fashion trends are slowly moving towards having a psychotropic effect on the masses, which is characterized with vibrant palettes, vivid tropical patterns and prints made through rendering by computers. It reflects a hyperreal perception of nature, underscored by bright synthetic colourways. Futuristic fashion is inspired by artificial intelligence and illustrated by technology. Properties of post-human apparel are ultra-light, highly breathable, protective, and heat regulating properties. While futuristic fashion is defined by other worldly aspects like embossed textures, bespoke fabrics, liquid or metallic finishes, and glowing LED lights inside of mesh materials. With a rapid change in the socio-economic status of the Indians and an increase in the disposable income, with almost everything including clothes available on hire-purchase and in instalments, the face of the Indian retail industry has also changed, much to the advantage of the youth. Media reporting is largely responsible for the fashion and clothing industry boom. Magazines, TV live telecasts, star shows, etc. help in disseminating fashion information in no time amongst the masses.

The net worth of the Indian textiles and apparel industry was \$152 bn in 2021. It is said to be growing at Compound Annual Growth Rate of 12%. By 2025 it should reach \$225. The market's largest segment includes the Women's Apparel, which has the largest market share, US\$43.65bn in 2023 (9).

Fashion trends always repeat itself in a decade or two bringing new-fangled changes to the current fashion. Indian fashion is a fusion of all the fashion trends in Indian history. Ancient Indian clothing amalgamated the dressing styles of the Mughals followed by the British and itself included a wide range of regional variations which in turn are influenced largely by the west. This inclusive nature of the Indian fashion which has the inherent quality of accepting outside influence and beautifully blending it, is what makes it different and internationally sought after. Indian apparels are widely accepted all over the world.

The Indian fashion market is lucrative in terms of scope and variety. Rapid growth of information technology has popularized the corporate look, the revival of the ethno-cultural look has dominated leading to the popularization of traditional forms of art and crafts. International fashion brands have started focusing on India offering immense opportunities to in-house fashion designers. The Indian fashion industry is competing at par with the international fashion industry and has become one of the most popular revenues generating industries of India.

Women are the undeclared icons of fashion. The twenty first century began with a crystal-clear picture of an independent woman in pants, skirts, and bold outfits. Blouses became extremely stylish and branded clothes flooded the market, as they provide quality affirmation. This revolutionized the Indian fashion scenario. The blended Indo-western styles have become popular and fusion wear is regarded as a beauty all over the world. A comparison of financial years 2020 and 2021 reveal that a record growth of 51 percent was recorded in the orders for garments, making it the largest contributor to the e-commerce industry of India. This was in spite of the hardships faced because of Covid-19 pandemic. It is prophesied that the online business is expected to grow by 15-20 percent during the next five years.

The Indian youth has been part of all these ups and downs in the fashion scenario. The Fashion which the youth adopts today for its casual wear is simple, comfortable and minimalistic. They are happy with the wash and wear concept. Negligible maintenance with less effort and minimum costs, is their slogan for every-day wear casual garments. However their formal wear is geared up with garments which are totally ethnic with a whole lot of handwork and embroidery.

Youth, who form a significant portion of the Indian population, are leading the way in terms of changing fashion trends in India. The young generation is highly influenced by global fashion and is open to experimenting with new styles, cuts, and designs. They are breaking away from the traditional norms of Indian fashion and embracing a more westernized and cosmopolitan style.

Nowadays fashion is fast adapting and evolving, social media, youth culture, celebrities and influencers are omnipresent to influence you from all angles. The youth follows this with passion and sincerity. From sustainable clothing to gorgeous corseted outfits is what's trending amongst youngsters. You will find them sporting dresses, which are an all-time favourite with variations in type, fabric print and pattern, Tie-knot satin dresses to an oversized hoodie dress, to waist cut blazer dress to velvet dresses to net dresses to short slit dress to black robe dress, to pullup string dresses, to teal dresses, to off-shoulder dresses, to rib dress, there is a never ending list to design options. Corset Tops are a must-have these days in the wardrobe for young girls and women. They help in giving a sophisticated

modern look with cuts that enhance your bodyline and help giving a perfect body structure. Corsets help achieve a rich, chic and classy look.

Co-ordinated style of dressing has been in vogue for quite some time. It has gained popularity recently amongst the youth because it just needs the basic sense of mixing and matching garments and colour. The overall look is comfortable, casual and perfect look. They are appropriate for all occasions and extremely cost affective. Custom made clothing or boutique clothing though a bit expensive is also a great choice made by youngsters today. Satisfaction level for custom clothing is high because the garment is styled and fabricated according to the individual's style, personality and fit.

V. FINDINGS

Indian youth are embracing global fashion trends with open arms in their casual wear. In their formal wear there is a touch of ethnic Indian culture. Social media contributes towards the changing fashion trends among the youth. Social platforms have made visual interactions globally instantaneous. Posts by fashion influencers, bloggers, models, actors, etc. who post their designs, are followed by the youth. Various platforms have facilitated the youth to appreciate and share their fashion choices, which in turn helps the popularisation of new fashion trends. E-commerce has a major role to play also. With online shopping catching on it is the youth who is active on all platforms. The ease, convenience, fast deliveries, and affordable pricing has made shopping extremely convenient for the youth to choose and acquire the latest fashions.

In order to promote fashion the number of fashion shows have increased, thus promoting latest fashions amongst the youth. Brands and designers showcase their designs offering unique designs. Youth are eager to experiment with clothes as they form an easy way to express their individuality. Today's fashion is global and represents the spirit of the times. Clothes have always been the most comprehensive manifestation of the society in all eras.

The main reason why the fashion industry manages to grow at a stupendous rate is because majority of the youth is fashion-conscious. The youth understands fashion and chooses clothes along with accessories to express itself in a particular manner. Fashion these days is not the privilege of the upper class. It is the universal amongst all classes. Magazines, TV shows,, celebrities, play the role of influencers in the lives of the youth whereby they are mesmerised by new styles and trends.

VI. CONCLUSION

Youth which forms roughly 22 percent of the Indian population is an important section which influences the clothing industry from all angles. In fact, the movement of the market is largely dependent on the like and dislikes of the youth. This area of study is relatively unexplored and needs to be discovered, surveyed, and discussed. The word 'youth' according to the National youth policy 2014, Government of India the word 'youth' refers to people between 15 and 29 years of age. This is the age when a person is young full of vigor, ready to experiment, discover, adopt, creative and talented. India is a young nation and synonymous with youth. It's a big market. On one side we have the industry and on the other we have this brigade of positively charged youth which has the capacity to take on the market. So the present scenario is continuously evolving and clothing trends among the Indian youth will constantly change. After all fashion and clothing is all about change.

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